

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

VET in Slovakia is regulated by Act on VET 61/2015 Coll. Stipulating initial VET system. This law stipulates types of secondary vocational schools, places of work-based learning, dual education, relationships and procedural features of dual education, in-company trainer's education and certification, company schools and governance of VET. In context of structural changes on labour market, experiences of stakeholders, ongoing digitalization of industry and services, Ministry of Education amended the existing law on VET in 2021 by act 413/2021 Coll.

This amendment introduces many adjustments towards practical training of pupils such as **better in-company services**, **internationalisation of practical training** (provisions of VET can be performed in partners schools/companies abroad), adjustments of apprenticeship contract (prolonged period for its assignment), **expansion of possibility to carry out practical training in dual education for pre-school education teachers and social services workers**.

The main changes however, bring VET provision and its real application in praxis even closer to the needs of the labour market and the society. **New system of evaluation of new fields of study**'s been implemented via new defined responsibility of Employers' Associations based on empiric and objective needs of specific field of economy. It replaced previous system based on decision of founder of the secondary school. It prohibits for new fields of study not relevant to labour market needs and its clear link to qualifications to be adapted.

The second large change stipulates bringing more small and medium-sized companies (SME's) on board in order to deliver work-based learning to more pupils. **In-company training centres** have been introduced and their full effect is expected to come into force in 1 January 2025. Companies can combine their efforts to create in-company training centre to deliver high quality and excellent and inclusive VET for those segments of VET provision, which can't be provided neither, by school or company. For SME's the WBL is offered by its entirety or partially. Quality assurance based on Recommendation for EQAVET is obligatory condition for its approval. In-company centre can be awarded to big company as well as long it is already active in dual education.

The third major change is focusing on **early school leavers** and pupils in lower secondary vocational education (EQF/NQF 2). By amendment of Education Act 245/2008 Coll., which came into force on 1 January 2022, new VET provision for those pupils in above mentioned fields of study enables them to **acquire lower secondary education** as an obligatory condition for transition into higher levels of education. Formally, two separated programs are merging into one single program provided with possibility for graduates to access

higher school-year in in acquainted fields of study (f. e. EQF 2 program – construction production, graduates from this new field of study enhanced by element of lower secondary education can access second school year in EQF 3 program – bricklayer).

Parallel to this improvement of accessibility to VET for all, **second chance education** has been introduced via article 31a of Education Act. By this program offered to anyone can acquire secondary lower education (EQF 2) and can access mainstream of education, by successful completion of entry exams to upper secondary education programs. This program is modular and for everyone regardless of age, level of previous learning, country of origin, health or mental disabilities. The program is concluded by exam awarding to its applicants lower secondary education. If the results of entry exam to this program are satisfactory, the program can be skipped and applicant can jump directly to completion exam.

Regarding above-mentioned legislation, supplementary elements are being implemented, defined in Recovery and Resilience Plan such as **system of early warning** (identifying in prior time pupil threatened by drop out) or **monitoring and mentoring scheme** for pedagogical staff in order to deliver qualitative focused aid for pupils.

Lastly, in regard towards amended Recommendation for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, revision of state curricula undertook its process in 2021, where **revision of all key competences** on all levels of VET education (EQF 2 -5) was implemented. Furthermore, in regard on **digital and green transition** of needs of the labour market, **new state curricula for VET** are under preparation and are expected to be adapted in September 2023.

In November 2021, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved the Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Guidance for 2021-2030 (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy) with the aim of defining forward-looking measures in the field of education policies that will enable "responding to the dynamically changing labour market, the nature of work in the context of the fourth industrial revolution and systemic changes in the field of education for all". The Strategy outlines its subsequent elaboration in the form of action plans in three three-year time phases. **The Action Plan for the Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Guidance for 2022-2024** approved by the Slovak Government in April 2022 contains a roadmap of activities, based on the defined thematic areas of the Strategy and the actions proposed therein. Each measure includes a proposal for a set of activities aimed at achieving the objectives of that measure as well as the overall goals of the Strategy, output indicators, the institutions involved in their implementation and an indication of possible financial resources. The financing of the activities is planned to a large extent from EU funds from the programming period 2021-2027 through the Programme Slovakia.

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.
- 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.
- ii. relevant (statistical) evidence, especially regarding the quantitative objectives set in the Recommendation (the Commission will provide more information on these in Spring 2022).

