

Slovakia: Catching-up Regions Initiative 4

Improving the Quality and Efficiency of Secondary Education in Slovakia's CuRI Regions



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Acronyms

| | |
|-------------|--|
| BBSK | Banská Bystrica self-governing region |
| CEDEFOP | European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training |
| CKO | Central Coordination Body |
| CSF | Common Strategic Framework |
| COVE | Centre of Excellence for Vocational Education and Training |
| COVP | Centre for Vocational Education and Training |
| CuRI | Catching-up Regions Initiative |
| DE | Department of Education |
| DIP | Digital investment package |
| EC | European Commission |
| EC-DR REGIO | Directorate – General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission |
| ERDF | European Regional Development Fund |
| ESF+ | European Social Fund |
| EAFRD | European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development |
| EDUDEPT | Educational department on regional level (self-government unit) |
| EC | European Commission |
| ESF+ | European Social Fund + |
| ESIF | European Structural and Investment Funds |
| EU | European Union |
| EGD | European Green Deal |
| EQAVET | European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training |
| GDP | Gross domestic product |
| IIPP | Integrated Investment Project Package |
| ICT | Information and communication technologies |
| IP | Integrated project |
| IROP | Integrated Regional Operational Program |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| ITS | Integrated Territorial Strategy |
| ITI | Integrated Territorial Investments |
| KSK | Košice Self-Governing Region |
| LLG | Lifelong guidance |
| LLL | Lifelong learning |
| MA | Managing Authority |
| MRC | Marginalized Roma community |
| MC | Monitoring Committee |
| MIRDI | Ministry of investments, informatization and regional development |
| NEET | Young people aged 15 to 29 who are neither in education nor in employment |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| NIVAM | National Institute of Education and Youth |
| NP | National Project |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OP | Operational Program |
| OP Slovakia | Programme Slovakia |
| PA | Partnership Agreement |
| PPT | PowerPoint presentation |
| PR | Public Relations |
| PS | Professional staff |
| PSK | Prešov Self-Governing Region |
| RRP | Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic |
| R&I | Research and Innovation |
| RCC | Regional Career Centre |
| RCSU | Regional Teacher Support Centre |
| RIS3 | Regional Innovation Strategy |
| SEP | Social-economic partner |
| SS | Secondary school |
| SIOV/SIVET | State Institute of Vocational Education |
| SMEs | Small and Medium Enterprises |

| | |
|-------|--|
| SR | Slovak Republic |
| SSE | Social economy entity |
| STE | State educational program |
| STEAM | Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math |
| SUD | Sustainable urban development /urban functional area |
| TC | Training center |
| TCM | Temporary compensatory measure |
| TS | Teaching staff |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |
| WB | World Bank |

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Introduction

This report is an output of the Slovak Republic **Catching-up Regions Initiative (CuRI)**, a joint program of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) and the World Bank. The report focuses on the three regions of the Slovak Republic involved in the Initiative – the Prešov, Banská Bystrica and Košice regions. The CuRI is implemented thanks to the cooperation of partners: the European Commission, the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic, the Prešov Self-governing Region, the Banská Bystrica Self-governing Region, the Košice Self-governing Region, and the World Bank.

The Catching-up Regions Initiative aims to identify and address the development challenges faced by so-called 'low-income regions'. These regions are mainly located on the eastern periphery of the European Union and their regional GDP per capita remains below 50% of the EU average, as a consequence, among other reasons, of slow growth in the long term. There are two key challenges in low-income regions: (a) long-term sustainability of growth, and (b) the need to eliminate the development risks typical for low-growth regions.

The above objectives are met within the framework of the individual region-specific components that have been jointly identified and defined by the partners. The Secondary Vocational Education and Training (VET) component, which is the subject of this report, is the only component implemented in all three regions involved.

The recommendations of the World Bank team in this synthesis report therefore focus on creating the conditions for the development of comprehensive and functional VET systems at the regional level as part of lifelong learning, on designing investments in a quality and attractive learning environment for students in VET, and on promoting the flexibility of the education system.

Executive summary

The CuRI initiative has been instrumental in modernizing and expanding vocational schools in Slovakia, particularly in the Prešov, Banská Bystrica, and Košice Self-governing Regions. The initiative has focused on addressing the mismatch between the skills possessed by secondary vocational school graduates and the demands of the labor market.

Key initiatives include:

- **Investing in pilot VET schools:** The CuRI has invested in selected pilot schools to enhance their infrastructure, equipment, and teaching methods. This has led to improved skills development and a better alignment of graduates' skills with industry needs. The World Bank has supported the Prešov, Banská Bystrica, and Košice self-governing regions in identifying specific investment needs for pilot schools and developing integrated investment packages tailored to their unique requirements. These packages have been funded from EU sources
- **Promoting dual education:** The initiative actively promotes dual education and other forms of practical training, which has been shown to improve the application rates of secondary vocational school graduates.

- **Digitalization of education:** The CuRI has recognized the importance of digitalization in education and has implemented activities to support the development of digital infrastructure, digital competences, and digital content in secondary schools. This includes conducting surveys to assess the digital maturity of schools and providing recommendations for further investment.
- **Optimizing the network of secondary vocational schools:** The CuRI has worked to optimize the network of secondary vocational schools to align with regional labor market demands and enhance the overall quality of vocational education and training. This has involved providing methodological support to school management and engaging stakeholders in consultations.

Specific examples of modernization and expansion projects include:

- **Prešov Self-governing Region:** The CuRI has supported the development of digital infrastructure, digital competences, and digital content in secondary schools in the Prešov region. This includes the implementation of a survey on the digital maturity of schools and the development of recommendations for further investment.
- **Banská Bystrica Self-governing Region:** The CuRI has supported investments in pilot secondary vocational schools in the Banská Bystrica region, including the modernization of classrooms, laboratories, and workshops. The initiative has also supported the development of quality assurance frameworks and the optimization of the network of secondary vocational schools.
- **Košice Self-governing Region:** The CuRI has supported the development of integrated investment packages for pilot schools in the Košice region, focusing on the modernization of infrastructure and the development of new educational programs.

Slovakia's secondary vocational education and training (VET) system faces significant challenges in adapting to the rapid evolution of society and technology. The need for new skills, driven by digitalization and automation, presents a critical challenge for the system's long-term sustainability. The mismatch between the supply of secondary vocational schools, the skills of their graduates, and the needs of the labor market is particularly acute in low-income regions, hindering their development.

The World Bank team, through the Catching-up Regions Initiative (CuRI), is in cooperation with other CuRI partners working to address these challenges by focusing on creating the conditions for the development of comprehensive and functional VET systems at the regional level. This includes designing investments in a quality and attractive learning environment for students in VET and promoting the flexibility of the education system.

The CuRI initiative has identified several key areas for reform:

- **Digitalization of VET:** The initiative emphasizes the need to leverage digitalization in education, including creating and utilizing digital content, adapting teaching methods, and enhancing the digital competencies of both teaching staff and students. This includes supporting the development of digital infra-

structure, digital competences, and digital content based on the analysis of digital readiness of secondary schools.

- **Strengthening the Link between VET and the Labor Market:** The initiative aims to align the education system with the needs of the labor market by fostering partnerships between providers of secondary vocational education and employers. This includes engaging employers in the development and innovation of educational content, enhancing the professional skills and competencies of teaching staff, and promoting an inclusive environment within schools.
- **Improving the Quality of VET:** The initiative focuses on enhancing the quality of vocational education and training by establishing links between the education system and labor market needs. This includes implementing a system for continuous evaluation of the quality of vocational education and training across all secondary vocational schools, developing draft norms for providing standard equipment that aligns with EU standards for digital learning, and prioritizing interventions in schools based on their impact on improving the quality of VET.
- **Addressing Teacher Shortages:** The initiative recognizes the importance of addressing the issue of teaching staff, particularly in regions experiencing teacher shortages. This includes exploring options for additional pedagogical training for graduates in non-teaching subjects, facilitating easier access to teaching roles for practitioners, and ensuring that teachers receive adequate salary compensation.
- **Promoting Dual Education:** While recognizing the value of the dual education system, the initiative emphasizes the need for greater flexibility in the education system to meet the dynamic demands of the modern economy. This includes actively promoting dual education and other forms of practical education & training across all sectors.

The outputs of the CuRI and the proposed solutions will contribute to the necessary changes that the Slovak secondary vocational education system needs and will establish a direct link to the demands of a modern society based on the use of talent, innovation, and Industry 4.0. The CuRI initiative has made significant progress in improving the quality of VET in Slovakia.

However, there is still a need for continued investment in order to ensure that the education system is able to meet the evolving needs of the labor market. The World Bank is committed to continuing its support for the development of VET in Slovakia, with a focus on promoting innovation, digitalization, and collaboration between schools and employers.

External environment: EU and national levels

To uphold Slovakia's competitiveness as an EU Member State and be perceived by its partners as a modern nation, as well as to develop its regions, the most valuable asset lies in its talented workforce.

The rapid evolution of society and technology presents significant challenges to secondary vocational education and training, driven by factors such as digitalization, the demand for new skills, and the increasing automation of processes with broad societal impacts. At the regional level, there is a growing emphasis on SMART education, a concept that integrates carefully selected information technologies to enhance schools in several ways. This includes fostering new opportunities for teacher-student interaction, improving the accessibility of education without constraints, and enabling personalized learning tailored to individual learner needs. The framework of SMART education is also an area of interest for regions involved in CuRI, who are considering incorporating it into future investments in secondary vocational schools, including comprehensive digital investment packages.

The EU is pushing for a dual green and digital transformation towards a climate-neutral economy in all its policies, which will have significant implications for skills development, education, and employment.

The EU policy aims to:

- Contribute to the linking and integration of these different areas also within the EC's skills agenda and support partnerships established in different ecosystems.
- Support the implementation of the dual transformation in an appropriate political, economic and social context.
- Anticipate how institutions can influence opportunities, constraints, and possibilities, which is a prerequisite for designing and implementing effective and equitable human capital policies and instruments and for supporting their implementation.

Lifelong learning systems should provide citizens with the necessary competences, such as adaptability and critical thinking, to cope with the constant changes in the coming decade. These systems must be fundamentally changed to allow, in particular, learner-centeredness and flexible learning methods. There is a need to move from competitive education and training systems to more collaborative ones and to strengthen equity, as well as to enable new business models for sectors and the development of the sharing economy. Individuals can fully realize their potential as citizens and workers when they recognize the value of all competences and skills, whether acquired through academic pursuits, practical experiences, occupational training, or online learning.

In April 2023, the EC adopted two draft EU Council Recommendations to provide accessible digital education and training to develop the digital skills of European citizens. The Commission is also focusing on developing legal labor migration to attract talent to the EU.

For the development of Slovakia's Vocational Education and Training (VET) in various regions, this entails creating strategic frameworks for public education policy based on data and evidence. This involves identifying and measuring digital and green skills and competences that align with labor market demands and address skills gaps. It also includes enhancing the anticipation of learning challenges and opportunities and assessing the labor market and policy implications arising from the dual transformation, such as impacts on job quality, wages, inequality, health, and spatial dynamics.

According to the OECD, Slovakia is among the countries most at risk of job displacement or transformation due to the impact of new technologies. Additionally, following Luxembourg, Slovakia has the highest percentage of secondary school graduates leaving the domestic education system in Europe¹.

The World Bank team is confident that the outputs of the CuRI and the proposed solutions will contribute to the necessary changes that the Slovak secondary vocational education system needs and will establish a direct link to the demands of a modern society based on the use of talent, innovation, and Industry 4.0.

Significant societal changes will be required to prepare secondary vocational schools for new operating models, new roles for teaching and professional staff, changes in school-employer relations and an urgent need for new skills. The scarcity of a skilled workforce is leading to competition among regions, directly affecting the networks of secondary vocational schools at a regional level.

The mismatch between the supply of secondary vocational schools, the skills of their graduates and the needs of the labor market is most visible at the regional and local levels and has long been one of the biggest obstacles to the development of low-income regions. Numerous studies, analyses, and experiences from stakeholders indicate that this skills mismatch is attributed to a unique combination of region-specific factors. These factors include inadequate scope and quality of data, demographic trends, limited interest of young individuals in vocational education and training, the condition and accessibility of educational infrastructure, and a lack of sustained collaboration with employers over the long term. Therefore, in all three regions, a secondary Vocational Education and Training component was designed and approved within the CuRI Slovakia initiative. This component emphasizes the development of expert capacity required to implement the optimization of regional VET networks effectively and to successfully access EU funds necessary for implementing changes that enhance the quality of vocational education and training.

During CuRI 4, there was a concentrated effort on preparing project proposals and engaging in consultations with relevant ministries, in coordination with MIRD, to determine the focus and financing of interventions jointly proposed by the regions and supported by World Bank technical assistance. Subsequently, with the approval of the Slovak Republic Partnership Agreement for 2021-2027, a single operational program, 'Programme Slovakia 2021 – 2027', was approved in November 2022. This program sets the fundamental financial framework for financing investment and non-investment projects using EU funds, including those related to VET. The operational program allows for the financing of the proposed interventions in several measures and places greater emphasis on an integrated approach and coordination. A significant benefit is the ability to determine the financing of priority investment projects at the regional level. The World Bank team collaborated with regional project teams to review and refine investment packages and projects, designing a financing model that aligns with the requirements of MIRD, serving as the Managing Authority.

¹ Source: <https://www.teraz.sk/ekonomika/slovensko-spomedzi-krajin-oecd-najviac/317575-clanok.html/>

The EU's initiatives in the realm of skills have injected new energy into efforts to enhance the quality of vocational education and training, notably through **the designation of 2023 as the European Year of Skills**. This designation has heightened awareness of the challenges facing VET. The objective is to **promote more effective and inclusive investment in training and skills, facilitate job transitions for individuals, and ensure alignment between workers' skills and labor market demands**. Throughout 2023, the European Commission underscored the pivotal role of vocational education and training in personal and career development, including up-skilling, re-skilling, professional growth, and career advancement. It emphasized the importance of VET in addressing economic, climate, and social challenges. There was a specific focus on increasing labor market participation, particularly for women and young individuals who are not engaged in education or employment. The representation of women in technology-related professions and studies remains low, with only one in six IT specialists and one in three graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) being women. Vocational education and training play a crucial role in equipping graduates with the necessary skills to pursue current and future job opportunities. Additionally, efforts are underway to attract individuals from third countries possessing the skills needed in EU countries. This includes promoting learning opportunities such as language acquisition, skill development, and mobility, and facilitating the recognition of qualifications. To support skills development, EU countries should allocate adequate funding from programs like the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Digital Europe, Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, and other relevant initiatives.²

Box 1: The Timeline of VET policies in Europe

In 2023, Cedefop launched a new website called 'Timeline of VET Policies in Europe', which contains information on over 1,000 VET and lifelong learning (LLL) strategies, action plans, legislation, and practical measures in participating countries. The tool helps policymakers, analysts, and practitioners track how national policies and practices were implemented and evolved over time, from design through implementation to completion. The aim was to inspire and support all those interested or involved in the development or revision of VET and LLL policies and practices³.

The system of secondary vocational education has a long tradition in Slovakia. However, the high unemployment rate among young people and graduates, coupled with declining interest in vocational education and training, has been a persistent issue in Slovakia. Over the last ten years, several changes were made in the Slovak Republic to enhance the overall state of VET and to align it more closely with the needs of the labor market and employers.

Over the past twenty years, the number of students in secondary vocational schools has declined by more than 130,000 students. This decline has gradually led to a shortage of skilled labor in the labor market, despite historically having one of the highest student

² Source: <https://zakladnezrucnosti.sk/nikdy-nie-je-neskoro>

³ Source: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/cedefop-launches-timeline-vet-policies-europe>

enrollments compared to other EU countries, with up to 75% of students graduating with a 'maturita', i.e. a high-school-level diploma. One contributing factor to this decline is **the persistently low attractiveness of vocational education and training VET**. Often, the genuine interest of students in pursuing a particular field of study is overlooked, which can subsequently result in a lack of enthusiasm for entering the workforce in their chosen field after graduation.

From a long-term perspective, there has been a gradual decrease over the past 20 years in the proportion of pupils in secondary education without 'maturita', shifting towards a higher preference for full secondary education. The proportions of pupils in post-secondary and higher vocational education have remained relatively stable over the long term and constitute a negligible component of secondary vocational education.

Between 2022 and 2027, the proportion of secondary school graduates entering the labor market in engineering occupations is expected to significantly decrease across all regions compared to the current workforce structure. Only the Trenčín and Nitra regions are managing to maintain interest in engineering education, positioning them to potentially become the primary engineering centers of the Slovak Republic. Roughly one in five jobs necessitates a secondary school graduate with a background in engineering or commerce. However, future graduates are projected to fulfill less than half of the demand in these sectors.

However, there are also districts in Slovakia where the number of secondary school graduates entering the labor market will be adequate to meet the needs by 2025. These include districts like Svidník, Levoča and Medzilaborce in the PSK, Trebišov, Košice III and Košice IV in the KSK, as well as Banská Štiavnica and Poltár in the BBSK. Nevertheless, the last two districts are expected to have the lowest additional demand until 2025.

Conversely, the highest additional demand for secondary school positions will primarily be in districts with regional capital cities, namely the districts of Košice I, Banská Bystrica, and Prešov. These districts will also experience the most significant shortage of secondary school graduates entering the labor market, with less than half of the labor market needs expected to be covered. The main exception is the Prešov district, where secondary school graduates entering the labor market are projected to cover more than 80 percent of the total labor market needs in the district.

Instead of relying on forecasts, the VET coordination system should prioritize long-term cooperation between schools and employers, aiming to provide the education system with flexibility and responsiveness to evolving labor market trends, economic shifts, and technological advancements.

Addressing the issues related to teaching staff is crucial for enhancing the secondary vocational education system. Implementing hybrid education models would allow schools to leverage high-quality teachers more effectively, particularly benefiting regions experiencing teacher shortages. The challenges posed by the fourth industrial revolution also call for involving practitioners in the educational process, even if they lack formal pedagogical backgrounds. Therefore, it would be beneficial to explore options for additional pedagogical

training for graduates in non-teaching subjects, facilitating easier access to teaching roles for practitioners. Furthermore, it is essential to ensure that teachers receive adequate salary compensation, aiming to align it closer to the OECD average (currently at 88% of the salary of university-educated employees, whereas in Slovakia it is only at 70%). This approach should also consider regional labor market conditions, subject-specific teacher shortages, and the overall quality of education provided.

Although the dual education system is a valuable tool for enhancing the quality of vocational education, it is not universally applicable as a singular solution. Its primary advantage lies in supplying the workforce needed in the present moment. However, the evolution of the modern economy in the era of the fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0) is highly dynamic and demands a greater level of flexibility from workers.

Role of CuRI in the modernization of VET

The VET component has been part of the CuRI initiative since its inception in 2018. Its inclusion was driven by the recognition of a mismatch between the supply of skills from secondary vocational schools and the skills demanded in the regional labor market. This mismatch has been identified as a significant barrier to the further development and growth of the regions involved in the initiative.

The primary objective of this component is to enhance the quality of vocational education and training by making targeted investments in secondary vocational schools. This is achieved through systematic data collection and analysis in close collaboration with education departments, following an assessment of the baseline situation in the respective regions.

