



Vocational education and training policy briefs 2024

SLOVENIA



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1. Introduction

This VET policy brief ⁽¹⁾ produced by Cedefop presents a snapshot of vocational education and training policy developments in Slovenia between 2020 and the end of 2024. It presents the context and the challenges the country faces, a selection of the latest VET-related statistics, as well as the national priorities until 2030 identified in Slovenia's national implementation plan. This policy brief provides information from Cedefop monitoring and analysis on the implementation of the [Council Recommendation on VET](#) and [Osnabrück Declaration](#) and contributes to shaping new EU priorities in VET as of 2026 and informing the mid-term evaluation of the Council Recommendation on VET.

1.1 National VET context

Slovenian vocational education and training (VET) is characterised by competence-based programmes, permeability between education levels, and high practical training integration. The autonomy of upper secondary schools allows for adaptation to local industry needs. Collaboration between the education and labour ministries, and the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET (CPI) ensures smooth governance and implementation, including providing teacher training. CPI also acts as a liaison between ministries, schools, and social partners in shaping VET policies.

Formal VET begins at upper secondary level and is primarily delivered by State-funded schools. Upper secondary programmes include 4-year technical pathways (EQF level 4), delivered in school-based settings, and 3-year vocational pathways (EQF level 4), offered either as school-based programmes or apprenticeships. Shorter 2-year vocational programmes (EQF level 3) prepare learners for less demanding occupations. All VET programmes are based on vocational standards and comprise general and technical subjects, as well as practical training; a school can adjust up to 20% of the curriculum to local needs (the open curriculum).

Initial VET (IVET) is an attractive option in Slovenia; in 2023, 69.9% of all upper secondary students enrolled in IVET, which is one of the highest in the EU. This percentage has been steadily increasing, up from 67.5% in 2015. The number of graduates in IVET with STEM-related diplomas and professions has also grown, rising to 44.5% in 2023, compared to 37.5% in 2015.

Graduates with a vocational *matura* (school leaving diploma) can pursue 2-year higher vocational programmes (EQF 5) or enrol in a first-cycle professional education programme (EQF 6). Higher vocational programmes, oriented towards practical skills, incorporate 40% of work-based learning in companies. Adults can enrol in the same formal VET programmes as young learners, and continuing VET is available for adults through public

⁽¹⁾ See also the previous edition: Cedefop. (2024). [Vocational education and training policy briefs 2023 – Slovenia](#). Cedefop monitoring and analysis of vocational education and training policies.

and private providers. Recognition of non-formal and informal learning is supported by the national vocational qualifications (NVQ) system ⁽²⁾ (Cedefop & CPI, 2023).

1.2 Challenges

VET in Slovenia has evolved since the 1990s, marked by the establishment of the tripartite-managed CPI to strengthen stakeholder cooperation. However, social partner involvement and cooperation remains a challenge. The transition from centralised to participatory VET governance aimed to create a more independent education system; Nevertheless, it still struggles to engage companies and employers effectively. The system lacks cohesion, with independent segments targeting different groups, hindering agility and responsiveness to societal and economic changes (Slovenia, 2022).

The development of new qualifications and educational programmes is progressing slowly, while the scale and quality of work-based learning continue to pose challenges. More specifically, the Apprenticeship Act of 2017 initiated apprenticeship paths, but a lack of coordination and stakeholder unity has limited its impact (Slovenia, 2022).

Slovenia faces demographic challenges and an ageing population, while upskilling and reskilling are in decline. Adult participation in lifelong learning remains low, skills mismatches persist, and there is a shortage of vocationally educated workers (Slovenia, 2022; European Commission, 2024a; European Commission, 2025).

Digital and green skills continue to be underdeveloped, especially among adults. (European Commission, 2025).

Persistent teacher shortages reflect the continued low attractiveness of the profession. (European Commission, 2024b; European Commission, 2025).

2. National VET policy priorities

Slovenia prepared its national implementation plan in VET in 2022 in response to the [2020 Council Recommendation on VET](#) and the [Osnabrück Declaration](#). It identified the following priorities:

- (a) modernising VET based on skills forecasting, aligned with labour market needs, and with a focus on the digital and green transition;
- (b) further developing quality assurance in VET at provider and system levels, in line with EQAVET principles, and establishing a graduate tracking system;
- (c) improving adult education, including upskilling programmes to strengthen professional competences.

⁽²⁾ The NVQ system, in place since 2000, ensures the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, as opposed to the national qualifications framework (NQF system), established in 2016, that promotes formal qualifications and lifelong learning programmes. The system is under the responsibility of the labour ministry.

