

Annex 1 - Template and guidelines for National implementation plans

Please fill in the information in English.

1. Brief information on the national context and baseline

The Ministry of Education and Children formulates the policy in the area of vocational education and training. There are 12 upper secondary schools in Iceland that offer vocational education and training. The government's policy in this field is implemented in collaboration with their headmasters and managers and also the stakeholders such as the Industries who is responsible for internships.

This section **briefly** presents the national context and serves as a baseline for the plan. The participating countries should describe:

- i. The strategic and legal frameworks that are in place and the national context of the VET system at the time of submission of the NIP that will guide the implementation of the planned measures for VET. The information may refer to relevant points of national long-term visions and strategies (e.g. for 2030 and beyond), main strategic documents related to the development of education, training and lifelong learning and, specifically, VET strategies and/or plans, the EU skills agenda, resilience and recovery plans ⁽¹⁾, employment policies, as well as to sectoral and regional strategies, if applicable. The presentation of the national context of the VET system will focus on the factors (e.g. strong involvement of the social partners) that national VET policy can build upon to address the European priorities and to achieve the objectives of the NIPs.

Vocational education and training in Iceland is based on the Act no. 92/2008 on Upper Secondary Schools and the National Curriculum Guide for Upper Secondary Schools. The act and the curriculum frame all the policy work and the preparation of all plans and implementation. In addition, an Education Policy 2030 has recently been presented and implemented. The motto of education policy 2030 are: **Outstanding education for life. The education policy is based on five pillars that support its value. The pillars will be:**

- A. Equal opportunities for all.**
- B. Leading teaching.**
- C. Skills for the future.**
- D. Well-being.**
- E. Quality.**

(1) Especially the components related to education and training and labour market and social protection. National recovery and resilience plans will be available here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en

The pillar C in Education policy 2030 is the one that supports increased quality in vocational education and training and the implementation of projects in industries that promotes all development to the future.

The government financial plan is also the basis for all planning for each period. The financial plan for 2023-2027 is the basis for the current period.

- Today there are thirty upper secondary schools in Iceland, twelve are schools that offer vocational education and training.
- Stakeholders such as the business community are also important in all cooperation in the implementation of new projects in the field of vocational education and training. As with the introduction of the new regulation in vocational training.

It is important to report that in Iceland the objectives of the Osnabrück Declaration are in line with the national objectives for VET.

- A new regulation on workplace learning in Iceland has been approved and took effect on 1 August 2021, as part of a comprehensive reform of the Icelandic VET system.

The main emphases in the new regulation are e.g.:

The responsibility for finding a suitable workplace for apprenticeship will be in the hands of the VET schools, rather than being the sole responsibility of the learner. This means that if a learner is not able to find a place for apprenticeship (a so-called school-based apprenticeship programme), the VET school will have to ensure that the learner has access to the workplace training needed. Further, the exact duration of workplace learning will not be determined at the outset but will be decided based on the learner's progress in acquiring a predetermined skillset. The focus will therefore be on competences gained in the workplace rather than duration of workplace learning, making workplace training more competence driven. The regulation will speed up the learning process, as learners will be able to graduate earlier, rather than being held up waiting for an appropriate apprenticeship to come along.

- A new act, drafted by the Ministry of Education based on proposals in the minister's action plan, increases young people's interest in VET and changes admission requirements for VET learners who wish to enter university.

With the new act (– which was approved) – a final examination from an upper secondary school at EQF level 4 (ISQF level 3) will be equivalent to a matriculation exam. In the past, applicants to universities were required to have completed matriculation exams to be eligible for admission to a first university degree. This change aims to put learners who have completed art, technology and vocational studies on an equal footing with those who have completed general study programmes, when entering university.

- ii. main policy initiatives and reforms that have already started and are ongoing at the time of preparing the NIPs. These might include initiatives and reforms that may be completed by May 2022 or will continue. Countries are invited to reflect and describe how these national initiatives will contribute to the implementation of the common priorities.

In parallel to the new regulation that took effect on 1 August 2021 an action plan was introduced with a digital logbook which was launched in August 2021 and the first VET learners signed a workplace contract through the logbook system. Digital logbook has now been introduced in 28 industries / professions, in Iceland.

The operationalisation of the digital logbook symbolises fundamental changes in vocational education and training (VET) in Iceland. It is part of systemic changes taking place in the VET system in recent years under the former Minister for Education, Science and Culture.

The logbook keeps track of the academic progress of VET learners and of the skills they must acquire to master their trade. At the same time, logbooks are now a shared communication platform for the learner, the school, and the workplace, simplifying administration and clarifying the responsibilities of each partner.

The Directorate of Education oversees the project (the administration of the digital logbook) in close cooperation with the upper secondary VET schools and a committee under the Ministry of Education and Children.

