

# Strategic vision for the development of dual VET (DVET)-2030

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN

 BULGARIA

## Timeline

2023 Approved/Agreed

2024 Implementation

2025 Implementation

ID number 48669

## Background

Dual VET (DVET) is in the focus of the state policy in the field of vocational education and training (VET) in Bulgaria. There is a sustainable intergovernmental partnership between Bulgaria and Switzerland in this area that has led to many fruitful results at system level.

The report for the review of the DVET system in Bulgaria, prepared by an expert mission of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Bulgaria during the preparation process of the second Swiss contribution programme, states that there is a lack of a strategic vision for the development of DVET, which should direct the policies and the resources in an effective way to achieve the national development goals. The report recommends the formulation of a national vision that places DVET in the context of inter-institutional policies focusing both in labour market skills and the contribution of the educational process to effective employment and a strong economy.

Thus, a strategic vision should ensure the effective use of financial resources for the development of the DVET by formulating data and evidence-based goals as well as qualitative and quantitative parameters of the system. The vision should envisage a focus on the leading role of companies in DVET, the development and the modernisation of the DVET in the country, as well as better communicative activities for its promotion.

## Objectives

The purpose of the *Strategic vision for the development of dual VET (DVET) in Bulgaria-2030* (hereinafter Strategic vision for the development of DVET) is to formulate goals, scope and tools for the public policies in the country, for achieving a successful national model of DVET. The vision aims to contribute achieving the following goals:

- (a) DVET should be the leading VET pathway at upper secondary education level by 2030;
- (b) DVET should be comprehensively and sustainably integrated into the education system;
- (c) DVET should be driven by companies (which should actively participate in its provision);
- (d) DVET should be quality assured and responsive to labour market needs;
- (e) DVET should be harmonised with the inter-ministerial policies to achieve quality employment and strong economy in all regions and for all citizens of Bulgaria.
- (f) young DVET graduates should be equipped with the necessary skillset (digital and green skills, key competences and transversal skills) to meet current and future work-

- related demands;
- (g) DVET should be expanded to adult learners (including for partial qualifications and for micro-credentials) and higher education.

## Description

The *Strategic vision for the development of dual VET (DVET) in Bulgaria-2030* (hereinafter *Strategic vision for the development of DVET*) was drafted by an expert team, with the financial support of the Fund for the preparation of support measures under the Swiss-Bulgarian cooperation programme. It outlines the general framework for the development of dual VET until 2030, and corresponds to the main strategic documents for the development of education, training and learning in the country, namely:

- (a) the *National recovery and resilience plan (NRRP)* of the Republic of Bulgaria;
- (b) The *Strategic framework for the development of education, training and learning in the Republic of Bulgaria (2021-30)*
- (c) the *National strategy for small and medium-sized enterprises (2021-27)*;
- (d) the evaluation of the current state of DVET in Bulgaria and the recommendations for the development of the DOMINO II project under the Swiss-Bulgarian cooperation programme

This strategic document aims to address the following issues:

- (a) to establish a model of DVET which could contribute most effectively to Bulgaria's development goals of in economic, social and educational aspect;
- (b) to showcase the characteristics, opportunities and possible limitations for establishing an effective DVET system;
- (c) to assure that the national model of DVET is efficient and its qualitative and quantitative goals are achieved;
- (d) to clarify the positioning of DVET stakeholders - relationships, roles and responsibilities, motivation and opportunities, interests and influence.

The document includes the following four strategic goals for further developing the DVET system:

- (a) strategic goal one: full integration of DVET into the education system;
- (b) strategic goal two: transforming companies into a driving force for DVET;
- (c) strategic goal three: expanding the social and regional scope of DVET;
- (d) strategic goal four: institutional strengthening and expanding partnerships with stakeholders.

The strategic vision also points towards potential funding programmes/tools and measures to achieve its goals but the final decisions will be made by the education ministry. Such examples are:

- (a) the European Social Fund(ESF) operational programme *Education 2021-27*;
- (b) the second Swiss contribution to Bulgaria (with planned support for DVET);
- (c) the *Strategy for small and medium-sized Enterprises 2021-27* (with its action plan) foreseeing possible incentives for companies through bonus points, the creation of an information database, etc.

The strategic vision finally reflects a draft concept for the development of DVET which was developed by the economy ministry and brought to the attention of the education minister which includes measures to promote DVET among companies in Bulgaria.

### 2023 Approved/Agreed

The content of the *Strategic vision for the development of dual VET (DVET) in Bulgaria -2030* (hereinafter *Strategic vision for the development of DVET*) was initially agreed by a wide range of stakeholders, including the Ministry of Economy and Industry, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Regional Management Units of Education,

educational institutions, national and regional employers' organisations, trade unions, chambers of commerce and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The strategic vision was then formally approved by the Consultative council for VET under the auspice of the education minister on 12 September 2023.