2. Challenges and general objectives of the plan

There are still many challenges which need to be addressed:

- 1. decreasing performance in reading, mathematics and science, visible from PISA, negatively affects participation in mechanical and electrical engineering VET programmes, leading still to shortage of supply of technically skilled graduates in the national economy;*
- 2. early leaving from education and training data of Eastern Slovakia deteriorated, being in a long-term over the EU 2020 target,*
- 3. participation in lifelong learning is well below the EU-28 average (4.0% compared to 11.1% in 2018),*

(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 2012 European Council country-specific recommendations have identified three areas for action:

- 1. strengthening labour market relevance of education and vocational training;*
- 2. improving education of vulnerable groups, including Roma;*
- 3. ensuring labour market reintegration of adults.*

They are still relevant: ESF projects have had some impact, but more time is needed to address them fully. In spite of substantial progress in reforming VET since 2008, systemic changes, including additional investments, are needed to:

- 1. secure up-to-date equipment in VET schools to improve training quality based on digital and green transition;*
- 2. increase the attractiveness of the VET teacher and trainer profession and improve their in-service training substantially;*
- 3. strengthen VET research and labour market analysis, focusing on graduate tracking and identification of transferable skills, to improve understanding of labour market and skill needs;*
- 4. support more systematically the mobility of learners, VET staff and experts, and learn from international expertise and experiences to mainstream activities;*
- 5. bridge the worlds of learning and work by ensuring that experts with a business background can inform VET schools on emerging skill needs, particularly by reinforcing the position and role of sectoral (skills) councils;*
- 6. make the qualification system more flexible through continuous revision (linked to the work on the Slovak qualifications framework) and development of validation procedures for non-formal and informal learning.*

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 VET Recommendation priorities and the Osnabrück Declaration objectives (see Annex 2).

The participating countries are invited to explain how they plan to achieve the quantitative objectives set by the Recommendation and other national targets (e.g. those of Skills agenda), as applicable, by 2025 in the medium-term and by 2030 in the long-term and provide the respective evidence.

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;
- ii. a reference to the main sources of funding for the implementation of the NIP, namely which funds, including EU funds, will be used;
- iii. timeline and current phase of development of the implementation of the NIP with respect to the timeline of the Osnabrück Declaration and the Recommendation.

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

Title

- 1. Centres of Excellence in VET**
- 2. In-company Training Centres**
- 3. Higher VET transformation**
- 4. Quality assurance in IVET and CVET**
- 5. Prevention of Early School Leaving**
- 6. Basic skills**
- 7. Individual Learning Accounts**

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

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

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.

8. New system of Lifelong Learning introduced by the new law on LLL

Rationale/background, challenges addressed

1. Centres of Excellence in VET

Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) are innovative hubs, that aim to provide first-class and high-quality initial and continuing VET, involving all relevant actors in the VET coordination process. The aim of CEOVP is to cumulate all elements of VET coordination, including its supra-ministerial elements (career guidance, defining the content of education for the practical part of teaching) so that quality and innovation in education are achieved as much as possible in accordance with labour and society needs.

By European definition: Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) bring together a wide range of local partners, such as providers of vocational education and training, employers, research centres, development agencies, and employment services (among others), to develop "skills ecosystems" that contribute to regional, economic and social development, innovation, and smart specialisation strategies. They aim to provide high quality vocational skills, support entrepreneurial activities, diffusion of innovation, and act as knowledge and innovation hubs for companies (particularly SMEs), while working with centres in other countries through international collaborative platforms.

*CoVEs are secondary vocational schools that define themselves in terms of other secondary schools with material, technical and personnel equipment, offer adult education programs, retraining courses, long-term unemployed or vocational training. A secondary vocational school can become CoVEs, if the founder of the school (public or non-public) agrees and if the relevant professional or professional organization decides to do so. The COVP infrastructure is well developed; every branch of industry or services in Slovakia is covered by study and training departments or adult education programs and qualifications. If the school offers study and teaching departments in the initial VET, then it can also implement them in the form of non-formal education and informal learning according to the Lifelong Learning Act 568/2009 Coll. after the granting of the so-called "**Automatic accreditation**".*

Following the example of German-speaking countries as well as on the basis of knowledge from application practice, the Ministry of Education indicates disparities in the education provided. Some training programs cannot be implemented through the existing form of the dual education system, where neither employer or school are not able to provide pupils or apprentices the practical training or adequate theoretical subject due to the fact that some sectors are mainly small and medium enterprises (eg construction, services, forestry), where the company, or nor does the school have the appropriate material, technical or personnel support. The part of the

educational program that they do not know whether the employer or the school or none of them can provide is implemented on the so-called **"Third place" of the implementation of the educational process.**

Furthermore, it is cooperation with universities or professional orientation of elementary school students and cooperation with elementary schools in polytechnic education. CoVEs will also be an **institution for the validation and recognition of the results of previous education and master's examinations.**

2. In-company Training Centres

Another element of supporting the **entry of small and medium-sized enterprises and the self-employed** into the dual education system. The preparation of pupils in in-company training centres set up by employers will increase **the quality, attractiveness, and excellence** of the provided vocational education and training in the dual education system or other form of WBL using the resources of several employers as well as the overall coordination of vocational education and training by employers, trade unions and professional organizations.

