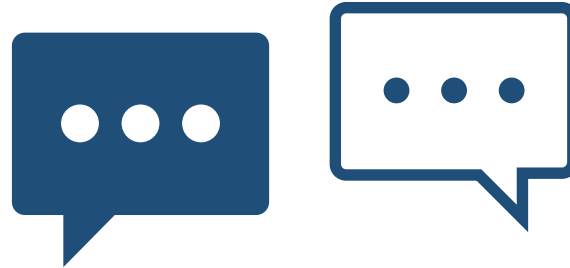


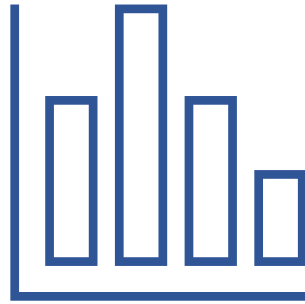


# Findings Update – 15/04/2024

## Serbia Sector Skills Council (SSC) Assessment



1. Welcome and introduction to the group
2. Key findings derived from the research/analysis conducted
3. Proposed recommendations
4. Introduction to the SSC Model/Framework
5. Group Discussion
6. Next steps – Implementation strategies



## Headline Survey Findings

What did the stakeholder and employer surveys say?



## SWOT analysis

All evidence

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

Stakeholders	Employers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A total of <b>166</b> responses were received</li><li>• <b>19</b> sectors were represented in the responses</li><li>• Vast majority of stakeholders were from <b>Education</b> sector followed by <b>State administration and defence; compulsory social insurance</b></li><li>• Most <b>representation</b> (over 10% of respondents from each) came from <b>Social Sciences, Journalism and Information; Health and social protection; Industrial development; and Business administration</b></li><li>• <b>Ministries</b> (24.5% of respondents), <b>Trade Unions/Branch Trade Unions</b> (13.6%) and <b>Professional associations/chambers</b> (15.0%) accounted for over half of all nominating agencies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A total of <b>170</b> responses were received</li><li>• <b>18 economic</b> sectors were represented in the responses; <b>Over a third</b> of all employers came from manufacturing</li><li>• <b>HR employees</b> were the most represented job group followed by Directors</li><li>• In terms of business size, <b>most responses</b> came from <b>small and medium sized enterprises</b> (37%).</li><li>• <b>Over a quarter</b> of the responses were received from those people representing business <b>employing over 250 staff</b></li><li>• <b>83%</b> respondent organisation had been in operation for <b>11 years or more</b>. <b>Only 2.5%</b> of businesses had been operating for <b>3 years or less</b>.</li></ul>

- **Uncertainty over membership criteria/selection**; most questions relating to current membership arrangements showed a **50/50 split** between **in favour** and **uncertain/against** the current arrangements. Opponents of current working offered suggestions for improvements, such as allocating membership based on ability to produce outputs and engage in SSC activities.
- **Majority** were **in favour** of current **classifications**, although some had strong views on potentially reallocating SSC areas of responsibility. *Industrial Development* picked out as one SSC with too broad a remit/too many contrasting sectors and skills profiles.
- **Lack of private sector/voice of business interests was highlighted**. Respondents suggested employers or employer representatives, such as employer associations, should have membership and key involvement in SSC decision making.
- **Membership numbers** were picked out as a **potential source of inefficiency** in decision making and SSC operation.



- Majority of respondents 70% indicated an interest in becoming an SCC member and widely agreed the interests of employers need to be considered in SSC activity (90%).
- Employers also believed there were some areas where SSC classifications or areas of responsibility could be improved or made clearer, as some did not know which SSC would be responsible for the skills of their organisations activity, or alternatively, of which sector they were a part.
- On the question of how members should be selected, there was considerable support for using a mixed approach combining the principle of delegation/nomination of representatives and the principle of public invitation.
- Employers place highest value on the following SSC activities: development of Labour Market Information (LMI), developing skills, updating qualifications, and development of apprenticeship frameworks/standards. No suggested function was unpopular; most (>50%) respondents expressed interest for all offered functions.

