



**STRATEGIC MODEL for MODERNIZATION of
WORK BASED LEARNING in VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION and TRAINING, developed under
„LEARNING BY DOING“PROJECT
BULGARIA**

DTP 2014-2020

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

2019



LEARNING BY DOING“

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This document reflects the personal views of its authors



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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Summary

The Learning by doing project aims to improve the capacity of all stakeholders in vocational education and training (VET) by strengthening regional, national and transnational partnerships in the Danube countries, involving 24 project partners. Because of the identified need for regional exchange and learning, the project aims to develop vocational education and training schemes, supporting labor mobility and responding to rapid economic changes and company needs through awareness of socio-economic and cultural challenges and shortcomings. For this purpose, the project focuses on reducing systemic disparities, as well as the imbalance in the labor market and education in the Danube region. The ultimate goal is to promote the VET system as an attractive and competitive tool.

2. Specific objectives:

- Improve the institutional capacities and attitudes of collaborators of all VET actors by stimulating their sensitivity to the formation of WBL through learning activities at individual, stakeholder and institutional level.
- Develop transnational tools to support the long-term transition of VET systems to more competitive ones, including VET and apprenticeships. The aim is to prepare regional VET partnerships in durable transnational convertible instruments and smarter groups to make long-term changes in institutional, cultural and organizational frameworks
- To support the vision of the project (to enable VET participants by building capacity to enhance the transition from existing VET systems to WBL's more enterprise-oriented and workable schemes) by developing national/ regional strategies using methods for jointly creating participation and capitalizing on the increased capacity of stakeholders, including practical roadmaps setting out clear responsibilities, rights and obligations for each of the key players in VET to support the REPO of VET. In addition, political policy orientations will be developed to integrate (or improve) WBL schemes in local education and training systems by creating the necessary regulatory framework in the context of practices, legislation and collective agreements.

3. The project is based on three steps to generate ideas:

3.1. Defining ambitions: defining institutional, cooperation and cultural challenges by sharing EU good practice and peer review. The process leads to visions created by local stakeholders, how to "ideally" transform WBL schemes into more business-oriented and practical forms in their own context.

3.2. Scenario development: Creating authoritative capacity building actions using innovative and interactive training techniques, adapting their themes / formats to the specific local challenges identified by stakeholders, also in view of the European practices previously explored. Stakeholders, using the new skills acquired through capacity building, will produce country-specific scenarios explaining how the realization of existing WBL vocational education and training can be realized in a realistic way in their local context.



3.3. Strategy / tool development: Partners prepare long-term strategies and appropriate tools. Firstly, a Guide for More Effective Learning in the Danube Region will be set up, which will focus on the key factors of the transition. This is based on country-specific examples of country-specific challenges. Secondly, the partners set up a WBL Observatory in the Danube Region to track and support the process of transition with expertise and knowledge sharing. Third, the enhanced partnership of VET participants draws up long-term regional / national strategies and policy recommendations, initiating and supporting the country-specific transition of existing VET systems. The final reports will reflect the harmonized views of the whole partnership.

II. ANALYSIS OF THE STATUS AND CHALLENGES

The impact of the changed economic situation in Europe, including in Bulgaria, in recent years on the labor market, trends and difficulties - aging population, reduced interest in some professions, digitization and automation of others and the dropping of the human factor from production, immigration, the cultural and social problems that arise - all of this must be the subject of research, monitoring, analysis and strategic planning to improve the conditions for conducting policies for a more effective vocational education and training.

1. SWOT ANALYSIS

Regarding the functioning and the development of VET in Bulgaria in the recent years could be concluded that:

STRENGTHS:

