

National implementation plan – Serbia

1. Brief information on the national context and baseline

The strategic and legal frameworks. VET in Serbia is regulated by the Law on Fundamentals of Education System, Law on Secondary Education (LSE), Law on Dual Education (LDE), Law on the Dual Model of Studies in Higher Education and Law on NQFS. The new Strategy for Education Development 2030 (SED 2030) with the accompanying Action Plan 2021-2023 was adopted in June 2021 with general objectives to increase the quality, equality, relevance and accessibility of education. Specific strategic objectives at all levels of the education system (including VET) according to SED 2030 are as follows: upgrading of the digital infrastructure in education and training, improvements of schools' connectivity and the further development of EMIS. Specific measures and activities in the field of VET are focused on increasing the relevance of curricula and closer cooperation between the world of labour and education, improving the work of SSCs in the process of developing proposals of qualification standards, improvement of the quality of work-based learning and students' practice in schools, development of students' key competencies, further development of formal and non-formal adult education including CVET and establishment of 12 regional training centres for training, reskilling and upskilling in line with labour market needs in order to support the development of dual education and lifelong learning. Since the implementation of the previous strategy mostly failed in the area of adult education, goals that refer to RPL (Recognition of prior learning) and increasing coverage, accessibility and quality of adult education and training programs are again among the priorities.

SED 2030 also highlights as an important priority improvement of monitoring and evaluation of VET and dual education. The goal is to have a Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) system that would not only follow students during education and in-company training but also after they enter the labour market and provide a feedback loop for further improvements. The monitoring system should also help dropout prevention since it is a frequent issue, especially in VET.

Also, one of the priorities is the development of short-cycle study programmes at the NQFS level 5 as a way to support further harmonisation of the NQFS with European policies and facilitate the recognition of foreign qualifications. Following SED 2030, such programmes should prepare students to enter the labour market or as one of the ways for entering higher education.

In order to enhance skills, Strategy on Scientific and Technological Development 2021-30, Employment Strategy 2021-26 and SED 2030 are adopted and, by adopting the Economic Reform Program – ERP 2021/231, Serbian authorities committed to implementing activities related to the development of digital skills and support of lifelong learning; improving school-to-work transition through WBL; piloting Youth Guarantee (YG) and improving skills information. In the chapter related to Education and Skills, qualifications oriented to the needs of the labour market, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Dual Education are explicitly mentioned among the reform priorities.

Main policy initiatives and reforms. Main policy initiatives and reforms that were initiated are the result of the multisector approach and are supported by international funding aside from the national budget and the increases in coverage, quality, relevance, and efficiency of education

¹ Economic Reform Programme 2021-2023, Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia: https://www.mfin.gov.rs/upload/media/ID63iX_60f11fc3470a8.pdf

remain important. Dual education stayed at the top of the VET reform agenda and improvements are made in the process to ensure sufficient participation of employers, better conditions, and quality of WBL for the students in dual profiles, as well as to integrate the developed M&E into the existing quality assurance system.

Recent policy directions refer, also, to the adoption of the Bylaw on implementation of practical teaching and professional practice in secondary VET (2020). By this bylaw, the implementation and organization of practical teaching and professional practice are more closely defined, especially in the situation where students' professional practice is implemented in both - VET school and in-company by defining the structure and content of the agreement between the school and company, the role of the company, the adaptation of practical teaching and professional practice for students with disabilities and the characteristics of the workplace. This policy change is followed by the change in the LSE.

Also, legislation related to the standards for accreditation of non-formal adult education programmes, as well as legislation that set standards for self-evaluation and external evaluation of the quality of work of (Publicly recognized organizers of adult education) PROAE is adopted.

Implementation of the RPL system has just begun.

MoESTD and QA compiled a unique List of Qualifications of RS to secure precise recording of employed and unemployed persons' qualification structure and support overcoming potential gaps between supply and demand for knowledge and skills in the labour market. The List of Qualifications of RS currently includes more than 4,600 qualifications for all levels of education.

MoESTD remains committed to introducing the State Matura in the education system as a means of secondary education certification and qualification for enrolment in higher education.

The digital transformation of education is progressing and advancing digital learning and the development of digital competencies remains one of the key education priorities of the Government, thus investments are made in improving the information and communication technologies infrastructure and school connectivity.

