



Funded by the  
European Union



The research was conducted as part of the Erasmus+ “Implementing Mock Accreditation for Supporting Quality Assurance in Armenian VET Institutions” (QA4VET) project

FACTUAL ANALYSIS ON THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS IN VET  
INSTITUTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

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## **Introduction**

This research was conducted as part of the Erasmus+ “Implementing Mock Accreditation for Supporting Quality Assurance in Armenian VET Institutions” (QA4VET) project. It is geared towards the identification of the knowledge, skills and capacities that can significantly enhance the effectiveness of quality assurance processes in the RA vocational education and training (VET) system. The research focuses on the needs that enable education institutions to conduct more targeted and structured self-evaluations.

The findings are intended to serve as a substantive and methodological basis for training programmes under the Erasmus+ project.

The research aims to study and analyse VET institutions' capacity building needs to support the implementation of effective self-evaluations and the development of evidence-based enhancement strategies.

**Key research objectives** are as follows:

1. To identify the primary challenges and constraints in the implementation of self-evaluations.
2. To study and analyse the areas of training and capacity building essential for an effective self-evaluation process.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to allow a comprehensive analysis of the VET institutions' capacity building and training needs for the effective implementation of self-evaluation.

The research intends to study two main directions:

- the identification of key issues in the self-evaluation implementation on the basis of the quantitative data;
- the identification of skill gaps among key actors involved in the self-evaluation and development of enhancement strategies on the basis of the qualitative data, current needs and potential directions for capacity building to address these gaps.

### Quantitative method

An online survey was used for quantitative data collection, ensuring large-scale dissemination and effective data gathering. 61 out of 87 VET institutions participated, resulting in a response rate of **66.67%**. This indicator meets the criteria for representativeness and supports the consistency of the analytical results.

Among the participating institutions, **87.93%** were **state**, while **12.07%** were **private**. With regard to accreditation processes, **58.62%** of VET institutions reported having up to two years of experience, **22.41%** three to five years, **12.07%** six to ten years, and only **6.90%** over ten years of experience. Overall, about 81% of participants had less than five years' experience, which demonstrates the system development and the need for professional growth.

### Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis was performed through MS Excel and SPSS.

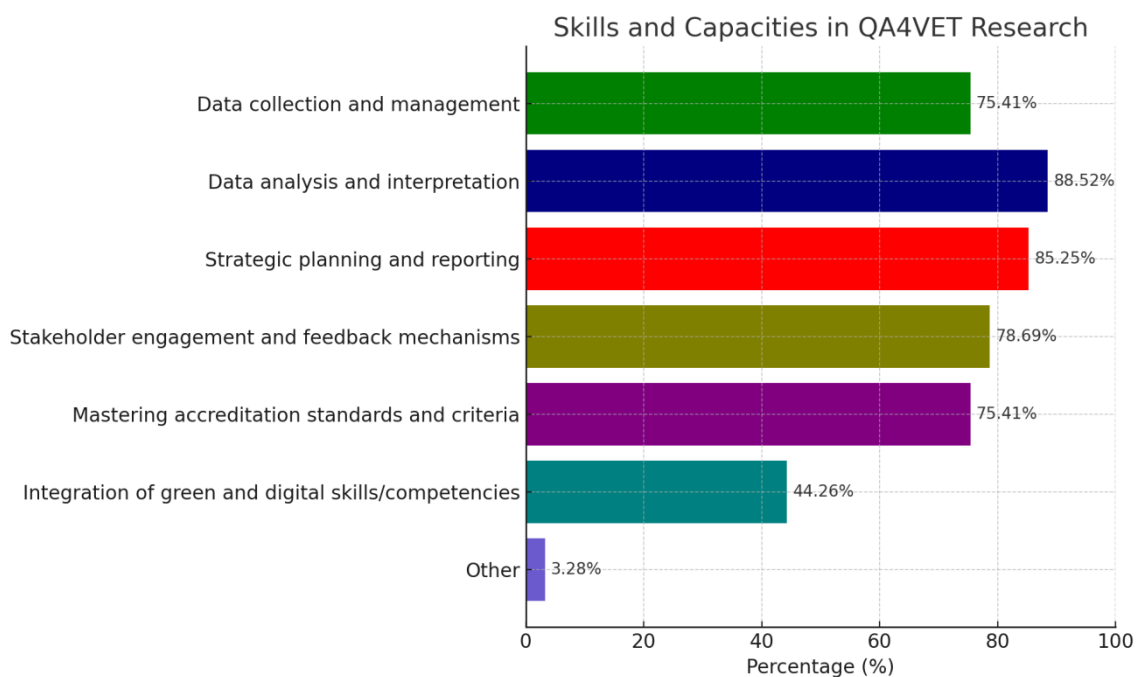
## STUDY OF THE NEEDS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF SELF-EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES IN VET INSTITUTIONS

