



Ministry of  
Education, Science  
and Innovation

# EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGY 2025–2035

JANUARY 2025





**Funded by  
the European Union**



*This publication has been co-financed by the European Union and UNICEF.  
Its content is the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Innovation  
and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union and UNICEF.*

*Expert support during the development of the Education Reform Strategy (2025–2035)  
was provided by Prof. Tinde Kovač Cerović (PhD), international consultant,  
and the expert team of the international consulting agency Genesis Analytics.*











# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>A INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>9</b>
Process of developing the Education Reform Strategy (2025–2035)	<b>11</b>
A1. Vision of the Strategy	<b>13</b>
<b>B ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS AND FRAMEWORKS</b>	<b>17</b>
National reforms and strategies	<b>19</b>
Digital transformation	<b>24</b>
The implementation of new policies through adequate financial planning	<b>24</b>
Environmental impact	<b>25</b>
<b>C SITUATION ANALYSIS</b>	<b>28</b>
C1. Education system structure	<b>29</b>
C2. Governance and management	<b>32</b>
C3. Legal and policy frameworks	<b>36</b>
C4. Education trends	<b>37</b>
C5. Situation analysis and recommendations as reported by parents, teachers and students	<b>57</b>
C6. Stakeholder analysis	<b>61</b>
C7. SWOT analysis	<b>64</b>
<b>D STRATEGIC GOALS AND OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>67</b>
D1. Strategic Goal 1	<b>67</b>
D2. Strategic Goal 2	<b>71</b>
D3. Strategic Goal 3	<b>81</b>
D4. Strategic Goal 4	<b>93</b>
D5. Description of the activities of the competent authorities and bodies monitoring the implementation of the strategy	<b>98</b>
<b>E METHOD OF REPORTING AND EVALUATION</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>F ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR THE PERIOD 2025–2026</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>G FINANCIAL ESTIMATES RELATED TO THE ACTION PLAN PERIOD</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>H COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGY</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>APPENDIX I</b> Key findings from the consultative process with all stakeholders	<b>182</b>
<b>APPENDIX II</b> Working Group for the Development of the Education Reform Strategy 2025–2035	<b>189</b>



# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
AT	Assistive technology
BES	Bureau for Educational Services
CPD	Continuous professional development
CEB	Council of Europe Development Bank
CVET	Centre for Vocational Education and Training
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EIB	European Investment Bank
EU	European Union
EC	European Commission
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ERA	European Research Area
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
GDP	Gross domestic product
HDI	Human development index
MoESI	Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation
MQF	Montenegrin National Qualifications Framework
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEL	Socio-emotional learning
UoM	University of Montenegro
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VET	Vocational education and training
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene











# (A) INTRODUCTION

The education system in Montenegro includes preschool education, primary and secondary education, as well as adult education programmes, reflecting a comprehensive approach to lifelong learning. This framework presents both opportunities and challenges to improve the quality and accessibility of education. The Education Sector Analysis (ESA),<sup>1</sup> conducted in partnership between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MoESI) and validated through consultations with all key education actors and stakeholders, highlights the key issues related to quality, access, equity and governance. A key recommendation of the Education Sector Analysis is that a long-term strategic framework is needed in order to enhance the quality of education, ensure the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups and improve learning outcomes for all.

Access to education in Montenegro is still not equal for everyone. Although 96 per cent of children are enrolled in primary education, significant disparities remain among marginalized groups, particularly Roma children, who have lower attendance rates at both the primary and secondary levels. Data shows that only 7 per cent of Roma children continue to secondary school, and just 16 per cent attend preschool education. These figures underscore the need for greater investment in inclusive policies, particularly at the lower educational levels, to provide children from vulnerable communities with an equal starting point.

Montenegro has made significant progress in ensuring that children with disabilities are enrolled in and attend regular education together with their peers, and the number of children with disabilities enrolled in regular primary schools has been on a constant increase since 2009. However, many challenges remain in terms of both access to schools and the quality of educational services provided to children with disabilities. Also, the number of children with disabilities in preschools and those transitioning to secondary education is very low. Furthermore, issues related to lack of or unreliable data on the number of children with disabilities in the country are a serious obstacle to creating interventions aimed at ensuring full coverage.

The 2022 PISA results for Montenegro reveal significant challenges in student performance, with average scores for mathematics, reading and science falling well below the OECD averages. Furthermore, only 40 per cent of students reached at least Level 2 proficiency in mathematics, compared to 69 per cent across OECD countries. There has been a decline in performance since the 2018 round of the PISA assessment, highlighting the urgent need for targeted reforms and greater investment in education to improve learning outcomes for all students and to ensure equitable access to quality education. Moreover, students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds have, on average, lower achievements at PISA 2022 than their peers, pointing to equity issues that need urgent, efficient and specific measures.

Montenegro's education system has also come under recent strain as a result of the influx of refugees from conflicts such as the war in Ukraine. The sudden increase in the student population puts a strain on resources, infrastructure and teaching staff, leading to overcrowded classrooms and limited learning opportunities. This situation has differently affected the various regions of Montenegro, with some regions and classrooms being particularly impacted. Newly arisen barriers and cultural differences also present hurdles for both students and educators, impacting effective

<sup>1</sup> [www.unicef.org/montenegro/en/reports/education-sector-analysis-2015-2020](http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/en/reports/education-sector-analysis-2015-2020)



communication and integration. Moreover, addressing the trauma and mental health needs of refugee children requires specialized support services that may not be readily available. The Montenegrin education system must adapt quickly to provide inclusive and quality education to all students, including migrants and refugees, stateless children or children at risk of statelessness to ensure their successful integration and academic development.

Furthermore, Montenegro has recently adopted a comprehensive Education System Digitalization Strategy (2022–2027),<sup>2</sup> which emphasizes fostering the digital competencies essential for students' future success in a technology-driven world. The strategy focuses on fostering ICT innovation by creating supportive environments, while enhancing digital competencies. These objectives align with broader European goals for digital education, emphasizing the integration of digital competencies into the curriculum and addressing systemic weaknesses exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teachers play a crucial role in the future development of the education system. However, analysis reveals that both the initial teacher training and the professional development of teachers require better alignment with the evolving demands and educational needs of children. This includes equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to integrate technology into the classroom and learning processes, fostering critical thinking and promoting inclusive practices that address diverse learning needs.

While education funding has steadily increased over the past few years, most resources continue to be allocated to operational costs – primarily salaries. This budget structure leaves little room for reforms that require additional investments, while reliance on donor funding further complicates the long-term sustainability of changes. At the same time, challenges have been recognized that are related to insufficient coordination between sectors and institutions, which slows the implementation of programmes and reduces the effectiveness of reforms. Nonetheless, efforts are underway to secure additional funding through internationally available mechanisms that aim to support sustainable and transformative changes.

The 2025–2035 Education Strategy aims to address these challenges through a holistic approach to improving the quality and accessibility of education for all, ensuring that children and young people acquire lifelong, applicable knowledge and skills, with support for their overall wellbeing to continue their education and actively participate in the labour market and society. The strategy involves all relevant stakeholders—from ministries and schools to civil society organizations and local communities—to ensure the coordination and sustainability of reforms. Increasing investments in education and improving budget planning are essential for the long-term sustainability of reforms, while better intersectoral cooperation can contribute to more efficient implementation.

As a developmental document, the strategy aligns with the priorities of Montenegro's medium-term<sup>3</sup> and annual government work programmes. In the 2024–2027 Medium-Term Work Programme, education is identified as a key sector under Goal 14: "Exceptional education for an exceptional Montenegro". Additionally, the strategy is integrated into the framework of Montenegro's EU integration efforts, aligning with the EU Accession Programme and obligations under Chapter 19 – Social Policy and Employment, Chapter 23 – Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, and Chapter 26 – Education and Culture.

This alignment supports Montenegro's efforts to meet the commitments outlined in the 2024 Progress Report.

<sup>2</sup> Education System Digitalization Strategy 2022–2027 with Action Plan 2022–2023 (<https://skolskiportal.edu.me>)

<sup>3</sup> <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/ee885398-748f-48fd-912a-29bbac334bfb?version=1.0>

To achieve stronger economic growth and development, education is also recognized as a priority in the 2024–2026 Economic Reform Programme,<sup>4</sup> with Structural Reform No. 5 which focuses on improving youth employability through a higher quality of education. Additionally, Reform Measure No. 8 also proposes developing an integrated approach to increasing the quality and inclusiveness of education.

Through the implementation of this strategy, Montenegro is positioning itself as part of the EU single market of knowledge and skills, following the reform priorities outlined in the Western Balkans Growth Plan. The strategy aims to create an education system that equips students with the skills needed to catalyse their professional and personal development while driving regional economic growth. With this strategic approach, Montenegro's education system is becoming a key pillar of sustainable development, focusing on strengthening human capital.

### **Process of developing the Education Reform Strategy (2025–2035)**

The process of drafting the comprehensive 2025–2035 Education Reform Strategy was initiated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation and UNICEF, and supported by UNICEF and the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro. It is part of a two-year joint project of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, UNICEF and the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro, titled “Quality Education for All Children in Montenegro”, which was officially launched in January 2024.

In February of the same year, a public call was issued for the nomination of representatives of non-governmental organizations to the working group<sup>5</sup> for drafting the strategy, while in April 2024 a working group was established under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, comprising 61 members. The group includes representatives of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation and educational institutions responsible for various levels of education, such as the Examination Centre of Montenegro, the Centre for Vocational Education, the Bureau for Education Services and the Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids. Additionally, the working group consists of representatives of teachers, professional services and the administrations of public preschool institutions, primary schools, vocational secondary schools, general secondary schools (gymnasiums), art schools and resource centres, as well as representatives of the Union of High School Students, the Chamber of Commerce, the Employers' Union and the Education Trade Union. To ensure the efficiency of the work, a core team<sup>6</sup> of the working group was formed, reflecting the structure of the broader working group.

At the same time, a steering committee<sup>7</sup> was established, consisting of representatives of the relevant ministries, central educational institutions, the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts, and civil society, as well as the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro and UNICEF. A technical operational team was also formed to oversee project implementation, comprising representatives from the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, the Bureau for Education, the Examination Centre of Montenegro and the Centre for Vocational Education and Training.

It is important to emphasize that the development of the Education Reform Strategy, which outlines the vision for education over the next decade, is based on the first of the key recommendations of the 2015–2020 Education Sector Analysis, which states:

<sup>4</sup> [www.gov.me/dokumenta/e19b682f-19f3-4788-99f5-ca5ad1df3e4a](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/e19b682f-19f3-4788-99f5-ca5ad1df3e4a)

<sup>5</sup> The list of members of the working group is shown in Appendix II.

<sup>6</sup> The list of members of the core team is shown in Appendix II.

<sup>7</sup> The list of members of the steering committee is shown in Appendix II.



“It is recommended to develop an integrated education sector plan that responds to the needs of students and benefits society as a whole, ensuring the well-planned, coordinated and financially supported implementation of measures, taking into account the key challenges identified in this analysis.”

This analysis was published in November 2022 and was prepared in partnership between UNICEF Montenegro and the Ministry of Education. Beyond the above recommendation, both the data and the remaining recommendations from the Education Sector Analysis served as guiding principles throughout the work of the working group, which was also supported by a team of international consultants in the preparation of the strategic document. A total of five workshops were held with the working group, along with several meetings of the smaller team, whose members were directly involved in drafting the strategic document. Additionally, the advisory board was regularly informed about the progress and results of the working group and its smaller team throughout the consultation process, playing a consultative role in the overall preparation of the strategy. The findings of these consultations provided an insight into those areas of educational policy where progress had been made, as well as those where the expected results had not been achieved, highlighting both short-term and long-term priority areas crucial to Montenegro’s educational policy.

Furthermore, recommendations and findings from national consultations with teachers and students, validation with parents and desk analyses of recent research were used. These were developed during Montenegro’s participation in the United Nations Summit on Education Transformation in 2022, which included 43 focus groups across 20 schools (13 primary and seven secondary), 265 students (110 boys and 155 girls), and 200 teachers (26 men and 174 women).

It is essential to note that during 2024, as part of the development of the strategy—especially in the analysis of existing issues and challenges in Montenegro’s education system, as well as in formulating proposed goals, measures and activities—consultations were held with children and adolescents through focus groups and in-depth interviews, as well as with teaching staff, headteachers, parents and all interested stakeholders. These consultations were conducted through community mobilization, local dialogues and panel discussions in selected municipalities across all three regions of Montenegro. A total of 50 focus groups were conducted, including 25 focus groups with teachers (three for public preschool institutions, two for resource centres, 14 for primary schools, and six for secondary schools), and 25 focus groups with students (14 for primary school students, six for secondary school students, four for students from Roma and Egyptian communities, and one for students with special educational needs). In total, 313 teachers participated (33 from preschool institutions, 200 from primary schools, 59 from secondary schools, and 21 from resource centres), along with 305 students (187 from primary schools, 73 from secondary schools, 36 from the Roma and Egyptian population, and nine children with special educational needs). Additionally, teachers had the opportunity to provide input through an online survey, expressing their opinions on the key challenges they face in their daily work, as well as potential solutions and important aspects for future educational reforms. A total of 2,485 education professionals (1,929 female and 556 male teachers)—representing approximately 15 per cent of all teachers in Montenegro—completed the survey.

Regarding parents, an online questionnaire consisting of 29 questions (26 closed and three open-ended) was completed by 5,573 respondents, who freely shared their views, proposed concrete solutions and highlighted the challenges they faced. The qualitative component of the questionnaire was supplemented by dialogues held in seven Montenegrin municipalities, providing a deeper understanding of the specific challenges within the education system and parental perspectives. These activities enhanced local communities’ and parents’ analytical value, inclusiveness and engagement.

For the purposes of drafting the strategy and with UNICEF's support, findings from the analysis of the selected subject curricula and accompanying textbooks from a gender perspective were prepared and used. Additionally, recommendations from consultations with the Union of High School Students on peer violence prevention were incorporated, based on various activities and consultations with 348 high school students (110 young men and 238 young women).

A survey among adolescents was conducted through UNICEF's U-Report platform (with 216 participants, averaging 18.3 years old), along with recommendations from young people derived from the Youth Needs Analysis, which engaged 1,010 young people and was prepared during the development of the 2023–2027 National Youth Strategy.

These research efforts, analyses and consultations have significantly shaped the priorities and measures outlined in this document.

Additionally, in accordance with Article 12 of the Regulation on the Selection of NGO Representatives in Government Working Bodies and the Conduct of Public Consultations in the Preparation of Laws and Strategies ("Official Gazette of Montenegro", No. 41/18), the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation conducted public consultations that were open to all interested citizens and stakeholders, whose results were also analysed.

It was assessed that education and related public policies should be at the centre of interest for the government, all relevant sectors and key institutions, as well as for individuals directly involved in the implementation of public policies related to education. Through joint, coordinated and strategic action, along with proportional investment, efforts should be made to improve the position of children, adolescents and young people in Montenegro and ensure their right to quality education.

## **A1. Vision of the Strategy**

By 2035, education will be distinguished by its child-centred approach, prioritizing the wellbeing and motivation of students, fostering an environment conducive to learning, and catering to their individual needs and comprehensive personal growth. Students in 2035 will feel a strong connection to schools that are committed to innovative, interactive and relevant teaching methods that emphasize development of both the skills and competencies essential for personal fulfilment and meaningful contributions to both Montenegrin and global society. This vision will be enriched by a diverse array of enriching extracurricular activities, nurturing and collaborative relationships, and opportunities for student involvement in decision-making processes.

The vision for schooling in 2035 outlines an inclusive and welcoming environment that fosters high achievement for all. Montenegrin schools will operate as full-day institutions, providing a safe and stimulating space for learning. It will embrace modern educational trends and innovative teaching methods to support the success of all students. High expectations for each individual within the school community will promote a culture of excellence. The school infrastructure will be designed to meet the needs of all users, ensuring an environment conducive to learning and growth.

Collaboration will be at the heart of school life, with all stakeholders working together towards common goals. Parents will be valued partners, and their input and initiatives will be respected and integrated. The school director will be a role model, esteemed by colleagues and the local community for their leadership qualities, while also embodying a personal commitment to continuous learning as the "first student" of the school. Montenegrin schools will be places of



continuous improvement, free from discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect. Challenges will be addressed promptly through a spirit of cooperation and mutual support, with a focus on enhancing professional services and support systems. Staff will be equipped with a diverse range of competencies tailored to meet the evolving needs of all students for their own enrichment, to preserve the ecology of the country and to contribute to the labour market.

By 2035, the national education strategy envisions a workforce of satisfied, motivated and highly competent teachers and carers. They are free from excessive administrative duties and focused on supporting all students in various ways to inspire high achievement and life skills. The education of teachers and preschool educators is of a high quality and includes practical training. During their work, they are supported and encouraged to collaborate, innovate and pursue personal and professional development and advancement. Their initiative and autonomy are respected. They consistently adhere not only to the law but also to the Code of Ethics as a set of rules and ethical principles both within and outside the educational institution. They feel a sense of belonging to the school and have the opportunity to participate in decision making.

This vision reflects society's strong trust and confidence in the education system. It promotes flexibility, openness, inter-institutional and cross-sector partnerships, international collaboration and teacher–student exchanges to enhance quality and foster personal and social growth. The education system is adequately funded, efficient and constantly seeking improvement. This vision and the strategies outlined in the national education strategy correspond to contemporary educational policies. It recognizes the Sustainable Development Goals,<sup>8</sup> goals for education and training in the European Union,<sup>9</sup> key competences for lifelong learning,<sup>10</sup> socio-emotional competences and life skills,<sup>11</sup> policies of inclusion and the involvement of vulnerable groups,<sup>12</sup> as well as the EU quality framework for early childhood education and care.<sup>13</sup> It also aligns with the EU policy Pathways to School Success,<sup>14</sup> the Digital Education Action Plan (2021–2027), policy guides supporting the teaching profession<sup>15</sup> and lessons in green transition, sustainable development and digital transition.

This vision is translated into four strategic goals based on the following principles:

1. The education system provides high-quality, accessible and equitable education that fosters the holistic development of all children and adolescents, while being resilient to challenges and risks.

8 UNESCO (2018) Quick Guide to Education Indicators for SDG 4, <https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/quick-guide-education-indicators-sdg4-2018-en.pdf>

9 Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021–2030) 2021/C 66/01 (OJ C, C/66, 26.02.2021, p. 1, CELEX: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021G0226(01)))

10 European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2019) Key Competences for Lifelong Learning; Publications Office, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/569540>

11 Sala, A., Punie, Y., Garkov, V. and Cabrera Giraldez, M., LifeComp: The European Framework for Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Key Competence, EUR 30246 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, ISBN 978-92-76-19417-0, doi:10.2760/922681, JRC120911.

OECD (2021), Beyond Academic Learning: First Results from the Survey of Social and Emotional Skills, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/92a11084-en>

12 Council conclusions on equity and inclusion in education and training in order to promote educational success for all (2021/C 221/02) CELEX\_52021XG0610. Croatian language version available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/HR/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021XG0610\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/HR/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021XG0610(01));

13 Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/HR/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019H0605\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/HR/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019H0605(01))

14 European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Pathways to School Success, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/477763>

15 European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Supporting teacher and school leader careers – A policy guide – Report, Publications Office, 2020, European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Supporting teacher and school leader careers – A policy guide – Report, Publications Office, 2020.

2. All employees in educational institutions equally and fully support the quality and equity of education, develop all the key competencies and skills of students, and maintain high expectations and positive attitudes towards all children and young people.
3. Achieving higher quality and equity in the education system through improved governance and management, with an emphasis on the use of evidence and participation in the decision-making process.
4. The education infrastructure and modern teaching resources support contemporary, high-quality, equitable and safe education for all children and young people

The vision is also underpinned by the following cross-cutting themes that appear throughout each of the strategic goals, which include but are not limited to:

**Poverty reduction:** Poverty is a major factor affecting students' achievement, as evidenced by the 2022 PISA findings. Children from the poorest households also benefit the least from public education funding. Recent reports indicate that the poorest percentile of students receive only 16 per cent of public education funding compared to 28 per cent for the richest percentile. By providing targeted support and resources to students from low-income backgrounds, such as those who have access to quality education and social services, the education system can help break the cycle of poverty and promote social mobility across Montenegro.

**Gender:** Ensuring gender equality and empowerment through education is crucial for creating a more equitable and inclusive society. By integrating a gender perspective into curriculum design, teacher training and school policies, students of all genders can thrive and fulfil their potential without facing discrimination or stereotypes.

**Climate change and green skills:** This is vital for preparing students to address environmental challenges and contribute to sustainable development. By promoting environmental awareness, teaching environmentally friendly practices and encouraging innovation in the field of green technologies through the development of green skills, the education system can empower students to become environmentally conscious citizens and leaders. A climate-resilient school infrastructure must be clearly defined, developed, improved and maintained over the next decade, with appropriate investments, in order to mitigate the effects of climate change and foster greater resilience to external climate and weather-related risks

**Socio-emotional skills and wellbeing of children:** By prioritizing students' socio-emotional skills and wellbeing, schools support the holistic development of their personalities. By integrating into the curriculum programmes that enhance emotional intelligence, resilience and mental health support, schools can help students cope with challenges, build respectful relationships with peers and adults, prevent peer violence and preserve their mental health, all of which contribute to better academic achievement, motivation and life outcomes.

**Digitalization:** Fundamental digital skills prepare students for the digital age and for leveraging technology to enhance their learning outcomes. By integrating digital literacy, digital skills and online resources into the curriculum, schools can equip students with the necessary skills to thrive in a technology-driven world, fostering creativity, critical thinking and innovation. This drive extends to the digitalization of teaching and learning resources to improve and extend classroom pedagogy, as well as to the streamlining and digitalization of administrative tasks in all educational institutions, which brings multiple benefits.





## (B) ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS AND FRAMEWORKS

Montenegro has also made several specific international commitments in the education sector, aligning with both global and European standards:

### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UN human rights treaties**

Montenegro has committed itself to achieving SDG 4 – Quality Education, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. As part of this commitment, Montenegro is working towards:

1. Providing inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels
2. Increasing access to vocational and tertiary education
3. Eliminating gender disparities in education
4. Ensuring literacy and numeracy for all children, young people and adults
5. Promoting education for sustainable development

The government has committed itself to ensuring the right to education for all children as specifically prescribed within the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>16</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child,<sup>17</sup> Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>18</sup> and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.<sup>19</sup>

Commitments related to education are also operationalized within the 2023–2027 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. This medium-term strategic planning document articulates the collective vision and response of the UN System to Montenegro's national development priorities. The activities are to be implemented in partnership with the Government of Montenegro and in close cooperation with international and national partners and civil society until 2027.

### **Links to international strategic objectives and benchmarks**

The existing strategic framework of Montenegro, including its horizontal and vertical alignment, positions the 2025–2035 Education Reform Strategy as a composite development document

16 United Nations Department of Public Information (n.d) Universal Declaration of Human Rights, [www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/translations/english](http://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/translations/english)

17 The Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted in 1989 by the United Nation General Assembly Resolution 44/25, [www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child](http://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child)

18 The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted in 2006 by the United Nations General Assembly A/RES/61/106, [www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities](http://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities)

19 The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly, [www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women](http://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women)



aimed at ensuring a holistic contribution to equitable, inclusive and sustainable development through access to quality education for all children and young people, enabling them to realize their potential and contribute to society. The strategy aims to develop a framework for an integrated approach to improving the quality and inclusiveness of education to enhance learning outcomes and foster the acquisition of lasting and applicable knowledge. Additionally, the strategy aims to address the challenge of long-term unemployment, particularly among young people, caused by the mismatch between skills and labour market needs, partly by improving the quality of education and ensuring a quicker response of the education sector to labour market demands.

In alignment with Montenegro's EU Accession efforts, the European Union Accession Programme of Montenegro serves as the country's overarching strategic framework guiding its European integration process. It outlines the scope and pace of reforms required to align Montenegro with the EU acquis across all 33 chapters. This strategic document plays a crucial role in Montenegro's journey towards EU membership by translating the key obligations, particularly under:

- Chapter 23 – Judiciary and Fundamental Rights
- Chapter 26 – Education and Culture

The strategy is designed to help Montenegro meet the EU Accession criteria and address the key issues identified in Montenegro's 2023 Progress Report, especially regarding education under Chapter 26.

As part of its EU accession efforts, Montenegro is synchronizing its educational policies with the EU benchmarks and standards under the EU negotiation Chapter 26 – Education and Culture, which was provisionally closed in 2013. This alignment includes:

1. Implementing the Bologna Process in Higher Education
2. Participating in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
3. Adopting the European Qualifications Framework
4. Engaging in EU education programmes such as Erasmus+

In October 2024, the European Commission published the Progress Report on Montenegro, with particular reference to Chapters 25 and 26, which relate to science and research and education and culture for the year 2024. A good level of preparedness in these chapters was noted, along with good or certain progress achieved concerning the recommendations from 2023.

The adoption of the new Science and Research Strategy and the significant funding allocated by the government for research and innovation were praised. Regarding research and innovation policy, it was noted that several projects partially funded by the EU have contributed to strengthening cooperation between the academic and business sectors and increasing interest between young people and the representatives of vulnerable groups to engage in new social projects in the field of entrepreneurship.

The European Commission recognizes the efforts in developing a comprehensive Education Reform Strategy (2025–2035), as well as Montenegro's integration of various education sector reform measures into the 2024–2027 Reform Agenda of Montenegro, within the framework of the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans.

It was also noted that the MoESI remains committed to the Osnabrück Declaration in the field of vocational education and training.

The EC report serves as additional motivation to continue the reform processes in the education system. In this context, further efforts will be made in the coming period to implement the recommendations regarding:

1. The adoption of the Education Reform Strategy (2025–2035)
2. The establishment of mechanisms for evaluating practical learning within secondary vocational education and training, as well as higher education
3. Ensuring work-based learning opportunities with employers

### **National reforms and strategies**

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development to 2030 is Montenegro's strategic and institutional framework for sustainable development in accordance with the EU standards. It is an umbrella, horizontal and long-term development strategy that relates to the environment and economics, but also to human resources and social capital that should ensure prosperous development. Central to this strategy is the ambition to ensure inclusive and quality education and to promote lifelong learning and opportunities for all.

Further emphasizing the importance of education, the 2024–2027 Medium-Term Work Programme identifies education as a key sector under Goal 14: “Exceptional education for an exceptional Montenegro”. It is one of the key pillars of the government-adopted Reform Agenda, which defines a set of reforms that Montenegro must implement to receive funding from the European Growth Plan for the Western Balkans.

To drive stronger economic growth and development, education has been identified as a key priority in the 2024–2026 Economic Reform Programme. Structural Reform No. 5 focuses on improving youth employability through higher education quality, while Reform Measure No. 8 proposes developing an integrated approach to increasing the quality and inclusiveness of education.

Education outcomes are deeply integrated into the key national cross-sectoral strategies including:

- National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025
- Regional Development Strategy of Montenegro 2023–2027
- Media Strategy of Montenegro 2023–2027
- Early and Preschool Education Strategy 2021–2025
- Early Childhood Development Strategy 2023–2027
- Inclusive Education Strategy 2019–2025
- Education System Digitalization Strategy 2022–2027
- Higher Education Development Strategy of Montenegro 2024–2027
- Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2021–2025
- Strategy on Migration and Reintegration of Returnees in Montenegro 2021–2025
- Youth Strategy 2023–2027
- Sports Development Strategy in Montenegro 2024–2028
- National Employment Strategy 2021–2025
- Strategy for Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning of Montenegro 2020–2024

- Strategy for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities from Discrimination and Promotion of Equality 2022–2027
- Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (2025–2030)

The **National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025**.<sup>20</sup> By adopting a series of laws in the field of human rights and freedoms and the prohibition of discrimination, Montenegro has established a legal framework for implementing gender equality policies. The strategy identifies the main issue: a low level of gender equality, and accordingly, defines the main strategic goal: Achieve a higher level of gender equality in Montenegro by 2025.

The **Regional Development Strategy of Montenegro 2023–2027**<sup>21</sup> focuses on sustainable development with the aim of improving the quality of life in all regions. Through this strategy, specific infrastructure and economic and social projects are envisioned that will enhance the connectivity and competitiveness of the regions.

The **Early and Preschool Education Strategy 2021–2025**<sup>22</sup> aims to ensure equal opportunities for the early development of all children in Montenegro by strengthening the accessibility, quality and fairness of preschool education. It is based on the principles of participation, partnership, cooperation, sustainability, rationality, continuity, quality of services, conditions, experiential learning, innovation, accessibility, individualization, integration, cost-effectiveness and transparency.

The **Early Childhood Development Strategy 2023–2027**<sup>23</sup> emphasizes that all children should receive adequate support for early learning within the system and in the family environment, as well as that parents should be sufficiently empowered to be equal partners in supporting children's development. It also envisions improving coordination in the system for providing evidence-based early intervention services for children with developmental disabilities.

The **Inclusive Education Strategy 2019–2025**.<sup>24</sup> By fulfilling the principle of equal opportunities through inclusive education, this strategy ensures a choice in accordance with the individual capabilities of children with special educational needs and implements education without discrimination. It actively promotes and implements a social model where the focus is on adapting society and removing obstacles and barriers in the environment, attitudes and services, rather than on the child's impairment or developmental difficulty. Additionally, it ensures support and continuity at all levels to achieve educational outcomes and individual characteristics. To accomplish this, close cooperation among the relevant public entities, partners and civil society is necessary to drive change at the community and school levels.

The **Education System Digitalization Strategy 2022–2027**<sup>25</sup> aims to modernize teaching in a planned and systematic manner to enhance the quality of education, as well as to digitalize all records and processes to improve the efficiency of administrative tasks in educational institutions. It also focuses on the development and improvement of students' and teachers' digital skills, with an emphasis on the safe use of technology.

20 [www.gov.me/dokumenta/26b0c8cc-3890-426e-a275-a29e1ff69648](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/26b0c8cc-3890-426e-a275-a29e1ff69648)

21 [www.gov.me/dokumenta/b3e6d4fa-6777-43f5-a235-501114a90243](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/b3e6d4fa-6777-43f5-a235-501114a90243)

22 [www.gov.me/clanak/strategija-ranog-i-predskolskog-vaspitanja-i-obrazovanja-2021-2025-sa-akcionim-planom](http://www.gov.me/clanak/strategija-ranog-i-predskolskog-vaspitanja-i-obrazovanja-2021-2025-sa-akcionim-planom)

23 [www.gov.me/clanak/strategija-ranog-razvoja-djeteta](http://www.gov.me/clanak/strategija-ranog-razvoja-djeteta)

24 [www.gov.me/dokumenta/fbeec964-7c59-4b5a-a54e-8417281160ba](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/fbeec964-7c59-4b5a-a54e-8417281160ba)

25 Education System Digitalization Strategy 2022–2027 with Action Plan 2022–2023 (<https://skolskiportal.edu.me>)



The **Higher Education Development Strategy of Montenegro 2024–2027**<sup>26</sup> aims to establish a recognizable, high-quality and dynamic education system that fully meets the labour market needs while promoting research, innovation and the preservation of academic freedom and autonomy. The strategy is based on three key strategic goals. The first goal is to improve the alignment of study programmes with the labour market needs, ensure adequate recognition of higher education qualifications and improve the infrastructure. The second goal involves enhancing the higher education system in line with EHEA and ERA standards, thereby increasing the quality and competitiveness of Montenegrin institutions at the European level. The third goal focuses on strengthening the role of higher education institutions at the international level through further development of cooperation and exchange with global educational institutions.

The **Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2021–2025**<sup>27</sup> focuses on improving the accessibility, effectiveness and quality of education for all members of the Roma and Egyptian communities, on increasing the number of Roma and Egyptians enrolled in preschool, primary and secondary education, as well as on improving the quality of their education at all levels through the provision of various support models.

The **Strategy on Migration and Reintegration of Returnees in Montenegro 2021–2025**<sup>28</sup> aims to improve migration management by ensuring effective integration of returnees and reducing the negative impacts of migration. It focuses on strengthening institutional coordination, improving the legislative framework and providing support for returnees through education, employment and social inclusion. Additionally, the strategy seeks to enhance capacities for the reintegration of returnees to ensure long-term stability and social cohesion while strengthening international cooperation in the field of migration.

The **Youth Strategy 2023–2027**<sup>29</sup> emphasizes intersectoral cooperation to support both formal and non-formal sustainable, high-quality and inclusive education, including programmes that assist young people in transitioning to adulthood. Special attention is given to the preservation of mental health and wellbeing, the prevention of peer violence, the strengthening of employability and digital skills, civic engagement with a particular focus on improving the educational and scientific component in higher education, aligning the higher education system with the needs of society and the labour market, as well as promoting entrepreneurship and the importance of culture in society.

The **Sports Development Strategy in Montenegro 2024–2028**<sup>30</sup> contributes to the country's comprehensive development of sports in the country by improving the sports infrastructure, increasing the participation of citizens in sports activities, developing and supporting talented athletes, and strengthening international competitiveness. Additionally, the strategy aims to promote sports as a factor in health, inclusion and social cohesion, creating the conditions for the sustainable growth of sports achievements at the national and international levels.

The objectives are achieved through improving sports education, increased investments in sports, strengthening the organization and structure of sports federations, and creating a platform for cooperation with international sports organizations.

26 [www.gov.me/dokumenta/5ac50349-1c8e-4331-a11c-ff20de1f8a55](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/5ac50349-1c8e-4331-a11c-ff20de1f8a55)

27 [www.gov.me/clanak/strategija-socijalne-inkluzije-roma-i-egipcana-u-crnoj-gori-2021-2025](http://www.gov.me/clanak/strategija-socijalne-inkluzije-roma-i-egipcana-u-crnoj-gori-2021-2025)

28 [www.gov.me/dokumenta/38214cec-7412-498d-9f8e-484e02ee1c78](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/38214cec-7412-498d-9f8e-484e02ee1c78)

29 [www.gov.me/clanak/vlada-usvojila-nacrt-strategije-za-mlade-2023m-2027-godine](http://www.gov.me/clanak/vlada-usvojila-nacrt-strategije-za-mlade-2023m-2027-godine)

30 [www.gov.me/dokumenta/4e28e812-f1bd-4c46-a808-d4505a8e2707](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/4e28e812-f1bd-4c46-a808-d4505a8e2707)

The **National Employment Strategy 2021–2025**<sup>31</sup> aims to increase employability through labour market development, job creation and support for entrepreneurship. It focuses on improving workforce skills, particularly among young people, women and other vulnerable groups, as well as reducing unemployment through training and employment programmes. The strategy also seeks to modernize the institutional framework and improve working and employment conditions, thereby contributing to sustainable economic development and social stability.

The **Media Strategy 2023–2027**<sup>32</sup> aims to achieve the adoption and implementation of the highest international standards in the field of freedom of expression and to create an environment for free and professional journalism. The main objectives include ensuring a free environment for the exchange of information, ideas and opinions in the public interest, improving the conditions in which journalists work and their safety, developing media pluralism and strengthening self-regulation.

The **Strategy for Lifelong Entrepreneurial Learning of Montenegro (2020–2024)**<sup>33</sup> represents a key foundation for creating conceptual changes, shifting from education focused on business skills to the development of a general set of competencies applicable in all spheres of life. Through this strategy, lifelong entrepreneurial learning is focused on improving the education system to develop entrepreneurial competencies. Special emphasis is placed on three main goals: 1) enhancing entrepreneurial competencies through formal education at all levels, including preschool education; 2) strengthening non-formal education through more efficient implementation of entrepreneurial learning programmes; 3) increasing the efficiency of the entire entrepreneurial learning system to create a functional and integrated framework that supports entrepreneurship development at all stages of educational and professional growth.

The **Strategy for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities from Discrimination and Promotion of Equality 2022–2027**<sup>34</sup> aims to ensure the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities to education through an inclusive education system at all levels, including preschool, primary, secondary and higher education, vocational training, lifelong learning, extracurricular and social activities, for all students, including persons with disabilities, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. Inclusive education provides a platform for combating stigmatization and discrimination, enabling persons with disabilities, who face disproportionately higher unemployment rates, to fully participate in community life.

Building on this foundation, Montenegro is prioritizing strategic projects and reforms aimed at modernizing and improving the education system. The initiatives presented below serve as a basis for ongoing activities in establishing an educational framework that addresses current and future challenges.

1. Implementation of the “Quality education for every child in Montenegro” project in collaboration with UNICEF and the EU.<sup>35</sup> The project emphasizes inclusivity and equal opportunities for children to have access to education regardless of their background. This project involves the development of the comprehensive Education Reform Strategy (2025–2035).

31 [www.zzzcg.me/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/predlog-nacionalne-strategije-zaposljavanja-2021-2025-s-predlogom-akcionog-plana-zaposljavanja-za-2021-godinu.pdf](http://www.zzzcg.me/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/predlog-nacionalne-strategije-zaposljavanja-2021-2025-s-predlogom-akcionog-plana-zaposljavanja-za-2021-godinu.pdf)

32 [www.gov.me/dokumenta/b7e6dde8-74a2-4ce7-b58c-376a85ed0416](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/b7e6dde8-74a2-4ce7-b58c-376a85ed0416)

33 [www.gov.me/dokumenta/59a998e8-af01-4e54-a205-fc81584163f8](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/59a998e8-af01-4e54-a205-fc81584163f8)

34 [www.gov.me/dokumenta/e9659c4e-e7f6-41f2-ab98-0fd115b80601](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/e9659c4e-e7f6-41f2-ab98-0fd115b80601)

35 [www.unicef.org/montenegro/price/kvalitetno-obrazovanje-za-svu-djecu-u-crnoj-gori](http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/price/kvalitetno-obrazovanje-za-svu-djecu-u-crnoj-gori)

2. The adoption of the Programme for the Development of General Secondary Education (2024–2026) to improve teaching quality and professional development.<sup>36</sup> This is focused on enhancing the quality of teaching and promoting professional development among teachers. By raising the standard of secondary education, Montenegro will be better equipped to train students with the necessary skills for higher education and the labour market.
3. Adoption of the Medium-Term Work Programme (2022–2024) and the 2024 Work Programme established the priorities and objectives that will guide the government's focus and resources from 2024 to 2027. It provides a framework for planning sectoral policies, annual government programmes, and both medium-term and annual ministry work programmes. Education is one of the key priorities of the Montenegrin Government, as highlighted in Goal 14: “Exceptional Education for an Exceptional Montenegro”.
4. Implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Montenegro (2023–2027). This framework provides a strategic approach to enhancing Montenegro's educational landscape in collaboration with international partners and supports existing efforts to align national education reforms with the global Sustainable Development Goals.
5. Through the 2024–2027 Reform Agenda of Montenegro for reforms and growth within the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, a series of key reform measures have been developed to stimulate the development of human capital, which, among other things, include investments in all levels of education and digital education to improve their quality. Through a proposal by the MoESI concerning infrastructure projects in the field of education, the construction and reconstruction of several dozen facilities through 44 projects has been proposed. The implementation of these projects, along with additional activities such as continuous investment in the professional development of teachers, will ensure the achievement of the targets set by the Reform Agenda indicators.
6. The implementation of the Youth Guarantee programme<sup>37</sup> represents an innovative approach to addressing youth unemployment. In addition, it includes reforms and initiatives that Montenegro will implement in the coming period to ensure its full implementation after the planned pilot phases. It covers the period 2024–2026, with the possibility of revision during this period to align the proposed reforms and initiatives with the current position of young people in the labour market and policy guidelines, following the EU employment policy framework.

The **Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2025–2030**.<sup>38</sup> The purpose of this document is to achieve an appropriate level of disaster risk reduction through effective risk mapping and community vulnerability assessment. This contributes to reducing community vulnerability by mitigating the effects of disasters and strengthening sustainable development. The aim of the strategy is to support the adequate development of a protection and rescue system in Montenegro, so that the country's human and material resources are used in the most efficient way possible.

The **Education Reform Strategy 2025–2035** is the first strategic document of its kind in the field of education in Montenegro, as it encompasses all levels of education – from early and preschool education to university-level education. In the previous period, strategic documents did not exist for all individual levels of education. For example, the Strategy for the Development of Primary

36 [www.gov.me/dokumenta/ef923d5a-6ba6-4a49-af11-4107bcf5fd58](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/ef923d5a-6ba6-4a49-af11-4107bcf5fd58)

37 [www.gov.me/clanak/usvojen-plan-implementacije-programa-garancija-za-mlade-do-2026-godine](http://www.gov.me/clanak/usvojen-plan-implementacije-programa-garancija-za-mlade-do-2026-godine)

38 [www.gov.me/dokumenta/a9cef7cc-015d-4433-a86c-38bba3357126](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/a9cef7cc-015d-4433-a86c-38bba3357126)



Education covered the period from 2011 to 2017; the Strategy for the Development of General Secondary Education in Montenegro covered the period from 2015 to 2020; and the Strategy for the Development of Vocational Secondary Education covered the period from 2020 to 2024 – after which no new strategic framework has been adopted for these levels of education.

With the adoption of the 2025–2035 Education Reform Strategy, the following strategies will cease to be in force: the 2021–2025 Early and Preschool Education Strategy, the 2019–2025 Inclusive Education Strategy, and the 2015–2025 Adult Education Strategy, as the key strategic and operational goals and measures from all three documents have been incorporated into the 2025–2035 Education Strategy and the 2024–2026 Programme of Development of General Secondary Education in Montenegro.

## Digital transformation

In response to the growing importance of digital literacy and the use of technology, Montenegro has strategically aligned its digital education commitments with the EU Education Digital Action Plan (2022–2027). This alignment is evident through the shared goals and priorities highlighted in Montenegro's 2022–2027 Education System Digitalization Strategy.

The 2022–2027 Education System Digitalization Strategy emphasizes transforming the education system with modern technologies, ensuring equitable access across schools in both urban and rural areas. The focus on upgrading digital infrastructure mirrors the EU's objective of creating a high-performing digital education ecosystem.

Similar to the EU Digital Education Action Plan, the Montenegro digitalization strategy prioritizes upskilling teachers, enhancing digital competencies and preparing educators and students for the evolving digital landscape. Moreover, Montenegro's commitment to safety and ethical technology use resonates with the EU's efforts in promoting digital literacy and addressing concerns like data protection and online wellbeing.

Integrating digital education initiatives into the broader framework of education reform (2025–2035) is crucial for Montenegro, as it aims to deliver a more adaptable, efficient and inclusive education system. These digital advancements are not just about modernization; they serve as a foundation for driving long-term reform, enhancing education delivery resilience, equipping students with future employment skills and boosting Montenegro's education sector competitiveness on a European and global scale.

Special emphasis in the 2022–2027 Education System Digitalization Strategy is placed on the improvement of the Education Information System. In addition to collecting data into a centralized database from all educational institutions to enable faster statistics and data analysis for decision making, the strategy focuses on the digitalization of processes to reduce paper-based administration for education employees. Furthermore, interoperability (data exchange with other institutions) is highlighted to enhance intersectoral cooperation and implement processes related to child welfare, as well as the development of electronic services for all education stakeholders, including children, parents, employees and institutions.

