

The Modernisation of technical and vocational education under the Slovenian NRRP (2021-26)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 SLOVENIA

Timeline

2022 Implementation 2023 Implementation 2024 Implementation
2025 Implementation

ID number 45068

Background

Following the pandemic, the National recovery and resilience plan (NRRP) was prepared to support a strong recovery and make Slovenia ready for the future. The reforms and investments in the plan aim at helping Slovenia become more sustainable, resilient and better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transitions. Component 5 of the plan 'Strengthening competences, especially digital ones and those required in new jobs and green transitions' under the development area 'Smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', aims to increase the resilience of the education system.

The NRRP, confirmed on 1 July 2021, envisages the following education reforms:

- (a) overhaul of the education system for the green and digital transitions with the aim of renewing curricula and catalogues of knowledge in primary and upper secondary education as well as the establishment of a comprehensive support environment, including teacher training;
- (b) reform of higher education for a green and resilient transition to Society 5.0 with the aim of creating a higher education system that responds to environmental needs and creates a highly skilled workforce;
- (c) modernisation of upper secondary vocational and technical education, including apprenticeships, curriculum reform of higher vocational study programmes and establishment of digitally supported learning places (modernisation of VET).

Objectives

The resilience of the education system should be increased by strengthening competences for the digital and green transitions; modernising curricula in line with the needs of the economy and society; linking education, science and economy to exchange knowledge; offering students the chance to acquire qualifications flexibly in schools, workplaces and digital environments; and strengthening the transition from education to the labour market.

With the Modernisation of technical and vocational education (TVET) project, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport aims to:

- (a) renovate the educational programmes of upper-secondary VET, as well as higher VET, strengthening competence-based education, put greater emphasis on the acquisition of competences for the digital and green transition, increase the responsiveness of VET to sectoral and regional economy needs, including better use of elective and open parts of the curriculum;
- (b) develop new and promote existing models of school-company cooperation, including both apprenticeships and school-based paths; together with social partners, further develop the apprenticeship path at higher qualification levels and open it to adults, and establish digitally supported communication between schools, students and companies in order to plan, monitor and report student training at work places;
- (c) develop new pedagogical and didactical models, including the use of digital technologies, to improve the achieved learning outcomes, the quality and attractiveness of VET, develop teachers in in-company mentor competences model, prepare training courses for them, including competence-based methods of teaching, training and assessment.

Description

The Modernisation of VET project is currently being implemented for the period 2022-26 by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET (CPI) in cooperation with other public institutions and social partners. It has five components.

Competences and qualifications for the digital and green transitions

The project, in the dialogue with social partners, defines a new development period for VET in Slovenia in the direction of greater connection with the labour market, the needs of the circular economy and the digital and green transitions. Upper secondary VET programmes are currently renewed to support the digital and green transitions. Open curricula that link VET with the local economy are subject to development.

Quality of the implementation of VET programmes

A model of learning and teaching in VET that responds to changes in the labour market, society, economy and learning environments, including the needs and expectations of students and a new set of training for principals, teachers, mentors and other professionals, is planned.

Further development of cooperation between schools and companies, including apprenticeship

CPI aims at evaluating the newly established apprenticeship system and preparing, together with ministries and social partners, proposals for upgrading the system; it is set to examine the possibilities for introducing apprenticeships at higher levels, including adult education. Together with the chambers, the project is yet another support measure for the implementation of apprenticeships in companies and schools, aiming at developing instruments for strengthening the quality of training in companies and for assessment of apprentices.

Digitally supported training places

The modernisation of VET envisages the pilot establishment of a digitally supported route for the comprehensive transfer of information in the planning, implementation and evaluation of on-the-job training between employers, schools and students in health and social care and pre-school education.

Renewal of higher vocational study programmes

In dialogue with stakeholders and the professional public, CPI is in the process of renewing the methodological framework for the preparation of higher vocational study programmes. New qualifications and study programmes at EQF level 5, in line with the digital and green transitions, are being prepared.

2022 Implementation

The Expert Group for the Modernisation of VET was appointed, with representatives from the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sport; Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia; Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for VET; National Vocational Matura Committee; Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education; Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult Education; Chamber of Commerce and Small Business of Slovenia; Chambers of Commerce Slovenia; Nurses and Midwives association of Slovenia; Education, Science and Culture Union of Slovenia; The Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia; Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET; Association of Slovene Higher Vocational Colleges; Association of Upper Secondary Schools and Dormitories of Slovenia; Faculty of Arts University of Ljubljana; National Education Institute; Slovenian Institute for Adult Education; Employment Service of Slovenia; and representatives of upper secondary VET schools.

Analysis of evaluations of reform measures in VET in the last 10 years in Slovenia was carried out.

