

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EXPERTS

Terms of reference for on-site activities and missions

**Action code and partner country:** SOCIEUX 2022-08 AZERBAIJAN

**Action title:** Mapping and improvement of VET services providers in Azerbaijan

**Partner institution:** State Employment Agency (Ministry of Labour and Social Protection)

**Activity number and title:**

Activity 3 – Showcase of EU good practices in VET and as well as digitalization of VET

**Date of implementation of activity: 7 November until 16 December 2022 (on site mission from 21 November until 2 December 2022)**

**Expert positions and responsibilities (by activity):**

Activity 3 : Expert 1 (principal) – **Employment services, Vocational training, Vocational guidance, Organ. structures, roles and arrangements**

Activity 3 : Expert 2 – **Employment services, Governance, transparency & accountability**

**Workload:**

Activity 3 - Expert 1 : 20 days

Activity 3 - Expert 2 : 19 days

**Call for experts' reference:** **22-08/AZE/3**

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## 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1.1 Country overview

Azerbaijan is situated in southwestern Asia. It is bordered by the Caspian Sea in east, Iran in the south, Armenia in the west and Georgia and Russia in the north. The capital of Azerbaijan is Baku. The population of the country was estimated at 10, 197, 000 in 2021. It is a unitary multiparty republic with a single legislative house. It's president is Ilham Aliyev, assisted by a Prime Minister, Ali Asadov. The official language is Azerbaijani.

Azerbaijan was an independent nation from 1918 to 1920 but was then incorporated into the Soviet Union. The country declared sovereignty on September 1989 and independence on August 1991.

Azerbaijan is a developed industrial and agrarian country with two traditional industries: petroleum and natural gas. Engineering, light industry and food production are also of growing importance. The country's agriculture developed considerably in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Almost half of the country's total area is suitable for agriculture. The country's industrial base is varied: power, manufacturing, chemical production, mineral fertilizers, gasoline, kerosene, herbicides, industrial oils, synthetic rubber, and plastics. Light industrial manufactures include cotton and wool textiles, knitwear, footwear. Azerbaijan exports chemicals, machinery, food (grapes and other fruits and vegetables) beverages, petroleum and natural gas, iron and steel, nonferrous metals. The country's primary trading partners are Russia, Turkey, China and Italy. There are also links to Georgia, Belarus, Britain, Israel, and Central Asian republics<sup>1</sup>.

The country's economy grew by 2.2% in 2019, it's best performance since 2014. Non-energy GDP grew at a solid 3.5% with agriculture and services driving the expansion. Official national poverty rate is low, standing at 5.1% in 2018. Inflation remained low in 2019 and early 2020, annual consumer prices edged up to 2.8% year on year in February 2020<sup>2</sup>.

### 1.2 Sector situation

Azerbaijan achieved extensive economic progress over the past decade. Economic stability and oil-related foreign direct investments generated rapid economic growth. Taking advantage of this growth, the country initiated large public sector investment programmes and supportive policies to increase social welfare of the population, as well as institutional reforms intended at modernizing the economy. This translated into poverty reduction<sup>3</sup>.

Increased population of working age, and of people aged 65+ will undoubtedly have an effect on the labour market, but also on social security systems. It create a substantial need for creating permanent and decent jobs over the coming years. The government has taken steps with a view to create more jobs: promotion of private investment and an environment that enables creation of sustainable enterprises.

The proportion of public sector employees declined and share of non-State employees and self-employed increased. In 2015, 76% of new jobs were created by entrepreneurs and self-employed, which proves stable economic situation, but poses risk of creating an informal economy. This continues to be a challenge, although successful counter-measures have been undertaken to tackle this issue (e-system to register labour contracts).

Azerbaijan succeeded in reaching an unemployment rate of 5% at the end of 2015.

Azerbaijan has approved an action plan for 2020-2025 to implement the country's Employment Strategy, signed by a presidential decree. The document forms a state employment policy aimed at ensuring effective employment based on the country's demographic characteristics, development prospects and economic priorities. The strategy also aims at supporting micro, small and medium sized enterprises.

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<sup>1</sup> [Azerbaijan - People | Britannica](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Azerbaijan Overview: Development news, research, data | World Bank](#)

<sup>3</sup> Decent work county programme of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2016-2020, [wcms\\_531140.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

The implementation would see unemployment rate dropping to 4%, rise official employment to 80%, reducing youth unemployment, and increasing the number of regional vocational education centers to 10.

