



“LEARNING BY DOING” PROJECT

**“Targeted capacity building of VET partnerships
in the Danube Region for the effective modernisation of VET
systems”**

WP 6: Policy Engagement
Deliverable D: 6.1. Slovenia - Country specific strategic document
Prepared by: Institute of Republic of Slovenia for Vocational ,
Education and Training
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1. Executive Summary

The “Learning by Doing” project aims to improve capacities of all relevant VET actors through reinforcing regional, national and transnational partnerships in the Danube countries, by involving 24 project partners. Following a common need for regional exchange and learning, the project aims to develop vocational education and training schemes helping labour mobility and responding to fast economic changes and to the needs of companies, by creating awareness on the socio-economic and cultural challenges and deficiencies. For so doing, the project focusses on reducing systemic disparities as well as labour market and educational imbalances within the Danube area. The ultimate goal is to promote the VET system as an attractive and competitive tool.

Specific objectives include:

- To improve institutional capacities and cooperation attitudes of all VET actors, prompting their sensitisation towards more company- and practice oriented forms of WBL through learning activities on individual, stakeholder and institutional level.
- To develop transnational tools to support long-term transition of VET systems towards more competitive ones, including dual VET schemes and apprenticeship. The aim is to equip VET partnerships in the regional with durable transnationally convertible tools and change mind-sets to implement long-term changes in the institutional, cultural and organisational frames
- To support the project’s vision (enabling VET actors through capacity building to boost the transition of existing VET systems towards more company- and practice oriented WBL schemes) by developing national/regional strategies using participative co-creation methods and capitalizing on the increased capacities of stakeholders, including practical roadmaps defining clear responsibilities, rights and obligations for each key VET actors involved, to support VET reform. Besides, policy recommendations will be developed targeting policy level to integrate (or improve) WBL schemes into local education and training systems by creating the necessary regulatory framework in the context of practices, legislation and collective agreements.

The project is based on 3 steps of ideas generation:

1. Ambition-setting: identification of institutional, cooperation and cultural challenges by sharing EU good practices and conducting peer review. The process results in visions created by local stakeholders on how to “ideally” transform WBL schemes towards more company- and practice-oriented forms in their own context.
2. Scenario development: the creation of empowering capacity building actions using innovative and interactive training techniques, tailoring their themes/formats to the specific local challenges identified by stakeholders, also with a view on previously explored European practices. Stakeholders, by using the new mind-sets and skills gained in the frame of capacity building, will set up different country specific scenarios, elaborating on how the transition of existing WBL VET could realistically take place in their local context.

3. Strategy/tool development: Partners prepare long-term strategies and appropriate toolkits. Firstly, a Guidebook for more efficient Work-Based Learning in the Danube Region will be created, highlighting key factors of the transition. This is based on partners' case studies on country specific challenges. Secondly, partners will establish a Work-Based Learning Observatory in the Danube Region aiming to follow-up and support the transition processes with expertise and knowledge sharing. Thirdly, reinforced partnerships of VET actors draft long-lasting regional/national strategies and policy recommendations, initiating and supporting the country specific transition of existing VET systems. Final papers will reflect the harmonized views of the whole partnership.

The project's target groups are:

1. National public authorities
2. Education/Training Centres and Schools
3. Enterprises and SMEs
4. Youth, as an indirect target group

1.1. Main Activities of LbD Project

In line with the above description of the project, thematic WPs navigate through 3 spheres of learning, starting with individual learning in WP3 (study visits, staff exchanges). It continues with stakeholder learning in WP4 (capacity building, ambition setting workshops) as well as in WP5 (scenario development workshops), resulting at the end of the project with institutional learning, where reinforced VET actors create innovative strategies (WP6).

1.2. Aim of the Strategic Document

The Strategic Document supports the project's vision (enabling VET actors through capacity building to boost the reform of existing VET systems) of the country Slovenia by developing national/regional strategies, including practical roadmaps defining clear responsibilities, rights and obligations for each key VET actors involved, to support VET reform. Besides, policy recommendations will be developed targeting policies to integrate WBL schemes into national/regional education and training systems."

