

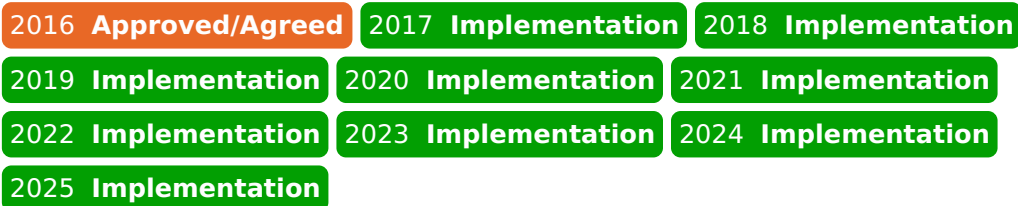
# Introducing dual IVET programmes

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 ROMANIA

## Timeline



ID number 28507

## Background

In 2013, the IVET system was reformed, restructuring programmes, introducing agreements with companies for organising work-based learning, as well as providing subsidies for companies involved in apprenticeship and opportunities for student progression to higher VET.

The apprenticeship system was also reformed in 2013-14. A proposal for a 2-year dual system was submitted to parliament in December 2014. A new strategic framework for IVET was prepared, aiming to strengthen social partners' and companies' involvement and to bring IVET closer to labour market needs.

At the beginning of the reporting period the attractiveness of apprenticeship was low, despite existing policies being in place for supporting apprenticeship as part of the Youth guarantee implementation plan, 2014-15 and additional funding from the Human capital operational programme, 2014-20. Conclusions from an impact assessment project run between August 2014 and September 2015 revealed the need for more flexibility (shorter apprenticeship programmes) and increased financial incentives for employers. Another challenge was to change the mentality of learners/parents towards IVET and foster (youth) entrepreneurship.

## Objectives

To improve relevance of VET to the labour market needs, increase participation, facilitate access to VET programmes, and improve their quality.

To develop innovation and cooperation in IVET at national and international level.

## Description

An amendment to the Education Law endorsed in November 2016 (Ordinance No 81/2016)

introduced a dual form of initial VET for qualifications at EQF/ROQF (Romanian national qualifications framework) levels 3, 4 and 5.

Implementation of dual IVET programmes started in 2017/18 for qualifications at EQF level 3. Over 2 500 learners from the first generation of students with access to dual VET programmes enrolled in dual IVET. Setting up a methodology for organising and conducting entrance examinations for dual IVET programmes at EQF level 4 and 5 has still to be done. The National Authority for Initial Training in Dual System was established by government Order in June 2018 to help develop policies in this field. The authority has been operational since January 2019. Based on government Decision No 24/January 2020 on the new structure and functioning of the Ministry of Education and Research, the National Authority for Initial Training in Dual System became a directorate/department within the ministry.

### **2016 Approved/Agreed**

In initial VET, the dual form of the *3-year school-based VET programme* ('professional' VET) was created by means of new legal provisions, based on the Government Emergency Ordinance No. 81/2016, endorsed by Law No 82/2018, regarding the modification and completion of the National Education Law No 1/2011.

This new legal framework followed a national debate initiated as part of the Dalivet project, where companies, national authorities, school decision-making actors took part.

According to these official documents, dual VET programmes could be organised at the request of companies and include a partnership contract concluded between initial VET school, employer/ company and municipality (local authority). Companies were also obliged to pay dual VET learners a monthly allowance that is not less than that provided by the government and should support by being involved in the practical training of students.

### **2017 Implementation**

The first implementation year of the dual VET programme welcomed 2 570 students in 2017/18.

### **2018 Implementation**

The number of students enrolled in grade 9 of initial dual VET increased to 4 244 in 2018/19.

### **2019 Implementation**

The National Authority for Initial Training in Dual System was established within the education ministry in 2018 to help develop policies in this field.

The number of new students enrolled in dual VET in the ninth grade increased from 2 570 in the school year 2017/18 to 4 244 in 2018/19, growing to 6 970 in 2019/20. The share of dual VET students in the total number of ISCED level 3 VET students increased from 8.1% in 2017/18 to 16.4% in 2019/20. The effectiveness and quality of dual VET partnerships was high due to the commitment of companies in providing good training and to employing the graduates. The number of companies involved in partnership contracts increased from 227 in 2017/18 to 763 in 2019/20. VET schools have also played an active role in this process by adapting their offer to meet the requirements of companies and by offering companies the possibility of being involved in partnership contracts. The number of schools involved in dual VET increased from only 67 in 2017/18 to 167 in 2019/20, according to the data provided by the county school inspectorates.