In Azerbaijan, formal vocational education is provided by public and private vocational education institutions, informal by state-owned enterprises and private companies. A VET institution can obtain a license for its operations according to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on licenses and permits.

### **1.3 Role of partner institution in the sector**

Azerbaijan is a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) since 1992, and has so far ratified 57 Conventions of the Organization including "On forced labor"(No 29), "On discrimination in labor and employment" (No 111), "On employment policy" (No 122), "On Organization of Employment Service" (No88)," "On Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities" (No 159).

The State Employment Agency operates under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Azerbaijan. As government institution, the Agency assists unemployed job seeking citizens in their reintegration into the labour market. The Agency's primary objective is increasing the population's employment possibilities, assisting with decent jobs, and increasing employee productivity. To emphasize, the Agency's key focus is on organizing vocational training and enhancing the skills and capacities of unemployed and jobseekers.

The Agency's mandate can be summarized as follows:

- To increase employment opportunities by contributing to the development of professional skills and vocational education
- To develop policies in order to decrease long-term unemployment, increase employment quality, and ensure decent work
- To formalize effective measures to address unemployment
- To balance labor supply and demand as well as achieve full employment by determining labor market requirements
- To provide temporary financial support to unemployed persons
- To develop and ensure the implementation of employment directed activities within the framework of social dialogue
- To detect and prevent informal employment

There is an analogue project developed for the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population within AAP 2018. In specific, the analogue project aims to support the development of career guidance and specialised training programmes for adults in the lifelong learning context including for special target groups (unemployed youth, military veterans, disabled); support the institutional development of Vocational Training Centres; support the National Observatory on Labour Market and Social Protection Affairs (NO) to develop further the skills matching system.

## **2 ACTION DESCRIPTION**

### **2.1 Overall objective**

Institutional capacities of employment, labour and social protection institutions are strengthened and reinforced.

### **2.2 Specific objective (s) (purpose)**

- To improve the quality, curriculum content, reach, and governance of VET services in Azerbaijan
- The State Employment Agency uses innovative and modern tools for VET, drawing on EU good practices, and has at hand practical approaches to start implementing VET online

### **2.3 Expected results**

- A mapping and assessment of VET providers in Azerbaijan is drafted
- VET providers have increased capacities and harmonized services
- A benchmarking of EU practices in VET including a roadmap to support the digitalization of VET is provided to the State Employment Agency

## 2.4 Final deliverables

- A report on the state of play and mapping of current VET providers
- Pedagogical tools, guidelines for operationalization of VET services and M&E mechanism
- A showcase of EU good practices in VET and a roadmap to support digitalization of VET

## 3 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 General methodology (of the action)

This technical assistance provided by SOCIEUX+ through mobilized EU public experts will be performed on site. **The Agency will designate a focal point that will accompany experts throughout their mission. The Agency will be responsible for setting up meetings and liaising with stakeholders to meet for the benefit of the activity.**

Experts will be tasked with outlining a mapping of the existing VET providers with consultation with the Agency, a state-of-play of the current situation and governance mechanism between the Agency and the service providers, and identifying which sectors are not covered by the current providers, and potential shortcomings.

Subsequent to the first activity, which will provide the Agency with a mapping and assessment of VET providers, and after identifying potential shortcomings, this second activity will focus on drafting a framework/roadmap to reinforce and ensure quality and harmonization of the capacity of VET providers. Experts will deliver training and pedagogical modules and elaborate guidelines for operationalization of VET services and to ensure the harmonization and quality of services, a monitoring and evaluation tool of services.

The outcome of the third activity will be for the agency to build capacity to implement systematic approaches to innovation and digitalization of VET. Experts could showcase good practices in VET from Sweden, Germany, Finland and Denmark. This is TBD by the experts while preparing their workshop. The experts shall take into account, while drafting their report, the European framework for digitally competent educational organizations.

### 3.2 Planned activities (work plan of the action)

The following activities are currently planned for the action:

- Activity 1 – Mapping and assessment of VET providers
- Activity 2 – Framework to reinforce and ensure quality of VET providers. Elaboration of guidelines for operationalization of VET services and M&E mechanism
- **Activity 3 – Showcase of EU good practices in VET and as well as digitalization of VET**

The present terms of reference cover the services expected for activities of the above work plan:

- **Activity 3**

### 3.3 Inclusion of cross-cutting issues

SOCIEUX+ recognises the importance to include cross-cutting issues in social protection, labour and employment policies and systems. The following cross-cutting issues are duly taken into account:

- Good governance;
- Human rights (including rights of children, people living with disabilities, vulnerable groups and minorities); and,
- Social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups.