3. Main policy developments 2020-24

3.1 Modernising VET for labour market needs and digital/green transitions

Slovenia's National recovery and resilience plan (NRRP) (2022–26) launched a major [VET modernisation project](#) (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025) to better align curricula and qualifications with labour market needs and the green and digital transition. CPI is leading the project in cooperation with public institutions and social partners, focusing on curriculum reform in upper secondary and higher VET, apprenticeship development, and the establishment of digitally supported learning places. In 2022, an Expert Group for the Modernisation of VET was appointed to oversee the project's progress, bringing together representatives from several ministries and government bodies.

In 2023, several developments took place under the VET Modernisation project. The National Education Institute (ZRSŠ) prepared guidelines for renewing general education subjects in VET. CPI developed future VET scenarios for the development of VET in Slovenia and drafted pilot guidelines for upper-secondary programmes, which were approved in 2024. CPI also integrated digital and green competences into curricula and scheduled the renewal of 25 upper-secondary and 16 higher VET programmes by 2026. It also evaluated the open curriculum, confirming that VET schools adapt it effectively to local labour market needs, while its review of apprenticeships revealed low awareness among learners and limited enrolments. In addition, CPI created standardised documents to support cooperation between VET schools and employers. Finally, its comparative analysis of higher VET strategies across EU countries highlighted funding and accessibility challenges as well as the growing role of microcredentials.

In 2024, the Modernisation of VET project advanced through a series of developments. The Expert Group for the Modernisation of VET approved [new guidelines for renewing upper secondary VET programmes](#) (ReferNet Slovenia & Cedefop, 2024b). The modernisation of five pilot programmes was also piloted: pharmaceutical technician, industrial mechanic, two mechatronics tracks, and nursing assistant. Together with social partners, CPI organised expert debates on systemic coherence in VET. To improve quality, CPI prepared a conceptual document on competency-based programmes, advanced the revision of the open curriculum, and launched an analysis of national competence profiles for teachers in EU countries. On apprenticeships, CPI collected survey data and mentor interviews in technical fields to explore expansion to additional programmes and levels. It also coordinated the development of a digital work-based learning application with a central register of training places, while in higher VET it drafted guidelines for integrating key competences.

Slovenia has been supporting the [green transition in VET](#) primarily through two projects implemented by CPI between 2022 and 2024: the Climate goals and contents in education project, and the Care for climate (C4C) project.

Within the Climate goals and contents in education project, piloted in 15 schools, sustainable school guidelines, school action plans and three teacher training programmes

were tested. The project introduced a whole-school approach to sustainable development, delivered targeted lectures and workshops, and published two manuals – one on the whole-school approach to sustainability, and another on the design of sustainable products and services in the context of final examinations.

Through the Care for climate (C4C) project, CPI – in cooperation with social partners – developed a methodology for integrating sustainability competences into occupational standards. The methodology covers ten sustainability dimensions (e.g. energy, transport, eco-design), which served as the basis for the development of 34 competence frameworks across different economic sectors. The project also produced the manual *Guidelines for integrating sustainability competences into occupational standards* and the compendium *Contributions to understanding sustainability in VET*.

In April 2022, Slovenia, in line with the EU's Digital education action plan, initiated its national [Digital action plan \(ANDI\)](#). ANDI is an important strategic framework for continuing teacher professional development on digital skills, and also involves curriculum reform, introducing digital competences for students in primary and secondary education (ReferNet Slovenia & Cedefop, 2023).

The 2023 e-bag project (eTorba) kick-started ANDI implementation, focusing on creating a national platform for electronic textbooks and learning resources to improve student access and interaction. [Tools like the e-reader includes interactive functions such as highlighting and note-taking.](#)

Within the [2023–26 Digital and sustainable teacher project](#), part of the ANDI initiative, efforts aim to improve the digital competences of over half of Slovenia's teachers through self-reflection tools ([SELFIE for Teachers](#)) and EU digital frameworks. The project is a national initiative, implemented by a consortium of partners. The goal is to train 20 000 teachers in digital skills and modern teaching methods; by mid-2024, more than 15 000 educators from 410 institutions had already taken part in training and conferences.

Slovenia is investing in [strengthening teachers' digital and pedagogical competences](#) through initiatives on artificial intelligence (AI), blended learning and sustainable teaching. Within the Erasmus+ project 'Artificial intelligence for teachers' (AI4T, 2021–24), coordinated by France and implemented in Slovenia by the education ministry and the Educational Research Institute (PI), 269 teachers from 76 Slovenian upper secondary schools were trained in AI applications for mathematics, science and English. In 2023, a relevant large-scale evaluation was conducted to assess the impact of the training on teachers' attitudes and practices, while in 2024 a final European conference in Luxembourg presented updated resources and policy recommendations aligned with the European AI Act.