## The implementation of new policies through adequate financial planning

Adequate financial planning plays a critical role in advancing educational development. Montenegro has committed to allocating appropriate resources to education, aiming to allocate 4–6 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) to education, which is in line with UNESCO's recommendations.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> UNESCO (n.d) SDG 4 – Country Profiles: Montenegro, <https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/country-profile/Montenegro.pdf>

Additionally, Montenegro's education sector is identified as one of the priority areas for investment in the EU's Growth Plan for the Western Balkans. This plan emphasizes human capital development as a fundamental drive for sustainable growth.<sup>40</sup> It focuses on aligning education programmes with the labour market needs, enhancing vocational training and promoting lifelong learning to equip individuals with the necessary skills for the evolving job market. The investment is targeted at improving educational infrastructure and quality in Montenegro with the goal of building a skilled workforce that can contribute to increased social inclusion and economic development in the country.

Montenegro's fiscal strategy also outlines planned expenditures supporting these commitments, ensuring adequate resources are allocated towards relevant education initiatives. The macroeconomics and fiscal projections indicate a sustainable approach to funding these reforms while maintaining fiscal discipline.

In the previous period, the MoESI established highly successful cooperation with international financial institutions and concluded agreements, primarily in the area of financing capital projects in education and equipping schools. These agreements have been concluded with: the European Investment Bank (EIB) – for the construction and equipping of multiple school facilities; the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) – for the construction of new kindergartens; and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) – through energy efficiency projects.

In addition to the agreements directly concluded by the MoESI, educational facilities are also the largest beneficiaries of a project implemented by the Ministry of Energy in cooperation with the German Development Bank (KfW). Strong cooperation with international financial institutions will be a defining aspect of the implementation period of this strategic document, both through the execution of the aforementioned agreements and through the negotiation of new ones, as reflected in the draft budget for 2025, which has enabled the possibility of concluding new agreements with the EIB, EBRD and CEB. Beyond the securing of financial resources, cooperation with international financial institutions is also crucial when applying for grant funding. With the support of the EIB, a grant has been secured through the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) and similar activities have been announced by other creditors. This is particularly significant in the context of the EU Growth Plan, for which funding will be secured through the WBIF mechanism.

## Environmental impact

For the purposes of developing this strategic document, a strategic environmental impact assessment was carried out using the self-assessment tool for draft strategic documents, and it was determined that the identified strategic and operational objectives contribute to the achievement of the goals and indicators defined in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro to 2030.<sup>41</sup> Specifically, the objectives defined in this strategy are fully aligned with the goals defined in the 2030 National Sustainable Development Strategy, namely:

- Thematic Area 1: Improvement of the human resource status and strengthening social inclusion (Strategic Goal 1.3; Measures 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3 and 1.3.4);

<sup>40</sup> EU (2024) Commission approves Reform Agendas of Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, paving the way for payments under the Reform and Growth Facility, [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-approves-reform-agendas-albania-kosovo-montenegro-north-macedonia-and-serbia-paving-way-2024-10-23\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-approves-reform-agendas-albania-kosovo-montenegro-north-macedonia-and-serbia-paving-way-2024-10-23_en)

<sup>41</sup> Self-assessment tool: Questionnaire for Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment, included in Annex III of the methodology for policy development, drafting and monitoring of strategic planning documents. Available at: [www.gov.me/dokumenta/4d95d6d8-ace1-4338-96ce-0f4de29c36b0](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/4d95d6d8-ace1-4338-96ce-0f4de29c36b0)



- Thematic Area 2: Social resources – support for values, norms, and behaviour patterns (Strategic Goal 2.2: Develop a system of values in line with the goals of community sustainable development; Measures 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3);
- Thematic Area 5: Improvement of governance system for sustainable development (Strategic Goal 5.4: Establish a system for monitoring the sustainability of national development, including the monitoring of sustainable development goals and implementation; Measures 5.4.1 and 5.4.2).

Additionally, the indicators defined in the strategy are fully aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goal indicators, specifically: SDG 4.1.1, SDG 4.2.1, SDG 4.6.1, SDG 12.8.1, SDG 4.7.1, SDG 4.a.1 and SDG 4.c.1. A self-assessment was also conducted regarding general issues, and it was determined that the Education Reform Strategy does not have any outcomes that would result in either a positive or negative impact on the environment.

All planned infrastructure projects are aligned with the European Green Deal in the part concerning the improvement and development of infrastructure within the education system. Through implemented and planned projects in cooperation with international partners, such as the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and KfW Bank from Germany, projects are being carried out to enhance energy efficiency in educational institutions across Montenegro, aiming to support the green transition and generate long-term environmental benefits. Project implementation includes various energy efficiency measures, including the installation of heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems, measures to improve building performance and renewable energy technologies (e.g. solar photovoltaic energy), which will enhance the energy efficiency and environmental sustainability of renovated facilities and improve their structural stability. In turn, this will contribute to the reduction of harmful gas emissions and energy consumption, improve indoor air quality and create a healthier environment for our youngest generations.



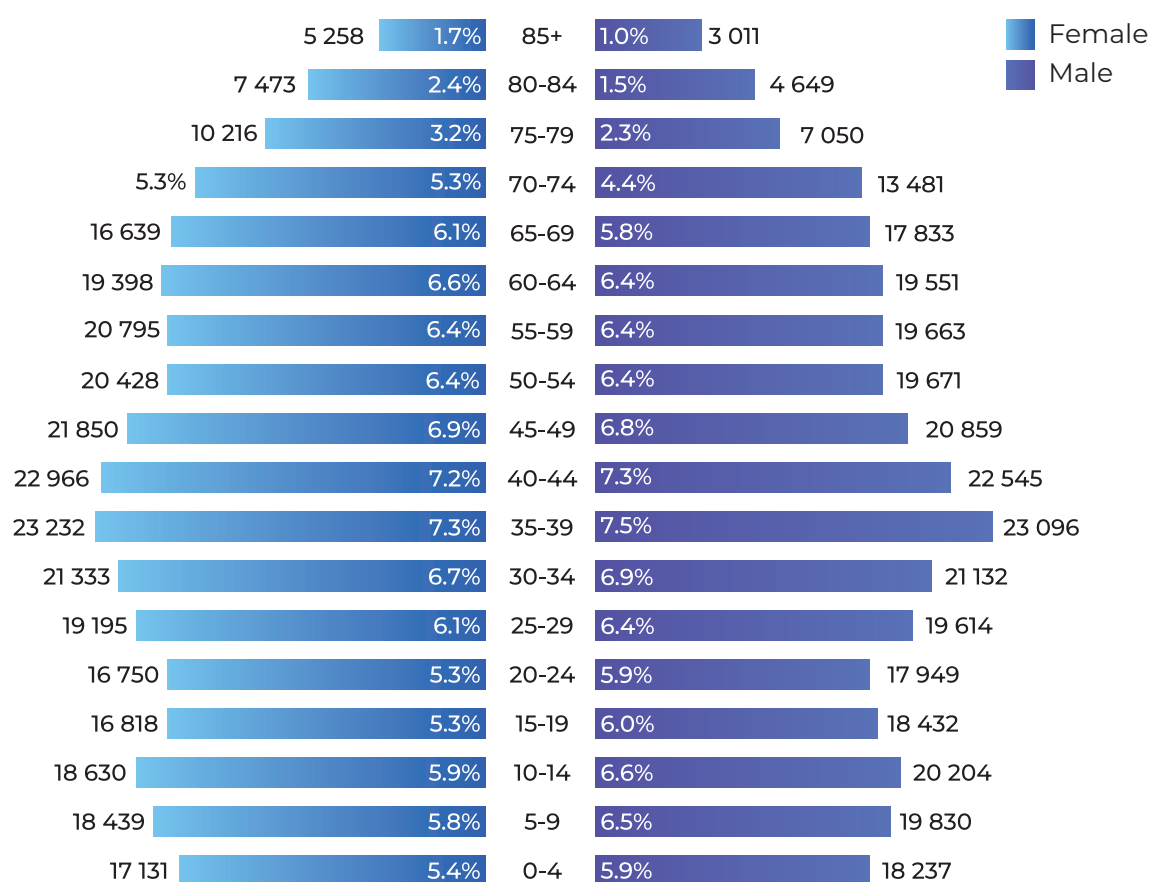




## (C) SITUATION ANALYSIS

Montenegro, an upper-middle-income and EU candidate country in the Western Balkans, is undergoing population shifts that are shaping its future economic and social landscape. As of 2023, the country's population was estimated at 623,633, with 29.2 per cent being children and young people aged 24 years or below.<sup>42</sup>

Figure 1: Population of Montenegro, by age and gender



Montenegro's demographics present both opportunities and challenges that must be addressed. On the one hand, the current youth population could drive future economic growth and development if adequately supported by investments in education, skill development and employment opportunities. On the other hand, without sufficient access to quality education, job opportunities and social services, this youth population risks becoming economically inactive, posing long-term economic and social challenges for the country.

<sup>42</sup> MONSTAT (2024) Population of Montenegro by sex and age, Population Census, [www.monstat.org/uploads/files/popis%202021/saopstenja/SAOPSTENJE\\_Popis%20stanovnistva%202023%20I\\_cg.pdf](http://www.monstat.org/uploads/files/popis%202021/saopstenja/SAOPSTENJE_Popis%20stanovnistva%202023%20I_cg.pdf)

Furthermore, Montenegro is facing the dual challenge of an aging population with only a slowly growing youth population to replace it. While one third of the country's population is young, the fertility rate has been steadily declining. This aging demographic trend is expected to accelerate in the coming decades, leading to a shrinking working-age population. The implications of this are significant, as it could limit Montenegro's ability to support dependent population groups at both ends of the spectrum – those under 24 and those over 65.

Economically, Montenegro experienced significant changes in its GDP per capita between 2019 and 2023, largely driven by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the country's reliance on tourism. In 2019, the GDP per capita was approximately €6,800, but the COVID-19 pandemic led to a sharp decline in 2020, with the GDP per capita dropping to about €5,490.<sup>43</sup> In 2020, it was estimated that the economic downturn brought about by the pandemic may have pulled up to 34,000 of Montenegro's citizens into absolute poverty.<sup>44</sup> As the economy gradually recovered, including the tourism sector, GDP per capita rose to €6,650 in 2022 and reached €6,900 in 2023.<sup>45</sup> While this economic recovery is encouraging, one in four Montenegrin citizens and one in three children are already living at risk of poverty.<sup>46</sup> This highlights Montenegro's economic challenges and the need for adequate social safety nets. It also indicates the country's vulnerability to external shocks and highlights the need for economic diversification beyond tourism to build greater resilience.

The economic trend—including but not limited to fluctuating GDP, labour market challenges and high poverty rates—is linked to Montenegro's human capital development. The country's human development index (HDI) of 0.844 ranks it above some Balkan countries, including Romania (0.827) and Serbia (0.805); however, it falls below EU countries such as Slovenia (0.919) and Croatia (0.858).

The country is lagging in key areas such as education and labour market integration. Furthermore, while Montenegro's education system has made progress in recent years, it still falls short in terms of adequately preparing adolescents for the fast-evolving labour market and economy. Montenegro's NEET rate (young people not in education, employment or training) decreased from 23.2 per cent in 2022 to 20.3 per cent in 2023.

Addressing educational needs will be critical for fostering sustainable development within the next decade. By investing in education and skills development, Montenegro can better leverage its demographic structure, ensuring that children and young people transition into the labour market effectively and are better-prepared to drive economic growth.

## C1. Education system structure

The Montenegrin education system is structured into several levels, each designed to cater to specific age groups and educational needs.

1. **Preschool education** is available, but not mandatory, for children aged 0 to 6 years.
2. **Primary education**, which is mandatory for all children, typically begins at age 6 and lasts for nine years.

<sup>43</sup> EUROSTAT (n.d.) Real GDP per capita, [https://ec.europa.eu/databrowser/sdg\\_08\\_10/default/table](https://ec.europa.eu/databrowser/sdg_08_10/default/table)

<sup>44</sup> UNICEF (2022) Fighting Poverty in Montenegro Through Responsive Evidence-Based Social and Child Protection, [www.unicef.org/montenegro/media/22416/file/SDG%20publication.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media/22416/file/SDG%20publication.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> UNICEF (2022) Child poverty reduction – a national priority. [www.unicef.org/montenegro/en/stories/child-poverty-reduction-national-priority](http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/en/stories/child-poverty-reduction-national-priority)

**Primary art education** is available, but not mandatory, for children from 6 to 14 years old, and lasts three, six or nine years.

- 3. Secondary education** is available, but not mandatory, for adolescents aged 15 to 19. It is delivered through two subsystems, consisting of three types of schools:

Gymnasium education is general secondary education provided in gymnasiums, which offer four-year general academic education and prepare students for further studies.

Vocational education is conducted in schools for lower, secondary and higher vocational education, as well as in secondary art schools. These educational institutions offer two, three or four years of vocational education and prepare students for the labour market.

- 4. Higher vocational education** is provided by higher vocational schools.
- 5. Resource centres** provide education and upbringing for children with special educational needs.
- 6. Higher education** includes universities and independent faculties, covering undergraduate, master's and doctoral studies.
- 7. Adult education** takes place at licensed education providers, including: schools, specialized adult education organizations, institutions for the accommodation and care of persons with special educational needs, and other licensed legal entities.

The tables that follow provide insights into the distribution of students currently enrolled across the various educational levels in the 2023/2024 school year.

Table 1: Number of students per educational level, disaggregated by gender (2023/2024)

Education level	Number of children		
	Male	Female	Total
Preschool	13,082	11,993	25,075
Primary (grades I–IX)	36,617	34,052	70,669
Secondary (general)	3,377	4,446	7,823
Secondary (vocational – three-year programme)	2,749	1,081	3,830
Secondary (vocational – four-year programme)	7,017	7,057	14,074
Higher education	6,721	9,588	16,309



Table 2: Number of students from vulnerable groups, including children with special educational needs, children from the Roma and Egyptian communities, and children from families receiving financial assistance, by education level, disaggregated by gender (2023/2024)

Education level	Number of students with special education needs		
	Male	Female	Total
Preschool	116	44	161
Primary (grades I–IX)	740	364	1,104
Secondary	267	190	457
Education level	Number of students from Roma and Egyptian communities		
	Male	Female	Total
Preschool	151	144	295
Primary (grades I–IX)	921	888	1,879
Secondary	103	88	211
Education level	Number of students from families receiving financial assistance		
	Male	Female	Total
Preschool	491	438	929
Primary (grades I–IX)	2,618	2,475	5,093
Secondary	614	650	1,264
Education level	Number of students without parental care		
	Male	Female	Total
Preschool	17	11	28
Primary (grades I–IX)	110	114	224
Secondary	60	45	105
Education level	Number of foreign children		
	Male	Female	Total
Preschool	640	627	1267
Primary (grades I–IX)	3,056	2,754	5,810
Secondary	651	672	1,323

## C2. Governance and management

Montenegro has established the necessary institutional framework for the effective management and leadership of its education system. At the national level, the governance of the education sector in Montenegro is primarily managed by the MoESI, which oversees the planning, implementing and improving of educational policies. Its tasks include: creating and developing the educational system, setting the norms and standards for financing educational institutions, managing student and academic staff mobility, and promoting international cooperation in education. The responsibilities of the ministry also include the development of strategic and legislative frameworks in the areas of education, science and innovation, approval of education programmes for different levels of education, textbooks and manuals, and the publication of teaching materials. Additionally, it oversees the development of the Montenegrin National Qualifications Framework (MQF) and its alignment with the European Qualifications Framework.

Broadly, the MoESI is responsible for developing policies and strategies, strategic management, regulation and implementation through operational planning and budgeting, as well as for supervising educational institutions. The MoESI's role is complemented by independent national advisory organizations, especially the National Councils for Education. Certain responsibilities are delegated to supervised administrative bodies, including the Bureau for Educational Services, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, the Examination Centre and the Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids and the National Council for Education.

The Bureau for Education is a professional institution responsible for monitoring, ensuring, enhancing and determining the quality of educational processes in preschool institutions, primary schools, secondary general schools (gymnasiums), secondary vocational schools (general education subjects), resource centres and student dormitories. Among its other duties, the Bureau for Education advances the curriculum, proposes programmes for preschool, primary and secondary general education, engages in research and the development of the education system up to the university level, determines the quality of education work, encourages, monitors and ensures the professional development of teachers and educators, and establishes cooperation with international organizations in the education sector.

The Centre for Vocational Education and Training is a public institution in the education sector responsible for development, advisory, research and professional activities, and the determination and assurance of the quality of education work in the fields of vocational education, adult education and lifelong learning. It is also responsible for licensing institutions for adult education. The centre carries out continuous professional development for teachers and engages in international cooperation with partners through participation in significant projects and initiatives.

The Examination Centre of Montenegro conducts assessments of students' knowledge, skills and abilities at the end of the second and third cycles of primary school, as well as final and professional examinations for secondary school students. The centre is also responsible for national competitions for primary and secondary school students, as well as for the participation of Montenegrin students in international Olympiads. Additionally, the Examination Centre is in charge of implementing international assessments such as PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS.

The Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids is the only institution in Montenegro's education system responsible for the development and publication of textbook and non-textbook literature, as well as other teaching materials for pre-university education, including digital content and publications for students with special educational needs.

For decisionmaking on professional issues and to provide expert assistance in the decision-making process and the preparation of regulations in the field of education, the government has established the National Council. Among its responsibilities, the National Council: adopts educational programmes for children with special educational needs, educational programmes for student dormitories, standards for the preparation of textbooks and other teaching materials, standards for teacher and headteacher competencies, and guidelines for developing educational programmes; determines the specialized part of the programme for preschool, primary and secondary education; proposes the general component of the educational programme for primary and secondary education; proposes special training programmes, standards for school facilities and equipment, teaching materials, educational profiles and levels of teacher education; and approves textbooks and teaching materials.

The Qualifications Council decides on the classification of qualifications within the Qualifications Framework and proposes the development and enhancement of qualifications to the relevant institution. It also makes decisions on aligning the existing qualifications with the Qualifications Framework and monitors the development of the framework as a whole. The Qualifications Council issues methodological documents for classifying qualifications and determines the criteria for selecting members of sectoral commissions.

The Higher Education Council is responsible for tasks related to the advancement and development of higher education. Within its remit, this council analyses the state and achievements of higher education, provides opinions on proposals for higher education development strategies, prescribes the conditions and criteria for academic appointments, gives opinions on the amount of funding for public higher education institutions and the students at these institutions for each academic year, provides opinions on the number of students and the amount of funding for students enrolled in study programmes of public interest at private higher education institutions for each academic year, and cooperates with higher education institutions to ensure and enhance quality.

After several years under the Administration for Inspection Affairs, the responsibility of Educational Inspection has now been brought back under the authority of the MoESI. Its mandate also covers ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations across all education sectors, from preschool to adult education, including special needs education. This move strengthens the MoESI's capacity to enforce educational standards and ensure accountability. The Education Inspectorate's work is essential for maintaining quality standards in education and ensuring equal opportunities for all participants in the educational process.

Furthermore, the implications of the Growth Plan are that far more resources may be allocated to the MoESI. In order to ensure that these financial resources are used optimally, i.e. the efficient translation of education inputs into high-quality outputs, the MoESI needs to: clarify its strategic objectives; improve its capacity (both for single objectives and to deliver multiple objectives concurrently); and build trust with the MoF that it can absorb increasingly large amounts of money to bolster human capital development. First and foremost, it is necessary to develop an implementation structure by establishing one or more project implementation units (PIUs), whose sole task would be the implementation and execution of procedures for carrying out the tasks outlined in the Growth Plan. Support from international financial institutions, which have expressed interest in providing funding for technical assistance to these units, is also of great significance for these activities. This support aims to enhance the implementation capacity of the entire Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation.



Strategic oversight and accountability are ensured by the minister, who is subject to oversight and review by parliament, particularly the Parliamentary Committee on Education, which plays a vital role in reviewing proposals for laws, regulations and general acts linked to the various levels of education, ensuring alignment with EU laws and standards. It monitors the implementation and evaluation of laws, emphasizing those that are related to EU obligations. Within the parliament, several standing committees exist that also address important educational topics, such as equality, the status of vulnerable groups, education for children with developmental disabilities and socially vulnerable children, prevention of violence in schools, and measures to improve student performance on international assessments such as PISA.

Complementing these structures, the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro (the Ombudsperson) plays a significant role in safeguarding educational rights. This independent and autonomous institution is tasked with protecting human rights and freedoms, including those guaranteed by the Constitution, laws and international human rights treaties. Its competence spans children's rights, young people and social protection, making it an influential actor in networks such as the Southeast Europe Children's Rights Ombudspersons Network (CRONSEE) and the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC).

The Ombudsperson proactively acts by signalling, warning, criticising, proposing or recommending measures related to children's right to safety in educational institutions and the rights of children with special educational needs. Additionally, the Ombudsperson reviews the performance of management bodies and addresses the mutual rights and obligations between parents/guardians and educational institutions, from the MoESI to headteachers of kindergartens and schools. An innovative initiative by the Ombudsperson's office is the "Network of Golden Advisers", which empowers children from all municipalities to directly share their ideas and proposals, thus contributing to protecting and promoting children's rights.

At the school level, governance is carried out by school boards or management boards, with headteachers responsible for management. These boards, which include representatives from the MoESI, employees, social partners and parents – depending on the education level and type of schools, ensure effective institutional governance by adopting key documents and overseeing institutional changes.

Headteachers, who are selected through a public notice of vacancy by the MoESI, manage the work of educational institutions. Recent amendments to the General Law on Education have changed the selection process for headteachers, introducing selection criteria for the first time. These criteria are defined by the Rulebook on the Assessment of Competencies, Knowledge and Skills of Candidates for the Position of Headteacher of a Public Education Institution and include, among other aspects, the evaluation of leadership skills, teamwork, communication abilities and innovation. In addition to the general conditions that candidates for the position of headteacher must meet, the education minister forms a three-member committee to conduct an in-person interview, review the institution's Development Programme and submit a report to the minister for the final decision.

In addition to institutional governance, the participation of students and parents plays a crucial role. Student Parliaments, supported by law, engage in discussions with national legislative bodies, while Parent Councils have the purpose of providing organized realization of the interests of students, parents, and caregivers, organize interests and provide feedback on the plans and activities of educational institutions.

Although the education system in Montenegro has dedicated units and affiliated institutions aligned to its functions above, concerns about its efficiency remain, particularly regarding the following:

- Prioritizing overall education financing and allocating resources to align with policy goals
- Strategic planning, including the use of research and other evidence
- Human resource management related to professional and managerial roles
- Using data for decision making and accountability
- Suboptimal horizontal and vertical relationships and alignment of purpose
- Efficiency in the use of available resources
- Partnerships and participation of students, parents and employees

Availability of necessary competencies at both the national and institutional levels. Additionally, developing digital content and fully implementing the Digital School concept is essential for creating an education system capable of withstanding various challenges. This modernization is crucial for both teaching and administrative tasks, directly influencing the quality of work and the level of students' knowledge. A significant drawback is the insufficient number of IT experts in this field, which affects both the maintenance of the existing systems and the pace of development. Moreover, the educational system is equipped with only 50 per cent of the necessary computer hardware, highlighting the ongoing need for more equipment and improved internet connectivity across all facilities, including central institutions. The successful implementation of digital solutions relies heavily on the digital skills of all participants in the education system, which are currently not at satisfactory levels, thereby significantly affecting its overall efficiency.

Furthermore, efforts to promote inclusive education—particularly for children with special educational needs—are hindered by limited resources and inadequate coordination among institutions responsible for addressing these needs. This situation leads to inequalities in access to quality education for vulnerable student populations.

**Human resource management and required competencies:** A key weakness identified within the education sector is the absence of a strategic policy document governing human resource management, particularly regarding planning and professional development. According to the 2020 Education Sector Analysis (ESA), there is no policy framework related to human resource planning within the education sector.

In addition to the above, education leaders—including those in the MoESI, schools and institutions—require further capacity building to effectively manage and implement major reforms. This includes expertise in strategic planning, policy evaluation and navigating complex cross-sectoral dynamics, as well as digital skills that enhance overall efficiency. Moreover, fostering a stronger culture of continuous professional development across all levels of the education sector, from teachers to policymakers, is essential to ensure that individuals are equipped with the necessary skills to enhance the quality and management of education.

**Use of data for decision making and accountability:** The utilization of data for informed decision making and accountability remains insufficient. A major challenge lies in collecting, analysing and using data derived from research, monitoring, evaluation processes and the

Education Information System. This inadequacy undermines the ability to evaluate whether educational policies produce the desired outcomes and hampers timely intervention in instances of underperformance. To enhance the management and overall performance of the education system, a stronger horizontal connection within the system is needed. While the Education Information System encompasses all levels of education, including secondary education, there is a pressing need to expand the records and introduce new modules. Such additions would integrate the data with other systems and facilitate a more comprehensive analysis, which could inform decision making and enhance programmes aimed at improving quality education and support for children and students. In response to said governance and management challenges, Montenegro has initiated several government initiatives aimed at enhancing the performance of the education sector:

**Alignment with European standards:** Montenegro is actively working to align its educational policies and structures with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This initiative, led by the Qualifications Council, is crucial for ensuring the quality and relevance of educational outcomes in the context of European integration. The council oversees the activities of sectoral commissions and provides recommendations for developing qualifications harmonized with the labour market demand across various sectors.

**Vocational education and training (VET):** The government has placed a strong emphasis on vocational education as a vital tool for addressing skills shortages and improving employment opportunities for young people. Vocational education is becoming a key factor in reducing unemployment, particularly among young people, by developing skills that are directly aligned with labour market needs. The Centre for Vocational Education and Training plays a pivotal role in coordinating these efforts, ensuring that vocational education programmes remain responsive to Montenegro's changing economic needs.

**Quality assurance of higher education:** The Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education has made significant steps in aligning Montenegro's higher education institutions with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG). This alignment ensures that Montenegrin universities and higher education programmes meet international standards and remain competitive in the global academic market.

### C3. Legal and policy frameworks

The educational process in Montenegro is implemented in accordance with national and international legislative and strategic frameworks, which ensure the quality and compliance of education with modern standards and the needs of society.

The educational process in Montenegro is conducted in accordance with the General Law on Education and Upbringing (2024) and in line with the laws that regulate different levels of education:

- Law on Preschool Education and Upbringing
- Law on Primary Education and Upbringing
- Law on the Education and Upbringing of Children with Special Educational Needs
- Law on Gymnasiums
- Law on Vocational Education



- Law on Higher Education
- Law on Adult Education
- Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities
- Law on the National Qualifications Framework

The General Law on Education and Upbringing was adopted by the Parliament of Montenegro in November 2002. This law was subsequently amended on several occasions, and the most recent changes were adopted in September 2024. The General Law on Education and Upbringing is the umbrella law in the field of education and training in Montenegro. This law regulates work related to education and upbringing in the following areas: preschool and elementary education, secondary general education, vocational education, the upbringing and education of persons with special educational needs and adult education. The law defines educational institutions, management of the institutions, teachers, the training and advancement of teachers, quality assurance, financing, etc.

Bylaws regulate the establishment of institutions in the field of education, teacher licensing, professional development, student assessment, enrolment of students in schools, as well as the inclusion of adults in education programmes, the taking of matriculation and vocational exams, external testing, acquiring national professional qualifications, key skills and similar activities that are crucial for the functioning of the education system in Montenegro.

The quality of education and training in the institutions is determined in accordance with the Rulebook on the Content, Forms and Manner of Determining the Quality of Educational Work in Institutions (2020)<sup>47</sup> and the Methodology for Ensuring and Improving the Quality of Educational Work in a Preschool Institution, School, Educational Centre, Resource Centre, Adult Education Provider and in a Student Dormitory.<sup>48</sup>

## C4. Education trends

By assessing the relationship between the input parameters and outcomes and by monitoring the extent to which these efforts inclusively lead to improved learning outcomes for all students, a comprehensive situational analysis can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and inclusiveness of Montenegro's education system.

This section does that by, in turn, evaluating the current context of Montenegro's education system with respect to:

- a. Access to and coverage of students by education in Montenegro and current assessment of their achievement
- b. The primary role of teachers in leading these changes
- c. How the education system efficiently supports its necessary functions, such as oversight, HR management and collecting and processing data
- d. How well the education infrastructure can support positive teaching and learning

<sup>47</sup> [www.gov.me/dokumenta/70167096-7a99-409c-bb55-8166759ac029](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/70167096-7a99-409c-bb55-8166759ac029)

<sup>48</sup> [www.gov.me/dokumenta/410dfbd3-c202-48a6-90e4-ced271ee8482](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/410dfbd3-c202-48a6-90e4-ced271ee8482)

## Access

With net enrolment rates at 98.8 per cent for primary, and 76.1 per cent for secondary levels,<sup>49</sup> the indicators show that Montenegro has made impressive improvements in terms of accessibility of education.<sup>50</sup> Children are also staying longer in the education system, with the primary completion rate (PCR) rising to 93 per cent in 2020 and aligning Montenegro with the 2018 global average of 93.2 per cent. Further, school life expectancy (SLE) was 12.25 years on average in 2020, of which 8.90 years is in primary education (close to the nine years expected) and 3.35 years in secondary education, which is close to the non-compulsory maximum of four years. This is nearing the EU average of 12.9 years and positions Montenegro ahead of some EU member states, such as Hungary (12.1) and Cyprus (12.08).

The 2022 Education Sector Analysis figures show a recovery since the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, preschool education enrolment increased by 7 per cent in comparison to 2021, with the coverage rate of 3–6-year-old children currently standing at 76 per cent (75% for girls, 77% for boys). An upward trend was also evident for children from the most vulnerable groups – the number of children with disabilities increased by 7 per cent and Roma children in preschool education saw a major increase of 47 per cent. An important increase of 5 per cent was recorded in the number of children with disabilities in secondary education.

## Student assessment and achievements

The student assessment system in Montenegro operates within the framework of several key laws, including the Law on Primary Education and the Law on Gymnasiums (General Programme Secondary Schools), which prescribe a mix of descriptive and numerical grading throughout the education cycle. While these regulations ensure that students are assessed regularly and that feedback is provided to parents, significant challenges remain in how assessment supports learning and development.

A core issue is the misalignment between the goals of Montenegro's curriculum—designed to foster critical thinking, creativity and problem solving—and the actual assessment practices in classrooms. Despite these curricular ambitions, assessments often emphasize the reproduction of content, limiting their role in fostering higher-order cognitive skills. Internal assessments largely focus on memorization rather than the development of competencies.

Summative assessment is currently the dominant evaluation practice. Although reforms have aimed to shift towards competency-based learning, classroom assessment practices have not kept pace. Also, the focus on end-of-period grading has limited the use of formative assessment, which is widely recognized as crucial for continuous student development.

Since the PISA 2015 results, there has been an acknowledged need to move from summative to formative assessment. However, implementation of this shift has been slow, with classroom assessment frequently cited as a neglected area (ESA 77–78, 98). In response to these challenges, a commission within the Bureau for Education was established in 2018 to spearhead reforms, particularly around formative assessment. The commission proposed several measures, including the development of assessment manuals and the introduction of teacher training programmes aimed at enhancing formative assessment practices. Although the handbook *Assessment for*

49 Net enrolment rates for pre-primary and primary education for 2020, and secondary education for 2019.

50 UNICEF (2022) Education Sector Analysis 2015–2020, <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/en/reports/education-sector-analysis-2015-2020>

Student Development and the Improvement of Teaching and Learning (Z. Lalović, 2020)<sup>51</sup> was developed and made available to teachers and schools, the implementation of these reforms was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other resource constraints. As a result, formative assessment remains underutilized throughout the education system.

Student testing conducted at the end of grade VI of primary school serves as an instrument for education policymakers to monitor and improve education quality, providing data on subject curricula and their suitability for students' development levels. The purpose of this testing is not to evaluate students' individual achievements; knowledge assessment using externally prepared tasks is carried out through tests taken by grade IX students in Montenegrin-Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian language and literature, mathematics and an elective subject. At the end of grade IV of secondary education, students take either a school-leaving (matriculation) or professional examination, depending on whether they have followed a general secondary school curriculum or attended a vocational or art school.

In parallel, international standardized assessments provide additional insights into the performance of Montenegrin students. In the 2021 PIRLS reading assessment, 87 per cent of Montenegrin students achieved a score at or above the basic proficiency level.<sup>52</sup> In the 2023 TIMSS mathematics assessment, 84 per cent of Montenegrin students demonstrated basic knowledge, while 19 per cent reached advanced proficiency. In science, 80 per cent of 10-year-olds displayed basic knowledge, with 12 per cent achieving advanced levels. Each of these results represents significant achievement above the basic proficiency level but is still behind regional comparators.

The PISA 2022 assessment of 15-year-olds shows that 47.1 per cent of students achieved Level 2 or above in reading, 40.5 per cent in mathematics and 45.1 per cent in science. The shares of students who attained high cognitive levels were: 1 per cent in mathematics, 0.6 per cent in reading and 0.3 per cent in science. There was also a performance gap based on socio-economic status; students from the wealthiest 25 per cent outperformed those from the poorest 25 per cent by 67 points in mathematics. Though significant, the gap was actually smaller than the OECD average difference of 93 points between the highest- and lowest-performing students based on socio-economic status. Notably, 14 per cent of disadvantaged students in Montenegro were in the top 25 per cent in terms of mathematics scores, compared to the OECD average of 10 per cent, indicating some level of academic resilience among lower-income students.

These results highlight both the equity and quality challenges within Montenegro's education system. The current state of student assessment highlights the critical need for reform to bridge the performance gap and elevate overall student achievement. While the performance of some disadvantaged students demonstrates potential, the disparity in achievement and the small percentage of high achievers point to systemic issues that must be addressed. New reforms need to focus on improving learning outcomes, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, to ensure that Montenegro's students are better-prepared for future academic and labour market challenges.

## Equity and inclusion

Montenegro has developed strong laws, policies and practices, such as the Law on Education of Children with Special Educational Needs and the Inclusive Education Strategy (2019–2025), to

<sup>51</sup> [www.gov.me/dokumenta/5dd9760b-9051-4745-b56c-c200e23a3cd6](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/5dd9760b-9051-4745-b56c-c200e23a3cd6)

<sup>52</sup> IEA (2021) Montenegro PIRLS 2021 Encyclopedia, <https://pirls2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Montenegro.pdf>



support the inclusion of children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream education. The most pronounced disparities in educational access and outcomes in Montenegro are linked to socio-economic status (SES) and geography, while gender gaps remain minimal.

While data on the number of SEN children enrolled in mainstream schools and resource centres is available, the total number of children with disabilities in Montenegro remains unknown. The number of SEN children in mainstream primary schools has steadily increased, while the number of children in resource centres has decreased. However, at the secondary level, the proportion of SEN children in resource centres remains high compared to primary education, indicating a slower transition toward full inclusion. Teaching assistants are employed at all levels of education, up to the university level, to support students in accessing education and achieving academic success. Their role involves assisting children with severe and profound physical impairments, moderate intellectual disabilities, blindness, severe to total hearing loss, severe speech and language impairments, and autism. In the 2023/2024 school year, 517 teaching assistants were engaged (118 in preschool education, 336 in primary schools and 63 in secondary schools).<sup>53</sup>

Several measures have been introduced to support the integration of Roma and Egyptian children into Montenegro's education system. Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain. Early childhood enrolment stands at 16 per cent.<sup>54</sup> However, only 56 per cent of Roma children complete primary education, and just 3 per cent complete secondary education. These outcomes are further impacted by poverty and regional disparities, with children from poorer households and rural areas facing the most significant barriers. Out-of-school rates have decreased since 2013 but remain particularly high for children in rural areas and poorer regions, especially in the northern part of the country. Support for the educational process in primary schools is also provided by mediators for the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptians. Their role includes monitoring school attendance, facilitating communication between the Roma and Egyptian communities and schools or kindergartens, and mediating in cases of language barriers.

The socio-economic status (SES) of students plays a significant role in determining educational outcomes. Children from the poorest quintile are six to eight times less likely to attend preschool compared to their wealthier counterparts. In secondary education, 64 per cent of children from the poorest quintile attend school, compared to 97 per cent from the middle-income quintile, with a notable decline in attendance in the southern region.<sup>55</sup> Completion rates follow a similar pattern, with wealth disparities more pronounced at the secondary level.

In terms of gender, Montenegro shows relatively minimal gaps in enrolment and access across education levels. However, learning assessments reveal differences in outcomes. PISA 2018 results show that girls outperform boys by 35 points in reading. At the level of the tested student population, there was almost no difference in the average mathematics scores between boys (405.44) and girls (405.77).<sup>56</sup> However, in the new TIMSS 2023 cycle,<sup>57</sup> boys recorded an improvement of 28 points in mathematics, outperforming girls by 12 points. In science, they achieved a four-point advantage over girls. The biggest gender difference in education outcomes is manifested in reading. Visible

53 MEIS.

54 MICS.

55 UNICEF (2022) Education Sector Analysis 2015–2020, [www.unicef.org/montenegro/en/reports/education-sector-analysis-2015-2020](http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/en/reports/education-sector-analysis-2015-2020)

56 OECD (2023), PISA 2022 Results (Volume I): The State of Learning and Equity in Education, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/53f23881-en>

57 Von Davier, M., Kennedy, A., Reynolds, K., Fishbein, B., Khorramdel, L., Aldrich, C., Bookbinder, A., Bezirhan, U., & Yin, L. (2024). TIMSS 2023 International Results in Mathematics and Science. Boston College, TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, <https://doi.org/10.6017/lse.tpisc.timss.rs6460>

difference is present already among 10-year-olds, with girls outperforming boys by 20 points in PIRLS. The PISA 2022 results show that more than half of girls (56.12 per cent) achieve Level 2 or above, while 38.35 per cent of boys achieve success. On the other hand, boys perform better in terms of reaching the top levels of 5 and 6 in mathematics, reading and science (not statistically significant – less than a 1 per cent difference).

## **Pedagogy and the curriculum**

Montenegro has made significant strides in modernizing its education system, particularly with the 2001 comprehensive curriculum reform aimed at aligning educational programmes with contemporary pedagogical concepts. The shift towards a competency-based curriculum has emphasized learner-centred education, promoting active learning, critical thinking and socio-emotional development. However, the successful implementation of these reforms faces several challenges.

Teachers' adaptation to these reforms remains a concern. Many educators still rely on traditional, content-focused teaching methods rather than competency-based approaches that foster higher-order thinking skills. Research shows that teachers often prioritize content delivery over the development of student competencies, with limited use of interactive and participatory teaching methods.

While Montenegro has made some efforts to align textbooks and teaching materials with recent curriculum reforms, there are areas where further improvements are necessary to fully support the learning process. The Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids has worked to enhance and diversify teaching resources, including the production of digital formats, to better align with modern educational needs. However, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring that textbooks consistently promote critical thinking and bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. In secondary vocational schools, textbooks have traditionally been viewed as overly academic and disconnected from real-world skills. Yet, progress has been made, and recent developments indicate Montenegro's commitment to quality in this area. Notably, three textbooks designed for TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) schools have received the Best European Learning Materials Award (BELMA).<sup>58</sup> These efforts demonstrate that while improvements are needed, more steps are being taken to advance the quality and relevance of educational materials in Montenegro.

An analysis of Montenegro's educational subject programmes and textbooks<sup>59</sup> reveals significant gender disparities. Across various curricula, the generic masculine form is predominantly used, with little to no effort to incorporate gender-neutral language, contributing to the invisibility of women and girls in educational materials. The lack of explicit gender-relevant content and critical discussions on gender roles perpetuates stereotypes and fails to challenge traditional perceptions. For instance, the "Nature and Society" curriculum addresses gender roles only minimally, emphasizing the social organization of gender differences in one learning outcome, while other subjects such as mathematics and physics remain devoid of gender-responsive content. Furthermore, textbooks often portray women in traditional, submissive roles, with limited representation of women in professional or leadership contexts.

58 CDM (2024) Crnogorske čitanke osvojile nagradu BELMA (Montenegrin Readers Win the BELMA Award), <https://www.cdm.me/drustvo/crnogorske-citanke-osvojile-nagradu-belma/>

59 MoESI, UNICEF, OSCE, Gender Analysis of Selected Subject Curricula and Textbooks (unpublished).

## Learning environments

Montenegro's educational institutions are working towards creating safe, stimulating environments that promote the development of key competencies, socio-emotional skills and sustainability-related learning. The curriculum has been modernized to emphasize problem solving, information literacy and responsible decision-making competencies. However, gaps remain in implementation, particularly in embedding these competencies across all levels of education.

There is a recognized need to improve school environments to make them more inclusive and supportive. Safety concerns, including cyberbullying, are becoming increasingly relevant with the rise of digital learning. Many secondary schools lack relational trust between teachers and students, further contributing to an unfavourable school climate.

Socio-emotional learning (SEL) has become a priority, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated mental health issues among children and adolescents; this is a serious challenge also in other countries. The programme “My Values and Virtues”, aimed at developing children's social and emotional skills, serves as an outstanding resource. Teams of teachers from 109 primary and secondary schools have been trained for its implementation. However, many schools struggle to provide the necessary support for students' emotional wellbeing, resulting in disengagement and a lack of motivation (ESA, p. 85).

Montenegro has adopted the Education System Digitalization Strategy (2022–2027) to integrate digital technologies into educational and administrative processes. The development of digital textbooks and learning materials is part of this initiative, but challenges remain in ensuring effective implementation and accessibility for all students.

## Teacher competencies and the availability of competent professional staff

The quality of Montenegro's education system directly depends on the staffing structure and competencies of employees at all levels of education.

The Education Sector Analysis (2015–2020), the results of students in national tests and the achievements of our students in international studies indicate the necessity to improve initial teacher training, their professional development and the deployment of qualified and motivated professional staff to appropriate positions. Although the system of professional development for teachers is developed and legally regulated, it has not gone on to have the desired effects due to insufficient financial resources for teacher training in the previous period, a lack of internal motivation among teachers/preschool educators and inadequate application of acquired knowledge and skills in teaching practice.

Effective, systematic and long-term teacher workforce planning has been lacking, as there is no document regulating policy in this area, nor has there been an analysis of the system's future needs. The efficiency of the education system largely depends on the availability of competent teachers, who are employed based on objective criteria. The 2015–2020 Education Sector Analysis emphasizes that the employment process must be transparent and grounded in clear criteria: qualifications, teaching competencies and experience. While regulations are in place, their limitations may hinder the hiring of highly qualified staff and restrict opportunities for professional development.

A deficit of STEM teachers has been a pronounced issue for an extended period and no solution to develop a pipeline of qualified teachers to address the deficit has yet been put in place. In certain municipalities, the shortage of preschool educators is becoming more pronounced.



The education system does not provide the required number of paraprofessional staff, especially psychologists, speech therapists, special educators, pedagogues and social workers. In the schools where they are employed, it often happens that they are burdened with administrative tasks, which negatively affects the time available for working with children. This is one of the reasons why some educational institutions have not developed a sufficiently stimulating, inclusive and safe environment for the comprehensive development of children's/students' personalities (with the goal of zero violence in schools). The table below shows the current number of support staff in schools, including pedagogues, psychologists and special educators, along with the recommended standards and the difference between the actual number and the required standards.

