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To: Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

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**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**Evaluation of EU Agencies: Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA**

*Accompanying the document*

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE  
COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

**Evaluation of EU Agencies: Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA**

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## Glossary

Term or acronym	Meaning or definition
AAR	Annual activity report
ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
ACVT	Advisory Committee on Vocational Training
CAAR	Consolidated annual activity report
CATI	Computer assisted telephone interview
<u>CEDEFOP</u>	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
DG COMM	Directorate General for Communication
DG EAC	Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
DG EMPL	Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
DG HOME	Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG INTPA	Directorate General for International Partnerships
DG NEAR	Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DG SANTE	Directorate General for Health and Food Safety
DGVT	Directorate General for Vocational Training
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECDC	European Centre for Diseases Prevention and Control
EEA	European Environment Agency
EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ELA	European Labour Authority
EMAS	Eco-management and audit scheme
EMCC	European Monitoring Centre on Change
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EP	European Parliament

EPMS	<u>Eurofound</u> performance monitoring system
EPSCO	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ERM	European Restructuring Monitor
ESCO	European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations
ESENER	European survey of enterprises on new and emerging risks
ESJS	European skills and jobs survey
ESOSH	European Society of Occupational Health and Safety
ETF	European Training Foundation
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
EU	European Union
EUAN	European Union Agencies Network
EU-ANSA	European Union Agencies Network on Scientific Advice
<u>EU-OSHA</u>	European Union Agency for Safety and Health at Work
EUR	Euro
<u>EUROFOUND</u>	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
EWCS	European working conditions survey
FOP	EU-OSHA focal point
GRETA	Green responses to excellence through thematic actions
HCD	Human capital development
HR	Human resources
HWC	Healthy workplace campaign
IA	Internal audit
IAS	Internal audit system
ICT	Information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOSH	Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance

IT	Information technology
KPI	Key performance indicator
MB	Management board
MTF	Multiannual financial framework
MS	Member States
MSD	Musculoskeletal disorders
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument
NEC	Network of European Correspondents
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQF	National Quality Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OiRA	Online interactive risk assessment
OPC	Open public consultation
OSH	Occupational safety and health
PD	Programming documents
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
SAI	Strategic areas of intervention
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
VET	Vocational education and training
WHO	World Health Organisation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

This document evaluates four of the five EU decentralised agencies that fall under the remit of DG EMPL: the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working conditions (**Eurofound**); the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (**Cedefop**); the European Training Foundation (**ETF**); the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (**EU-OSHA**) ('the Agencies').

Since it was set up in 2019, the European Labour Authority (**ELA**) has also been under the remit of DG EMPL. However, due to its early stage of development and the on-going 2024 evaluation as required by its Founding Regulation, ELA does not fall within the scope of this evaluation. Nonetheless, ELA stakeholders have been consulted throughout this study, and the alignment of the mandates between the Agencies and ELA has been taken into account.

According to their Founding Regulations<sup>1</sup>, each of the Agencies should be evaluated at regular intervals. The previous joint evaluation of the Agencies took place in 2019<sup>2</sup>. The [Commission evaluation report](#) was published on 9 April 2019<sup>3</sup> along with the [supporting study](#)<sup>4</sup>. The Agencies also have their own evaluation programmes.

In line with the Commission's 'better regulation' guidelines, this evaluation analyses the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of each Agency, assessing to what extent they have fulfilled their mandates, specific objectives and activities. It includes individual and cross-cutting assessments, with an emphasis on synergies, cooperation and how the Agencies complement one another. The evaluation seeks to provide background information and insights to feed into future discussions on the Agencies, and if necessary, to contribute to potential legislative proposals responding to evolving needs or circumstances, including changes in their mandates.

#### Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation covers 2017-2022<sup>5</sup>, and includes the entire thematic remit of the Agencies: employment, industrial relations and the improvement of living and working conditions (Eurofound); health and safety at work (EU-OSHA); vocational education and training, as well as skills and qualification policies (Cedefop and the ETF). The evaluation also addresses the

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2019/127 establishing the European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions (Eurofound), repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 1365/75. Regulation (EU) 2019/128 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75. Regulation (EU) 2019/126 establishing the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 2062/94. Regulation (EC) no 1339/2008 establishing a European Training Foundation (recast).

<sup>2</sup> Including an in-depth assessment of the potential for mergers between the Agencies. See the [2019 supporting study Annex 6 Transversal report](#).

<sup>3</sup> Commission Staff Working Document, Evaluation of the EU Commission Agencies working in the employment and social affairs policy field: EUROFOUND, CEDEFOP, ETF and EU-OSHA, SWD(2019)160 final.

<sup>4</sup> PPMI/Ecorys (2018) [Evaluation of the EU Agencies under the remit of DG Employment](#).

<sup>5</sup> Previous evaluation time scope covered from 2011 to 2016.

role of each Agency in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, where relevant.

In terms of geographical scope, the evaluation covers the 27 EU Member States, as well as:

- for the ETF: activities in partner countries, including in Eastern Partnership countries, Central Asia, Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, Western Balkans and Türkiye<sup>6</sup>;
- for Eurofound: surveys in non-EU Member States<sup>7</sup>;
- for Cedefop: the contribution of Norway and Iceland to Cedefop's budget and activities<sup>8</sup>;
- for EU-OSHA: the participation of Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway in EU-OSHA's work (European Commission and EFTA agreement); the projects run by EU-OSHA in the Western Balkans and Türkiye (under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance - IPA).

## 1.2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

### 1.2.1 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was supported by an external study (supporting study)<sup>9</sup>. The supporting study used a variety of primary and secondary data collection tools as well as triangulated analysis: mapping research based on the Agencies' management and monitoring documents, other studies and reports related to the Agencies, stakeholder feedback surveys (commissioned by the Agencies), a wide range of consultation activities including interviews with and surveys of key stakeholders and staff working in the Agencies.

The supporting study<sup>10</sup> included 20 Agency-specific and five cross-cutting in-depth case studies. It also made use of a European Commission public consultation published on 'Have your say' to collect feedback on the evaluation criteria covered by the study. A cost-effectiveness analysis focused on assessing Agency-level and activity-level cost-effectiveness. The cross-cutting analyses<sup>11</sup> assessed the mandates and cooperation between the Agencies and provided significant input to answer the coherence questions. Finally, a validation focus group with key stakeholders took place on 18 September 2023 to test preliminary evaluation findings.

### 1.2.2 LIMITATIONS

Limitations to the evaluation research are associated with the scope, research coverage, data availability and data quality. Many of these limitations stem from the Agencies' monitoring

<sup>6</sup> ETF partner countries are: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion of the Kosovo declaration of independence), Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Palestine (this designation should not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual position of the EU Member States on this issue), Russia, Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. ETF stopped all its operations in Russia in February 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Non-EU countries covered in some of Eurofound surveys are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Türkiye and the United Kingdom.

<sup>8</sup> From 2023, Lichtenstein is also involved in Cedefop's activities.

<sup>9</sup> The supporting study was carried out by Ecorys/PPMI and was coordinated by the Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Inclusion and Social Affairs, with the support of an Inter Services Steering Group (ISSG). See details in Annex I.

<sup>10</sup> See detailed overview of the methods used in Annex II.

<sup>11</sup> See Annex V of the supporting study.

systems and key performance indicators (KPIs) which restrict the assessment of performance and achievement of objectives. These constraints were taken into account during the study's design and implementation, with mitigation measures introduced accordingly.

#### **1.2.2.1. Agencies monitoring systems and KPIs limitations:**

Overall, the Agencies have numerous and similar mechanisms to ensure accountability and assess performance, including: monitoring: internal performance monitoring/measurement systems, mechanisms to track risks; reporting: single programming documents and multiannual strategies, annual reports and consolidated annual activity reports, annual budgets and accounts, establishment plans, management board and executive board meeting minutes; evaluation: reports by ECA, EP, and IAS, internal and external evaluations and controls, staff surveys and internal user/stakeholder surveys (except ETF).

Despite growing cooperation between the Agencies to increase the alignment and quality of their monitoring systems, notable differences and limitations persist:

**Limited comparability of KPIs among the Agencies:** Although each Agency collects a large amount of data, these data are not always comparable due to variations in methodology when defining and quantifying KPIs. To address this, priority was given to KPIs that are common to most Agencies; proxy indicators were used where possible. Qualitative information from other data collection methods was also used to triangulate the findings (e.g. Cedefop does not use a quantitative indicator for work programme delivery so alternative qualitative information was used, including European Parliament discharge reports).

#### **Result indicators and benchmarking limitations to assess success:**

(i) The Agencies did not consistently set targets for performance indicators, which made it difficult to analyse whether the objectives had been achieved. While targets were set for some operational KPIs (e.g. budget implementation and output delivery), this was not the case for most result indicators (see Annex X for a list of Agencies' KPIs with and without targets). In such instances, the study analysed trends over time, comparing achievements with 2016 baseline figures or with data from the entire 2011-2016 period when available.

(ii) ETF and Cedefop changed their approach to monitoring indicators during the evaluation period making it difficult to analyse some trends<sup>12</sup>. In 2021, the ETF changed its approach to monitoring indicators with the introduction of the 2027 ETF strategy, which reduced data comparability. In those cases, indicators are used to a limited extent and explanations are given based on triangulated evaluation sources.

(iii) In some cases, the ETF set targets, but the ETF consolidated annual activity reports do not provide sufficient information for assessing the achievement of those quantitative targets. As a result, there is a disconnect between the specified targets and the description of what was achieved<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> For example, Cedefop changed its approach to monitoring website traffic in 2019.

<sup>13</sup> In 2021, the Agency introduced a set of new output indicators (e.g. number of reports and knowledge products produced, Torino process assessment). However, these were not included in the annual report for 2022.

(iv) Some of the proposed indicators are no longer relevant for assessing success (e.g. number of press releases).

**Lack of KPIs on country-level impacts:** The data on results and impacts at national level is limited and is not systematically monitored by the Agencies. The responses to the public consultation and stakeholder survey were insufficient to analyse the results by country. To address this, qualitative information collected through interviews, case studies and mapping tasks was used to identify examples of uptake, use, and impact of Agencies activities at national level. Evaluations of specific programmes and activity areas commissioned by the Agencies were also used (e.g. the evaluation of the EU-OSHA OiRA tool was used to identify uptake and use at national level alongside information from the OSH-wiki website).

#### 1.2.2.2. Other limitations

**Mapping methodology:** The mapping task, based mainly on the Agencies' monitoring and evaluation systems, had limited scope to incorporate outsider views. Interviews, a public consultation, a targeted survey and case studies were therefore needed to ensure that a variety of perspectives could be considered in the evaluation.

**Limitations of the public consultation results:** The public consultation received only 101 responses across all four Agencies, limiting the scope to analyse responses by stakeholder group. To address this, the supporting study included a targeted survey of Agency staff and stakeholders which generated 560 responses. This was sufficient to enable staff and stakeholder responses to be analysed separately, with the latter further broken down by replies from Management/Governing Board members and other stakeholders. This allowed a differentiation between those involved in the Agencies' operations and those using the Agencies' outputs. Public consultation and targeted survey data were also triangulated with all other data sources collected during the study.

**Potential bias from evaluation tools based on perceptions:** The evaluation collected staff and stakeholder views through semi-structured interviews, a targeted survey and a public consultation. To address any potential bias, the study considered that opinions were influenced by the stakeholders' relationships with the Agencies. The perception-related data were therefore triangulated with other data sources. For instance, in the case of complex issues such as the functioning of the Management/Governing Boards, in-depth interviews with both direct participants and informed outsiders were used to inform the findings.

**Limitations of the cost effectiveness analysis methodology:** Typically, a cost-effectiveness analysis assesses if the cost of the activities match the achieved outputs and results. Yet, for many of the Agencies' activities, it was not possible to identify a single effect or indicator that could be easily quantified. Unit cost analysis at the level of outputs was difficult as each Agency is unique, with its own remits, objectives and activities, making it difficult to apply a set of comparable performance indicators. Consequently, the performance of the Agencies had to be considered against multiple objectives rather than the achievement of a sole output by a given date. To address these challenges, a mixed-method approach was used to gather information through desk research, interviews, surveys and case studies. The goal was to evaluate

production efficiency (the relationship between inputs and outputs), allocation efficiency (the relationship between inputs and higher-level results) and how efficiency could be improved.

**Challenges linked to specific evaluation criteria:** The effectiveness criterion assesses impacts which are affected by multiple factors that are often outside of the control of the Agencies. In-depth analyses of selected initiatives in case studies addressed these challenges. Moreover, the Agencies' specific objectives, based on their programming documents, are not formulated in a SMART way, which makes it difficult to assess the extent of the success of the interventions. The efficiency criterion was affected by the limitations of the cost-effectiveness methodology presented above.

## 2. WHAT WAS THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE INTERVENTION

### 2.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION AND ITS OBJECTIVES

This evaluation builds on the intervention logics (ILs) of the Agencies. Each IL includes a complex set of operational, specific and general objectives for each Agency. These objectives are mirrored, respectively, by activities/outputs, results and impacts, which are the core of the Agencies' effectiveness and efficiency assessment (see Section 4.1.1.).

The objectives and tasks of the Agencies are set out in: (i) their Founding Regulations – which set the mandates/general objectives; and (ii) their programming documents for the relevant period (midterm perspectives and work programmes) - which set specific and operational objectives. Detailed intervention logics per Agency are presented in Annex VI, along with full references to the Agencies' key strategic programming documents.

To fulfil their objectives<sup>19</sup>, the Agencies carry out several broad types of activity, depending on their specific mandate and intervention logic, namely: (i) research and monitoring; (ii) communication, dissemination and raising awareness; and (iii) capacity building.

During the current evaluation period several external factors need to be considered in the Agencies' ILs, as they influenced the achievement of results and impacts. The most significant factor, common to all four Agencies, is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Agency-specific external factors include the level of engagement of national focal points (for EU-OSHA), the Network of National Correspondents - NEC (for Eurofound), the geopolitical context and the level of engagement of partner countries (for the ETF).

The mandates of the Agencies, which correspond to the general objectives of the ILs, are presented below (in bold). Detailed specific objectives per Agency, are presented in Annex VI. Operational objectives are presented in Table 2.

**EUROFOUND** - Eurofound was established in 1975 by Regulation (EEC) No 1365/75<sup>14</sup>. Together with Cedefop and EU-OSHA, it was one of the first three EU Agencies to be created. Located in Dublin, Ireland, **its main mission is to carry out research in the areas of**

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<sup>14</sup> The Founding Regulation was amended in 1993, 2003 and 2005, mainly to take account of enlargement or treaty changes, and it was ultimately repealed in 2019 by Regulation (EU) 2019/126 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019.

**employment, industrial relations, and living and working conditions, with the objective of shaping and implementing policies aimed at improving living and working conditions.**

The 2021-2024 programming document of Eurofound sets out six strategic areas<sup>15</sup> on which to focus: (1) working conditions and sustainable work; (2) industrial relations and social dialogue; (3) employment and labour markets; (4) living conditions and quality of life; (5) anticipating and managing the impact of change; and (6) promoting social cohesion and convergence. Eurofound operates three observatories: (1) the European Observatory of Working Life (EurWORK - working conditions and industrial relations); (2) the European Monitoring Centre of Change (EMCC - monitoring of change for employment); and (3) the European Observatory on Quality of Life (EurLIFE - living conditions and quality of life).

Eurofound conducts regular surveys: the European working conditions survey (EWCS), the European company survey (ECS), the European quality of life survey (EQLS), and living and working in relation with COVID-19. The Agency also carries out individual research projects. In its field of competence, it contributes to the analytical and policy work of the European Commission and Member States, and of organisations representing both employers and employees. In 2023, Eurofound had around 100 staff members (own staff only) and a total annual budget of EUR 23.8 million, including an operational budget of EUR 6.1 million (programming document 2021-2024).

**CEDEFOP** - Cedefop was established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/1975<sup>16</sup>. Located in Thessaloniki, Greece, **its main mission is to support the promotion, development and implementation of evidence-based, high-quality EU policies on vocational education and training (VET)**. Cedefop provides information, research, analyses and evidence at the crossroads of VET, skills and qualifications, and the labour market. More specifically, Cedefop monitors and analyses developments in these three areas. It contributes to European tools in the area of education and training, such as the European Qualification Framework and Europass. It provides skills analysis and forecasting together with tools for validating non-formal and informal learning. As a platform for policymakers, social partners, researchers, experts and other VET and labour market actors, Cedefop promotes knowledge sharing and policy learning. It plays a key role in monitoring the implementation of the Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration. To support its work, Cedefop manages several networks, including ReferNet, CareersNet, SkillsNet, and a community of apprenticeship experts. In 2023, Cedefop had 120 staff<sup>17</sup> and an annual budget of around EUR 19.6 million, including an operational budget of around EUR 4.9 million (programming document 2023-2025).

**ETF** – the ETF was established under Council Regulation (EC) No 1360/90, replaced in 2008 by Regulation (EC) No 1339/2008<sup>18</sup>. Located in Torino, Italy, it focuses on EU policy and cooperation instruments for external relations, which in 2021 were brought together under the

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<sup>15</sup> Linked to the strategic areas of intervention (SAIs).

<sup>16</sup> Cedefop's Founding Regulation was amended in 1993, 1994, 1995, 2003 and 2004 mainly to take account of enlargement or treaty changes, and it was ultimately repealed in 2019 by Regulation (EU) 2019/126 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Establishment plan 2023; includes officials, temporary agents, contract agents and seconded national experts.

<sup>18</sup> This 2008 Regulation moved the focus for ETF from vocational education and training reforms to a much broader scope of activities covering human capital development (HCD).

umbrella of Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI - Global Europe). **Its main mission is to contribute to EU external relations policies, notably on helping partner countries to develop human capital through improved VET and lifelong learning systems that are inclusive and innovative.**

The ETF's geographical scope includes the EU candidate countries, the potential candidate countries in the western Balkans, the southern Mediterranean, eastern European and southern Caucasus partner countries, and other countries, as decided by the ETF Governing Board. In 2023 it had around 129 staff and an annual budget of EUR 22.63 million, including an operational budget of EUR 4.33 million (ETF annual work programme 2023).

**EU-OSHA** – EU-OSHA was established in 1994 by Council Regulation (EC) No 2062/94<sup>19</sup>. Located in Bilbao Spain **its main mission is to develop, gather and provide reliable and relevant information, analyses and tools to advance knowledge, raise awareness and exchange occupational safety and health (OSH) information and good practices.**

The Agency collects and disseminates information and develops tools on health and safety at work relevant for stakeholders and policymakers involved in OSH at EU and national level. It also carries out awareness raising campaigns and networking in the OSH field. EU-OSHA anticipates change as well as new and emerging risks. It develops tools for good OSH management. It has a network of focal points in Member States, which provides input into EU-OSHA's work and disseminates products and information to national stakeholders. In 2023 it had around 65 staff and an annual budget of EUR 17.04 million, including an operational budget of EUR 7.065 million (programming document 2023-2025).

Three of the Agencies, Eurofound, Cedefop and EU-OSHA, are 'tripartite' Agencies. This means that national authorities, trade unions and employer representatives (one per Member State and category) participate in their management boards<sup>20</sup> (see details in Section 4.1.2.).

## 2.2. POINT(S) OF COMPARISON

Given that the evaluation period is 2017-2022, the baseline year is 2016. The supporting study has therefore taken into consideration the key findings of the previous evaluation (2011-2016). In addition, and where possible, data relating to indicators comparable with those assessed previously has been collected. For specific evaluation criteria (e.g. efficiency), other similar EU decentralised agencies have been used as benchmarks; for effectiveness, extensive use is made of the Agencies monitoring systems and KPIs (see Annex X - list of KPIs per Agency), comparing achievements to targets when the latter exist.

<sup>19</sup> Its Founding Regulation was amended in 1995, 2003 and 2005, mainly to take account of enlargement or treaty changes and it was ultimately repealed in 2019 by Regulation (EU) 2019/126 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019.

<sup>20</sup> With 27 government representatives, 27 representatives of employers and 27 of workers' organisations, plus three Commission representatives.

### 3. HOW HAS THE SITUATION EVOLVED OVER THE EVALUATION PERIOD?

#### 3.1. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

##### 3.1.1 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The Agencies, similarly to other EU decentralised agencies, are almost exclusively funded by the general EU budget, with annual contributions from the cohesion, resilience and values headings of the multiannual financial framework (annual subsidy to each Agency).<sup>21</sup> According to their Regulations, all four Agencies can also receive (i) fees charged for their services and publications, (ii) funding from the Member States and third countries participating in the Agencies' activities<sup>22</sup>, and (iii) internal and external revenue<sup>23</sup> assigned for specific items of expenditure<sup>24</sup>.

According to their Founding Regulations, Eurofound, Cedefop and EU-OSHA can also receive (iv) other funding from the European Commission (through contribution agreements, grant agreements and financial framework partnerships), provided that specific conditions are met<sup>25</sup>. While the ETF's Founding Regulation does not mention these agreements explicitly, it permits funding from other sources as well (e.g. contribution and grant agreements with the European Commission, if they are covered by mandates and are not already funded).

**In practice, all four Agencies received most of their funding from the general EU budget (subsidy).** The funding received from other sources<sup>26</sup> represented less than 5% of their total annual revenue<sup>27</sup>. The ETF is an exception as in 2022, it received additional funding totalling about EUR 3 million (approx. 13.8% of the ETF budget) through extra-subsidy projects, mainly from agreements between the European Commission and the Foundation (e.g. with EU Delegations). This additional funding enabled the ETF to increase operational expenditure, improve visibility and amplify the impact of its operations (see details of these additional projects delivered by the ETF in 2022 in Box 1 of Annex VII). In the case of Eurofound, Cedefop and EU OSHA, some extra-subsidy funding comes from EFTA countries (Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway), which in exchange participate in some agencies' activities<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> European Court of Auditors (2023), *Annual Report on EU Agencies for the Financial Year 2022*. Available at [https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SAR-AGENCIES-2022/SAR-AGENCIES-2022\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SAR-AGENCIES-2022/SAR-AGENCIES-2022_EN.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Explicitly mentioned in the Founding Regulations of the tripartite Agencies.

<sup>23</sup> They are specified in Article 20 of Eurofound's Founding Regulation.

<sup>24</sup> See Article 15.3 of the ETF Regulation: *'The revenue of the Foundation shall comprise, without prejudice to other types of income, a subsidy from the general budget of the European Union, payments made as remuneration for services performed as well as finance from other sources'*.

<sup>25</sup> Eurofound Regulation (EU) No 2019/127 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019, OJ L 30 of 16 January 2019 (p. 46).

<sup>26</sup> For instance, Eurofound and EU-OSHA received grant funding from DG NEAR during most of the evaluation period to support the participation of enlargement countries in the Agencies' activities. E.g. in 2017, EU-OSHA signed a grant agreement to support Western Balkan countries and Türkiye (IPA II 2016 programme), for a total amount of EUR 290 000 for a period of 2 years.

<sup>27</sup> According to the data presented in the Agencies' consolidated annual activity reports for 2016-2022.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. in the period 2020-2024, Eurofound has received EUR 932,022 from Norway for covering the costs of the Network of Eurofound Correspondents related to the agency's research projects in which Norway has participated, and for its participation in the European Working Conditions Survey.

Eurofound has also received funding from a European Parliament Pilot Project dedicated to minimum wages<sup>29</sup>.

**The annual contribution to all four Agencies from the EU budget remained stable during the evaluation period, and similar to the baseline.** In 2019, a slight (2%) increase was introduced to the MFF to partially compensate for inflation. However, this modest rise in annual revenues could not keep pace with the actual level of inflation and rising staff costs. Consequently, **the proportion of staff costs increased during the evaluation period, leading to a decline in the share of operational expenditure**<sup>30</sup>.

The Agencies faced significant pressure on their operational budgets, which limited their operations. For example, Cedefop reduced activities directly targeting Members States, and in 2022, EU-OSHA reduced activities related to the priority areas ‘Facts & figures’, ‘Raising awareness and communication’, and ‘Networking’<sup>31</sup>.

**Between 2017 and 2022, the Agencies implemented about 100% of their annual budget, similar to the previous evaluation period (2011-2016),** indicating a high operational efficiency (see Section 4.2 on efficiency). Budget implementation was slightly lower for EU-OSHA, but remained above the target of 95%. This can be explained by the large share of the operational budget which is implemented through procurement actions<sup>32</sup>.

**Table 1: Annual budget implementation (%)**

Agency	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<u>Eurofound</u>	99.9	100	99.6	99.9	99.9	100	100
<u>Cedefop</u>	99.9	99.9	100	99.9	100	100	99.9
<u>ETF</u>	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.8	99.9	100
<u>EU-OSHA</u>	96.3	96	100	98	97	97	98.7

Source: Annual activity reports

### 3.1.2 HUMAN RESOURCES

**The total number of staff** <sup>33</sup> **of the Agencies remained stable** during the evaluation period (see Figure 1 and Table 1 in Annex VII). EU-OSHA is the smallest Agency with 65 staff in 2022. The ETF was the largest with 134 staff in 2022 down from 141 in the baseline year

<sup>29</sup> Eurofound database on minimum wage rates applicable to low paid jobs. It started in 2021, completed in 2023. Budget: EUR 1,000,000. New SLA to be signed in 2024 to update the database by mid-2025.

<sup>30</sup> Agencies’ expenditure is divided into three categories: Title 1: Staff; Title 2: Administrative (infrastructure maintenance of buildings, equipment, furniture, software); Title 3: Operational expenditure (key activities, including missions, meetings and interpretation, pilot, studies and projects, and communication).

<sup>31</sup> EU-OSHA (2023), Consolidated annual activity report for 2022 (p. 45).

<sup>32</sup> As a result, the prices received are sometimes lower than those planned.

<sup>33</sup> All figures represent the state of employment as of 31 December. They also include staff members outside the establishment plan (e.g. contract agents, seconded national experts and structural service providers).

(2016). Cedefop staff numbers decreased from 121 in 2016 to 116 in 2022. Staff numbers at Eurofound remained largely the same at 110 in 2016 and 108 in 2022.

**The Agencies completed in 2018 (EU-OSHA in 2017) the 10% staff cut – a policy introduced in 2013 for decentralised agencies, applicable to permanent staff (included in the establishment plans)<sup>34</sup>.**

## 3.2. DELIVERING OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

### 3.2.1 DELIVERY OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

The Agencies largely achieved their annual programme output targets despite budgetary and staff limitations and, in the second half of the evaluation period, the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>35</sup>.

**EUROFOUND** - Eurofound exceeded 80% of its work programme delivery target throughout the evaluation period. Delivery was lower than the baseline between 2017-2019; this was linked to staff cuts of 10% in 2017, which resulted in delays of some outputs and a reallocation of priorities. Eurofound revised its work programme, adapted to remote working and completed the activities during the last months of the financial year, despite initial delays<sup>36</sup>.

**EU-OSHA** – EU-OSHA’s work programme completion rates were higher than the baseline, as well as its 90% target. Some outputs were cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic, but this did not affect the overall completion rate, which was very high in 2020 (96%).

**ETF** – since 2016, the ETF’s work programme delivery remained above its 90% target, except in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic severely impacted Agency operations due to an early lockdown in Italy and the Agency working in third countries. Most of the outputs were re-programmed for the last quarter of the year, with some of them being postponed, due to pressures on staff capacity.

**CEDEFOP** – Cedefop does not have a specific quantitative indicator to monitor the completion rate of its work programme. However, based on the supporting study’s assessment of the outputs, the Agency has fully implemented the annual work programmes. This includes 2020, when Cedefop even exceeded its 2020 work plan targets, as noted by the European Parliament’s discharge decision<sup>37</sup>.

The Agencies have carried out their activities in line with their operational objectives (see Table 2). Each Agency collects and monitors the data on the outputs produced per year but the level of detail, type of outputs and definitions vary between the Agencies (see list of each Agency’s indicators in Annex X). For a detailed analysis on the delivery of each operational objective,

<sup>34</sup> The staff target was set in the Commission Communication to programme human and financial resources for decentralised Agencies in 2014-2020 - COM(2013) 519 of 10.7.2013-.

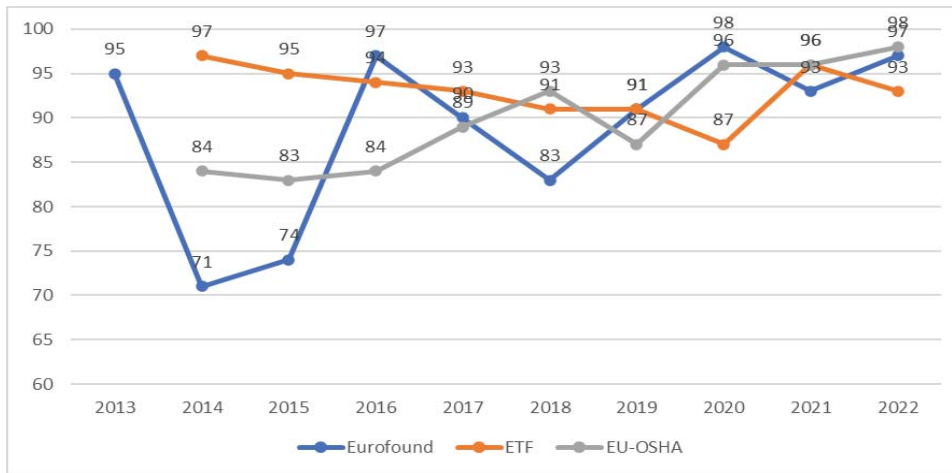
<sup>35</sup> For each Agency, COVID-19 was a highly disruptive factor, e.g. cancellation of some events and activities in 2020 involving physical presence. Eurofound’s survey fieldwork was profoundly affected, as the survey could not be carried out face-to-face. EU-OSHA ESENER outputs were also affected, as no dissemination events could be held.

<sup>36</sup> Consolidated Annual Activity Report, 2020.

<sup>37</sup> European Parliament [decision of 4 May 2022 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of Cedefop for 2020](#) (2021/2119(DEC)).

see Annex VIII and Section 4.1.1.2 of the supporting study as well as Annexes 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the supporting study on the specific situation in each Agency.

**Figure 1: Work programme delivery: Eurofound, ETF and EU-OSHA** <sup>38</sup>



Source: Consolidated annual activity reports for Eurofound, ETF and EU-OSHA 2016-2022

### 3.3. FACTORS FACILITATING/HINDERING EFFECTIVENESS

#### Facilitating factors

At a general level, the most significant internal facilitating factors contributing to the effectiveness of the Agencies' operations were: (1) flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, as a result of proactive internal measures<sup>39</sup>; and (2) tripartite representation in the three tripartite Agencies, which increased the reliability and credibility of the Agencies vis-à-vis stakeholders.

The COVID-19 pandemic could be considered as an external facilitating factor. The shift to online work not only generated efficiency savings, but also allowed the Agencies to enhance their visibility by offering information and guidance on COVID-19 related matters. As a result, audiences also became aware of the broader work that the Agencies carry out (e.g. previous Eurofound work on youth and gender)<sup>40</sup>.

For individual Agencies, internal facilitating factors include Eurofound's Network of Expert Correspondents, the level of engagement of ETF's partner countries, as well as of EU-OSHA's focal points in Member States.

#### Hindering factors

<sup>38</sup> Share of outputs delivered in the planning year versus planned outputs (%). Cedefop does not use quantitative indicators for monitoring work programme delivery.

<sup>39</sup> For example, in the case of EU-OSHA, its 'portfolio approach' gave the Agency's national-level focal points (FOPs) several optional activities in addition to their mandatory activities, which they could engage in, based on their interest and resources.

<sup>40</sup> See details of achieved impacts in the supporting study's Annexes 1-4 on individual Agencies, as well as the case studies (Annex 8).

In general, the most significant internal hindering factor was the lack of financial resources. Staff costs increased for all Agencies due to inflation adjustments, as did administrative expenditure (except for ETF). As a result, and given that the budget remained stable, the operational expenditure decreased. Confronted with the need to address new EU policy priorities, Agencies had in some cases to revise their activities in order to deliver on their work programmes.

Other internal hindering factors included lack of human resources, lack of time to prepare data and finalise outputs, and accessibility issues on outputs linked to the quality of translations.

The COVID-19 pandemic was another external hindering factor. It led to live events having to be cancelled and disrupted work, including surveys.

For individual Agencies, hindering factors included insufficient tailoring of outputs for specific target audiences (ETF, EU-OSHA), unforeseen delays with external contractors (EU-OSHA), translation issues (EU-OSHA<sup>41</sup>, ETF<sup>42</sup>) and a need to improve engagement with training (Eurofound). For the ETF, insecurity, political instability and economic volatility were also among the external factors that limited the engagement of partner countries.

## **4. EVALUATION FINDINGS**

### **4.1. TO WHAT EXTENT WAS THE INTERVENTION SUCCESSFUL AND WHY?**

The evaluation has assessed the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the work of the Agencies during the current 2017-2022 period, confirming for the three criteria the overall positive assessment given in the previous evaluation (2011-2016), though with room for improvement in some areas (see in particular Section 5.2. on lessons learnt).

#### **4.1.1 EFFECTIVENESS**

The evaluation has assessed the effectiveness of the Agencies in achieving the objectives outlined in their Founding Regulations and programming documents and as reflected in their intervention logics (see Annex VI). The evaluation assessed to the extent possible whether the Agencies successfully met their operational and specific objectives in terms of outputs and results (see Section 4.1.1.1) and produced impacts for EU policymaking or policy implementation at national level (see Section 4.1.1.2). In addition, it assessed the Agencies ability to adapt to changes and, notably, their responses to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression.

##### **4.1.1.1 ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**

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<sup>41</sup> Need to improve the quality of EU-OSHA translations by ensuring that the original EN text is of high quality.

<sup>42</sup> Language barriers prevent ETF stakeholders from taking full advantage of the resources and services provided by the Agency.

Overall, and based on the available evidence, it can be concluded that **the Agencies have achieved many of their operational and specific objectives to a high degree<sup>43</sup>. There are however opportunities for improvement in certain areas.**

**A) OUTPUTS (OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES - ACTIVITIES)**

**Overall, the Agencies largely delivered the outputs planned in their annual programming documents**, as shown in Section 3.2. They managed to do this in spite of staff and budget constraints, and in the difficult context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some delays occurred for Eurofound (mainly due to staffing issues) and EU-OSHA (due to the editing of final outputs taking longer than expected and delays in getting the deliverables from contractors), as well as for Cedefop and the ETF (mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

**Table 2: Agencies operational objectives**

<b><u>Eurofound</u></b>	Monitoring Research and data collection Communication and dissemination
<b><u>Cedefop</u></b>	Research Contribution to EU and national policies Data compilation Monitoring Support in the development of EU tools Carry out activities with other agencies/organisations Contribute to capacity building Dissemination
<b><u>ETF</u></b>	Provide information, policy analysis and advice Support capacity building and networking Monitor system-wide progress Support EU project and programming cycle in an EU external relations context Support knowledge dissemination
<b><u>EU-OSHA</u></b>	Develop foresight activities Provide OSH facts and figures Develop OSH management tools Awareness raising and communication Knowledge networking Maintain and develop strategic and operational networks

Source: *Intervention logics of the Agencies, see Annex VI*

**EUROFOUND - Eurofound successfully delivered the expected outputs for all its objectives.** The Agency performed well in carrying out research and collecting data (desk research, KPIs<sup>44</sup> and confirmed by consultations -see below stakeholders’ views on quality of

<sup>43</sup> See below assessment and additional evidence provided in: (i) Annex VIII and XII; (ii) Section 3.2 of the supporting study and Section 4.1.1. of the main report; (iii) Agency-specific reports in the supporting study (Annexes 1-4).

<sup>44</sup> See list of Eurofound KPIs in Annex X.

outputs). The core of the Agency’s work relies on its pan-European surveys,<sup>45</sup> which were delivered as planned. For instance, the 2020 European working conditions survey (EWCS) covered 37 countries, two more than the 2015 edition. Additionally, a follow-up telephone survey in 2021 assessed the impact of COVID-19 on job quality. The 2019-2020 European company survey (ECS), carried out in cooperation with Cedefop, was the first large-scale, cross-national survey introducing a ‘push-to-web’ approach<sup>46</sup>. Due to COVID-19, Eurofound adopted computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) instead of face-to-face interviews for surveys. This shift prompted the Agency to explore alternative data collection methods to save costs in the long run, without compromising the quality<sup>47</sup>.

**CEDEFOP - Cedefop successfully delivered the expected outputs for all its objectives in VET, skills and qualifications.** Cedefop performed particularly strongly on its operational objective of ‘carrying out research on topics relevant to the policy agenda’ – especially on ‘Skills anticipation and matching’- as well as on its objective of ‘Monitoring and analysing VET policy developments. Cedefop publications were frequently referenced in EU policy documents (with 524 and 449 references respectively)<sup>48</sup>. Although the overall number of publications slightly decreased during the evaluation period (compared to 2016), this was a deliberate shift from traditional to online content, enhancing accessibility through interactive tools and databases.

In terms of compiling relevant data, Cedefop made strides by developing online tools and databases<sup>49</sup>, such as Skills Forecast, the European database on apprenticeship schemes, and the European VET policy dashboard. This move aimed to enhance user interaction and accessibility. Cedefop also contributed to capacity building through events and policy learning activities, albeit to a lesser extent than in 2016, with a reduction in events starting before 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>50</sup>.

Finally, Cedefop successfully supported the development and implementation of European tools to support VET, skills and qualifications policies. It produced the expected outputs in its support of EQF, ECVET and EQAVET, and played a crucial role in the transition to the new Europass.

**ETF – the ETF successfully achieved its five operational objectives**, focusing on partner countries in the area of EU external relations. To provide information and policy analysis, the ETF produced various informative materials, including reports, policy briefings, guides and

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<sup>45</sup> European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), European Company Survey (ECS), European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS), and the Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey. The share of expenditure allocated to survey management and development has increased considerably during this evaluation period, rising from 7% of expenditure in 2017 (EUR 1.39 million) to 18% in 2022 (EUR 3.91 million).

<sup>46</sup> Where establishments were contacted by phone to identify a management and an employee respondent, who were then asked to fill out the survey questionnaire online, see:

<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/2019/european-company-survey-2019>

<sup>47</sup> Eurofound (2022), Consolidated annual activity report for 2021, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Cedefop consolidated annual activity reports 2016-2022.

<sup>49</sup> According to the 2022 user satisfaction survey, they are Cedefop’s second most appreciated outputs, after publications.

<sup>50</sup> Cedefop annual reports 2012-2014.

toolkits, offering valuable insights into human capital development in partner countries. Stakeholders assessed this ‘information and policy analysis’ objective positively (see Figure 8 in Annex VII).

ETF’s support on capacity building and networking grew significantly with an increased number of events held compared to the baseline<sup>51</sup> (a notable rise from 24 events in 2017 to 143 events in 2021). ETF stakeholders viewed its support to partner countries as largely or partially successfully, according to the 2018 Policy Delphi (partner country governments, social partners, EU Member States, institutions, international organisations)<sup>52</sup>.

The fifth round of the Torino Process (2018-2020) covered 100% of partner countries, while the sixth round (2022-2024) adopted a new approach based on two separate strands. The first strand focuses on the collection of statistical data and indicators, covering all partner countries. The second strand consists of an in-depth review (known as ‘Level 2’) which became voluntary in 2022<sup>53</sup>. Stakeholders, especially partner countries, highly valued the Torino Process for its role in facilitating policy dialogue, guiding education and training strategies, as well as evaluating ongoing reforms (see ETF's Case Study 5 in Annex 8 to the supporting study). As participating in the ‘in-depth country policy review’ has become voluntary, the ETF now focuses efforts on those countries that are motivated to participate, ensuring that ETF’s resources are used where they can have the greatest impact. However, this means that some countries may have opted out of the process, even though they would need support.

On the objective of supporting the EU project and programming cycle, the ETF has offered guidance and expertise to EU stakeholders. This includes providing input for policy dialogues with EU institutions and agencies<sup>54</sup>. Although the number of requests from EU departments has declined since 2020, the ETF has observed that the requests it receives are more substantial<sup>55</sup>.

**EU-OSHA – EU-OSHA successfully met all six operational objectives, consistently achieving timely delivery, with rates exceeding 90% of its outputs delivered on time for most activities.** The number of outputs related to facts and figures nearly tripled compared to the baseline, showcasing a significant increase in outputs related to networking knowledge. Outputs in other areas remained similar to the 2016 baseline (see Table 1 in Annex VIII).

The most relevant outputs falling under facts and figures were the European survey of enterprises on new and emerging risks (ESENER), and support with compliance for SMEs

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<sup>51</sup> Data for 2015 and 2016 show that 20 and 29 events were organised in those years, respectively - ETF consolidated annual activity reports: 2015 and 2016.

<sup>52</sup> PPMI (2018), Evaluation of the ETF Functions: Policy Delphi Results 1st round: June/July 2018. 36% (N=263) of respondents to the Policy Delphi indicated that the ETF contributed to strengthening the capacity of partner country stakeholders and policymakers ‘to a large extent’ and a further 44% indicated that the Agency contributed ‘to some extent’.

<sup>53</sup> An IAS report had found the previous structure of the TRP, which involved a review in all partner countries even though each country had different levels of readiness and VET system maturity, posed risks to the effective implementation of the initiative - IAS (2017), Audit on progress monitoring in VET through the TRP in ETF.

<sup>54</sup> e.g. work with the European Institute for Gender Equality on gender gaps in employment in 2021.

<sup>55</sup> They remained stable between 2016 and 2019 with between 105 and 116 requests, and then dropped to 86 in 2020, 50 in 2021 and 40 in 2022, mainly explained by the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

(source: KPIs from the 2021 annual activity report). The ‘tools for OSH management’ were used more widely during the current evaluation period, to enable workplaces to manage their occupational safety and health risks. Over 72 000 new risk assessments were conducted in 2022, surpassing both the target of 30 000 and the baseline)<sup>56</sup>.

To raise awareness on OSH issues, the Agency actively developed the healthy workplaces campaigns (HWC). Through these campaigns, EU-OSHA engaged with national stakeholders ranging from SMEs to larger corporations and national bodies. Awareness was raised about the risks of dangerous substances in the workplace and preventing work-related musculoskeletal disorders<sup>57</sup> (see EU-OSHA Case Study 4 in Annex 8 to the supporting study).

Finally, on its objective of maintaining and developing strategic and operational networks, EU-OSHA successfully delivered 91% (21 out of 23) of its outputs on time. However, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to the cancellation of four actions and one event<sup>58</sup>.

### **Common operational objective: conducting communication and dissemination activities**

In addition to the Agency-specific objectives, the Agencies shared the operational objective of conducting communication and dissemination activities. The degree of achievement varied between the Agencies:

**EU-OSHA’s** healthy workplaces campaigns (HWC) were successful in raising awareness and communicating on OSH issues<sup>59</sup>.

**CEDEFOP** increased its social media reach and the number of visits to its website compared to baseline (as shown in Annex VIII).

**EUROFOUND’s** communication and dissemination activities were generally appreciated (and improvements were made throughout the evaluation period). However, the level of achievement of this objective could be improved. For instance, Eurofound monitored the uptake of knowledge through the media as of 2021<sup>60</sup>, but no monitoring data were available for social media activities.

The **ETF** increased its social media use and presence throughout the evaluation period. However, despite these improvements, ETF Case Study 2 showed that the effectiveness of the ETF’s efforts was hindered by an imbalance between delivering outputs and carrying out dissemination activities<sup>61</sup>. The case study highlighted that prioritising the production of research publications over communication and communication initiatives posed a challenge to effectiveness<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> In 2016, only 13 281 new risk assessments were performed.

<sup>57</sup> For the 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 HWCs campaigns, EU-OSHA delivered 100% of its planned outputs, and 96% of its planned outputs for its 2020-2022 campaign.

<sup>58</sup> EU-OSHA (2016). Annual activity report for 2016.

<sup>59</sup> See EU-OSHA Case Study 4 in Annex 8 to the supporting study.

<sup>60</sup> This indicator (KPI 5.5) captures articles referring to Eurofound’s research, data, and analysis in recognised local, national and international media, distributed via print, radio, television and online sources.

<sup>61</sup> A 2018 Policy Delphi of key stakeholders for an external evaluation of the ETF’s functions also found mixed results of stakeholder assessment of the ETF’s communication, dissemination and networking activities.

<sup>62</sup> Explained by the fact that the incentive structure at ETF has been based on the number of publications.

## B) SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES (RESULTS)

Given the Agencies' focus on knowledge generation, results are achieved when stakeholders at both EU and national level utilise the knowledge outputs, which are of high quality. As outlined in the intervention logics of the Agencies (see Annex VI), one common expected result is that policymakers receive valuable and pertinent data from the Agencies' outputs, supporting relevant policies. Another result is that stakeholders, in general, receive relevant, timely, and high-quality information (see full list of the Agencies expected results in Table 1 of Annex XII).

Consequently, the achievement of results (meeting the Agencies' specific objectives) has been assessed based on the use of the Agencies' outputs and services, as well as their quality<sup>63</sup>. This perspective aligns with the results indicators used by the Agencies, primarily focusing on the extent of stakeholders' adoption of the Agencies' outputs. The Agencies also assess these results through regular user satisfaction surveys.

### B.1) Use of the Agencies' outputs

Based on the Agencies' KPIs<sup>64</sup> (e.g. references in EU policy documents, academic literature, social media following and download numbers), along with consultations with stakeholders and staff<sup>65</sup>, the evaluation concludes that **each of the Agencies' services and outputs have been used by their key stakeholders. There is an overall trend of increased usage compared with the previous evaluation period**. Usage by EU institutions was greater and more widespread than at national or international level (as shown in Annex VIII).

**EUROFOUND experienced a significant increase in the usage of its outputs for EU-level policymaking**, evidenced by a higher number of references in key European-level policy documents, particularly from the European Commission and the European Parliament<sup>66</sup>. This trend has been consistent since 2011-2016. The number of downloads of **Eurofound** publications from its website was higher than the 2016 baseline figure of 155 943 throughout the evaluation period, with a peak in 2020 of 188 556 pdf downloads, supported by an increasing number of social media users. However, **a stakeholder survey suggests that there is still room to increase the use of and participation in Eurofound's services and activities**. Only 49% of stakeholders (N=65) frequently used Eurofound's information, resources or services, and only 37% (N=65) participated often in the Agency's activities or events.

**The CEDEFOP stakeholder survey reported that 43% (N=174) of respondents 'often' consult or use the Agency's information**. However, one fifth of respondents (22% - 38 out of 174) declared that they seldom or never use the Agency's information resources. **Since 2020, Cedefop** downloads have exceeded the 2016 baseline (383 600). Downloads peaked at 465 000 in 2020 linked to the shift to only disseminating publications digitally.

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<sup>63</sup> See Annex XII to this SWD and Section 4.1.1., pages 47-60 of the supporting study, for a detailed analysis of the results achieved by each Agency.

<sup>64</sup> See Annex VIII for detailed figures on use of outputs.

<sup>65</sup> A clear majority of staff - 93% (N=48) at EU-OSHA, 86% (N= 51) at Eurofound, 85% (N= 45) at Cedefop and 78%(N= 51) at ETF) responded that they consider either 'to a large or moderate extent' that stakeholders take full advantage of the information, resources and services provided by the respective Agency.

<sup>66</sup> See figures in Annex VIII.

**Eurofound and Cedefop have also substantially increased usage by researchers and academia compared to the previous period** (see Table 3). Despite this positive trend, the supporting study concluded there is **room to increase the outreach of Cedefop's evidence through academia and VET providers** to ensure wider dissemination of its outputs<sup>67</sup>.

**Table 3: Number of citations of each Agency's work in academic literature**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Cedefop</b>	591	545	611	838	956	988	1 030
<b>Eurofound</b>	627	663	720	880	1 034	1 220	1 134

Source: Annual activity reports, 2016-2022

**ETF - EU-level stakeholders have continued to use ETF's services and advice**, although requests from EU departments have decreased since 2020. Regarding beneficiaries from partner countries, feedback from staff, stakeholders' surveys and public consultation suggests that the **ETF has room for improvement in disseminating its outputs**<sup>68</sup>. The ETF stakeholder survey revealed that 44% (N=91) of stakeholders use the Agency's outputs 'often' while 43% reported using them 'sometimes'. Downloads of **ETF** publications saw a dramatic decrease from 1 181 462 in 2016 to 351 219 in 2018<sup>69</sup> (see Table 4, Annex VIII).

**EU-OSHA - Stakeholders actively engaged with EU-OSHA activities and related outputs, as evidenced by various user surveys and indicators** (e.g. huge increase in downloads on corporate and campaign websites). The Agency saw a huge leap in downloads in 2019 with a peak of 2 259 137 in 2020<sup>70</sup> (compared to a low baseline of 82 558 downloads in 2016). This exceeded the target of a 5% increase in downloads per year. The evaluation survey showed that a majority of stakeholders often or sometimes participated in the Agency's activities or events (89% of respondents N=75) and consulted or used its information, resources or services (95% of respondents N=75).

**The use of the Agencies' services at Member State level is less well documented than their use by European level stakeholders**<sup>71</sup>. Nevertheless, the evaluation provides evidence of effective use by national stakeholders depending on the Agencies' different remits and activities. **Eurofound** services used by national stakeholders include its work on minimum wages. This work is continuously referred to by national wage-setting institutes, including governments, trade unions and low pay commissions<sup>72</sup>, as highlighted in the Eurofound case study on minimum wages<sup>73</sup>. **Cedefop support to national stakeholders decreased during the reporting period**. This is because direct support to Member States (e.g. by way of thematic country reviews and policy learning forums) decreased following the Agency's decision to

<sup>67</sup> Though for VET providers, lack of translations may be an obstacle.

<sup>68</sup> E.g. only 37% of ETF staff respondents (N=) agreed 'to a large extent' that stakeholders take full advantage of the Agency's services.

<sup>69</sup> Data on the number of downloads of **ETF**'s publications is only available for 2016-2018.

<sup>70</sup> This can be explained by the Agency's COVID-19 guidance documents, which have been the most downloaded and accessed publications in the Agency's history.

<sup>71</sup> Partly because the latter group are the primary stakeholders.

<sup>72</sup> See [Irish Low Pay Commission, 'Recommendations for the National Minimum Wage'](#), July 2022.

<sup>73</sup> See Annex 8 to the supporting study.

prioritise EU level policy support in the face of intense budgetary constraints<sup>74</sup>. **EU-OSHA** outputs and tools have been used intensively by national stakeholders, with outputs such as OiRA<sup>75</sup>, OSH-wiki and the healthy workplaces campaigns (HWCs) seeing increasing use and stakeholder participation compared to the 2016 baseline.

**The importance of social media channels for the visibility, uptake and use of the Agencies' outputs increased during the evaluation period.** Cedefop and the ETF showed a year-on-year growth of social media followers across all the channels used by both Agencies<sup>76</sup> (with the number of followers at least doubling across most channels during the evaluation period). The use of social media channels is particularly important for the ETF as many stakeholders in partner countries rely on information from these channels. Comparable data are not published by EU-OSHA<sup>77</sup> and Eurofound.

## **B.2) Quality of outputs and other results achievements<sup>78</sup>**

**One specific objective / expected result common to all the Agencies is to provide stakeholders with relevant, timely and high-quality information<sup>79</sup>.** The evaluation, based on various Agencies' indicators, consultation tools and case studies, concludes that during the evaluation period, the Agencies achieved this objective to a great extent. **Most of the Agencies' outputs and services have received very positive feedback and high user satisfaction,** even surpassing scores from the previous evaluation period. Table 4 highlights the most used and highest quality outputs, as explained in the below Agency assessment.

**EUROFOUND - Eurofound received increased recognition for the scientific quality of its research,** peaking at 1 220 references in peer-reviewed journals in 2021 (see KPI in Table 3). 90% (N=65) of stakeholder survey respondents rated the Eurofound research outputs as 'very or rather high quality' while 89% of the public consultation respondents (N=31) gave similar ratings. The Agency's COVID-19-related research was widely acknowledged and contributed to EU policy discussions (e.g. on telework and the right to disconnect). Stakeholder feedback highlighted Eurofound's significant contribution to understanding working and living conditions<sup>80</sup> and emphasised the consistently high quality of its surveys. A 2022 external evaluation<sup>81</sup> highlighted the success of the new monitoring convergence activity, contributing to timely and policy-relevant knowledge on EU convergence. Eurofound developed in 2018 the

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<sup>74</sup> While there were 46 outputs at the start of the evaluation period (2017), they decreased to only 5 in 2021.

<sup>75</sup> 10 of the 15 OiRA national partners made an explicit reference to the OiRA tool in their national OSH strategy or legislation.

<sup>76</sup> ETF started to use Instagram in 2018 and Cedefop started to use LinkedIn in 2021.

<sup>77</sup> EU-OSHA does not publish data on social media followers.

<sup>78</sup> See the detailed analysis of the results of all Agencies in Annex XII.

<sup>79</sup> As knowledge providing agencies, each specific objective corresponds to a particular thematic field/area of the agency work and share the common goal of 'providing high quality information/support to the EU level and other stakeholders'. Therefore, this expected 'common' result covers multiple specific objectives.

<sup>80</sup> Supporting study Eurofound stakeholder survey (n=65). Replies to open response questions include as main achievements 'the knowledge-based approach to work and labour', 'timely and objective knowledge information about the world of work in Europe'.

<sup>81</sup> ICF (2022), Evaluation of two new crosscutting activities delivered as part of the 2017-2020 programme. The digital age: opportunities and challenges for work and Employment and Monitoring convergence in the European Union.

convergeEU tool, which permitted the analysis of convergence for the full set of indicators of the Social Scoreboard<sup>82</sup> accompanying the European Pillar of Social Rights.

**However, stakeholders have been requesting more visually accessible digital content since 2020<sup>83</sup>.** While the 2022 user satisfaction survey showed high satisfaction levels (91% of Eurofound stakeholders were satisfied or very satisfied with research reports and 86% with survey information<sup>84</sup>), a majority (79%) expressed the desire for more digital content, especially data visualisation. Furthermore, consultations highlighted the need for more in-depth outputs, accompanied by additional methodological guidance, considering the extensive amount of primary data Eurofound reports on (Annex 1 to the supporting study, p.140).

The outputs that have contributed most to Eurofound's results are: (i) the three pan-European surveys; (ii) the living, working and COVID-19 e-survey; and (iii) the outputs on minimum wages (see Table 4).

The three surveys mentioned in point (i) are key for achieving results, because they underpin most of Eurofound research work, and therefore contribute to several specific objectives and results. They have, for example, contributed to the improvement of working conditions and sustainability of work, labour market functioning and inclusiveness, as well as to promoting social cohesion and convergence, e.g. social convergence indicators are drawn from the European quality of life survey (EQLS) and the European working conditions survey (EWCS), (see also the added value of Eurofound surveys in Section 4.2).

The 'Living, working and COVID-19' e-survey mentioned in point (ii) was conducted in five rounds between April 2020 and May 2022. It contributed to the result 'Key stakeholders have increased understanding of ways in which to improve quality of life, public services, and society'. The timeliness and relevance of this research has been crucial for understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; the case study on Eurofound's contribution to COVID-19 policy showed that Eurofound more than doubled its media impact thanks to the knowledge gathered from this e-survey.

Finally, Eurofound's work on minimum wage mentioned in point (iii) helped provide knowledge to improve working conditions (e.g. the annual review reports blogs 'How to ensure adequate minimum wages in an age of inflation'<sup>85</sup>) and supported the 2022 Directive on adequate minimum wages in the EU (see details in Section 4.1.1.2, and in Eurofound Case Study 3)<sup>86</sup>.

**CEDEFOP - The users' satisfaction and appreciation of Cedefop's outputs is high and has significantly increased compared to the previous evaluation period.** According to the user satisfaction surveys conducted in 2019 (N=453) and 2022 (N=486), 99% of respondents in both

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<sup>82</sup> See: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/indicators/social-scoreboard-indicators> and <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/convergence-hub/convergence-methodology>

<sup>83</sup> ICF (2021), User feedback programme 2017-2020 - capstone report, p.18.

<sup>84</sup> ICF (2023), User feedback survey 2022 - final draft report, p. 11.

<sup>85</sup> Eurofound (2022), '[How to ensure adequate minimum wages in an age of inflation](#)', Blog, June 2022.

<sup>86</sup> [Directive \(EU\) 2022/2041 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union.](#)

years found information provided by Cedefop to be reliable. In 2019, 95% (N=463) of the respondents and 96% in 2022 (N=507) indicated that Cedefop addressed their needs. This is a notable improvement from the stakeholder survey conducted for 2011-2016, where only 70-75% of respondents (N=213 in total) felt that their needs had been met by the Agency's outputs.

Furthermore, Cedefop received the highest rating among the Agencies for introducing new concepts or ideas in public policy<sup>87</sup>. Both staff (89% N=45)<sup>88</sup> and stakeholders (79% N=174) rated it as either 'very good' or 'rather good'.

Cedefop's work on monitoring and analysing VET policy developments, skills anticipation and matching, and promoting access to and attractiveness of VET, were the three most referenced and downloaded areas throughout the evaluation period (see Table 4). Its work on monitoring and analysing VET contributed to shaping the common priorities set out in the Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration<sup>89</sup>. VET policy monitoring is highly rated by stakeholders, with 72% of survey respondents rating them as very or rather high quality. The Agency's work on skills anticipation and matching was also among the most widely used and appreciated, informing EU employment strategies and wider EU policies (e.g. the EU migration network, and the testing of different scenarios in the work of DG GROW, DG ENER, and DG ENV). Finally, the outputs on promoting access to and attractiveness of VET were among the most cited (especially by international organisations) and downloaded, though less than the above-mentioned areas. These outputs contributed to the strategic area of 'Valuing VET and skills'.

Cedefop has also achieved positive results on the policy learning objective, facilitating valuable exchanges for EU and national actors. Although the overall number of meetings and events decreased over the evaluation period, the number of participants has increased each year since 2017 (from 1 159 in 2017 to 1 961 in 2021)<sup>90</sup>. In 2021, participants gave a 98% rating for the 'quality and expected impact' of events organised by Cedefop, the highest satisfaction level during the evaluation period.

**EU-OSHA** - Similar to the previous evaluation period, **most of the EU-OSHA's outputs received high user satisfaction ratings**<sup>91</sup>. The EU-OSHA's online risk assessment tools (OiRA) were particularly valued and widely used, indicating a **successful achievement of the specific objective to provide small workplaces with relevant tools for health and safety management**. More than 300 OiRA tools were available in 17 EU languages by the end of the reporting period, roughly 200 more than in 2016, covering over 30 sectors from manufacturing to education. These tools were widely used, especially by SMEs, helping them to initiate risk assessments. The healthy work campaigns (HWCs) were also widely used and valued (see Annex XII, Figure 4 on stakeholders' assessment of HWCs), and have been key to achieving

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<sup>87</sup> Indeed, 48% of stakeholders responded with 'very good' – the highest percentage across all the performance areas for the Agency, and the highest of the four Agencies in this category.

<sup>88</sup> Cedefop staff survey, n = 45.

<sup>89</sup> The Osnabrück declaration on vocational education and training is an agreed set of policy actions in VET covering 2021-2025, signed by Ministers in charge of the VET of the Member States, the EU candidate countries and the EEA countries, the European social partners and the European Commission.

<sup>90</sup> Cedefop consolidated annual activity reports 2016-2021.

<sup>91</sup> In terms of quality, results of stakeholder surveys and OPCs conducted for this evaluation showed that respondents found the quality of EU-OSHA's outputs under its six activities to be of very high or high quality.

the result of making beneficiaries and intermediaries aware of workplace risks and how to prevent them (see also Section 4.1.1.2. on generating impacts).

Other Agency outputs, including the **foresight reports on the circular economy and digitalisation have effectively contributed to the expected result of raising awareness among policymakers on new and emerging risks**, therefore helping them to inform their decisions. In particular, EU-OSHA’s foresight reports on digitalisation brought added value even in countries that were familiar with the issue, by exploring aspects that were under-researched at national level. Management Board members and focal points also found foresight exercises to have been very relevant for EU and national employers’ organisations. This is a considerable improvement compared to the baseline when the foresight studies were used less than the other outputs.

However, **focal point members emphasised the need to customise EU-OSHA outputs to the specific needs of target groups, particularly for workplaces**, which may involve creating concise infographics with key information.

**ETF** - Similar to the previous evaluation period, **the Torino Process was highly appreciated by stakeholders, especially partner countries**. The latter consider the Torino Process reports as one of the most valuable ETF outputs (see Table 5), as they are key to monitor the performance of lifelong learning policies and systems and to identify partner countries’ needs, contributing to policy dialogue. During 2019-2021 the ETF substantially exceeded its target of 50% of partner countries using the Torino Process and achieved a figure of 78% of partner countries in 2019 (see also Section A above).

The expected result of providing partner countries with relevant and timely support to modernise national qualification frameworks was also mostly achieved. The ETF consistently monitored and supported the development of national qualification frameworks (NQFs), playing a crucial role in supporting the development of the African Continental Qualifications Framework. The Agency built on its positive work in this area during the previous evaluation period.

The ETF’s work on facilitating collaboration through the creation of networks was often highlighted by stakeholders as a key area in which the Agency has achieved significant results, including three of the most used and valued ETF outputs during the evaluation period (see Table 4 below), namely: (i) the ETF’s Network of Excellence, cited by both survey respondents and interviewees as being a high-quality output and a success in terms of the number of participants involved and its contribution to vocational excellence provision; (ii) the Skills Lab Network, set up during the current period, which brings together labour market experts and researchers from different institutions and countries to share knowledge on skills anticipation and skills matching (see supporting study case study on Skills Lab); and (iii) the New Learning Network, which contributed to innovative teaching and learning.

**Table 4: Most used and highest quality outputs / themes per Agency**

	Top ranked outputs / themes
<u>Cedefop</u>	Skills anticipation and matching within the EU Monitoring and analysing VET policy developments

	Promoting access to and attractiveness of VET
<u>ETF</u>	Skills demand anticipation in partner countries Monitoring and diagnostics reports (Torino process reports, rapid education diagnostics reports) Innovative teaching and learning (New Learning Network) Vocational excellence provision models (ETF Network for Excellence)
<u>EU-OSHA</u>	OiRA Healthy workplaces campaigns
<u>Eurofound</u>	Living, working and COVID-19 The three pan-European surveys: European working conditions surveys, European quality of life Surveys, European company surveys Minimum wages

Source: supporting study, based on triangulated assessment, using several sources/indicators, including outputs that have helped to achieve results, most downloaded outputs and most highly rated outputs in the stakeholder survey / public consultation.