The proposal implements into praxis legislative basis for in-company training centres (ICTC). ICTC represents an opportunity, especially for self-employed, small and medium-sized enterprises, to prepare their own future workforce without the risk of a decrease in the quality of education provided due to insufficient material, personnel and space capacities. At the same time, ICTC is a **tool for increasing the level of innovation in vocational education and training and increases the competitiveness of industry and services** in the labour market.

Authorization of the employer to use the designation ICTC will be granted by the relevant **Chamber of Employers or the relevant professional organization of employers** based on conditions stipulated by law.

The most important condition for obtaining this authorization is the fact that the employer concerned has been providing practical training in the dual education system or other form of WBL to pupils with an apprenticeship contract concluded with other employers for at least three years. An important point in ICTC is the fact that large companies will be able to train for other employers as well. This measure will support the entry of SMEs and entrepreneurs into the VET system. ICTC should be innovators in quality assurance for WBL and VET provision etc.

3. Higher VET transformation

An important part of vocational education in Slovakia are **also secondary industrial schools**, the progress of which is necessary in terms of preparing future employees for the labour market and preparation for technical / vocational universities. The priority of secondary

industrial schools is not only to acquire skills, but also mainly to create space for **creativity and innovation** in the process of modern education in cooperation with employers, the labour market as well as universities.

The aim is the implementation of practical training for employers, cooperation with universities in the field of theoretical training of future students, especially technical departments of universities. Furthermore, it is an increase in students' professional skills in a foreign language, which is also a requirement of foreign and Slovak employers; finally yet importantly, it is the involvement of experts from **practice in the theoretical teaching of vocational subjects** at secondary industrial schools.

Through the gradual preparation and transformation of secondary industrial schools into **higher VET schools**, we will also create space for other activities within formal and non-formal education for all age categories, as well as the possibility of **verifying qualifications at EQF 5 and possibly 6**.

Higher VET schools **fill the gaps on labour market in areas where additional higher value for skills and competences requires upcoming demand on labour market following Industry revolution 4.0** and abolition of lower qualification, especially manual jobs etc.

4. Quality assurance in IVET and CVET

Quality assurance in VET is a key EU priority, which aims to increase transparency in VET (both initial and continuing vocational training) between Member States, thus strengthening mutual trust, staff and student mobility and lifelong learning. European cooperation in the field of quality assurance has been developing since 2001, when the European Quality Forum in VET was established and gradually moved through the creation of a Common Quality Assurance Framework in VET (CQAF) to the adoption **of Recommendation 2009 / C 155/01 of 18 March 2009 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training** (hereinafter referred to as the "EQAVET Recommendation").

The conclusions of the EU Ministerial Meeting in Riga in 2015 confirmed as one of the strategic goals until 2020 "to increase the overall quality and position of vocational education and training in the context of the Copenhagen process". One of the five priorities by 2020 set out in the **Riga Conclusions** is "to further develop quality assurance mechanisms in vocational education and training in line with the EQAVET recommendation and to create continuous information and feedback in initial and continuous VET systems based on results as part of quality assurance systems in education".

Following the Riga conclusions, the **New Skills Agenda for Europe** envisages measures to support on-the-job training and flexible VET practices, including through the further development of EQAVET and improved data on VET outcomes in the labour market. Quality education is one of UNESCO's global goals for sustainable development (Agenda 2030).

The European Pillar of Social Rights, adopted in 2017, sets out quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning as the first principle for every EU citizen. The EU's 2020 Recommendation on Vocational Training aims to fulfil the vision of a **European Learning Area** that will enable the provision of high-quality and inclusive barrier-free education throughout Europe.

The issue of VET quality was subsequently elaborated in the Council Recommendation of 15 March 2018 on a **European framework for quality and efficient apprenticeships**, which elements will be implemented by this systemic approach.

Quality is one of the main goals of the National Program for the Development of Education and one of the recommendations of the National Skills Strategy of the Slovak Republic developed by the OECD in 2020. Quality Assurance was also included into **Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Counselling for 2023-2030**.

Quality Assurance in IVET and CVET is expected to be implemented as a project funded by EU structural funds in upcoming Programming period.