Table 3: School support staff by education level in the 2023/2024 school year

Education level	Type of support staff	Number of employees
<b>Preschool education</b>	<b>Pedagogues</b>	<b>22</b>
	<b>Psychologists</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>Speech therapists</b>	<b>9</b>
	<b>Special educators</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Primary education</b>	<b>Pedagogues</b>	<b>90</b>
	<b>Psychologists</b>	<b>44</b>
	<b>Speech therapists</b>	<b>19</b>
	<b>Special educators</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Secondary education</b>	<b>Pedagogues</b>	<b>37</b>
	<b>Psychologists</b>	<b>14</b>
	<b>Speech therapists</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Special educators</b>	<b>1</b>

The uneven demographic structure and migration of the population from the northern to the central and southern regions, as well as a significant increase in the number of migrants from other language areas, are directly reflected in the education sector and teachers' uneven workload. The teacher-to-student ratio in primary education ranges from 1:2.7 (Šavnik) to 1:19 (Budva and Tivat), while in the largest schools in Podgorica and Budva this ratio is 1:30 and 1:33, respectively. As regards vocational secondary schools, the teacher-to-student ratio is closer to the OECD average, standing at 1:12/13.

## Initial education of preschool educators/teachers

The Education Sector Analysis 2015–2020 emphasizes the need to reform initial teacher education programmes with a focus on developing skills that support all students, including those from marginalized communities.

Teachers are trained at the public University of Montenegro, three private universities and one independent faculty. However, the study programmes for teacher education have not sufficiently modernized their curricula to include the acquisition of key transversal competencies. In some study programmes, students do not receive training in pedagogy, psychology, adult education, didactics or methodology, and key competencies such as assessment, digital skills and socio-emotional skills are not integrated into the curricula of all study programmes, which results in insufficient practical preparation for teachers in their educational work.

There is a significant imbalance between study programmes for classroom teachers and subject teachers in terms of the representation of pedagogical-methodological subjects, which play a crucial role in the education of future teachers.<sup>60</sup>

Teachers of vocational-theoretical subjects in secondary vocational schools, who often teach multiple vocational subjects, are required to possess tertiary but not education-specific degrees (e.g. in fields such as technology, electrical engineering, health and economics). These typically do not include pedagogical-psychological education. Instead, these skills and knowledge are obtained through the professional development system for teachers, requiring an additional 16 hours of training over five years, which is far from sufficient. In addition, they encounter pedagogical-psychological and didactic-methodological knowledge for the first time while preparing for their professional exams. Additionally, many teachers lack professional experience in the industry, which undermines their ability to effectively develop students' professional skills.

Most preschool, primary and secondary education teachers possess the VII-I level of qualification within the MQF (equivalent to just 180 ECTS for preschool teachers and 240 ECTS for others). However, the number of teachers holding a master's degree is negligible despite EU policies, the Bologna Process and the 2017–2024 Teacher Training Strategy.

All programmes for the education of subject teachers are conceived as single-subject (e.g. history, geography, physics, mathematics, mother tongue and foreign languages), which is not in alignment with European education systems. The deficit of STEM teachers in primary and secondary schools has long been a concern. Not only do few students enrol in programmes for mathematics and physics, but the unattractiveness of the teaching profession also drives university graduates away from teaching and toward sectors offering better working conditions and remuneration. The gap between the system's needs and the labour market supply is also affected by the natural turnover of teachers (retirement, illness, death). Notably, the accreditation process for the chemistry study programme is only now nearing completion, underscoring the longstanding misalignment between teacher training and system needs.

Despite significant progress in early and preschool education over the past 10 years, particularly regarding child inclusion, some municipalities are facing a growing shortage of educators tasked

60 Vučković, D., Mićanović, V., Novović, T. (2023) Teacher Education in Montenegro: The Current State, Challenges, and Future Perspectives. In: Kowalczyk-Walędzia, M., Valeeva, R.A., Sablić, M., Menter, I. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Teacher Education in Central and Eastern Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 295–330, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-09515-3\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-09515-3_13)

with handling overly large educational groups. This directly impacts the quality of work carried out by headteachers, preschool educators and support staff, i.e. professional associates.

Teachers do not receive adequate and continuous mentoring support during their studies, internships in schools/preschools or in adult education institutions, which leads to insufficient practical training for educational work with children, young people and adults.

### Continuous professional development of teachers and preschool educators

Since 2009, continuous professional development for teachers has been legally mandated, rooted in the European concept of lifelong learning. This process begins on a teacher's first day and continues until retirement. Key responsibilities lie with teachers/preschool educators, school leaders, including headteachers and support staff, who monitor training effectiveness and identify professional development needs. The Bureau for Education Services and the Centre for Vocational Education and Training manage the CPD process and oversee the biennial updating of training programmes via public competitions. Though funding for training programmes has been secured in 2024, support for professional development models at the school level has remained insufficient, hindering collaboration between teachers and school administration, but also greater motivation among coordinators for the professional development of teachers at the school or kindergarten level, despite the fact that they receive no financial incentives for this role.

It is standard practice for newly elected headteachers to complete a training programme consisting of six two-day modules (with two additional modules for secondary vocational schools). As pedagogical leaders, they are responsible for the quality of teaching, teacher competence and fostering the professional development of teachers. Despite the mentoring support provided by the Bureau for Education Services, many head teachers lack sufficient motivation to engage actively in professional training (formal and non-formal), which affects their ability to initiate significant changes. Assistant headteachers undergo professional development like other teachers and educators, but there is no mandatory training programme nor a set number of modules through which they can acquire competencies relevant to participating in institutional management and internal evaluation.

In the 2023 Annual Report of the Bureau for Education, the area of School Management and Governance was assessed as follows:

Key area	Standard	Average Standard Assessment	Overall Average Assessment
<b>A.2. School Management and Governance</b>	<b>A.2.1.</b>	<b>6.73</b>	<b>6.90</b>
	<b>A.2.2.</b>	<b>7.21</b>	
	<b>A.2.3.</b>	<b>6.64</b>	
	<b>A.2.4.</b>	<b>7.06</b>	

The quality of School Management and Governance was rated as “very successful” in three schools (9 per cent) and “successful” in 22 schools (67 per cent), while Standard A.2.3: “The headteacher ensures effective quality assurance of teaching and learning” received an average rating of 6.64.



Notably, the supervisory service found that the standard “The headteacher creates a stimulating environment for learning, professional development and employee advancement” was rated “very successful” in only one school (3 per cent).<sup>61</sup> Professional development programmes generally meet modern quality standards, but they often fall short in addressing the needs of specific teacher groups, particularly in areas such as STEM and the arts. In 2024, feedback from participants yielded an average quality rating of 4.88 out of 5 for training organized by the Bureau for Education Services. However, external evaluations reveal persistent deficiencies in teachers’ competencies, particularly in implementing active learning methods and promoting critical thinking and problem solving. Although the professional development system is well-structured, the impact of teacher training remains limited. A particular challenge arises from professional development programmes that are not organized by the Bureau for Education or the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, as they lack effective monitoring and evaluation. This issue should be addressed by improving the existing mechanisms within the system.

In-school support provided to teachers by headteachers is essential for promoting effective teaching. Headteachers are tasked with fostering a collaborative environment, where they monitor the implementation of training and assess teachers’ professional development needs in the process of assessing teacher performance. Yet, evidence shows that this support often falls short of driving meaningful change. Many teachers report limited engagement with the support offered and traditional, lecture-based approaches persist in many classrooms despite efforts to promote modern teaching practices. Feedback indicates that teachers sometimes participate in professional development activities only to meet the requirements for promotion, reflecting a lack of intrinsic motivation to enhance their skills, which serves as the main obstacle to strengthening teacher and preschool educator competencies. The misalignment between training content and practical classroom application exacerbates these issues.

Regular evaluations provide valuable insights into teachers’ performance and inform training needs and improvement plans. Schools are expected to use this information to directly tailor strategies for teacher support. However, evidence suggests that the integration of feedback into improvement plans is inconsistent, leading to stagnation in teaching practices. External evaluations highlight specific deficiencies, such as inadequate use of active learning techniques and poor critical thinking facilitation, yet these findings frequently do not result in efficient and much-needed adjustments.

The effects of teacher training are quality assured at two external levels. The first level is managed by the Bureau for Education Services’ Department for CPD, which evaluates training immediately after completion. Teachers provide feedback through anonymous questionnaires, assessing the applicability of knowledge, trainer skills and relevance to teaching practice. Participants also suggest topics for future sessions and describe their plans to implement regarding the application of acquired knowledge and skills (new methods, techniques, work formats, teaching resources, etc.).

After completing a seminar, Professional Development Coordinators at the school/kindergarten level report on the activities implemented by trained teachers. The first follow-up involves sharing knowledge with colleagues through meetings or workshops, while the second focuses on applying new methods in the classroom. Headteachers, as pedagogical managers, and advisory staff monitor the practical application of training, paying close attention to teachers’ methodological and pedagogical practices. Limited budgets for teachers’ professional development programmes

61 Annual Report on the Quality of Work of Educational Institutions for 2023, [www.gov.me/dokumenta/4dcd-fd97-8f19-479e-bf5e-c8f2e5ff1255](http://www.gov.me/dokumenta/4dcd-fd97-8f19-479e-bf5e-c8f2e5ff1255)

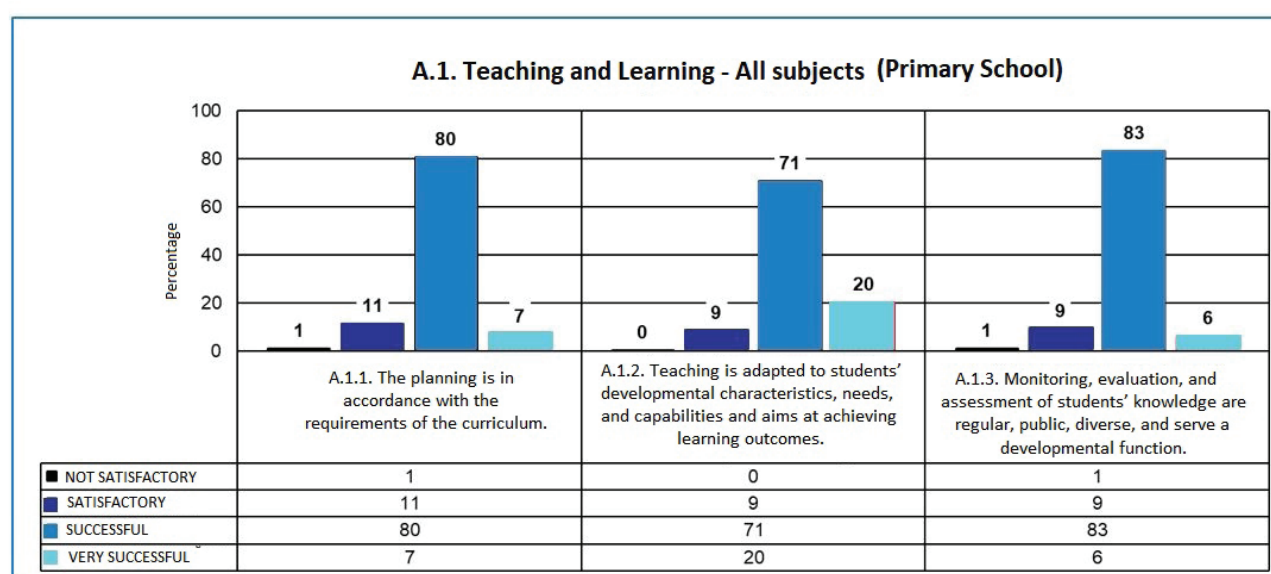
in previous years have prevented the Bureau for Education and the Centre for Vocational Education and Training from inviting teams of teachers to training sessions. This has negatively impacted collaboration, teamwork, multidisciplinary approaches and the application of newly acquired knowledge within schools and preschool institutions by a larger number of participants, rather than just individuals. In their annual professional development plans, schools are required to outline professional development needs and weaknesses in teaching. These plans are based on evaluations, self-assessments and external reviews. The Department for Determining Quality further monitors training effects through school visits, assessing areas such as teaching, management, student support and achievements.

External evaluations conducted by the Bureau for Education indicate that teachers demonstrate an insufficient level of competence in understanding the subject curricula based on learning outcomes, applying active learning methods, fostering critical thinking and problem solving, and implementing assessment practices that support student development and teaching improvement. Despite extensive training, such as active teaching sessions with 209 participants in early 2024 and online critical thinking courses completed by 90 per cent of teachers in 2022, these efforts have not translated into desired student outcomes or improved performance in national and international assessments.

In addition to evaluating the implementation of educational standards based on the Methodology for Ensuring and Improving the Quality of Educational Work and the Rulebook on the Content, Forms and Methods for Determining the Quality of Educational Work in Institutions, the Department for Quality Assessment also has an advisory role. It is important to emphasize that external evaluation is not personalized, and its purpose is to provide recommendations for improving educational work in all segments and to encourage the accountability of teachers and management. In previous years, the education system has not utilized the resource of external evaluation to the necessary extent, limiting its impact on education policy, including human resource management. There is a need for a more objective assessment of quality and a stronger influence on education policy to initiate systemic improvements.

During 2023, the external evaluation covered 33 elementary schools.

The area of Teaching and Learning for all subjects was assessed as follows:



Subject	Standard	Average standard assessment	Overall average assessment
<b>Subject teaching – all subjects – Primary schools</b>	<b>A.1.1.</b>	<b>6.90</b>	<b>7.18</b>
	<b>A.1.2.</b>	<b>7.40</b>	
	<b>A.1.3.</b>	<b>6.86</b>	

The comparison between the assessment of the Standard: Monitoring, evaluating and grading of student knowledge is regularly conducted, transparent and diverse, and has a developmental function (6.86) from the 2024 testing conducted by the Examination Centre, and the school grades of grade IX students in the same year, indicates a significant imbalance. Grade IX students achieved an average score of 54 per cent in mother language and literature, 42 per cent in mathematics, and 47 per cent (average value) in the natural sciences: biology, chemistry and physics.

Although teachers are legally guaranteed autonomy regarding professional freedom in organizing teaching, applying teaching methods, choosing forms of work and selecting tasks within the established educational programme, some teachers still exhibit, in addition to the mentioned weaknesses, a lack of competence in assessment, as well as a lack of integrity and the practice of grade inflation. Grades are often the result of learning solely for the sake of assessment and pressure from parents or guardians exerted even on teachers with many years of teaching experience.

### Attractiveness of the teaching profession

The attractiveness of the teaching profession is a critical factor in recruiting and retaining competent staff in educational institutions. The 2015–2020 Education Sector Analysis suggests that while there are opportunities for career advancement and professional development for teachers, the overall appeal of the teaching profession is diminished by various challenges.

Factors such as the material position of teachers, extensive administrative work and the mismatch between the scope of subject programmes and the number of lessons all play a role. Additionally, the poor working conditions—including the size of educational groups and classes, the questionable quality of individual textbooks and inadequate support—further contribute to the unattractiveness of the profession. There is also a pronounced focus from parents/guardians and students on high grades, which negatively affects teacher motivation. As a consequence, there is a frequent occurrence of attending private (paid) lessons and unexcused absenteeism among students.

According to the findings of the survey conducted during the preparation of the 2015–2020 Education Sector Analysis on job satisfaction, based on a reference sample of 3,645 teachers (48.4 per cent), there is a high level of dissatisfaction regarding several factors: social status (85 per cent), salary (92 per cent) and material conditions in schools (73 per cent).<sup>62</sup> However, in 2023 and 2024, salaries for education workers were increased and financial compensation was provided for teachers who commute, indicating the government's commitment to continuously improving the standards of education workers. Despite these negative outcomes, if given the chance to choose again, as many as 80 per cent of teachers would select the same profession. Public opinion

<sup>62</sup> UNICEF (2022) Education Sector Analysis 2015–2020.



polls conducted by non-governmental organizations<sup>63</sup> and specialized agencies indicate a high degree of trust among citizens (55 per cent) in the education system of Montenegro which does not correspond to the abovementioned results from the Education Sector Analysis.

Promoting inclusive values and ensuring a sufficiently represented professional staff remains essential. Efforts should focus on encouraging responsibility among teaching staff and headteachers to refresh and strengthen inclusive attitudes, develop resistance against discriminatory practices and maintain established mechanisms. Furthermore, it is crucial to confront and halt the trends advocating a return to the paradigm of special education. By promoting the teaching profession and fostering an environment where teachers feel safe, respected and supported, the education system can cultivate a motivated workforce dedicated to developing and learning for all children and young people.

### **Montenegrin Education Information System**

The Montenegrin Education Information System (MEIS) contains a centralized database for all educational institutions and organizers of adult education, as well as a web application through which data is collected into a single database.

The large number of institutions also led to a large number of users who enter data into the system (about 10,000 operators – headteachers, teachers, pedagogical and psychological services within educational institutions), but also a large number of automated processes in the field of education.

The system maintains data for about 130,000 children per year, about 14,000 employees in educational institutions, as well as for over 1,000 facilities. The processes implemented through the MEIS are:

- Issuing licences to teachers to work in educational institutions
- Invoices for reimbursement of the costs of children's stay in preschool institutions
- Issuing various certificates for children and employees
- Issuing educational documents (reports and certificates of student achievement)
- Creating a list and schedule of teachers
- Students' registration to take the matriculation (secondary education graduation) exam and vocational school-leaving exams
- Early identification of children at risk of dropping out
- Monitoring cases of violence in educational institutions

The system has been continuously evolving and improving, resulting in a complex and dynamic framework. Over time, there has been a notable increase in the number of users accessing MEIS data for various purposes, including conducting analyses, writing scientific papers, making informed decisions and automating business processes in other departments. It is important to highlight that the system continues to advance in this direction, enhancing the volume of data exchange with other departments and functioning both as a consumer and a provider of data.

.....  
63 Research – Centre for Democracy and Human Rights, 2024.

Institutions and registries that exchange data with the MEIS include:

- The Central Population Register (Ministry of Internal Affairs)
- The Information System of the Ministry of Social Welfare
- MONSTAT
- The Institute of Public Health
- The Examination Centre of Montenegro

It is also important to note that the MEIS is connected to the Single Electronic Data Exchange System (GSB – Government Service Bus), meaning that electronic data exchange is performed according to predefined standards and in accordance with the legal regulations in this area.

The development of the MEIS has laid the groundwork for a range of electronic services for both citizens and institutions, which will see significant enhancements in the near future, along with the introduction of new services. The electronic services developed as part of the Education Information System include:

- An app for parents
- Enrolment of children in preschool institutions
- Enrolment of children in primary schools
- Enrolment of children in secondary schools
- Enrolment of children in primary music schools
- Enrolment in higher education institutions
- Submitting a request for residence in a student dormitory
- Applying for scholarships
- Applying for loans
- School statistics
- School network

### **Education financing in Montenegro**

Public funding of the education system is primarily organized at the central level. The MoESI covers all expenses incurred by institutions that implement publicly recognized education programmes in the fields of preschool education, primary education, general secondary education, vocational education, the education and upbringing of children with special educational needs, adult education, student dormitories and educational centres. The ministry funds the salaries and other personal earnings of employees, material costs—including the procurement of supplies for educational programme delivery, office materials, occupational safety equipment, expenses for pedagogical documentation and professional literature—as well as ongoing operational costs, including electricity, water and utility bills, facility maintenance, minor capital expenditures, etc.

The funds that Montenegro allocates for education are earmarked in the Education chapter of the budget. In addition, funds are allocated by the GoM for education in the “Capital Budget” for the improvement of school infrastructure through new construction and larger rehabilitation works. At the municipal level, some funding for education is provided from the municipal budgets. These represent a very small share of the overall education budget.

In total, the MoESI is responsible for 84 per cent of public education expenditures. The Administration of Public Works is responsible for 3 per cent of public education expenditure, which is fully used for school infrastructure. The remaining 13 per cent is spent amongst several other autonomous education institutes, of which the University of Montenegro (UoM) is the biggest, with an 11 per cent share.

During the whole period 2015–2020, the GoM’s expenditure on education has seen an average of 1.5 per cent real annual growth. The GoM’s total expenditure on education was €171.7 million in 2015 and €197.9 million in 2020, a nominal increase of 15.3 per cent. When adjusting for inflation, the rise in spending is about 9.1 per cent over the period 2015 to 2019, equal to 1.5 per cent real annual growth. The relative importance of education, measured as a share of GDP, decreased in the period 2015–2019 from 4.7 per cent in 2015 to 3.8 per cent in 2019, indicating that, in relative terms, a smaller proportion of national wealth was being invested in education.

The exact amount of private expenditure on education is unknown but is considered relatively small at an estimated 0.1 per cent of GDP. The total national expenditure on education (both public and private) was therefore approximately 3.9 per cent of GDP in 2019, right at the lower end of the international benchmark.

The share of education expenditures as a percentage of total public expenditure increased from 7.6 per cent in 2015 to 8.2 per cent in 2017 (latest available data). Even though the GoM has increased its relative share spent on education, thereby lowering the gap with its peers, it is still at the lower end of the spectrum. When the share of expenditure on education of total government expenditure in Montenegro is compared with a sample of randomly selected EU countries and regional neighbours,<sup>64</sup> it is seen that in this sample only Sweden meets the international benchmark, with an expenditure of 15.8 per cent in 2017. Most other countries’ spending on education lies in a range between 9 and 11 per cent.

The share of education expenditures spent on wage costs continued to increase during 2015–2020. The fiscal space for the non-wage component decreased from 7.6 per cent in 2015 to 4.6 per cent in 2020. As a general rule of thumb, when spending on salaries exceeds 80 per cent, it indicates that wage and non-wage costs are out of balance. Across OECD countries, the wage costs of teachers and other staff employed in educational institutions averaged about 77 per cent of total current expenditure within non-tertiary education.

In recent years, the share of salary expenditures within the total education budget has been decreasing, contributing to the improvement of the quality of the educational process. The percentage of salaries in the total budget for 2025 has been reduced to 74 per cent. Budget credibility on education-related expenditures has been consistently high at an average of 99.3 per cent over the period 2015–2020, meaning that the GoM has been able to execute the budget according to plan.

64 The sample for the Education Sector Analysis consisted of Croatia, Serbia, France, Romania, Germany, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden.



## Government macroeconomic and fiscal projections 2024–2027

Montenegro's economy has shown a significant degree of resilience over the past two years, given the tension of geopolitical and global economic uncertainties. After a period of tourism-driven economic growth averaging 4 per cent in 2015–2019, Montenegro's economy was hit extra hard by COVID-19 and contracted by over 15 per cent in 2020. A strong recovery started in 2021, with tourism exceeding its pre-pandemic levels. In addition to a rebound in tourism, growth is driven by strong consumption, including from an inflow of affluent Russian and Ukrainian migrants since 2022 (estimated at around 10 per cent of Montenegro's population). The latest country report of the IMF (May 2024) mentions economic growth of 6 per cent in 2023.

The fiscal position has improved substantially in recent years. After peaking at 107 per cent of GDP in 2020, public debt fell to an estimated 61.5 per cent of GDP in 2023, driven by the post-pandemic recovery and high inflation. The current account deficit has narrowed significantly. Falling from its peak of 26.1 per cent of GDP in 2020, the current account deficit stood at 12.9 per cent and 11.4 per cent in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Montenegro uses the euro unilaterally as its currency. This influences its monetary policy and limits its ability to control inflation independently. Driven by food and fuel prices, as well as large domestic policy-induced wage increases, inflation jumped to 17 per cent in 2022.

## Economic outlook

Montenegro's economic landscape reflects a mix of recovery and ongoing challenges. While the tourism sector's resurgence provides optimism, inflationary pressures, public debt management, and the need for structural reforms remain critical areas of focus. Preliminary forecasts point to real economic growth of 3.8 per cent in 2024, based on further growth in the tourism sector, continued high private consumption, as well as recovery and further growth in investments, based on relevant plans and the adopted capital budget for 2024. In the medium term, the Montenegrin economy will grow at an average annual rate of 3.7 per cent (4.8 per cent in 2025, and 3.1 per cent and 3.2 per cent in 2026 and 2027, respectively).

Employment is expected to grow by around 2 per cent annually in the medium term. According to the available domestic policy plans in this area, wage growth of about 6 per cent, on average, is expected in the period 2025–2027, led by an increase in the minimum wage and average earnings based on reduced contributions for pension disability insurance.

Inflation is expected to continue to fall. Debt is projected to increase from 61.5 per cent in 2023 to 66.1 per cent by 2029.

The forecasted expenditure on education, science and innovation, youth and sports in the medium term is expected to increase in absolute terms from €343.2 million to €367.5 million. In relative terms, this represents a projected decline from 4.7 per cent to 4.3 per cent of GDP. The medium-term public allocations per education programme for the period 2024–2027 are summarized in the table below.

Table 5: Overview of expenditures by programme (€ million)

P. C.	Programme title	2024 plan	2024 estimate	2025 estimate	2026 estimate	2027 estimate
19 032	Regulation, supervision and development of all levels of the educational system	27.80	32.59	28.95	25.69	26.46
19 033	Primary and preschool education	152.53	163.53	168.16	174.04	176.98
19 034	Secondary education	44.35	47.58	51.53	55.10	57.50
19 035	Higher education	50.97	50.97	54.69	55.81	56.88
19 036	Support for the education of students (all levels)	14.48	15.40	15.11	15.44	15.68
19 037	Scientific and artistic work	2.88	2.88	2.90	2.94	2.97
19 038	Sports	12.63	13.60	11.71	11.90	12.20
19 039	Youth	0.44	0.39	0.46	0.47	0.47
19 040	Development of science and technology	7.14	7.47	8.67	9.22	9.16
19 042	Management of human and material resources of the Ministry of Sports and Youth	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03
19 044	Management of human and material resources of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation	8.71	8.71	8.61	9.00	9.17
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES (€ million)</b>		<b>321.96</b>	<b>343.16</b>	<b>350.83</b>	<b>359.63</b>	<b>367.50</b>
Total expenditures as a percentage of GDP		4.58%	4.71%	4.48%	4.37%	4.27%
Total expenditures as a percentage of total budgetary expenditures		9.26%	9.75%	8.88%	9.98%	8.47%

## Education infrastructure and school facilities

### School and classroom capacity and availability of equipment and learning materials

The school infrastructure in Montenegro faces a number of challenges that significantly affect the quality of education and the conditions in which it takes place. One of the most important challenges is the situation where some schools are overcrowded while other schools are experiencing declining student numbers.

There are currently huge discrepancies between the supply and demand for education infrastructure. According to the Education Sector Analysis, in Montenegro almost 70 per cent of all students enrol at 13 per cent of the primary schools, while 87 per cent of primary schools

operate with smaller-size classes—often with fewer than 28 students per class—and have excess space. The situation in secondary education is similar, with 33 per cent of schools operating above capacity and more than half of all students enrolling at these schools; the remaining 67 per cent of students enrol at schools with class sizes within or below the standard (data from ESA, 2019). Schools in the central and southern regions are particularly affected and often organize three or more shifts. Almost all coastal municipalities are seeing an increase in the number of primary school students.

The school capacity for preschool education has improved considerably in the last decade and so has enrolment, yet more capacity is needed to ensure a further, needed increase in enrolment. Preschool institutions' capacities are generally insufficient, with groups often exceeding the set standard.

The uneven development of school infrastructure originates from and continues to be impacted by internal population migration, which has not been accompanied by adequate infrastructure changes. The process of building new educational facilities is slow and the need for educational infrastructure often gets overlooked in the planning of residential areas.

There is currently no shortage of VET infrastructure. The network of schools implementing vocational education programmes consists of 43 schools in all municipalities of Montenegro. The existing network of schools enables the admission of all students who want to continue their education after completing primary school. Vocational schools face an evident lack of equipment and learning resources, especially for practical training, and teachers are not sufficiently prepared to use specialized classrooms.

The quality of the existing school infrastructure is a common problem in many schools and a shortage of relevant equipment and teaching and learning materials is affecting the quality of education. The MoESI and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), in cooperation with UNICEF Montenegro, are currently conducting a functional analysis of school infrastructure across Montenegro. The analysis includes an assessment of compliance with construction standards, as well as curriculum requirements, inclusivity measures and basic functional conditions such as occupancy, water supply, sanitation and hygiene, energy efficiency and accessibility for children with disabilities. This study will provide important baseline information that will help to establish the investment requirements. The first phase of this study which consisted of piloting the methodology in 40 schools has already been completed and phase II is currently in progress. While the detailed results of this study are not yet available, there is sufficient empirical evidence to conclude that:

- Many schools lack didactic materials, well-equipped workshops and specialized premises for collaborative activities, reception of parents or the work of mentors. Basic furniture is often inadequate and didactic equipment, including assistive technologies, is outdated or lacking.
- The premises in many schools are not safe enough and do not help build a sense of belonging among students. Inadequate physical conditions do not support research-based and interactive learning. School premises are often unappealing and demotivating and do not provide enough opportunities for cooperation and additional activities.
- These premises are often inadequate and unfit to facilitate inclusion.
- It is also considered that schools are insufficiently resilient to the expected impact of climate change.

Article 17 of the Law on Primary Education provides for extended and morning stays. Depending on their respective capacities, schools organize extended stays for first-grade students and sometimes for second-grade students. During that time, students are looked after and engage in various sports and arts/culture activities or spend their time studying, doing homework or performing other duties, in line with the school rules. Schools are obliged to provide an extended morning stay for first-grade students. The after-school care programme may be provided also by legal or physical persons eligible under the aforementioned law. However, due to limited capacities, particularly in the central and southern regions, most schools cannot provide the mentioned services.

### **Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in schools**

Research conducted in 2022 by the Institute of Public Health of Montenegro, with the help of UNICEF, found that 81 per cent of schools have drinking water supplied to the school or the schoolyard from the public water supply system. The remaining institutions, mainly located in rural areas, have water supplied from other sources (local water supply systems, springs, wells, etc.). Schools generally do not have alternative water supply sources and do not apply water treatment measures (filtration, chlorination, etc.) – not even those supplied with water from unimproved sources.

Regarding sanitation, a high share of educational institutions (98 per cent) use toilets connected to the water supply system. A large share (63 per cent) of institutions have toilets that are flushed using cisterns or manually, and are connected to the public sewerage system, while some—mainly schools in suburban or rural areas—have toilets connected to a septic tank (24 per cent) or a permeable tank (11 per cent). About 2 per cent have outdoor toilets that are not connected to the water supply system. Approximately 82 per cent of institutions have separate single-sex toilets for students, while some 84 per cent have staff toilets separate from the student ones. Most school toilets meet the criteria of accessibility and functionality, but not privacy. The student-to-toilet ratio is high in urban schools. It is worth mentioning that 18 per cent of schools do not meet the prescribed standard in terms of the number of toilets for female students, while 7 per cent do not meet the same standard for male students.

In terms of hygiene, water is available for hand washing, but soap and hand dryers are rare. Only some 18 per cent of institutions have hot water available throughout the academic year. Places for washing hands are accessible to the youngest students, but in half of the institutions they are not adapted to serve those with limited mobility or disabilities. Schools generally do not keep logs on toilet cleaning and school staff are not trained in cleaning procedures or safe and adequate use of cleaning products and protective gear. Although teaching personal hygiene is included in the curriculum, most institutions do not organize group activities, for example group handwashing.

### **Digital and assistive technologies**

The Montenegrin Education Information System provides relevant information about the availability of digital equipment and the type and speed of internet connection in each institution. The data shows that, although significant efforts have been made in recent years to equip schools with digital equipment and technology, the current situation still does not meet European standards. In particular, in terms of the student-to-computer ratio, there is a shortage across all segments and levels of the education system, which affects the quality of teaching. In addition, the internet connections in some schools do not meet modern teaching requirements, further complicating the digitalization process.



In addition to the hardware and network requirements, all computers must have the licensed operating system and applicative software needed to teach specific subjects/modules, especially in vocational education. Besides the OS and MS Office packages, schools lack licensed applicative software for their work.

Although all educational institutions have a package of applications for collaboration (cooperation), there is no uniform use of those resources. Implementation of the existing software packages should be intensified, as they serve as the basis for the design that enables the institutions to implement all activities in an adequate digital environment in various circumstances:

- Complete disruption of regular teaching, with remote delivery of all segments of educational work;
- Hybrid teaching, with some classroom-based teaching and some remote learning;
- Regular classroom-based teaching, where the school uses the possibilities for communication and distance learning to make it more efficient and thus modernize the teaching process, but also for the work and collaboration among teachers, administration and school-based professionals.
- Assistive technology such as devices, software or equipment that are designed to help students with special needs to perform tasks that might otherwise be difficult or impossible, are currently also lacking, including training on how to use assistive technology effectively.

### **Financing for education capital projects**

Historically, education capital investments have been underfunded. Whereas the total GoM capital budget increased in nominal terms from €45.2 million in 2015 to €76.8 million in 2020, the education sector hardly benefitted from this increase. The share spent on education decreased from 12.3 percent in 2015 to 5.5 percent in 2020. This decreasing priority in the capital budget was in sharp contrast to the pressing school infrastructure situation affecting the majority of children in schools in ECE and at the primary and secondary levels.

With recognition of this pressing situation, the momentum has changed and additional funding has become available. Currently, 44 new capital investment projects have been identified, with a total value of €245 million. Construction and investments in equipment are planned to start between 2024 and 2027 with funding secured from the capital budget and with external support from grants and loans from the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB). Through this project, five schools will be built, three kindergartens will be reconstructed and expanded, nine vocational secondary schools will be adapted, and furniture and computer equipment for all schools, as well as specialized equipment for vocational schools, will be procured. Additionally, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) will finance the reconstruction of 24 school facilities in terms of energy efficiency, while the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF)—a joint initiative of the CEB, EIB and EBRD—will also provide support. The capital projects include the construction of new kindergartens, primary schools, construction of secondary general schools (gymnasiums), sports halls, energy efficiency measures and the procurement of ICT equipment. It is important to note that educational infrastructure facilities are among the largest individual beneficiaries of the public building energy efficiency improvement project implemented by the Ministry of Energy in cooperation with KfW Bank.

As part of Montenegro's 2024–2027 Reform Agenda for reforms and growth within the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, a series of key reform measures have been developed to stimulate human capital development, including investments across all education levels and digital education to enhance their quality. Through a proposal by the ministry regarding infrastructure projects in education, the construction and reconstruction of several dozen facilities across 44 projects has been proposed. The implementation of these projects, along with additional activities, such as training personnel to teach in these facilities, will ensure the achievement of the Reform Agenda targets as outlined by its indicators.

## **C5. Situation analysis and recommendations as reported by parents, teachers and students**

### **Consultations with parents**

Consulting parents in the education reform process is of crucial importance, as they witness the daily development of their children within the educational system framework. Parents understand their children's needs best and can identify the obstacles and challenges they face during their schooling.

During the recent consultation process, parents provided feedback on various areas in education. Regarding the learning environment, 17.4 per cent of parents suggested that some schools have an unwelcoming atmosphere, where children do not feel accepted and respected. Additionally, the majority of parents (92.2 per cent) emphasized the importance of physical health and sports as essential components of education. This feedback highlights the necessity of investing in both the social atmosphere and the physical infrastructure of the school, ensuring that programmes and facilities support students' overall wellbeing and development.

Parents also criticized current teaching practices. Approximately 47 per cent of parents identified a lack of practical education as a significant challenge, emphasizing its importance for applying theoretical knowledge and preparing students for real-world situations. Additionally, nearly 24.1 per cent of parents noted that classes are not sufficiently engaging, highlighting a need for more innovative teaching methods to motivate students and stimulate their curiosity and creativity.

Concerns about the curriculum included its outdated content, with 21.4 per cent of parents indicating it does not meet modern societal needs. Nearly half of all parents (48.6 per cent) consider the curriculum excessive (i.e. it contains too many topics for students to fully absorb over time) and this is a barrier to acquiring a quality education. Parents also stressed the importance of foreign language proficiency and the values of arts and culture, recognizing that these areas are crucial for fostering the global communication skills and cultural awareness needed in an increasingly interconnected world. In terms of incorporating essential skills and competencies to enhance the curriculum, there was significant support for digital literacy (75 per cent), social and emotional skills (92.4 per cent), and STEM skills (85 per cent). These areas were seen as critical for equipping students with the tools needed for success in a rapidly changing world. However, while 71.6 per cent of parents recognized the importance of civic engagement and activism, these areas were less prioritized, indicating a potential gap in the perceived value of fostering civic responsibility and participation in education.

## Consultations with preschool educators and teachers

Teachers also shared their perspectives and experiences of being on the frontline of implementing education policies and practices. They emphasized that one of the primary challenges they face is the overcrowding of classrooms, often exceeding capacity norms by two to three times. This issue has been compounded by a lack of physical space, which severely hampers the kind of lesson activities used in the classroom. Teachers also highlighted the challenge of teacher shortages and insufficient number of professional collaborators, which leave both teachers and students without necessary support, especially in crisis situations. This underscores an urgent need to increase the number of professional staff, ensuring adequate support for all students, regardless of the institution's size. Furthermore, many teachers admitted to using traditional rather than learner-centred methods. They expressed a need for a shift towards more dynamic and contemporary educational programmes, coupled with meaningful supervision and ongoing professional development. These teachers showed eagerness for training sessions to enhance their teaching strategies and renew their professional competencies.

Teachers also stressed the importance of depoliticizing management structures within educational institutions. They suggested that hiring processes should be based on expertise, competence and socio-emotional skills to ensure that qualified and capable individuals are teaching and leading schools.

Lastly, educators pointed out a lack of coordination with external systems, such as social welfare, health and development centres. This disconnect suggests a need for improved collaboration and communication channels to support holistic student development and address broader systemic issues.

## Consultations with students

Students were also actively involved in consultations regarding educational reforms, and several recurring issues emerged across different educational levels. Primary school students expressed dissatisfaction with traditional, lecture-based teaching, particularly from older teachers who prefer a “frontal” instructional approach. These students highlighted the lack of interactive and engaging teaching methods, noting that younger teachers were more likely to incorporate modern tools such as quizzes and smartboards. However, both groups of students reported that teachers provided little to no room for discussions or questions. This created an environment where students hesitated to express misunderstandings, fearing ridicule or rejection, which ultimately led to disengagement and stifled their curiosity and learning motivation.

Secondary school students also had similar concerns, pointing to the same heavy reliance on teacher-led instruction. They also noted the lack of an individualized approach and practical learning opportunities, which left them feeling disconnected and bored. The absence of hands-on activities, especially in vocational programmes, compounded this issue, as students felt that it was making them ill-prepared for real-world applications. The situation is further compounded by overloaded textbooks and outdated equipment, particularly in vocational training labs, and students were critical of the minimal use of digital tools.

These challenges are not limited to mainstream students. Both Roma and Egyptian students, as well as students with special needs, faced even greater barriers. While mainstream students struggle with rigid teaching methods, Roma and Egyptian students encounter additional difficulties, such as language barriers, discrimination and a lack of tailored support. They often

experienced discrimination, both from teachers and peers, which compounded the language barriers they already faced. Textbooks were difficult to understand due to dense content or being written in a foreign language. Additionally, unreliable transportation to school contributed to their irregular attendance, which further hampered their ability to keep up with their peers. Despite these challenges, Roma and Egyptian students expressed optimism, believing they could improve their performance if they had more time and support to engage with accordingly adapted material.

Students with special educational needs across different educational levels also expressed dissatisfaction with the traditional teaching approach, reporting that lessons were rarely adapted to meet their individual requirements. In their opinion, as they advance from primary to secondary education, teaching and learning become less interactive. Students with special needs find the curriculum overly challenging and highlight that teachers pay little attention to their specific learning needs, and students with autism appear to need the most support. This lack of interactive, creative methods in classrooms contributes to their difficulties, particularly in secondary schools where there tends to be more peer persuasion or exclusion.

In all, students across all groups emphasized the need for more interactive, learner-centred teaching methods and improved school environments. Both mainstream and vulnerable student groups—such as Roma, Egyptian and special needs students—face unique challenges that require targeted interventions.

These insights from teachers and students, alongside feedback from parents, highlight the multifaceted challenges within the education system and the critical areas requiring attention and reform to create a more effective and supportive learning environment for all.

### **Recommendations as reported by students, preschool educators, teachers and parents**

The consultative process with students, teachers and parents resulted in the following recommendations which are key considerations for the strategy:

#### **Improvement of student–teacher relationships**

Student–teacher relationships are crucial for creating a positive learning environment, mutual respect and trust between students and teachers, which may be achieved through training that develops teachers' emotional intelligence and activities to foster a supportive school climate. It is recommended to introduce mandatory professional development programmes for teachers, covering interpersonal skills, communication skills, social interaction and training related to understanding the developmental characteristics of students across different age groups. Additionally, regular training in non-violent communication techniques, conflict prevention and emotional support for students can contribute to creating harmonious relationships within schools.

#### **Enhancing the teacher recruitment process and performance monitoring**

It is necessary to develop a system that ensures that only the best candidates enter the teaching profession through a rigorous selection process that includes detailed assessments of their teaching potential, as well as continuous evaluations throughout their careers. Teacher performance monitoring should include objective indicators, such as student achievements on external and international tests (e.g. PISA), as well as qualitative assessments based on surveys of



students, parents and colleagues. Introducing key performance indicators (KPIs) into the teaching process could further encourage professional development and accountability for improving learning outcomes.

### **Curriculum reform**

The curricula must be developed in accordance with students' needs and the principles of developmental psychology. It is recommended to form interdisciplinary working groups that include educators, psychologists and subject-specific experts. These teams should undergo training in developmental psychology and pedagogical innovations to ensure that curricula are adapted to the students' age and needs.

### **Strengthening support for teachers from central institutions**

Reform the roles within central institutions to ensure that certain staff are specialized in providing direct support to teachers in curriculum implementation and teaching methodologies. Additionally, reducing the administrative burden on school counselling services would allow them to focus more on advising and assisting teachers.

### **Increasing school autonomy**

Increase school autonomy to enhance flexibility in teaching and better adapt to the needs of local communities. This model requires a clear and transparent quality control system, through regular inspections, accreditations and external evaluations.

### **Reforming the education quality evaluation system**

It is necessary to revise and enhance the existing evaluation system at all levels of education and across the entire system. The goal is for supervisory service reports, in terms of objectivity and quality, to serve as a starting point and one of the main tools for policymakers in making important decisions and solutions. Evaluation teams, acting as "critical friends", should continuously, systematically and consistently support headteachers, deputy headteachers, teachers and professional associates in implementing recommendations for substantial improvement of the quality of educational work in institutions.

### **Improving school infrastructure and equipment**

Enhance the infrastructural equipment of schools in line with the needs of the digital age by providing adequate learning spaces, computer labs and other resources that enable modern teaching methods.

### **Increasing parental involvement in the educational process**

It is essential to promote active parental involvement in education by fostering collaboration with schools and encouraging their participation in key decision-making processes. Introducing programmes to educate parents about the importance of education and their role in supporting their children's schooling is recommended. Additionally, schools should organize workshops and advisory sessions for parents to raise awareness about the significance of education, cultivate a culture of participation and establish mechanisms for regular communication and cooperation.