**The ETF also achieved positive results in other areas.** For example, the ETF’s enterprise skills development support activities were specifically highlighted in the European Parliament’s discharge report for 2020<sup>92</sup>. The report welcomed the Agency’s ‘Skills for enterprise development’ initiative, which helps enterprises respond to challenges related to COVID-19 and the digital and green transitions. In addition, the ETF’s EU external policy support met KPI targets (the ETF provided support each year to 58-62% of partner countries, against a target of 50%), and the rapid education diagnostics reports (RED) enhanced dialogue and supported EU policy for Lebanon and Kosovo (see further evidence in Section 4.1.1.2 and Annex XII).

**However, the ETF fell short of meeting its targets in two areas:** developing and implementing mechanisms to facilitate the transition to work in 50% of partner countries; and labour market and skills intelligence to inform VET and skills development policies and to support entrepreneurial learning (see Annex XII and Section 4.1.1.3. of the supporting study). The evaluation of ETF’s activities also suggested room for improvement on the relevance of the Agency’s support for capacity building among teachers and trainers, and for work-based learning (supporting study, p. 144). It also achieved **mixed results on supporting governance of human capital systems in partner countries**, with good results in Moldova, but insufficient indicators and evidence for concluding an overall assessment (see Annex XII).

One reason for the underachievement of some objectives was the limited willingness of partner countries to adopt the advice and support offered by the ETF. This challenge was identified in the previous evaluation, highlighting the need to better tailor the ETF support to the needs and policy cycle of partner countries.

#### 4.1.1.2. GENERATING IMPACTS

<sup>92</sup> European Parliament (2022), Discharge 2020: European Training Foundation.

During the evaluation period, **the Agencies directly contributed to EU policymaking in the areas relevant to their mandates, confirming the positive assessment on impacts achievement from the previous evaluation.**

The Agencies also supported **the implementation of EU policies at national level** (e.g. EU-OSHA on OSH policies - see Box 4 - CEDEFOP on upskilling and recognition of qualifications, EUROFOUND on minimum wage and ETF on supporting the implementation of EU external policies in partner countries).

The Agencies' work has also led to specific impacts, as outlined in their respective intervention logics<sup>93</sup>, along with unexpected impacts, primarily driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, **the Agencies contributed to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) during the evaluation period** by supporting EU policymaking in employment, social inclusion and education. In particular, Eurofound contributed to SDG8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG10 (reduced inequalities); CEDEFOP and the ETF to SDG4 (quality education) and SDG10 (reduced inequalities); and EU-OSHA to SDG3 (good health and well-being) and SDG8 (decent work and economic growth).

**EUROFOUND** - Similar to the previous evaluation period, **Eurofound continued to make a direct impact, enhancing policymaking capacity in various EU policy areas.** Notably, Eurofound played a significant role in areas such as minimum wage (see Box 1), and emerging forms of work. Through its research on digitalisation and new, non-standard employment forms, including the platform economy, Eurofound strengthened the ability of the European Commission and other EU bodies to draw up effective employment policies. A concrete example is Eurofound's contribution to platform work, which has underpinned the proposed Directive on improving working conditions in platform work<sup>94</sup>.

Eurofound's activities also contributed to the lasting impact of improving dialogue between management and labour<sup>95</sup>. Notably, the 2022 Tripartite Exchange Seminar<sup>96</sup> positively influenced social partners' capacity and improved social dialogue. Eurofound's work in this area has indirectly impacted areas such as the gender pay gap and the production of EU-wide comparative information on COVID-19. The impact was substantial, fostering frequent communication with trade union stakeholders. However, **the case study found that these impacts could be further enhanced if Eurofound's resources were available in more languages.**

Finally, Eurofound has significantly contributed to improving the capacity to address current and emerging challenges for enhancing living and working conditions. The Agency's noteworthy contributions include an increased understanding of policy topics related to COVID-19 (see Eurofound Case Study 1 in Annex 8). This understanding encompasses the

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<sup>93</sup> See Table 22 in the supporting study.

<sup>94</sup> See: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=24992&langId=en>.

<sup>95</sup> Case Study 5 in Annex 8 details Eurofound's work in communicating knowledge and organising debate with its tripartite stakeholders.

<sup>96</sup> Organised in 2022, it helped to build social partner and national government capacity and to promote social dialogue through exchanges on current policies and practices. It was followed up by five Teams groups, which have enabled relevant parties to keep exchanging and building upon existing dialogue.

effects on remote working, platform work, the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 crisis on lower paid and minimum wage workers, and the identification of groups significantly affected (see below on overall unexpected impacts and on adaptation to COVID-19 challenges). As it has done every year since 2015, Eurofound published its ‘Minimum wages in 2020: Annual review’, which was mentioned in 15 Commission key policy documents related to the initiative on fair minimum wages for workers in the EU.

**Box 1: Eurofound’s contribution to minimum wage policy (case study)<sup>97</sup>**

Eurofound has significantly influenced EU employment policies, including the 2022 Directive on adequate minimum wages in the EU. This impact is attributed to its production of country reports on minimum wage settings and adequacy, coupled with its active participation in meetings and social partner hearings organised by DG EMPL and other European stakeholders. Eurofound's expertise has directly contributed to shaping these policies.

Moreover, Eurofound’s influence extends to the national level, where its outputs and data on minimum wages are referenced. For instance, discussions on the potential introduction of a national statutory minimum wage in Italy have drawn upon Eurofound's information. In addition, national stakeholders, such as the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, have sought Eurofound's expertise on minimum wage.

**CEDEFOP - Cedefop successfully achieved its expected direct impacts by providing knowledge, evidence and data, and facilitating peer exchanges.** This support was instrumental in helping both EU and national policymakers to develop or enhance policies and systems on VET, skills and qualifications. At EU level, Cedefop actively participated in shaping EU VET policies by giving presentations at various EU-level forums (see Box 2). Notably, Cedefop significantly contributed to enhancing transparency and recognition of qualifications (see Cedefop Case Study 3 in Annex 8 to the supporting study). Its work in the area contributed to advancing the use of the European Qualification Framework (EQF), by continuously comparing and analysing its implementation across the EU at national and sectoral level.

Cedefop achieved significant impact by aligning with the priorities of the 2019-2024 Commission, notably the 2020 renewed Skills Agenda<sup>98</sup> and the first-ever Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience. This contribution was acknowledged by the European Parliament in its 2022 discharge report<sup>99</sup>. Cedefop also provided valuable input to the Osnabrück Declaration.

The Agency’s analytical framework on apprenticeships informed the 2018 Council Recommendation on a European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships. Cedefop co-organised policy learning forums on upskilling and reskilling of low-skilled adults, together with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). The European Parliament

<sup>97</sup> See Eurofound Case Study 3 in Annex 8 to the supporting study.

<sup>98</sup> European Commission (2020) European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.

<sup>99</sup> European Parliament (2022), Discharge report for 2020.

recognised Cedefop's expertise and potential, suggesting that further reference be made to it when preparing guidelines for foresight-based policy analysis<sup>100</sup>.

At national level, Cedefop made an impact by conducting country-focused thematic reviews and contributing to national events. For instance, in 2021, thematic reviews and peer learning activities were organised on skills governance in Slovenia and on upskilling pathways in France and Italy. Cedefop also provided support to Slovenia's Labour Ministry in preparing a national skills forecast and developing a career platform<sup>101</sup>.

**Box 2: Cedefop's impact on VET policy at EU level (case study)<sup>102</sup>**

Cedefop has made a significant contribution to the renewed VET policy monitoring cycle. This is due to the Agency taking an active role in shaping EU policies by giving presentations at the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) and to the Directors-General for Vocational Training (DGVT) (in cooperation with the ETF). Cedefop also contributed to the development and implementation of the new monitoring framework on VET policy.

**ETF** - Evidence shows that the **ETF's work on supporting human capital development reforms in partner countries has had a positive impact in at least three areas listed in its intervention logic**: (i) adapting VET governance to changing skills demands; (ii) enhancing labour market policies and practices; and (iii) contributing to EU external relations policy through advice. In particular:

- ETF actions effectively contributed, with concrete inputs, to the development of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) / regional qualifications frameworks (RQFs) in at least nine countries and two regions of Africa.
- The ETF designed new/upgraded tools for analysing skills needs, benefiting stakeholders in partner countries (see Box 3).
- Since 2013, the ETF collaborated with Türkiye on a key priority for the country: a reform to set up centres for recognition of prior learning. The ETF partnered with EU delegations, the national qualifications agency and relevant sectoral committees. As a result, 25 centres for VET recognition have been set up in the country.

**Box 3: ETF support on improving active labour market policies and practices (case study)<sup>103</sup>**

The ETF has designed new/upgraded methodological tools to analyse skills needs, benefiting stakeholders in partner countries. The current approach involves gathering data using regional knowledge by building regional research networks involving EU experts (e.g. Skills Lab) and by conducting in-depth analysis (e.g. country reports in selected sectors). The study revealed that the in-depth approach, focusing on specific sectoral studies in fewer countries, based on their unique needs, produces detailed and granular data. These data are valuable for both partner countries and the European

<sup>100</sup> Cedefop (2022), [Consolidated annual activity report for 2021](#), p.13.

<sup>101</sup> Cedefop annual report for 2021.

<sup>102</sup> See Cedefop Case Study 2 in Annex 8 for details.

<sup>103</sup> See ETF Case Study 2 in Annex 8

Union. The impact depends on the extent to which partner countries are involved with their national stakeholders, and provide inputs and insights on changing skills needs.

**EU-OSHA** – Overall, EU-OSHA has achieved its expected direct impacts, contributing to EU OSH legislation, Member State policies, as well as initiatives by social partner and other OSH stakeholders. This contribution has helped these entities anticipate and manage change, prevent workplace accidents and increases readiness for future health crises.

- On contributing to OSH legislation and strategies, EU-OSHA significantly contributed to the EU’s strategic frameworks on health and safety at work, collaborating extensively with the Commission. The Agency’s work is cited in the 2014-2020 strategic framework, particularly its work in supporting SMEs, including through the OiRA tool<sup>104</sup>. EU-OSHA’s healthy workplace campaigns influenced legislation and strategies, such as the European Commission’s proposals on carcinogens (see Box 4 below).
- EU-OSHA supported stakeholders in preventing workplace accidents and illnesses, and increased readiness for potential future health crises. For instance, the OiRA tool for COVID-19, introduced in June 2020, helped with COVID-19 risk management. The tool was actively promoted in Belgium<sup>105</sup> and France<sup>106</sup> among other Member States. In France it provided 3 797 risk assessments in just over 2 months. It is, however, difficult to assess the actual use of tools such as OiRA in companies, and its longer-term impacts (e.g. whether companies acted on the information from OiRA and applied changes to prevent workplace accidents and illnesses), as the use of the tools is anonymous<sup>107</sup>.
- In terms of enabling anticipation and management of change, EU-OSHA successfully provided foresight information on OSH. Most respondents across the three consultations (staff, stakeholders and the broader public) responded that the Agency was successful in delivering foresight information either to a large extent or to a moderate extent during the evaluation period<sup>108</sup>.

**Box 4: EU-OSHA’s impact on contributing to preventing workplace accidents (case study)<sup>109</sup>**

Two of EU-OSHA’s healthy workplaces campaigns (HWCs) demonstrate the Agency’s contribution to policy on preventing workplace accidents particularly well: ‘2018-2019: Healthy workplaces manage dangerous substances’ and ‘2020-2022: Healthy workplaces lighten the load’. These HWCs allowed EU-OSHA to engage with stakeholders at national level, from SMEs to larger corporations and national bodies. They raised awareness about dangerous substances in the workplace, their associated risks, and

<sup>104</sup> European Commission (2014), Communication on an EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020, Brussels 06/06/2014, COM(2014) 332 final, p. 14.

<sup>105</sup> See: <https://www.beswic.be/nl/in-de-praktijk/nieuwe-oira-tool-helpt-bij-covid-19-risicobeheer>

<sup>106</sup> In France, the carrying out of risk assessments was associated with access to a grant scheme for micro and small enterprises (MSEs).

<sup>107</sup> Ipsos (2020), ‘Mid-Term evaluation of the OiRA activity - Final Report’, p.39.

<sup>108</sup> 96% of staff survey respondents (n=48), 95% of stakeholder survey respondents (n=75), and 93% of public consultation respondents (n=41). It is nevertheless worth noting that a sizeable minority of stakeholders found that the Agency was successful in delivering foresight information on OSH to a ‘moderate extent’.

<sup>109</sup> See EU-OSHA Case Study 4 in Annex 8 to the supporting study.

methods to prevent work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). The ‘dangerous substances’ campaign coincided with the revision of EU directives on dangerous substances and carcinogens and mutagens and helped their transposition and implementation at national level. The campaigns’ impact has had a lasting effect, as some Member States, like Finland and Cyprus, have chosen to continue to address the topics even after the campaigns ended<sup>110</sup>.

#### **4.1.1.3. UNEXPECTED IMPACTS**

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the Agencies’ outputs and activities, with the specific impact depending on the mandate and way of working of each Agency. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the Agencies’ outputs and activities – impacts differentiated according to their mandates–, and their way of working. For all agencies, COVID-19 was a highly disruptive factor, e.g. cancellation of some events and activities in 2020 involving physical presence. Eurofound’s survey fieldwork was profoundly affected, as it could not be carried out face-to-face, and the EU OSHA ESENER outputs, as no dissemination events could be held. The number of events organised by Cedefop reduced by around half in 2020 and 2021. The pandemic also affected the ETF’s Partner Countries ability to engage in some activities that were planned in 2020 with some of them having to be postponed to the following year.

However, **these changes also led to several positive outcomes and unexpected effects.** The transition to online work not only resulted in cost-savings but also allowed the Agencies to increase their visibility by providing information and guidance on COVID-related issues, expanding their audience.

For example, Eurofound’s work on remote and platform work fed into policy discussions on COVID-19, particularly its findings on youth and gender<sup>111</sup>. This unexpected event led to higher engagement, measured through policy references, media coverage, academic citations and downloads, showing the increased interest in their expertise on gender and youth<sup>112</sup>.

Other broader achievements and unexpected impacts included EU-OSHA’s publications reaching a wider audience, positive impacts from the ETF’s work related to Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, and heightened visibility for Cedefop’s work due to its activities related to Ukraine (see below).

#### **Agencies’ adaptation to changes, COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s war of aggression**

During the 2017-2022 evaluation period, the EU was faced with new challenges, alongside its ongoing long-term issues<sup>113</sup>. Overall, the Agencies adjusted their activities and outputs responding to: (a) changes in EU policies, including the political priorities of the 2019-2024 Commission, focusing more on green and digital transitions policies (see Tables 4 and 5 in

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<sup>110</sup> Ipsos (2020), ‘Evaluation of the Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2018-2019’, p.41.

<sup>111</sup> As Eurofound highlighted through its work that women and young people were disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

<sup>112</sup> Eurofound (2020), Consolidated annual activity report for 2020, p. 7.

<sup>113</sup> From 2011 to 2016, the previous evaluation identified major socio-economic challenges (post-crisis recovery, immigration crisis), and long-term developments (ageing workforce, changing working patterns, new forms of employment) to which the Agencies needed to adapt to generate evidence for policymaking.

Annex VII); and (b) the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

**A) Regarding the adjustment to EU policy priorities**, such as digitalisation and the European Green Deal, the Agencies adapted their activities, within their mandates, and worked on addressing these megatrends during the evaluation period. This involved realigning work programmes and creating specific outputs on these topics such as publications, studies, surveys and collaborative projects (see Table 6 in Annex VII)<sup>114</sup>. The Agencies also revised their environmental policies to align with EU priorities around climate change. The evaluation identified a need to improve dissemination of outputs related to these topics, to ensure that stakeholders are well-informed of the Agencies' efforts in these areas.

On the **European Green Deal** in particular, **Eurofound** published a range of reports on sustainability and related social challenges<sup>115</sup> in addition to a pilot project proposed by the European Parliament on the [Future of Manufacturing in Europe](#). **Eurofound** and **EU-OSHA** are active partners in the EU Climate and Health Observatory. This collaboration enhances their ability to address the intersecting challenges of climate change and health, providing comprehensive data, analysis, and tools to stakeholders across Europe. Their work within the Observatory focuses on assessing and mitigating the impacts of climate change on working and living conditions, thereby contributing to more resilient and adaptive occupational and public health policies, which monitors and evaluates the impacts of climate change on public health. **Cedefop** produced outputs analysing the impact of the green transition on jobs and skills across sectors and occupations, united under the Cedefop Green Observatory initiative. Publications<sup>116</sup> included the [sectoral skills foresight](#), which focused on occupational profiles for the green transition of smart and green cities, waste management, agri-food and circular economy, and [the green employment and skills transformation report](#) (2021), which assessed the effects of the European Green Deal on different sectors and identified opportunities for upskilling and reskilling.

**The ETF** carried out a significant amount of work on green skills, including: (i) pilot reviews in eight countries<sup>117</sup> in sectors such as agri-tech, agri-food, automotive and energy; (ii) the [GRETA initiative](#)<sup>118</sup> to support the green transition through peer learning; and (iii) the annual ETF Green Skills Award that recognises successful efforts in creating circular and carbon-neutral economies (see ETF Case Study 4). Finally, **EU-OSHA** produced a growing number of thematic publications on green jobs, including [foresight studies aimed at anticipating OSH challenges](#) relating to green jobs and the circular economy, and the 'heat at work' guidance for workplaces.

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<sup>114</sup> See also the detailed analysis in Section 4.1.1 of the supporting study.

<sup>115</sup> For example: Eurofound and the European Environment Agency (2021), [Exploring the social challenges of low-carbon energy policies in Europe](#), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg; Eurofound (2022), EU-ANSA mapping report: [Socioeconomic aspects of sustainable development](#), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

<sup>116</sup> A total of 11 publications were produced during the evaluation period, Cedefop (2022), [Consolidated annual activity report for 2021](#), p.10.

<sup>117</sup> Algeria, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Morocco, North Macedonia, Serbia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

<sup>118</sup> GRETA (greening responses to excellence through thematic actions) is an ETF initiative supporting the greening of vocational education and training (VET) as a response to the green and digital transitions.

**B) The COVID-19 pandemic** significantly influenced the latter part of the evaluation period. All Agencies swiftly adapted to the challenges posed by COVID-19, both in terms of internal processes and thematic focus. They produced knowledge and dissemination tools to address COVID-19 challenges in line with their mandates. For instance, EU-OSHA and Eurofound responded promptly to provide advice on occupational health and safety, and support for living and working conditions, respectively. Cedefop and the ETF also quickly adapted their activities to assist stakeholders in facing the challenges brought about by the pandemic.

**EUROFOUND** adjusted its work on ‘living and working conditions’, by introducing two new tools for monitoring and data collection: the COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch database and the ‘living, working and COVID-19’ e-survey<sup>119</sup>. The e-survey was particularly helpful in assessing the impact of the pandemic on living and working conditions.

The EU PolicyWatch tool provided valuable information to the European Commission and European Parliament by showcasing initiatives responding to crises. This resulted in Eurofound being one of the first organisations to provide insights into the pandemic’s effects<sup>120</sup>. Since then, Eurofound has produced 145 publications related to COVID-19<sup>121</sup>, which were highly effective and widely downloaded<sup>122</sup>.

**Table 4: Agencies’ responses to COVID-19**

Agency	Main responses
<u>Eurofound</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produced two key data collection tools in 2020 to monitor the impact of the pandemic. It continued to update these tools in 2021 and 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch database; and</li> <li>the Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Produced a joint European company survey with <u>Cedefop</u> to explore the impact of the pandemic in companies in the EU-27.</li> <li>There were 25 216 downloads of publications on the subject of COVID-19 in 2021.</li> </ul>
<u>Cedefop</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information flyer ‘Rising to the Coronavirus challenge’, which informed stakeholders about COVID-19’s impact on the labour market, skills and VET.</li> <li>Cooperation with <u>Eurofound</u> to design a survey to gather information on how organisations coped with the consequences of the pandemic, as a follow-up to the European company survey.</li> <li>Led and coordinated an international survey on career guidance policy and practice during the pandemic, which resulted from the collaboration of an inter-agency working group with representatives of UNESCO, ILO, OECD, the European Commission and the <u>ETF</u>.</li> </ul>
<u>EU-OSHA</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a COVID-19 OiRA tool.</li> </ul>

<sup>119</sup> It entered its fifth round in 2022 and is now also assessing the effects of the war in Ukraine, again demonstrating the Agency’s ability to refocus its attention on areas where research is most needed.

<sup>120</sup> Eurofound (2020), Consolidated annual activity report for 2020, p. 1, p. 4.

<sup>121</sup> Compared to 122 publications on digitalisation, on which Eurofound has been working since 2012.

<sup>122</sup> 25 216 downloads of publications in 2021. The next highest number of downloads was 13 073 on the topic of working conditions and sustainable work.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a webpage, ‘COVID-19: Resources for the workplace’, which contained 20 resources developed in 2021<sup>123</sup>, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ two guides on long COVID for managers and workers,</li> <li>○ OSH-Wiki articles on COVID-19,</li> <li>○ awareness-raising tools such as videos and factsheets.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<u>ETF</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up a system for monitoring the impact of the pandemic on partner countries’ education and training systems<sup>124</sup>.</li> <li>• Adaptation of the #LearningConnects campaign to offer further support during the pandemic through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ organisation of webinars and activities,</li> <li>○ publication of news articles and reports on good practices identified across partner countries<sup>125</sup>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Adapted its activities in partner countries following the pandemic to take a flexible approach to address their more immediate needs<sup>126</sup>.</li> </ul>

The evaluation study and Case Study 1 confirmed that Eurofound responded rapidly and effectively to the challenge posed by COVID-19. Stakeholder interviews and staff surveys<sup>127</sup> indicated that Eurofound’s response to the crisis was effective, timely and impactful. Eurofound has largely aligned its research areas and key outputs with the European Commission’s six strategic priorities for 2019-2024<sup>128</sup>, making significant contributions.

**EU-OSHA** - As detailed in EU-OSHA Case Study 1<sup>129</sup>, the pandemic provided an opportunity for the Agency to significantly contribute to an increased focus on OSH issues, both in terms of practical needs and in policy debates. The Agency responded promptly by offering various tools to manage the pandemic in European workplaces<sup>130</sup>. These tools included guidance for workplaces, a dedicated webpage (‘COVID-19: Resources for the workplace’), and 20 resources developed in 2021<sup>131</sup>, such as EU guidance documents, OSH-Wiki articles, and awareness-raising materials<sup>132</sup>. In addition, the Agency developed the OiRA risk assessment tool for COVID-19 and made it available to national partners in June 2020<sup>133</sup>.

The **ETF** carried out several activities to address the urgent needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, it set up a monitoring system to track the pandemic’s impact on education

<sup>123</sup> European Commission (2021), [EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027](#).

<sup>124</sup> ETF (2020), Single Programming Document 2021 – 2023: Work Programme 2021, GB/20/DEC/011, p. 33.

<sup>125</sup> For example, see: ETF (2020), LearningConnects – *What can Turin teach us?: Highlights from the City of Turin on dealing with learning under lockdown due to the COVID-19 crisis*, [online].

<sup>126</sup> ETF (2021), Consolidated annual activity report for 2020, GB/21/DEC/003, p. 24.

<sup>127</sup> 72% of stakeholder survey respondents (N=65) and 92% (N=51) of staff survey respondents viewed Eurofound’s response to the COVID-19 crisis as effective ‘to a large extent’.

<sup>128</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024_en)

<sup>129</sup> See Annex 8 to the supporting study.

<sup>130</sup> The Agency’s AAR in 2020 reported 30 COVID-19-related actions, delivered mainly in 2020 and 2021.

<sup>131</sup> European Commission (2021), [EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027 Occupational safety and health in a changing world of work](#).

<sup>132</sup> EU-OSHA (2021), [Annual activity report for 2020](#), pp.18-19: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/annual-activity-report-2020-0>

<sup>133</sup> Ipsos (2020), *Mid-Term evaluation of the OiRA activity* - final report, p.37.

and training systems in partner countries, along with measures to mitigate negative effects<sup>134</sup>. The findings were shared through reports for partner countries and Commission departments<sup>135</sup> as well as public webinars. The #LearningConnects campaign provided further support by organising webinars and other activities, and publishing articles and reports on good practice in partner countries. The ETF stepped up its collaboration with other Agencies and international organisations, focusing on skills, youth and career guidance<sup>136</sup>.

**CEDEFOP** collaborated with Eurofound on a survey to gather information from organisations on how they were coping with the pandemic and organised a seminar with Members of the European Parliament on post-pandemic employment, skills and social policies. Cedefop also led an international survey on career guidance policy and practice during the pandemic, in collaboration with an inter-Agency working group including representatives of UNESCO, ILO, OECD, the European Commission and the ETF. It also produced products and resources informing stakeholders about COVID-19's impact on the labour market, skills and VET, and specifically, the tourism sector<sup>137</sup>. A user satisfaction survey run by Cedefop in 2022 revealed that approximately 90% of users were highly satisfied with the Agency's COVID-19 outputs, finding them clear, sound, attractive, and very useful for understanding the pandemic's impact on VET, skills and qualifications<sup>138</sup>.

**Joint outputs** - In addition to their individual actions, the Agencies cooperated on joint outputs and activities to address the cross-cutting challenge of COVID-19<sup>139</sup>. These included: (i) a joint European company survey run by Eurofound with Cedefop, exploring the impact of the pandemic on companies in the EU-27; (ii) an e-survey by Eurofound on 'Living, working and COVID-19', distributed by the ETF to its partner countries; and (iii) collaboration between Eurofound and EU-OSHA, such as on organising discussions at the European Parliament's EMPL Committee on the COVID-19 impacts, and the participation of Eurofound in EU-OSHA's psychosocial risk assessment.

**Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine** also meant that the Agencies needed to respond and adapt their activities to varying degrees, depending on their mandates, over the course of 2022. The situation in Ukraine was most relevant for the ETF; it was of intermediate relevance for Eurofound and Cedefop and of least relevance for EU-OSHA. This is reflected in the varying intensity of the Agencies' reactions, and in the responses to the staff and stakeholder surveys.

**ETF** - For the **ETF**, Ukraine has long been a partner country, allowing the Agency to provide tailored support. The ETF's range of activities in this area is therefore much greater than that of the other three Agencies. Stakeholders largely perceived the ETF as responsive<sup>140</sup>. The

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<sup>134</sup> ETF (2020), Single programming document 2021-2023: Work programme 2021, GB/20/DEC/011, p. 33.

<sup>135</sup> ETF (2021), Consolidated annual activity report for 2020, GB/21/DEC/003, p. 6-7.

<sup>136</sup> Such as UNICEF, UNIDO, EBRD, CEDEFOP and ILO.

<sup>137</sup> Cedefop (2021), [Consolidated annual activity report for 2020](#), p.16.

<sup>138</sup> PPMI (2022), User satisfaction survey 2022, p.8.

<sup>139</sup> See cross-cutting Case Study 2.

<sup>140</sup> On the split between Management Board (MB) and non-MB members, 80% (N=5) of MB members judged that the ETF was responsive to a large or moderate extent, compared with 39% of non-MB (N= 80) members.

Agency's initiative in monitoring and responding to the Ukrainian crisis was also highlighted in the 2021 European Parliament discharge report on the ETF's activities<sup>141</sup>.

The ETF's initiatives included work on the recognition of qualifications to help Ukrainian refugees enter the workforce, through the report 'Comparing Qualifications Frameworks for Inclusion: a Ukrainian case study'<sup>142</sup>. In addition, in collaboration with Eurofound, the ETF published a report in 2022 that provides an assessment of the impact of Russia's invasion on the economy and education<sup>143</sup>. In addition to other outputs and resources<sup>144</sup>, the ETF carried out two key initiatives to support the country in setting up a new education paradigm: the UA Re-Emerge(ncy) programme, focused on vocational e-learning, reskilling and upskilling courses<sup>145</sup>, and the Ukrainian Resource Hub: to provide wide education and work information for both Ukraine and EU countries hosting Ukrainian refugees, including schools, universities and employers<sup>146</sup>.

**CEDEFOP** – For Cedefop, the Ukrainian crisis has been of more moderate relevance. The Agency focused on supporting displaced Ukrainian students in VET institutions of the host countries, providing guidance to teachers and trainers involved in their reception and learning pathways<sup>147</sup> (e.g. Using ReferNet 2022 national outputs, Cedefop analysed Member States' national policies to support the integration of Ukrainian refugees into VET)<sup>148</sup>.

**EUROFOUND**, for which the Ukrainian crisis was less relevant than the COVID-19 pandemic, had fewer research outputs on Ukraine. Survey responses indicated a lower perception of Eurofound's effectiveness in responding to the Ukraine crisis compared to COVID-19 (see Annex 13 to the supporting study).

#### 4.1.2. EFFICIENCY

**The available evidence indicates that the four Agencies were cost-effective during the evaluation period.** The four Agencies have fully implemented their budgets and delivered to a large extent the planned outputs set out in their annual programming documents, indicating high operational efficiency (see Sections 3.1.1 and 3.2). They managed to lower costs through various measures while maintaining the quality of their outputs. The cost-effectiveness analysis of the Agencies' key activities concluded that, for most of them, there was no scope to reduce costs without compromising quality (see Annex XI)<sup>149</sup>.

There are differences in the annual expenditure among the four Agencies as well as between the Agencies and those decentralised agencies used as benchmarks. This includes differences

<sup>141</sup> European Parliament (2023), draft report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Training Foundation for the financial year 2021, p. 8.

<sup>142</sup> ETF (2023), [Comparing qualifications frameworks for inclusion: A Ukrainian case study](#).

<sup>143</sup> ETF and Eurofound (2022), Working life in Ukraine.

<sup>144</sup> For example, see: ETF (2022), [Education in a time of war](#).

<sup>145</sup> ETF (2022), [UA Re-Emerge\(ncy\): e-learning and skills development to rebuild Ukraine](#).

<sup>146</sup> ETF(2022), [Education and work information for Ukrainians and EU countries](#).

<sup>147</sup> Cedefop (2022), [Skills comparison between Ukraine and the EU-27](#).

<sup>148</sup> Cedefop (2022), [Making VET inclusive for Ukrainian refugee students](#).

<sup>149</sup> See also supporting study in Annex 6.

in the share of expenditure allocated to administrative and operational activities. However, these differences are based on reasonable factors and do not indicate any specific or obvious inefficiencies.

The Agencies have taken action to improve their cost-effectiveness over the evaluation period. Key examples include:

- cost-saving measures, e.g. joint procurement with other agencies (the agencies share information on upcoming procurements through the EU Agencies Network (EUAN));
- sharing services (e.g. the ETF and EU-OSHA now share accounting services);
- sharing costs related to research activities (e.g. Eurofound's preparation of the fourth European company survey was completed in collaboration with Cedefop);
- investing in actions that, while increasing short-term costs, should ensure long-term savings (e.g. increasing the energy efficiency of offices, disseminating outputs in digital formats rather than physical formats).

These examples are described in detail below. See also Table 3 in Annex VII.

The evaluation also examined how the Agencies responded to audit reports. It found that the Agencies were highly responsive in putting audit recommendations (both by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA)) into practice and transparently publishing follow-up to audit recommendations in consolidated annual activity reports of audit recommendation implementation.

Stakeholders perceived the four Agencies' operations to be cost-effective although the evaluation stakeholder survey showed differences between the main stakeholder groups. Members of the Agencies' management or governing boards (MBs) were far more positive than other stakeholders. Across all four Agencies, 83% or more of MB members rated the cost-effectiveness of the Agencies' operations as either high or medium, compared to 61% of other Eurofound stakeholders, 57% of other EU-OSHA stakeholders, 49% of other ETF stakeholders and 46% of other Cedefop stakeholders. The percentage of survey respondents rating the cost-effectiveness as low was very low across all four Agencies, at 6% or less (see Figure 12 in Annex VII).

**However, the interviews, survey responses, consultations and analysis of expenditure data identified some key areas where the Agencies' cost-effectiveness could be further improved**, in particular staff resources, inter-agency cooperation, procurement and contracting procedures (see below).

The evaluation analysed the efficiency of the Agencies in terms of: (i) balance of operational and administrative expenditure (and staff); (ii) staff resources and workload; (iii) cost-effectiveness of key activities; (iv) internal monitoring and reporting mechanisms and potential for simplification and administrative burden reduction; and (v) the efficiency of governance structures. The following sections provide an overview of the main evidence by area.

#### **4.1.2.1 BALANCE OF OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE**

A key factor contributing to cost-effectiveness is the balance between the Agencies' 'front-line' operational activities and their staff and administrative costs. Although administrative roles are essential to an agency's performance, these should be streamlined to maximise the proportion

of expenditure on operational activities. To assess the balance of administrative, staff and operational expenditure<sup>150</sup>, the four Agencies were benchmarked against other decentralised agencies working in related policy areas: the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and the European Labour Authority (ELA)<sup>151</sup>.

Compared to the previous evaluation period, the **four Agencies reported increases in staff costs** (and their share in total budget) between 2016 and 2022 (see Figure 2). Rather than being driven by increases in staff numbers (see Section 3.1 and Annex VII), these increases were due to high inflation rates and corresponding wage adjustments through the correction of the country coefficients<sup>152</sup> (e.g. Eurofound, headquartered in Dublin, saw its country coefficient rise from 118.3 in 2016 to 136.9 in 2022). Among the four Agencies, the ETF had the smallest increase in the share of staff costs to total expenditure (4 pps.) and EU-OSHA had the largest (9 pps.), although it began with the lowest share in 2016.

The increase in staff costs, coupled with relatively stable budgets (which are both factors out of the Agencies' control), led to **decreases in the share of expenditure devoted to operational activities** when comparing 2022 to 2016, the baseline year. This suggests that higher staff costs, mostly driven by the country correction coefficients, limited the Agencies' ability to allocate financial resources to the operational activities that are necessary to fulfil their mandates. Eurofound saw the largest decrease in the share of operational expenditure to the total budget (9 pps.), while the ETF saw the lowest (3 pps.).

The **shares of expenditure devoted to administrative costs saw smaller fluctuations**. When benchmarked with similar agencies, the four Agencies showed generally similar or lower shares of administrative expenditure, which was already the case in the previous evaluation period. Three of the four Agencies experienced slight increases from 2016 to 2022: Eurofound (following a large decrease in the previous period), EU-OSHA<sup>153</sup> (remaining substantially below the 2013 value when the share of administrative costs peaked at 12%) and Cedefop (mainly due to increased investment in its building's digital infrastructure and energy efficiency). The ETF's administrative expenditure share decreased, continuing the downward trend since 2013<sup>154</sup>.

Although the share of administrative expenditure has only slightly increased in the current period, it is expected to grow in the coming years as the Agencies invest in energy efficiency to achieve the net-zero target. This will put even more pressure on the Agencies' operational budgets (if total budgets remain stable) but does not relate to any specific or obvious inefficiencies on their part.

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<sup>150</sup> Following the Agencies' expenditure classification (Title 1: Staff; Title 2 Administrative; Title 3 Operational).

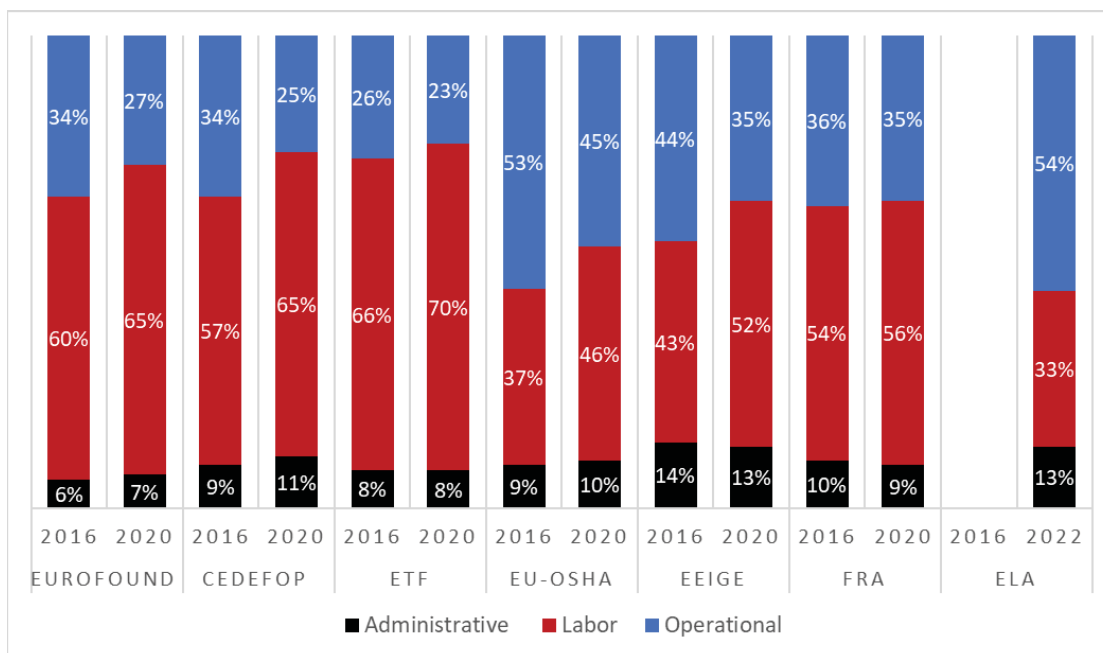
<sup>151</sup> This is despite the limits of such a comparison, given the different remits, objectives and activities of each agency. The ELA was chosen as it is the fifth agency working under the remit of DG EMPL. The ELA has only been running since 2020, so comparisons are only possible for 2020-2022 and need to be treated with additional caution.

<sup>152</sup> Salaries in the four Agencies are adjusted annually in line with inflation and purchasing power in EU countries by applying a coefficient based on the cost of living in the host country, compared with Brussels.

<sup>153</sup> EU-OSHA explained the rise in its administrative costs in 2022 resulted from expenditure on office supplies and maintenance to support the hybrid way of working – see EU-OSHA (2022). [Consolidated Annual Activity Report \(2022\)](#).

<sup>154</sup> When the share of administrative expenditure peaked at 9%.

**Figure 2: Type of expenditure (% of total expenditure 2016 and 2022)**



Source: Consolidated Annual Activity Reports, 2016 & 2022. Data not available for ELA in 2016.

#### 4.1.2.2 STAFF RESOURCES AND WORKLOAD

Skilled staff are essential for the Agencies to carry out their work plans to a high standard. However, **the four Agencies have faced staffing challenges to varying degrees**<sup>155</sup>. These challenges are: (i) cuts to and subsequent caps on staff numbers (see Section 3.1); (ii) an unexpected increase in workload due to the response to COVID-19 and Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine without a corresponding increase in staff; and (iii) the Agencies expanding certain areas of their work. These difficulties have **undermined the Agencies’ ability to keep achieving their targets and maintaining a manageable workload for their staff**.

According to the evaluation’s staff surveys, most staff in the four Agencies considered their workload to be well balanced or mostly balanced. This ranged from 90% in EU-OSHA to 56% in Eurofound. However, high percentages of staff reported that their workload was either mostly unbalanced or unbalanced, especially in Eurofound (44%), followed by the ETF (29%), Cedefop (27%), and EU-OSHA (10%).

**The supporting study found that all four Agencies have coped with the demands by increasing overtime and the use of contract staff**, which is unlikely to be sustainable<sup>156</sup>. Interviews complementing staff surveys corroborated this conclusion<sup>157</sup>. In particular, Cedefop and EU-OSHA have relied on external contractors to support both administrative and

<sup>155</sup> See detailed assessment in the supporting study’s main report and in the agency-specific reports.

<sup>156</sup> These challenges are also likely to continue in the future and may worsen as long-serving staff retire, creating vacant positions and a potential loss of knowledge.

<sup>157</sup> For example, interviews with Eurofound staff revealed that, as an organisation, it had reached the upper limit of its capacity.

operational tasks<sup>158</sup>. Although this has reduced pressure on statutory staff (especially for carrying out administrative tasks), it comes with significant budget implications. EU-OSHA staff and executive board members pointed to concerns about the quality of contractors, difficulties in finding contractors specialised in OSH, and a time-consuming process to review deliverables. Based on these elements, bringing tasks in-house by hiring more staff would enable the agency to have more control over work processes and the quality of outputs. For the ETF, the Court of Auditors recently highlighted a need to avoid overreliance on external consultants and maintain expertise in-house<sup>159</sup>. Eurofound had also relied on external contractors although, over the evaluation period, it increased the amount of work done in-house, one of the drivers being to have more control over research quality. On the gender balance of ETF staff, the European Parliament discharge reports between 2018 and 2021 noted that further efforts were needed to achieve a better staff gender balance (67.7% women and 32.3% men in 2020).

**Regarding their headquarters**, Eurofound, the ETF and EU-OSHA staff reported high satisfaction about the fulfilment of their respective host Member States' obligations. However, Cedefop staff had mixed views (45% satisfaction), primarily due to delays in signing a new headquarters agreement. Moreover, EU-OSHA, the ETF and Cedefop staff had mixed views on schooling (around a 50% satisfaction rate), while Eurofound, the ETF and Cedefop staff identified transport connections as an area for improvement (see Figure 6 in Annex VII).

#### **4.1.2.3 EFFICIENCY AND ADEQUACY OF INTERNAL MONITORING AND REPORTING MECHANISMS AND THE POTENTIAL FOR REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS**

Overall, the Agencies have complied well with the measures necessary for ensuring accountability and assessing performance. The existing mechanisms cover different areas of the Agencies' operations (including financial, human resources and core business performance), allowing for an assessment of how resources are spent and how they convert into the planned output.

In the current period, the four Agencies collaboratively implemented an internal control framework between 2018 and 2019. The framework allows the Agencies to assess how they mitigate problems and maximise their effectiveness in five control areas<sup>156</sup>. It also enables the four Agencies to better align their reporting and evaluation output. The Agencies made additional efforts to streamline their indicator systems<sup>160</sup> and reduce the administrative burden created by the existing mechanisms.

However, the current evaluation has identified **two main areas for improvement**.

(i) While the monitoring and reporting systems are extensive, **a number of limitations were identified**. In particular, **some monitoring data were not fully complete or missing** (particularly for the ETF). Moreover, for some performance indicators there is an **absence of target indicator values** (across all four Agencies). Another major gap is the **absence of indicators for monitoring agencies results at national level**. Some agency-specific issues

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<sup>158</sup> Deloitte (2018), Ex-post evaluations of Cedefop activities 2016-2017.

<sup>159</sup> ECA (2020), [Special Report: Future of EU Agencies – Potential for more flexibility and cooperation](#):

<sup>160</sup> Eurofound revised its Performance Monitoring System (EPMS) in 2017, making it KPI-based and easier to monitor.

were identified: for Eurofound, although the indicators had no problems, reporting could be further improved by using more user-friendly software and by streamlining project-reporting procedures; Cedefop, unlike other Agencies, does not have a separate indicator for monitoring the work programme completion rate; for the ETF, some indicators are not available across partner countries, and some performance indicators are missing data for certain years (e.g. the number of downloads from the ETF's website).

(ii) **There is potential to reduce the administrative burden associated with accountability mechanisms.** Internal mechanisms are generally sufficient for ensuring accountability and assessing performance (and the Agencies' staff and Parliament discharge reports corroborated this overall positive assessment). However, these mechanisms do require extensive administrative resources. Most staff survey respondents still experience some administrative burden<sup>161</sup>, which is perceived as higher by Cedefop and EU-OSHA staff (see Figure 3 in Annex VII). These results are in line with the previous evaluation, indicating only slight shifts<sup>162</sup>. In particular, Cedefop staff see accountability mechanisms as very burdensome, viewing them as a source of additional workload, despite simplification measures piloted by the agency's administration<sup>163</sup>. As for EU-OSHA, which is the smallest of the four Agencies and has the highest administrative costs per staff member<sup>164</sup>, its staff and focal points members (FOPs) spoke of the increasing administrative burden associated with reporting and monitoring mechanisms<sup>165</sup> as multiple online tools are used. The associated workload was disproportionate to the size of the agency.

Moreover, interviews with staff of all Agencies revealed **that administrative staff perceived their workload as less balanced than the workload of operational staff.** This suggests that the efforts needed to meet the reporting, monitoring and evaluation requirements may be disproportionate to the relative sizes of the Agencies and are hindering effectiveness.

#### **4.1.2.4 AGENCIES' ACTIONS TO IMPROVE COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND POTENTIAL AREAS FOR COST REDUCTION**

During the evaluation period, each agency looked to adapt to the budget and human resources challenges and decrease the administrative burden with the aim to achieve efficiency gains. These have been mostly achieved through: a) cooperation and sharing costs with partners; b) digitisation/automation; and c) streamlining of work processes.

First, the **Agencies looked for ways to share services**, including recruitment (e.g. sharing reserve lists) and joint public procurement contracts (see agency-specific details in Table 3 in Annex VII). These efforts were facilitated by coordination through the EU Agencies Network. Moreover, the **digitalisation of processes**, which was strengthened during the COVID-19

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<sup>161</sup> Question: *Do you think that administrative tasks related to programming, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation hindered the implementation of your primary tasks in the period 2017-2022?*

<sup>162</sup> There has been a minor change, with a decrease in perceived burdens at Eurofound (from medium to small) and an increase at EU-OSHA (from small to medium).

<sup>163</sup> Such as preparing a shorter annual report and avoiding duplication with CAAR.

<sup>164</sup> This reflects that smaller agencies must deal with relatively higher administrative workloads since the administrative requirements for programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluation are the same for all of them.

<sup>165</sup> Staff survey, question: *Please, indicate, in your opinion, how distribution of tasks could be improved, indicating if there are tasks that have become redundant or tasks that are duplicated, and what these tasks are.*

pandemic, enabled some savings. As regards **work processes**, the four Agencies have implemented an activity based management (ABM) approach, where budgeting is organised under key activity headings, ensuring that sufficient budget is allocated to different activities.

The Agencies have made efficiency gains and implemented simplification measures. However, there is room for further action to improve cost effectiveness and reduce the administrative burden in the following areas.

- 1) **Strengthening inter-agency cooperation:** although there is already evidence of cooperation between the Agencies, there is room to deepen it further and create synergies (e.g. more information sharing and joint events to improve external stakeholders' access to information across the four Agencies; identifying further areas for collaboration on research/survey development and implementation)<sup>166</sup>.
- 2) **Expanding joint procurement and contracting procedures** to cope with the increasing number of regulatory requirements and to *improve procurement procedures*, particularly in EU-OSHA<sup>167</sup>.
- 3) **Streamlining performance indicators and reporting activities** (see section above).
- 4) **Reducing administrative burdens of the tripartite boards** of Eurofound, Cedefop and EU-OSHA (see section below).
- 5) **Balancing operational and administrative staffing:** explore possibilities to increase the ratio of operational staff to administrative staff and reduce the reliance on external contractors. This could be based on: (i) potential gains in efficiency (as highlighted in this section); and (ii) prioritising activities and output without compromising quality.

#### 4.1.2.5 EFFICIENCY OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

To provide further insights into the efficiency assessment, the evaluation considered a specific aspect of the Agencies' administration process, namely the efficiency of their governance arrangements.

Eurofound, Cedefop and EU-OSHA's managing boards have a tripartite structure. Each Member State is represented in each board by a government, an employer and a trade union member (81 representatives in total). The European Commission has three representatives, and there is an independent expert (without voting rights) appointed by the European Parliament<sup>168</sup>.

The smaller size of the ETF's governing board includes 27 representatives from Member States (without social partners), three Commission representatives (who share one vote in the Board), three experts appointed by the European Parliament (compared to one per tripartite Agency), and three partner country representatives appointed by the Commission.

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<sup>166</sup> For example, by contributing to the development and implementation of Eurofound's surveys, Cedefop, the ETF and EU-OSHA could lower Eurofound's production costs and make their surveys more effective by ensuring the surveys capture key information relevant to them.

<sup>167</sup> For EU-OSHA, this could be achieved by: i) diversifying the contractor base, such as by requesting focal points to disseminate procurement opportunities in their respective countries and/or by promoting them through social media; and ii) adopting a more selective approach to contractors by setting out more stringent criteria, thereby reducing the time needed to review outputs.

<sup>168</sup> In addition, Cedefop and Eurofound have two coordinators: one from ETUC for employees and one from Business Europe for employers.

**The key benefits of the tripartite governance composition are the representation and strategic direction provided by social partners, in addition to the government representatives.** Respondents across these three groups unanimously recognise the value of being heard and represented. In addition, the management boards, with such an extended membership, constitute a significant pool of experts contributing to the Agencies' annual programmes with their knowledge and experience and serving as multipliers for disseminating evidence at national level.

**However, governance efficiency faces challenge from the size and the number of voting members in this tripartite model** in terms of: (i) the costs incurred by the Agencies to run the boards, including the organisation of meetings, information support, logistics; and (ii) the efficiency of the decision-making process and the way in which stakeholders are involved.

This tripartite structure is also not in line with the Common Approach<sup>169</sup>, which suggests that the management board should be limited in size<sup>170</sup> so that it can operate as a true supervisory body rather than a consultative assembly<sup>171</sup>. This matter has been flagged repeatedly by the European Parliament in its discharge reports. It was also raised in the study requested by the BUDG Committee on the management boards of the decentralised agencies (published October 2021) and in the ECA Special Report on the Future of EU Agencies – Potential for more flexibility and cooperation (2020)<sup>172</sup>.

However, the previous evaluation showed that the size and composition of the governing boards were not a significant concern for the Agencies themselves or for most of their stakeholders. Most respondents to targeted surveys positively evaluated the size and composition, and this assessment remains unchanged in the current evaluation (see Figures 4 and 5 in Annex VII). In contrast, as in the previous evaluation, a significant share of respondents to the Eurofound staff survey<sup>173</sup>, corroborated by staff interviewed in Eurofound and Cedefop, consider that, compared to the small number of internal staff, particularly research staff, **the management board is disproportionately large, bringing with it financial, administrative and logistical challenges.**

In assessing efficiency and the potential for streamlining, the evaluation explored alternative governance models with different ways of involving social partners. It compared the advantages and disadvantages of the tripartite management boards of Cedefop, Eurofound, and EU-OSHA

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<sup>169</sup> The Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies, agreed in July 2012 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, sets out the framework for the functioning of EU decentralised agencies. It aims to improve coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and transparency.

<sup>170</sup> According to the Common Approach, an agency's managing board should consist of one representative from each Member State, two representatives from the Commission, one member designated by the European Parliament (where appropriate) and a 'fairly limited' number of stakeholder's representatives (where appropriate).

<sup>171</sup> The ETF governing board's limited size is in line with the Common Approach. It includes 27 representatives from Member States (without social partners), three representatives of the Commission (who share one vote in the Board), three experts appointed by the European Parliament (as opposed to one per tripartite agency), and three representatives of partner countries appointed by the Commission.

<sup>172</sup> This was also highlighted in the previous 2019 evaluation of the Agencies.

<sup>173</sup> Only 51% of Eurofound staff (N=52) found the size of their governing board appropriate. It was 48% (N=84) in the previous round.

with the ETF’s Governing Board and other models (ELA, EIGE, ILO)<sup>174</sup>. This comparison took into account the particular features of these agencies, including which countries are covered by the Agencies’ analysis. The comparative analysis of the different models led to the following conclusions.

- Meeting costs for larger boards are higher, especially if they are held in person, although this can be moderated to some extent by adopting online or hybrid meetings formats<sup>175</sup>. Since 2020, there has been a shift to more online meetings, which is reflected in the reduced overall costs (see Table 5)<sup>176</sup>.

**Table 5 – Amount spent on tripartite board meetings as a percentage of operational expenditure (Cedefop, Eurofound) (%)\***

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Cedefop	2.66	2.78	2.71	2.70	0.66	1.63	1.88
Eurofound	2.26	2.44	2.65	3.67	2.45	2.30	1.17

\* Data for EU-OSHA is not available.

- The productivity of management board meetings is dependent on the level of its members’ involvement. The engagement and level of knowledge will vary among members in such large governing bodies. In particular, social partner representatives (especially national ones) often lack background/experience in (EU-specific) administrative, financial, institutional and other governance/ matters. Consequently, in some Agencies, time is sometimes lost on explaining issues or discussing problems raised as a result of a lack of knowledge or a misunderstanding of the institutional context.
- While applicable in varying degrees to the Agencies concerned and in line with the Founding Regulations, a portion of the topics covered by management board meetings concern administrative matters, sometimes overshadowing core business topics. In Agencies where such discussions represent a significant part of the discussions, this raises the question whether this is the best use of the time of people who are mainly policy experts. Although stakeholder expertise in the Agencies’ work is an important asset that cannot be compromised for the sake of financial efficiency, there are other models that might allow involving stakeholders in an equally effective but more efficient manner.
- Even though the mission of each agency is laid down in their respective founding acts, groups will tend to represent their specific interests; this can result in a careful balancing act for the Agencies’ management and a potential loss of focus in their objectives and activities<sup>177</sup>.

The **ETF**’s governing model is considered to be financially and procedurally efficient. It is also in line with the Common Approach mentioned above. A smaller board facilitates smooth

<sup>174</sup> See the comparative SWOT analysis in the supporting study, Section 4.1.2.4.

<sup>175</sup> See supporting study (Table 35) for a breakdown of expenditure on tripartite bodies’ meetings by agency.

<sup>176</sup> For example, after the year of lockdown, EU-OSHA decided to merge executive board and management board meetings, reducing them to one face-to-face meeting per year.

<sup>177</sup> See the previous 2019 evaluation, where it is stated that ‘There is also a “multiple principals” situation, as the social partners, the Member States and the Commission tend to have different views on the Agencies’ objectives and priorities’.

logistics for in-person meetings and information support from the agency. Along with effective and efficient decision-making, this allows for clearly defined priorities and focused activities.<sup>178</sup> On the other hand, as there is no involvement of social partners, the main concern is lack of ownership and less precise targeting of policies and tools.

Smaller sized executive boards mitigate to some extent some of the tripartite model's inefficiencies described above. However, the analysis of other governance models in this evaluation's supporting study points to possible alternatives that could keep the current model's strengths (notably the involvement of stakeholders, in particular social partners) and address its weaknesses.

In this context, the evaluation considered the broader EU governance structure in the domains concerned, with the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT)<sup>179</sup> and the CEDEFOP management board both covering the same policies (VET), even if their roles are different. The same applies to the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work<sup>180</sup> and the EU-OSHA management board. **A clearer distinction between the advisory and governance roles in the management boards could allow stakeholders to focus on their domain of expertise and offer significant efficiency gains.**

A case in point is the fact that the composition of existing advisory committees and the corresponding Management Board overlaps significantly (ACVT/Cedefop, and OSH Advisory Committee/EU-OSHA<sup>181</sup>). In this context, the ELA model could be explored (while the ELA management board is not tripartite, social partners are involved through a separate stakeholder group, which gives thematic expertise to the management board)<sup>182</sup>.

### 4.1.3. COHERENCE

#### 4.1.3.1 COHERENCE BETWEEN THE AGENCIES MANDATES AND ACTIVITIES

**During the evaluation period, the mandates and activities of the four Agencies were coherent.** The four Agencies' mandates identify broad policy themes in which they operate

<sup>178</sup> Based on interviews with ETF and Commission staff.

<sup>179</sup> Since its creation in 1963, the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) is a tripartite consultative body that has the task of assisting the Commission in implementing EU vocational education and training policy.

<sup>180</sup> The Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work is a tripartite consultative body whose remit is to assist the Commission in preparing and implementing decisions taken in the field of safety and health at work and to facilitate cooperation between national administrations, trade unions and employer organisations.

<sup>181</sup> 52% of the government representatives in the ACVT and the Cedefop management board are the same, as are 44% of employer and 41% of trade union representatives. There is total overlap among EU-OSHA management board members and members of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work.

<sup>182</sup> Pending the outcome of the ELA evaluation, which is currently underway. The ELA management board is not tripartite; it is made up of: (a) one member from each Member State; (b) two members representing the Commission; (c) one independent expert appointed by the European Parliament; and (d) four members, representing social partner organisations at EU level, without voting rights. In addition, there is an advisory body called the 'Stakeholder group', composed of social partners (and Commission representatives). This group gives expert advice on certain areas to the management board. Adopting the ELA model would involve changing the Agencies' Founding Regulations.

(see Section 2.1). While the four Agencies worked on related policy areas (labour markets, vocational education and training, skills, qualifications, health and safety at work, and the working environment), each Agency approached the broad policy themes from different perspectives. Where two or more Agencies' mandates covered the same policy, the Agencies cooperated. **Cooperation between the Agencies was closer and deeper than in the previous evaluation period, and the evaluation found no instances of activities being duplicated.**

Considering the Agencies' mandates and strategic objectives, there are shared themes addressed by two or more Agencies. However, evidence shows that the Agencies approached these common policy themes from different perspectives or a different geographical focus. The most significant cases concerned three pairs of agencies.

**(i) Cedefop and the ETF** both worked on issues such as VET<sup>183</sup>. However, the actual focus of the two Agencies' work in this area was clearly distinguished: the ETF focused on capacity building and policy implementation in partner countries outside the EU, while Cedefop focused on research and policymaking in the EU.

**(ii) Cedefop and Eurofound** worked on the intersection between VET, skills mismatches, working and living conditions and labour market policies<sup>184</sup>. The two Agencies approached these topics from different angles: Cedefop focused on skills mismatches and VET providers from the supply side, while Eurofound focused on the demand side.

**(iii) Eurofound and EU-OSHA** worked on occupational health and safety as this is connected to Eurofound's wider 'working conditions' field. It is noteworthy that EU-OSHA was established after Eurofound. The Founding Regulation of EU-OSHA established a specific focus on providing highly technical and specialised support for protecting the safety and health of workers. This mandate requires a high level of expertise, especially in light of the rapid societal, technological and scientific developments in occupational safety and health. The Agencies' focus and ways of working are also different. Eurofound focuses on broad research (e.g. European working conditions survey), whereas EU-OSHA focuses on providing workplaces with practical knowledge and tools for implementing OSH rules and raising awareness, using their network of national focal points.

According to the open public consultation, **most stakeholders familiar with the Agencies' mandates and activities agree that they are coherent or very coherent** (53% of respondents, N=101). Only 3% of respondents believed that the mandates and activities were incoherent or very incoherent. 46% did not know if the mandates and activities were coherent and were not able to answer this question.

**The current evaluation has found no instances of duplicated work** across the Agencies<sup>185</sup>. While the Agencies' mandates covered broad, complex and interconnected themes, the

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<sup>183</sup> PPMI, ECORYS (2018), [Evaluation of the EU Agencies under the remit of DG Employment: EUROFOUND, CEDEFOP, ETF and EU-OSHA](#).

<sup>184</sup> Ipsos Mori (2016), Ex-ante evaluation of Eurofound's Draft Programming Document 2017-2020, p. 21.

<sup>185</sup> The evaluation used several methods to determine if there was any duplication: (i) a detailed analysis of each agency's output and consolidated activity reports, (ii) Mapping of collaboration agreements, cooperation at the Management/Governing Board level, and joint activities to determine the mechanisms in place to avoid

common thematic areas were well understood by most policymakers and agency staff. Thematic overlaps in the mandates did not necessarily mean duplicating work. In fact, **common thematic areas were both accepted and used as a basis for inter-agency cooperation**, which increased consistency. For examples of joint output and activities delivered by the agency pairs related to common thematic areas, see the dedicated section below and Table 4 in Annex VII. Moreover, staff in all agencies were much more aware of each other's work than in the previous evaluation and were therefore able to complement each other's work rather than duplicate it.

The evaluation also assessed whether the creation of the **European Labour Authority (ELA)** could prompt a reassessment of the previous evaluation's conclusions on merging the Agencies. In this regard, **the risk of the Agencies duplicating the work of ELA was limited**. EU-OSHA, Cedefop, and Eurofound were predominantly research-focused and did not have an operational and cross-border focus as the ELA did. The potential for merging the ELA with the ETF was also limited as the ETF only dealt with non-EU countries, mainly in the EU's neighbourhood.

Cooperation between the four Agencies and the ELA was at an early stage due to the recent establishment of the ELA. Nevertheless, the three tripartite agencies had begun to cooperate with ELA on certain issues, for example on seasonal workers campaigns (EU-OSHA) and skills intelligence and job shortages (Eurofound and Cedefop). All five agencies cooperated when the ELA participated in the September 2022 event 'Employment, skills and social policies that work for young Europeans in times of uncertainty'.

Nevertheless, **there is scope for further cooperation with the ELA**. For instance, the four Agencies could support the ELA by sharing their existing research in their respective areas of competence; this could also lead to pooling resources or producing joint reports on issues of common concern, e.g. on restructuring or respecting occupational health and safety rules in mobility situations, including posting, in the context of risk assessment. The evaluation identified two further areas for cooperation with ELA: (i) digital labour and labour mobility with ETF; and (ii) OSH implementation and workplace working conditions with EU-OSHA.

#### **4.1.3.2 COOPERATION BETWEEN THE FOUR AGENCIES**

**Joint work and cooperation increased during the evaluation period.** The 2011-2016 evaluation showed some cooperation between the agencies, particularly between Cedefop and ETF, Eurofound and EU-OSHA, and Eurofound and Cedefop. Formal agreements already existed between them, but cooperation was mostly limited to the mere exchange of information and knowledge, without leading to joint outputs and lacking strategic planning. Therefore, it identified a need for strengthening cooperation, engaging in joint-value creation, developing mechanisms for joint delivery, and sharing support services.

**From 2017 to 2022, cooperation and synergies among the Agencies intensified**, with a rise in the number of initiatives and projects where Agencies have cooperated. This includes the development of joint research, tools, events, and publications, demonstrating genuine

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potential duplication; and (iii) the staff survey included a question asking if staff were aware of duplicated work with other decentralised agencies.

cooperation with clear shared input and output from two or more agencies. **This increased cooperation was at both the strategic (board) level and project/initiative level.**

**Cooperation to share administrative functions, such as HR and finance, also increased** during the evaluation period. The Agencies were more likely to procure services together than in the previous evaluation period. They launched joint framework contracts and cooperated with other agencies and the Commission. As discussed below, opportunities could be explored for sharing more staff and office space in Brussels.

The benefits of cooperation between the Agencies are in three main areas. First, **improved coordination and complementarity** arising from interaction at different levels on different activities: there are over 20 formal agreements in place, and over 30 joint projects (events, research, procurement) have been delivered as a result of cooperation. The benefits of the Agencies complementing each other during this evaluation period are best illustrated through the joint work of the Agencies on EU cross-cutting priorities (the green transition, digital economy and migration). Second, **improved relevance and quality of joint Agencies outputs.** Joint outputs benefit from co-production, through broader evidence or expertise and the possibility to reflect multiple perspectives (e.g. Eurofound-Cedefop joint working on skills forecast). Moreover, joint dissemination has a wider reach due to the use of the Agencies' multiple communication channels. This is a marked advance compared to the previous evaluation period where separate reports were produced on similar issues for the same audience. Third, **improved efficiency of individual Agency operations** thanks to co-financing. A case in point was the joint Eurofound / Cedefop European Company Survey (2019).