- Recognizing at national level the importance and the effect of vocational education and training on the overall economic development of the country;
- Despite the unfavorable demographic trends, about a half of the students in Bulgaria are covered in vocational education, with a tendency to increase the number of VET learners. This trend corresponds to the national educational policy, which aims at increasing the percentage of the admitted students in VIII grade in professional high schools and vocational training classes;
- In the system of vocational education and training, the dual system of education is getting more and more important, and the foundations are put through projects; schools and businesses create sustainable partnerships;
- Vocational education and training allows permeability to higher levels of education.
- Introducing a unified system of state planning for vocational education and training on the basis of an institutionalized system for research, identification and forecasting of the needs of vocational training and workforce in professions.
- Providing training opportunities for protected specialties from professions, specialties from professions with a proven current or foreseen shortage of labor market specialists and with dual form of education, linked to the insured financing and provision of the training;
- There is an "opening" of the vocational high schools to training for new specialties from professions in accordance with the needs of the regional labor market; the possibility of training in 2 specialties within 1 class provides flexibility and opportunities to take into account the interests of students;
- In 2017, the employment rate of vocational education graduates aged 20-34 is above the European average (EU-79.5%, in Bulgaria - 83.0%), and 39.0% of vocational education graduates aged 18-24 years in Bulgaria continue their education or training (against 32.8% in the EU).



- VET in Bulgaria gives advantages to the labor market: According to NSI data, in 2017 "professional qualifications" have higher economic activity and higher employment than total secondary education

WEAKNESSES:

- There is a general drop in the number of students in schools (including in the vocational sector), as well as a decrease in the working age population as a result of demographic and migration factors; In 2000/2001 the number of students in vocational education was 191 246 and in 2017/2018 - 142 021. Due to low interest and unrealized admission, classes were closed and the potential of high schools with developed facilities and with proven capacity for training in industry-relevant professions and qualifications;
 - Young people with low success and lack of motivation are targeted at training in vocational schools, which determines the high share of early school leavers - 12.7% in 2017 and young people aged 15-24 who do not work and do not study (NEETs) - 15.3% for 2017. Career guidance currently does not function as a reliable regulator of young people's interests, taking into account their opportunities and requirements on the labor market.
 - A low percentage completes secondary education in vocational schools without acquiring professional qualification and thus largely "lost" as qualified middle labor market specialists. This high percentage (almost 20% according to NSI, at national level, source : NSI 2018 Education in Bulgaria) makes the VET system inefficient: otherwise seen, this means that 1/5 of the resources invested in acquiring professional qualifications are irrevocably lost. Surveys at the regional level also point to another unfavorable trend: a high percentage of graduating vocational education continues in higher education institutions in a field other than vocational education. The "vocational" general education, without realization in the relevant field, does not contribute to the relationship between education and the labor market.
 - Employers encounter serious problems in finding secondary vocational education in some sectors and directions (according to the data of the Bulgarian Industrial Association, the problem is relevant for about 65% of the employers)
 - Lack of a unified information system with a database of graduates and their realization.
 - Lack of sufficient coordination and cooperation between all VET stakeholders.
 - Lack of a system for annually identifying and forecasting the needs of the business by professionals with professional qualification.
 - Moral obsolete textbooks and methodical guides are applied to the subjects of vocational training.
 - Practical training of students lags behind the dynamics in technological development and modernization of enterprises and sectors - production practice is formal and still practical skills are not created in a real working environment.
 - Deficit and lack of a quality management system for vocational education, which includes feedback from employers and young people in the profession.
 - The trend of "aging" and feminisation of teaching staff in the vocational education system is deepening; There is no regulation and conditions for compulsory recurrent training of teachers on subjects of vocational training.
 - The share of participation in lifelong learning is low - 2.3% in 2017 (versus 10.9% in the EU).
 - Ensuring continuing vocational training (VET) by enterprises lags behind other European countries. According to CVTS5 data, in 2015, 42.5% of enterprises provided CVT to employees (enterprises with over 10 employees in the manufacturing sectors of the economy). Although there is an increase of 11 points compared to the previous wave of the survey (2010), compared to the EU average (72.6%), Bulgaria lags with 30 points and is in the penultimate position among the member states before Romania and Greece.