In addition, Serbia is committed to designing and adopting a YG implementation plan and carrying out a pilot phase in order to secure a good quality offer of employment, traineeship, apprenticeship, or continued education to all young people aged 15 to 29 who are not in employment, education, or training.

Relevant (statistical) evidence. According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS) data, 248.605 students participated in secondary education in the school year 2020/21 of which 49.6% are female and 50.4% male students. Out of the total number of schools - 518, 312 are VET, 52 are mixed VET and general and 4 are mixed art and VET schools.²

² SORS: <https://data.stat.gov.rs/Home/Result/11030104?languageCode=en-US>

SED 2030³ stated the coverage rate in secondary education is 87.4%, the secondary school completion rate is 87%, and the dropout from secondary education is 1.1 %. The data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2019)⁴ on students from Roma settlements are discouraging: the transition rate to secondary school is 55%, while the secondary school completion rate is 61%. There are no data on students with developmental impairments and disabilities – MoESTD plans to collect the baseline data during 2022 through EMIS.

According to EUROSTAT, there are 6.6% of young aged 18-24 who left education and training early.

The participation rate of youth and adults (the age group from 15 to 24) in formal and non-formal education and training in 2020 was 66.9% while for the age group from 25 to 64 is just 3.7%.⁵

The NEET rate in the fourth quarter of 2021 was 15.6%⁶ while with 3.3% of adults involved in lifelong learning education in 2020⁷ Serbia is far below all EU education and training as well as national benchmarks.

Labour Force Survey data showed that, in the fourth quarter of 2021, the employment rate of people aged 15 and over was 50.0% (among men 58.0% and women 42.5%) while the unemployment amounted to 9.8% (9.0% for men and 10.8% for women). The activity rate of people aged 15 and over in the fourth quarter of 2021 amounted to 55.4%, the activity rates among men and women being 63.7% and 47.7%, respectively. During the same period, out of labour force rate was 44.6%. The informal employment rate in the mentioned quarter in all activities amounted to 13.7%. Youth remains a vulnerable group in the labour market - the youth employment rate (15-24 years) in the fourth quarter of 2021 was 23.3% and the youth unemployment rate amounted to 28.7%.⁸

2. Challenges and general objectives of the plan

A brief overview of the main challenges. Despite the progress over the last years, the system still suffers from significant shortcomings: the skills mismatches are still high; exposure to in-company training of VET students is not sufficient; VET is not fully flexible and permeable; RPL system is still not fully established; EMIS is still not fully operational thus monitoring potentials are not fully utilised, validity and reliability of data is not sufficient, and their regular updating is still missing. Also, a comprehensive approach to lifelong learning is yet to be achieved, especially at the outcome level (such as inter-institutional cooperation, encouraging employers to continue to invest in the development of skills of their labour force or increasing the coverage of vulnerable groups, etc.). Participation in adult education in Serbia is low due to several reasons - the inadequate offer of training

³ SED 2030: <https://mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SROVRS-2030-1.pdf>

⁴ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey – UNICEF & Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia – 2019:

<https://www.unicef.org/serbia/media/16056/file/MICS%206%20Istra%C5%BEivanje%20vi%C5%A1estrukih%20pokazatelja%20za%202019.%20godinu.pdf>

⁵ SORS: <https://sdg.indikatori.rs/en-us/area/quality-education/?subarea=SDGUN040301&indicator=240002090105IND01>

⁶ SORS: <https://www.stat.gov.rs/en-US/oblasti/trziste-rada/anketa-o-radnoj-snazi>

⁷ EUROSTAT database: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/bookmark/2561320b-f909-4370-b0a2-e88a59845f0c?lang=en>

⁸ Labour Force Survey, IV quarter, SORS – February 2022: <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2021/PdfE/G20211329.pdf>

programmes/courses in terms of qualifications needed by companies, the inadequate format in which training courses are provided and high training costs.⁹

Bearing in mind the aforementioned, it is clear that this plan (as well as the national strategies already do) should contribute to 1) further harmonisation of the Serbian VET system with the modern labour market through offering regularly updated qualification standards and VET programmes based on them that include a balanced mix of vocational and key competencies, including strong work-based learning components, and that are developed in cooperation with a wide group of stakeholders, 2) further flexibilization of the VET through the establishment and use of the RPL system recognition of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning, open up career and learning progression and increase of vertical and horizontal permeability within VET system; and 3) further development of a national quality assurance system for VET.