The extent of cooperation between the four Agencies is analysed below under four headings: (i) joint cooperation agreements, activities, events and data collection; (ii) cooperation between management boards; (iii) cooperation on administrative and organisational functions; and (iv) joint communication activities.

#### **(i) Joint cooperation agreements, activities, events and data collection**

Overall, the number of joint action plans and cooperation agreements between the Agencies increased (in particular, between Cedefop and Eurofound, EU-OSHA and Eurofound, Cedefop and the ETF, and the ETF and Eurofound)<sup>186</sup>. Staff surveys show that formal cooperation agreements increased staff awareness and clarified each agency's role in projects. A number of joint activities and events were organised, and shared data collections were created.

- **Cooperation between Cedefop and Eurofound** became more extensive. The two Agencies launched an EU-wide joint European company survey. Moreover, joint actions and publications focused on skills forecasting and manufacturing. These included the 'Skills forecast: trends and challenges to 2030' report<sup>187</sup> and the joint report on 'Workplace practices

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<sup>186</sup> The mapping identified the following new framework agreements: (i) ETF and Cedefop had collaborated extensively prior to the current evaluation period but had two framework agreements during the current evaluation period (for 2018-2020 and 2021-2023), compared to one during the previous period; (ii) for the first time, Cedefop and EU-OSHA prepared a cooperation agreement, which was signed in 2023; and (iii) Cedefop and Eurofound updated their memorandum of understanding in 2020, which was signed for the first time in 2006.

<sup>187</sup> Cedefop, Eurofound (2018), '[Skills forecast: trends and challenges to 2030](#)', Luxembourg.

unlocking employee potential<sup>188</sup>. A recently revised memorandum of understanding includes contact points for all areas of joint interest.

- **Cooperation between Eurofound and EU-OSHA** is not new, and formal agreements followed by action plans date back to 2007. The two agencies have focused their cooperation on a range of themes, including psychological risks, mental health, self-employment, working-time patterns, burn-out, older workers, and foresight<sup>189</sup>. During the COVID-19 pandemic (May 2020), the European Parliament’s Employment and Social Affairs Committee (EP EMPL) held an exchange of views with the two agencies on the social and employment impact of the pandemic<sup>190</sup>. For details, see Annex IX, Section 4(i).
- **Cooperation between Cedefop and the ETF**, specifically on VET policy monitoring, is envisaged in their respective mandates. The agencies have a 3-year framework agreement<sup>191</sup>, which is implemented through a joint annual work programme annexed to each agency’s programming documents. The two agencies report on progress to the European Parliament every 2 years. The following joint actions were implemented during the evaluation period:
  - joint support for monitoring the Riga Conclusions deliverables in the VET field;
  - regular joint contributions to work on national and regional qualifications frameworks in cooperation with UNESCO (2017-2018, 2020);
  - joint implementation of the European Skills and Jobs Survey (ESJS) and joint monitoring of the implementation of the Osnabrück Declaration, supporting digital skills and inclusion in VET (from 2020);
  - Cedefop and the ETF shared expertise on validating refugee work skills in Türkiye.
- **Cooperation between the ETF and Eurofound** increased, especially on social partnership and dialogue, public-private partnerships in VET, skills shortages and skills mismatches. The two agencies launched a joint online survey comparing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on EU Member States and selected ETF partner countries. The agencies also cooperated on themes related to platform work, NEETs and capacity building of social partners through sharing data, contributing to events and knowledge-sharing activities. In particular, they participated in or jointly organised seminars on the digital economy, platform work (2019, 2020, 2021) and the impact of COVID-19 on businesses (2021). Moreover, Eurofound participated in the advisory board of the ETF’s initiative on skills demand in partner countries (2020).
- **Although the ETF and EU-OSHA** do not have a joint action plan or framework agreement (due to limited possibilities for thematic cooperation), they do have a service level agreement in place to share an accounting officer (see point (iv) below).
- Cooperation between the Agencies increased on **pan-European surveys**. This cooperation led to wider benefits, such as cost sharing (particularly for the European company survey),

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<sup>188</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/2228>

<sup>189</sup> Eurofound (2017), [Consolidated annual activity report of the Authorising Officer for the year 2017](#), p. 25.

<sup>190</sup> See: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/nl/events/european-parliament-discussion-with-eurofound-and-eu-osh-impacts-of-the-COVID-19-pandemic>.

<sup>191</sup> ETF, Cedefop (2018), [Framework agreement for cooperation between the European Centre For The Development Of Vocational Training \(Cedefop\) and The European Training Foundation \(ETF\)](#).

aligning definitions and tools, facilitating sharing data and best practices, and overcoming methodological difficulties. For more details, see Annex IX, Section 4(ii).

- The Agencies were also involved in several **multilateral (more than two agencies)**, in particular on digitalisation, the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and readiness for future challenges/foresight. For more details see Annex IX, Section 4(iii)<sup>192</sup>.
- Overall, **various stakeholder groups** across both the public consultation and the stakeholder survey gave positive ratings to the **joint publications, joint data collection and joint information or expertise shared**. However, when analysing these surveys by specific stakeholder groups, there were no conclusive patterns on the perceived quality of these joint activities.

## (ii) Cooperation between management boards

Each agency has a management board to provide leadership and strategic direction. **All the boards strengthened inter-agency cooperation by exchanging information at their level on activities, priorities and operational issues**. Most boards now include representatives from the other agencies, and there is a general agreement on cross-participation among boards. This leads to better understanding the ongoing work of other agencies, sharing programming documents earlier, developing joint action plans and generally making the Agencies' activities more consistent. Previously, cooperation between the Agencies was primarily bottom-up rather than based on joint strategic planning<sup>193</sup>. Although board-level cooperation is positive, the Agencies' staff<sup>194</sup> did point out that participation in other board meetings is time-consuming.

## (iii) Cooperation on administrative and organisational functions

Beyond operational matters, the four Agencies cooperated on various administrative and organisational functions; however, **there could be room to improve the scope of this cooperation**. In terms of **sharing and co-funding staffing**, there are a few instances of collaboration in HR, IT, data protection and legal services. One particular example is the formal ETF–EU-OSHA agreement to share an accounting officer through a service level agreement<sup>195</sup>. Where feasible, opportunities could be further explored for sharing roles that require technical or specialist skills, for example, in cybersecurity, employment statistics and labour market economics.

On **office space**, close cooperation takes place between the staff of the three existing Brussels Liaison Offices (Brussels Liaison Offices were set up by all four Agencies, although the ETF closed its office in 2019). These offices support partnership with stakeholders, monitor changes in EU policymaking and contribute to the Agencies' strategic management and communication.

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<sup>192</sup> In addition, **Cedefop and EU-OSHA prepared a cooperation agreement**, even though its signature falls outside the scope of this evaluation (September 2023). The cooperation between the two Agencies will focus on the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information on the protection and development of skills of workers.

<sup>193</sup> PPMI, ECORYS (2018), [Evaluation of the EU Agencies under the remit of DG Employment: EUROFOUND, CEDEFOP, ETF and EU-OSHA, p.157](#).

<sup>194</sup> Interviews with agency staff carried out between February and June 2023.

<sup>195</sup> EU-OSHA (2021). Annual Activity Report 2021.

The recommendation from the previous evaluation to merge agency offices was not implemented. The possibility to share office space in Brussels could be considered. Locating all liaison office staff in one Brussels could stimulate ongoing and ad hoc collaboration and allow agency staff visiting from their headquarters to work together and save costs across all four Agencies.

On **joint procurement**, in contrast to the previous evaluation period, the Agencies were increasingly likely to procure work together. Between 2017 and 2022, Cedefop participated in 18 joint procurements led by other EU agencies and launched one joint procedure for its ICT helpdesk service with ENISA (the EU Agency for Cybersecurity) in 2019. It also participated in 40 Commission-led procurements for HR, ICT, audits and communications activities and launched one joint procedure with Eurostat. Eurofound launched two multiple framework contracts for evaluation and feedback services. The 2017-2020 contract was shared among eight EU agencies. The 2021-2025 contract is shared among 15 EU agencies. Eurofound also launched a joint procurement procedure in cooperation with Cedefop to align its performance measurement system with other agencies. The ETF has participated in five joint tenders since 2017 (although not all were with other agencies), and 16% of its contracts were concluded following joint procurement tenders with other agencies or with Commission departments. Lastly, EU-OSHA also participated in joint procurement activities with other agencies and the Commission to save costs, improve quality and increase efficiency. The agency also chaired the EUAN Shared Services Task Force.

#### **(iv) Joint communication activities**

**Joint communication activities were largely focused on outputs and events.** The Agencies' staff emphasised that joint dissemination 'reach' was greater when two or more agencies used their dedicated networks, databases and other means to engage with stakeholders.

For example, the report titled 'Towards age-friendly work in Europe: a life-course perspective on work and ageing from EU Agencies'<sup>196</sup> and another report, 'Health and safety risks at the workplace: a joint analysis of three major surveys'<sup>197</sup>, were shared across multiple channels (membership databases, agency websites, newsletters, mentioned at events).

Staff highly rated the cooperation and joint activities with other agencies under the remit of DG EMPL (Figure 11 in Annex VII)<sup>198</sup>. However, cooperation with the ELA was assessed slightly less positively compared to other agencies. This may be attributed to the ELA being a newly established agency, which has allowed for less time for develop joint activities.

#### **4.1.3.3 COHERENCE WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2019-2024**

The mandates, activities and outputs of the four Agencies were coherent with the Commission's strategic priorities for 2019-2024. In particular, the Agencies produced many tailored outputs

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<sup>196</sup> EU-OSHA, Cedefop, Eurofound, EIGE (2017), '[Towards age-friendly work in Europe: a life-course perspective on work and ageing from EU Agencies](#)'.

<sup>197</sup> [https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Health\\_and\\_safety\\_risks\\_at\\_work\\_joint\\_analysis\\_summary.pdf](https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Health_and_safety_risks_at_work_joint_analysis_summary.pdf)

<sup>198</sup> Staff views may be subject to bias.

related to the priorities<sup>199</sup> ‘A Europe fit for the digital age’ and ‘An economy that works for people’. The Agencies’ work was aligned with new strategic priorities tailored to initiatives such as the European Green Deal (see Table 5 in Annex VII for more details about the coherence of the four Agencies’ mandates and activities with the Commission’s strategic priorities for 2019–2024).

### **Figure 3: Coherence of the Agencies’ mandates and activities with other EU programmes/initiatives**

Source: Public consultation, question: To what extent do you think that the Agencies’ mandates and activities are coherent with other relevant EU programmes/initiatives?

Most respondents to the public consultation believed that the Agencies’ mandates and activities were very coherent or coherent with those of the relevant EU strategic priorities (see Figure 3).

#### **4.1.3.4 COHERENCE WITH DG EMPL AND OTHER COMMISSION DEPARTMENTS**

**The Agencies’ mandates and activities were coherent with those of DG EMPL:** all four Agencies worked in thematic areas that were relevant to and coherent with DG EMPL policies, in particular the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (see Section 4.1.1 on effectiveness for detailed evidence).

The ETF’s mandate is a special case as it focuses exclusively on the partner countries outside the EU, while DG EMPL focuses largely on EU Member States. Consequently, the ETF also worked with other DGs with an international profile (e.g. DG NEAR, DG INTPA).

DG EMPL was represented in the management boards of each agency, providing input to the programming cycle and decision-making at board level. In particular, DG EMPL participated in the executive and management boards of Eurofound, Cedefop and EU-OSHA, with director-level representation in each. The ETF Governing Board is chaired by the Director-General of DG EMPL.

**Overall, DG EMPL and the Agencies worked collaboratively during the evaluation period, and the Agencies’ outputs were used to inform EU policies, particularly those of DG EMPL.**

During the evaluation period, progress was made on having more regular formal and informal communication between DG EMPL and the Agencies. Each agency has set up cooperation channels with DG EMPL, ranging from day-to-day cooperation at project level to interaction between senior managers in the Agencies and DG EMPL.

On thematic contributions to DG EMPL policies, events, working groups and advisory committees, each agency worked with DG EMPL based on its specific role. Most often, the Agencies provide research, expertise and input into policy documents or proposals and also participate in a variety of formal committees and other meetings. For further details, see Annex IX (iv) and Section 4.1.1 on effectiveness.

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<sup>199</sup> Von der Leyen, U. (2019), ‘[A Union that strives for more – My agenda for Europe – Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2019–2024](#)’, 16 July 2019.

## Coherence with other Commission departments

The relationship between the ETF and DG EMPL is distinctive due to each body's different geographical coverage. This requires coordination among several DGs. The structured dialogue process<sup>200</sup> between DG EMPL, DG NEAR and DG INTPA is well-established<sup>201</sup>. However, despite coordination, the different DGs have competing expectations of where the ETF should focus its work (reflecting the different DGs' objectives and geographic responsibilities). An agreed joint vision between the different DGs and the ETF could benefit the agency's work.

For EU-OSHA, the evaluation found that cooperation with other Commission departments could be strengthened for small and medium-sized companies, research dissemination and mental health. This could involve closer cooperation with several Commission departments (DG JUST, DG FISMA, DG GROW and DG SANTE) and EASME, the executive agency for SMEs (supporting study Annex 4, pp. 104-5).

### 4.1.3.5 COHERENCE WITH OTHER EU DECENTRALISED AGENCIES

The mandates and activities of the four Agencies were consistent with those of other relevant decentralised agencies. Most cooperation between the four Agencies and other decentralised agencies took place through the EU Agencies Network (EUAN) and the EUAN sub-network, EU-ANSA (EU Agencies Network on Scientific Advice)<sup>202</sup>. For further details, see Annex IX, 4(v).

Via the EUAN, the four Agencies and other EU agencies pooled existing expertise to address new cross-cutting themes, such as the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, digitalisation and the green transition. Sub-networks enabled agencies working with primary research to hold regular in-depth methodological exchanges, for example, on sustainability and strategic foresight. Another benefit of cooperation within EUAN was staff cooperation on identifying solutions to common challenges and cost-saving measures (e.g. on risk management, the sustainable management of buildings and teleworking arrangements).

Within the **Performance Development Network** (PDN), a sub-network of the EUAN<sup>203</sup>, Eurofound played a leading role in developing an evaluation handbook and catalogue of key performance indicators across all four Agencies. The Agencies also took part in PDN exchanges on experiences with user satisfaction.

EU-OSHA intensified cooperation with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, this was the first time EU-OSHA cooperated with other agencies on public health issues.

In 2021, the ETF began cooperation with EIGE on the gender equality index. Given the overlapping geographical mandates of ETF and EIGE, which include EU candidate countries and potential candidates, there is an opportunity to improve the consistency of the two agencies'

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<sup>200</sup> Structured Dialogue is the consultation process between DG EMPL, DG NEAR, DG INTPA and ETF to prepare for governing board meetings and coordinate the decision-making process between the three DGs. It takes place twice a year in line with the governing board meetings.

<sup>201</sup> Apart from the structured dialogue, ETF also cooperated with other DGs, such as DG HOME.

<sup>202</sup> The four Agencies are active members of the EUAN and their sub-networks.

<sup>203</sup> European Environment Agency, [2021-2022 Work Programme of the EU Agencies Network](#).

activities. This would give ETF the opportunity to mainstream the gender equality part of the European Social Pillar in EU partner countries.

#### 4.1.3.6 COHERENCE WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

All four Agencies cooperated with international organisations active in the same policy areas through joint publications, events and surveys. This cooperation intensified, in particular, with the ILO and the OECD through cooperation on new thematic areas.

All four Agencies had already cooperated with the **ILO** before 2017 leading to joint outputs produced between 2017 and 2022. Cooperation has increased, in particular as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as has the use of joint online surveys. For further details, see Annex IX, 4(vi).

Eurofound, Cedefop and the ETF cooperated with the **OECD**. Eurofound and the OECD cooperated on job quality, collective bargaining, minimum and living wages and platform work. Cedefop and the OECD have cooperated on the role of VET in employing refugee and migrant workers since 2017, and in 2019, a 2-yearly joint event on skills was launched. The ETF cooperated with the OECD on skills-demand analysis and foresight, qualification systems and working with companies on skills development.

EU-OSHA cooperated with the **World Health Organization**, including via data sharing on healthcare. The two organisations attended each other's events and organised joint workshops<sup>204</sup>.

The ETF collaborated with the ILO, the OECD, UNICEF and UNESCO, and this cooperation has intensified since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (see supporting study, Annex 4, Section 6.2.3.1). However, as the international landscape for human capital development becomes more complex, involving a growing number of non-traditional players, there is an opportunity for the ETF **to strengthen cooperation with international donors and financial institutions (within the scope of its mandate).**

The four Agencies also continued to cooperate multilaterally with international organisations and regularly conducted joint activities with them. These included the ILO, the OECD, UNICEF and UNESCO.

#### 4.1.3.7 COHERENCE WITH THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Consistency with national-level work is supported through the representation of Member States in all the Agencies' management/governing boards. National social partners are also represented in the management boards of the three tripartite Agencies. Member States and social partners have two roles: (i) they provide input to the Agencies' programming documents; and (ii) act as multipliers for disseminating the Agencies' output. The extent to which the four Agencies provide direct support to Member States and partner countries varies according to their mandates and their operations. A number of examples can be given for each agency.

EU-OSHA conducts OSH communication campaigns in Member States that would not otherwise be possible in those that have less funding available for OSH systems. The OiRA

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<sup>204</sup> EU-OSHA (2023), *Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2022*.

tool is well regarded in many Member States as the tool is referred to in national OSH strategies and legislation. Broader references to risk assessment tools suggest that EU-OSHA awareness-raising has influenced national policies.

Cedefop prepared country-focused thematic reviews and attended events organised at national level. In 2021, thematic reviews and peer-learning activities were organised on skills governance in Slovenia and on upskilling pathways in France and Italy. Cedefop supported Slovenia's Labour Ministry in developing national skills forecast and a career platform. The agency contributed to a total of 18 events organised at national level.

Eurofound's outputs are not directly aimed at specific Member States. Nevertheless, Belgium, France, Slovenia and Spain provided additional funding to increase the sample size of the European working conditions survey (EWCS) for their countries for a more in-depth analysis. Eurofound also participated in the research days of the Irish Low Pay Commission, and an Irish government speech from April 2022 acknowledged Eurofound research.

The ETF works to support human capital development reforms in partner countries. In Moldova, support for VET reforms contributed to sectoral committees being set up to address labour market needs. In Türkiye, the support provided for setting up centres for the recognition of prior learning contributed to establishing 25 centres for VET recognition. National ministries in Ukraine and Azerbaijan have used SELFIE (Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the use of Innovative Educational technologies) as a source for policy discussions.

#### **4.1.3.8 POTENTIAL FOR MERGERS: PREVIOUS EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CURRENT EVALUATION ASSESSMENT**

Based on the assessment of the Agencies' mandates and common thematic areas, the previous cross-cutting evaluation in 2019 identified which Agencies might be more suitable for a merger and assessed the benefits and risks of each merger scenario.

**The previous evaluation concluded that there was no straightforward scenario for mergers and that, to improve efficiency, there was rather room for strengthening cooperation.** Although Cedefop/ETF and Cedefop/Eurofound merger options could be considered, they were high-risk scenarios, and there were difficulties in balancing the positive and negative effects. In both merger options, potential synergies could be exploited through developing methodological expertise and the pooling of knowledge (e.g., in skills anticipation and matching). **Cedefop/ETF merger cost savings were possible** for research roles (estimated at up to EUR 2 million) and for back-office roles (up to EUR 1.5 million), whereas for **Cedefop/Eurofound**, they were estimated to amount to up to EUR 1.5 million for research roles and up to EUR 1.5 million for back-office roles (see more details on costs and benefits of these two merger options in Annex IX, Table 3: **Overview of benefits and risks of agency merger scenarios**).

A Eurofound/EU-OSHA merger was also considered. **Cost savings** for research roles are estimated at up to EUR 1 million and up to EUR 0.5-1 million for back-office roles). Potential synergies could be exploited by pooling methodological expertise in researching working conditions and OSH issues. However, it was concluded that a possible merger would face significant 'stumbling blocks', especially because the work of EU-OSHA is highly specialised.

Moreover, there is a clear risk that Eurofound, as the larger Agency, would become the dominant partner and OSH policy issues are given insufficient priority relative to other issues. This would reduce their visibility and impact at the EU level.

In all merger scenarios, **closure costs are high**, around EUR 2-3 million for each agency. Overall, as individual agencies were shown to be overall efficient and effective, the previous evaluation noted that one of the key reasons for a merger – joining a ‘weaker’ organisation to a ‘stronger’ one – was absent.

**The support study for this evaluation confirmed the previous conclusions on the feasibility of mergers as there were no substantial changes to the mandates and activities during the current evaluation period, and the potential for duplication with the ELA is limited.** The 2019 revision of the tripartite Agencies’ Founding Regulations did not change or expand the scope of the Agencies’ mandates, and the Agencies are putting in place cooperation mechanisms with the ELA to create synergies where possible. For a detailed analysis of the benefits and risks of the different agency merger scenarios, see Table 3 in Annex IX<sup>205</sup>.

#### 4.2. HOW DID THE EU INTERVENTION MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND TO WHOM?

This chapter examines the added value of the Agencies’ work and how they made a difference to their stakeholders. It analyses the extent to which the Agencies’ contributions are unique when compared to those of other agencies and organisations and the extent to which their activities could be substituted by other EU, international or national organisations.

Like the previous evaluation<sup>206</sup>, this evaluation found **that the four Agencies continued to bring unique value through: (i) specialised thematic knowledge; (ii) high-quality data, tools and methodologies; (iii) extensive European coverage in their respective fields, ensuring consistent data availability; and (iv) maintaining a tailored focus on EU policy needs**<sup>207</sup>. This is confirmed by the results of the stakeholder survey (see Figure 7 in Annex VII).

**Overall, the Agencies’ stakeholders considered that other organisations could either partially or not at all replace the Agencies’ activities, emphasising the Agencies’ unique contribution.** Around 75-80% of Cedefop and the ETF’s stakeholders believed that ceasing the Agencies’ activities would affect their work; for Eurofound and EU-OSHA<sup>208</sup>, over 90% of their stakeholders shared this view. This feedback was comparable to the previous evaluation’s findings. For the ETF, some stakeholders (35 % of respondents to the stakeholders survey, N=91) indicated that international organisations, such as UNESCO, UNICEF, the OECD, and

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<sup>205</sup> See also Section 4.1.2.7 of the supporting study.

<sup>206</sup> ‘Unique’ activities in the sense that other organisations or institutions are not concurrently engaged in activities with the same objectives, methodology, target groups and geographical scope.

<sup>207</sup> The Agencies’ work programmes are approved by their governing boards based on their relevance to the EU’s policy agenda (mostly driven by the Commission as it has a right of initiative). Few other research institutions possess such mandates and links to policymaking.

<sup>208</sup> See Table 4 in Annex VII – percentages do not include ‘do not know’ answers.

the ILO could carry out similar work to ETF, matching its level of expertise and organisational capacity<sup>209</sup>.

The Agencies generate significant value for various stakeholders, albeit to different degrees.

**The Commission remained the primary beneficiary of all four Agencies**, and the evaluation found extensive evidence of the added-value and benefits that the Commission gained from their support. Examples include Eurofound's knowledge and input in preparing one of the six political priorities of the Von der Leyen Commission in 2019 (An economy that works for people). Cedefop supported the Commission through its initiatives and support for empowering adults through upskilling and reskilling<sup>210</sup>, among others. EU-OSHA played a key role in shaping EU OSH policy, particularly the EU's strategic frameworks on health and safety at work (see EU-OSHA Case Study 5). Lastly, the ETF provided effective support to EU development cooperation and external relations. (See Section 4.1.1.3).

The evaluation underscored **the added value provided by the Agencies to Member State stakeholders (and EU partner countries for ETF)**, offering quality data, extensive European coverage and thematic expertise. Cedefop provided support to education and training providers, academic/research institutions and social partners. EU-OSHA provided insights into national policymaking, benefiting social partners in particular, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. EU-OSHA and Eurofound supported employers and trade union associations. The ETF supported education and training providers<sup>211</sup>. The evaluation suggested that the ETF could strengthen its collaboration with businesses and social partners.

**Other stakeholders benefited from the Agencies' support less often:** the EU public, businesses, EEA/ETFA national public authorities, other EU decentralised agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The public and NGOs do not directly benefit from the Agencies. However, considering the expanding thematic scope and current budget constraints, the evaluation identified opportunities to involve more NGOs. NGOs could serve as multipliers to increase the reach and dissemination of the Agencies' outputs with a minimal impact on costs.

Main sources of added value across the Agencies are described below.

**EUROFOUND.** Eurofound provided strong added value through its pan-European surveys<sup>212</sup>. The surveys offer a unique and established source of comparative information on the quality of living and working conditions across the EU, providing EU-wide data that is consistent, reliable and covers a wide range of themes. **Eurofound's surveys offer much more detailed**

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<sup>209</sup> These mixed views could be explained by the fact that, while support in the field of human capital development is not matched by any other national or European organisation in the EU, at international level, the ETF's work on education, training and skills is matched by other large organisations, such as UNESCO and other bilateral and international donors.

<sup>210</sup> As documented in the supporting study, Cedefop Case Study 1.

<sup>211</sup> One example of this ETF work is the virtual training courses organised by the ETF in 2021 (see ETF Case Study 3), which benefited education providers, stakeholders working in education and the labour market, and partner countries officials.

<sup>212</sup> European Company Survey (ECS), European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS).

**harmonised information that complements the yearly data that Eurostat produces in the Labour Force Survey.** The EU-level data helped to understand dynamics that were not apparent at individual Member State level. The surveys inform and guide a substantial part of Eurofound’s analytical work. The methodology and questionnaires used in Eurofound’s pan-European surveys are freely available for use by other researchers, subject to certain copyright conditions. Moreover, they serve as an inspiration for other surveys worldwide, such as the American Working Conditions Survey, the South Korea Working Conditions Survey, the Israel Social Survey and the China Urban Labour Survey<sup>213</sup>. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has used Eurofound’s European quality of life survey (EQLS) questionnaire to carry out surveys on the quality of life in Croatia and North Macedonia.

**Eurofound’s representativeness studies were important for social dialogue and EU lawmaking**<sup>214</sup>. As highlighted in the validation workshop for this study, the representativeness studies were crucial for ensuring proper social dialogue at EU level and facilitating social dialogue at national level (thus also having a national impact). Eurofound’s methodology is reliable and extensive (having conducted these studies since 2006), and this has strengthened these studies’ credibility. While these studies were beneficial for social partners, providing visibility and influencing national agendas, some interviewees, including members of the executive and management boards, expressed concerns about the high cost of these studies and questioned their overall added value to stakeholders, especially at national level. In the final years of the current evaluation period, Eurofound increased its national focus as outlined in its 2021-2024 work programme. To improve national adoption of its research, Eurofound built on its Network of Eurofound Correspondents and contributed to national events on working conditions and pay. Eurofound’s work has been used more extensively at national level in recent years, particularly from 2020, demonstrating its use beyond EU level.

**CEDEFOP.** Cedefop brought EU added value by providing evidence with unique thematic and European coverage. In the current evaluation period, Cedefop’s increased focus on supporting EU policymaking and implementation was recognised by the Commission as a significant source of added value, in particular to support the 2020 European Skills Agenda and the 2020 Council Recommendation on VET (see detailed evidence in Section 4.1.1.3). It has also added value by providing consistent definitions and concepts across Member States to facilitate the implementation of agreed EU policies (e.g. apprenticeships, transparency tools, upskilling pathways, individual learning accounts and micro-credentials).

**Cedefop adds value to Eurostat’s statistical data, complementing and contextualising it with quantitative and qualitative information obtained from surveys and ReferNet partners**<sup>215</sup>.

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<sup>213</sup> Argentina, Chile and Uruguay and countries in Central America used EWCS questionnaires to carry out national surveys.

<sup>214</sup> **Article 155** of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides the possibility to put social partner agreements into practice in EU law. However, this can only be done if the social partners who negotiated the agreement are considered as representative. This assessment is based on the representativeness studies. **Article 154** TFEU obliges the Commission to consult social partners in certain instances; the representativeness studies are used to determine which social partners should be consulted.

<sup>215</sup> Coordination and complementarity are ensured through bilateral memoranda of understanding and participation in different forums, including Eurostat’s big data task force, the network of European statistical systems (ESS-net) and the Web Intelligence Hub.

Cedefop's data have also provided added value for the EU migration network, and, beyond the employment domain, have been used to test different scenarios in the work of DG GROW, DG ENER and DG ENV.

At national level, Cedefop's high added value also stemmed from producing comparable EU-level data, such as the VET opinion survey and skills forecast, which national organisations often lack the capacity to produce. Additionally, during the current evaluation period, Cedefop developed tools and repositories accessible across Europe, including the Financing adult learning database, the European Skill Index (ESI) and the Skills Online Vacancy Analysis Tool for Europe (Skills OVATE). The *ex-post* evaluation of Cedefop's projects and tools<sup>216</sup> confirmed how unique they were, with no national or regional equivalents. The agency provided EU comparable data on VET, skills and qualifications to researchers and academics, which they could not have accessed otherwise. Cedefop's 2022 user satisfaction survey highlighted the frequent use of Cedefop output to strengthen knowledge, understand policy issues, trends or challenges, and support research/policy analysis.<sup>217</sup>

**ETF.** The ETF's added value comes from its distinctive expertise in both EU and partner countries' policies, a breadth of knowledge not found in other EU institutions or partner countries. The agency served as a bridge, transferring experience and expertise from Member States and EU institutions to partner countries, thereby strengthening the capacity of those countries' administrations. The ETF also added value to EU external policy through the advice it provided to Commission departments drawing on its expertise in neighbourhood and enlargement countries. The ETF's role in providing both EU and non-EU expertise, producing reports and sharing methodologies has proven beneficial for VET and TVET providers in partner countries. The Agency's networks of VET and skills policy experts (see Box 5) provided readily available thematic and synthesised information that informed VET policy. This information would not have been available without the ETF<sup>218</sup>. The ETF works closely with other data organisations, including Eurostat, for example for the Western Balkans, Türkiye and the neighbourhood countries, to avoid any duplication. All data produced by the ETF on country intelligence are not available anywhere else.

### **Box 5: Supporting education and training providers – the ETF's networking activities**

VET providers considered the ETF as a primary source of information. The agency collaborates with VET centres and providers, sharing research methodologies, organising events with NGOs and business organisations and supporting implementation of reforms. The ETF Network of Excellence included an International Network of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), involving over 250 organisations from the EU, its neighbouring regions, Central Asia and Africa. The GRETA initiative, operating through this network, supports 18 centres of vocational excellence in eight countries in their green transition<sup>219</sup>.

<sup>216</sup> Deloitte (2018), Ex-post evaluations of Cedefop activities. p. 10.

<sup>217</sup> PPMI (2022), Cedefop user satisfaction survey 2022.

<sup>218</sup> The ETF's expertise in supporting the development of partner countries' VET systems is recognised by governmental organisations of EU Member States and other European and international organisations.

<sup>219</sup> Covering the greening of curricula, teachers' development and stakeholder engagement.

Additionally, the ETF's unique work on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine (including its manuals to include refugees in the job market) has become a primary source of information. An example of uptake of the ETF work by the Commission and Member States is the [Ukrainian Resource Hub](#), which has had more than 27 000 visitors since its launch<sup>220</sup>.

EU-OSHA was particularly valued for its support to Member States, extensive thematic coverage, and effective awareness-raising efforts, confirming the added value of EU-OSHA at national level. In addition, the agency brings added value to the Commission by supporting OSH policymaking and implementation. The agency's stakeholders emphasised the added value of EU-OSHA's OSH assessment tools, awareness campaigns and networking activities involving focal points, including the ESENER survey, the OiRA tool and the healthy workplaces campaigns (e.g. the 2019 campaign, which supported EU policymaking in OSH, see Box 4 in Section 4.1.1.3). The European Parliament study, 'Cost of Non-EU Agencies Focusing on the Health and Safety Cluster of the EU Decentralised Agencies'<sup>221</sup>, highlighted that EU-OSHA provided significant support to Member States by bringing the EU perspective to the work of national health and safety agencies. Additionally, the evaluation demonstrated EU-OSHA's essential role in conducting awareness-raising campaigns on OSH at the workplace, addressing gaps at the national level<sup>222</sup> (case study on EU-OSHA's healthy workplaces campaigns). In particular, EU-OSHA brought significant added value to countries with less advanced OSH systems<sup>223</sup>. There is potential to increase EU-OSHA's impact in those countries if the required resources are available.

#### **Box 6: EU-OSHA European coverage of publications – ESENER survey**

EU-OSHA's European survey of enterprises on new and emerging risks (ESENER) is recognised as the sole source of European information on OSH that is comparable and reliable across countries. It fills a gap, providing insights into compliance with OSH legislation and its effectiveness across all sectors<sup>224</sup>. National focal points' representatives appreciate ESENER as a valuable tool for rethinking their OSH policies and encouraging businesses and workers to address specific risks. This shows that ESENER plays a crucial role in shaping OSH strategies in Member States, helping to prevent workplace accidents and illnesses.

#### **4.3. IS THE INTERVENTION STILL RELEVANT?**

The Agencies' mandates, objectives and activities are highly relevant. The Agencies contribute very significantly to the EU policy priorities. They also address their stakeholders' needs, although there is still room for improvement.

<sup>220</sup> For more info: [Education and work information for Ukrainians and EU countries | ETF \(europa.eu\)](#); [Key policy developments in education, training and employment – Ukraine 2023 | ETF \(europa.eu\)](#).

<sup>221</sup> EP (2021), '[Cost of Non-EU Agencies Focusing on the Health and Safety Cluster of the EU Decentralised Agencies](#)'.

<sup>222</sup> The evaluation of the campaign on dangerous substances and interviews with focal points show that, without the campaign, they would not have been able to carry out so many activities, and those activities carried out would not have been of such good quality.

<sup>223</sup> Such as Central and Eastern and European countries.

<sup>224</sup> The 2019 version collected data from over 45 000 establishments in 33 countries across all sectors and consistently received high satisfaction ratings in the annual EU-OSHA survey.

#### 4.3.1 CONTRIBUTION TO EU POLICY PRIORITIES

The four Agencies developed their work programmes in response to EU policies and priorities. **There was a clear link between EU priorities and the Agencies' key programming and reporting documents** – the Agencies' work was often referred to in EU policy documents. The expertise of the Agencies' staff was leveraged to inform policy and programme development. Table 8 in Annex VII shows Agencies' outputs corresponding to the Commission's 2019-2024 strategic priorities. See also Annex IX for examples of the Agencies' work that contributes to EU policy needs.

**EUROFOUND** closely aligned its activities with DG EMPL's three main areas of action: supporting the European Semester, fostering stronger social dialogue and promoting decent and safe working conditions for all<sup>225</sup>.

**EU-OSHA** successfully contributed to the EU's OSH legislation and strategies. Tools for OSH management, especially OiRA, have contributed to EU policy needs by promoting a culture of prevention, particularly in small and medium-sized companies.

**CEDEFOP** closely aligned its work with EU upskilling and reskilling policies, in particular the European Skills Agenda, the Council recommendations on VET, the Osnabrück Declaration and the Digital Education action plan<sup>226</sup>.

**The ETF** closely aligned its work with EU policy priorities. The agency also significantly contributed to the EU's external relations policies and programmes. While the **ETF's** work is highly relevant, its close relations with different Commission departments led to competing expectations about the geographical scope and focus of its activities (e.g. focusing on INTPA countries versus neighbourhood/candidate countries). Consequently, there is a need to clarify the agency's long-term vision and which of its activities should be prioritised.

#### 4.3.2 CONTRIBUTION TO ADDRESSING STAKEHOLDERS' NEEDS

**The Agencies' priorities, mandates and activities addressed their stakeholders' needs.** The Agencies were able to monitor and adjust to them thanks to their respective monitoring and feedback systems (dedicated user surveys<sup>227</sup> or participatory activities<sup>228</sup>).

Over 90% of **EU-OSHA** stakeholders and over 75% of **ETF**, **Cedefop** and **Eurofound** stakeholders considered that the Agencies met at least partially their needs (evaluation feedback survey – see Figure 3). Analysis by stakeholder group (to be treated with caution as the sample is relatively small) shows that over 80% of trade unions and consultancy organisations found **Eurofound's** activities and output very relevant to their work. This figure was around 45% for the EU institutions and national governments.

On **Cedefop**, 75% of trade union respondents considered the Agency's activities and outputs to be very relevant, compared to 42% of employer institutions and VET providers. A 2022 user

<sup>225</sup> DG EMPL (2020), '[Annual Activity Report 2019](#)'.

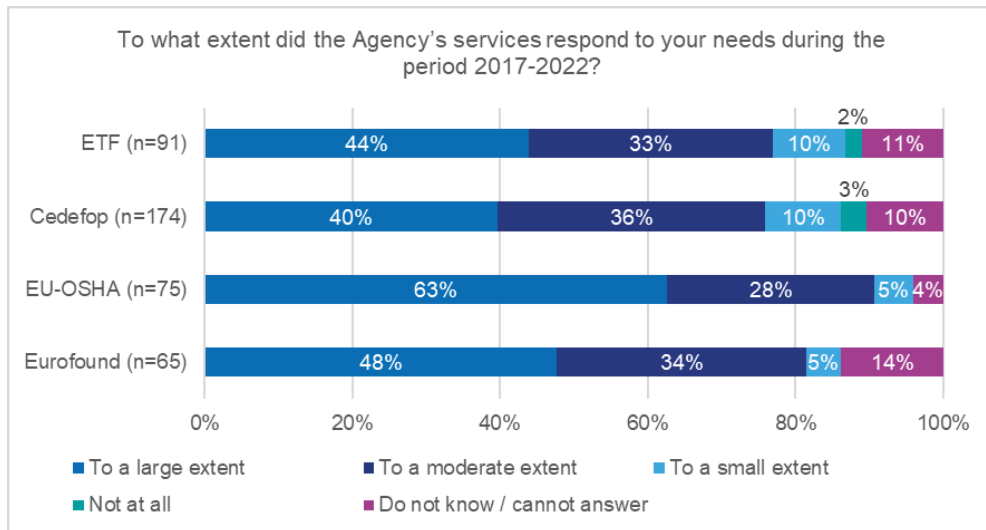
<sup>226</sup> European Commission (2018), '[Communication on the Digital Education Action Plan](#)'.

<sup>227</sup> Used by Cedefop, Eurofound, and EU-OSHA.

<sup>228</sup> Used by ETF through the Torino Process.

satisfaction survey suggests that Cedefop output related to forecasts and future trends are the most valuable<sup>229</sup>. Nonetheless, a limited number of trade union representatives argued that the agency should not focus as much on micro-credentials and individual learning outcomes. Other stakeholders indicated that the agency could respond more quickly to emerging trends and have a greater focus at regional level.

**Figure 4: Stakeholder survey responses on the extent to which the Agencies' services responded to their needs**



Source: Stakeholder survey.

Regarding the ETF, 75% of research or consultancy organisations considered the agency's outputs and activities most relevant, compared to about 50% of VET providers and EU institutions. A Policy Delphi review from 2018 found that partner country stakeholders found the ETF's outputs related to VET governance, the modernisation of VET systems, the facilitation of labour market reforms, and support for more effective skills and employability policies to be highly useful<sup>230</sup>. Moreover, the agency received 100% positive feedback on its support to EU services from 2017 to 2020.

Taken together, the survey, public consultation and other evaluation feedback suggests that greater efforts are needed to increase the visibility and uptake of ETF resources at national level

<sup>231</sup>.

Figure 4 above shows that EU-OSHA had the lowest proportion of stakeholder survey respondents who indicated that the agency's activities and outputs were only slightly or not at all relevant to their work. Stakeholders highlighted the agency's outputs such as ESENER-2 data (which was used by research organisations for studies<sup>232</sup>), the healthy workplaces campaign

<sup>229</sup> PPMI (2022), User satisfaction survey 2022.

<sup>230</sup> PPMI (2018), Evaluation of the ETF Functions: Policy Delphi Results 1st round: June/July 2018.

<sup>231</sup> For examples, see: PPMI (2018), Evaluation of the ETF Functions: Policy Delphi Results 1st round: June/July 2018. and PPMI (2022), Evaluation of the ETF Monitoring and Assessment.

<sup>232</sup> Iñigo I. and Corral A. (IKEI) (2018), 'Ex-post evaluation of the Second European Survey of Enterprises on new and emerging Risks (ESENER-2)'.

(which enriched national policy debate on OSH<sup>233</sup>) and activities on strategic and operational networking (which was rated very highly in a recent user feedback survey<sup>234</sup>). While the OiRA tool for OSH management has been widely used by EU-OSHA’s stakeholders, there is room to improve the tool by making the layout more appealing<sup>235</sup>.

Stakeholders and staff from Cedefop, EU-OSHA and Eurofound pointed out that different stakeholder groups may perceive relevance differently; therefore, meeting all stakeholder needs can be a challenge. Nevertheless, Cedefop, EU-OSHA and Eurofound all balanced different stakeholders’ needs effectively. In particular, for EU-OSHA, the tripartite structure of the management board was seen as fostering a strong level of ownership among stakeholders that contributed to the effective delivery of the agency’s work programme<sup>236</sup>.



**Figure 5: Stakeholder survey responses on the extent to which they were able to provide input on the Agencies’ priorities, activities and/or outputs**

Source: Stakeholder survey.

While the Agencies’ activities and outputs were largely aligned with stakeholder needs, **more opportunities could be given to stakeholders to provide feedback** and shape the Agencies’ approaches. Figure 5 shows that, for both EU-OSHA and Eurofound, over two thirds of stakeholders indicated they were able to shape the Agencies’ priorities to a large or moderate extent. However, a lower proportion of ETF and Cedefop stakeholders indicated the same level of influence. The ETF is the only one of the four Agencies that does not regularly conduct user satisfaction surveys.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war of aggression against Ukraine have not changed the relevance of the Agencies’ mandates or work. Each agency adapted its work programme where relevant and feasible to respond to the two crises by producing additional targeted output. Looking ahead, **the Agencies are already working on highly relevant future trends, such as climate change and digitalisation**, which stakeholders agree as important areas of focus. However, stakeholders also highlighted demographic change as a fundamental area of work, given Europe’s ageing population (see Figure 13, Annex VII). The Agencies’ mandates are already broad enough to accommodate these megatrends and the work programmes already include them to stay aligned with EU policy needs (see Section 4.1.1.4). Therefore, there is no need to modify the Agencies’ mandates or intervention logics.

## 5. WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED?

### 5.1. CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.1.1. EFFECTIVENESS

<sup>233</sup> Ipsos (2020), ‘Evaluation of the Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2018-2019’.

<sup>234</sup> EU-OSHA (2022), Bi-annual stakeholder survey 2022.

<sup>235</sup> EU-OSHA (2023), [Summary - Risk assessment using OiRA at French workplaces: a qualitative study](#).

<sup>236</sup> Based on contributions at the study’s final validation workshop.

Based on the available evidence, the four Agencies operated effectively during the 2017-2022 evaluation period. **Overall, the Agencies achieved many of their general, specific and operational objectives to a high degree**, as was the case during the previous 2011-2016 evaluation period. There is however room for improvement in certain areas (see Section 5.2. on lessons-learned)

#### Operational objectives (activities)

**The four Agencies completed the activities and outputs set out in their work programmes to a high level**, despite budget and staff limitations and the COVID-19 pandemic. Delivery against key performance targets was good.

While the Agencies have improved their communication and dissemination activities (including increased social media use and presence) the evaluation highlighted scope for improvement in that field.

#### Specific objectives (results)

The four Agencies achieved to a great extent the expected result of providing EU (and ETF Partner Countries) policymakers and stakeholders with high-quality information to support relevant policies. The evidence suggests that **the quality of the Agencies' outputs, as well as the use of these outputs by stakeholders, was high**.

Use of outputs - The Agencies' KPI as well as staff and stakeholder consultations indicate that each of the Agencies' services and outputs have been used by their key stakeholders. *Use has increased compared to the previous evaluation period and is more widespread across the EU institutions compared to international or national stakeholders.*

Quality of outputs – *The user satisfaction of the Agencies' outputs was very high (and has even increased for Cedefop compared with the previous period).*

For each Agency, the outputs that were most used and of the highest quality were:

Eurofound - research related to COVID-19 and on working and living conditions, the three pan-European surveys (as in the previous period), and work on minimum wages;

Cedefop - skills anticipation and matching, monitoring and analysing VET policy developments and promoting access to and the VET's appeal;

ETF – predicting skills demand, monitoring and diagnostics reports, innovative teaching and learning and vocational excellence provision models;

EU-OSHA – the OiRA tool and the healthy workplaces campaigns.

However, other results were achieved to a lesser extent, particularly for the ETF. Unlike agencies operating under EU boundaries, support to partner countries is naturally limited by external factors beyond the ETF's control, such as insecurity, political instability, and economic volatility. The ETF's achievement of results depends, to some extent, on the willingness of partner countries to engage with the support offered by the ETF.

#### Impacts: achievement of the general objectives

**Each Agency achieved its general objectives, by positively contributing to EU policy making and implementation in the policy areas established in its mandate. Overall, the activities and outputs of the Agencies were aligned to the Commission's priorities and adapted well to changes in EU policies (as in the previous evaluation period).**

Examples of the most significant impacts include:

Eurofound: the work on digitalisation and new and non-standard forms of work (including the platform economy) helped the Commission and other EU bodies to underpin the EU legislative initiative on platform work.

Cedefop: the evidence and data gathered by Cedefop contributed to the renewed European Skills Agenda, the first Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration. Cedefop has therefore contributed to improving policies on VET, skills and qualifications.

EU-OSHA made a significant contribution to the EU's strategic frameworks on health and safety at work. It strongly supported policymaking with its work on COVID-19 and two healthy workplace campaigns.

ETF supported policymaking by improving the adaptation of VET governance to evolving skills demand and labour market transitions. Its work also helped to improve labour market policies and practices and informed EU external relations policy.

**In addition, the Agencies generated wider impacts and demonstrated adaptability by responding, within the scope of their mandates, to unexpected events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.**

Eurofound leveraged its longstanding work on structural changes in policy debates on how the COVID-19 pandemic was accelerating change in the workplace.

Cedefop supported the integration of Ukrainian refugees into VET.

The ETF played a key role in facilitating Commission support to Ukraine in response to Russia's war of aggression. The ETF's longstanding presence in and expertise on Eastern Partnership countries prepared the Agency for this unexpected role.

EU-OSHA's healthy workplace campaigns contributed to improved social dialogue and cooperation among the national governments and social partners.

### **5.1.2. EFFICIENCY**

The available evidence shows that **overall, the four Agencies were cost-effective**. This was the case also in the previous evaluation. They lowered costs through a variety of measures while maintaining the quality of their outputs. The cost-effectiveness analysis of the key activities concluded that, for most of them, there was no scope to reduce costs without compromising quality. Stakeholders continued to highly rate the Agencies' expertise and outputs and had a generally positive view of the Agencies' cost-effectiveness.

During the evaluation period, **the Agencies took a variety of cost-saving measures to boost cost-effectiveness**. For instance, joint procurement and sharing accounting services, identifying deliverables where costs could be shared (e.g. the joint Eurofound-Cedefop European company

survey), and investing in actions that lead to long-term savings (e.g. increasing office energy efficiency, dissemination of digital rather than print outputs). The rise in digital usage during the COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to cost savings.

However, the assessment of administrative costs, staff allocation, and monitoring and reporting systems shows that **the four Agencies have the potential to reduce the administrative burden and simplify processes even further**. In this context, it should be noted that, during the reporting period, a higher proportion of administrative staff than two other Agencies – the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

#### Monitoring and reporting systems

During the evaluation period, the four Agencies have developed internal control frameworks to monitor, report and evaluate their activities. These frameworks cover financial, human resources, and core business performance. They allow for a broad assessment of how resources are spent and translated into the planned outputs.

Despite these positive developments, **the evaluation highlighted that the Agencies should continue to work on their monitoring and reporting systems**. There is room to: (i) improve **their monitoring systems and KPIs to better define targets and assess the scale of success/achievement of results; and (ii) simplify reporting**. Such simplifications would help to reduce further the workload of administrative staff while maintaining the Agencies' capacity to ensure accountability and assess performance.

#### Agencies' governance

The tripartite governance of Eurofound, Cedefop, and EU-OSHA offers significant advantages, such as representation, strategic direction, and knowledge-sharing facilitated by government representatives and social partners. However, a primary challenge comes from the size of management boards and the number of voting members who must navigate compromises not only on the Agencies' core businesses but also on administrative decisions, budgets, and infrastructure.

**The evaluation explored alternative governance models with different ways to involve the social partners**. Although expenditures on the larger boards are higher, they can be reduced to some extent through hybrid meetings. However, the size of tripartite management boards and the diversity of participating stakeholders raises questions about how to ensure that the discussions remain focused, and how to efficiently use stakeholder expertise in board meetings given that operations, budget, and administration can overshadow core business topics. **While stakeholder expertise is an asset that contributes to the Agencies' work and cannot be compromised for the sake of financial efficiency, other models may allow involving stakeholders in an equally effective, but more efficient manner**.

### **5.1.3 COHERENCE**

#### Coherence among the Agencies

**The four Agencies cooperated more actively and intensively than before 2017.** Cooperation among the Agencies moved beyond passive information sharing and took place: (i) in a variety of forms (joint research, tool development, events and publications); (ii) on a variety of topics (labour markets, vocational education and training, skills, qualifications, health and safety at work, and the working environment); and (iii) at several levels (board level, project / initiative level, administrative functions, such as HR/finance). **This cooperation led to a higher degree of coherence among the Agencies.**

The assessment of the coherence across the four Agencies' mandates shows that there are some overlaps in the thematic areas of the mandates (e.g. Cedefop and ETF, both dealing with VET; Eurofound, Cedefop and ETF on skills mismatches). However, these overlaps do not materialise in activity or output duplications because the Agencies approach these topics from different angles based on their expertise. **As a result, the Agencies have complemented rather than duplicated their work.** The Agencies have intensified inter-agency cooperation, producing more joint outputs based on the common thematic areas. In fact, the current evaluation has not found any example of duplication of activities.

Regarding the potential for mergers between the four Agencies, and based on the cross-cutting analysis of the four Agencies' mandates and activities, as well as the fact that the current Agencies mandates have remained unchanged, **the evaluation has not found evidence to change the conclusions from the previous 2019 evaluation. The 2019 evaluation concluded that: (i) merger options show difficulties in balancing positive and negative effects; and (ii) efficiency can be improved through better cooperation.**

Concerning a potential merger of the European Labour Authority (ELA) with any of the other four EMPL Agencies, the ELA's highly specialised mission and its very distinct types of activities do not suggest significant overlaps with the mandates of other agencies.

#### Coherence between the Agencies and other stakeholders

**The four Agencies' mandates and activities continued to be coherent with DG EMPL and EU policies.** The mandates and work of the Agencies were in line with the Commission's strategic priorities for 2019 to 24. The thematic areas covered by the Agencies were coherent with DG EMPL's policies and the policies of other relevant Commission departments.

**Cooperation between the Agencies and DG EMPL was good** even though there remains scope for even stronger cooperation. DG EMPL participated in each Agency's Management / Governing Board and commented on the Agencies work programmes. Day-to-day coordination also took place at operational level.

The four Agencies continued to cooperate with other relevant EU decentralised agencies, in particular, through the EU Agencies Network (EUAN). The four Agencies also intensified cooperation with international organisations, such as the ILO, the OECD, UNESCO. Cooperation with the recently established ELA has begun.

#### **5.1.4. EU ADDED VALUE**

**The four Agencies generated EU added value across a range of areas**, as was the case in the previous evaluation. Stakeholders particularly appreciated the EU added value in relation to the “quality of information produced, specific thematic knowledge not available elsewhere and European coverage of the publications, surveys and data, and a focus on EU policy needs”.

The degree of EU added value varied according to each Agency’s specific mandate and area of work. Eurofound ranked highly in terms of European coverage / EU level comparability. Cedefop performed well in terms of quality of information produced. The ETF ranked highest in terms of representing the Commission’s external dimension in partner countries. EU-OSHA ranked particularly highly in terms of awareness raising.

Other examples of EU added value provided by the Agencies are:

- for Eurofound, a key area of EU added value are its surveys, providing unique insights into key living and working topics on a comparable basis. Eurofound scored highly in terms of its EU-wide comparable data which is reliable and has continuity over the years, and its thematic coverage.

- for Cedefop, added value arose from publications, surveys, and data with a unique thematic and European coverage, including the work on skills anticipation and forecasting. Also, for the tools and repositories shared across the EU, such as the financing adult learning database, the European Skill Index (ESI) and the Skills Online Vacancy Analysis Tool for Europe (Skills OVATE).

- for the ETF, its EU added value arose from its specific expertise in policies of both the EU and partner countries, which does not exist at such a scale within other EU institutions or partner countries. Stakeholders also praised the added value of the ETF’s work in respect of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine.

- EU-OSHA was valued particularly highly for its support to Member States and thematic coverage that adds a European dimension to the work of national health and safety agencies. This added value was particularly high in countries with less developed OSH systems. Key tools that provided EU added value include the ESENER survey, the healthy workplaces campaigns and the OiRA.

Overall, most stakeholders indicated that other organisations could only substitute to a small extent or not at all the Agencies’ services, and that ending the Agencies would affect their work. This suggests the Agencies generate strong EU added value as they make a distinct contribution that cannot be replaced.

### **5.1.5 RELEVANCE**

**The activities, objectives and mandates of the Agencies were highly relevant and responded to both EU policy and stakeholders’ needs.** EU policies and priority areas were reflected in key programming documents. The work of the Agencies was often referred to in EU and other policy documents. Feedback from stakeholders also suggests that the Agencies responded to their needs.

No issues were identified which would put into question the future relevance of the mandates or work of the Agencies. The Agencies already work on highly relevant future trends, such as

climate change and digitalisation. The Agencies' stakeholders agree with the policy focus of the Agencies, but also pointed out that the 'mega-trend' of an ageing population could receive greater attention from the Agencies.

The Agencies demonstrated adaptability by responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine with additional targeted deliverables where relevant and feasible.

The Agencies responded promptly and transparently to audit recommendations.

## 5.2. LESSONS-LEARNED

### 5.2.1. GENERAL LESSONS-LEARNED FOR ALL AGENCIES

#### Effectiveness

1. **Overall, the use of and the quality of the four Agencies' outputs is high.** However, **communication and dissemination could be further improved to better reach target audiences.** The agencies could: (i) produce more 'tailored' outputs; and (ii) consider dedicating an appropriate level of budget and focus to the dissemination and communication activities (see Section 4.1.1.1.).

2. The four Agencies could **explore how to better engage with the national level**, developing a more targeted approach to awareness-raising and dissemination to better reach target audiences in Member States and the ETF partner countries (see Section 4.1.1.1. and Annex VIII).

3. The four Agencies contribute well to relevant EU political priorities and have incorporated the key EU themes into their work. The Agencies could continue to ensure that: (i) **they address key themes such as green and digital transitions; and (ii) outputs related to key themes are properly disseminated** so that stakeholders are aware of the Agencies' efforts in these areas (see Section 4.1.1.5.).

#### Efficiency

4. There may be scope for the four Agencies **to further reduce their administrative burden and simplify processes.** The Agencies could: (i) examine how to further reduce their administrative burden on staff to maintain sustainable workload (e.g. further scope for cooperation and synergies between the Agencies); and (ii) reduce the share of staff engaged in administrative activities and increase the share of staff focused on the Agencies' operations (see Section 4.1.2.).

5. The four Agencies could consider **cutting costs and increasing cost-effectiveness** by organising more hybrid or online meetings where possible, and without compromising the Agencies' outreach/presence among stakeholders. The Agencies could also further prioritise

activities and outputs, using transparent criteria agreed with their governance bodies (see Section 4.1.2.4.).

6. **Eurofound, Cedefop and EU-OSHA could consider how to address the balance between research needs and budgetary restrictions.** They could explore additional funding possibilities, as was successfully by the ETF while remaining within the scope of their mandates (see Section 3.1.1.).

7. The governance of the tripartite Agencies offers significant advantages, such as representation, strategic direction, and knowledge-sharing facilitated by government and social partner representatives from all Member States. At the same time, due to their larger size, the Agencies' management boards have relatively high operating costs, meetings tend to be long and complex to manage, decision-making can be challenging, and the overall management can be burdensome.

Where deemed necessary, **a case-by-case exploration of the governance arrangements could be carried out** while giving due consideration to the importance of social dialogue and the role of social partners in tripartite agencies. In this context, the future results from the ongoing ELA evaluation could be considered, as relevant, taking also into account the different nature of the respective governance arrangements (see Section 4.1.2.5.).

8. While the four Agencies' control mechanisms are effective and overall efficient, **the Agencies could review and significantly improve their monitoring systems, including KPIs, to properly assess the scale of success of their interventions**, and to make the evaluations more useful in improving the Agencies' performance. This could be achieved by: (i) defining SMART objectives; (ii) identifying meaningful KPIs to measure result achievement; (iii) systematically setting targets for all KPIs; (iv) filling data gaps (v) further harmonising and aligning indicators across the Agencies; and (vi) better monitoring of services / outputs use at national level. Moreover, the Agencies could **further streamline monitoring processes and tools** (streamlining of reporting) (see Section 1.1.2. and 4.1.2.3.).

### Coherence

9. **The Agencies could continue to explore shared or central services**, where this adds value. This covers functions such as HR, legal and IT, and more specialist and technical roles (such as cyber security, employment statistics, and labour market economics) (see Section 4.1.2.4. and 4.1.3.2.).

10. **The Agencies could explore shared office space**, using the Brussels Liaison Office, to contribute to both coherence and efficiency (see Section 4.1.3.2.).

11. **The Agencies could continue to explore with the Commission those areas in which working together brings most added value** to quality of outputs and stakeholders' use. These include cooperation between Eurofound and Cedefop on the European company survey,

Cedefop and the ETF on VET policy monitoring, and Eurofound and EU-OSHA at the intersection of working environment, working conditions and occupational health and safety, including psychosocial risks and a focus on climate and environmental health issues. (Section 4.1.2.4. and 4.1.3.2.).

12. Better coordination could be needed between Cedefop, the ELA and Eurofound to avoid duplication and ensure completeness and consistency in areas concerning skills forecast and labour shortages, while joint products in this domain should be considered (see Section 4.1.3.1.).

#### EU added value

13. **The Agencies' visibility could be strengthened**, notably vis-à-vis EU citizens, businesses at national level, other EU decentralised agencies, and NGOs. The Agencies could, where resources permit, reach out to relevant NGOs as potential multipliers to increase the reach and dissemination of the Agencies' outputs (see Section 4.2.2.2.).

#### Relevance

14. The Agencies already work on 'megatrends' such as climate change and digitalisation. The Agencies could also provide added value by also considering the implications of an ageing population (see Section 4.3.2.).

### **5.2.2. LESSONS-LEARNED FOR INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES**

#### **5.2.2.1 EUROFOUND**

15. While general satisfaction with Eurofound outputs is high, the Agency could add value for stakeholders by: (i) developing its digital content and making its products more visual (country comparisons, survey research, policy evaluations, qualitative research, datasets); and (ii) providing more in-depth outputs, with more methodological explanation to help stakeholders interpret findings (see Section 4.1.1.1.).

16. Evidence from external and internal consultations suggests Eurofound could try to increase stakeholder participation in its services and activities (see Section 4.1.1.1.).

17. Training could be further developed by producing formal guidance and a more structured approach that supports ongoing learning for staff (see Section 4.1.1.2.).

18. In a context of limited operational budgets, Eurofound could continue to reflect on the cost/quality trade-off between face-to-face and CATI / online surveys methods. Any decision about carrying out these surveys online (for cost-efficiency reasons) needs to ensure that these surveys continue to provide high quality and representative data (see Section 4.1.1.1.).

19. Eurofound could, together with the Commission and the social partners, review the approach to conducting representativeness studies, as also mentioned in the [2023 Commission Communication on strengthening social dialogue](#) (see Section 4.2.1.).

#### **5.2.2.2. CEDEFOP**

20. Cedefop could explore how to increase user numbers, for example in academia and with VET providers (see Section 4.1.1.1.).

21. Cedefop working arrangements with the management board could benefit from being reviewed to increase efficiency and effectiveness, including a clearer orientation of agenda items towards policy topics rather than administrative matters (see Section 4.1.2.5.).

22. Cedefop could cooperate and align with other agencies on KPIs and introduce a KPI on a quantitative work programme delivery that would be reported on in agency annual reports (see Section 1.1.2. pages 3-4 and Section 4.1.2.3.).

23. Evidence from stakeholder survey suggests that Cedefop could consider providing more possibilities for stakeholders, outside the management board, to provide input on its activities (e.g. VET providers), and explore how to improve the extent to which its services correspond to the needs of its stakeholders (see Section 4.3.2.).

#### **5.2.2.3. ETF**

24. The ETF could reflect on how to support partner countries that do not participate in the voluntary strand of the Torino Process (see Section 1.1.1.1.).

25. The ETF could work to improve the gender balance among its staff (see Section 4.1.2.2.).

26. The ETF could investigate how to improve internal monitoring, especially monitoring and evaluating, overcoming data gaps, and linking specific targets to reporting data (see Sections 1.1.2. and 4.1.2.3.).

27. The ETF already cooperates with several relevant international organisations. It could proactively develop cooperation with international donors and international financial institutions as international human capital development actors are diversifying (see Section 4.1.3.5.).

28. The ETF is well embedded in EU policy structures through structured dialogue with its partner Commission departments (DGs EMPL, INTPA and NEAR in particular). Despite these efforts, challenges remain as the latter have competing priorities and varied visions for the ETF. The ETF could develop a joint long-term vision together with DG EMPL and its partner Commission departments to focus its efforts and resources on the areas of greatest impact and need (see Section 4.1.3.3.).

29. In its work with partner countries, the ETF could further cooperate with EIGE on gender equality, and with ELA on digital work and job mobility (see Sections 4.1.3.4. and 4.1.3.1.).

30. Efforts to tailor national activities could continue, through sensitivity to partner country needs, awareness of the policy cycle and maintaining regular contacts (see Section 4.1.1.1.).

31. While the ETF's activities provide significant EU added value to most stakeholders, cooperation with businesses and social partners could be further strengthened (see Section 4.2.2.2.).