OPPORTUNITIES:



- Expanding the scope of the dual education system when planning the state plan;
- Applying a qualification system for pedagogical staff in the field of vocational education, which provides periodic "refresh" of the professional knowledge, skills and competences;
- Improvement of the system of vocational guidance and career counseling of the students;
- Establishment of a system for quality assessment and in-depth analysis of the needs of the labor market;
- Active involvement of the business in the process of planning and realization of vocational education and training.
- Involvement of technologies at all stages of the learning process for all subjects, including professional training.
- Building collaboration between schools and businesses so that the partnership is result-oriented.
- Developing key competences and competences through VET for lifelong learning, initiative, innovation, entrepreneurship, soft skills, basic digital skills that will be important to every profession of the future.
- Implementing positive models outlined as effective results from pilot training projects.
- Utilization of the potential of the Institution's joint mechanism for enrollment and inclusion in the education system of children and pupils at compulsory pre-school and school age, adopted by Decree No. 100 of June 8, 2018 of the Council of Ministers, on limiting the number of dropouts and / or early school leavers who are trained to acquire a vocational qualification.
- Utilizing the opportunities of Erasmus + mobility and their contribution to improving the quality of vocational education and training and the competitiveness of young people on the European labor market.

THREATS

- Unfavorable demographic trends;
- Deepening the imbalance in the territorial distribution of the population and in the territorial development of the economy;
- High share of early school leavers in vocational schools (The number of pupils enrolled in vocational schools at the entrance is higher than those received in general education schools, while the graduates of secondary vocational education are less than those with secondary general education. that the number of dropouts from vocational schools is higher due to socio-economic factors, low motivation for learning, learning difficulties, emigration abroad).
- Continuing targeting of pupils completing primary education (7th grade) with the lowest success rate from the HVO to the weakest, as quality of teaching and social environment of vocational schools. "Unattractive" schools who have difficulty in realizing the admission accept unmotivated pupils with low educational outcomes, which naturally implies an unfavorable environment and development prospects. It is so that these schools become the place where the weakest among the weak have to spend their last years in the education system.
- Non-interest of part of the business from the process of vocational education and training, which in some cases results in a mismatch between the state reception plan and the needs of the local / regional / labor market;
- Economic uncertainty that hinders long-term staff planning and business needs, especially among small and medium-sized companies. At present, an employer claims the need for certain specialists, but when they are prepared after 5 years, there is no certainty that it will be still in the labor market, whether this type of staff will be needed (or the production will already be automated and / or exported elsewhere).



III. AREAS of IMPACT :

1. Ensuring career guidance and counseling
2. Ensuring the quality and effectiveness of vocational education and training
3. Establish a system for updating the qualifications of teachers in vocational training
4. Develop the capacity of stakeholders to support and participate in the process of preparing students for their professional development.
5. Responsiveness to the needs of the labor market
6. Financing



IV. OPERATIONAL PLAN. CURRENT SITUATION AND PLANNED MEASURES BY FIELD OF IMPACT

Field of impact	Current situation and planned measures
<p><i>Providing career guidance and counseling</i></p>	<p>Ensuring career guidance at all stages of student development influences all participants and stakeholders and contributes to the full professional and life achievement of young people. Although important steps have been taken in the field of career guidance with the implementation of a project with such a focus in the period 2012-2015, continued in 2016-2017, there are still deficits and problems with the capacity of educational institutions and others stakeholders. The need to change the way of thinking and the attitudes of more and more parents and pupils to recognize VET and the dual form of learning as the right and reliable choice is recognized. To achieve the desired change, however, time, system, and effort consistency and full interaction are needed. It is also necessary to overcome the formalism in the implementation of part of the career guidance and counseling activities carried out at the school level. Legislative changes can also be proposed to create better conditions for the effectiveness of efforts in this direction.</p> <p><i>Measures of impact:</i></p> <p><i>A. At national level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of a system / models for early career guidance and counseling at school level. • Ensuring the career guidance system at the school level with quality information and methodological resources. • Ensure further qualification of pedagogical specialists for career guidance and counseling for students. • Regulation of Open Doors Day in companies, enterprises and others. for secondary school pupils, within the framework of the envisaged statutory option for the school principal to determine up to 3 school days in one school year as non-academic. (Article 105, paragraph 4 of TWTP) • Development of a National Career Guidance Program • Maintaining and updating the created National Career Guidance Portal for students under the project "System for Career Guidance in School Education". • Organization of national information and communication campaigns through various initiatives / forums (Panorama of Vocational