5. Prevention of Early School Leaving

Early school leaving means the abandonment of the education system by pupils who have attained the lowest level of secondary education and who do not continue in any of the forms of education or training; **The consequence of ESL is a significant reduction in the ability of individuals to participate in working life - unemployment and social exclusion** (in the Slovak Republic, the acuteness of this problem lies largely in its regional conditionality)

According to EUROSTAT data, the Slovak Republic experienced a deterioration in the ESL rate from 4.7% to 8.3% between 2010 and 2019, and over the same period the EU-wide ESL average improved from 13.9% to 10.2%.

The European Commission's Recommendation on Comprehensive Policies to Reduce ESL of 28 June 2011 (the "EC Recommendation") defines the concept of an overall strategy to reduce ESL, based on the key components that are group of measures against ESL (preventive, intervention compensatory),

- focus on ESL monitoring,
- cross-sectoral and interdepartmental cooperation,

- *focusing on several factors leading to ESL in their complexity and interconnectedness,*
- *exact evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of measures against ESL.*

The Slovak Republic has not yet approached the ESL solution based on the developed strategy - but systemic measures have been introduced with a secondary effect on the reduction of ESL e.g.

- *compulsory preschool education for 5-year-old children (from 1. 9. 2021),*
- *introduction of a system of dual education and a new system of coordination of vocational education and training with the active participation of employers (from 1 September 2015),*
- *creation of legislative preconditions for the creation of a new system of career counselling in regional education (from 1 September 2019) or with a direct impact on the ESL system solution,*
- *adjustment of more effective education (course) for additional acquisition of lower secondary education - LSE (following the expansion of the possibility of obtaining LSE also for students with mental disabilities) (from 1 January 2022)*
- *introduction of a new type of lower secondary vocational education program, where students can complete lower secondary education within the vocational education program (from 1 January 2022).*

6. Basic skills

The aim of National basic skills initiative and pilot intervention programmes is to strengthen the inclusiveness of adult learning and improve learning pathways for all, including adults with low basic skills as well as to increase participation and equity of adults in education, i.e. opportunities also for adults with low skill levels and/or educational attainment. In order to achieve these goals we intend to:

- *Embed the concept of basic skills in the LLL Act,*
- *Pilot the introduction of tools for mapping, assessing and testing basic skills levels for low-skilled adults,*
- *Pilot funding scheme for providers of non-formal education in basic skills for low-skilled adults (NGOs with a potential for outreach to the target group),*
- *Focus on institutional capacity to support basic skills training programmes from public sources by establishing the National Network for Basic Skills,*

- *Actively support the development of digital skills of the Slovak citizens by the definition of a supra-ministerial national digital skills strategy with its own measures, recommendations for ministries.*

7. Individual Learning Accounts

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Slovak Republic is responsible for the implementation of the EU recommendation for the ILA, and we communicate with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as the co-manager of the programme.

*An eligible individual educational account (ILA) is one that is approved and confirmed by the graduate himself (positive evaluation of the quality of education by the course participants) and the value of the account (set at EUR 200 in the pilot scheme) is subsequently paid to the educational institution. For the pilot scheme we intend to deal with at least 5,000 active participants with the account worth 200.00 EUR. The idea is that employers can contribute to the value of the ILA in their own amount as well as the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Investments and Regional development can also contribute to this package of funding to 'their' specific areas of education, however the original amount of 200, 00 EUR must be the "individual right of the individual" for what specific education or training he / she will use these funds - if it is agreed with his / her employer that he / she will use these funds cumulatively or to increase digital skills, it must also be eligible and possible within the system. Please find more information in the attached **The Action Plan for the Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Guidance for 2022-2024.***

8. New system of Lifelong learning introduced by the new law on LLL

The idea is to:

- *Develop the concept of the Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning and Guidance at the self-governing regions (higher territorial units)*
- *Embed the concept of basic skills*
- *evaluate the effectiveness of the National Qualifications Framework and the Slovak Qualifications Framework (SKKR)*
- *Introduce descriptors of lower levels into SKKR*
- *Fix all the elements of the recognition of prior learning outcomes (permeability of the education system)*

- *Establish sustainable system of management and activities of sectoral councils in the Slovak Republic in order to support alignment of the LLL system with the needs of the labour market*
- *Strengthen the importance of civic education in the legislation*
- *To introduce the system and IT Platform for Individual Learning Accounts also in relation to microcredentials*