32. The ETF could work on improving the relevance of its outputs for stakeholder in the areas of: (i) capacity building of teachers and trainers and support for work-based learning; and (ii) specific partner country needs (see Section 4.1.1.1.).

33. The ETF could provide more opportunities for stakeholders, in particular partner countries, to provide suggestions and feedback on its services including through a user satisfaction survey (see Section 4.3.2.).

#### **5.2.2.4. EU-OSHA**

34. EU-OSHA could consider how to adapt its outputs to target audience needs and increase reader numbers. A distinction could be made between outputs destined for workplaces and those for OSH professionals/researchers, as workplaces often require short documents with infographics or visuals summarising key information (see Section 4.1.1.1.).

35. EU-OSHA could review how well its activities meet stakeholder needs on the topics of an ageing society and the green and digital transitions (see Section 4.1.1.1.).

36. While EU-OSHA impact on supporting health and safety policies is overall very good, it could further increase its impact by exploring how to better support countries that are less advanced in OSH. Such efforts may depend on available resources (see Section 4.2.2.1.).

37. EU-OSHA has already improved the translation quality to increase the usability of its work. Strict quality assurance mechanisms for the original English text could be considered to increase cost-effectiveness (see Section 4.1.1.1.).

38. EU-OSHA could improve the cost-effectiveness of procurement and contracting procedures for instance by diversifying, when possible, the contractor base through better dissemination and publicity (see Section 4.1.2.4.).

39. EU-OSHA is very well embedded in the broader EU policy governance structure and cooperation with the relevant Commission departments greatly intensified during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. EU-OSHA could however, depending on the available resources, consider developing cooperation with additional Commission departments<sup>237</sup> (e.g. on SME policies, with DG JUST, DG FISMA, DG GROW, and with EASME, the executive Agency for SMEs). EU-OSHA could also increase efforts to disseminate research findings in the

Commission's publications and increase the visibility of its work in DG GROW's Europe Enterprise Network (see Section 4.1.3.3).

40. EU-OSHA already cooperates well with the other three Agencies covered by the evaluation. Stronger cooperation could take place on areas such as the green and digital transitions, climate change, and foresight studies. Cooperation with the ELA has the potential to be strengthened, notably in relation to OSH implementation and workplace working conditions. The [Framework for cooperation between EU-OSHA and ELA](#) signed by these Agencies in May 2023 is a good example of a realistic approach to how cooperation could be strengthened (see Section 4.1.3.1.).

## ANNEX I: PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

### Lead DG, Decide Planning/CWP references

The evaluation was led by the Directorate-General for Employment, Inclusion and Social Affairs, with a Decide planning reference PLAN/2022/487.

### Organisation and timing

An **inter-service steering group** (ISG) was set up, coordinated by the Directorate-General for Employment, Inclusion and Social Affairs (represented by staff from the Better Regulation unit, the four lead units in charge of the Agencies, and the coordination unit) and including members from Eurostat, the Secretariat-General, and the Directorates-Generals for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC); International Partnerships (INTPA); Budget (BUDG); Human Resources and Security (HR); Neighbourhood & Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR); Migration and Home Affairs (HOME); Justice and Consumers (JUST); Health and Food Safety (SANTE); and the Joint Research Centre (JRC).

The ISG also acted as steering group for the **external study** supporting the evaluation, which was carried out by Ecorys. Contract VC/2022/0294 was awarded after reopening of competition (tender VT/2022/015) within the multiple framework contract VC/2021/0336). The contract VC/2021/0381 started on 17 October 2022. The draft final report of the external study was received on 21 August 2023, the inter-service steering group provided comments by 20 September 2023 and the contractor delivered the revised final report on 12 January 2024, along with the agreed annexes (including an annex on the stakeholders' consultation).

The **call for evidence** published on 2 March 2023 explained the context, purpose and scope of the evaluation and informed stakeholders that an external evaluation study was being carried out, supported by a public consultation. The **public consultation** was open for 12 weeks from 2 March 2023 to 25 May 2023. The factual summary was published on 6 July 2023. **Targeted consultations** were carried out mainly within Q1 and Q2-2023. See Annex V for further details on the stakeholder consultations carried out.

### Exceptions to the better regulation guidelines

All Better Regulation requirements were fulfilled.

### Consultation of the RSB (if applicable)

The evaluation was selected for the scrutiny of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board. The evaluation staff working document was discussed at the meeting on 28 February 2024. The Regulatory Scrutiny Board issued a positive opinion with reservations on 29 February 2024. Table 2 below shows how this report took into account the RSB comments before launching the inter-service consultation.

### Evidence, sources and quality

The evaluation was based on the evidence collection and analysis carried out by external experts (contract with Ecorys to carry out the supporting study, see above).

Annex II provides additional information on the methodological approach taken. To ensure quality, the ISG provided feedback throughout all steps of the evaluation process, and the four Agencies evaluation staff was consulted on each study deliverable to ensure accuracy of the factual information and data.

**Table 1: Chronological overview of the evidence collection process**

Date	Type of activity
27.04.2022	ISG meeting to discuss the Tender specifications
18.05.2022	Launch Request for services
16.06.2022	Offers received
17.10.2022	Signature of Contract
23.10.2022	ISG meeting: kick-off meeting with external contractor
5.12.2022	ISG Meeting: Inception external evaluation report and discussion about the consultation strategy and public consultation
2.03.2023- 25.05.2023	Publication of Call for Evidence and public consultation
19.04.2023	ISG Meeting: Interim external evaluation report
Q1-Q2 2023	Targeted consultations
21.08.2023	Draft final report
8.09.2023	ISG meeting: draft Final external evaluation report
10.10.2023	Revised draft Final external report
10.01.2024	ISG meeting on the draft Staff Working Document
12.01.2024	Receipt of final version of external report supporting the evaluation

**Table 2: How RSB comments have been addressed**

Opinion 29.02.2024 (RSB comments)	How and where comments have been addressed
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<p><b>Summary of findings:</b> The Board notes the additional information provided and commitments to make changes to the report. However, the report still contains significant shortcomings. The Board gives a positive opinion with reservations because it expects the DG to rectify the following aspects: (i) The report does not critically assess the usefulness, comparability, and robustness of the key indicators in assessing performance and success in reaching the specific objectives. (ii) The analysis of effectiveness, efficiency and the EU added value is not transparent in terms of methodology used and not sufficiently underpinned by evidence. (iii) The report does not sufficiently discuss the potential for simplification and cost reduction.</p>	<p>The SWD has been significantly amended in order to take on board the RSB comments contained in the 29 February opinion and in the quality checklist received from the RSB on 22 February. See below the main changes to address the points to improve.</p>
<p><b>What to improve:</b></p> <p>(1) The report should better analyse and discuss to what extent the indicators and the delivered outputs contribute to the effective delivery of the general and specific objectives given that several indicators lack targets and are presented in isolation (without two benchmarks or a clear context). It should provide the reader with clear evidence on how the agencies made a difference and added value by analysing the agencies' impact on knowledge creation and implementation of policies within their competence. The report should better discuss to what extent the absence of SMART objectives hinders both the determination and the presentation of what success looks like.</p>	<p>(1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SWD Section 4.1. on evaluation findings has been fine-tuned by adjusting the conclusions about the extent of success, in light of indicator limitations.</li> <li>• Section 4.1.1. on effectiveness in particular Subsection 4.1.1.1. B) on achievement of results presents an improved narrative that better links agencies outputs to the achievement of objectives and how the agencies made a difference.</li> <li>• The revised SWD provides a more detailed analysis of the agencies monitoring systems and their KPI limitations, including a new Subsection 1.2.2.1. Annex X, presents the KPIs and indicates which KPIs set targets.</li> <li>• Cases where indicators were presented in isolation have been reviewed and included benchmark/context (e.g. see new Figure 1 in Section 2.1. Annex VIII).</li> <li>• The SWD Section 1.2.2.2. on limitation now includes explicit reference to the absence of SMART objectives. The lessons learnt section also includes a clear message on the need for the Agencies to address these shortcomings.</li> </ul>
<p>(2) The report should more convincingly explain the scale of success using tangible evidence and transparent methodology to</p>	<p>(2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On ETF, the SWD sections on methodology (1.2.2.) and effectiveness (4.1.1) explain more clearly the difficulties to assess ETF success and the Agency's</li> </ul>

<p>support its assessments. For example, it should more clearly outline to what extent the European Training Foundation can be concluded as a success and why. Similarly, on coherence between the agencies, the report should specify which inter-agency cooperation has increased and delivered tangible gains.</p> <p>Since all four agencies produce and manage different data sets the report should also evaluate how effectively they are made available to other users avoiding overlaps or duplication.</p>	<p>specificity as regards achievement of results. This ETF point is also reflected in the conclusions section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On coherence between the agencies, SWD Section 4.1.3. has been simplified, and better explains what has changed in inter-agency cooperation compared to the previous evaluation period.</li> <li>• On data management, SWD Section 5.2. now explains how the Agencies interact with other Commission services, particularly Eurostat, to avoid duplications and exploit complementarities.</li> </ul>
<p>(3) The report should be a self-standing document in terms of its evidence base and the methodologies used. It should systematically make better use of the available evidence to improve the effectiveness analysis. It should bring the key evidence to the main report (from the annexes and the support study) to substantiate the upbeat conclusions on the agencies' achievements. It should be more explicit about addressing the limitations of the analysis related to the benchmarking, for example, because of lack of the quantitative targets for certain areas.</p> <p>It should better present the views from different stakeholder groups and when using the staff survey, it should be more explicit about the potential stakeholder bias.</p>	<p>(3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SWD has been revised to make it a more self-standing document. Additional evidence from the supporting study and the SWD annexes has been included in the main report. In particular, in the <u>effectiveness section</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The revised SWD presents a more granular assessment of the achievement of the agencies' specific objectives (Section 4.1.1.1. B.2), based on the broader evidence included in the supporting study.</li> <li>○ SWD Section 4.1.1.1. B.1 <i>Use of the Agencies' outputs</i> has been further developed using evidence from Annex VIII.</li> <li>○ A new Annex XII on achievement of results has been added, and its main findings are presented in the main text, in particular with an improved narrative to better reflect the limitations of the analysis.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>For the Efficiency criterion</u>, the revised SWD now includes additional evidence from the supporting study on cost-effectiveness analysis of key activities of each agency. This provides more robust evidence to underpin the efficiency findings. A new annex is provided based on Annex 6 of the supporting study <i>XI: Cost-effectiveness of key activities</i>.</li> <li>• <u>Presentation of stakeholders' views</u> has been developed to include perceptions from different stakeholder groups where feasible. In particular, staff perceptions on efficiency have been replaced with those from the stakeholder survey (see new Figure 12 Annex VII, on cost-effectiveness assessment by agency stakeholders). When the staff survey is referred to, potential bias has been made explicit (e.g. Section 4.1.3.3.)</li> </ul>

<p>(4) The report should significantly strengthen the EU added value assessment. Given that EU-added value arguments are primarily based on the agencies' own assessment, the report should substantiate the claims with the most relevant, impartial, and robust evidence.</p>	<p>(4) SWD Section 4.2. on added value has been fully redrafted. The structure has been simplified and the assessment of EU added value is underpinned by robust objective evidence, including external sources and stakeholder perceptions.</p>
<p>(5) The report should make better use of quantified estimates in the efficiency section. It should develop the REFIT dimension by more thoroughly looking at the potential for simplification and cost reduction. It should provide the total costs of the governance structures and indicate the cost saving potential that could result from related efficiency enhancing measures.</p>	<p>(5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The revised SWD includes in the main text the cost figures on governance savings from the supporting study (see new Table 5 in Section 4.1.2.5.).</li> <li>• The SWD text now includes figures on the potential cost savings from merging scenarios (see Section 4.1.3.7.). These figures are taken from Annex IX.</li> </ul>
<p>(6) The conclusions should be revised to reflect better the findings and be consistent with the outcome of the analysis. They should mirror the changes made in line with the recommendations from this opinion. The lessons learned should better discuss the need for an improved data management and monitoring system based on more SMART objectives.</p>	<p>(6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conclusions have been revised to better reflect the findings, finetuning the assessment of achievement of results and making explicit the ETF specificities in this regard.</li> <li>• General lesson learnt n° 8, on the need to improve the agencies monitoring systems, has been redrafted. A clear message is stated on the need to improve monitoring systems, not just for simplification, but also to improve performance assessment. The need to set concrete targets for all indicators, including result indicators is clearly stated and SMART objectives should be set for future evaluations.</li> </ul>

### **1. Overall approach to the evaluation work**

The main objective of this evaluation is to provide, for the four Agencies: Eurofound, Cedefop, the ETF and EU-OSHA, an assessment of their effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value and relevance, for the period 2017-2022<sup>238</sup>. The evaluation covers both an individual assessment of each Agency and a cross-cutting comparative perspective.

DG EMPL took a mixed approach to this evaluation, by relying on the work of external evaluators to: (i) collect and analyse the relevant evidence (including consultation work); (ii) provide initial answers to all evaluation questions; and (iii) present evidence-based conclusions and lessons-learned. The supporting study followed a mixed methods data collection approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research tools and sources to collect wide evidence on the four Agencies performance. The evaluation did not assess the performance of Agencies in each individual Member State and sector because of data and sampling constraints. Instead, it focused on evaluating the performance of the Agencies at a broader EU-level.

The overarching methodological approach was based on each Agency's Intervention Logic (see Annex VI), which formed the basis of the evaluation's analytical framework (see Annex III), encompassing the evaluation inquiries. To conduct the evaluation, the supporting study team completed six tasks (see Figure 1).

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<sup>238</sup> The legal basis of the named evaluation is set in the three tripartite Agencies (Eurofound, Cedefop, EU-OSHA) revised Founding Regulation and in Art. 24 (2) of ETF's Founding Regulation.

**Figure 1: Overview of methodology**



## **Task 1: Mapping of the Agencies' activities, outputs and results**

The aim of this task was to collect qualitative and quantitative information regarding the performance of the four EU Agencies, starting from 2016, which was the baseline year, up to 2022. The findings of the task were used to conduct a first assessment of each Agency's performance, pre-populate the relevant Agency-specific reports (see supporting study Annexes 1 to 4). The findings were also used to inform subsequent tasks, with a specific focus placed on finding out potential gaps in the evidence-base, to be addressed through primary data collection methods.

### Subtask 1.1 - Qualitative data review

This subtask consisted in a desk-based review of analytical and documentary evidence relating to the Agencies' operations. Evidence was gathered using the sources.

- EU-level documents governing the legal framework of EU decentralised agencies and Eurofound, Cedefop, EU-OSHA and the ETF as well as other reports produced by EU institutions.
- Previous external and internal evaluations, analytical studies and audit reports.
- Studies, documents and reports prepared by the Agencies.

The planning, monitoring and reporting documentation produced by the Agencies as well as other internal administrative documentation related to the Agencies' operational and administrative processes and governance structures.

After the selection of relevant documents, the research team developed a coding framework to dissect the relevant information with the view to answering the evaluation questions.

### Subtask 1.2 - Quantitative data review

This subtask consisted in a desk-based review of the Agencies' monitoring data against their performance indicators. Information was gathered using planning, monitoring and reporting documentation produced by the Agencies (e.g. in their annual activity reports, annual accounts, etc.) as well as other internal administrative documentation related to the Agencies' operational and administrative processes and governance structures. The research team used a quantitative mapping framework to analyse the achievement of the indicators by Agency, year, expected target and level of achievement.

## **Task 2: Consultation activities**

The consultation activities aimed at gathering the views of a broad range of stakeholders which were concerned by the Agency's activities.

### Subtask 2.1. Interview programme

The interviews aimed at collecting detailed information from stakeholders directly involved in the Agencies' operations, their target groups, and stakeholders working in similar policy and thematic areas.

The team conducted a total of 157 semi-structured interviews as part of these targeted consultations. This type of interview had an interview guide that served as a checklist of topics to be covered and a default wording and order for the questions. However, neither the wording

nor the order of questions was fixed in stone, while additional questions were spontaneously included as a follow up to what the interviewees' said. Two types of interviews were included in the targeted consultations.

A total of 137 agency-specific interviews were carried out with key staff members, members of the executive and managing / governing boards, as well as relevant stakeholders, such as social partners. Most of these interviews were conducted in person, whereas a set of interviews were conducted online. The purpose of these interviews was to gather detailed insights that were not available in the literature review and were challenging to capture using the closed-ended questions employed in the rest of the consultation activities. The number of interviews conducted were:

- 29 interviews for Eurofound;
- 46 interviews for Cedefop;
- 28 interviews for ETF; and
- 34 interviews for EU-OSHA.

Twenty high-level interviews were carried out with key stakeholders (DG EMPL, other Commission departments and institutions, authorities or committees), and international institutions representatives. The purpose of these interviews was to test the intervention logics of the evaluation as well as initial insights on the quality and relevance of the Agencies' activities.

Topic guides were tailored to the various roles, governance levels, and areas of expertise of the stakeholders consulted. Researchers took detailed notes during each interview. These notes were written up in a structured format using a coding framework to facilitate the analysis.

Interpreting the interview data was an iterative process. On the one hand, the research team compared the views of stakeholders to find areas of consensus, and disagreement. On the other hand, the research team also compared the views of stakeholders with the available evidence from Task 1 as well as from the rest of the consultation activities, to triangulate the evidence.

#### Subtask 2.2. Public consultation

The research team assisted the Commission in conducting the public consultation. The aim of this consultation was to gather wider feedback on the performance of the Agencies from relevant stakeholders.

The public consultation, in contrast to *Subtask 2.3. Staff and stakeholder survey*, focused on the evaluation criteria that were more suited for respondents like the general public to provide input on. It therefore excluded questions around the Agencies' efficiency.

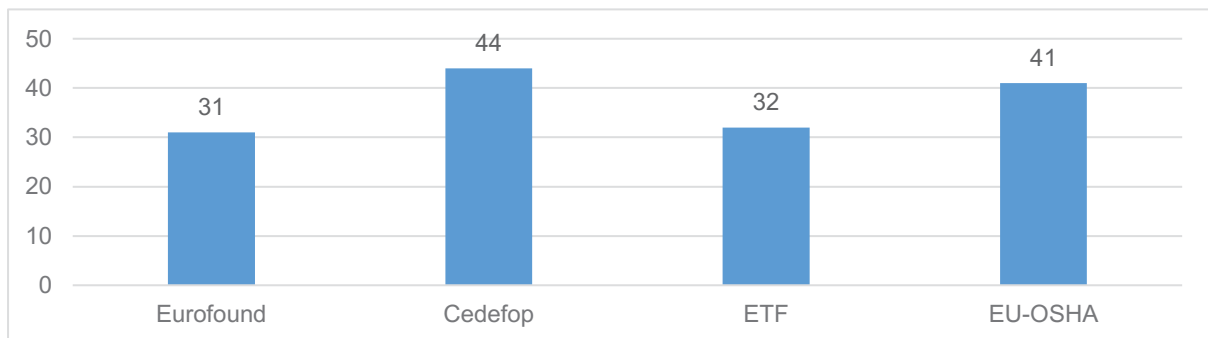
The consultation was made available in all official EU languages and remained open for 12 weeks, from 1 March to 25 May 2023, in line with the Better Regulation guidelines. The consultation's questionnaire included both close- and open-ended questions. To disseminate it, the research team followed a snowball sampling approach and invited the Agencies as well as relevant organisations at EU-level to share it with their membership. Dissemination efforts by the Agencies included email campaigns, as well as sharing the news on the consultation in their

respective websites, newsletters, social media, and email signatures, for example, in the case of Cedefop. In turn, dissemination efforts from the research team included sharing the consultation’s questionnaire with the Members of the European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs via email, reaching out to relevant organisations at EU-level, as well as making regular posts about it on corporate social media accounts, leveraging, where possible, existing networks, such as the European Alliance for Apprenticeships LinkedIn page.

Examples of relevant organisations at EU-level that were contacted included the European Trade Union Confederation, BusinessEurope, the European Vocational Training Association, the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training, the Partnership for European Research in Occupational Safety and Health, IndustriAll Europe, the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers, the European Transport Workers’ Federation, Eurocommerce, Industry4Europe, the European Logistics Association, the European Safety Federation and others. Despite the continuous efforts from the research team and the Agencies, the total sample size after cleaning the dataset was relatively small, with 101 respondents.

**Figure 2** shows the distribution of responses across the Agencies. The number of responses was higher than the number of respondents, as respondents could answer for more than one Agency.

**Figure 2: Number of responses to the public consultation**



Eight weeks after the conclusion of the public consultation, a factual summary was published on the Commission’s webpages,<sup>239</sup> whereas the consultation’s analytical findings can be found in Annex 9 to the final report.

### Subtask 2.3. Staff and stakeholder survey

At the same time as Subtask 2.2. a targeted survey was sent to the Agencies’ staff and stakeholders. The survey was accessible for 9 weeks in English, German, and French. It was sent to the Agencies' contact points together with the public consultation.

<sup>239</sup> For more information see: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13400-EU-Agencies-Eurofound-Cedefop-ETF-and-EU-OSHA-2024-evaluation/public-consultation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13400-EU-Agencies-Eurofound-Cedefop-ETF-and-EU-OSHA-2024-evaluation/public-consultation_en). Date of last access: 04 August 2023

The survey gathered data concerning all five evaluation criteria. It served a dual purpose for the research team. On the one hand, quantifying diverse aspects of the Agencies' performance based on these criteria, and on the other hand, gathering qualitative input to improve the evaluation process.

Based on the evaluation framework, the survey questionnaire was designed as follows to have two levels of questions.

- Level 1 questions: common general questions on the performance of the Agencies. These questions were designed to facilitate a comparison between the Agencies.
- Level 2 questions: specific questions for each Agency, focusing on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and EU added value. These questions also focused on the direct or indirect use of outputs and results of the Agencies by their stakeholders.

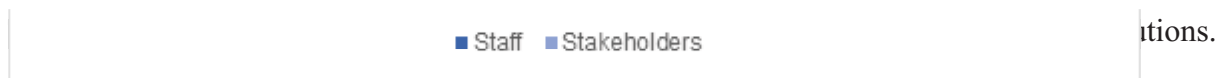


Figure 3 shows the breakdown of responses by Agency. Similar to the Subtask 2.2., the stakeholder survey enabled participants to provide answers for multiple Agencies. Therefore, the total number of responses exceeded the number of respondents.



**Figure 3: Breakdown of responses by Agency to the online survey**

The survey results have been included in the individual Agency reports, while they are also available, together with the survey questionnaires, in Annex 13 of the final report.

### **Task 3: Cost-effectiveness analysis**

A comprehensive cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) was conducted for the four Agencies' activities. The methods and results of the CEA are available in Annex 6 of the final report.

A mixed-method approach was used to collect the information needed to carry out the CEA through Tasks 1, 2, 5 and 6 in order to evaluate the relationship between **inputs and outputs** as well as the relationship between **inputs and higher-level results and impacts**. CEA was split in two respective subtasks, as shown below.

#### Subtask 3.1. Agency-level cost-effectiveness analysis

This subtask provided a CEA at the Agency-level for 2017 to 2022. The analysis gathered information about the following:

- total expenditure per year;
- total staff number per year;
- total expenditure per staff member per year;
- types of expenditure (administrative, labour, operational);
- staff allocation;

- annual budget implementation rates;
- efficiency of governance structures.

### Subtask 3.2. Activity-level cost-effectiveness analysis

This subtask provided a CEA for the Agencies' activities. The activities examined have been identified based on the Agencies' own activity based management (ABM) approach. For Eurofound and EU-OSHA, quantitative performance indicators corresponding directly to the ABM activities were available and examined as part of this CEA. For CEDEFOP and the ETF, performance indicators that related directly to the ABM activities were not consistently available over the evaluation period. As a result, for these two Agencies, overall performance indicators were used in assessing cost-effectiveness. On top of the ABM, interview data were also used to evidence this part of the CEA.

### **Task 4: Cross-cutting analysis of the Agencies**

Task 4 aimed to assess coherence issues among the Agencies and assess issues of efficiency. It focused on coherence and synergies between and among the Agencies and therefore aimed to understand the extent to which the four organisations interacted, complemented, cooperated and mutually reinforced one another in 2017-2022.

As a secondary focus, the task also looked at efficiency among the Agencies, including the extent to which they duplicated each other's objectives, activities, governance arrangements and internal organisation. It therefore looked into whether resources were being used in the most efficient way.

The results of this task informed a cross-cutting report, which is available in Annex 5 of the final report.

### Subtask 4.1. Indicator framework to assess efficiency and coherence

The first subtask to conduct the cross-cutting analysis was to develop an **indicator framework** to systematically assess issues related to coherence and efficiency. It includes, on the one hand, the relevant indicators together with the focus of the evidence, and on the other hand, the different methods from which the cross-cutting analysis drew on to collect the necessary evidence.

### Subtask 4.2. Desk research

Desk-research (Task 1) was one key source of evidence for the cross-cutting assessment. During this task, the research team reviewed agreements between the Agencies, and in particular the Memoranda of Understanding, the Framework Agreements, and the action plans that were in place during the evaluation period. Evidence available in the consolidated annual activity reports, Agencies' programming documents and relevant previous evaluations was also considered. This subtask considered literature that was used to produce the reports for each of the Agencies (Annexes 1 to 4) within the scope of this evaluation.

### Subtask 4.3. Consultation activities, CEA and case studies

Consultation activities (Task 2), cost-effectiveness (Task 3) and cross-cutting case studies (Task 5) served as supplementary sources of information for the cross-cutting report.

In particular, the research team considered the findings of the **consultation activities** (Task 2) related to synergies, collaboration, and coherence between and among the Agencies as well as efficiency savings and potential areas of simplification. In addition, it considered views on the added value and quality of joint activities.

Further to the above, it considered the results of the **cost-effectiveness-analysis** (Task 3) to assess the type of joint outputs developed and implemented, and to evaluate the use of shared or combined resources among the Agencies.

The analysis also used the findings from the **five cross-cutting case studies** (Task 5) on social dialogue and industrial relations, COVID-19, Agencies' contribution to the debate on digital and green skills and on the ageing society, as well as on surveys of employers and employees.

#### Subtask 4.4. Analysis and verification

The information from Subtask 4.2. and Subtask 4.3. Consultation activities, CEA and case studies was used to populate

##### *Subtask 4.1. Indicator framework to assess efficiency and coherence.*

The focus of this analysis was on identifying:

- where synergies and cohesive working between the Agencies was most and least prevalent was well as finding out which type of cohesion was common and the collective positive and negative outcomes of this;
- areas of clear overlap between the Agencies in terms of their objectives, activities, governance and internal organisation. In particular, finding out areas of either positive overlap (for example, in relation to stronger outcomes, for instance tackling the same issue from different angles) or negative overlap (for example, leading to duplication, confusion, resource inefficiency);
- potential solutions to weak cohesion. In particular, finding out if there was anything that could be done at the staff, Agency and the Commission level to ensure stronger cohesion in the areas identified during the evaluation.

The subsequent cross-cutting analysis was presented and checked in the validation focus group focusing on cross-cutting issues (see Task 6). During the focus group, staff members had the opportunity to comment on the findings, as well as agree or disagree with its main messages. The focus group also served as an occasion to discuss in more detail the extent to which the 2019 evaluation recommendations on reinforcing cooperation have been implemented and identify what further recommendations were required to cement cohesion across the Agencies. These recommendations informed the final evaluation report.

#### **Task 5: Case studies**

This task consisted in selecting and delivering 25 stand-alone case studies to inform the individual and cross-cutting assessment of the Agencies. In particular, it included five specific

case studies per Agency (see Tables 1 to 6). The case studies results are in Annex 8 of the final report.

The specific case studies per Agency enabled an analysis of causal links between an Agency’s activities and its deliverables, outputs and immediate and intermediate outcomes and impacts to which it contributed, providing evidence to substantiate the Agencies’ assessment of the different evaluation criteria. In turn, the cross-cutting case studies focused on developing an in-depth understanding of how the contributions of different Agencies may have reinforced each other and/or how their synergies could be exploited.

#### Subtask 5.1. Case studies’ selection

To achieve a balanced view of the Agencies’ different activities while covering all the evaluation criteria and questions set in the analytical framework, the supporting study team used the following criteria, as well as the Commission’s and other relevant stakeholders’ input during the inception phase of the project, to inform the selection of the case studies.

- New projects and approaches of the Agencies.
- Geographical coverage and functions of the implemented activities/projects.
- Contextual information on the functioning of the Agencies.
- The range and functioning of priorities and working areas of the Agencies.
- The policy development level for particular thematic working areas.
- Specific impacts of external developments such as the COVID-19 pandemic, digitalisation, the growth of artificial intelligence, and the growth of the green economy.
- Practical considerations relating to the feasibility of carrying out particular case studies.

#### Subtask 5.2. Case studies’ implementation

The case studies were mainly based on desk-based research and the findings of the consultation activities. Tables 1 to 4 show the topics selected for the Agency-specific case studies. In turn, Table 5 shows the topics selected for the cross-cutting case studies. As noted earlier, these case studies are in Annex 8 of the final report.

**Table 1: Eurofound case studies**

EUROFOUND	
1.	Contribution to discussions and policy decisions related to the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine.
2.	Contributions to discussions and policy decisions in relation to digitalisation, new and non-standard forms of work, including the platform economy, and implications for working conditions.
3.	<u>Eurofound</u> ’s work on the minimum wage.
4.	<u>Eurofound</u> ’s work on young people.
5.	<u>Eurofound</u> ’s work in terms of communicating knowledge and organising debate with its tripartite stakeholders on working and living conditions, industrial relations and the job market.

**Table 2: Cedefop case studies**

CEDEFOP	
1.	Contributions to discussions and policy decisions in relation to initiatives and support related to empowering adults through upskilling and reskilling.
2.	Contribution of Cedefop VET policy monitoring to EU and national VET policy.
3.	Contribution of Cedefop to increased transparency and recognition of qualifications.
4.	Review of Cedefop's online and data visualisation tools.
5.	Cedefop's work in terms of communicating knowledge and organising debate with its tripartite stakeholders on VET, skills, and qualifications.

**Table 3: ETF case studies**

ETF	
1.	ETF support to the African Union (PANAFRICA) on the African Continental Qualification Framework (ACQF).
2.	Studying ETF activities in skill demand anticipation (including the participatory Skills Lab approach).
3.	ETF Virtual training 2021 on VET for all EUD.
4.	The ETF's work on skills for green transition.
5.	Communication and stakeholder involvement in supporting the Torino Process from 2018-onwards.

**Table 4: EU-OSHA case studies**

EU-OSHA	
1.	Support for OSH management in the context of COVID-19.
2.	The contribution of research outputs from the ESENER survey to the evidence base for OSH policymaking and research on how OSH is managed in the workplace.
3.	The contribution of EU-OSHA's work to raising awareness of psychosocial risks and contributing to discussion about psychosocial risk management, including in the context of COVID-19.
4.	The healthy workplaces campaigns (HWCs). The focus will be on the following two HWCs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 2020-2022: Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load.</li> <li>▶ 2018-2019: Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances.</li> </ul>
5.	The contribution of EU-OSHA to the EU's strategic frameworks on health and safety at work.

**Table 5: Cross-cutting case studies**

Cross-cutting case studies		
1.	Actions to support the social dialogue and industrial relations, including the capacity-building of the social partners.	All four Agencies
2.	The contribution of the Agencies to managing the impact of COVID-19 and shaping the 'new normal'.	All four Agencies
3.	Agencies' contribution to the debate on the digital and green skills / just transitions.	All four Agencies
4.	Agencies' contribution to policy at EU level on how to develop responses to the ageing society.	All four Agencies (the ETF to a lesser extent)
5.	Surveys of employers and employees.	All four Agencies

**Task 6: Validation focus groups**

The validation focus groups aimed at validating the draft evaluation findings and at filling in the remaining knowledge gaps. Five validation focus groups were conducted on

18 September 2023: four covering each of the Agencies, and one covering all Agencies collectively. The latter focused on issues around the coherence among and between the Agencies, and within this, on issues around their efficiency. The focus groups took place in a single online event in September. In total, 59 participants participated in the focus groups, excluding the members of the research team. The key findings of each focus group have been embedded in the final report.

### **Limitations and robustness of the findings**

The research is subject to a number of limitations, mainly arising from the availability of data and the quality of data at hand. This section lists these limitations, together with the mitigation measures that were taken.

#### **Task 1: Mapping of the Agencies' activities, outputs and results**

Overall, the desk-based review of the Agencies' monitoring data has shown that on some occasions the Agencies did not set specific targets for their performance indicators to benchmark their performance. On these occasions, the research team reported on the trends over time. Furthermore, it appeared that in certain instances, the Agencies were changing their performance indicators or altering the methods used to gauge progress on these indicators. This limited to a certain extent, the ability of the research team to report on trends over time.

#### **Task 2: Consultation activities**

Both the public consultation and the stakeholder survey did not have a finite population. Therefore, the sample of these surveys should not be considered as representative and their results should not be generalised. While the same was not true for the staff survey, its response rate also rendered its findings as non-representative. At the same time, while the staff survey had a finite population, its sample size, albeit important, cannot equally be considered as fully representative.

To address these limitations, the results of the different consultations were cross-referenced with each other, as well as with findings from interviews and desk-based research. Moreover, the information incorporated in the final report underwent validation through validation focus groups (see Task 5). Consequently, even though the sample size of the above surveys might not have been fully representative, the evidence used in shaping the final report gained substantial reliability due to this triangulation approach.

Despite extensive dissemination efforts (for more information, see the specific annexes on the public consultation and the survey results), the sample size of the public consultation and the stakeholder survey was relatively small. As a result, it was not always possible to conduct subgroup analysis for different stakeholder groups, as often these were either consisting of a handful of participants or they were non-existent. Despite this, to the extent that subgroup analyses were possible, they have been conducted.

#### **Task 3: Cost-effectiveness analysis**

Typically, a cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) incorporates an assessment of how far activities have been implemented at a cost which is commensurate with the level of outputs and results achieved. However, for this evaluation, many elements of the Agencies' activities could not

form part of a conventional quantitative CEA. In particular, for many of the Agencies' activities, it was not possible to identify a single effect or indicator that could be easily quantified. Unit cost analysis at the level of outputs also presented challenges, as the Agencies were all unique, with their own distinctive remits, objectives, and wide range of different activities, making it difficult to apply a set of comparable performance indicators across all four Agencies. As such, the Agencies' performance had to be considered against multiple objectives rather than one output to be achieved by a given date.

In recognition of these challenges, the CEA considered the total and/or unit costs of activities, along with factors that influenced delivery, effectiveness, and efficiency. A mixed-method approach has been conducted that collected data through desk research, interviews, surveys, and case studies, to evaluate both production efficiency (i.e. the relationship between inputs and outputs) and allocation efficiency (i.e. the relationship between inputs and higher-level results and impacts) and how such efficiencies could be improved.

## ANNEX III: EVALUATION MATRIX

**Table 1: Evaluation matrix**

Evaluation criterion	Main research questions (as specified in the tender specifications)	Sub-questions	Potential judgement criteria / indicators	Tasks				
				Mapping	Targeted consultations	Public consultation	Cost-effectiveness analysis	Case studies
<b>Effectiveness</b>	To what extent did the Agencies achieve their objectives?	To what extent the objectives identified in the intervention logic for each Agency has been achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extent to which the main objectives set out in Annual Work Programmes/ Programming documents of the Agencies have been reached (% of objectives).</li> <li>- Extent to which expected outputs were achieved by the Agencies (number of publications, surveys, events delivered compared to the baseline period).</li> <li>- Extent to which results indicators were achieved by the Agencies (number of downloads, website visits, references in EU level documents, academic publications compared to the baseline period).</li> <li>- Stakeholder perception of the achievement of Agencies objectives as reported by stakeholder satisfaction surveys conducted by the Agencies during the evaluation period.</li> <li>- The extent to which expected outputs, results and impacts have been achieved according to the evaluations commissioned by the Agencies during the evaluation period.</li> <li>- Perception of the Agencies' stakeholders and staff on the extent to which the objectives (identified in the intervention logic for each Agency) have been achieved.</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perception of the quality of Agencies' services (at least two thirds of all respondents are fully or largely satisfied).</li> <li>- Perception of the Agencies' stakeholders and staff on what factors facilitated the achievement of objectives.</li> <li>- Agencies' stakeholder and staff perceptions on the extent to which national networks (Eurofound's Network of Correspondents, EU-OSHA focal points, CEDEFOP's ReferNet and ETF's representatives from partner countries) contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the Agencies' intervention logics.</li> <li>- Contribution of the Agencies' performance to the observed changes (impacts).</li> <li>- Perception of the Agencies' stakeholders and staff of the main reasons why any objectives were not achieved (if any).</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓
	To what extent were the services of the four Agencies actually used by their stakeholders, including EU Institutions, stakeholders in the Member States, international bodies	How do stakeholders and the wider public perceive the quality of the services provided by the four Agencies? How visible were their services and to which stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Volume of use measured by number of PDF and HTML downloads (achievement of Agencies' KPIs, % increase each year).</li> <li>- Use of Agencies' expertise in key EU-policy documents (achievement of Agencies' KPIs, % increase each year).</li> <li>- Number of references in peer-reviewed publications (% increase year on year)</li> <li>- Contribution to policy developments at priority events (achievement of Agencies' KPIs, % increase each year, if available).</li> <li>- Contribution to events organised by other organisations.</li> <li>- Regularity of stakeholders' use of Agency services (at least two thirds of all respondents indicate that they use Agencies' services regularly).</li> <li>- Frequency of use (at least half the respondents have used Agencies' services in the last six months).</li> <li>- Number of stakeholders reporting the use of Agencies' services in preparing policy documents, workshops and informing national debates (at least half of respondents have used the Agencies' services for their intended purpose).</li> <li>- References to the Agencies' work in European media as reported in annual activity reports (if available).</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓

	and organisations and, in the case of ETF, partner countries?							
	To what extent did Agencies focus their work on areas most in need and where they can have an impact?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholders' perception on whether Agencies' services meet their needs (at least-two thirds of respondents indicate their needs have been met).</li> <li>- Utility of services (at least-two thirds of all respondents find services Agencies provide 'very useful' or 'useful').</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions of the most useful services for their work.</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions of the areas where Agencies' services would be needed to address their needs.</li> <li>- Process by which stakeholders' needs are taken into account when identifying priorities, activities and services (existing mechanisms for stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process).</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions on the extent to which Agencies focus on providing evidence to policy makers.</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions on the extent to which Agencies are engaging in policymaking.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Were there other broader achievements/unexpected impacts arising from the Agencies operations?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholders share examples of wider/unexpected impacts (if relevant).</li> <li>- Examples of wider unexpected impacts identified in annual reports, evaluations and stakeholder feedback surveys.</li> <li>- Stakeholders report the factors that facilitated the generation of unexpected impacts (if applicable).</li> </ul>		✓	✓		✓
	Which factors facilitated or hindered the effectiveness of the four Agencies' operations?	To what degree did host Member States fulfil their obligations as defined in the Headquarters Agreements between the Agency and Member State?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documentary evidence indicates the factors that facilitated and/or hindered achievement of the objectives.</li> <li>- Management/Governing Boards' perceptions of factors that facilitated and hindered the achievement of Agencies' objectives.</li> <li>- Agencies' staff reporting examples of factors that facilitated and hindered the achievement of the Agencies' objectives.</li> <li>- Evidence on the fulfilment of Headquarters Agreements from the document analysis.</li> <li>- Staff perceptions on host Member States obligation fulfilment.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓
	To what degree have the four Agencies adapted to changes in EU policy, to Commission political priorities over the evaluation period and to the political and socio-economic situation in general?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of any changes in Agencies' activities in relation to changes in the EU policy priorities and broader changes in the political and socio-economic situation in the EU based on document analysis.</li> <li>- The extent to which these changes in Agencies' activities have referenced changes in EU policy or the EU's political and socio-economic situation in their justification.</li> <li>- Stakeholders' and staff perception of the changes in Agencies' activities in relation to the broader changes in the EU.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓

	In particular, to what degree have the four Agencies provided useful support with regard to the unexpected and additional challenge of the COVID pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, where pertinent?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documentary evidence of the new services developed in response to COVID-19 and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.</li> <li>- The extent to which Agencies adapted their cooperation patterns with other Agencies to respond to the needs caused by COVID-19 and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.</li> <li>- Comparative analysis of the achievement of Agencies' KPIs in 2017-2019 and 2020-2022 to assess the effect of COVID-19 on the effectiveness of Agencies' operations.</li> <li>- The uptake and results indicators (such as downloads) show the use of the outputs produced as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.</li> <li>- Stakeholders' and staff perceptions of the quality of the services developed in response to COVID-19 and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine (at least two thirds of respondents are fully or largely satisfied).</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Efficiency</b>	To what extent were the operations of the four Agencies cost-effective?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expenditure tracking by title and type of activity per Agency.</li> <li>- Total expenditure per staff member by Agency compared with other Agencies.</li> <li>- Operational efficiency (% of budget approved actually committed).</li> <li>- Staff allocation by type of role (administrative, neutral, operational) per Agency.</li> <li>- Ratio of operational and administrative expenditure.</li> <li>- Benchmarking Agencies' performance to each other and other selected Agencies regarding cost-effectiveness.</li> <li>- Case-study evidence on the efficiency and effectiveness of specific Agencies' activities.</li> <li>- Analysis of the output and result indicators in the context of the cost-effectiveness of key activities.</li> <li>- Agencies' evaluations conducted during the evaluation period assessment of the cost-effectiveness of Agencies' activities (when available).</li> <li>- Comparative rating by stakeholders and staff with regard to Agencies' cost-effectiveness.</li> <li>- Perceptions of stakeholders and staff whether any improvements need to be made to increase the cost-effectiveness of the Agencies' activities.</li> <li>- Comparing country coefficient for each Agency and the extent to which it affects the resources allocated to each Agency.</li> <li>- Agencies stakeholders and staff perceptions on the extent to which survey methods used are efficient in collecting high quality data. Are there other survey methods that would be beneficial in certain circumstances?</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	To what extent were staff resources and workload appropriate to fulfil efficiently and effectively the Agencies' objectives and activities?	How balanced were the administrative and operational budgets and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff perception of workload balance.</li> <li>- Staff perception of human resources allocated to fulfil their duties.</li> <li>- Staff perceptions on the efficiency of the distribution of tasks inside the Agency.</li> <li>- Vacancy rate analysis.</li> <li>- Benchmarking Agencies' performance to each other regarding adequacy of staff resources and workload.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓

To what extent were the internal mechanisms for 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?	In particular, did digitalisation play a role in the above?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of monitoring data in the performance measurement system and its links to specific monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanisms.</li> <li>- Review of documentary evidence, particularly European Parliament discharge reports and audit reports on the Agencies' internal monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanisms.</li> <li>- Benchmarking Agencies' performance to each other regarding adequacy of internal programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating mechanisms.</li> <li>- Reviewing evidence on the changes to the monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanisms.</li> <li>- Perceptions by Management/Governing Boards and Agencies' staff about the ability of the mechanisms to ensure accountability of the Agencies.</li> <li>- Agencies' staff perceptions of the overall administrative burden of the internal programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating procedures.</li> </ul>	✓	✓			✓
How efficient were the Agencies' governance structures?	To what extent were the size and the composition of the Agencies' management boards appropriate for the size and nature of the Agencies so as to ensure effective and efficient governance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent to which the size and the composition of the Agencies' management boards are in line with the other Decentralised Agencies.</li> <li>- Comparative analysis of the alternative tripartite governance models.</li> <li>- SWOT analysis of the alternative tripartite governance models.</li> <li>- Evidence on how the management boards contribute to the Agencies' activities.</li> <li>- Evidence on the extent to which operations of the management board are appropriate to implement their functions (e.g. preparation and organisation of the meetings, decision-making process).</li> <li>- Stakeholder perception of the impact of management board size and composition on Agencies' work.</li> <li>- Evidence from previous programming, monitoring, and reporting documents on the impact of the size and composition of management boards.</li> <li>- Evidence on the costs associated with the functioning of Agencies' management boards.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓
How well were the Agencies embedded in the broader EU policy governance structures for their respective activity domains, and is there room for improving coherence and efficiency?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU-level stakeholders' perceptions on the extent to which the Agencies are embedded in broader EU governance structures.</li> <li>- The extent to which the membership at the Agencies' Management/Governing Boards and the EU-level policy/advisory committees are similar.</li> <li>- Agency leadership teams, EU-level stakeholders and social partners' perceptions on the extent to which there are overlapping topics, mandates and membership between EU-level policy/advisory committees (e.g. ACVT, OSH Committee) and governance structures of the Agencies.</li> <li>- Agency leadership teams, EU level stakeholders and social partners' perceptions on potential synergies/efficiency gains between the Agencies' governance structures and the EU-level policy/advisory Committees (e.g. ACVT, OSH Committee).</li> <li>- Agencies' staff perceptions on the extent to which the Agencies are embedded in the broader EU policy governance structures.</li> </ul>		✓	✓		✓
Were there any potential areas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examples of simplification measures introduced during the evaluation period based on document analysis and interviews.</li> <li>- Stakeholders reporting on the areas where further digitalisation would increase the efficiency of the Agencies' operations.</li> </ul>		✓	✓		✓

	and/or activities which could be subject to simplification and/or administrative burden reduction?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholders reporting on potential efficiency gains due to cross-Agency cooperations.</li> <li>- Agencies staff reporting examples of areas where the simplification would be possible.</li> </ul>					
	To what extent do new elements (e.g. the ELA, updated mandates) change the conclusions of the previous evaluation regarding advantages / disadvantages of mergers between the Agencies?	Are there any other new elements that could play a role?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapping exercise to determine any impacts of new elements since the last evaluation.</li> <li>- Stakeholder views on changes in activities of Agencies since the last evaluation.</li> </ul>		✓	✓		✓
<b>Coherence</b>	To what extent were the mandates and activities of the four Agencies coherent among themselves?	Were there any unnecessary overlaps or duplications?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapping and comparative analysis of the documentary evidence on the mandates, objectives, activities, target groups and themes of the four Agencies.</li> <li>- Examples of joint outputs delivered in cooperation between two or more Agencies related to the common themes identified.</li> <li>- Levels of duplication (mandates, objectives, activities, themes) – none, minor, major.</li> <li>- Levels of complementarity (mandates, objectives, activities, themes) – none, minor, major.</li> <li>- Stakeholder perceptions of coherence of the mandates and activities of the Agencies among themselves.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓
	To what extent do the four Agencies work cooperatively with each other where needed?	To what extent have they reinforced cooperation among themselves during the current evaluation period?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documentary evidence on the implementation of the recommendations from the previous evaluation in 2019 on reinforced cooperation, including cooperation regarding corporate functions (strategy, human resources, legal and financial management), performance management, mutual learning and sharing services, joint delivery, joint programming and planning.</li> <li>- Review of Agencies' cooperation agreements and joint action plans and comparison to the previous evaluation period.</li> <li>- Review of joint publications, including survey reports.</li> <li>- Agencies management boards, stakeholders and staff report the areas where the cooperation was most successful and areas for improvement.</li> <li>- Agencies management boards, stakeholders and staff reporting on the factors that facilitated and hindered reinforced cooperation.</li> <li>- Agencies management boards, stakeholders and staff perceptions on the areas where further cooperation would have the greatest impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agencies' operations.</li> <li>- Processes are in place, and steps are taken to exploit synergies and minimise duplication – none, ad-hoc, systematic.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓
	To what extent are the four Agencies' mandates and activities coherent with DG	To what extent do they work cooperatively with DG EMPL and other Commission services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documentary evidence/mapping of complementarities between the mandates and activities of the Agencies and relevant European Commission DGs and policies.</li> <li>- Documentary evidence of the uptake of the Agencies' outputs in EU-level publications and events.</li> <li>- Mentions of the Agencies' outputs in EU-level documents (when available).</li> <li>- EU-level stakeholders, Management/Governing Board members and staff reporting on the level of cooperation.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓

<p>EMPL policies and with other EU policies (including, in the case of ETF, with the “Geopolitical Commission” approach and, in the case of OSHA, with the health in all policies approach, namely related to the prevention of occupational risks)?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU-level stakeholders, Management/Governing Board members and staff are reporting on the factors that facilitated/hindered cooperation.</li> <li>- EU-level stakeholders, Management/Governing Board members and staff reporting on the areas where further complementarities would be beneficial to increase cooperation.</li> </ul>					
<p>To what extent are the mandates and activities of the four Agencies coherent with those of other EU decentralised Agencies (including the EUAN network), and, in particular, with the European Labour Authority?</p>	<p>To what extent do the four Agencies work cooperatively with those other Agencies?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documentary evidence review and mapping of the mandates, objectives, activities, target groups and themes of the four Agencies and ELA.</li> <li>- Mapping existing cooperation agreements, joint action plans and Memoranda of Understanding between the four Agencies and ELA.</li> <li>- Documentary evidence review of potential complementarities with other decentralised Agencies (e.g. EIGE).</li> <li>- Agencies staff (including those that are not covered by this evaluation e.g. ELA) and stakeholders (including EUAN) report examples of mutual learning, sharing services, development of joint expertise and other examples of cooperation.</li> <li>- Agencies stakeholders and staff reported examples of coherence and cooperation in response to the common challenges e.g. COVID-19 and Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine (where relevant).</li> <li>- Stakeholders’ perceptions on the coherence of Agencies’ mandates with those of ELA.</li> <li>- Agencies stakeholders’ and staff perceptions on the factors that facilitated and hindered coherence and cooperation.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓
<p>To what extent are the mandates and activities of the four Agencies coherent with those of other relevant organisations and stakeholders (at EU, international and national level)?</p>	<p>To what extent do they work cooperatively with those organisations and stakeholders?  To what extent is such cooperation established with all relevant organisations and stakeholders?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documentary evidence of cooperation agreements with international organisations (OECD, UNESCO, ILO).</li> <li>- Documentary evidence of the examples of cooperation with international organisations and stakeholders at national level.</li> <li>- Stakeholders’ perceptions on the level and nature of cooperation.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓

<b>EU added value</b>	What was the EU added value of the four Agencies during the evaluation period?	To what extent did their achievements add value in terms of volume, scope, process and role effects <sup>240</sup> , in particular in comparison to the previous evaluation period?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documentary evidence of the added value of the Agencies' operations.</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions (including partners working in similar areas) whether the Agencies' activities are unique and could not be achieved through existing mechanisms at national, EU and international levels.</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions of the characteristics of the Agencies' work they value the most.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓
	To which groups of stakeholders concretely did the Agencies work make a difference?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documentary evidence on the intended target groups of Agencies' operations.</li> <li>- Analysis of the indicators related to the use of Agencies' services by intended beneficiaries collected during the evaluation of the effectiveness of Agencies' operations.</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions of the groups of stakeholders directly affected by and using the Agencies' services.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Relevance</b>	To what extent did the four Agencies' mandates, objectives and activities fulfil EU policy needs and those of relevant stakeholders during the evaluation period?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent to which outputs (based on the documentary analysis) were relevant to the EU policy needs.</li> <li>- The extent to which (based on interviews) high-level officials involved in the EU policy planning and Agencies' Management/Governing Boards agree that the Agencies contribute to addressing EU policy needs.</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions regarding relevance of Agencies' outputs and activities (at least two thirds of respondents considering Agencies' work 'Highly relevant' or 'Relevant').</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions on the extent to which Agencies' services have met their needs.</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions on the extent to which they feel they can inform Agencies' activities.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓
	To what extent are the four Agencies' mandates and activities still relevant, and has that been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documentary evidence of the activities specifically developed to address the challenges posed by COVID-19 and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions on the relevance of the Agencies mandates and activities in responding to challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.</li> </ul>		✓	✓		✓

<sup>240</sup> *Volume effects*: Agency action adds to existing action, either at EU, international or national level; *Scope effects*: Agency action broadens existing action by supporting groups or policy areas that would not otherwise receive support; *Role effects*: Agency action supports innovations that are taken up at national level or national innovative actions that are then mainstreamed; *Process effects*: Agency action influences Member-State administrations and organisations involved in the Agency actions.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine (where pertinent)?								
To what extent is there a need to amend the mandate of the four Agencies?	If yes, what would be the financial implications?	- Documentary evidence identified/not identified on the need to amend Agencies' mandates. - Stakeholders' perceptions on the need to amend Agencies' mandates. - Staff perceptions on the need to amend Agencies' mandates.		✓	✓			✓
In terms of foresight, are there any future trends including megatrends (such as demographic change, migration, etc.) that could affect the four Agencies' future relevance and how?		- Documentary analysis identifies the trends the Agencies need to consider to remain relevant. - Stakeholders' perceptions on the impacts of future trends on the Agencies' future relevance.		✓	✓			✓
To what extent have recent audit recommendations been put into practice?		- Rate (%) of recent audit recommendations implemented.		✓	✓	✓		✓

## ANNEX IV: OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS AND COSTS

This Annex presents an summary of the cost and benefits examined in the accompanying main report produced for the study supporting the evaluation of EU Agencies: Eurofound, Cedefop, the ETF and EU-OSHA. Values are presented in millions of euro (€) unless otherwise stated. The cost data are taken from the Agencies consolidated annual activity reports and the Agencies published accounts on their activity based management (ABM) activities. Unless otherwise stated, the figures presented in the benefits section relate to the stakeholder and staff interviews and surveys carried out as part of this evaluation. Further details on the sources used are contained in the main report.

The table presents direct costs and benefits identified through this evaluation. While the work of the Agencies can be assumed to result in indirect outcomes as well as additional direct outcomes, identifying and quantifying these is highly challenging – for example, it is very difficult to identify specific skills or health outcomes that related back to the work of the Agencies, although many of the Agencies activities are designed to lead to longer-term downstream effects on a wide range of individuals or organisations.

**Table 1: Benefits and costs**

	EUROFOUND		CEDEFOP		ETF		EU-OSHA	
<b>Direct costs (borne by the Agencies)</b>								
Total expenditure of the Agency	2017	20.7m	2017	17.0m	2017	20.2m	2017	15.3m
	2018	20.9m	2018	18.3m	2018	20.1m	2018	15.9m
	2019	21.2m	2019	19.2m	2019	20.1m	2019	15.5m
	2020	22.6m	2020	17.1m	2020	21.2m	2020	15.6m
	2021	23.6m	2021	18.5m	2021	20.6m	2021	15.8m
	2022	23.6m	2022	18.3m	2022	21.2m	2022	16.4m
Total administrative costs	2017	1.9m	2017	1.4m	2017	1.9m	2017	1.4m
	2018	2.7m	2018	1.6m	2018	2.0m	2018	1.4m
	2019	2.6m	2019	1.6m	2019	1.7m	2019	1.3m
	2020	1.6m	2020	1.9m	2020	2.3m	2020	1.6m
	2021	1.7m	2021	1.9m	2021	1.7m	2021	1.7m
	2022	1.7m	2022	2.0m	2022	1.6m	2022	1.6m
Administrative cost: Administrative costs per staff member (€)	2017	16 376	2017	11 932	2017	13 841	2017	22 406
	2018	23 888	2018	13 456	2018	14 821	2018	20 846
	2019	21 315	2019	14 052	2019	12 512	2019	21 206
	2020	13 702	2020	16 208	2020	16 958	2020	24 810
	2021	14.865	2021	15 430	2021	12 405	2021	26 391
	2022	15 319	2022	18 364	2022	11 943	2022	24 483
Administrative cost: Cost of governance meetings	2017	0.15m	2017	0.16m	2017	0.15m	2017	0.15m
	2018	0.15m	2018	0.15m	2018	0.12m	2018	0.15m
	2019	0.21m	2019	0.15m	2019	0.09m	2019	0.10m
	2020	0.15m	2020	0.04m	2020	0.01m	2020	0.08m
	2021	0.14m	2021	0.09m	2021	0.08m	2021	0.06m
	2022	0.06m	2022	0.07m	2022	0.12m	2022	not available
Key activities of the Agency	<b>Survey management and development</b>		<b>VET systems and institutions</b>		<b>VET provision and quality</b>		<b>Awareness Raising and Communication</b>	
	2017	1.39m	2017	2.14m	2017	3.99m	2017	5.48m
	2018	2.42m	2018	2.02m	2018	3.86m	2018	4.25m
	2019	3.18m	2019	2.09m	2019	4.12m	2019	4.19m
	2020	4.24m	2020	1.60m	2020	4.53m	2020	4.13m
	2021	1.84m	2021	2.04m	2021	not available	2021	3.61m
	2022	3.91m	2022	1.66m	2022	available not available	2022	4.00m

<b>Corporate communication and infrastructure</b>		<b>Skills and labour market research</b>		<b>Employment, skills, and employability</b>		<b>Facts and Figures</b>	
2017	4.71m	2017	1.36m	2017	3.25m	2017	0.91m
2018	4.69m	2018	1.33m	2018	3.75m	2018	2.39m
2019	4.34m	2019	1.87m	2019	2.92m	2019	2.56m
2020	5.06m	2020	1.41m	2020	4.37m	2020	2.42m
2021	6.54m	2021	1.98m	2021	not available	2021	2.47m
2022	5.82m	2022	0.83m	2022	available not available	2022	2.70m
<b>Quality of life/living conditions</b>		<b>Transversal activities</b>		<b>Support to EU assistance in the context of EU external policies</b>		<b>Anticipating Change</b>	
2017	1.89m	2017	0.31m	2017	1.56m	2017	0.08m
2018	1.44m	2018	0.34m	2018	1.16m	2018	0.17m
2019	1.87m	2019	0.33m	2019	2.21m	2019	0.10m
2020	1.34m	2020	0.18m	2020	1.99m	2020	0.07m
2021	1.60m	2021	0.33m	2021	not available	2021	0.16m
2022	0.91m	2022	0.14m	2022	available not available	2022	0.09m
<b>Employment and labour markets research</b>				<b>Policy analysis and system wide progress monitoring</b>		<b>Networking Knowledge</b>	
2017	3.96m			2017	3.01m	2017	0.21m
2018	2.85m			2018	3.24m	2018	0.23m
2019	3.03m			2019	4.81m	2019	0.04m
2020	3.79m			2020	4.89m	2020	0.15m
2021	1.84m			2021	not available	2021	0.35m
2022	1.04m	2022	available not available	2022	0.21m		
<b>Social dialogue and industrial relations</b>				<b>VET governance</b>		<b>Strategic and Operational Activities/networking</b>	
2017	1.28m			2017	2.95m	2017	0.57m
2018	1.47m			2018	2.41m	2018	0.47m
2019	1.62m			2019	1.76m	2019	0.52m
2020	2.02m			2020	2.33m	2020	0.11m
2021	3.61m			2021	not available	2021	0.11m
2022	3.57m	2022	available not available	2022	0.28m		
<b>Reacting to ad-hoc information requests</b>				<b>Qualifications and qualification systems</b>		<b>Tools for OSH management</b>	
2017	0.4m			2017	3.60m	2017	0.22m
2018	0.67m			2018	3.62m	2018	0.33m
2019	0.38m			2019	2.54m	2019	0.24m
2020	1.82m			2020	2.10m	2020	0.32m
2021	0.11m			2021	not available	2021	0.35m
2022	0.23m	2022	available not available	2022	0.30m		
				<b>Entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills</b>			
				2017	1.77m		
				2018	2.10m		
				2019	2.18m		
				2020	0.71m		

			2021 2022	not available not available	
<b>Direct benefits</b> (to consumers <sup>241</sup> of the Agencies outputs)					
	<b>Stakeholders rating of cost-effectiveness of the Agency</b>	<b>Stakeholders rating of cost-effectiveness of the Agency</b>	<b>Stakeholders rating of cost-effectiveness of the Agency</b>	<b>Stakeholders rating of cost-effectiveness of the Agency</b>	
	54% of stakeholders rated the Agencies cost-effectiveness as high, 20% as medium, and 5% as low (the remainder were unsure (N=65)).	32% of stakeholders rated the Agencies cost-effectiveness as high, 20% as medium, and 5% as low (the remainder were unsure (N=175)).	34% of stakeholders rated the Agencies cost-effectiveness as high, 13% as medium, and 4% as low (the remainder were unsure (N=91)).	56% of stakeholders rated the Agencies cost-effectiveness as high and 24% as medium (the remainder were unsure (N=75)).	
	<b>Surveys</b>	<b>VET systems and institutions</b>	<b>Employment, skills, and employability research</b>	<b>Facts and figures</b>	
	75% of staff regard surveys to be either cost-effective to a large extent (53%) or a moderate extent (22%), with no staff finding them to be not at all cost-effective (the remaining 25% felt unable to comment, N=51).	The monitoring reports produced by <u>Cedefop</u> 's using its ReferNet network data are highly rated by stakeholders, with 72% rating them as very or rather high quality (N=174). These outputs are also highly rated by staff, with 67% rating them as cost-effective to a large (51%) or moderate extent (16%, N=45).	Interviewees noted that the Skills Lab Network of Experts has been beneficial in terms of allowing the <u>ETF</u> to establish high-level contacts with partner countries' statistical offices, which makes access to data easier and quicker. By December 2022, Skills Lab had more than 160 members, covering the majority of partner countries.	81% of staff rated <b>European surveys</b> as cost-effective to a large extent, 8% to a moderate extent, 2% to a small extent, with the remainder not answering (N=48).  79% of staff rated <b>Research reports</b> as cost-effective to a large extent, 10% to a moderate extent, 2% to a small extent, with the remainder not answering (N=48).  <u>EU-OSHA</u> interviewees also noted that <b>ESENER</b> had become a tool of reference for cross-country comparisons and has proven to be a survey of high relevance for stakeholders at both national and EU levels. FOPs found <b>ESENER</b> to be a useful tool to re-think and re-design their OSH policies, as well as to encourage businesses and workers to take action in response to specific risks.	

<sup>241</sup> Users of the Agencies' outputs include decentralised EU Agencies, EEA/ETFA country governmental institutions/Agencies, employer organisations, EU candidate country governmental institution or Agency, EU Member State governmental institutions/Agencies, NGO's, research or consultancy organisations, Trade unions, and private companies.