## C6. Stakeholder analysis

Table 7: Stakeholders, their roles and responsibilities

STAKEHOLDER	ROLE AND RELATION TO THE STRATEGIC DOCUMENT	INTEREST (GRADE 1–5)	IMPACT/ STRENGTH (GRADE 1–5)
<b>MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION</b>	<p>Role: The MoESI is responsible for planning, implementing and improving educational policy.</p> <p>Relation: The MoESI is the lead agent for strategy implementation and is responsible for overall monitoring.</p>	5	5
<b>BUREAU FOR EDUCATION SERVICES</b>	<p>Role: In charge of ensuring and improving the quality of education in preschool institutions, primary schools and general secondary schools.</p> <p>Relation: Key stakeholder for the implementation of SG2.</p>	5	5
<b>INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b>	<p>Role: Defines and ensures the quality of education and carries out development, advisory and research activities in post-university education. They participate in the organization of continuous professional development of teachers, external determination of the quality of educational work of institutions, preparation of subject programmes, educational programmes for general and vocational education and adult education programmes.</p> <p>Role: Involved in the implementation of certain activities from the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy.</p>	5	5
<b>EXAMINATION CENTRE</b>	<p>Role: Performs external verification of the achieved standard of knowledge and skills of pupils. Conducts international PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS tests.</p> <p>Relation: Monitors progress towards the strategy's overall objective of improved learning outcomes.</p>	5	5
<b>INSTITUTE FOR TEXTBOOKS AND TEACHING AIDS</b>	<p>Role: In charge of developing and publishing textbooks and other teaching aids for pre-university education.</p> <p>Relation: This institution plays a key role in the process of digitalization and modernization of the education system.</p>	5	5

<b>EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	<p>Role: Providers of education to the students of Montenegro.</p> <p>Relation: Almost all activities envisaged by the strategy are directed towards educational institutions and directly affect the improvement of the work of institutions and the quality of the implementation of the educational process.</p>	5	5
<b>PRESCHOOL EDUCATORS AND TEACHERS</b>	<p>Role: Provide quality education to all students of Montenegro.</p> <p>Relation: Will benefit from the strategy through improved working conditions, numerous trainings and digital processes. Their role is crucial for improving the quality of students' education (SG1 and SG2).</p>	5	5
<b>CHILDREN/ STUDENTS</b>	<p>Relation: The entire strategy is focused on the well-being of children/students who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the strategy.</p>	5	3
<b>PARENTS</b>	<p>Role: Parents can encourage, motivate, and even influence their children to attend school.</p> <p>Relation: Parents can enhance the school's capacity to reach its goals by being involved in school management and with their children's schoolwork.</p>	5	3
<b>MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE, FAMILY CARE AND DEMOGRAPHICS</b>	<p>Role: Responsible for the welfare of children and families. In addition, they are in charge of taking care of children who are in families that do not fulfil the legal obligation of regular schooling of children, as well as those who have problems of child neglect and violence.</p> <p>Relation: Partner in the implementation of activities related to identifying children who are not in school in Montenegro and participate in the exchange of data with the Montenegrin Education Information System.</p>	4	4
<b>INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH</b>	<p>Role: Partner in charge of public health promotion and monitoring.</p> <p>Relation: Partner on the cross-cutting theme of improving school health, performs a regular analysis of the vaccination of children and the technical safety of water in the facilities of educational institutions.</p>	5	1
<b>MONSTAT</b>	<p>Role: Statistical Office of Montenegro.</p> <p>Relation: Key partner in collecting data for the purpose of monitoring various education performance indicators (all SGs).</p>	5	1

<b>MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR</b>	<p>Role: The Ministry of the Interior manages, among other responsibilities, the Central Population Register and serves as a policymaker in the area of disaster risk reduction.</p> <p>Relation: The ministry is a partner in identifying children who are not attending school and in ensuring safety (Strategic Goal 1). It also collaborates in formulating policies related to disaster risk reduction (Strategic Goals 2 and 4).</p>	3	5
<b>MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</b>	<p>Role: Policymakers in the field of digitalization, responsible for the e-Government portal, infrastructure and the Single System for Electronic Data Interchange.</p> <p>Relation: Relevant partner for the development of the Montenegrin Education Information System, the development of electronic services and the digitalization of processes (crosscutting).</p>	3	5
<b>PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION</b>	<p>Role: Responsible for larger public works in Montenegro</p> <p>Relation: Important partner for SG4 on school infrastructure</p>	3	4



## C7. SWOT analysis

A detailed SWOT analysis was conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of Montenegro's education system and its capacity to meet the strategic goals set for the coming years. The analysis highlights the system's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats across key areas such as quality, equity, governance and infrastructure. Following the completion of the situation analysis, the figure below presents a consolidated high-level SWOT analysis that encapsulates these insights. This unified view provides a clearer foundation for the strategic goals that follow, ensuring that the development of Montenegro's education continuously aligns with the identified needs and opportunities.

Figure 2: Overview of the SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A comprehensive, inclusive education policy is already approved and being rolled out.</li> <li>The system of professional development for teachers, legally supported since 2009, is mandatory and includes an established teacher advancement system.</li> <li>Modern and high-quality teaching resources, including digital tools, are available in educational institutions.</li> <li>There is an adequate institutional framework for governance, with an Education Information System used by all institutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are evident infrastructure problems and overcrowding in certain schools and kindergartens, as well as a lack of adequate spaces for conducting curricular and extracurricular activities, which affects the quality of the educational process.</li> <li>Many students are struggling to reach basic literacy levels by age 15, as evidenced by the PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS results.</li> <li>There is a lack of alignment between the curriculum reforms and the assessment systems, which do not prioritize higher-order thinking skills.</li> <li>The initial teacher education and continuous professional development are not sufficiently aligned with the needs of modern education, particularly in STEM fields.</li> <li>Professional support staff such as psychologists and defectologists (special educators) are lacking in kindergartens and schools, and there are regional disparities in teacher availability.</li> <li>There are gaps in periodic monitoring of education financing, with limited cost-effectiveness evaluations and overcrowded urban schools affecting education quality.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital transformation presents opportunities for enhancing learning outcomes and modernizing the education system.</li> <li>Additional financial resources are available for professional development programmes, with external financing possibilities from the EU and other sources.</li> <li>The development of socio-emotional learning (SEL) competencies can improve student wellbeing.</li> <li>The Education Information System can be upgraded to support better integration with national digital platforms, further boosting collaboration between institutions.</li> <li>Better legal systems and improved coordination between institutions provide avenues for strengthening governance and institutional collaboration.</li> <li>The EU Growth Plan and international financing offer opportunities for advancing educational reforms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socio-economic disparities could further limit educational access and outcomes, particularly in marginalized and rural areas.</li> <li>Demographic changes, including population migration and aging, are putting pressure on teacher supply and school infrastructure, especially in urban areas.</li> <li>The unattractiveness of the teaching profession could lead to more staff shortages as younger generations shy away from the sector.</li> <li>Resistance to change, particularly in adopting new technologies, persists among some educators and staff.</li> <li>Political instability and potential economic disruptions pose risks to the long-term sustainability of reforms and external funding support.</li> </ul>



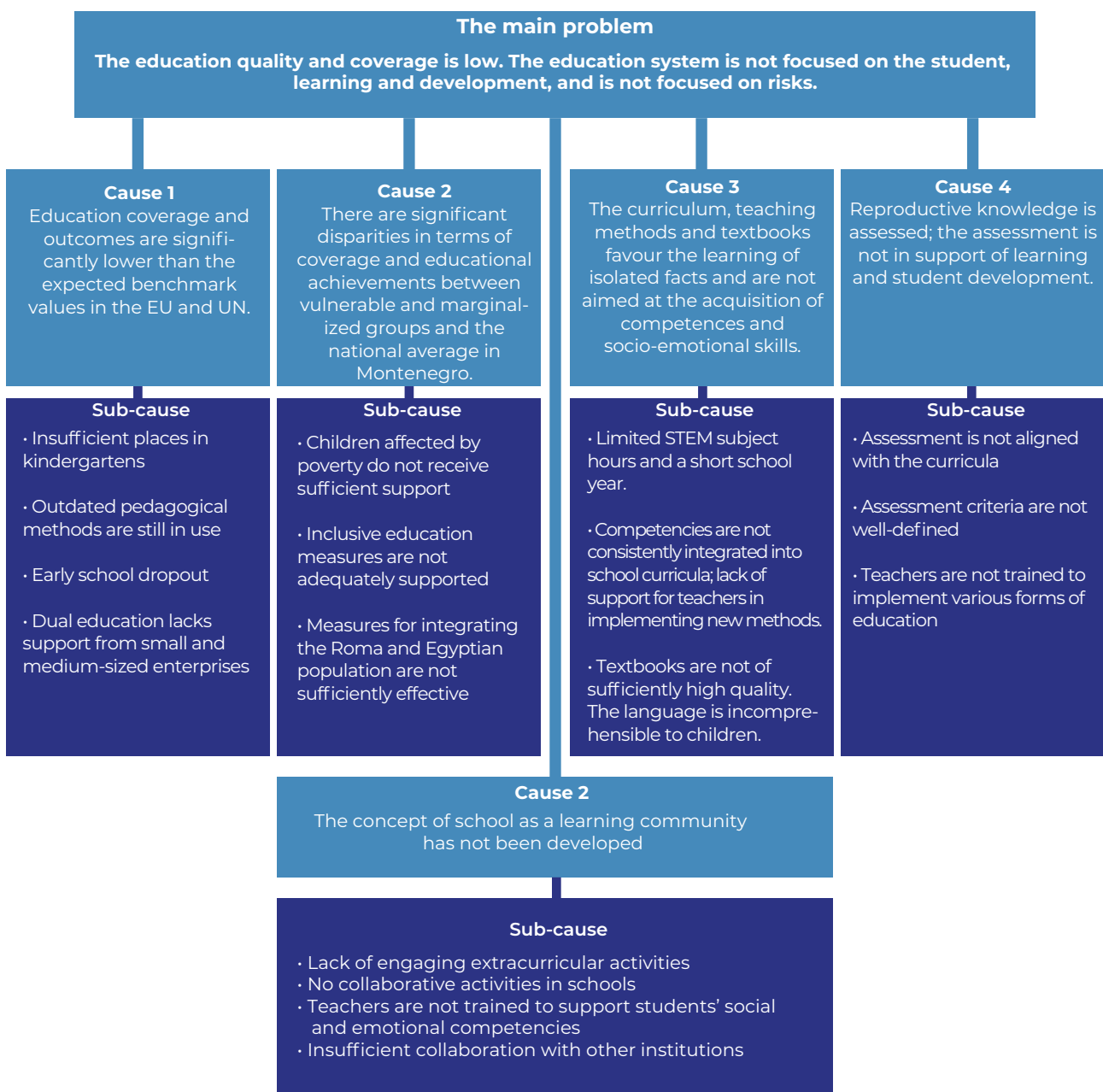






## (D) STRATEGIC GOALS AND OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

**D1. Strategic Goal 1: The education system provides high-quality, accessible and equitable education that fosters holistic development of all children and adolescents, while being resilient to challenges and risks**





National planning and growth strategies rely upon a high-quality, accessible and equitable education system to foster the growth and development of all children and young people. By providing quality education, Montenegro can equip young people to navigate a changing environment and develop the competencies needed to work in line with the demands of an evolving economy and market. Accessible education ensures that every child has the opportunity to learn and develop their skills, regardless of their background or circumstances. Additionally, an equitable education system promotes social cohesion, reduces disparities and creates a level playing field for all students, regardless of their socio-economic status.

A resilient education system in Montenegro is essential to effectively address challenges and risks that may arise in the future. By building resilience into the education system, Montenegro can adapt to unforeseen circumstances, such as natural disasters, economic downturns or pandemics, without compromising the quality and accessibility of education.

**Operational Objective 1.1: Access to education for all children is ensured and results meet SDG targets and are aligned with the average performance of the EU member states.**

This operational objective envisages a major expansion of coverage of children and adolescents by the education system and responds to the findings that identified lower coverage compared to other European Union countries. Low coverage rates with ECE and preschool education are particularly concerning; so also are secondary education coverage rates, especially for some regions and for boys. This objective will therefore require joint efforts of the institutions involved in various aspects of education, coupled with solutions to numerous specific problems and bottlenecks hindering full coverage. Some of those efforts refer to activity within SG4 on the expansion of education infrastructure.

To achieve the objective, the following **measures** are to be implemented:

**1.1.1. Increasing access to education for children aged 0–3 and ensuring access for children from 3 years of age until they start school**, to be implemented through the following key activities: development of equity-focused policies to expand access to quality preschool education in underserved areas and among children from vulnerable groups; revision of the regulatory framework with higher numbers of educators and support staff in preschool institutions and recruitment of social inclusion assistants; launching awareness campaigns and promotional activities to educate parents and caregivers about the importance of early childhood education and its long-term benefits; further expansion and institutionalization of parent support programmes; expansion of the network of outreach services to enable equal access to kindergartens for all children and to strengthen the operation of multidisciplinary teams; development of a consolidated database covering three sectors (health, education and social protection) to identify children who are not attending preschool education and to enhance support measures; strengthening intersectoral cooperation, with a focus on stronger involvement of local communities in addressing infrastructure and transport-related issues; implementation of the new Programme for Project-Based Planning in Educational Work; construction of new kindergartens and adaptation of existing ones (specifically addressed under SG4); strengthening of early intervention programmes, an increase in the number of practitioners, the expansion of community-based services and the provision of additional professional support.

**1.1.2. Ensuring full coverage and preventing dropout in primary and secondary schools**, encompassing the following set of key activities: developing programmes for teachers/mentors through regulation of the legal framework and its implementation; changing the regulatory

framework to hire and introduce into the system additional mediators, psychologists, social workers and other professionals with relevant backgrounds, to provide support to children and adolescents; establishing intersectoral cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography with the aim of identifying children and students at risk of dropping out, and setting up a database; upgrading the information system to identify out-of-school students or dropouts, enable activation of student tracking systems upon change of school, transition to another education cycle or transition from the formal or informal system, and enabling disaggregated and meaningful data (inter alia, on migrant and refugee children and children with disabilities); strengthening the interventions aimed at preventing dropout; strengthening the case management practices within school and at the local level, for students at risk of dropping out; strengthening communication between schools and families, and involving parents in education; fostering communication between schools and parents; and removing financial, administrative and other barriers to access, and participation in education.

**1.1.3. Increasing vocational school students' engagement in learning at the workplace, including by securing greater interest among small and medium-sized enterprises for the provision of practical training,**

by implementing the following key activities: implementation of research on skills and qualification needs and, based on that, the preparation of sectoral strategies with defined priorities in order to ensure that policies are developed and planned based on relevant information and that qualifications for young people and adults are developed, including qualifications that support the green and digital economies, greater inclusion of women and vulnerable groups (individuals with special educational needs, Roma communities, etc.); improvement of the educational offer in vocational education by modernizing the existing educational programmes and developing new ones based on previously conducted research on skills and qualification needs, with a particular emphasis on areas related to green and digital transitions; increasing the scope of work-based learning in vocational education; enhancement of the quality of practical training in vocational education through the establishment of regional centres of excellence in vocational education and training for young people and adults; establishment of a system for tracking vocational school graduates after the completion of education in order to enable realistic planning of enrolment policies and educational offers; improvement of quality assurance mechanisms in vocational education, with a special focus on practical education in all its forms; establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating practical education at employers' premises as fundamental elements of practical education quality; ensuring continuous training for teachers of practical education and instructors of practical education in accordance with the identified needs; strengthening cooperation with employers and their active involvement in the processes of planning, implementation, supervision and evaluation of vocational education; establishment of an incentive system for employers participating in the implementation of practical education and employing students upon completion of education by forming a Support Fund for Dual Education; promotion of in-demand qualifications and vocational education as a whole; development and institutionalization of mentoring and career guidance programmes – providing career guidance to help young people transition between education and the labour market and developing transition plans from primary to secondary school for all students, ensuring accessible learning formats through the establishment of a new model for implementing career guidance and counselling at all levels of the education system and the establishment of career centres (this measure is envisaged by the Growth Plan and the Higher Education Strategy (2024–2027)).

**1.1.4. Increasing the participation of adults in lifelong learning, as well as better regulation of adult education,** by developing and implementing the following set of key activities: promoting lifelong learning through campaigns to encourage a culture of lifelong learning, including skill-

building workshops and online courses that cater for their diverse needs and interests; better data availability and stronger interaction with the Employment Agency to create a unified database on citizens' participation in lifelong learning activities, monitor labour market needs and keep track of (former) students; partnering with employers and skills mapping to reflect the labour market needs – providing support to adult education institutions to connect with businesses and employers, enabling the acquisition of national professional qualifications and micro-qualifications; ensuring professional training, irrespective of age, within the system itself (flexible and more available educational programmes); development and revision of adult education programmes in line with labour market needs.

### **Operational Objective 1.2: Reduce inequalities in educational coverage and performance, including of those from vulnerable and marginalized groups**

This operational objective assumes the need to remove the causes of the disparities in educational achievement and coverage identified in the Situation Analysis above. Significant disparities in the coverage and achievements have been shown to correlate with socio-economic status, gender and place of residence. Children from the Roma and Egyptian communities have also underachieved across all education levels. Socio-economic status has also been particularly highlighted, with children at risk of poverty having considerably lower achievement and leaving school earlier compared to the children from the higher-income strata. Disparities have also been identified across regions or related to the place of residence, while some education levels feature gender disparities. Lastly, the coverage rates for children and adolescents with disabilities and migrant children are also lower than expected.

Measures that will contribute to eliminating existing disparities include the measures listed in the 2019–2025 Strategy for Inclusive Education, and include the following:

#### **1.2.1.**

**1.1.1. Targeted educational support and inclusion for students from vulnerable groups** to raise awareness on the importance of inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Support for students in mastering the language of instruction, learning, and raising awareness of cultural sensitivity, along with incentives such as scholarships.

Strengthening the competencies of teachers, support staff – professional associates and school and preschool management in cultural sensitivity and responding to the specific needs of students from vulnerable groups.

Developing a system for monitoring and evaluation to track and support the academic achievements of students from vulnerable groups. Empowering individuals – self-acceptance, building self-confidence and fostering acceptance by others.

**1.1.2. Development of inclusive education policies to promote and ensure full inclusion and equitable access through reasonable accommodations and support services** through: the improvement of inclusive education policies to support vulnerable groups; monitoring and evaluating the implementation and adherence to inclusive education policies; developing interdepartmental cooperation to address the holistic needs of students; establishing cross-sectoral and intersectoral collaboration between education, social services and healthcare, as well as between schools and resource centres, to support the transition of children and students

both within and between educational levels; enhancing support services (for families, specialized professional assistance, licensed services, mentors, career guidance counsellors, etc.); conducting campaigns to foster broad societal support for inclusion; redirecting the inclusive paradigm; and improving the organization and scope of inclusive services (such as schools with integrated classrooms and resource centres) through more inclusive systematization and services.

**1.1.3. Ensuring quality education for students studying in Albanian**, through the following activities: providing access to updated and adapted didactic materials, manuals, digital content and other teaching resources in Albanian. To achieve equality and accessibility in learning and to overcome language barriers, it is essential to provide resources for the use of assistive technology and augmented communication. In educational institutions that offer instruction in both languages, continuous peer support for learning both languages should be organized within a rich cultural environment.

**1.1.4. Development of policies, interventions and methodologies in the field of gender-equal education to promote and ensure a gender-sensitive environment for development and learning, enabling the full realization of the potential of boys and girls, as well as students of all genders, including support for the development of a *growth mindset*.** This includes: adapting methodologies for designing subject curricula and printed and digital textbooks to align with gender-aware and gender-sensitive discourse; developing textbooks, manuals and other publications that incorporate gender-conscious and gender-sensitive education; creating manuals to support teachers in achieving gender equality in classrooms; designing and implementing training programmes for teachers, educators and other education professionals; enhancing gender-sensitive discourse in initial teacher education curricula; encouraging male and female secondary school students to enrol in teacher training faculties to improve the gender balance in the profession (women in STEM studies, men in early childhood and primary education studies); and promoting gender equality in education and other sectors through media campaigns.

**1.1.5. Ensuring equal access to learning and participation in education for students from other language backgrounds, including socio-emotional support, with particular attention to those who have fled from conflict-affected areas, in order to help them overcome challenges related to a change of environment, cultural adjustment and to develop a sense of belonging within the school community.** This includes the following activities:

- Ensuring equal access to education for students from other language backgrounds.
- Providing support in learning, meeting academic needs, as well as fulfilling social and emotional needs.

**1.1.6. Enabling intensive instruction in the language of instruction by using the available resources within the institution.** The planned activities should be reinforced by including peer support, which, in addition to language learning, would be important for students' socialization and adaptation to the new environment. If needed, individual support should be provided to assist with adaptation to the new curriculum.

**1.1.7. Ensuring equal access to education for students from other language backgrounds. Providing them with support in learning, meeting academic needs, as well as fulfilling social, emotional and social needs. Enabling intensive instruction in the language of instruction by using the available resources within the institution.** The planned activities should be reinforced



by including peer support, which, in addition to language learning, would be important for students' socialization and adaptation to the new environment. If needed, individual support should be provided to assist with adaptation to the new curriculum.

### **Operational Objective 1.3: Teaching focuses on developing key competences for lifelong learning and life skills, in accordance with EU policies and standards**

Ensuring a constructivist learning environment for all students, fully respecting their diversity, interests and preferences. This goal entails the continuous assessment and improvement of curricula and educational programmes across all subjects, including the modernization of textbooks, manuals and supplementary educational materials, enriched with digital resources. Teaching should incorporate cooperative, interactive and active learning methods to ensure a focus on developing key academic, socio-emotional and transversal skills. These improvements should always align with the latest national policies and be based on relevant research.

Orientation of teaching for all students towards a learning process that emphasizes interactive and cooperative learning models, as well as the functionality of final achievements or learning outcomes. In addition to developing a system of knowledge and skills, it is essential to ensure the adoption of attitudes, virtues and values. Learning should take place in an environment rich in stimuli for project work, research, discovery-based learning, problem-based teaching approaches and the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary study of topics, as well as peer and experiential learning, practical activities and experimentation. Teaching and learning should be digitalized while maintaining a balance with non-digital learning environments. Activities, content, tasks and learning processes should be relevant to students' progress and comparable to those of successful education systems. Educational achievements in foundational literacies (reading, mathematics, science, digital literacy, etc.) should be continuously monitored, measured and evaluated, with the results and evaluation recommendations used to improve teaching and learning.

To achieve the objective, the following measures are to be implemented:

**1.3.1 Alignment and strengthening of the curriculum and learning materials** – to develop a national framework curriculum aligned with EU policies and standards, defining key competences for lifelong learning, global citizenship competences, socio-emotional, life and green skills, as well as other essential aspects for the development of educational plans and programmes.

Within the national curriculum, it is essential to reassess the relevance and attractiveness of the elective subjects offered to students in both primary and secondary schools, as well as the content of cross-curricular topics. The scope of the subject programmes should be reviewed and reformed, with the development of a methodological framework and quality standards, placing particular emphasis on the mother tongue, STEM subjects, foreign languages, humanities, sports, arts, intercultural education, civic education and sustainable development. The quality of subject programmes in arts schools should also be improved, ensuring an optimal workload for students both at school and at home while maintaining a gender-equitable approach.

In all subject programmes, learning outcomes should be clearly defined, along with the methods and scope of their implementation in the domain of disaster risk reduction. It is important to align the textbooks, manuals and other educational materials with updated curricula, as well as to develop digital textbooks, manuals and teaching materials for their integration into regular teaching and learning processes. To ensure the continuous monitoring of the quality of all educational materials, regular feedback should be collected from users—teachers, students, and

parents—ensuring their constant alignment with modern educational standards.

It is necessary to ensure the correlation of learning outcomes at both the horizontal and vertical levels and to align the assessment process for all compulsory and elective subjects with the defined outcomes through elements, criteria and forms of monitoring, evaluation and student assessment.

Based on the frequency of emergency situations affecting the entire system, it is necessary to define response models with a particular focus on the most vulnerable groups of children. Additionally, practical strategies should be developed for educational institutions to prepare for and recover from emergencies while maintaining the quality of education for all children, especially those at risk.

To enhance the resilience of the education system, it is necessary to develop procedures for the full implementation of the *Digital School* concept, including the digitalization of teaching processes and the improvement of educational infrastructure. Additionally, it is essential to carefully consider and precisely define detailed recommendations for the use of artificial intelligence in education, with the aim of supporting learning, individualizing teaching and improving administrative activities.

**1.3.2. Enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning and support for innovative teaching practices.** This includes: developing an implementation plan for updated curricula, textbooks and digital educational materials in teaching; preparing teachers for the implementation of updated curricula and textbooks through interactive, cooperative and active learning methods, supported by additional educational resources, including digital platforms; creating instructional and didactic materials, teaching guidelines, manuals and examples of best practices to support teachers in implementing updated curricula; developing work programmes and procedures for the operation of Innovative Technology Laboratories/EdTech Labs; designing strategies and programmes for the early identification and support of gifted students; and providing support to schools for the implementation of bilingual education.

**1.3.3. Evaluation and improvement of educational practices, materials and programmes** including: establishing clear and transparent quality standards for updated curricula, textbooks, manuals and other educational materials, whether in printed or digital form; continuously evaluating and enhancing the quality of teaching to ensure that teachers apply constructivist methods and rely on cooperative and active learning pedagogies; regularly collecting feedback from teachers, students and parents to improve the quality of textbooks, manuals and other educational materials, ensuring they foster critical thinking, problem-solving skills and students' socio-emotional development; and continuously gathering feedback from teachers to refine curricula, ensuring they are age-appropriate, aligned with students' capabilities and support the development of critical thinking, problem-solving and socio-emotional skills.

**1.3.4 External knowledge assessment (testing and examinations)** by: conducting online coding/scoring of tests from external knowledge assessments – external testing and examinations; revising exam catalogues for external exams in accordance with new educational programmes; administering trial revised exams on a representative sample to verify the quality of tests and procedures; implementing online national testing/assessment; and developing a new concept for final and professional examinations, aligned with best practices from neighbouring countries.

### **Operational Objective 1.4: School assessment serves the purpose of student development and the improvement of teaching and learning**

This operational objective requires urgent improvements to the existing practices of school assessment in Montenegro, which is characterized by, among other things, the traditional focus on the reproduction of facts, encouragement of cramming for tests, reduction of the assessment function to solely summative forms and which allow the possibility of corruption and conflicts. This implies the development and implementation of a new school assessment policy.

To achieve the objective, the following is to be implemented:

**1.4.1. Alignment of assessments with curriculum goals**, including: for all subjects and grade levels, developing knowledge standards at three levels in accordance with Bloom's Taxonomy, along with assessment criteria; creating guidelines and providing teacher training on using diverse assessment methods in teaching, including self-assessment, peer assessment, evaluation of practical work, group projects, portfolios, presentations, etc.; establishing standards for both external and internal monitoring of assessment to ensure that assessment supports student development. This should include a consistent and balanced application of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment functions, with grades awarded at the end of each term and the academic year.

**1.4.2. Enhancement of transparency and continuous feedback**, including: developing guidelines to ensure that students and their parents are informed at the beginning of the school year about student obligations and the criteria on which students will be assessed; improving teachers' competencies for continuous monitoring and providing constructive feedback to students during learning as a means of supporting their learning and development; and continuously monitoring and analysing assessment practices during implementation to ensure the engagement of higher levels of knowledge, a high frequency of feedback and a balanced representation of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment functions.

### **Operational Objective 1.5: Schools are a safe, inclusive and stimulating environment for holistic and complete development of all students**

This operational objective relies on the modern concept of the school as an institution that does not serve the purpose of programme implementation and transmission of programme content but is a stimulating and safe environment for the full intellectual, emotional and social development of all students. The school is expected to be a safe, inclusive and stimulating environment for the holistic development of all students, thereby contributing to the development of social cohesion within the school and in the wider community.

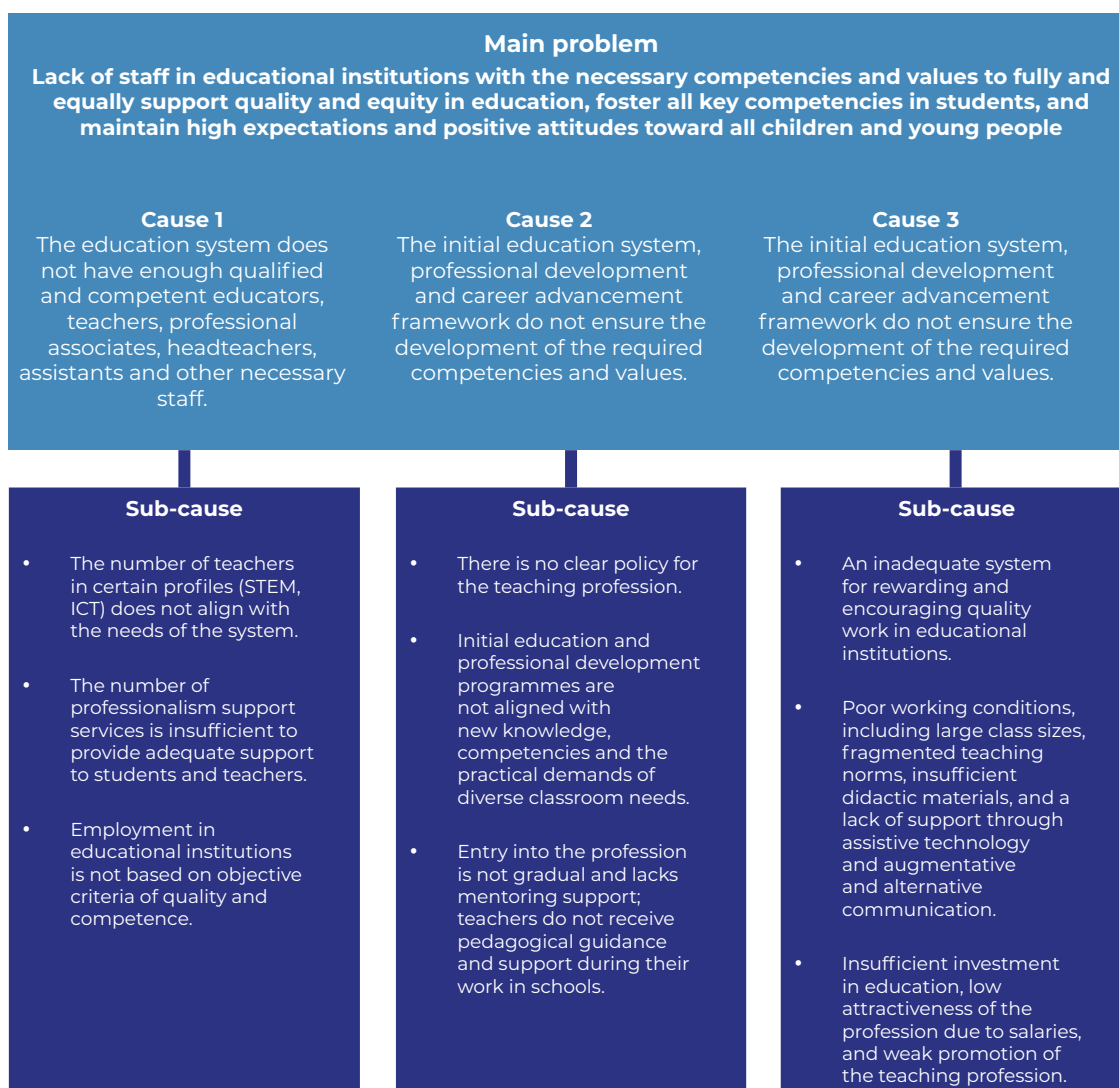
**1.5.1. Enhancement of socio-emotional support, wellbeing and holistic development through a safe, inclusive and engaging school environment** achieved through: improving the guidelines and procedures to ensure a safe school environment free from physical, verbal, social, sexual and emotional violence by students or teachers; enhancing guidelines to create an inclusive school environment with equal opportunities for all, preventing discrimination and hate speech while promoting universal human and civic values, empathy, mutual respect and multicultural coexistence; establishing mechanisms for continuous educational and socio-emotional support to improve student success, holistic development and physical and mental wellbeing; providing a diverse range of creative, motivating and inclusive extracurricular activities focused on arts, sports, practical skills and ecological and civic initiatives, ensuring access for all students,

especially in rural areas; enabling morning care, full-day school support, and student assistance; strengthening teachers' educational competencies to foster better student relationships and provide socio-emotional and academic support in crisis situations such as abuse, discrimination or academic failure, as well as to encourage greater student achievement; and developing models to enhance students' environmental awareness by focusing on the green transition and sustainable development through a rich selection of extracurricular ecological actions and activities.

**1.5.2. Ensuring a comprehensive approach and cooperation among all stakeholders in the educational process through community and professional participation** through: ensuring a democratic school environment and greater student participation in decision-making processes; improving the efficiency of the student parliament, organizations and clubs, while increasing collaboration and networking opportunities among schools and teachers through forums, professional conferences, associations and international cooperation programmes to exchange best practices and foster innovation, alongside developing models to enhance partnerships between schools, parents, businesses, local institutions, organizations and NGOs for a holistic and inclusive approach; strengthening the school's capacity for quality assessment and improvement through enhanced competencies in self-evaluation and professional development; promoting regional and international cooperation and the internationalization of education by introducing a bilingual department from the first grade, allowing students to follow part of the curriculum in English in non-language subjects such as mathematics, science and society, music, art and physical education, with the main objectives of fostering motivation and a positive attitude towards learning English as a foreign language, boosting students' confidence in expressing themselves in a foreign language and increasing their exposure to English during lessons.



## D2. Strategic Goal 2: All employees in educational institutions equally and fully support the quality and equity of education, foster the development of key competencies for lifelong learning and skills of students, and maintain positive attitudes and high expectations towards all children and young people



The quality of education directly depends on the competence and expertise of teachers and educators, who play a crucial role in shaping future generations. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the education system has sufficient qualified and motivated professional staff ready to face the challenges of education in the 21st century. The goal is to develop an effective framework for initial teacher education, continuous professional development and career advancement for all employees in educational institutions. The focus will be on improving professional competencies, applying modern teaching methods and fostering strong partnerships with industry.

**Operational Objective 2.1: The education system has sufficient qualified and competent preschool educators, teachers, professional associates, headteachers, assistants and other necessary personnel, who are employed based on objective quality and competence criteria**

This operational objective reflects the system needs and the available personnel resources, including both their profiles and years of service. Additionally, it requires the forecasting of the future human resource needs for the education system in preschool, primary and secondary education. Those who implement such strategies will need capacity strengthening and support, including the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, the Bureau for Education Services and the Centre for Vocational Education and Training. Furthermore, the enhancement of partnerships with industry stakeholders, both domestically and internationally, in the professional development of teachers for vocational-theoretical subjects and practical classes is key to ensuring that educational programmes in vocational education remain relevant to the current and future labour market needs.

To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of teacher professional development programmes, it is recommended to establish formal mechanisms for regularly collecting feedback from key stakeholders. This includes staff at the Bureau for Education Services, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, trainers and trainees. Such systems will provide valuable insights to support the ongoing refinement of teacher development efforts, particularly in the context of school- and kindergarten-level initiatives.

To achieve the objective, the following measures are to be implemented:

**2.1.1 Providing staff with deficit profiles that meet the specific needs of the education system**, encompassing the following key activities: conducting an analysis to identify gaps in human resources across education sectors; developing recruitment strategies tailored to attract qualified personnel for the identified deficit profiles; establishing incentive schemes to attract professionals to underserved areas; revising employment policies to streamline hiring procedures based on competency frameworks; and ensuring an equitable distribution of staff across different regions/municipalities to meet the regional/local needs.

**2.1.2 Strengthening the existing capacities of experts at the Bureau Education Services, the VET Centre, the Examination Centre and the Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids through targeted professional development and mentorship programmes.** This includes: organizing specialized training for evaluators and external collaborators; developing tools and methodologies for quality assessment; establishing collaborative networks with regional and international educational experts to exchange best practices; and implementing mechanisms for regular monitoring and support to improve the evaluation processes across educational institutions.

**2.1.3. Strengthening the established Professional Development System through professional development at the school/kindergarten level by developing a sustainable model that promotes peer learning and continuous improvement** including the following key activities: enhancing the existing mentorship system for trainee teachers, novice teachers and beginner headteachers to provide effective and efficient support; introducing mandatory training programmes for deputy headteachers to improve their competencies, particularly in monitoring teaching and learning quality; fostering networking among schools and teachers to share best practices; and consistently utilizing the existing mechanisms for assessing the impact of professional development activities at the school and preschool levels.

**Operational Objective 2.2: The system of initial education, continuous professional development and career advancement for all employees in educational institutions is designed to facilitate the acquisition and application of competencies necessary for the comprehensive development and learning of children and adolescents in an inclusive environment**

To achieve this objective, a detailed analysis of the initial education of all teacher profiles must be conducted, comparing the results with the Standards of Competencies for Teachers and Headteachers in Educational Institutions (2016) to identify any discrepancies. Based on this analysis, precise measures can be proposed to improve the initial education of teachers.

Additionally, in order to achieve this objective, it is necessary to organize professional development programmes for coordinators of continuous professional development and career advancement of teachers at both the national and international levels, enabling the staff to familiarize themselves with innovative teaching methods, bring in new ideas and acquire and apply the competencies needed for the comprehensive development and learning of children and young people in an inclusive environment. Continuous professional development of teachers should be implemented with a focus on improving didactic and methodological skills, socio-emotional competencies, working with gifted students, as well as training for vocational-theoretical subjects and practical classes that correspond to the specific needs of the vocational education sector. Developing on-the-job training for teachers of vocational-theoretical subjects and practical classes that are directly related to the needs of the vocational education sector, as well as adapted to industrial practices and technological innovations, will be key to improving the expertise of teachers.

Cooperation between teachers of different subjects and fields should be encouraged in order to develop interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to teaching. Additional training for trainers should be provided, in collaboration with international experts and organizations, to improve their competencies and ensure the long-term sustainability of teachers' professional development programmes.

To achieve the objective, the following measures are to be implemented:

**2.2.1 Improving initial education in the area of teacher competencies by revising the curricula and enhancing collaboration with educational institutions.** Key activities include: analysing and aligning teacher education programmes with competency frameworks; introducing practicum components alongside an improved mentorship system for trainee and novice teachers; engaging experienced teachers in the co-design of training programmes; and establishing formal partnerships to ensure collaboration between universities, schools/preschools and key educational institutions to enhance the coherence between theory and practice, as well as integrating action and other team-based research into partnership agreements between universities, schools/preschools and educational institutions that have dedicated research departments.

**2.2.2 Providing additional training for trainers through cooperation with local and foreign experts.** This will involve: providing additional training for trainers through collaboration with foreign experts to enhance their competencies by organizing workshops led by international education specialists; developing joint projects with foreign educational institutions; developing joint projects with foreign educational institutions; integrating new methodologies into training programmes based on global best practices; and ensuring that local trainers are equipped to sustain programme delivery independently.

**2.2.3. Strengthening the professional development of counsellors at the Bureau for Education Services and the Centre for Vocational Education, in line with successful practices in the region and Europe** through activities such as: organizing exchange programmes with similar agencies in the EU; developing specialized training aligned with emerging educational needs; promoting interdisciplinary collaboration between counsellors; establishing performance review mechanisms to track the impact of the work of CPR counsellors on the performance of school-level professional development coordinators; as well as increasing the number of employees in the BES and CVET to strengthen support for the professional development system and create the necessary conditions for the implementation of this strategy.

**2.2.4. Implementing continuous professional development for teachers through structured programmes that align with both national education strategies and specific school needs.**

Activities in this regard include: implementing continuous professional development for school and preschool teaching teams, with a particular focus on enhancing innovative didactic and methodological skills through training that promotes critical thinking, problem solving, learning-to-learn strategies, socio-emotional skills, bilingual education, digital competencies including AI, sustainability, inclusion, gifted students and project-based planning; improving access to professional development programmes for teachers and educators by establishing education centres in the southern and northern regions of the country; creating modular specialized training programmes for teachers addressing challenges such as literacy in reading, science and mathematics, assessment for student development and the latest trends in inclusive education to develop competencies for working with diverse student groups, including gifted students and those with developmental difficulties; developing a training system for vocational-theoretical subject teachers and practical instruction that aligns with the specific needs of the vocational education sector and adapts to industry and technological innovations; establishing additional support systems for underperforming teachers by engaging senior mentors and providing access to updated resources; developing an online resource platform to support underperforming teachers; amending secondary legislation on professional development, senior titles and certification to ensure full complementarity with the overall teacher professional development system, particularly at the school and preschool levels; redefining the list of professional development programme areas in alignment with the Central Framework of Key Competencies and the Standards of Competencies for Teachers and Headteachers; conducting SELFIE assessments for teachers to evaluate their skills against the DigCompEdu<sup>65</sup> framework and, based on their levels, creating training programmes to help them improve in areas where they demonstrate the weakest knowledge and skills.

**2.2.5 Ensuring continuous professional development of teachers and educators, with a particular focus on enhancing innovative didactic and methodological skills.**

Activities in this regard include: providing training for specialized teams of teachers, educators, psychologists and subject matter experts in pedagogical innovations and developmental psychology; ensuring collaborative preparation and planning within schools across different subject areas through a multidisciplinary approach (languages, STEM, arts) to create lesson plans tailored to students' needs; establishing a robust and reliable quality assurance system with internal and external evaluations conducted within shorter cycles, including regular inspections to achieve high educational standards; ensuring broad participation of teachers and educators in training on critical thinking, problem solving, digital competencies including AI, green skills, inclusion and gifted students; developing trainer programmes in literacy, science and mathematics for teachers in all primary schools; ensuring extensive participation in professional development programmes

65 [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcompedu\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/digcompedu_en)



for primary school teachers focused on 10-year-olds' reading literacy (PIRLS); and ensuring high participation in professional development programmes for primary school teachers in mathematical and scientific literacy (TIMSS).

**Operational Objective 2.3: Systemic measures have been implemented to improve the reputation, safety and overall wellbeing of employees. The professions of preschool educators, teachers and other employees in educational institutions are attractive, ensuring the attraction and retention of the highest quality and most motivated educational and teaching staff, with systemic measures in place to guarantee their reputation and wellbeing.**

To achieve this operational objective, it is crucial to enhance the appeal and prestige of the profession of preschool educators, teachers and other education staff through a comprehensive strategy. This involves developing and implementing measures to improve working conditions and professional benefits, such as salaries, work environments and clear career advancement and professional development opportunities. Additionally, the value and significance of educational professions should be actively promoted through media campaigns and initiatives that elevate the status of this profession in society. These campaigns should highlight the critical role of educators in societal development and their key contribution to shaping future generations.

Moreover, establishing mechanisms to recognize and reward exceptional performance in education is essential. Recognition programmes and awards for educators who achieve outstanding results in their work will contribute to employee motivation and enhance the overall quality of the education system.