1.3. Fields of Interventions

Some enablers were identified among stakeholders in Slovenia on which the implementation of the apprenticeship can be build further (and in accordance with the Cedefop's Review):

- ✓ the existing legislation on apprenticeship
 - ✓ already established cooperation between schools and companies (to be used as examples of good practice in order to inspire other schools and to inform guidance activities)
 - ✓ involvement of social partners in VET at strategic level
 - ✓ monitoring and update of occupational standards

- ✓ general education component included in all formal secondary VET programmes (which enables permeability to higher levels of education)
- ✓ open curriculum (which allows adapting VET programmes to the local labour market needs and interests)
- ✓ existence of inter-company training centres

2. General information on VET system, including WBL, in Slovenia

The Slovenian education system includes pre-school education, compulsory primary education, upper-secondary education, higher vocational education, and higher education. VET programmes in Slovenia are generally provided by public schools. Together with private providers, public schools also offer continuing VET for adults. At upper secondary level the programs are provided by 71 educational providers, 26 of them are bigger school centres. For adults these programs are also provided by 28 People's Universities and 17 other private institutions.

The Slovenian VET system is characterised by the following main features:

- Occupational standards form the basis for competence-based VET programmes implemented by the schools and for the National vocational qualifications as a system of validation of non-formal and in-formal learning.
- Both main types of upper-secondary programmes, vocational and technical programmes, are offered in all professional fields, all programmes combine general subjects with vocational modules that integrate theoretical and practical learning, permeability between levels and programme types is high.
- VET schools support students to complete their studies with partly external final examination Vocational matura and to continue their studies in higher vocational programmes, placed at the same VET schools centres.
- Work-based learning represents an integral part of all type of programmes. Students are trained in modern Inter-company training centres and/or companies, in 8 (pilot) VET programmes also in apprenticeship form.

In Slovenia there is a type of alternation in all initial VET (IVET) programs, representing an important connection between the economy and school field. Work-based learning (WBL) is an obligatory part of educational programs in all types of VET programs. Practical training in IVET programs consist of practical lessons in school and of work-based learning in companies. WBL takes place as a real work process and is carried out in companies or partially in Intercompany Training Centres (ITCs).

The overall length of the PTW is defined by each education programme. After completing compulsory basic education, pupils can enrol in the following upper secondary VET programmes:

- Short vocational upper secondary education (2 years): 35-40% of educational program is intended for practical training, of which 4 weeks for work-based learning in companies;
- Vocational upper secondary education (3 years): 40% of educational program is intended for practical training, of which at least 24 weeks and not more than 53 weeks for work-based learning in companies. All programs have a prescribed minimum length, (24 weeks) of practical training in companies. A student may have an individual agreement with a company that the minimum length of practical training be extended but it must not exceed the limit (53 weeks); with the new Law on Apprenticeship (2017), apprentices spend minimum of 56 weeks of work-based learning in companies.

- Technical upper secondary education (4 years): 15% of the educational program is intended for practical training, of which 4-12 weeks for work-based learning in companies;
- Vocational technical education (2 years, after vocational upper secondary program): 10% of the educational program is intended for practical training, of which 2 weeks for work-based learning in companies;
- In higher vocational schools (2 years), 40 % of educational program is intended for work-based learning in companies (20 weeks).

A new law on Apprenticeship (2017) sets apprenticeship as a form of education in upper secondary vocational education (3-year programmes). It introduces the term “apprentice” and also defines his/her responsibilities and rights (including remuneration). The law sets specific conditions for contract, as well as requirements for companies and mentors. It also gives chambers and trade unions additional responsibilities and roles, and creates committee for monitoring the implementation of apprenticeships. The main responsibilities of the chambers are: 1) verification of learning places; 2) collecting announcements of learning places and registration of apprenticeship contracts. Control of apprenticeships will be shared between the labour inspectorate and the education inspectorate.

2.1 Contextual conditions of VET system

In the school year 2016/17, 35,1% of students enrolled in general upper secondary programmes and 59,5 % in upper secondary VET programmes (41,5 % in technical programmes, 16,6% in vocational programmes, and 1,4% in short VET programmes).