## 4 ACTIVITIES DESCRIPTION

### 4.1 Tasks

The principal expert will lead the on-site mission. He/she will be responsible for the delivery of all deliverables of the activity (see below Section **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**). He/she will be responsible for the preparation, coordination, implementation and reporting of the overall activity towards SOCIEUX+.

The main tasks of the mission team include:

- Ahead of the action to get substantial knowledge of the local context;
- As soon as possible, experts will make preliminary contacts with the Partner in view of the preparation of the mission's methodology and agenda, to be transmitted ahead of the mission to the SOCIEUX+ team for approval;
- Taking part to the pre-mission briefing with SOCIEUX+ team (around 1 week before the start of the action);
- To make themselves available for a briefing meeting with the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan (SOCIEUX+ will introduce the experts to the focal point within the EU Delegation);
- When arriving on site, mobilized experts will meet with the key staff of the Agency, in order to perhaps adjust the planning and gain a definitive list of stakeholders to meet.
- During the mission, to conduct consultations with the Agency's key staff. The partner institution shall facilitate and arrange the meetings in Baku;
- Experts will deliver a workshop showcasing good practices in VET from for example Sweden, Germany, Finland and Denmark.
- Experts will showcase also approaches to innovation and digitalization of VET;
- The experts shall take into account, while drafting their final report, the European framework for digitally competent educational organizations;
- To present the outcomes of the mission to the partner in order to discuss and take into account comments on the contents of the deliverables before their finalization;
- At the end of the mission, timely submission to SOCIEUX+ of the final deliverables (10 working days after the mission), and availability to go through an eventual round of comments and adjustments in interaction with SOCIEUX+ and the Partner;
- To channel to SOCIEUX+ Communication officer any material that can be useful to inform the public about the activity (pictures, interviews, brief notes or articles);
- To use the different templates and evaluation forms provided by the SOCIEUX+ team.

### 4.2 Deliverables

#### 4.2.1 Pre-mission deliverables

- P1: A methodological note, detailing the working approach, tools and methods to employ, a risks analysis, etc. The Methodological Note shall not exceed 3 pages (excluding cover page and annexes).
- P2: A activity/mission agenda, detailing the meetings and working sessions to be held, persons to meet, etc. The Activity/mission Agenda shall not exceed 2 pages.

#### 4.2.2 Final deliverables

- D1: An individual Expert Mission Report (ExMR) in SOCIEUX+ format (template provided). This report is a confidential product intended solely for and use by SOCIEUX+. The expert team may also submit a single-joint ExMR report if they prefer to do so (see instructions on the template).
- D2: An individual completed Expert Feedback Form (ExF) completed online (see instructions and link on the ExMR template).
- D3: A collective Activity Report (AcR) in SOCIEUX+ format (template provided). This AcR is to be produced jointly by the mission team. It is intended for the Partner Institution, and will be shared, most probably, with key stakeholders of the action. The report will reflect the tasks conducted in during the activity. It shall provide a meaningful contribution towards the final deliverables of the action.
- Technical deliverables: workshop on good EU practices on VET and approaches to innovation and digitalization of VET. A final report with roadmap for digitalization of VET in Azerbaijan.

## 5 REPORTING AND SUBMISSION OF DELIVERABLES

### 5.1 Formats

*All deliverables and products of the activity* (notes, reports, presentations, etc) shall comply with the formats and templates provided by the SOCIEUX+ Team.

All deliverables are to be submitted in electronic in *electronic editable versions* [Microsoft Word 97-2003 [doc], PowerPoint 97-2003 [ppt] and Excel 97-2003 [xls]; or in equivalent OpenDocument format). Non-editable electronic document such as in Portable Document Format (PDF) shall not be accepted.

*Templates for electronic presentations* during the activity/mission are provided by the SOCIEUX+ Team. These templates are in Microsoft PowerPoint format and comply with the SOCIEUX+ Corporate Image standards. These templates are to be used as a sole format by all members of the expert mission team. They are to be used *for all presentations by the experts* during and for the activity/mission. The use by the experts of their own, or their organisation(s), templates or formats are not allowed unless otherwise instructed in written [by email] to the experts by the SOCIEUX+ Team.

