

Projects promoting key competences in IVET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 SLOVAKIA

Timeline



ID number 28574

Background

In PISA 2015, Slovakia scored below the OECD countries average in all PISA domains. Dissatisfaction with this resulted in the decision to support interventions financed through the ESF. In 2018, two calls for ESF-funded projects were launched aiming to improve literacy, mathematics and science; they are carried out in basic (ISCED 1 to 2) and grammar schools. 207 projects have been submitted; 100 projects have been approved and 28 have been already contracted. The first projects began in January 2019. The projects are meant to address the low performance of Slovakia in PISA.

Objectives

The calls for specialised projects financed by ESF should encourage basic and secondary schools to start new activities resulting in improvement of performance in PISA domains.

Description

In 2019, ESF-funded projects were launched aiming to improve learners' literacy, mathematics and science competences. They were also carried out in VET schools. The projects enrich school curricula, improve learning environments and offer afternoon activities aiming to improve performance in respective competences via non-formal and informal learning. Although still at their initial stage, the initiatives are already very positively assessed by practitioners including the Slovak Chamber of Teachers. All social partners were involved in the preparation of the calls.

2018 Design

Preparation and launching the calls for ESF projects.

2019 Implementation

Within the call Linking secondary education and practice for ESF projects, launched in

August 2019, addressing inter alia reading literacy, EUR 19.3 million were demanded by project applicants from VET schools out of the total allocation of EUR 30 million.

The call Support for improving educational achievements and competences, for ESF projects, launched in July 2019 with a total allocation of EUR 9.7 million and with eligible applicants outside the education sector (including NGOs and professional associations) resulted in 25 approved projects out of 42 submitted. Some projects conducted by business-related bodies, such as the Union of Electrical Engineering Industry, address improvement in science competences.

A project of the NGO UNI KREDIT focuses on the development of digital competences of secondary school teachers in the Nitra self-governing region, in line with the Digital competence framework (DigComp).

A project of the Trenčín Regional Chamber of Slovak Chamber of Commerce is aimed at retraining of teaching staff in secondary schools via a specialised training module focusing on reflecting on labour market needs.

2020 Implementation

On 31 December 2020, 83 projects with a total budget of approximately EUR 18 million were in progress or contracted, within the call Linking secondary education and practice, aiming to improve key competences of VET students in line with labour market requirements.

Within the call Support for improving educational achievements and competences, 64 projects with a total budget of approximately EUR 9.5 million were in progress or contracted on 31 December 2020.

2021 Implementation

There were 81 projects in progress within the call Linking secondary education and practice, aiming to improve key competences of VET learners in line with labour market requirements.

Within the call Support for improving educational achievements and competences, new projects emerged run by other applicants than VET schools or school founders. 74 projects were in progress.

2022 Implementation

At the end of 2022, 81 projects were still in progress within the call Linking secondary education and practice, aiming to improve key competences of VET learners in line with labour market requirements, and 74 projects were in progress within the call Support for improving educational achievements and competences, where NGOs were very active.

2023 Implementation

In June 2023, the government approved the education ministry's Concept of long-term support for the expansion of innovations including key competence development in education. The document, created by independent experts, aimed to identify and disseminate innovations aligned with the National programme for the development of education (NPDE) and to introduce matching grants for financing eligible activities. The government empowered the education ministry to ensure financing for an innovative scheme. In September 2023, a call for submitting projects within a scheme 'Disseminating innovations into education in schools' was launched to attract diverse legal entities - other than schools but dedicated to enriching the educational environment - to submit projects supporting schools, inter alia, concerning competences interrelated with key competences. Nine strong players, including NGOs with a long history of involvement in education, were supported with a total amount of EUR 950 thousand from the State budget.

2024 Implementation

In October 2024, the education ministry launched a call for submitting projects within a scheme titled Disseminating successful innovations into education in schools, following a 2023 scheme with a similar focus that explicitly referred to the government's resolution concerning the dissemination of innovations. The allocation for this scheme was EUR 1.38 million as eligible activities were expanded from six to eleven.

2025 Implementation

The scheme in support of small school-based projects (the so-called development projects) has finally been abolished. Instead the two state-funded schemes introduced in 2023 and 2024 in support of disseminating innovation by large, experienced NGOs have become the main instrument for supporting innovation in schools, with schools now primarily benefiting as participating institutions rather than direct grant holders. For example, Junior Achievement Slovakia, with a long history of supporting the improvement of financial literacy, offers within its project activities for the development of entrepreneurship, digital and media literacy, and for personal development, emotional and social literacy for learners in secondary education, including IVET programmes.

A national curriculum reform in upper secondary education, including initial VET, which is currently under discussion, must be in line with settings in the national curriculum for ISCED 1 + 2 already in place. This curriculum introduced functional literacy as a central principle, which covers the development of eight key competences related to respective educational domains (clusters of subjects). In addition to well-known mathematics, science, and reading literacy (expanded to language and communication literacy), five other key competences were identified, among which two have a specific impact on initial VET - technical and vocational literacy, and informatics/computer science-related literacy. In contrast to this, digital literacy is seen as cross-cutting and addressed in compliance with the DigComp framework. Results of learning are prescribed for each of the three cycles (after the third, fifth, and ninth years). The third cycle-related requirements are the basis for the current discussion of embedding key competences and cross-cutting competences in initial VET as well as ensuring continuity between basic education and IVET. Upper secondary education reform will be implemented nationwide from 2035-36.

Bodies responsible

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

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Education professionals

Teachers
School leaders

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Acquiring key competences

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

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

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[The call Reading, mathematical and science literacy at basic school](#)

[The call Reading, mathematical, financial and science literacy at grammar school](#)

[The call Linking secondary education and practice](#)

[The call Support for improving educational achievements and competences](#)

[Concept paper for long-term support of the expansion of innovations in education \(in Slovak\)](#)

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

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

[A guide to transversal literacies \(in Slovak\)](#)

[State educational programme \(national curricula\) for basic education: Annex 1: Definition of literacy and its gradation sequence \(in Slovak\)](#)

Related policy developments

2025 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:

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Environmental education

Since October 2017, the Green education fund (GEF), managed by the Slovak Environment Agency and financed from the State budget and private companies, has been active in supporting environmental education. EUR 155 000 were earmarked for 28 NGO-projects at national (11) and regional (17) level.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Strategy for enhancing the level and continuous development of reading literacy

In 2016, the education ministry submitted to the government a Strategy for enhancing the level and continuous development of reading literacy. The 2016/17 school year was declared 'year of reading literacy', accompanied by diverse activities, including competitions.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET

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.

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IVET CVET

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