The research was conducted under the framework of the Erasmus+ "Implementing Mock Accreditation for supporting quality assurance in Armenian VET institutions" (QA4VET).

TRAINING NEEDS EVALUATION AMONG ARMENIAN PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

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CONTENT

Introduction

This study was conducted under the framework of the Erasmus+ "Strengthening Expert Capacities for Quality Assurance Processes in Armenia" (QA4VET) program. Its aim was to identify the knowledge, skills, and capacities that could significantly improve the effectiveness of quality assurance processes in the vocational education and training (VET) system of Armenia. The research focused on identifying needs that could enhance targets and structure of self-assessment practices within educational institutions.

The findings are intended to serve as a basis for developing the content and methodology of training programs under the Erasmus+ project.

The aim of the research is to study and analyze the need for effective self-assessment for implementation and improvement of strategies develop process of vocational education and training (VET) system of Armenia.

Key objectives of the research are:

1. Assess the existing capacities of VET institutions to conduct effective self-assessments and develop improvement strategies.
2. Study and analyze the directions of trainings and capacity development that essential for effective self-assessment process organization.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. This approach allowed a comprehensive analysis of the capacity development and training needs in VET institutions for implementing self-assessment processes effectively.

The research was intended to study two main directions.

- Determination of main problems of self-assessment implementation process on the basis of the quantitative data,
- Identifying capacity gaps and its improvement planning development opportunities among key actors involved in self-assessment on the basis of the qualitative data,

Quantitative method

For quantitative data collection online questionnaire was used, ensuring large-scale dissemination and effective data collection. **Quantitative data** were collected through online questionnaires, with participation from 61 out of 87 VET institutions (66.67% participation rate).

- This indicator satisfies the representativeness requirements and confirms analytical results consistency. 87.93% of participants are public institutions and 12.07% are private.
- 58.62% of VET institutions have up to 2 years experience in accreditation processes,
- 22.41% have for 3–5 years' experience in accreditation processes,
- 12.07% have for 6–10 years' experience in accreditation processes,
- only 6.90% have more than 10 years' experience in accreditation processes.

So, about 81% of participants have less than 5 years' experience, which shows the development of system and necessity of professional growth.

Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis was performed using MS Excel and SPSS to identify trends and gaps in institutional capacities.

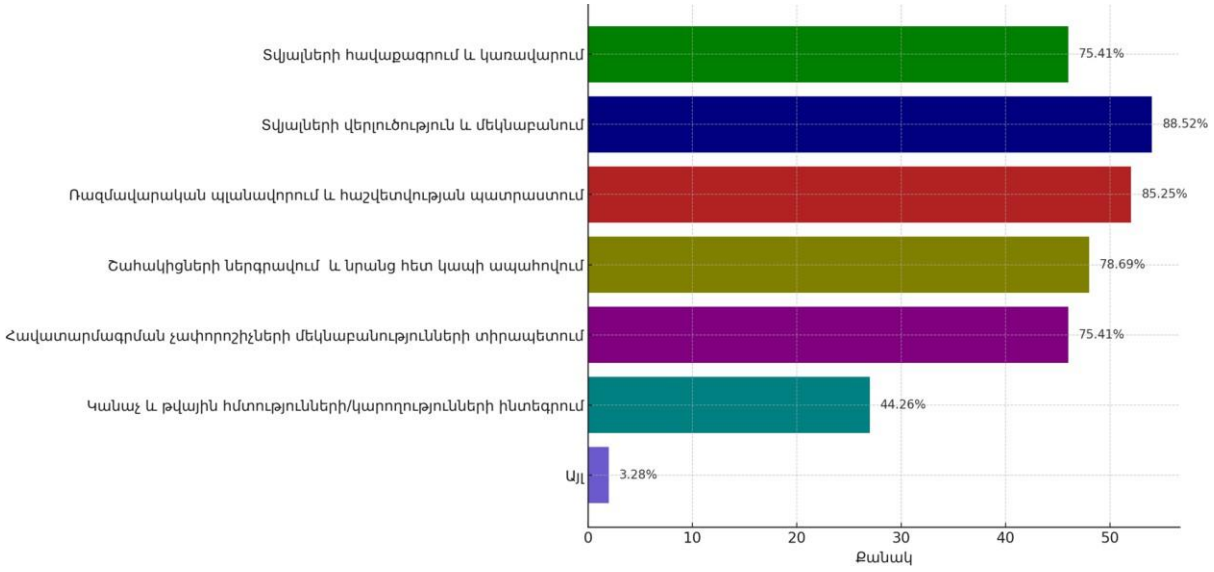
EFFECTIVE SELF-ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS STUDY IN VET INSTITUTIONS

