

Creation of centres of excellence in VET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN

 SLOVAKIA

Timeline



ID number 41675

Background

There are centres of VET (CeVETs) established based on the Act on VET. According to the Act on VET No 184/2009, having state-of-the-art equipment in VET schools was the main prerequisite for upgrading. According to the Act on VET No 61/2015, the ability to offer reskilling and upskilling was also required. Respective professional or employer organisations could prescribe also additional prerequisites. The CeVETs were created in cooperation with regional authorities and respective professional or employer organisations. Dissatisfaction with the performance of some CeVETs led to the need to revise decisions on recognising some schools as CeVETs. According to the 2018 amendment of the Act on VET, professional and employer organisations are entitled to downgrade a CeVET to a regular VET school. Furthermore, there was also a need to reflect the European initiative on establishing centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs). Initiated by the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 and directly referring to the 2020 European skills agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, a project aimed at establishing CoVEs is in progress.

Objectives

In addition to the provision of IVET and CVET (upskilling, reskilling), centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs) must offer retraining of teachers, head instructors and instructors, offer work-based learning opportunities for dual learners contracted by SMEs (as SMEs often lack the full technological resources or capacity to cover the full scope of a qualification), and be an interface between basic schools (lower secondary education in particular) and VET schools and between VET schools and higher education institutions to support career choices and VET-related aspects. CoVEs will be responsible for the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning. These centres should support regional development, and reflect research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3) developing into an integrative part of skills ecosystems and the knowledge triangle of research, education and innovation. CoVEs in Slovakia should comply with the European initiative and participate in international activities within 'platforms of centres of vocational excellence' in the future.

Description

The creation of CoVEs is determined by the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 adopted by the government on 24 November 2021. According to the strategy's action plan, a pilot phase to transform some of the existing centres of VET into CoVES was scheduled to start in 2022, co-funded by ESIF (specific objective 1.4 'Developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship' under Operational programme Slovakia 2021-27). About 20 CoVEs should have been originally created with stakeholder involvement. New legislation to provide a detailed legal basis for these centres is expected from an amendment to the Act on VET in the pipeline.

2021 Design

The envisaged transformation of some current centres of VET (CeVETs) into CoVEs is embedded in the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 adopted by the government on 24 November 2021 and in the Operational programme Slovakia 2021-27.

2022 Design

Programme Slovakia 2021-27, replacing six operational programmes of the previous programming period, was approved by the European Commission on 23 November 2022 boosting also the elaboration of the final version of the national project 'Centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs)'. A project proposal prepared by the State Institute of Vocational Education aimed to establish the first 12 CoVEs equipped with state-of-the-art technology. Discussions on equipment details of respective centres were ongoing.

2023 Implementation

The main goal of this 2023-27 ESF+ project, with a budget of EUR 15.6 million is a comprehensive setup of the system with a minimum of eight pilot CoVEs with full functionality. Implementation started with exploiting international experience and quality instruments such as EQAVET to identify dimensions of excellence appropriate for functions of CoVEs and key performance indicators related to respective dimensions. The Self-assessment tool for excellence guided the process, resulting in 15 areas of excellence prescribed for CoVE candidates: Curriculum, Educational process, Programme structure, Cooperation with partners, Professional development of pedagogical staff, Career counselling, Management and resources, Lifelong learning, Innovation in education, Digitisation, Green solutions and sustainability, Inclusion and equal opportunities, Business operations and entrepreneurship, Feedback data, and Safety at schools. Key performance indicators (KPIs), along with descriptions (clarification) of respective KPIs and assessment criteria, were finalised for each area.

2024 Implementation

On 11 October 2024, the government announced 12 selected CoVE candidates based on stakeholder evaluations and the potentials of the respective schools. These centres are currently encompassing 18 schools across Slovakia. Some centres face challenges in linking with research and development. Only two centres are located in major university centres (Bratislava and Košice). The selected schools will receive funding of EUR 25 million from the ERDF for equipment. Detailed investment plans will be prepared within the call for proposals expected by the end of 2024. The pre-selected schools currently work on their 'quality strategy for CoVEs' including justification of development plans and related investments as a precondition for drawing from ERDF funds.

2025 Implementation

16 CoVE candidates developed quality strategies and evaluation reports. All were evaluated and approved. Subsequently, individual schools were entitled to apply for funding for equipment in response to the call 'Support for pilot centres of excellence in VET' with a total final allocation of EUR 27 818 162.

In March, the State Institute of Vocational Education issued a methodological guide explaining the process of achieving excellence, which also contains measurable indicators that pilot centres must meet. For example, in Area 5.3 International cooperation, a minimum of 10% of teaching staff and 10% of learners must participate in international mobility to fulfil the expected level of excellence.

In October, an amendment to the Act on VET (61/2015) embedded CoVEs into the legislation. The act defines the minimum requirements that a school applying for the CoVE designation must meet to be recognised as a partnership ecosystem in the respective field of VET. A school is awarded the title CoVE by the education ministry with the consent of the establisher and the relevant professional organisation in charge of assessing the compliance of the applicant's activities with the respective field of education.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
- Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (until 2024)

Target group

Learners

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

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers
School leaders
Adult educators
Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

Companies
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Modernising VET infrastructure

Modernising infrastructure for vocational training

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Supporting Centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs)

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Learners' possibilities of accumulation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired non-formally and informally

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Permeability between IVET and CVET and general and vocational pathways, academic and professional higher education

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

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

VET underpinned by a culture of quality assurance

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Sustainability - a green link in VET

European Education and Training Area and international VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 \(in Slovak\)](#)

[Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 \(in English\)](#)

[Lifelong learning and counselling strategy action plan 2022-24 \(in Slovak\)](#)

[Lifelong learning and counselling strategy action plan 2022-24 \(in English\)](#)

[Programme Slovakia 2021-27](#)

[EFT self-assessment tool for CoVEs](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Swiss project in support of VET

The main activities of the project comply with the three aforementioned objectives and six measures.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

National implementation plan: Slovakia

Eight priority areas were identified in relation to the achievement of the objectives, five of which explicitly target VET, two target lifelong learning in parallel with VET ((f) and (h)) and one targets interlinking general education and VET (e):

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30

LLCS 2030 focuses on four thematic areas: the qualification system; basic skills and civic education; lifelong learning, counselling, and motivation of citizens for lifelong learning; and building a system of skills management and identification of lifelong learning needs.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

A continuing professional development model for pedagogical and professional staff

A new act was adopted on pedagogical staff and professional staff (138/2019) in 2019 complemented by two decrees (361/2019 on education for professional development and 1/2020 on qualification requirements). The act cancelled:

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

CVET

2025 Implementation

System of verifying qualifications

The project System of verifying qualifications, run by the State Institute of Vocational Education, started in 2019 and is expected to be completed on 1 February 2023.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

“ ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Creation of centres of excellence in VET: Slovakia. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/41675>