	<p>Education, Profession Days), Occupational Competitions, etc.), according to an annual calendar of activities approved by the Minister of Education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a state policy for engaging the national media for broadcasts / occupations on the national air, with a view to reaching the widest range of young people and their parents. <p><i>B. At regional/local/school level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement school policies to implement early career guidance and counseling models using a variety of information and methodological resources. • • Applying skills-building approaches to adequate self-esteem and decision-making skills by students in order to make a meaningful and proper choice of profession. • • Assign students to research and presentation to peers of different types of professions. • • Implementing school policies to direct students to select interest-based interests to develop their interest in natural sciences, mathematics and technical subjects, as well as additional practical skills and interdisciplinary approach to case-solving, project-specific and entrepreneurial development skills and participation in competitions, competitions, quizzes, rounds, etc. • • Implementation of a regional / school level study of the motives for choosing a profession and barriers for young people to refer to vocational education and training, incl. and for training in dual form. • • Conducting thematic parental meetings at school and parallel level in connection with the state plan for admission (GPP) and career guidance for pupils in order to improve their awareness of the various opportunities for vocational education offered by schools for a more responsible reflection on choice. • • Engaging school public councils and school boards to work with parents to attract pupils to dual-form training. • • Improving coordination and cooperation among all stakeholders for career guidance development - parents, students, schools, CCPT, labor offices, state and local authorities, businesses, employers' organizations. • • Attract companies in the information and advertising campaigns of schools for recruiting students to raise awareness of first-hand jobs and the benefits of dual learning; ensuring their participation in activities and initiatives to enhance the attractiveness of vocational education.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • Broad awareness campaign through media and industry structures of employers on the need and benefits of dual learning. Informing the community / parents / about the positive aspects of dual learning. • • Organization of information and communication campaigns through: Initiatives, Forums / Vocational Education Panoramas, Occupation Days, Open Days of Schools and Companies, Career Days, Festival / Occupation Parade, Summer Academy, Professional Excursions, Exhibitions bazaars of professions, etc. for pupils, parents, the public, in order to obtain comprehensive and complete information about the possibilities for applying in different professions on the territory of the respective municipality / region, incl. and for training in dual form. • • Initiate different levels of competitions, quizzes, competitions, etc. between schools with the same or similar professions. • • Thematic shows on local TV, local media, promotional materials, brochures, leaflets, posters, billboards, etc. with a focus on promoting vocational education and dual learning as a valuable investment for both employers and students, facilitating their transition from school to work, and supporting competitiveness and economic growth. • • Using the potential of parents with interesting professions to present them to students. • • Organizing meetings for sharing good practices among successful young people (former students). • • Providing co-operation and implementation of adequate school policies to target students with chronic illnesses and pupils with special educational needs (SEN) to appropriate occupations with the participation of parents; School Inclusion, Regional Center for Support of the Inclusive Education Process, Regional Governance of Education (EQF), business. • • Creation of appropriate learning pathways for the reintegration into the educational system of dropouts and / or early school leavers. • • Achieving cooperation and partnership between the combined schools and the vocational schools to ensure continuity and achieve a higher percentage of their continuing education in the second stage of a corresponding profession / specialty of the second or third degree of professional qualification.
<p><i>Ensuring quality of VET</i></p>	<p><i>Ensuring the quality and efficiency of vocational education and training, as well as achieving satisfactory completion of graduates, would create the conditions for increasing its attractiveness for young people and</i></p>



their parents.

At present, vocational education does not yet have a sufficiently positive image to motivate students to complete primary education. The reasons for this are of a different nature. A key problem is the attitudes, values and career orientation of young people. It is no secret that in the last two decades vocational education is often associated with unpretentious and low paid work. The quality of education in some vocational high schools is unsatisfactory, the material environment, security and discipline are assessed at an average level. The quality of training in certain specialties varies considerably depending on the school that performs it. It can be seen that there are significant inequalities in terms of the components of the environment, both between the vocational high schools in a given region and the vocational secondary schools in the same sector in the different regions of the country. Maintaining modern equipment that is close to that used by companies in the economy is difficult and costly and is generally overwhelming for most of the vocational high schools.