## Strengths (what are SSCs doing well?)

- **Strong cooperation between members** – while not universal, evidence suggested members had faith in their ability to work with their colleagues.
- **Faith in the mission** – strong belief in the value of the work, however it should be considered – the most engaged members will be the ones who participated in research.
- **Willingness to seek expert advice if needed** – many examples were listed of reliance on expert advice on issues outside members' area of professional experience.
- **Agency perceived as supportive of SSC working** – members complimented communication and willingness to provide support and advice.
- **Survey evidence suggests a majority (71%) have high confidence in SSC work**

## **Weaknesses (what areas could be improved)**

- **Private industry not engaged/aware of SSC activity** – noted by all research methods.
- **Gaps in stakeholder input on decisions** – partly resulting from the above.
- **Lack of evaluation of activities to monitor and review work** – initiatives are not followed up formally.
- **Engagement differs between SSC members**
- **Different areas of expertise place differing burdens on SSC members** – some members with strong expertise in a subject matter are disproportionately involved.
- **Avenues to impact on policymaking are unclear** – members are unsure how their work can influence the big picture.
- **Mode of working (meeting frequency, membership numbers) causing inefficiency in decision making** – too many members to be actively involved in some examples.
- **Sector classifications could potentially be improved**



# SWOT Analysis of all evidence gathered (ongoing)

## Initial headlines, not exhaustive:

9

### Opportunities - how can we consider making improvements?

- **Improve industry outreach** and involve businesses and the private sector more in SSC work, where appropriate – SSCs recognised this as within their mandate but expressed uncertain in method.
- **Creation of a mechanism to evaluate activities** – need formal monitoring/feedback to evaluate work and make improvements.
- **Improve membership selection process** – members had a selection of suggestions on what aspects to focus on for new members.
- **Renew focus on goals, mission, and outputs** – Members highlighted the desirability of a clear and succinct mission statement both as promotional tool and organising principle to rally engagement and participation in SSC activity.
- **Develop a formal mechanism for councils to coordinate and share information** – different evidence sources suggested overlap between SSC areas and employer organisations occupying multiple sectors. More accessible channels of communication that did not rely on individuals members to reach out, were desired.

## Threats – what dangers lie ahead for the next cycle of work?

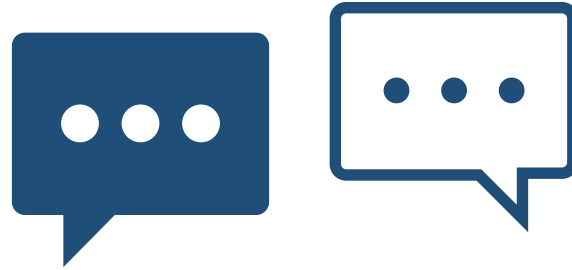
- **Lack of specific stakeholder input (specifically private sector) may lead to skills gaps** – without insight from how work is conducted in practise, initiatives, qualifications, and other activities may lack the necessary applicability to real world contexts. Other stakeholder gaps may reduce the legitimacy of SSC activity.
- **Lack of regular evaluative activities leading to unnoticed issues** – without formal evaluation, any outputs may run into problems during implementation that SSCs remain unaware of – which may lead to duplication of problems in future work.
- **Lack of evidence in support of decision making** – Some evidence suggests challenges in conducting primary research for SSC decision-making, potentially leading to future flaws. Further verification is required to gauge its practical extent.



# Proposed Recommendations – 15/04/2024

## Serbia Sector Skills Council (SSC) Assessment

# Contents



## Initial recommendations for discussion

(with a selection of evidence from the current report draft)

# Recommendations

Recommendations appear in the blue box at the top of the page; there are currently 7 headline recommendations for consideration, one on each of the following slides – followed by a summary.

*Evidence will appear in red; this will either be direct quotes from participants in the research, or an excerpt from the excellent notes from our colleagues at SeCons.*

– A blue tag like this will highlight exactly where the evidence was sourced.

Further discussion of evidence will appear separately in blue text.