Therefore, the general objectives are:

1. Increasing the relevance of VET at all levels of education,
2. Increasing flexibility and permeability of VET at all levels of education,
3. Strengthening the culture of quality assurance in VET.

The main sources of funding. The implementation of the NIP will be mainly funded through national funds, but significant resources are allocated through ongoing and future EU projects/IPA funds.

Timeline. The activities foreseen by the NIP will be implemented in the period from September 2022 to September 2025.

3. Detailed description of measures and/or their packages

Title

Cluster 1 - Harmonisation of the VET offer with labour market needs through sustainable partnership

Rationale/background, challenges addressed

Serbia continuously works on harmonisation of the education system with labour market needs through the implementation of different measures among which are most frequent those related to the development of new and update of the existing qualification standards as well as VET educational profiles/curricula based on them. The same measures are also emphasized in SEDS 2030 and in the Economic Reform Programme (ERP) for the period 2021-2023 where further development of qualifications oriented to the needs of the labour market is listed as one of the priorities. In more concrete terms, starting from 2010, curricula in VET are developed based on qualification standards. So far, 174 qualification standards have been developed in RS, of which 74 are according to the new methodology. Also, there are 120 educational profiles based on the qualification standard, 34 of which

⁹ Ex-post analysis of the implementation of the Strategy of Education Development in Serbia 2020 - https://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/3-Ex-post-analiza_0202.pdf

have been innovated after adoption. Innovation was intensified after the adoption of the LDE and the Law on NQFS. The enrolment of students in educational profiles based on the qualification standard is constantly growing (87% in the 2021/22 school year). However, in order to ensure all curricula are based on qualification standards and to achieve full enrolment of students in educational profiles based on qualification standards in the following few years, all the processes related to the development of qualification standards and modernised curricula need to be fastened and intensified. In addition, although NQF is operational and referenced to EQF, the whole process of harmonisation of the education system with labour market needs and functioning of SSCs should be based on a more solid social partnership, including needed improvement of institutional set-up (e.g. trade union or other employee representative are recognized only in advisory role etc.).

Furthermore, in order to prepare students not just for vocation but for the life in modern societies, SED 2030 foresees the revision of key, interdisciplinary, general and specific subject competencies/competency standards. The starting point for the improvement of education standards is the document Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning – European Reference Framework (2018) which defines eight key competencies based on which subject competencies are to be developed. The basis for the revision of standards is also the results of PISA assessment from 2018, which showed that the achievements of students from the Republic of Serbia are still below the OECD average.

As for the CVET, PROAEs fastened with the development and implementation of CVET programmes which correspond to the needs of the labour market, but according to reports on the implementation of Annual Adult Education Plans, it is visible that there are not enough such programmes and that those programmes do not fully meet the needs of the labour market (e.g., the number of participants undergoing retraining, additional training and specialisation programmes is low and there is a huge disproportion between the number of planned and enrolled participants, which is, inter alia, the result of planning that is not in line with labour market needs), thus processes of further improvement of PROAEs offer need to be improved.

Similarly, to pre-university education, the relevance of higher education study programmes should be improved. Therefore, in 2021, the standards for the accreditation of dual academic and vocational (applied) study programmes are adopted and the first cohort of students is enrolled in such programmes. Currently, the number of dual study programmes and modules in vocational and academic studies is 32 and the number of students is 150. Therefore, the further development and implementation of dual study programmes and modules and their promotion are needed as well as support to NEAQA in amending standards for accreditation of vocational (applied) study programmes (new standards should contain increased hours for practical teaching and the section related to the description of qualifications should contain descriptors of levels in the NQFS).

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

- Specific objective 1.1. – Strengthening social partnership in the modernisation of qualification standards, VET programmes and graduate tracking.
- Specific objective 1.2. – Accelerating the process of developing new and improvement of the existing qualification standards, IVET curricula and CVET programmes based on qualification standards.
- Specific objective 1.3. – Improving the relevance of higher education, through the improved offering of vocational (applied) and dual study programmes.

