

European  
Training  
Strategy

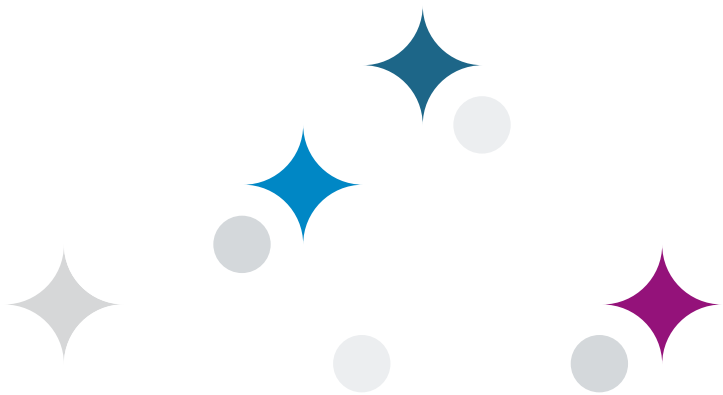
2021-2027

# European Training Strategy for youth work

A strategic framework for the development of youth worker education and training in Europe under the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes

**SALTO** TRAINING & COOPERATION





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# Introduction and background information

The motivation behind revising the European Training Strategy (ETS) was the need to provide extra support to the EU Youth Programmes, in specific areas of youth work. This particularly concerns **capacity-building in youth work and the education and training of youth workers**. The ETS aims at contributing to the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda through the Bonn process, the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, and the Council Conclusions on Education and Training of Youth Workers. Moreover, it intends to offer a framework that is, on the one hand, **at the service of the different initiatives** contributing to youth work development, and on the other hand, **a space for bringing forward innovative ideas** and projects.

The philosophies and the content of the ETS were defined in cooperation with the National Agencies (NAs) for Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps, the SALTO Resource Centres (SALTOs), other stakeholders in the field of youth and training of youth workers, and the ETS Advisory Group.

What was initially a series of strategic elements subsequently evolved into a consolidated strategy under the EU YOUTH Programme (2000-2006) and the EU Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013), the implementation of the ETS, developed and coordinated by the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre (SALTO T&C), and was first revised in 2010 (CJ/22/2010-2-EN).

Throughout this period, the ETS directly and indirectly supported hundreds of learning initiatives involving several thousands of participants active in youth work all over Europe, carried out successfully by a broad variety of stakeholders (e.g., NAs, youth organisations, trainers and youth workers). Among the achievements and contributions of the ETS so far are:

- Support for developing a common framework for youth worker training through European cooperation and a focus on competence-based approaches
- Steps toward a comprehensive framework for supporting training and youth work in the context of the EU Youth Programmes
- Input to improve the quantity and quality of training opportunities for youth workers and trainers working in European and international contexts
- Tools to support communication and cooperation of stakeholders providing training to youth workers
- Support to the network of NAs in improving the quality of their Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA) and Networking Activities (NET)<sup>1</sup>
- Support for implementing the Knowledge Management and Staff Training (KMST) competence framework for the NA network.

<sup>1</sup> The SALTO European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre focuses on NET. Together with the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, both endeavour to cooperate and update each other when it comes to training-related processes and support to NAs, in order to create synergies and avoid overlaps.



The ETS has continuously evolved and currently represents a European **strategic framework** that supports youth work development and promotes high-quality educational and capacity-building for youth workers, trainers, and the network of NAs.

The new ETS needs to **undergo an explicit shift** from broader and more conceptual dimensions to more concrete features connected to the education and training of youth workers from a non-formal education perspective. This shift has been effected in the form of **ETS Goals**, which should be understood as a blueprint for the education and training of youth workers in Europe, with a particular focus on quality, capacity building and recognition. The ETS Goals can also be described as **quintessential stepping stones** for the ETS to reach its vision and fulfil its purpose. They represent **not only what the ETS endeavours to be but also how it does so**. They identify specific target groups alongside a set of indicators to measure the progress and achievements made under the ETS.

While the **ETS Goals are interdependent and remain specific to the ETS**, they are also **strongly informed by other European and international youth work areas**. This is particularly relevant when it comes to knowledge-building initiatives and ensuring synergies between different processes and cooperation with the broader community of practice.

- **Knowledge about capacity building and training** of youth workers in Europe remains essential for developing quality youth work in Europe. However, we still need to know more about youth work and how it responds to the ever-changing realities of social, political and economic nature. It is therefore crucial to continue incorporating contributions from youth work research, specifically the work of RAY and PEYR.
- **Cooperating and establishing synergies** with other developments in the community of practice are intrinsically connected to implementing the ETS, its operationalisation, and its space for engagement. This means investing in connecting with processes led by European networks and platforms, steered by experts and working groups, and creating opportunities for cooperation.





## 2 Policy context

The primary basis for the renewed ETS is the decision to adopt a → **European Youth Work Agenda** (EYWA) and the new generation of programmes in the youth field. The EYWA is a strategic framework for strengthening and developing youth work policies and practices in Europe in the context of the EU Youth Strategy of the EU and the Council of Europe's 2030 strategy.

The → **Council resolution** on the framework for establishing an EYWA identifies the *competence of youth workers as one of the challenges: it is important to provide sufficient resources for youth work opportunities to continuously develop youth work, and to build quality within youth work. More **quality education and learning opportunities, as well as training and practical support for youth workers across the EU, need to be offered based on more knowledge and exchange and the recognition of the diverse range of competences. [...]***