No.	Indicator	Data
1	Number of secondary schools	123 upper secondary schools in the 2016/2017 school year
2	Number of secondary vocational schools	71 upper secondary vocational schools in the 2016/2017 school year
3	Number of students in secondary schools	2014/15 - 75.329 2015/16 - 74.831 2016/17 - 74.012
4	Number of students in secondary vocational schools	2014/2015 - 43.098 2015/2016 - 43.817 2016/2017 - 44.124
5	Number of adults in vocational qualification programmes as the part of lifelong learning process	19.560 adults in vocational qualification programmes in the 2015/2016 school year
6	Percentage of VET system graduates among all the	Exam/Year 2013 2014 2015 2016

	secondary school graduates	General <i>matura</i>	7429	7194	6741	6663																																							
		School leaving exam	3689	3454	3387	3732																																							
		Vocational <i>matura</i>	10510	9587	9432	9210																																							
		TOTAL	21628	20235	19560	19605																																							
		VET graduates only, %	65,65	64,44	65,53	66,01																																							
7	Success rate of finishing secondary schools vs. success rate of finishing secondary vocational schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general <i>matura</i> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Number of candidate</th> <th>% Success rate of finishing secondary schools</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>9272</td> <td>86,4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>8679</td> <td>89,4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>8169</td> <td>88,5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>7896</td> <td>88,7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> school leaving exam <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Number of candidate</th> <th>% Success rate of finishing secondary vocational schools</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>3724</td> <td>99,0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>3497</td> <td>98,7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>3455</td> <td>98,0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>3789</td> <td>98,4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vocational <i>matura</i> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Number of candidate</th> <th>% Success rate of finishing secondary vocational schools</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>13241</td> <td>93,9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>11970</td> <td>94,8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Year	Number of candidate	% Success rate of finishing secondary schools	2013	9272	86,4	2014	8679	89,4	2015	8169	88,5	2016	7896	88,7	Year	Number of candidate	% Success rate of finishing secondary vocational schools	2013	3724	99,0	2014	3497	98,7	2015	3455	98,0	2016	3789	98,4	Year	Number of candidate	% Success rate of finishing secondary vocational schools	2013	13241	93,9%	2014	11970	94,8%
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		2015	11891	94,4%
		2016	11446	94,5%
8	Student/teacher ratio in secondary schools vs. ratio in secondary vocational schools	In 2015 – student/teacher ratio 13.4 in secondary schools In 2015 - Student/teacher ratio 14.2 in secondary vocational schools		
9	Percentage of secondary vocational schools having their own workshops	100 %		
10	Percentage of companies who accept apprentices during their secondary schooling	In 2017, there were 214,000 registered in Slovenia, of which 638 are verified as training companies		
11	Number of secondary vocational school's student cooperatives	All upper secondary schools: 71 (in the 2016/2017 school year)		
12	Percentage of secondary vocational school students involved into student cooperatives work	100%		
13	Total number of different vocational programmes	163 different programmes (<i>short vocational upper secondary education - 2 years (13), vocational upper secondary education – 3 years (69), technical upper secondary education – 4 years (81)</i>) in 2018/2019 school year		
14	Programmes with greatest enrolment quotas			
1	Health Care			
2	Mechanical Engineering Technician			
3	Economic Technician			
4	Preschool education			
5	Gastronomy and Tourism			
6	Industrial Mechanic			
7	Gastronomy and Hotel Services			
8	Metal Sharper-Toolmaker			
	Programmes with largest interest of the pupils finishing primary school (by enrolment applications)			
1	Health care			
2	Mechanical Engineering Technician			

3	Pre-school education	
4	Economic Technician	
5	Gastronomy and Tourism	
6	Gastronomy and Hotel Services	
7	Metal Sharper-Toolmaker	
14	Average division of hours between in class learning (theoretical and general knowledge) and practical work (in percentages).	The <i>short vocational upper secondary education</i> (2 years) programs: school/employer: cca. 70/30 %. The <i>vocational upper secondary education</i> (3 years) programs: school/employer: at least 40/60 %. The <i>technical upper secondary education</i> (4 years) programs: school/employer: approximately 85/15%.
15	Programme(s) with minimum percentage of practical work	46 Programmes with minimum (4 – 8 weeks) percentage of practical work
16	Programme(s) with maximum percentage of practical work	104 Programmes with maximum (24 - 53 weeks) percentage of practical work

2.2 The internal factors of VET system

VET is regulated in Slovenia through the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (ZOFVI) of 2016, Vocational Education and Training Act (or VET Act, 2006) and the Higher Vocational Education Act. These acts define practical training at the workplace as integrating theory and practice through cooperation among schools, companies and intercompany training centres. A new law (on Apprenticeship, 2017) sets apprenticeship as a form of education in upper secondary vocational education (three-year programmes) and in continuing vocational and technical education.