The specific activities, outputs, and outcomes within this component have been outlined in action plans tailored to each of the three regions. These plans are designed based on the unique needs of each region and their readiness to implement changes in VET.

In the fourth year of the CuRI in the Prešov Self-governing Region, the educational department concentrated on enhancing the quality of VET in the secondary vocational schools under its jurisdiction. The primary objective was to bolster the employability of secondary school graduates in the regional, national, and cross-border labor markets and to equip them with the ability to adapt to evolving labor market requirements driven by new technologies. The main focus of these efforts was on digitalizing education, which encompassed digital educational content and digital infrastructure of schools, as well as networking and decision-making at the regional level regarding the optimization of the regional network of secondary schools and planning future investments.

In the third year of the CuRI, the Banská Bystrica Self-governing Region continued the activities initiated in the previous year and focused on transferring best practices for developing VET quality, implementing investment activities within the first group of eight pilot VET schools, and enhancing collaboration between VET schools and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

In its second year of the CuRI, the Košice Self-governing Region faced specific challenges driven by the entry of a strategic investor and their demands for future graduates of secondary schools. The region also encountered limited funding opportunities from EU sources and continued to grapple with a significant number of secondary school students from disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as students from Ukraine.

A distinct methodology has been devised for each region involved, drawing on best practices from Slovakia and abroad. The aim is to maximize the utilization of technical assistance provided, emphasizing tangible outcomes and practical application at the regional level. Detailed descriptions of these methodologies, along with their implementation in each region, are provided in dedicated chapters focusing on each individual region.

Methodology

The World Bank expert team, in close collaboration with regional education departments, determined that the fundamental methodological unit for all implemented activities would be sub-regions and selected sectors. This approach supports the development of newly established and emerging local and regional platforms while achieving complementarity and synergy with national projects implemented in the PSK and the BBSK. Furthermore, this approach emphasizes the sharing of experiences and results. For the first time, certain activities were carried out jointly across all three regions. These activities included conducting a survey on the digital maturity of secondary schools, organizing joint focus groups, webinars, and workshops (such as those related to quality assurance in VET), as well as coordinating joint study visits and excursions.

The World Bank team also facilitated joint consultations with the regions and intensified efforts to promote the outcomes of secondary vocational education in the media. Through marketing activities and media collaborations, they consistently communicated education results and initiatives to the general public. The objective was to underscore the significance of secondary vocational education and training and to emphasize its support from CuRI partners. All three regions, alongside regional and national media outlets, covered activities in this area through their communication channels. The outcomes of the efforts to promote the role of VET are detailed in separate annexes of this report.

The World Bank experts, working closely with regional education departments, utilized international methodologies in strategic planning to implement individual activities according to approved action plans. They placed particular emphasis on systematically acquiring and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data from various sources and levels. This approach aimed to support evidence-based decision-making regarding future investments and the development of internal information systems within the regions.

Key findings and initial results in the CuRI regions

The foundation for all proposed solutions, future investments, and interventions in the regional Vocational Education and Training (VET) system must be **high-quality quantitative and qualitative data** that is accessible to all relevant stakeholders in the region or sector.

Successful transformation and adaptation of the regional VET system require **multi-level cooperation** among various stakeholders.

Local and regional platforms play a critical role in aligning the supply and demand of skills for secondary vocational graduates. They provide a space for cross-sectoral and territorial dialogue among stakeholders and make significant contributions to enhancing the quality of VET.

It is imperative to **integrate VET development into strategic development documents at both national and regional levels**, including integrated territorial strategies, and to ensure continuous financial support for secondary vocational schools from EU funds.

The World Bank team has provided the following recommendations on the digitalization of VET for all three CuRI regions:

Moving forward, we recommend initiating a project (or group of projects) to address the need for secondary education and VET providers to become more familiar with blended/hybrid learning. This can be achieved by providing professional support and guidance, enabling them to effectively integrate blended learning into their daily practices within a condensed timeframe. An investment package to support pilot secondary schools in this effort should include the following:

- Developing a strategic plan for effective implementation of blended learning in secondary schools to avoid unnecessary failure through self-study and self-discovery.
- Adapting the digital competency framework to consider teachers' competences in blended learning (iNACOL);
- Design, preparation and delivery of blended learning training for teachers and trainers in secondary schools and the possibility to adapt it to different types of schools (needs);
- Support to enable other secondary schools in the CuRI regions to participate in such training (beyond the pilot group that participated in the survey);
- Facilitating international study visits to countries with established blended learning in the context of secondary education and VET systems (potentially in line with the Erasmus+ offer);
- Promoting cooperation and the exchange of experiences among teachers within the region, within the same school type, and, where appropriate, internationally;
- Evaluation and self-assessment of schools and teachers/trainers to continuously improve their competencies.
- Communication with key stakeholders, target groups and the general public (information materials, public events, etc.) to explain the benefits of these innovations and to promote a cultural change that will lead to their adoption.

The management of secondary vocational schools, with support from regional education departments, should prioritize a systematic approach to collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. This data should be utilized to align the supply of technical skills from vocational education with the demand in the labor market.

Drawing from the experiences and outcomes of implemented national projects and technical assistance, secondary vocational schools and VET institutions need to actively seek ways to identify future employer needs. They should adapt teaching methods to meet specific technical skill requirements for particular jobs and address emerging demands like digital skills.

Secondary vocational schools and secondary schools in general should leverage the new opportunities presented by digitalization in education. This includes creating and utilizing digital content, adapting teaching methods, and enhancing the digital competencies of both teaching staff and students.

Actively promoting dual education and other forms of practical training across all sectors is crucial for enhancing the quality of Vocational Education and Training (VET). This approach has been demonstrated to improve the application rates of secondary vocational school graduates and better align their skills with industry needs.

There is still a noticeable mismatch between the skills possessed by graduates of secondary vocational schools and the demands of the labor market, particularly in specific job-related skills. However, progress is being made in certain sectors, where this mismatch is decreasing due to intensive investments in selected pilot schools, the exchange of experiences between schools and employers, and the promotion of new shared infrastructure between schools and employers.

CuRI 4th phase

In the VET component during phase 4 of the CuRI, common (joint) activities were implemented across all three regions, along with regionally specific activities tailored to the unique needs and priorities of each region.

Joint activity 1: A survey on the digital maturity or readiness of secondary schools for education digitalization

The survey was conducted based on the hypotheses that digitalizing the educational process can enhance learning outcomes, promote equity, and improve the efficiency of related processes. Effective and sustainable digital learning requires the right pedagogical technologies (such as computers, tablets, etc.) being embraced by the teachers and integrated into clear learning objectives and effective teaching practices.

The survey aimed to assess the current readiness of secondary schools for digital transformation and to provide recommendations for further investment and non-investment activities at the level of secondary vocational schools and grammar schools. The survey

targeted a diverse group of secondary schools, including vocational schools, technical schools, non-technical schools (service schools), specialized IT education centers, and grammar schools. This selection allowed for a comprehensive assessment of digital readiness across different types of secondary education institutions.

The data collection for the survey was conducted electronically using an online questionnaire. The outcome of this activity was an analytical report with recommendations titled 'Assessment of Digital Maturity in Secondary Schools (Analysis of the Digital Transformation of Secondary Schools and Recommendations for Public Policies)', presented in Annex 2. The purpose of the report was to summarize the findings of a survey on digital maturity in secondary schools across the three CuRI regions, with a specific focus on VET and its potential implications for education policy.

The survey collected data from 1,568 teachers of vocational and general subjects, spanning different specializations, lengths of experience, and age groups, who collectively provide education to 22,700 pupils. Digital maturity, as defined for the purposes of the report, refers to an educational institution's ability to leverage digital technologies for processing and creating value.

The survey data was further enhanced with qualitative insights from focus group meetings held after presenting the preliminary survey results. This qualitative data enriched the findings by incorporating the perspectives of various stakeholders and experts, leading to more precise recommendations.

The report serves to compare the current state of digital education in secondary schools, map the expectations and needs of these schools, assess the perceived importance of digitalization in the secondary education system, and formulate recommendations to expedite the digital transformation of education.

Joint activity 2: Improving the quality of vocational education and training

Establishing a quality management system for secondary vocational education is a continuous and crucial effort for all three regions. Within the framework of CuRI 4, the Prešov Self-governing Region and the Banská Bystrica Self-governing Region have built upon previous activities, with a primary focus on strengthening the quality culture in pilot schools and enhancing cooperation, communication, and coordination between secondary vocational schools and employers. Additionally, there has been a concerted effort, in collaboration with ŠIOV (State Institute of Vocational Education), to gradually implement the EQAVET (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training) system. In the Košice Self-governing Region, activities have been dedicated to creating the necessary conditions for implementing a quality assurance framework, primarily through training events and individual consultations with the management of the pilot VET schools.

The experience of the World Bank team and the regional educational departments as a local authorities (EDUDEPT) underscores the importance of coordinating the establishment of a VET quality system at both national and regional levels. This coordination includes aligning

activities with regional VET development strategies and making appropriate investments in schools to prepare them for implementing the various components of the VET quality system. Consequently, introducing a quality management system necessitates thorough preparation and the implementation of a school quality plan by school management, supported by targeted assistance from the EDUDEPT to help schools achieve their defined target state as outlined in their vision.

Joint activity 3: Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of integrated investment packages

In the Prešov Self-governing Region and the Banská Bystrica Self-governing Region, the design of integrated investment packages for selected pilot schools was carried out in two phases: the first phase included 5 pilot schools in the PSK and 8 pilot schools in the BBSK, while the second phase included 9 pilot schools in the PSK and 5 pilot schools in the BBSK. In the Košice Self-governing Region (KSK), integrated investment packages were designed for one group of pilot schools consisting of 5+3 schools.

These investments were informed by comprehensive analyses, including research conducted by the World Bank team, consultations with relevant stakeholders, regional concepts and strategies for the development of secondary education, and best practices adopted from Slovakia and abroad. The school-level investment packages encompassed investments in the following areas:

- a) changes in the range of study programs offered, focusing on improving the employability of future graduates,
- b) upgrading educational infrastructure, including facilities and equipment,
- c) completion of campuses and creating a quality learning environment,
- d) improving the qualification structure of the teaching and professional staff of the secondary school.

As agreed with the education departments of the respective regions, investment activities at the level of pilot secondary schools were complemented by non-investment activities in the form of national projects, running concurrently with the school-level investments. The report provides detailed descriptions of the objectives and outcomes of these national projects in each region. The situation differs in the Košice Self-governing Region, where the non-investment activities of the national projects are partially substituted by technical assistance from the World Bank and activities involving other partners. The World Bank team anticipates that the experiences gained by the schools involved will be applied to other schools within the regions and beyond, as part of the ongoing reform efforts in secondary vocational education. Such initiatives should be tailored to meet local needs and conducted in close collaboration with partners to ensure effective implementation and sustainable impact.

One of the outcomes of this activity is a **proposal outlining a recommended investment strategy for primary and secondary schools** in the new programming period spanning 2021 – 2027.

In 2023, the World Bank team focused on the development of digital investment packages specifically tailored for VET schools. This effort was informed by the findings and insights obtained from the VET digitalization survey conducted during the course of the year⁴.

Table 1: Overview of joint and region-specific component activities

| Activity/region | PSK | BBSK | KSK |
|--|--|--|---|
| Joint activity 1: A survey on the digital maturity or readiness of secondary schools for education digitalization | Promoting digitalization in secondary vocational schools | Additional schools involved in the Digital Maturity Survey of Secondary Schools | Accelerating the digital transformation of VET |
| Joint activity 2: Improving the quality of vocational education and training | The PSK continued to improve the quality of VET through NP activities and in cooperation with ŠIOV | Support for the implementation of Quality Improvement Plans in pilot secondary schools II | Support for the development of Quality Improvement Plans in pilot VET/secondary schools |
| Joint activity 3: Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of integrated investment packages | Regular monitoring and evaluation of IIB/IP implementation and provision of consultation to 14 pilot schools | Regular monitoring and evaluation of IIP/IP implementation and provision of consultation to 13 pilot schools | Regular monitoring of IIP/IP implementation preparation for pilot schools and shared infrastructure |
| Specific activity 1 | | Action plan to improve cooperation between VET schools and SMEs | Design of a framework and strategy for quality assurance in VET |
| Specific activity 2 | | Database of best practice examples from VET | Creating conditions for inclusive education with an emphasis on MRC |

Source: World Bank, 2023.

⁴ For more information on the selection of pilot schools in the region and the planned investments see: <https://www.po-kraj.sk/sk/samosprava/kompetencie-psk/regionalny-rozvoj/catching-up/1etapa-curi/k2-ss/>, <https://www.bbsk.sk/komponent-1-2>, <https://web.vucke.sk/sk/kompetencie/regionalny-rozvoj/catching-up-regions/komponent-2-skolstvo/>

Improving the quality of vocational education and training in the Prešov Self-governing Region

During the first year of the Catching-up Regions Initiative in the Prešov Self-governing Region, the World Bank team conducted two studies focusing on the state of secondary vocational schools in the PSK and the needs of employers across various sectors, as well as trends within the regional labor market. These studies highlighted significant challenges, including a notable mismatch between the skills of secondary school graduates and the demands of employers, particularly in specific technical areas. Additionally, the studies underscored a lack of communication and coordination among relevant stakeholders. The findings from these studies were instrumental in several ways, making it possible to identify specific investment needs at the level of VET schools and employers and develop integrated investment packages tailored for the pilot schools, to be funded from EU sources.

During the second year of the CuRI, the primary objective was to develop quality assurance frameworks and optimize the network of secondary vocational schools to enhance the quality, efficiency, and relevance of curricula within vocational education and training. In alignment with this goal, the PSK initiated and commenced the implementation of the national project (NP) titled “Improvement of Secondary Vocational Education in the Prešov Self-Governing Region”. The NP activities were strategically phased to run concurrently with investment activities, allowing the pilot schools to promptly integrate upgraded educational content and further innovate the content and forms of education, following the completion of investment initiatives.

In its third year, CuRI expanded upon the achievements of the preceding years. The focus was on refining the network of secondary vocational schools to align with regional labor market demands and enhance the overall quality of vocational education and training. This was achieved through targeted methodological support provided to the management of secondary vocational schools, which involved engaging stakeholders and offering consultations on the practical application of the PRIME methodology.

In the fourth year of the CuRI initiative, the World Bank team continued to provide support to the PSK in implementing cohesive investments in secondary vocational schools. This included identifying specific sub-regional needs to optimize the network of secondary vocational schools and achieve targets for enhancing the quality of vocational education and training. Significant efforts were dedicated to preparing an analysis of the secondary schools' readiness for the digitalization of education, reflecting the initiative's commitment to modernizing educational practices. Moreover, there was a strong emphasis on strengthening public relations (PR) activities within the media landscape to promote the outcomes and achievements of the CuRI initiative.

Overview of activities implemented

In line with the approved Action Plan, which is based on the needs and competences of the PSK and builds on the achievements of CuRI 1-3, the fourth phase of the CuRI initiative

centered on fostering inclusive economic growth through strategic investments in human resources and infrastructure.

The Action Plan for CuRI 4 included a dedicated component focused on vocational education and training, designated as component IV titled “Improving the quality and efficiency of VET in the Prešov Self-governing Region”, implemented from May 2022 to December 2023 (see more details in Annex 1).

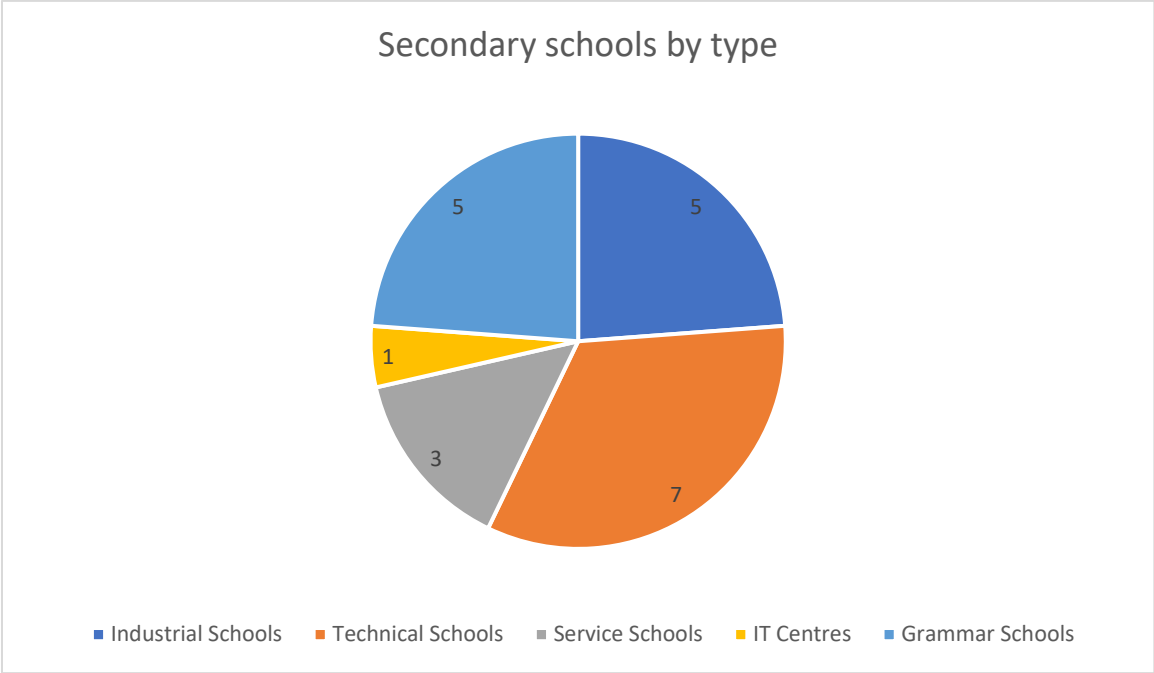
The PSK has expressed a keen interest in continuing this CuRI component in close collaboration with the World Bank, MIRDI, and the European Commission. The objective is to support ongoing activities aimed at enhancing the quality assurance of vocational education and training. This entails further modernizing the infrastructure of secondary schools under the PSK's jurisdiction, aligning educational offerings with labor market demands, and fostering educational innovation, particularly in response to Industry 4.0 requirements.

Building upon the results of prior analyses and outputs from the VET component in previous years, new activities were introduced during the fourth year, focusing on the digitalization of vocational education and training. This strategic area was identified as a key developmental priority for secondary education within the PSK. The development and implementation of these activities, outputs, and proposed solutions were conducted in consultation with relevant ministries and their directly managed organizations. This collaborative approach ensured coordination, partnership, and multi-level governance.

Activity 4.1 Support for digitalization in secondary schools in the Prešov Region aimed at supporting the development of digital infrastructure, digital competences and digital content based on the analysis of digital readiness of secondary schools. The activity was implemented in the period from May 2022 to December 2023. The digitalization of the learning process in secondary schools holds significant potential for improving learning outcomes, promoting equity, and enhancing the efficiency of educational processes. Effective and sustainable digital education relies not only on appropriate pedagogical technologies (such as computers and tablets) but also on the active engagement of teachers and alignment with clear theoretical and practical learning objectives and pedagogical practices. The CuRI team at the World Bank developed a methodology, which was used to gather essential data and evaluate the baseline digital readiness and maturity of secondary schools in the PSK (and concurrently also in the KSK and the BBSK).