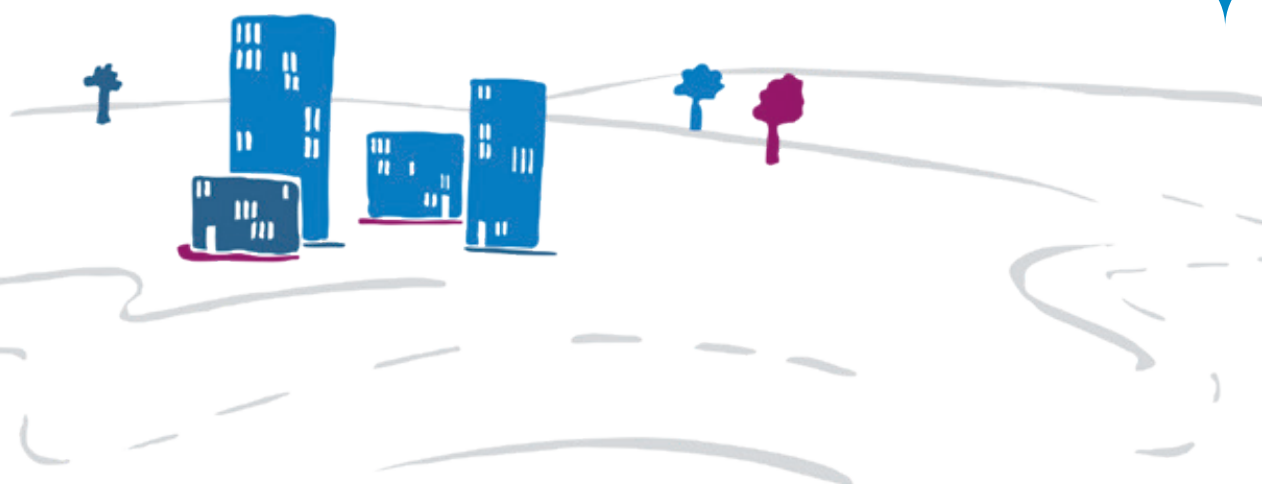


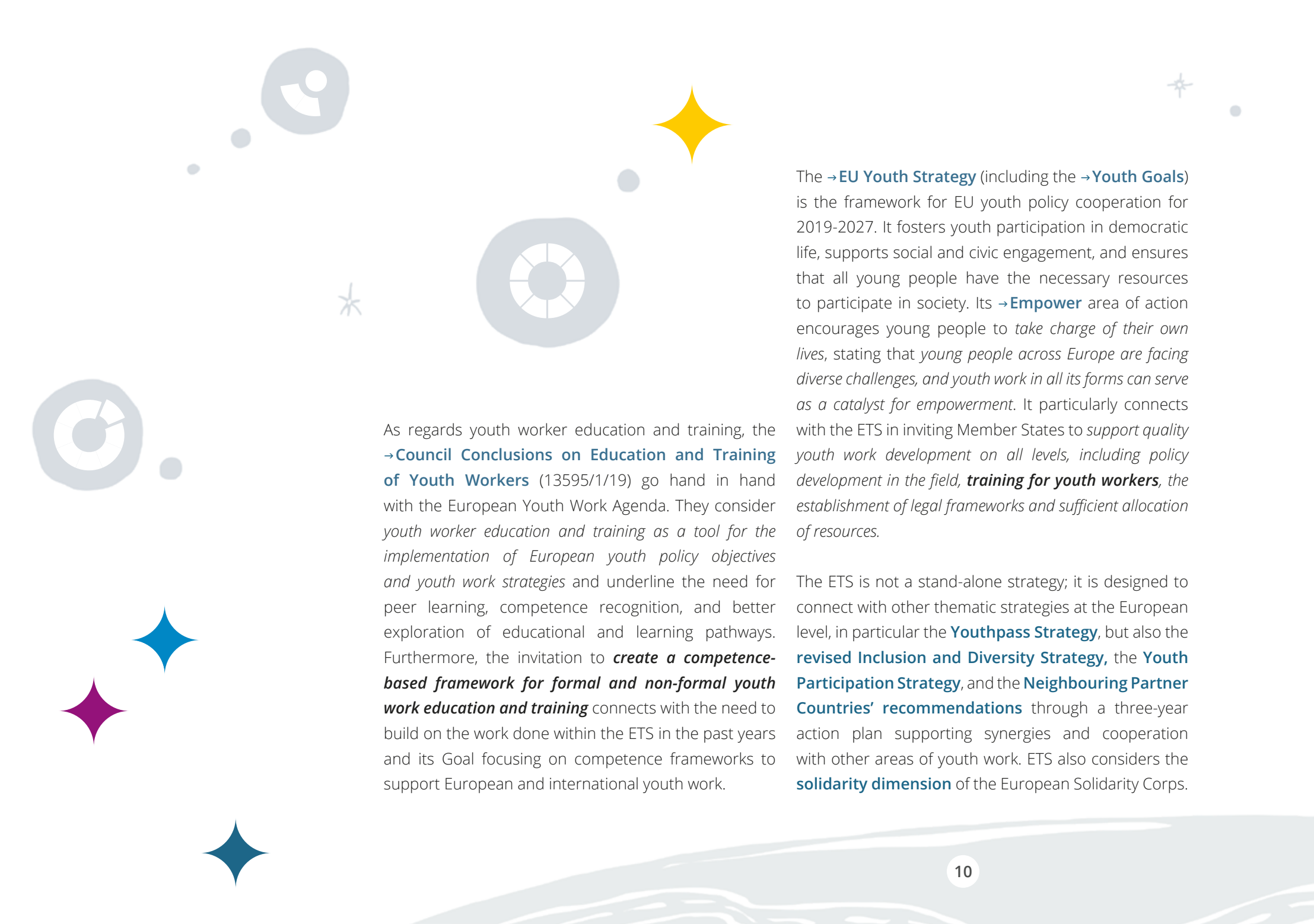
The EYWA aims to *enhance understanding of the concepts, methods and tools used for education and training in youth work, **further develop competence-based frameworks for formal and non-formal youth work education and training**, where applicable and provide the various actors involved in youth work with sufficient quality education, training, guidance and support.*

The EYWA foresees a coordinated approach of actors at different levels and in different fields of youth work. The ETS contributes to this approach and links up all the three elements of the EYWA, which are as follows:

- a) the political basis and commitment through the policy documents of the Council of Europe and the EU;
- b) the engagement of the youth work community of practice in the Member States and at the European level;
- c) the Bonn Process to implement the EYWA, which was launched during the 3rd European Youth Work Convention (December 2020).

The forthcoming →**Erasmus+** and →**European Solidarity Corps** Programmes in the field of youth for the period 2021-2027 include measures to support youth workers' learning and competence development and, in turn, will benefit the development of quality youth work. While Erasmus+ supports connecting projects and processes to the primary Goals of the ETS through **TCA, strategic partnerships and youth worker mobility**, the European Solidarity Corps connects to the Strategy through **exploring the values in and of youth work and, in particular, that of civic engagement and critical youth citizenship**. Therefore, the EU Youth Programmes are the core instruments for implementing the ETS, both in European youth work development and beyond, namely at the international level.






As regards youth worker education and training, the **→Council Conclusions on Education and Training of Youth Workers** (13595/1/19) go hand in hand with the European Youth Work Agenda. They consider *youth worker education and training as a tool for the implementation of European youth policy objectives and youth work strategies* and underline the need for peer learning, competence recognition, and better exploration of educational and learning pathways. Furthermore, the invitation to ***create a competence-based framework for formal and non-formal youth work education and training*** connects with the need to build on the work done within the ETS in the past years and its Goal focusing on competence frameworks to support European and international youth work.

The **→EU Youth Strategy** (including the **→Youth Goals**) is the framework for EU youth policy cooperation for 2019-2027. It fosters youth participation in democratic life, supports social and civic engagement, and ensures that all young people have the necessary resources to participate in society. Its **→Empower** area of action encourages young people to *take charge of their own lives*, stating that *young people across Europe are facing diverse challenges, and youth work in all its forms can serve as a catalyst for empowerment*. It particularly connects with the ETS in inviting Member States to *support quality youth work development on all levels, including policy development in the field, **training for youth workers**, the establishment of legal frameworks and sufficient allocation of resources*.

The ETS is not a stand-alone strategy; it is designed to connect with other thematic strategies at the European level, in particular the **Youthpass Strategy**, but also the **revised Inclusion and Diversity Strategy**, the **Youth Participation Strategy**, and the **Neighbouring Partner Countries' recommendations** through a three-year action plan supporting synergies and cooperation with other areas of youth work. ETS also considers the **solidarity dimension** of the European Solidarity Corps.



The →**Council Conclusions on Digital Youth Work** (2019/C 414/02) call for *invest[ing] in and set[ting] up guidelines for **building digital capacity among youth workers**, youth organisations and organisations doing youth work, where needed, and encourage youth workers and young people to **increase and improve their digital competences in a co-learning process***. This connects with processes initiated under the previous ETS to explore the digital dimension of youth workers' competences, particularly through their integration in the Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally.

In its →**Youth Sector Strategy 2030**, the Council of Europe declares youth work one of its priorities, with a particular focus on strengthening, recognising and promoting youth work policies and practices by embedding youth work in the youth policy framework, in particular through the EYWA and its implementation in close cooperation with the European Union.

The →**Council of Europe Recommendation on Youth Work** (2017) recommends[...] *establishing a **coherent and flexible competency-based framework for the education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers** that takes into account existing practice, new trends and arenas, as well as the diversity of youth work. It invites Member States to work with youth work providers and other stakeholders to develop a **set of core competences** [...] that should be expected from youth workers and to establish **frameworks, strategies, programmes and pathways for the education, training, capacity building and professional development of youth workers based on the agreed set of competences***. As for the above-mentioned Council Conclusions, this Recommendation emphasises one of the core Goals of the ETS, which is to focus on competence frameworks to support European and international youth work.

# 3 Vision and purpose of ETS

1

## Vision

The ETS is a strategic framework for developing high quality, innovative and sustainable youth work community that is **prepared and equipped to sense, acknowledge, address and respond to trends and opportunities for change**. This also includes other dimensions of youth work, such as the requirement for being attractive, needs-based and joyful.

While time-limited, the **ETS looks beyond 2027** and therefore **extends also to future generations of youth workers**. It calls for looking at youth work from the future, rather than solely from the past and for dimensions to change.

2

## Purpose

The ETS sustains capacity building and educational pathways for youth workers through supporting **competence-based** and coordinated **approaches to the education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers**. Through this, it endeavours to **enhance and strengthen quality youth work** in Europe and beyond.

The ETS understands European and international youth work and developments in the field as part of youth work and regards this as a guiding principle for its development and implementation. As a strategic framework **embedded in the Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps Programmes'** priorities and objectives, the ETS supports, develops and links different initiatives in youth work through a strong **connection with and contribution to the European Youth Work Agenda**.

## Theory of change, strategic orientations and ETS Goals

ETS is designed to become a reference point in youth work development in Europe and at the European level. Its theory of change is designed to support what the Strategy intends to achieve, and how. It considers the ETS from **two different perspectives: that of igniter and connector**.