Unsatisfactory is the quality of vocational training in high-tech professions. An additional deficit is the lack of a quality management system for vocational education, which includes feedback from employers and from the young people who are employed in the profession.

The tendency of discrepancy between the required labor market skills and the quality of the practical and theoretical training of young people in the education system is sustainable. Nearly every second employer is dissatisfied with the level of general business knowledge, technical and technological knowledge and inadequacies in working with specific machines, equipment, instruments and measuring instruments.

Measures of impact

A. At national level

- Develop a state standard for quality vocational education and training in line with the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET).
 - Creating a stakeholder mechanism to ensure the quality of company / enterprise training.
 - Improving the role of the National Education Inspectorate (NIB) as an independent institution in developing indicators and tools for the external quality assessment of educational institutions to take into account the specificities of VET.
- Development of a self-assessment system for schools providing vocational education and training and dual learning based on a flow of information and business feedback on the degree of correspondence between the skills and competences acquired and the people on the labor market.



- Updating the content of vocational training by adapting VET curricula and VET programs to labor market needs and interests, after studying their functionality / setting up working groups with leading industry specialists to update and update the curriculum content of the programs in theory and practice in a real working environment to improve the quality of VET).

- Ensuring the sustainability of the results of the dual training projects by implementing a state policy to promote and promote the dual form of education.

- Development of national programs and projects aimed at improving the material and technical infrastructure and ICT infrastructure in VET schools

B. At regional/local/school level :

Priority application of the competence approach in vocational education and training and work-based learning - combining the acquisition by pupils of basic, specific skills for the corresponding professional training with the so-called "soft skills".

- *Linking the practical training of learners with skills training in a real work environment.*

- *School measures to increase the success of students in the vocational education system, consistently limiting the number of dropouts by providing a flexible variety of ways and means for real equal access to quality vocational education and training.*

- *More rapid penetration of information and communication technologies into the education process in the VET system.*

- *Improving training technology with alternative forms and working methods, including the use of electronic content.*

- *Participation of specialists and managers from the companies in the learning process in the form of "master classes", presentations, career management lessons,*

- *Encourage VET schools to improve their facilities and ICT infrastructures by including them in National Programs and Projects, as well as in fund-raising activities and through their own revenues. Effective use of adult learning opportunities.*

- *Improvement of the organizational and managerial skills of the management teams in schools in order to achieve effective management and the creation of full-fledged partnerships with the various stakeholders with a view to enhancing the quality of education offered by the school.*

- *Ensuring the possibility of VET in various forms of training, including*



	<p><i>dual, taking into account the specificities of particular professions / specialties and the opportunities of the educational environment.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop an internal school quality assurance system that takes into account the results, on the basis of which analyzes and conclusions can be drawn up and measures for quality improvement are formulated.</i> • <i>Establishment of a mechanism for internal monitoring, control and self-assessment of the achieved quality of evidence-based VET. Development of school indicators to measure the progress / added value of the acquired competences / at the entrance and at the exit stage.</i> • <i>Promoting positive models of VET and working in a real working environment through the means of electronic communications, exchange of good practices between related schools and others.</i> • <i>Ensuring the transparency of school activities through a dynamic school site with a variety of links and columns for students, parents, companies, direct participants in the VET process / work-based learning. Focused activities to build and maintain a positive image of the school.</i> • <i>Improving the social environment in vocational schools (material environment and trained specialists providing quality education, safety and security, full conditions for interpersonal communication and interaction at different levels, etc.), especially in those where there are identified problems with regard to the environment.</i>
<p><i>Establish a system for updating the qualifications of teachers in the vocational training</i></p>	<p>Qualitative education cannot be carried out without a high quality of training for the subjects that provide it, teachers.</p> <p>In modern production, the need to know new techniques and technologies is a necessity. This necessitates a permanent system for updating the qualification of teachers from the VET system.</p> <p>Current data on age distribution of vocational training teachers indicate that the highest share of teachers is 55 to 59 years old (according to NSI data, Education and Training 2018) whose motivation for professional development is low. The trend of "aging" and feminisation of teaching staff in the vocational education system is deepening. Studies show that almost 2/3 of the vocational training teachers have not participated in qualification programs in the last 5 years. The theoretical and practical training of some of the vocational training teachers is not at the level of modern requirements, their knowledge about new techniques and technologies applied in modern production. There is no working regulation and conditions for obligatory periodic qualification of teachers in vocational training in the specific professional field. Additional difficulties arise from the lack of provision of qualification courses / trainings from universities,</p>



departments and training organizations with such a focus.