For the purposes of the survey, a group of secondary schools in the PSK was selected as shown in Figure 1 – vocational schools, technical schools, non-technical schools (service schools), centers specialized in IT education and grammar schools. A total of 21 secondary schools in the PSK participated in the survey.

Figure 1: Distribution of the PSK secondary schools surveyed by type



Source: World Bank, 2023.

Data collection was conducted electronically (via an online questionnaire). The data were not analyzed at the individual level, but were summarized for school, region/district, and school type, with other demographic variables used only to verify the representativeness of the sample.

There were no significant differences observed in the level of digital maturity among the three examined regions. However, when comparing different types of schools, notable differences were observed in the PSK. Specialized centers of vocational education (CoVET) and grammar schools in this region demonstrated higher digital maturity compared to vocational schools within the PSK and across all regions.

Assessing digital maturity and representing it graphically is an important input for developing a comprehensive digital transformation strategy and strategic development plan for each educational institution. However, a deeper analysis is needed to identify and address specific challenges, gaps, and bottlenecks. Rather than viewing digitalization superficially, the focus should be on systemic modernization of the school. Modernization involves a strategic approach that goes beyond replacing organizational functions or tools. Therefore, the World Bank team analyzed options for modernizing educational organizations across four key levels: 'technology', 'processes', 'data, content, and capabilities', and 'people and skills'. The main findings and recommendations from this analysis were formulated accordingly.

The main findings and recommendations from the analysis (at PSK level) are:

A) Technology:

- There are notable disparities in technological equipment among secondary schools. While about two-thirds of surveyed secondary schools report very good, good, or satisfactory computing facilities, more than 80% rely on computing equipment that is over five years old and does not adequately support modern application packages, software, or platforms.
- Secondary schools are relatively well-equipped for traditional teaching methods (frontal teaching in a physical location for a larger group of students), with sufficient interactive or projection boards in 71% of schools. However, more than three-quarters of secondary schools lack equipment necessary for hybrid and interactive teaching/learning. Additionally, almost 90% of schools surveyed are unable to provide their teachers with specialized equipment.

Recommendations:

- The concept of digitalization should extend beyond providing quick access to online learning resources.
- Limited public investment presents a significant barrier to effectively managing the digital infrastructure lifecycle and achieving digital transformation.
- There is a need to promote and support systematic, predictable, and digital methods for managing the lifecycle of schools' infrastructure.

B) Processes:

- Many schools exhibit superficial use of digital tools in teaching. Although nearly 85% use digital technologies for communication, only 61% utilize them for active collaboration or content creation. Only 35% of schools are equipped to digitally assess students and provide feedback.
- Approximately half of the schools view their teachers as active digital tool users in their subjects, but only 35% believe students' use of digital tools for learning is satisfactory. Digital aspects are rarely incorporated into STEM teaching, with only 16% of schools doing so regularly and about 25% occasionally.

Recommendations:

- The development of digital competences and content requires a continuous, collaborative, and interactive approach.
- Supporting the role of digital coordinators (motivator, counsellor, coach) as part of regular operations (systematically), not just project-based, is essential.
- Implementing technological and methodological measures to eliminate the risk of a digital divide requires greater inclusion, support, and guidance.
- Centralized provision and maintenance of digital content, software, and services at a regional level would benefit secondary schools.
- Methodological practices, recommendations, and concrete actions should be implemented to reduce the digital divide and enhance inclusive education methods and techniques.

C) Data, content and capabilities:

- The strategic (or systemic) use of data in the sample is at two poles – about half of the schools measure and evaluate their digital readiness and the other half do not collect such data. Approximately one-third of schools have or are developing a dedicated digital transformation and modernization strategy, contrasting with half of the schools, which instead only respond to occasional external opportunities.
- Almost 75% of teachers are open to learning by observing their colleagues (or being trained by them).
- Less than 40% of the schools have introduced the role of a digital coordinator – more than half of the schools face various barriers to introducing this supportive, transformational role (despite the formal legislative requirement to have a digital coordinator).
- It is relatively positive that two-thirds of schools rate their teachers' skills and confidence in using digital tools as sufficient (i.e., they do not consider them to be a barrier). However, we again see a polar opposite in terms of awareness and accessibility of digital content and third-party materials (around half of the schools consider the lack of information on this topic to be a major barrier). Similarly, almost half of the schools perceive a lack of information on professional development opportunities related to digital skills and competences.

Recommendations:

- At the regional level, it is essential to develop standard procedures to enable the strategic (or systemic) collection and use of data not only for assessing digital readiness but also for assessing the quality of education.
- Encourage secondary schools to increase the proportion of available digital content created by teachers or in collaboration with employers and to share it at least at regional or sectoral level.
- Targeted support for the participation of school teams of teachers in international cooperation programs and EU initiatives aimed at developing digital learning.

D) People and skills:

- Three-quarters of secondary schools recognize the value of digital technologies in supporting teacher collaboration and interaction, yet only a quarter of teachers regularly share digital content with colleagues outside their own school. About a third co-create digital content within their school, and less than a fifth collaborate occasionally with colleagues from other schools, employers, or universities.
- Around two-thirds of school's struggle to attract and retain qualified teachers, and one-third feel unable to contribute to regional or local digital transformation programs (planning, prioritization, implementation).
- Culturally, many schools reflect a "lonely struggle" among teachers, where each is responsible for finding and preparing instructional materials, presenting them to students, testing and assessing students, and continually improving the curriculum reducing time available for discovering and learning new technologies

and methods. This approach perpetuates an organizational culture that may not appeal to younger enthusiasts and professionals. In the schools surveyed, the ratio of teachers under the age of 40 to over 50 is 1:2, and when split them into age categories under and over 40, the ratio changes to 1:3 (one younger teacher for every three older teachers).

Recommendations:

- There is a potential for cultural change in Slovakia's regions, fostering closer connections among educators from different schools and with industry partners. This shift could bridge the gap between digital technologies as abstract concepts and their practical application in real-world business scenarios.

Figure 2: Workshop on digitalization of education for VET schools directors in Prešov



Source: World Bank, 2023.

Linking World Bank and other PSK activities

The Prešov Self-governing Region is implementing the national project “Improvement of secondary vocational education in the PSK” alongside investments in the first group of pilot secondary vocational schools. This project is supported by the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund under the Operational Program Human Resources.

The primary objective of the national project is to align the education system with the needs of the labor market and enhance employer involvement in developing and innovating educational content. It aims to foster partnerships between providers of secondary vocational education and employers, as well as to improve the quality of strategies and

educational policies at the regional level of the PSK. This project was initiated as part of the CuRI component 'Increasing the quality and efficiency of secondary education in the PSK' and represents the first national project under the Operational Program Human Resources in the Education priority axis, where the beneficiary was a self-governing region.

The intention of the PSK is to proceed with defining and implementing similar integrated plans for other schools within its territory. The goal is to gradually modernize and enhance the quality of the entire network of schools and educational facilities in the region.

Therefore, the World Bank team supported the PSK in preparing the new national project titled "Improving the Quality and Efficiency of Secondary Education in PSK II". The primary objective of this new project is to enhance the quality of vocational education and training by establishing links between the education system and labor market needs. It involves engaging employers in the development and innovation of educational content, enhancing the professional skills and competencies of teaching staff, and fostering an inclusive environment within schools.

The national project is organized into six activities: (i) supporting the Regional Platform to facilitate collaboration with employers and enhance the quality of vocational education in the PSK; (ii) conducting training sessions for teaching and professional staff to implement innovations in vocational education and enhance their professional and practical competencies; (iii) innovating school curricula and materials to align education with labor market requirements and engage employers in the educational process; (iv) promoting inclusivity within participating schools; (v) supporting marketing activities to generate interest among students in vocational education; and (vi) evaluating the outcomes and impact of the national project.

Specific recommendations for the PSK

A) at the secondary school level:

- Promote cross-sectoral cooperation through local platforms, emphasizing collaboration on learning processes and content to enhance the quality of vocational education and training
- Enable selected schools to invest in the digitalization of VET
- Support schools in introducing tools and strategies that enhance inclusiveness in education

B) at the level of the PSK Education Department:

- Implement a system for continuous evaluation of the quality of vocational education and training across all secondary vocational schools in the PSK
- Develop draft norms for providing standard equipment that aligns with EU standards for digital learning
- Prioritize interventions in schools based on their impact on improving the quality of VET, considering dividing interventions into mandatory and optional categories according to available funding

Modernization of vocational education and training in the Banská Self-governing Bystrica Region

In the first year of the Catching-up Regions Initiative in the Banská Bystrica Self-governing Region, the World Bank team conducted two studies focusing on the state of secondary vocational schools and the needs of employers in various sectors of the regional labor market. These studies identified significant mismatches between the skills possessed by secondary school graduates and the demands of employers, highlighting a lack of coordination and communication among stakeholders. Leveraging these findings, the World Bank team collaborated with BBSK to pinpoint specific investment requirements for pilot vocational schools and partnering employers, culminating in the development of integrated investment packages tailored for selected schools eligible for potential EU funding.

During the second year of the CuRI in the BBSK, the primary emphasis was on establishing frameworks to enhance the quality of education and optimizing the network of secondary vocational schools. The objective was to improve the efficiency and relevance of VET curricula.

In the third year, the World Bank team continued to build on the achievements of the previous two years. The activities focused on supporting the implementation of integrated investments aimed at optimizing the network of secondary vocational schools in the BBSK and its sub-regions. Alongside the investment activities in the pilot secondary vocational schools, additional activities of the approved national project were implemented. These activities included providing targeted methodological support to VET secondary school management, implementing VET quality plans in the second group of pilot VET secondary schools, and engaging stakeholders through consultations on selected VET issues.

During CuRI 4, the World Bank team continued to support the BBSK in implementing synergistic investments in secondary vocational schools. This included identifying specific needs to optimize the network of secondary vocational schools at the sub-regional level and meeting objectives to enhance the quality of vocational education and training. Additionally, there was a focus on assisting the BBSK in analyzing the readiness of secondary schools for the digitalization of education.

Overview of activities

In line with the approved CuRI Action Plan for the VET component, which reflects the specific needs and competencies of BBSK and builds upon previous CuRI accomplishments, the emphasis has been on implementing more tailored activities to bolster inclusive economic growth through investments in human resources and infrastructure.

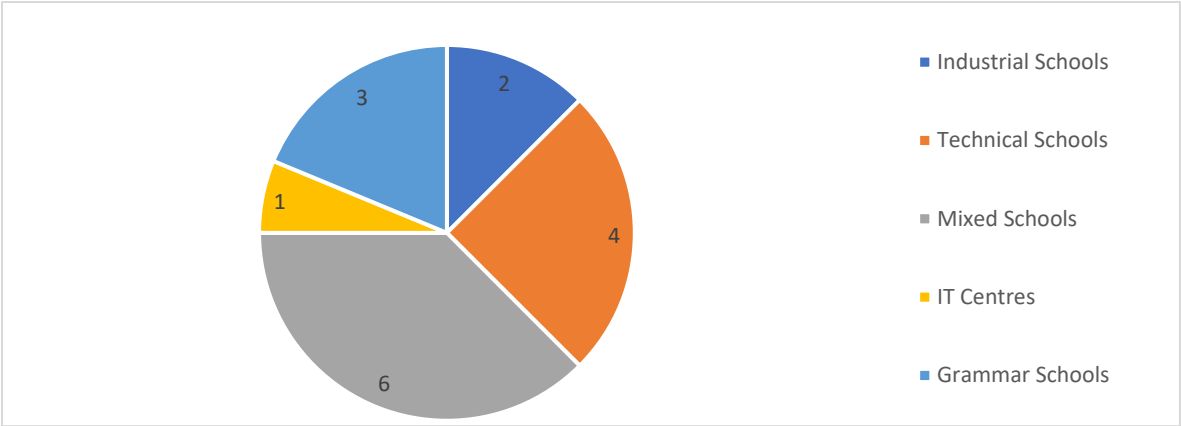
The CuRI 4 Action Plan also included a distinct VET component titled **‘Improving the Quality of VET and Improving the Quality of the Learning Environment’**, which focused on supporting interventions in 13 pilot VET schools, enhancing the expertise of EDUDEPT and providing expert technical assistance and consultation to enhance the quality of VET processes.

The BBSK has expressed its interest in continuing this component within CuRI in close cooperation with the World Bank team, MIRDI, and the EC. The aim is to receive advice and mentoring from the World Bank team for implementing integrated investment packages in pilot schools, identifying and utilizing best practices, organizing professional events and workshops for staff of the pilot secondary schools, and conducting study tours focusing on selected sectors.

The World Bank team invited BBSK representatives to involve selected secondary schools in a digital maturity survey aimed at gathering data for decision-making on further investments and interventions in secondary vocational education and training. In BBSK, a total of 18 secondary schools participated in the survey. An overview of the participating secondary schools is shown in the figure below.

Similar to other CuRI regions, differences emerged among the participating schools based on school type, with specialized IT centers and grammar schools demonstrating better digital maturity. This underscores the need for systematic planning and implementation of targeted interventions to support digitalization in secondary schools under the jurisdiction of BBSK as part of the regional education development strategy. See Annex 1 for more details.

Figure 3: Distribution of the BBSK secondary schools surveyed by type



Source: World Bank, 2023.

Linking World Bank and other BBSK activities

The implementation of the BBSK national project “Strengthening regional governance in vocational education and training to improve the quality, attractiveness and higher orientation to the labor market in the Banská Bystrica Region” (NP BBSK I) is a significant outcome of the CuRI initiative. This project focused on developing soft skills alongside the implemented investment activities in the eighth pilot secondary vocational education and training schools. The objectives of the pilot validation included:

- Linking the education system to labor market needs
- Improving the quality of vocational education and training of the professional staff
- Increasing employer involvement in the design and innovation of learning content

- Encouraging the establishment of partnerships between vocational education and training providers and employers
- Supporting new targeted forms of vocational education and training aimed at inclusivity
- Identifying and modifying existing resources and educational infrastructure for effective utilization

The implementation of NP BBSK I, which concluded at the end of 2023, contributed to building a smart learning environment through its specific activities, focusing on all the main components of a smart learning environment: learners (students of secondary schools), pedagogical and professional staff, leveraging new technologies in teaching and practical training, and adopting new or improved methods of education, including personalized learning. An important aspect of the project implementation was fostering cooperation with employers, particularly SMEs, to better align VET with employers' needs. Pilot schools' collaboration was further supported through investments in new technologies in partnership with SMEs.

NP BBSK I also indirectly influenced two other projects – **“Modern Education for Practice”** and **“Modern Education for Practice 2”** implemented by BBSK from 2020 to 2022, which aimed to enhance the quality of vocational education and training with a focus on practical education. These projects increased the hours dedicated to practical education and training and utilized additional hours to enhance specific literacy skills among students. The development of literacy skills was further bolstered through extracurricular activities. To foster the exchange of experiences among professional staff in the area of teaching practices and innovation in vocational education, pedagogical clubs were established where the staff met to discuss and share experiences. These activities targeted professional staff and students in the least developed districts of secondary schools.

In addition to the EU-funded NP, the BBSK undertook other projects that impacted secondary school students. Through cooperation with Iuventa, the BBSK Development Agency supported young people in implementing small projects focused on regional and local development and acquiring practical skills for the labor market under the ‘Project is Change’ initiative. Another program available to secondary school students was ‘Get Going and Stay in the Region!’ designed to inspire and motivate young people towards entrepreneurship. This program allowed students to consult their business ideas with mentors and explore entrepreneurship opportunities.

The BBSK utilized the experience, outputs, and results from the implemented NP to prepare a proposal for a new NP titled “Modernization of Secondary Education in the BBSK 2”. The primary activity of this new NP is focused on disseminating the results and outputs of the regional vocational education and training platform to create an innovative, inclusive, and accessible educational space in the Banská Bystrica Self-governing Region.

The aim of the main activity within the project is to increase the number of graduates from BBSK secondary schools in specific fields who are equipped with the skills and knowledge demanded by the regional labor market. This includes transferable skills such as critical thinking, reading, financial, digital and mathematical literacy, and soft skills like teamwork

and flexibility. The target group for this project includes pupils from primary and secondary schools, including those with special educational needs and from socially or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as pedagogical and professional staff (as defined by applicable legislation), school principals, and employees of state and local government.

The World Bank team leveraged the experience, outputs, and results of implemented national and BBSK projects, as well as insights gained from various secondary school projects within the BBSK territory, to develop proposals for integrated investments in 2021. These investments were aimed at supporting enhancements to the educational environment, including creative zones, open laboratories, multifunctional spaces, and modifications to secondary school premises, among others.

In addition to the national projects, certain pilot secondary schools were concurrently executing projects supported under IROP1 and IROP2 that were prepared prior to the BBSK's involvement in the CuRI. This situation placed pressure on school management to secure funding and align investments, exemplified by schools like the Technical and Agri-Food Secondary School in Rimavská Sobota and the Secondary School of Services and Forestry in Banská Štiavnica. Following consultations with the Managing Authority (MA), efforts were made to synchronize investment activities and prevent duplication of expenditures and project activities of the MIRD/ IROP projects.

Specific recommendations for the BBSK

A) at the secondary school level:

- Support small innovative projects prepared and implemented by secondary schools, their professional staff and students
- Strengthen after-school education for STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics)
- Promote multigenerational learning for professional staff and students
- Continue integrating activities and investments at the school level in collaboration with local actors
- Include measures on digitalization and quality assurance of vocational education and training in the strategic documents of the VET institutions

B) at the level of the BBSK Education Department:

- Continue support of schools in developing strategic plans for improving the quality of VET
- Link all strategic documents in the field of VET with the strategic documents of the BBSK and at the national level
- Strategically communicate VET needs to the public
- Prioritize investment in VET in the 2021 – 2027 programming period
- Develop a regional model for the evaluation of VET Schools
- Focus on shared services and infrastructure at local and/or sectoral level

- Pay increased attention to the staffing of secondary schools, especially in less developed districts of the BBSK
- Introduce a system of tracking/monitoring graduates' employability at the pilot secondary schools in cooperation with employers
- Consider new tools for collecting data on regional/local labor market needs
- Pilot test special programs for different groups of pupils (gifted, with special educational needs, with other disadvantages)

Aligning vocational education and training with labor market needs in the Košice Self-governing Region

In the first year of CuRI in the Košice Self-governing Region, the World Bank team conducted two studies on the state of secondary vocational schools and employer needs in specific sectors and regional labor market trends, similar to those in the BBSK and PSK regions. These studies highlighted mismatches between supply and demand, particularly for technical skills aligned with the region's economic structure, and revealed a lack of communication and coordination among relevant stakeholders, especially at the local level. These findings guided the World Bank and KSK education department team to identify specific investment and non-investment needs of pilot VET schools and collaborating organizations, leading to the development of integrated investment packages for selected pilot VET schools in the region. Activities also included assessing funding opportunities from EU sources, with the KSK education department providing targeted investment and non-investment support to schools using EU funds from the 2014 – 2020 programming period.