Having been developed and reformatted, the strengths of the ETS are its **comprehensiveness and thoughtful connectedness to other processes, strategies, initiatives and large-scale projects** supporting quality youth work development in Europe. While these challenges make some areas of the ETS more complex to monitor, they correspond also to the parts of the Strategy dedicated to making synergies. However, the

ETS also seeks to **initiate and sustain longer-term processes**. Its ambition is to **create a systemic change and provide solutions** to improve visibility, recognition, and development in youth work in Europe through a series of measures. While this calls for the need to define its limits (and where its role as igniter turns into that of supporter and connector), it also allows the ETS to take a proactive role in conceptualising and defining actions that support capacity-building and quality developments in the youth field.

Three keywords summarise these two approaches towards understanding the ETS: **synergies, impulses, and operationalisation**. They lead to **four primary strategic orientations and seven specific Goals**.

1

## Support for and steering of institutional cooperation at the European level

ETS aims at strengthening quality youth work (development) by sustaining and maintaining its institutional framework. This involves looking at facilitating transnational cooperation, networking, and mutual learning among SALTOs and NAs and other stakeholders in the community of practice and beyond. Although ETS is a European strategy, this also means it looks at the links between the European and national levels and contributes to closing gaps in the national contexts regarding youth work development and recognition. In this context, ETS **endorses a role as strategic supporter that nurtures and inspires regional and national processes. Thus, it can potentially influence the quality of and reflections on training** at the national level. This strategic orientation is particularly relevant when looking at the meso level of intervention of the ETS, focusing on competence-development frameworks and processes.

### Goal 1:

Complement the actions connected to education and training of youth workers under the European Youth Work Agenda.

### Goal 2:

Tailored support for the work of the network of National Agencies of the EU Youth Programmes.

### Goal 3:

A quality assurance and comprehensive system that support trainers working at the European and international level.



### Goal 4:

A certificate and recognition scheme for trainers working at the European and international level.

2

## A comprehensive system to support European and international trainers' professional development


The ETS seeks to **cater to the needs of paid and volunteer professionals** who design, implement and participate in training and learning activities. It calls for **progressive development and a more systemic approach**, providing a more coherent path when designing those activities. For example, concrete steps towards modular training of trainers, a voluntary certification system for trainers, or an ETS label will create greater coherence and more recognition for trainers' work, whether in the context of full-time trainers or as a more occasional professional activity. This strategic orientation requires connecting with existing tools (e.g., TOY), paying particular attention to capacity-building mechanisms and directly connecting with the micro and macro levels of intervention.




## Recognition of the youth worker profession and validation of their competence development

This area aims to initiate and support processes and initiatives seeking to provide more recognition and visibility for youth workers as a profession - or occupation - and **youth work**. It looks at processes, activities, and tools supporting quality youth work in Europe through capacity building. It pays particular attention to further developing **tailored and modular learning opportunities and strengthening validation systems within** youth work (and non-formal education) to support the recognition of youth work at European and national levels. It calls for **strong support of and connection with the Youthpass Strategy**. This strategic orientation also connects with the micro and macro levels of intervention.

**Goal 5:**  
Recognised modular courses for youth workers working at the European and international level.




**Goal 6:**  
Validation of youth workers' competences and learning outcomes.

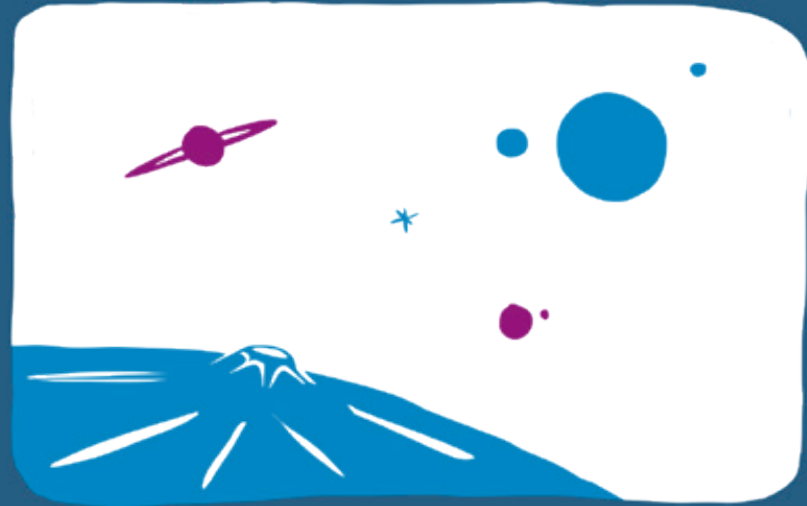


## Innovation for quality in youth work with a focus on youth worker education and training

In the role of igniter, the ETS experiments, explores and initiates responses to an ever-changing future in youth work. It looks at new concepts, approaches, and **transformation processes** for emerging challenges and developments. Moreover, following its ambition to create synergies, it also connects **with other frameworks, initiatives and projects** (SNACs, KA2, the European Academy on Youth Work, among others) that either support or are directly linked to competence development. This can be done by directly contributing to (participating in) steering mechanisms or supporting knowledge-building and supporting material development.



**Goal 7:**  
Pilot initiatives and innovative approaches towards the development of quality, sustainable and future-fit youth work.



# 4

## The ETS Goals<sup>2</sup>

The list below needs to be understood as non-exhaustive and in constant flux so it can respond to the needs of and necessary changes in European youth work and beyond. Neither does it solely refer to processes and initiatives that are steered and led by the ETS.

<sup>2</sup>Note: The goals are not listed by order of importance, in spite of their numbering.

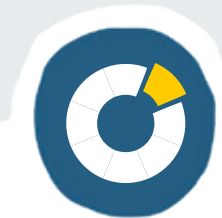


## Goal 1: Complement the actions connected to education and training of youth workers under the European Youth Work Agenda

**Rationale:** The final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention references the education and training of youth workers in the framework of the Bonn Process. In the chapters on Quality development and Recognition, the Declaration calls for better outreach and information about existing support structures and mechanisms” (...) such as the European Training Strategy and invites to connect (...) with current thematic strategies such as the European Training Strategy and the Youthpass Strategy. This requires the ETS to pay particular attention to developments that support and contribute to the main objectives of the EYWA.

- Objectives:**
- Contribute to a better understanding of concepts, terminologies, methods and tools used for education and training in youth work.
  - Connect with the development of competence-based frameworks (systems) for youth worker training.
  - Take an active role in designing youth workers' formal education pathways
  - Support the actors involved in youth work with sufficient quality education, training, and guidance.
  - Establish a monitoring and evaluation system to implement competence-based approaches, focusing on the ETS competence models and the KMST competence framework.
  - Connect with research-related processes, e.g., RAY and the work of the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership.

<sup>2</sup>Note: The goals are not listed by order of importance, in spite of their numbering.



## Goal 2: Tailored support for the work of the network of National Agencies of the EU Youth Programmes

**Rationale:** The ETS should be mindful of the different stakeholders and instruments that support the development of youth work and, in particular, the focus on youth worker education and training. In their role as implementers of the EU Youth Programmes through TCA and NET activities and longer-term strategic projects, the NAs and SALTO Resource Centres play a crucial role in proposing and developing quality training for trainers and youth workers. The ETS therefore incorporates a series of support tools and mechanisms tailored to NAs..

- Objectives:**
- Strengthen the ongoing development of TCA and NET<sup>3</sup> as processes and instruments that contribute to developing quality youth work in Europe.
  - Design and implement tailored courses and meetings for staff of NAs on the ETS Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally and contribute to multipliers training courses for youth workers at the national level
  - Further develop and use the Knowledge Management and Staff Training (KMST) competence framework and conceptualise staff training formats and content accordingly, focusing on peer support. This implies defining support measures and a monitoring and evaluation scheme.
  - Develop a cooperation platform and support tools for the internal NA cooperation, planning and monitoring projects and activities.
  - Strengthen cooperation with the other SALTO Resource Centres' thematic and regional strategies.

<sup>3</sup>Through support to the work of the SALTO European Solidarity Corps RC



### **Goal 3:** A quality assurance and comprehensive system that support trainers working at the European and international level

**Rationale:** The need for flexible, tailored and focused training offers has increased in recent years. While long-term learning and training opportunities for trainers remain necessary, the continuous professional development of trainers calls for more customised, accessible and affordable training. A quality assurance system that addresses a broad variety of training opportunities that support trainers' professional development, visibility, and evidence-based initiatives will help increase the quality of the scheme.