# Initial Recommendation 1

- 1) Review legal regulations surrounding the functioning of SSCs to:
  - a) Clearly define a competency-based approach to vocational training, that accounts for the needs of industry (links with recommendation 6).
  - b) Structurally reallocate how sectors are divided between each SSC (industrial development highlighted as SSC of most concern).
  - c) Pinpoint inactive or low activity SSCs and evaluate the reasons for their comparatively lower activity, strengthen them, or move responsibilities to active SSCs where needed.

*As main issue, participants have mentioned that the division of SSCs is not in correlation with division of areas of work.* – Focus Group Industrial Development, notes.

Areas of responsibility/sectoral divisions were established in accordance with the European Qualification Framework – however, noted that areas of work within Serbia are not well aligned with the EQF.

*(...) in their SSC [Transportation] there are professions that are not only in the field of transport (e.g., mechanical engineering, education), so this can be a problem when making some decisions because members who are not professional vote.* – Focus Group Transportation, notes.



# Comments 1

- 1) Review legal regulations surrounding the functioning of SSCs to:
  - a) Clearly define a competency-based approach to vocational training, that accounts for the needs of industry (links with recommendation 6).
  - b) Structurally reallocate how sectors are divided between each SSC (industrial development highlighted as SSC of most concern).
  - c) Pinpoint inactive or low activity SSCs and evaluate the reasons for their comparatively lower activity, strengthen them, or move responsibilities to active SSCs where needed.

**Please include any additional comments in the group chat.**

# Initial Recommendation 2

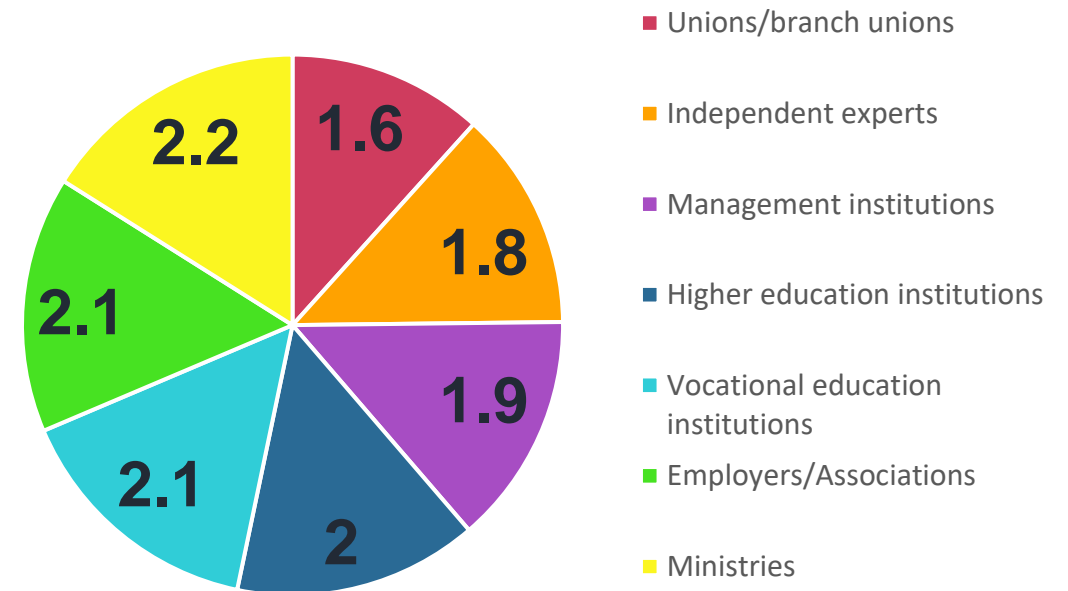
- 2) Pin down clear and consistent criteria for selecting SSC members. Key considerations include:
- a) Number of members.
  - b) Level of professional experience or subject matter expertise relevant to the remit of the SSC.
  - c) Capacity and/or motivation to participate in the required work.

Survey data indicated an average of 2 members from each suggested stakeholder group as ideal. This would suggest 14 members; which agrees with other evidence from participants emphasising 20-30 is too many. Smaller membership numbers are required – however, employers/associations should be greater considering the lack of industry voice in SSC. Consider 16 overall members as a general target.