A workshop based on the Cedefop methodology took place where project collaborators, experts in the field and representatives of the social partners formulated possible scenarios for the development of VET in Slovenia.

2023 Implementation

The National Education Institute (ZRSŠ) is modernising the general education curriculum, including the general education subjects in VET. In 2023, it prepared guidelines for working groups to support this process.

Activity 1 Competences and qualifications for the digital and green transition

In early 2023, CPI experts developed future VET scenarios based on a 2022 workshop. The expert group for VET modernisation, appointed by the ministry of education, held its first session in March 2023 to oversee the project.

Key developments:

- (a) Analysis of existing upper-secondary VET guidelines, leading to the concept for the renewal of guidelines and the preparation of pilot guidelines, approved in March 2024.
- (b) Modernisation of key competences, integrating digital and green skills into upper-secondary and higher VET programmes.
- (c) Planned renewal of 25 upper-secondary VET programmes and 16 higher VET programmes by 2026 to align with employers' needs.

Activity 2: Quality of planning and delivery of VET programmes at provider level

The open curriculum within VET programmes was evaluated, confirming that VET schools effectively tailor their curricula to meet local labour market needs. This flexibility fosters collaborative learning, innovative teaching methods, and stronger ties with employers.

Activity 3: Further develop apprenticeships and link schools with enterprises

The evaluation of the apprenticeship system, which was reintroduced in 2016, identified several key challenges. A significant issue is the lack of awareness among young people and primary school counsellors regarding the benefits of apprenticeships, which can limit informed choices and early interest in vocational pathways. Additionally, low enrolment numbers in some VET schools highlight the need for a more coordinated and strategic network for apprenticeships. There is also the possibility of expanding the apprenticeship programme beyond the three-year vocational upper secondary programmes to also be offered in four-year technical upper secondary programmes, higher VET, and adult education — a development that would require the creation of suitable assessment solutions.

Furthermore, a review of training for in-company mentors revealed general satisfaction with the current provision, while also pointing to specific areas for improvement in future revisions.

Activity 4: Digitally supported training places in education, health and social care.

A standardised documentation set was created to facilitate collaboration between VET schools and employers in the following sectors: preschool education, health and social care. Work is ongoing to develop a digital tool that will streamline processes and improve cooperation.

Activity 5: Renewal of higher education study programmes

- (a) Stakeholder interviews and an international comparison of higher VET strategies across EU countries were conducted.
- (b) Findings revealed that Slovenia faces similar challenges to other countries at ISCED 5, particularly in terms of funding and accessibility.
- (c) The study also highlighted the increasing importance of micro-credentials in higher VET and the need for consistent programme development frameworks.

2024 Implementation

Activity 1 Competences and qualifications for the digital and green transition

In March 2024, the expert council for VET approved the new guidelines for the preparation of upper secondary vet programmes. a framework for the inclusion of key competences in programmes and a draft concept for their integration were developed.

The work continued on the renewal of 5 pilot VET programmes:

- (a) pharmaceutical technician (technical programme)
- (b) industrial mechanic (vocational programme)
- (c) technician of mechatronics (technical and vocational technical education)
- (d) nursing assistant (vocational programme)

A working group, composed of various stakeholders, has been established to analyse existing VET programmes and vocational standards and to support their modernisation.

A pilot study was conducted in two sectors: cultural and creative industries and agriculture, forestry and horticulture. Stakeholders provided feedback through a questionnaire on qualification implementation and related challenges in these fields.

In June 2024 two expert discussions were organised: one to address conceptual and systemic challenges in VET and the other to address open curricula. This included a second expert debate on the topic of Ensuring a coherent VET system supported by a functioning social partnership.

Activity 2: Quality of planning and delivery of VET programmes at provider level

A leading expert in professional education, in partnership with CPI, developed the conceptual document 'Planning and Implementation of Competency-Based Programmes in VET'.

The revision of the guidelines for the open curriculum is ongoing, based on analyses of curriculum assessments and public discussions.

An analysis of national competency profiles for VET teachers in EU countries is underway. Findings will contribute to the development of a Slovene competency framework for VET teachers. Training courses for professional and management staff in schools are also being developed.

Project events included two workshops for the VET professional community and one workshop for CPI staff:

- November workshop on Leading a competence-oriented school at the second thematic conference, entitled: 'Competence-based learning and teaching: vision or illusion?';
- November discussion on Opportunities and challenges in leading competence-oriented vocational education at the XXXI annual conference for headteachers;
- December workshop for CPI advisors presenting the training model for the VET teacher framework and fostering professional discussion was held.

Activity 3: Further develop apprenticeships and link schools with enterprises

Draft guidelines for preparing final assignments for teachers in pedagogical-andragogical training were developed, aligning with recent evaluation findings. Additional guidelines for training providers were also created.