It is anticipated that the operationalisation of the logbook will increase the attractiveness of vocational education and training.

- ii. relevant (statistical) evidence.

2. Challenges and general objectives of the plan

The participating countries are invited to identify and describe the main challenges they face (e.g. in the socioeconomic, employment, VET and skills areas) and how they are going to be addressed through the implementation of the planned measures.

The general objectives of the NIPs should be presented in the order of priority and supported with evidence. Countries should make a clear link between the challenges to be addressed and the set objectives and explain how their achievement will help addressing these challenges. The description of each objective should refer to the objectives of the Osnabrück Declaration.

The participating countries should provide:

- i. a brief overview of the main challenges, reform objectives and main measures ⁽²⁾ that comprise the NIP and links between them, explain the coherence of all parts of the NIP as well as its consistency with other national initiatives ⁽³⁾, where applicable;

The main challenges in the field of VET that Iceland intends to include in the NIP are the following, Iceland believes that these challenges support very well with Objective 1 in the Osnabruck plan:

1. Promote vocational education and training in primary schools.

Technical and vocationally educated people play a key role in the dynamics of society. Technical education has for years been below expectations and the shortage of young people with vocational and technical education is a fact.

2. Increase the number of vocational students, especially in small professions.

It has also for a long time been a challenge in Iceland to increase specially the number of students in the so-called small-scale industries, where there is a lack of professionals and few have been educated in the field for a long time. The aim is to introduce these industries to prospective students in vocational education.

3. Improve learning conditions in vocational schools, an assessment has been made of the facilities and the vocational school buildings.

⁽²⁾ A detailed description of those measures will be done in Section 3.

⁽³⁾ E.g. national recovery and resilience plans, national reform programmes.

A new building for the country's largest vocational school is in the planning phase, and 3-4 other schools will have an extension or extra building.

4. Increase the number of vocational education and training places/placements?

An agreement has been reached with the business community that will manage the task of increasing the number of vocational education and training places/placements

5. Increase the number of companies that accept interns in-the-job training.

An agreement has been reached with the business community that will manage the task of increasing the number of companies that take on apprenticeships.

The above challenges must also be accompanied by a systematic increase in the number of qualified vocational teachers. This will be the next task in response to the increase in students, which has immediately become visible in the applications received by vocational schools.

ii. a reference to the main sources of funding for the implementation of the NIP, namely which funds, including EU funds, will be used;

National funds will be used for the implementation of the NIP and possibly there will be some EU funds available through the Erasmus+ programme.

iii. timeline and current phase of development of the implementation of the NIP with respect to the timeline of the Osnabrück Declaration.

In Iceland there will be a link between the multi-annual national budget plan 2023-2027 and the NIP.

The objective of the NIP will be among other things implemented through the implementation of a new regulation on workplace training and the introduction and development of an digital logbook.

3. Detailed description of main measures and/or their packages ⁽⁴⁾

One table to be developed for each measure that forms the core of the plan.

In VET, the main emphasis continues to be on quality issues and promotion of vocation education with the objective to increase the number of VET students in the country. The main objective is to raise awareness of the importance and diversity of VET. The NA has contributed to this i.e. by sharing good examples and encouraging VET schools and organisations to take part in promotion linked to the European VET skills week.

There are three main objectives presented by the Ministry of Education and Children in the financial plan from the government, they are the following:

Objectives 1: Increase the proportion of students who complete vocational and technical studies and equalize gender distribution.

Objectives 2: Increase the number of students who complete an exam on time.

Objectives 3: Increase the quality of education in upper secondary schools.

Below you can see the key criteria that are being worked on:

⁴ A package (of measures) is a coherent set of measures that address a particular challenge, one or several priorities and principles of the VET recommendation and/or objectives of the Osnabrück Declaration.

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Measure	Status 2019	Target 2021	Status 2021
Proportion of registered students in vocational education and training compared to students in studies to a matriculation examination	Total: 4,5:10 men; 6,9:10 women; 2,7:10 (2018)	5.0: 10 nationally	a) 5,1:10 b) 7,4:10 C)3,3:10
Proportion of graduates in vocational education and training compared to students studying for a matriculation examination. a) total, b) men, C) women	Total: 5.6: 10 (men; 7.2: 10 women: 4.5: 10) (2017)	7,8:10 nationally	a)5,7:10 b)8,0:10 c)4,2:10 2020

<p>Rationale/background, challenges addressed</p> <p>It is clear in the first action plan of the education policy 2030 that it's important to shape Iceland's national skills strategy and systematically build the skills required to tackle future challenges, while at the same time ensuring welfare, the creation of economic value and competitiveness.</p> <p>It is important that the supply of vocational education and the training supports c pillars (C. Skills to the future) in education policy 2030 and skills policy for the future which is on schedule to perform.</p>
<p>Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan</p> <p>The main objectives are to increase the interest of young people in vocational education and training and thus achieve increase in the number of those who choose vocational and technical education after primary school.</p> <p>We want to prepare for the future, meet the skill needs of the community, skills for the future and thus ensuring prosperity in the country.</p>
<p>Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline</p> <p>The following plan are part of an agreement reached with the stake holders in the business community in 2020 and has been in working process since.</p>