During the second year of CuRI in the KSK, the primary focus was on establishing frameworks to ensure education quality and optimizing the network of secondary vocational schools. Efforts were made to increase the efficiency and relevance of VET curricula and to secure financial resources for the proposed IIPs for pilot VET schools. Special attention was dedicated to preparing the Regional Action Plan for Inclusive Education and designing the pilot project for training centers.

Given the limited implementation of investment activities in the pilot VET schools due to the conclusion of the 2014 – 2020 programming period, the support to these schools focused primarily on non-investment activities. This included providing targeted methodological support to the KSK education department and the management of pilot VET schools, preparing VET quality plans, capacity building for school quality teams, and engaging stakeholders through consultations on selected VET issues.

The World Bank team continued to support secondary vocational schools in implementing synergistic investments, identifying secondary needs for optimization of the network of secondary vocational schools at the sub-regional level, and engaging secondary vocational schools in international cooperation and joint projects.

Overview of activities

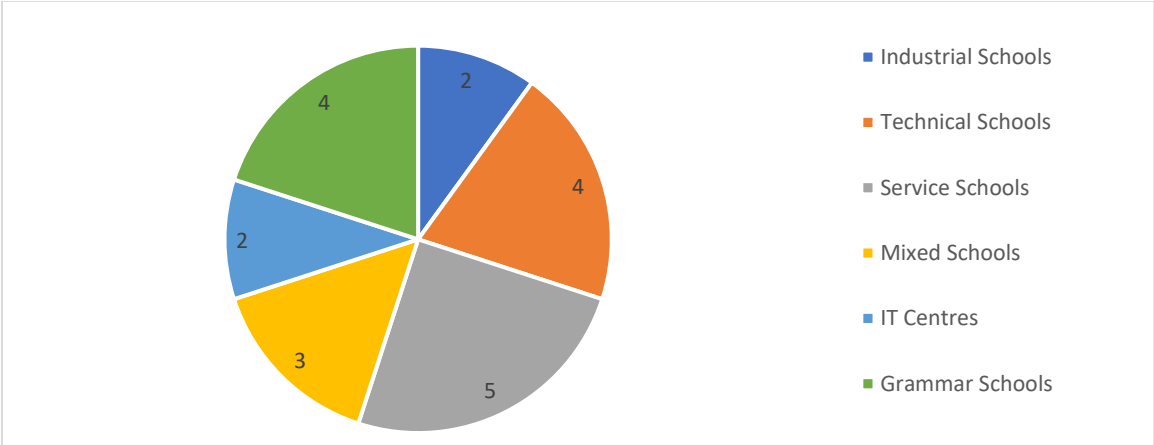
In line with the approved the KSK Action Plan for the VET component, which is rooted in the needs and competencies of the KSK and builds on the prior accomplishments of CuRI, the primary focus was on advancing the digitalization of VET and implementing targeted activities to promote inclusive education. Furthermore, following the news on the arrival of a new strategic investor to the KSK, efforts were directed towards proposing the development of a shared educational infrastructure for selected technical secondary schools in the Košice district.

The Action Plan for CuRI 4 also encompassed a distinct VET component titled “Improving the quality of vocational education in the Košice Self-governing Region in line with the requirements of the market”, which comprised three key activities: accelerating the digital transformation of VET in alignment with EU strategies, establishing frameworks and strategies for ensuring VET quality, and creating conditions for inclusive education and the employment of students from marginalized Roma communities in the labor market. See detail in Annex 1.

The KSK has expressed interest in continuing this component under CuRI in close cooperation with the World Bank team, MIRDI, and the EC, aiming to enhance communication with relevant stakeholders at regional, sub-regional, and local levels. Additionally, the objective is to lay the groundwork for new strategic documents at the regional level.

Within the KSK, similar to the PSK and the BBSK, a survey on the digitalization of secondary education was conducted in selected secondary schools. A total of 20 secondary schools participated in the survey, as depicted in the figure below.

Figure 4: Distribution of the KSK secondary schools surveyed by type



Source: World Bank, 2023.

The results of the survey conducted in selected KSK schools, analyzed in detail in a separate report annexed to this summary report, indicate that no significant differences were found compared to the other two CuRI regions. This finding was unexpected for the KSK,

considering the high concentration of IT companies in the Košice area, unlike in the PSK and the BBSK. Further interpretation of the survey results will necessitate additional surveys focused on obtaining qualitative data.

Linking World Bank and other KSK activities

The KSK, in collaboration with the World Bank and various partners including the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, SIVET, and the Central Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family, has developed a proposal for a pilot project to test the concept of **“Training Centers for practical education of pupils with lower secondary vocational education”**. This pilot project is integrated into the measures outlined in the KSK Regional Action Plan for Inclusive Vocational Education and Training for 2024 – 2027, as well as in the Integrated Territorial Strategy of the KSK for 2021 – 2027.

The proposed pilot project aims to establish and operate training centers (TC) for practical education targeting individuals with lower secondary vocational education who have dropped out of education before the age of 18 and are registered at the Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family as recipients of social benefits, form the NEET group or are already at risk of dropping out of education before the age of 18 without qualifications during their attendance at a secondary vocational school. The objective is to create conditions for establishing TCs, based on CuRI's project goals in the VET component, to serve as centers for practical training. Here, under the guidance of trainers or instructors, these individuals will acquire vocational competences aligned with specific labor market needs, focusing on crafts and services. The project complements the integrated investment packages of three pilot schools in the KSK: the Secondary School of Agrotechnical and Gastronomic Services in Pribeník, including the Viničky workplace; the Secondary Technical School in Rožňava, including the Štítik workplace; and the Secondary Woodworking School in Spišská Nová Ves.

The World Bank team is actively seeking examples of best practices both in Slovakia and internationally that can be leveraged innovatively to optimize the network of secondary vocational schools and support inclusive learning environments. One notable example is the Pontis Foundation's project, currently underway in three Slovak cities within selected primary schools.

Box 2: The ‘Future DIFFERENTLY’ program

An exemplary program in Slovakia implemented by the nonprofit sector in education and inclusion is the ‘Future DIFFERENTLY’ program. This initiative aims to enhance soft skills, digital literacy, and entrepreneurship among primary school pupils. The program fosters teamwork, proficiency in digital technologies, and the ability to generate solutions to community issues. By participating, primary school pupils can translate their skills into tangible solutions and become catalysts for change in their neighborhoods. The ‘Future

DIFFERENTLY' program promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, perseverance, collaboration, and creativity. It features educational sessions twice a week, focused on future skills, informal innovative learning opportunities, and space for self-development. Additionally, it provides a welcoming club environment accessible after school, access to IT resources, visits from interesting guest speakers (scientists, writers, entrepreneurs), and guidance in choosing a high school.

The 'Future DIFFERENTLY' program collaborates closely with experts and practitioners from various sectors including the business community, civil society organizations, and public administration. They share their valuable work experiences with the children, providing guidance and support in creating projects and transitioning to secondary school.

In the student program, university students interested in youth work engage in learning about innovative educational approaches and non-formal education. They explore topics such as creating inclusive environments, understanding student motivations and group dynamics in the classroom, and preventing problem behavior. The basic course consists of 12 hours of training, supplemented by 4 short assignments for individual work and self-reflection, with ample opportunities for asking questions. The trainers leading each session are top experts in the field of education.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yhbKHFu1uI>, <https://buducnostinak.sk/>

Source: <https://buducnostinak.sk/o-programe/>

In August 2023, as part of CuRI's focus on vocational education and training, especially following the arrival of a major investor (Volvo) to the region and based on positive feedback from activities highlighting examples of good practice, the KSK's Department of Education cooperated with World Bank experts to organize a joint visit/excursion to VET centers, campuses, education centers, companies and their partners focused on vocational secondary and higher education and practical training. The activity was attended by representatives from the KSK, selected pilot schools, the World Bank, and MIRDI representatives.

The findings from the study visit served as input for refining the campus concept for technical VET, which included visualizing the new infrastructure, adjusting proposed investment packages for pilot schools, generating ideas for collaborative school projects with employers and other partners at regional and sectoral levels, and informing project preparation for cross-border cooperation and EU programs.

One of the outcomes of the study visit is the proposed visualization of the future modern secondary school campus depicted in the image below. The emphasis on promoting technical education in the future secondary school represents a novel concept and a transformational approach to secondary vocational schools.

Figure 5: Visualization of the proposed Campus for technical VET in Košice – Šaca



Source: KSK, 2023.

Specific recommendations for the KSK

A) at the secondary school level:

- Increase the participation of the pilot VET schools in particular in EU and cross-border cooperation programs
- Develop VET quality improvement plans, including an investment plan with an emphasis on digital infrastructure at the pilot schools
- Improve cooperation with local stakeholders (employers, NGOs, local government)
- Involve the professional staff of schools in the activities of the regional VET platform

B) at the level of the KSK Education Department:

- Actively cooperate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the approved KSK Integrated Territorial Strategy for 2021 – 2027
- Align the strategic documents of the KSK in terms of content and time
- Systematically promote the role of secondary vocational schools in the regional economy to the public
- Ensure the sharing of experiences, knowledge, and information from the pilot activities with social and economic partners (SEPs) and relevant actors in the field of education
- Strengthen cooperation with local government representatives, especially in areas where pilot projects and IIPs are being prepared,
- Use all available public and EU resources for targeted investments in VET

Investment packages for pilot VET schools in the CuRI regions

Throughout all phases of the CuRI's VET component implementation in all three regions, the preparation of investment packages has been one of the most significant activities of the approved Action Plans.

The Prešov Self-governing Region, which joined CuRI in 2018, promptly initiated the preparation of investment packages in five pilot schools the following year. The implementation of investments is expected to conclude by the end of the 2014 – 2020 programming period, leveraging resources from multiple operational programs and funds from the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic. The exception is the phased investment for the technical VET school in Poprad – Matejovce.

The experience of the PSK project team responsible for implementing individual pilot projects under CuRI has emphasized the necessity of proactive communication and coordination between EU fund providers and beneficiaries/recipients. Additionally, the team has recognized the added value of technical assistance provided by the World Bank, particularly in transferring knowledge related to the application of the integrated approach within a specific territory and topic.

The first funds from the new programming period 2021 – 2027 allocated to the Prešov Self-Governing Region (PSK) under the Integrated Territorial Investment will focus on 14 new projects in the field of vocational education and training. These projects aim to improve educational infrastructure in VET schools and develop vocational training and lifelong learning. Up to twelve secondary vocational schools in the PSK will receive support totaling EUR 36 million, which will result in projects such as a Talent Centre or a Centre for Simulation Medicine.

Investments in secondary vocational schools supported under the first phase of the CuRI will continue, building directly on those initiated since 2018. A new multifunctional polygon for electrical engineering and automation is currently under construction at the Secondary School of Electrical Engineering in Poprad-Matejovce. This significant investment project, valued at approximately EUR 10.5 million, was launched by the PSK with support from European Structural Funds. It marks the fifth school in the region where CuRI has succeeded in modernizing and improving learning conditions. The project at the Secondary School of Electrical Engineering in Poprad-Matejovce is the final one of the five pilot projects implemented in regional schools through the CuRI. The other four projects involved the VET schools in Prešov, Medzilaborce, Kežmarok, and Stará Ľubovňa. All these planned investments included in the integrated investment packaged were completed by the end of 2023.

Figure 6: Example of a successful project in a pilot secondary school in Kežmarok (PSK)



Source: PSK, 2023 – School farm in Kežmarok.

Table 2: Overview of investment activities in pilot secondary vocational schools in the PSK CuRI 4.

| Applicant/project beneficiaries | Project name | Brief description of the project (planned activities) | Estimated project budget in EUR total - after construction increase (prices+supervision) | Estimated project budget in EUR construction - after price increase 25% + 10% construction supervision and engineering | Estimated project budget in EUR/equipment | Project status |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| VET School of Gastronomy and Services, SDH 3, Prešov | Improvement of the educational infrastructure in the VET School of Gastronomy and Services, SDH 3, Prešov | Construction of specialised classrooms for teaching vocational subjects (10-13 classrooms - sensory laboratory, dairy laboratory, laboratory for beer and malt production, microbiological laboratory, bakery with a shop, specialised classrooms with specific equipment for all disciplines at the school, equipment of classrooms with digital technology, extension of the chemistry laboratory). Provision of material and technical equipment for vocational classrooms. | 2,892,703.94 | 1,516,897.94 | 1,375,806.00 | PD prefunded from Call 80, processed descriptions of equipment |
| Technical Industry School, Volgogradská 1, Prešov | Improvement of the educational infrastructure in the Technical Secondary School Volgogradská 1, Prešov | Reconstruction of the school building on Bardejovská St, partial reconstruction and rehabilitation of the entire building, replacement of ELI, central heating, repair of plaster, floors, change of layout of toilets, cloakrooms, boiler rooms, and insulation of the building (outside the roof). Workshops in the building on Volgogradská St - modernisation and addition of material and technical equipment | 3,186,151.39 | 1,766,451.39 | 1,419,700.00 | PD prefunded from Call 80, processed descriptions of equipment |
| Secondary School of Woodworking, Lúčna 1055, Vranov nad Topľou | Improvement of educational infrastructure in the Secondary School of Woodworking, Lúčna 1055, Vranov nad Topľou | Revitalization of workshops for woodworking departments - increase of the workshop area, realization of light prefabricated storage hall and gas boiler room of workshops including heat distribution and heating elements, realization of new electrical distribution, realization of air exhaust and compressed air. Replacement of technological machinery and addition of new types of machinery and equipment (machines for machining of solids, structural boards, surface treatment, CNC machines and transport and handling equipment). | 1,490,054.99 | 948,794.99 | 541,260.00 | PD prefunded from Call 80, processed descriptions of equipment |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| Technical secondary school, Levočská 40, Stará Ľubovňa | Improvement of the educational infrastructure in the Technical Secondary School, Levočská 40, Stará Ľubovňa | Reconstruction of toilets for pupils on all floors of the school, new floors in the corridors, creation of toilets for the disabled, extension of the lift, reconstruction of the welding workshop (floors, partition screens, ventilation, windows) Modernisation of existing classrooms and workshops Creation/establishment of new vocational classrooms and workshops Use of renewable energy sources for teaching, but also to reduce the energy consumption of the school Provision of the infrastructure necessary for the installation and use of equipment | 2,609,627.08 | 789,627.08 | 1,820,000.00 | PD prefunded from Call 80, processed descriptions of equipment |
| VET School J. A. Bata, Štefánikova 39, Svit | Improvement of educational infrastructure in the polytechnic secondary school, Štefánikova 39, Svit | Modernization of three laboratories of applied biological disciplines and a biotechnology laboratory/space in the school building. Addition of printing equipment for vocational training of pupils in the production process of printed materials. Provision of special equipment for vocational training of students in the fields of knitter, tailor and mechanic repairer. Modernisation of a vocational classroom for training in the field of commercial transport worker - transport logistics Modernisation of a vocational classroom for teaching foreign languages and computer science. Establishment of a common room in the school's free space | 2,747,593.99 | 1,920,262.99 | 827,331.00 | PD prefunded from Call 80, processed descriptions of MTZ |
| Technical Industry School, Kukučínova 483/12, Poprad | Improvement of the educational infrastructure in the Technical Secondary School, Kukučínova 483/12, Poprad | Establishment of a multimedia classroom, establishment of a toilet for the disabled, replacement of floors in the hall, new ELI wiring in the hall, establishment of a cabinet for masters in the hall (new building), equipment - Modernization of vocational classrooms and school dormitory | 1,656,282.11 | 660,582.11 | 995,700.00 | PD prefunded from Call 80, processed descriptions of equipment |
| School of Economics, Hotel Management and Services J. Andraščík, Pod Vinbargom 3, Bardejov | Improvement of educational infrastructure in the Secondary School of Economics, Hotel Management and Services of Ján Andraščík, Pod Vinbargom 3, Bardejov | Reconstruction and modernisation of vocational teaching areas, sports grounds, buildings and school grounds Modernisation of the professional kitchen and pastry workshop | 2,561,787.24 | 2,212,574.24 | 349,213.00 | PD prefunded from Call 80, processed descriptions of MTZ |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| Technical secondary school, Družstevná 1474/19, Humenné | Improvement of educational infrastructure in the Technical Secondary School, Družstevná 1474/19, Humenné | Remediation of classrooms in block "D". Replacement of doors, floors, partial replacement of ELI , gas piping for lab. Tables, water supply and sewerage, HVAC in chem. Lab and welding classroom, platform on entrance staircase, minor structural alterations. Classroom equipment for mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, chemistry and digital media graphics | 1,474,694.80 | 322,502.80 | 1,152,192.00 | PD prefinanced from Call 80, processed descriptions of equipment |
| VET polytechnic and services arm. gen. L. Svobodu, Bardejovská 715/18, Svidník | Improvement of the educational infrastructure in VET polytechnic and services arm. gen. L. Svobodu, Bardejovská 715/18, Svidník | Material and technical equipment of the hall for mechanical engineering disciplines Elevator and staircase extension, WC for the disabled | 1,741,582.28 | 278,602.28 | 1,462,980.00 | PD prefinanced from Call 80, processed descriptions of equipment |
| VET Industry School, Duklianska 1, Prešov | Improvement of the educational infrastructure of the Secondary Industrial School of Mechanical Engineering, Duklianska 1, Prešov | Equipment of school workshops with conventional machines and equipment (milling machines, grinding machines, equipment for cutting and bending of material) for the study field of mechanical engineering Equipment of classroom of progressive technologies (3D printing) for the study field of mechatronics and mechanical engineering | 650,000.00 | 0.00 | 650,000.00 | Construction completed from Call 68 completed 12/23 processed MTZ descriptions |
| Secondary School of Electrical Engineering, Hlavná 1400/1, Poprad - Matejovce - project from CuRI I / IROP | Improvement of educational infrastructure in the Secondary School of Electrical Engineering, Hlavná 1400/1, Poprad - Matejovce - phased project | Completion of construction in the case of a phased project from CuRI I/phased IIP | 5,500,000.00 | 5,500,000.00 | 0.00 | it is a phased project - if the investment started in 2023 and qualifies as phased, it is a continuation of the CURI I. project |
| TOTAL | | | 26,510,477.81 | 15,916,295.81 | 10,594,182.00 | |

Source: PSK, 2023.

