



РЕПУБЛИКА СЕВЕРНА МАКЕДОНИЈА  
МИНИСТЕРСТВО ЗА ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ И НАУКА



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# REPORT ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM



This document is based on a comprehensive analysis and its purpose is to give recommendations for modernization and improving the quality of post-secondary education and its linkages to the National Qualifications Framework. On one hand, as a system, post-secondary education should follow the trends in economy and technology and create skilled and professional workers, while on the other it should meet employers' demands: improving the links between vocational schools, private educational service providers, universities and companies; building wide partnerships and cooperation between all key stakeholders; modernizing the educational programmes so that they reflect the relevant needs of the labour market; and based on learning outcomes enable mobility (horizontal and vertical) of qualification users.



### The analysis process was carried out in three phases:

PHASE 1



- The **FIRST PHASE** was the preparatory phase to identify the documents, laws and by-laws that should be analyzed, how many workshops should be organized, who would be in the focus groups relevant to the topic, and what international experience and good practices should be looked into.

PHASE 2



- The **SECOND PHASE** included a comparative analysis, description and assessment of documents, laws and bylaws about the function and principles of post-secondary education, the types of post-secondary education, target groups and entry criteria (eligibility criteria for enrolment in post-secondary education), duration of post-secondary education, type of institutions that can deliver post-secondary education, educational programmes and education process, sectors and qualifications, NQF level, qualification standards, learning outcomes, credits, assessment of learner performance, acquiring specialization and the master craftsman title in post-secondary education, quality assurance, the verification and accreditation process, public documents, funding, social partnership and mobility in the National Qualifications Framework.



Consultations were organized with the focus groups, and conclusions, ideas and recommendations from the focus groups were written as a brief report, which is now an integral part of this Report. Focus groups were as following:

- **THE FIRST FOCUS GROUP** comprised representatives of state institutions: the Ministry of Education and Science(MES), the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), the Vocational Education and Training Centre (VET Centre), the Adult Education Centre(AEC), the Employment Service Agency (ESA) of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Chamber of Crafts and the Organization of Employers.

- **THE SECOND FOCUS GROUP** comprised vocational schools that deliver post-secondary education, open civil universities for lifelong learning, educational service providers.

- **THE THIRD FOCUS GROUP** included employers interested in delivering qualifications for post-secondary education, but with a focus on the sectors construction and textile, leather and other products.

In this phase, international experience and good practices from Croatia, Switzerland and Poland were also analyzed.



- THE THIRD PHASE** was the writing of this Report, which includes the information and insight gained from the analysis of the materials (laws and bylaws), experiences from abroad and the ideas and conclusions from the focus groups, as well as the recommendations for establishing a modern and efficient system of post-secondary education. To put it briefly, the recommendations relate to the revision/updating of the Law on Vocational Education and Training and the Concept on Post-Secondary Education or they could be used as a basis for developing a new law and bylaws only for post-secondary education.



The current education system in our country is too slow when it comes to solving the mismatch between skills and the needs of the labour market. The gaps in vocational education, and thus in post-secondary education as an integral part of vocational education, as a result of inadequate curricula and low level of investment in education, are an obstacle for the students to acquire the necessary skills and competences for the work processes, particularly in industry and technologically intense sectors. Although efforts are being made to modernize educational programmes and make them market-oriented, the gap between students' skills and companies' needs is still big, and this limits the potential growth and regresses the country's economy.

One of the options for solving the mismatch between the supply in education and the demands of the labour market, and for adequately responding to the quick changes in technology, modernization and automatization, is to establish a good quality vocational education, a functional and efficient system of post-secondary education, develop educational programmes for acquiring skills and qualifications adapted to the relevant needs of the companies, and create a model of better cooperation between employers and schools and educational service providers.

The establishment of a modern, functional and efficient system of post-secondary education is envisaged in the *STRATEGY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE CONTEXT OF LIFELONG LEARNING*, which foresees: revision of the legislation that covers the system of post-secondary

education and amendments to the Law on Vocational Education and Training and the Law on Adult Education, as well as development of new training programmes in accordance with the real needs and accreditation of educational service providers that would deliver these programmes.

The modernization of post-secondary education is also envisaged in the *STRATEGY FOR EDUCATION 2018-2025*, where one of the priorities that need to be achieved with educational reforms is to establish a modern and efficient system of post-secondary education, harmonized with the Macedonian Qualifications Framework.

Ensuring a functional post-secondary education is also included in the 8th goal of the *NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY 2016-2025*, which foresees measures for adjusting the legal framework with the nature of the youth sector and a broad application of EU standards, which implies recognition of knowledge and skills through the validation process.

Thus, post-secondary education needs to react quickly to companies' needs and ensure the gaining of deeper knowledge and practical skills, getting more complex competences and new qualifications relevant on the labour market, making operational decisions and a higher level of personal and business responsibility, as well as the opportunity to progress in further education. With its specific character, post-secondary education is a manifestation of lifelong learning and an integral part of the vocational education and training system.



In order to achieve the goal of better formal post-secondary education, the following reform steps are necessary:



1. Formulate a general definition of post-secondary education in the Law on Vocational Education and Training in order to ensure consistency in the law and harmonization with the European terminology.
2. Harmonize the Law on Vocational Education and Training with the Law on the National Qualifications Framework, in the part “after completing post-secondary education, students/participants should gain VB level of qualifications”.
3. Introduce the term “education programme” as a set of documents, instead of the current term: teaching plan and teaching programme, and examination programme.
4. Use the term students/participants that would cover both types of beneficiaries in education.
5. Introduce a Diploma Supplement that would describe the learning outcomes, in line with the recommendations for the European Qualifications Framework.
6. Define which institutions and educational service providers can deliver post-secondary education, the way of their verification, funding, the system for quality assurance and control.
7. Make it possible for all persons who have completed secondary education as a minimum to be involved in educational programmes for post-secondary education through an established system (such as introduction of entry modules, defining criteria in the educational programme, defining work experience, etc.).
8. Define partial qualifications as part of post-secondary education.
9. To adopt bylaws for introduction of the “entry modules” in the educational programme for post-secondary education.
10. “The entry modules” will be determined by the educational service providers.
11. Precisely define the general rights and obligations of persons enrolled in post-secondary education institutions.
12. The timeframe for achieving the learning outcomes in the educational programmes for post-secondary education should be between 6 months and one year, depending on the qualification’s specificity.
13. Introduce credits (ECVET) in the educational programmes for post-secondary education.
14. Introduce a diploma supplement that includes the description of learning outcomes, in line with the recommendations of the European Qualifications Framework.
15. Division/specification of the specialist and master craftsman exam as part of post-secondary education.
16. Harmonize the amendments to the laws with the updating of the Concept for Post-Secondary Education or develop a new concept.



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