All versions of deliverables or other products used or produced during activity/mission by the experts shall include the following disclaimer:

*"Disclaimer:*

*The responsibility of this publication sole lies with its authors. The European Union, the European Commission, the implementation partners of SOCIEUX+ and the SOCIEUX+ Staff are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein."*

*Please refer to the expert information package for further guidance on communication and templates.*

All deliverables are to be provided in English.

### 5.2 Submission and approval

*All deliverables versions (drafts, final or other) shall be submitted directly and only to SOCIEUX+ Team, unless otherwise instructed in written [by email] to the experts by the SOCIEUX+ Team.*

#### 5.2.1 Pre-mission deliverables

- Pre-mission deliverables shall be submitted *no later than 5 working days before the start of activity or departure of the mission of the experts, whichever is the earliest.*
- Pre-mission deliverables will be shared and reviewed by the SOCIEUX+ and the Partner Institution. *Feedback on the deliverables should be provided to the Principal Expert at latest 2 days before the start of activity or departure of the mission of the experts, whichever is the earliest.* Comments and recommendation of this feedback shall be taken into account for the

implementation of the activity/mission by the experts. Only the mission agenda shall be resubmitted with revision if requested by the SOCIEUX+ Team.

### 5.2.2 Final deliverables

- The first draft versions of the final deliverables are to be submitted no later than 10 working days upon completion of the activity or return of the experts.
- Feedback to the first draft version of the report should be provided 10 working days after its submission.
- Inclusion of the feedback on drafts versions is expected 5 working days upon reception of the comments by the principal expert. (In general, no more than one round of feedback and revision is required, unless the quality of the deliverables is considered unsatisfactory by the SOCIEUX+ Team or/and the Partner Institution.)
- Final versions of the deliverables should be approved or rejected no later than 10 working days upon their submission to the SOCIEUX+ Team.
- Final payments and reimbursement of travel costs to experts can only be authorised upon approval of the final version of the deliverables by SOCIEUX+.

## 6 REQUIRED EXPERTISE

### 6.1 Expertise profile

#### **Principal expert (Expert #1):**

***Area(s) of expertise: Employment services, Vocational training, Vocational guidance***

***Specific skill(s) of expertise: Organ. structures, roles and arrangements***

#### ***Requirements (essential/required):***

- Education: university level (Masters or PhD relating to the subject are considered a plus)
- At least 15 years of professional experience within EU public administrations or, international organisations, academia, social partners, civil society organizations, international thematic organizations
- Experience of missions of systemic and organizational diagnosis of intermediation services on the labour market and vocational training;
- Experience on elaborating giving trainings, elaborating guidelines and creating Monitoring & Evaluation tools;
- Deep knowledge of the current challenges of the labour market and of VET tendencies
- Fluent in English, written and oral; knowledge of Azerbaijani or Turkish will be considered a plus;
- Sense of diplomacy and institutional relations.

#### **Expert #2**

***Area(s) of expertise: Employment services***

***Specific skill(s) of expertise: Governance, transparency & accountability***

#### ***Requirements (essential/required):***

- Education: university level (Masters or PhD relating to the subject are considered a plus)
- At least 10 years of professional experience within EU public administrations or, international organisations, academia, social partners, civil society organizations, international thematic organizations
- Experience of missions of systemic and organizational diagnosis of intermediation services on the labour market and vocational training;
- Fluent in English, written and oral; knowledge of Azerbaijani or Turkish will be considered a plus;

- Sense of diplomacy and institutional relations.

## 6.2 Estimated workload

	Preparation	On-site work	Travel	Reporting & deliverables	Total
Principal expert (#1)	4	10	2	4	<b>20</b>
Expert (#2)	4	10	2	3	<b>19</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>39</b>

## 7 APPLICATIONS

### 7.1 Call for experts

All calls for experts for SOCIEUX+ activities are published online on the SOCIEUX+ website. Interested experts should submit their application on the SOCIEUX+ on-line expert database: <https://pmt.socieux.eu> (currently only available in English). The application process is:

1. If they have not already, experts create their SOCIEUX+ account by clicking on "Create an account" using an email address.
2. Login details for their account will be sent to experts by email, experts should create and submit their profile for review by<sup>4</sup>:
  - a. Providing contact details
  - b. Providing information on the competences, skills and working history of the expert. Experts are required to provide only limited information through fields marked with an asterisk. However, *experts are encouraged to complete in most detail the sections on skills and competences as the SOCIEUX+ Team also regularly reviews profiles in the roster to identify and contact potential experts for future missions.*
  - c. Uploading of a curriculum vitae, preferably in Europass format<sup>5</sup>.
3. Once their profile is approved by the SOCIEUX+ Team, they can apply to any available calls for experts accessible under the tab "Call for experts" and click on "Apply."

