

National basic skills improvement initiative

POLICY DEVELOPMENT**STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN** SLOVAKIA

Timeline

2021 **Design** 2022 **Implementation** 2023 **Implementation**
2024 **Implementation**

ID number 41653

Background

The lack of basic skills is one of the main obstacles to the successful completion of labour market training programmes for the low-skilled. There is also insufficient financial and institutional support for basic skills-related training. Furthermore, the term 'basic skills' is not yet embedded in legislation, and is used in a too general way without the operationalisation needed to guide developers of adult learning course curricula.

Objectives

The objective of the related part of the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 is strengthening legislative, financial and institutional support for improving the basic skills of adults.

Description

The following five measures are set by the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30:

- (a) embedding the term 'basic skills' in the Lifelong Learning Act;
- (b) piloting tools for mapping, assessing and testing basic skill levels of low-skilled adults;
- (c) improving the digital skills of citizens in line with Reform 6 of Component 17 'Digital Slovakia' of the National recovery and resilience plan;
- (d) piloting a financing scheme for supporting non-formal learning for low-skilled adults in cooperation with NGOs;
- (e) establishing a national basic skills support network, co-funded by the State budget, including relevant national authorities, regional authorities, and complemented by local self-governments and NGOs, if needed.

Under Reform 6 'A strategic approach to education in digital skills in cooperation with representatives of key stakeholders', the implementation is in progress based on the national strategy for the development of digital skills through lifelong learning. Retraining of at least 172 800 seniors and disadvantaged people is envisaged, following a pilot project. The pilot project will involve 1 000 participants, assessing their retraining needs

and physiological characteristics for selecting the appropriate digital equipment suitable for their personal use.

2021 Design

The lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30, approved by the government on 24 November 2021, created a framework for detailed elaboration of the aforementioned five measures in a subsequent action plan.

2022 Implementation

The pilot training phase for seniors began on 23 June 2022 and was running continuously in 62 training locations nationwide. Universities of the third age, schools, libraries, municipal and city authorities, day centres and leisure centres offered their premises for the training. The training consisted of seven modules delivered over five weeks. Each module included three 45-minute teaching sessions. The training materials were prepared in cooperation with Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice. During the pilot phase of the project, 1 423 seniors and disabled persons were successfully retrained receiving a certificate, a personal tablet and a voucher for a 40 GB data package.

In addition, the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy action plan 2022-24 allocated a total of EUR 21 million up to 2024 for the thematic area 1.3 'National basic skills initiative and pilot intervention programmes'. Basic skills were also identified in the National implementation plan (NIP) among priority areas.

From June to October 2022, nine round tables were organised by the State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV) in its capacity as the National Coordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning to map regional stakeholders' opinions on skills development, barriers, groups at risk, the potential for cooperation and relevant national measures in support of skills development. A mapping report and a communication campaign 'It is never late!' were under development capitalising on round table results. Preliminary findings were discussed during the Lifelong learning week 2022, which opened on 17 October 2022 with the conference Quality assurance in education of adults.

In November 2022, a new Erasmus+ project, Digital individual learning accounts (ILA) in V4, run by ŠIOV in cooperation with Visegrad partner countries (Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) started. The project aims to develop a validated data model and a methodological guide for its practical application as a vehicle for improving adult learners' skills.

2023 Implementation

The State Institute of Vocational Education published a comparative study, New elements of qualification systems for skills development, envisaged by the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 to inform about the international experience with the introduction of individual learning accounts (ILAs) and microcredentials. This study recommended implementing ILAs as targeted voucher schemes rather than 'virtual accounts - wallets' originally suggested by the Learning Slovakia paper. This resulted from the resistance of the finance ministry to accept the accumulation of means in the wallet (EUR 200) and doubts concerning the sustainability of funding ILAs from the State budget.

The study also suggested a double approach to microcredentials making a difference between microcredentials issued under light and strict regulation by the State. In the first case, it is obligatory to inform on voluntarily set quality assurance measures applied by individual providers. In the second case, the regulation is linked to strict requirements for registration with the National Qualifications Register. Both these new instruments were conceptualised as primarily focusing on increasing the accessibility of adults to lifelong learning and skills improvement.

2024 Implementation

In April 2024, an intensive campaign was launched to promote the Pact for Skills, and its four principles, including commitments and activities to support basic skills development within the Pact for Basic Skills. The goals of the Pact for Basic Skills in Slovakia are presented on the website of the National Coordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning embedded in the State Institute of Vocational Education such as:

- (a) strengthening the concept of basic skills and raising awareness;
- (b) creation of a national platform of organisations supporting the development of basic skills;
- (c) exchange and transfer of knowledge on best practices in the field of skills;
- (d) support for the development of basic skills.

From September 2024, workshops were organised to finalise activity plans, establish regional coordination points in western, central and eastern Slovakia, and finalise commitments for the Pact for Basic Skills for submission to the European Commission.

The National RRP's Investment 7, Improving digital skills for seniors and distribution of Senior-tablets, retraining and equipment of 172 800 seniors and disabled persons was envisaged by mid-2026. In October 2024, this project, commonly known as Digital seniors, was relaunched after piloting and delays caused by the evaluation of the results of the pilot and political turbulences. The revised aim of the project, with a budget of EUR 41 million by the National RRP, is to train 105 440 seniors over 65 and disabled persons over 18 in basic digital skills and provide them with quality tablets and a one-year 65 GB data package.

Free training focusing on the basics of using digital devices, information searching, online communication and information security is currently being launched in all regional capitals. In the coming months, these sessions will also expand to smaller cities nationwide, in cooperation with the Association of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia and Trade Unions of Workers in Education and Science.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- Government Office of the Slovak Republic
- Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation
- State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV)
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (until 2024)

Target group

Learners

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Learners with migrant background, including refugees

Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers

Learners with disabilities

Adult learners

Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)

Unemployed and jobseekers

Low-skilled/qualified persons

Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or social-economic disadvantaged position)

Entities providing VET

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

Optimising VET funding

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

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

VET promoting equality of opportunities

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Subsystem

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 \(in English\)](#)

The National recovery and resilience plan summary of reforms and investments

Gállová et al. (2023). Nové prvky kvalifikacných systémov na rozvoj zruchnosti [New elements of qualification systems for skills development]

Learning Slovakia strategy paper (in Slovak)

Improving digital skills for seniors and distribution of Senior-tablets (Digital seniors) project website

Pact for Basic Skills Slovakia web page

Related policy developments

2024 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):



Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 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.



Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

National recovery and resilience plan

The National recovery and resilience plan sets out a package of reforms and public investments to be implemented by 2026.



Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Digital transformation strategy

In the short term, three priority areas have been identified by the strategy, forming a basis for the 2019-22 action plan:



Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Promoting key competences of adults

Don't BE disQUALIFIED (*Nediskvalifikuj sa!*) is the motto of a 2016 call for projects launched by the education ministry, focusing on key competence development and enhancing/upgrading skills. Project topics include continuing VET.



Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

2020 Completed

National skills strategy

The education ministry has started an international project (with a budget of EUR 350 000) aimed at elaborating a National skills strategy for the Slovak Republic, in cooperation with the OECD.

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). National basic skills improvement initiative: Slovakia. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/41653>