Implementation of self-assessment in VET institutions and the development of improvement strategies based on it are core functions of management and institutional development. They enable the establishment of sustainable continuous improvement processes through evidence-based analysis and decision-making.

In practice, however, educational institutions face challenges stemming from a lack of managerial and methodological skills. These limitations hinder the comprehensiveness and applicability of the self-assessment process, preventing the effective integration of analysis results into the organization's development strategy.

The study explores capacities of VET institutions which could be prioritized to conduct more effective and analytical self-assessments. Simultaneously, the surveys aimed to identify the key skill gaps that remain challenging for VET institutions and require development.

Chart 1. Capacities prioritized VET institutions to conduct effective self-assessment



As shown in the chart, 75.41% of the 61 respondents indicated that **data collection and management** is the top priority for conducting effective self-analysis. In the subsequent data

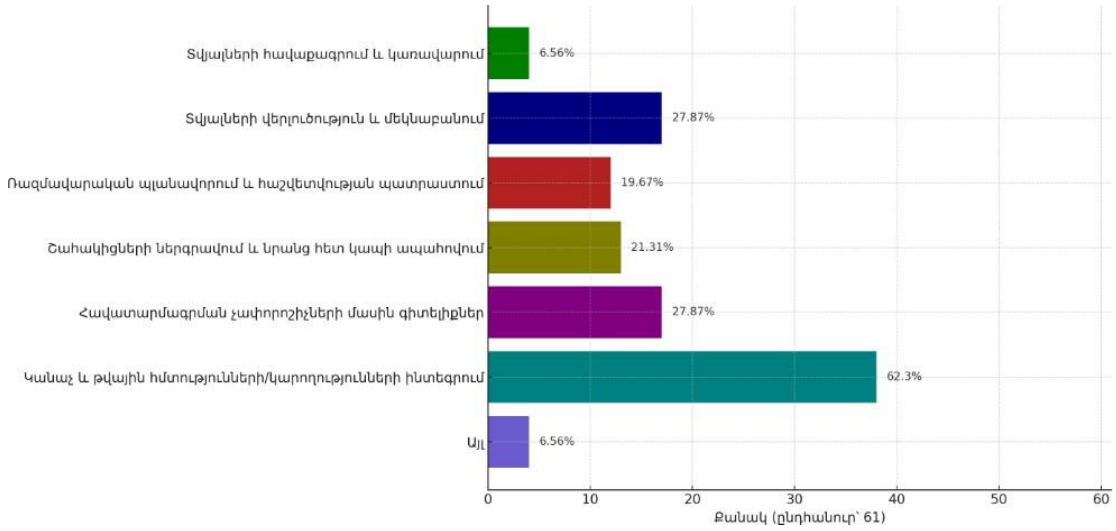
utilization phase, **data analysis and interpretation** scored highest at 88.52%, indicating that a significant portion of respondents also value the use of analytical tools. This component received the highest rating among all survey responses.

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

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

Beyond emphasizing the importance of the aforementioned skills for effective self-analysis, the study also addressed the following question: which competencies VET institutions *perceive as gaps and in need of development* within their own institutions.