Main action in the plan include:

1. Provide young people in primary school more insight into vocational and technical education at the upper secondary level and introduce them to the many ways of studying in a structured way offered and job opportunities following them.
2. Inform students, parents, guardians, teachers and study and career counsellors on opportunities for future work after vocational and technical studies.
3. Take ambitious regional development plans into account in the organization of action to strengthen vocational and technical education.
4. Emphasize vocational and technical education in primary schools.
5. Equal access for upper secondary school students to higher education.

EU policy priorities addressed

Iceland believes that with its future vision in vocational education and training and its NIP, it is responding specifically to the following issues in the Osnabruck program; **Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET** and also the following EU priorities:

- Agile VET, which adapts to labour market needs.
- Flexible VET, which provides progression opportunities. T
- VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of 21 training/skills.
- VET that promotes equal opportunities.
- VET underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.

Osnabrück Declaration

- 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET.
- 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation.
- 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET.
- 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (List to be provided) high school students, students, workplaces and parents.
Responsible ministries/bodies
Directorate of Education and the Ministry of Education and Children
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
List all sources of funding and estimated amounts, if available. Icelandic Treasury, EU Erasmus+ funding, RAFMENNT Electrical VET Centre, Iðan education centre and Industries also have a vocational training fund

4. Governance of the implementation of the plan

As previously stated, Osnabruck declaration supports very well Iceland's vocational education and training policy. Furthermore, an education policy has been set for the year 2030, which also supports this together with the new regulation on internships.

This section describes how the NIP will be implemented.

The participating countries should:

- (i) provide a summary of the stakeholder involvement, optionally supported by a diagram, explaining their roles and responsibilities for contributing to the successful implementation of the plan, more specifically but not exclusively:
 - authorities – national, regional and/or local – involved; Ministry of Education and Children, Directorate of Education, Upper-secondary schools.
 - social partners;
 - VET providers, representatives of VET learners;

partnerships involving relevant stakeholders, including at regional and sectoral level or international partners, engaged or created for the purpose.

The following parties are key players from the business community and the Ministry's main contacts into the companies and out to the workplaces that receive trainees in vocational training in the implementation of all vocational training projects.

Federation of Icelandic Industries, RAFMENNT Electrical VET Centre and Iðan education centre. These parties should guide companies when new projects come in, such as the logbook. These are also the stakeholders that are in contact with the schools in connection with the students who are in internships.

(ii) indicate how you will organise monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the NIPs in cooperation and in line with the national context and the above described governance arrangements.

Follow-up of policy is stated each year in the government's financial plan, which sets out the main objectives and measures for four years at a time.

At the same time, the results of the ministry's main projects each year are followed up and monitoring in the minister's annual report each time with measures.

5. Expected effects of the plan

Iceland has focused a lot on increasing the number of vocational students in recent years and has achieved good results there. For the next few years, it is important to work to improve conditions for students both in the workplace and at school, and to aim for an increase in the number of qualified teachers who can teach vocational training in accordance with the number of students.

At the same time, the increase in vocational training places must always be closely monitored. Like it says in the Osnabruck declaration: *Companies as learning venues are crucial to modern and excellent VET.*

Iceland agrees with this and this is reflected in national policy and in all the work in the field of VET.

There must always be sufficient apprenticeships and work-based learning in good cooperation with the companies.

The participating countries are invited to assess and explain the expected effects of the implementation of the NIPs in the short-, medium and long-term. Benefits and improvements in relevant socio-economic areas, skills and education and training and on various target groups should be considered.

The participating countries should also indicate potential obstacles/risk factors that can hinder the implementation of the NIP and explain how they foresee to overcome those.

It is always a target group to stimulate interest in students immediately in primary school, thus increasing the number of students in vocational education and training as well as the drop-out students who are usually older than the normal student.

The upper secondary school system in Iceland is special in that way, it is actually open to people in all ages, although students under the age of 25 always have priority for admission.

This flexible system gives people the opportunity to start vocational education later in life and therefore the average age of students in vocational education and training is generally higher.

This flexible system has worked well both in the financial crisis and also in the coronavirus epidemic, when both drop-out and older students returned to school to complete their studies or start studies when there was a lack of employment opportunities.

Iceland believes that with the implementation of these projects, vocational training will become more professional and accessible for all students interested in this field. The benefit to society is also great to get more enthusiastic and ambitious individuals into the industries especially where there is a lack of people. Iceland is building for the future for the whole community, make skills for the future and for individuals themselves so they can enjoy their work more.