As part of a feasibility study on expanding apprenticeships to four-year technical upper secondary programmes and higher VET levels, an online survey of companies and VET schools in the fields of mechanical engineering and mechatronics was conducted. Data was collected and processed, and an interim report is being prepared. Interviews with in-company mentors and HR departments were conducted.

In November, the feasibility study was completed and a focus group with representatives from ministries and social partners was conducted to gather opinions on the study's results, conclusions, and recommendations for further work. A report summarising the focus group process and outcomes was prepared. In parallel, work also began on a synthesis report and a methodological review of partial reports.

Additionally, following the 2023 review of training for in-company mentors, examples of training plans were collected as part of piloting new guidelines for final project assignments within mentor training programmes.

Activity 4: Digitally supported training places in preschool education, health and social care.

Several meetings were held to support the development of the work-based learning (WBL) digital application. Coordinators from preschool education, health and social care were introduced to the Central Register of Training Places, and operational learning objectives for digitalisation were established. Data on available placements was entered into the register, and a draft collective learning agreement for WBL was prepared, awaiting legal review.

Evaluation indicators and questions were developed based on operational learning objectives and qualifications and will be integrated into the digital application. In July 2024, the responsible external contractor presented updates, and working group members provided feedback, particularly on the communication and student tracking modules. Best practices for managing student progress and document handling were also shared.

The team continued developing the digital application for planning, implementing, and evaluating workplace learning (WBL). The application connecting WBL organisers, workplace mentors, and students was tested, and feedback was sent to the contractor for improvement, including the introduction of digital signature functionality for key documents such as learning site notifications, collective learning agreements and annexes.

The digital support working group provided input to improve the user experience, while continuous testing of the application's functionalities was carried out. In parallel, user guidance materials were prepared in the form of video tutorials, accompanied by supporting documentation.

Activity 5: Renewal of higher education study programmes

A model for preparing higher education study programmes was developed, integrating all levels of professional education and promoting innovative approaches. The model also seeks to address unresolved issues related to the Guidelines for Higher Education

Study Programme Development.

Guidelines were drafted for incorporating key competences into programme updates, with a working group evaluating them and suggesting modifications.

The expert group for the Modernisation of VET prepared supporting materials for the workgroup for the Modernisation of VET sessions and presentations aimed at higher education stakeholders. At the same time the expert group is developing guidelines for creating open curriculum at the higher vocational level, to guide future programme planning and design.

Towards the end of the year, a dedicated working group was established to prepare guidelines for higher education study programmes.

2025 Implementation

Activity 1: Competences and qualifications for the digital and green transition

Following the renewal of five pilot VET programmes in 2024, in 2025, the team worked on modernising 20 upper secondary VET programmes as part of the second phase of curriculum reform.

The updates cover upper secondary vocational programmes (SPI), including florist, gastronomy and hotel services, butcher, joiner, baker, confectioner, upholsterer and gardener; upper secondary technical programmes (SSI), such as window display technician, economic technician, photographic technician, gastronomy and tourism, horticultural technician, wood technician, media technician, environmental technician, preschool education and optician technician; and vocational-technical programmes (PTI), including gastronomy, horticultural technician, wood technician and logistics technician.

The work focuses on modernising programme structures and includes the establishment of relevant working groups, preparation of contracts, analysis of existing programmes and vocational standards, development of draft programme structures, and preparation of draft catalogues of knowledge.

Pilot studies conducted in 2024 in the cultural and creative industries and in agriculture, forestry and horticulture were summarised in a synthesis report in 2025. On 1 April 2025, two CPI researchers presented these pilot study findings at the Cedefop conference 'Using data from the web to shape next-generation labour market and skills analysis', which explored using online data to predict labour market and skill needs, helping to align education programmes with employer demands.

Activity 2: Quality of planning and delivery of VET programmes at provider level

Several workshops were organised to support the development teams of schools involved in the first five revised programmes. Development teams were constituted based on their expertise. It was suggested that at least one member is a vocational teacher, the second member a teacher of practical training, the third member a teacher of general educational subject and the fourth member, the headmaster. The underlying concept for the composition of school development teams was based on the concept of competence-based education, which places the integration of individual elements of the educational programme at the forefront of curriculum planning. VET schools were responsible for selecting the members of the development team. Teams were established before the first workshop was carried out. The task of the school development teams was to transfer knowledge to their school environment and lead the planning of the revised educational programmes. The first workshop, entitled 'Leading the implementation of revised educational programmes, was held in January 2025 and targeted school principals'. The second workshop, entitled 'Implementing revised educational programmes', took place in March 2025 and was addressed to school development teams, including principals, from all five pilot programmes.

In April, the next workshop for school development teams, 'Curriculum Implementation and Learning Situations', was held.