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

Activities related to specific objective 1.1:

- 1.1.1. Improvement of the legislative, institutional and methodological framework for the development of qualification standards through a participatory and transparent process of all main stakeholders (Milestone – Legislative, institutional and methodological framework for development of qualification standards fully established until the end of 2023).
- 1.1.2. Improvement of the methodological framework for the development of CVET programmes based on the qualification standards (Milestone – Improved methodological framework for the development of CVET programmes based on the qualification standards adopted until the end of 2023).
- 1.1.3. Development of the methodology for monitoring the effects of applying new qualifications to employment and lifelong learning based on data from the sector profile (data on student participation in the labour market and continuation of their education) (Milestone - The methodology for monitoring the effects of applying new qualifications to employment and lifelong learning based on data from the sector profile developed until the end of 2023).
- 1.1.4. Establishment of a system of monitoring the effects of the implementation of new qualifications on employment and lifelong learning (Milestone - System of monitoring the effects of the implementation of qualifications on employment and lifelong learning established until the end of 2024).
- 1.1.5. Improving the capacities of social partners for active participation in the development of a qualifications system (Milestone - Capacity building programme for social partners for active participation in the development of a qualifications system developed and implemented until the end of 2023).
- 1.1.6. Enhancing the capacities of QA in their role to provide expert support to Sector Skills Councils in their activities (Milestone - Capacity building programme for QA representatives to provide expert support to Sector Skills Councils in their activities developed and implemented until the end of 2023).

Activities related to specific objective 1.2:

- 1.2.1. Revision of key, cross-curricular, general and specific curricular competencies/competence standards (Milestone - Key, cross-curricular, general and specific curricular competencies/competence standards revised until the end of 2022).
- 1.2.2. Development and improvement of qualification standards following the Methodology for the development of qualification standards and in accordance with the needs of the labour market and society (Milestone - Approx. 25 qualification standards developed/improved per year, 100 until the end of 2025)

- 1.2.3. Development of new and improvement of the existing curricula in IVET in accordance with qualification standards (school and dual based secondary VET) (Milestone - Approx. 25 per year, 100 until the end of 2025)
- 1.2.4. Improving PROAEs' capacities for the development of new training programmes in accordance with qualification standards (Milestone – Developed and implemented capacity building programme for PROAEs' representatives for the development of training programmes in accordance with qualification standards until the end of 2023).

Activities related to specific objective 1.3:

- 1.3.1. Development of new and implementation of existing study programmes that are implemented according to the dual model (Milestone - 50 accredited dual model study programmes (specified by NQFS levels) until the end of 2025).
- 1.3.2. Promotion of study programmes that are implemented according to the dual model (Milestones - Approx. 10 promotional events organised & 1000 students enrolled in study programmes that are implemented according to the dual model until the end of 2025).
- 1.3.3. Support to the National Entity for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NEAQA) in amending standards for accreditation of vocational (applied) study programmes (Milestone - Standards for accreditation of vocational (applied) study programmes amended until the end of 2023).

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET. <input type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)

- initial VET (IVET)
- continuing VET (CVET)

Scope (national, regional, local)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local
Beneficiaries/target groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector skills councils • Higher education institutions • Employee representative bodies • Employers' representative bodies • VET schools • Students
Responsible ministries/bodies
MoESTD in cooperation with the Qualifications Agency, the Council for NQFS, the Council for VET and Adult Education, the Institute for the Improvement of Education, the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation, the National Council for Higher Education and the National Entity for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
National funds (budget funds) – approx. 5 mil. EUR until 2023. EU projects RediS 2030 and State Matura – approx. 300,000 EUR until 2023.

3. Detailed description of measures and/or their packages
Title
Cluster 2 – Expanding the network of RPL providers and increasing permeability within the VET system
Rationale/background, challenges addressed
Even foreseen by the legislation and even the Rulebook on standards and implementation of RPL procedures is adopted, a system of RPL has not yet been fully established and there is no intensive promotion of the RPL system. Furthermore, after successful piloting of RPL in several PROAE there is

a need for expansion of the network of RPL providers, thus approving/licencing new PROAEs for implementation of RPL and capacity building of PROAE teams to implement RPL procedure adequately is still missing.

The VET system is not fully permeable. Namely, at the preuniversity level permeability between tracks is possible but, bearing in mind rather huge differences between VET and general education programmes, it is not implemented in practice without huge compensation of exams. Also, a possibility for horizontal and vertical mobility in the qualifications system is needed in order to allow further harmonisation of the NQFS with European policies including the recognition of foreign qualifications.