The [BlendVET/KIPSI project \(2021–24\)](#), coordinated by CPI and financed through the EEA and Norway Grants, involved a consortium of 10 partners from Norway, Iceland and Slovenia. It supported VET schools in adopting blended learning by providing professional support, developing school strategies and training teachers to use digital tools. In 2023, 115 participants attended a national conference on digital transformation, and in March

2024 a final hybrid conference in Ljubljana brought together 171 participants to share innovations and good practices.

Slovenia's focus on labour market forecasting since the last few years resulted in the launch of the [Skills forecasting platform](#) in 2021. The labour ministry managed the project in collaboration with the Employment Service of Slovenia (ZRSŠ). The platform aims to provide real-time data and forecasts spanning short (up to 1 year), medium (3-5 years), and long-term (10 years) periods. The initiative seeks to improve competence and profession forecasting methodologies, foster institutional cooperation among stakeholders, and address skill mismatches and labour shortages. In 2022, the Employment Service of Slovenia (ZRSŠ), as a project partner, set functional specifications to ensure the platform's effective online operation. As of 2023, the project has completed its first phase, featuring activities such as reviewing forecasting methodologies by foreign experts, preparing a medium- and long-term labour market forecast, and organising a concluding conference to share results and forecasts with stakeholders until 2037.

Building on this, the initiative entered a second phase in 2023 as the [Labour Market Platform](#) (2023–28). In 2023, the Labour Market Platform (2023–28) released the first medium- and long-term forecast of the most in-demand occupations and competences, based on new forecasting methodologies. In 2024, results were shared through events and social media, and a broad consultation group was set up, bringing together all relevant ministries, public bodies, social partners and chambers. The group held its first meeting in September 2024 to advise on the further development of the platform.

Slovenia is strengthening [career guidance in higher vocational education \(EQF level 5\)](#) through the project 'Development of lifelong career guidance and counselling in higher vocational education'. The project started in 2021 and is funded by the Education ministry. It aims to raise students' awareness of career planning and lifelong learning, provide tailored support for graduates, and establish the foundations for a career counselling system in higher VET by offering professional development, and networking opportunities for career counsellors, while also creating more opportunities for employers to connect with prospective employees. In 2023, activities included two student training events on career orientation and financial literacy, a national conference for career counsellors, a dedicated event on working with special needs students, and 13 meetings between higher VET schools and companies to strengthen labour market links. In 2024, the Higher VET School Association evaluated career centres through interviews, a focus group and 183 questionnaires. The evaluation confirmed that students value career centres but highlighted the need for more individualised support, while employers emphasised the importance of strengthening students' soft skills, practical experience and readiness for lifelong learning.

3.2 Developing quality assurance in VET in line with EQAVET

Slovenia is focusing its efforts on developing quality assurance in VET at provider and system levels. At the system level, the country participates in EQAVET peer reviews and implementation of EQAVET principles. In 2022, representatives of the Slovenian VET

system took part in the [EQAVET peer reviews](#) in Croatia and Slovakia; the former was on the national model of quality assurance (QA) in Croatian IVET and the latter on the new system for validation of results of non-formal education and training in Slovakia. In June 2023, Slovenia hosted a peer review on the national support system for VET schools' internal quality assurance. In the same year, CPI contributed to the National education Programme 2023-33, placing QA high on the policy agenda, and, together with the Ministry of Education and two public institutes, launched the initiative 'Networking of schools for quality 2023' to promote mutual support among schools in reflecting on their QA measures and sharing experiences. In 2024, CPI and its partners continued this initiative, further strengthening collaboration and support for QA in VET, while offering tailored counselling and training to school staff. The initiative is overseen by a national working group that includes the Education ministry, CPI, the National Examination Centre and the School for Leadership. It is complemented by CPI's Quality report on VET 2024, focusing on EQAVET indicator 2 on investment in teachers and trainers.

Since 2023, the education ministry has been developing a [national tool to forecast VET-related labour market needs](#). To this end, it launched the design of two applications, planned to be operational by the end of 2025: one to monitor graduate employability and another for higher VET schools to manage enrolment data, grades and related information. In 2023, a dedicated expert group within the ministry reviewed tracking systems in several EU countries, defined monitoring areas and data, and proposed legal amendments. In 2024, work continued with the publication of tenders, the assessment of proposals and the selection of contractors to design the applications.