Different actors are cooperating: national and regional Chambers, Ministries of Industry, Labour and Education, the National Institute for VET, educational institutions, trade unions, companies, expert institutions, teachers, universities, employers' associations, employment services, policymakers, etc. Main responsibilities are:

- the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MoESS) formulates and implements education policies and creates system regulations;
- the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities shares responsibility with the MoESS. It adopts occupational standards;
- the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology provides financial support to employers;
- sector committees for occupational standards discuss priorities in the development of occupational standards, and propose experts to prepare occupation profiles, occupational standards and catalogues of knowledge and skills for NVQs;

- the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational and Technical Education is the main expert body. It proposes occupational standards and educational programmes for adoption by the minister;
- chambers, associations of employers, occupational associations, NGOs, trade unions, ministries give initiatives for new occupational standards and educational programmes. They also propose members to sector committees and for the Council of Experts for VET;
- trade unions cooperate in determining priorities in developing occupational standards;
- the chambers define the rules of verification of workplaces for employers who wish to take students, and cooperate with schools on vocational and career guidance and open curriculum. They keep track of the register of learning workplaces. Following the new Apprenticeship law,, chambers are also obliged to: make companies fulfil the conditions for PTW; monitor the registry of learning places and contracts; supervise the implementation of PTW; organise the intermediate student examinations; cooperate with schools on final examinations.
- schools arrange contracts in companies for students, although students can also make individual contracts. Schools select from national catalogues of learning outcomes the objectives that are to be achieved during WBL.
- companies are obliged to enable students to gain vocational competences, to provide remuneration, to control students' activities, and inform them about safety regulations. Students are medically insured. Mentors in companies are supposed to be familiar with the relevant modules, and organise students' training according the aims defined in them.
- the CPI is a competent expert service for VET and the main research and development body for VET. The CPI coordinates a working group of teachers and other stakeholders that is in charge of designing VET programmes. The CPI conducts monitoring activities, evaluations, and studies.

The new law on Apprenticeship (2017) gives chambers and trade unions additional responsibilities and roles, and creates committee for monitoring the implementation of apprenticeships. Control of apprenticeships is shared between the labour inspectorate and the education inspectorate.

The Vocational Education Act has strengthened the autonomy and the developmental role of VET schools, at the same time it reinforced the importance of quality assessment and assurance. According to the Act, schools are requested to establish a Quality Committee. It self-evaluate the school performance and publishes a quality report every school year. For the Quality Committee's work CPI publishes recommendations to schools for the implementation of self-evaluation that include scope of PTW. The work of Quality Committees includes work-based learning in companies.

2.3 SWOT Analysis of VET in Slovenia

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in VET in Slovenia (67.5%) is high and above the EU average (47.3%). Among female upper secondary students, enrolment in VET is lower (60.5%) but also above the EU average (42.0%). A relatively large share (56.0%) of young VET graduates in Slovenia is in further education and training, compared with the EU as a whole (at 32.8%). • The existing legislation on apprenticeship is on place (including the ongoing pilot on apprenticeship). • Already established cooperation between schools and companies (to be used as examples of good practices in order to inspire other schools and to inform guidance activities). • Involvement of social partners in VET at strategic level. • Monitoring and update of occupational standards. • General education component included in all formal secondary VET programs (which enables permeability to higher levels of education). • Open curriculum (which allows adapting VET programs to the local labour market needs and interests). • Existence of inter-company training centres. • Ongoing promotion of the apprenticeship and raising awareness about the image of VET, WBL and the apprenticeship. • Specific actions for improvement in the field of career guidance. 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mistrust and lack of coordination among all involved stakeholders: tendency to shift the responsibility to other partners, leading to insufficient alignment. • Cooperation and roles are not clear on different levels (national, regional, local), especially if we talk about social partners. • There is not enough cooperation of local partners (local employers, schools and the Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia). • The system lacks good research and development projects, as investment in this sector is very poor, being the only resources from EU funds. • There are still great discrepancies between small-, medium- and large-sized companies when it comes to apprenticeships. • Difficult to obtain enough teachers for certain areas of expertise, given that the salary system is not sufficiently stimulating. Also autonomy from schools and teachers could be improved. • Quality learning materials (e-learning) are lacking. • The quality assurance system needs to be strengthened (indicators, self and external evaluation...). • Practical training should be improved, in cooperation with employers and mentors.
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No big changes are required within the VET system as a whole, just minor but key 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the EU demographic trend, Slovenia's population is getting older, with