VET institutions' implementation of self-evaluation and the subsequent development of enhancement strategies are core functions of management and institutional development. They enable the establishment of sustainable continuous enhancement processes through evidence-based analysis and decision-making.

In practice, however, education institutions face challenges due to the lack of managerial and methodological skills. These limitations hinder the comprehensiveness and applicability of the self-evaluation process, preventing the effective integration of analysis results into the organisation's development strategy.

The survey is designed to study which capacities VET institutions prioritise for conducting more effective and analytical self-evaluations. Meanwhile, it aims to identify the key skills gaps that continue to the institutions and need further development.

**Chart 1. Capacities prioritised for VET institutions to conduct effective self-evaluation**



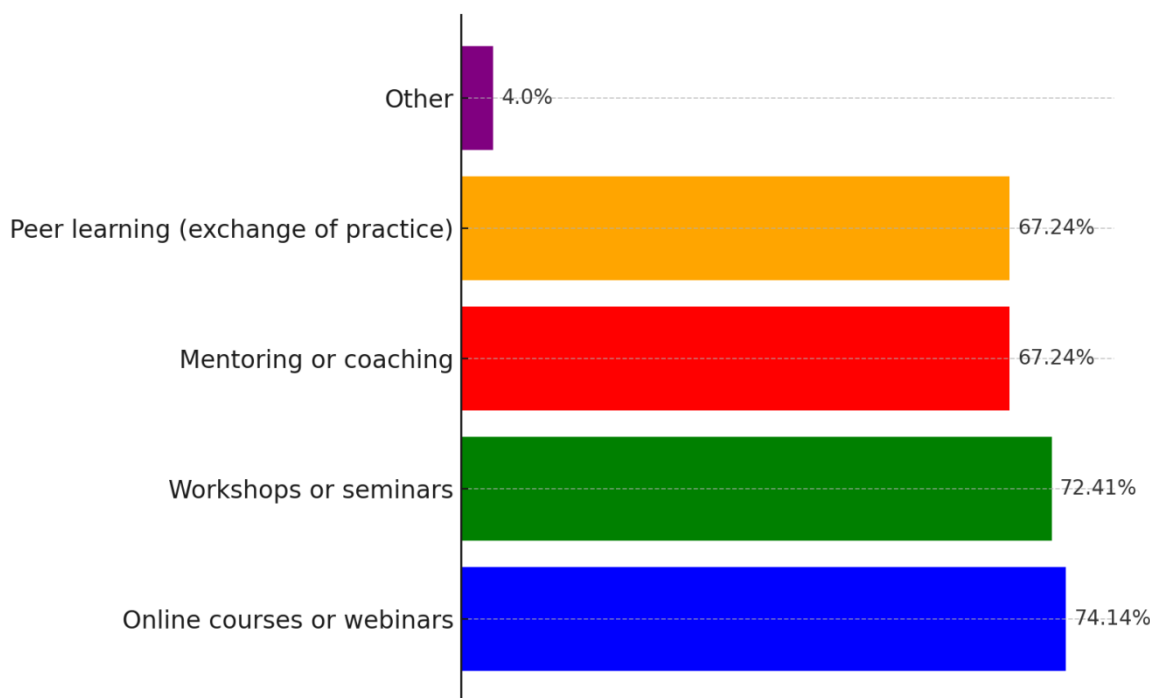
As shown in the chart, 75.41% of the 61 respondents indicated that "**Data collection and management**" is the top priority for effective self-evaluation. In the subsequent data utilisation phase, **data analysis and interpretation** scored highest at 88.52%, reflecting that a significant proportion of respondents also value the use of analytical tools. This component was rated the highest among all responses.