3.3 Improving adult education and upskilling to strengthen competences

Adopted in March 2022, the Slovenian [Adult education master plan](#) (ReNPIO 2022-30), rooted in the Adult Education Act of 2018, set objectives of improving basic skills, raising educational attainment, aligning adult skills with labour market needs, promoting research and development in adult education, improving regulation, and increasing support to adult learners. The master plan envisions equal opportunities and incentives for quality adult learning in Slovenia, supporting holistic development and sustainable living throughout life. It emphasises equal opportunities for diverse target groups and is operationalised in annual programmes of adult education (LPIO). Its implementation is based on cross-ministerial cooperation and social partnership to ensure effective governance. In 2023, the Resolution on ReNPIO 22–30, adopted by the Slovenian Parliament, entered into full implementation as the strategic framework guiding adult education policy up to 2030.

Slovenia has begun efforts to develop short-term adult learning programmes, not leading to full qualifications, for various areas and specific target groups. One way forward is the [introduction of microcredentials](#). In 2021, the Ministry of Education set up a consultation group, which prepared a position paper for the European Commission's public consultation on microcredentials. In 2022, the Slovenian Qualifications Framework – European Qualifications Framework national coordination point (SQF-EQF NCP)

organised a conference on microcredentials, focusing on their definition, quality assurance and inclusion in the SQF. In 2023, the NCP explored options for integrating microcredentials into the SQF, prepared a desk research report on their role in the Slovenian qualifications system and organised two focus groups to reflect on this topic. In 2024, the NCP expanded its work by setting up an interdepartmental working group as a counselling body for the SQF, carried out a comparative study of approaches in other countries and engaged key stakeholders – including the Employment Service of Slovenia, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, and the Ministry of Public Administration – through events and presentations on microcredentials.

Additional [initiatives are gradually strengthening adult education guidance](#) (ReferNet Slovenia & Cedefop, 2024a). In September 2023, the ‘Days of guidance for learning’ campaign reached more than 2 500 adults – mostly over 55 – through over 200 events focused on digital skills. Activities included workshops on digital security, the digital inclusion of Roma women, and smartphone use for older adults. As migrants accounted for 35.5% of vulnerable participants, adult education counsellors received additional training in intercultural competences and e-tools to better support this group.

4. Statistical information in relation to EU targets

Slovenia’s efforts to boost IVET education and support learners and graduates are starting to show results. Notably, the employment rate of recent IVET graduates (20 to 34-year-olds) is one of the highest in Europe, at 80.6% as of 2024, a significant rise from 62.4% in 2015.

In 2024, 75.1% of recent IVET graduates in Slovenia (aged 20–34) had a work-based learning component in their training, compared to 65.3% on average in the EU. This indicates that Slovenia performs well above the European average, reflecting the strong role of work-based learning in its VET system.

In 2022, 26.5% of adults (25–64) in Slovenia had a learning experience in the past 12 months, 13 percentage points below the EU-27 average of 39.5%.

Slovenia has made notable progress in reducing its NEET rate, which has decreased by 5.3 percentage points since 2014. As of 2024, the NEET rate stands at 7.6%, already falling below the 9% target set for 2030, reflecting the country’s commitment to engaging its youth in meaningful education and employment opportunities.

Table 1. **European vocational education and training policy dashboard: Slovenia**