Measures of IMPACT:

A. At national level:

- *Developing a system for updating and upgrading qualification of the vocational training teachers with the participation of business and higher education institutions.*
 - *Development and implementation of modern vocational qualification programs for teachers by request to training organizations, HEIs, qualification improvement departments.*
 - *Introduce and develop a system of continuous updating of the competences of the vocational training teachers, including methodological teachers, through effective co-operation with businesses and higher education institutions for the provision of business-to-business training in connection with the introduction of new techniques and technologies in modern productions.*
 - *Developing a quality control mechanism for training courses.*
 - *Regulating the possibility for part of the high-tech training in VET schools to be carried out by business specialists or higher education lecturers.*
 - *Developing and implementing a training program for mentors and teachers-methodologists.*
 - *Adoption of special packages of measures against the outflow of young people from the teaching profession, given the problem of aging and feminisation of pedagogical staff. Keeping highly qualified teachers in the VET system through national and regional programs with the necessary financial, material, household and other incentives, especially in areas with marked deficiency of teachers in certain professional fields.*

B. At regional/local/school level

- *Implementation of school policies to encourage the participation of Vocational Training teachers in appropriate trainings, developing their competence in the respective professional field.*
- *Sharing good practices between schools with the same or similar professional backgrounds as well as promoting best practice partnerships between vocational schools, businesses and higher education institutions that provide ongoing updating of teacher knowledge and training in areas that are characteristic of modern industry.*



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the qualification of the teachers for special subjects and practices from the schools through inclusion in the training of the companies on new techniques and technologies in a real working environment. • Systematic mutual exchange between companies and educational institutions of specialized information related to technological and business processes, innovations, • Implement local policies to support and target prospective pupils / young people to teachers who have been identified for labor market deficits - through scholarships, training contracts, etc. • Encourage the cross-border mobility of teachers and other pedagogical specialists in order to improve their qualifications and exchange good pedagogical experience. • Encourage the participation of schools in all forms and activities of the Erasmus + European Program.
<p><i>Develop the capacity of stakeholders to support and participate in the process of preparing students for their professional development.</i></p>	<p>Effective vocational education and training requires full institutional partnerships and real interactions with business circles. At present, there is a need to improve the capacity of stakeholders. Business involvement in the VET planning and realization process is still not satisfactory. There are various difficulties in implementing dual learning - eg. at the statutory level there is no provision for a way of acting in the case of non-fulfillment of the concluded contracts; in specific professional fields it is difficult to conclude contracts for dual training, etc.</p> <p>The parents of a small percentage of the pupils are rather an observer rather than an active participant in the education of their children. There are not sufficiently developed good practices for cooperation and interaction between vocational schools and higher education institutions. Employers do not have reliable information about graduate students in professional fields and majors. No follow-up system is implemented for students after graduation.</p> <p>The media's opportunities to promote the meaning and benefits of VET can be harnessed more effectively.</p> <p>MEASURES of IMPACT</p> <p><i>A. At national level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .Developing diverse and innovative forms of contacts, cooperation and partnerships between VET schools and a wide range of stakeholders - state and local executive authorities, parents, business circles and employers' organizations, HEIs, media, etc .; bringing together stakeholders in decision-making and sharing responsibility for VET