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

- *bring up CoVEs in every self-governing region (at least 1 per self-governing region) – **Council recommendation (point A, B, F) + Osnabrück Declaration (point 1,4)***
- *bring up In-company training centres for main sectors of economy (at least 1 per main sector) - **Council recommendation (point A, B, F) + Osnabrück Declaration (point 1,4)***
- *bring new qualifications/fields of study according to needs of digital and green transition - **Council recommendation (point B, C, D) + Osnabrück Declaration (point 1,3)***
- *reduce ESL rates – **Council recommendation (point E) + Osnabrück Declaration (point 1,2,4)***
- *professional development of teachers of vocational subjects, VET masters and in-company trainers - **Council recommendation (point D, E, F) + Osnabrück Declaration (point 1,2)***
- *pilot new models of conclusion of IVET or CVET - **Council recommendation (point C, D, F) + Osnabrück Declaration (point 1,2)***
- *implement management of quality in IVET and CVET - **Council recommendation (point C, D, F) + Osnabrück Declaration (point 1,2,3,4)***
- *stipulate system of higher VET - **Council recommendation (point A, B, C, D, E, F) + Osnabrück Declaration (point 1,2,3,4)***
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Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

- ✓ **Centres of Excellence in VET (CoVEs)**

Transformation of existing Centres of VET and creation of new CoVEs for an innovative area of the Slovak Republic. Implementation of CoVEs in practice on the basis of a pilot phase, further support of CoVEs in the area of completion of material, technical equipment and staff capacities, setting of quality assurance cycles of initial and continuing VET, special position of CoVEs within secondary school performance plans, networking and changes in school network.

- ✓ *All forms of practical training, also for self-employed and SMEs (modern, digital, innovative technologies - eg virtual reality) - ERDF equipment,*
- ✓ *Actively participate in knowledge triangles with universities, research centers and enterprises in order to be at the forefront of research and technological development,*
- ✓ *Preparation and provision of education: VET masters, pedagogical staff of professional subjects, career counsellors,*
- ✓ *Quality assurance managers + quality cycles,*
- ✓ *Recognition of prior learning outcomes following segmentation of qualifications and fields of study,*
- ✓ *Contractual connection with employers or it can also be a specific innovation in given sector unique for the entire Slovak republic, New qualifications/fields of study based on digital and green transition or revision of existing qualifications/fields of study,*
- ✓ *Support and creation of smaller qualifications and micro qualifications (4 sub frames of the NQF, modulation, segmentation),*
- ✓ *Cooperation with higher education institutions, State school inspection, self-governing regions, talent centres, basic schools etc.*

In-company training centres

- ✓ *Modification of educational programs for the segment "in-company training education",*
- ✓ *participation of SMEs and self-employed to jointly create ICTC,*
- ✓ *Responsibility for the creation of ICTC segment of curricula through Employers Associations - courses and campus education (according to competencies and special technical skills),*
- ✓ *Testing of competencies and knowledge in order to further validate the results of previous education,*
- ✓ *Creation of innovations in ICTC and quality system of the above-mentioned segment and practical teaching - experts from practice and pedagogical specialist in innovations in the educational process,*
- ✓ *Quality assurance and innovation in WBL element,*
- ✓ *Implementation of preparation / courses for master exams and implementation of master exams,*
- ✓ *Training of in-company trainers and lead in-company trainers,*
- ✓ *Support for the creation of employer clusters,*

- ✓ *ICTC equipment.*

Higher VET transformation

- ✓ *Analysis of the irreplaceability of secondary industrial schools in VET in Slovakia, transformation into higher VET schools and measures to increase the quality of VET in these types of schools,*
- ✓ *Pilot verification of cooperation with employers at the regional level, especially in the field of practice - long-term internship with employers, the output will be activities and problem solving assigned by the employer and the presentation will be in a foreign language directly with the employer. The result will be a proposal to change the state curricula,*
- ✓ *Preparation of methodology and verification of conditions for teaching professional subjects for practitioners resp. teachers / university experts, new content for teachers of vocational subjects,*
- ✓ *Pilot of implementation of sub-system of higher VET,*
- ✓ *New form of WBL; min. 3 months resp. total min. half a year work experience by employer or technical university (or combination of both),*
- ✓ *Entrance tests and methodology for admission to the study (both graduates and apprenticeship certificate) via validation of prior learning, opening vertical permeability of education system,*
- ✓ *Participation in the creation of technical university programs,*
- ✓ *Connection of higher VET with the bachelor degree at technical university,*
- ✓ *Provision of qualifications at the level of EQF level 5 and 6.*

