

Promoting key competences of adults

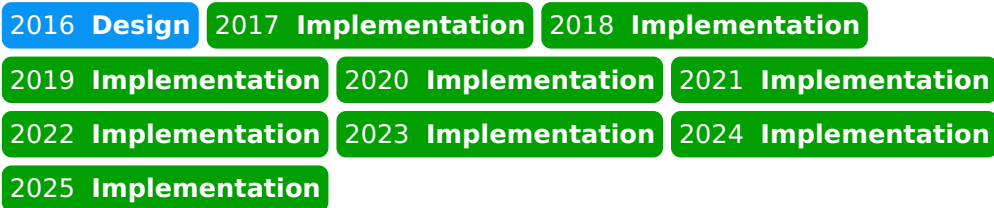
POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE



SLOVAKIA

Timeline



ID number 28579

Background

Insufficiently developed key competences among some adults signal the need to target lifelong learning on key competences. ESF support aimed at increasing the quality and effectiveness of lifelong learning, focusing on the development of key competences and related up-skilling, is considered necessary.

Objectives

Examples of eligible activities within Don't BE disQUALIFIED (*NedisKVALIFIKUJ SA!*) call include:

- creating and carrying out programmes aiming to develop competences complying with labour market requirements including ICT and financial literacy;
- supporting second chance programmes, enabling adults to complete lower secondary education;
- supporting inclusive education activities for people with special educational needs;
- supporting young people experiencing difficulties with their employment;
- identifying and validating adults' learning acquired through working experience.

Description

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. Applications exceeded by two times the available ESF co-funded budget of EUR 15 million. 144 projects have been in progress since 2018, but have been delayed due to administrative complications. In 2017, EUR 7 million were allocated to ESF projects focusing on the development of key competences through lifelong learning. Eligible are secondary schools including VET schools, but also businesses and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In January 2021, 59 new projects were approved, while 44 were rejected.

Assessment of key competences of adults is prioritised by the National programme for the development of education (NPDE).

Piloting the Slovak online version of PIAAC was completed in July 2018.

2016 Design
2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation
2019 Implementation Within the call Don't BE disQUALIFIED! 135 projects are in progress in April 2020 out of 174 approved and 300 submitted applications.
2020 Implementation On 31 December 2020, within the call Don't BE disQUALIFIED!, 134 projects were in progress; EU sources have contributed with approximately EUR 20 million. Of these projects, 39 aimed to develop key competences of people over 50 years of age, regardless of their labour status; EU funds invested in these projects totalled approximately EUR 6 million.
2021 Implementation As of 18 February 2022, within the call Don't BE disQUALIFIED!, 166 projects are in progress and 35 projects have been finished. Completion of all activities is envisaged by October 2022. The Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30, approved by the government on 24 November 2021, contains measures to support key competences related to cohesion policy priorities for 2021-27. The strategy also suggests the introduction of individual learning accounts within which improving key competences can also be funded. The strategy focuses on the improvement of the basic skills of adults. In addition to traditional basic skills – reading, mathematics and science – digital and media skills are added. Respective measures target groups at risk, such as NEETs, migrants, elderly people, and disadvantaged. Operational programme Slovakia 2021-27 and the initiatives funded by EU funds put a stronger emphasis on entrepreneurship and digital skills. A massive intervention to improve the digital skills of seniors and disadvantaged people (172 800 retrained by 2026) has been approved within the National recovery and resilience plan.
2022 Implementation Within the call Don't BE disQUALIFIED!, 56 projects were completed and 95 projects are in progress at the end of 2022.
2023 Implementation All 151 projects were either in progress or completed. In essence, the training focused on increasing the employability of individuals and was only partly related to genuine key competences. For example, a secondary VET school ran a project training 60 adults in occupations such as 'Bartender', 'Sommelier', and 'Baker-Confectioner', where key competences were only addressed as a complement. In contrast, another project focused on 36 out of 100 employees of an air rescue service, aiming to improve their communication skills, stress management, conflict resolution, language proficiency, and IT skills.
2024 Implementation Under the call Don't BE disQUALIFIED!, all 151 projects have been completed.

Lessons learnt from this scheme are as follows: it was hard to distinguish between the development of universal and portable skills or even key competences and job-specific competences. The education ministry found that many projects could have been supported via active labour market policies. As a result, the education ministry decided not to continue with a similar scheme, opting instead to launch two complementary initiatives:

- (a) The 2024-28 national ESF+ project 'Monitoring and evaluation of performance of key competences of adults', with a budget of EUR 4 998 813, is aimed at enhancing the quality and efficiency of lifelong learning by analysing data collected from the 1st and 2nd cycles of PIAAC international adult skills measurement to help authorities better target financial schemes in support of adult learning;
- (b) The financial scheme 'Development of basic skills of adults - the path towards inclusion and employability', with a total allocation of EUR 6 million from ESF+, was launched in October 2024, targeting 16 to 65-year-olds with a skills deficit hampering their employability. The focus is on developing basic skills, such as reading, math and digital skills. Additional skills, e.g. financial, media and health literacy, green skills, and communication skills, can also be developed, but only as part of the development of the aforementioned skills, which are recognised as key competences. When addressing low-skilled, not only educational programmes but also counselling and other forms of individual or group learning activities with clearly identified learning outcomes are eligible.

The national project, Digital future, represents an initial phase addressing the needs of employers and employees concerning digital and green transformation. To support further development of digital and green skills a tool for measuring the respective levels of these skills is under preparation. This tool is aligned with the DigComp 2.2 and GreenComp classifications (areas) and uses a vertical classification similar to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages classification. The framework's skill levels range from A1 (lowest) to C1 (expert level).

2025 Implementation

Referencing frameworks (A1 to C1) created for digital and green skills have been embedded into descriptions of occupations in the National System of Occupations (occupation cards) and descriptions of qualifications in the National Qualifications System (qualification cards) within the newly created portal 'Career gate' maintained by the Sector Councils Alliance. The 'Digital future' project portal also offers testing, allowing for the identification of the respective level of digital or green skills of individuals. Project management expects that testing and identification of skill levels can help identify strengths and weaknesses of learners, plan professional development of employees, and contribute to the description of the levels of demandingness of respective educational programmes. The development of reference frameworks also for other skills/key competences has been announced.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (until 2024)

Target group

Learners

Learners with disabilities

Adult learners

Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)

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

Education professionals

Adult educators

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Acquiring key competences

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

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

Subsystem

CVET

Further reading

[The call Don't BE disQUALIFIED!](#)

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

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

[Proposal for a Council implementing decision on the approval of the assessment of the National recovery and resilience plan for Slovakia](#)

[The National recovery and resilience plan summary of reforms and investments](#)

[Programme Slovakia 2021-27](#)

[The call Disseminating successful innovations into education in schools](#)

[The call Development of basic skills of adults - the path towards inclusion and employability](#)

['Career gate' portal](#)

[The Digital future project portal](#)

Related policy developments

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.

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

National basic skills improvement initiative

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

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

CVET

2025 Implementation

National programme for the development of education

On 27 June 2018, the government approved the National programme for the development of education (NPDE). The NPDE was adopted, with 106 measures to be fulfilled until 2027. Some measures related to regional schooling and higher education are relevant also to VET.

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Promoting key competences of adults: 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/28579>