- Objectives:**
- Develop a flexible, high-quality modular system to train paid and volunteer trainers that provides orientation and guidance for the community of practice and those specifically connected to training trainers within the EU Youth Programmes, including for and from Neighbouring Partner Countries. The modular system should offer a variety of training formats and curricula.
  - Further develop and support competence-based frameworks for trainers working at the European and international level, paying particular attention to reinforcing the work on the ETS competence model for trainers and creating synergies with other sectors and similar processes at a European level. This is to be accompanied by a specific set of tools.
  - Create an ETS label to valorise European-level courses in the network of NAs and SALTO RCs; these could be labelled, e.g., 'ETS training for trainers'.
  - Connect with research, e.g., those carried out by the RAY Network that focus on training.
  - Develop criteria in consultation with a network of providers for courses and/or programmes that support the work of trainers. This can include networks such as the International Youth Work Trainers Guild, though not only.



## **Goal 4:** A certificate and recognition scheme for trainers working at the European and international level

**Rationale:** The situation of trainers in the recent years, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, have flagged up a need to better comprehend, support and valorise the profession of trainer (whether full-time or occasional, and whether paid or volunteer). Such a certificate will allow paid and volunteer trainers to demonstrate their experience and engagement in continuous learning and professional development paths. It should be voluntary, inclusive and provide support tools and mechanisms for both experienced trainers and newcomers. It will complement and connect with existing tools such as TOY. The certificate will support reflection, self-assessment, and encourage connecting with other assessment processes and validation as ways for trainers to improve their competences or confirm them.

- Objectives:**
- Create a voluntary certificate scheme for youth trainers working at the European and international level, developed by trainers active in European and international youth work training, the International Youth Work Trainers Guild, and NAs/SALTO RCs. The scheme will be applied within the network of Youth NAs and SALTO RCs and includes continuous training and practice requirements. It will offer a flexible and inclusive system that will allow every trainer to be supported on their certification path.
  - Pursue the work initiated under Working with Trainers 2.0 focusing on the cooperation and relationship between trainers and NAs.
  - Support and connect with existing tools to enhance the visibility and the credibility of paid and volunteer trainers as a profession, hence advocating for quality training offers and practices.



## Goal 5: Recognised modular courses for youth workers working at the European and international level

**Rationale:** Youth work keeps evolving and changing though with a stable sense of purpose to support young people's inclusion and active democratic participation in their communities. There is hence a strong need for flexible, tailored, and focused training offers that can support youth work development and quality training. In this regard and under the ETS, this requires creating bridges and opportunities for cooperation primarily with non-formal learning providers. Moreover, it calls for stepping up the search for synergies and therefore embracing the diversity of key stakeholders in the field and beyond.

- Objectives:**
- Develop (a) recognised training course(s) for youth workers in European and international youth work, connected to possible credentials and/or accreditation paths.
  - Develop an agile, flexible and high-quality modular system for training youth workers that supports their engagement in European and international youth work projects and activities within the EU Youth programmes, including for and from Neighbouring Partner Countries. The modular system should offer a variety of training formats and curricula.
  - Further develop and support competence-based frameworks for the training of youth workers paying particular attention to mainstreaming the work on the ETS competence model for youth workers and creating synergies with other sectors and similar processes at a European level.
  - Establish a pool for other educational players to offer/develop tailored training courses in line with and connectable to the ETS. This requires tight cooperation with the community of practice, including networks such as Professional Open Youth Work in Europe, youth worker associations and international organisations such as the European Youth Forum, though not exclusively. It also requires exploring cooperation mechanisms with stakeholders outside youth work.
  - Support the reflection on the ETS competence model for youth workers with other sectors and create a network for cooperation around this topic to contribute to the potential of youth work and the need for further quality development.



## Goal 6: Validation of youth workers' competences and learning outcomes

**Rationale:** The topic of validation of youth workers' competences and learning outcomes has been on European, national and local agendas for many years. The intention here is to further develop and strengthen validation systems within youth work (and non-formal education) that are solid enough to support the recognition of youth work at the European and national levels. Furthermore, it calls for strong support of and connection with the Youthpass Strategy for common frameworks and invites a more collaborative approach among all education stakeholders.

- Objectives:**
- Ensure more visibility and broader dissemination of youth worker training, learning outcomes, developed according to the principles of non-formal learning.
  - Identify and act on ways to connect and/or integrate European youth work issues in curricula by fostering cooperation with practitioners and the availability of youth work studies and accreditation processes at the national level. This connects with the formal education of youth workers or other professional stakeholders in universities and vocational institutions and the integration of European perspectives, e.g., the role of European mobility in youth work, the European Youth Work Agenda and the Bonn Process, the strategic NA cooperation projects (SNACs), and the ETS.
  - Complement the Youthpass Strategy and the development of the Youthpass tool and European/national validation processes, with a particular focus on the link to the ETS competence model for youth workers.
  - Use the ETS label to valorise European-level courses in the context of the network of National Agencies to contribute to the visibility and recognition of learning in international youth work through opportunities to access pathways for youth workers and tailored instruments.



## **Goal 7:** Pilot initiatives and innovative approaches towards the development of quality, sustainable and future-fit youth work

**Rationale:** While there are many initiatives and projects to sustain and foster innovation in youth work, the intention is to establish a connection between them and the ETS capacity-building framework. This gives greater visibility to initiatives developed by others and that nonetheless support competence development. This Goal also underlines the need to allow space for the ETS to explore, experiment and initiate responses to an ever-changing future. This addresses transformation processes and openness for upcoming challenges and developments. Finally, this Goal also calls for particular attention to the work done by the European Academy of Youth Work.


- Objectives:**
- Initiate and monitor pilot projects contributing to the further development of education and training systems and approaches, focusing on youth workers, trainers, NAs and SALTO RCs, in the framework of EU Youth Programmes and the European Youth Work Agenda.
  - Pursue projects and initiatives that seek to explore new concepts, approaches and formats for training and learning opportunities for trainers and youth workers active at European and international levels;
  - Cooperate with SALTO RCs and strengthen the link to their thematic and regional strategies and implementation processes.
  - Contribute to and develop synergies with projects and initiatives tackling digital youth work, such as the Digital Youth Work SNAC or other initiatives supported by the renewed Digital Education Action Plan that presents a long-term vision for digital education. It covers formal, non-formal and informal education and includes youth work.





# 5 The underlining principles of the ETS

As an **agile strategy**, appropriate for adaptive, nascent and evolving processes and projects, the ETS relies on a **set of principles** as defined in the following:



## Support an iterative approach:

Set a long-term vision and outline the steps that will support the ETS to achieve its Goals and associated objectives. This will allow for adapting to emerging trends and quickly reacting to unexpected changes.

## Be future-oriented:

Take stock of the past and the present and design the ETS from an angle that looks at youth work from the future. This will allow the ETS to be future-fit and support agility in implementing and monitoring the ETS.

## Be inclusive:

Efforts for a more inclusive ETS that supports more diverse profiles from the community of paid and volunteer trainers and youth workers.



### **Foster more involvement of newcomers in the community of practice:**

Better work towards involving those who recently started engaging in European youth work while extending support to more experienced groups.

### **Contribute to the professionalisation of youth work:**

Where possible, support to the national level through the efforts of NAs, direct target groups of ETS activities, and other stakeholders.

### **Pay particular attention to Neighbouring Partner Countries:**

Support the development of youth work and related capacity-building processes in Neighbouring Partner Countries, and the possible breach between the needs in the respective regions and what the ETS offers.

### **Network, cooperate, and share experiences:**

Prerequisites for an effective ETS, which, in its overarching dimension, benefits from and supports other processes and initiatives that contribute to the development of quality youth work in Europe and beyond.

### **Ensure ownership:**

Precondition for the successful implementation of the ETS, which requires regular exchanges with the community of practice and key stakeholders.

### **Build on monitoring, evaluation and evidence:**

Set a long-term guarantee a hand-in-hand process that will enable monitoring ETS implementation, assess and measure the results of its intervention by 2027, and support ongoing and necessary adjustments. Monitoring and evaluation processes should correspond to the identified baselines and the target groups' needs.

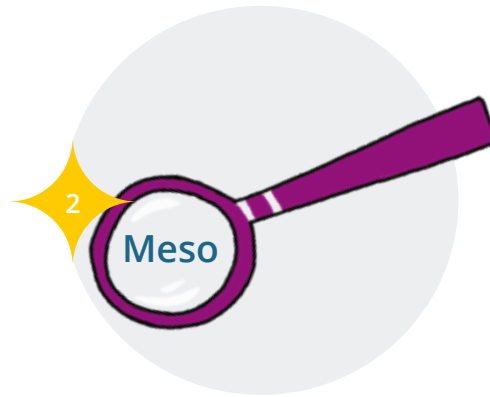


# Levels of impact of the ETS



## Micro

Emphasises the provision of support to volunteer and paid professionals through strategic measures to equip them with the necessary competences and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively. The micro level is mainly about individuals' competence-development processes and learning spaces.



