

Developing the professional qualifications system and jobs-and-skills forecasting

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 ESTONIA

Timeline

2022 Design

2023 Design

2024 Implementation

2025 Implementation

ID number 44313

Background

Lack of skilled labour is an important factor hindering the development of Estonian companies. Occupation-specific and transversal employee skills need upgrading. Skill development enables preserving and promoting a technologically innovative and competitive economy and well-being. Mapping of skill needs, provision and recognition of skills are important measures for alleviating the shortage of skilled labour.

Reducing the number and share of adults with a low level of education and/or without professional education is one of the biggest challenges for adult education. The share of adults with professional education has been slowly increasing. In 2022, it was 74.8%, 1.3 percentage points higher than in 2021.

The process of amending professional qualifications is inflexible and does not permit sufficient rapid and efficient responses to changes in the labour market and society. Employers consider formal qualifications important in some areas, but in others work experience or general skills or other aspects play a much more important role. Acquired skills and knowledge are often not translated into productivity gains and wages.

Objectives

To support the systematic and flexible linking of education and the labour market by improving the system of labour market monitoring and future skills forecasting OSKA, reforming the professional qualifications system and integrating them into a system of labour market monitoring and future skills forecasting, OSKA as well as in the domains of systemising and description of skills, and matching, assessment and recognition of skills.

Development of the labour market monitoring and forecasting system focuses on the gradual shift from forecasting based on fields of activity and profession to skills- and sets of skills-based forecasting.

Description

The following measures are foreseen:

- (a) development of the professional qualifications system, modernisation of professional standards and the creation and implementation of skills profiles;

- (b) creating, developing and supporting the implementation of a skills classification and competences catalogue in VET;
- (c) further development of the jobs and skills forecasting system OSKA, updating of the methodology for general analysis and sectoral surveys, extension of analytical capacity;
- (d) supporting the implementation of Europass.

2022 Design

The framework (conditions for granting support from EU structural funds) for the reform of professional qualifications system was adopted. It focused on three areas:

- (a) development of OSKA methodology (including shift to region-based forecasts), conducting surveys on sectoral and thematic labour force demand, disseminating research results and monitoring the implementation of proposals for ensuring the labour force;
- (b) development of a comprehensive system of skills and professional qualifications, OsKuS;
- (c) development of digital solutions and registers, and capacity building, to ensure the efficient functioning of skills and professional qualifications system OsKuS.

2023 Design

A comprehensive 2023-29 project was launched to merge the jobs and skills forecasting system (OSKA) and the professional qualifications system into a unified skills and professional qualifications system called OsKuS. Forecasting methodology is upgraded, covering regional forecasts and big data, and enhanced by visual presentation and dissemination of OSKA data. More agile approach is adopted to accommodate micro-credentials and non-linear learning paths. Profession-based qualifications are being transformed into skills profiles. Digital solutions for OsKuS include skills and certificate registries, awarding professional qualifications, skills conformity assessments, and additional analytical services.

2024 Implementation

As the first step in the professional qualifications system reform, the skills information system, Skills Compass, was completed in 2024. This digital tool is designed for describing, forecasting, and recognising skills. Its main components include a skills tree, descriptions of professions and job sectors, and an occupation recommendation system that links skills with employment data. The Skills Compass is built upon professional standards, OSKA surveys, and the European Classification of Skills and Occupations (ESCO). It is intended for use by learners, employers, jobseekers, career counsellors, teachers, trainers, and policymakers.

As part of the qualifications system reform, preparations have also started for amending the Professions Act.

In 2024, the methodology of labour market monitoring and future skills forecasting OSKA was updated, including its data model, general forecast, thematic studies, and monitoring. Development of a skills classifier and catalogue continued, and a methodology for describing skills was further developed, drawing on international experience, incl. ESCO. By the end of the year, the Estonian Skills Register contained descriptions of 2,833 skills linked to nearly 400 occupational profiles.

2025 Implementation

In 2025, the qualifications system reform continued, and preparations for the new Professions Act were made. The aim is to reduce the number of professional qualification standards and for most VET programmes, use competence profiles as the link between the education system and the labour market. An indicator was being developed to assess the effectiveness of the professional qualifications system. The

suggested indicator is the implementation rate of recommendations proposed in OSKA studies.

Bodies responsible

- Estonian Qualifications Authority

Target group

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

National, regional and local authorities

Thematic categories

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Using EU transparency tools (EQF, Europass, ESCO, ECTS, ECVET principles)

Comprehensive national qualification frameworks

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[System of labour market monitoring and future skills forecasting OSKA](#)

[Europass Estonia](#)

[ESF project 'Reform of Estonian professional qualifications system'](#)

[Skills Compass](#)

[Professions Act](#)

Related policy developments

2025 **Implementation**

Education Strategy 2021-35

The education strategy applies an integrated approach to the development of the education system to make better use of Estonia's high-quality education for the benefit of people, society and the economy.

 ESTONIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2022 **Completed**

Initiatives supporting adults' key competences and participation in lifelong learning (until 2022)

The activity is part of the National adult education programme. In 2017-18, nine projects were set up for equipping adults with social and learning skills, entrepreneurship competence, skills in foreign languages and Estonian for non-native speakers.

 ESTONIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

2021 **Completed**

Adult education programme 2015-21

The programme was adopted in 2015 and comprises three measures:

 ESTONIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2021 **Completed**

Estonian qualifications framework (until 2021)

The EstQF was referenced to the EQF in 2011. Following the VET reform in 2013, the referencing report was revised and updated in 2016 to include developments in the education system.

 ESTONIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2021 Completed

Developing OSKA, a system of labour market monitoring and future skills forecasting (until 2021)

OSKA analyses the developmental potential and labour requirements of different economic sectors in Estonia. Its surveys of sectoral needs for labour and skills use a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

 ESTONIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2022 Completed

Labour market and education cooperation programme

The programme was adopted in 2015. It sets out a roadmap and offers a framework for increasing the qualification levels of the labour force, decreasing the structural labour shortage and enhancing the employability of graduates by responding better to changes in labour demand.

 ESTONIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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