The initial dual VET has not yet been implemented for qualifications at EQF level 4 and 5.

Due to numerous campaigns to promote initial vocational education and training in the regions, across all its forms of organisation (4-year technological programme, three-year school and work-based programme including the initial dual form), the companies and local authorities increased their interest in the initial dual VET programme as a solution to addressing their skills needs.

From 2019/20, there was an increase in the number of places requested by employers for students to be trained in initial dual VET: the number of initial dual VET learners increased to 6 970. The most attractive domains were mechanics (41.9%), electrics (8%), electromechanics (7.5%); the qualifications sought by students were operator for machines with numerical command/control (11% of the total enrolled), auto/car mechanic (9.5%), electromechanics in industrial machinery and installations (6.7%) and cook (6%). Services, tourism and food were also popular.

### 2020 Implementation

The National Authority for Initial Training in Dual System was reorganised within the Ministry of Education and Research based on Government Decision No 24/January 2020.

The number of new students enrolled in dual VET in the ninth grade reached 6 639 in 2020/21. Despite the pandemic, the number of companies interested in supporting the practical training of the initial dual VET programmes grew from 527 companies in 2019 (for 2019/20) to 886 in 2020/21 emphasising a growing awareness of the vital role of companies supporting initial VET training.

A relevant, interactive map of IVET programmes leading to the acquisition of level 3 qualifications (3-year school and work-based programmes/ *învățământ profesional* and its dual form) or level 4 qualifications (4-year technological programmes) was provided for the school year 2020/21 on the institutional website of the National Centre for TVET Development.

### 2021 Implementation

In 2021/22, 16 195 students were in initial dual VET programmes, including 4 649 new enrolments. The most attractive domains for the new entrants in initial dual VET were: mechanics (48.53%), tourism and food (13.70%), electrics (10.48%), electromechanics (7.64%), construction, plumbing and public works (3.36%), electronics and automation (3.10%) followed by commerce (2.75%), textile and leather industry (2.41%).

The qualifications sought by students were operator for machines with numerical command/control (almost 11.71% of the total enrolled), auto/car mechanic (9.8%), electromechanics in industrial machinery and installations (7.51%). Services, tourism and food were also popular.

### 2022 Implementation

In 2022, 15 118 students were in 3-year dual IVET programmes leading to the acquisition of a qualification at NQF/EQF level 3.

In 2022, methodologies for the organisation and implementation of dual IVET programmes for qualifications at NQF/EQF levels 4 and 5 were developed. They aimed to support the development of a complete dual pathway in education and training covering levels of IVET and continuing to higher education dual VET programmes for qualification level 6-8 NQF/EQF. The implementation was expected to take place as soon as possible in the light of a new package of the education law for preuniversity and university education.

### 2023 Implementation

In 2023, 15 805 students were enrolled in dual IVET programmes at NQF/EQF level 3. There was a growing tendency in dual IVET programmes in terms of number of IVET

learners and number of companies, presently 855 companies as compared to 740 in 2022/23. However, the number of IVET learners compared to the total number of learners at upper secondary level was still relatively low, since companies did not have extensive financial capacity. Most companies involved in IVET dual programmes have had strong foreign capital and could support practical training, provide even further incentives for learners to participate in dual programmes, other hostel and transport facilities, etc.

Given that the former provision of the law of education (Law no.1/2011) according to which dual IVET provision should have included also qualifications of level 4 and 5, and although methodologies were developed, but confronting with the challenges brought by the COVID-19 crisis at economic level and specific restrictions of face-to face activities, the provision could not be implemented mainly because of economic diminished capacity of employers. Even companies usually active in dual IVET suffered from the economic constraints: if in the first year of dual IVET there were 227 companies involved in related activities, their participation grew to 886 in 2020/21 but suffered a major decrease to 496 during the pandemics.

Given this context, the Government made dual education a priority and adopted more consistent actions, supported with European funding resources:

- (a) the new package of laws on education was adopted in 2023 to give legitimacy of all related actions. It emphasised that dual education should be a complete dual pathway, covering qualifications at EQF levels 3 to 8, to ensure more opportunities for young IVET graduates who want to continue their studies in the same type of programme. The complete dual pathway also aimed at improving VET image, attractiveness and learner self-esteem as future university graduates,
- (b) the Regional Consortia for Dual Education (29 organisational structures) were established, bringing together universities, IVET schools, employers and public administrative authorities and the new campuses for dual education (that can later become centres of excellence) with updated infrastructure supported through consistent ESF funding.
- (c) the systemic approach of IVET training standards in terms of revision, update, and development of new IVET qualifications and specific curricular documents, quality assurance of IVET programmes, IVET teacher training, development of teaching and learning materials.