*“It is way easier to function when you have a smaller group of people who are focused on the same topic.” -*

Focus Group Industrial Development, quote

Survey Data - Suggested Membership Numbers



# Comments 2

2) Pin down clear and consistent criteria for selecting SSC members.

Key considerations include:

- a) Number of members.
- b) Level of professional experience or subject matter expertise relevant to the remit of the SSC.
- c) Capacity and/or motivation to participate in the required work.

**Please include any additional comments in the group chat.**

# Initial Recommendation 3

- 3) Work with colleagues from relevant partner organisations to publish a Terms of Reference to pin down:
- a) the aims of SSCs;
  - b) the intended mechanism to achieve those aims, including workflow and outputs;
  - c) the intended mechanism to monitor and evaluate this activity;
  - d) the management structure and precise roles and responsibilities of different organisations involved in the management of SSCs; this may involve an organisation flowchart;
  - e) the terminology required to understand the above points.

Interview data suggested there were barriers to communication between some stakeholders that has arisen from jurisdictional uncertainty, scope creep, and/or overlapping responsibilities.

This problem may be further emphasised by a lack of familiarity with education terminology for stakeholders with a background outside education.

Evidence indicated members inconsistently understood the different stakeholders involved in SSC work and what roles and responsibilities different organisations performed:

*It is important to emphasize that members don't recognise work of Office for NQF, they are not familiar with their role and responsibilities. - Focus Group Agriculture, notes*

# Poll 1

**Are you aware of the roles/responsibilities and Terms of Reference for your SSC?**

**Да ли сте свесни улога/одговорности и задатака за ваш ССЦ?**

**Yes**

**No**

# Initial Recommendation 4

4) Pursuant to recommendation 3 – develop a guidance document for SSC members covering the responsibilities of their council (with examples of good practice), such as:

- a) drafting new standards and qualifications and updating existing standards and qualifications;
- b) gathering labour market information, conducting environmental scans, participating in evaluation;
- c) assessing skills and training (skills needs within economy, and training availability across the education sector);
- d) how to collaborate with other SSCs in the performance of the above (especially relevant when drafting standards pertaining to competencies which are common across sectors).

The need for a formal method of evaluation and monitoring was a key recurring theme in the evidence collected through all research methods:

*Participants mentioned they don't have Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) established but they think that feedback from enrolment rates of in some schools would be a good KPI for work of SSC. – Focus Group Industrial Development, notes*

Collaboration between councils was positioned as a viable way to improve the quality of outputs and ease the burden of sourcing expertise:

*Sometimes, knowledge and opinions are scattered across other councils. For example, when dealing with certain competencies, it would be beneficial to have the opinions of members who are involved in engineering or a related field. – Focus Group Agriculture, notes*



# POLL 2

**Do you think it would be beneficial to have a guidance document specifically for SSC members detailing the responsibilities of the council.**

**Да ли мислите да би било корисно имати документ са упутствима посебно за чланове ЗСО који детаљно описује одговорности савета.**

**Yes**

**No**

# Initial Recommendation 5

5) Develop an updated training tool for induction of new SSC members covering contents - such as described in the Terms of Reference suggested in Recommendation 3 and guidance suggested in Recommendation 4. This should cover:

- a) expected responsibilities of each individual SSC member;
- b) intended working patterns, timelines, outputs, etc.;
- c) previous examples of good practice;
- d) how to solicit external (and particularly industry) expertise when required.

There was an observed need for greater guidance, if no standardisation, at least examples of good practice:

*“[In our mandate] one of the obligations/jurisdictions are related to promotion, however no one has ever explained to us what that means, and how we should do that.”* – Focus Group Agriculture, quote

*“(...) if we are discussing an initiative, and we see that we are lacking some expertise or other opinion, each of us, through our personal connections tries to find that person or company representative.”* – Focus Group Agriculture, quote

While this can be a good resource, it can also be unreliable, as the quality and volume of expert advice becomes conditional on the particular social links of the council members.