After the selection of pilot VET schools in 2019, **the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region** continued to support investments in five other secondary vocational schools. Complete project documentation was developed for the modernization and construction of buildings at these schools:

Table 3: Overview of investment activities in pilot secondary vocational schools in the BBSK CuRI 4.

| Applicant/project beneficiary | Project name | Brief description of the project (planned activities) | Estimated project budget in EUR | Estimated project budget in EUR + 20% increase | Estimated implementation period (e.g. 9/2023-12/2027) | Project readiness status (e.g. PD in preparation under IROP call, or "concept only") |
|--|---|--|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <p>Joint School Poltár</p> | <p>Modernization of agriculture and back to glassmaking traditions</p> | <p>The aim of the integrated project is to create a modern centre of lifelong learning in Rovňany at the United School in Poltár with a significant impact on the quality and professionalism of the training of pupils and those interested in education, which prepares for working positions in the conditions of modern agriculture and is focused on the inclusive aspect of education, the modernisation of agricultural education with the introduction of automation and digitalisation elements in the process of crop production, education in the field of vegetable growing, fruit growing, product processing and the establishment of a model centre for the ecological treatment of waste in agricultural production using local resources in order to broaden the training of pupils and to build up an ecological concept of agricultural production productivity. At the same time, the school aims to revitalise and modernise glass production in order to prepare pupils for glass professions and the needs of regional employers in this sector.</p> | <p>3,021,000</p> | <p>3,626,000</p> | <p>1/2024 - 12/2027</p> | <p>preparation of project documentation; project proposal approved</p> |
| <p>Secondary Medical School Banská Bystrica</p> | <p>Let's help put a smile back on patients' faces</p> | <p>The intention of IIB of this school is to increase the capacity of the school by adding a new four-floors building to the north wall of the main building of the Secondary Medical School in Banská Bystrica and thus expand the current capacity of the school and create new, modern, innovative and professionally equipped professional classrooms and laboratories for practical training of pupils and at the same time to create a modern centre of education, education and practical assistance in the field of preventive care, protection and health promotion for the general public, unique of its kind in Slovakia, which will make the educational process and practical skills of pupils more attractive and better, as well as improve the overall reputation and position of the Secondary Medical School in Banská Bystrica at the regional and national level. Thanks to the expansion of the school's spatial capacities, the school wants to increase the number of graduates or health workers leaving the school's gates each year by including in the portfolio of study fields offered from the school year 2022/2023 a new study field of dental assistant in accordance with the State Educational Programme for the study field issued by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic under the number Z35009-2013-OZdV dated 30. 12. 2013. 7. 2013 with effect from 1 September 2013 starting from the 1st year and every second year to open two classes in the study field of practical nurse. More than 90% of the graduates are trained by the school for specific employers.</p> | <p>3,400,000</p> | <p>4,080,000</p> | <p>1/2024 - 12/2027</p> | <p>preparation of project documentation; project proposal approved</p> |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|---|
| Secondary School of Information Technologies, Banská Bystrica | Education for the Future Industry 4.0 | The idea is to create a centre of lifelong and vocational education and training for Industry 4.0 with state-of-the-art technologies and facilities, where all ages can learn and share their experiences with each other. To prepare graduates for the labour market and to motivate students for lifelong learning through activities to be carried out in cooperation with employers and other institutions. Focus on improving the quality of vocational education. To implement activities promoting innovative cooperation between employers - schools (universities, secondary schools, primary schools) and the surrounding area in the field of Industry 4.0. To create a common space for mutual creative cooperation between pupils of all types of schools, teachers, employers, the municipality, the city of BB and the surrounding area. To create a centre of lifelong and vocational education and training for Industry 4.0 of a national character. | 3932514.2 | 4,719,017.04 | 1/2024 - 12/2027 | preparation of project documentation; project proposal approved |
| Secondary Industrial School of Transport, Zvolen | Multitechnological educational polygon in transport, energy and logistics | The intention of the project is to build a modern high-technology equipped training centre in transport with a wide range of professional training activities also in the framework of further education (lifelong learning). By introducing a new study field of Intelligent Systems in Transport and Industry, we reflect the needs of the labour market and offer a progressive study field with great prospects and opportunities for graduates to apply in practice as well as to continue their studies at university. By innovating both the content and the forms of education in the current fields of study, we respond to the requirements of employers on a supra-regional scale. | 4,208,000 | 5,049,000 | 1/2024 - 12/2027 | preparation of project documentation; project proposal approved |
| Technical secondary school, Lučenec | VET for Green Smart Buildings - Lifelong Learning and Training Centre | Establishment of the Centre for Lifelong Learning and Training at the Secondary Vocational Technical School in Lučenec - focusing on green energy, ecology, environment, renewable energy sources, low-energy buildings and smart home. Our intention is to provide education to pupils, vocational teachers and vocational masters at the school through the Lifelong Learning and Training Centre, also for other secondary schools in the Banská Bystrica region, but also to the general public - companies, tradesmen, unemployed, through various retraining and other educational courses, professional competence courses, courses for specific professional skills, educational programmes, training courses aimed at professional development and increase of competences under the guidance of experienced lecturers from their own ranks, as well as in cooperation with experts in the above areas from various associations, unions, companies. | 3,840,000 | 3,840,000 | 1/2024 - 12/2027 | preparation of project documentation; project proposal approved |
| TOTAL | | | 18,401,514 | 21,314,017 | | |

Source: BBSK, 2023.

In 2023, the Jozef Murgaš Secondary School of Electrical Engineering in Banská Bystrica, one of the pilot secondary vocational schools, achieved a notable accomplishment by winning a prestigious award from the European Commission under the Erasmus+ program (2021 – 2027) – the EITA Award (European Innovative Teaching Award). The school participated with the project ‘Modernization in the field of IT – teachers’, which won in the vocational education and training category⁵.

Figure 7: Example of successful project in a pilot secondary school in the BBSK – Modernisation of premises & new equipment



Source: BBSK, 2023 – Jozef Murgaš Secondary School of Electrical Engineering in Banská Bystrica.

The Košice Self-governing Region was the last to join the Catching-up Regions Initiative, in 2021. However, the planning, preparation, and implementation of integrated investment packages for pilot schools were significantly hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the conclusion of the 2014-2020 programming period, and subsequently by the war in Ukraine.

Despite these challenges, the KSK project team, with support from the World Bank, continued in preparing investments for pilot schools. Furthermore, a draft financing model for the proposed investments in the KSK secondary VET was developed, utilizing financial resources from the Integrated Territorial Strategy and the Just Transition Fund.

⁵ Video source: <https://www.erasmusplus.sk/iniciativy-a-sutaze/europska-cena-za-inovativne-vzdelavanie>. The Jozef Murgaš Secondary School of Electrical Engineering also its CuRI investments through a virtual presentation on its website: <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=cNDYuZ8nx8r>

Table 4: Overview of investment activities in pilot secondary vocational schools in the KSK

| NFP applicant/project promoter | Project name | Brief description of the project (planned activities) | Estimated project budget in EUR | Estimated implementation period (e.g. 9/2023-12/2027) | Project implementation status |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Hotel Academy South class 10, Košice | Multifunctional educational centre for the development of the region | The aim of the project is to procure project documentation for the issuance of a building permit and to procure documentation for the issuance of a zoning permit. This documentation will serve as a basis for the construction procedure and subsequent investment activities of the applicant. The project objectives will be achieved through two main activities: Main activity No. 1: Procurement of project documentation for the issuance of a building permit Main activity No. 2: Procurement of project documentation for the issuance of a zoning permit Main activity No. 2: Procurement of project documentation for the issuance of a zoning permit | 11,600,000.00 € | till 2027 | PD in preparation |
| Secondary Technical School, Hviezdoslavova 6, Spišská Nová Ves | A technological learning ecosystem for professional excellence | The following activities are planned within the implementation of the project: - Main activity No.1 - Acquisition of documentation for the issuance of a building permit prepared by an authorized person for the project plan Educational and presentation centre of robotics and intelligent manufacturing systems - Main activity No.2 - Acquisition of documentation for the issuance of a building permit prepared by an authorized person for the project plan Excellence Centre of vocational education and training - Main activity No. 3 - Acquisition of documentation for the issue of a building permit prepared by an authorised person for the project plan Sustainable Learning Environment - Main activity No 4 - Acquisition of documentation for the issue of a building permit prepared by an authorized person for the project plan Informatization and digitisation for practice | 5,800,000.00 € | till 2027 | PD in preparation |
| Secondary Vocational School of Woodworking, Filinského 7, Spišská Nová Ves | Education and training centre for the support of the regional economy in the field of wood processing production | On the basis of the Regional Strategy for Education and Training in Secondary Schools in the Košice Self-Governing Region, there is a need to modernize the infrastructure of vocational schools so that they are able to provide pupils with education at a level corresponding to the current needs of employers. Main activity No. 1 - Acquisition of documentation for the project plan Model timber building (DÚR + DSP) | 5,100,000.00 € | till 2027 | PD in preparation |
| Secondary Vocational School of Trade and Services, Školská 4, Michalovce | Comprehensive training centre for regional gastronomy and tourism | On the basis of the Regional Strategy for Education and Training in Secondary Schools in the Košice Self-Governing Region, there is a need to modernise the infrastructure of vocational schools so that they are able to provide pupils with education at a level corresponding to the current needs of employers. Main activity No 1 - Procurement of documentation for the issue of a building permit prepared by an authorised person | 2,900,000.00 € | till 2027 | PD in preparation |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Agrártechnikai és Gasztronómiai Szolgáltatási Szakközépiskola - Agrártechnikai és Gasztronómiai Szolgáltatási Szakközépiskola, J. Majlátha 2, Pribeník | Eco-friendly, innovative and inclusive | On the basis of the Regional Strategy for Education and Training in Secondary Schools in the Košice Self-Governing Region, there is a need to modernise the infrastructure of vocational schools so that they are able to provide pupils with education at a level corresponding to the current needs of employers. Main activity No 1 Preparation of project documentation | 15,500,000.00 € | till 2027 | PD in preparation |
| Technical secondary school, Rožňava | A modern, inclusive secondary vocational school for the 21st century | On the basis of the Regional Strategy for Education and Training in Secondary Schools in the Košice Self-Governing Region, there is a need to modernise the infrastructure of vocational schools so that they are able to provide pupils with education at a level corresponding to the current needs of employers. Main activity No 1 - Procurement of documentation for the issue of a building permit prepared by an authorised person | 2,600,000.00 € | till 2027 | PD in preparation |
| Secondary School of Electrical Engineering, Komenského 44, Košice | Excelling in ELE, AUT and IT for the 21st century | On the basis of the Regional Strategy for Education and Training in Secondary Schools in the Košice Self-Governing Region, there is a need to modernise the infrastructure of vocational schools so that they are able to provide pupils with education at a level corresponding to the current needs of employers. Main activity No 1 - Procurement of documentation for the issue of a building permit prepared by an authorised person | 4,500,000.00 € | till 2027 | PD in preparation |
| Secondary Medical School | The 21st Century Healthcare Professional - Education at an International Level | On the basis of the Regional Strategy for Education and Training in Secondary Schools in the Košice Self-Governing Region, there is a need to modernise the infrastructure of vocational schools so that they are able to provide pupils with education at a level corresponding to the current needs of employers. Main activity No 1 - Acquisition of documentation for the issue of building permits prepared by an authorised person Main activity No 2 - Acquisition of spatial planning documents | 3,750,000 € | till 2027 | PD in preparation |
| Košice self-governing region | Tokaj Institute - project documentation | The aim of the Modern Educational Centre - Tokaj Institute is to adapt the premises of the school in Viničky. The school will be located in the north-eastern part of the site, with the preservation and renovation of some of the buildings - the main building, the outbuilding, with an emphasis on the visual change of their character while maintaining their function. The main building will have modern digital learning rooms upstairs. The main building will also house specialist classrooms for the Gastronomy and Food Science departments. The farm building will be refurbished to create a school canteen for pupils, staff and other interested parties. Main activity No 1 - Procurement of documentation for the issue of a building permit | 8,000,000 € | till 2027 | PD in preparation |
| | TOTAL | | 59,750,000.00 € | | |

Source: KSK, 2023.

General recommendations for investing in vocational schools

Based on previous experience gained from implementing integrated investment packages in pilot VET schools in the PSK and the BBSK, analyzing the digital readiness of selected secondary schools, consulting on the new EU programming period 2021 – 2027, preparing integrated territorial strategies, and monitoring and evaluating individual projects of pilot vocational schools alongside the results of implemented national projects in the regions, the World Bank team has revised the methodology and implementation strategy for integrated investments in VET. This revision was also driven by changes in financing possibilities for developing secondary vocational schools outside the ESIF demand system, utilizing the regions' own allocations (ITI – integrated territorial investments) and partly the Recovery and Resilience Plan.

The new options allow regions to make faster and more targeted decisions on their investment priorities. In the next phase of support to pilot VET schools, the World Bank team proposes to channel these interventions in the form of investment and non-investment activities towards:

- Smaller innovative, pilot, and experimental activities and projects implemented in co-operation with employers
- Promoting new, digital, and entrepreneurial skills in every sector
- Program design to enable schools to introduce initiatives leading to micro-skills, the participation of the school in international projects, programs and networks
- Support for school in the area of cooperation with the private and non-profit sectors.

Most of the pilot VET schools gained new experience in the preparation and implementation of individual investment projects financed mainly from IROP and REACT-EU programme, Recovery and Resilience Plan and partly from the OP Quality of the Environment, also in the form of open demand-oriented calls with specific conditions for the entities involved in the CuRI. Given the constraints of the outgoing 2014 – 2020 programming period, such as limited time and lengthy procurement processes, it was necessary to phase the implementation of the IIPs and, in some cases, coordinate with relevant Managing Authorities to adjust project timelines and approve the phasing. The World Bank values the flexibility demonstrated by IROP MAs and proposes the following approach for developing a financing model for ready investments in pilot secondary schools:

Given the limited time duration of the outgoing 2014 – 2020 programming period, the lengthy procurement processes and the insufficient time for the physical completion of all investment activities, it was necessary to split the implementation of the IIP pilot schools into individual phases and, for some projects, to agree with the relevant MA on the phasing of the implemented projects. The World Bank highly appreciates the flexibility of the MAs for IROP in the implementation of the investment projects and based on this experience proposes the following approach for the development of the financing model for the ready investments of the pilot schools:

The first step involves developing a long-term school development (and investment) plan aligned with the school's vision and in accordance with the school quality management plan, which includes key target-oriented investments and non-investment activities.

The second step entails assessing the current status of the approved IIPs for each pilot school, including proposed projects and activities. This assessment and potential revision should incorporate new inputs and outputs from implemented national projects. At this stage, it would be desirable to involve employers in the process and objectively evaluate the added value of planned investments, such as through the participation of regional, sub-regional, or local VET platforms.

The third step involves proposing stakeholder involvement and exploring opportunities for project implementation through partnerships. This includes presenting projects to representatives at the local or regional level, with an envisaged link to approved new national projects and defined results, impact, and timetable. Local and regional platforms established as a result of the supported national project (NP) and the CuRI can be leveraged for this step.

The fourth step is to propose a financing model for individual projects as part of the integrated investment packages, along with potential phasing of project implementation (including both investment and non-investment activities).

The fifth step involves finalizing individual projects according to the requirements of the future funder. During this step, schools can leverage the experiences of other applicants and consult with the relevant provider (Managing Authority or other body representing the funder) as needed. It also entails creating an efficient environment for project implementation by establishing professional project teams (including joint teams) and mitigating potential risks such as errors in procurement, unexpected cost increases, frequent changes in guidelines, lack of methodological support from the MA, and low levels of cooperation and coordination among stakeholders.

During the monitoring and evaluation of IIP implementation in the CuRI pilot schools, we paid close attention to critical success factors for IIP design and implementation and identified the following factors:

- Highly professional and administrative capacity and joint project teams
- Sharing experiences and best practices among participating schools and their partners
- Creating sufficient financial capacity at the level of the founder
- Coordination and regular consultation with the funder
- Effective monitoring and evaluation system for projects and project activities and regular assessment of potential risks
- Making use of available technical assistance and expertise

Based on three years of IIP implementation experience, the World Bank team, in cooperation with experts, has prepared a practical guide on the process of preparing and implementing individual projects included in integrated territorial investments. This guide is supplemented with examples of good practices and templates for planning and support forms.

Funding model for VET schools' investment packages

The Partnership Agreement of the Slovak Republic 2021 – 2027 and the approved Programme Slovakia 2021 – 2027 clearly define priorities in the field of education and their connection to the labor market needs within Policy Objective 1 and Policy Objective 4.

Policy Objective 1 (PO1) addresses the existing gaps in science and research spending, digitalization, and the preparedness of the business sector for digital and green transformations. The key objectives of support under PO1 are to align education with labor market demands, especially in technical and scientific education, aiming to increase the number of students in technical and scientific fields by 2027 based on projected labor market needs. Priority support will focus on VET investments aligned with RIS3 domains, as well as establishing a system for continuous vocational education, including retraining and various forms of lifelong learning.

The primary aim of the support for education under Policy Objective 4 (PO4) is to promote the inclusion of disadvantaged groups of pupils, cater to specific groups such as talented individuals, develop soft skills, and reform the VET system to ensure equal opportunities and deliver high-quality inclusive education. Within this objective, VET initiatives can encompass activities supporting special educational needs of pupils and teaching and professional staff, as well as efforts to implement comprehensive, individualized, and holistic approaches to students.

In addition to the activities covered by PO1 and PO4, educational institutions must also be supported in their transformation into entities that equip individuals with the skills and knowledge, including practical expertise, demanded by the labor market.

Table 5: Types of investments in Programme Slovakia 2021 – 2027 by Policy Objectives

| Policy Objective, priority and action | | Type of investment | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------|
| | Priority and action | New infrastructure | Reconstruction of infrastructure | Facilities and equipment | Services, education | Personnel expenses | Scholarships | Other |
| Policy Objective 1 | SC 1.1 | | | | | | | |
| | SC 1.2.2. | | | | | | | |
| | SC 1.4.1* | | | | | | | |
| Policy Objective 2 | CP 2.1.2 | | | | | | | |
| | CP 2.2.2 | | | | | | | |
| Policy Objective 4 | SHC RS04.2/ESO4.2. | | | | | | | |
| | SHC RS04.3/ESO 4.3. | | | | | | | |
| | SC RSO 4.5. | | | | | | | |
| Policy Objective 5 | SC 5.2.1 | | | | | | | |
| | SC 5.2.2 | | | | | | | |

Source: World Bank, 2023. Based on the data from Programme Slovakia 2021 – 2027.

In the programming period 2021 – 2027, all regions and municipalities participating in the CuRI have their own approved allocation of EU funds. These funds can be utilized to support ERDF investments aligned with specific objectives outlined in Program Slovakia. Additionally, these funds can finance projects related to approved integrated investment packages and integrated pilot projects of pilot secondary vocational schools. This level of flexibility empowers regions to tailor implementation to their specific needs, including phasing projects, setting their own timetables, and employing various financial models. It also facilitates more targeted investments based on strategic priorities and allows for thorough pre-project and project preparation.

Moreover, the BBSK and the KSK can leverage funds from the Just Transition Fund. The first call for education-related projects was announced in June 2023, providing additional resources for secondary schools in selected districts within these regions.