In light of lifelong learning support, stakeholder dialogue and consideration of the possibility of merging sub-levels into individual levels 6 and 7 of NQFS should be initiated and changes of descriptors of level 5 of NQFS need to be considered. The latter is of special importance since NQF level 5 in Serbia assumes specialist education and master craftsman, but the legislation in the field of crafts is yet to be adopted, thus it is not possible to acquire a diploma for this level of education for master craftsman. Parallely, this NQF level does not provide access to higher levels of education, does not belong to higher education, and does not include short-study programmes. The existing short study programmes provided by HEIs are non-formal and do not lead to an NQFS level. Thus, there is a need for the introduction of short cycles in higher education, the development of substantial offer of short-cycle study programmes provided by HEIs and work on the additional regulation of qualifications at level 5 NQFS.

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

- Specific objective 2.1. – Increasing possibilities for RPL implementation.
- Specific objective 2.2. – Enhancing permeability of VET on the level of secondary and higher education.

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

Activities related to specific objective 2.1:

- 2.1.1. Approvement/licencing of new schools for implementation of RPL (Milestones - 40 VET schools licenced for RPL implementation until the end of 2024).
- 2.1.2. Further implementation of training of PROAE teams involved in the RPL procedure (Milestone - 40 PROAEs' teams trained for implementation of the RPL procedures until the end of 2024).
- 2.1.3. Promotion of the RPL concept (Milestone - 30 promotional events implemented until the end of 2023).

Activities related to specific objective 2.2:

- 2.2.1. Initiation of dialogue with stakeholders and considering the option to join sub-levels into individual levels 6 and 7 of the NQFS and changing the descriptors for level 5 of NQFS in order to integrate the short cycles (Milestones - Dialogue with stakeholders and considering the option to

<p>join sub-levels into individual levels 6 and 7 of the NQFS and changing the descriptors for level 5 of NQFS until mid-2023 & Developed proposal for redefining descriptors at the NQFS level 5 until the end of 2023).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2.2. Development of post-secondary education programmes at level 5 of NQFS (e.g. specialisation, master craftsman training, short cycles) (Milestone – Developed 30 post-secondary education programmes at level 5 of NQFS including short-study programmes until the end of 2025). 	
EU policy priorities addressed	
Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration
<input type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET. <input type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.
VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)	
Scope (national, regional, local)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local	
Beneficiaries/target groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROAEAs Institute for the Improvement of Education Higher education institutions Students Unemployed 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEETs
Responsible ministries/bodies
MoESTD in cooperation with the Qualifications Agency, the Council for NQFS and the National Council for Higher Education.
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
National funds (budget funds) – approx. 2,5 mil. EUR until 2023. IPA 2014 funds – approx. 1 mil. EUR until the end of 2022. IPA 2020 funds – approx. 2 mil. EUR until the end of 2025.

3. Detailed description of measures and/or their packages
Title
Cluster 3 – Improving quality assurance policies and practices in VET.
Rationale/background, challenges addressed
<p>The quality of vocational education and training is one of the main long-term focuses of the new education strategy. Attention will be focused on the school model of vocational education, in which most learning processes take place in vocational schools, and on the dual model in which a significant part of practical teaching is realized with employers.</p> <p>Improvements in this area will be harmonized with the European framework for quality assurance in vocational education EQAVET, especially bearing in mind that in 2019, Serbia joined the EQAVET network and established the National Reference Point of Serbia for the quality of vocational education NRP.</p> <p>To ensure the quality of the National Model of Dual Education, the establishment of a system of monitoring and evaluation of dual education which will consider all the specifics of this part of secondary vocational education is prioritised in different strategic documents at the national level (e.g. ERP, SEDS 2030, etc.). Therefore, the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for dual education was developed, piloted and adopted by the CDIDE. Such M&E Framework presents enrichment of the existing quality assurance processes and, in the future, should be integrated into the existing standards and procedures for external evaluation of schools' quality and self/evaluation processes. Also, in order to have full integration into the system the capacity building of external evaluators, namely representatives of regional school administrations, should take place.</p>

PROAEAs are not widely recognised as a flexible model of adapting education to rapid technological changes and the needs of the labour market while the methodology and standards for external evaluation and self-evaluation of the work of PROAEAs are just recently developed and not all the actors involved in these processes are trained enough to take and fulfil their responsibilities in this area. Also, the current normative framework of quality assurance of non-formal education is not reflecting recent changes in this area.