A series of key competence workshops was organised in 2025. The first workshop, focusing on digital competences, was held in May. The second workshop, on holistic health and wellbeing, took place in June, followed by a third workshop on learning to learn in August 2025. In September 2025, a workshop on entrepreneurship was organised, followed by a workshop on green and sustainability competences in October 2025. The final two workshops, addressing career orientation and culture, arts, citizenship and languages, are scheduled for November 2025.

Work also continued on the 'Planning and Implementation of Competency-Based Programmes in VET', alongside revising the guidelines for completing educational programmes in VET. In addition, the revision of the 'Knowledge Assessment Plan' is underway, as is the updating of the 'Guidelines for Implementing Curriculum'. The Assessment Plan is part of the implementation curriculum and is prepared by the subject expert group. It systematically defines learning standards (in particular minimum standards), assessment criteria and approaches, the timeline of assessment.

Activity 3: Further develop apprenticeships and link schools with enterprises

Activity 3 focused on evaluating apprenticeship workplaces.. A plan for the evaluation of apprenticeship workplaces and designed simple evaluation tools was developed, including a student questionnaire and interview questions for work-based learning (WBL) organisers. Interviews were conducted, the data analysed, and the findings presented in a partial report. In addition, an online survey was carried out among all students in upper secondary vocational and technical education. Data on verified workplaces covering the period from 2017/18 to 2024/25 were collected from the relevant chambers.

Activity 3 also addressed the preparation of support materials for workplace training in companies. Instructions for preparing final assignments were tested with mentor training providers. Following the testing phase, a meeting was held to discuss proposed updates to the instructions. In parallel, the providers prepared example training plans for use in mentor training sessions.

Activity 4: Digitally supported training places in preschool education, health and social care.

In Activity 4, the team focused on further developing the e-WBL application. New modules were introduced to support work reports (daily and task-based reports, attendance tracking), archiving, and communication between mentors, students and WBL organisers.

In February 2025, the updated application was presented to the Ministry of Education, demonstrating how it supports the standardisation of WBL organisers' work. In March 2025, an online meeting with organisers from the preschool education and health and social care programmes introduced the new functionalities and encouraged their testing in real-life settings.

Feedback was provided on legal compliance (ZDSMA), and the developer prepared a presentation on accessibility features. As a result of the updated functionalities, new user instructions and guidelines for mentors and students were developed and published within the application. School-level testing was closely monitored, and ongoing support was provided through a dedicated email channel for questions and suggestions.

In parallel, the team developed evaluation and archiving modules, defined user roles and access rights, and continued refining the application. In June 2025, an online meeting with preschool education and health and social care organisers was held to exchange good practices and present recent updates. Throughout this period, the digital renewal working group met regularly, submitted weekly testing reports, provided feedback to the developer on proposed improvements, and revised document templates for notifications and assignments in line with the group's recommendations.

Activity 5: Renewal of higher education study programmes

Under Activity 5, the team completed the coordination of content for the *Guidelines for Higher Vocational Study Programmes*. The draft was approved by the Expert Council for VET in April 2025 and subsequently published on the project website.

In 2025, work focused on the modernisation of 16 higher vocational study programmes. This included the establishment of working groups, preparation of contracts, analysis of existing programmes and vocational standards, development of draft programme structures, and preparation of draft catalogues of knowledge.

During this period, planning also began for the development of common subjects within higher education study programmes. This involved the preparation of a framework and a plan for the selection of experts to support the development of catalogues of knowledge for these subjects. The activity was implemented and successfully completed in the third quarter of the year.

In parallel, the 'Guidelines for competence-based planning and implementation of higher education study programmes', the 'Guidelines for designing an open curriculum in higher education study programmes', and the 'Guidelines for integrating key competences into higher education study programmes' were prepared and are currently undergoing professional review.

Bodies responsible

- Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI)
- Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy (SVRK)
- Ministry of Education

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers

Entities providing VET

Companies
VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies
Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Modernising VET infrastructure

Improving digital infrastructure of VET provision
Making VET institutions sustainable and green

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses
Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation
Diversifying modes of learning: face-to-face, digital and/or blended learning; adaptable/flexible training formats
Developing and updating learning resources and materials
Acquiring key competences
Integrating green transition and sustainability in VET curricula and programmes
Integrating digital skills and competences in VET curricula and programmes
Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers
Supporting teachers and trainers for green transition and sustainability
Supporting teachers and trainers for and through digital

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

VET as a driver for innovation and growth preparing for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Sustainability - a green link in VET

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Recovery and resilience plan - summary](#)

[Recovery and resilience plan documents](#)

[Slovenia's recovery and resilience plan on the European Commission website](#)

[Project website](#)

[New website of the project](#)

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/45068>