# POLL 3

**Do you think new SSC members would benefit from additional induction training?**

**Да ли мислите да би нови чланови ССЦ имали користи од додатне уводне обуке?**

**Yes**

**No**

# Initial Recommendation 6

6) Consider one or more remedial actions to involve greater input from employers and the private sector within the work of SSCs so that practical issues regarding standards development can be considered and addressed. This could mean:

- a) selecting employers, employer associations, or unions to participate as members of SSCs;
- b) targeted consultation or primary research with employers, employer associations, or unions (would require frequent activity to ensure employer's views are adequately considered within the work of SSCs);
- c) drafting documentation and conducting research on how language is used in businesses (e.g. job roles and needs) compared to in education (e.g. standards and competencies) to facilitate the input of stakeholders unfamiliar with key SSC terminology.

*It was recognised that representatives of economy are missing, specially from private sector* - Focus Group Agriculture, notes

*“there is a lack of experts who apply the relevant competencies in practice/business.”* – Survey Data, quote

Despite this, most respondents (70%) indicated an interest in becoming an SCC member and widely agreed the interests of employers need to be considered in SSC activity (90%).

# Comments

6) Consider one or more remedial actions to involve greater input from employers and the private sector within the work of SSCs so that practical issues regarding standards development can be considered and addressed. This could mean:

- a) selecting employers, employer associations, or unions to participate as members of SSCs;
- b) targeted consultation or primary research with employers, employer associations, or unions (would require frequent activity to ensure employer's views are adequately considered within the work of SSCs);
- c) drafting documentation and conducting research on how language is used in businesses (e.g. job roles and needs) compared to in education (e.g. standards and competencies) to facilitate the input of stakeholders unfamiliar with key SSC terminology.

**Please include any additional comments in the group chat.**

# Initial Recommendation 7

7) Following recommendation 6, develop a marketing or public relations strategy focused on raising awareness of SSCs and their work – focused especially on key stakeholders absent from current decision making (employers, employer associations, unions, and other representatives with oversight of sectors of the economy – particularly the private sector.) This strategy should identify and capitalise on available channels of communication – such as sharing work at conferences, leveraging the position of the Chamber of Commerce, and interfacing with employer associations.

*“I have been on so many conferences on different topics and never ever have heard about SSC.”* – Focus Group Employers, quote

*Almost all respondents stated that they have never heard about SSC or their existence.* – Focus Group, Employers, notes

*“(...) marketing is crucial, you need to sell us story about SSCs.”* – Focus Group Employers, quote

The presentation of SSC work at events and conferences will improve visibility across a range of stakeholders, fostering a potential avenue towards policy impact in addition to wider participation from key stakeholders.



# POLL 4

**Would a marketing or public relations strategy aimed at increasing awareness of SSCs and their activities be advantageous?**

**Да ли би маркетиншка стратегија или стратегија односа с јавношћу која има за циљ повећање свести о ССЦ-има и њиховим активностима била корисна?**