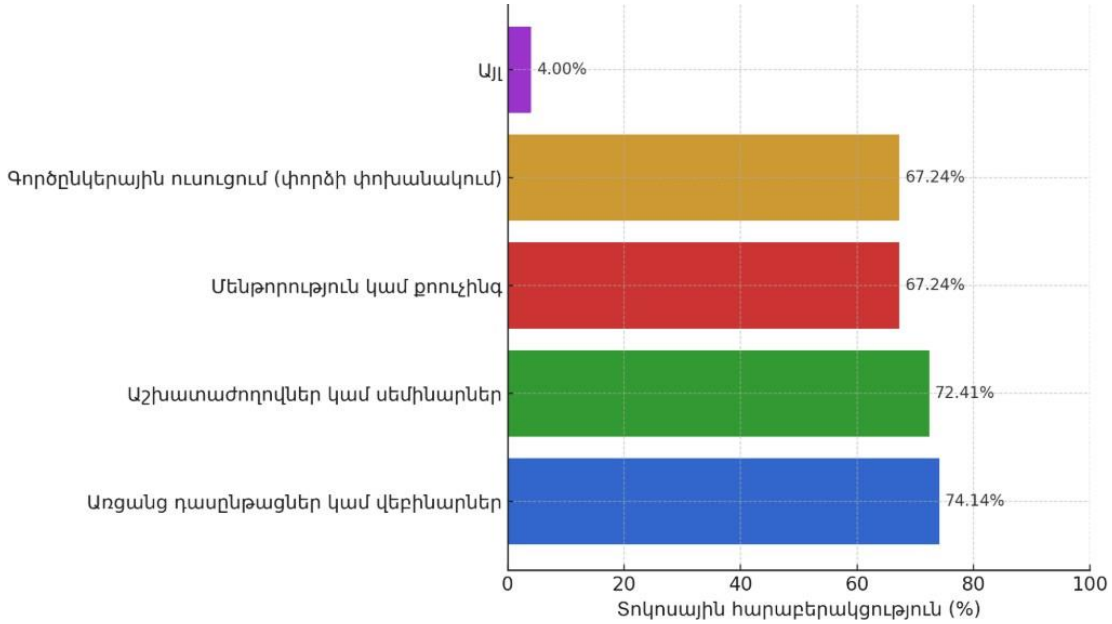
Chart 2. Competency Gaps Identified by VET Institutions



The survey results indicate that the skill gap in VET institutions is most pronounced in the "**Integration of Green and Digital Skills**" component, noted by 62.3% of respondents. Moreover, a need for skills development was identified in several other areas. Specifically, 27.87% cited "**Data Analysis and Interpretation**", and the same percentage (27.87%) cited "**Knowledge of Accreditation**

Criteria". The latter, in particular, may be explained by the fact that approximately 15% of the surveyed VET institutions still lack accreditation experience, and developing these skills would support their preparation process. A skill gap in the "**Stakeholder Engagement and Communication**" component was reported by 21.31%, and in "**Strategic Planning and Reporting**" by 19.67%. Only 6.56% of respondents highlighted "**Other**" types of needs in their answers, specifically the need to improve foreign language proficiency and develop benchmarking skills. The study also examined the **preferred training and support formats** for VET institutions, which could be effectively applied to address the skill gaps mentioned above.