	<p>development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing at the national level a cooperation mechanism for collecting and analyzing data from labor market surveys (EA, MLSP, NSI, NSSI, MI, regional, sectoral) supporting the structuring of the state admission plan on the basis of objective data. • Sustainable and effective management and coordination of the VET system at national level through the established VET Advisory Board. • The conditions and procedure for the implementation of dual learning should be supplemented and refined, and in certain cases provided with the possibility of flexibility according to the specific conditions. • Utilization of the opportunities for European cooperation - participation in the Consultative Councils and working groups of the EC. • Attract businesses to take part in curriculum development and updating with a view to improving the quality of VET. • Development and implementation of the communication strategy - a wider media campaign to promote VET and increase the attractiveness of dual education <p><i>B. At regional/local/school level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the planning of the state plan for admission, a more wide-ranging application has a regional approach, strengthening the role and importance of regional and local authorities and local businesses. • Achieving greater involvement of the social partners in the process of vocational education and training. • Applying a systemic approach to working with parents - ensuring full awareness of school policies and opportunities for synergies and partnerships. • Carrying out diverse and convincing campaigns at regional / school level with the participation of various stakeholders on the planned state reception plan, based on researched and proven labor market needs and in favor of the future development of the region.
<p><i>Labour Market needs response</i></p>	<p>The vocational education and training system in Bulgaria is still unable to provide the necessary knowledge, skills and competences that are sought on the labor market. Necessary interactions between schools and businesses are hampered by a number of factors of an objective and subjective nature. The process of involving small and medium-sized firms in the dual learning system is hampered by the uncertainty and difficulty in forecasting future activities in the medium and long term. Employers are concerned about the inclusion of mentors in training due to their disconnection from production and the need to</p>



find substitutes.

A system for forecasting workforce needs with certain characteristics is in the process of being developed. This system should provide information on future labor market needs of knowledge, skills and competences that are adequately addressed in the planning of vocational education and training.

There is a need to track the professional development of vocational education and training graduates. This would help: to improve the professional orientation of pupils; planning and forecasting evolving needs in the areas of employment, education and the social sphere; developing the capacity of stakeholders to support and participate in the process of preparing students for their professional development.

MEASURES of IMPACT:

A. At national level:

- *Development and implementation of an information system / platform / national or regional portal with up-to-date data base for the medium-term labor market needs by sectors / branch organizations / professional fields and territorial areas / for a minimum of 5 years ahead / forecasting changing employment needs by region.*
- *Creation of an information system for tracing the professional development of the graduates of vocational education and training / dual form of education, protected specialties from professions, specialties from professions with expected shortage, started working in the specialty, continued their studies in universities, unrealized.*
- *Creating an information database for employers providing dual learning.*
- *Regulatory regulation of possibilities for change of the form of training from a day to a secondary level of secondary school - at the request of the business.*
- *Revise and update the Vocational Vocational Education and Training List (VETL) in order to better link classifiers to areas of education, economic areas, occupations and professions.*

B. At regional/local/school level

- *Development and implementation of guidelines for flexibility and adaptability in planning of GMP for training in professions and specialties with priority for the regional labor market.*
- *Improving the training of mentors to provide effective support to students in conducting training through work.*
 - *To fine-tune the negotiated conditions between the partners in the implementation of the dual training and to provide relevant clauses on*



	<p>the working conditions, the implementation of the training in a real working environment, the evaluation of the students, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing effective models and outcomes of dual learning projects - contracts, mentoring, curriculum development with business involvement, etc. <p>Exploring European practices in ensuring match between VET / dual learning and the occupations / specialties sought on the labor market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the capabilities of the system to validate knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal learning and self-learning to meet the needs of the labor market
Funding/finance sources	<p>Financial preferences for educational institutions that provide training in line with labor market needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of financial and administrative mechanisms for attracting young teachers and VET teachers into the VET system. • Financial incentives for employers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Involve them in discussing and approving professional standards, curricula, curricula and requirements for production processes. o To participate and invest in the dual training system - equipping workplaces meeting the requirements for quality of training, safe working conditions, certified mentors;