Additionally, the "**Strategic planning and reporting**" component received an 85.25% response rate, underscoring the importance of a long-term and systematic approach to the management process. "**Stakeholder engagement and feedback mechanisms**" also earned a high rating (78.69%), demonstrating the recognition of the role of participatory mechanisms and communication channels within institutions. "**Mastering accreditation standards and criteria**" was emphasised in 75.41% of responses, highlighting the need for proficiency in these areas.

Meanwhile, the "**Integration of green and digital skills/competencies**" received the lowest score of 44.26%. This result is likely because green skills, in particular, are a relatively new concept for VET institutions, and widespread application or integration into educational processes has not yet been achieved.

Beyond highlighting the significance of the aforementioned skills for effective self-evaluation, the study also explores which skills VET institutions *identify as gaps requiring development* within their own institutions.

**Chart 2. Skill gaps identified by VET institutions**



According to the survey results, the VET institutions' skill gaps are most evident in the "**Integration of Green and Digital Skills**" component, as noted by 62.3% of respondents. Moreover, a need for skills development was identified in several other areas. Specifically, 27.87% highlighted "**Data analysis and interpretation**", while the equal percentage (27.87%) pointed to "**Knowledge of accreditation criteria**". The latter may be attributed to the fact that approximately 15% of the surveyed VET institutions lack accreditation experience and the development of these skills would support their preparation process. 21.31% of respondents reported a skill gap in "**Stakeholder engagement and communication**" component, while 19.67% indicated a gap in "**Strategic planning and reporting**". Only 6.56% of respondents identified "**Other**" types of needs, particularly highlighting the improvement of foreign language proficiency and the development of benchmarking skills.

The study also explores **preferred training and support formats** for VET institutions, which could be effectively applied to address the above-mentioned skill gaps.

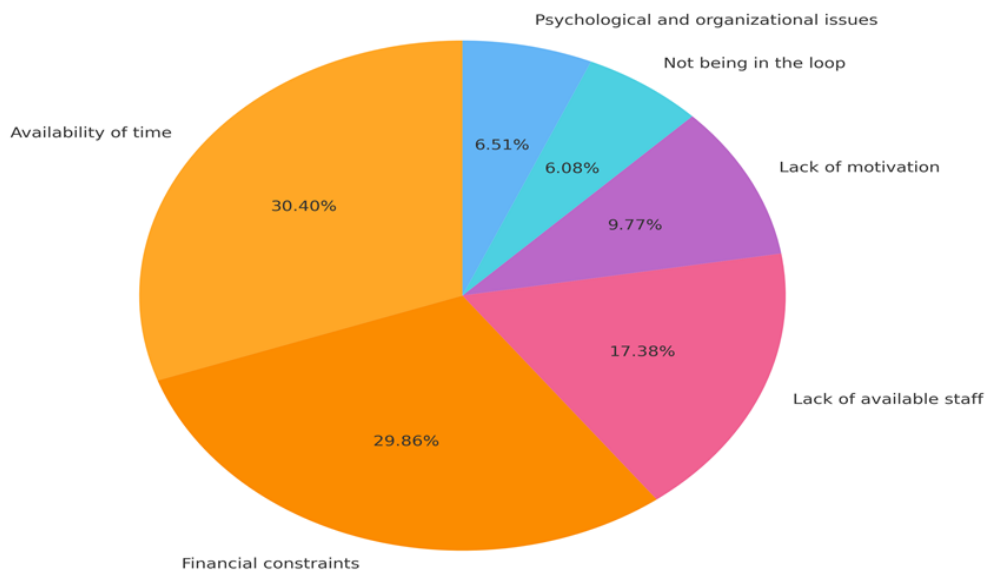
**Chart 3. Preferred skills' development formats for VET Institutions**