As for the RPL system, even if it is not fully established, it is expected that continuous monitoring of RPL system implementation is needed and that, based on data collected through monitoring, improvement of the quality assurance system for the RPL procedure will take need to take place.

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

- Specific objective 3.1. – Improving the quality assurance system in IVET (school-based and dual VET).
- Specific objective 3.2. – Improving quality assurance system in non-formal CVET.

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

Activities related to specific objective 3.1:

- 3.1.1. Integration of Framework for monitoring and evaluation of the National Model of Dual Education into the national quality assurance system and procedures (Milestones - Bylaw for implementation of Framework for monitoring and evaluation of the National Model of Dual Education adopted & the Framework applied in 75 VET schools with dual profiles until the end of 2023).
- 3.1.2. Improving the capacity of RSAs representatives for the implementation Framework for monitoring and evaluation of the National Model of Dual Education through the development and implementation of relevant training seminars (Milestone - Developed and implemented capacity building programme with all RSAs' representatives for the implementation of Framework for monitoring and evaluation of the National Model of Dual Education until the end of 2023).
- 3.1.3. Introduction of appropriate EQAVET standards and indicators into the national quality assurance system (Milestones - National model for national peer-review in line with EQAVET recommendations developed until the end of 2023 & 80% of VET schools familiar with the EQAVET quality assurance model until the end of 2024).

Activities related to specific objective 3.2:

- 3.2.1. Improving normative framework of quality assurance of non-formal education (Milestone - Developed and adopted model for quality assurance of non-formal CVET until the end of 2023).
- 3.2.2. Improving the capacity of the Qualifications Agency for the implementation of standards for self-evaluation and external evaluation of PROAEs through the development and implementation of relevant training seminars (Milestone - Developed and implemented 7 training seminars

<p>with employees in the Qualifications Agency for the implementation of standards for self-evaluation and external evaluation of work of PROAEs until the end of 2023).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.2.3. Monitoring and improvement of the quality assurance system for the RPL procedure (Milestone - Procedures, methods and instruments used in the RPL procedure are developed and adopted until the end of 2024). 	
EU policy priorities addressed	
Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration
<input type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET. <input type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.
VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)	
Scope (national, regional, local)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> national <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> regional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local	
Beneficiaries/target groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoESTD/Regional school administrations Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation Institute for the Improvement of Education Schools PROAEAs 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students
<p>Responsible ministries/bodies</p>
<p>MoESTD in cooperation with the Qualifications Agency, the Council for NQFS, the Commission for the development and implementation of dual education, the Institute for the Improvement of Education and the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation</p>
<p>Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)</p>
<p>National funds (budget funds) – approx. 2,5 mil. EUR until 2023.</p> <p>IPA 2020 funds – approx. 1,5 mil. EUR until the end of 2025.</p> <p>The SDC project “Support to the Development of Dual Education” – 300,000 EUR until 2025.</p>

<p>4. Governance of the implementation of the plan</p>
<p>Summary of the stakeholder involvement. As the main governing body in education, MoESTD will be in charge of overall coordination and monitoring of NPI implementation. MoESTD will ensure intersectoral cooperation with line ministries (MoLEVSA and MoYS) and other involved institutions/bodies that are going to be involved in the aforementioned activities (e.g. the Council for NQFS, the Qualifications Agency, the SSC, the National Entity for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education, the Institute for the Improvement of Education, the Institute of Educational Quality and Evaluation, The Council for Vocational Education and Adult Education, etc.). MoESTD will also ensure a clear division of roles and responsibilities among stakeholders.</p> <p>In line with its jurisdictions, QA will be responsible for amendments in the NQFS, improvement of the legislative, institutional and methodological framework for the development of qualification standards; improving the methodological framework for the development of CVET programmes based on the qualification standards; development a methodology for monitoring the effects of applying new qualifications to employment and lifelong learning based on data from the sector profile; development and implementation of the capacity building programme for social partners for active participation in the development of a qualifications system (2023); and provision of support to Sector Skills Councils in their activities.</p> <p>The Council for NQFS will participate in the development of a methodology for monitoring the effects of applying new qualifications to employment and lifelong learning and a system of monitoring the effects of the implementation of qualifications on employment and lifelong learning, proposing market-relevant qualification standards for all NQFS levels.</p> <p>The Council for Vocational Education and Adult Education will provide advice and professional opinion on IVET curricula and CVET programmes to be developed based on qualification standards.</p>

In addition, IIE and IEQE are involved in policy making and the development of some elements of quality assurance, thus they will contribute to the process of defining education standards and will be involved in activities related to quality assurance.