Quality Assurance in IVET and CVET

- ✓ *VET quality coordination at the national level (Government Council for VET / LLL),*
- ✓ *Cooperation with the State School Inspection and adjustment of its position within quality assurance in VET,*
- ✓ *Cooperation with Employers Associations /employers within the framework of quality assurance at secondary vocational schools,*
- ✓ *National VET quality strategy, legislative framework in the VET Act 61/2015 Coll.,*
- ✓ *Introduction of quality criteria for the regulation of the network and qualifications/fields of study,*
- ✓ *Development of a qualification standard for the VET quality manager / coordinator at school and at the employer,*
- ✓ *Introduction of methodological support for QA by State Institute for VET,*
- ✓ *Financing solution - surcharges for pedagogical staff, increase of funds (for schools, which have a quality cycle),*

- ✓ *Involvement of all self-governing regions taking into account the outputs of CURI projects, and knowledge from abroad (peer review method ...),*
- ✓ *Involvement of all secondary vocational schools - quality cycle system,*
- ✓ *Networking of regional structures – self-governing regions, regional school offices, regional Centres for pedagogical, psychological counselling and prevention, Employers' Associations, employers; Coordination of the quality system at the regional level,*
- ✓ *Quality action plans at the level of local authorities based on the Regional Strategy of Education,*
- ✓ *Graduates tracking of secondary schools.*

Prevention of Early School Leaving

- ✓ *Creation and enhancement of an information system for early warning about pupils at risk of early school leaving with a link to targeted mechanisms of preventive, intervention and compensatory measures,*
- ✓ *Creation of a comprehensive system of data collection on the causes and consequences of school failure and early school leaving, including monitoring the further applicability of students-recipients of intervention and compensation measures, on the labour market or in further study,*
- ✓ *Implement a new type of lower secondary vocational education program with an integral part of primary school completion and connect vocational education and training of pupils with a real working environment,*
- ✓ *Strengthen elements of career guidance aimed at working with students at risk of ESL,*
- ✓ *Mentoring of pedagogical and professional staff with a focus on preventing early school leaving at schools with a concentration of students at risk of ESL (continuation from RRP),*
- ✓ *Support for pedagogical and professional staff from the MRC environment in schools with a concentration of pupils at risk of ESL and support for the quality of teaching staff at schools with a concentration of pupils from the MRC by pedagogical and professional staff,*
- ✓ *Support for the possibility of distance education or teaching in a "pandemic" regime for students at risk of ESL (MT equipment - ICT, strengthening the staffing of forms of education with a lower number of students*
- ✓ *Support for projects aimed at supporting the active participation of pupils in school teaching through local communities and regional structures (motivation of families within communities, provision of transport infrastructure ...).*

All activities and measures should start being implemented in 2023 and expected time for their respective conclusion, incorporation into legislation and financial measures should be concluded in 2025, respectively in 2027.

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET

- A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges.
- B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET.
- C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand.
- D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills.
- E. VET promotes equality of opportunities.
- F. VET is 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)

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

Scope (national, regional, local)

- national
- regional
- local

Beneficiaries/target groups

- (List to be provided)

Secondary VET schools

<p><i>Employers</i></p> <p><i>Employers Associations</i></p> <p><i>Self-governing regions</i></p> <p><i>Regional labour offices</i></p> <p><i>Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family</i></p> <p><i>Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization</i></p> <p><i>State School Inspection</i></p> <p><i>Technical Universities</i></p> <p><i>Talent centres</i></p> <p><i>Regional school administration offices</i></p> <p><i>Basic schools</i></p> <p><i>International partners</i></p>
<p>Responsible ministries/bodies</p>
<p>Ministry of Education, Research, Science and Sport</p>
<p>Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)</p>
<p>List all sources of funding and estimated amounts, if available.</p> <p><i>State budget</i></p> <p><i>EU funds</i></p>

4. Governance of the implementation of the plan

Governance of VET

National VET Council is the coordinating body affiliated to the government that discusses VET policy, such as regional and sectoral strategies. 18 working groups covering selected study fields support adjustments in VET programmes better matching them to labour market needs. A working group for the verification of labour market needs focuses on assessing self-governing regions activities related to secondary VET regulation;

Regional VET Councils are composed of representatives of state, self-government, employers and employees. They are advisory bodies to the heads of the eight self-governing regions; they prepare regional VET policy documents, discuss number of places to be offered in respective schools and programmes, etc.;

Sectoral (skills) councils are voluntary independent associations of employers' representatives, trade union representatives, education institutions, state administration and self-government authorities regulated by the Act on Employment Services (5/2004). The Alliance of Sectoral Councils' is their umbrella organisation. Sectoral (skills) councils provide expertise to policy-makers concerning labour market needs in terms of knowledge, skills and competences required in occupations and cater for delivery of occupational standards for labour sector-driven information system on the labour market, and support the creation of a national qualifications system (NQS);

Sectoral assignees (institutions of the world of work selected from chambers and employers' associations) represent employers' interests in each VET study field as professional counterparts to education authorities and experts. Sectoral assignees should play a prominent role in adjusting VET to labour market needs and in assuring its quality. The Employer Council for Dual VET encompassing sectoral assignees involved in dual VET, coordinates their activities;

Expert groups and ad hoc working groups affiliated to the State Institute of Vocational Education covering respective fields of study focus on diverse curricula issues and conditions of provision of VET (material, spatial and equipment-related requirements).