				<u>EU-OSHA</u> 's bi-annual stakeholder surveys between 2016-2022 <sup>242</sup> found that the majority of respondents were satisfied with ESENER (85% in 2016, 90% in 2018, 94% in 2020, 95% in 2022).
<b>Corporate communication and infrastructure</b>	<b>Communication and dissemination</b>	<b>Communication and dissemination</b>	<b>Communication and dissemination</b>	
The majority (65%) of <u>Eurofound</u> 's staff regard Communication and dissemination activities as cost effective to a large extent (47%) or to a moderate extent (18%), with 2% finding them cost-effective to a small extent and no staff finding them not at all cost-effective (the remaining 33% felt unable to comment, N=51).	The PPMI 2022 User satisfaction survey <sup>243</sup> found that information disseminated through publications, online tools and databases is perceived as being provided in an attractive form (27% strongly agree, 63% agree) and meets the most prominent needs of users (31% strongly agree, 65% agree (N=507)).  Interviewed representatives from the Executive and management boards and the international/European organisations emphasised their high level of satisfaction with <u>Cedefop</u> 's outputs and the unique nature of the findings that the Agency presents.  40% of staff surveyed found communication and dissemination activities to be cost effective to a large extent, 29% to a moderate extent, and 9% to a small extent (2% did not find them at all cost-effective and 20% did not provide an answer, N=45).	46% of staff surveyed found these to be cost-effective to a large extent, 33% to a moderate extent, and 15% to a small extent (4% did not find them at all cost-effective and 2% did not provide an answer, N=52).	The vast majority of staff (90%) consider <u>EU-OSHA</u> 's activities to be either largely cost-effective (69%), or moderately cost-effective (21%). A small minority (2%) believed they were cost-effective to a small extent only, while 8% were not able to answer the question, N=48.	
<b>Events</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Anticipating Change</b>	
61% of staff view events as cost-effective (35% to a large extent, and 25% to a moderate extent), although 31% felt unable to comment, 2% found them to be not at all cost effective, and	Stakeholders' assessment of the quality and usefulness of the Agency's events (based on the Agency's KPI reporting): 2017 97% 2018 94%	54% of staff surveyed found these to be cost effective to a large extent, 27% to a moderate extent, and 13% to a small extent (4% did not find them at all cost-effective	The majority of survey respondents found the Agency to be successful in delivering foresight information either to a large or moderate extent (96% of staff survey respondents (N=48), 95%	

<sup>242</sup> Available to download here: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications>.

<sup>243</sup> PPMI (2022), User satisfaction survey 2022.

	<p>6% only found them cost-effective to a small extent (N=51).</p>	<p>2019 96% 2020 94% 2021 98% 2022 95%</p> <p>53% of staff surveyed found the Agencies events to be cost effective to a large extent, 22% to a moderate extent, and 4% to a small extent (20% did not provide an answer, N=45).</p> <p>49% of staff surveyed found the Agencies peer learning activities to be cost-effective to a large extent, 18% to a moderate extent, and 4% to a small extent (29% did not provide an answer, N=45).</p>	<p>and 2% did not provide an answer, N=52).</p>	<p>of stakeholder survey respondents (N=75), and 93% of OPC respondents, (N=41) during the evaluation period).</p> <p>Interviewees confirmed that <b>foresight activity</b> was used to inform national OSH strategies and national policy debates. The foresight reports themselves were also considered to be cost-effective to a large extent by the majority of staff members surveyed (79%, N=48).</p>
	<p><b>Quality of life research</b></p>	<p><b>Outputs related to implementation of transparency and recognition tools</b></p>	<p><b>Qualifications and qualification systems</b></p>	<p><b>Tools for OSH Management</b></p>
	<p>The 2020 <u>Eurofound</u> user survey<sup>244</sup> reported that 64% of respondents noted that this activity was relevant to their work (N=544).</p>	<p>64% of staff surveyed found these to be cost effective to a large (42%) or moderate (18%) extent, and 4% to a small extent (36% did not provide an answer, N=45).</p>	<p>A key initiative under this activity area is the Torino Process (TRP). In a 2018 PPMI evaluation<sup>245</sup> interviewees highlighted that the TRP provides valuable insights, contributes to policy dialogue, and informs the Agency on partner country needs. The process was also praised by partner country governments, EU institutions and a partner country civil society organisation, with a majority of all three stakeholder types finding it relevant to a large or to some extent (83%, 81% and 77%,</p>	<p>73% of staff surveyed indicated that the tools were largely cost-effective, with 19% finding them moderately cost-effective and no staff finding them to be of little or not at all cost-effectiveness (8% felt unable to respond, N=48).</p> <p>The 2020 midterm evaluation of <b>OiRA</b><sup>246</sup> found this to be highly efficient in terms of achieving its outputs and outcomes and that it had saved costs at the national level by providing readily available online risk assessment tools, thereby eliminating the need to develop such tools from scratch. <u>EU-OSHA</u>'s stakeholders<sup>7</sup></p>

<sup>244</sup> ICF (2021), User Feedback Survey 2020.

<sup>245</sup> PPMI (2018), Evaluation of the ETF Functions: Policy Delphi Results 1st round: June/July 2018.

<sup>246</sup> Ipsos (2020), Mid-Term evaluation of the OiRA activity - Final Report. A total of 40 interviews were conducted for the OiRA evaluation, covering EU-OSHA staff and contractors, management board Members, OiRA national partners, IRAT partners, EU social partners, national social partners and European Commission stakeholders.

			respectively, N=263). In 2019, 78% of partner countries were using the TRP for policy dialogue.	assessments <sup>247</sup> confirm the growing satisfaction and popularity of OiRA, with satisfaction rates at 83% in 2018, 92% in 2020, and 93% in 2022.
<b>Employment and labour markets</b>	<b>Reports</b>	<b>Expertise to EU project and programming cycle</b>	<b>Promoting networking and coordination</b>	
89% of survey respondents felt that <u>Eurofound</u> had achieved its objectives under this activity over 2017-2022 to a large or moderate extent (N=116).  The 2020 <u>Eurofound</u> user survey found that 79% of respondents found this activity relevant for their work (N=544).	Of staff surveyed, 73% found skills forecasting reports to be cost effective to a large or moderate extent, with this figure at 76% for thematic research reports, 67% for monitoring report, 78% for country reports, and 76% for EU-wide study reports, N=45.	37% of staff surveyed found these to be cost-effective to a large extent, 40% to a moderate extent, and 12% to a small extent (12% did not provide an answer, N=52).	81% of <u>EU-OSHA</u> staff survey respondents felt that the Agency was able to meet this objective to a 'very large extent' (N=48), with approximately half of respondents in the stakeholder survey (52%, N=75) and the OPC (51%) reporting the same thing (N=41).  Staff perceive <b>events</b> are being largely cost-effective (67%) or cost-effective to a moderate extent (23%). 2% found them cost-effective to a small extent and 8% were unsure (N=48).	
<b>Social dialogue and industrial relations</b>	<b>Outputs related to upskilling and reskilling</b>	<b>Supporting capacity building in partner countries</b>	<b>Networking knowledge</b>	
89% of stakeholders rated this as very or rather good (N=65)	53% of staff surveyed found the Agencies events to be cost-effective to a large extent, 22% to a moderate extent, 4% to a small extent (20% did not provide an answer, N=45).	33% of staff surveyed found these to be cost-effective to a large extent, 37% to a moderate extent, and 17% to a small extent (2% did not find them at all cost-effective and 12% did not provide an answer, N=52).	84% of staff judge the cost-effectiveness of <u>EU-OSHA</u> 's online database as either largely cost-effective (52%) or as moderately cost-effective (31%). The remaining 17% felt unable to judge cost-effectiveness (N=48).  Respondents to the stakeholder survey from Trade Unions indicated that one of the main achievements of the Agency in their eyes during 2017-2022 was the underpinning of EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work, which attests to the impact of <u>EU-OSHA</u> 's knowledge outputs (N=75).	

<sup>247</sup> Bi-annual stakeholder survey 2016-2022. Satisfaction with OiRA over time excludes do not know / cannot answer responses.

				The provision of quality work and of updated information of health and safety topics was also mentioned in the stakeholder survey as a key achievement of the Agency. The activity also exceeded its set targets from 2019 to 2022 in terms of usefulness, relevance, EU-added value and impact, based on the assessment of stakeholders. The assessment of usefulness rose from 83% to 94% over 2019 to 2022, while the other indicators remained stable.	
		<b>Peer learning activities</b>	<b>Policy advice to partner countries</b>	<b>MB members and FOPs assessment of performance</b> (KPI target 80%)	
		49% of staff surveyed found these to be cost-effective to a large extent, 18% to a moderate extent, and 4% to a small extent (29% did not provide an answer, N=45).	42% of staff surveyed found these to be cost-effective to a large extent, 35% to a moderate extent, and 13% to a small extent (10% did not provide an answer, N=52).	2017	89%
				2018	93%
				2019	87%
				2020	96%
				2021	96%
				2022	98%
		<b>Skills and labour market</b>	<b>Monitoring and diagnostics reports</b>		
		<u>Cedefop</u> developed a tool for online vacancy analysis (Skills-OVATE) over the evaluation period. An ex-post evaluation <sup>248</sup> revealed that stakeholders greatly appreciate quick access to the data, the ability to implement comparisons of countries, and effective visualisations	38% of staff surveyed found these to be cost-effective to a large extent, 38% to a moderate extent, and 10% to a small extent (2% did not find them at all cost-effective and 12% did not provide an answer, N=52).		

<sup>248</sup> Intellera Consulting (2022). Real-time Labour Market Information on Skills Requirements: Setting up the EU system for online vacancy analysis Final Report. Cedefop Ex-Post Evaluation 2021 ROC/CTF/19/ETF/0001-02/2021

## ANNEX V: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION – SYNOPSIS REPORT

### Chapter 1: Introduction

This report provides an overview of all consultation activities and the input received through the call for evidence that supported the evaluation study of the EU agencies Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA ('the Agencies') covering the period from 2017 to 2022. The legal basis of the evaluation is set out in the revised Founding Regulation of the three tripartite Agencies (Eurofound, Cedefop and EU-OSHA) and in Article 24(2) of the ETF's Founding Regulation.

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 presents an overview of the consultation strategy, including the distribution of stakeholder groups across the various consultation activities;
- Chapter 3 provides information on the consultation activities, including the approach taken for dissemination, as well as the sample size, and the strengths and limitations of each consultation; and
- Chapter 4 consolidates and discusses the findings of the consultation activities across the five evaluation criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value.

### Chapter 2: Overview of consultation strategy

Several stakeholder groups were consulted to inform the study's findings. Table 1 shows an overview of the consulted stakeholder groups across the various consultation activities.

**Table 1: Consulted stakeholder groups across the consultation activities**

Stakeholder group	High-level interviews	Interviews	Public consultation	Have your say portal	Stakeholder survey	Staff survey	Validation focus groups
European Commission Directorates-General	✓		✓				✓
EU agencies, authorities or committees	✓		✓				✓
EU institutions / experts excluding the Commission	✓		✓				✓
International institutions (OECD, World Bank, etc.)	✓		✓				✓
Agencies' staff members		✓	✓			✓	
Agencies' management / governing board		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Agencies' executive board members / directors		✓				✓	✓
Agencies' stakeholders		✓	✓	✓	✓		
General public			✓	✓			

As Table 2 shows, the study incorporated 900 stakeholder contributions across the various consultation activities<sup>249</sup>.

**Table 2: Number of stakeholders consulted**

	High-level interviews	Interviews	Public consultation	Call for evidence	Stakeholder survey	Staff survey	Validation focus groups	Total
Number	22	143	101	15	364	196	59	900

### Chapter 3: Consultation activities

This section provides a detailed account of the objectives, the dissemination methods, the sample size and composition, as well as the strengths and limitations of all consultation activities.

#### High-level interviews

A total of 22 high-level interviews were conducted between March and July 2023 involving representatives from the following stakeholder groups:

- European Commission Directorates-General, including DG Budget, DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Eurostat, DG Human Resources and Security, DG International Partnerships and DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations;
- EU institutions excluding the European Commission – these include the European Economic and Social Committee, as well as the European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs or experts appointed by the European Parliament;
- EU decentralised agencies, including the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the European Environment Agency, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Institute for Gender Equality, the European Labour Authority and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights; and
- international organisations including the EU Agencies Network, the International Labour Organization, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, UNESCO, UNICEF and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

The aim of these interviews was to sense-check the intervention logic, gain initial insights regarding the merit and relevance of the Agencies’ activities, and identify the primary areas of their impact. The selection of representatives within the named stakeholder groups was made in collaboration with Unit G5 of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, which was responsible for the study.

<sup>249</sup> Some of these contributions might not be unique, as the same stakeholders might have been consulted through multiple activities.

## Interviews

A total of 143 interviews were conducted with the Agencies' staff members and their stakeholders between February and June 2023. The purpose of these interviews was to add to the desk-based research by providing in-depth insights into the Agencies' performance across the five evaluation criteria. Interviews were well-suited to this purpose as their qualitative information was difficult to capture in the desk-based research or in the close-ended questions used in the rest of the consultation activities.

While most interviews were conducted on the Agencies' premises, some were conducted online. Specifically, 30 interviews were conducted for Eurofound, 46 interviews for Cedefop, 33 interviews for the ETF, and 34 interviews for EU-OSHA. The number of interviews was subject to staff and stakeholders' availability.

Interpreting the interview data was an iterative process. On the one hand, interview notes from different staff members were compared to find areas of consensus or disagreement. On the other hand, interview notes were compared with the available evidence from the desk-based research and the other consultation activities, to assess the weight of the evidence. After this process, interview findings were blended in the evaluation report.

## Public consultation

A public consultation was available in all official EU languages for a period of 12 weeks, from 2 March 2023 to 25 May 2023. The consultation, in contrast to the staff and stakeholder surveys, focused on the evaluation criteria that were more suitable to seek input on from respondents like the general public. It therefore excluded questions about the efficiency of the Agencies.

For the consultation's dissemination, 'snowball sampling' was used. The four EU Agencies used email campaigns and shared the consultation through their websites, newsletters, social media, and email signatures. Similarly, the research team disseminated the public consultation to the Members of the European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, to relevant EU-level associations and to social media.

The total sample size after cleaning the dataset according to the European Commission's rules for feedback and suggestions was 101 responses. As a result, 44 responses were received for Cedefop, 41 for EU-OSHA, 32 for the ETF, and 31 for Eurofound (Figure 1). One limitation of this dataset was that it did not enable subgroup analysis. In addition, it should be noted that the public consultation was not based on random sampling from a finite population and therefore its results were not representative of the EU population.



**Figure 1: Number of public consultation responses per agency<sup>250</sup>**

<sup>250</sup> The number of responses was larger than the number of respondents, as respondents could answer for more than one agency.

Most respondents (81 out of 101) were from within the EU, from 24 different Member States. The highest number of responses came from Spain (12 out of 101) and Belgium (10 out of 101). A total of 20 responses (out of 101) came from outside the EU, from 14 non-EU countries. The non-EU country with the most responses was Türkiye with 4, followed by the UK with 3, and Armenia with 2.

**Figure 2: Number of public consultation respondents per country**

**Figure 3: Types of respondents per stakeholder group**

A wide range of stakeholders replied to the consultation. The highest number of responses (24 out of 101) came from individual EU citizens, followed by those working for public authorities (21 out of 101). When combined, businesses and business associations represented the third-largest category of respondents (14 out of 101). The remaining respondents (42 out of 101) included trade unions, academic/research institutions, NGOs, non-EU citizens, and others (Figure 3).

### **Call for evidence**

Simultaneously with the public consultation, a call for evidence was published on the European Commission's 'Have your say' web portal. The call for evidence gathered 15 unique contributions from business associations, academic/research institutions, trade unions, NGOs, EU and non-EU citizens, and others. The feedback from these organisations and individuals has been incorporated into Chapter 4 of this report.

### **Stakeholder and staff survey**

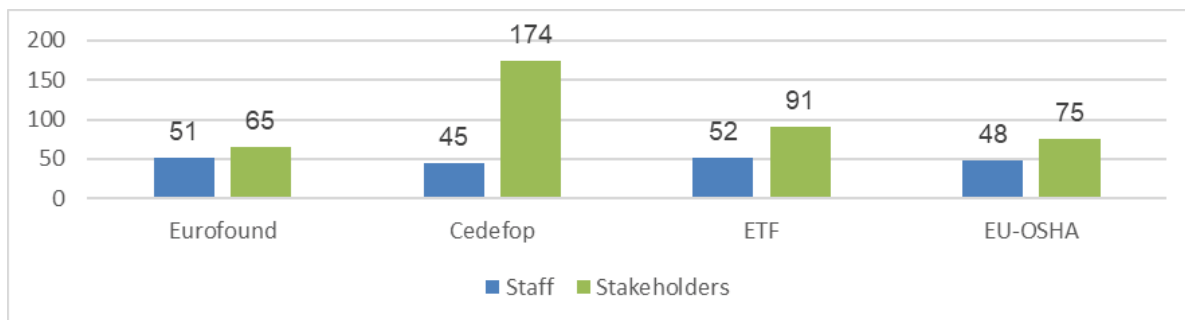
Simultaneously with the public consultation, a targeted survey was administered to the Agencies' staff and stakeholders. The survey was accessible in English, German and French. It was sent to the Agencies' contact points together with the public consultation for dissemination. The survey questionnaire was distributed via a unique link that included a separate route for the staff members and stakeholders of each of the four Agencies, resulting in a total of eight surveys.

The survey gathered data concerning all five evaluation criteria. It served a dual purpose: on the one hand, quantifying diverse aspects of the Agencies' performance in relation to the evaluation criteria, and, on the other hand, gathering qualitative input to strengthen the evaluation process.

The surveys gathered a total of 560 unique contributions. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of responses by agency whereas Table 3 shows the sample composition of the stakeholder survey. The sample composition of the stakeholder survey presented similar challenges for subgroup analysis as seen in the public consultation's sample composition. In addition, similarly to the public consultation, the stakeholder survey did not rely on random sampling from a finite

population. Therefore, its results should not be generalised. The same was not true for the staff survey, but because of its low response rate, its findings were not representative either.

**Figure 4: Number of responses to the stakeholder/staff surveys**



**Table 3: Sample composition of stakeholder survey**

Stakeholder group	Eurofound	Cedefop	ETF	EU-OSHA
Business organisation / private company	4 (6%)	13 (7%)	3 (3%)	3 (4%)
Decentralised EU agency	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (3%)
EEA/EFTA country governmental institution or agency	1 (2%)	5 (3%)	5 (5%)	2 (3%)
Employer organisation	14 (22%)	10 (6%)	2 (2%)	10 (13%)
EU candidate country governmental institution or agency	1 (2%)	3 (2%)	4 (4%)	2 (3%)
EU Member State governmental institution or agency	13 (20%)	27 (16%)	3 (3%)	27 (36%)
European Commission	5 (8%)	1 (1%)	13 (14%)	0 (0%)
International non-EU organisation (e.g. OECD, ILO, UNESCO, etc.)	1 (2%)	2 (1%)	14 (15%)	0 (0%)
NGO	3 (5%)	11 (6%)	2 (2%)	2 (3%)
Other (please specify)	5 (8%)	42 (24%)	13 (14%)	5 (7%)
Other EU institution (e.g. CoR, EESC, etc.)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	14 (15%)	0 (0%)
Research or consultancy organisation	11 (17%)	30 (17%)	8 (9%)	2 (3%)
Trade union	5 (8%)	9 (5%)	1 (1%)	20 (27%)
Vocational education and training provider	0 (0%)	20 (11%)	8 (9%)	0 (0%)

<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b> <b>(100%)</b>	<b>174</b> <b>(100%)</b>	<b>91</b> <b>(100%)</b>	<b>75</b> <b>(100%)</b>
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### Validation focus groups

The validation focus groups aimed to validate the draft evaluation findings and to fill in the remaining knowledge gaps. Five validation focus groups were conducted: four covering each of the Agencies, and one covering all Agencies collectively. The one covering all Agencies collectively focused on issues around the coherence within and between the Agencies, and within this, on issues around their efficiency. The focus groups took place as a single online event on 18 September 2023. In total, 59 participants participated in the focus groups, excluding the members of the research team.

## Chapter 4: Summary of results

This section brings together the findings of the evaluation’s consultation activities, as presented in the previous chapter. Overall, the different consultation activities were cross-referenced with each other, and their findings underwent further validation through the validation focus groups. By employing this triangulation approach, the findings presented in this section acquired significant reliability, even in light of the non-representative nature of the samples across various consultation activities.

### Effectiveness

**Across all Agencies, responses to effectiveness-related questions in the public consultation were predominantly positive.** Negative responses were rare, ranging from 0% to a maximum of 20% such as in the case of assessing effectiveness against Russia’s war against Ukraine. However, many respondents, across questions and Agencies, often opted for moderate responses, suggesting room for improvement in various effectiveness dimensions.

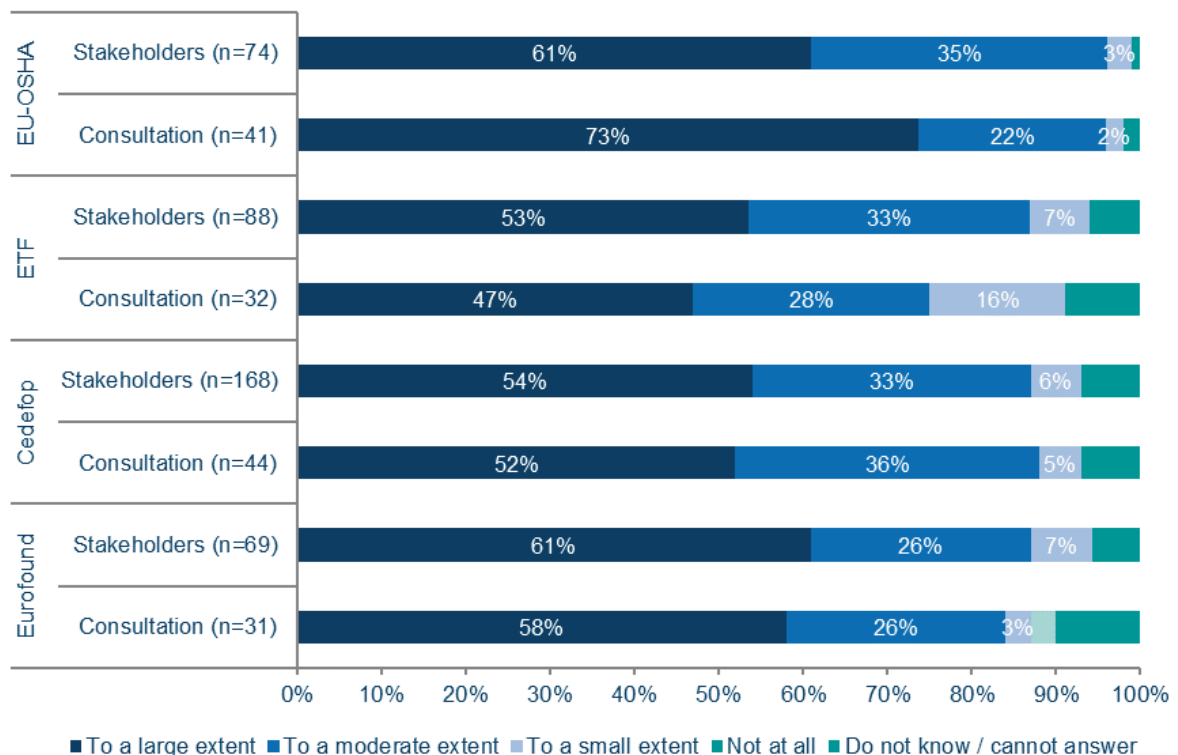
In summary, respondents broadly found the Agencies’ services to have been of high quality. For Eurofound, the services that were found to have the highest quality were its European-level surveys and its research outputs. For Cedefop, services such as its EU-wide study reports, its events and its monitoring and diagnostics reports were appraised. As regards the ETF, its role in supporting capacity building in partner countries and offering policy advice received recognition. Lastly, for EU-OSHA, services involving communication and dissemination activities and research reports were highlighted as areas of excellence. These findings were consistent across the public consultation and the stakeholder survey and were corroborated during the interviews with the Agencies’ staff members and their relevant stakeholders.

According to the public consultation, albeit with individual differences, the main purposes for which respondents were using the Agencies’ services were: (i) to familiarise themselves with developments in the Agencies’ respective areas; (ii) for peer learning and identifying good practices; and (iii) on some occasions, to inform policy development at the national level. The survey results were consistent with the public consultation. They also highlighted a strong use of the Agencies’ guidance documents and tools by respondents in order to inform their work.

This use was confirmed by the interview data, with stakeholders referencing examples such as Eurofound's European working conditions surveys, Cedefop's network of independent experts in lifelong career guidance and development, the ETF's rapid education diagnosis and EU-OSHA's healthy workplaces campaigns.

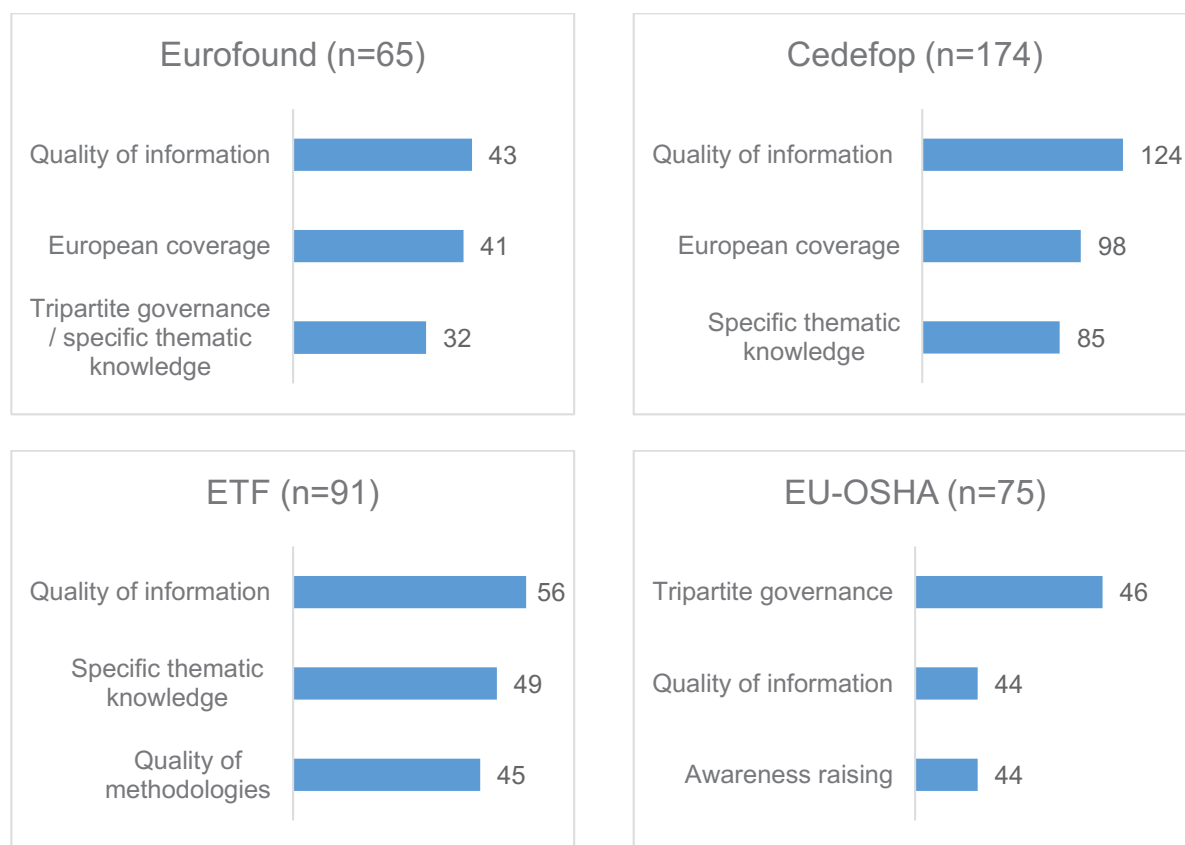
The corresponding activities and outputs of the Agencies' services also appear to have effectively addressed the respondents' needs. Some Agencies seem to have fared slightly better compared to others in this regard. The same pattern held true for the Agencies' objectives, as the majority of respondents believed they had been achieved to a significant extent. The contributions to the call for evidence also confirmed that the Agencies' services met the needs of their stakeholders. As an illustration, a national academic/research institution in the field of medicine from Sweden reported to have frequently used statistics and reports from Eurofound and EU-OSHA and to have received these Agencies' support in organising national-level events. EU-OSHA has also received praise from Danish, Spanish and French trade unions for producing balanced and relevant scientific knowledge on occupational safety and health. However, some suggestions have been made, indicating that there was potential for EU-OSHA to further assist Member States in improving the data they provide, through capacity-building activities and direct assistance.

**Figure 5: To what extent did the Agencies' overall activities and / or outputs meet your needs?**



The public consultation also revealed patterns in the characteristics of the Agencies that respondents highly valued. Despite individual variations, the Agencies' European coverage, quality of information, and specific thematic knowledge were consistently reported as the aspects most valued by respondents. These traits were followed by the quality of the Agencies' methodologies and their tripartite nature. As Figure 5 shows, the findings of the stakeholder survey were consistent with the public consultation findings, while similar views were expressed in the rest of the consultation activities. In particular, stakeholders often commented on the high added value of the Agencies' European coverage, quality of information and specific thematic knowledge (Figure 6). In addition, they highlighted the effectiveness of the Agencies' tripartite nature in terms of consolidating diverse perspectives and increasing the acceptability of the Agencies' research at national level.

**Figure 6: Which characteristics of the Agencies' work did you value the most?**



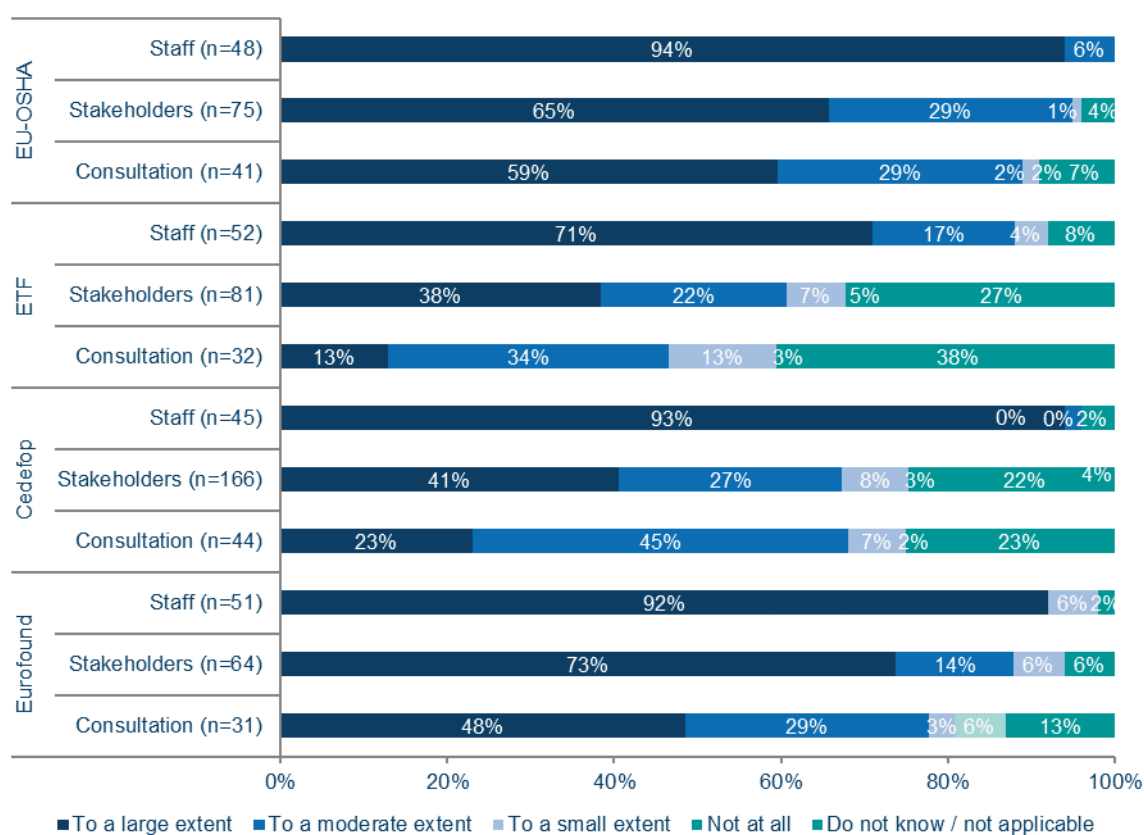
Overall, respondents to the public consultation expressed positive views on the focus of the Agencies, although to varying degrees. For instance, a greater proportion of respondents reported that Eurofound and Cedefop were directing their efforts towards areas with the greatest need and potential impact, in comparison to the ETF and EU-OSHA, although for all four Agencies, most respondents expressed positive views.

Finally, regarding the Agencies' effectiveness in terms of addressing the needs that emerged from the two big crises during the evaluation period, i.e. COVID-19 and Russia's war of

aggression against Ukraine, respondents' views did not make it possible to draw definite conclusions, although the overall picture appeared to be broadly positive.

On the one hand, the Agencies were broadly successful in terms of providing useful support to address the challenges posed by COVID-19, with consulted stakeholders highlighting several examples of the Agencies' work that helped in this direction. On the other hand, a sizeable share of responses suggested that the Agencies' work has only moderately addressed the issues that emerged from COVID-19.

**Figure 7: To what extent were the Agencies' responsive to pressures arising from COVID-19?**<sup>251</sup>

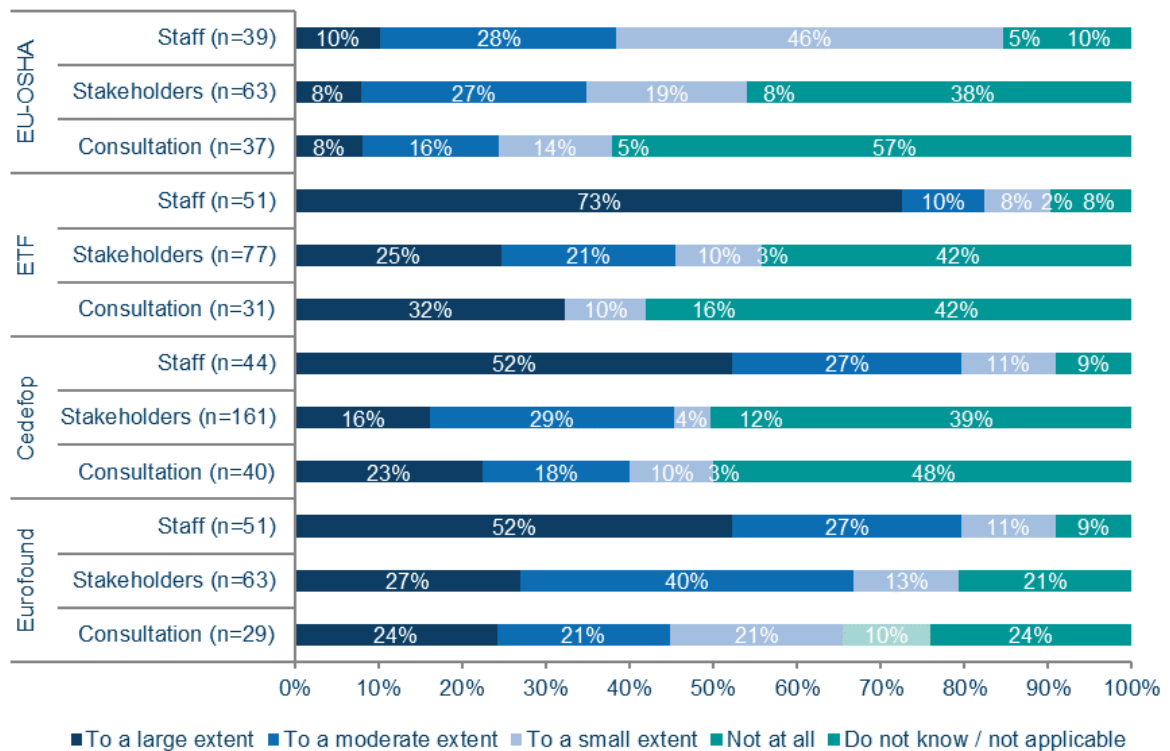


Positive examples that were mentioned during the interviews included Eurofound's COVID-19 Policy Watch, which collated information on the responses of governments and social partners to the COVID-19 crisis and Russia's war against Ukraine; Cedefop's information hub on how countries and stakeholders were coping with vocational education and training (VET) during COVID-19; and the ETF's partnership with Eurofound on Eurofound's living, working and COVID-19 survey.

<sup>251</sup> The figure excludes respondents who selected 'not applicable'.

As regards the Agencies' effectiveness in terms of addressing the needs that emerged from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, respondents have been somewhat more modest across all consultation activities. This is possibly due to the low affinity of the Agencies' mandate with those needs. Despite this, stakeholders also pointed to positive examples of support. All in all, it appears that the ETF has fared better than the other Agencies in this aspect, closely followed by Eurofound and Cedefop, while EU-OSHA ranked last.

**Figure 8: To what extent were the Agencies' responsive to pressures arising from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine?<sup>252</sup>**



## Efficiency

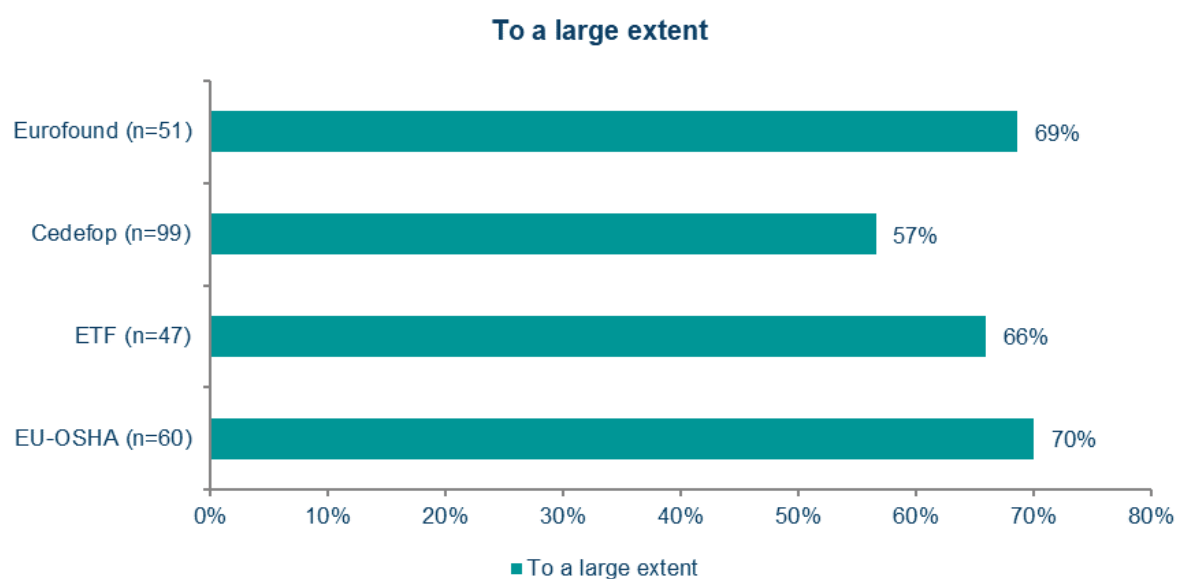
The prevailing opinion among stakeholders was that the Agencies have operated in a cost-effective manner (Figure 9). Interview and focus group data suggested that the Agencies were continuously seeking to increase efficiency in delivering their services, e.g. by performing joint actions between them and with other institutions, by streamlining monitoring and reporting, and other measures. However, it became evident that the Agencies were often under pressure to deliver their work programmes and that further resources could have helped them maximise their impact on the ground, e.g. for EU-OSHA, by increasing their missions in countries that have less developed occupational safety and health (OSH) structures and driving the EU OSH agenda in these countries. Figure 10 also points to an issue around the appropriateness of available resources, as it demonstrates that the allocation of human resources

<sup>252</sup> The figure excludes respondents who selected 'not applicable'.

was perceived as too low among staff members across all four Agencies. Importantly, almost no staff members reported that this allocation was too high. In this context, it was noted that compensating for the lack of resources by continuously improving efficiencies might not be sustainable in the long run. In addition, such an approach might undermine the Agencies' capacity to strategically plan their future actions.

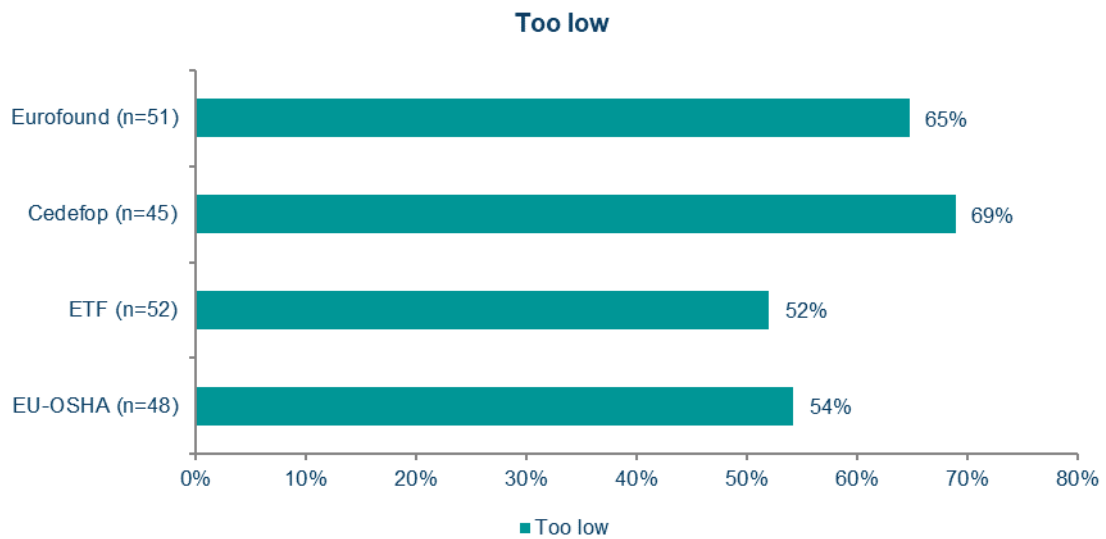
**Figure 9: Stakeholders' perception of the Agencies' efficiency:**

**How do you rate the cost-effectiveness of the Agencies' operations in 2017-2022?<sup>253</sup>**



<sup>253</sup> Replies to the evaluation stakeholder survey. The sample size excludes respondents who selected 'do not know' or who did not answer.

**Figure 10: How do you perceive the amount of human resources allocated to fulfil the functions of your department or unit in the period 2017-2022?<sup>254</sup>**

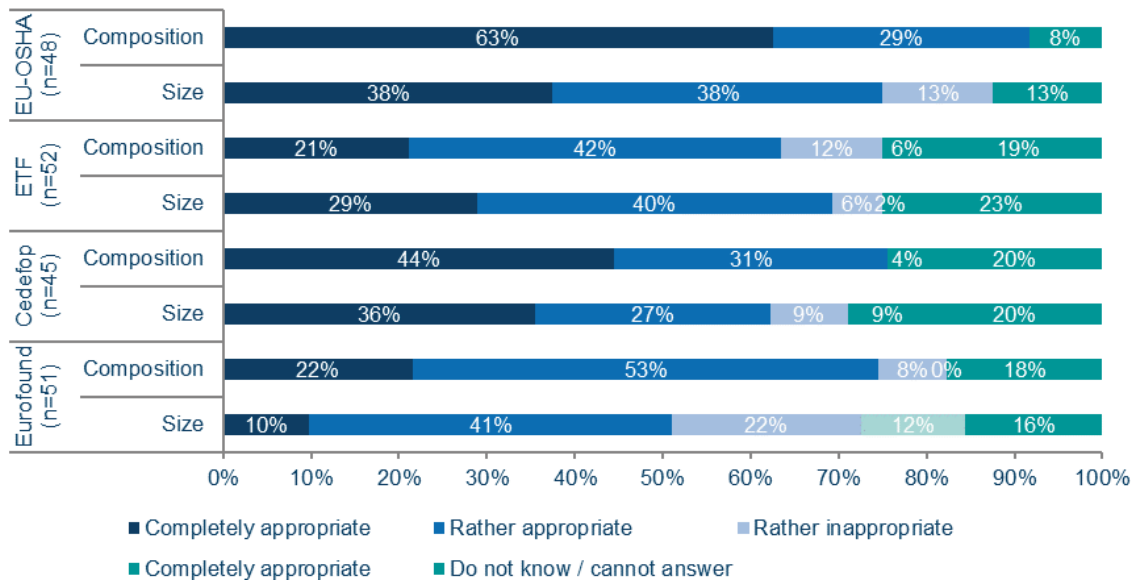


Despite the resource constraints, staff members of all four Agencies considered that there were adequate mechanisms in place to ensure accountability towards stakeholders, maintain transparency with stakeholders and the general public, and conduct suitable assessments of their performance. However, respondents did not select extreme values when making these claims, suggesting that there might have been some potential for improvement.

Finally, Figure 11 shows that staff members were also overall positive about the appropriateness of the size and composition of the Agencies' management or governing boards. Specifically, while it was recognised that the tripartite nature of the Agencies entails a certain administrative burden, it was noted that this tripartism's role in synthesising diverse viewpoints and rendering the Agencies' research more acceptable to national-level stakeholders counterbalanced this drawback.

<sup>254</sup> Replies to the staff survey.

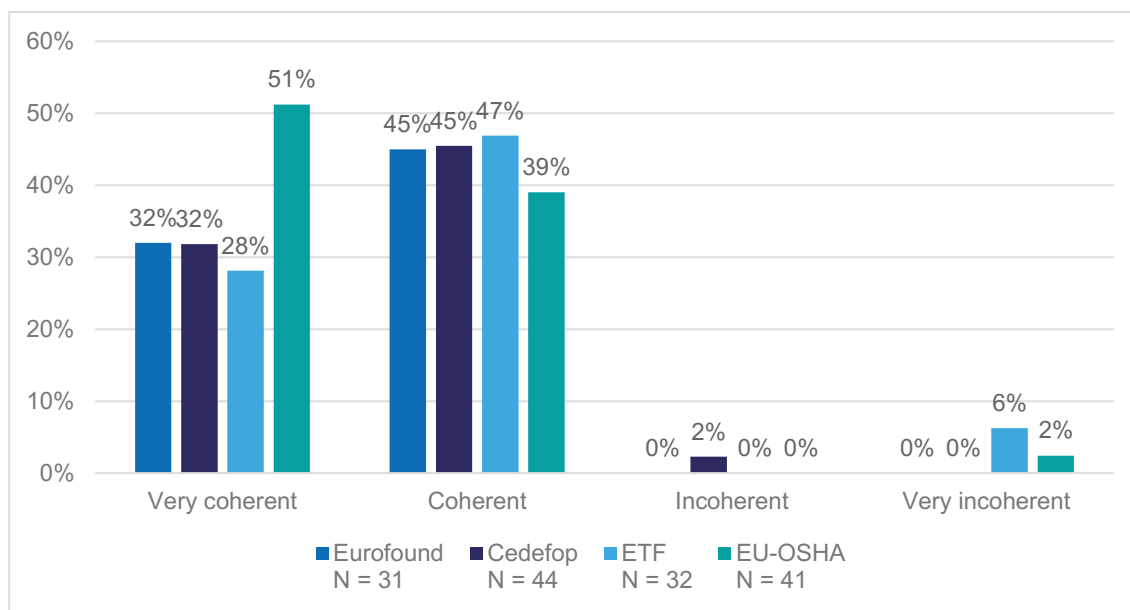
**Figure 11: How would you rate the appropriateness of the size and composition of the management / governing board?**



**Coherence**

Similar to effectiveness, the distribution of the public consultation responses for all Agencies leaned towards positive values across all questions on coherence. Instances of responses suggesting that the Agencies’ work has been either incoherent or very incoherent have been marginal, ranging from as low as 0% to a maximum of 6%.

**Figure 12: To what extent do you think that the Agencies' mandates and activities are coherent with other relevant EU programmes/initiatives?**



Nevertheless, a notable share of respondents opted for moderately positive values (e.g. coherent) instead of extreme positive values (e.g. very coherent), suggesting that there was some room for further improving different dimensions of coherence. At the same time, a significant proportion of respondents was unable to provide an answer (from 32 to 61%). This can be explained by the technical nature of these questions.

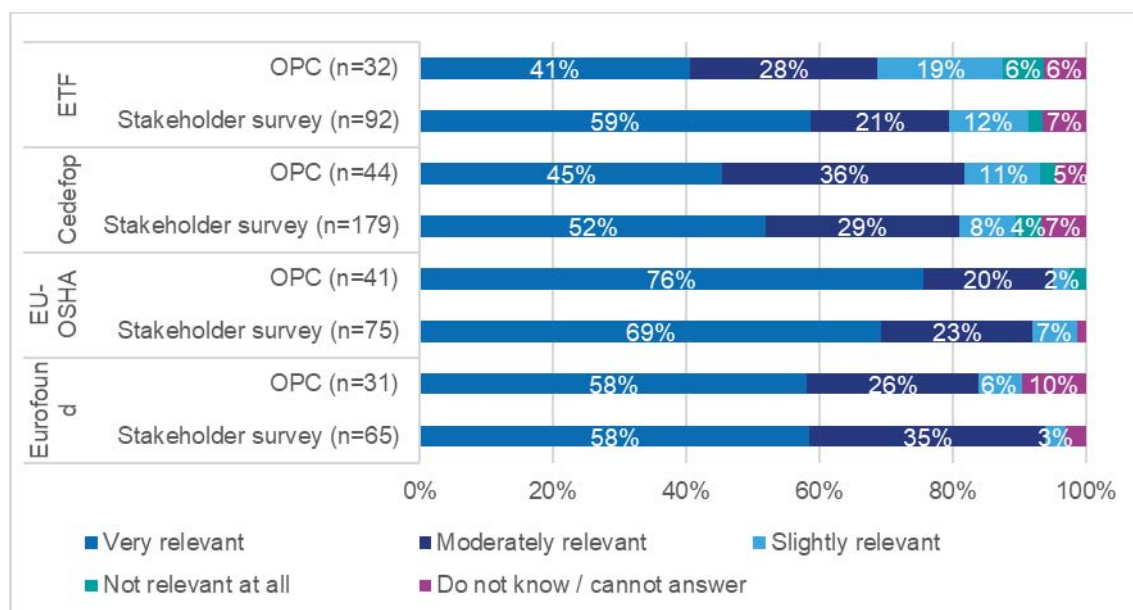
Despite this, the overall picture that emerged from the public consultation and the interviews was that during the evaluation period, the Agencies were often seeking opportunities to tap into shared opportunities to increase their effectiveness and efficiency, and, conversely, to decrease overlap. Participants in the focus groups confirmed this observation and pointed to the visibility, complementarity, and outreach gains the cooperation brought. However, they also stressed that cooperation is not necessarily associated with efficiency gains and that in practice, they work better when they come in a bottom-up way, via projects, compared to a formalised way. In addition to seeking collaboration opportunities among themselves, the four Agencies were also exploring similar opportunities with other agencies. For example, in the call for evidence, the European Centre for Disease Control expressed a positive view on its collaboration with the four Agencies through the work of the EU agencies sub-network on scientific advice as well as through bilateral cooperation on issues of mutual concern.

All in all, joint publications, joint data collection and joint information- or expertise-sharing received positive ratings across various stakeholder groups across both the public consultation and the stakeholder survey. Sub-group analysis on these surveys did not yield conclusive patterns when it came to the quality of these joint activities as perceived by different stakeholder groups.

## Relevance

All in all, for the four Agencies, most respondents suggested that they have been on the ‘right track’ in terms of addressing issues that were relevant to their stakeholders. This finding was consistent across the public consultation and the stakeholder survey.

**Figure 13: How relevant, if at all, were the Agency’s overall activities and/or outputs to your work in 2017-2022?**



Interview accounts and contributions to the call for evidence corroborated this observation, with stakeholders providing numerous examples of how different activities and their corresponding outputs were relevant to their needs. For example, non-EU citizens have reported using the Agencies as points of reference for various matters. They have mentioned Cedefop as a point of reference for VET-oriented initiatives, and Eurofound as a point of reference for collecting EU-level information, e.g. through the European working conditions telephone survey. Furthermore, a trade union from Denmark reported that the Agencies had clear relevance to their work during the evaluation period.

Nevertheless, when grouping respondents who viewed the overall activities and/or outputs of the Agencies as moderately, slightly or not at all relevant to their work, it becomes evident that there was noticeable room for improvement. In the public consultation, this subset accounted for 22% of respondents for EU-OSHA, 32% for Eurofound, 49% for Cedefop and 53% for the ETF. In this context, one contribution suggested that Cedefop could improve its relevance by further promoting some strands of its work (e.g. Europass, ECVET, ESCO, EQAVET, EQF/NQFs). According to interview data, the same observation held true for the other Agencies.

Similar trends emerged in terms of the relevance of the services, activities and outputs introduced by the Agencies in response to COVID-19. In this context, for EU-OSHA (54%)

and Eurofound (31%), most respondents to the public consultation found these offerings to align with their needs. This was less pronounced for Cedefop (16%) and the ETF (13%), which might be due to the closer alignment of the mandates of EU-OSHA and Eurofound with the emerging needs from COVID-19. Similar patterns were identified in the stakeholders' survey, although respondents in this survey generally displayed a more positive outlook. Despite these observations, a notable share of respondents across all Agencies indicated that such services, activities or outputs moderately met their needs, indicating that despite the numerous positive examples, there might have been some room for some improvement.

Regarding both crises, the Agencies' staff maintained the view that there was no need to amend the Agencies' mandates.

Regarding the relevance of the services, activities and outputs introduced by the Agencies in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, patterns were less distinct, with a large share of respondents – ranging from a minimum of 32% to a maximum of 63% in both the public consultation and the stakeholder survey – opting not to provide an answer, therefore limiting the conclusions drawn to a small number of participants. Nevertheless, overall, respondents expressed more reserved opinions on the Agencies' relevance in this context, which, again, might be due to the low affinity of the Agencies' mandates with the needs that emerged. Despite this, positive examples of support were cited for all Agencies, including Cedefop's lifelong guidance policy for Ukrainian refugees and the ETF's development of ESCO in Ukrainian.

Finally, regarding trends that might affect the future relevance of the Agencies, the findings were once again consistent across the public consultation and the stakeholder survey. In both, most respondents considered that digitalisation and technological development, climate change, as well as demographic change and migration were the key trends likely to affect the Agencies' work in the future. In addition to these trends, the focus groups also pointed to re-globalisation, geopolitics and external crisis as some megatrends that might affect the work of the Agencies.

### **EU added value**

The four Agencies have helped bring about changes that would have been difficult to achieve otherwise. Specifically, most respondents in the public consultation and the stakeholder survey held the view that national-level organisations were not equipped to take over the role of the Agencies. This sentiment was more pronounced for Eurofound and EU-OSHA, compared to Cedefop and the ETF. Respondents also expressed similar, albeit less strong views regarding the ability of European- and international-level organisations to substitute the work of the Agencies. Similar views were also shared during the focus groups.

In this context, the Agencies' work has had a clear added value in Member States that lacked resources or had no equivalent national competences. For stakeholders in these Member States, the Agencies' outputs frequently served as the only available reference points. At the same time, the Agencies' outputs also proved valuable to stakeholders in countries with equivalent national competences in place. These stakeholders were able to supplement their national research by exploring a topic from a different angle, but also to include a comparative, EU dimension to their research.

Overall, the Agencies' unique ability to produce work encompassing all EU countries and provide time-series data emerged as clear sources of added value across several consultation activities, including interviews. Other key strengths that have been highlighted included the Agencies' focus on EU policy needs, the development of repositories and tools that were shared or were made accessible across Europe, as well as the set-up of pan-European networks.

Overall, across various stakeholder consultation activities, the work of the Agencies has been reported to provide the highest added value to the European Commission and to EU Member State public authorities. In most cases, organisations representing employers and employees, academic institutions as well as education and training providers took similar positions on the perceived benefits they derived from the Agencies. These results might hint that the Agencies could perhaps strengthen their visibility to the general public, a point emphasised in multiple consultation activities, including the call for evidence. Discussions in the focus groups highlighted that presenting the Agencies' work at local level could help in this direction.

Finally, respondents cited several examples of activities that have brought added value. For Eurofound, these included its pan-European surveys including the European working conditions surveys, the European company surveys, and the European quality of life surveys; for Cedefop, these included its expert networks as well as its reports focusing on forecasting skills and future labour market demands, as well as its reports on the future of VET; for the ETF, these included its capacity-building activities in partner countries; and for EU-OSHA, these included the healthy workplaces campaigns, ESENER, the Online Interactive Assessment Tools (OiRA) and others.

## ANNEX VI: AGENCIES INTERVENTION LOGICS

### 1. **Eurofound**

The intervention logic of Eurofound is presented in Figure 1. It was produced by reviewing the Agency's key strategic documents and external evaluation reports, listed below:

- [Revised Founding Regulation \(Regulation \(EU\) 2019/127\)](#)
- [Eurofound Programming document 2017–2020: work programme 2020](#)
- [Eurofound Programming document 2021–2024: Towards recovery and resilience](#)
- [Eurofound consolidated annual activity report 2020](#)
- [Evaluation of the EU Agencies under the remit of DG Employment: Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA \(European Commission, 2018\)](#)

### 2. **Cedefop**

The intervention logic of Cedefop is presented in Figure 2. It was produced by reviewing the Agency's key strategic documents and an external evaluation report. The key documents reviewed are listed below:

- [Revised Founding Regulation \(Regulation \(EU\) 2019/128\)](#)
- [Evaluation of the EU Agencies under the remit of DG Employment: Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA \(European Commission, 2018\)](#)
- Programming documents:
  - [Single Programming Document 2022-24](#)
  - [Programming document 2021-2023](#)
  - [Programming document 2020-2022](#)
  - [Programming document 2019-2021](#)
  - [Programming document 2018-2020](#)

### 3. **ETF**

The intervention logic of the ETF is presented in Figure 3. It was produced by reviewing the Agency's key strategic documents and an external evaluation.

- [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1360/90, amended by the recast ETF Regulation \(1339/2008\)](#)
- [Evaluation of the EU Agencies under the remit of DG Employment: Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA \(European Commission, 2018\)](#)
- Programming documents:
  - [Single Programming Document 2022-24 - Work Programme 2022](#)
  - [Single Programming Document 2021-23 - Work Programme 2021](#)
  - [Single Programming Document 2020-22 - Work Programme 2020 rev. 2](#)
  - [Single Programming Document 2017-2020 - Annual Work Programme 2019](#)

- [Single Programming Document 2017-2020 - Annual Work Programme 2018](#)
- [Single Programming Document 2017-2020 \(Includes WP 2017 and first outline of WP 2018\)](#)

#### **4. EU-OSHA**

The intervention logic of EU-OSHA is presented in Figure 4. It was produced by reviewing the Agency's key strategic documents and an external evaluation.