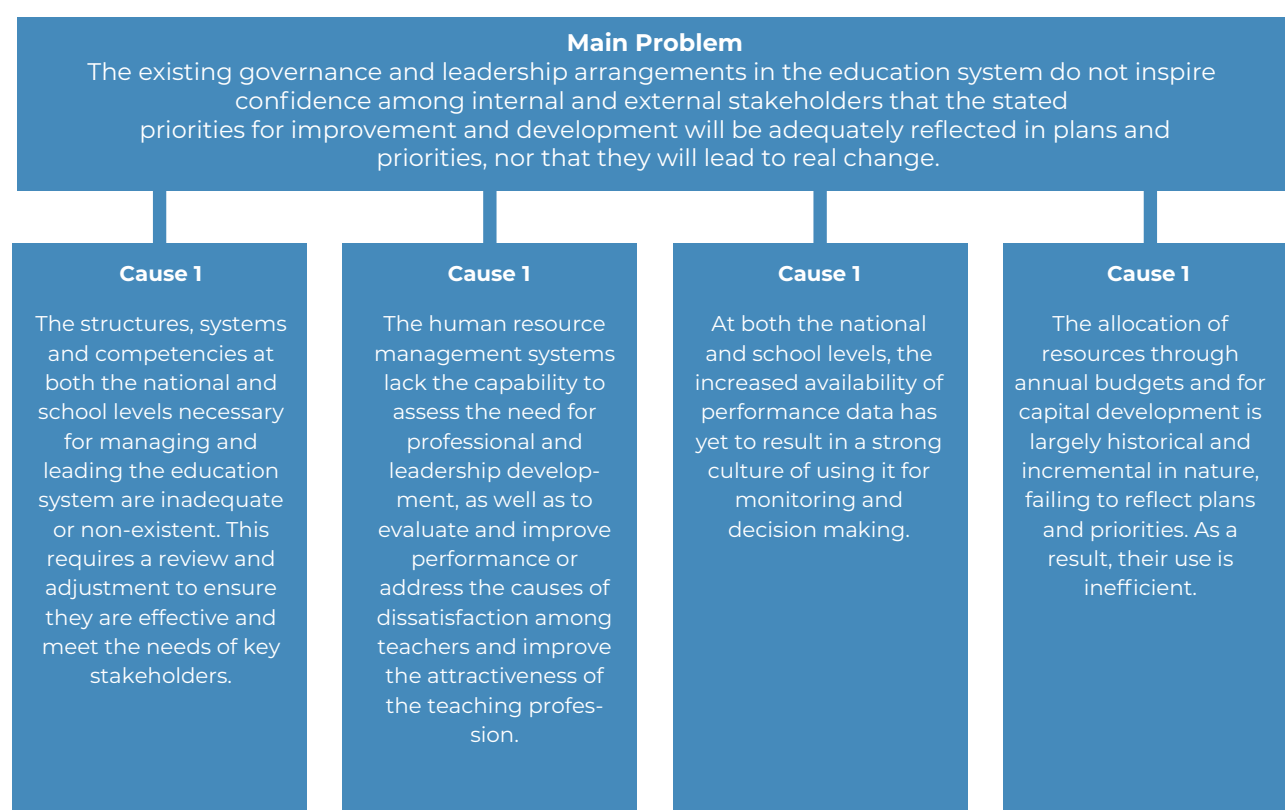
To achieve the objective, the following measures are to be implemented:

**2.3.1. Enhancing the attractiveness and reputation of the profession of educators, teachers and other education professionals by developing policies to improve working conditions, including salaries, career advancement opportunities and support for mental health and wellbeing.** This includes: reviewing and updating salary scales to reflect market trends; introducing financial incentives for teachers in rural areas and those working outside their place of residence; providing opportunities for outstanding practitioners to advance within the education system; establishing clear career advancement pathways; and ensuring financial compensation for school-level coordinators of teachers' and educators' professional development to support the effective and responsible implementation of professional development at the school and preschool levels.

**2.3.2. Fostering positive student–teacher relationships by providing comprehensive support to teachers through the enhancement of teaching competencies in ethos, supportive and inclusive learning environments and strengthening trust between students, teachers and parents/guardians in the spirit of gender equality and equal rights and responsibilities for all.** Key activities include: consistently and professionally developing various models of cooperation with parents/guardians, improving socio-emotional skills among teachers and students and fostering assertive communication at the school level; establishing and implementing an effective system for monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs) for teachers, linked to student outcomes in national assessments, PISA, PIRLS studies and qualitative evaluations from student, parent and colleague surveys to promote accountability among teachers, pedagogical-psychological associates and school leaders; reviewing roles within central education institutions to provide ongoing advisory support to teachers, particularly in curriculum implementation and innovative learning methods; strengthening professional support services in educational institutions to

focus on assisting teachers and educators by offering guidance on educational strategies, socio-emotional and pedagogical-psychological support to enhance teaching effectiveness and student motivation; improving the system of external and internal evaluation at all levels of education to obtain objective, reliable, relevant and measurable data as key instruments for continuously ensuring and enhancing schools and preschools as supportive and stimulating communities; ensuring that evaluation teams, as well as all advisors from the Institute for Education and CVET, act as “critical friends”, systematically and consistently providing expert advisory support to all stakeholders in education to implement recommendations for meaningful and effective quality improvement; launching initiatives to educate parents about the importance of their role in the educational process and their support for their children’s holistic development, including organizing workshops and sessions in schools and preschools to raise awareness of the value of education, develop a culture of participation and trust and improve regular communication and collaboration.

### **D3. Strategic Goal 3: Improving quality and equity in the education system through enhanced governance and financing, with a focus on evidence collection and utilization, as well as participation in decision-making processes**



The foundation for the labour market is established in the education system.” Policy Area 3 of the national Reform Agenda (2024) outlines how human capital development will drive the vision of national prosperity through the production of highly skilled citizens into global and local labour markets. It sets out the essential need to cultivate foundational skills for all students in Montenegro, emphasizing individuals with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. This effort aims to later align these taught skills with the nation's labour market. Such a strategic viewpoint necessitates a responsive and adaptable ministry capable of outlining the optimal profiles of students graduating from general, TVET and higher education institutions. Moreover, the MoESI should then be able to effectively track whether the system's outcomes align closely with these standards.

Although the current set of education institutions and affiliated agencies is deemed appropriate and sufficient, weaknesses have been observed in its functioning, the MoESI has “a full set of strategies and legislation guiding the everyday practice and development of education but it has to be noted, however that, at the strategy and data production levels, fragmentations are visible” (ESA, 2022). This strategy, along with the commissioned Functional Review, aims to examine and address these weaknesses and to create and maintain arrangements and organizations for the improvement of education over the next 10 years.

Areas needing improvement at a system level were noted by the Education Sector Analysis as:

- Prioritizing overall education financing and allocating resources to align with policy goals
- Strategic planning, including the use of research and other evidence
- Human resource management related to professional and managerial roles
- Using data for decision making and accountability – overproduction of under-analysed data
- Suboptimal horizontal and vertical relationships and alignment of purpose – quality assurance systems not fully functional; inadequate coordination and cooperation
- Inefficiency in the use of available resources
- Inadequacy of necessary competencies at both the national and institutional levels – particularly in systematic monitoring and evaluation of impact
- Relational trust is low in schools – partnerships between parents and teachers are often dysfunctional; participation of students, parents and employees is often not meaningful

A significant contribution in this area can be made through the Functional Review of the MoESI and central educational institutions. This review will focus on the areas of underperformance outlined above while aiming to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of educational policies towards the objectives of the system.

The Functional Review will include: a review of the organizational structures to simplify the decision-making process at both the national and institutional levels. It will evaluate the required competencies, identifying areas where capacity-building efforts are needed to enhance policy implementation and educational leadership. Additionally, the reviews will assess support systems, particularly the ICT infrastructure and inclusive education programmes, to modernize the education sector and ensure it meets the diverse needs of all learners.

This Functional Review is expected to inform and complement the development of a comprehensive education strategy for the period 2025–2035, along with a budgeted action plan for the period 2025–2027. The findings from the review will guide necessary reforms aimed at strengthening the capacity of the education system to deliver high-quality education that aligns with both national and international standards.

**Operational Objective 3.1: The structures, systems and necessary competencies for managing the education system reflect the key functional requirements of strategic management, system oversight, human resource management, financial management and property and infrastructure management**

Operational Objective 3.1 requires a deep assessment of the readiness of the MoESI to deliver on its mandate and further assess whether the current set of structures that have previously been deemed appropriate and sufficient are in fact so, and whether the operationalization of the MoESI's mandate, in reality, is leading to suitable results, and where weaknesses and gaps exist. The primary tool to complete mapping of institutional capacity against the mandate is the upcoming Functional Review.

The second phase, assessing MoESI performance against mandate, will require the results of the Functional Review to be combined with a detailed assessment of whether the value chain of the MoESI is leading to improved educational outcomes in practice, as measured by the quality and equity of recent cohorts of Montenegrin students.

Although the Functional Review will be carried out in phases as the strategy is developed, it is expected to apply the following framework of nine key functions for ministries of education and associated entities:

- Legal and legislative matters
- Briefing, drafting and communication
- Strategic management
- System monitoring
- Human resource management
- Management of the financial and budget cycles
- Property and infrastructure management
- Information generation and use
- General administration including procurement

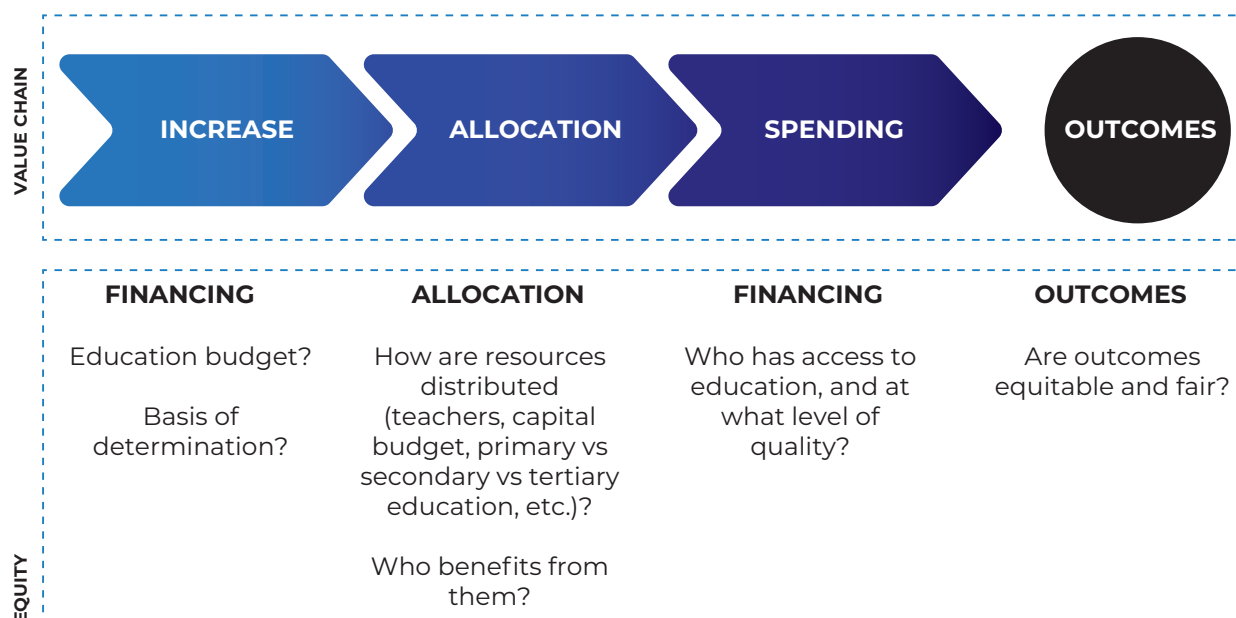
The key systems required to support these functions and the competencies needed for their effective implementation will be further analysed. They exhibit both internal effectiveness and coherence vertically and horizontally with the associated organizations. The key systems support these functions and should be staffed competently.

When assessing system performance, not all questions are fully within the control of the MoESI. For example, the system could function perfectly well, but if it is underfunded it is unlikely to



generate strong outcomes. Such decisions sit outside the MoESI, with the Ministry of Finance. However, on the other hand, the system could be sufficiently funded but only suboptimally turn these inputs into outputs and outcomes. For this reason, it is essential to ensure effective inter-institutional cooperation to achieve mutual institutional benefits.

Figure 3: A system review sample at the level of the entire value chain



The measures and activities of Operational Objective 3.1 required to improve governance and management of the system will need to be based on the solid and objective assessment of system strengths and weaknesses. As such, they will flow from the Functional Review and the assessment of inefficiencies and blockages in the value chain above where spending does not correspond to the expected volume or quality of outputs.

Currently there are expressed weaknesses and sub-optimal performance in respect of some of these functions:

- Communication between the education institutions and with intersectoral partners is inadequate
- There is no focus on strategic management (including planning) within the MoESI – this role falls by default to the minister, creating problems of discontinuity
- Whilst there are systems in place for the assessment of educational and institutional performance and reporting, it is not clear how these are translated into improvement measures with appropriate accountability
- Annual budgeting is “historical” and incremental, and not based on longer-term plans and priorities
- The twin issues of schools with very small numbers of pupils and overcrowded schools are not being addressed adequately

- Potential educational and managerial dividends of increased digitalization are yet to be fully realized
- The MoESI is inundated with operational matters whose resolution would necessitate more active support from local communities.

In relation to the achievement of this objective, the following measures will be implemented:

**3.1.1. Undertaking the Functional Review of the MoESI and associated organizations, agreeing an action plan for the implementation of approved recommendations and commencing implementation.**

The objective is to conduct a comprehensive functional review of the ministry's operations, evaluate the existing processes, resources, structures and responsibilities, and identify areas for improvement. The activities through which this will be implemented include: developing a methodology for the functional review; providing recommendations for improving operations and strengthening institutional and human resources within the ministry and central educational institutions; drafting and adopting an action plan for the implementation of approved recommendations; executing the recommendations; and reporting on the implementation of activities from the action plan on a periodic, monthly and annual basis.

**3.1.2. Establishing within the MoESI a directorate or department for strategic management and define its relationship with other directorates and departments.**

The objective is to establish a new department within the ministry dedicated to planning, implementing and monitoring strategic initiatives and policies. This department will be essential for strengthening the strategic focus and coordinating activities at all levels to enable the ministry to achieve its long-term goals. Key activities include: amending the Rulebook on the Organization and Systematization of Job Positions within the ministry; establishing a Directorate/Department for Strategic Planning and Management, and ensuring the necessary material, technical and human resources for its functioning; developing a framework for capacity development planning with projected costs to support the implementation of policies and the 2025–2035 Education Strategy; ensuring effective governance of the education sector at all levels; adopting an act on strategic planning and management; monitoring the implementation of the strategy; and conducting regular reporting and evaluation.

**3.1.3. Improving the work of the Human Resources Management Service within the MoESI.**

The objective of this measure is to enhance the organization and functioning of the Human Resources Management Service, ensuring more efficient management of human capital within the ministry through the following activities: analysing the current state of existing activities and responsibilities under the jurisdiction of the existing Service for Personnel, General Affairs and Human Resources; strengthening the capacity of the Directorate/Department for Human Resources Management within the ministry by improving cooperation with the Human Resources Administration to promote good governance in human resource management.

**3.1.4. Strengthening medium-term financial planning and annual budgeting through the application of programme- and priority-based budgeting methods.**

Key activities include: conducting a detailed analysis of the current situation and capacities to identify gaps; developing internal procedures for preparing a medium-term budget framework that includes a plan for new policies at the level of the MoESI's budget programmes and the institutions under its supervision; developing internal procedures for the preparation of the annual budget plan; providing employee training for financial planning and budgeting; and improving the internal control processes within the education system.

**3.1.5. Developing an analysis and investment plan to address the issue of schools with a small number of students in cooperation with other relevant ministries and agencies.** This measure will be implemented through the following activities: collecting data on all primary and secondary schools in Montenegro, including student numbers, school facility capacities, geographical location and teaching staff, based on the information available in the MEIS database; establishing an inter-ministerial working group tasked with designing a set of measures for the functioning of schools with a small number of students; creating an appropriate legal framework to support such schools; implementing the proposed measures, followed by evaluation and reporting.

**3.1.6. Developing an analysis and investment plan to address the issue of schools serving an excessively large number of students in cooperation with other relevant ministries and agencies.** This measure will be implemented through the following activities: collecting data on all primary and secondary schools in Montenegro, including student numbers, school facility capacities, geographical location and teaching staff; establishing an inter-ministerial working group tasked with designing a set of measures for the functioning of schools with a large student population; creating an appropriate legal framework to support such schools, including an investment plan; conducting an analysis of teaching staff sufficiency; defining mechanisms to overcome the challenges; implementing the proposed measures, followed by evaluation and reporting.

### **Operational objective 3.2: Strengthen national oversight and planning of teaching staff, improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession and enhance human resource management practices in institutions**

As indicated in 3.1 above, a key part of the strengthening of governance and management of the education system will be more effective human resource management. By this, a broad approach is implied, which encompasses all aspects of human resource planning, development of human resources, incentives and motivation, and the fair application of rules for recruitment, supervision, promotion, performance and termination of employment.

Whilst these are all key matters to be addressed by the MoESI and associated organizations, they are also the concern of other ministries and notably the Ministry of Public Administration and its Human Resources Agency. The Education Sector Analysis identified a number of key weaknesses in the teacher workforce and managers which require attention through this strategy:

- A lack of information – limited insight into the structure of unemployed teachers; insufficient data on teacher turnover
- An obvious need for new, younger teaching staff
- Teachers with 20 or more years of experience rarely participate in training for professional development
- There is no prediction of the future needs for teachers
- Large variations in the teacher-to-student ratio by municipality
- The need for a more highly qualified teaching workforce as the basis for higher competencies (including green skills, democratic citizenship skills, bullying prevention, gender equality, digital skills, crisis response skills and socio-emotional skills)

The survey among teachers showed a very high level of dissatisfaction among teachers regarding their social status, salary and the material and pedagogical conditions in schools.

As well as these more general matters, particular attention needs to be given to the preparation of teachers for more senior roles including those as heads of institutions and in the continuing development of leadership and management skills.

The achievement of this objective will be ensured by:

**3.2.1 Implementing approved recommendations from the Functional Review related to human resource management and reaching an agreement on all structural and systems changes with the Ministry of Public Administration.** This will be achieved through: developing a detailed implementation plan for the recommendations with clearly defined objectives and deadlines; organizing training in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Administration/Human Resources Administration to strengthen employee knowledge and skills; and ensuring continuous monitoring of the implementation of the Functional Review recommendations.

**3.2.2. Promoting the teaching profession with a particular focus on gender equality and the inclusion of vulnerable groups.** This will be achieved through media campaigns that highlight the value of the teaching profession, events in collaboration with relevant institutions to further promote teaching as a career and the establishment of mentoring programmes where experienced teachers provide support to students and young education professionals pursuing a teaching career. Additionally, efforts will be made to encourage a gender balance and the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the teaching profession through educational programmes and initiatives that promote gender equality and foster a society of equal opportunities.

**3.2.3. Developing a support system for potential future shortage occupations** will be achieved through: the analysis and identification of potentially scarce professions; modernizing existing study programmes and the establishment of new ones; designing and implementing support measures for students (scholarships, loans, accommodation); and the creation of a dedicated support system for teachers in shortage subjects.

**3.2.4. Enhancing the competencies of leadership staff in educational institutions at all levels** will be achieved through: the formation of a working group to analyse teachers' professional development programmes and the existing training programme for school directors, including the development of a training programme for deputy directors; assessing the content, quality and structure of existing programmes; modernizing the current programmes and creating new specialized programmes for the professional development of leadership staff, with a focus on digital skills, leadership, strategic planning and management; strengthening cooperation with international organizations and institutions to exchange experiences and best practices in leadership training and development; and implementing, evaluating and reporting on the outcomes of these initiatives.



**Operational Objective 3.3: Digitalization of the education system, including the enhancement of the Montenegrin Education Information System (MEIS) to ensure timely and relevant data for system diagnostics, trend analysis and decision making at both the national and institutional levels, as well as the full implementation of the Digital School concept**

The Montenegrin Educational Information System (MEIS) serves as a comprehensive digital platform for managing educational data, providing essential support for institutions such as preschools, primary and secondary schools, music schools, resource centres and adult education providers. With a user base of approximately 10,000 individuals, the platform ensures continuous data entry and monitoring. Its functionality requires high system availability and stability to manage the dynamic influx of information, ensuring uninterrupted data flow and reliable access to crucial educational records.

Beyond collecting data, the MEIS plays a pivotal role in facilitating data exchange between educational institutions and other government sectors. Through a connection with the Unified Information System for electronic data exchange, the MEIS enables smooth communication and cooperation across departments, contributing to more effective management and decision-making processes. This interoperability supports not only the management of daily operations but also strategic planning by enhancing data integration across different institutions. To keep pace with the increasing demands of the education system, further development of the MEIS is imperative. In primary focus is the continued digitalization of the essential processes, including of pedagogical documentation and administrative procedures. This includes enabling electronic applications for external examinations, professional training, competitions and monitoring teachers' participation in professional development programmes. Additionally, the system will play a crucial role in identifying children who are not enrolled in school, contributing to more targeted efforts toward ensuring inclusive education for all.

The expansion of the MEIS also envisions the introduction of new electronic services that will benefit not only institutions but also citizens, including students, parents, and teachers. These services aim to streamline administrative interactions, such as facilitating the submission of applications, scheduling meetings or accessing exam results. Improved digital services will also promote greater transparency and efficiency in communication between schools and families, fostering stronger cooperation between all stakeholders.

To support the growing scope of the MEIS, both software solutions and hardware infrastructure must be continuously enhanced. System scalability is crucial to accommodate future needs, ensuring that new services can be integrated smoothly without compromising performance. Robust security measures are essential to protect sensitive data, with a focus on developing effective access control models that ensure that only authorized users have appropriate access to different parts of the system.

The successful functioning of the MEIS also depends on strengthening institutional capacities within the MoESI and individual educational institutions. This includes providing training and technical support to personnel responsible for data management and system administration. Reliable data input and monitoring are essential not only for operational efficiency but also for producing high-quality, accurate and timely reports that inform policy development and strategic planning.

In line with technological advancements, MEIS applications are built using modern solutions that prioritize speed, scalability and the user experience. The system is accessible across multiple

devices through web browsers and features a responsive design, ensuring functionality on various screen sizes. This approach makes it easier for users to engage with the system, whether they are accessing it from desktops, tablets or smartphones, thus promoting accessibility and usability.

As the education sector evolves, the MEIS must remain adaptable and responsive to emerging challenges. Continuous development and investment in both software and hardware will ensure that the system can meet future demands. Furthermore, the platform must stay aligned with national priorities by supporting inter-institutional collaboration, improving service delivery to citizens and enabling informed decision making at both the national and institutional levels.

In addition to the above, it is necessary to improve planning and operational processes across all educational institutions to enhance information flow, data exchange and collaboration. The improvement mechanism should ensure that, even in disaster risk reduction circumstances where institutions cannot operate from their physical premises, all activities continue seamlessly and within the designated timelines. Ensuring continuity and building a resilient system for both administrative processes and teaching delivery is a key objective of the Digital School concept. Given that the implementation of this concept remains uneven across institutions, appropriate measures must be taken to achieve full implementation in all educational settings. Full implementation entails the use of all Digital School resources by all education stakeholders, as well as the development of new digital content for staff, students and parents. Alongside technological advancements and application of new tools, developing an appropriate legal framework is also essential to ensure that regulations keep pace with digital transformation, enabling more efficient implementation.

The measures contributing to the achievement of this objective include:

**3.3.1. Ensuring compliance with legal regulations.** Compliance with legal regulations is one of the requirements that accompanies every development, including the development of the Education Information System. For the realization of a series of existing and new activities, it is necessary to improve the legal regulations in order to ensure better reliability and accuracy of data, but it is also necessary to create a series of internal procedures that more closely describe each activity in the implementation and maintenance of the Education Information System. Additionally, the Information System must be aligned with GDPR regulations. Furthermore, the seamless and full implementation of the Digital School concept is directly linked to the adoption of legal acts that regulate its operation, considering that this concept did not previously exist within the education system.

**3.3.2. Improving hardware infrastructure and security.** In order to ensure the stable and safe operation of the Education Information System, it is necessary to continuously work on improving the hardware and network infrastructure in the Data Centre and Disaster Recovery site. Special attention should be paid to the security of the entire system, both in the domain of network and application protection, as well as in the domain of physical protection.

**3.3.3. Developing and improving software components.** Some modules of the Education Information System are still in older technological solutions, which is why there are certain security risks, and it is necessary to create them using newer ones (in which new system modules have already been created) in order to make the entire existing information system stable, safe and fast.

In addition, it is necessary to develop new application modules, including:

- Records of employees in educational institutions (including professional development, licences, etc.)
- Records of individuals who have attained Level V education according to the National Qualifications Framework
- Records of teachers' professional development and their activities
- Records of part-time students
- Creation of a database of all projects implemented within the education system

3.3.4. Ensuring accurate, reliable data processing and effective utilization. The lack of timely data entry directly impacts the quality of information in the Education Information System. One effective strategy for enhancing data reliability is to increase awareness among employees in educational institutions about the importance of information systems for large departments. Special emphasis should be placed on the significance of the MEIS for both the educational system and society at large. Employees need to better understand the role of the information system, the necessity for data to be current, and how their contributions can improve the system's quality and data accuracy. Accurate data is crucial for effective planning and operational activities.

Many institutions remain unaware of the existence of the Education Information System and that they too can access data from this system, provided they have the legal basis for the type of data they are looking for. To increase the number of users, it is essential to showcase the system and its capabilities to various target groups outside the education sector. Additionally, there should be a concerted effort to promote the information system and the range of electronic services offered. Improved public awareness will likely lead to an increase in the number of users of these electronic services, contributing to the overall improvement of the system and its broader application.

**3.3.5. Development and enhancement of electronic services to ensure seamless and uninterrupted integration, i.e. interoperability.** Particular emphasis should be placed on data exchange, as it can significantly enhance interdepartmental cooperation. Improved data sharing can accelerate procedures, reduce the time required for process implementation and alleviate the administrative burden on employees.

Enhancing the Education Information System also entails the development of electronic services tailored for institutions or citizens. Data exchange not only enables the creation of electronic services for citizens, teachers and institutions, but also enriches the overall educational landscape.

Some of the electronic services that should be developed include: an electronic service for submitting requests for the recognition of public higher education credentials; a service for applying for a licence to work at an educational institution; an electronic service for submitting requests for the accreditation of teachers' professional development programmes; a service that enables teachers to register for professional development programmes; and an electronic service for submitting requests for student loan repayment exemptions.

**3.3.6. Improvement of the personnel structure.** The current structure and staffing levels in the department for information and communication technologies are inadequate to meet today's demands and future requirements. The effectiveness of the Education Information System relies not just on the relevant ministry but also on all educational institutions, other state agencies

and stakeholders such as citizens (parents and guardians). Therefore, it is crucial to promptly restructure the unit and increase the number of employees. Particular attention should be given to the need for personnel specializing in data analytics, as there are currently no employees in institutions dedicated to this area of work.

In addition to enhancing the personnel structure within the unit, it is necessary to strengthen the role of ICT coordinators in educational institutions. As the use of digital technologies among end-users grows, the workload for these coordinators increases, necessitating higher standards and additional training. This will enable them to successfully implement various projects and support digital initiatives within the education sector.

**3.3.7. Full implementation of the Digital School concept.** The Digital School concept involves the use of online collaboration among all stakeholders within an institution, as well as the possibility of independent online learning. Its implementation should cover regular institutional operations, blended learning and modified working conditions arising from various challenges such as a pandemic, extreme weather conditions or facility renovations.

By developing appropriate legal regulations, creating digital content for children, staff and parents, providing training and integrating digital tools into daily operations, the education system should become more resilient to challenges while also significantly improving efficiency and quality. One key aspect of the Digital School concept is its potential to enhance teaching quality while also reducing the administrative workload, ultimately increasing overall efficiency.

### **Operational Objective 3.4: Financing, management and planning of education serve to ensure quality, equity and the development of the education system**

Sufficient funding is vital for Montenegrin children to access the quality education they deserve. Currently, Montenegro falls short of international standards. To bridge this gap, it is important to ensure adequate education financing to support the implementation of the 2025–2035 Education Strategy. To maximize the efficiency of education spending, the policy and budget cycle will have to be strengthened in alignment with the broader National Public Finance Management Reform. The long-term objective is to ensure fiscal sustainability and sound management of public finances in line with EU legislation.

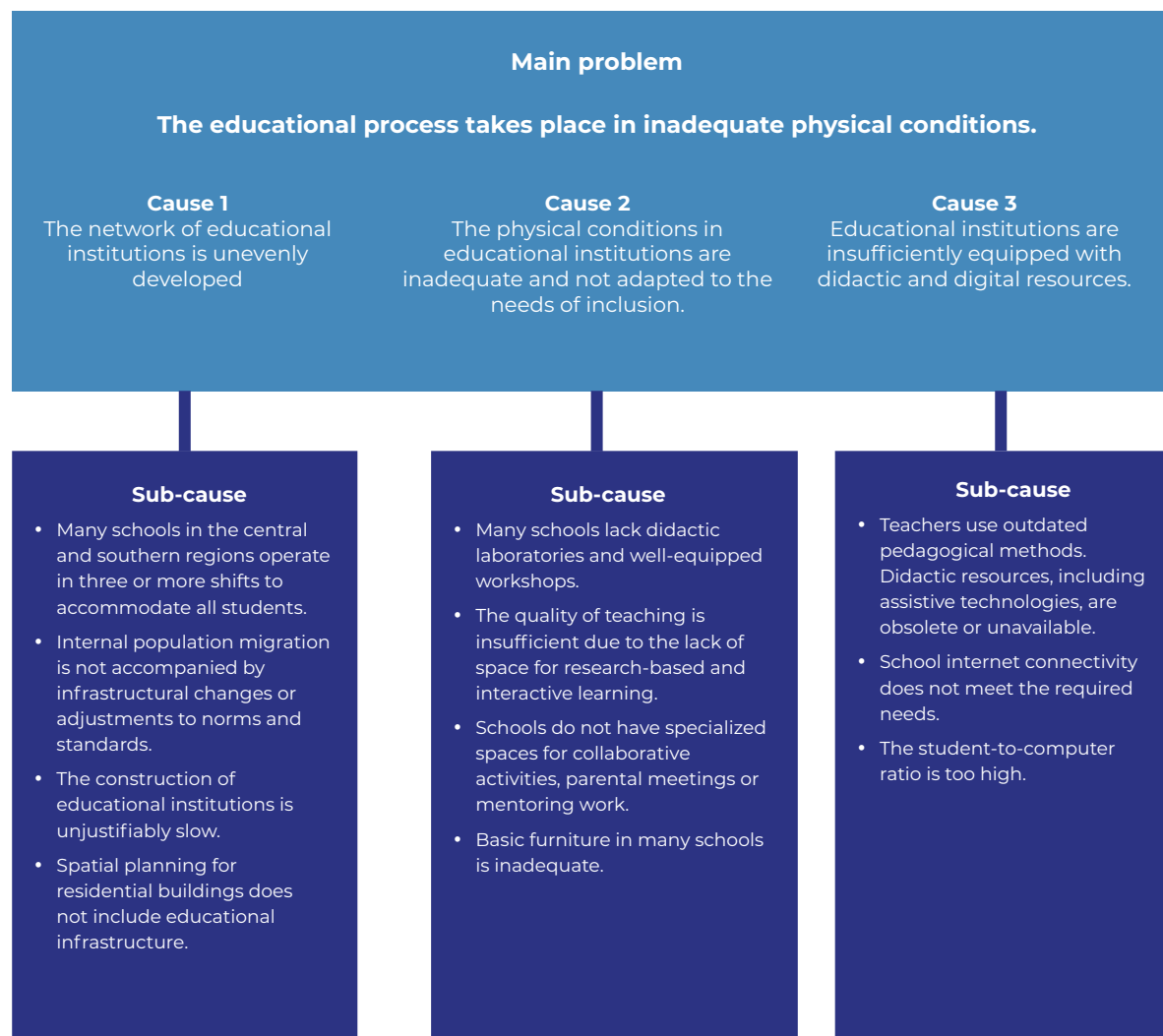
To achieve this operational objective, the following measures are to be implemented:

**3.4.1. Increasing the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of education spending, to be implemented** through the following activities: conducting a Public Expenditure Review to analyse and assess the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of government spending; building capacity for analysing and reporting on financial data, ensuring the required skills, tools and systems needed to effectively interpret and assess key financial data and trends over time; publishing concise annual reports on the financial budget for both internal and external use, including data on the financial performance of the MEIS, with a focus on resource management efficiency and goal achievement. To enhance transparency, the report will include an overview of the proposed budget for the next fiscal year, with key data on the total allocations, main spending areas and significant changes compared to previous years; analysing and adjusting funding models, particularly to benefit disadvantaged and gifted students, with a focus on equity; developing a capacity development planning framework with projected costs to support the implementation of policies and objectives of the 2025–2035 Education Strategy, ensuring effective management of the education sector at all levels.



**3.4.2. Increasing the level of resources available for education.** For a structured and coordinated approach, this measure will start with the activity of developing a resource mobilization strategy that identifies future funding options. The resource mobilization strategy will be aligned with the 2025–2035 Education Strategy in setting longer-term targets of funding requirements for two scenarios (medium ambition and high ambition). The strategy may help in mapping out the available funding opportunities, potential new innovative funding sources or forming partnerships with different stakeholders, including private-sector entities or multilateral organizations and identifying critical gaps. It will include an action plan for how to approach and engage with different funders or partners, including actions on engaging with the private sector to explore different options to stimulate private ECE.

## D4. Strategic Goal 4: Educational infrastructure and modern teaching resources support contemporary, high-quality, equitable and safe education for all children and young people



As the population migrates, the supply of educational institutions no longer matches the demand. This objective aims to make improvements to the network of educational institutions in terms of both the capacity and quality of the educational infrastructure. New infrastructure must accommodate the increasing number of students in those urban areas where the population has expanded, and must avoid a system of shifts.

The MoESI has already recognized the need for the construction of new educational facilities, securing funding through credit arrangements with international financial institutions. As part of a project with the European Investment Bank, funds have been allocated for the construction of four new primary schools, three kindergartens and a general secondary school (gymnasium), while an arrangement with the Council of Europe Development Bank will support the construction of nine new preschool education facilities across Montenegro.

Additional support for achieving this goal is also outlined in the Growth Plan, which includes the construction of more new facilities and the expansion of existing ones.

This specific objective includes three different operational measures for the different sub-sectors as well as a number of cross-cutting quality measures that apply to all subsectors. Combined, they must provide the conditions for the holistic development of all students based on the following principles:

- ECE: Encourages all children to attend early childhood education, whether in public institutions or through public–private partnerships, with a focus on children aged 3–6 years, recognizing the importance of proper preparation for primary school.
- Primary education: Mandatory primary education (defined in Montenegro as grades I–IX) should be available to all students, aiming to ensure education close to their place of residence or adequate and locally feasible arrangements, including transport of students.

Secondary education: A further analysis and strategy is needed to set specific targets for access to secondary education, which is currently not mandatory:

- Establishing centres of excellence in all regions, equipped with state-of-the-art technology, to enable students to acquire practical knowledge and skills, and connect with the labour market through various activities. In addition to practical skills, these hubs would also support the development of soft skills, leadership, organizational and communication skills.
- To improve the quality of work in educational institutions, all class sizes are in line with the prescribed standards. Classes should be organized with a maximum of two shifts and students should be provided with an extended stay, coupled with adequate resource management.
- The design and environment of educational institutions should facilitate motivating, supportive, inspiring, modern, transparent and inclusive pedagogical work, contributing to the development of quality education for all.
- Physical barriers should be avoided or eliminated to enable access to all educational institutions for children and young people from vulnerable groups or those with disabilities.
- Furthermore, the design of all educational institutions should be secured against all types of external risks, such as flooding, earthquakes and fire.
- To improve hygiene, the use of outdoor toilets should be eliminated and separate single-sex toilets provided in all schools.

The key principles outlined have been translated into three operational objectives, for which infrastructure prerequisites have been established through projects identified in the Growth Plan. First, 1,800 new kindergarten places will be provided through the construction of at least 12 new kindergartens and the expansion of at least three existing preschool education facilities. The second objective, set by the Reform Agenda, aims to ensure that, by December 2027, no school in Montenegro will operate in more than three shifts, which will be achieved through the construction of six new primary schools and the establishment of new general secondary schools in Podgorica and Bar. Beyond new construction and capacity expansion, the Growth Plan also includes the renovation of dozens of facilities, with a primary focus on energy efficiency, as well as the expansion of sports halls to improve this area of education.

## **Operational Objective 4.1: Improve the network of educational institutions to ensure quality, equitable and safe education for all children and young people**

To achieve this operational objective, the following **three measures** are to be implemented, each including a set of key activities that are further specified and sequenced in the Action Plan for 2025–2026:

**4.1.1. Ensuring new school infrastructure for public preschool education in accordance with new construction standards, starting with areas where the need is most pressing.** This includes the development and updating of construction standards for preschool and school infrastructure, with a focus on meeting children's needs for educational facilities equipped with specialized spaces and functional furniture, greater resilience to external risks, compliance with WASH standards, elimination of physical barriers and the creation of a better environment that fosters a motivating school atmosphere. This measure will be implemented through activities such as launching design competitions for selected facilities, conducting tenders for selecting main project developers, contractors and construction supervisors, equipping facilities and making them operational.

**4.1.2. Ensuring the implementation of the extended stay concept in primary schools.** This measure will be implemented through activities such as conducting a feasibility study with cost assessment, implementing the extended stay concept in phases and in accordance with the study's recommendations, conducting a feasibility study with cost assessment for the implementation of the full-day stay concept, and implementing the full-day stay concept in phases based on the feasibility study's recommendations.

**4.1.3. Optimization of the maximum number of shifts per school facility.** This will be achieved through activities such as launching a competition for selecting the main project developer, conducting tenders for selecting contractors and conducting tenders for selecting construction supervisors.

**4.1.4. Developing and updating construction standards for educational institutions, ensuring that facilities are climate-resilient and energy-efficient.** This will be achieved through agreements between UNOPS, the EIB and UNICEF for the implementation of these activities under the School Infrastructure Mapping project, the formation of a working group, the preparation of regulations and guidelines within the working group, conducting a public consultation and adopting the relevant documents.

**4.1.5. Enhancing the preparedness of educational institutions for disaster risk reduction, ensuring trained staff, established emergency protection and rescue plans for different types of risks, and all necessary safety signage within facilities.** This measure will be implemented through activities such as: integrating internal fire hose systems and external fire hydrants, fire detection and suppression systems, and other hazard prevention mechanisms during the design and reconstruction of facilities; equipping all educational institutions with essential safety equipment (fire extinguishers, fire hose systems, emergency signs, fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems, first aid kits, etc.); assessing the current state of disaster response equipment in schools; developing a procurement plan for the required equipment in line with the strategy's timeframe; creating protection and rescue plans for various risks such as fires and earthquakes; conducting regular child-focused risk assessments across all education levels, with special attention to children with disabilities; providing continuous training for school leaders, teachers and educators on disaster risk reduction; integrating disaster risk management responsibilities into



job classifications within educational institutions or defining roles within existing systematization documents; and developing and distributing digital and printed handbooks and guidelines (including graphical animations) on disaster risk reduction.

**4.1.6. Improving infrastructural and technical upgrades to enhance existing water supply and sanitation facilities and/or develop new ones, including necessary equipment and devices, as well as strengthening WASH capacities in educational institutions.** This will be achieved through activities such as: establishing and improving the norms and standards related to hygiene and sanitary conditions in schools, nutrition and other key aspects of a quality school environment; integrating the information systems of the Institute of Public Health and the MoESI to enable regular data exchange for better policies and interventions; ensuring conditions for regular water quality control in line with the National Drinking Water Monitoring Programme; developing educational programmes and content for education professionals and students on school hygiene, nutrition and healthy lifestyles; amending the Regulation on the Conditions for Establishing Educational Institutions to define standards for access to drinking water points for younger students; increasing the percentage of schools with accessible drinking water stations for students with limited mobility; improving drinking water quality testing in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, and the Institute of Public Health, with regular reporting based on the WHO–UNICEF JMP methodology; ensuring access to safe drinking water in all educational institutions; providing access to facilities and supplies for menstrual hygiene; and establishing WASH structures at the national, preschool and school levels (involving teachers, school staff, students and parents) with accompanying guidelines.

**4.1.7. Repurposing unused school facilities for educational, cultural and tourism purposes (e.g. nature schools, camps for gifted students).** Activities leading to the implementation of this measure include conducting an inventory of abandoned school buildings where no educational processes take place, assessing the condition of these facilities, forming an inter-ministerial working group, developing models for repurposing the buildings, creating an implementation plan, securing financial resources and monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the process.

**Operational Objective 4.2: Ensuring that all educational institutions have specialized facilities and functional furniture, aligned with the developmental and educational needs of children and young people.**

This operational objective has one broad measure:

**4.2.1 Constructing and renovating all educational institutions with functional specialized classrooms, premises, furniture and gyms** by constructing/rehabilitating, procuring and installing special school facilities. Schools should have dedicated premises for sports, arts, collaborative learning and practical activities such as workshops, as well as functional and age- and subject-appropriate furniture, including disability-inclusive equipment and furniture. These resources enhance students' physical, creative and intellectual development, fostering a comprehensive learning environment. The actual needs per school are currently being identified by the functional analysis of school infrastructure. The results of this study will set the baseline to establish the investment requirements.

**Operational Objective 4.3: Ensure that all educational institutions are fully equipped to provide quality education in the modern digital era through adequate didactic materials and functional digital infrastructure, including connectivity, hardware and software.**

To achieve this operational objective, the following measures are to be implemented:

**4.3.1. Providing all educational institutions with adequate didactic materials and functional digital infrastructure, including connectivity, hardware and software** through first defining a minimum package of appropriate computer equipment (computers, laptops, TV sets, screen projectors, smart boards, multifunctional devices, etc.) per education institution based on their per-student ratios; by providing an internet connection, which is needed to use the existing and some new resources in all rooms in the institution; by defining the appropriate software packages and providing schools with licensed software, categorized either as software for achieving the learning outcomes in core or elective subjects/modules or software for online collaboration, and the platforms for individual online learning covered by the Digital School concept. The availability and proper use of assistive technologies (tech- and non-tech-based) technologies and didactic equipment will support an inclusive environment; and by equipping the computer labs and libraries so that children who do not have adequate conditions at home can study and complete their homework there.

## **D5. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES AND BODIES MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY**

This Education Reform Strategy will be the guiding document of the MoESI in its stewardship of the education sector over the next 10 years. As with any long-term plan, while the overall objectives and underlying principles can be expected to hold, the application of them will be influenced by changes in political, economic and social contextual factors.

The rapidly evolving arena of digital development will throw up both new opportunities and problems, while new international evidence will emerge on educational practices. It is also inevitable that in the processes of implementation some aspects will proceed smoothly, while in other aspects challenges will be met and progress will prove difficult. The current views of key stakeholders may change in the face of actual changes.

The intentions of the plan will be reflected in rolling two-year plans and financial estimates and in annual plans and budgets at the national and institutional levels. It will be reflected in infrastructure development programmes and in programmes of human resource development.

Thus, there is a need to carefully define roles and mechanisms for effectively keeping sight of planning, progress monitoring and to support timely corrections and adjustments. It will be important to establish from the outset whether the current structures as outlined in SG3 above are adequate for this purpose or need to be modified and whether additional structures are required.

An open question is whether there might be a role for a commission or convening body which draws together the various organizational strands into a single strategy monitoring panel or whether greater effectiveness will be achieved through the role of an active strategic management function in the ministry.

It will also be appropriate for the National Councils for Education and Higher Education to be engaged in annual discourse with the minister to provide advice and comment on strategy progress and, in particular, to suggest areas where research might be commissioned on national and international trends in educational thinking and development.

School Boards and their associated Parent Councils and Student Parliaments are an essential source of information and opinion. It will be useful to gather information from them in a structured approach with an annual set of key questions for them to respond to.

Within the MoESI, a clear focus will be required for continuing attention to driving forward the intentions of the strategy, assessing progress and making proposals for adaptations. At a policy level, key roles will be played by the minister and the state secretaries. At an executive level, this will require a group of senior officials providing briefing and coordinating inputs from the directorates, departments and supervised agencies. This would be a key role of a Strategic Management Function within the MoESI (and will be explored in the upcoming Functional Review).