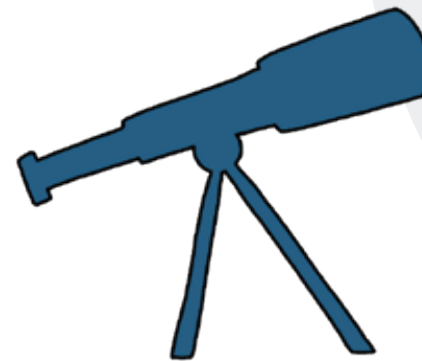
Meso

Looks at organisational development mechanisms: increase awareness, strategies, processes and procedures within youth work-related structures, ability to establish cooperation within the community of practice and between the different sectors (public, private and community). The meso level is about enabling and supporting.



## Macro

Focuses on systems and systemic frameworks for the development of youth work: establish strategic alliances and create systemic conditions for the professionalisation and the development of youth work, enabling organisations, institutions and agencies across the youth work field to enhance their capacities. The macro level is about looking at systemic change and transformation.





## 'And' rather than 'either/or'

Because of its core nature, its connections, commonalities with other strategies and policies, and its intention to create more synergies with initiatives and processes in the field of youth work in Europe and beyond (hence supporting cooperation with Neighbouring Partner Countries), the ETS constantly oscillates between the following aspects:

### **Be defined and open to change.**

Like any other strategy, the ETS needs to have a series of clearly defined objectives supported by specific plans, projects and cooperation initiatives. While this can seem like it is set in stone, in fact the ETS should be open to any changes and unexpected occurrences, meaning it will require adjustments and sometimes a review of its direction and intentions. This allows the ETS to remain relevant in the future.

### **Embrace coherence and diversity.**

The ETS tends to coherently focus on one specific area: education and training of youth workers, in the framework of EU and European youth programmes and policy documents, among others. At the same time, it also embraces a variety of contexts (Europe and beyond), concepts (training, non-formal learning, non-formal education), stakeholders (both paid and volunteer youth workers) and sectors (in the field of youth but seeking cooperation with other ones such as formal education).



### Support and regulate.

The ETS intends to contribute to processes that originate elsewhere. In other words, the ETS supports existing initiatives, endeavours and projects that were developed by or in cooperation with others. At the same time and in the spirit of responding to pleas and changes occurring in the present or future, the ETS can also set paths, advocating for quality and defining approaches that aim to steer, frame and channel specific processes.



### Be EU Youth Programmes- and youth work-focused.

As for the tension between coherence and diversity, the geographical scope of the ETS varies. It is embedded in EU Youth Programmes and connected to the EU Youth Strategy. At the same time, its scope extends beyond the EU, e.g., the EYWA and the Council of Europe recommendations and even beyond that, foreseeing to support cooperation with partner countries as often as possible, hence embracing youth work per se, whether it be European or international.



### Initiate and be needs-based.

To reach its vision, the ETS should be forward-looking and forward-thinking and envision not necessarily needs-based initiatives. Needs can undoubtedly guide and support evolutions that will respond to the needs of the field (of youth work). Nonetheless, being able to detach from a purely needs-based approach can allow the ETS a certain freedom to zoom out, sense, innovate and experiment. This opportunity for creativity and experimentation goes hand in hand with remaining truthful to the purpose of the ETS and the support it provides to youth work development.



# 6

## Mechanisms and instruments supporting the implementation of ETS

It is essential to underline that some of the mechanisms and instruments detailed below are not exclusively instruments of and for the ETS (e.g., the SALTO-YOUTH website, SNACs or TCA/NET); rather, they serve a multitude of objectives and strategies. Moreover, the list below also includes stand-alone strategies that display synergies with the ETS.



1

## TCA and NET

Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA) and Network Activities (NET) are processes and instruments available to NAs to support the Erasmus+: Youth and the European Solidarity Corps programmes in fulfilling their objectives and priorities. TCA/NET aim to enhance the quality of the overall implementation of the EU youth programmes, thus contributing to their increasing and systemic impact.

The ETS delivers a valuable and sustainable contribution to support capacity building as one of the key elements for developing quality youth work in Europe and beyond. In the framework of TCA/NET, the relation with the ETS lies in focus on the meso (organisational development) and macro level (systemic framework development).

The NAs' TCA/NET internal cooperation is supported by the **TCA/NET Cooperation Platform** (CooP), which allows strategic and long-term planning and implementation of TCA/NET projects and activities, enables the internal communication of the network on TCA/NET and connects with features of the SALTO-YOUTH website. It also allows for a better overview of activities through a clustering system in a user-friendly formats that help to prepare plans virtually. In addition, KMST and Business Meetings' documentation is also connected to the CooP.

## The SALTO-YOUTH website and related tools

One of the instruments supporting the ETS is the SALTO-YOUTH website, which provides information about the Resource Centres and offers a series of tools for NAs, youth workers and trainers. It also provides information, guidance and educational materials.

### The SALTO-YOUTH website includes, among others, the following tools

- The **European Training Calendar (ETC)**, which lists international activities all over Europe organised by various stakeholders. In addition, the ETC can serve as a basis for developing complementary databases at the national level.
- The **Toolbox**, a learning community for trainers and youth workers to share, debate and improve the quality of educational methods in their daily work.
- **OTLAS**, a database to find partners for youth work projects in Europe.
- **TOY**, which lists services offered by trainers to training providers.
- The **HOP Platform**, an online learning platform that foster the quality of youth projects.
- The **Participation Pool**, which gathers useful materials and new trends on Youth Participation, Media and Information Literacy, and Communication.



3

## The Competence Models for Trainers and Youth Workers to Work Internationally and related tools and publications

Together with the NAs and SALTOs, youth workers and trainers form the core of the ETS community of practice. Their professional expertise and their ability to perform within an educational framework crucially affect the quality of training activities. This is why the Competence Models for Trainers (2014) and Youth Workers (2016) to Work Internationally were developed as part of the previous ETS generation. Having undergone repeated development and revision, these well-thought-out **competence models are dynamic frameworks for youth trainers, youth workers, NAs and other educators, institutions and organisations that plan formal and non-formal education training activities.**

The **YOCOMO online self-assessment tool** is based on the ETS Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally that was developed by SALTO Training and Cooperation RC. It allows youth workers to assess themselves in all the competence areas, exploring their behaviours, knowledge, skills and attitudes. In addition, it offers a visualisation of the results and a possibility to upload evidence and enter reflection notes. The self-assessment tool should also support the reflection process in Youthpass.



4

## The Youthpass Strategy

The underlying vision of the Youthpass Strategy is to achieve broad visibility and understanding of the youth field's learning value and the competences developed through involvement in the youth field. The Strategy aims to support young people and youth workers

through greater recognition of learning in European youth contexts. It strives to promote and facilitate the recognition of learning outcomes in this area, specifically those achieved within the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

Youthpass



## Knowledge Management and Staff Training of NAs (KMST)

Since 2007, KMST has been the basis for all European activities aiming at capacity and competence building of NAs and SALTO RCs staff who, to implement the European youth programmes at the European and national level, will continue to be trained at the European level.

The ETS continually supports the work of the **KMST Working Group** that develops and implements KMST through in-person and online work and meetings.

### In the context of the ETS 2021-2027, KMST will focus on

- Developing a **competence framework** for staff training,
- Elaborating **common approaches to support the more consistent and cohesive implementation of staff meetings and training** courses,
- Measuring the **quality and impact** of the KMST courses,
- The **knowledge management** dimension of KMST, with a focus on peer learning, job shadowing, informal meetings and study visits internally to the network of NAs.
- The **connection to Europe-wide thematic strategies** in the KMST courses such as ETS, Youthpass, Inclusion and Diversity, Youth Participation, either mainstreamed or tackled specifically, depending on the target group of the courses.
- The integration of KMST into the **TCA/NET Cooperation Platform**, an online system that allows for a more flexible use and adjustment of KMST, will facilitate monitoring.

6

## Strategic NA Cooperation projects (SNACS)

Developed under TCA and NET, Strategic NA Cooperation projects (SNACs) are unique **opportunities for NAs and SALTO RCs to leverage their European network to pool expertise and mutual support, policy implementation and contribute to youth work**

**development.** For this reason, new and continued strategic cooperation projects should position themselves as 'flagships' of the Network of NAs in the youth field. This also applies to supporting projects within the ETS.