adjustments. For instance, no major legislative changes are needed. However, consensus amongst all of those involved must be reached. Also no additional institutions are needed. What is needed is for the existing institutions to take a more active interest in promoting vocational education and training, jobs and apprenticeships, and where education reacts to the needs and trends of the labour market.

- General economic situation is improving, which had a positive impact: in 2016 the employment rate for IVET graduates (aged 20-34) at ISCED levels 3-4 (81.4%) is slightly higher than the EU average (78.1%). Their employment rate is 5.4 % points higher than for graduates from general education.
- Social partners are involved in VET at all levels and has a long tradition in Slovenia's educational system
- The percentage of early leavers from education and training (4.9%) is much lower than the EU average (10.7%), and levels of educational attainment overall are high.

a significant decline for the population between 20 and 54. This will lead to a significant shortage of labour.

- Slovenia's working-age population is projected to increase only around 1% between now and 2025¹ and, therefore, labour market participation is set to fall to 53.4% in 2025, below EU average of 55.5%.
- The State often tries to solve the most pressing and important issues by using project financing, a strategy that can only be temporary.
- Investment in the R&D sector is very low, being the primary resources from EU funds.
- Political meddling affects the whole VET system (shifts in priorities).

3. Latest developments and introduction of the apprenticeship pilot

In field of VET, Slovenia assigned overall a high priority on the work related to work-based learning and apprenticeship. The country's priorities for 2016-20 in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training (DGVT) at the ministry of education, are to:

- reintroduce an apprenticeship system (including the related programmes and adapting the legislation accordingly);
- set specific arrangements for introducing the apprenticeship system in VET schools, alongside the work-based learning system already in place.

A thematic country review on apprenticeship was conducted in close cooperation with CEDEFOP in the years 2015-17. The final report was published in September 2017 suggesting:

a) the setting up of a clear vision for apprenticeship by all stakeholders, b) piloting the new scheme based on the existing knowledge, c) to motivate companies and learners with customised support and improved career guidance, d) increasing communication and cooperation among all actors also through accepting responsibilities and e) ensuring competent mentors and to sustain a funding model also by non-financial support. The new act on apprenticeships, published in 2017, is the result of joint work and consultation of all main VET stakeholders. It defines apprenticeships as a means to accomplish three-year upper secondary VET programmes, equal to school-based programmes. The act strengthens the role of chambers in monitoring the scheme, defines the roles and responsibilities of companies offering practical training, the terms of the apprenticeship contract and the rights and obligations of apprentices, considered students. A monthly remuneration is foreseen for the whole duration of the programme. The scheme is open to unemployed persons. The first pilot programmes were initiated in 2017.

4. Strategic Plan

The following priorities areas were recognized as strategically crucial for the ideal vision VET/WBL/ apprenticeship system:

1. strengthening cooperation, communication and coordination of roles, responsibilities and tasks among all actors and stakeholders,
2. establishment of regular monitoring and evaluation structures, with special attention to monitoring and evaluation of pilots,
3. preparation of students for professional careers
4. greater flexibility of VET pathways and making work-based learning attractive for students
5. creation of the framework conditions for lifelong learning,
6. customized and coherent support for both companies and schools,
7. ensuring quality teachers and in-company mentors lifelong training,
8. processes and output-oriented concepts for quality assurance in VET/ WBL/ apprenticeship.