Table 6: Overview of EU resources allocated at the regional level

| Region ally-specific objectives of Programme Slovakia | Specific objective 1.4.1 | Specific objective RS04.2 | Specific objective RS04.3 | Specific objective 1.2.2 |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| PSK | 5 945 521 | 26 265 354** | 6 208 174** | 3 342 863 |
| BBSK | 4 260 599 | 18 821 927** | 4 448 819** | 2 395 518 |
| KSK | 4 213 026 | 18 611 761** | 4 399 143** | 2 368 769 |
| Objective of support | Provision and development of skills and competences – technical, new, highly specialized, digital and other, relevant to RIS3 domains, in close cooperation between educational institutions and enterprises. | Support to infrastructural measures complementary to ESF+, the main objective also supports for disadvantaged groups, support taking into account CuRI outcomes, such as integrated support to schools, synergy with RRF Component 6 and 7. | Fighting poverty and promoting social inclusion for all. | Supporting the development of data creation, processing, use and linking within public administration, in particular the development of data platforms and related value-added tools for smart decision-making, planning and management |
| Proposed eligible activities | Support for the creation and delivery of professional qualifications and micro-certificates based on the needs of RIS3 domains, support for the implementation of practical learning for pupils in RIS3 domains (e.g., dual education, practical learning at | Support for desegregation of education and training, debarrierization, material equipment and technical provision, building and modernization of classrooms, construction and reconstruction of school sports | Investments in social infrastructure – completion of community centers, accessible social services for crisis intervention, comprehensive assistance for children experiencing violence, provision | Mandatory activity: IoT, data and platforms Support the development of data generation, processing, use and linkage within public administration, in particular the development of |

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|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| | the employer's workplace), support for the creation or innovation of VET schools based on the needs of RIS3 (innovation, infrastructure, involvement of experts from practice – extra support will be provided for CuRI outputs. | grounds, support for the quality and availability of care provided in the counselling and prevention system. | of affordable housing infrastructure. | data platforms and related value-added tools for smart decision-making, planning and management through: e.g., data platforms, GIS and the use of data and/or analytical outputs from them directly for decision-making, planning and/or management, making data available for analytical purposes. Complementary / optional activities: support for analytical activities contributing to integrated planning and management, improving the quality and resilience of systems and optimizing public administration processes. |
| Eligible applicants | | Regional and other territorial units (302/2001 Coll. on self-government of higher territorial units), including organizations established by them, enterprises, non-governmental organizations | Higher territorial units (302/2001 Coll. on self-government of higher territorial units), including organizations established by them, enterprises, non-governmental organizations | Regional territorial and other units (302/2001 Coll. on self-government of higher territorial units) including organizations established by them, enterprises, non-governmental organizations, interest associations of legal entities that will implement activities in the environment of municipalities |
| Proposed CuRI VET projects | Support for pilot VET schools – IIP projects in line with RIS3 | Support for pilot VET schools – IIP projects that are not aligned | Complementary projects to inclusive | Intelligent data infrastructure for VET management |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| | domains (all pilot schools except Hotel Academies, polytechnics and service-oriented VET schools) | with RIS3 domains, but are primarily focused on inclusion | secondary schools – linking to the CuRI MRC component | in the context of the optimization of the network of secondary schools |
| Important notes | Fields of study and training SK NACE RIS 3 Demand calls beyond the allocation of the region | Pilot project Training Centers Demand calls beyond the allocation of the region | Integrated approach – complementary to the Training Centers project Demand calls beyond the allocation of the region | Demand calls beyond the allocation of the region |
| Legend | ** the allocation of the self-governing regions will probably be increased by the decision of the Ministry of the Interior | | | |

Source: World Bank, 2023, based on data from Programme Slovakia 2021 – 2027 (as of August 31, 2023)

Table 7: Overview of complementary EU resources at regional level

| Region a Specific objectives of Programme Slovakia | Specific objective 5.2.1** | Specific objective 5.2.2** | Specific objective 2.7.4 + use of other | Specific objective 5.2.3** |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| PSK | 2 208 677 | 239 205 | 2 443 728 | 549 594 |
| BBSK | 1 582 753 | 171 416 | 1 751 192 | 393 842 |
| KSK | 1 565 079 | 169 502 | 1 731 638 | 389 445 |
| Objective of support | Support for strategic and analytical capacity building in line with CuRI legislation and know-how. Strategic analytical capacity building will be based on the bottom-up territorial principle and existing territorial structures. | Increase the number, capacity development and technical equipment of staff capacities including SEPs at regional, sub-regional, local and community levels. | Ensuring a quality living environment for the population in settlements. The focus of projects must be on creating and/or strengthening green infrastructure elements. | Investing in safe physical environments for communities, cities and regions. |
| Proposed eligible activities | Analytical and strategic activities, CuRI capacity building and maintenance, implementation of ITS and other integrated investments. | Support for community action, development of cooperation, cross-sectoral and international partnerships, implementation and evaluation of public policies, preparation and implementation of projects at regional and local levels. | Creation and/or reinforcement of green infrastructure elements, eligible public green spaces and dedicated green spaces (schools, nurseries, hospitals, sports grounds, botanical and zoological | Crime prevention (infrastructure as part of an integrated project, strengthening of helping professions, targeted support for primary prevention activities, education and sensitization of |

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|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| | | | gardens), green roofs and green walls, man-made features (fountains, drinking fountains ...). | security forces); Outreach and volunteer work with at-risk groups; Analytical-strategic activities, creation, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of strategic documents in the field of security and prevention of the emergence and deepening of socio-pathological phenomena. |
| Eligible applicants | Self-government, contributory and budgetary organizations of self-government | Self-government, contributory and budgetary organizations of self-government, SEP | Self-government, contributory and budgetary organizations of self-government | Self-government, contributory and budgetary organizations of self-government |
| Proposed CuRI VET projects | IP analytical and project team (capacity building with links to planned NP activities) | Promoting SEP involvement in local/regional platforms and related projects to IIP/IP | IIP/IP projects or complementary green and blue infrastructure projects on vocational school campuses | Support for preventive measures, counselling for at-risk groups of pupils in secondary schools |
| Important notes | In line with strategic documents at regional level. Allocation of the region only. | Complementary NP activities and support for pilot activities. Allocation of the region only. | Allocation also for demand calls. It is recommended to coordinate investments with cities/municipalities where pilot VET schools are located. | Complementary NP activities and support for pilot activities. Allocation of the region only. |
| Legend | ** the allocation of the local authorities will probably be increased by the decision of the MoI for the 'sustainable urban development' (SUD) / 'urban functional area' activities from Objective 5 only outside the SUD area from the allocation of the local authorities. | | | |

Source: World Bank, 2023, based on data from Programme Slovakia 2021 – 2027 (as of August 31, 2023)

In addition to the objectives of the integrated investment packages / integrated investment projects, the World Bank, in collaboration with the regions' Departments of Education, has also developed proposals for national projects focused on inclusion, improving the quality of vocational education and training, promoting digitalization, and enhancing cooperation between secondary vocational schools and employers. These projects have undergone a stepwise consultation process in line with the guidelines for preparing national projects and will be progressively approved by the Programme Slovakia Monitoring Committee by the end of 2024.

Figure 8: Consultation with regional teams on the preparation of national projects



Source: World Bank, 2023.

As ministries and their organizations also prepare national projects, consulting with regions on their national project intentions at the national level helps to define clear boundaries between national projects and regional-level NPs under preparation. This consultation is essential to avoid duplication and ensure that the supported projects achieve complementary and synergistic effects.

The following aspects were considered for the preparation of NP proposals:

- Differentiating the new projects of ŠIOV/SIVET focusing on Centers of Vocational Excellence support and quality management in VET, as well as NIVAM initiatives related to POP3 and future plans for school management concerning systemic support for mental health;
- Delineating roles among mentors, regional career centers, and educational professional staff;
- Establishing boundaries between other national projects under development in the areas of inclusion and digitalization.

Table 8: Overview of proposed CuRI national education projects per region

| Applicant | Specific objective | Project name | Expected costs | Planned implementation | Project intention |
|---|--|---|-----------------|------------------------|---|
| National projects under consultation at national level | | | | | |
| PSK | Quality and inclusive education/ ESO4.5 -4P2 | Improvement of secondary vocational education in the Prešov Region II | EUR 6.5 million | 12/23 – 11/26 | The aim of the national project is to increase the quality of vocational education and training by linking the education system with the needs of the labor |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------|---------------|--|
| | | | | | market, involving employers in the development and innovation of the content of education, developing the professional skills and competences of teaching staff and promoting an inclusive environment in schools. |
| BBSK | Quality and inclusive education/ ESO4.5 – 4P2 | Modernization of secondary education in BBSK National project CuRI BBSK II | EUR 9 million | 12/23 – 11/26 | Increasing the number of graduates from secondary schools in the Banská Bystrica region, who will graduate in fields of study demanded by the labor market in the region and who will be equipped with transferable skills such as critical thinking, reading, financial, digital and mathematical literacy and soft skills such as teamwork and flexibility. |
| KSK | Quality and inclusive education/ ESO4.5 – 4P2 | Creating a regional ecosystem for excellent vocational education in the Košice Self-governing Region | EUR 4.8 million | 01/24 – 12/26 | The intention of the national project is to create a quality/excellent, educational, technologically innovative, functional regional ecosystem in vocational education and training for the acquisition of professional competencies of graduates of selected secondary vocational schools. |
| KSK | ESO4.5, RSO 4.5 | Training center for students with lower educational attainment (complementary project with the NP planned for MRC) ESO4.5 Enhancing the quality, inclusiveness, efficiency and market relevance of education and training systems | EUR 2 million | 01/24 – 12/26 | The intention of the proposed pilot project in the form of a national project is the creation and operation of training centers (TC) for practical education of students with lower secondary vocational education who have dropped out of education before the age of 18 and are registered at the Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family as recipients of social benefits, form the NEET group or are already at risk of dropping out of education before the age of 18 without qualifications during their attendance at a secondary vocational school. |
| National projects before the national consultation process | | | | | |
| KSK | Quality and inclusive education/ RSO4.2- 4P2 or FST | Digital infrastructure for shared infrastructure of technically-oriented secondary schools – Technological | EUR 2 million | 07/24 – 07/26 | The intention of the project is to build a model shared digital infrastructure for selected technically oriented secondary schools in the KSK according to modern standards. |

| | | | | | |
|------------|--|--|-----------------|---------------|--|
| | | Campus | | | |
| PSK | 1P1 Science, research and innovation /RSO1.2.2 | Digital infrastructure for strategic management of VET (complementary project with NP planned in the field of digitalization of public administration) | EUR 2.5 million | 07/24 – 07/26 | The aim of the project is to create a data platform including infrastructure for strategic management in the field of education. |

Source: World Bank, 2023 (as of September 5, 2023).

Conclusions and recommendations

After extensive consultations among representatives of the regions, the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization as the Managing Authority (MA) for the Programme Slovakia 2021 – 2027, partners, and other stakeholders regarding the financing options for approved investments in Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the regions participating in the CuRI, it is essential to reach agreements on the conditions for the provision of ESIF resources, the prioritization of investments, but also on the method of financing priority projects and the territorial dialogue on further investments in the region.

The World Bank team recommends approval of the priority IIP/IP pilot projects in the form of the IIP/IP project plans by the regional Partnership Board by the end of 2024.

From a legislative perspective, local territorial self-government holds an equal position in relation to municipalities, forming a natural partnership that needs to be considered in the development of vocational education and training. Given that secondary school students come from primary school environments, where municipalities are the primary founders of these schools, it is important to keep local authorities regularly informed where pilot projects are being implemented. This ensures synergies and, in urban functional areas (MFOs), may lead to desirable joint integrated projects for the area's prosperity.

The situation in specific areas varies according to the requirements of the local economy, and therefore proposals for improvements must be targeted and not blanket (place-based approach).

For the development of VET and increasing its attractiveness in the future, it is essential to communicate examples of good practice, which should serve as a source of inspiration, motivation, and useful starting points for other regions, taking into account their differences, uniqueness, specificities, limitations, but with the shared economic and social perspectives.

We observe insufficient progress in the utilization of VET centers as supra-company centers that bring together multiple employers, schools, and school founders to share modern equipment and human capacity.

Equally important is the development of a system to track graduate employability with easily understandable results for the public, and to include regional human resource strategies in school performance plans.

General recommendations

The challenges and opportunities facing the EU, Slovakia, and all three regions are significant enough to drive irreversible changes in the future and shift away from short-term policy responses to immediate skills challenges towards holistic approaches aimed at achieving a more technologically advanced, greener, and fairer future. The experience and results of the activities undertaken lead to the following recommendations:

Moving away from so-called silo thinking is crucial. The lack of an integrated approach and the absence of cross-sectoral cooperation are incompatible with the rapid and complex changes brought about by the digital and green transformations in VET. VET needs to be more inclusive and resilient to external shocks and crises. Traditional boundaries between the world of VET, employment, and careers are blurring. Trends and challenges may be national or global, but sectoral needs and local realities define how they can be addressed. VET Centers of Excellence emerging from selected CuRI pilot schools allow for comprehensive skills management and expanded opportunities for collaboration, helping to exploit synergies and foster innovative solutions. Integrated Territorial Investments are a tool to create the right conditions for VET and skills provision in line with several policy objectives of Programme Slovakia and to take advantage of better coordination between skills policy and other regional/local policy areas such as economic growth, innovation, social justice, and migration.

The role of VET as a change agent is critical in the context of the green transformation, transitioning to carbon neutrality, and embracing a circular economy. This necessitates a 'recalibration' of VET systems to develop new programs and update existing ones, focusing on increasing the share of 'green VET' that emphasizes skills for the green transformation. Understanding whether labor or skills shortages are temporary or structural will enable regions to make informed decisions and set short and long-term priorities for VET. Urgent short-term shortages should be addressed swiftly, for example through short courses leading to micro-certificates. For shortages expected to persist, such as those related to transitioning to new business models, considerations should be made for changes in training content and adjustments to entire training programs.

Investment in STEM/STEAM and digital skills is essential for the success of the twin transformation. There is a need for increased support for STEM/STEAM education and the promotion of selected professions, along with significant expansion of digital skills training at all levels. Focusing on skills associated with the twin transformation also requires strengthening labor market policies, stimulating labor market participation, and implementing activation measures. This includes integrating middle-skilled individuals, especially women and other groups with low participation rates, and targeting occupations and skill profiles that are in high demand.

Understanding and addressing the skills gap is crucial. The evidence from the four years of CuRI VET in all three regions reveals a lack of consistency in measuring shortages and assessing mismatches between labor market demand and supply at the local and regional levels. Furthermore, the (lack of) available data pose challenges in drawing definitive conclusions about the future trajectory of VET supply. Policy makers must reflect on the appropriate response, considering its intensity, time horizon, and target groups of individuals and/or employers. They need to determine the VET system's response, whether it involves high-quality training, improvements in working conditions and human resource management practices, new curricula, or other measures.

Empowering players at the local level is essential to achieving the digital and green ambitions of Europe, Slovakia, and the regions. Achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal (EGD) and addressing labor market mismatches requires concerted action at the local level, engaging local policy makers, employers, VET providers, social partners, and citizens. Transparent cooperation is essential for developing shared visions that can guide efforts to tackle current challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities. Local SMEs can play a critical role as catalysts for change. Cities and regions, represented by local and regional authorities, must foster stronger connections across different policy areas. In sub-regions experiencing declining employment due to ecological transformations, and in smaller urban centers grappling with infrastructure financing or skills shortages, policies must be integrated at the local level to stimulate intra-regional mobility and address labor market exhaustion and skill shortages. Addressing labor market mismatches also involves tackling horizontal disparities. This can be achieved through campaigns to enhance attractiveness, offering incentives, and prioritizing investments in skills required by the local economy.

Employer involvement. Amidst the profound transformations driven by digitalization, automation, and the embrace of circular and sustainable production methods, businesses must undergo a fundamental shift in their models. Employers require deep understanding of these changes, recognizing their benefits, and translating evolving paradigms into concrete business practices. This includes embedding circularity into key performance indicators and actively participating in skills ecosystems. Employers should collaborate with VET representatives to identify the skills needed for their own transition, invest in their development, and create expanded opportunities for their application.

Annexes

Annex 1: Overview of activities implemented in CuRI regions in the nutshell

Prešov self-governing region (PSK)

| Timetable | Name of activity | Activity description | Outputs |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| May 2022 – June 2022 | <p>Analysis of EU, national and regional strategic documents</p> <p>Identification of available data on schools' digital infrastructure, digital skills of the teachers and trainers</p> <p>Participation in the preparation of infographics</p> <p>Press release for the media about the reconstruction of the secondary school in Stará Ľubovňa</p> <p>Visit of WB experts to selected schools in the PSK</p> | <p>The analysis of strategic documents at all levels was carried out in order to define the scope and content of the upcoming survey on digital maturity in selected secondary schools in the PSK.</p> | <p>Overview of the relevant strategic documents forming the strategic framework and background to the study (see special Annex 2 “digital report”)</p> |
| July – August 2022 | <p>Consultations with digital learning stakeholders</p> <p>Secondary data analysis</p> | <p>The definition of the scope and content of the upcoming survey on digital readiness in selected secondary schools in the PSK was consulted with stakeholders to avoid duplication of activities and to create space for obtaining data for a secondary analysis</p> | <p>Overview of existing secondary data sources and analysis of secondary data</p> <p>Press release for the media about the secondary school in Kežmarok to obtain a subsidy for equipment</p> |
| September 2022 | <p>Workshop for representatives of PSK, KSK and BBSK schools on the digitalization of VET I</p> <p>Consultation on the implemented IIP within five pilot schools</p> <p>Consultation on new integrated projects of nine pilot schools</p> | <p>The aim of the joint workshop for all regions involved in the CuRI was to present the results of the analyses and to verify the regions' expectations from the analysis of digital maturity in the selected secondary schools, to agree on a common procedure, individual steps and timetable for the implementation of</p> | <p>PPT presentation on digital learning approaches and practices</p> <p>Draft timetable for the implementation of the survey in selected secondary schools</p> <p>Inputs to the Survey Operations Manual</p> <p>Measures to eliminate the risks of IIP projects</p> |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| | | the survey. As part of the continuous monitoring, consultations were carried out with the intention of eliminating possible risks to the schools' investment activities. Financial requirements of the proposed IP were assessed. | |
| October – November 2022 | <p>Selection of the survey sample of secondary schools</p> <p>Workshop on the digitalization of education II</p> <p>Expert group on questionnaire design and development of questionnaires</p> <p>Creation of a survey manual on digitalization</p> | The selection of the survey sample in each region was carried out in close cooperation with the EDUDEPT PSK and the KSK were joined by the BBSK in November 2022. The selection of the sample was in line with the strategic documents of the regions, and the CuRI pilot schools were also included in the sample. | <p>Criteria for selecting secondary schools for the survey sample</p> <p>PPT presentation from the workshop on the digitalization of education II</p> <p>Questionnaires for the pilot validation (see special Annex 2 “digital report”)</p> <p>Survey Implementation Manual/Technical Report</p> |
| December 2022 | Pilot validation of questionnaires in secondary schools | Pilot validation of the questionnaires was conducted in three secondary schools. Three questionnaires were tested – for school management representatives, school, and teaching staff. | <p>Operational Manual for the regions and secondary schools</p> <p>Questionnaires after pilot validation in online format</p> |
| January 2023 – March 2023 | <p>Informing selected secondary schools in the PSK, KSK and BBSK about participation in the survey</p> <p>Quick Self-Assessment for secondary schools</p> <p>In-depth survey on a sample of secondary schools</p> <p>Consultation on integrated projects of schools</p> | The EDUDEPT informed the individual schools about the implementation of the survey by letter. The survey was conducted in the selected secondary schools with the methodological assistance of the World Bank team in the months of January – March 2023 online and hybrid (in one time online or in-person). On a voluntary basis, the schools could also use EU-level tools and | <p>Comprehensive information for selected secondary schools</p> <p>Final versions of the questionnaires including self-assessment</p> <p>Preliminary report on the implementation and results of the survey</p> <p>Proposals for modification of the IP of the secondary schools</p> |

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| | | compare/use the results from other surveys already carried out (Digital Coalition, etc.) as part of the self-assessment. | Press release for the media about the school building in Lomnička, the digital survey and the reconstruction of the secondary school of Ľ. Podjavorinská |
| April 2023 – June 2023 | <p>Workshop of focus groups</p> <p>Compilation of survey data into a report on survey results and draft recommendations</p> <p>Consultations on the upcoming NP PSK II</p> | Preliminary results of the survey at selected secondary schools were presented to focus group workshop participants in May 2023 to verify the survey findings, gather additional qualitative data, and complete draft recommendations. At the same time, consultations were held with various actors in the digital education sector in relation to the preparation of digital investment packages. | <p>PPT presentation of preliminary survey results</p> <p>Press release for the media</p> <p>Summary report on the results of the focus group workshop</p> <p>Draft NP PSK II</p> |
| July 2023 – December 2023 | <p>Presentation of the results of the Digital Maturity Survey of secondary schools</p> <p>Preparation of draft digital investment packages</p> <p>Consultations on further financing of IIPs and phasing of projects</p> <p>Consultations on the upcoming NP PSK II</p> | The results of the survey were shared with all stakeholders. The recommendations of the survey form the input for the design of digital investment packages for each type of VET school or secondary school and suggestions for the way forward. The termination of the ESIF funding 2014 -2020 required the proposal of alternative funding for the unfinished investments and new investments of the pilot VET schools. | <p>Final report on the results of the survey on digital learning in selected secondary schools</p> <p>Design of digital investment packages for selected secondary schools</p> <p>Proposal for a financing model for DIPs, IPs and IIPs phased investments</p> |

Source: World Bank, 2023.