The results indicate that the majority of survey participants prefer **"Online courses or webinars"** (74.14%), reflecting the appeal for remote learning opportunities in terms of time and location flexibility. Meanwhile, **"Workshops or seminars"** held considerable importance (72.41%), demonstrating participants' interest in practical and direct interaction, particularly for topics that benefit from active discussion and collaboration with specialists and peers. Additionally, participants valued **"Mentoring or coaching"** methods (67.24%), highlighting personalised support and skill development tailored to individual needs. **"Peer learning (exchange of practice)"** methods were equally rated (67.24%), suggesting that participants prioritise knowledge exchange and collaborative work with other VET institutions to implement innovative ideas and approaches. The **"Other"** option was also noted, with 3.45% of respondents proposing the development and provision of guidelines as an effective tool for self-learning and professional development. Meanwhile, some institutions reported no current need for training or additional support.

Regarding barriers hindering VET institutions' staff participation in training programmes, the following trends emerge:

**Chart 4: Key barriers to training participation**



Survey results indicate that the key barriers to participating in training programmes are primarily related to time and budget constraints:

1. **"Time scarcity" (30.40%):** This barrier was the most frequently mentioned barrier reported by respondents. Participants noted that the heavy workload from primary job responsibilities, often leaves little time for training. The daily functions and additional work duties of those responsible restrict the opportunities for participation.
2. **"Financial constraints" (29.86%):** This barrier was also frequently highlighted by respondents. Organising training programmes is challenging due to limited financial resources, as some institutions lack sufficient funds to offer the quality training programmes necessary for their staff.
3. **"Lack of external support" (17.38%):** Participants indicated that the absence of external support (e.g., a shortage of organisations providing free, fund-supported training) hinders the participation in training programmes. This issue is particularly evident in institutions without external partnerships or opportunities for the exchange of practice.
4. **"Lack of motivation" (9.77%):** Participants also noted this barrier, highlighting training programmes are not always viewed as engaging or useful.
5. **"Psychological and organisational issues" (6.51%):** According to some participants, psychological reasons (e.g., lack of self-confidence or resistance to new methods) can hinder training participation. This issue is also linked to cultural and managerial factors, including

situations where the management staff does not support training programmes. In the case of online training, technical issues (insufficient internet quality, lack of suitable equipment) can hinder effective participation as well.

6. **"No such barriers exist" (6.51%):** Some participants stated that such barriers do not exist in their institutions.

## CONCLUSION

The summary of the research findings leads to the following conclusions:

1. **VET institutions** require capacity building in several areas, driven by both modern educational requirements and the need to effectively implement the accreditation process. The "**Integration of digital and green skills**" (62.3%) was most frequently highlighted, highlighting the need for technological transformation and stronger sustainable development approaches. The demand for "**Data analysis and interpretation**" (27.87%) is also quite high, reflecting the need for evidence-based decision-making and development of analytical skills. Other key areas include "**Stakeholder engagement and communication**" (21.31%), and "**Strategic planning and reporting**" (19.67%). "**Benchmarking methodology**" (6.56%) also attracts interest, aiming to identify development paths through the analysis and benchmarking of best practices in the sector.
2. To conduct more effective self-evaluations, **VET institutions** need intensive training and capacity building, platforms for practice exchange, revision of standards and clarification of methodologies, development of material-technical resources and digital tools and the creation of data accumulation systems.