If more information is needed, please contact SOCIEUX+ by email at [experts@socieux.eu](mailto:experts@socieux.eu) with the reference number of the application.

Collaborative or interested institutions wishing to make expertise available for a specific call for application may directly contact the team of SOCIEUX+ at [experts@socieux.eu](mailto:experts@socieux.eu).

### 7.2 Selection of experts

In principle, SOCIEUX+ mobilises experts from the public administrations and mandated bodies of EU member states, and practitioners working for social partners, including:

- Practitioners, civil servants and employees from publicly mandated bodies;
- Collaborators and employees of social partner institutions, such as trade unions and employer associations; and,
- Academic and research institutions.

<sup>4</sup> SOCIEUX+ expert database and other management tools comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) -Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

<sup>5</sup> Europass templates for CVs are available here: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions>

Active public experts from collaborative institutions are given priority in the selection. Private consultants may also apply. Their application will be considered in case an appropriate public expert cannot be identified.

Only short-listed applicants may be contacted. The selection process may include interviews by phone or other communication means.

Interested candidates may download the **Guide for Experts and Collaborative Institutions** with detailed information on contracting with SOCIEUX+ at [www.socieux.eu](http://www.socieux.eu)

### 7.3 Contracting of public experts

Public experts can be in active duty or retired. Retired employees from international specialised agencies or cooperation agencies can also be mobilised, without regard to their former employer's collaborating with SOCIEUX+ on a specific action. Retired experts are considered as public experts for all purposes, benefits, and financial compensation provided by SOCIEUX+.

Short-listed candidates may be required to provide the contact of employer or proof of their ability to be directly contracted under their status as civil servant or public employee.

### 7.4 Financial compensations

Contract officials or active-duty or retired employees are entitled to standard fixed allowances of 350 euros per working day worked. The fees of private consultants are negotiated according to their number of years of relevant expertise and the standard scale of SOCIEUX+.

Retired experts are assimilated to public employees for all intents and purposes, benefits and financial compensation provided by SOCIEUX+.

National regulations on remuneration and compensation of public employees and civil servants applies, and may limit the payment of allowances by SOCIEUX+. The responsibility for compliance and verification lies with individual experts and their institutions of origin. The payment of income or other taxes is the sole responsibility of the mobilised experts and/or their organisations.

### 7.5 Travel costs

All travel expenses for the mobilised experts (public, private or international institutions) are covered by SOCIEUX in accordance with the **Guide for Experts and Collaborative institutions** with detailed information on contracting with SOCIEUX+ (version as on date of signature of the contract).

## 8 COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY

SOCIEUX + can use its communication channels, such as the web, newsletter and other media, to share information about the implementation and results of the activities. For this, contributions of the experts mobilised are expected. The experts may be requested to provide such contributions in the field of communication as photographs, provide short texts, and interviews.

Short briefings, before and after the mission, with the Communication Officer of SOCIEUX+. This briefings will provide the opportunity to identify communication opportunities and strategies.

For specific activities, visibility products, such as brochures, USB sticks, notebooks and pens, can be made available to experts for on-site distribution.

## 9 CODE OF CONDUCT

The experts mobilised by SOCIEUX+ will provide technical assistance from the preparatory stages of each activity to the delivery of products. The SOCIEUX+ Team will assist experts to fulfil their assignments by supporting and advising on the preparation of background materials before meetings. The SOCIEUX+ team will collect feedback from partner institutions and relevant stakeholders to ensure that mission reports and recommendations are delivered to national authorities, the EU Delegations in the partner countries and EuropeAid.

The experts mobilised are not representing SOCIEUX+ or the EU. Technical opinions and recommendations expressed are their own. They shall not express negative opinions on the implementation of actions supported by SOCIEUX+ to third-parties. Nevertheless, they shall be

aware of SOCIEUX+'s objectives and functioning, and promote its services at the best of their knowledge, whenever possible and feasible.

The experts shall perform their duties in the Partner Country in a way that is fully compliant with and respectful of the local institutions, policies and cultural behaviours. They shall particularly adopt a culturally-sensitive behaviour in their way to deal with the local counterparts.

## **10 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

*If applicable*

...Text...

## **11 ANNEXES**

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