National Council for Higher Education should support the development of amendments to the LHE that will contribute to student permeability. It will also be consulted in the process of developing new study programs implemented according to the dual model.

NEAQA will participate in activities related to amending standards for accreditation of vocational/applied study programmes and supporting the implementation of quality dual education study programs.

Other social partners, through bodies they are represented in, will participate in all the matters related to qualification standards and the development of methodology for CVET programmes. They are also a part of the Commission for monitoring of dual education implementation which will continue to be one of the most important stakeholders in quality assurance activities as well as activities related to increasing the relevance and attractiveness of VET.

VET providers are represented through membership in the Commission for monitoring of dual education implementation, the Council for Vocational Education and Adult Education and will be invited to participate in different working groups and bodies dedicated to the development of new policies and/or legislation.

It is important to note that MoLEVSA is going to be an important partner to MoESTD in all the processes of implementation of NIP since it is in charge of the implementation of the Employment Strategy in the Republic of Serbia 2021 – 2026 & accompanied AP as well as for design and implementation of the YG Implementation Plan. Both of these documents put a strong accent on cooperation between the education and employment sectors in the development of a skilled labour force. Also, cooperation between the aforementioned sectors is reflected within YG scheme prevention measures as well as the provision of quality offers of continued education and training.

Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the NIP. The monitoring and reporting will be harmonised with the monitoring of the implementation of the SED 2030 & accompanied AP, ERP 2021/23 and the Employment Strategy in the Republic of Serbia 2021 – 2026 & Action Plan 2021/23 and YG Implementation Plan since the objectives and activities described in the NIP are in the line with aforementioned national documents.

In general, monitoring of implementation and assessment of achievements will be done based on data provided from different sources such as line ministries (e.g. MoESTD and MoLEVSA), National Employment Service, VET providers, employers, relevant institutions (QA, IEQE, National Employment Service etc.), CCI and PROEAs while specific data (e.g. these related to qualitative indicators) are going to be collected through the EMIS which is going to be fully established in the following months.

Responsible institutions will report to MoESTD, namely to DGVTs and ACVTs from the group of MoESTD employees who will be in charge of general monitoring of and reporting on the NIP.

5. Expected effects of the plan

In the long-term, full implementation of NIP can enhance the quality of education reform processes in the VET sector, support the development of a culture of lifelong learning, create a better connection with the world of labour that should lead to an increase in employment, especially of young people, strengthening of social partnership and intersectoral approach and the establishment of mechanisms on the national and local levels for the coordinated implementation of VET policies and measures. It will, also, support the implementation of activities dedicated to permeability between levels of education through programmes and paths that weren't previously developed which should make VET a much more attractive choice.

Also, by implementing NIP together with national strategies and activities planned through Youth Guarantee, Serbia shows dedication to moving towards the achievement of EU Council Recommendations on VET quantitative indicators – the share of employed graduates from VET should be at least 82%¹⁰ and 60 % of recent graduates from VET benefit from exposure to work-based learning during their vocational education and training¹¹.

In more specific terms, short and medium terms, implementation of NIP will support national efforts to create updated and harmonised market-relevant qualification standards as well as IVET and CVET programmes that contain a good balance of vocational and key competencies, to create a legal foundation for better flexibility of the VET system in the terms of permeability and possibilities for recognition of prior learning, to intensify the promotion of VET opportunities and to improve quality assurance mechanisms.

The main challenge will be quantitative data collection since EMIS is still not fully established. Also, there are different activities to be implemented simultaneously with limited human resources which might negatively influence the completion of some of the activities in a timely manner, thus planned timeline might be adjusted during the implementation of NIP.

The challenge of having a joint vision between the world of labour and education is present since VET reforms have started, thus NIP can complement YG and can serve as a communication tool if presented adequately. Its implementation also will depend on whether it is supplemented with enough promotion of activities and training of all relevant actors.

¹⁰ This will cover the age group 20-34 who have graduated 1-3 years ago from upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary VET.

¹¹ This refers to experiences at a workplace (i.e. in a company, government institution or non-profit organisation) that were part of the curriculum of the formal programme that led to the highest level of education successfully completed.