V. RISK MANAGEMENT

Areas of intervention	Risk	Likelihood(high, medium, low)	Impact	Mitigation
Career guidance and counseling	Difficult change in the attitudes of parents and students to "learning for learning" to "learning through work to acquire a profession"; insufficient capacity of	Medium	Many students and their parents still do not realize that the choice of vocational education and dual training can be a prerequisite for successful professional and life achievement. This public attitude is fueled by some	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A coherent regional policy for EARLY career guidance for students; capacity building of educational institutions / schools, personal development support / career counseling



	educational institutions and lack of a system of early and adequate career guidance.		secondary schools, which in their quest to "preserve" the students do not make efforts for the career guidance of the pupils, according to their abilities and needs on the labor market	centers; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and communication campaigns for the promotion of vocational education and dual learning, with the active participation of companies, businesses, labor offices and others.
Quality of Vocational Education and Training	Difficult change in attitudes of parents and students to "learning for learning" to "learning through work to acquire a profession"; insufficient capacity of educational institutions and lack of a system of early and adequate career guidance. Improving the quality of vocational training of young people and providing competencies for direct inclusion in the labor market is a broad-based process and can be "sabotaged" by many factors - lack of material conditions, lack	Medium	Education in certain professions lags behind the needs of the labor market. Many employers are not satisfied with the competencies acquired by the pupils to ensure their inclusion in the work process, especially when it comes to high-tech productions. Thus vocational training does not prepare for the exercise of the profession concerned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernization of material and technical equipment and facilities in vocational education schools; close cooperation with firms in the field of dual learning and the approaching of the conditions. • Systemic current qualification of teachers in vocational training; inclusion of representatives of companies in the educational process. • Quality management system for vocational education with the participation of employers.



	of trained teachers, etc.			
System for updating the qualifications of teachers in vocational training	High average age of teachers in vocational training and low motivation to improve professional knowledge, skills and competences; Limited offering of opportunities for ongoing and continuing qualification from HEIs, departments, training organizations.	High	The need for lifelong learning is particularly pronounced in vocational education. The lack of a national policy for the systematic continuous training of teachers in vocational training over a long period of time, coupled with the aging of the teaching staff, has a direct negative impact on the quality of the pupils' professional training and the scissors dissolution between the needs of the business and the preparation of the students .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving cooperation with training organizations, HEIs, qualification improvement departments and "requesting" the necessary programs / training courses; • Creating favorable and motivating working conditions and attracting young professionals such as vocational training teachers
Capacity building of stakeholders to support and participate in the process of preparing students for their professional development	Lack of strategic thinking and planning by a large number of employers; inadequate activity of business circles for cooperation with educational institutions; difficult change of parents' attitudes towards orientation towards	Medium	. For a long period of time, vocational education was a major commitment only to educational institutions and its associated structures - WMO and MES. It is clear that the quality and results of it can not be satisfactory unless all stakeholders are involved in the cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization of the capacity of the regional administrations and DGs to initiate and coordinate cooperation between municipalities, businesses, employers' organizations, HEIs, the media and educational institutions. • Support for vocational education



	vocational education			by business circles would be more effective in the presence of financial incentives / facilitations in cooperation with educational institutions in the training of staff. • Consistent and systematic work with students' parents.
<i>Labour Market demands</i>	Poorly developed labor market in the Northwest and some other regions; offering unfavorable financial conditions from companies in the required professions and difficult motivation of the students to orientation for training on them.	Medium	The vocational education and training system in Bulgaria does not adequately meet the needs of the labor market, resulting in lack of the necessary labor for a number of productions and business ventures. A large part of the students completing vocational education do not work in their respective spheres. There is a serious imbalance - vocational education prepares staff for certain areas of the economy, and the labor market is lacking	Forecasting labor needs with certain characteristics in the medium and long term and adapting regional education policies to evolving needs. Adapting the financial conditions offered to the expectations of young people with a view to their realization in the respective professional sphere.



List of abbreviations used

EA	Employment Agency
SES	State Education Standard
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
VETA	VET Act
PSEA	Pres-school and School Education Act
IT	Information Technologies
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
NAVET	National VET Agency
NII	National Insurance Institute
NSI	National Statistics Institute
OPSESG	OP Science and Education for Smart Growth
OPHRD	OP Human Resource Development
OPRG	OP Regions in Growth
VET	Vocational Education and Training
SEN	Special Education Needs
VQL	Vocational Qualification Level
LPVET	List of Professions in VET
EQAVET	European Referent Framework for VET qualification
WBL	Work Based Learning
NEET	Youths out of the school system and labor market