## (E) METHOD OF REPORTING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring process outlined here offers a broad foundation for data collection, analysis and reporting, which will be further elaborated throughout this section to align with the specific needs of the 2025–2035 Education Reform Strategy. The key role of monitoring is to provide a clear picture of the progress of implementation, compliance of activities with defined goals and indicators, and identification of potential challenges and problems that may affect achievement of the planned results.

The strategy includes ambitious goals related to modernization of the education system. In this context, effective monitoring is crucial for measuring progress and recognizing the need for corrective action in a timely manner. The aim of monitoring is to ensure full transparency of the process and the accountability of all the relevant actors. To do this, it will be necessary to ensure that all the indicators in Section D5 above have both designated implementation partners – those who are responsible for implementing the activities – and designated data partner – those who will collect, analyse and report on the activities.

Monitoring of the implementation process of the 2025–2035 Education Reform Strategy includes:

### 1. Data collection

The institutions in charge of implementation collect data on the implementation of activities, taking into account compliance with the timeframes defined in the action plan. Data collection can take place through direct reports, surveys, observations, document analysis and other relevant methods. Where possible throughout this strategy, we have tried to use existing data sources to minimize the burden of collecting this data.

### 2. Data analysis

The collected data is analysed with the aim of evaluating progress in relation to the set goals and indicators. This process involves data referencing (whether this be to national baselines or international benchmarks), quantitative progress and trend analyses, including against targets, as well as qualitative analysis methods, which enable a deeper understanding of the challenges in implementation.

### 3. Identification of obstacles

The aim of the monitoring is to enable timely identification of potential obstacles in the implementation of activities, such as delays in implementation, inadequate resources or problems in communication between institutions. Corrective measures should be proposed on the basis of this information. An important aspect of monitoring is to analyse not only the efficiency of activity implementation but also the effectiveness and outcomes of the activities implemented and to report back on whether these actually fit the initial outcome that they were meant to measure.



## 4. Reporting

The monitoring process includes the preparation of regular reports on the results and outcomes of the implemented activities, with a focus on the degree of achievement of objectives, the achievement of performance indicators, as well as the identification of areas that require additional attention. This requires a detailed process to be developed to get this information into the hands of the decisionmakers who recognize and communicate their achievement or make course correction decisions.

### Institutions in charge of monitoring and data collection mechanisms

The Education Research, Development and Strategic Planning Unit of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation currently has primary responsibility for coordinating monitoring and ensuring quality collection and processing of data related to the implementation of the strategy. However, several relevant institutions and bodies are involved in this process, which have specific roles in data collection and monitoring of results.

The institutions currently responsible for the implementation of activities and monitoring include:

- The Bureau for Educational Services
- The Centre for Vocational Education and Training
- The Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids
- The Examination Centre

The Education Research, Development and Strategic Planning Unit of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation will be in charge of consolidating the collected data and periodically preparing progress reports. In addition to consolidating data, it will oversee data integration and ensure interoperability between the different systems managed by the responsible institutions. This unit will focus on integrating data from various sources to ensure comprehensive and real-time monitoring of educational outcomes. It will also coordinate training programmes for staff across all institutions, ensuring consistency in data collection and processing procedures. This unit will play a crucial role in supporting the establishment of a robust, centralized platform, capable of identifying trends and gaps early, allowing for timely interventions.

### Reporting and dynamics

**Reporting** is a key element of the monitoring process, as it allows for transparent monitoring of progress and encourages accountability of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the strategy. The dynamics of reporting will be aligned with the phases of implementation of the strategy:

- **Twice-yearly reports** – The institutions responsible for the implementation of activities are obliged to report twice-yearly on the achieved results. These reports will focus on progress against targets and indicators, as well as challenges during implementation.
- **Yearly reports** – Once a year, the Education Research, Development and Strategic Planning Unit of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation will produce a comprehensive annual report that will be presented to the government for consideration and adoption. This report will include a detailed analysis of the implementation of the action plan, monitoring of the fulfilment of indicators and an assessment of the effectiveness of the implemented measures.

- **Mid-term review** – Halfway through the 10-year period, a mid-term review should be conducted to recognize progress, identify challenges and make necessary adjustments. This review allows the MoESI to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented initiatives, measure progress against the set targets and recalibrate the goals based on changing circumstances, and ensure alignment with broader national objectives. By conducting this assessment halfway through the strategy's timeline, the education authorities can make informed decisions to optimize the remaining implementation period and maximize the strategy's impact on the education system.

The reports will be publicly available through the MoESI's official website and will contain the following elements:

- Analysis of performance indicators
- An overview of the activities carried out in accordance with the action plan
- Recommendations for improving and adjusting the strategy
- A detailed overview of the funds spent by category
- Evaluation of progress based on impact indicators for those indicators that may show changes in the short and medium term.

### Quality assurance mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the strategy

1. **Team structure and responsibilities:** The Monitoring and Reporting Team consists of representatives of the Education Research, Development and Strategic Planning Unit of the MoESI, representatives from the other sectors of the MoESI, in accordance with the strategic/operational goals of the strategy, the Institute for Education, the Centre for Vocational Education, the Examination Centre and the Institute for Textbooks and Teaching Aids.

#### 2. Roles of team members

Team Coordinator (unit of the MoESI):

Oversees the entire monitoring and reporting process, coordinates the work of the institutions responsible for the implementation of activities, monitors deadlines for the submission of data and reports, prepares twice-yearly and yearly reports, and is responsible for communicating with the government.

Team members from the Bureau for Educational Services, the Centre for Vocational Education, the Examination Centre and the Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids: monitor the implementation of activities within the scope of their responsibility (in accordance with the action plan); collect and analyse data related to activities within the scope of their responsibility; and prepare reports based on quantitative and qualitative data on the impact and impact of the measures and activities implemented. They submit data on a twice-yearly basis to the team coordinator from the MoESI.

3. **Data collection and processing:** All team members are responsible for collecting data from their respective fields of activity in a way that allows for consistent, accurate and timely reporting.

- Team members will use a centralized electronic platform maintained by the Education Research, Development and Strategic Planning Unit of the MoESI for data entry. The platform allows users to enter data in tabular form, with defined indicators.
- Team members are responsible for entering quantitative data (number of trainings conducted, students, etc.), as well as qualitative data (teacher feedback, programme evaluations).
- Members are required to enter data on a monthly basis and, in certain cases (special indicators), more often, according to needs.
- Team members validate each other's data. Data from different sources (schools, the Examination Centre, the Vocational Training Centre) are compared to ensure consistency. A coordinator from the Education Research, Development and Strategic Planning Unit of the MoESI is in charge of ensuring the accuracy and consistency of the data with the given indicators.

#### 4. Reporting

- All team members are required to submit data for the twice-yearly report by the end of June and December of each year.
- The report must include an overview of all key monitoring indicators, a description of the activities carried out, the results achieved, as well as the identification of obstacles and recommendations for improvement.
- The report includes a graphical representation of the key indicators, tabular overviews and qualitative analysis.
- The yearly report is due by the end of February for the previous year.
- The yearly report must provide a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of the strategy, including the results achieved, challenges and proposals for adaptation of the action plan.

#### Evaluation plan

The evaluation of the 2025–2035 Education Reform Strategy ensures a systematic assessment of the effects of the implemented activities and enables conclusions to be drawn on the success of the strategy and the achievement of its key goals. The evaluation is divided into two key phases: a mid-term evaluation five years on after the beginning of the implementation of the measures from the strategy, in 2030, and **an ex-post evaluation** after the completion of the entire period of implementation of the strategy, in 2035.

**The mid-term evaluation** will be carried out five years after the start of the implementation of the strategy, and its purpose is to provide an insight into the results achieved so far and to enable the adjustment of measures and activities in order to achieve the objectives in the remaining implementation period. This evaluation will include an independent team of evaluators, who will analyse the degree of achievement of the impact indicators and all data related to the implementation of the measures from the action plans through the analysis of the performance indicators collected through monitoring and available reports. The mid-term evaluation will focus on:

- The level of implementation of the key activities
- Achievements in relation to the set performance and impact indicators
- Identifying weaknesses and recommendations for improving implementation
- An indicative proposal for revision of the strategy

The Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MoESI) has the obligation to consider the findings of the mid-term evaluation and make a proposal for the amendment or revision of the measures on the basis of the indicative proposal for revision from the mid-term evaluation.

**The ex-post evaluation** will be carried out upon completion of the implementation of the strategy and will provide a comprehensive overview of the achievements, results and long-term effects. It will include a detailed analysis of the quantitative and qualitative indicators, and an assessment of the sustainability of reforms. The evaluation will be carried out by an independent evaluator, with a recommendation to engage external experts to ensure objectivity and impartiality. The evaluation will also include: a qualitative analysis of achievements in the reform of the education system; assessment of the impact of reforms on the educational outcomes of students and teachers; and recommendations for further improvement of educational policies.

To ensure that the evaluation findings encompass a detailed analysis of the effects of the reform activities, research is planned to assess the effects of the implemented measures and activities. The research will be conducted twice: five years after the strategy's implementation begins (in 2030) and again in 2035, following the conclusion of the strategy implementation period.

The research will serve as a complementary activity aimed at ensuring broad access and detailed analyses of the implemented activities. It will encompass specific sub-studies focusing on perceptions of the reform measures and outcomes from teachers, parents and students. Additionally, the research will include other interested parties such as higher education institutions, employers, chambers of commerce and other stakeholders.

An independent research team composed of experts in educational research and policy analysis will conduct the research, and the Education Research, Development and Strategic Planning Unit of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation will oversee the coordination to ensure alignment with the overall evaluation framework.

The findings from this research will complement the mid-term evaluation by: gaining first-hand insights into whether the implemented measures are resulting in improvements in schools and among students; collecting teachers' opinions on the quality of the implemented activities and their effects on the overall improvement of education quality; gathering information from the broader stakeholders regarding the effects of the implemented activities and measures on the wider socio-economic environment.

### Assessment of the evaluation costs

As the first evaluation is scheduled to take place five years after the strategy's implementation and the ex-post evaluation at the end of its timeframe, the necessary funding will be allocated in the budgets for the respective years and included in the corresponding action plans. Additionally, there is a possibility that some or all of the required funds may be secured through international organizations or available EU funding mechanisms.







## TABULAR OVERVIEW OF OBJECTIVES, INDICATORS, MEASURES AND KEY INTERVENTIONS

STRATEGIC GOAL 1:		The education system provides high-quality, accessible and equitable education that fosters holistic development of all children and adolescents, while being resilient to challenges and risks				
	Outcome indicator	Baseline 2024	Interim target 2030	Final target 2035	Source of data	Responsible institutions
1.0.1.	Percentage of 15-year-olds achieving the minimum proficiency level in reading, scientific and mathematical literacy in the PISA assessment	<b>40% mathematical literacy</b> - 40% boys - 41% girls <b>47% reading literacy</b> - 39% boys - 56% girls <b>45% scientific literacy</b> - 42% boys - 48% girls	<b>50% mathematical literacy for both genders</b> <b>55% reading literacy for both genders</b> <b>50% scientific literacy for both genders</b>	<b>60% mathematical literacy for both genders</b> <b>65% reading literacy for both genders</b> <b>60% scientific literacy for both genders</b>	MoESI	MoESI BES CVET EC BTTA
1.0.2.	Average student score in PIRLS	<b>PIRLS Reading 2021</b> Average score: 487 (girls: 497, boys: 478)  Cumulative % of students reaching the basic or higher level: 87%  Cumulative % of students reaching the intermediate or higher level: 59%	<b>PIRLS Reading</b> Average PIRLS score: 500 (girls: 510, boys: 490)  Cumulative % of students reaching the basic or higher level: 90%  Cumulative % of students reaching the intermediate or higher level: 66% Expected achievement: 510 (PIRLS, Grade IV)	<b>PIRLS Reading</b> Average PIRLS score: 500 (expected - girls: 520, boys: 510)  Cumulative % of students reaching the basic or higher level: 94%  Cumulative % of students reaching the intermediate or higher level: 75% Expected achievement: 520 (PIRLS, Grade IV)	PIRLS TIMSS	MoESI BES EC
	Average student score in TIMSS	<b>TIMSS 2023:</b>  <b>Mathematics</b> Average score: 477 (girls: 471, boys: 483)  <b>Science</b> average: 461 (girls: 458, boys: 463)  <b>Mathematics and Science</b> Cumulative % of students at basic or higher level: 84%.  Cumulative % of students at intermediate or higher level: 53%.  Cumulative % of students at basic or higher level: 80%. Cumulative % of students at intermediate or higher level: 45%	<b>Mathematics</b> Average score: 490 (girls: 485, boys: 496)  <b>Science:</b> Average score: 475 (girls: 470, boys: 479)  <b>Mathematics and Science</b> Cumulative % of students at basic or higher level: 85%.  Cumulative % of students at intermediate or higher level: 60%.  Expected average score: 500 (TIMSS Grade IV)	<b>Mathematics</b> Average score: 510 (girls: 500, boys: 520)  <b>Science:</b> Average score: 490 (girls: 480, boys: 488)  <b>Mathematics and Science</b> Cumulative % of students at basic or higher level: 90%.  Cumulative % of students at intermediate or higher level: 70%.		

1.0.3.	Student scores in the external knowledge assessment at the end of the third cycle of primary education.	<b>55% CSBH</b> (50% boys, 60% girls) <b>49% Albanian</b> (45% boys, 54% girls) <b>42% Mathematics</b> (42% boys, 44% girls) <b>65% English</b> (64% boys, 68% girls) <b>42% Biology</b> (43% boys, 42% girls) <b>48% Physics</b> (44% boys, 56% girls) <b>51% Chemistry</b> (52% boys, 52% girls) <b>41% Geography</b> (40% boys, 45% girls) <b>51% History</b> (52% boys, 51% girls) <b>55% Italian</b> (59% boys, 49% girls) <b>63% German</b> (61% boys, 66% girls) <b>66% Russian</b> (66% boys, 69% girls)	<b>65% MSBC</b> <b>60% Albanian</b> <b>55% Mathematics</b> <b>70% English</b> <b>55% Biology</b> <b>60% Physics</b> <b>60% Chemistry</b>	<b>75% MSBC</b> <b>65% Albanian</b> <b>70% Mathematics</b> <b>75% English</b> <b>70% Biology</b> <b>70% Physics</b> <b>70% Chemistry</b>	External student assessment at the end of the third cycle (2023–2024)	MoESI BES EC
1.0.4.	Academic achievements of students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups	<b>PISA 2022:</b> <b>Reading literacy:</b> 60% girls, 74% boys  <b>Maths literacy:</b> 74% girls, 74% boys  <b>Science literacy:</b> 69% girls, 73% boys	35% for both genders	50% for both genders	PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS, PISA 2029 & 2033	MoESI BES EC
1.0.5.	Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI)/ 4.2.1 Proportion of children aged 24–59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex	90% (90% boys, 91% girls)	> 92% for both genders	> 95% for both genders	MICS	MoESI Ministry of Health IPH
1.0.6.	Completion rate for primary/secondary school-age Roma boys and girls (EU Growth Plan indicator)	<b>Children from the Roma and Egyptian communities</b>  <b>Primary school: 8%</b> (9% boys, 9% girls) <b>Secondary school: 21%</b> (22% boys, 21% girls)  <b>Children with disabilities</b>  <b>Primary school: 19%</b> (17% boys, 22% girls) <b>Secondary school: 25%</b> (25% boys, 22% girls)	<b>Children from the Roma and Egyptian communities</b>  <b>Primary school: 90%</b> for both genders <b>Secondary school: 50%</b> for both genders  <b>Children with disabilities</b>  <b>40% for both genders</b>	<b>Children from the Roma and Egyptian communities</b>  <b>Primary school: 95%</b> for both genders <b>Secondary school: 70%</b> for both genders  <b>Children with disabilities</b>  <b>80% for both genders</b>	MoESI	MoESI MHMR MoH MSWFC BES BT CVET Local self-governments
1.0.7	The number of children in early education, categorized by all classifications (children aged 0–3 and 3–6 years)	<b>Children aged 0–2 (ISCED 01)</b>  <b>32% (32% boys, 33% girls)</b>  <b>Children aged 3–6 (ISCED 02)</b>  <b>82% (83% boys, 81% girls)</b>	<b>Children aged 0–2 (ISCED 01)</b>  <b>35% for both genders</b>  <b>Children aged 3–6 (ISCED 02)</b> <b>90% for both genders</b>	<b>Children aged 0–2 (ISCED 01)</b>  <b>40% for both genders</b>  <b>Children aged 3–6 (ISCED 02)</b> <b>95% for both genders</b>	MoESI	MoESI

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.1	Access to education for all children is ensured and results meet SDG targets and are aligned with the average performance of the EU member states				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Percentage of Roma and Egyptian children enrolled in early education (aged 3 and above)	15% (15% boys, 14% girls)	Roma and Egyptian children: 30%	Roma and Egyptian children: 60%	MoESI	MoESI
Number of children with disabilities aged 3 and above enrolled in early education.	20% (20% boys, 19% girls)	Children with disabilities: 50%	Children with disabilities: 80%	MoESI	MoESI
Number of out-of-school children of primary and secondary school age	The baseline will be determined by the end of Q4 2025	50%	0%	<a href="https://databrowser.uis.unesco.org/">https://databrowser.uis.unesco.org/</a> MoESI	MoESI MONSTAT
The average number of absences (excused and unexcused) in primary and secondary school.	Primary school: 51.40 (excused absences) 3.94 (unexcused absences) Secondary school: 80.98 (excused absences) 9.47 (unexcused absences)	Primary school: 45 (excused absences) 3 (unexcused absences) Secondary school: 65 (excused absences) 7 (unexcused absences)	Primary school: 30 (excused absences) 2 (unexcused absences) Secondary school: 50 (excused absences) 5 (unexcused absences)	MoESI	MoESI Educational institutions

**Measure 1.1.1: Increase access to education for children aged 0–3 and to ensure full access for children from 3 years of age until they start school**

**Key interventions:**

1. Enhancing equality-focused policies to expand access to quality preschool education in underserved areas and among children from vulnerable groups.
2. Amending the regulatory framework regarding the number of educators and professional associates in preschool institutions, as well as engaging mediators for social inclusion.
3. Launching awareness campaigns and conducting promotional activities to educate parents and guardians on the importance of early education and its long-term benefits.
4. Further expansion and institutionalization of parental support programmes.
5. Expanding the network of interactive services to ensure equal access to kindergartens for all children and strengthen the work of multidisciplinary teams.
6. Establishing a unified database across three sectors (healthcare, education and social welfare) to identify children not attending preschool education and reinforcing support measures.
7. Strengthening intersectoral cooperation, with a focus on increasing local community involvement in addressing infrastructure and transport issues.
8. Implementing a new programme for project-based planning in educational work.
9. Empowering early intervention programmes by increasing the number of practitioners, expanding community-based services and providing additional professional support.

**Measure 1.1.2: Ensure full coverage and prevent dropout in primary and secondary schools**

**Key interventions**

1. Establishing intersectoral cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demographics to identify children and students at risk of early school dropout. This includes creating a database to track students who do not attend school or leave education prematurely. The system should be activated during school transitions, education cycles or shifts between formal and non-formal education to enable student tracking and provide segregated and useful data (including information on migrant and refugee children, as well as children with developmental disabilities).
2. Developing a mentor/tutor programme for teachers to support students.
3. Amending the regulatory framework to allow for the engagement of additional mediators, psychologists, social workers and related professionals to provide support to children and adolescents.
4. Strengthening interventions aimed at preventing school dropout, particularly among socio-economically disadvantaged groups.
5. Improving student transport services.
6. Enhancing case management practices at the school and local levels for students at risk of early school dropout.
7. Strengthening communication between schools and families.



**Measure 1.1.3: Increase vocational school students' engagement in learning at the workplace, including securing greater interest among small and medium-sized enterprises for the provision of practical training**
**Key interventions**

1. Conducting research on skill and qualification needs and preparing sectoral strategies with defined priorities to inform policy planning and qualification development for young people and adults. This includes qualifications supporting the green and digital economy, greater inclusion of women and vulnerable groups (such as individuals with special educational needs, Roma, etc.).
2. Enhancing the educational offer in vocational education by modernizing the existing programmes and developing new ones based on prior research on skill and qualification needs, with a special focus on the fields of green and digital transition.
3. Improving the quality of practical training in vocational education through the establishment of regional centres of excellence for youth and adult vocational training.
4. Tracking vocational school graduates after graduation to facilitate realistic enrolment planning and educational programme development.
5. Strengthening quality assurance mechanisms in vocational education, with a particular emphasis on practical training in all its forms.
6. Establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for workplace-based training as key components of quality practical education.
7. Enhancing cooperation with employers and actively involving them in the planning, implementation, supervision and evaluation of vocational education.
8. Creating an incentive system for employers participating in practical training and hiring students after graduation by establishing a Fund for Dual Education Support.
9. Promoting in-demand qualifications and vocational education, as a whole.
10. Improving transitions for children with special educational needs and increasing their participation in dual education by strengthening motivation, attitudes and employer openness.
11. Enhancing international cooperation.

**Measure 1.1.4: Increase the participation of adults in lifelong learning, as well as better regulation of adult education**
**Key interventions**

1. Promoting lifelong learning – fostering a culture of continuous education by providing ongoing learning opportunities, including skills development workshops and online courses tailored to diverse needs and interests.
2. Enhancing data accessibility and strengthening connections with the Employment Agency to monitor labour market demand, track (former) learners, establish partnerships with employers and map skills according to the market needs. This includes supporting adult education institutions in building links with businesses and employers, while enabling the acquisition of national professional qualifications and micro-qualifications.
3. Ensuring professional training opportunities regardless of age, within the education system itself, by increasing programme flexibility and improving accessibility

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.2	Reduce inequalities in educational coverage and performance, including of those from vulnerable and marginalized groups				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Transition rate of Roma, Egyptian and children with disabilities from primary to secondary school	Roma and Egyptian children: 10%  Children with disabilities: 20%	Increase of 25% for both genders  Increase of 30% for both genders	Increase of 35% for both genders  Increase of 50% for both genders	MoESI	MoESI
Share of Roma, Egyptian, children with disabilities, and refugee children enrolled in primary and secondary education	Roma and Egyptian children:  Primary school: 82% (79% boys, 80% girls)  Secondary school: 23% (23% boys, 24% girls)  Children with disabilities: Primary school: 53% (56% boys, 48% girls) Secondary school: 38% (38% boys, 39% girls)  Baseline for forcibly displaced children enrolled in primary and secondary schools will be set by Q4 2025	Increase of 25%	Increase of 50%	MoESI	MoESI

**Measure 1.2.1: Targeted educational support and inclusion for Roma and Egyptian students and programmes of cooperation with their communities**
**Key interventions**

1. Awareness-raising programmes on the importance of inclusion for vulnerable groups.
2. Support for students in mastering the language of instruction, learning, increasing cultural sensitivity and providing incentives such as scholarships.
3. Strengthening the competencies of educators, teachers, professional associates and school and kindergarten administrations in cultural sensitivity and responding to the specific needs of students from vulnerable groups.
4. Developing a monitoring and evaluation system to track and support the academic achievements of students from vulnerable groups.
5. Empowering individuals – fostering self-acceptance, building self-confidence and strengthening acceptance by others.

**Measure 1.2.2: Develop policies and interventions in inclusive education to promote and ensure full inclusion and equal access, with appropriate adaptations and support services**
**Key interventions**

1. Enhancing inclusive education policies to support vulnerable groups.
2. Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of and adherence to inclusive education policies.
3. Interdepartmental cooperation to support the holistic needs of students.
4. Establishing intersectoral and cross-sectoral collaboration between education, social services and healthcare, as well as between schools and resource centres, to support the transition of children and students within and between educational levels, along with support services (for families, additional professional assistance, licensed services, mentors, career advisers, etc.).
5. Increasing the number of psychologists, pedagogues, speech therapists, special educators, social workers and other professional associates in kindergartens and schools.
6. Conducting campaigns to foster broad social support for inclusion.
7. Redirecting the inclusive paradigm and improving the organization and scope of inclusive services (schools with integrated classrooms, resource centres) through more inclusive staffing structures and services.

**Measure 1.2.3: Ensure quality education for students receiving instruction in Albanian**
**Key interventions**

1. Ensuring the availability of updated and adapted didactic materials, manuals, digital content and other teaching resources in Albanian.
2. To achieve equality and accessibility in learning and overcome language barriers, providing resources for the use of assistive technology and augmented communication in educational institutions that deliver instruction in both languages.
3. Organizing continuous peer support for learning both languages within a rich cultural environment.

**Measure 1.2.4: Develop policies, interventions, and methodologies in the field of gender-equal education to promote and ensure a gender-sensitive environment for development and learning, enabling the full realization of the potential of boys and girls, students of all genders, including support for the development of a growth mindset**
**Key interventions**

1. Collaboration between the institutions responsible for initial teacher education and their continuous professional development to enhance a gender-sensitive discourse in the teacher training curricula and professional development programmes. This includes developing manuals to support teachers in achieving gender equality in classrooms and implementing training programmes for teachers, educators and other education professionals.
2. Adapting methodologies for developing subject curricula and for designing printed and digital textbooks to incorporate gender-aware and gender-sensitive discourse, as well as creating textbooks, manuals and other publications that reflect these principles.
3. Media promotion of gender equality in education and other fields.

**Measure 1.2.5: Ensure equal access to learning and participation in education for students from different language backgrounds, including socio-emotional support, with particular attention to those who have fled war-affected areas, in order to overcome challenges related to environmental change, cultural adaptation and to develop a sense of belonging within the school community**
**Key interventions**

1. Ensuring equal access to education for students from other language backgrounds
2. Providing support in learning, meeting academic needs, as well as fulfilling social, societal and emotional needs
3. Enabling intensive instruction in the language of instruction by using the available resources within the institution
4. Strengthening planned activities by including peer support, which, in addition to language learning, would be important for the socialization and adaptation of students to the new environment
5. If needed, providing individual support to assist with adaptation to the new curriculum

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.3	Teaching focuses on developing key competences for lifelong learning and life skills, in accordance with EU policies and standards				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Revision of key documents (national curriculum framework, educational plan and programme, developed legal regulations)	0	Review completed	Implementation	MoESI	MoESI
Percentage of programmes innovated	0	100% of educational programmes updated for primary and general secondary education 50% of educational programmes updated for vocational education	100% of educational programmes updated for primary and general secondary education 100% of educational programmes updated for vocational education	CVET	BES CVET MoESI
Percentage of subjects using updated textbooks and teaching manuals	0	0%	60%	Periodic reports	BES CVET MoESI BT TA
Percentage of textbooks for which digital educational materials have been developed	0	0	7%	Periodic reports	BES BT TA
Percentage of students participating in the work of innovative technology laboratories	1%	15%	30%	Periodic reports	MoESI BES
Number of students in international competitions	19	30	40	Periodic reports	EC CVET

#### Measure 1.3.1: Align and enrich the curricula and learning materials

##### Key interventions

1. Developing a framework national curriculum aligned with EU policies and standards, defining key competences for lifelong learning, global citizenship, life and socio-emotional skills, green skills, climate change and other relevant topics for curriculum design, including elective subjects and cross-curricular themes. This framework serves as the foundation for all educational programmes.
2. Aligning the scope and structure of curricula at all education levels with international best practices, with a focus on the mother tongue, STEM subjects, foreign languages, arts, humanities and global citizenship, while ensuring an optimal workload for students at school and home.
3. Developing a methodological framework and quality standards for subject-specific curricula.
4. Defining the learning objectives and outcomes within programmes, ensuring their horizontal and vertical alignment and establishing assessment criteria, methods and monitoring for all compulsory and elective subjects, as well as cross-curricular themes, including their implementation in DRR areas.
5. Defining learning objectives and outcomes in primary and secondary school educational programmes.
6. Developing procedures for the full implementation of the Digital School concept to enhance the quality and inclusiveness of education.
7. Aligning textbooks, manuals and other educational materials with the updated curricula, in accordance with the prescribed procedures, immediately after adoption of the new plans and programmes.
8. Developing supplementary digital educational materials as a complementary resource for teaching and learning.
9. Creating digital textbooks as a supplement to printed ones, serving as an essential additional resource for teaching and learning, especially in DRR situations.
10. Developing guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning processes.
11. Based on the frequency of DRR situations affecting the education system, defining response models, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable children. Two DRR models should be established: preventive measures; and action during emergencies. Procedures should be developed to help educational institutions prepare for and recover from DRR situations and maintain education quality during crises, especially for at-risk groups.

#### Measure 1.3.2: Improve the quality of teaching and learning and support innovative teaching practices

##### Key interventions

1. Developing an implementation plan for updated curricula, textbooks and digital educational materials in teaching.
2. Preparing teachers for the implementation of updated curricula and textbooks through interactive, cooperative and active learning methods, supported by additional educational resources, including digital platforms.
3. Creating instructional didactic materials, such as teaching guides, guidelines, manuals and best practice examples, to support teachers in implementing updated curricula.
4. Developing work programmes and procedures for the operation of Innovative Technology Laboratories/EdTech hubs.
5. Designing programmes for the early identification and support of gifted students.
6. Preparing support programmes for schools to implement bilingual education

**Measure 1.3.3: Evaluate and improve the quality of educational practices, materials and programmes****Key interventions**

1. Developing clear and transparent quality standards for teaching based on updated curricula, as well as for textbooks, manuals and other educational materials, whether in printed or digital form.
2. Continuously evaluating and improving teaching quality during the implementation of updated curricula and textbooks to ensure that teachers apply constructivist methods and rely on cooperative and active learning pedagogies.
3. Collecting ongoing feedback from teachers, students and parents during implementation to enhance the quality of textbooks, manuals and other educational materials, ensuring that they foster critical thinking, problem-solving skills and students' socio-emotional development.
4. Gathering continuous feedback from teachers during implementation to refine educational programmes, ensuring that they are age-appropriate, aligned with students' abilities and support the development of critical thinking, problem-solving skills and socio-emotional competencies.

**Measure 1.3.4: External knowledge assessment (testing and examinations)****Key interventions**

1. Conducting online coding/scoring of tests from external knowledge assessments, including external testing and examinations.
2. Revising exam catalogues for external exams in line with updated educational programmes.
3. Administering trial revised exams on a representative sample to assess the quality of tests and procedures.
4. Conducting online national testing/assessments.
5. Developing a new concept for graduation and vocational exams, aligned with best practices from neighbouring countries.

<b>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.4</b>					
<b>School assessment serves the purpose of student development and the improvement of teaching and learning</b>					
<b>Output indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Interim target (2030)</b>	<b>Final target (2035)</b>	<b>Source of data</b>	<b>Responsible institution</b>
Percentage of schools where assessment meets the minimum standards of success	20%	50%	70%	Periodic reports Annual external evaluation report	BES CVET
Percentage of assessment tasks that require students to engage in higher-order thinking: critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity	20%	50%	70%	Periodic report	BES
Increase in the percentage of tasks in external testing that are similar to questions in assessments such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS	10%	15%	25%	Periodic report	MoESI EC BES

**Measure 1.4.1: Align the assessment process with programme objectives****Key interventions**

1. Developing knowledge standards at three levels in accordance with Bloom's taxonomy, including subject-specific criteria, assessment methods and student evaluation formats for all subjects and grade levels.
2. Building teachers' competencies in applying various assessment methods, constructive monitoring and providing meaningful feedback to all students.
3. Establishing standards for external and internal monitoring of school assessment to ensure all assessment functions are represented in practice, with frequent student feedback and final grading at the end of each semester.

**Measure 1.4.2: Enhance transparency and continuous feedback****Key interventions**

1. Providing students and their parents with information at the beginning of the year about student responsibilities and the criteria on which they will be assessed.
2. Enhancing teachers' competencies for continuous monitoring and providing constructive feedback to students throughout the learning process as support for their learning and development.
3. Continuously monitoring and analysing assessment practices to ensure engagement with higher-order thinking skills, frequent feedback and a balanced representation of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment functions.



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.5	Schools are a safe, inclusive and stimulating environment for holistic and complete development of all students				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Percentage of schools with fully functional socio-emotional support systems (counselling, peer support, mentoring) and anti-bullying programmes.	10%	40%	At the level of/above the EU average 60%	Educational institutions	MoESI BES CVET
Number of reported incidents of peer violence.	181	Decreased by 50%	Decreased by 70%	MEIS	MoESI BES CVET
Percentage of schools providing morning care for children in the first education cycle.	0	25%	50%	MoESI	MoESI\SI
Percentage of students participating in extracurricular activities at school.	Total: 0.74% (699 students) Primary school: 0.94% (644 students) Secondary school: 0.22% (57 students)	Increased by 25%	Increased by 50%	MoESI	MoESI
Percentage of students who express a positive sense of belonging to their school based on relevant indicators.	PISA 2020 86% of students reported that they easily make friends at school (OECD average: 76%). 85% of students felt a sense of belonging at school (OECD average: 75%). 13% of students felt lonely at school (OECD average: 17%). 14% of students felt excluded from school activities (OECD average: 16%).	OECD average +/-10%	OECD average +/-10%	PISA	EC
Number of schools where the process of assessing and improving quality has been rated as highly successful in external evaluations.	3%	15%	40%	Reports on the assessment of educational quality	BES CVET
Percentage of teachers participating in mobility programmes.	0.3%	4%	85%	MoESI	CVET BES
Percentage of schools implementing international projects.	Primary and general secondary education: 25 Vocational education: 38	Primary and general secondary education: 35 Vocational education: 50	Primary and general secondary education: 50 Vocational education: 60	MoESI	CVET BES

#### Measure 1.5.1: Enhance socio-emotional support, well-being and holistic development through a safe, inclusive and engaging school environment

##### Key interventions

1. Enhancing guidelines and protocols for addressing violence to ensure a safe school environment, free from physical, verbal, social, emotional and sexual violence by all participants in the educational process.
2. Creating an inclusive school environment with equal opportunities for all, preventing discrimination and hate speech while promoting universal human and civic values, empathy, mutual respect and coexistence in a multicultural setting.
3. Establishing additional mechanisms for providing continuous educational and socio-emotional support to students for better achievement and holistic development.
4. Developing a diverse range of creative, motivating, and inclusive extracurricular activities, focusing on volunteer work, arts, languages, sports, and practical skills, ensuring access for all students, especially those in rural areas.
5. Improving conditions for morning care in the first cycle of primary education and enabling full-day school attendance for students.
6. Strengthening teachers' competencies in educational work with students, including providing socio-emotional and academic support.
7. Introducing models to enhance students' environmental awareness, focusing on the green transition and sustainable development through a wide range of extracurricular ecological activities.
8. Encouraging regional and international cooperation and the internationalization of education.

**Measure 1.5.2: Ensure a comprehensive approach and collaboration among all stakeholders in the educational process through community engagement and expert participation**
**Key interventions**

- 1. Establishing a democratic school environment and increasing student participation in the decision-making processes within schools, including improving the effectiveness of student parliaments, student organizations and clubs.**
- 2. Creating more opportunities for school and teacher collaboration and networking through forums, professional gatherings, associations, international exchanges, mobility programmes and other initiatives aimed at sharing best practices and fostering innovation.**
- 3. Developing models and establishing partnerships between schools and parents, businesses, local institutions, organizations and NGOs to promote a holistic and inclusive approach.**
- 4. Strengthening schools' capacity for quality assessment and improvement by enhancing competencies in self-evaluation of school and teacher performance, as well as professional development activities at the school level.**

STRATEGIC GOAL 2		All employees in educational institutions equally and fully support the quality and equity of education, foster the development of key competencies for lifelong learning and skills of students, and maintain positive attitudes and high expectations towards all children and young people				
	Outcome indicator	Baseline 2024	Interim target 2030	Final target 2035	Source of data	Responsible institution
2.0.1	All the staffing needs of the education system are fully met by qualified personnel.	Baseline value – TBC % of unqualified staff in educational institutions	Reduction of unqualified staff in educational institutions by 3%	Reduction of unqualified staff in educational institutions by 5%	MoESI	MoESI
2.0.2	Ratio of educators and teachers to students (at the regional/ municipal level):	Ratio of educators and teachers to students:	Ratio of educators and teachers to students:	Ratio of educators and teachers to students:	MoESI	MoESI
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In preschools</li> <li>- In primary schools</li> <li>- In secondary schools</li> </ul>	1:40 in preschools 1:28 in primary schools 1:32 in secondary schools	1:27 in preschools 1:25 in primary schools 1:28 in secondary schools	1:24 in preschools 1:23 in primary schools 1:25 in secondary schools		
2.0.3	Overall job satisfaction among teachers	60% of teachers reported a high level of job satisfaction based on the 2021 survey.  Teacher turnover rate: N/A	The number of teachers reporting a high level of job satisfaction increased by 10% compared to the 2021 survey results.  Teacher turnover rate reduced by 10%	The number of teachers reporting a high level of job satisfaction increased by 20% compared to the 2021 survey results.  Teacher turnover rate reduced by 20%	MoESI	MoESI
2.0.4	Employees in educational institutions are fully capable of meeting the requirements of the revised Key Competences for Lifelong Learning Framework and the Improved Competency Standards for Teachers and Headteachers	40% of teachers have completed professional development programmes focused on generic and digital skills, inclusive education, literacy and scientific and mathematical literacy	55% of teachers have completed professional development programmes focused on generic and digital skills, inclusive education, literacy and scientific and mathematical literacy	70% of teachers have completed professional development programmes focused on generic and digital skills, inclusive education, literacy and scientific and mathematical literacy	BES CVET EC	MoESI
2.0.5	Teaching is high-quality, motivating and focused on developing all competences outlined in this strategy	40% of students demonstrate competencies in literacy, mathematics, science and digital literacy.  50% of parents and students report being satisfied with the quality of teaching.  Number of schools achieving results above national standards for teaching quality – 1%	55% of students demonstrate competencies in literacy, mathematics, science and digital literacy.  > 15% of parents and students report being satisfied with the quality of teaching.  > 5% of schools achieve results above national standards for teaching quality	70% of students demonstrate competencies in literacy, mathematics, science and digital literacy.  > 30% of parents and students report being satisfied with the quality of teaching.  > 10% of schools achieve results above national standards for teaching quality	Periodic research  National testing, EC analyses  PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS results  Report on the assessment of educational quality	MoESI  BES CVET EC

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.1	The education system has sufficient qualified and competent preschool educators, teachers, professional associates, headteachers, assistants and other necessary personnel who are employed based on objective quality and competence criteria				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Percentage of schools reporting a shortage of qualified staff	35% of schools/ kindergartens report a shortage of qualified staff	< 20% of schools/ kindergartens report a shortage of qualified staff	< 10% of schools/ kindergartens report a shortage of qualified staff	MoESI	MoESI
Increased enrolment of secondary school graduates in STEM study programmes	Number of secondary school graduates enrolled in STEM study programmes  UoM 894 Mediterranean University 154 Adriatic University 80 UDG 319	> 5–10%	> 15%	UoM UDG Mediterranean University Adriatic University	MoESI UoM UDG Mediterranean University Adriatic University
Increase in the percentage of employed qualified ECE educators and professional associates.	N/A	> 10%	> 20%	MoESI	MEoSI Higher education institutions
Established policies and functional tools to address teacher shortages, including alternative pathways to teaching qualifications	No policies or functional tools exist to mitigate teacher shortages across all subjects in certain geographic areas or disadvantaged schools.  No alternative pathways to obtaining teaching qualifications exist beyond initial teacher education (ITE).	Partially established policies and functional tools to address teacher shortages for all subjects in specific geographical areas or disadvantaged schools, with evidence of implementation having begun.  Partial availability of alternative pathways to obtaining teaching qualifications beyond initial teacher education (ITE).	Developed and implemented policies and functional tools to mitigate teacher shortages across all subjects, geographical areas, and disadvantaged schools.  Full implementation underway of alternative pathways to obtaining teaching qualifications beyond initial teacher education (ITE).	MoESI	MoESI

**Measure 2.1.1: Ensure the recruitment of in-demand professionals aligned with the specific needs of the education system**
**Key interventions**

1. Conducting an analysis to identify human resource shortages across the entire education sector.
2. Developing recruitment strategies tailored to attracting qualified professionals, particularly in identified shortage areas.
3. Providing career counselling in final-year secondary school classes to guide students towards relevant university programmes.
4. Establishing incentive measures to attract professionals to understaffed areas.
5. Revising employment policies to simplify recruitment procedures based on competency frameworks.
6. Ensuring fair distribution of staff across different regions/municipalities to meet regional and local needs.

**Measure 2.1.2: Strengthen the existing expert-level capacities of the Institute for Education, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, the Examination Centre and the Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids through targeted professional development and mentoring programmes**
**Key interventions**

1. Organizing specialized training for evaluators from the Bureau for Educational Services and the Centre for Vocational Education and Training (teaching associates and university lecturers in methodological subjects) with renowned international experts.
2. Participating in training sessions, conferences, seminars and round tables organized by state institutions (UoM, CANU, HRMA) and NGOs to strengthen employees' competencies.
3. Establishing collaborative networks with regional and international institutions and experts to enhance the professional competencies of teachers, professional associates, headteachers and deputy headteachers.
4. Implementing mechanisms for regular monitoring and support for employees in the Bureau for Educational Services, the Examination Centre, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training and the Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids to improve the evaluation process.
5. Organizing specialized training for employees in the Examination Centre on national exam and test item development, data analysis (IRT) and the use of platforms for various aspects of external online testing, in collaboration with recognized international experts.

**Measure 2.1.3: Strengthen the established system of professional development at the school/kindergarten level by developing a sustainable model that promotes collaborative learning and continuous professional development.**

**Key interventions**

1. Enhancing the existing mentoring system for trainee teachers, novice teachers and newly appointed headteachers to provide effective and efficient support.
2. Introducing mandatory training programmes for deputy headteachers to improve their competencies, particularly in monitoring teaching and learning quality.
3. Establishing networks of schools and teachers to share best practices.
4. Ensuring the consistent use of existing mechanisms for assessing the impact of professional development activities at the school and kindergarten level.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.2		The system of initial education, continuous professional development, and career advancement for all employees in educational institutions is designed to facilitate the acquisition and application of competencies necessary for the comprehensive development and learning of children and adolescents in an inclusive environment			
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Teachers possess pedagogical competencies in: collaborative and interactive learning; applying principles of inclusive education; sustainable development; discrimination and violence prevention; media literacy; socio-emotional skills; gender equality; interculturalism; bilingual skills; democracy and human rights; civic education; climate change, etc.	30% of teachers/educators	50% of teachers/educators	60% of teachers	Report on the Assessment of Education Quality	BES CVET
Teachers trained to implement the new/revised curriculum in line with the 2025 Education Reform Strategy	0	50% of trained teachers	100% of trained teachers	Training Report	BES CVET
Number of teachers/participants who have attended training on digital competencies in accordance with the adopted Framework for Teachers' Digital Competencies and the revised Licensing Rulebook.	20% of teachers	40%	80%	Training Report	MoESI BES CVET
The student-to-professional associate ratio aligns with actual needs	300:1 student-to-professional associate ratio	No higher than 150:1 student-to-professional associate ratio	No higher than 100:1 student-to-professional associate ratio	MoESI	MoESI
Number of career advisers in primary and secondary schools and universities trained under the new model	200 teachers trained	500 teachers trained	1,000 teachers trained	MoESI	MoESI UoM
Percentage of primary and secondary schools implementing the "My Values and Virtues" programme for developing children's social and emotional skills	56%	100%		MoESI BES	BES MoESI

**Measure 2.2.1: Improve initial teacher education by revising curricula and strengthening cooperation with educational institutions**

**Key interventions**

1. Analysing and aligning teacher education programmes with the Montenegrin Framework of Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning and the revised Standards of Competencies for Teachers and Headteachers.
2. Introducing practical elements with an improved mentoring system for trainee and novice teachers.
3. Strengthening the existing partnerships between universities, schools/preschools and key educational institutions to enhance the alignment of theory and practice.