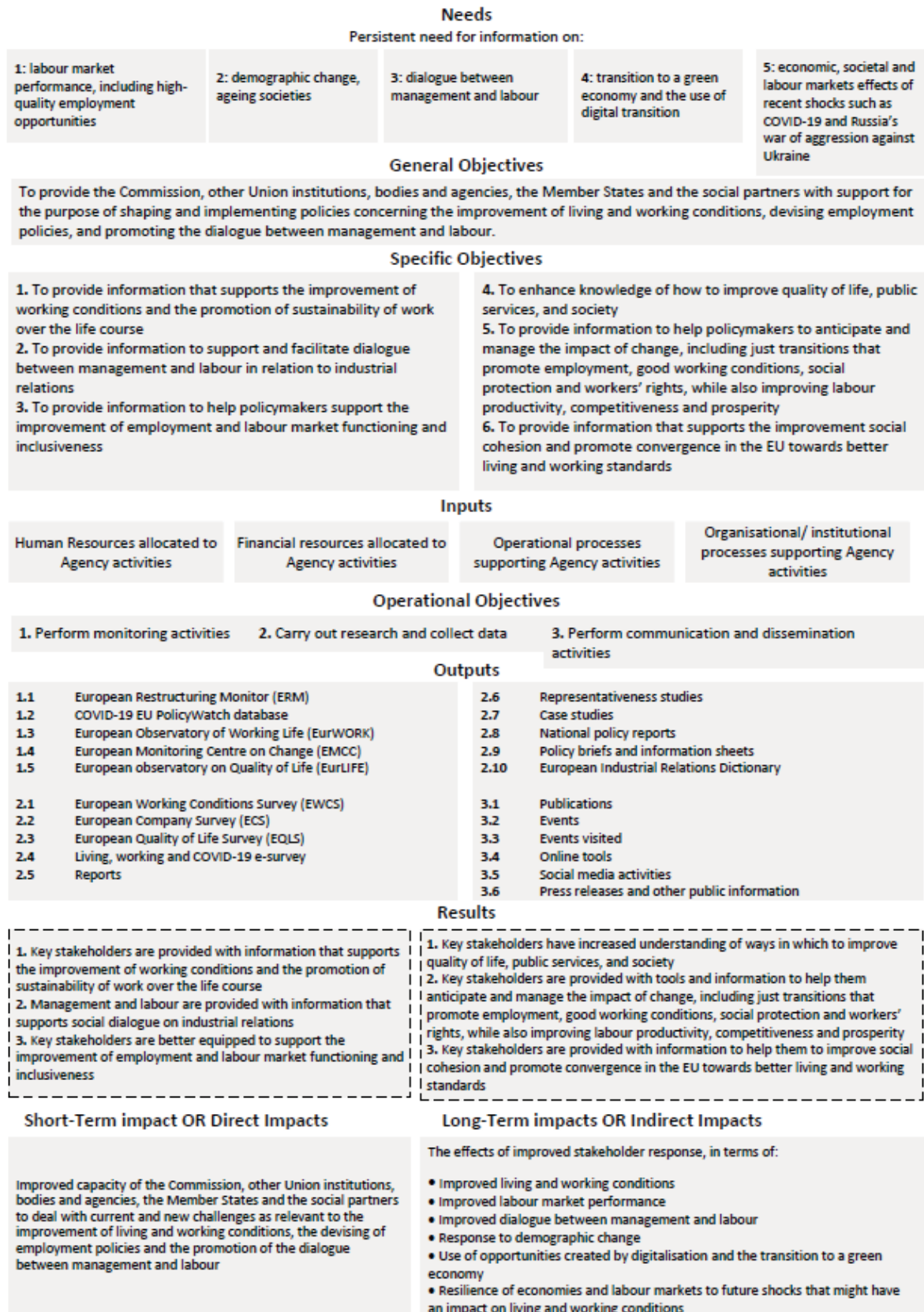
- [Revised Founding Regulation \(Regulation \(EU\) 2019/126\)](#)
- [EU Strategic Framework for Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027](#)
- [EU-OSHA Multiannual Strategic Programme 2014-2020](#)
- [Evaluation of the EU Agencies under the remit of DG Employment: Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA \(European Commission, 2018\)](#)
- [EU-OSHA's corporate strategy 2018–2023 / EU-OSHA Multiannual Strategic Programme 2018-2023](#)
- [Single Programming Document 2021-2023](#)

#### **5. Cross-cutting activities intervention logic**

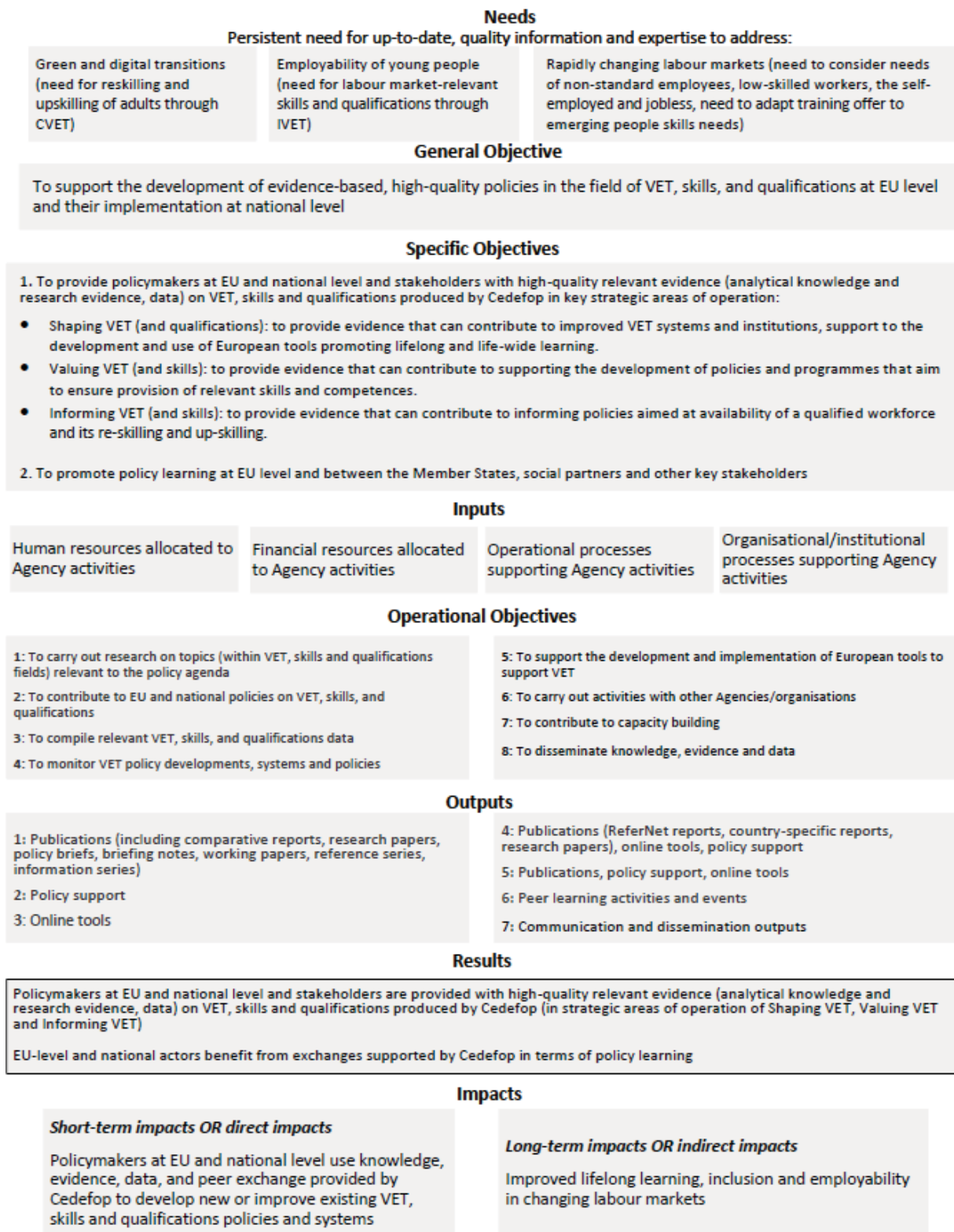
The intervention logic of cross-cutting activities is presented in Figure 5. It was produced by reviewing the above mentioned strategic documents and the previous evaluation of the four Agencies. The main documents are also listed below:

- [Regulation \(EU\) No 2019/127 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019, OJ L 30 of 16 January 2019](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training \(Cedefop\) and repealing Council Regulation \(EEC\) No 337/75](#)
- [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1360/90, amended by the recast ETF Regulation \(1339/2008\)](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/126 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 January 2019 establishing the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work \(EU-OSHA\), and repealing Council Regulation \(EC\) No 2062/94. OJ L 30, 31.1.2019](#)
- [Evaluation of the EU Agencies under the remit of DG Employment: Eurofound, Cedefop, ETF and EU-OSHA \(European Commission, 2018\)](#)

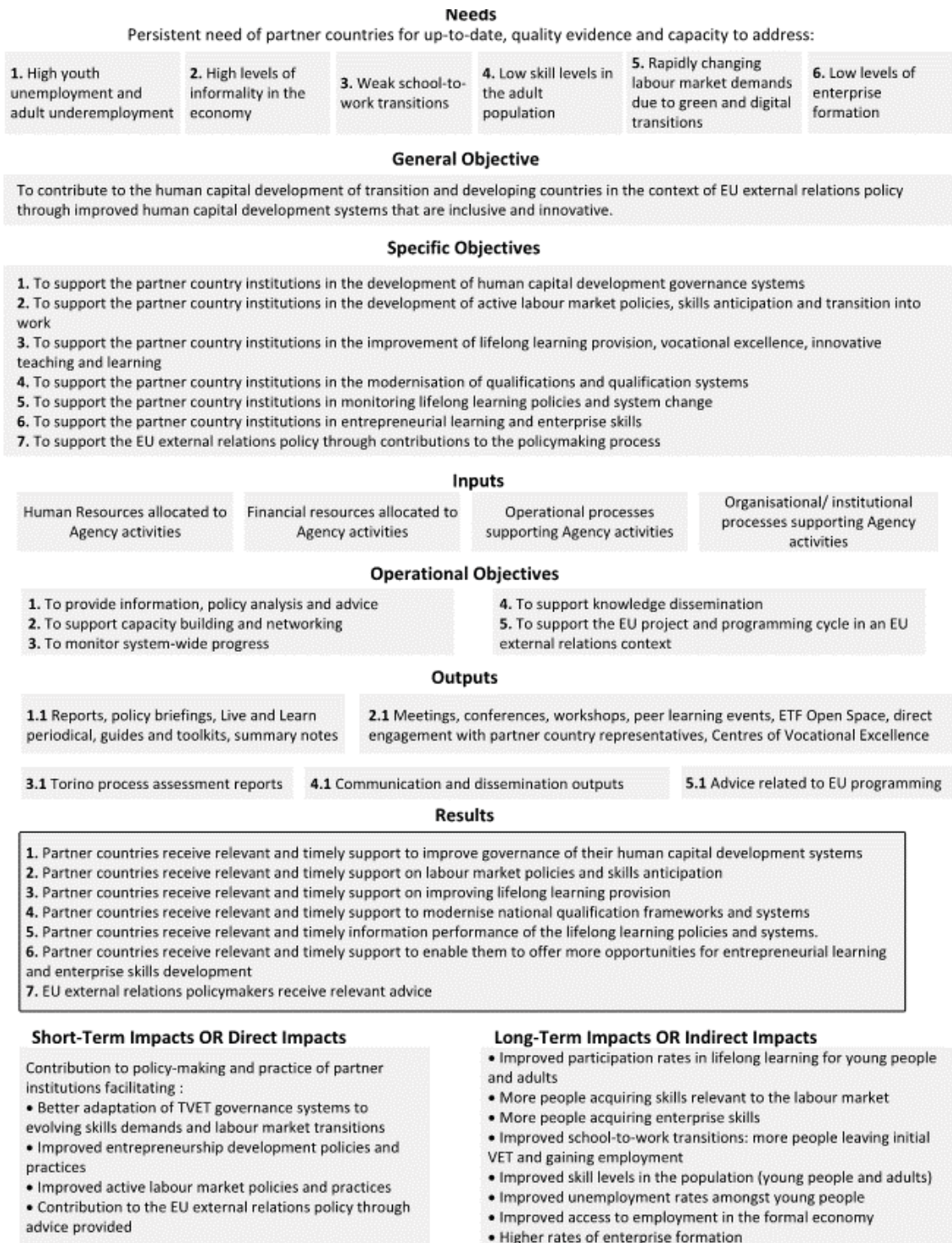
**Figure 1: Intervention logic of Eurofound**



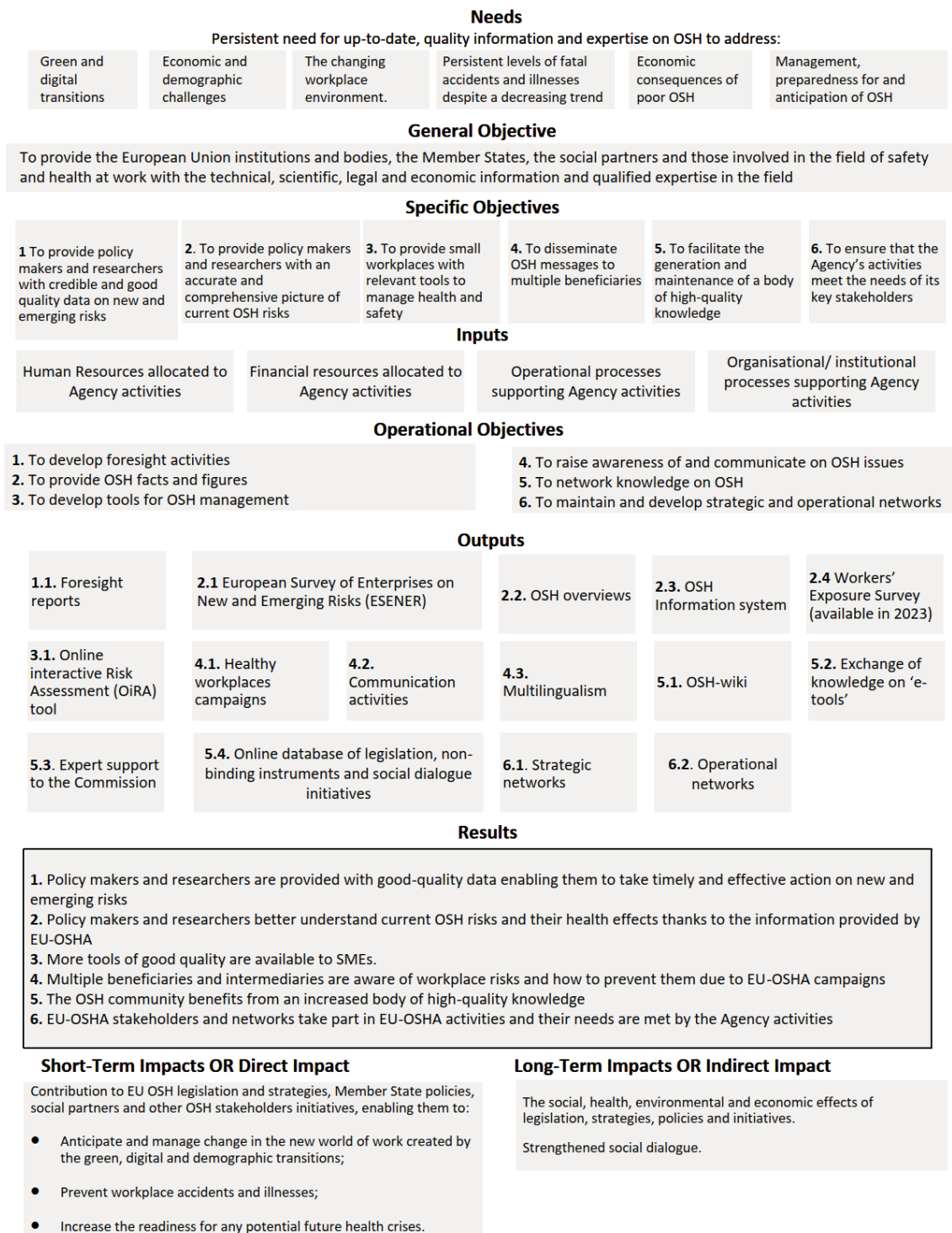
**Figure 2: Intervention logic of Cedefop**



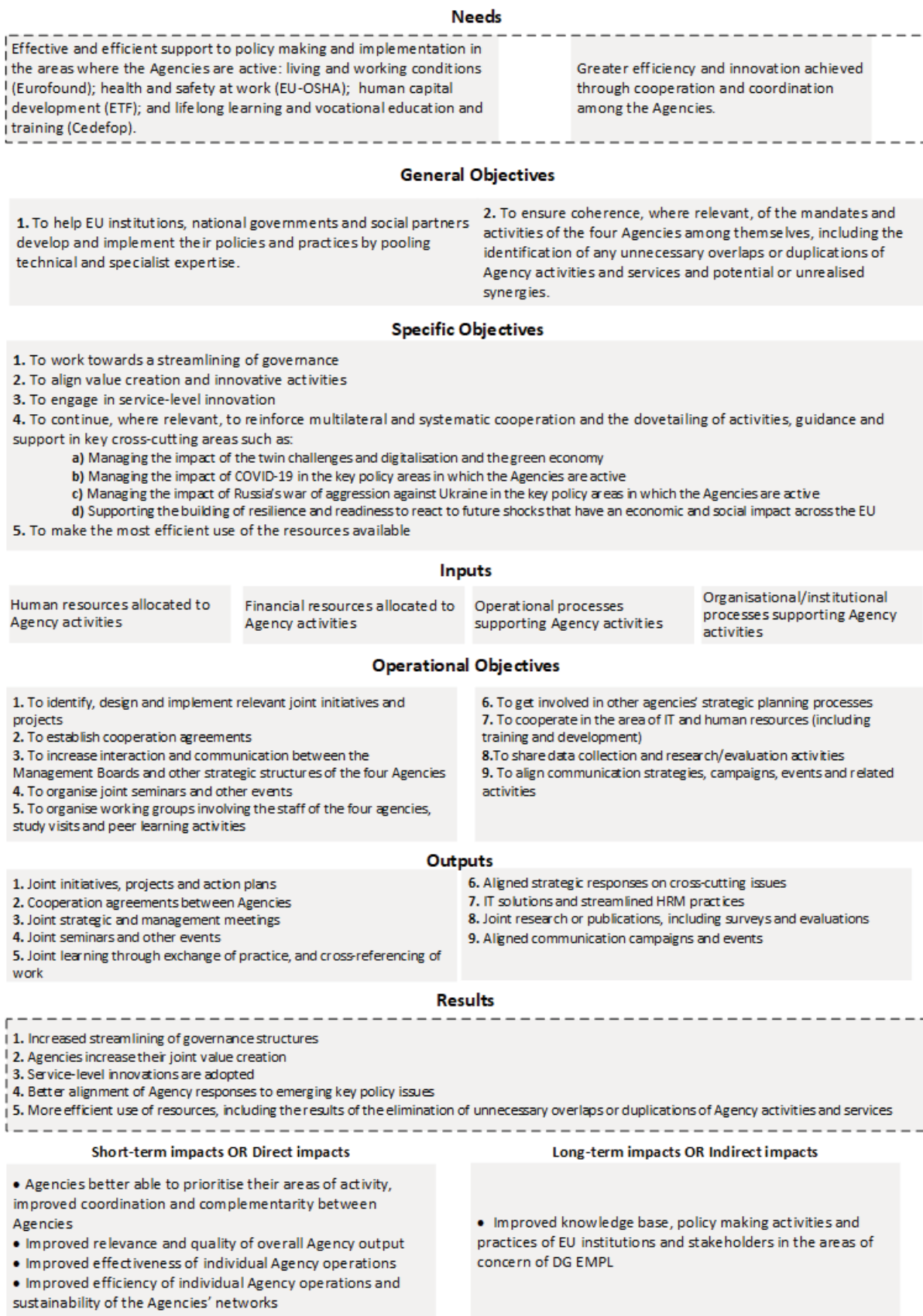
**Figure 3: Intervention logic of the ETF**

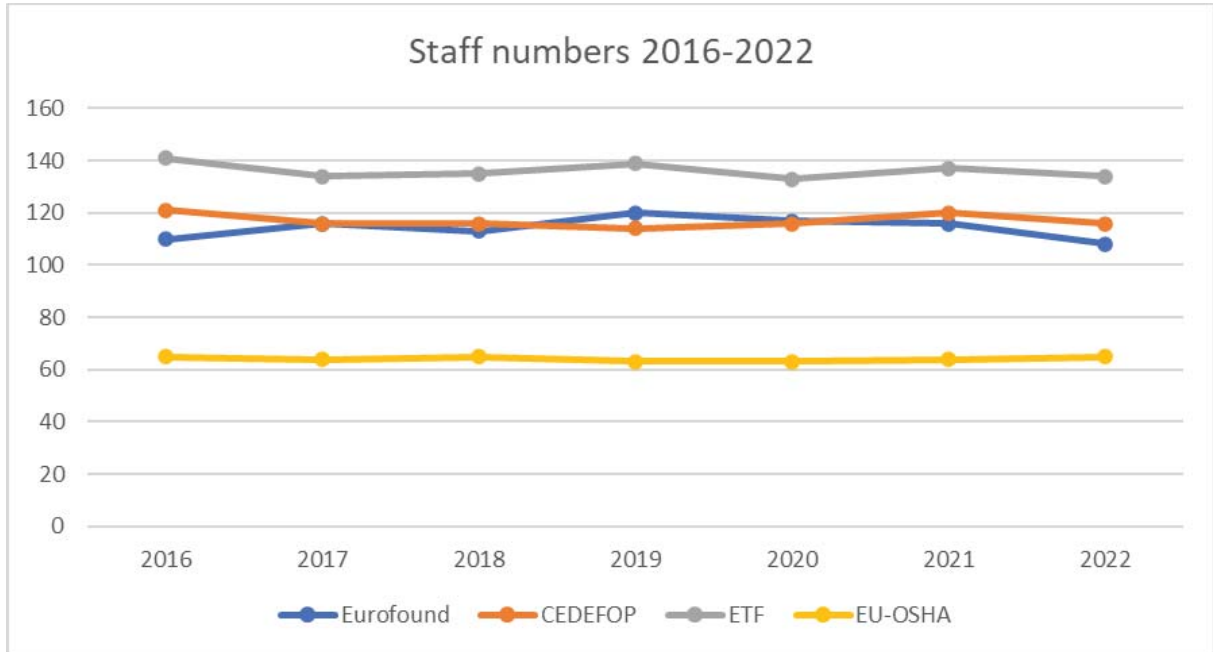


**Figure 4: Intervention logic of EU-OSHA**



**Figure 5: Intervention logic of cross-cutting activities**



**Figure 1: Changes in staff numbers in the four Agencies, 2016-2022<sup>255</sup>**

Source: Agencies consolidated annual activity reports, 2016–2022.

The staff numbers employed by all four Agencies remained largely stable during the evaluation period. **EU-OSHA** is the smallest Agency with 65 staff members in 2022 and the **ETF** was the largest with 134 staff members employed at the end of the evaluation down from 141 during the baseline period in 2016. **Cedefop** staff numbers reduced slightly from 121 in 2016 to 116 in 2022, while staff numbers at **Eurofound** remained largely the same at 110 in 2016 and 108 in 2022 but were slightly higher during the evaluation period.

**Table 1: Total staff numbers by organisation and year<sup>256</sup>**

Agency	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Eurofound</b>	110	116	113	120	117	116	108
<b>CEDEFOP</b>	121	116	116	114	116	120	116
<b>ETF</b>	141	134	135	139	133	137	134

<sup>255</sup> All figures presented in the table represent the state of employment as of 31 December of the respective year. The staff count includes members outside the establishment plan, such as contract agents, seconded national experts, and structural service providers.

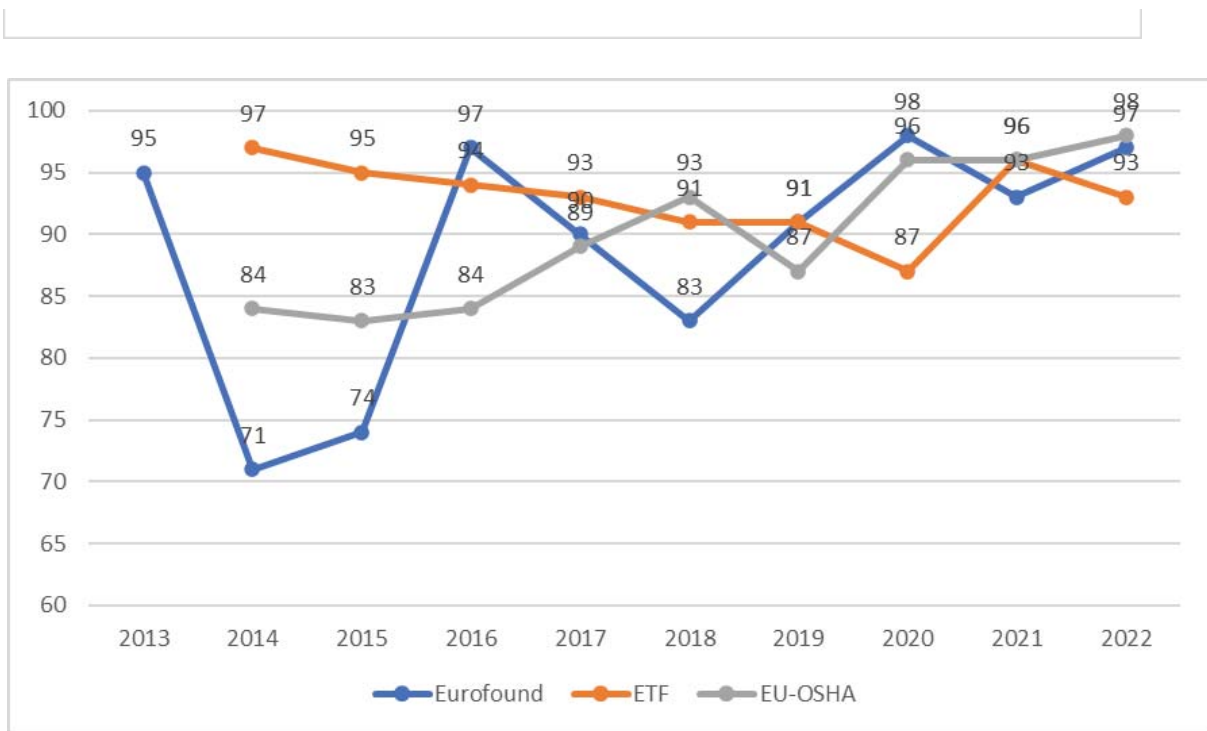
<sup>256</sup> All figures presented in the table represent the state of employment as of 31 December of the respective year. The staff count includes members outside the establishment plan, such as contract agents, seconded national experts, and structural service providers.

EU-OSHA	65	64	65	63	63	64	65
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Source: Consolidated Annual Activity Reports and Programming Documents, 2016–2022.

**Box 1: ETF Extra-subsidy projects in 2022**

- Service level agreement (SLA) with DG EMPL to support the international dimension of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) in 2022 and 2023<sup>257</sup>;
- Contribution agreement with the Delegation of the EU to the Republic of Kazakhstan for the project Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia (DARYA)<sup>258</sup>;
- Agreement with DG INTPA for the provision of the ETF's expertise in the implementation of the Africa Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)<sup>259</sup>.
- Human Capital Development (HCD) training for EU delegations in Africa and Asia - contract signed in October 2022 with DG INTPA.



**Figure 2: Work programme delivery: Eurofound, ETF and EU-OSHA<sup>260</sup> (%)**

Source: Consolidated Annual Activity Reports for Eurofound, ETF and EU-OSHA 2016-2022

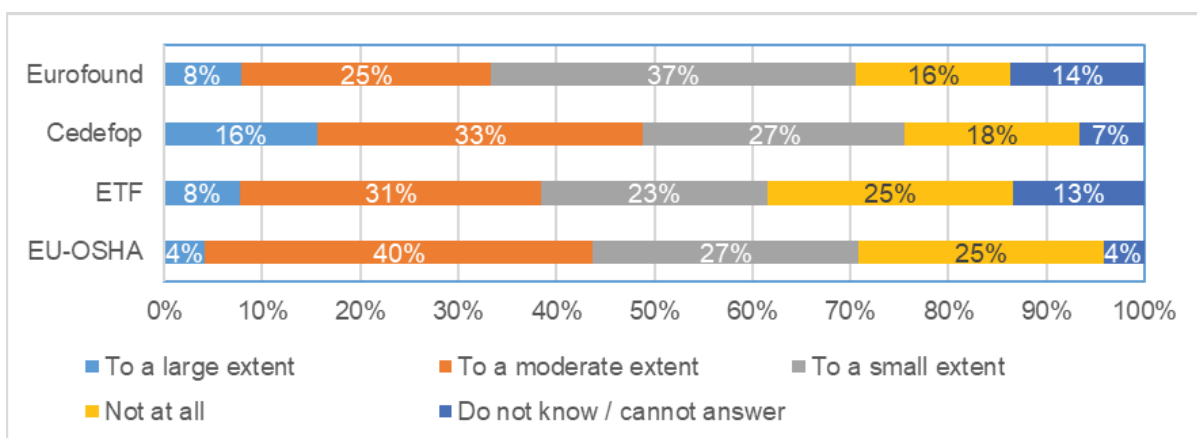
<sup>257</sup> Second phase (SLA2) signed in autumn 2022; Amount: EUR 1 million – DG EMPL.

<sup>258</sup> Proposed duration: (2022-2027). Contract signed in Q2 2022 – Amount: EUR 10 million –DG INTPA.

<sup>259</sup> Proposed Action intends to contribute to the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa 2021-2027 Priority area 1 – Human Development: Education. Amount: EUR 5 million – DG INTPA – start date January 2023.

<sup>260</sup> Cedefop does not use quantitative indicators for monitoring work programme delivery.

**Figure 3: Staff perceptions on administrative burden, % of respondents**



Source: Staff Survey (ETF N=52, Cedefop N=45, Eurofound N=51, EU-OSHA N=48) question: Do you think that administrative tasks related to programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluation hindered the implementation of your primary tasks in the period 2017-2022?

**Table 3: Simplification/cost-savings measures implemented by the four Agencies**

<b>Eurofound</b>	<p>Collaboration and sharing services: Joint procurement (through EUAN), recruitment (sharing reserve lists with other decentralised Agencies) and developing joint outputs with the other EMPL Agencies and international organisations.</p> <p>Automation/digitisation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Digitalisation of the Agency’s documents and processes</li> <li>2) Exploration of more cost-efficient methodologies, particularly computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) as opposed to face-to-face data collection</li> <li>3) Transitioning meetings to online platforms, alleviating the missions and travels budget</li> </ol> <p>Streamlining: Implementation of the Activity Based (budget) Management (ABM) approach, extending cooperation with Brussels Liaison Office for more efficient contact with stakeholders at EU level.</p>
<b>Cedefop</b>	<p>Collaboration and sharing services: Joint procurement (through EUAN), recruitment (sharing reserve lists with sister Agencies), sharing staff (joint legal support with ENISA) and developing joint outputs with other Agencies and international organisations.</p> <p>Automation/digitisation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Switching to e-tendering and e-submission for its open procedures</li> <li>2) Digitalisation of the Agency’s documents and processes</li> <li>3) Transitioning meetings to online platforms</li> </ol> <p>Streamlining:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Setting up new management approaches, such as portfolio review and negative priorities</li> <li>2) Transformation of annual reports to short summaries that do not duplicate CAARs</li> </ol>

## ETF

Collaboration and sharing services: Joint procurement (through EUAN), recruitment (sharing reserve lists with other decentralised Agencies), sharing staff (joint accounting officer with EU-OSHA) and developing joint outputs with other Agencies and international organisations.

Automation/digitisation:

- 1) Digitalisation of the Agency's documents and processes (HR, financial workflows, procurement)
- 2) Establishment of online collaboration platforms with stakeholders (e.g. Skills Lab Network) facilitating knowledge exchange, collaboration, and storage of information without costs on on-site meetings
- 3) Collaboration with statistical offices in partner countries by sharing data, providing remote assistance for data calculations, or offering calculation scripts and guidance

Streamlining: The new Project Management Unit set up in 2021 allowed for a streamlined approach to the management of the framework contract and ensured timely payments.

## EU-OSHA

Collaboration and sharing services: recruitment (sharing reserve lists with other decentralised Agencies), sharing staff (joint accounting officer with EU-OSHA) and developing joint outputs with other Agencies and international organisations.

Automation/digitisation:

- 1) Introduction of a paperless process and digital signatures
- 2) Transitioning meetings to online platforms
- 3) Using machine translations of research outputs, particularly for shorter material

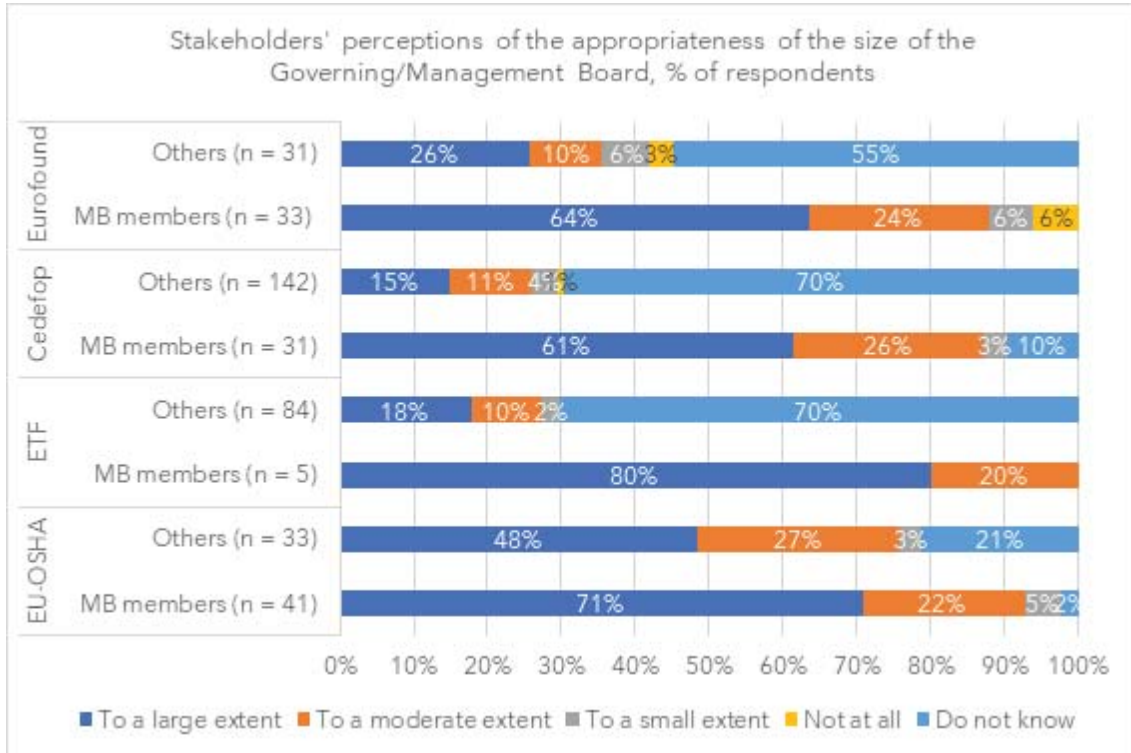
Streamlining:

- 1) Introduction of new tools for reporting on tasks
- 2) Improving efficiency of campaigns organisation through introduction of the Focal Points Assistance Tool (FAST)<sup>261</sup>.

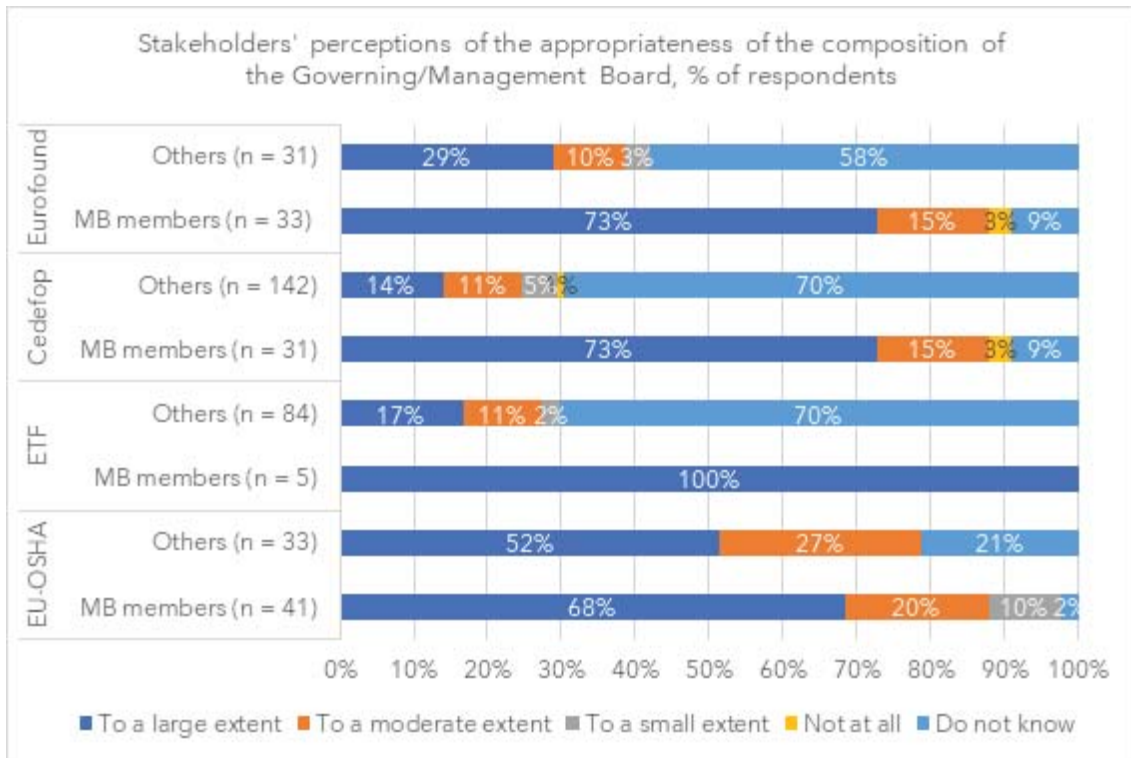
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<sup>261</sup> FAST is a tool supporting FOPs to run and promote campaigns at the national level, e.g. through contracting a media partner in national Member States.

**Figure 4: Stakeholders' perceptions of the appropriateness of the size of the Governing/management board, % of respondents**

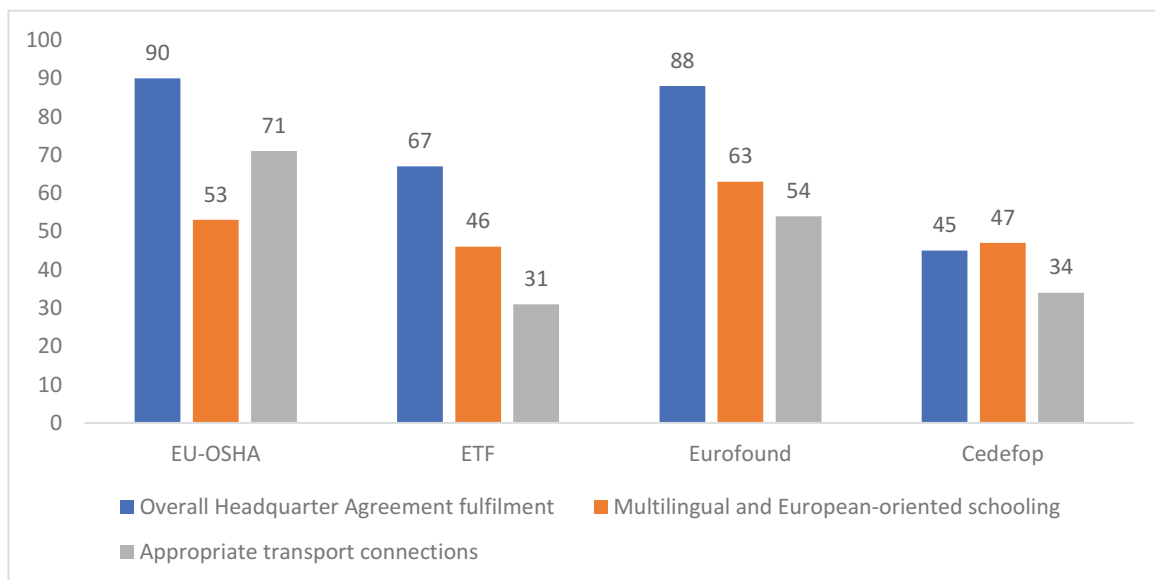


**Figure 5: Stakeholders' perceptions of the appropriateness of the composition of the Governing/management board, % of respondents**



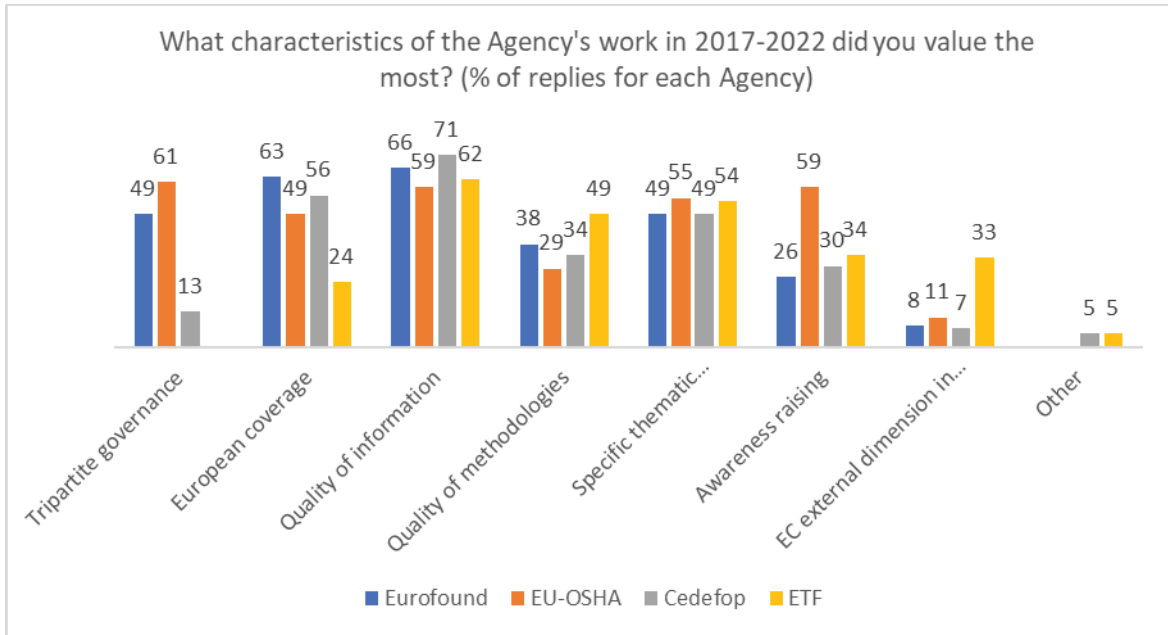
Source: Stakeholder Survey (ETF N=91, Cedefop N=174, Eurofound N=65, EU-OSHA N=75) question: In 2017-2022, to what extent were the following aspects of Agencies' governance structures appropriate for its size and nature

**Figure 6: Percentage of Agency staff indicating that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the fulfilment of the Headquarter Agreement in three areas.**



Source: Agency staff survey responses to the following question: Please, indicate your level of satisfaction with the fulfilment of Headquarter Agreement regarding the following obligations: Overall Headquarter Agreement fulfilment; Multilingual and European-oriented schooling; and Appropriate transport connections. N = EU-OSHA 48, ETF 52, Eurofound 51, Cedefop 45.

**Figure 7: Stakeholder views on the characteristics of the Agencies' work they value most.**



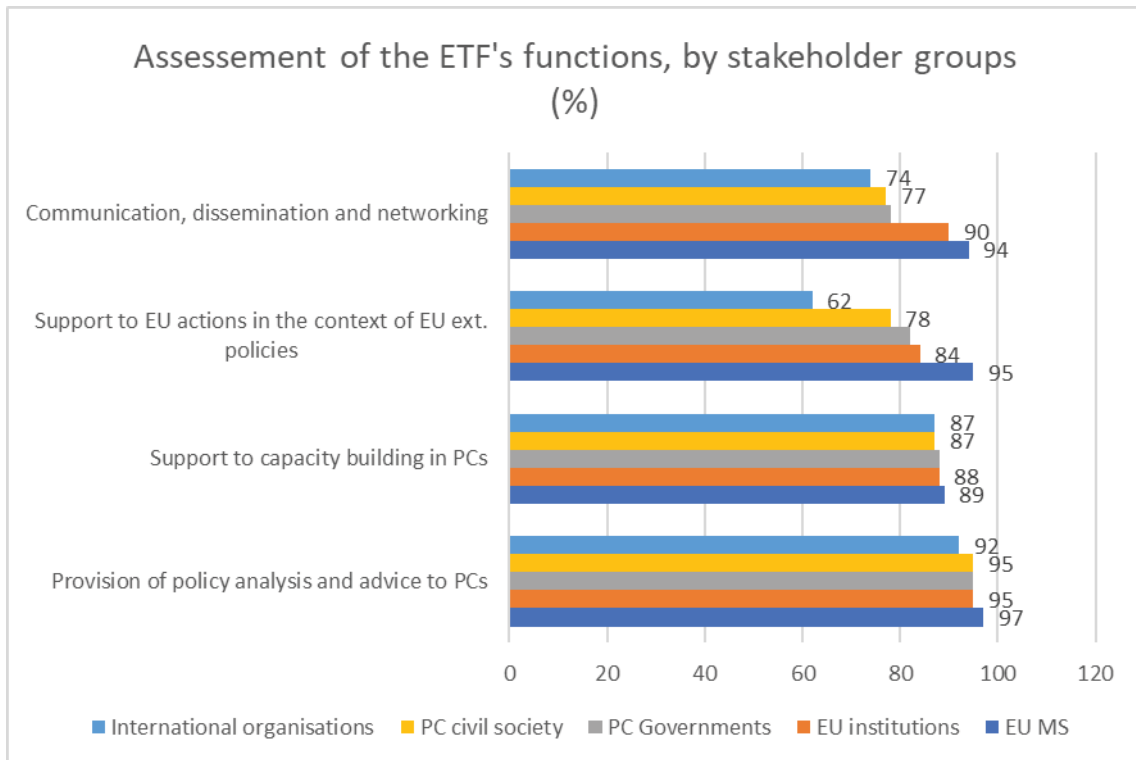
Source: Supporting study Stakeholder survey for each of the four Agencies, 2023. N= Eurofound 65; EU-OSHA 75; ETF 91; Cedefop 174. Multiple answers possible.

**Table 4 – ‘Hypothetically, would termination of Agency activities affect your work?’ (% of each Agency’s stakeholders replies)**

	Cedefop stakeholders	ETF stakeholders	Eurofound stakeholders	EU-OSHA stakeholders
Yes	66	62	72	85
No	18	21	9	7
Don't know/cannot answer	16	18	18	8

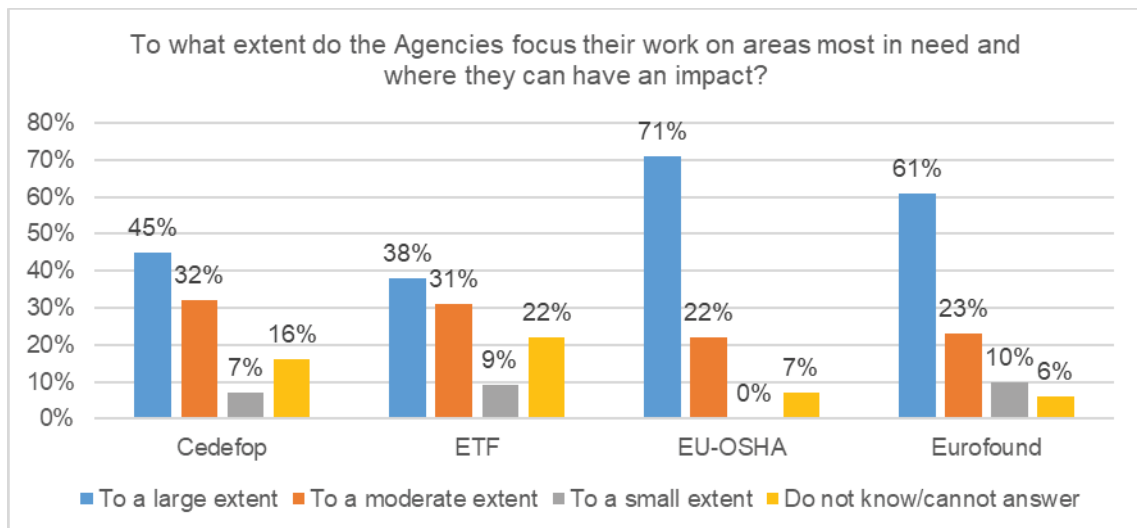
Source: Supporting study stakeholders survey, 2023. Cedefop n=174; ETF n=91; Eurofound n=65; EU-OSHA n=75

**Figure 8: Assessment of the ETF functions by stakeholder groups**



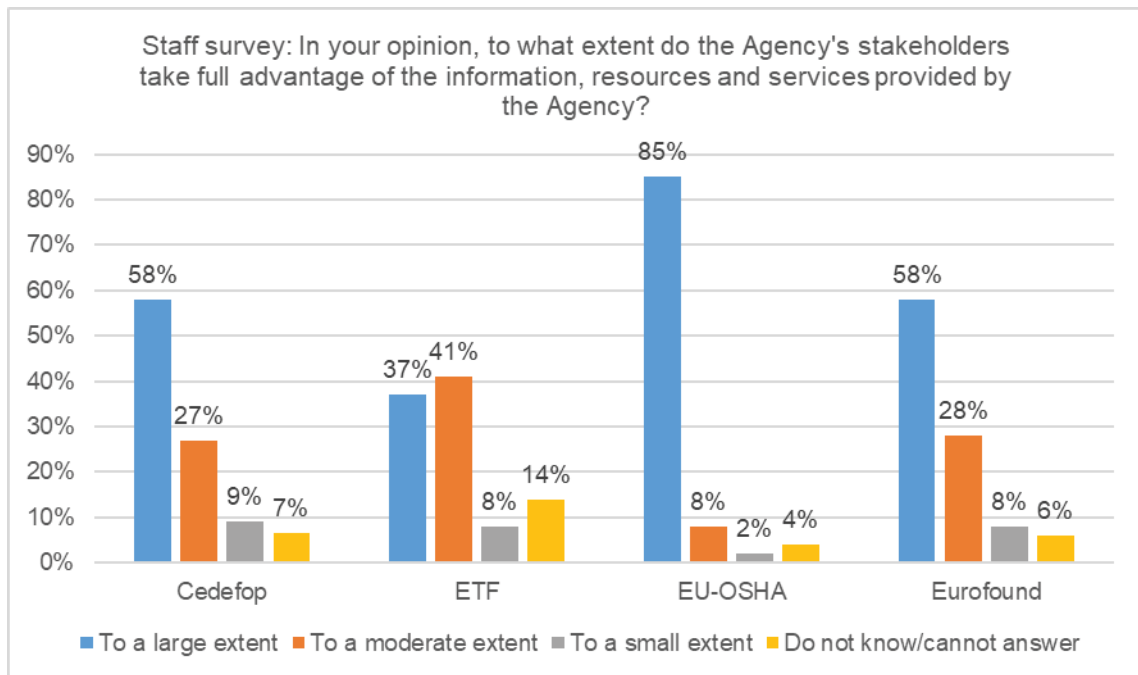
Source: compiled by research team based on the Policy Delphi data, responses include those who rated the functions as successful to a large and to some extent (n=263)

**Figure 9: Public Consultation responses on the extent to which the Agencies focus their work on areas most in need and where they can have an impact**



Source: Public consultation, 2023. Question: To what extent did the Agencies focus their work on areas most in need and where they can have an impact? N = Cedefop 44; ETF 32; EU-OSHA 41; Eurofound 31.

**Figure 10: Responses to the staff survey: 'In your opinion, to what extent do the Agency's stakeholders take full advantage of the information, resources and services provided by the Agency?'**



Source: Staff survey for each of the four Agencies, 2023. Question: In your opinion, to what extent do the Agency's stakeholders take full advantage of the information, resources and services provided by the Agency? N = Cedefop 45; ETF 51; EU-OSHA 48; Eurofound 51.

**Table 5: Alignment between EU policy priorities and Agencies' objectives<sup>262</sup>**

Source: Supporting study (ECORYS)

	EURO-FOUND	CEDEFOP	EU-OSHA	ETF
<b>Juncker Commission priorities 2014-2019</b>				
A new boost for jobs, growth and investment	✓	✓	✓	✓
A connected digital single market				
A resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy				
A deeper and fairer internal market with a strengthened industrial base		✓	✓	✓
A deeper and fairer Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)				
A reasonable and balanced free trade agreement with the United States				
An area of Justice and Fundamental Rights based on mutual trust	✓			✓
Towards a new policy on migration	✓	✓		✓
Europe as a stronger global actor				✓
A Union of democratic change				✓
<b>Von der Leyen Commission priorities 2019-2024</b>				
A European Green Deal	✓	✓	✓	✓
A Europe fit for the digital age	✓	✓	✓	✓
An economy that works for people	✓	✓	✓	✓
A stronger Europe in the world	✓			✓
Promoting our European way of life	✓		✓	✓
A new push for European democracy	✓			✓

**Table 6: Examples of the Agencies' responses to new EU needs in the evaluation period**

Agency	Example of a response
<b>Eurofound</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eurofound's strategic area anticipating and managing the impact of change replaces the digital age SAI from the previous programming period to cover a much broader spectrum of societal and economical changes, covering the 'twin transitions' (i.e. climate change and digitalisation).</li> </ul>

<sup>262</sup> European Parliament (2014), Setting EU priorities, 2014-2019: The ten points of Jean-Claude Juncker's political guidelines, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/EPRS-Briefing-538963-Setting-EU-Priorities-2014-19-FINAL.pdf>, and European Commission [online], The European Commission's priorities: 6 Commission priorities for 2019-24, available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024_en).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2018 there was a strong policy focus on the future of work and digitalisation, especially the area of platform work<sup>263</sup>, specifically through the production of a platform economy web repository alongside the comparative EU-wide study of employment and working conditions of selected types of platform work<sup>264</sup>, which fell under <u>Eurofound</u>'s Strategic Area of Intervention of the digital age.</li> <li>• In 2019, <u>Eurofound</u>'s work on monitoring convergence was of use in contributing to the European Union's policy agenda and in the Assessment of the Europe 2020 strategy<sup>265</sup>.</li> <li>• <u>Eurofound</u> adopted an environmental policy in 2021<sup>266</sup>. Adopting such a policy that impacts on how the Agency is run is directly linked to the European Green Deal and the requirement for EU institutions, as well as many other organisations, to work towards lessening their carbon footprint.</li> </ul>
<b>EU-OSHA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Across 2017 and 2018, <u>EU-OSHA</u> conducted a two-year study "Foresight on new and emerging OSH risks associated with digitalisation by 2025"<sup>267-268</sup>, which was followed up by a major OSH Overview research project on policies and practices with regard to digitalisation, as well as work on 'Regulating the OSH impact of the online platform economy'<sup>269</sup>, which directly echoed the Juncker Commission priority related to the Digital Single Market.</li> <li>• In recent years, <u>EU-OSHA</u> has also intensified its work related to the green and digital transitions, as demonstrated by a growing number of thematic publications on green jobs and digitalisation.</li> <li>• Thematic publications on green jobs include foresight studies aiming at anticipating OSH challenges in relation to green jobs and the circular economy.</li> <li>• <u>EU-OSHA</u> has digitalised a number of work processes reducing its environmental impact and uses a scoreboard to monitor its environmental impact.</li> </ul>
<b>Cedefop</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Cedefop</u>'s work on digitalisation focuses on the impact it might have on EU employment and skill needs. The data sources that the Agency employs are the <u>Cedefop</u> European skills and jobs surveys, online job advertisements, based on Big Data analysis, skills forecasts, <u>Cedefop</u> survey on platform work, and <u>Cedefop</u> work on key competences with a focus on digital competences.</li> <li>• The focus of <u>Cedefop</u>'s second European Skills and Jobs Survey is on the relationship between technological change and digitalisation, changing job-skill requirements and skill mismatch of EU adult workers and their adaptiveness to such trends via vocational education and training.</li> <li>• Overall, during the evaluation period, <u>Cedefop</u> produced 11 publications under the umbrella of the <u>Cedefop</u> Green Observatory, exploring the impact of the green economy on VET and skills in sectors and occupations<sup>270</sup>.</li> </ul>

<sup>263</sup> Eurofound (2018), Consolidated annual activity report of the Authorising Officer for the year 2018, p. 3, available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/annual-report/2019/consolidated-annual-activity-report-of-the-authorising-officer-for-the-year-2018>.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid. p.8.

<sup>265</sup> Eurofound (2019), Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2019, p. 3.

<sup>266</sup> Eurofound (2021), Environmental Policy, available at: [https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/page/field\\_ef\\_documents/eurofound\\_environmental\\_policy\\_signed.pdf](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/page/field_ef_documents/eurofound_environmental_policy_signed.pdf). Eurofound has since certified for EMAS, verification in Q4 2022.

<sup>267</sup> EU-OSHA (2018), Annual Activity Report 2017, available at: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/annual-activity-report-2017/view-0>

<sup>268</sup> EU-OSHA (2019), Annual Activity Report 2018, available at: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/annual-activity-report-2018>

<sup>269</sup> EU-OSHA (2018), Annual Activity Report 2017, available at: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/annual-activity-report-2017/view-0>

<sup>270</sup> Cedefop (2022), Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2021, p.10, available at: [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/rb202200697\\_caar\\_2021\\_0.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/rb202200697_caar_2021_0.pdf).

- Among Cedefop's most relevant initiatives within this scope are the sectoral skills foresight analyses, which aim to understand which occupational profiles will foster the transition of smart and green cities, waste management, agri-food and circular economy towards a "greener" future<sup>271</sup>.
- The green employment and skills transformation report<sup>272</sup> provides insights into the possible effect of the European Green Deal on different sectors and occupations and identifies opportunities and challenges for upskilling and reskilling within this changing context.
- Cedefop has started reducing its energy consumption, diminishing its carbon footprint and digitalising workflows to become paperless<sup>273</sup>. Further, the emissions generated by the Agency have been gradually reducing, with an especially notable reduction since the pandemic.

**Table 7: Agencies' joint outputs relevant to common themes**

	EUROFOUND	CEDEFOP	ETF	EU-OSHA
Eurofound	-	European company survey 2019 and the accompanying 'Workplace practices unlocking employee potential' report; 'Skills forecast: trends and challenges to 2030' report <sup>274</sup> . Knowledge exchange and seminars (e.g. Skills and quality jobs as drivers of a just green transition) <sup>275</sup> .	Living, working and COVID-19 survey covered EU Member States and 10 EU neighbouring countries <sup>276</sup> . New Working Life Country Profile for Ukraine was published in November 2022 by <u>Eurofound</u> and the <u>ETF</u> <sup>277</sup> .	'Towards age-friendly work in Europe: a life-course perspective on work and ageing from EU Agencies' <sup>278</sup> .

<sup>271</sup> Cedefop (2021), Sectoral skills foresight, available at:

[https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/cedefop\\_sectoral\\_skills\\_foresight\\_methodology\\_and\\_experts.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/cedefop_sectoral_skills_foresight_methodology_and_experts.pdf)

<sup>272</sup> Cedefop (2021), The green employment and skills transformation. Insights from a European Green Deal skills forecast scenario, available at: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/4206>

<sup>273</sup> European Parliament (2021), Discharge report 2019, p.8, at: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/content/2019-discharge-european-centre-development-vocational-training-cedefop>.

<sup>274</sup> Cedefop, Eurofound (2018), 'Skills forecast: trends and challenges to 2030', Luxembourg: Publications Office, Cedefop reference series No 108, available at: <http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/4492>.

<sup>275</sup> EU-OSHA. Cedefop-Eurofound joint knowledge seminar on Skills and Job Quality as drivers of a just green transition, available at: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/oshevents/cedefop-eurofound-joint-knowledge-seminar-skills-and-job-quality-drivers-just-green-transition>

<sup>276</sup> Eurofound-ETF (2022), Living, working and COVID-19 in the European Union and 10 EU neighbouring countries, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, available at: [https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_publication/field\\_ef\\_document/ef21065en.pdf](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef21065en.pdf).

<sup>277</sup> See: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/news-and-events/news/understanding-working-life-ukraine-joint-endeavour-eurofound-and-etf>.

<sup>278</sup> EU-OSHA, Cedefop, Eurofound, EIGE (2017), 'Towards age-friendly work in Europe: a life-course perspective on work and ageing from EU Agencies', available at:

<b>Cedefop</b>	See above	-	Joint outputs related to VET policy reporting as part of the implementation and monitoring of Riga medium-term deliverables, qualification systems, including validation of non-formal learning, work-based learning and work-placed learning, skills matching, anticipation, and identification of skills needs <sup>279</sup> .	Common thematic areas were not identified. Joint activities and outputs were identified in the context of multilateral activities e.g. 'Employment, skills and social policies that work for young Europeans in times of uncertainty' event.
<b>ETF</b>	See above	See above	-	Common thematic areas not identified. Cooperation was based on multilateral activities mentioned above.

**Table 8: Agencies' outputs corresponding to the European Commission's 2019-2024 strategic priorities**

	<b>EUROFOUND</b>	<b>CEDEFOP</b>	<b>ETF</b>	<b>EU-OSHA</b>
<b>A European Green Deal</b>	'Energy scenario: Employment implications of the Paris Climate Agreement' report, 2019 'Distributional impacts of climate policies in Europe' report, 2021	'Work-based learning and the green transition' collaborative leaflet, 2022 'The green employment and skills transformation: Insights from a European Green Deal skills forecast scenario' report, 2021	'Building a resilient generation in Central Asia and Europe' - Youth views on lifelong learning, inclusion and the green transition', 2021 'Skilling for the green transition' policy brief, 2023	Foresight study on the circular economy and its impacts on OSH
<b>A Europe Fit for the Digital Age</b>	'Digitisation in the workplace' report, 2021	'Skill development in the platform economy' research paper, 2021	'The future of work - New forms of employment in the Eastern Partnership	OSH overview research project 2020-2023 including research on: advanced robotics and artificial

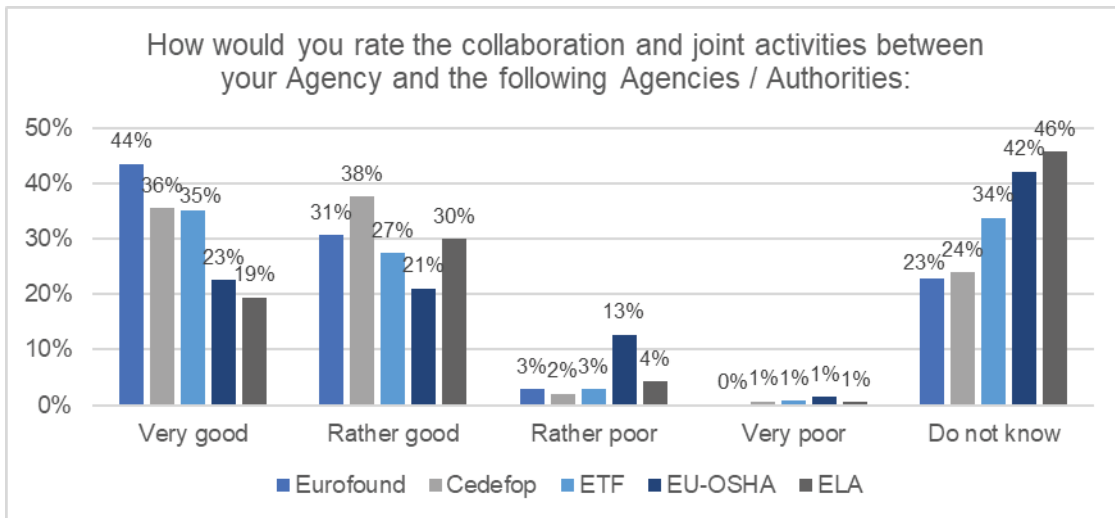
<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2017/towards-age-friendly-work-in-europe-a-life-course-perspective-on-work-and-ageing-from-eu-Agencies>.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

	'New forms of employment: 2020 update' report, 2020	'Understanding technological change and skill needs: skills surveys and skills forecasting' practical guide, 2021	countries: Platform work', 2021 'Scaling up and integrating the SELFIE tool for school's digital capacity in education and training, 2021	intelligence; Worker management through artificial intelligence
<b>An Economy that Works for People</b>	'Minimum wages in the EU' publication series, 2015-2023 'COVID-19 pandemic and the gender divide at work and home' report, 2022	'Digital gap during COVID-19 for VET learners at risk in Europe' report, 2020 'Economic and gender equality: are skills systems the answer?' blog article, 2020	'Developing national career development support systems', ILO-ETF report, 2021 'Unlocking youth potential in South Eastern Europe and Turkey', 2020	Expert article on OSH as a key factor to attract new personnel; Expert article on workers with mental health condition in a digitalised world
<b>A Stronger Europe in the World</b>	'Casual work: Characteristics and implications' report, 2019 'The cost-of-living crisis and energy poverty in the EU: Social impact and policy responses - Background paper', 2022	'Lifelong guidance policy for Ukrainian refugees in the EU' flyers from CareersNet network, 2023 'Mobilising skills for business performance' webinar, 2023	'How do migration, human capital and the labour market interact in the Western Balkans', 2022 'The future of skills: A case study of the automotive sector in Turkey', 2021	Foresight study on circular economy and digitalisation 'Casual work: Characteristics and implications' report, 2019
<b>Promoting our European Way of Life</b>	'Challenges and prospects in the EU: Quality of life and public services' report, 2019 'Tackling labour shortages in EU Member States' report, 2021	'European skills and jobs' survey and online tool, last entry 2021 'Relocation 2.0: tying adult refugee skills to labour market demand' policy brief, 2022	'Skills mismatch measurement in ETF partner countries', 2022 'Building resilient societies with young people in the era of COVID-19', 2020 - UNICEF and ETF report	ESENER-3 Psychosocial risks - main overview report Expert article on 'workforce diversity and MSDs: COVID-19 risks and migrants'
<b>A New Push for European Democracy</b>	'European quality of life surveys' publication series, 2003-2018 'Maintaining trust during the COVID-19 pandemic' report, 2022	'European company survey 2019: Workplace practices unlocking employee potential' report, 2020	'Civil society organisations' role in Human Capital Development' country reports, 2022	Different outputs that can provide workers with useful information about their rights at the workplace regarding health and safety

Source: compiled support study contractor based on consolidated annual activity reports

**Figure 11: Quality of collaboration between the four Agencies and ELA**

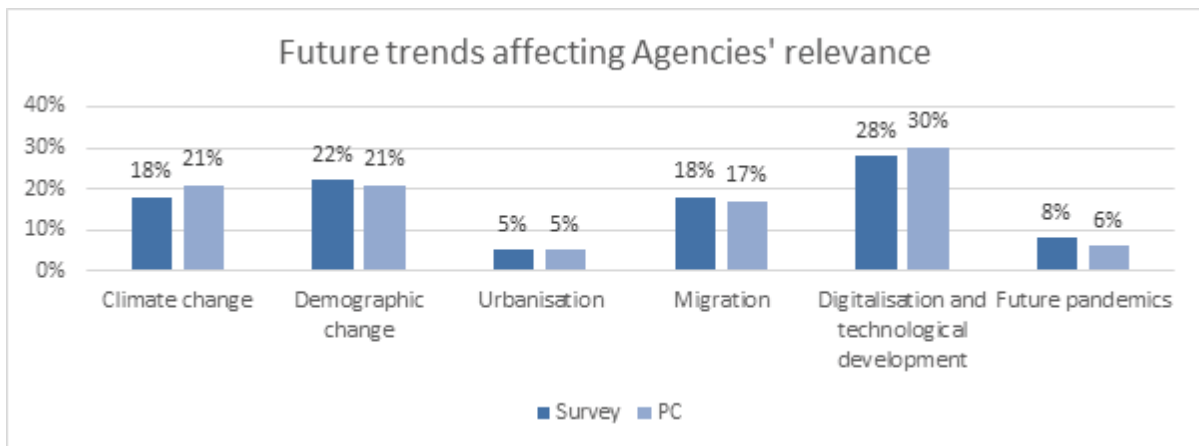


Source: Staff surveys (Eurofound, n=140; Cedefop, n=146; ETF, n=142; EU-OSHA, n=142; ELA, n=190), question: How would you rate the collaboration and joint activities between your Agency and the following Agencies / Authorities:

**Figure 12: Cost-effectiveness assessment by Agency stakeholders**

Source: supporting study Stakeholders survey; Q: “How do you rate the cost-effectiveness of EU-OSHA's operations during 2017-2022?”