4.1. Operational Plan

AREAS OF INTERVENTION	OPERATIONALIZATION - IDEAL VISION
1. <i>Collaboration between stakeholders at national and local level</i>	A clear and consistent regulatory framework will be in place based on a fair and equitable partnership approach, including a structured and transparent dialogue among all relevant stakeholders. Cooperation is a two-track: bottom-up and top-down at 3 levels:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local/regional (schools, employers, other supporting institutions): An integrated approach at all levels of cooperation, including local employers, schools and regional chambers. - National (state institutions, other national supporting institutions): individual portfolios and divisions (education, labour, economy, etc.) will be planned collectively. This would lead to higher financial competence and to improved results and a shift away from inefficiency. National departments will train their employees and will ensure joint harmonization of interests. A system, connected to the big data system, will measure quality. National chambers and companies will develop a consistent cooperation. The division of responsibilities between the stakeholders involved will be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ministry of education will prepare systemic regulations; 2. Ministry of Labour will publish standards and catalogues of knowledge; 3. Ministry of Economy will certify and keep a register of posts; 4. National and regional chambers will give incentives for new vocational standards; 5. Institute for Vocational education will design programs, monitor them and will be in charge of evaluation, studies. - International (European Commission, international partners, firms, schools and other supporting institutions): International programs and support programs must reach the regional and local levels through a common strategy (top-down). Consolidation and unification of certain platforms (i.e. ESCO, Skills Panorama, etc.) will be enhanced.
<p><i>2. Regular monitoring and evaluation, piloting of new models</i></p>	<p>The Law already presents a clear definition of the WBL concept, which should help to give a bigger role at regional and local levels, involving branches of chambers and trade unions. Chambers will cooperate in the preparation of training plans; they will provide guidance services for employers, functioning as mediators, and will develop and implement programs for training mentors. They will also be actively engaged in finding placements for apprentices. A committee for monitoring the implementation of apprenticeships (chambers, Ministries, trade unions, employers, and schools) will prepare an annual report and develop recommendations. Differentiation between big, medium and small companies will lead to a better distribution of resources and to higher efficiency. The current pilot on apprenticeship will be accompanied by comprehensive monitoring and evaluation to identify the lessons learned and examine its key elements. Evaluation will also include cost-benefit analysis, providing evidence to key players, especially employers.</p>

<p><i>3. Career guidance</i></p>	<p>Effective Career guidance would start early and would cover all levels– from primary to higher education. Students will be supported by more individualized career guidance and schools need to have a strategy as early as the final (two) years of elementary school. Parents will be invited to participate in career decisions, and have an increasing positive perception of VET. Employers need to be more intensively involved in guidance in elementary schools. Guidelines for school-based guidance and counselling should be conjointly agreed between the National Institute for Education and experts. Counsellors will need to be trained and better informed about VET programs. They will have a systematic training, serving as promoters of VET. Career will be introduced also in upper secondary schools (not just restricted to universities). The platform Slovenia.com will become a one-stop shop, also for apprenticeships, where students will find information, will create profiles and will search for employers. It will also offer services to companies and for apprentices, serving as mediator between students and companies.</p>
<p><i>4. Flexible pathways and work-based learning</i></p>	<p>Greater flexibility of VET pathways would favoring concept which allows greater flexibility and personalization in IVET, in response to new qualification requirements and individualized demand on the part of learners. Entry requirements for apprenticeships will take into account relevant informal and non-formal learning through a clear legal framework and recognition of skills at the national level. Apprenticeships will lead to a nationally recognized qualification referenced in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework, and will allow access to other learning opportunities, also at higher education and training levels. Transnational mobility of apprentices will be a main component of apprenticeship qualifications. Career development will be ensured through apprenticeships, both horizontally and vertically.</p>
<p><i>5. Lifelong VET</i></p>	<p>The framework conditions for lifelong learning include the creation of attractive range of high-quality initial and continue training offer, financial arrangements, teaching of certain basic skills, learner-centered approaches, digital-supported learning, competencies based assessment and recognition methods and system of credits transfer.</p>
<p><i>6. Support for companies and schools</i></p>	<p>A sustainable funding model and non-financial support will be developed for cost-sharing arrangements among employers, apprentices and public authorities, enabling cost-effective apprenticeships for companies. These include better guidance by schools, better information on possibilities to take students, better alignment between education programmes and company needs, a</p>