Schools are headed by directors appointed by school establishers for a five-year term, based on a tender organised by a school board (rada školy). School board can also have impact on development plans of schools and can also suggest dismissing of the director. School board is as a rule composed of 11 members representing school staff, parents, school establisher, students, and, if requested, also sectoral assignee. School director is not a member of school board.

Since 2009, the influence of employers on VET policy has been gradually increased also concerning school-based VET. VET schools must submit their school educational programmes (autonomously elaborated school curricula reflecting and adjusting national curricula to local/regional needs) to sectoral assignees unless they were elaborated in cooperation with companies participating in dual VET or discussed with companies offering practical training within the mixed scheme. In 2017/18, sectoral assignees for the first time checked assignments related to school leaving examinations. There is also a strong engagement of sectoral assignees in dual VET in assessment and certification of companies offering practical training and in training of in-company trainers (instructors).

Regulation of secondary VET

Self-governing regions are responsible for maintaining public secondary VET schools and for regulating inflow of learners into schools in their territory. VET programmes and numbers of students are strictly regulated to address regional labour market needs, based on macroeconomic forecasting data and opinion of regional stakeholders. The education ministry supports schools by providing regulations for content, pedagogy, qualification of staff, etc. Some VET schools are under the responsibility of the interior and health ministries.

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 contributing to the successful implementation of the plan , more specifically but not exclusively:
- authorities – national, regional and/or local – involved;
 - 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.
- (ii) indicate how you will organise monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the NIPs in cooperation with Cedefop's ReferNet and your country's DGVT representatives and in line with the national context and the above described governance arrangements.

5. Expected effects of the plan

- 1. Excellent, inclusive and accessible VET for all*
- 2. High employment rate of graduates*
- 3. Sustainable and competitive fields of study/qualifications in IVET and CVET relevant to labour market needs based on digital and green transition*
- 4. Validation and recognition of prior learning*
- 5. Increase of adults in Lifelong learning*
- 6. Second chance education – reduction of early school leaving rates*
- 7. Increase of WBL in all qualifications*

8. Quality Assurance in IVET and CVET

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.

Annex 2 – National level reforms and actions defined in the VET Recommendation and the Osnabrück Declaration

VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
A. Vocational education and training is agile in adapting to labour market changes	<p>A.1 VET programmes that offer a balanced mix of vocational including technical skills well aligned to all economic cycles, evolving jobs and working methods and key competences, including solid basic skills, digital, transversal, green and other life skills which provide strong foundations for resilience, lifelong learning, lifelong employability, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development;</p> <p>A.2 VET curricula, programme offers and qualifications which are regularly updated, building on skills intelligence (i.e. graduate tracking systems, skills anticipation mechanisms, including at sectoral and regional levels);</p>	1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET	<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>1.3 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>1.5. Develop national and regional skills intelligence systems including skills anticipation and graduate tracking; enable social partners, decision-makers, stakeholders and providers</p>

VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
	<p>A.3 an appropriate degree of autonomy of VET providers, flexibility, support and funding to adapt their training offer to changing skills needs, green and digital transitions and economic cycles;</p> <p>A.4 VET programmes at all levels which comprise work-based learning components that are further expanded also in continuing vocational education and training, and complemented by appropriate support and measures to stabilise the offer of apprenticeships and to address specific challenges of small companies to create work-based learning opportunities in different sectors of the economy.</p>	<p>4. European Education and Training Area and international VET</p>	<p>to adapt and update VET programmes, curricula and guidelines in a timely and effective manner</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>B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of vocational education and training</p>	<p>B.1 learner centred VET programmes that offer access to face-to-face and digital or blended learning, flexible and modular pathways based on the recognition of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning and open up career and learning progression; continuing vocational training programmes designed to be adaptable to labour market, sectoral or individual up- or reskilling needs; and</p> <p>B.2 VET programmes which are based on modules or units of learning outcomes and validation mechanisms allowing the transfer, recognition and accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to gaining a qualification, a partial qualification, as relevant in the national context.</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>C. Vocational education and training is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares</p>	<p>C.1 integration of VET into economic, industrial and innovation strategies, including those linked to recovery, green and digital transitions; expansion of the training offer fostering the acquisition of entrepreneurial, digital and green skills;</p>	<p>1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET</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</p>

VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
for the digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand	<p>C.2 establishment of Centres of Vocational Excellence, which act as catalysts for local business investment, supporting recovery, green and digital transitions, European and regional innovation and smart specialisation strategies, development of vocational education and training, including at higher qualification levels (EQF levels 5-8), in line with national context and provide innovative services such as clusters and business incubators for start-ups and technology innovation for SMEs, as well as innovative reskilling solutions for workers at risk of redundancy; and</p> <p>C.3 access to state-of-the-art infrastructure, digitalisation strategies in line with national context and environmental and social sustainability in VET programmes and organisational management, thus contributing to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.</p>	3. Sustainability – a green link in VET	<p>quality and effective VET and apprenticeship programmes at EQF level 5 and above</p> <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>
D. Vocational education and training is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills	<p>D.1. permeability between both initial and continuing vocational education and training, general education and higher education;</p> <p>D.2 development of VET at EQF levels 5 to 8;</p> <p>D.3 delivery based on a mix of open, digital and participative learning environments, including learning conducive workplaces supported by state-of-the-art and accessible infrastructure, equipment and technology, and accompanied by versatile pedagogies and tools (e.g. ICT based simulators, virtual and augmented reality);</p>	<p>1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET</p> <p>2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation</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>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>

VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
	<p>D.4 initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers to foster technical and digital skills and effective innovative training methods, including teaching in virtual environment, in line with state of the art vocational and digital pedagogy, work with digital learning tools, and in diverse and multicultural environments;</p> <p>D.5 internationalisation strategies supporting a strategic approach to international cooperation in VET;</p> <p>D.6 Opportunities for learning mobility of vocational learners and staff, including virtual mobility, long-duration mobility and mobility to Partner Countries are in place, facilitated by the use and recognition of units of learning outcomes and of relevant European tools (Memorandum of Understanding and the Learning Agreement); and</p> <p>D.7 high quality lifelong learning and career guidance services, making full use of Europass and other digital services.</p>	<p>4. European Education and Training Area and international VET</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> <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>4.5 Cooperate with other EU countries in preparing national teams for international competitions such as WorldSkills and EuroSkills</p>

VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
E. Vocational education and training promotes equality of opportunities	<p>E.1 inclusive and accessible programmes for vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, low-qualified/skilled persons, minorities, people with migrant background and people with fewer opportunities because of their geographical location and/or their social-economically disadvantaged situation; targeted measures and flexible training formats prevent early leaving from education and training and support the school-to-work transition;</p> <p>E.2. programmes accessible through digital learning platforms, supported by tools, devices and internet connection, in particular for vulnerable groups and people in rural or remote areas; and</p> <p>E.3 targeted measures promoting gender balance in traditionally “male” or “female” professions and address gender related and other types of stereotypes together.</p>	<p>1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET</p> <p>2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation</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>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>
F. Vocational education and training is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance	F.1 further development of national quality assurance systems, for both initial and continuing VET, in all learning environments (such as school-based provision and work-based learning, including apprenticeship schemes) and all learning types (digital, face-to-face or blended), delivered by both public and private providers, underpinned by a set of indicative descriptors and common reference indicators for quality assurance in vocational education and training applied both at system and provider level as defined in Annex II of the Council Recommendation on VET.		

VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
	<p>F.2 Quality Assurance National Reference Point for VET to:</p> <p>take concrete initiatives to implement and further develop the EQAVET Framework, inform and mobilise a wide range of stakeholders, including Centres of Vocational Excellence, to contribute to implementing the EQAVET framework, support self-evaluation as a complementary and effective means of quality assurance to allow the measurement of success and the identification of areas for improvement, including with respect to digital readiness of VET systems and institutions, participate actively in the European network for quality assurance in vocational education and training, provide an updated description of the national quality assurance arrangements based on the EQAVET Framework, engage in EU level peer reviews of quality assurance to enhance the transparency and consistency of quality assurance arrangements, and to reinforce trust between the Member States;</p>		
Making best use of the European transparency tools		<p>2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation</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> <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>
Sustainable partnerships at national, regional and sectoral level, involving all relevant stakeholders			

VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
	Best use of European Union funds and instruments such as the Next Generation EU (Recovery and Resilience Facility, REACT-EU), European Social Fund+, SURE, the European Regional Development Fund, InvestEU, Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Interreg, Digital Europe, the Just Transition Mechanism and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the Modernisation Fund		