**Figure 13: Stakeholders’ perception of “megatrends” that will impact the future work of the Agencies**



Source: Combined data from Stakeholder survey (n=1111) and public consultation (n=267), question: ‘Are there any future trends that could affect the Agency's / Agencies' future relevance?’

## 1. DELIVERING OUTPUTS (MEETING OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES)

The four Agencies have been delivering their activities according to their operational objectives<sup>280</sup> (see Agencies' intervention logics in Annex VI).

### 1.1. Eurofound

**Eurofound's monitoring activities relied on three observatories – EurWORK, EMCC and EurLIFE – to which the newly created COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch database was added<sup>281</sup>.** EurWORK has been the most active of these observatories, publishing regular reports and receiving quarterly inputs from the Network of Eurofound Correspondents (NEC) on working life developments, whereas the COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch database, created in 2020, is one of the flagship outputs of the evaluation period. This database has since **been transformed into the EU PolicyWatch database** and is now a general social and employment policy-related database used across all SAIs.

**Research and data collection by Eurofound are underpinned by its pan-European surveys<sup>282</sup>.** The latest European working conditions survey (EWCS) was conducted in 2020, as planned, and covered 37 countries (two more compared to the previous one delivered in 2015). In addition, a follow-up telephone survey was conducted in 2021, which made it possible to assess the impact of COVID-19 on job quality. The European company survey (ECS) was delivered in 2019-2020 in cooperation with Cedefop. The survey represented the first large-scale, cross-national survey to use a 'push-to-web' approach<sup>283</sup>. Eurofound's decision to conduct surveys using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) methodology rather than face-to-face interviewing arose as a necessity of COVID-19, but prompted Eurofound to make an assessment of methods other than face-to-face interviewing for collecting data in the longer term, in order to save costs<sup>284</sup>. The next round of the European quality of life survey (EQLS) was not intended to take place during the evaluation period. The focus was on analysing the results and disseminating the latest edition of the survey conducted in 2016.<sup>285</sup>

### 1.2. Cedefop

<sup>280</sup> Each agency collects and monitors the data on the outputs produced per year, but the level of detail, type of outputs and definitions vary across the Agencies. See Annexes 1 to 4 to the supporting study for a detailed analysis of each agency's performance in achieving its operational objectives.

<sup>281</sup> European Observatory of Working Life (EurWORK), European Restructuring Monitor (ERM), European Monitoring Centre on Change (EMCC), and European Observatory on Quality of Life (EurLIFE).

<sup>282</sup> European working conditions survey (EWCS), European company survey (ECS), European quality of life survey (EQLS), and living, working and COVID-19 e-survey. The share of expenditure allocated to survey management and development increased considerably during this evaluation period, rising from 7% of expenditure in 2017 (EUR 1.39 million) to 18% in 2022 (EUR 3.91 million).

<sup>283</sup> Where businesses were contacted via telephone to identify a management and an employee respondent, who were then asked to fill out the survey questionnaire online; see: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/2019/european-company-survey-2019>.

<sup>284</sup> Eurofound (2022), *Consolidated annual activity report 2021*, p. 3.

<sup>285</sup> See: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurlife>.

**Cedefop** has eight operational objectives on vocational education and training (VET), skills and qualifications: (i) to carry out research; (ii) to contribute to EU and national policies; (iii) to compile relevant data; (iv) to monitor VET policy developments, systems and policies; (v) to develop and implement European tools to support VET, skills and qualifications policies; (vi) to carry out activities with other agencies/organisations; (vii) to contribute to capacity building; and (viii) to disseminate knowledge, evidence and data.

During the current evaluation period, **Cedefop delivered the expected outputs across all these objectives, with a strong focus on research and policy analysis**. Compared with the 2016 baseline, the number of publications slightly decreased during the current evaluation period, which was due to **Cedefop's** decision to shift from traditional publications to online content, making the agency's research and analyses available in online interactive tools and databases (see below).

In line with the objective to **compile relevant VET, skills and qualifications data**, one **important achievement of the period is the development of online tools and databases**, to increase interaction and the user-friendliness of the collected data<sup>286</sup>. Except Skills Forecast (developed in 2015), the other tools were designed and implemented in 2016-2022, including the European database on apprenticeship schemes, the database on validation of non-formal and informal learning, the European skills index and the European VET policy dashboard.

Throughout the evaluation period, **Cedefop also contributed to capacity building through events and policy learning activities, although to a more limited extent compared with the baseline**. The number of events had already started to decline in the previous evaluation period; by 2014, it had halved<sup>287</sup>. The number stayed relatively stable, with minor declines, until 2020, when it dropped due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as **Cedefop** correspondingly reduced the budget dedicated to missions and events.

Cedefop has also achieved the objective **'Supporting the development and implementation of European tools to support VET, skills and qualifications policies'**. It has produced the expected outputs in relation to **supporting EQF, ECVET and EQAVET**, and has played a crucial role in transitioning to the new Europass.

### 1.3. **EU-OSHA**

**The agency has fully delivered on its six operational objectives, with very high levels of timely delivery, above 90% for most of the activities**<sup>288</sup>: (i) develop foresight activities; (ii) provide occupational safety and health (OSH) facts and figures; (iii) develop tools for OSH management; (iv) raise awareness of and communicate on OSH issues; (v) network knowledge on OSH; and (vi) maintain and develop strategic and operational networks.

Compared to the baseline, the number of outputs related to facts and figures almost tripled and there has been a substantial increase in outputs related to networking knowledge during the

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<sup>286</sup> According to the 2022 user satisfaction survey, they are Cedefop's second most appreciated outputs, after publications.

<sup>287</sup> From 150 in 2012, and 135 in 2013, to 69 in 2014. Cedefop's annual reports for 2012-2014.

<sup>288</sup> See Table 6 of the main report on the supporting study.

second half of the evaluation period (2020-2022). The number of outputs across other areas was similar to the baseline year of 2016.

**Table 1: Number of EU-OSHA outputs delivered on time under each activity, 2016-2022**

EU-OSHA activity (including all corresponding outputs)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% of timely delivered outputs vs number of committed outputs (2017-2022)
A1: Anticipating change	0	5	10	12	4	12	3	92%
A2: Facts and figures	14	18	32	20	23	23	41	72%
A3: Tools for OSH management	4	8	15	12	16	16	4	93%
A4: Raising awareness	22	33	35	42	34	32	37	98%
A5: Networking knowledge	3	8	9	7	14	23	24	79%
A6: Strategic and operational networking	22	21	12	24	28	24	23	92%

Source: Ecorys supporting report based on EU-OSHA’s annual activity reports for 2016–2022.

The key outputs falling under facts and figures were the European survey of enterprises on new and emerging risks (ESENER), musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), EU-OSH info systems, OSH and digitalisation, and support to help SMEs achieve compliance. According to the key performance indicators from the [2021 annual activity report](#), OSH and digitalisation and support to help SMEs achieve compliance were the most impactful activities (93%), with the ESENER coming in.

The **‘tools for OSH management’ objective was increasingly important during the current evaluation period**. The agency has developed practical tools and guidance that enable workplaces to easily assess and manage their OSH risks. Over 72 000 new risk assessments were performed in 2022, which is a figure much higher than the target of 30 000 and the baseline (in 2016, only 13 281 new risk assessments were performed)<sup>289</sup>.

**In terms of raising awareness of and communicating on OSH issues, the agency has worked extensively on the healthy workplaces campaigns (HWC)<sup>290</sup>**. Through these campaigns, [EU-OSHA](#) was able to engage with various stakeholders at national level, from small to medium-sized enterprises to larger corporations, as well as national bodies, raising awareness of risks from dangerous substances in the workplace and on prevention of work-related MSDs. See EU-OSHA Case Study 4 in Annex 8 to the supporting study for details.

<sup>289</sup> EU-OSHA (2016), annual activity report for 2016.

<sup>290</sup> See EU-OSHA Case Study 4 in Annex 8 to the supporting study.

For the **HWC on MSDs**, EU-OSHA had **100 official campaign partners**, **29 media partners**, performed **1 322 promotional actions**, and organised **2 217 campaign activities**. These included activities of official campaign partners, media partners, focal points and European Enterprise Network (EEN) OSH ambassadors. For the HWCs generally, EU-OSHA delivered 100% of its planned outputs for its 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 campaigns, and 96% of its planned outputs for its 2020-2022 campaign, with the only missing output for the 2020-2022 campaign being a communication output related to the Napo<sup>291</sup>.

Finally, the agency delivered 91% (21 out of 23) of its outputs related to its **‘maintaining and developing strategic and operational networks’ activity** on time, a trend that continued in 2018 and 2019. 2020 saw some setbacks, with cancellations affecting the delivery of outputs. Specifically, four actions and one event were cancelled as they were impossible to implement due to the pandemic. On a positive note, in 2021, most outputs were delivered on time, although three outputs related to coordinating relations with key stakeholders had to be cancelled due to travel restrictions during the pandemic.

#### **1.4. ETF**

During the evaluation period, the **ETF** delivered on its five operational objectives oriented towards its partner countries in the context of EU external relations: (i) provide information, policy analysis and advice; (ii) support capacity building and networking; (iii) monitor system-wide progress; (iv) support knowledge dissemination; and (v) support the EU project and programming cycle in EU external relations.

To provide information and policy analysis, the **ETF** published reports, policy briefings, guides and toolkits, which provided stakeholders with insights about human capital development in its partner countries and were assessed positively by its stakeholders (see Section 4.1.1 of the main staff working document).

In relation to the **ETF’s support on capacity building and networking**, **the number of events held by the ETF increased dramatically** over the evaluation period and compared to the baseline<sup>292</sup>, with only 24 events held in 2017 compared with 143 events held in 2021.

To monitor system-wide progress, the corresponding output is the **Torino Process assessment reports, one key activity used by the ETF to ensure that its work meets the needs of partner countries**<sup>293</sup>. The fifth round of the Torino Process (2018-2020) covered 100% of

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<sup>291</sup> Napo has become the main ambassador for EU-OSHA’s HWCs: he is the hero in a series of animated films, providing light-hearted, discussion-provoking introductions to OSH topics and risk prevention. He is a typical worker in any industry or sector, who is frequently exposed to common hazards and risky situations in the workplace. However, he is actively involved in identifying risks and providing practical solutions. For more information, see: <https://www.napofilm.net/en>.

<sup>292</sup> Data for 2015 and 2016 shows that the number of events organised was 20 and 29, respectively (ETF’s consolidated annual activity reports for 2015 and 2016).

<sup>293</sup> Conducted for the first time in 2010-2011, the TRP is a biannual review of the status and progress of VET in ETF partner countries, which is carried out by stakeholders in these countries and summarised in country reviews.

partner countries<sup>294</sup>, while there was a decrease in the number of countries in the sixth round (2022-2024), as participation in the in-depth review became voluntary.

In terms of supporting the EU project and programming cycle, the ETF was consistently requested to provide support in the majority of its partner countries, and it has also provided advice and expertise by responding to requests from EU stakeholders, including policy dialogue inputs to EU institutions and agencies<sup>295</sup> and updates on the impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on refugees and their needs for skills development and validation<sup>296</sup>. However, the number of requests from EU services has decreased substantially since 2020<sup>297</sup>, although the ETF has reported that recent years have seen a smaller number of more substantial requests.

Finally, the ETF has made progress in supporting knowledge dissemination through strengthened external communication, following the conclusions from the previous evaluation, which found that there was 'room for improvement in the ETF's communication efforts to ensure that stakeholders, particularly from partner countries, fully understand its role, work and objectives'<sup>298</sup>. The main developments include the creation of a dedicated online platform for the Torino Process in 2017, the launch of a new website for the agency in 2018, the launch of the Open Space knowledge-sharing platform in 2019<sup>299</sup>, and **the greater emphasis that has been placed on social media, so as to better reach stakeholders**. Each of the agency's social media accounts – Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter (now X), and Instagram – grew throughout the evaluation period. Facebook has seen the largest growth: 11 539 in 2017 compared to 25 010 in 2022.

## 2. USE OF THE OUTPUTS BY THE AGENCIES' MAIN STAKEHOLDERS

The four Agencies' services and outputs have been used by their key stakeholders, with a tendency for usage by EU institutions to be both more prominent and more widespread than usage by stakeholders at national (or international) level, in line with the use patterns shown during the previous evaluation period.

### 2.1. EU-level, policy-oriented stakeholders are among the main target groups for each agency.

They made increased use of the agencies' services and outputs, particularly in the case of **Eurofound**, where the number of references to its work in key EU-level policy documents<sup>300</sup> increased over the evaluation period and compared to the 2016 baseline<sup>301</sup>. The European

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<sup>294</sup> There was a 41% increase in stakeholder participation and the agency reported that 2 100 participants were reached through events (ETF (2019); consolidated annual activity reports for 2018 and 2021).

<sup>295</sup> For example work with the European Institute for Gender Equality on gender gaps in employment in 2021.

<sup>296</sup> ETF (2023), consolidated annual activity reports for 2021-2022.

<sup>297</sup> They remained stable between 2016 and 2019 with between 105 and 116 requests, and then dropped to 86 in 2020, 50 in 2021, and 40 in 2022, mainly explained by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>298</sup> European Commission, *Evaluation of the EU Commission Agencies working in the employment and social affairs policy field: EUROFOUND, CEDEFOP, ETF and EU-OSHA* (SWD(2019) 160 final).

<sup>299</sup> ETF's consolidated annual activity reports for 2018, 2019 and 2021.

<sup>300</sup> Key EU policy documents are defined as those that initiate policy processes, are of a consultative/advising nature or are reports with comprehensive uptake of Eurofound's knowledge.

<sup>301</sup> Although the total number of EU policy documents referencing Eurofound's work decreased.

Commission is consistently the institution that refers to Eurofound knowledge most<sup>302</sup> in its key policy documents<sup>303</sup>, closely followed by the European Parliament, which saw a jump in the number of mentions in key policy documents in 2021 and 2022<sup>304</sup>. Eurofound's COVID-19-related outputs consistently featured among the most-referenced outputs in key EU policy documents between 2020 and 2022.

**Table 2: References in EU policy documents, 2016-2022**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Cedefop</b> <sup>305</sup>	167 EU-level documents	144 EU-level documents	200 EU-level documents	167 EU-level documents	165 EU-level documents	189 EU-level documents	124 EU-level documents
<b>Eurofound</b>	78 key out of 315	99 key out of 315	81 key out of 272	52 key out of 185	95 key out of 274	152 key out of 206	163 key out of 198

Source: annual activity reports.

As in the previous period<sup>306</sup>, for **Cedefop**, the number of EU-level documents containing references to its work fluctuated, with a low of 124 documents in 2022 and a high of 189 documents in 2021, with, overall, higher figures than the 2016 baseline (see Table 2)<sup>307</sup>. The European Commission is the stakeholder most frequently citing the Agency's work, followed by the European Parliament, the ETF, and the Joint Research Centre. The thematic areas of Cedefop's work most referenced in EU policy documents were skills anticipation and matching, and monitoring and analysing VET policy developments (with 524 and 449 references, respectively; much higher figures than for the other areas, see Figure 1)<sup>308</sup>.

<sup>302</sup> As shown in Table 23 of the supporting study.

<sup>303</sup> With 41 references in key EU-level policy documents in 2017, 39 in 2018, 18 in 2019, 35 in 2020, 36 in 2021 and 61 in 2022.

<sup>304</sup> With 63 references in key EU-level policy documents in 2021 and 67 in 2022, compared to only 27 in 2017, 15 in 2018, 9 in 2019 and 18 in 2020. See Eurofound annual activity reports.

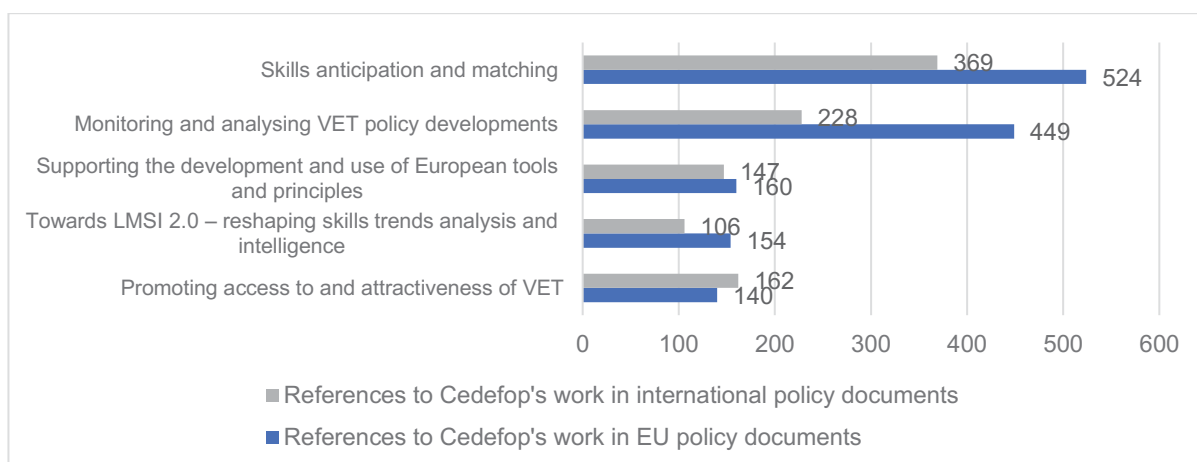
<sup>305</sup> Cedefop reports on this indicator differently than Eurofound, as it did not report the number of references in key EU-level documents for any of the years.

<sup>306</sup> Between 2011-2016, the lowest number of references to Cedefop's work in EU-level documents was 97 in 2014, the highest number was 173 in 2013.

<sup>307</sup> This indicator is not reported on by the ETF and EU-OSHA.

<sup>308</sup> Cedefop's consolidated annual activity reports for 2016-2022.

**Figure 1 Number of citations of Cedefop’s outputs: top 5 thematic areas with most references in EU and international policy documents in 2016-2021**



Source: Cedefop’s consolidated annual activity reports for 2016-2021.

**2.2. Research and academia** stakeholders more actively used Cedefop’s and Eurofound’s work compared to the previous evaluation period, as evidenced by the year-on-year increase in the number of citations of both Agencies’ outputs in academic journals, reaching a peak of 1 030 academic papers citing Cedefop’s work in 2022 and of 1 220 citations of Eurofound’s work in 2021 (see Table 3)<sup>309</sup>. Eurofound has intensified collaboration with universities across Europe<sup>310</sup>. In 2020, it received around 50 requests from universities, research institutes and other EU-level stakeholders, including the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), the Joint Research Centre and the OECD<sup>311</sup>. Participation numbers at Cedefop events show the use of the Agency’s services by a wider range of its stakeholders. Although at least 50% of participants are policymakers at EU or national level, the share of researchers attending Cedefop’s events increased throughout the latter half of the evaluation period, from 11% in 2018 to 20% in 2021.

**Table 3: Number of citations of each agency’s work in academic literature, 2016-2022**<sup>312</sup>

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<u>Cedefop</u>	591	545	611	838	956	988	1 030
<u>Eurofound</u>	627	663	720	880	1 034	1 220	1 134

### 2.3. Use at national level

The use of the Agencies’ services by stakeholders at Member-State level is less well documented than the use by European-level stakeholders<sup>313</sup>. Nevertheless, the evaluation

<sup>309</sup> No data is available on the uptake of EU-OSHA’s or ETF’s work.

<sup>310</sup> For example, in 2021, Eurofound signed a cooperation agreement with the European University Institute in Florence.

<sup>311</sup> For example to access the microdata under the quality of life and public services activity.

<sup>312</sup> Annual activity reports for 2016-2022.

<sup>313</sup> Partly because European-level stakeholders are the primary stakeholders.

provides wide evidence of effective use by national stakeholders, to varying extents given the Agencies' different remits and activities.

**EU-OSHA's** outputs and tools were used intensively by national stakeholders, with outputs such as OiRA<sup>314</sup>, OSH-wiki, and the healthy workplaces campaigns (HWCs) increasing their popularity during the evaluation period, compared to 2016. The HWCs have been increasingly growing in terms of partnerships, events and stakeholder participation. Examples of the use of **Eurofound's** work by national stakeholders include its work on minimum wages, as highlighted in a case study<sup>315</sup>. **Eurofound's** minimum wage publication series is continuously referred to by national wage-setting institutes, including governments, trade unions and low pay commissions<sup>316</sup>, in their policy reports. **Cedefop's** focus on national stakeholders decreased during the current period compared to the previous one. Its performance measurement system shows that 'direct support to Member States' (e.g. by way of thematic country reviews, policy learning forums, and events in Member States to support the implementation of policies) has decreased, following the Agency's decision to prioritise EU level policy support in view of intense budget constraints<sup>317</sup>.

**2.4. The only agencies considering international actors and organisations as being key stakeholders are Cedefop and the ETF** (though **Eurofound's** outputs are also used by international actors). In 2017, 2018 and 2020, **Cedefop's** work on skills anticipation and matching was the most referenced output by international organisations. In 2019, this was the agency's work on monitoring VET policy developments, and in 2021, its work on reshaping skills trends analysis and intelligence. These outputs were the most frequently referenced **Cedefop** outputs in EU policy documents as well. As regards the **ETF**, a 2023 **ETF** stakeholder survey to monitor the uptake of its outputs showed that the thematic areas in which the knowledge was used the most were innovative teaching and learning, skills demand analysis and vocational excellence provision models, whereas the outputs on engaging businesses in skills development, quality assurance and governance mechanisms, and upskilling and reskilling were used less frequently<sup>318</sup>.

## **2.5. Use and dissemination of outputs through websites and media**

The use of the Agencies' outputs measured by the **number of downloads**, showed varying trends across Agencies. The number of downloads of **Eurofound's** publications was higher than the 2016 baseline figure of 155 943 throughout the evaluation period, with a peak in 2020 of 188 556 PDF downloads from its website, supported by an increasing number of social media users; **EU-OSHA**, which had a relatively low baseline number of downloads in 2016 (82 558)

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<sup>314</sup> 10 of the 15 OiRA national partners made an explicit reference to the OiRA tool in their national OSH strategy or legislation.

<sup>315</sup> See Annex 8 to the supporting study.

<sup>316</sup> See Irish Low Pay Commission, *Recommendations for the National Minimum Wage*, July 2022, available at: <https://assets.gov.ie/234304/074a6944-2f9e-4443-8e6d-a4f85be432d2.pdf>.

<sup>317</sup> There were 46 outputs at the start of the evaluation period in 2017, but this decreased to only 5 in 2021.

<sup>318</sup> Ockham, IPS (2023), *Development of Methodology to Monitor Uptake and Use of ETF Knowledge Products/Activities*.

saw<sup>319</sup> a huge leap in 2019 and a peak of 2 259 137 in 2020<sup>320</sup>, followed by a significant drop in 2022<sup>321</sup>. **Cedefop**'s downloads have been higher than the 2016 baseline (383 600) since 2020, when downloads peaked at 465 000, linked to the shift to fully digital dissemination of publications. The number of downloads of the **ETF**'s publications saw a dramatic decrease from 1 181 462 in 2016 to 351 219 in 2018<sup>322</sup> (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Number of downloads of each agency's publications, 2016-2022**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Cedefop</b> <sup>323</sup> (publications)	383 600	313 850	290 000	352 000	465 000	416 000	440 000
<b>Cedefop</b> (briefing notes)	88 400	63 150	55 000	72 000	88 000	82 000	N/A
<b>ETF</b> <sup>324</sup>	1 181 462	837 236	351 219				
<b>EU-OSHA</b> <sup>325</sup>	82 558	N/A	N/A	1 701 161	2 259 137	2 132 816	1 477.674
<b>Eurofound</b> <sup>326</sup>	155 943	178 406	161 974	175 761	188 556	174 878	160 233

The importance of social media channels for the visibility, uptake and use of the Agencies' outputs increased during the current evaluation period. The data available for **Cedefop** and the **ETF** shows a year-on-year growth of social media followers across all channels used by both Agencies<sup>327</sup>, which increased the range of the channels used (the **ETF** introducing Instagram in 2018 and **Cedefop** LinkedIn in 2021). The use of social media channels is particularly important for the **ETF** as many stakeholders in partner countries rely on information shared through these channels. Comparable data are not published by EU-OSHA<sup>328</sup> and **Eurofound**; however, the importance of social media channels and the increase in followers is reported in the **Eurofound**'s consolidated annual activity report for 2022<sup>329</sup>.

<sup>319</sup> 1 701 161 downloads in 2019 and a peak of 2 259 137 in 2020, followed by a drop to 1 477 674 in 2022.

<sup>320</sup> This can be explained by the agency's COVID-19 guidance documents, which were the most downloaded and accessed publications in the agency's history.

<sup>321</sup> In September 2021, the agency migrated its websites, and from then to mid-2022, some issues with the redirection of publications were reported, which may have negatively affected the number of downloads.

<sup>322</sup> Data on the number of downloads of the **ETF**'s publications is only available for 2016-2018.

<sup>323</sup> Cedefop splits this indicator into: (i) downloads of publications; and (ii) briefing notes (apart from in 2022).

<sup>324</sup> 'Number of downloads of publications'. The **ETF** did not collect any data on this indicator after 2018.

<sup>325</sup> 'Number of downloads on EU-OSHA's corporate and campaign websites'.

<sup>326</sup> 'Uptake of and engagement with Eurofound's knowledge through its website and other corporate platforms – PDF downloads'.

<sup>327</sup> During the evaluation period, the number of followers at least doubled across most channels for both Agencies.

<sup>328</sup> EU-OSHA does not publish data on social media followers.

<sup>329</sup> Eurofound (2023), *Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2022*, p. 23.



## ANNEX IX: TECHNICAL ANNEX (II)

This annex presents additional detailed evidence on the theme of coherence (points 1 to 4) and relevance (point 5).

### 1. Agencies' mandates, common thematic areas and activities

The technical specifications for the evaluation asked the following question: '1.14. To what extent do new elements (e.g. the ELA, updated mandates) change the conclusions of the previous evaluation regarding advantages / disadvantages of mergers between the agencies?'

The Agencies' mandates identify broad policy domains in which they operate.

**Table 1: Thematic coverage of the Agencies**

	Thematic coverage according to the mandate of each agency
<b>Eurofound</b>	To provide the Commission, other Union institutions, bodies and Agencies, the Member States and the social partners with support for the purpose of shaping and implementing policies concerning the improvement of <b>living and working conditions, devising employment policies, and promoting the dialogue between management and labour</b> . To that end, Eurofound shall enhance and disseminate knowledge, provide evidence and services for the purpose of policy making, including research-based conclusions, and shall facilitate knowledge sharing among and between Union and national actors.
<b>Cedefop</b>	To support the promotion, development and implementation of EU policies in the field of <b>vocational education and training (VET)</b> as well as <b>skills and qualifications policies</b> by working together with the Commission, Member States and social partners.
<b>ETF</b>	Contributing to <b>human capital development</b> in the context of EU external relations policies and aiming to promote the development of <b>VET systems</b> in the EU's partner countries.
<b>EU-OSHA</b>	EU-OSHA's objective shall be to provide the Union Institutions and bodies, the Member States, the social partners, and other actors involved in the field of safety and health at work with relevant technical, scientific and economic information and qualified expertise in that field in order to <b>improve the working environment</b> as regards the <b>protection of the safety and health of workers</b> .

Source: Compiled by research team based on the basis of Founding Regulations of the four Agencies.

If one combines the policy scope of the Agencies as set out in the mandates (in the table above) with an analysis of the strategic objectives that appear in the Agencies' programming documents, one finds that **two (or more) Agencies sometimes work in the same broad policy area**. The most significant cases are described below.

- (i) *Cedefop and the ETF* worked on **VET**, in particular, qualification systems, modernisation of VET, lifelong learning, anticipation of skills for the future of work, labour market intelligence, quality assurance and teacher training.

**Cedefop and the ETF** both worked on VET, particularly on qualification frameworks, quality assurance and teacher training<sup>330</sup>. During the current evaluation period, both

<sup>330</sup> PPMI, ECORYS (2018), Evaluation of the EU Agencies under the remit of DG Employment: EUROFOUND, CEDEFOP, ETF and EU-OSHA, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=21074&langId=en>.

Agencies worked on the modernisation of VET and qualifications systems, lifelong learning policies, anticipation of skills for the future of work, and labour market intelligence. However, the actual focus of work of the two Agencies in this area was clearly distinguished: **the ETF focused on capacity building and policy implementation in partner countries outside the EU, while Cedefop focused on research and policymaking in the EU.**

- (ii) *Cedefop and Eurofound* worked on **the intersection of VET, skills mismatches, working and living conditions and labour market policies.**

Eurofound's research activity on working conditions crosses over into Cedefop's work on vocational skills development. The two Agencies also complement each other's work in terms of Cedefop's focus on skills development and Eurofound's research on employment change and the changing nature of work.

However, the two Agencies approach these topics from different perspectives. **Cedefop focuses on the supply side** of skills mismatches and the perspective of VET providers, while **Eurofound focuses on the demand side.** The Agencies also have different approaches to the production of research outputs and dissemination: Cedefop tends to produce shorter and more regular reports and bulletins, while Eurofound generally provides longer and more detailed reports.

- (iii) *Eurofound and EU-OSHA* worked on **occupational health and safety.**

**Eurofound and EU-OSHA** both worked on occupational health and safety as this area can be considered part of working conditions, which is part of Eurofound's mandate and objectives. For example, Eurofound's activities include work on health and safety in the form of the European working conditions survey (ECWS) and the related 'Health and well-being at work' analysis. However, EU-OSHA was created when Eurofound was already in place and its Founding Regulation set out *a very specific focus on providing highly technical specialised support on protecting the safety and health of workers.* **The tasks of EU-OSHA require such a high level of specialisation** that a possible merger with another agency would clearly jeopardise its effectiveness.

The analysis above shows that **each agency approached these broad policy themes from different perspectives.** For example, tackling the labour force from both the supply and demand angles, the working environment from both the employer and employee angle, and skills shortages from the provider and employer standpoint.

**The Agencies' mandates cover broad, complex and interconnected themes,** which are the basis for cooperation between the Agencies. These themes could also be the basis for exploring the potential for merging some of the Agencies, as was done in the previous 2019 cross-cutting evaluation (see next section).

Focusing on cooperation, the common thematic areas are well understood by most policymakers and agency staff, and **thematic overlaps in the mandates do not necessarily mean duplication of work.** In fact, common thematic areas are both accepted and used as a basis for inter-agency cooperation, ensuring coherence.

**The current evaluation has found no instances of duplication of work** among the Agencies. It also found that staff from all Agencies are much more aware of each other’s work compared to the previous evaluation and are therefore able to complement rather than duplicate each other’s work. **Each agency has its own unique area of expertise when addressing the broad themes that are common among the four Agencies.**

The examples of joint outputs and activities delivered by the agency pairs related to common thematic areas are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Agencies’ joint outputs relevant to common themes**

	<b>Eurofound</b>	<b>Cedefop</b>	<b>ETF</b>	<b>EU-OSHA</b>
<b>Eurofound</b>	-	European company survey 2019 and the accompanying ‘Workplace practices unlocking employee potential’ report; ‘Skills forecast: trends and challenges to 2030’ report <sup>331</sup> . knowledge exchange and seminars (e.g. Skills and quality jobs as drivers of a just green transition) <sup>332</sup> .	Living, working and COVID-19 survey covered EU Member States and 10 EU neighbouring countries <sup>333</sup> . New Working Life Country Profile for Ukraine was published in November 2022 by Eurofound and the ETF <sup>334</sup> .	‘Towards age-friendly work in Europe: a life-course perspective on work and ageing from EU Agencies’ <sup>335</sup> .
<b>Cedefop</b>	-	-	Joint outputs related to VET policy reporting as part of the implementation and monitoring of Riga medium-term deliverables, qualification systems, including validation of non-formal learning, work-based learning and work-placed learning, skills matching, anticipation, and	Common thematic areas were not identified. Joint activities and outputs were identified in the context of multilateral activities, e.g. ‘Employment, skills and social policies that work for young Europeans in times of uncertainly’ event.

<sup>331</sup> Cedefop, Eurofound (2018), ‘[Skills forecast: trends and challenges to 2030](#)’, Luxembourg.

<sup>332</sup> EU-OSHA. [Cedefop-Eurofound joint knowledge seminar on Skills and Job Quality as drivers of a just green transition](#).

<sup>333</sup> Eurofound-ETF (2022), [Living, working and COVID-19 in the European Union and 10 EU neighbouring countries](#), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

<sup>334</sup> See: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/news-and-events/news/understanding-working-life-ukraine-joint-endeavour-eurofound-and-etf>.

<sup>335</sup> EU-OSHA, Cedefop, Eurofound, EIGE (2017), ‘[Towards age-friendly work in Europe: a life-course perspective on work and ageing from EU Agencies](#)’.

			identification of skills needs <sup>336</sup> .	
<b>ETF</b>	-	-	-	Common thematic areas not identified. Cooperation was based on multilateral activities mentioned above.

Source: Compiled by research team

## 2. The European Labour Authority

The evaluation question also identified the European Labour Authority (ELA) as a potential new element that could lead to revising the analysis of merger scenarios.

**However, the Agencies’ potential to duplicate the work of the ELA is limited.** EU-OSHA, Cedefop, and Eurofound are predominantly research-focused and do not have an operational and cross-border focus as ELA does. The potential for a merger with the ETF is limited as it only operates in non-EU countries, mainly in the EU’s neighbourhood.

The ELA can, nevertheless, use existing research resources developed by the Agencies in their respective areas of competence; this could also lead to pooling resources or producing joint reports on issues of common concern, e.g. on restructuring or respecting occupational health and safety rules in mobility situations, including posting, in the context of risk assessment.

Cooperation between the four Agencies and the ELA is at an early stage due to the ELA having only been recently created. Nevertheless, the three tripartite Agencies have begun to cooperate with ELA on certain issues, for example, on a seasonal workers campaign (EU-OSHA) and skills intelligence and job shortages (Eurofound and Cedefop). Cooperation on digital labour mobility with the ETF has been identified as a subject for future cooperation. Cooperation across all five agencies took place when ELA participated in the September 2022 event ‘Employment, skills and social policies that work for young Europeans in times of uncertainty’.

## 3. Potential for mergers: previous evaluation findings and current evaluation assessment

Based on the assessment of the Agencies’ mandates and common thematic areas, the previous 2019 cross-cutting evaluation identified which of them could have a higher potential for merging. The evaluation also assessed the benefits and risks of each merger scenario.

While the Cedefop/ETF and Cedefop/Eurofound merger options could be feasible, they were high-risk scenarios and there were difficulties in balancing the positive and negative effects. A Eurofound/EU-OSHA merger was also considered, but it was concluded that it would face significant ‘stumbling blocks’ as EU-OSHA is highly specialised. Overall, as individual agencies were shown to be overall efficient and effective, it was noted that one of the key reasons for mergers – joining a ‘weaker’ organisation to a ‘stronger’ one – was absent. **The previous evaluation also concluded that there was no straightforward scenario for mergers and that, to improve efficiency, there was rather room for strengthening cooperation.**

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

**The current evaluation supporting study confirmed these previous conclusions as there were no substantial changes to the mandates and activities during the current evaluation period.** The 2019 revision of the tripartite Agencies' Founding Regulations did not change/expand the mandates of the Agencies beyond their existing scope (see details on this analysis in Section 4.1.2.7 of the supporting study).

Although the evaluation has not identified any grounds for mergers, scope for further synergies and cooperation has been identified.

The table below summarises the benefits and costs of each merger scenario. The middle column provides the analysis from the previous evaluation. The right column provides additional comments, in particular if there are new elements that could change the assessment from the previous evaluation.

**Table 3: Overview of benefits and risks of agency merger scenarios**

	Previous evaluation findings	Current evaluation assessment
<b>Eurofound and Cedefop merger</b> (Common area: intersection of VET, skills mismatches, working and living conditions and labour market policies – Cedefop supply side / Eurofound demand side)		
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Cost savings are possible</b> for research roles (estimated at up to EUR 1.5 million) and back-office roles (estimated at up to EUR 1.5 million)	Cost savings are possible due to a reduction in both administrative roles and operational roles (e.g. some management roles). The cost of living crisis, inflationary pressure on salaries, and ever-increasing pressure on Agencies' budgets increase the weight of this benefit. Differences in salary coefficients make a merger with Eurofound more expensive than vice versa. A merger with Eurofound is more likely as Greece already has another decentralised agency, while Ireland does not.
	<b>Potential synergies could be exploited</b> through collaboration in areas such as long-term unemployment, youth unemployment, skills, employment and migration.	It is likely that more efficient processes for research and collaboration could increase the cost-effectiveness of the different outputs produced. The overall level of outputs produced by the two Agencies (as combined now) would more likely decrease due to an overall reduction in staff.
	<b>Potential to develop more efficient research processes</b> , e.g. by pooling knowledge and working closer on methodological development and data collection.	
	<b>Merging tripartite Agencies would likely be easier than merging a tripartite and a non-tripartite Agency.</b>	<b>No change in governance;</b> therefore, this is still valid.
<b>Risks</b>	Very broad thematic scope, <b>risk of reducing or limiting priority to some fields or issues</b> , such as VET	<b>No significant changes in thematic areas;</b> therefore, this is still valid.
	There are <b>likely to be higher costs related to additional governance and management</b>	<b>Still valid.</b>

	<b>costs associated with increased organisational complexity.</b>	
	<b>Disruption in the short term through staff losses</b> due to the need for relocation.	<b>Still valid.</b>
	<b>Potential deterioration in specific and unique thematic knowledge</b> in some areas, along with <b>weakened cooperation with EU institutions/agencies, Member States, and national and EU-level stakeholders.</b>	<b>No significant changes in thematic areas;</b> therefore, this is still valid.
	<b>Closure costs are high,</b> around EUR 2-3 million per agency.	Closure costs remain a risk and would increase in proportion to the growth of the agency's budget.
<b>Cedefop and ETF merger</b> (Common area: VET – Cedefop within the EU / ETF outside the EU)		
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Cost savings are possible</b> for research roles (estimated at up to EUR 2 million) and back-office roles (estimated at up to EUR 1.5 million)	Cost savings are still likely due to a reduction in both administrative roles and operational roles (e.g. some management roles). Savings on operational roles are still likely to be higher than in the Cedefop/Eurofound merger due to more overlapping thematic expertise. The cost of living crisis, inflationary pressure on salaries, and ever-increasing pressure on Agencies' budgets increased the weight of this benefit. Differences in salary coefficients would make the merger with the ETF more expensive than vice versa.
	<b>Practical difficulties in collaborating</b> on capacity-building tools <b>should be overcome,</b> leading to a more efficient production of tools.	The current level of collaboration on common tools between Cedefop and ETF is already assessed as high in this evaluation, as the Agencies cooperate on key tools where there are synergies. It is likely that more efficient processes for research and
	<b>Potential synergies could be exploited</b> in developing methodological expertise, e.g. in skills anticipation and matching.	

	<b>Potential to develop more efficient research processes</b> , e.g. by pooling knowledge and working closer on methodological development and data collection.	collaboration could increase the cost-effectiveness of the different outputs produced. The overall level of outputs produced by the two Agencies (as combined now) would more likely decrease due to an overall reduction in staff.
	<b>Closer fit between Cedefop and the ETF than between Cedefop and Eurofound</b>	<b>No significant changes in mandates</b> , therefore this still holds true.
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Some activities are unlikely to be continued</b> due to restructuring.	<b>No significant changes in thematic areas</b> ; therefore, this is still valid.
	There are likely to be <b>higher costs related to additional governance and management costs associated with increased organisational complexity</b> .	<b>Still valid.</b>
	<b>Disruption in the short term</b> through staff losses due to the need for relocation	<b>Still valid.</b>
	The ETF's <b>ability to deliver advice perceived as independent may be hindered</b>	<b>No significant changes in mandates/activities</b> ; therefore, this is still valid.
	<b>Different mandates and intervention logics</b> of the Agencies.	<b>No significant changes in mandates</b> ; therefore this is still valid.
	<b>Different governance structures</b> (Cedefop tripartite, ETF not) <b>would need resolution</b> : Member States might object if social partners have a voice in EU external action.	As governance structures remain different, <b>this risk is still valid.</b>
	<b>Closure costs are high</b> , around EUR 2-3 million per agency.	<b>Closure costs remain a risk</b> and would increase in proportion to the growth of the agency budget.
	<b>Loss of specialist knowledge</b> in relation to working in partner countries (particularly if the ETF relocates).	<b>Still valid.</b>
	<b>Cedefop might emerge as the dominant partner</b> , prioritising EU Member States	<b>Still valid.</b>

	<b>Potential deterioration in specific and unique thematic knowledge</b> in some areas, along with <b>weakened cooperation with EU institutions/agencies, Member States, and national and European-level stakeholders.</b>	<b>Still valid.</b>
<b>Eurofound and EU-OSHA merger</b> (Common area: occupational health and safety – Eurofound specificity / EU-OSHA specificity)		
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Cost savings are possible</b> for research roles (estimated at up to EUR 1 million) and back-office roles (estimated at up to EUR 0.5-1 million)	Cost savings are still likely due to a reduction in both administrative roles and operational roles (e.g. some management roles). The cost of living crisis, inflationary pressure on salaries, and ever-increasing pressure on Agencies' budgets increased the weight of this benefit of the merger.
	<b>Potential synergies could be created</b> by pooling methodological expertise in researching working conditions and safety and health issues.	It is likely that more efficient processes for research and collaboration could increase the cost-effectiveness of the different outputs produced. The overall level of outputs produced by the two Agencies (as combined now) would more likely decrease due to an overall reduction in staff.
	<b>Potential to develop more efficient research processes</b> , e.g. by pooling knowledge and working closer on methodological development and data collection.	
<b>Risks</b>	<b>Closure costs are high</b> , around EUR 2-3 million per agency.	<b>Closure costs remain a risk</b> and would increase in proportion with the growth in the agency's budget.
	There are likely to be <b>higher costs related to additional governance and management costs associated with increased organisational complexity.</b>	<b>Still valid.</b>
	<b>Some activities are unlikely to be continued</b> due to restructuring.	<b>Still valid.</b>
	The <b>risk that Eurofound becomes the dominant partner, and safety and health policy issues are given insufficient priority</b> relative to other issues, reducing their visibility at European level.	As Eurofound is still the larger agency, <b>this risk is still valid.</b>

	<p><b>Potential deterioration in specific and unique thematic knowledge</b> in some areas, along with <b>weakened cooperation with EU institutions/agencies, Member States, and national and EU-level stakeholders.</b></p>	<p><b>Still valid.</b></p>
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#### 4. Detailed coherence evidence

##### (i) Joint activities, events and sharing data collection

The already well-developed cooperation between **Cedefop** and the **ETF**, specifically on VET policy monitoring, was further developed as set out below.

**(a)** Joint support for monitoring the deliverables of the Riga Conclusions in the field of VET. In 2019, the jointly launched Riga questionnaire resulted in the final report *Enhancing European cooperation in VET: outcomes of the Riga cycle*<sup>337</sup>, which was presented at meetings of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training and the Directors-General for Vocational Training (2020)<sup>338</sup>. The two agencies were also entrusted with the annual monitoring of the implementation of the Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration for 2021-2030.

**(b)** Regular joint contributions to work on national and regional qualifications frameworks in cooperation with UNESCO (2017-2018, 2020)<sup>339</sup>. **Cedefop** contributed to the Eastern Partnership conference on qualifications and mobility in 2019. In 2020, **Cedefop** published an article on European Qualifications Framework qualifications, to which the **ETF** contributed. The agencies also developed joint publications: the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning, and, together with UNESCO, the global inventory of national qualifications frameworks.

**(c)** The agencies are jointly implementing the European skills and jobs survey. The focus is on the energy and crafts sector in selected **ETF** partner countries, while **Cedefop** covers EU countries (2021-2023). The two agencies also jointly monitor the implementation of the Osnabrück Declaration, supporting digital skills and inclusion in VET (from 2020)<sup>340</sup>.

**(d)** **Cedefop** shared its expertise to develop a tool for validating refugees' work skills in Türkiye and identifying best practice for the Eastern Partnership event in October 2017. In addition, the

<sup>337</sup> Cedefop (2020), *Enhancing European cooperation in VET: outcomes of the Riga cycle: progress in common priorities for 2015-20*, available at: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/3084>.

<sup>338</sup> Cedefop and ETF (2020), *Enhancing European cooperation in VET: outcomes of the Riga cycle*, available at: [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3084\\_en.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3084_en.pdf).

<sup>339</sup> See, for example: ETF, Cedefop and UNESCO (2019), *Global inventory of regional and national qualifications frameworks 2019: Volume I: Thematic chapters*, available at: [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/2224\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/2224_en_0.pdf).

<sup>340</sup> See, for example: ETF (2022), *Osnabrück Declaration: supporting digital skills and inclusion in VET*, available at: <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/news-and-events/news/osnabruck-declaration-supporting-digital-skills-and-inclusion-vet>.

ETF contributed to the Cedefop-OECD Experts Forum on upskilling, reskilling and employing adult refugees, and shared its experiences from Jordan and Lebanon.

Cooperation between **Eurofound and the ETF** increased during 2017-2022. For the first time, the agencies cooperated on a joint survey. Typically, they cooperate on platform work, young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and capacity building of social partners. In particular, the two agencies cooperated on the below topics.

**(a) Social partnership:** The two agencies increasingly on social partnership and dialogue and public-private partnerships in VET, with a particular focus on EU-level social dialogue. Joint events supported this, such as the ETF-Eurofound working seminar on social dialogue and skills development (2021), joint participation in the expert workshop on capacity building for effective social dialogue (2021), and peer review of publications.

**(b) Digital economy:** The two agencies participated in or jointly organised seminars on the digital economy, platform work (2019, 2020, 2021), and the impact of COVID-19 on businesses (2021). The ETF also supported the distribution of the online survey on living and working during COVID-19 among 10 partner countries.

**(c) Skills shortages and skills mismatch:** Eurofound participated in the advisory board of the ETF's initiative on skills demand in partner countries (2020).

Cooperation between **Cedefop and Eurofound** became more extensive during 2017-2022. Prior cooperation emphasised information exchange and participation in events rather than developing joint outputs and activities. A notable example of cooperation was the joint EU-wide European company survey, which was launched in 2019 and led to joint analysis and reporting. The two agencies also started working together on skills forecasting and analysis to integrate Eurofound's job tasks approach into the forecasting analysis for the EU Skills Panorama (2017). The two agencies published the *Skills forecast: trends and challenges to 2030* report<sup>341</sup>. Other joint publications included a report entitled *Workplace practices unlocking employee potential*<sup>342</sup>. Eurofound led an event on the future of manufacturing, and the publication of a related study, to which Cedefop contributed with employment projections<sup>343</sup>.

There is a longstanding cooperation between **Eurofound and EU-OSHA** and the two agencies had previously published joint reports on psychosocial risks at work<sup>344</sup>. The two agencies focused on themes such as psychological risks, mental health, self-employment, working time patterns, the issue of burn-out, older workers, and foresight<sup>345</sup>. In 2018, a foresight publication

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<sup>341</sup> Cedefop, Eurofound (2018), 'Skills forecast: trends and challenges to 2030', *Cedefop reference series* No 108, Publications Office, Luxembourg, available at: <http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/4492>.

<sup>342</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/2228>

<sup>343</sup> Eurofound (2019), *The future of Manufacturing in Europe*, <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/emcc/fome>.

<sup>344</sup> Evaluation of EU agencies in the field of employment and social affairs, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=85&furtherNews=yes&newsId=9348>.

<sup>345</sup> Eurofound (2017), *Consolidated annual activity report of the Authorising Officer for the year 2017*, p. 25, available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/annual-report/2018/consolidated-annual-activity-report-of-the-authorising-officer-for-the-year-2017>.

*New and emerging OSH risks associated with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by 2025* was published<sup>346</sup>. In May 2020, the European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs held an exchange of views with then Eurofound Director Juan Menéndez-Valdés and the Director of EU-OSHA on the social and employment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>347</sup>.

### **(ii) Pan-European surveys**

There was increased cooperation between the Agencies on **pan-European surveys**. Such survey cooperation led to wider benefits such as cost sharing (particularly for the European company survey), aligning definitions and tools, facilitating data and best practice sharing, and overcoming methodological difficulties.

- European company survey, 2019. Eurofound in cooperation with Cedefop, leading to a publication on the subject of workplace practices unlocking employee potential in 2020.
- Career guidance policy and practice in the pandemic, 2020. Cedefop in cooperation with the ETF, the European Commission, the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy, the ILO, the OECD and UNESCO, leading to a publication of the same name in 2020.
- Living, working and COVID-19 survey, 2020-2022. Eurofound in cooperation with the ETF, leading to a publication entitled *Living, Working, and COVID-19 in the European Union and 10 EU Neighbouring Countries* in 2022.
- European skills and jobs survey, 2021-2024. A joint survey: Cedefop in cooperation with the ETF.

### **(iii) Multilateral cooperation**

The Agencies also engaged in several multilateral (involving more than two agencies) initiatives, in particular on digitalisation, the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and readiness for future challenges / foresight.

Led by Cedefop and the ETF and in cooperation with other international organisations (the ILO, the OECD and UNESCO), a flash joint international survey launched in March 2020 provided a snapshot of career guidance in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to a joint report published by Cedefop entitled *Career Guidance policy and practice during the COVID-19 pandemic* and a joint background note focusing on social dialogue and partnerships in response to the post-COVID environment.

In 2020, Eurofound and EU-OSHA held a discussion with the European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the following

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<sup>346</sup> EU-OSHA (2018), *Foresight on new and emerging occupational safety and health risks associated with digitalisation by 2025*, available at: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/foresight-new-and-emerging-occupational-safety-and-health-risks-associated>.

<sup>347</sup> See: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/nl/events/european-parliament-discussion-with-eurofound-and-eu-osha-impacts-of-the-COVID-19-pandemic>.

year, Eurofound participated in the scoping phase of EU-OSHA's psychosocial risk assessment, which covered the consequences of COVID-19 on workers' mental well-being.

Five EU agencies (EU-OSHA, Cedefop, Eurofound, the European Labour Authority and the ETF) and the European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs organised the 'Youth First! Employment, skills and social policies that work for young Europeans in times of uncertainty'<sup>348</sup> event in September 2022 to discuss policies on young people and challenges related to employment, working conditions and mental health. Follow-up cooperation is planned.

Four agencies (EU-OSHA, Eurofound, Cedefop and the European Institute for Gender Equality) provided input to *Towards age-friendly work in Europe: a life-course perspective on work and ageing from EU Agencies* in 2017. This publication was the outcome of a collaborative project with topics covered by different agencies according to their mandate and expertise.

#### **(iv) Thematic contributions to DG EMPL policies, events, working groups, and advisory committees**

Each agency interacted with DG EMPL according to its specificities. Most often, the agencies provide research, expertise and inputs into the policy documents or proposals, and participate in a variety of formal committees and other meetings. Examples of the ways in which each agency provided input to DG EMPL policies and programmes are set out below.

Eurofound provided input to EU policies in areas such as employment, social affairs, skills and labour mobility. In 2019, Eurofound analysed upward convergence in the EU, developments in the state of middle classes, working conditions, platform work, work-life balance, representativeness studies of European social partner organisations, and involvement of social partners in national policymaking<sup>349</sup>. In 2021, Eurofound and EU-OSHA analysed the digitalisation of the workplace, telework and the right to disconnect. In 2021, Eurofound material contributed to the 2022 joint employment report and the employment and social development in Europe report<sup>350</sup>.

Cedefop contributed to DG EMPL work in the areas of VET and skills. The agency played an important role in the development of a new Europass platform, took part in preparing the blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills<sup>351</sup>, and published a report on progress in greening

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<sup>348</sup> European Labour Authority, <https://www.ela.europa.eu/en/events/youth-first-employment-skills-and-social-policies-work-young-europeans-times-uncertainty>.

<sup>349</sup> DG EMPL (2020), *Annual Activity Report 2019*, p. 22, available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2020-06/empl\\_aar\\_2019\\_en.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2020-06/empl_aar_2019_en.pdf).

<sup>350</sup> DG EMPL (2022), *Annual Activity Report 2021*, p. 21, available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/annual-activity-report-2021-employment-social-affairs-and-inclusion\\_en.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/annual-activity-report-2021-employment-social-affairs-and-inclusion_en.pdf).

<sup>351</sup> Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills website: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1415&langId=en>.

the economy and skills<sup>352</sup>. Cedefop cooperates regularly with DG EMPL on the Skills-OVATE project<sup>353</sup>.

The ETF provided expert input to DG EMPL on VET, national qualification systems, work-based learning and vocational excellence. In 2017, together with Cedefop, it participated in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Advisory group. The ETF provided updates on the implementation of national qualifications systems in south-eastern Europe and Türkiye and provided analysis on future links of non-EU countries to the EQF by identifying policy options and criteria for prioritising countries<sup>354</sup>. In 2017-2018, the ETF provided expert input to DG EMPL for ministerial meetings as part of the Berlin Process<sup>355</sup> on work-based learning and digital skills in the Western Balkan countries<sup>356</sup>. In 2019, the ETF contributed to the Employment and Social Affairs Platform involving representatives of DG EMPL, Ministries of Labour/Employment and public employment services<sup>357</sup>. The ETF contributed to a meeting organised by DG EMPL in October 2020 as part of the consultation ‘A strong social Europe for just transitions’ to prepare the action plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights<sup>358</sup>.

EU-OSHA contributed to DG EMPL’s strategic priorities that focus on safe working conditions for all. It primarily developed tools for employers and workers and promoted the application of EU occupational safety and health legislation in the Member States with support from DG EMPL. Together with Eurofound, EU-OSHA delivered research on workplace digitalisation, telework, and the right to disconnect, which contributed to DG EMPL’s understanding of the current challenges and opportunities faced by workers and employers<sup>359</sup>.

The agencies also cooperate with DG EMPL in contributing to each other’s events and supporting each other’s communication and dissemination activities, for instance on the **European Vocational Skills Week** (Cedefop)<sup>360</sup>.

#### **(v) Agencies’ contribution to the European Union Agencies Network on Scientific Advice**

Eurofound chaired the network between July 2021 and mid-2022 and hosted the 17th and 18th meetings of the European Union Agencies Network on Scientific Advice (EU-ANSA) meetings in November 2021 and May 2022. EU-OSHA hosted an inter-agencies crisis preparedness

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<sup>352</sup> Cedefop (2020), *Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2019*, p.44, available at:

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/content/consolidated-annual-activity-report-2019-including-governing-boards-analysis-and-assessment>.

<sup>353</sup> Intellera consulting (2022), *Cedefop Ex-Post Evaluation 2021*, p. 9.

<sup>354</sup> ETF (2019), *Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2018*.

<sup>355</sup> The Berlin Process is an initiative of several EU Member States, under German leadership, to engage with the six Western Balkan partners and promote regional cooperation and the European perspective of the region. It consists of annual summits and a series of ministerial meetings.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> ETF (2020), *Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2019*.

<sup>358</sup> ETF (2021), *Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2020*.

<sup>359</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General Employment Social Affairs and Inclusion, available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/annual-activity-report-2021-employment-social-affairs-and-inclusion\\_en.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/annual-activity-report-2021-employment-social-affairs-and-inclusion_en.pdf).

<sup>360</sup> ICON-INSTITUTE GmbH & Co. KG Consulting Gruppe (2021), *Cedefop Ex-post evaluations 2019-2020*, p. 25.

exercise in May 2023 to draw lessons from the COVID-19 crisis and increase preparedness for future crises. EU-OSHA and Eurofound (alongside the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, DG EMPL, DG SANTE, the ILO and the WHO) also jointly worked on the project ‘Healthy Workplaces Stop the Pandemic’. Cedefop, Eurofound and EU-OSHA also conducted the EU-ANSA survey on the socio-economic effects of sustainable development and published a related report in May 2020. A follow-up in the form of a tripartite knowledge summit in 2024 is under discussion. In 2022, Cedefop and Eurofound organised a knowledge-sharing seminar for EU-ANSA on quality jobs and the green transition.

#### **(vi) Agencies’ cooperation with the ILO**

The Eurofound European working conditions survey of 2015 led to a joint report entitled *Working anytime, anywhere: the effects on the world of work* in 2017. A further joint report was published in 2019 on working conditions in a global perspective. Cedefop, the ETF and the ILO have jointly worked on skills anticipation and matching methods, including a compendium of six guides on ways to anticipate skills needs, the last volume dating from 2017. Cooperation between the ETF and the ILO on joint surveys saw increased use of online surveys partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A joint ETF-ILO global survey on the impact of COVID-19 on enterprises fed into a joint report issued together with several other organisations, called *Skilling, upskilling and reskilling of employees, apprentices & interns during the COVID-19 pandemic*. The longstanding cooperation between EU-OSHA and the ILO on OSH in SMEs has led to the ILO and countries outside the EU (Canada, US, Singapore) referencing EU-OSHA research outputs in publications, but also to these countries updating their national tools and policies addressing OSH risks in SMEs.

#### **5. Agencies’ relevance to EU policy needs**

The four Agencies’ mandates, objectives and activities were highly relevant and the Agencies highly contributed to EU policy priorities. The Agencies developed their work programmes in response to EU policies and priorities. **There was a clear link between the EU priorities and the Agencies’ key programming and reporting documents** – the Agencies’ work was often referred to in EU policy documents. The expertise of the Agencies’ staff was leveraged to inform policy and programme development (see Table 8 in Annex VII, which **shows how Agencies’ outputs correspond to the European Commission’s 2019-2024 strategic priorities**).

**Eurofound** closely aligned its activities with three main areas of action of DG EMPL: supporting the European Semester, fostering stronger social dialogue, and promoting decent and safe working conditions for all<sup>361</sup>. For instance:

- **Eurofound**’s work on digitalisation and the platform economy was particularly relevant to promoting decent and safe working conditions for all (e.g. EU Platform Work Directive);

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<sup>361</sup> DG EMPL (2020), *Annual Activity Report 2019*, p. 22, available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2020-06/empl\\_aar\\_2019\\_en.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2020-06/empl_aar_2019_en.pdf).

- Eurofound's work also directly contributed to reporting on the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights within the framework of the European Semester<sup>362</sup>;
- Eurofound's report on cross-border labour inspections supported the discussion leading to the set-up of the European Labour Authority<sup>363</sup>;
- Eurofound also hosted webinars and #AskTheExpert sessions in cooperation with partners such as the European Institute for Gender Equality and the EU Presidency.

**EU-OSHA** successfully contributed to EU OSH legislation and strategies. For instance:

- **EU-OSHA** contributed significantly to the development and implementation of successive strategic frameworks on health and safety at work (2014-2020 and 2021-2027);
- in particular, **EU-OSHA**'s work on costs to society of work-related injury and illness, psychological risks, and the ageing workforce was quoted in the 2021-2027 strategic framework on health and safety at work;
- the strategic framework also outlined further areas of research that the Commission plans to carry out in cooperation with **EU-OSHA** (digitalisation, psychosocial risks, health and care sectors) through activities on OSH, the platform economy, work-related musculoskeletal disorders, and the highly relevant healthy workplace campaigns;
- **EU-OSHA** aligned its activities with EU action and initiatives and contributed to policy planning through its healthy workplace campaigns (for instance on dangerous substances); in this respect, **EU-OSHA**'s ESENER survey was highly relevant as it provided comparable and otherwise hard to retrieve data on how businesses manage OSH (case study);
- **EU-OSHA**'s tools for OSH management, especially OiRA, have helped address EU policy needs by promoting a culture of prevention, particularly in SMEs.

**CEDEFOP** closely aligned its work with EU upskilling and reskilling policies, in particular the European Skills Agenda, the Council Recommendations on VET, the Osnabrück Declaration, and the digital education action plan. For instance:

- **Cedefop**'s expertise on VET policies and its work on monitoring the implementation of VET across Member States informed relevant EU policy planning<sup>364</sup>;
- **Cedefop**'s skills forecasts were cited in the policy documents of several EU institutions; for example, the European Parliament noted the Agency's contribution to Europass, the European skills index, the Copenhagen Process and the Skills Panorama<sup>365</sup>;
- the agency supported the latest policy developments in the area of adult upskilling and reskilling; its outputs were relevant to both EU- and national-level policymakers (case study);

<sup>362</sup> Eurofound (2018), *Consolidated annual activity report of the Authorising Officer for the year 2018*, p. 4, available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/annual-report/2019/consolidated-annual-activity-report-of-the-authorising-officer-for-the-year-2018>.