Banská Bystrica self-governing region (BBSK)

| Timetable | Name of activity | Activity description | Outputs |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| May 2022 – June 2022 | <p>Consultation on the implementation of the Action Plan</p> <p>Study visits to the BBSK VET schools and</p> | The aim of the consultation on the implementation of the Action Plan was to elaborate a more detailed implementation | <p>Implementation of the Action Plan</p> <p>Study tour press release and photo documentation</p> |

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| | secondary school in the Czech Republic | <p>procedure and timetable.</p> <p>Capacity building of the BBSK VET schools and secondary school was ensured by the preparation and implementation of a study trip to the Czech Republic.</p> | |
| July – August 2022 | Monitoring the implementation of IIP/IP | Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation is part of the technical assistance provided by the World Bank team to the BBSK team | <p>Records of monitoring visits and recommendations</p> <p>Press release on the modernization of the Joint School in Poltár</p> |
| September 2022 | Workshop for representatives of the PSK, KSK and BBSK schools on digitalization of VET I | The aim of the workshop was to present the results of the analyses and to check the expectations of the BBSK in the field of digitalization of VET. | <p>PPT presentation on digital learning approaches</p> <p>Proposal for a survey implementation procedure in selected secondary schools</p> <p>Decision of the BBSK team to participate in the survey</p> |
| October – November 2022 | <p>Selection of the survey sample of secondary schools</p> <p>Workshop on the digitalization of education II</p> <p>Visit to the KIA Training Centre</p> | The selection of the survey sample in the BBSK was carried out in close cooperation with its education department. The selection of the sample was carried out by the BBSK team and was in line with the strategic documents of the regions and the CuRI pilot schools were also included in the sample. | <p>Criteria for selecting the secondary schools in the survey sample</p> <p>List of BBSK secondary schools included in the sample</p> |
| December 2022 | Consultations on the preparation of the survey with the BBSK team | The BBSK was involved in the preparation of draft questionnaires and the possibility of systematic data collection from various sources for the needs of the BBSK for its own activities in the field of digitalization. | <p>Operational Manual for EDUDEPT and secondary schools</p> <p>Approved versions of online questionnaires</p> <p>Press releases about the modern education center at the secondary school in Lučenec, and the secondary schools in Poltár and Zvolen.</p> |

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| <p>January 2023 – March 2023</p> | <p>Informing selected BBSK secondary schools about participation in the Rapid Self-Assessment of secondary schools</p> <p>In-depth survey on a sample of secondary schools in the BBSK</p> | <p>The BBSK education department informed the individual secondary schools about the implementation of the survey by letter. The survey was conducted online and hybrid (In one time online and in-person) in selected secondary schools with methodological support of the World Bank team in the months of January – March 2023.</p> | <p>Comprehensive information for selected secondary schools</p> <p>Final versions of the questionnaires, including self-assessment</p> <p>Preliminary report on the implementation and results of the survey</p> |
| <p>April 2023 – June 2023</p> | <p>Workshop of focus groups</p> <p>Compilation of survey data into a report on survey results and draft recommendations</p> <p>Preparation of best practice examples for the needs of the pilot VET schools</p> <p>Study visit in the training center of KIA Motors Slovakia for selected directors of secondary schools in the BBSK</p> | <p>Preliminary results of the survey at selected secondary schools were presented to focus group workshop participants in May 2014 to verify the survey findings, gather additional qualitative data, and complete draft recommendations. At the same time, consultations were held with various actors in the field of digital education in relation to the preparation of digital investment packages.</p> | <p>Summary report on the results of the focus group workshop</p> <p>PPT presentation of preliminary survey results</p> <p>Press release for the media</p> |
| <p>July 2023 – December 2023</p> | <p>Presentation of the survey results to relevant stakeholders</p> <p>Preparation of draft digital investment packages</p> <p>Consultations on further financing of IIP/IP and phasing of projects</p> <p>Preparation of a presentation publication of the results of the pilot schools</p> <p>Consultations on the preparation of NP BBSK II</p> | <p>The results of the survey were shared with all the stakeholders in the region. The recommendations of the survey form an input to the design of digital investment packages for each type of secondary school in the BBSK and proposals for the way forward.</p> <p>Material for the creation of the presentation publication was collected online, including photo documentation,</p> | <p>Final report on the results of the survey on digital learning in selected schools</p> <p>Design of digital investment packages for selected secondary schools</p> <p>Proposal for a presentation publication on the results of the pilot school projects</p> <p>Intent of NP BBSK II</p> |

Source: World Bank, 2023.

Košice self-governing region (KSK)

| Timetable | Name of activity | Activity description | Outputs |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|
| May 2022 – June 2022 | <p>Consultation on the detailed process and timetable for the implementation of the Action Plan</p> <p>Consultations with VET stakeholders in the territory</p> <p>Study visit of KSK secondary school representatives to the Czech Republic</p> | <p>Due to the limited capacity of the KSK education department, it was necessary to elaborate a detailed procedure for the implementation of the approved CuRI VET IV Action Plan and to consult the involvement of relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>The World Bank's technical assistance also included capacity building of the KSK education department and pilot schools through transfer of experience in the form of a study tour.</p> | <p>Timetable and procedure for the implementation of the Action Plan</p> <p>Proposal for the creation of a regional platform</p> <p>Press release and photo documentation</p> |
| July – August 2022 | <p>Monitoring visits to pilot schools</p> <p>Preparation of documents for analysis according to the needs of the strategic investor and the Campus study</p> <p>Consultations on the working draft of NP KSK I</p> | <p>Changes in the financing options for the proposed investments of the pilot schools required monitoring visits and individual consultations with representatives of the pilot schools.</p> <p>Based on the skilled workforce requirements of a future major investor, the data collected by the World Bank from the surveys was again analyzed and used as input for the design of the Campus.</p> <p>Capacity building of KSK secondary schools was to be ensured through financial support of NP KSK I</p> | <p>Records of monitoring visits</p> <p>Campus concept design</p> <p>Working draft of NP KSK I</p> |
| September 2022 | Workshop for representatives of the | The aim of the workshop for all regions involved | PPT presentation on digital learning |

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| | <p>PSK, KSK, and BBSK</p> <p>Impact analysis of the strategic investor's input on IIP proposals</p> <p>Workshop on the VET quality assurance framework</p> <p>Concept design Training centers</p> | <p>was to present the results of the secondary analyses and to verify the expectations of the KSK from the analysis of digital readiness in selected secondary schools, to agree on a common procedure and timetable for the implementation of the survey in the territory of the KSK. An extra requirement of the KSK was also the assessment of the readiness of secondary schools to introduce digital tools for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> | <p>approaches</p> <p>Draft timetable for the implementation of the survey in selected secondary schools</p> <p>Impact analysis and proposal for updating IIPs</p> <p>PPT presentation on the Campus for technical VET</p> <p>PPT presentation on Quality assessment of VET</p> <p>Methodology for the development of school quality plans</p> |
| October – November 2022 | <p>Selection of the survey sample of secondary schools</p> <p>Consultation on the Draft Concept Training Centers</p> <p>Workshop on the digitalization of education II</p> <p>Visit to KIA Training Centre</p> <p>Establishment of a working group on VET inclusion</p> | <p>The selection of the survey sample was carried out in close cooperation with the KSK schools to ensure comparability of results between regions and the selection of the sample was in line with the strategic documents of the regions. CuRI pilot schools were also included in the sample.</p> | <p>Criteria for selecting the secondary schools in the survey sample</p> <p>Update of the Training Centers concept design</p> <p>PPT presentation on the digitalization of VET</p> <p>Press release and photo documentation from the study visit</p> |
| December 2022 | <p>Consultations on the preparation of the survey with the KSK education department</p> <p>Consultation on the design concept of the Training Centre</p> | | <p>Operational Manual for region and secondary schools</p> <p>Update of the Training Centers concept design</p> |
| January 2023 – March 2023 | <p>Informing selected secondary schools of the KSK about participation</p> | <p>The KSK educational department informed the individual schools about the</p> | <p>Comprehensive information for selected secondary schools</p> |

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| | <p>in the survey</p> <p>Rapid Self-Assessment of the schools</p> <p>In-depth survey on a sample of secondary schools</p> <p>Consultation on the design of the Training Centers pilot project</p> <p>Consultation on the draft new VET legislation</p> | <p>implementation of the survey by letter. The survey was conducted online and hybrid and in-person in the months of January – March 2023 in selected secondary schools with the methodological assistance of the World Bank team.</p> | <p>Final versions of the questionnaires including self-assessment</p> <p>Preliminary report on the implementation and results of the survey</p> <p>PPT presentation on the Training centers pilot project in the KSK</p> |
| April 2023 – June 2023 | <p>Workshop of focus groups</p> <p>Compilation of survey data into a report on survey results and draft recommendations</p> <p>Consultation on the draft NP KSK I</p> <p>Consultations with stakeholders on the proposal for a quality assessment system for secondary schools in the KSK</p> <p>Study visit in the training center of KIA Motors Slovakia for selected directors of secondary schools in the KSK</p> | <p>Preliminary results of the survey at selected secondary schools were presented to the focus group workshop participants to verify the survey findings, obtain additional qualitative data and complete the draft recommendations. At the same time, consultations with various actors in the field of digital education were also carried out in the context of the quality assessment system of VET schools and in the context of the preparation of digital investment packages.</p> <p>Experience from the implementation of school quality plans, evaluation of the readiness of schools for change and after consultations with experts, a working draft of the schools' quality evaluation system in the KSK was prepared.</p> | <p>Summary report on the results of the focus group workshop</p> <p>PPT presentation of preliminary survey results</p> <p>Press release for the media</p> <p>Methodology for the development of school quality plans – update</p> <p>Proposal for a quality evaluation system for secondary schools in the KSK</p> |
| July 2023 – December 2023 | <p>Presentation of survey results</p> <p>Preparing digital investment packages</p> | <p>The results of the survey were shared with all stakeholders. The recommendations from the survey form an input</p> | <p>Final report on the results of the survey on digital learning in selected</p> <p>Design of digital investment packages for</p> |

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| | <p>Consultations on further financing of IIPs and phasing of projects</p> <p>Study visit to the Czech Republic and Austria</p> <p>Consultation on financing options for proposed investments</p> | <p>to the design of digital investment packages for each type of secondary school and proposals for the way forward.</p> | <p>selected secondary schools</p> <p>Financing model for planned investments</p> <p>Study tour report and photo documentation</p> |
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Source: World Bank, 2023.

Annex 2: Digital maturity assessment in secondary education.

Analysis of, and Recommendations for, Public Policies on Digital Transformation of Secondary Schools. World Bank, September 2023 – attached as a separate document.

Annex 3: CuRI VET schools in the media (from January 2022 till September 2023)

JANUARY 2022

The Banská Bystrica Region wants to renovate eight secondary vocational schools for 31.5 million euros

- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/banska-bystrica-kraj-chce-obnovit-osem-strednych-odbornych-skol-za-315-mil-eur/>

11.2 million euros will be invested in secondary schools in Spiš

- <https://spisskabela.sk/mesto/aktuality/na-strednych-skolach-na-spisi-sa-preinvestuje-112-milionov-eur/>
- <https://www.obecne-noviny.sk/clanky/na-strednych-skolach-na-spisi-sa-preinvestuje-11%2C2-milionov-eur>
- <https://presov.zoznam.sk/spojenu-skolu-na-jarmocnej-ulici-zmodernizuju-vdaka-eurofondom-2/>
- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/58244/spojenuskoluv-starej-lubovnizmodernizuju-vdaka-eurofondom>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/stara-lubovna-spojenu-skolu-na-jarmocnej-ulici-zmodernizuju-vdaka-eurofondom/>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2022012600000052>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/spojenu-skolu-v-starej-lubovni-zmoder/607154-clanok.html>
- <https://regiony.zoznam.sk/spojenu-skolu-na-jarmocnej-ulici-zmodernizuju-vdaka-eurofondom/>

Kežmarok AGRO and Technical School to be modernised for more than 5 million euros

- <https://sita.sk/vskolstve/kezmarsku-potravinarsku-a-technicku-skolu-zmodernizuju-za-viac-ako-5-milionov-eur/>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2022012500000164>

FEBRUARY 2022

New workshops for more than 1.5 million euros will be added to the school in Svidník

- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/58559/vo-svidnickejskolepribudnu-nove-dielne-za-viac-ako-15-miliona-eur>
- <https://presovsky-vecernik.sk/spravy/presov-a-region/vo-svidnickej-skole-sa-vybuduju-nove-dielne-pre-odborny-vyucvik/>
- <https://obce.tasr.sk/clanok/6194/vo-svidnickej-skole-pribudnu-nove-dielne-za-viac-ako-1,5-miliona-eur>
- <https://www.ahoj.tv/clanky/clanok/8101/>
- <https://www.obecne-noviny.sk/clanky/vo-svidnickej-skole-pribudnu-nove-dielne-za-viac-ako-1%2C5-miliona-eur>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/vo-svidnickej-skole-pribudnu-nove-di/617920-clanok.html>

Secondary Vocational School of Services and Forestry in Banská Štiavnica awaits modernization

- <https://myziar.sme.sk/c/22849828/strednu-odbornu-skolu-sluzieb-a-lesnictva-v-banskej-stiavnici-caka-modernizacia.html>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/strednu-odbornu-skolu-sluzieb-a-lesnictva-v-banskej-stiavnici-caka-modernizacia-za-37-miliona-eur/>

MARCH 2023

Secondary Industrial School Jozefa Murgaša is awaiting modernization for EUR 6.5 million

- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/banska-bystrica-strednu-priemyselnu-skolu-murgasa-caka-modernizacia-za-65-mil-eur/>

APRIL 2022

Eight secondary schools can apply for more than 23 million euros for better quality education

- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/58803/osem-sos-sa-moze-uchadzat-o-vyse-23-mil-eur-na-kvalitnejšie-vzdelavanie>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2022041200000262>
- <https://mirri.gov.sk/aktuality/cko/vicepremierka-remisova-zvysujeme-sance-absolventov-odbornych-skol-na-kvalitnejšie-stredoskolske-odborne-vzdelavanie-v-banskobystrickom-kraji-ide-z-irop-23-milionov-eur/>

VET School Ľ. Podjavorinská in Prešov is preparing projects for almost 870.000 euros

- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/58777/spojena-skola-l-podjavorinskej-v-presove-chysta-projekty-za-takmer-870000-eur>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/spojena-skola-l-podjavorinskej-chyst/625353-clanok.html>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/presov-spojena-skola-l-podjavorinskej-chysta-projekty-za-takmer-870000-eur/>

MAY 2022

Stara Ľubovňa Joint School is being renovated for almost 7.6 million euros

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/stara-lubovna-spojenu-skolu-obnovu/637290-clanok.html>

- <https://www.obecne-noviny.sk/clanky/spojenu-skolu-obnovuju-za-takmer-7%2C6-miliona-eur>
- <https://www.eufondy.sk/stara-lubovna-spojenu-skolu-obnovuju-za-takmer-76-miliona-eur/>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/stara-lubovna-spojenu-skolu-obnovuju-za-takmer-76-miliona-eur/>

Banská Bystrica region can attract pupils to secondary vocational schools, millions of euros are earmarked for modernization

- <https://sita.sk/vskolstve/banskobystricky-kraj-chce-prilakat-ziakov-na-stredne-odborne-skoly-na-modernizaciu-pojdu-miliony-eur/>
- <https://touchit.sk/vicepremierka-remisova-na-modernizaciu-strednych-odbornych-skol-davame-dalsich-viac-ako-10-milionov-eur/417178>
- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/59015/mirri-sos-z-banskobystrickeho-kraja-mozu-ziskat-vyse-10-milionov-eur>
- <https://mirri.gov.sk/aktuality/cko/vicepremierka-remisova-na-modernizaciu-strednych-odbornych-skol-davame-dalsich-viac-ako-10-milionov-eur-mladi-ludia-potrebuju-lepsie-vzdelanie-a-perspektivu-najst-si-dobru-pracu/>

The school in Viničky in the Tokaj region should become a wine academy

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/v-regione-tokaja-by-sa-mala-vzniknut/632475-clanok.html>
- <https://www.obecne-noviny.sk/clanky/zo-skoly-vo-vinickach-v-regione-tokaja-by-sa-mala-stat-vinarska-akademia>
- <https://www.kosiceonline.sk/zo-skoly-vo-vinickach-na-tokaji-bude-vinarska-akademia>

JUNE 2022

CuRI 3 Final Conference in Košice – Catching-up Regions is already helping three regions in Slovakia

- <https://eufondy.sk/pomoc-z-iniciativy-catching-up-regions-ocenili-tri-zapojene-kraje/>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/pomoc-z-iniciativy-catching-up-regions/640755-clanok.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2022061400000382>
- <https://po-kraj.sk/sk/samosprava/media/tlacove-spravy/ts2022/region/catching-up-regions-pomaha-trom-krajom-slovensku.html>
- <https://web.vucke.sk/sk/kompetencie/regionalny-rozvoj/aktuality/catching-up-regions-pomaha-trom-krajom-slovensku.html>
- <https://www.slovenskyreporter.sk/kosicka-zupa-hostila-zastupcov-svetovej-banky-europskej-komisie-aj-krajov/>
- <https://www.ahoj.tv/clanky/clanok/8464/>
- <https://www.obecne-noviny.sk/clanky/catching-up-regions-pomaha-uz-trom-krajom-na-slovensku>
- <https://www.slovenskyreporter.sk/kosicka-zupa-hostila-zastupcov-svetovej-banky-europskej-komisie-aj-krajov/>