Chart 3. Preferred Skills Development Formats for VET Institutions

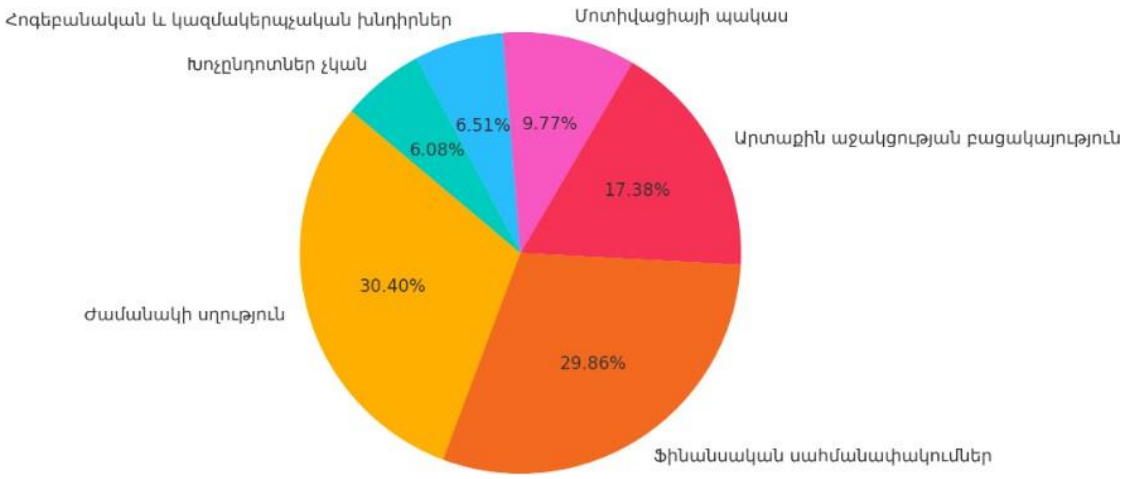


The results indicate that the majority of survey participants prefer online courses and webinars (74.14%), reflecting their preference for distant learning opportunities due to time and space savings. At the same time, workshops and seminars hold considerable importance (72.41%), demonstrating participants' interest in practical and direct interaction, particularly in contexts requiring active discussion and collaboration with experts and peers on relevant topics.

Additionally, participants valued mentoring and coaching methods (67.24%), citing the provision of personalized support and skill development tailored to individual needs. Peer learning methods were equally rated (67.24%), indicating that participants prioritize knowledge exchange and collaborative work with other VET institutions to implement innovative ideas and approaches.

During the survey, the "Other" option was also noted, where 3.45% of respondents proposing the development and provision of guidelines as an effective tool for self-directed learning and professional development. Meanwhile, some institutions mentioned that they currently do not require training or additional support. Regarding barriers hindering VET institutions staff participation in training programs, the following trends are existed:

Chart 4: Main Barriers of Training Participation



Survey results indicate that the main obstacles to participating in training programs are primarily related to time and budget constraints:

1. **Time Scarcity (30.40%):** This is the most common barrier, cited by the majority of 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 reduce their opportunities for participation.
2. **Financial Constraints (29.86%):** This barrier was also frequently mentioned by respondents. Organizing training programs is difficult due to a lack of financial resources, as some institutions lack sufficient funds to organize the quality training programs necessary for their staff.
3. **Lack of External Support (17.38%):** Participants indicated that the absence of external support (e.g., a shortage of organizations providing free training with support from various funds) hinders participation in training programs. This issue is particularly noticeable in institutions lacking external partners or opportunities for experience exchange.

4. **Lack of Motivation (9.77%):** This barrier was also noted by participants, who emphasized that training programs are not always perceived as interesting or useful.
5. **Psychological and Organizational Issues (6.51%):** Some participants mentioned that psychological reasons (e.g., lack of self-confidence or resistance to new methods) can hinder participation in training. This problem is also linked to cultural and managerial factors, such as when training programs are not encouraged by management. Additionally, in the case of online training, technical problems (insufficient internet quality, lack of suitable equipment) could barrier effective participation.
6. **No Such Barriers Exist (6.51%):** Some participants stated that such barriers do not exist in their institutions.

CONCLUSION

Summarizing the research findings leads to the following conclusions:

1. **VET institutions** require capacity development in several areas, driven by both modern educational demands and the need to effectively implement the accreditation process. The integration of digital and green skills (62.3%) was most emphasized, highlighting the need for technological transformation and strengthening sustainable development approaches. Demand for data analysis and interpretation skills (27.87%) is also quite high, necessary for evidence-based decision-making and developing analytical capabilities. Other key areas include stakeholder engagement mechanisms (21.31%), and strategic planning and reporting (19.67%). Within this context, interest in benchmarking methodology (6.56%) also stands out, aiming to identify development paths by analyzing and comparatively evaluating best practices within the sector.
2. To conduct more effective self-assessments, **VET institutions** need more intensive training and capacity development, platforms for experience exchange, revision of criteria and clarification of methodology, development of material-technical bases and digital tools, and the creation of data accumulation systems.