<sup>363</sup> Eurofound (2019), *Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2019*, p. 8.

<sup>364</sup> Cedefop (2021), *Minutes of the 99th management board virtual meeting*, available at: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/public-documents/minutes-conclusions>.

<sup>365</sup> European Parliament (2022), *2020 Discharge: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)*, available at: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/content/2020-discharge-european-centre-development-vocational-training-cedefop>.

- Cedefop organised, in cooperation with the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee, a number of policy learning events on upskilling pathways, bringing together governments, social partners and civil society to help draft and implement the Council Recommendation on upskilling pathways for adults.

The ETF closely aligned its work with EU policy priorities. The agency also provided significant contributions to the EU's policies and programmes on external relations.

- The ETF provided analyses of partner countries' labour market developments and socio-economic contexts that were not otherwise available (stakeholders).
- The ETF's research on skills demand anticipation (e.g. the creation of the Skills Lab Network of Experts) helped achieve the EU objective of helping people thrive in the green and digital transitions (Action 2 – European Skills Agenda). It did so by providing valuable insights on how developments in skills needs vary outside the EU (case study).
- The ETF supported DG INTPA, in particular through contributions to the Africa Continental Qualifications Framework and training of EU delegations. This support has increased the visibility and impact of the ETF and has enabled the agency to access additional funding. However, this support has also extended the ETF's geographical scope beyond partner countries and has led to questions as to whether this support leads to the agency's resources being spread too thinly<sup>366</sup>.

While the ETF's work is highly relevant, the last point illustrates that its close relations with several different Commission services led to competing expectations about the geographical scope and focus of its activities. Consequently, there is room to clarify the longer-term vision for the agency and which of its activities should be prioritised.

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<sup>366</sup> IAS (2022), *Final audit report on cooperation and coordination mechanisms between the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the European Commission (EC) services*.

**ANNEX X: LIST OF INDICATORS PER AGENCY**

**Table 1: Eurofound indicators**

	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>KPIs</b>	Budget implementation %	98%	
	Activity-based-budget (ABB) implementation %	-	
	Positions filled %	97% (93% in 2021)	
	Number of staff per category	-	
	Gender balance (%)	-	
	Programme delivery % (outputs delivered)	80%	
	No. of key EU policy documents quoting Eurofound	-	
	Recognition of the scientific quality of Eurofound's research (number of references in peer reviewed publications)	-	
<b>Core activities, outputs &amp; results</b>	Number of completed publications published	-	
	No. of EU policy documents quoting Eurofound	-	
	Number of projects/initiatives (including E-surveys) to explore the impact of COVID-19	-	Available for 2020 only.
	Uptake of Eurofound knowledge in the media	-	Introduced in 2020
	Uptake of and engagement with Eurofound's knowledge through its website and other corporate platforms	-	In 2020, the data breakdown by activity area was introduced. Previously 10 most downloaded publications were reported.
	Contributions to policy development through events/Eurofound's engagement with stakeholders in meetings and events	-	
<b>Outreach communication</b>	Contributions to EU-level events	-	
	Registrations to participate in webinars %	-	Data available since 2020.
	Number of downloads in PDF format	-	
	Number of COVID-19 items published	-	
	Number of HTML page views	-	
<b>User satisfaction</b>	Satisfaction with publications used (very satisfied/satisfied) %	-	
	Stakeholders agreeing that Eurofound publications provide high quality content %	-	
	Stakeholders who recommended a Eurofound publication to a colleague or someone else in the past year %	-	
	Stakeholders agreeing that Eurofound provides reliable data in its outputs %	-	

	Satisfaction with the quality of content, reliability, policy relevance and format of Eurofound's outputs (%)	-	
<b>Other</b>	% budget on continuation of previous WP	9% in 2017 1% in 2018	
	Rate of outturn (payment appropriations) (EUR)	-	
	Total budget (EUR)	-	
	Budget per title (EUR)	-	
	Engagement of staff %	-	
	Number of interinstitutional tenders Eurofound participated in	-	

**Table 2: Cedefop indicators**

	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>KPIs</b>	Budget implementation rate (%)	-	
	Timeliness of recruitment procedures (number of days)	60 days	Days from deadline for applications to finalisation of selection board report to AIPN.
	Establishment plan filled (%)	95%	
	Number of staff per category	See comment	Depends on the category. The numbers are set in the establishment plan.
	% of total staff per category	See comment	Depends on the category as above.
	Gender balance (%)	60% female /40% male	Target was introduced in 2021.
	Resource allocation per activity (#)	-	
	Policy documents to the preparation of which Cedefop has contributed (of EU institutions) (#)	-	
	Policy documents to the preparation of which Cedefop has contributed (of international institutions) (#)	-	
	EU policy documents citing Cedefop's work (#)	-	
	References to Cedefop work in EU-level policy documents (#)	-	
<b>Core activities, outputs &amp; results</b>	Citations of Cedefop in the literature (#)	-	
	Number of publications (#)	-	
	Policy documents of international organisations citing Cedefop's work (#)	-	
	References to Cedefop work in documents issued by international organisations (#)	-	
	Active participation in conferences and events	-	

	Cedefop's contribution to meetings that inform policies and their implementation (#)	-	
<b>Outreach communication</b>	Number of meeting/events organised by Cedefop (#)	-	
	Type of audience (%)	-	
	Number of participants at Cedefop events (#)	-	
	Number of events organised virtually	-	Introduced in 2020.
	Downloads of Cedefop publications (#)	-	
	Downloads of Cedefop briefing notes (#)	-	
	Number of videos (#)	-	Not available for the full evaluation period.
	Number of views on social media (#)	-	Available since 2018.
	Visits (#)	-	
	Unique visitors (#)	-	
	Page views (#)	-	
	Skills Panorama portal users	-	
	Skills Panorama portal sessions	-	
	Skills Panorama traffic increase (%)	-	
	Facebook followers (#)	-	
	Twitter followers (#)	-	
	Facebook followers increase (%)	-	
	Twitter followers increase (%)	-	
LinkedIn followers (#)	-		
Media coverage, take-up of articles and press releases (#)	-		
<b>User satisfaction</b>	Quality and expected impact of events organised (%)	-	
	Stakeholders' assessment of the quality and usefulness of agency's services	-	Introduced in 2019 and available every two years.
<b>Other</b>	Rate of outturn (payment appropriations) (%)	-	
	Rate of implementation of commitment appropriations (budget execution) (%)	98%	The target was 97% in 2017 but increased to 98% since 2018.
	Rate of payments completed within the legal/contractual deadlines (%)	-	
	Total budget (EUR)	-	
	Budget per title (EUR)	-	
	Budget execution per title (%)	-	
	Financial management statistics (EUR)	-	
	Cedefop's consultation with key stakeholders (%)	-	
	Engagement of Cedefop staff members (%)	-	
	Number and type of procurement procedures (# and %)	-	
	Rate of accepted audit recommendations implemented within agreed deadlines	-	

	Environmental indicators	See comment	Indicators were introduced in 2020, the targets were set in 2021.
	Visits to Europass website (#)	-	
	Europass CVs generated online (#)	-	

**Table 3: ETF indicators**

	Indicator	Target	Comments
<b>KPIs</b>	Commitment appropriation implementation (%)	98%	
	Payment appropriations cancellation rate (%)	<2%	
	Rate (%) of outturn	96%	
	Payments Executed out of year's budget (PAY C1+ PAY C8T3) / Budget	-	
	Administrative support and coordination/operational staff ratio (%)	<30%	
	Staff engagement in satisfaction survey (%)	2% increase	
	Average vacancy rate (%)	<5%	
	Activities completion rate (%)	90%	
	Timely achievement of activities of the WP (%)	80%	
	Timely submission of WP (%)	100%	
	Rate of countries successfully progressed within stage or next stage of policy development (%)	70%	Not monitored since 2021.
	Requests for assistance from EU Services and Delegations (#)	-	
	Geographic and thematic coverage of EU Requests for support to projects and programmes design (%)	-	Introduced in 2021.
	Share of ETF budget invested in EU requests (%)	-	Introduced in 2021.
<b>Core activities, outputs &amp; results</b>	Web news items	-	Available for 2017 and 2018.
	Knowledge products finalised and shared externally vs initial plan (%)	-	Introduced in 2021.
	Knowledge products finalised in time vs initial deadline (%)	-	Introduced in 2021.
	ETF knowledge products contributing to Policy Advice (#)	-	Introduced in 2021.
	Share of ETF knowledge products contributing to Policy Advice (%)	-	Introduced in 2021.
	Uptake of the developed ETF knowledge products	-	Introduced in 2021.

	Mechanisms for national and sub-national coordination in VET introduced in partner countries	85% of targeted countries	Available until 2020.
	Participation in QA policy learning forum	50% of partner countries:2017 14 partner countries: 2018 16 partner countries: 2019 and 2020	Target is not set since 2021.
	Requested to provide support in eligible partner countries	50%	Available until 2020.
<b>Outreach communication</b>	Invitations/contributions from third parties for ETF participation in external events and knowledge products (articles, blogs, etc.) (#)	-	
	Number of participants in international and regional events	-	Available for 2017 and 2018.
	Number of downloads of publications (#)	-	Available for 2017 and 2018.
	Number of unique visitors to the website	-	Available for 2017 and 2018.
	Facebook (# of total followers)	-	
	Twitter (# of total followers)	-	
	LinkedIn (# of total followers)	-	
	YouTube views (#)	-	Introduced in 2021.
	Instagram (# of total followers)	-	Introduced in 2018.
	OpenSpace followers (#)	-	Introduced in 2021.
	Weighted sum of No. of people reached through digital media, downloads, and events	-	Available until 2020.
	Growth in number of total subscribers to Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter (%)	-	Introduced in 2021.
	Post link clicks on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter (% increase from previous period)	-	Introduced in 2021.
	Rate of positive feedback from EC project request implemented in year (%)	80%	Available until 2020.
<b>Other</b>	Audit recommendation implementation (%)	90%	
	Total budget (EUR)	-	
	Budget per title (EUR)	-	
	Commitments (#)	-	
	Timely payments (%)	90%	In 2017 the target was lower at 80%.
	Average time to assess and pay mission expenses reimbursement (# of days)	15 days	Target set in 2021.
	Budget transfers (#)	<10	Target set in 2021.
	Invoices (#)	-	
	Payments (#)	-	
	Staff (% of budget)	-	
	Infrastructure (% of budget)	-	

Operational Activities (% of budget)	-	
Budget utilisation by activity area	See comment	The target set for each activity area and is reported in Annex 3 of the evaluation report (p. 91-92).
Engagement rate of active members in ETF networks (%)	-	Introduced in 2021.
Number and typology of stakeholders engaged in ETF activities (# of stakeholders)	-	Introduced in 2021.
Number and typology of stakeholders engaged in ETF activities (% primary stakeholders)	-	Introduced in 2021.
% of key country stakeholders participated in ETF activities / No of stakeholders (%)	90%	Available until 2020.
Level of stakeholders' engagement in Policy Advice (%)	-	Introduced in 2021.
People engaged with Open Space (# of members)	-	Introduced in 2021.
Participants in green skills award (# countries covered in applications)	-	Introduced in 2021.
Number of people voting in green skills award	-	Introduced in 2021.
Annual governing board decisions (#)	-	Introduced in 2018.
Approved vs Proposed GB decisions (%)	100%	Introduced in 2018, target set in 2021.
Completion rate of Level 1 monitoring by partner country (%)	-	Introduced in 2021.
Calls for tender (#)	-	Introduced in 2018.
Average time consumed by procurement procedures -launch to award (# of days)	Open tenders: <5 months Negotiated procedures: <2 months	Introduced in 2018, target set in 2021.
Contracts prepared (#)	-	Introduced in 2018.
Contract amendments (#)	-	Introduced in 2018.
L&D training sessions (#)	-	
Recruitment procedures launched (#)	-	Introduced in 2018.
Interinstitutional tenders (#)	-	Introduced in 2021.
Share of partnership agreements operationalised through annual action plans and implemented through joint activities, events (%)	-	Introduced in 2021.
Environmental indicators	-	Introduced in 2021.

**Table 4: EU-OSHA indicators**

	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>KPIs</b>	Budget implementation (%)	95%	Reduced to 90% since 2020.
	Budget per title (%)	-	
	Share of outputs delivered in the planning year vs planned outputs, calculated on the basis of completion status/Annually (%)	90%	
	Work Programme implementation (output status)	-	Qualitative updates are available.
<b>Core activities, outputs &amp; results</b>	Number of publications (reports, evaluations, studies, etc.)	-	
	Covid-19: Resources for the workplace (absolute number)	-	Available for 2021.
	Covid-19 Related Actions	-	Available for 2021.
	Uptake of electronic information for Strategic objectives 1, 2, 4 (%)	5% increase per year	
<b>Outreach communication</b>	Number of events organised by the Agency (under the activity 'Awareness raising actions' and under 'FAST') (absolute value)	200-250	Introduced in 2019, the target was reduced to 80 in 2021.
	Number of stakeholders reached through events (absolute value) / Reach of users through networking	10 000	Available for 2017 and 2018.
	Outreach capacity of intermediaries through networking - Events count across all activities across all priority areas where work of the Agency has been actively presented (policy and workplace practice oriented), either organised by the Agency or organised by others/Annually (absolute value)	350	Introduced in 2019.
	Uptake of publications etc. (downloads) (%)	5% increase per year	Available for 2017 and 2018.
	Visitors to EU-OSHA's websites (absolute value) / Reach of online users	10% increase per year	Available for 2017 and 2018.
	Reach via websites (absolute value)	2 500 000	Introduced in 2019.
	Social media statistics	-	Available for 2017.
<b>User satisfaction</b>	Stakeholders' assessment of the quality and usefulness of agency's services: EU Added Value (%)	80%	Introduced in 2019.
	Stakeholders' assessment of the quality and usefulness of agency's services: Relevance to needs (%)	80%	Introduced in 2019.
	Stakeholders' assessment of the quality and usefulness of agency's services: Usefulness (%)	80%	Introduced in 2019.
	Stakeholders' assessment of the quality and usefulness of agency's services: Impact on workplace practice (%)	80% (except for 2020 when it was 70%)	Introduced in 2019.
	Stakeholders' assessment of the quality and usefulness of agency's services: Impact on policy (%)	80% (except for 2020 when it was 70%)	Introduced in 2019.

	Relevance, usefulness, EU Added Value, Impact breakdown per activity (data available for each activity implemented) (%)	-	
	Quality of EU-OSHA's work (%)	80%	Available for 2017 and 2018.
<b>Other</b>	Budgetary and Financial Management (€) - Revenue breakdown, Expenditure breakdown, Specific projects breakdown	-	
	Total budget (EUR)	-	
	Activity based costing 2016 by activity	-	
	Fulfilment of payment appropriations (%)	-	
	Implementation of commitment appropriations (%)	95%	
	Staff breakdown by contract type, function group and gender balance	-	
	Distribution by gender of TAs posts in grades AD10 to AD14	-	
	Staff distribution by nationality	-	
	Gender balance at the senior management level (absolute value)	-	
	Gender balance on the management board (absolute value)	-	
	OSHmail newsletter subscribers (absolute value)	5% increase	Available for 2017 and 2018.

## ANNEX XI: COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AGENCIES' KEY ACTIVITIES

The table below summarises the results of the activity-level cost-effectiveness analysis in Annex 6 of the supporting study. Based on this analysis, a score is assigned to each of the key activities with respect to: a) reducing costs; and b) improving effectiveness. The following scoring framework is used:

- Costs: 3 = no scope to reduce costs; 2 = some limited scope to reduce costs; 1 = significant scope to reduce costs
- Effectiveness: 3 = no scope to improve effectiveness; 2 = some limited scope to improve effectiveness; 1 = significant scope to improve effectiveness

The scores for cost and effectiveness are then summed for each individual activity to give an overall cost-effectiveness score (maximum 6 = no scope to reduce costs or improve effectiveness, minimum 2 = significant scope to reduce costs and improve effectiveness). The table lists the agencies' key activities in descending order, from the highest to the lowest score, and includes a summary of the findings that contributed to this score. The assessment is based on expenditure data, external evaluations and stakeholder feedback via surveys and interviews.

**Table 1 - Cost-effectiveness of the Agencies's key activities**

Agency and activity heading	Score (out of 6)	Summary
Eurofound: Employment and labour markets	6	Effectiveness = 3, cost = 3 Stakeholders have stated that the ' <i>living and working in the EU monitor</i> ' is one of Eurofound's main achievements and that the availability of databases (such as the <i>European Jobs Monitor</i> ) has allowed stakeholders to better understand recent labour market and employment trends. Providing such information means that stakeholders are better equipped to improve labour market functioning in their respective countries. Interviewees also noted costs had been reduced over the evaluation period by reducing the amount of work that Eurofound contracts out under this activity heading. This has helped reduce the amount of money spent on completing projects. There is no scope to reduce costs without compromising quality.
Eurofound: Quality of life/living conditions	6	Effectiveness = 3, cost = 3 Stakeholder feedback shows that stakeholders have been very impressed with Eurofound's performance on 'quality of life'. For example, the 2020 Eurofound user survey reported 64% of respondents found this activity to be relevant to their work. There is no scope to reduce costs without compromising quality.
Cedefop: VET systems and institutions	6	Effectiveness = 3, cost = 3 Cedefop's monitoring reports that use data from VET policy monitoring are highly rated by stakeholders: 72% of stakeholders rated them as being of very or rather high quality. These outputs are also highly rated by staff and viewed as cost-effective. In a difficult economic climate of rising costs and inflation, ReferNet and its related outputs can be viewed as maintaining a good level of cost-effectiveness

		while operating within a fixed budget. No opportunities have been identified for cutting costs that would not result in compromising quality.
Cedefop: Skills and labour market	6	Effectiveness = 3, cost = 3  Under this activity heading, Cedefop developed a tool for online vacancy analysis (Skills-OVATE) over the evaluation period. An <i>ex-post</i> evaluation of Skills-OVATE revealed that stakeholders greatly appreciate quick access to the data, the ability to compare countries, and the effective visualisations. There is no scope to reduce costs without compromising quality.
ETF: Employment, skills and employability (including skills and migration)	6	Effectiveness = 3, cost = 3  Before launching the Skills Lab Network of Experts in 2021, preparatory work was carried out by the ETF to understand what the added value of such a network would be. This included a survey, expert consultations and a feasibility analysis that confirmed that a thoughtfully structured ETF network of labour market experts could fill existing information gaps. There is no scope to reduce costs without compromising quality.
ETF: Qualifications and qualification systems	6	Effectiveness = 3, cost = 3  Stakeholder feedback on the Torino Process (TRP) demonstrates a high regard for the ETF's monitoring role through this initiative. Interviewees highlighted that TRP provides valuable insights, contributes to policy dialogue, and informs the agency on partner country needs. The process was also praised by partner country governments, EU institutions and a partner country civil society organisation. From 2019 to 2021, the ETF set targets in its single programming documents for 50% of partner countries to use the TRP for national and/or EU policy dialogue; by 2019, 78% of partner countries were using the TRP for policy dialogue. There is no scope to reduce costs without compromising quality.
EU-OSHA: Anticipating change	6	Effectiveness = 3, cost = 3  The foresight activity under this heading was used to inform national OSH strategies and national policy debates. The evaluation of the EU-OSHA's Large scale Foresight Activity dedicated to digitalisation and OSH concluded that this activity was managed and implemented in a cost-effective way. The budget was used to produce a large number of outputs, including studies, scenario-building and dissemination workshops, and event materials. Additionally, EU-OSHA actively looked for ways to increase cost-effectiveness by identifying potential synergies, such as those with the Joint Research Centre that allowed the agencies to cooperate on foresight topics and share production costs. This, combined with the fact that actual expenditure on this activity heading was lower than planned over the evaluation period, indicates that the budget allocated to 'Anticipating change' at the planning stage could be reduced. However, no scope has been identified to reduce expenditure below the agency's current expenditure level without reducing quality.
Eurofound: Reacting to ad-hoc information requests	6	Effectiveness = 3, cost = 3  The fact that actual expenditure on this activity heading was lower than planned over the evaluation period indicates that the budget allocated at the planning stage could be reduced – however, no scope has been identified to reduce expenditure below the agency's actual expenditure level without reducing quality.

Eurofound: Social dialogue and industrial relations	5	Effectiveness = 2, cost = 3  No scope to reduce costs without compromising quality has been identified, and stakeholder feedback on this activity is positive. However, there is scope for Eurofound to improve its work in the area of industrial relations by having more regular contact with social partners at EU and national levels.
EU-OSHA: Awareness raising and communication	5	Effectiveness = 2, cost = 3  The agency has been creating more synergies between its awareness-raising activities and other activities to create cost efficiencies. Interviews with EU-OSHA's focal points (FOPs) indicate that national stakeholders have been increasingly expressing their interest in participating in the healthy workplaces campaigns. This suggests that this activity is meeting its objective of making multiple beneficiaries and intermediaries aware of workplace risks and how to prevent them. However, translation challenges were reported as part of the evaluation of the healthy workplaces campaign (2018-2019). While it was acknowledged that EU-OSHA did make an effort to translate resources into other languages, it was noted that more and better-quality translations are required.
EU-OSHA: Facts and figures	5	Effectiveness = 2, cost = 3  EU-OSHA's FOPs found ESENER to be a useful tool to rethink and redesign their OSH policies and encourage businesses and workers to take action in response to specific risks. EU-OSHA's bi-annual stakeholder surveys support this view: most respondents are satisfied with ESENER (95% in 2022). External evaluations found that OSH overview activities were of good value with the available resources. The 2020 <i>ex-post</i> evaluation stated that objectives were achieved and resulted in a greater understanding among stakeholders. However, the same evaluation noted that more resources would have been beneficial, especially on dissemination activities and data quality checks. Dissemination and communication were also noted as limiting the effective use of good practices on work on micro and small enterprises.
EU-OSHA: Tools for OSH management	5	Effectiveness = 2, cost = 3  The 2020 mid-term evaluation of the Online Interactive Risk Assessment (OiRA) <sup>[1]</sup> (a key tool for OSH management) found that OiRA was highly efficient in terms of achieving its outputs and outcomes. It had saved costs at national level by providing readily available online risk assessment tools, thereby eliminating the need to develop such tools from scratch. EU-OSHA stakeholders' assessments confirm the growing satisfaction and popularity of OiRA, with satisfaction rates reaching 93% in 2022. However, the mid-term evaluation noted that the uptake of tools could be improved by promoting them more.
EU-OSHA: Networking knowledge	5	Effectiveness = 2, cost = 3  Respondents to the stakeholder survey indicated that the main achievements of the agency between 2017 and 2022 include underpinning the EU strategic framework on health and safety at work and carrying out good quality work to update information on health and safety topics. The activity also exceeded its set targets from 2019 to 2022 in terms of usefulness, relevance, EU-added value and impact, based on the assessment of stakeholders. However, compared to other activities of the agency, this activity had a low share of planned outputs delivered on time between 2017 and 2022 (79%). There is no scope to reduce costs without compromising quality.

Eurofound: Corporate communication and infrastructure	4	<p>Effectiveness = 2, cost = 2</p> <p>While staff generally consider activities under this heading to be cost-effective, difficulties in finding the right balance of in-person, hybrid or online events have been identified. Fully understanding which model works best for different types of meetings and events would improve cost-effectiveness by promoting networking and engagement while reducing the overall cost of meetings and events. Changes could also be made to make it clearer to stakeholders which output is most relevant to them (e.g. publishing just one monitoring report on a topic rather than several reports).</p>
Eurofound: Survey management and development	4	<p>Effectiveness = 2, cost = 2</p> <p>Surveys are a large and crucial investment for Eurofound; the data collected are highly valued by stakeholders. However, there is the potential for Eurofound to reduce costs by involving other agencies in the development of the surveys. This could make the surveys more relevant to these agencies and their stakeholders and open up the possibility to share production and design costs with these other agencies. Similarly, work to find the most cost-effective mix of face-to-face interviews, CATI and online methods is needed to ensure data quality is not reduced as a result of moving away from face-to-face interviewing.</p>
Cedefop: Transversal activities	4	<p>Effectiveness = 2, cost = 2</p> <p>Challenges to find the right balance of in-person, hybrid or online events have been identified. Fully understanding which model works best for different types of meetings and events would improve cost-effectiveness by promoting networking and engagement while also potentially reducing the total cost of meetings and events.</p>
ETF: VET provision and quality	4	<p>Effectiveness = 1, cost = 3</p> <p>A key area of the agencies' work that needs to be improved is making support for capacity building of teachers and trainers relevant and improving work-based learning – 53% of EU stakeholders found these outputs to be only slightly relevant. This, coupled with the fact that the agency has regularly spent more on this headline activity than planned over the evaluation period, indicates that there is room to improve the cost-effectiveness of this activity by making its outputs more relevant to stakeholders.</p>
EU-OSHA: Strategic and operational activities/ networking	4	<p>Effectiveness = 2, cost = 2</p> <p>Linked to the move to online/hybrid meetings and associated translation/ language barriers and reduced networking opportunities, engagement in meetings fell over the evaluation period. However, online/hybrid meetings have contributed to cost savings (e.g. a reduction in travelling costs and time) and promoted more exchanges with experts located outside the EU. Fully understanding which model works best for different types of meetings and events and what translation services are optimal would improve cost-effectiveness by promoting networking and engagement while potentially reducing the total cost of meetings and events.</p>

## ANNEX XII: RESULTS ACHIEVEMENT

The expected results (result indicators or RI) for each agency are presented below and correspond to the results of the individual intervention logic (see Annex VI).

**Table 1 – Expected results, as presented in the Agencies’ intervention logics**

	Eurofound	Cedefop	ETF	EU-OSHA
1	Key stakeholders are provided with information that supports the improvement of working conditions and the promotion of sustainability of work over the life course	Policymakers and stakeholders are provided with high-quality relevant evidence on VET, skills and qualifications produced by Cedefop in strategic areas of operation	Partner countries receive relevant and timely support to improve the governance of their human capital development systems	Policymakers and researchers are provided with good quality data, enabling them to take timely and effective action on new and emerging risks
2	Management and labour are provided with information that supports social dialogue on industrial relations	EU-level and national actors benefit from exchanges supported by Cedefop in terms of policy learning	Partner countries receive relevant and timely support on labour market policies and skills anticipation	Policymakers and researchers better understand current OSH risks and their health effects thanks to information provided by EU-OSHA
3	Key stakeholders are better equipped to support the improvement of labour-market functioning and inclusiveness		Partner countries receive relevant and timely support on improving lifelong learning provision	More good quality tools are available to SMEs
4	Key stakeholders have increased understanding of ways in which to improve the quality of life, public services and society		Partner countries receive relevant and timely support to modernise national qualification frameworks and systems	Multiple beneficiaries and intermediaries are aware of workplace risks and how to prevent them due to EU-OSHA campaigns
5	Key stakeholders are provided with tools and information to help		Partner countries receive relevant and timely information on the performance of	The OSH community benefits from an increased body of

	them anticipate and manage the impact of change		lifelong learning polices and systems	high-quality knowledge
6	Key stakeholders are provided with information to help them improve social cohesion and promote convergence in the EU on better living and working conditions		Partner countries receive relevant and timely support to enable them to offer more opportunities for entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills development	EU-OSHA stakeholders and networks take part in EU-OSHA activities and their needs are met by these activities
7			EU external relations policymakers receive relevant advice	

Source: Supporting study, based on Agencies' planning and reporting documents

Before reviewing the results indicators specific to each agency, Table 2 provides a snapshot comparison of the Agencies' outputs and key thematic areas using two criteria: frequency of use and output quality. Table 2 also links each output/area with the agency result to which it contributed (see right column).

**Table 2 - Most used and highest quality outputs/themes per agency**

	Top ranked outputs / themes	Results indicator
Eurofound	Living, working and COVID-19	RI1, RI3, RI4
	The three regularly repeated pan-European surveys: European working conditions survey, European quality of life survey, European company survey	Cross-cutting, underpins research across all the results indicators
	Minimum wages	RI2
Cedefop	Skills anticipation and matching	RI1
	Monitoring and analysing VET policy developments	RI1
	Promoting access to and attractiveness of VET	RI1
ETF	Skills demand anticipation	RI2
	Monitoring and diagnostics reports (Torino process reports, rapid education diagnostics reports)	RI5, RI6
	Innovative teaching and learning (e.g. New Learning network)	RI3
	Vocational excellence provision (e.g. the ETF Network for Excellence)	

		RI3
EU-OSHA367	OiRA Healthy workplaces campaigns	RI3 RI4

Source: Supporting study

**(i) EUROFOUND**

Eurofound’s achievement of results indicators 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in Table 1 above can be inferred from the uptake of Eurofound expertise in key European-level policy documents (Table 2 of Annex VIII) and the recognition of the scientific quality of Eurofound’s research (measured by way of articles mentioning Eurofound in academic journals (Table 3, Annex VIII)). Both indicators show improvements in Eurofound’s performance during the evaluation period. While the 2016 baseline for the number of key EU documents referencing Eurofound was 24.8% (out of the total number of references to Eurofound in registered European-level policy documents), it remained fairly stable at around 30% between 2017 and 2020. This increased to a 74% uptake of Eurofound’s expertise in key European-level policy documents in 2021 and 82% in 2022 (163 key documents out of 198 in total). Similarly, the number of articles mentioning Eurofound in academic journals increased year on year between 2017 and 2021 (and compared to the 2016 baseline). Both point to the fact that Eurofound has indeed had an effect through its work.

**Results indicator 1: Key stakeholders are provided with information that supports the improvement of working conditions and the promotion of sustainability of work over the life course**

Eurofound has provided evidence for a wide range of existing and planned legal instruments. This includes input on working time, equal treatment and anti-discrimination. Research on the impact of COVID-19 on working conditions has fed into renewed discussions on telework, the right to disconnect<sup>368</sup>, the design of workplaces and the outcome on performance and well-being<sup>369</sup>. Feedback from the Eurofound stakeholder survey also highlighted the knowledge it provided on working and living conditions as one of its main achievements (e.g. achievements highlighted by stakeholders in the open questions include: ‘the knowledge-based approach to work and labour’, ‘timely and objective knowledge information about the world of work in Europe’)<sup>370</sup>. Moreover, by providing knowledge about policy interventions that have been successful, Eurofound has supported mutual learning and peer-review processes among Member States. For example, knowledge shared on the institutional frameworks and policies that support making work more sustainable inform the European Semester process and the

<sup>368</sup> Eurofound (2021), Right to disconnect: Exploring company practices, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

<sup>369</sup> Eurofound and Cedefop (2020), European Company Survey 2019: Workplace practices unlocking employee potential, European Company Survey 2019 series, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

<sup>370</sup> Evaluation stakeholder survey, conducted in 2023 (N=65).

drafting of country-specific recommendations<sup>371</sup>. This direct impact on sustainable work processes in Member States exemplifies the effectiveness of information provided on this thematic area by Eurofound given its use in policymaking.

### **Results indicator 2: Management and labour are provided with information that supports social dialogue on industrial relations**

89% of respondents to the Eurofound stakeholder survey (N=65) viewed Eurofound's work in supporting social dialogue as 'very good' or 'rather good'. This shows that Eurofound's work in this field is highly rated but at a lower level than some other areas. These areas include: (i) promoting the involvement of key stakeholders in EU policy processes, showing flexibility and responsiveness to changing needs, contributing to the debate on the digital transition (all three areas rated by 96% of stakeholders as very good or rather good); (ii) raising awareness about European policy priorities, introducing new concepts of ideas in public policy (both rated as very good or rather good by 92%); and (iii) contributing to the debate on the green transition and policy development on ageing society (90%). Eurofound's work on minimum wages stands out with such outputs. As identified in Eurofound Case Study 3, the agency's work on minimum wages contributed to the 2022 Directive on adequate minimum wages in the EU (further information is included in the impact section)<sup>372</sup>.

One of the key outputs through which Eurofound has achieved this result are the representativeness studies it produces on an annual basis. These reports are of key importance for EU lawmaking and social dialogue more generally. Article 155 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides the possibility to put social partner agreements into practice in EU law. However, this can only be done if the social partners who negotiated the agreement are considered as representative. This assessment is based on the representativeness studies. Moreover, under Article 154, the Treaty obliges the Commission to consult social partners in certain instances. The representativeness studies are used to determine which social partners should be consulted. Finally, representativeness is an eligibility criterion for setting up a European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee or participating in one.

Moreover, the validation workshop for this study highlighted that the representativeness studies are crucial for ensuring proper social dialogue at EU level to facilitate social dialogue at national level (thus having an indirect national impact). Eurofound has developed a reliable methodology for conducting representativeness studies, which ensures transparency and data validity. Eurofound's extensive experience and expertise in this regard is an important factor in the credibility of these studies. The representativeness studies are also useful to social partners, to whom they provide visibility and ensure that social dialogue is on the agenda of national governments.

### **Results indicator 3: Key stakeholders are better equipped to support the improvement of labour-market functioning and inclusiveness**

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<sup>371</sup> Eurofound (2020), Programming document 2021–2024: Towards recovery and resilience, p. 12.

<sup>372</sup> Directive (EU) 2022/2041 [on adequate minimum wages in the European Union](#).

Eurofound's analysis of structural labour market change and shifts in supply and demand were intended to enable stakeholders to go beyond standard statistical data to better understand recent trends and developments and identify related opportunities and challenges. Databases such as the European Jobs Monitor, which tracks structural change in European labour markets, the European Restructuring Monitor (ERM) and EU PolicyWatch let stakeholders to do just that. Reports such as 'COVID-19: Implications for employment and working life' provided an overview of policy approaches adopted to mitigate the impact of the crisis on businesses, workers and citizens and examined the development, content and impact of support schemes<sup>373</sup>. The tools above help stakeholders to be more effectively equipped to understand how the labour market works in their respective countries. Eurofound also uses these tools to create research outputs.

**Results indicator 4: Key stakeholders have increased understanding of ways in which to improve the quality of life, public services and society**

The 'Living, working and COVID-19' e-survey has been one of the key outputs related to this indicator. Five rounds of this unique survey were conducted between 9 April 2020 and 2 May 2022. The fifth round included collaboration with the ETF, Albania, Georgia, Jordan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, North Macedonia, Tunisia and Palestine. The timeliness and relevance of this research made this a key output of Eurofound and was crucial to understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in EU society and further afield; for example, Eurofound's work showed that women and young people were disproportionately affected by the pandemic<sup>374</sup>. Eurofound more than doubled its media impact, as measured by KPIs, thanks to the dissemination of this research.

**Results indicator 5: Key stakeholders are provided with tools and information to help them anticipate and manage the impact of change, including just transitions** that promote employment, good working conditions, social protection and workers' rights.

Respondents to the stakeholder survey rated Eurofound highest of the four Agencies in these three categories: contribution to the debates on ageing societies, the green transition and the digital transition. Eurofound's contribution was rated as very good in 38% of cases relating to ageing society, 42% concerning the green transition, and 49% concerning the digital transition (N=65).

**Results indicator 6: Key stakeholders are provided with information to help them improve social cohesion and promote convergence in the EU on better living and working standards**

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<sup>373</sup> Eurofound (2021), COVID-19: Implications for employment and working life, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

<sup>374</sup> Case Study 1: Eurofound's contribution to discussions and policy decisions related to the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

To address this objective, Eurofound has worked on monitoring convergence, including a 'convergeEU' tool in 2018. The tool analyses upward convergence for the full set of indicators of the Social Scoreboard<sup>375</sup> accompanying the European Pillar of Social Rights, as well as for a selected set of Eurofound indicators drawn from the European quality of life survey (EQLS) and the European working conditions survey (EWCS)<sup>376</sup>. The 2022 external evaluation of the new cross-cutting activities for 2017-2020 highlighted the success of monitoring convergence activity, which produced 20 outputs and adapted to policy needs as previously mentioned. This was a very new topic in 2017<sup>377</sup> and, given that the concept of convergence was only emerging, there were some issues with language being too specific and thus only accessible to specialised audiences. This made it difficult to align this activity with Eurofound's other publications and the policy debate<sup>378</sup>. Overall, however, the activity was effective in contributing to timely and policy-relevant knowledge.

**(ii) Cedefop**

**Results indicator 1: Policymakers and stakeholders are provided with high-quality relevant evidence on VET, skills and qualifications produced by Cedefop in strategic areas of operation.**

The number of downloads of Cedefop's outputs indicates this result was achieved. Downloads generally increased throughout the evaluation period (313 850 in 2017 compared to 444 000 in 2022, with a peak of 465 000 in 2020)<sup>379</sup>. A full table comparing downloads for each agency between 2016 and 2022 can be found in Table . This trend can be explained partially by the continuing popularity of publications published in previous years (i.e. older publications are still being referenced and downloaded as reflected in Cedefop's performance measurement system data) and the relevance of the evidence Cedefop produces.

According to the user satisfaction survey in 2019 (N=453) and 2022 (N=486), 99% of respondents found information provided by Cedefop to be reliable, and 95% of respondents in 2019 (N=463) and 96% in 2022 (N=507) felt Cedefop's activities met their needs<sup>380</sup>. The level of user satisfaction has significantly increased compared to results from the stakeholder survey in the previous evaluation (2011-2016), where 70-75% (N=213) of respondents felt their needs were met by the agency's outputs<sup>381</sup>.

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<sup>375</sup> See: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/indicators/social-scoreboard-indicators>.

<sup>376</sup> See: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/convergence-hub/convergence-methodology>.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid, executive summary, p. i.

<sup>378</sup> ICF (2022), Evaluation of two new crosscutting activities delivered as part of the 2017-2020 programme. The digital age: opportunities and challenges for work and Employment and Monitoring convergence in the European Union, executive summary, p. ii.

<sup>379</sup> Cedefop Annual Reports 2017-2022.

<sup>380</sup> PPMI (2020) Cedefop user satisfaction survey 2019; PPMI (2022) Cedefop user satisfaction survey 2022.

<sup>381</sup> PPMI, Ecorys (2018) Evaluation of the EU Agencies under the remit of DG Employment: EUROFOUND, CEDEFOP, ETF and EU-OSHA.

Of the four strategic areas of operation (shaping VET, informing VET, valuing VET and communication and dissemination), shaping VET is the area with both the highest resource allocation (32% to 33% of the total budget throughout the evaluation period) and most downloads (with a peak of 94 000 downloads in 2020)<sup>382</sup>. High percentages of both staff (89%, N=45)<sup>383</sup> and stakeholders (79%, N=174) rated Cedefop's performance in introducing new concepts or ideas in public policy as either 'very good' or 'rather good'. 48% of stakeholders responded with 'very good' – the highest percentage across all the agency's performance areas and the highest of the four Agencies in this category. This is an important indicator of Cedefop's ability to provide its stakeholders with highly relevant evidence based on empirical data, research evidence and analytical knowledge. Moreover, Figure 1 shows large percentages of stakeholders rating Cedefop's performance highly in providing evidence and policy analysis.

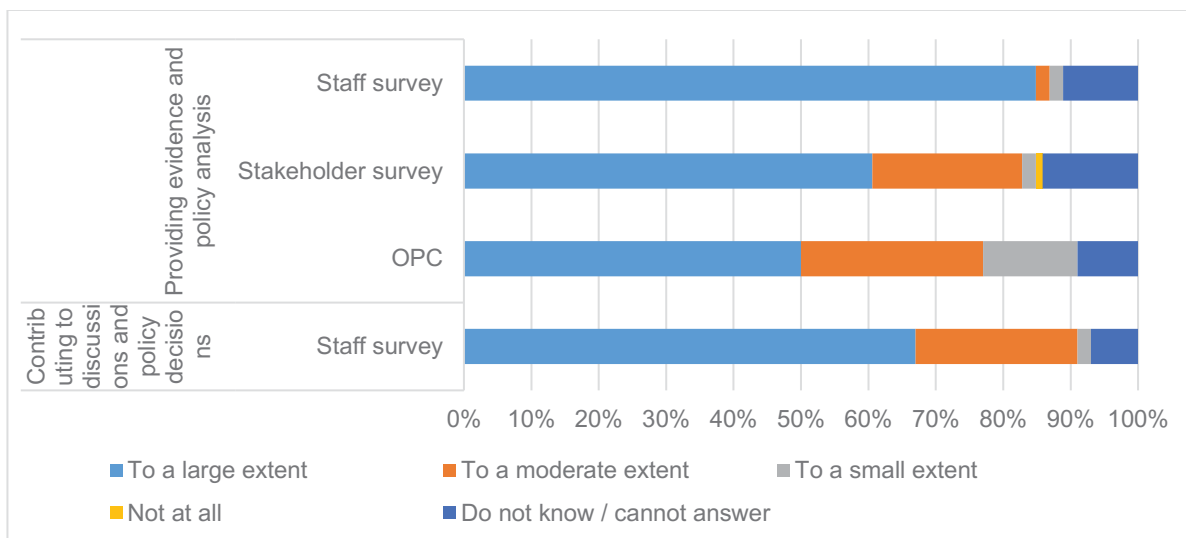
Cedefop's work on monitoring and analysing VET policy developments, skills anticipation and matching and promoting access to and attractiveness of VET were among the most referenced and downloaded areas throughout the evaluation period. Cedefop's work on monitoring and analysing VET policy developments contributed directly to shaping the common priorities in the Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration. Cedefop's output on skills anticipation and matching was also among the most widely used compared to other thematic areas. The skills forecast tool was referred to at the Commission-OECD roundtable and in the EU migration network. The tool's added value was explored beyond the thematic scope of Cedefop and DG EMPL when it was used to test different scenarios in the work of DG GROW, DG ENER and DG ENV. Compared with the two other strategic areas of Cedefop's work, the results of valuing VET (and skills) seem to have been used less by stakeholders overall. However, certain themes in this area (promoting access and attractiveness of VET) were also among the most cited (especially by international organisations) and downloaded (see above and state of play). With an increasing share of the budget allocated to this area, the references and downloads were on an upward trend.

**Figure 1: Perceptions on the achievement of Cedefop's objectives: Contributing to policy decisions and providing analysis with evidence, % of respondents**

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<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

<sup>383</sup> Cedefop staff survey, N=45.



Source: Cedefop staff survey (N=45), stakeholder survey (N=174), and public consultation (N=44), question: In your view, to what extent, if at all, was Cedefop successful in achieving the following objectives in 2017-2022?. The results of the assessment of contributions to discussions and policy decisions are only available from the staff survey.

## Results indicator 2: EU-level and national actors benefit from exchanges supported by Cedefop in terms of policy learning.

Looking at the second results indicator, EU and national actors have indeed benefited from policy learning exchanges supported by Cedefop. Despite the overall number of meetings/events organised by Cedefop falling throughout the evaluation period, the number of participants in these events has increased year on year since 2017 (1 159 in 2017 compared to 1 961 in 2021)<sup>384</sup>. This has led to a rating of 98% for ‘quality and expected impact of events organised by Cedefop’ in 2021, the highest of the evaluation period. The positive trend in stakeholder participation from 2017 to 2021 is rather a recovery from a gradual decline in the previous evaluation period (from above 2 500 participants between 2011 and 2013 to 1 795 by the end of evaluation period in 2016 and consequently 1 159 in 2017)<sup>385</sup>. According to this evaluation’s stakeholder survey, 68% (N=174) of respondents consider the quality of Cedefop’s events to be high or rather high. This shows that Cedefop’s written contributions are valued more than in-person activities (81% and 87% valued national and EU-level reports). A significant proportion of stakeholders (28%) indicated they did not have enough information to evaluate the events.

### (iii) ETF

## Results indicator 1: Partner countries receive relevant and timely support to improve governance of their human capital development systems

<sup>384</sup> Cedefop Consolidated Annual Activity Reports 2016-2021.

<sup>385</sup> Cedefop Consolidated Annual Activity Reports 2012-2017.

The ETF has partially achieved this result. The agency has scored highly in the Policy Delphi consultation on the activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of partner country stakeholders and policymakers: 80% of respondents reported that the ETF contributed to this objective to a large or some extent (the highest rated activity in the consultation). This finding was also confirmed by some stakeholders consulted during the evaluation who valued the ETF's expertise in governance. An example of the achievements in this field is ETF's work on Moldova, which resulted in sectoral committees being established to address labour market needs<sup>386</sup>.

However, as a non-governmental organisation with limited resources, the ETF can only support policymaking in partner countries to a limited extent. Assessing a result in this area is hindered by the lack of indicators to measure progress against objectives. The ETF set a quantitative target of introducing coordination mechanisms, legislation and multilevel governance methodologies in 85% of targeted countries. However, progress on the indicator was not measured quantitatively. This makes it difficult to assess to what extent this target was achieved. Qualitative information indicates that in 2017 progress in system-level coordination was achieved in Egypt, Kosovo, Serbia and Ukraine. However, information on the targeted is not available. Between 2017 and 2020, when the data for this indicator is available, support was also provided to Georgia, Kazakhstan and Tunisia, in addition to the countries mentioned above. However, it is not clear to what extent it contributed to improving the governance of human capital development systems in those countries.

## **Results indicator 2: Partner countries receive relevant and timely support on active labour market policies and skills anticipation**

The focus of activities in this area of work related to the development of ALMPs, skills anticipation and transition to work. The evaluation found that the ETF's work on skills anticipation was particularly effective. The ETF has designed new and upgraded existing methodological tools to analyse skills needs, leading to better intelligence on the topic. Previously, tools used in the EU were adapted for ETF partner countries. However, as a result of the ETF's work, regional knowledge is now captured through expert networks, such as the Skills Lab and conducting in-depth country-specific reports. Some respondents to the stakeholder survey mentioned the ETF's work on skills anticipation as one of its main achievements between 2017 and 2022, particularly in countries and situations where data are scarce (see case study on Skills Labs for further details). The other notable examples of outputs that contributed to achieving this objective included the ETF's work on the Youth Guarantee, with SEET countries committing to implement the EU Youth Guarantee and Future of Work methodology. This generated interest and uptake in partner countries (including Tunisia, Albania and Armenia), and the initiatives were adapted to Latin American countries through cooperation with UNDP<sup>387</sup>.

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<sup>386</sup> ETF website (2024), [Moldova](#).

<sup>387</sup> ETF (2023), Consolidated Annual Activity Report: 2022.

The ETF did not report quantitatively on: (i) the extent to which 2017-2020 targets to develop and implement mechanisms to facilitate transitions to work in 50% of partner countries were met; or (ii) whether labour market and skills intelligence informed VET and skills development policies in 50% of partner countries<sup>388</sup>. However, the ETF's targets often aimed to influence complex policy reforms in the partner countries. Such policy reforms are affected by a range of factors outside the ETF's control and take a long time to implement. The willingness of the partner country to follow the ETF's advice and accept support also plays a role in this. It is a continuing challenge for the ETF, which was already identified in the previous evaluation.

### **Result indicator 3: Partner countries receive relevant and timely support on improving lifelong learning provision**

Overall, the ETF achieved this specific objective, with evidence from quantitative indicators, qualitative information and stakeholder feedback pointing to this conclusion. One of the main contributions of the ETF in this area was the creation of networks to promote excellence and increase collaboration. This included the Creating New Learning network and the ETF Network for Excellence, which by 2021 had 1 300 members and 258 members respectively<sup>389</sup>. The ETF's networks were highly valued by most of their users and facilitated more collaboration both within and across partner countries. In the Policy Delphi conducted in 2018 during the development of the 2027 ETF strategy, the agency's contribution to modernising partner countries' VET systems was the most positively assessed activity. 41% of respondents indicated that the agency helped partner countries to a large extent<sup>390</sup>.

### **Results indicator 4: Partner countries receive relevant and timely support to modernise national qualifications frameworks and systems**

The result on qualifications systems and frameworks was achieved by consistently monitoring and supporting partner countries in developing their national qualifications frameworks (NQFs). Based on the work in this field at the national level, the ETF, together with Cedefop and UNESCO, produced the Global Inventory of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks. The ETF built on its expertise in supporting partner countries and played a major role in supporting the development of the African Continental Qualifications Framework.

The 2020 evaluation of ETF action to reform qualifications systems in partner countries found that the agency's work had an impact on partner countries' mechanisms, frameworks and processes for implementing reforms of qualifications systems. The evaluation emphasised that combined ETF action was a major factor contributing to the success of interventions on qualifications. For example, ETF work on strengthening stakeholder capacity, providing knowledge, insights and advice based on international comparative analysis and tools helped achieve results. The evaluation highlighted that ETF expert support informed the NQF implementation action plan, national qualifications agencies' work and the qualifications

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<sup>388</sup> ETF, Consolidated Annual Activity Reports, 2017-2020.

<sup>389</sup> ETF (2023), Consolidated Annual Activity Report: 2022.

<sup>390</sup> PPMI (2018), Evaluation of the ETF Functions: Policy Delphi Results 1st round: June/July 2018, p. 14.

register in Ukraine. There were also positive contributions in this field identified in North Macedonia and Kosovo. To further increase effectiveness in this field, there is a need to better integrate end-user perspectives in the ETF's work and to develop links with other related areas of work, e.g. social dialogue, work-based learning and lifelong learning<sup>391</sup>. The ETF's work in these areas was assessed favourably during the previous evaluation period, indicating that the agency continued to build on its strengths.

#### **Results indicator 5: Partner countries receive relevant and timely information on the performance of lifelong learning policies and systems**

The ETF achieved this result based on the stakeholder feedback and data analysed during the evaluation. For example, in 2019, 78% of partner countries were using the Torino Process for policy dialogue. This exceeds the 50% target substantially. Partner countries representatives considered the Torino Process to be one of the most valuable activities provided by the agency<sup>392</sup>. For example, when confirming their participation in the sixth round of the Torino Process, the Ministry of Education and Research in Moldova expressed their appreciation for the process as 'one of the most efficient tools for the policy dialogue, monitoring and evaluation of VET reforms'. The representatives praised ETF's role in facilitating policy dialogue, informing strategies on education and training, and evaluating ongoing reforms and programmes.

#### **Results indicator 6: Partner countries receive relevant and timely support to enable them to offer more opportunities for entrepreneurial learning and enterprise skills development**

The increasing importance of ETF's support related to enterprise skills development was highlighted by the European Parliament's discharge report. The report highlighted that the initiative on Skills for Enterprise Development helped businesses respond to challenges related to COVID-19 and the digital and green transitions<sup>393</sup>. This is a significant development as ETF's work in this field was assessed less favourably in the previous evaluation. Despite progress on the ETF's work on enterprise skills, targets related to entrepreneurial learning were only met in 2017. This shows that performance in this area is less favourably perceived than in the previous evaluation period.

#### **Table 6 Quantitative data for results indicator 6**

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<sup>391</sup> Ockham IPS (2020), Evaluation of the ETF actions on the reform of qualifications systems in Partner Countries, pp. 40-45.

<sup>392</sup> Interviews conducted for the purposes of this evaluation, as well as the stakeholder survey.

<sup>393</sup> European Parliament (2022), Discharge 2020: European Training Foundation.

Indicator	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Improvement in human capital dimension of Small Business Act performance in partner countries	3 countries	7 countries	6 countries			
	Target: 3 countries	Target: 10 countries	Target: 10 countries			

Source: ETF, consolidated annual activity reports 2017-2022

### **Results indicator 7: EU external relations policymakers receive relevant advice**

The two ETF targets for providing support for EU external relations policy were met in the years during which the indicators were monitored (2017-2020). The ETF was consistently asked to provide support in more than half the agency's partner countries, ranging between 58-62% of countries (against a target of 50%). Furthermore, 100% of the support provided by the agency was assessed positively each year. The interviews with the Commission show that rapid education diagnostics (RED) reports introduced during the current evaluation period for Lebanon and Kosovo improved dialogue with those countries and informed decisions on EU external assistance.

#### **(iv) EU-OSHA**

### **Results indicator 1: Policymakers and researchers are provided with good quality data enabling them to take timely and effective action on new and emerging risks**

Overall, the evidence<sup>394</sup> suggests that outputs were successful in raising awareness among policymakers on new and emerging risks, thus helping them make decisions. This holds for both foresight reports on the circular economy and digitalisation. In particular, EU-OSHA's foresight reports on digitalisation brought added value even in countries that were familiar with the issue, including by exploring aspects that were under-researched or otherwise not present in national research. Management board members and focal points also found that foresight exercises were very relevant for EU and national business associations and employers' organisations. This is a considerable change compared to the baseline when the foresight studies were used less than other outputs.

### **Results indicator 2: Better understanding of current OSH risks and their health effects thanks to information provided by EU-OSHA.**

The most significant way in which EU-OSHA has achieved this result has been through the European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER). EU-OSHA's bi-annual stakeholder surveys between 2016 and 2022 showed a growing majority of respondents were satisfied with ESENER (85% in 2016, 90% in 2018, 94% in 2020 and 95% in 2022). In terms of more cross-cutting recent policy priorities, there are insights from EU-OSHA's contribution to the debates on ageing societies, the green transition and the digital transition. While staff rated the agency's performance as 'very good' in 65% of cases related to ageing

<sup>394</sup> Evidence gathered from interviews and annual activity reports.

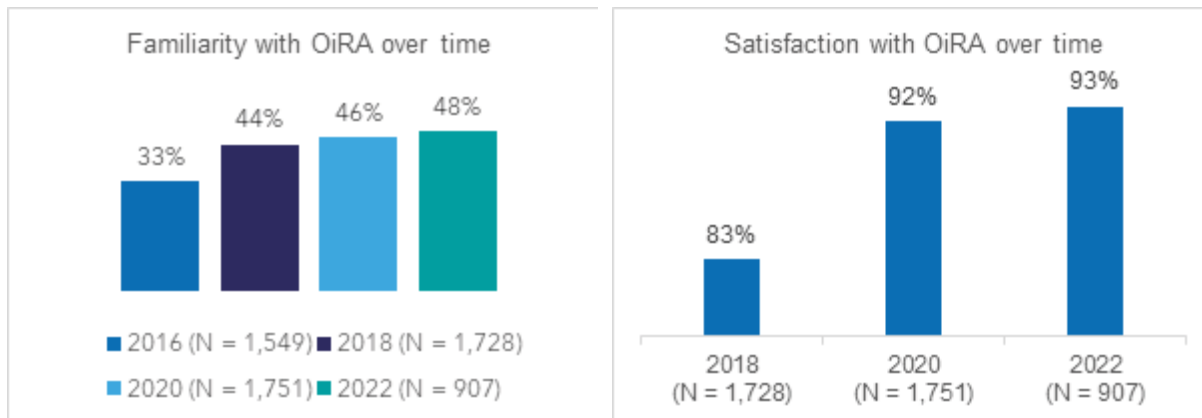
society, 56% related to the green transition, and 81% related to the digital transition, respondents to the stakeholder survey were of the same opinion in only 20%, 17% and 39% of cases respectively. This large gap indicates that EU-OSHA stakeholder needs are perhaps not met by agency activities in these areas.

**Results indicator 3: SMEs know and use the tools provided by EU-OSHA to manage health and safety**

For this result (that there are more tools of good quality available to SMEs), during the evaluation period, there were more than 300 OiRA tools available in 17 EU languages, roughly 200 more than in 2016<sup>395</sup>. These tools covered over 30 sectors, from manufacturing, hairdressing and beauty salons to education and live performance. The evidence suggests that these tools have helped companies, in particular SMEs, to take their first steps in risk assessment. For example, Cyprus has seen a high number of risk assessments with OiRA tools, with more than 95% of its companies being SMEs. More broadly, OiRA tools have been used extensively in Slovenia (3 681 users), Cyprus (5 605 users), Lithuania (6 176 users), Latvia (7 093 users) and France. France, with more than 42 000 users, made up roughly half of all OiRA users<sup>396</sup>. During the COVID-19 pandemic, an OiRA tool was also reported to have helped employers and workers prevent the spread of the virus at the workplace.

EU-OSHA stakeholders’ assessments confirm the growing satisfaction and popularity of OiRA tools. This supports the conclusion that it has been used by SMEs to improve or manage health and safety.

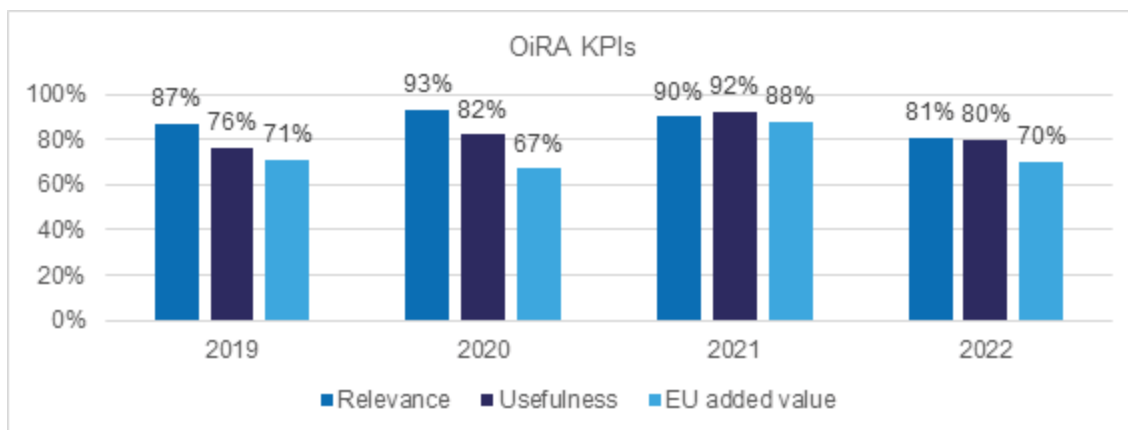
**Figure 3: OiRA key performance indicators and bi-annual stakeholder surveys<sup>397</sup>**



<sup>395</sup> EU-OSHA (2016). [EU-OSHA Annual Activity Report 2016](#).

<sup>396</sup> EU-OSHA (2023). Tender Specifications. OSHA/2023/OP/0004. Qualitative Research Insights into the process of risk assessment with OiRA at European Workplaces.

<sup>397</sup> Satisfaction with OiRA over time excludes ‘do not know’ and ‘cannot answer’ responses.

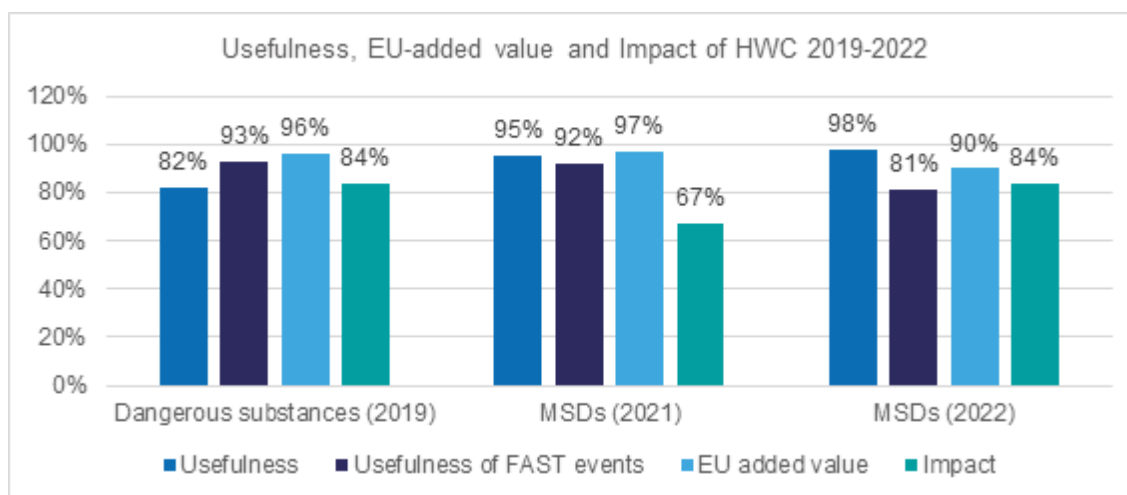


Sources: bi-annual stakeholder survey 2016-2022, key performance indicators 2019-2022 (AAR)

#### Results indicator 4: Multiple beneficiaries and intermediaries are aware of workplace risks and how to prevent them

For this result, interviews with EU-OSHA’s focal points revealed that national stakeholders expressed increasing interest in participating in the healthy workplaces campaigns (HWCs), while some of them<sup>398</sup> requested access to some of the campaigns’ material. In addition, based on EU-OSHA’s data, the HWCs grew in terms of partnerships and event activities. For example, in 2022, EU-OSHA had more than 80 official campaign partners, including 29 media partners. It also held 1 322 promotional activities. Evidence from EU-OSHA’s annual stakeholder survey corroborates the usefulness, EU-added value and impact of the campaigns, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: HWCs: EU-OSHA stakeholders’ assessment on key performance indicators 2019-2022



Source: EU-OSHA AARs, Key performance indicators, 2019-2022

<sup>398</sup> Examples include Cyprus and Finland.

### **Results indicator 5: The OSH community benefits from a larger body of quality knowledge**

For this result, EU-OSHA's A5 area of activities, 'Networking knowledge', aims to support the OSH community with a larger body of quality knowledge. There were 107 outputs under this activity between 2017 and 2022. These outputs were related to an OSH wiki, an exchange of knowledge on e-tools, expert support to the Commission, and an online database of legislation, non-binding instruments and social dialogue initiatives. While there is no direct measurement of this work, a stakeholder survey conducted by EU-OSHA suggests that this activity exceeded its set targets in terms of usefulness (94%, target 80%)<sup>399</sup>, relevance (100%, target 80%), EU-added value (100%, target 70%) and impact (76%, target 70%). Furthermore, the staff and stakeholder survey results for EU-OSHA also show that the agency was successful in introducing new concepts and ideas to public policy (confirmed by 90% of staff and 91% of stakeholders). In the public consultation, the category 'Quality of Information' emerged as the most valued characteristic of EU-OSHA's work from 2017 to 2022, accounting for 63% of responses (N=41)<sup>400</sup>. These findings lead to the conclusion that EU-OSHA's networking knowledge outputs achieved their expected results.

### **Results indicator 6: EU-OSHA stakeholders and networks take part in EU-OSHA activities and their needs are met**

EU-OSHA achieved this result, although to a lesser degree than other results. Engagement in planning, monitoring and implementing the agency's work programme decreased throughout the second half of the evaluation period<sup>401</sup>, falling from 95% in 2019 to 88% in 2022. Nevertheless, engagement remained high<sup>402</sup>. There is also evidence<sup>403</sup> to suggest that some members of the management board struggled to quickly become involved in board meetings and make meaningful contributions to them due to engagement and language barriers.

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<sup>399</sup> This metric applies to OSHwiki.

<sup>400</sup> Public consultation, N=41.

<sup>401</sup> There are no indicators on this before 2019.

<sup>402</sup> EU-OSHA Annual Activity Reports 2019-2022, Key Performance Indicators. Engagement indicator. Source: Board and FOP annual survey.

<sup>403</sup> Interviews conducted for the purpose of this study.