### 2024 Implementation

Based on the priorities for the improvement of the legislation set forth by the *Strategic vision for the development of DVET* and more precisely of the need to 'improve' *Ordinance No 1 of 8 September 2015 on the terms and conditions for conducting work-based learning* (dual system), following an extended public consultation on the necessary amendments a new Ordinance was issued in 2024 by the education minister on the amendments and supplements to Ordinance No 1, with the following highlights:

- (a) stipulations improving students' career guidance and their readiness to work in a real work environment through prior familiarisation with the company's activities;
- (b) emphasis on the possibility of conducting production practice (before the beginning of work-based learning) in cooperation with partner employers in a real work environment;
- (c) flexible schedule in view of the specifics of the production process or the seasonal nature of some business related activities;
- (d) clarity regarding the conduct of practical training in a real work environment for students in grade XI who are under 16 at the beginning of their work-based learning.

These amendments contributed to the vision's first and fourth strategic goals.

### 2025 Implementation

To operationalise the *Strategic Vision for the Development of Dual VET (DVET) in Bulgaria - 2030*, the education ministry developed and launched on 2 October 2025 the DOMINO 2 programme - the key policy instrument designed to strengthen and expand the dual VET system in alignment with the goals of the strategic vision. The vision, adopted in 2024 with the financial support of the *Fund for the Preparation of Support Measures* under the Swiss- Bulgarian cooperation programme, provides the long-term framework for consolidating dual education in Bulgaria in response to labour market needs, business participation and regional development priorities.

The DOMINO 2 programme implemented during 2025-29 within the framework of the second Swiss-Bulgarian cooperation programme, with a total budget of Swiss Franc (CHF) 5 882 352.94 (approximately EUR 6.2 million), including a Swiss contribution of CHF 5 million (approximately EUR 5.3 million) (85%) and national co-financing of CHF 882 352.94 (approximately EUR 944 000) (15%).

The programme is based on the principle that the sustainable development of dual VET depends on the active participation of enterprises as a leading stakeholder in shaping skills relevant to the labour market. It introduces a governance model supported by an intermediate coordination body between the education system and employers, aimed at improving coordination, capacity and overall effectiveness. The programme ensures the transfer of Swiss know-how through three Swiss partner institutions contributing expertise in system governance, data-driven policymaking, quality assurance, inclusiveness of DVET and strategic communication.

The programme consists of four interrelated components, each addressing a core area of system modernisation and contributing to the implementation of the strategic vision:

- (a) component 1 - active business involvement and capacity building: establishment of 10 regional clusters and 28 information points for dual VET; piloting coordination models linking education and business; mapping institutional capacity; and transferring Swiss management practices through trainings and study visits (*supports vision goal 2 - transformation of companies into a driving*

*force for DVET and goal 4 - institutional strengthening and partnerships with stakeholders);*

- (b) component 2 – support through research, analysis and data: creation of interdisciplinary research teams to analyse the transition from education to employment and design digital tools for evidence-based policy improvement (*supports vision goal 1 - the full integration of DVET into the education system*);.
- (c) component 3 – inclusion and quality assurance mechanisms: development of the QualiCard certification tool for schools and companies, training and awards for best practices, and piloting models for social inclusion in dual training with the potential for recognition as social services (*supports Vision goal 3 - the expansion of the social and regional scope of DVET*);
- (d) component 4 – communication and visibility: organisation of national and regional campaigns and conferences, upgrading the national career guidance platform, and establishing a network of ambassadors among successful DVET graduates and employers.

Through these coordinated actions, the DOMINO 2 programme provides the operational framework for implementing the *Strategic vision for DVET -2030*, reinforcing partnerships between education and business, improving quality and inclusiveness, and promoting the visibility and prestige of dual education in Bulgaria.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Ministry of Education and Science

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices  
Learners with migrant background, including refugees  
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers  
Adult learners  
Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or social-economic disadvantaged position)

### **Education professionals**

Teachers  
Trainers  
School leaders

### **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 offer and delivery**

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

# European priorities in VET

## VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

## Subsystem

IVET

## Further reading

[Launch of the DOMINO 2 programme:](#)

## Related policy developments

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**2025 Implementation**

### Register of employers who meet the requirements for establishing dual VET partnerships

Ordinance RD No 04-4 of 8 October 2019 of the economy minister sets the conditions for creating and maintaining a register of employers who meet the requirements for dual vocational education and training (DVET) partnerships.

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#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

### Training programme for mentors in the dual training system

The education minister approved a training programme for acquiring basic pedagogical and psychological knowledge and skills aimed at mentors involved in on-the-job training (dual training system). The changes in Art.

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#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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## 2025 Implementation

### The consultative council for VET

In 2018, a consultative council for vocational education and training (VET) was established by the education ministry with the participation of other ministries, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET), organisations of employers and trade unions and other bodies and civ

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#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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## 2025 Implementation

### Developing dual VET

Piloting started in the 2015/16 school year for seven professions in five secondary VET schools in different regions of the country. In 2016/17, 12 professions and 17 schools in total were involved in the experiment. Dual VET(DVET) is supported by the municipalities and the social partners.

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#### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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## 2025 Implementation

### Legal framework for the implementation of dual VET

An Ordinance that regulates dual vocational education and training (DVET) came into force at the beginning of September 2015.

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#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Strategic vision for the development of dual VET (DVET)-2030: Bulgaria. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

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