Type of indicator ⁽³⁾	Indicator	Last available year	SI	EU-27	Policy Document	EU target (year)
VET for developing a lifelong learning culture						
Progress	Adults (25 to 64 year-olds) with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%) [*]	2022	26.5	39.5	Skills Agenda Council Resolution on EEA ESPR Action Plan	50% (2025) 47% (2025) 60% (2030)
Progress	Low-qualified adults with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%) [*]	2022	7.8 ^u	18.4	Skills Agenda	30% (2025)
Progress	Unemployed adults with a learning experience in the last 4 weeks (%)	2024	19.1	15.3	Skills Agenda	20% (2025)
Context	Employment rate for 20 to 64-year-olds (%)	2024	78.3	75.8	ESPR Action Plan	78% (2030)
Context	Early leavers from education and training (%)	2024	5	9.3	Council Resolution on EEA	<9% (2030)
Context	NEET rate for 15 to 29-year-olds (%)	2024	7.6	11.0	ESPR Action Plan	9% (2030)
VET for Resilience, transitions, sustainability and excellence						
Progress	Adults (16 to 74-year-olds) with at least basic digital skills (%)	2023	46.7	55.6	Skills Agenda ESPR Action Plan	70% (2025) 80% (2030)
Progress	Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20 to 34-year-olds) (%)	2024	80.6 ^u	80.0	Council Rec on VET	82% (2025)
Progress	Recent IVET graduates (20 to 34-year-olds) with a work-based learning experience as part of their vocational education and training (%)	2024	75.1	65.3	Council Rec on VET Council Resolution on EEA	60% (2025)
Context	25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	2024	43.1	44.2	Council Resolution on EEA	45% (2025)
Context	Gender employment gap (%)	2024	6	10.0	ESPR Action Plan	To be halved (2030)
Context	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (1000s)	2024	302	93.333	ESPR Action Plan	15 million reduction (2030)
Context	Employed ICT specialists (1000s)	2024	42.8 ^e	10 273.6 ^e	2030 Digital Compass	20 million, with convergence between men and women (2030)
VET for the European Education Area						
Progress	Learners in IVET who benefitted from learning mobility abroad (%) ^{**}	2021	7.2	2.1 ^{dV}	Council Rec on VET Skills Agenda	8% (2025)
Context	Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	2023	1.3	1.2 ^d		

Available flags: d – definition differs, e – estimated, u – low reliability, V – Cedefop estimate.

^{*} Eurostat data (Adult Education Survey, special calculation excluding guided on-the-job training).

^{**} Provisional estimates affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: Cedefop.(n.d.). [European VET policy dashboard](#).

(³) [Definitions](#) of the type of indicators are available.

5. Conclusion

Slovenia has advanced in implementing its national priorities according to its NIP. In particular, progress is evident in modernising VET, strengthening quality assurance, and improving adult education.

On the modernisation of VET, Slovenia advanced curriculum reform, piloted updated programmes and integrated green and digital competences into provision. It also invested in digital learning, teacher training aligned with digital and AI-supported environments, and sustainability initiatives, while launching a new labour market forecasting platform to anticipate needs in the medium and long term. Steps have also been taken to strengthen its career guidance system in higher vocational education (EQF level 5). These measures contribute to aligning VET more closely with labour market demand. However, apprenticeships remain limited in scale, and their expansion to technical programmes and adult education will be crucial to further reinforce work-based learning. Furthermore, labour shortages in Slovenia have been reported as a major factor limiting economic activity (European Commission, 2024b) and more efforts should be made to improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession. (European Commission, 2025).

On quality assurance, Slovenia continues to develop its VET system in line with EQAVET principles and the Council Recommendation on VET. It participates in international EQAVET peer reviews and hosted one in 2023 on the national support system for VET schools' internal quality assurance. In the same year, a mutual support initiative was launched to help schools reflect on and improve their internal quality systems. Progress has also been made towards establishing a graduate tracking system, with tenders issued and contractors selected in 2024. Further efforts will be needed to ensure that tracking results are fully integrated into VET planning and provision.

On adult education, Slovenia launched the implementation of the 2022-30 master plan, advanced the integration of microcredentials into the qualifications framework, and expanded guidance services. Career guidance campaigns and targeted support for migrants and other vulnerable groups highlight progress towards greater inclusiveness. Nevertheless, adult learning has declined (European Commission, 2025), participation in lifelong learning remains below the EU average, and so meeting the NIP's ambition to raise adult competences will require further efforts, particularly in basic and digital skills.

Abbreviations

AI4T	Artificial intelligence for teachers
ANDI	Akcijski načrt digitalnega izobraževanja [digital education action plan]
C4C	Care4climate
CPI	Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for vocational education and training
EEA	European Economic Area
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
EU	European Union
ICT	information and communications technology
IVET	initial vocational education and training
LPIO	Letni program izobraževanja odraslih [Annual programme of adult education]
MOOC	Massive open online course
NEET	young people not in employment nor in education and training
NIP	National implementation plan
NRRP	National recovery and resilience plan
NVQ	National vocational qualification
PI	<i>Pedagoški inštitut</i> [Educational Research Institute]
QA	Quality assurance
RENPIO	<i>Resolucija o nacionalnem programu izobraževanja odraslih</i> [Resolution on the adult education master plan]
SELFIE	Self-reflection on effective learning by fostering the use of innovative educational technologies
SQF	Slovenian qualifications framework
SQF–EQF NCP	Slovenian Qualifications Framework – European Qualifications Framework National Coordination Point
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
VET	Vocational education and training
ZRSS	<i>Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo</i> [National Education Institute of Slovenia]

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