



Objective of the Conference

The conference aims to open a structured regional dialogue that leads to a draft regional framework of standards for providing career development services to students in educational institutions across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The framework will build on national and regional experiences, international standards and practices, and the expertise of practitioners and decision-makers, in order to support service quality, practitioner competence, ethical practice, and stronger impact.

Strategic Objectives

1. Build a shared regional understanding of the concept, scope, and role of career guidance and career development in educational institutions.
2. Present international frameworks and current practices in the region, and identify the practices that can be further developed and scaled up.
3. Collect and document the input of experts, practitioners, and policymakers, and turn it into a professional basis for the first draft of the regional framework.
4. Propose the components of the regional framework, including practitioner competencies, service quality standards, ethical standards, quality assurance mechanisms, and other relevant elements.
5. Strengthen the multi-stakeholder dialogue on quality career guidance in the region.

Four Main Themes

1. The Institutional Role of Educational Institutions: A Systemic Approach to Career Guidance

This theme looks at career guidance as a responsibility of the whole institution. Based on the Psychology of Working Theory, access to decent work depends on contextual barriers such as economic constraints and marginalization, and not only on students' choices. Therefore, schools, universities, and TVET institutions have a role in reducing these barriers and building students' career adaptability. Drawing on the Gatsby Benchmarks (Holman, 2014), the theme will discuss what this role looks like in practice and how it can be adapted to the MENA context throughout the student learning journey.

2. Experiences and Practices Across the Region

Case studies from different countries in the region will present real models and answer practical questions: how career guidance is delivered in schools and universities, which education-to-work

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programmes are offered and who is responsible for them, which standards are used, how service providers are trained, what roles ministries and labour market institutions play, and what the main challenges and lessons learned are.

3. Practitioner Competencies and Qualifications

This theme asks who provides career guidance services in schools and universities and what competencies they need. It also looks at the available training, certification, and continuing professional development (CPD) mechanisms, how service quality is supervised, and how far career practitioners in schools and universities are connected to the labour market.

4. Quality Standards for Career Guidance Services in Educational Institutions

This theme reviews national and international standards for delivering career development services in educational institutions, taking into account the regional context and digital transformation. It discusses how competency, ethical, and implementation standards can be applied and monitored, as well as the standards needed for education-to-work programmes in the different types of educational institutions.

Towards Building the Draft Regional Framework

After the sessions on the four themes, participants will share their thoughts and ideas for the draft regional framework through an online platform. The conference management will then collect and present them in the closing session. After the conference, the draft will be reviewed in depth by small committees formed during the conference, such as committees for pre-university education, higher education, and TVET, ... Etc. And this work will continue until the end of Feb. 2027. The draft will then be shared for a wider consultation with stakeholders, with the aim of reaching agreement on a regional reference framework.

Expected Output

A documented draft of a regional framework for career guidance standards in education in the MENA region, together with a clear pathway for its validation and publication.

Career guidance² describes the services that help people of any age to make the educational, training and occupational choices that are meaningful for them over a lifetime. It helps them to acquire and develop the capacity to manage their careers ('career management skills'). [Investing in career guidance | ETF 2025](#)

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