7

## Peer Learning Activities

**PLAs** are common reflections, exchanges of approaches and mutual learning processes with experts on education and training of youth workers, government representatives in the field of youth and education, as key actors in promoting quality education activities

to youth workers and incorporating international standards, tools and good practices into national initiatives. PLAs are not intended as a one-off activity but rather as a series of steps over several months.



# 7

## The ETS community of practice

Since stakeholders and target groups are often interdependent, the ETS prefers to regard them as part of a **wider community of practice in the field of European and international youth work**. In other words, it is composed of a group of people, professional or non-professional, who share the same interests in resolving an issue, improving their skills, and learning from each other's experiences.

### The community of practice may be drawn from

- National Agencies for Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps;
- SALTO Resource Centres;
- youth workers and youth leaders, both paid and volunteers;
- youth work managers;
- trainers;
- researchers;
- project organisers;
- mandated and independent youth work organisations;
- educators of youth workers;
- local communities and municipalities;
- youth representations and young people; and
- youth policy-makers.

All members of the youth work community of practice have different mandates, roles and capacities for the further development of youth work within their sphere of competence. Within this broader community of practice, the **following stakeholders are of specific relevance** for developing and implementing the ETS:



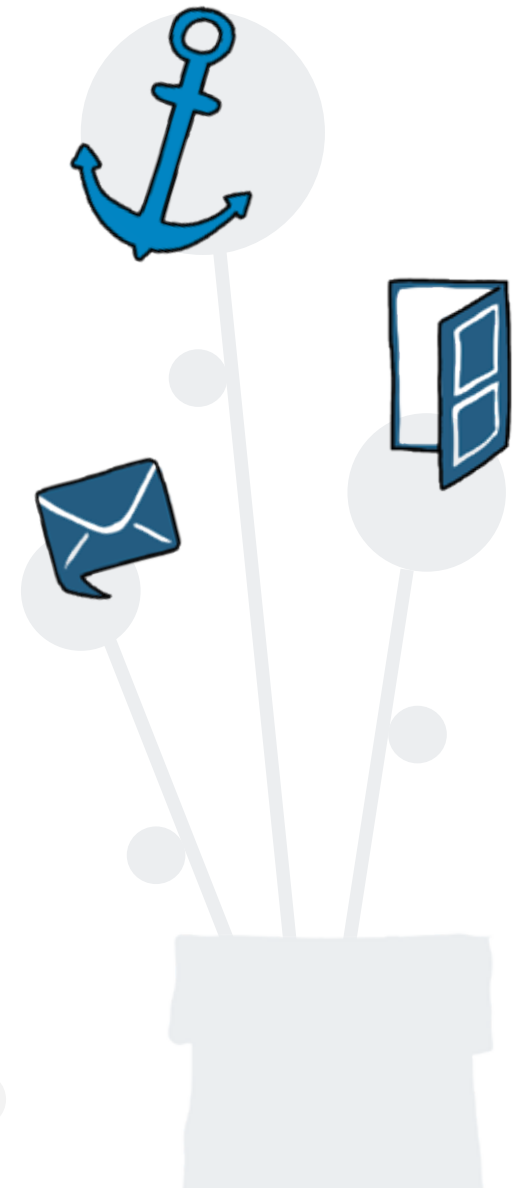
# The network of National Agencies

The role of NAs in the context of the EU Youth Programmes is to bring them as close as possible to the participants and guarantee high-quality implementation across different countries.

## This role incorporates

- providing information and guidance about Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps,
- selecting projects to be funded,
- monitoring and evaluating the implementation of both programmes,
- supporting beneficiaries and participants,
- working with other NAs,
- promoting Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps,
- and sharing success stories and best practices.

**NAs play a crucial role in implementing the ETS.** As they are in charge of TCA/NET planning and realisation, they can organise and steer coordinated youth worker training processes. Moreover, a successful strategic and modular approach towards training trainers and youth workers requires **fruitful, cohesive and close cooperation with NAs**, since they will identify those who will benefit from these opportunities. Finally, yet importantly, processes such as 'Working with Trainers 2.0' require a high level of interaction with NAs and the trainers they work with, both in operational and educational terms.



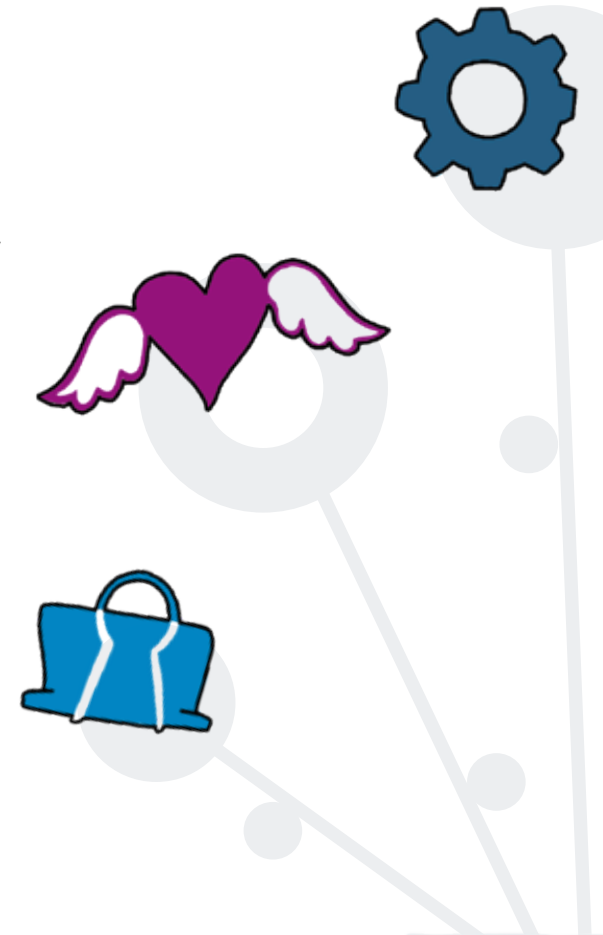
## The SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres

In 2021, there are seven Resource Centres: three thematic RCs, one for the European Solidarity Corps and three regional RCs, although the network is meant to expand. Each RC has its focus and either a clearly defined strategy or an elaborated series of guiding principles and areas of action. Therefore, the ETS should involve them as it continues to evolve so as to ensure cooperation and synergies.

As the renewed mandate of the SALTOs states, *the mission of thematic SALTO Youth Resource Centres is to **improve the quality and impact of Erasmus+ projects**. To that end, they are **supporting the entire network of National Agencies, the European Commission, and partners** involved in ensuring quality and recognition of youth work and fostering participation and non-formal and informal learning for young people. More specifically, **thematic SALTOs act as evidence-based knowledge hubs** and impartial brokers based on their expertise and experience with programme management in their respective fields to contribute to the links and synergies between Union youth policy and programmes. This means continuously building*

*and channelling the knowledge and lessons learnt from programme implementation in the SALTO thematic areas into the contexts of youth policy cooperation, policy development and programme development in collaboration with the NA network and the Commission through appropriate platforms and procedures to be put in place. Moreover, they will **support the National Agencies' respective fields to implement the EU Youth Programmes in a way that puts into practice the relevant policy decisions** (e.g. Council conclusions/resolutions), results of mutual learning activities, and decisions on programme priorities.*

Additionally, the work of SALTO Education and Training needs to be considered when exploring cooperation connected to education, particularly to the education and training of youth workers and curricula development.



## Youth workers

Youth workers, who are both actors and the main target group of the ETS, work with young people in various non-formal and informal learning contexts. They typically focus on personal and social development through one-on-one relationships and group-based activities. When acting as trainers/facilitators, they take a socio-educational or social work-based approach. In many cases, these roles and functions overlap.

In the ETS, the focus is mainly on **youth workers** (paid and volunteers, and active either full-time or on a more occasional basis) **involved in European/ International youth work**. However, most of them are closely connected to local or national youth work, which is the reason for the decision to support national training processes. Therefore, fields of action such as those tackling the education and training of youth workers are essential in the ETS 2021-2027.

**Youth worker associations and networks** such as those focusing on Open Youth Work or Street Youth Work, or the European Youth Forum, are given more space in the ETS 2021-2027 to ensure a better cohesion and consistency of the projects to be developed and implemented. They also have a particular role to play in the further development of the ETS Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally, namely in the **addition of the digital and solidarity dimensions** – in cooperation with the European Solidarity Corps RC – as well as in the **development of an area dedicated to civic engagement or critical youth citizenship**, in consultation with the SALTO Participation and Information RC.