Experts from the World Bank and the European Commission visited selected secondary schools in PSK

- <https://po-kraj.sk/sk/samosprava/media/tlacove-spravy/ts2022/skolstvo/experti-svetovej-banky-europskej-komisie-navstivili-vybrane-sos-psk.html>
- <https://www.povecernik.sk/spravy/presov-a-region/experti-svetovej-banky-a-europskej-komisie-navstivili-vybrane-stredne-skoly-v-kraji/>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/dve-stredne-skoly-na-spisi-prechadza/641238-clanok.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2022061600000207>
- <https://www.eufondy.sk/cez-iniciativu-catching-up-regions-islo-na-skoly-na-spisi-viac-ako-14-mil-eur/>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/cez-iniciativu-catching-up-regions-islo-na-skoly-na-spisi-viac-ako-14-mil-eur/>
- <https://www.obecne-noviny.sk/clanky/dve-stredne-skoly-na-spisi-prechadzaju-velkou-obnovou-v-ramci-iniciativy-curi>

Representatives of Banská Bystrica secondary schools drew inspiration in the Zlín region

- <https://www.priekopnik.sk/spravodajstvo/zastupcovia-banskobystrických-sos-cerpali-inspiráciu-na-najlepších-stredných-skolach-v-zlínskom-kraji/>
- <https://www.zkola.cz/expert-evropske-komise-a-svetove-banky-stefan-chudoba-navstivil-sps-otrokovice/>

JULY 2022

Modernization of the Poltár Joint School is to support education in the fields of glassmaking and agriculture

- <https://mynovohrad.sme.sk/c/22951303/efektivne-zosietovanie-moze-priniest-skolstvu-potrebných-luďi-pre-nasu-lepsiu-buducnost.html>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/poltar-modernizacia-spojenej-skoly-poltar-ma-podporit-vzdelavanie-v-oblastiach-sklarstva-aj-polnohospodarstva/>
- <https://www.eufondy.sk/poltar-modernizacia-spojenej-skoly-poltar-ma-podporit-vzdelavanie-v-oblastiach-sklarstva-aj-polnohospodarstva/>

The region (PSK) implements investment actions for 1.6 million euros at four schools

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/presovsky-kraj-realizuje-na-skolach/650525-clanok.html>
- <https://www.obecne-noviny.sk/clanky/kraj-realizuje-investicne-akcie-za-1%2C6-miliona-eur-na-styroch-skolach>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/presov-sedem-zupnych-skol-prechadza-rekonstrukciou-za-celkovo-15-milionov-eur/>

AUGUST 2022

Major investment plans at 7 regional secondary schools

- <https://www.ahoj.tv/clanky/clanok/8718/na-siedmich-skolach-v-presovskom-kraji-sa-aktualne-realizuju-velke-investicne-zamery/>
- <https://www.kampo.sk/clanok/velke-investicne-zamery-na-7-zupnych-strednych-skolach>

Agri-food school in Kežmarok received a subsidy for renovation and equipment

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/stredna-skola-v-kezmarku-ziskala-dot/654272-clanok.html>
- <https://polnoinfo.sk/agropotravinarska-skola-v-kezmarku-ziskala-dotaci-u-z-irop-na-obnovu-aj-vybavenie/>
- <https://www.engineering.sk/aktuality/28117-sr-kezmarok-nfp-irop-projekt-sosaat-eko>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/sosaat-v-kezmarku-ziskala-dotaci-u-z-irop-na-obnovu-aj-vybavenie/>

SEPTEMBER 2022

Assistance to less developed regions under the Catching-up regions (CuRI) project will continue

- <https://spravy.pravda.sk/regiony/clanok/641606-projekt-na-pomoc-menej-rozvinutym-regionom-pokracuje/>
- <https://presov.zoznam.sk/pomoc-regionom-memorandum-podpisali-tri-kraje/>
- <https://kosicednes.sk/spravy/projekt-pomoci-menej-rozvinutym-regionom-bude-pokracovat-aj-v-dalsom-roku/>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/iniciativa-na-pomoc-menej-rozvinutym-p/662321-clanok.html>

OCTOBER 2022

A year-round market and a student guesthouse will be built on the grounds of the secondary school Pod Bánošom in Rudlová

- <https://www.bystricoviny.sk/spravy/v-areali-sos-pod-banosom-v-rudlovej-vznikne-celoročna-trznica-a-studentsky-penzion-s-restauraciou/>

State-of-the-art 3D technology as part of industrial production

- <https://www.kampo.sk/clanok/najmodernejsie-3d-technologie-ako-sucast-priemyselnej-vyroby>
- <https://poprad.dnes24.sk/fascinujuca-tlac-studenti-z-presovskeho-kraja-si-3d-skenerom-vyrabali-vlastnu-minirepliku-422848>

NOVEMBER 2022

World Bank experts visited secondary vocational schools in the Prešov Region

- <https://pis.sk/clanok/20137/stredne-odborne-skoly-v-presovskom-kraji-navstivili-experti-svetovej-banky.html>
- <https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/LaeITzW/studenti-v-presovskom-kraji-sa-stretli-s-odbornikmi-zo-svetovej-banky/>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/stredne-skoly-v-presovskom-kraji-nav/675630-clanok.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2022112000000069>
- <https://www.po-kraj.sk/sk/samosprava/media/tlacove-spravy/ts2022/skolstvo/sos-presovskom-kraji-navstivili-experti-svetovej-banky-2.html>
- <https://www.kampo.sk/clanok/sos-v-presovskom-kraji-navstivili-experti-svetovej-banky>
- <https://skolskyportal.sk/vzdelavanie-vychova/stredne-odborne-skoly-v-presovskom-kraji-navstivili-experti-svetovej-banky>

- <https://presovsky-vecernik.sk/spravy/presov-a-region/stredne-odborne-skoly-navstivili-experti-svetovej-banky/>

The third stage of modernisation of the secondary school in S. Ľubovňa could start soon

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/tretia-etapa-modernizacie-spojenej-sko/672031-clanok.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:202211040000041>

DECEMBER 2022

A modern education centre is to be built within the secondary school in Lučenec

- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/lucenec-pri-strednej-odbornej-skole-technickej-ma-vzniknut-centrum-celozivotneho-vzdelavania-a-pripravy/>
- <https://www.eufondy.sk/lucenec-pri-strednej-odbornej-skole-technickej-ma-vzniknut-centrum-celozivotneho-vzdelavania-a-pripravy/>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/lucenec-v-ramci-sos-ma-vzniknut-m/683378-clanok.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2022122500000109>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/lucenec-v-ramci-sos-ma-vzniknut-moderne-centrum-vzdelavania-v-oblasti-ekologie/>
- <https://www.eufondy.sk/lucenec-v-ramci-sos-ma-vzniknut-moderne-centrum-vzdelavania-v-oblasti-ekologie/>

Modernisation of the school in Poltár will support education in the fields of glassmaking and agriculture

- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/poltar-modernizacia-spojenej-skoly-poltar-ma-podporit-vzdelavanie-v-oblastiach-sklarstva-aj-polnohospodarstva/>
- <https://www.eufondy.sk/poltar-modernizacia-spojenej-skoly-poltar-ma-podporit-vzdelavanie-v-oblastiach-sklarstva-aj-polnohospodarstva/>

BBSK has other development projects for six secondary schools for 25 million euros

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/banskobystricky-kraj-ma-pre-projekty-p/679780-clanok.html>
- <https://www.obecne-noviny.sk/clanky/bbsk-ma-dalsie-rozvojove-projekty-pre-sest-strednych-skol-za-25-milionov-eur>

Transport school in Zvolen has a chance to turn into an educational centre of the future

- <http://busportal.sk/modules.php?name=article&sid=15883&secid=1>
- <https://www.priekopnik.sk/spravodajstvo/dopravna-skola-vo-zvolene-ma-sancu-zmenit-sa-na-vzdelavacie-centrum-buducnosti/>
- <https://www.bystricoviny.sk/titulka/foto-dopravna-skola-vo-zvolene-ma-sancu-zmenit-sa-na-vzdelavacie-centrum-buducnosti/>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/sps-dopravna-vo-zvolene-sa-zmeni-na-m/679314-clanok.html>
- <https://spravy.pravda.sk/regiony/clanok/649604-senzory-v-podlahe-interaktivne-displeje-a-vlakicky-na-chodbach-to-je-skolstvo-buducnosti/>
- <https://zvonline.sk/dopravna-skola-vo-zvolene-ma-sancu-zmenit-sa-na-vzdelavacie-centrum-buducnosti/>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2022120600000306>

- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/zvolen-sps-dopravna-by-sa-mala-zmenit-na-moderne-vzdelavacie-centrum/>

JANUARY 2023

A new school building is being built in Lomnička at a cost of 3 million euros

- <https://spravy.rtv.slovakia.sk/2023/01/v-lomnicke-mladych-motivuju-k-odbornemu-vzdelaniu-vyrastie-tam-nova-skola/>
- <https://presovsky-vecernik.sk/spravy/presov-a-region/v-lomnicke-postavia-vzdelavacie-centrum-pre-remesla/>
- <https://www.kampo.sk/clanok/v-lomnicke-sa-buduje-novy-skolsky-objekt-za-3-miliony-eur>
- <https://www.po-kraj.sk/sk/samosprava/media/tlacove-spravy/ts2023/skolstvo/v-lomnicke-buduje-novy-skolsky-objekt-za-3-miliony-eur.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2023012400000167>
- <https://www.obecne-noviny.sk/clanky/elokovane-pracovisko-spojenej-skoly-na-jarmocnej-postavia-v-obci-o-rok>
- <https://poprad.dnes24.sk/prijmu-aj-stovky-ziakov-v-lomnicke-o-rok-postavia-uplne-novu-budovu-spojenej-skoly-428537>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/k-elokovanemu-pracovisku-strednej-skoly-v-lomnicke-pribudne-budova-za-3-miliony-eur/>
- <https://www.eufondy.sk/k-elokovanemu-pracovisku-strednej-skoly-v-lomnicke-pribudne-budova-za-3-miliony-eur/>

Secondary vocational school under Bánóš awaits modernisation for more than 3.5 million euros

- <https://www.eufondy.sk/banska-bystrica-strednu-odbornu-skolu-pod-banosom-caka-modernizacia-za-viac-ako-35-mil-eur/>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/banska-bystrica-strednu-odbornu-skolu-pod-banosom-caka-modernizacia-za-viac-ako-35-mil-eur/>

Electrical engineering school in Poprad will have a training centre

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/v-sose-by-mali-na-jar-stavat-nove-vzd/687004-clanok.html>
- <https://poprad.dnes24.sk/novinka-v-areali-popradskej-skoly-maju-tam-postavit-vzdelavacie-centrum-za-miliony-eur-427992>
- <https://www.eufondy.sk/v-sose-poprad-by-mali-na-jar-stavat-nove-vzdelavacie-centrum-za-84-miliona-eur/>
- <https://poprad.dnes24.sk/novinka-v-areali-popradskej-skoly-maju-tam-postavit-vzdelavacie-centrum-za-miliony-eur-427992>

FEBRUARY 2023

Survey of secondary schools reveals their digital readiness

- <https://www.slovenskaskra.sk/prieskum-na-65-strednych-skolach-v-troch-krajoch-odhali-ich-digitalnu-pripravenost/>

- <https://presovsky-vecernik.sk/spravy/presov-a-region/prieskum-na-strednych-skolach-odhali-ich-digitalnu-pripravenost/>
- <https://www.tv7.sk/index.php/spravodajstvo/item/2478-data-rozhodnu-o-buducnosti-odborneho-vzdelavania>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/prieskum-na-strednych-skolach-odhali/693365-clanok.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2023020900000223>
- <https://bleskovky.zoznam.sk/?h=f78d1b7c559c6883e9d388f6a9318fb6e8fca29c>
- <https://www.po-kraj.sk/sk/samosprava/aktuality/aktuality-2023/skolstvo/prieskum-strednych-skolach-odhali-ich-digitalnu-pripravenost.html>
- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/60043/prieskum-na-strednych-skolach-odhali-ich-digitalnu-pripravenost>

Extensive reconstruction of the VET school Ľ. Podjavorinská for 9 million euro

- <https://www.ahoj.tv/clanky/clanok/9388/>
- <https://www.kampo.sk/clanok/v-presove-vznika-moderne-centrum-odborneho-vzdelavania>
- <https://presov.dnes24.sk/na-presovskej-skole-zacala-rekonstrukcia-takto-bude-vyzerat-moderne-centrum-vizualizacie-429766>
- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/60062/majersky-presovske-regionalne-centrum-odborneho-vzdelavania-zlepsil-podmienky-ziakov>
- <https://www.po-kraj.sk/sk/samosprava/media/tlacove-spravy/ts2023/skolstvo/ozsiaha-rekonstrukcia-spojenej-skoly-l-podjavorinskej-za-9-mil-eur.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2023021600000223>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/psk-regionalne-centrum-odborneho-vzdelavania-zlepsil-podmienky-ziakov/>

Gymnasium in Nová Baňa attracts pupils again, instead of disappearing it is developing

- <https://www.priekopnik.sk/spravodajstvo/gymnazium-v-novej-bani-opat-laka-ziakov-namiesto-zaniku-sa-rozvoja/>
- <https://www.bystricoviny.sk/z-regionu/gymnazium-v-novej-bani-opat-laka-ziakov-namiesto-zaniku-sa-rozvoja/>
- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/60055/novobanske-gymnazium-sa-podarilo-zachranit-opat-zvysuje-pocty-ziakov>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/gymnazium-v-novej-bani-opat-zvysuje/694800-clanok.html>

MAY 2023

Survey of secondary schools reveals gaps in their digital readiness

- <https://digitalnakoalicia.sk/article/prieskum-na-strednych-skolach-odhalil-medzery-v-ich-digitalnej-pripravenosti/>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/prieskum-na-skolach-odhalil-medzery-v/712280-clanok.html>

- <https://skolskyportal.sk/vzdelavanie-vychova/prieskum-na-strednych-skolach-odhalil-medzery-v-ich-digitalnej-pripravenosti>
- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/60340/prieskum-na-strednych-skolach-odhalil-medzery-v-ich-digitalnej-pripravenosti>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2023050500000135>
- <https://www.po-kraj.sk/sk/samosprava/aktuality/aktuality-2023/skolstvo/experti-zamerali-digitalnu-pripravenost-strednych-skol.html>
- <https://www.kosiceonline.sk/stredne-skoly-reaguju-na-sucasne-trendy-aktualizovanim-vzdelavacieho-programu>
- <https://spuntik.zoznam.sk/cl/1000706/2515981/Prieskum-na-strednych-skolach-poukazal-na-to--ze-existuju-medzery--ktore-sa-tykaju-ich-digitalnej-pripravenosti>
- <https://www.kampo.sk/clanok/experti-sa-zamerali-na-digitalnu-pripravenost-strednych-skol>

Prešov Mechanical Engineering School to be modernized for 3.5 million euros

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/presovska-strojnicka-skola-sa-modern/716599-clanok.html>
- <https://presov.zoznam.sk/presovska-strojnicka-skola-sa-modernizuje-za-35-miliona-eur/>
- <https://www.po-kraj.sk/sk/samosprava/media/tlacove-spravy/ts2023/skolstvo/presovska-strojnicka-skola-modernizuje-za-35-mil-eur.html>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/presov-stredna-priemyselna-skola-strojnicka-prejde-modernizaciou-za-viac-ako-35-miliona-eur/>
- <https://www.presovak.sk/clanky/954/presovsku-strojnicku-skolu-caka-modernizacia-prace-planuju-ukoncit-do-konca-tohto-roka>
- <https://pis.sk/clanok/20302/presovska-strojnicka-skola-sa-modernizuje-za-3-5-mil-eur.html>
- <https://www.ahoj.tv/clanky/clanok/9797/>

The largest school in Lučenec is undergoing a change worth millions, it will also affect its focus

- <https://mynovohrad.sme.sk/c/23174399/najvacsia-skola-v-lucenci-prechadza-zmenou-za-miliony-dotkne-sa-aj-jej-zamerania.html>

JUN 2023

The building of the Secondary Vocational School of Hotel Services and Trade in Banská Bystrica is undergoing a major transformation

- <https://www.priekopnik.sk/spravodajstvo/nadstavba-bystrickej-hotelky-vytvori-priestor-pre-moderne-odborne-vzdelavanie/>
- <https://slovensky-vecernik.sk/story/nadstavba-hotelovej-sos-zlepsi-podmienky-studentom-i-pedagogom>

JULY 2023

Svidník school has new workshops for machinists, welders and car mechanics

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/svidnik-na-sos-vybudovali-nove-dieln/725157-clanok.html>
- <https://www.ahoj.tv/clanky/clanok/10024/>

- <https://www.po-kraj.sk/sk/samosprava/media/tlacove-spravy/ts2023/skolstvo/svidnicka-skola-ma-nove-dielne-strojarov-zvaracov-automechanikov.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2023062900000409>
- <https://www.kampo.sk/clanok/svidnicka-skola-ma-nove-dielne-pre-strojarov-zvaracov-a-automechanikov>
- <https://www.presovak.sk/clanky/1159/studenti-odbornej-skoly-vo-svidniku-sa-budu-na-svoje-povolanie-pripravovat-v-novych-dielnach>

AUGUST 2023

Prešov Region will invest more than 70 million euros in the modernization of secondary schools

- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/60698/presovsky-krajinvestuje-do-modernizacie-strednych-skol-viac-ako-70-milionov-eur>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/presovsky-kraj-investuje-do-moderniza/735302-clanok.html>
- <https://www.presovak.sk/clanky/1483/presovsky-samospravny-kraj-modernizuje-stredne-skoly-aktualne-ma-rozbehnuté-projekty-za-70-milionov-eur>
- <https://www.kampo.sk/clanok/vyse-70-milionov-eur-do-modernizacie-strednych-skol-v-presovskom-kraji>
- <https://www.kosiceonline.sk/desiatky-strednych-skol-v-presovskom-kraji-caka-rekonstrukcia>
- <https://slovensky-vecernik.sk/story/presovsky-kraj-investuje-do-modernizacie-strednych-skol>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/vyse-70-milionov-eur-do-modernizacie-strednych-skol-v-psk/>
- <https://www.po-kraj.sk/sk/samosprava/media/tlacove-spravy/ts2023/skolstvo/vyse-70-milionov-eur-do-modernizacie-strednych-skol-psk.html>

SEPTEMBER 2023

Secondary school in Matejovce begins construction of vocational classrooms

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/vystavba-dielni-vyucovanie-na-stredne/738402-clanok.html>
- <https://presov.korzar.sme.sk/c/23210012/odbornu-skolu-v-popradskych-matejovciach-caka-vystavba-novych-priestorov.html>
- <https://obce.tasr.sk/clanok/8219/vystavba-novych-dielni-vyucovanie-na-sose-v-matejovciach-neovplyvni>
- <https://poprad.dnes24.sk/sose-v-matejovciach-sa-docka-novych-dielni-za-miliony-vystavba-vyucovanie-neovplyvni-438560>
- <https://www.presovak.sk/clanky/1583/studenti-sos-elektrotechnickej-v-poprade-sa-mozu-tesit-na-nove-moderne-priestory-v-sume-107-miliona-eur>