### **2024 Implementation**

17 972 learners were enrolled in initial dual VET programmes and the growing participation reflected the increasing interest of both learners and employers. The 29 Regional Consortia for Dual Education created working groups for the revision/update of IVET standards according to specific methodological guidance and coordination provided by the National Centre for TVET Development (CNDIPT). As main beneficiary of the Operational Programme for Education and Employment, CNDIPT started the systemic action of revision/ update and or development of new qualifications and IVET training standards considering green, digital, entrepreneurial and sustainable competences.

### **2025 Implementation**

In 2025, there were 95 121 learners in the 3-year school and work-based VET programme (învăţământ profesional), including dual VET and 191 665 learners in the 4-year technological programme (învăţământ tehnic/tehnologic).

All IVET students participate in compulsory practical training, supported through specific practical training agreements/contracts between the school, employer, and local public authority. Practical training may take place within school laboratories/workshops and in companies.

In 2025, based on the education laws adopted in 2023, it was decided that from the 2026/27 academic year all EQF level 4 IVET programmes will last four years, with an option for learners to complete three years and obtain an EQF level 3 qualification. In

line with this reform, work began on updating curricula for grades 9-12. By December 2025, all IVET curricula for grade 9 had been revised.

## Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of National Education (until 2021)
- National Centre for TVET Development (CNDIPT)

## Target group

### Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

### Entities providing VET

Companies

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

VET providers (all kinds)

### Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

National, regional and local authorities

## Thematic categories

### Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

### Modernising VET offer and delivery

Expanding VET programmes to EQF levels 5-8

Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation

Integrating green transition and sustainability in VET curricula and programmes

Integrating digital skills and competences in VET curricula and programmes

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Supporting Centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs)

### Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning

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

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

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

## Subsystem

IVET

## Further reading

Cedefop ReferNet Romania (2013). Changes in legislation to encourage employers to engage in apprenticeship

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Cedefop ReferNet Romania (2018). Start of dual-based initial VET

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Government Emergency Ordinance No 81/2016 on 23 November 2016 regarding the introduction of the initial dual VET programme

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Government Decision No 24/2020 on the organisation, functioning and restructuring of the Ministry of Education and Research

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National Centre for TVET Development, Situation of enrolment in initial VET (on types of programmes, domains of qualifications)

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Ministry of Education (November 2022), Press release: Call for competitive projects"Pilot program for the development of regional consortia for dual education"

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Ministry of Education (2023), Order no. 5.068 / 14.07.2023 approval of selected Regional Consortia for Dual Education

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Ministry of Education (2023), Order no. 5.068 / 14.07.2023\_annex 1, list of selected Regional Consortia for Dual Education

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Ministry of Education (2022), Order no. 6216/ 09.11.2022 Methodology regarding the establishment of Regional Consortia for Dual Education

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Parliament of Romania (2023), Law no. 198/2023 on Preuniversity Education

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Parliament of Romania (2023), Law no. 199/2023 on Higher Education

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## Related policy developments

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### 2025 Implementation

#### IVET provision in line with the labour market needs

Educated Romania underlines the commitment to adjusting the education system to current and emerging challenges. Education and skills-related measures and actions are to be implemented with the support of State budget and EU funds.

 ROMANIA

##### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

##### Subsystem

IVET

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### 2025 Implementation

#### Promoting IVET

The National Centre for TVET Development, together with the support of the education ministry, runs annual information campaigns to raise public awareness that initial VET can

be a first option for young people.

 ROMANIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**


IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## Incentives for learners to participate in VET

The government supports the implementation of initial VET programmes by offering financial support in various forms.

 ROMANIA

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2021 Completed**

## The 2016-20 VET strategy

The strategy for education and vocational training in Romania for 2016-20 was adopted in 2016 (government Decision No 317 on 27 April 2016).

 ROMANIA

**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2021 Completed**

## Lifelong learning strategy 2015-20

Lifelong learning strategy 2015-20 was adopted in 2015. It addressed the need for strengthening partnerships between VET providers and enterprises, to increase the quality and labour market relevance of VET.

 ROMANIA

**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

**Incentives for companies to provide dual VET**

In December 2016, tax incentives (deductions) for businesses involved in dual IVET were introduced (government Emergency Ordinance No 84/2016):

 ROMANIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET

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“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Introducing dual IVET programmes: Romania. 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/28507>