	platform to share experiences and award best practices of WBL, better guidance.
7. Teachers and in-company mentors training	Teachers, trainers and mentors will be able to update their skills and competences in order to train apprentices according to the latest teaching and training methods and labour market needs. There will be a defined and agreed set of competences and qualifications for mentors and teachers. Schools will present new programmes and adopt new methods of teaching as well as create learning environments based on teamwork, more problem-solving and project-based work, networking. In-company mentors will be designated and tasked to cooperate closely with VET providers and teachers. A national training module for mentors will be developed leading to a professional certificate. Counsellors at employment services will be professionally trained and knowledgeable of the different vocations, VET and apprenticeship programs. Professional development opportunities will be available, with earmarked funding available. More exchange and mobility will be encouraged. For instance, VET teachers can work for a while as mentors in a company, while mentors can work as teachers, sharing experiences and improving alignment.
8. <i>Quality assurance</i>	The Ministry of Education will adopt a long-term strategy of quality assurance, in coherence with EQAVET. A system of accountability mechanisms will be put in place in order to verify workplaces, with regular inspections to assess compliance with standards. Chambers will regularly monitor companies and share quality assurance reports. It will also use digital support systems. A register of companies with apprenticeships will be part of a platform for vacancies, which will ensure data for assessing the system. The quality of the training plans will be ensured through a set of defined comprehensive learning outcomes for apprentices in (specific job-related), while key competences will be balanced in order to support both personal development and career opportunities.

5. Risks Management

Areas of intervention (operational plan)	Risk	Likelihood (high, medium, low)	Impact	Mitigation
1. <i>Collaboration between stakeholders at national and local level</i>	Not all stakeholders are interested in collaboration, cooperation is not transparent	Medium	The VET system is not developing	A structured and transparent dialogue among all relevant stakeholders needs to be established with a two-track cooperation: bottom-up and top-down, at several levels (local, regional, national, international)
2. <i>Regular monitoring and evaluation, piloting of new models</i>	VET/ WBL/ apprenticeship is implemented irregularly	High	VET, WBL, apprenticeship is not improving	Evaluation must include relevant indicator, providing evidence to key players, evaluations conclusion and follow-up must be shared between stakeholders
3. <i>Career guidance</i>	A mismatch between educational achievements and market needs	Medium	Career guidance activities do not allow for the development of workers' skills in a lifelong perspective	All stakeholders (schools, companies and HR management, chambers, representatives of employment services) must be engaged and actively participate for a common goal.
4. <i>Flexible pathways and work-based learning</i>	There is no clear legal framework and recognition of skills at the national level	Low	Apprenticeship qualifications are not recognised	Entry requirements for apprenticeships will take into account relevant informal and non-formal learning through a clear legal framework and recognition of skills at the national level. Apprenticeships will lead

				to a nationally recognised qualification referenced in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework, and will allow access to other learning opportunities, also at higher education and training levels. Transnational mobility of apprentices will be a main component of apprenticeship qualifications. Career development will be ensured through apprenticeships, both horizontally and vertically.
5. Lifelong VET	Lifelong learning is not in place	Medium	Continues training is not company based	Companies must be involved in preparing programs and in defining standards/occupations. The quality of the training plans will be ensured through a set of defined comprehensive learning outcomes
6. Support for companies and schools	Information are not in place	Low	Teacher and in-company mentors do not have any support	A sustainable funding model and non-financial support must be developed for cost-sharing arrangements among employers, students and public authorities, enabling a cost-effective VET
7. Teachers and in-company mentors training	Teachers, trainers and mentors will not have proper	Medium	The training in schools and companies is not adequate	A defined and agreed set of competences and qualifications for mentors and teachers needs to be put in place.

	skills and competences		to the learners needs	<p>National trainings module for mentors need to be developed and counsellors at employment services must be trained.</p> <p>Professional development as mobility opportunities have to be available</p>
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