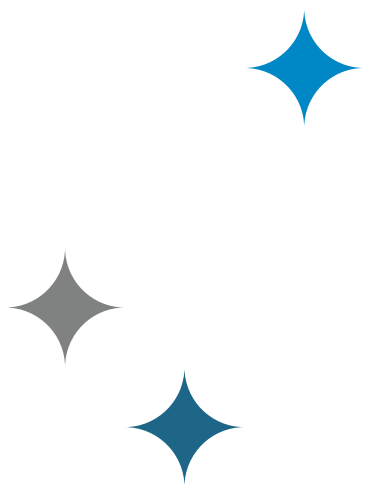
## Trainers

In an ETS context, “trainers” are the individuals (paid or volunteer) who shape, guide and accompany the learning processes of individuals or groups of youth workers. In this sense, trainers design and implement educational activities based on youth work and non-formal learning values and principles. They create an environment that promote learners’ development, and they shape the attitudes, knowledge, skills, behaviours and values necessary in and for youth work.

**Trainers have a key role to play** in the ETS 2021-2027. They are pivotal in the work developed by NAs and SALTO RCs and have an essential role in further developing the concept of the training projects to be developed and implemented with the ETS.

The further developed ETS Competence Model for Trainers Working at International Level continues to be used as a basis for designing **these ETS-related training projects and processes**. It offers a set of competences that serve as a dynamic framework to be integrated into the work of trainers and educators, institutions, and organisations that plan formal and non-formal education training activities.

The ETS 2021-2027 intends to keep on giving trainers a prominent role, especially regarding the **Trainer Competence Development projects** (TCD) and the **Working With Trainers 2.0** (WWT 2.0) **process**, mainly – though not only – through cooperation with the International Youth Work Trainers Guild.



# 8 Implementation and governance structure

The following structures and processes guide SALTO T&C RC and support to European Commission in developing, implementing and evaluating the ETS.





# The SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre

SALTO T&C RC develops strategic and innovative actions to ensure an overall **quality approach to training strategies and activities** in European and international youth work and the **recognition of non-formal and informal learning** through the Youthpass Strategy.



## Concerning the ETS, it fulfils its mandate through

- processes, activities and tools supporting the development of quality youth work in Europe through capacity-building;
- facilitating transnational cooperation, networking and mutual learning among NAs and different stakeholders;
- a consistent valorisation and the presentation of the Programmes' achievements, experiences and lessons learnt in the above areas.



## The SALTO T&C RC performs the role of ETS coordinator and

- steers the implementation of the ETS Goals;
- develops and/or coordinates ETS-related events and projects, such as training courses (pilot and consolidated, short and long-term activities, in-person and online) for NA staff, trainers and youth workers;
- develops ETS-related tools, guidelines and publications (connected to education and training of youth workers and competence development);
- supports the activities of working groups such as TCA/NET and KMST;
- supports the development and/or implementation of capacity-building related projects and initiatives led by NAs, SALTOs, platforms and networks;
- stimulates the exchange of information and cooperation within the ETS community of practice;
- work closely with the Youthpass team of the SALTO T&C RC;
- and organises the ETS Advisory Group meetings.



## The ETS Advisory Group (AG)

The ETS AG plays an essential role within the ETS. Its main tasks are to

- provide expert advice and feedback to its implementation;
- create links with other relevant processes in youth work and/or youth policies, on European and national levels;
- exchange information about education and training of youth workers and capacity-building in youth work, creating synergies where possible and relevant;
- promote and advocate for the EU Youth Programmes as contexts of competence development and capacity-building;
- draw conclusions supporting relevant policy-making, and
- help to disseminate and promote the European Training Strategy and its related developments.

These tasks are described in the ETS AG mandate, which also defines its duration, given that the ETS AG operates for a specified period (after which a new call for members is made).

The composition of the ETS AG is determined by an open call and selection procedure, except for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Youth National Agency staff who are nominated by the Heads of National Agencies.



## ETS work plans

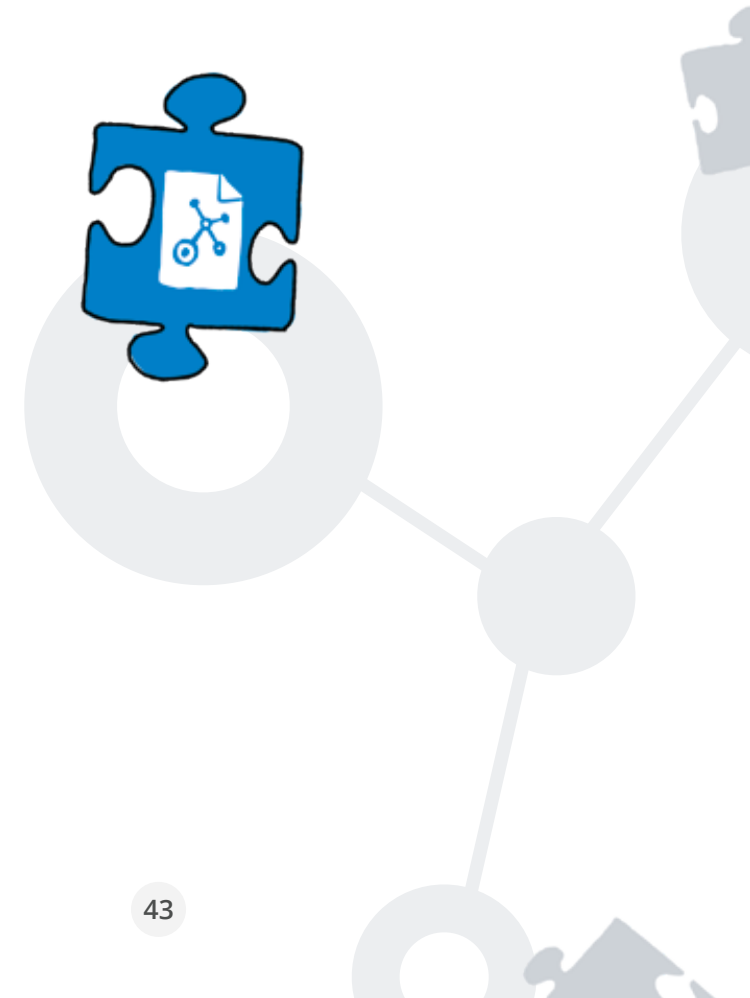
The ETS is designed for a six-year period but is monitored through triennial work plans on policy initiatives to streamline the EU Youth Strategy, the European Youth Work Agenda and the SALTO thematic strategies. These long-term work plans are operationalised through yearly action plans.



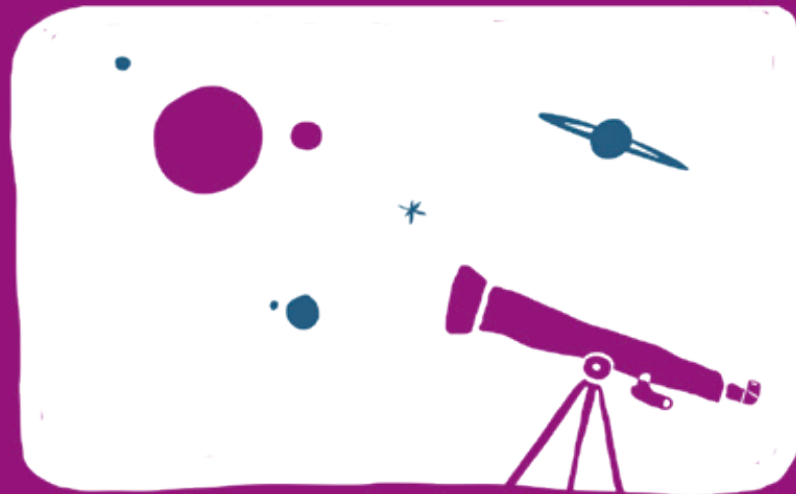
### The ETS AG is composed of

- representatives of the Youth/Programme Units in DG EAC,
- representatives of the EU Youth Programmes NAs, SALTO RCs and the EU-CoE youth partnership,
- representatives of platforms and networks tackling youth work and training in youth work,
- trainers, youth workers and youth researchers,
- and experts in youth work and youth policy, as well as representatives of permanent European Working Groups supporting the implementation of the EU Youth Programmes on an ad hoc basis.

The ETS AG meets once or twice a year as needed, chaired by the European Commission - DG EAC Youth and programme Unit. Between meetings, the members of the ETS AG coordinate their work via a dedicated online space.