**Yes**

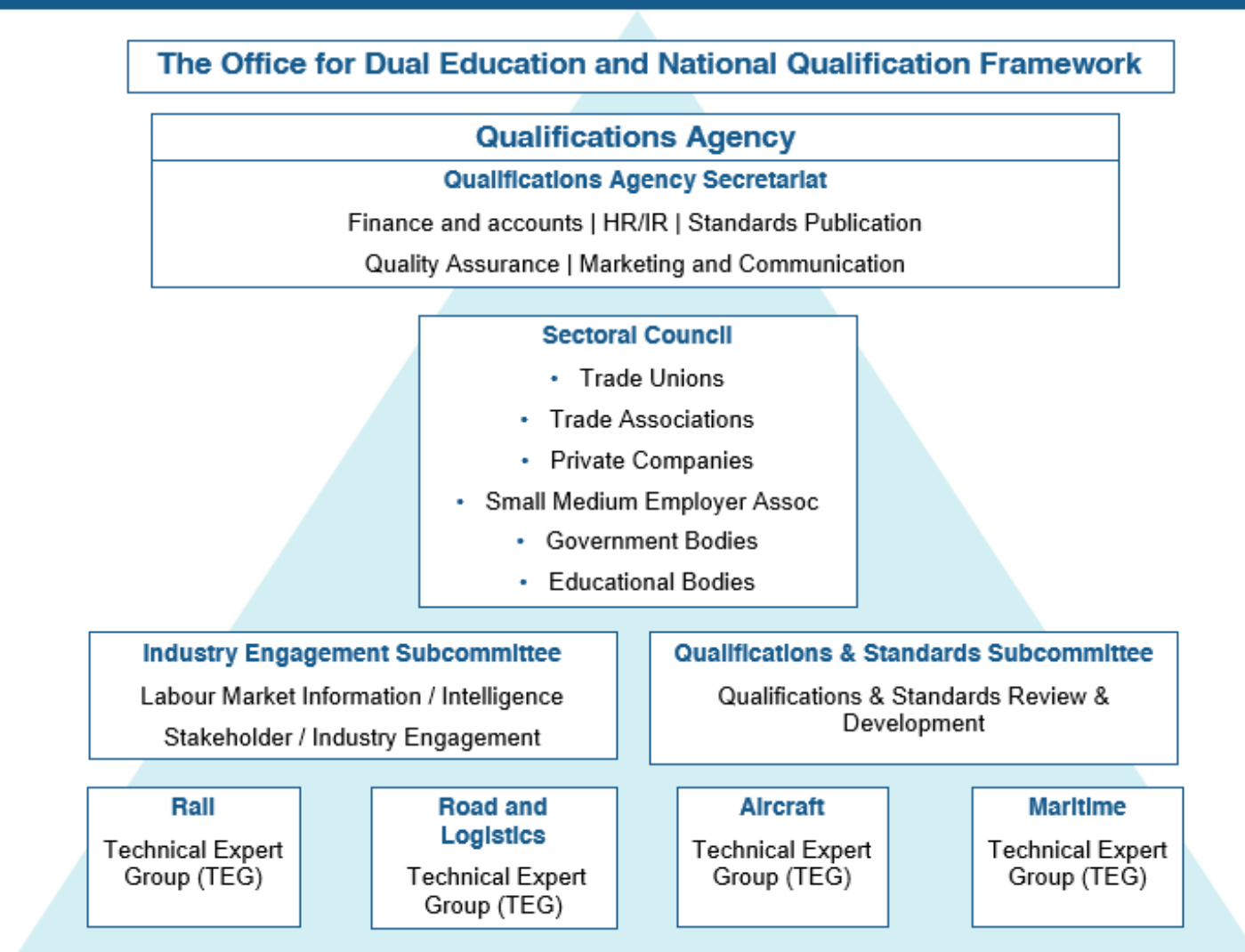
**No**

**Please include any additional comments in the group chat.**

# Recommendations for improving the Serbian Sectoral Council (SSC)



# Structure of Serbian Sectoral Council for Traffic and Transport



# DUTIES OF SSC MEMBERS

Members of the Council and members of the sector council are obliged to:

- Make sure that activities within the Council or sector council are carried out professionally and ethically in compliance with this methodology and rules of procedure on the work of the Council or sector council
- Coordinate positions on issues within the competence of the SSC, with the organisations on whose proposal they were appointed
- Regularly attend meetings and respect the planned working hours and agreed dates
- Respect other people's opinion, whether it is expressed through participation in the discussion, or if it is given in writing.

# TASKS OF SSC

- Identifies the qualifications that need to be updated
- Identifies qualifications that no longer correspond to the needs of the sector
- Makes a decision on drafting a proposal for qualification standards within the sector
- Gives an opinion on the expected outcomes of knowledge and skills within the sector
- Promotes dialogue and direct cooperation between the world of work and education
- Provide analytical input on qualifications whilst the Qualifications Agency manages standard development
- Promotes opportunities for education, training and employment within the sector
- Identifies opportunities for training adults within the sector
- Considers the implications of the national qualifications framework for qualifications within the sector
- Analyses the connection of qualifications with relevant occupations in the sector
- Considers the need to update the qualification standard after five years of its application
- Performs other tasks in accordance with the Law on the National Framework of Qualifications.