**Measure 2.2.2: Provide additional training for trainers through collaboration with national and international experts****Key interventions**

1. Organizing advanced-level interactive training sessions led by international education experts to develop joint projects with foreign educational institutions.
2. Integrating new methodologies into training programmes based on best European practices.
3. Development of a high-quality training system for trainers in reading, scientific and mathematical literacy as a prerequisite for intensive teacher training on a regional basis, aiming to enhance functional knowledge and skills and improve students' performance in international assessments.

**Measure 2.2.3: Strengthen the professional development of advisors in the Bureau for Educational Services and the Centre for Vocational Education and Training in line with successful practices in the region and Europe****Key interventions**

1. Establishing cooperation through study visits and exchange programmes with similar institutions in the EU.
2. Development of specialized training aligned with new educational needs and promotion of interdisciplinary collaboration among advisers.
3. Conducting performance assessments of advisers in the Department for Continuous Professional Development to evaluate the impact of their work on school and kindergarten professional development coordinators.
4. Increasing staffing in the Bureau for Educational Services and the Centre for Vocational Education and Training to strengthen support for the professional development system and ensure the effective implementation of this strategy.

**Measure 2.2.4: Implement continuous professional development for teachers through structured programmes that align with this and other national education strategies, as well as the specific needs of schools****Key interventions**

1. Ensuring continuous professional development for teachers by training teams from schools and preschools, with a special focus on enhancing innovative didactic and methodological skills through training that fosters critical thinking, problem solving, learning to learn, socio-emotional skills, bilingual learning, digital competencies (including AI), sustainable development, inclusion, gifted students and project-based planning.
2. Improving access to professional development programmes for teachers and educators by establishing education centres in the southern and northern regions of the country.
3. Developing modular training programmes that offer flexibility in attendance planning, integrate feedback into training sessions and promote interdisciplinary and project-based learning approaches in schools.
4. Providing professional development for practical training teachers on innovative teaching methods using digital technology, with a focus on children from vulnerable groups.
5. Ensuring continuous training for practical education teachers and instructors based on identified needs.
6. Developing specialized professional development programmes for teachers addressing challenges such as reading, scientific and mathematical literacy, assessment for student development and the latest trends in inclusive education, to strengthen competencies for working with diverse student groups, including gifted students and those with developmental difficulties.
7. Developing a training system for teachers of vocational-theoretical subjects and practical training that aligns with the specific needs of the vocational education sector and is adapted to industry and technological innovations.
8. Establishing an additional support system for teachers who do not meet competency standards by engaging senior mentor teachers and ensuring access to updated online support resources.
9. Amending secondary legislation on teacher professional development, senior titles and licensing to ensure alignment with the overall teacher professional development system, particularly at the school/kindergarten level.
10. Redefining the list of professional development programme areas for teachers in accordance with the Montenegrin Framework of Key Competencies, revised Standards of Competencies for Teachers and Headteachers, the improved Training Programme for Headteachers, the Training Programme for Deputy Headteachers and the revised regulations on teachers' professional development.
11. Implementing SELFIE for Teachers to allow teachers to assess their skills against the DigCompEdu framework and, based on their proficiency levels, create training programmes to enhance their weakest areas.

**Measure 2.2.5: Ensure continuous professional development for teachers and educators, with an emphasis on enhancing innovative didactic and methodological skills****Key interventions**

1. Establishing specialized teams for monitoring pedagogical innovations and developmental psychology, including educators, teachers, pedagogues, psychologists and subject matter experts.
2. Creating a framework for developing multidisciplinary curricula better suited to students' needs (STEM, humanities, arts, etc.).
3. Developing training programmes for trainers in shortage areas.

<b>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.3</b> Systemic measures have been implemented to improve the reputation, safety and overall well-being of employees. The professions of preschool educators, teachers and other employees in educational institutions are attractive, ensuring the attraction and retention of the highest quality and most motivated educational and teaching staff, with systemic measures in place to guarantee their reputation and well-being					
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Overall teacher satisfaction with the professional environment, including social status, salary and working conditions in schools.	15% of teachers are satisfied with their social status. 10% of teachers are satisfied with their salary. 27% of teachers are satisfied with the material conditions in schools. 38% of teachers are satisfied with their pedagogical conditions. 70% of teachers feel safe in their institution.	Increase by 10%	Increase by 20%	Periodic research Education Union MoESI NGO	MoESI
Policies and accompanying measures for teacher motivation and retention have been introduced and are effective	Rating 1 – Process initiated	Rating 2 – Moderate progress	Rating 3 – Advanced level	Periodic survey Education Union NGOs	MoESI
Implementation of an improved teacher performance evaluation system for career progression.	Rating 1 – Process initiated	Rating 2 – Moderate progress	Rating 3 – Advanced level	BES	BES

**Measure 2.3.1: Enhance the attractiveness and reputation of the profession of educators, teachers and other education professionals by developing policies to improve working conditions, including salaries, career advancement opportunities and support for mental health and employee well-being**

#### Key interventions

1. Reviewing and updating salary grades to align with labour market trends.
2. Introducing financial incentives for teachers in rural areas and those working outside their place of residence.
3. Creating legal provisions for vertical career progression and professional development for outstanding practitioners within the education system.
4. Providing continuous support for PRNŠ/V (Professional Development at the School/Kindergarten Level) coordinators by amending regulations to ensure the effective and responsible execution of their duties and the proper functioning of teacher professional development at the school/kindergarten level.

**Measure 2.3.2: Encourage positive student–teacher relationships by providing comprehensive support to teachers, strengthening their competencies in creating an ethical, supportive and inclusive learning environment. Foster a relationship of trust between students, teachers and parents/guardians, promoting gender equality and equal rights and responsibilities for all.**

#### Key interventions

1. Consistently, professionally and ethically developing various models of cooperation with parents/guardians, enhancing the socio-emotional skills of teachers and students and fostering assertive communication at the school level.
2. Establishing and implementing effective monitoring, introducing key performance indicators (KPIs) for teachers linked to student outcomes in national assessments and international studies, such as PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS, as well as qualitative evaluations from student, parent and peer surveys, to promote accountability among teachers, professional associates and headteachers.
3. Reviewing the roles within central educational institutions to provide continuous advisory support to teachers, particularly in curriculum implementation and innovative teaching methods.
4. Strengthening professional support services in educational institutions to assist teachers and educators by offering guidance on educational strategies, socio-emotional and pedagogical-psychological support, thereby improving teaching effectiveness and student motivation.
5. Launching an initiative to educate parents on the importance of their role in the educational process and their support for children's holistic development.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3:		Improving quality and equity in the education system through enhanced governance and financing, with a focus on evidence collection and utilization, as well as participation in decision-making processes				
	Outcome indicator	Baseline 2024	Interim target 2030	Final target 2035	Source of data	Responsible institution
3.0.1	Public expenditure on education per student as a share of total public spending	33% of the EU average	70% of the EU average	90% of the EU average	Law on Budget MONSTAT EUROSTAT	MoF MONSTAT MoESI
3.0.2	External assessment of the adequacy of management and leadership in the education sector	Results obtained through the Functional Review	55% of the max score	75% of the max score	Functional Review	MPA MoESI
3.0.4	Percentage of headteachers rated as competent or highly competent in the annual performance evaluation	40%	60%	80%	Annual competency assessment report	MoESI BES CVET

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.1	The structures, systems and necessary competencies for managing the education system reflect the key functional requirements of strategic management, system oversight, human resource management, financial management, property and infrastructure management				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Sources of data	Responsible institution
Number of implemented recommendations from the Functional Review with action plans in progress	0%	50%	90%	Annual Report of the Monitoring Commission	MoESI BES CVET
Average satisfaction rating of the quality of communication between MoESI and educational institutions	No assessment conducted	3.5	4.5	Research Implementation Report	MoESI

**Measure 3.1.1: Conduct a functional review of the ministry and its associated institutions, align the action plan for implementing approved recommendations, and initiate implementation**

#### Key interventions

1. Conducting a functional review of the ministry.
2. Developing an action plan for implementing approved recommendations.
3. Implementing the recommendations.
4. Reporting on the implementation of action plan activities (periodically, monthly, annually).

**Measure 3.1.2: Within the ministry, establish a directorate/department for strategic management and define its relationship with other directorates and departments**

#### Key interventions

1. Amending the Rulebook on the Organization and Classification of Job Positions within the ministry.
2. Establishing a directorate/department for strategic planning and management.
3. Ensuring the necessary material, technical and human resources for its operation.
4. Adoption of the Strategic Planning and Management Act.
5. Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of strategic goals.

**Measure 3.1.3: Improve the functioning of the Human Resource Management Service within the ministry**

#### Key interventions

1. Analysing the current activities and responsibilities of the Human Resources, General Affairs and Personnel Service.
2. Strengthening the capacity of the Human Resources, General Affairs and Personnel Service.
3. Enhancing cooperation with the Human Resources Administration to improve good human resource management.

**Measure 3.1.4: Strengthen medium-term financial planning and annual budgeting by applying programme-based and priority-driven budgeting methods**
**Key interventions**

1. Developing internal procedures for preparing a medium-term budget framework, including a plan for new policies at the level of the MoESI budget programmes and institutions under MoESI oversight, as well as internal procedures for preparing the annual budget plan.
2. Training employees in financial planning and budgeting.

**Measure 3.1.5: In collaboration with other relevant ministries and agencies, conduct an analysis and develop an investment plan to address the issue of schools with a low number of students**
**Key interventions**

1. Analysing data on all primary and secondary schools in Montenegro, including student numbers, school capacity, geographical location and teaching staff.
2. Strengthening cooperation with other relevant sectors.
3. Development of a set of measures to ensure the effective functioning of schools with a low number of students.

**Measure 3.1.6: In collaboration with other relevant ministries and agencies, conduct an analysis and develop an investment plan to address the issue of schools with a high number of students**
**Key interventions**

1. Analysis of data on all primary and secondary schools in Montenegro, including student numbers, school capacity, geographical location and teaching staff.
2. Development of a set of measures to ensure the effective functioning of schools with a high number of students.
3. Assessment of the availability of qualified teaching staff.
4. Defining a mechanism for addressing the issue.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.2		Strengthen national oversight and planning of teaching staff, improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession, and enhance human resource management practices in institutions			
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Estimated competence of institutional leaders and senior managers based on the Human Resources Administration competency framework	50%	80%	100%	Compilation of annual competency assessment reports	MoESI
Attractiveness of the teaching profession among secondary school and university graduates	20%	30%	40%	Universities	MoESI
Proportion of teachers aspiring to higher professional titles	30%	60%	100%	Primary and secondary schools in Montenegro	MoESI

**Measure 3.2.1: Implement the recommendations from the functional review related to human resource management and reach an agreement with the Ministry of Public Administration on all structural and systemic changes**
**Key interventions**

1. Developing a detailed implementation plan for the recommendations, with defined goals and timelines.
2. Organizing training sessions in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Administration/Human Resources Administration to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills.
3. Continuously monitoring the implementation of recommendations from the functional review.

**Measure 3.2.2: Promote the teaching profession with a special focus on gender equality and the inclusion of vulnerable groups**
**Key interventions**

1. Organizing media campaigns and events to promote the teaching profession.
2. Establishing mentoring programmes where experienced teachers support students and young education professionals pursue a teaching career.
3. Encouraging a gender balance and the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the teaching profession.



**Measure 3.2.3: Develop support systems for potential shortage occupations in the future****Key interventions**

1. Analysing and identifying shortage occupations.
2. Innovating existing study programmes and accrediting new ones in line with current trends and labour market needs.
3. Design and implementation of support measures for students (scholarships, loans, accommodation, etc.).
4. Development of a dedicated support system for teachers of vocational subjects.

**Measure 3.2.4: Improve the competencies of management staff in educational institutions at all levels of education****Key interventions**

1. Analysis of the content, quality and structure of the Training Programme for Headteachers of educational institutions.
2. Strengthening cooperation with international organizations and institutions to exchange experiences and best practices in professional development for management staff in education.
3. Updating existing and developing new specialized programmes to enhance the skills of current staff, with a focus on digital and leadership skills, management and strategic planning.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.3		Digitalization of the education system, including improvement of the Montenegrin Education Information System (MEIS) to ensure the provision of timely and relevant data for system diagnostics, trend analysis and evidence-based decision making at both the national and institutional levels, the full implementation of the Digital School concept and the digitalization of external knowledge assessment.			
Output indicators	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Number of employees in the ICT department working on education digitalization (MEIS, Digital School, etc.)	6	9	12	MoESI	MoESI
Number of professionals with advanced skills in analysing education statistics for evidence-based planning	0	2	4	MoESI	MoESI
Number of new modules in the Education Information System	0	3	6	MoESI	MoESI
Number of electronic services	17	20	23	MoESI	MoESI
Number of online courses available on the Digital School platform	1,194	1,224	1,249	MoESI	MoESI
Number of business processes covered by self-guided training	16	22	27	MoESI	MoESI
Number of professionals with advanced skills in analysing data from external knowledge assessments in education	2	3	5	EC	EC

**Measure 3.3.1: Ensure compliance with legal regulations****Key interventions**

1. Analysing and amending regulations related to the Montenegrin Education Information System.
2. Conducting a detailed compliance analysis of the Montenegrin Education Information System with GDPR.
3. Developing regulations that govern and enable full implementation of the Digital School concept.

**Measure 3.3.2: Improve hardware infrastructure and security****Key interventions**

1. Optimizing the hardware infrastructure at the primary Data Centre and Disaster Recovery site.
2. Installation of fire protection systems at the primary Data Centre and Disaster Recovery site.
3. Upgrading network infrastructure to enhance security at the primary Data Centre and Disaster Recovery site.
4. Implementation of physical security measures for the primary Data Centre and Disaster Recovery site.

**Measure 3.3.3: Develop and optimize software components****Key interventions**

1. Development of new versions of applications for existing modules in the Education Information System.
2. Creation of new application modules for records not previously maintained in the Education Information System.
3. Recording data on employees in educational institutions, including professional development, licences and related information.
4. Maintaining records of individuals who have attained Level V education according to the National Qualifications Framework.
5. Tracking teachers' professional development and activities.
6. Registering external students and course participants.
7. Development of a database of all projects implemented within the education system.
8. Creation of software for processing data related to the acquisition of national professional qualifications (EC).

**Measure 3.3.4: Ensure accurate and reliable data processing and effective utilization****Key interventions**

1. Conducting consultations with headteachers and deputy headteachers regarding the recording and use of the Montenegrin Education Information System.
2. Holding consultations with ICT coordinators on data entry and utilization within the Montenegrin Education Information System.
3. Training employees in educational institutions to improve data quality.

**Measure 3.3.5: Develop and enhance electronic services to ensure seamless and uninterrupted integration****Key interventions**

1. Development of electronic services tailored to the needs of all stakeholders in the education system, including the below:
2. Creating electronic services for submitting requests for the recognition of public higher education credentials.
3. Development of electronic services for applying for teaching licences in educational institutions.
4. Establishing electronic services for submitting requests to accredit teacher professional development programmes.
5. Implementing electronic services that allow teachers to register for professional development programmes.
6. Creating electronic services for submitting requests for exemption from student loan repayment.

**Measure 3.3.6: Improve staffing structure****Key interventions**

1. Expanding the workforce in the Information and Communication Technology Department.
2. Developing a training programme for ICT coordinators on using the MEIS application.
3. Delivering training sessions for ICT coordinators.
4. Strengthening the data analytics team by increasing the number of specialized employees.

**Measure 3.3.7: Full implementation of the Digital School concept****Key interventions**

1. Implementation of online collaboration resources in the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, the Bureau for Educational Services, the Centre for Vocational Education, the Examination Centre and the Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids.
2. Deployment of online collaboration resources in educational institutions.
3. Development of digital content for children.
4. Creating digital content for employees.
5. Producing digital content for parents.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.4		Financing, management and planning of education serve to ensure quality, equity and the development of the education system			
Output indicators	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Strengthened links between budget policy and priorities, reflected in the percentage of spending on key areas identified in the strategy Or: Percentage of education expenditure not related to salaries in relation to total education spending	9%	12%	15%	MoESI MONSTAT	MoESI BES EC CVET
Number of trained officials and senior management staff in medium-term and budget planning	40%	90%	100%	MoESI	MoF MoESI

#### Measure 3.4.1: Increase the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of education spending

##### Key interventions

1. Conducting a public expenditure review to analyse and assess the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of government spending on education, aiming to improve fiscal management and align costs with policy priorities.
2. Building capacity for financial data analysis and reporting by providing the necessary skills, tools and systems to interpret and monitor key financial data and trends over time.
3. Publishing concise annual budget reports for internal and external use, focusing on resource management efficiency and goal achievement.
4. Development of a capacity development planning framework with projected costs to support the implementation of education policies and objectives for the 2025–2035 Education Strategy, ensuring effective management of the education sector at all levels.

#### Measure 3.4.2: Increase the level of available resources for education

##### Key interventions

To ensure a structured and coordinated approach, this measure begins with the development of a resource mobilization strategy that will identify options for future funding sources. The strategy will be aligned with the 2025–2035 Education Reform Strategy, defining long-term financial goals based on medium- and high-ambition scenarios.

This strategy will enable:

1. Mapping of available financial resources
2. Identification of new and innovative funding sources
3. Focusing on building partnerships with various stakeholders, including the private sector and multilateral organizations
4. Identification of critical financial gaps. The strategy will also include an action plan for engaging and collaborating with potential funders and partners, including the private sector, to explore options for supporting private initiatives in early childhood education (ECE)

STRATEGIC GOAL 4		Educational infrastructure and modern teaching resources support contemporary, high-quality, equitable, and safe education for all children and young people				
	Outcome indicator	Baseline 2024	Interim target 2030	Final target 2035	Source of data	Responsible institution
4.0.1	Number of new places (according to regulations setting standards) in preschool educational institutions	N/A	2,000 for ages 0–3 and 4–6	3,000 for ages 0–3 and 4–6	MoESI MEN ACP	MoESI MEN ACP
4.0.2	Percentage of primary schools providing extended stay	1,270 children in 52 schools (31.9% of schools)	> 40% of primary schools	100% of primary schools	MoESI	MoESI
4.0.3	Maximum number of shifts per school building	6	4	2	MoESI	MoESI ACP
4.0.4	Number of schools implementing the full-day student stay concept	0	9	21	MoESI	MoESI
4.0.5	Percentage of educational institutions that have developed protection and rescue plans for various types of risks within their premises, trained staff, as well as established emergency protection plans and all necessary signage on the premises.	< 10%	> 40%	> 60%	Survey	MoESI

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.1		Improve the network of educational institutions to ensure quality, equitable and safe education for all children and young people			
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Number of school units assessed for compliance with construction and educational process standards, inclusive education standards, safety and management requirements	44	813	100% of school buildings	UNOPS EIB	MoESI
Number of school units for which a feasibility study has been conducted on implementing the extended stay concept	0	50	100	MoESI	MoESI
Number of school units for which a feasibility study has been conducted on implementing the full-day student stay concept	0	10	20	MoESI	MoESI
Number of primary/secondary schools renovated during the reporting period in accordance with the new construction standards, including energy efficiency, disaster risk reduction and improved water supply and sanitation standards	N/A	Primary: > 100 Secondary: > 30	Primary: > 150 Secondary: > 35	MoESI ACP	MoESI ACP
Number of new primary/secondary schools built and put into operation during the reporting period in accordance with the new construction standards, including energy efficiency	N/A	Primary: > 10 Secondary: > 5	Primary: > 13 Secondary: > 8	MoESI	MoESI

**Measure 4.1.1: Ensure new school infrastructure for public preschool education in accordance with new construction standards, starting with areas where the need is most urgent**

**Key interventions**

1. Launching a competition for conceptual designs for the selected facilities.
2. Organizing a tender process to select the project developer.
3. Organizing a tender process to select the construction contractor.
4. Organizing a tender process to select the construction supervision provider.
5. Equipping and inaugurating the facilities.

**Measure 4.1.2: Ensure the implementation of the extended stay concept in primary schools**

**Key interventions**

1. Development of a feasibility study, including a cost assessment for implementation of the extended stay concept.
2. Implementation of the extended stay concept in primary schools gradually, in accordance with the recommendations of the feasibility study.
3. Development of a feasibility study, including a cost assessment for the implementation of the full-day student stay concept.
4. Implementation of the full-day student stay concept gradually, in accordance with the recommendations of the feasibility study.

**Measure 4.1.3: Optimize the maximum number of shifts per school building**

**Key interventions**

1. Launching a competition for conceptual designs for the selected facilities.
2. Conducting a tender process to select the project developer.
3. Conducting a tender process to select the construction contractor.
4. Conducting a tender process to select the construction supervision provider.
5. Equipping and inaugurating the facilities.



**Measure 4.1.4: Develop and update construction standards for educational institutions, ensuring that buildings are climate-resilient and energy-efficient, in line with the findings of a comprehensive school infrastructure analysis**

**Key interventions**

1. Concluding agreements between UNOPS, the EIB and UNICEF for the implementation of activities within the School Infrastructure Mapping project.
2. Preparation, development and adoption of a set of documents (regulations and guidelines) related to the design and licensing of educational institutions.

**Measure 4.1.5: Improve the preparedness of educational institutions for disaster risk reduction by ensuring trained staff, established emergency response plans and all necessary safety signage within school facilities**

**Key interventions**

1. Planning for the installation of internal and external hydrant systems, fire detection systems, hazard warning systems, fire suppression systems, etc. when designing and constructing new buildings or renovating existing ones.
2. Equipping educational institutions with necessary safety equipment and resources to the fullest extent possible, including fire extinguishers, internal and external hydrants, pictogram signage, fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems, first aid kits, etc.
3. Assessment of the current state of equipment and resources used for responding to natural, technical and other disasters in educational institutions and related facilities.
4. Development of a procurement plan for acquiring the necessary safety equipment and resources in line with the timeline of this strategy.
5. Creation of protection and rescue plans for various risks (e.g. fires, earthquakes) in all educational institutions.
6. Conducting regular child-focused risk assessments at all levels of the education sector, with special attention to children with disabilities.
7. Providing continuous training for school leaders, teachers and educators on disaster risk reduction.
8. Amending the job classification regulations in all educational institutions to define responsibilities related to disaster risk reduction.
9. Development and distribution of manuals (both digital and printed) and guidelines (including graphical animations) for DRR actions in emergency procedures.

**Measure 4.1.6: Improve sustainable administrative, infrastructural and technical solutions to enhance the existing water and sanitation facilities and/or develop new ones. This includes procuring and installing the necessary equipment and devices, as well as strengthening the capacities of individuals and institutions for adequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in educational institutions.**

**Key interventions**

1. Establishing and improving norms and standards related to hygiene and sanitary conditions in educational institutions.
2. Integration of the information systems of the Institute of Public Health and the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation to ensure timely and continuous data exchange, enabling enhanced real-time monitoring of drinking water quality and WASH conditions in educational institutions. This will support evidence-based decision making, policy development and interventions in the WASH sector.
3. Ensuring regular monitoring of drinking water quality in educational institutions in accordance with the National Drinking Water Monitoring Programme.
4. Development of educational programmes and materials for education professionals and students on personal and school hygiene, along with promotional activities to encourage healthy hygiene practices and lifestyles.
5. Conducting an analysis of existing secondary legislation and implement necessary amendments to improve WASH conditions in educational institutions, including revisions to the Regulation on the Requirements for Establishing Educational Institutions to define standards for water access points for young students.
6. Removal of barriers that limit access to safe drinking water in educational institutions, with a special focus on improving accessibility at water access points for children with mobility limitations.
7. Improvement of the availability and usability of sanitation facilities (toilets) in schools for all children.
8. Establishment of mechanisms for regular monitoring and reporting on WASH conditions through the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (JMP).
9. Ensuring continuous availability of improved hygiene conditions and hygiene maintenance supplies, with a special focus on menstrual hygiene management.

**Measure 4.1.7: Repurpose school buildings that are no longer used for educational activities into facilities for educational, cultural, tourism-related and other purposes**

**Key interventions**

1. Creation of an inventory of abandoned school buildings where educational activities are no longer conducted.
2. Conducting an assessment of the condition of these buildings.
3. Proposal of modalities for repurposing the selected buildings.
4. Development of a plan for putting the buildings into use.
5. Securing financial resources for implementation.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.2	Ensuring that all educational institutions have specialized facilities and functional furniture, aligned with the developmental and educational needs of children and young people				
Output indicators	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Construction/renovation of educational institutions with functional classrooms, facilities, furniture and sports halls	N/A	> 70%	> 90%	Annual report	MoESI
Procurement of missing furniture and replacement of existing furniture for all schools in Montenegro	N/A	100%	–	Annual report	MoESI
Procurement of specialized equipment for secondary vocational schools	N/A	60%	90%	Annual report	MoESI
Percentage of schools equipped with: A. Art classrooms B. Sports halls C. Science laboratories	A. 20% B. 30% C. 10%	A. 50% B. 55% C. 40%	A. 80% B. 70% C. 70%	Annual report on Capital Budget realization	MoESI

**Measure 4.2.1: Construct and renovate all educational institutions with functional classrooms, facilities, furniture and sports halls**

**Key interventions**

1. Conducting a tender process to select the main project developer.
2. Conducting a tender process to select the construction contractor.
3. Conducting a tender process to select the supervision provider.
4. Executing construction and renovation works.
5. Equipping and inaugurating the facility.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.3	Ensure that all educational institutions are fully equipped to provide quality education in the modern digital era through adequate didactic materials and functional digital infrastructure, including connectivity, hardware and software				
Output indicators	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Computer-to-student ratio in schools (equipment no older than five years)	1:13	1:12	1:11	MoESI	MoESI
Internet coverage in satellite school units	47%	80%	100%	MoESI	MoESI
Number of EdTech hubs	100	120	140	MoESI	MoESI

**Measure 4.3.1: Ensure that all educational institutions have adequate didactic materials and functional digital infrastructure, including connectivity, hardware and software**

**Key interventions**

1. Procuring computer equipment for all educational institutions, including computer labs, classrooms, libraries, offices and staff rooms.
2. Ensuring internet connectivity in all educational institutions and upgrade existing connections where technically feasible.
3. Providing adequate software packages to support learning outcomes, including operating systems and application software.
4. Supplying computer equipment for students who lack access to technology at home, available through school libraries.
5. Equipping EdTech laboratories and expanding existing ones with innovative didactic tools.
6. Establishing support centres within schools, equipped with assistive technologies and adapted didactic materials, managed by trained teaching staff.







# (F) ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR THE PERIOD 2025–2026

STRATEGIC GOAL 1		The education system provides high-quality, accessible and equitable education that fosters holistic development of all children and adolescents, while being resilient to challenges and risks				
	Outcome indicator	Baseline 2024	Interim target 2030	Final target 2035	Source of data	Responsible institution
1.0.1.	Percentage of 15-year-olds achieving the minimum proficiency level in reading, science and mathematics literacy on the PISA assessment	<p>40% mathematical literacy (40% boys, 41% girls)</p> <p>47% reading literacy (39% boys, 56% girls)</p> <p>45% science literacy (42% boys, 48% girls)</p>	<p>50% mathematical literacy (both genders)</p> <p>55% reading literacy (both genders)</p> <p>50% science literacy (both genders)</p>	<p>65% mathematical literacy (both genders)</p> <p>65% reading literacy (both genders)</p> <p>60% science literacy (both genders)</p>	MoESI PISA	MoESI BES CVET EC BTTA
1.0.2.	Average student score in PIRLS	<p><b>PIRLS Reading 2021</b> Average PIRLS score: 487 (girls: 497, boys: 478)</p> <p>Cumulative % of students reaching the basic or higher levels: 87%</p> <p>Cumulative % of students reaching the intermediate or higher levels: 59%</p>	<p><b>PIRLS Reading</b> Average PIRLS score: 500 (girls: 510, boys: 490)</p> <p>Cumulative % of students reaching the basic or higher levels: 90%</p> <p>Cumulative % of students reaching the intermediate or higher levels: 66%</p> <p>Expected achievement: 510 (PIRLS, Grade IV)</p>	<p><b>PIRLS Reading</b> Average PIRLS score: 500 (expected –girls: 520, boys: 510) Cumulative % of students reaching the basic or higher levels: 94%</p> <p>Cumulative % of students reaching the intermediate or higher levels: 75%</p> <p>Expected achievement: 520 (PIRLS, Grade IV)</p>	PIRLS	MoESI BES EC
	Average student score in TIMSS	<p><b>TIMSS 2023:</b></p> <p><b>Mathematics</b> Average score: 477 (girls: 471, boys: 483)</p> <p><b>Science</b> average: 461 (girls: 458, boys: 463)</p> <p><b>Mathematics and Science</b> Cumulative % of students at basic or higher level: 84%. Cumulative % of students at intermediate or higher level: 53%.</p> <p>Cumulative % of students at basic or higher level: 80%. Cumulative % of students at intermediate or higher level: 45%</p>	<p><b>Mathematics</b> Average score: 490 (girls: 485, boys: 496)</p> <p><b>Science:</b> Average score: 475 (girls: 470, boys: 479)</p> <p><b>Mathematics and Science</b> Cumulative % of students at basic or higher level: 85%.</p> <p>Cumulative % of students at intermediate or higher level: 60%.</p> <p>Expected average score: 500 (TIMSS Grade IV)</p>	<p><b>Mathematics</b> Average score: 510 (girls: 500, boys: 520)</p> <p><b>Science:</b> Average score: 490 (girls: 480, boys: 488)</p> <p><b>Mathematics and Science</b> Cumulative % of students at basic or higher level: 90%.</p> <p>Cumulative % of students at intermediate or higher level: 70%.</p>	TIMSS	



1.0.3.	Student results from external knowledge assessment at the end of the third cycle of primary school	55% CSBH (50% boys, 60% girls) 49% Albanian language (45% boys, 54% girls) 42% Mathematics (42% boys, 44% girls) 65% English (64% boys, 68% girls) 42% Biology (43% boys, 42% girls) 48% Physics (44% boys, 56% girls) 51% Chemistry (52% boys, 52% girls) 41% Geography (40% boys, 45% girls) 51% History (52% boys, 51% girls) 55% Italian (59% boys, 49% girls) 63% German (61% boys, 66% girls) 66% Russian (66% boys, 69% girls)	65% CSBH 60% Albanian 55% Mathematics 70% English 55% Biology 60% Physics 60% Chemistry 45% Geography 55% History 58% Italian 66% German 67% Russian	75% CSBH 65% Albanian 70% Mathematics 75% English 70% Biology 70% Physics 70% Chemistry 60% Geography 60% History 62% Italian 70% German 70% Russian	External knowledge assessment at the end of third cycle 2023–2024	MoESI BES EC
1.0.4.	Achievement levels of students from the lowest 25% socio-economic background who do not attain minimum proficiency in reading, science and mathematics	<b>PISA 2022:</b> <b>Reading literacy:</b> 60% girls, 74% boys <b>Maths literacy:</b> 74% girls, 74% boys <b>Science literacy:</b> 69% girls, 73% boys	35% for both genders	50% for both genders	PISA PIRLS TIMSS PISA 2029 & 2033	MoESI BES EC
1.0.5.	Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI)/% of children aged 24–59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by gender	90% (90% boys, 91% girls)	> 92% for both genders	> 95% for both genders	MICS	MoESI Ministry of Health (MoH) IPH
1.0.6.	Completion rate of primary/secondary education among Roma, Egyptian and children with disabilities (EU Growth Plan indicator)	Roma and Egyptian children Primary school: 8% (9% boys, 9% girls) Secondary school: 21% (22% boys, 21% girls) Children with disabilities: Primary school: 19% (17% boys, 22% girls) Secondary school: 25% (25% boys, 22% girls)	Roma and Egyptian children Primary school: 90% (both genders) Secondary school: 50% (both genders) Children with disabilities: 40% (both genders)	Roma and Egyptian children Primary school: 95% (both genders) Secondary school: 70% (both genders) Children with disabilities: 80% (both genders)	MoESI	MoESI MHMR MoH MoSD BES BTTA CVET Local self-governments
1.0.7	Percentage of children in early childhood education, disaggregated by ISCED classifications (ages 0–2 and 3–6)	Ages 0–2: 32% (32% boys, 33% girls) Ages 3–6: 82% (83% boys, 81% girls)	Ages 0–2: 35% Ages 3–6: 90%	Ages 0–2: 40% Ages 3–6: 95%	MoESI	MoESI

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.1	Access to education for all children is ensured and results meet SDG targets and are aligned with the average performance of the EU member states				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Percentage of Roma and Egyptian children enrolled in early education (age 3+)	15% (15% boys, 14% girls)	Roma and Egyptian children: 30%	Roma and Egyptian children: 60%	MoESI	MoESI
Percentage of children with disabilities enrolled in early education (age 3+)	20% (20% boys, 19% girls)	Children with disabilities: 50%	Children with disabilities: 80%	MoESI	MoESI
Percentage of primary and secondary school-age children not attending school	To be determined by end of Q4 2025	50%	0%	UNESCO MoESI	MoESI MONSTAT
Average number of absences (excused and unexcused) in primary/secondary school	Primary school: 51.40 (excused absences), 3.94 (unexcused absences)	Primary school: 45 (excused absences) 3 (unexcused absences) Secondary school: 65 (excused absences) 7 (unexcused absences)	Primary school: 30 (excused absences) 2 (unexcused absences) Secondary school: 50 (excused absences) 5 (unexcused absences)	MoESI	MoESI Educational institutions

Measure 1.1.1: Increase access to education for children aged 0–3 and ensure full access for children from 3 years of age until they start school						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Forming a team and conducting an analysis of existing policies aimed at equality, with recommendations	Team established and analysis completed	MoESI BES	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€1,000	Budget
Amending the Law on Preschool Education	Law amended	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	No funds required	–
Amending the Rulebook on Standards and Criteria for the allocation of funds to institutions implementing early childhood education	Rulebook amended	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	No funds required	–
Conducting campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood education and its long-term benefits	Campaigns conducted in 12 preschool institutions	MoESI	Q2 2025	Ongoing	€6,000 (€6,000)	Budget (donations)
Expanding the Caring Families programme to parents/guardians of children in public preschools and primary schools	Programme available to parents in at least 15 public preschools and five primary schools	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€10,000	Budget
Expanding the Caring Families programme to Roma and Egyptian parents/guardians in public preschools and primary schools	Programme available to Roma and Egyptian parents in at least five public preschools and 12 primary schools	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€10,000	Budget
Implementing the Caring Families programme for parents/guardians of children with disabilities in public preschools, primary schools and resource centres	Programme available to parents in five preschools and two primary schools/resource centres; 20 new facilitators trained	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€20,000	Budget

Promoting the Bebbio mobile app	10 public preschools visibly displaying Bebbio promotional material	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€2,000	Donors
Analysing the results of established outreach services and propose recommendations for scale-up	Analysis with recommendations developed	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€1,000	Budget
Establishing unified data system across four sectors (education, health, internal affairs and social protection) to identify children not enrolled in preschool	Database developed to identify children who are not enrolled in preschool and support planning	MoESI Ministry of the Interior Ministry of Health Ministry of Social Welfare	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget
Signing Memorandum of Cooperation with municipalities focused on infrastructure and transport	Memorandum signed with 25 municipalities	MoESI Municipalities	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Accrediting training programme on project planning	Training programme on project planning accredited	MoESI NCED BES	Q2 2025	Q2 2025	€1,500	Budget
Designing an early intervention programme for children with delayed communication skills development	Early intervention programme for developing verbal and non-verbal communication designed	Ministry of Health BES MoESI	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget
Integrating and expanding services within the local community by providing additional professional support to children from vulnerable groups and their parents	A protocol on cooperation in providing support to children from vulnerable groups has been developed. The number of trained service providers working in early intervention has increased by 30% among those involved in the day-care centres	Ministry of Health MoSW MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€10,000	Budget
Strengthening early individualized approaches and adaptations	Coaching conducted in 20 public preschools	Ministry of Health BES MoESI	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget

**Measure 1.1.2: Ensure full coverage and prevent dropout in primary and secondary schools**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Determining baseline number of primary and secondary school-age children who are not attending school	Baseline value determined	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€7,000	Budget
Developing teacher-mentor/tutor support programme for students at risk of dropping out	Programme developed	BES CVET MoESI	Q2 2026	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget
Accrediting training programme for teacher-mentors/tutors	Programme accredited	MoESI BES CVET NGOs	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	€1,500	Budget

Improving the Rulebook on Norms and Standards for Securing Public Revenue Funding for Institutions Implementing Publicly Recognized Educational Programmes	The Rulebook has been improved to enable the engagement of additional mediators, psychologists, social workers and related professionals, with the aim of providing support to children and adolescents	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q1 2025	No funds required	–
Establishing a peer support system linking younger students at risk of dropout with older students	System established in 30 schools	Educational institutions	Q3 2026	Ongoing	No funds required	–
Establishing teams at the level of educational institutions to monitor implementation of the Protocol on Procedures and Prevention of Early School Leaving	Teams have been established in all educational institutions to develop individual support plans for students and to strengthen cooperation with parents	Educational institutions	Q2 2025	Q2 2025	No funds required	–
Improving the education information system to identify students who are not attending school or are at risk of early school leaving, and to enable data exchange among relevant institutions	An MEIS module developed for monitoring early school leaving and children not in education	MoESI Ministry of the Interior MoSW	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€15,000	Budget
Developing an intensive literacy training programme	Programme developed and accredited	BES	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget
Intensifying literacy efforts for students at risk of early school leaving, including monitoring and implementation of the programme	Report on students included in literacy support	Educational institutions	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€15,000	Budget
Conducting a cost analysis of providing transportation for children from Roma and Egyptian communities to schools in all municipalities, including preschool education	Analysis developed	MoESI	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	€5,000	UNICEF

**Measure 1.1.3: Increase vocational school students' engagement in learning at the workplace, including securing greater interest among small and medium-sized enterprises for the provision of practical training**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Development of sectoral strategies (sector profiles) with defined priorities for the development of qualifications, based on research into skills and qualification needs, with a focus on digital technologies and green jobs	Sectoral strategies developed for the sectors of: Transport & Communications; Health & Social Care; Construction & Spatial Planning (2025); and for at least three more sectors (2026)	MoESI (NQF Directorate) CfQ	Q1 2025	Q2 2026	€20,000	Budget



Conducting an analysis of the existing qualifications by sector to determine the need for their modernization and/or the development of new ones.	<p>Round tables organized to support the business sector in developing qualifications relevant to the labour market, green jobs, digital technologies, sustainable development, energy efficiency, and more.</p> <p>Priorities identified and an annual plan developed for the modernization of the existing qualifications and the development of new ones across sectors, including: green and digital technologies; sustainable development; energy efficiency; and other areas.</p>	<p>CVET</p> <p>MoESI (NQF Directorate)</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro</p> <p>Montenegrin Employers Federation</p> <p>CfQ</p>	Q1 2025	Q3 2025	€4,000	CVET MoESI
Strengthening the capacity of sectoral committees in labour market analysis and forecasting skills needs	<p>At least one training session organized annually for new members of sectoral committees.</p> <p>Annual reports on the work of the sectoral committees prepared.</p>	MoESI (NQF Directorate)	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Conducting training for members of working groups for the development of occupational standards in accordance with the accredited programme	<p>At least three training sessions conducted in one year for new members of the working groups.</p> <p>Training content includes topics related to: green and digital technologies; sustainable development; climate change; and more.</p>	CVET	Q2 2025	Q1 2026	€6,000	CVET
Development of new and/or revision of existing occupational standards in accordance with the adopted sectoral priorities and the annual work plan of the Centre for Vocational Education	<p>At least 20 occupational standards developed/ revised annually</p>	<p>CVET</p> <p>Council for Qualifications (CfQ)</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro</p> <p>Montenegrin Employers Federation</p>	Q2 2025	Q3 2026	€30,000	CVET
Training new members of the working groups that draft qualification standards	<p>At least three training sessions conducted per year for new members of the working groups.</p> <p>Training content includes topics related to: green and digital technologies; sustainable development; climate change; and more.</p>	CVET	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	€6,000	CVET

Development/revision of qualification standards	At least 20 qualification standards developed/revised annually	CVET CfQ Schools Council for Qualifications Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro Montenegrin Employers Federation	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	€40,000	CVET
Training members of the working groups that develop curricula	A minimum of three trainings annually for curriculum development teams	CVET	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	€4,000	CVET
Development/revision of curricula according to the approved plan	Six curricula developed/revised annually	CVET Schools University departments Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro Montenegrin Employers Federation Council for Vocational Education NCEd	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	€50,000	CVET
Analysis of feasibility of transforming vocational schools into regional centres of excellence in specific fields	At least three round tables organized with key stakeholders.  Analysis conducted of the network of vocational schools, educational provision, and material and human resource conditions in vocational schools.	MoESI CVET Schools	Q1 2025	Q3 2025	€10,000	Budget
Preparation of projects for establishing regional centres of excellence for young people and adults – one for each of the three regions	Projects prepared for establishing regional centres of excellence	MoESI CVET Local governments Employers' associations Business entities	Q4 2025	Q2 2026	€30,000	Budget
Preparation of specification and procuring of equipment for new regional centres of excellence for youth and adults	Equipment procured according to the specification	MoESI CVET Local governments Employers' associations Business entities	Q2 2026	Q4 2026	€1,000,000	Budget
Analysis of data on post-secondary pathways of students following the completion of vocational education	Annual analysis completed	CVET Schools	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€3,000	CVET

Preparation and implementation of an annual plan for external evaluation of institutions and the quality assurance system by external supervisory bodies, in accordance with the applicable methodology	<p>Annual plan for external evaluation of institutions prepared.</p> <p>External evaluation activities conducted in at least five schools annually.</p> <p>Relevant reports and recommendations prepared.</p> <p>Reports on the quality of educational work published on the websites of the Centre for Vocational Education and the respective institutions.</p>	CVET BES Schools	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€40,000	CVET
Conducting internal evaluations in schools based on existing methodology	Internal evaluations conducted in at least 70% of schools in 2025 and 2026	CVET Schools	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€40,000	CVET
Monitoring the implementation of final and vocational exams at the completion of three-year and four-year vocational education programmes	Analysis conducted and recommendations developed for improving the quality of student achievement assessment	CVET Schools	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€6,000	CVET
Conducting an analysis of student absenteeism from both theoretical and practical classes, as well as disciplinary measures imposed, during the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 school years, and preparation of recommendations	Analysis conducted and recommendations defined to reduce absenteeism from both theoretical and practical instruction	CVET Schools	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€6,000	CVET
Planning and organizing student competitions in vocational areas	<p>Competition plan prepared by subject area.</p> <p>Competitions organized annually in at least three subject areas.</p>	CVET Schools, EC  Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro Montenegrin Employers' Federation	Q1 2025	Q2 2026	€38,000	CVET
Analysing the organization and implementation of practical education in schools and with employers (based on internal/external evaluation reports)	Report prepared with recommendations for improving the quality of practical teaching in school-based and dual formats	CVET Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro Montenegrin Employers' Federation	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€8,000	CVET
Conducting external evaluation of practical education in school-based and dual formats	<p>External evaluation of practical education in school-based and dual formats completed.</p> <p>Presentation of the external evaluation of practical education in school-based and dual formats held.</p>	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€18,000	Budget