# 9 Monitoring and evaluation



To provide more reliable information and evidence-based material about the impact of the ETS **on its theory of change and the ETS Goals**, proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms need to be put in place.

#### **These mechanisms look at**

- the overall ETS as a strategy,
- its six-year work plan through triennial monitoring processes,
- its yearly action plan,
- the use of the ETS Competence Models and other ETS-related competence frameworks,
- and the specific initiatives and processes to be initiated in 2021-2027.

**Reports of the ETS work plans and yearly action plans** will include, as much as possible, the information resulting from consultations and/or surveys of the community of practice and in particular of NAs, trainers and youth workers. Those reports should serve as a basis for necessary adjustments and further developments during 2021-2027 and beyond. As much as possible, they need to be tailored and addressed to specific target groups and sectors.

The **monitoring process** will also pay particular attention to using **outcomes indicators developed for each ETS Goal**.

The following outcome indicators are proposed for monitoring the development and implementation of the ETS.

**Goal 1:** Complement the actions connected to education and training of youth workers under the European Youth Work Agenda.



- ✓ A supportive environment that fosters and inspires regional and national processes has been enabled, in accordance with the corresponding priority areas of the European Youth Work Agenda and the Bonn Process.
- ✓ A shared understanding of quality youth work (development) is established among and across ETS stakeholders, with a particular focus on occupational standards for the education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers.
- ✓ Efficient and timely support for the Bonn Process through contributions to areas dedicated to developing measures to validate learning in youth work in formal education.

**Goal 2:** Tailored support for the work of the network of National Agencies of the EU Youth Programmes.



- ✓ NAs cooperate successfully in a supportive environment and receive tailored support enabling them to contribute effectively to the quality of youth work at national and European levels.
- ✓ Relevant staff within NAs meet and are trained with supportive competence frameworks and tools that enable quality implementation of the ETS at national and regional levels.
- ✓ Concrete synergies are established between the ETS and the strategies of the different SALTO Resource Centres, enabling mutual support and quality processes.

**Goal 3:** A quality assurance and comprehensive system that support trainers working at the European and international level.



- ✓ A comprehensive system is in place to support European and international paid and volunteer trainers' professional development.
- ✓ Quality training for and of trainers is identified with a common label promoted by and through the SALTO RCs, the NAs, supporting organisations and platforms from the community of practice.



**Goal 4:** A certificate and recognition measures for trainers working at the European and international level.



- ✓ A developed and piloted systemic approach is in place for recognising trainers' work through voluntary and inclusive certification mechanisms.
- ✓ The profession of trainer – whether full time or on a more ad-hoc basis - has greater visibility and is recognised within the European youth work community of practice.
- ✓ A clear and supportive system is in place for quality training and learning and to support cooperation between NAs and trainers.

**Goal 5:** Recognised modular courses for youth workers working at the European and international level.



- ✓ The revised ETS competence model for youth workers serves as a framework for accredited and recognised training courses that support their engagement in European and international youth work, within the EU Youth Programmes and beyond.
- ✓ Contributions are made to the Strategic National Agency Co-operation projects on education and training of youth workers.
- ✓ Further developments within the YOCOMO project with new learning activities and greater resonance and visibility at regional and national levels, supported by an established group of multipliers.

**Goal 6:** Validation of youth workers' competences and learning outcomes.



- ✓ Greater visibility and recognition of the youth worker profession as one of the key stakeholders in European youth work.
- ✓ Strategic NA Cooperation projects focusing on youth work are supported by tailored training measures and informed data and theories.

**Goal 7:** Pilot initiatives and innovative approaches towards the development of quality, sustainable and future-fit youth work.



- ✓ Spaces are created and preserved for ETS stakeholders to explore, experiment and initiate responses to an ever-changing future affecting young people in Europe.
- ✓ Strong synergies are in place between stakeholders and strategies that guarantee support to European youth policy developments.

# 10

## Communication

As already mentioned under mechanisms and instruments (p.29), one of the core mechanisms to communicate about the network of NAs and SALTO RC is the **SALTO-YOUTH website** that is managed by SALTO T&C RC. This includes all information related to the ETS.

**New innovative online tools** will be created to deliver information about capacity building in youth work, build cooperation, exchange good practices and facilitate online debates of youth workers, trainers and researchers. In addition, they offer open educational resources and e-learning tools for capacity-building among youth workers and trainers.

To support that, an **ETS communication strategy** will ensure that the potential recipients and users of the ETS understand its benefits. It will include, amongst other elements, target group-specific and user-friendly information about the ETS, translations into various European languages, and new information channels such as webinars, etc.

The ETS will continue building **links to further platforms for communication and cooperation** among stakeholders of education and training of youth workers and trainers. These will guarantee the flow of information, enable stakeholders to learn from each other, build synergies and cooperation, and facilitate visibility and recognition.

The communication strategy will also design clear messages for each target audience and define clear dissemination channels. In this context, it will collaborate with Eurodesk when necessary and possible.



# Editorial

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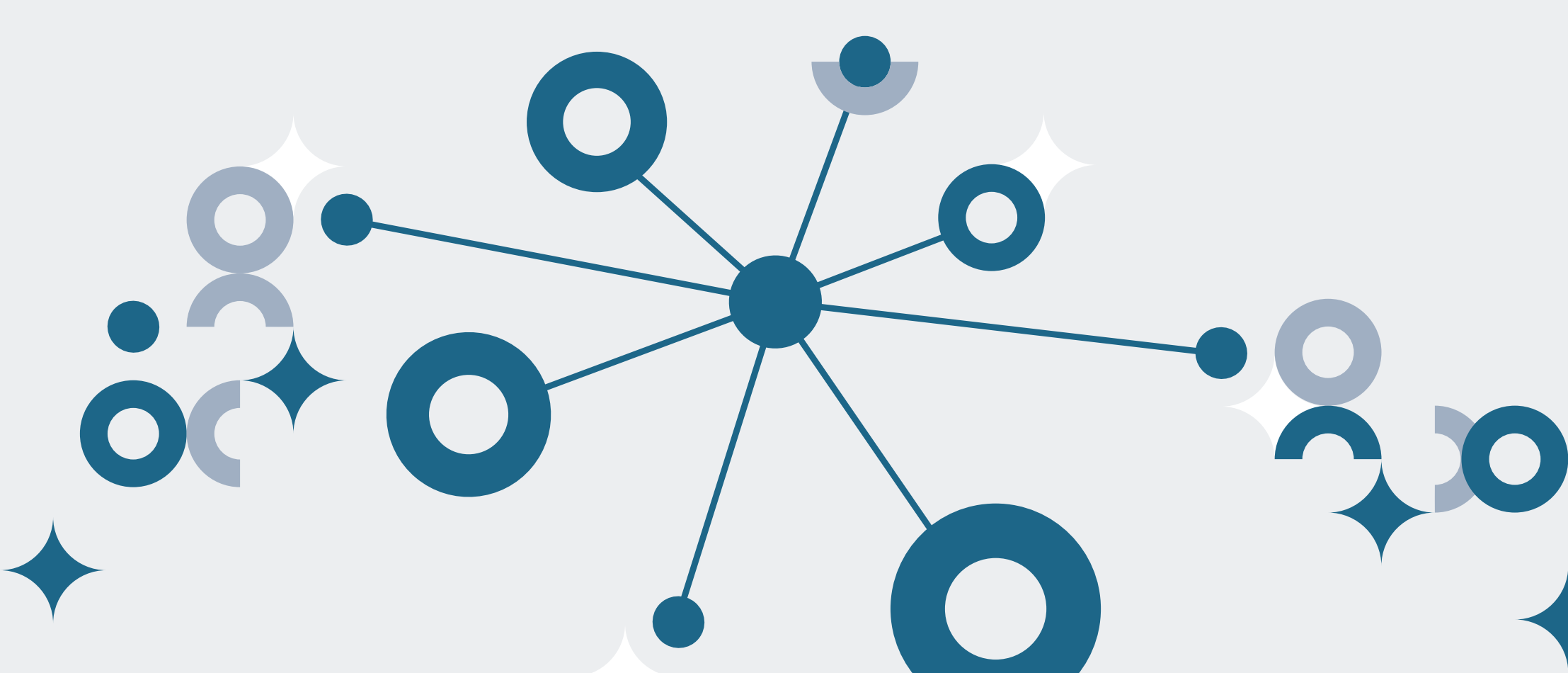
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