# Implementation of the Structure

## Sub Committees

### 1. Stakeholder engagement and labour market information / intelligence

- Undertake research activities to identify and validate skills needs and changes within the industry standards and qualifications.
- Evaluate and recommend industry standards – and qualifications for work-based learning.
- Monitor the implementation of the Industry Skills needs.
- Provide recommendations on how best to engage and encourage employers to invest in skills development.

### 2. Qualifications and Standards

- Provide input and design of agreed new and existing qualifications and standards.
- Recommend and outline skills requirements for training programmes.



# Technical Expert GROUPS (TEGS)

Technical Expert Groups (TEG) for the four sub sectors Rail, Road and Logistics, Aircraft and Maritime.

- **Purpose:**

- Technical expert groups are established to ensure that standards and qualifications align with industry needs and reflect current best practices.

- **Composition:**

- Members of these groups are made up of professionals with expertise in the specific industry / occupational field related to the standards and qualifications under consideration.
- Representatives from relevant professional bodies, employers and educational institutions may also be included if they can contribute to the development review of qualifications and standards.

- **Functions:**

- Technical expert groups play a crucial role in the development and validation of standards and qualifications. They provide insights, contribute to the drafting of documents, and review proposed standards or qualifications.
- Regular meetings and consultations are organised to gather input and feedback from the experts.

- **Collaboration:**

- Collaboration with other relevant industry organisations and authorities is common. This ensures that the standards and qualifications meet broader industry and educational needs across sectors.

- **Updates and Revisions:**

- The groups are also involved in periodic reviews and updates of existing standards and qualifications to keep them relevant and up to date with industry advancements.

- **Advisory Role:**

- TEGs serve in an advisory capacity to the larger governing bodies responsible for overseeing standards and qualifications such as the Office, Qualifications Agency and SSCs.

# Group Activity

**15 mins**

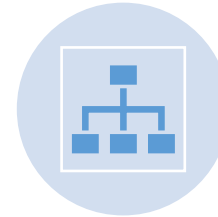
- **In groups please discuss the key insights and recommendations from this workshop that will help you to effectively contribute to supporting the initiatives and goals of the SSCs.**

**Please nominate a spokesperson to feed back from your group.**

# EXAMPLE OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES



**Best SSC international practices – 2 hour session**



**Governance of the SSC and internal procedures / operations – 2 hour session**



**Stakeholder engagement – 2 hour session**



**Undertaking LMI - Research techniques and communication - 2 hour session**



**Development and review of standards, qualifications and competency-based assessment – 2 hour session**



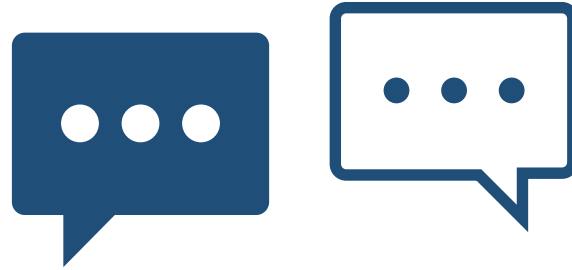
**Action plan – 4 hour session**

# POLL 5

**Please indicate which training programmes would be beneficial for you in your capacity as a member of the SSC (select all that apply).**

- 1) Best SSC International practices**
- 2) Stakeholder engagement**
- 3) Creating and assessing standards, qualifications and competency-based evaluations.**
- 4) Governance of the SSC and internal procedures**
- 5) Undertaking LMI - Research techniques and communication**
- 6) Action Planning**

# Next steps



## **Pilot implementation for traffic and transport SSC**

- **Timelines**
- **Roles and responsibilities**
- **Activities**



**European Bank**  
for Reconstruction and Development

**People 1st International**

Vertigo,  
Cheese Lane,  
Bristol, BS2 0JJ  
United Kingdom  
Tel: 020 3074 1222



[www.people1st.co.uk](http://www.people1st.co.uk)



[info@people1st.co.uk](mailto:info@people1st.co.uk)



[@p1stgroup](https://twitter.com/p1stgroup)



People 1st

people1st  
international