It is very important to work on all projects with all stakeholders, both the business community, companies and the schools. Through good dialogue and cooperation, Iceland believes that it is possible to minimize risk in the implementation of new projects, but these can be the main risk factors and will be monitored specifically.

- That teachers and workplaces do not use the digital logbook.
- that workplaces do not manage to offer vocational training to all vocational students.
- That there is not an active enough dialogue between schools and companies with the vocational students and the digital logbook.

Annex 2 – National level actions defined in the Osnabrück Declaration

Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
<p>1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET</p>	<p>1.1. Explore the possibility of setting up a network of voluntary experts and executives, retired or on sabbatical, to support their peers in the fields of VET and apprenticeships as part of the EAfA</p> <p>1.2. Support the development of digital infrastructure for learning and teaching purposes in VET including artificial intelligence and AR/VR technologies and develop suitable institutional teaching and training arrangements underpinned by adequate infrastructure, especially in remote and rural areas thus ensuring social inclusion</p> <p>1.3 Reinforce work-based learning and apprenticeships by implementing the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and making use of the on-demand support services, and policy learning initiatives. Strengthen the use of quality and inclusive apprenticeships as a tool to support school/training-to-work transitions of vulnerable groups and to improve citizens' qualification levels.</p> <p>1.4. Support Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) and improve permeability between vocational and academic pathways, including work-based learning and enhanced cooperation between VET, HE and research centres, thus establishing quality and effective VET and apprenticeship programmes at EQF level 5 and above</p> <p>1.5. Develop national and regional skills intelligence systems including skills anticipation and graduate tracking; enable social partners, decision-makers, stakeholders and providers to adapt and update VET programmes, curricula and guidelines in a timely and effective manner</p>
<p>2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation</p>	<p>2.1. Develop national skills strategies for quality and inclusive lifelong learning with all relevant national, regional, sectoral stakeholders and social partners. Besides education and training provision, the national skills strategies may include guidance, incentives for improved skills provision by employers, increased participation by employees, validation of prior learning and targeted public approaches for reaching out to inactive and unemployed individuals, NEETs or individuals at risk of unemployment</p> <p>2.2. Develop targeted information measures on the benefits of CVET and ensure user-friendly access to information on IVET and CVET offers at national and regional levels addressing gender and other stereotypes for an equal, fair and diverse society</p> <p>2.3. Work with respective stakeholders to develop digital learning solutions supporting access to CVET opportunities and the awarding of CVET credentials and certificates, thereby opening the possibility to obtain full qualifications without neglecting on-the-job CVET and the positive effects of learning conducive work environments</p>

Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
	<p>2.4. Support linking national VET platforms or databases to the Europass in accordance with the Europass decision and the EQF Recommendation where appropriate</p> <p>2.5. Support VET teachers, trainers, guidance counsellors, adult educators and mentors by equipping them with the adequate skills and tools for and through digital technologies; in particular through systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, initial and continuous professional development in both school and work-based settings, as well as distance education and training, enabling them to progress in their careers</p>
3. Sustainability – a green link in VET	<p>3.1. Create incentives for greening VET programmes, including education and training in green technologies and innovation, in energy efficiency, circular economy, environmental awareness, sustainable use of learning and training material, digitalisation to reduce climate effects</p> <p>3.2. Define labour-market-relevant skills for the green transition that are to be incorporated in curricula and VET provision, including basic skills across all sectors and occupations and sector-specific skills in cooperation with the social partners</p> <p>3.3. Define and support opportunities to enable teaching and training staff, managing teams in VET providers and trainers and mentors in companies to act as multipliers and mediators, in view of increasing digitalisation and sustainability within the provision and management of training programmes</p>
4. European Education and Training Area and international VET	<p>4.1. Support and facilitate the mobility of VET and adult learners, including apprentices, for example by developing support structures and providing information on opportunities in host countries</p> <p>4.2. Increase the rate of mobility of VET learners as well as teachers and trainers, while strengthening measures to ensure the quality and recognition of learning outcomes, as well as adequate support structures. Foster longer periods of mobility for VET learners abroad and ensure that apprentice work placements are in line with the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships, taking into account national regulations and collective agreements, including health and safety provisions</p> <p>4.3. Develop VET internationalisation strategies, mobilising partnerships and including commitments for concrete and targeted actions, with all relevant stakeholders in accordance with national or regional regulations</p> <p>4.4. Promote intercultural knowledge, skills and competences as part of qualification and curricula requirements in VET qualifications in line with the Key Competence Framework</p> <p>4.5 Cooperate with other EU countries in preparing national teams for international competitions such as WorldSkills and EuroSkills.</p>