Development of guidelines and methodology for continuous monitoring and evaluation of practical training by employers	Guidelines and methodology prepared for the implementation of continuous monitoring and evaluation of practical training with an employer, in line with the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships	MoESI CVET Schools Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro Montenegrin Employers' Federation	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	€3,000	CVET
Organizing round tables with vocational school and employer representatives	At least three round tables held annually	CVET Montenegrin Employers' Federation Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro Schools	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€2,000	CVET
Organizing presentations of current educational programmes to employers to improve cooperation models	At least four presentations organized annually	CVET Montenegrin Employers' Federation Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro Schools	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€2,000	CVET
Including employer representatives in the oversight of vocational education	The percentage of employer representatives among all external evaluators is at least 10%.  The percentage of employers involved in the evaluation of vocational education is 10%.	CVET	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€6,000	CVET
Ensuring conditions are in place for establishing an incentive system for employers participating in the implementation of practical education and employing students after completing their education	Support Fund for Dual Education established.  Rulebook on the Manner and Procedure for Allocation of Funds from the Support Fund for Dual Education adopted.	MoESI Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro Montenegrin Employers' Federation Local governments Schools	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	€20,000	Budget
Allocating funds from the Support Fund for Dual Education to employers and students	Calls for allocation of funds to employers and students conducted on an annual basis	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€200,000	Budget
Preparing promotional material for shortage occupations and vocational education	Promotional material prepared for shortage occupations and vocational education for 2025 and 2026	MoESI CVET	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	€30,000	Budget
Organizing promotional events	At least four promotional events per year	MoESI CVET	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	€20,000	Budget
Analysis of the reasons for low student interest in enrolling in educational programmes for certain shortage occupations	Analysis prepared	MoESI CVET	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget



Organizing workshops for students with disabilities to improve motivation	Workshops held for at least 100 students with disabilities	MoESI BES CVET Schools	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€5,000 €5,000	Budget Donors
Organizing presentations of the inclusive model of vocational education for employers with the aim of improving the inclusion process	Four presentations organized per year	MoESI BES CVET PK Montenegrin Employers' Federation	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€4,000	CVET
Organizing workshops to strengthen employer attitudes and openness	Workshops held with at least 50 employers	MoESI CVET PK Montenegrin Employers' Federation	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€5,000 €5,000	Budget Donors
Supporting mobility of vocational students and teachers through exchange programmes	At least two promotional events organized for student and teacher exchanges through international exchange programmes. Student and teacher exchanges organized, with a minimum of 25 students and at least 10 teachers per year participating in schools within the region or Europe, in line with the relevant mobility programme.	MoESI CVET Schools	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€35,000	Budget International projects (Move to Improve)
Organizing school participation in international education fairs and competitions	Participation organized in at least one international education fair. Competition team participated in the EUROSILLS competition. Competition team participated in the CROATIAN Skills competition	MoESI CVET Schools	Q1 2025	Q3 2025	€50,000 (Eurosills) €15,000 (Croatiaskills)	CVET Budget International projects
Organizing international vocational education conferences	At least one international VET conference organized	MoESI CVET Schools	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€11,500	Budget

**Measure 1.1.4: Increase the participation of adults in lifelong learning, as well as better regulation of adult education**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Analysis of the adult education system	Analysis report completed	MoESI CVET EC BES Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro Montenegrin Employers' Federation MLESD	Q1 2025	Q1 2025	€1,000	Budget (EU Growth Plan)

Revision of education programmes for adult retraining or acquisition of a first qualification, including education programmes for teaching assistants and mediators for the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptians	24 programmes revised and approved by the National Council for Education	CVET MoESI Accredited adult education providers Social partners	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€42,000	Budget (EU Growth Plan)
Revision of examination catalogues for adult education programmes	24 catalogues revised and approved by the National Council for Education	CVET MoESI Accredited adult education providers Social partners	Q4 2025	Q4 2026	€18,000	Budget (EU Growth Plan)
Development of training programmes for green and digital economy and other labour market-relevant fields	Seven programmes developed and approved by the National Council for Education	CVET MoESI Accredited adult education providers Social partners	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€8,200	Budget (EU Growth Plan)
Development of exam catalogues for the green and digital economies and other labour market-relevant fields	Seven exam catalogues developed	CVET MoESI Accredited adult education providers Social partners	Q4 2025	Q4 2026	€4,700	Budget (EU Growth Plan)
Development of online adult education programmes	Five online programmes developed	CVET MoESI Accredited adult education providers Social partners	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€7,500	Budget
Establishment of adult education centres within schools and universities	Five centres licensed	Schools Universities MoESI CVET	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Implementation of promotional campaigns and events to support lifelong learning	Promotional material produced (flyers, billboards, video content, advertisements, etc.). Eight promotional events organized (conferences, round tables, skills development workshops, etc.). An app developed featuring a catalogue of all available lifelong learning programmes.	MoESI CVET	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€64,000	Budget (EU Growth Plan)
Adoption of legal acts aimed at improving the availability and quality of data on participants in the field of adult education	General Law on Education adopted	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q1 2025	No funds required	–
Provision of support to adult education providers and participants for acquiring a first qualification, upskilling and retraining for the purpose of professional development	Subsidies provided from the state budget. Public call conducted for adult education providers – 100 individuals completed the training.	MoESI Employment Agency of Montenegro	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€100,000	Employment Agency

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.2 Reduce inequalities in educational coverage and performance, including of those from vulnerable and marginalized groups					
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Transition rate of Roma, Egyptian and children with disabilities from primary to secondary school	Roma and Egyptian children: 10%  Children with disabilities: 20%	Increase of 25% for both genders  Increase of 30% for both genders	Increase of 35% for both genders  Increase of 50% for both genders	MoESI	MoESI
Share of Roma, Egyptian, children with disabilities and refugee children enrolled in primary and secondary education	<b>Roma and Egyptian children:</b>  Primary school: 82% (79% boys, 80% girls)  Secondary school: 23% (23% boys, 24% girls)  <b>Children with disabilities:</b> Primary school: 53% (56% boys, 48% girls)  Secondary school: 38% (38% boys, 39% girls)  Baseline for forcibly displaced children enrolled in primary and secondary schools will be set by Q4 2025	Increase of 25%	Increase of 50%	MoESI	MoESI

**Measure 1.2.1: Targeted educational support and inclusion for Roma and Egyptian students and programmes of cooperation with their communities**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Implementing peer learning sessions in schools on anti-discrimination	Peer support delivered in 20 educational institutions	Educational institutions	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Promotion of the Roma language dictionary	Three promotional events organized	BTTA NGOs	Q3 2025	Q3 2026	€1,500	Budget
Provision of guidance to educational institutions for developing Individual Support Plans	Two trainings delivered on ISP development	BES MoESI	Q3 2025	Q1 2026	No funds required	–
Monitoring school-level multicultural education activities	Self-evaluation reports produced on multiculturalism	Educational institutions	Q3 2025	Ongoing	No funds required	–

**Measure 1.2.2: Develop policies and interventions in inclusive education to promote and ensure full inclusion and equal access, with appropriate adaptations and support services**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Conducting analysis of resource centres and schools with integrated classes with recommendations	Analysis with recommendations completed	BES MoESI CVET	Q3 2025	Q2 2026	€10,000	Budget
Researching and analysing inclusion index in primary and secondary schools	Research conducted and analysis carried out based on the inclusivity index, accompanied by an action plan	BES	Q2 2026	Q4 2026	€45,000	Budget

Analysing teaching assistants' work with recommendations	Analysis and recommendations completed	BES, MoESI UNICEF	Q1 2025	Q3 2025	€10,000	UNICEF
Accrediting a training programme for professional services in kindergartens and schools for working with teaching assistants	Programme accredited	BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	€1,500	Budget
Implementing an integrated additional professional support programme through cooperation between day-care centres, kindergartens and schools	Programme implemented in 13 municipalities	BES UNICEF	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€13,000	Budget
Development of a job classification system for professionals who will work in assistive technology units in resource centres and schools	Job classification and description completed	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Provision of licences for speech support software for students with special educational needs	30 speech support software licences provided	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€30,000	Budget
Provision of textbook formats compatible with speech support software	Textbook format for speech support software provided	BTTA	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Development of two new textbooks in DAISY format	Two textbooks in DAISY format developed	BTTA	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€50,000	Budget
Running public campaigns supporting inclusion	Four public events held	BES MoESI CVET	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€8,000	Budget

**Measure 1.2.3: Ensure quality education for students receiving instruction in Albanian**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Translation of examples of good practice for students with special needs into Albanian	Three examples of good practice translated from the School Portal	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q1 2026	€3,000	Budget
Development and implementation of a system of continuous and planned peer support for learning both languages	Plan developed and implemented in at least one school, involving at least 20 students and five teachers	Educational institutions	Q3 2025	Ongoing	€2,000	Budget
Development of bilingual teaching material to facilitate the learning of both languages	Teaching material in both languages developed and published on the School Portal	Educational institutions MoESI	Q1 2026	Ongoing	€1,000	Budget
Conducting monitoring of the application of knowledge gained through training	Monitoring conducted in five educational institutions	Educational institutions	Q4 2025	Ongoing	€2,500	Budget

**Measure 1.2.4: Develop policies, interventions and methodologies in the field of gender-equal education to promote and ensure a gender-sensitive environment for development and learning, enabling the full realization of the potential of boys and girls, students of all genders, including support for the development of a growth mindset**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Integrating a gender-equal approach into initial education programmes for preschool and primary teachers, pedagogues, psychologists and other teaching professions	All subject courses within study programmes for the education of preschool and primary teachers, pedagogues and psychologists include a gender-equal and gender-sensitive approach	UoM	Q2 2026	Ongoing	No funds required	–



Improving the methodology for developing subject curricula and for creating printed and digital textbooks using gender-aware and gender-sensitive discourse	Methodology improved	BES BT TA CVET MoESI MHMR	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Providing support to secondary school students for enrolment in teacher education faculties	Support provided (scholarships, transport, career counselling, etc.)	MoESI Local governments UoM	Q3 2025	Q2 2026	€70,000 €20,000 €10,000	MoESI Local governments UoM
Creating PR and marketing campaigns promoting gender equality in education	Two campaigns designed and implemented	UoM Media	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€7,000	UoM

**Measure 1.2.5: Ensure equal access to learning and participation in education for students from different language backgrounds, including socio-emotional support, with particular attention to those who have fled war-affected areas, in order to overcome challenges related to environmental change and cultural adaptation, and to develop a sense of belonging within the school community**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Determining the percentage of forcibly displaced children enrolled in primary and secondary schools out of the total number of students	Baseline value determined	MoESI MONSTAT	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	No funds required	–
Providing support for teachers and professional services in working with children from different language backgrounds (learning support, socio-emotional support)	At least two trainings delivered	BES CVET	Q3 2025	Q3 2026	€3,000	BES CVET

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.3		Teaching focuses on developing key competences for lifelong learning and life skills, in accordance with EU policies and standards			
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Revision of key documents (national curriculum framework, educational plan and programme, developed legal regulations)	0	Revision completed	Full implementation	MoESI	MoESI
Percentage of programmes innovated	0	100% of educational programmes updated for primary and general secondary education. 50% of educational programmes updated for vocational education.	100% of educational programmes updated for primary and general secondary education. 100% of educational programmes updated for vocational education.	CVET	BES CVET MoESI
Percentage of subjects using updated textbooks and teaching manuals	0	0	60%	Periodic reports	BES CVET MoESI BT TA
Percentage of textbooks for which digital educational materials have been developed	0	0	7%	Periodic reports	BES BT TA
Percentage of students participating in the work of innovative technology laboratories	1%	15%	30%	Periodic reports	MoESI BES
Number of students in international competitions	19	30	40	Periodic reports	EC CVET

Measure: 1.3.1: Align and enrich curricula and learning materials						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Development of a national curriculum framework aligned with EU policies and standards, defining key competences for lifelong learning, global citizenship, life and socio-emotional skills, green skills, climate change and other issues relevant for the development of curricula, including elective subjects and cross-curricular themes – for all levels of education and all types of schools	National curriculum framework developed and adopted, aligned with EU policies and standards, defining key competences for lifelong learning, global citizenship, life and socio-emotional skills, green skills, climate change and other relevant issues for curriculum development, including revised lists for elective subjects and cross-curricular themes in primary and secondary schools – for all levels of education and all types of schools	MoESI BES CVET	Q3 2025	Q2 2026	€100,000	Budget
Alignment of the scope and structure of curricula at all levels of education and types of schools with international best practices, with an emphasis on mother tongue, STEM subjects, foreign languages, the arts, humanities and global citizenship, while ensuring an optimal workload for students both at school and at home	Scope and structure of curricula aligned across all levels of education and types of schools	MoESI BES CVET	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	€70,000	Budget
Development of a methodological framework and quality standards for subject curricula	Methodological framework developed	BES MoESI	Q4 2026	Q4 2026	€10,000	Budget
Development of additional digital learning materials as complementary resources for teaching and learning	Additional digital learning materials developed as complementary resources for teaching and learning	BTTA	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€20,000	BTTA
Organizing training for authors, editors and reviewers of digital content	Trainings organized	BTTA	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€10,000	BTTA
Development of procedures for AI use in teaching and learning	AI usage procedures developed	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	No funds required	–
Designing and implementing workshops for children on the application of artificial intelligence – basic level and ethical aspects	10 workshops delivered involving 150 students	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	€6,000	Budget (EU Growth Plan)
Defining response models for emergency situations, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable categories of children; providing two response models for emergencies: preventive and reactive (in the event of an emergency); developing practical procedures for educational institutions	Models defined and procedures developed	MoESI BES Ministry of the Interior Ministry of Health Seismological Institute Civil Engineering Faculty	Q3 2025	Q3 2026	€60,000	Budget

Measure 1.3.2: Improve the quality of teaching and learning and support innovative teaching practices						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Conducting an analysis of the possibilities for textbooks to be reused or passed down between students	Analysis completed	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	€1,000	Budget
Analysing the potential for recycling selected textbooks	Analysis completed	BTTA MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€1,000	BTTA
Developing a work programme/procedures for the operation of Innovative Technology Laboratories/ EdTech hubs	Programme developed	MoESI BES	Q3 2025	Q3 2026	€1,000	Budget
Delivering training to teachers on EdTech lab usage	At least 102 teachers trained	MoESI BES CVET	Q3 2025	Q1 2026	€4,000	BES
Developing a programme for early identification and support for gifted students	Programme developed	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€3,000	Budget
Preparing support programmes for schools to implement bilingual education (identifying schools, defining subjects)	Support programme prepared	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€3,000	Budget
Developing textbooks for subjects taught in English in bilingual education	Bilingual textbooks developed for subjects taught in English	BTTA	Q2 2025	Ongoing	€260,000	Budget
Developing a national EdTech hubs programme	Programme developed	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q3 2025	€2,700	UNICEF

Measure 1.3.3: Evaluate and improve the quality of educational practices, materials and programmes						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Establishing a commission and developing quality standards for teaching with innovative programmes, as well as quality standards for textbooks, manuals and other educational materials, whether in printed or digital form	Quality standards developed or updated for institutions (schools), teachers' work, the work of professional associates and headteachers, textbooks, manuals and other educational materials in printed or digital form	BES	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	€20,000	Budget
Amending the Rulebook on the Content, Format and Method of Assessing the Quality of Educational Work in Institutions	Rulebook amended	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Preparing activities to develop the Methodology for Quality Assessment	Preparation activities carried out	BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€7,000	Budget
Developing improved versions of questionnaires for teachers, students and parents/guardians for the purpose of collecting and processing data in the external evaluation process	Improved versions of questionnaires for teachers, students and parents/guardians developed for data collection and processing in the external evaluation process	MoESI BES CVET	Q2 2025	Ongoing	€5,000	Budget
Supporting schools in implementing the self-evaluation process	Report analysis completed, four advisory sessions conducted and a manual developed	BES CVET	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€10,000	BES

Measure 1.3.4: External knowledge assessment (testing and examinations)						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Organizing online coding and grading of external tests for final-year primary students	Online test coding and grading system for grade IX students implemented	EC	Q4 2025	Q4 2026	€120,000	Budget
Conducting the first national online testing/examination	National testing in online format conducted for grade VI students	EC	Q4 2025	Q4 2026	€50,000	Budget

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.4	School assessment serves the purpose of student development and the improvement of teaching and learning				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Percentage of schools where assessment practices are rated as least effective or identified among the poorest performers against established standards	20%	50%	70%	Periodic reports Annual external evaluation report	BES CVET
Percentage of assessment tasks given to students that engage higher-order thinking skills: critical thinking, problem solving and creativity	20%	50%	70%	Periodic reports	BES
Increase in the percentage of tasks in external assessments that are similar to questions used in international assessments such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS	10%	25%	50%	Periodic reports	MoESI EC BES

Measure 1.4.2: Enhance transparency and continuous feedback						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Continuously monitoring and analysing assessment practices during implementation to ensure the engagement of higher-order knowledge, a high frequency of feedback and a balanced representation of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment functions	Reports on self-evaluation and evaluation practices produced	BES CVET Educational institutions	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.5	Schools are a safe, inclusive and stimulating environment for holistic and complete development of all students				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Percentage of schools with fully functional systems for socio-emotional support (counselling, peer support, mentoring) and anti-bullying programmes	10%	40%	At or above EU average (60%)	Education institutions	MoESI BES CVET
Number of reported cases of peer violence	181	Reduced by 50%	Reduced by 70%	MoESI	MoESI BES CVET
Percentage of schools providing morning care for children in the first education cycle	0%	25%	50%	MoESI	MoESI
Percentage of students participating in extracurricular activities	Total: 0.74% (699 students) Primary school: 0.94% (644 students) Secondary school: 0.22% (57 students)	Increased by 25%	Increased by 50%	MoESI	MoESI

Percentage of students who express a positive sense of belonging to their school based on the relevant indicators	<p>PISA 2020:</p> <p>86% of students reported that they make friends easily at school (OECD average: 76%)</p> <p>85% of students felt a sense of belonging at school (OECD average: 75%)</p> <p>13% of students felt lonely at school (OECD average: 17%)</p> <p>14% of students felt left out of school activities (OECD average: 16%)</p>	OECD average ±10%	OECD average ±10%	PISA	EC
Number of schools where the process of assessing and improving quality has been rated as highly successful in external evaluations	3%	15%	40%	Reports on the assessment of educational quality	BES CVET
Percentage of teachers participating in mobility programmes	0.3%	4%	8%	MoESI	CVET BES
Percentage of schools implementing international projects.	<p>Primary and general secondary education: 25%</p> <p>Vocational education: 38%</p>	<p>Primary and general secondary education: 35%</p> <p>Vocational education: 50%</p>	<p>Primary and general secondary education: 50%</p> <p>Vocational education: 60%</p>	MoESI	CVET BES

**Measure 1.5.1: Enhance socio-emotional support, wellbeing and holistic development through a safe, inclusive and engaging school environment**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Improving guidelines and instructions for procedures to ensure a safe school environment, free from physical, verbal, social and emotional violence, whether by students or teachers	Guidelines updated	MoES BES CVET	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	€5,000	Budget
Improving guidelines and instructions and developing programmes aimed at ensuring an inclusive, safe and supportive school environment	<p>Guidelines and instructions improved.</p> <p>Programme developed for the implementation of homeroom/class community sessions.</p> <p>Workshops conducted for students and parents/guardians in all educational institutions.</p> <p>Educational material developed in all educational institutions.</p> <p>Examples of good practice published on BES and CVET websites.</p>	BES CVET Educational institutions	Q2 2025	Ongoing	€5,000	Budget



Establishing additional mechanisms for educational and socio-emotional support to help students achieve better academic outcomes and holistic development, as well as to preserve and promote physical and mental health and improve the process of monitoring student support	<p>Survey conducted on student and parent attitudes using a representative sample, with proposed measures to improve student support.</p> <p>Number of additional and remedial classes and extracurricular activities increased by 30%.</p> <p>Workshops for students and parents/guardians held in all educational institutions.</p> <p>Volunteer clubs established in 50% of educational institutions.</p> <p>Self-evaluation and external evaluation reports prepared.</p>	BES CVET Educational institutions	Q3 2025	Q4 2035	€10,000	Budget
Developing and delivering workshops on cyber-safety for students	20 workshops held with 500 students	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€6,000	Budget
Marking Safer Internet Day	Day marked for two consecutive years; number of participants recorded	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q1 2026	€3,000	Budget
Ensuring students have access to a wide range of creative, motivating and inclusive extracurricular activities, with a focus on volunteer work, languages, arts, sports, practical skills and environmental initiatives, ensuring access for all students, especially those in rural areas	Number of schools offering students a diverse range of creative, motivating and inclusive extracurricular activities	MoESI BES CVET	Q3 2025	Ongoing	€20,000	Budget
Developing programmes for students aimed at fostering general attitudes, socialization, support and the development of a healthy self-perception	Programmes developed and delivered	BES CVET	Q4 2025	Q3 2026	€5,000	Budget
Implementing the pilot project "Creativity in School" and conducting its evaluation	Project implemented and evaluated in 10 schools (five primary schools, two grammar schools, two vocational schools, and one secondary art school through collaborative efforts)	BES CVET	Q4 2025	Q3 2026	€40,500	Budget
Ensuring conditions for morning care of children in the first cycle by creating adequate spatial capacities and amending the legal framework	Spatial capacities analysed. Legal framework amended.	MoESI	Q1 2026	Ongoing	No funds required	–
Increase bilingual education starting from the first grade of primary school	Number of schools implementing bilingual instruction: 24	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q4 2030	No funds required	–

Measure 1.5.2: Ensure a comprehensive approach and collaboration among all stakeholders in the educational process through community engagement and expert participation						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Ensuring more active student participation in the school decision-making processes, as well as more effective functioning of student parliaments, student organizations and clubs	<p>Number of student parliament initiatives adopted.</p> <p>Number of socially beneficial activities implemented at the school and community levels.</p> <p>A network of student parliaments established, covering 70% of schools.</p>	Educational institutions Union of High School Students	Q3 2025	Ongoing	€5,000	Budget
Enhancing cooperation and networking among schools and teachers by organizing forums, professional gatherings, associations, international cooperation, mobility programmes, etc., with the aim of sharing best practices and encouraging innovation	<p>Organized: two forums; one professional gathering of associations; mobility programmes established in 50% of schools; pilot project "School in the Community" implemented in five schools (two primary, one general secondary school, one vocational school and one art school); project teams formed in 50% of schools</p>	MoESI BES CVET Educational institutions	Q2 2025	Ongoing	€35,000	Budget
Enhancing school partnerships with parents, businesses, local institutions, organizations and NGOs to promote holistic and inclusive engagement	<p>Workshops involving parents conducted in all educational institutions.</p> <p>Activities carried out in cooperation with businesses, local institutions and NGOs in 80% of schools.</p> <p>Parents involved in the development of the flexible part of the curriculum in 30% of educational institutions.</p>	MoESI BES CVET Educational institutions	Q1 2025	Ongoing	€5,000	Budget

STRATEGIC GOAL 2		All employees in educational institutions equally and fully support the quality and equity of education, foster the development of key competencies for lifelong learning and skills of students and maintain positive attitudes and high expectations towards all children and young people				
	Outcome indicator	Baseline 2024	Interim target 2030	Final target 2035	Source of data	Responsible institution
2.0.1	All staffing needs of the education system are fully met by qualified personnel.	Baseline value – % of unqualified staff in educational institutions: TBC	Reduction of unqualified staff in educational institutions by 3%	Reduction of unqualified staff in educational institutions by 5%	MoESI	MoESI
2.0.2	Ratio of educators and teachers to students (at the regional/municipal level): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In preschools</li> <li>- In primary schools</li> <li>- In secondary schools</li> </ul>	<p>Ratio of educators and teachers to students:</p> <p>1:40 in preschools</p> <p>1:28 in primary schools</p> <p>1:32 in secondary schools</p>	<p>Ratio of educators and teachers to students:</p> <p>1:27 in preschools</p> <p>1:25 in primary schools</p> <p>1:28 in secondary schools</p>	<p>Ratio of educators and teachers to students:</p> <p>1:24 in preschools</p> <p>1:23 in primary schools</p> <p>1:25 in secondary schools</p>	MoESI	MoESI
2.0.3	Overall job satisfaction among teachers	<p>60% of teachers reported a high level of job satisfaction based on the 2021 survey.</p> <p>Teacher turnover rate: N/A</p>	<p>The number of teachers reporting a high level of job satisfaction increased by 10% compared to the 2021 survey results.</p> <p>Teacher turnover rate reduced by 10%</p>	<p>The number of teachers reporting a high level of job satisfaction increased by 20% compared to the 2021 survey results.</p> <p>Teacher turnover rate reduced by 20%</p>	MoESI	MoESI

2.0.4	Employees in educational institutions are fully capable of meeting the requirements of the revised Key Competences for Lifelong Learning Framework and the improved Competency Standards for Teachers and Headteachers	40% of teachers have completed professional development programmes focused on generic and digital skills, inclusive education, literacy, scientific and mathematical literacy	55% of teachers have completed professional development programmes focused on generic and digital skills, inclusive education, literacy, scientific and mathematical literacy	70% of teachers have completed professional development programmes focused on generic and digital skills, inclusive education, literacy, scientific and mathematical literacy	BES CVET EC	MoESI
2.0.5	Teaching is high-quality, motivating and focused on developing all competences outlined in this strategy	40% of students demonstrate competencies in literacy, mathematics, science and digital literacy.  50% of parents and students report being satisfied with the quality of teaching.  Percentage of schools achieving results above national standards for teaching quality: 1%	55% of students demonstrate competencies in literacy, mathematics, science and digital literacy.  > 15% of parents and students report being satisfied with the quality of teaching.  > 5% of schools achieve results above national standards for teaching quality	70% of students demonstrate competencies in literacy, mathematics, science and digital literacy.  > 30% of parents and students report being satisfied with the quality of teaching.  > 10% of schools achieve results above national standards for teaching quality	Periodic research National testing, EC analyses PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS results Report on the assessment of educational quality	MoESI BES CVET EC

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.1		The education system has enough qualified and competent preschool educators, teachers, professional associates, headteachers, assistants and other necessary personnel who are employed based on objective quality and competence criteria			
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Percentage of schools reporting a shortage of qualified staff	35% of schools/ kindergartens report a shortage of qualified staff	< 20% of schools/ kindergartens report a shortage of qualified staff	< 10% of schools/ kindergartens report a shortage of qualified staff	MoESI	MoESI
Increased enrolment of secondary school graduates in STEM study programmes	Number of secondary school graduates enrolled in STEM study programmes UoM 894 Mediterranean University 154 Adriatic 80 UDG 319	> 5–10%	> 15%	UoM UDG Mediterranean University & Adriatic University	MoESI UoM UDG Mediterranean University & Adriatic University
Increase in the percentage of employed qualified ECE educators and professional associates.	N/A	> 10%	> 20%	MoESI	MoESI Higher education institutions
Established policies and functional tools to address teacher shortages, including alternative pathways to teaching qualifications	No policies or functional tools exist to mitigate teacher shortages across all subjects in certain geographical areas or disadvantaged schools.  No alternative pathways to obtaining teaching qualifications exist beyond initial teacher education (ITE).	Partially established policies and functional tools to address teacher shortages for all subjects in specific geographical areas or disadvantaged schools, with evidence of implementation having begun.  Partial availability of alternative pathways to obtaining teaching qualifications beyond initial teacher education (ITE).	Developed and implemented policies and functional tools to mitigate teacher shortages across all subjects, geographical areas and disadvantaged schools.  Full implementation underway of alternative pathways to obtaining teaching qualifications beyond initial teacher education (ITE).	MoESI	MoESI

Measure 2.1.1: Ensure the recruitment of in-demand professionals aligned with the specific needs of the education system						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Collecting and analysing data from schools and preschool institutions on lacking teaching staff and professional associates	Database created at system level; recommendations issued	MoESI	Q2 2025	Ongoing	€9,000	Budget
Developing employment measures tailored to attract qualified personnel, particularly in areas with identified staff shortages	Employment strategies developed	MoESI CVET MLES Employment Agency Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Implementing career guidance in all secondary school grades	Career counselling delivered in all secondary schools	Secondary schools	Q2 2025	Ongoing	No funds required	–
Implementing incentive measures to attract professionals to areas with insufficient staffing coverage	Supportive work environment established	MoESI	Q2 2026	Ongoing	€100,000	Budget

Measure 2.1.2: Strengthen the existing expert-level capacities of the Bureau for Educational Services, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training, the Examination Centre and the Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids through targeted professional development and mentoring programmes						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Establishing cooperation with regional/international institutions	Two MoUs signed for joint projects	MoESI CVET BES EC BTAA	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget
Developing an online collaboration concept for the BES	Concept created	BES	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	€1,000	Budget
Setting technical requirements for online collaboration for the BES	Technical conditions ensured in the BES for 70 employees	BES	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	No funds required	–
Training staff for implementation of the online collaboration concept for the Bureau for Educational Services	70 BES employees trained	BES	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	€2,100	Budget

Measure 2.1.3: Strengthen the established system of professional development at the school/kindergarten level by developing a sustainable model that promotes collaborative learning and continuous professional development						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Developing mentorship guidelines for teachers and mentors based on the Mentorship Programme	Guidelines developed and distributed to schools	BES CVET	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	No funds required	–
Preparing reports on mentoring activities based on the developed guidelines	Reports from schools/preschools	BES CVET Schools Preschools	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Conducting advisory sessions for current assistant headteachers of educational institutions in the areas of ensuring the quality of teaching and learning, cooperation with parents or guardians and evaluation of the impact of professional development in schools and preschool institutions	Consultations held	BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	No funds required	–

Developing guidelines for networking schools and preschool institutions (subject groups, leadership, teams, etc.) at the municipal and regional levels	Guidelines created	BES CVET	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Regularly updating the websites of the BES and CVET with good practice examples in teaching, research, projects and extracurricular activities	Number of good practice examples published	BES CVET	Ongoing	Ongoing	No funds required	–
Developing improved reporting templates for activities implemented following training sessions for school-level CPD coordinators	Templates developed and posted on the BES and CVET websites	BES CVET	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	No funds required	–
Creation of an online questionnaire for evaluating training effects and knowledge transfer	Questionnaire developed	BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Organizing consultations with CPD coordinators at all education levels every two years	Consultations held at all education levels	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q1 2027	€1,000	Budget

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.2	The system of initial education, continuous professional development and career advancement for all employees in educational institutions is designed to facilitate the acquisition and application of competencies necessary for the comprehensive development and learning of children and adolescents in an inclusive environment				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Teachers possess pedagogical competencies in: collaborative and interactive learning; applying principles of inclusive education, sustainable development, discrimination and violence prevention; media literacy; socio-emotional skills; gender equality; interculturalism; bilingual skills; democracy and human rights; civic education; climate change; etc.	30% of teachers/educators	50% of teachers/educators	60% of teachers	Report on the Assessment of Education Quality	BES CVET
Teachers trained to implement the new/ revised curriculum in line with the 2025 Education Reform Strategy	0	50% of teachers trained	100% of teachers trained	Training report	BES CVET
Number of teachers/participants who attended training on digital competencies in accordance with the adopted Framework for Teachers' Digital Competencies and the revised Licensing Rulebook.	20% of teachers	40%	80%	Training report	MoESI BES CVET
Percentage of primary and secondary schools implementing the “My Values and Virtues” programme for developing children's social and emotional skills	56%	100%	–	MoESI BES	BES MoESI
The student-to-professional associate ratio aligns with actual needs	300:1 student-to-professional associate ratio	No higher than a 150:1 student-to-professional associate ratio	No higher than a 100:1 student-to-professional associate ratio	MoESI	MoESI
Number of career advisers in primary and secondary schools and universities trained under the new model	200 teachers trained	500 teachers trained	1,000 teachers trained	MoESI	MoESI UoM



Measure 2.2.1: Improve initial teacher education by revising curricula and strengthening cooperation with educational institutions						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Conducting an analysis of teachers' education programmes against the Montenegrin Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning and the revised Competence Standards for Teachers and Headteachers	Analysis with recommendations completed	UoM Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education	Q3 2025	Q1 2026	€5,000	UoM
Aligning teachers' initial education programmes with the Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning	Revised programmes	UoM Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education	Q4 2025	Q2 2026	€5,000	Budget
Conducting research, meetings, workshops and roundtables	E-publications developed	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	No funds required	–

Measure 2.2.2: Provide additional training for trainers through collaboration with national and international experts						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Forming national trainers' groups for work with foreign experts	Trainer groups formed	BES CVET	2026	2026	No funds required	–
Conducting advanced training for trainers in collaboration with foreign experts	Training sessions held	BES CVET	2026	2026	€5,000	Budget

Measure 2.2.3: Strengthen the professional development of advisors in the Bureau for Educational Services and the Centre for Vocational Education in line with successful practices in the region and Europe						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Identifying international experts and relevant areas/topics important for the professional development of advisors at the Bureau for Educational Services and the Centre for Vocational Education	Topics and experts identified	BES CVET	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	No funds required	–
Preparing initial materials for adviser training	Initial materials developed	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	No funds required	–
Organizing a study visit based on the identified themes	Study visit conducted, report with recommendations created	BES	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€5,000	Budget
Implementing the knowledge and skills gained from study visits and collaboration with international experts and institutions	Improved methodology for assessing, ensuring and enhancing the quality of educational work. Improved templates, procedures, instruments, etc. Revised Rulebook on the Manner, Content, and Forms of Work in Educational Institutions	BES CVET	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	No funds required	–

Establishing close cooperation through the formation of a joint team of the Bureau for Educational Services and the Centre for Vocational Education, composed of advisors for continuous professional development	Joint team formed	CVET BES	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	No funds required	–
Conducting an analysis of internal and external evaluations of the professional development of teachers and preschool educators	Reports with recommendations	CVET BES	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	No funds required	–
Strengthening human resources in the departments for continuous professional development	New advisors employed – two each in the Bureau for Educational Services and the Centre for Vocational Education	CVET BES MoESI	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	€12,000	Budget
Providing technical equipment and stable internet connectivity to ensure the smooth functioning of advisors	Stable connection and equipment provided	BES CVET	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget

**Measure 2.2.4: Implement continuous professional development for teachers through structured programmes that align with this and other national education strategies, as well as the specific needs of schools**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Revising the Rulebook on the Detailed Conditions, Manner and Procedure for Issuing and Renewing Work Licences for Teachers, Headteachers and Assistant Headteachers of Educational Institutions	Rulebook adopted	MoESI BES	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	No funds required	–
Defining areas of teachers' and preschool educators' professional development programmes in line with revised by-laws	Areas of professional development programmes for teachers and preschool educators established	MoESI BES	Q2 2025	Q2 2025	No funds required	–
Developing a Digital Competency Framework for Teachers	Framework adopted	MoESI BES CVET	Q4 2025	Q4 2026	€6,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Creating new training programmes and adapting the existing ones to strengthen and apply digital competences in teaching, categorized by areas and levels of progress according to the Digital Competence Framework for Teachers	15 new and adapted training programmes adopted	MoESI BES CVET	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€15,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting two-day training sessions to strengthen and apply digital competences in teaching	2,000 teachers trained	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€135,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting one-day training sessions to strengthen and apply digital competences in teaching	2,000 teachers trained	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€74,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting one-day training sessions for teachers on the use of self-evaluation tools to assess the level of digital competence in teaching (SELFIE for TEACHERS)	825 teachers trained	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€27,500	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting one-day training sessions for SELFIE teams in educational institutions on application of the SELFIE self-evaluation tool	600 staff trained	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€20,000	Budget (Growth Plan)

Conducting three-day 3D modelling training	30 staff trained	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	€3,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting two-day robotics training	150 teachers trained	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	€11,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting one-day training sessions on the application of artificial intelligence – basic level and ethical considerations	150 teachers trained	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	€6,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting one-day training sessions on the application of artificial intelligence – advanced level and ethical considerations	75 teachers trained	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	€3,500	Budget (Growth Plan)
Implementing general training programmes on cybersecurity for employees in educational institutions	2,000 staff trained	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€40,000	Budget
Initiating establishment of training centres based on a regional model in cooperation with educational institutions – Memorandum of Cooperation	Memorandum of Cooperation developed – training centres established: three in the north, three on the coast, and three in the central region	MoESI BES CVET Schools Preschools	Q3 2025	Q3 2025	No funds required	–
Cybersecurity training for ICT coordinators	180 ICT coordinators trained	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€4,000	Budget
Cybersecurity training for pedagogues and psychologists	100 staff trained	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€2,000	Budget
Implementing training programmes for the prevention of cyberbullying among students	100 staff trained	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q1 2026	€2,000	Budget
Active learning methodology training	600 teachers trained	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€10,000	Budget
Bilingual teaching training for secondary school teachers	20 teachers trained	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget
Implementing training programmes based on the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) methodology	45 class teachers trained	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€20,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Implementing training programmes for intensive literacy support for children from different language backgrounds and minority groups (Podgorica and the southern region)	40 teachers trained	MoESI BES	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget
Implementing the training programme “My Values and Virtues”	Teacher teams trained in an additional 30 schools (a total of 150 schools)	BES	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€15,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Project planning training for trainers	20 trainers trained	BES	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€1,000	MoESI (Growth Plan)
Project planning training for preschool teachers	750 preschool teachers trained	BES MoESI	Ongoing	Ongoing	€19,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
General trainer training	60 teachers professional support staff trained	BES	Ongoing	Ongoing	€3,000	Budget
Training on gender equality in education	100 preschool teachers and schoolteachers trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€3,400	Budget
Media literacy training for primary and secondary teachers	200 teachers trained	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€5,400	Budget
Implementing teacher training programmes for intercultural (civic) education	200 teachers trained	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€2,800	Budget

Implementing training on mental and physical health protection	400 teachers trained	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€5,500	Budget
Implementing training programmes for teachers and professional associates for the prevention of peer violence	400 teachers and professional support staff trained	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€5,500	Budget
Supporting training for working with students with intellectual disabilities	100 teachers trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€1,800	Budget
Supporting training for working with students facing behavioural challenges	200 teachers trained	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€3,600	Budget
Implementing training programmes in the field of human rights and freedoms and the prevention of discrimination	300 teachers trained	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€3,600	Budget
Subject-based assessment training for primary school teachers	2,000 teachers trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€54,000	Budget
Reading literacy training	500 teachers trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€7,600	Budget
PIRLS-based literacy training for lower primary school teachers	400 teachers trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€11,000	Budget
Scientific literacy training for primary school teachers	500 teachers trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€7,000	Budget
Mathematical literacy training	400 teachers trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€5,500	Budget
Implementing training for STEM teachers	300 teachers trained	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€6,000	Budget
Implementing training programmes for working with gifted students	170 teachers trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€3,000	Budget
Implementing training programmes to support students from Roma and Egyptian communities	120 teachers trained	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€4,100	Budget
Implementing training programmes for working with students with special educational needs, including training for the development of ITPs (Individual Transition Plans) and ITP2s	250 teachers trained	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€4,000	Budget
Implementing training and supervision sessions for the "Caring Families for Young Children" programme, including training of two new trainers	At least 35 new facilitators from preschool institutions and primary schools trained for programme implementation. Two new trainers trained	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€20,000	Budget
Training and piloting a parenting programme for parents of young children (age 1–4)	At least five preschool institutions implementing the programme for parents of young children (age 1–4)	MoESI Preschool	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€20,000	Budget
Implementing training and supervision for the "Caring Families for Young Children" programme for parents of children with disabilities, including the training of two new trainers	At least 20 new facilitators from public preschool institutions and primary schools trained to implement the programme. Two new trainers trained	MoESI Preschools Schools	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€10,000	Budget

Preschool teacher training	200 preschool teachers trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€4,000	Budget
Soft skills training for teachers	1,800 teachers trained	BES	Ongoing	Ongoing	€32,000	Budget
Early childhood development training	100 preschool teachers and professional support staff trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€1,900	Budget
Implementing training programmes to support adolescents	100 teachers and professional associates trained	BES MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€1,900	Budget Donors
Implementing training programmes for career guidance teams in secondary schools	150 teachers trained	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€2,700	Budget
Implementing training programmes for a multidisciplinary approach to teaching and learning	200 teachers trained	BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€3,800	Budget
Implementing training sessions for teaching in combined classes	50 teachers trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€800	Budget
Implementing training programmes for headteachers, teachers and professional associates on responding to emergency and crisis situations	120 headteachers, assistant headteachers, professional associates and teachers trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€3,800	Budget
Implementing the NTC Learning System training programme	1,000 teachers trained	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€45,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Sustainable development and environmental education training	160 teachers trained	BES	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€2,900	Budget
Implementing training sessions for schools on the use of CBoard	Four training sessions conducted for 80 teachers	BES	Q3 2025	Q3 2026	€1,500	Budget
Implementing training sessions for employees in educational institutions on applying the model for identifying children at risk of early school leaving and out-of-school children, as well as procedures for reporting to the relevant institutions	2,000 staff trained	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€14,400	Budget
Implementing training sessions for teachers and professional associates to develop students' competences for providing peer support	40 teachers and professional associates trained	CVET BES MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€1,000	Budget
Implementing training for professional services in kindergartens and schools on working with teaching assistants	100 professionals trained	BES CVET	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	€2,000	Budget
Identifying training needs of teachers and practical training instructors by school and sector, based on recommendations from the external evaluation of practical education in school-based and dual formats	Training needs of teachers and practical training instructors identified by school and sector on an annual basis	CVET	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Conducting training sessions for practical education teachers based on identified needs	Training sessions for practical education teachers conducted (three sessions per year)	CVET	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€20,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting training sessions for practical education instructors based on recommendations from external evaluation	Training sessions for practical education instructors conducted (three sessions per year)	CVET	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€20,000	Budget (Growth Plan)



Measure 2.2.5: Ensure continuous professional development for teachers and educators, with an emphasis on enhancing innovative didactic and methodological skills						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Establishing specialized teams for monitoring pedagogical innovations and developmental psychology, and for creating guidelines, teaching materials and digital tools to support the application of modern teaching trends in practice	Teams established and guidelines, teaching materials and digital tools developed for educational institutions	MoESI BES UoM	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget
Developing teamwork among teachers to enhance a multidisciplinary approach in curriculum development	Programmes and materials developed	Educational institutions	Q3 2025	Ongoing	No funds required	–
Developing training programmes for trainers in underrepresented areas	Training programmes developed	BES	Q3 2026	Ongoing	€1,500 per programme	Budget

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.3					
Systemic measures have been implemented to improve the reputation, safety, and overall well-being of employees. The professions of preschool educators, teachers and other employees in educational institutions are attractive, ensuring the attraction and retention of the highest-quality and most motivated educational and teaching staff, with systemic measures in place to guarantee their reputation and well-being					
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Overall teacher satisfaction with the professional environment, including social status, salary and working conditions in schools	15% satisfied with social status 10% satisfied with pay 27% satisfied with material conditions 38% satisfied with pedagogical conditions 70% feel safe at school	Increase by 10%	Increase by 20%	Periodic research Union MoESI NGO	MoESI
Policies and accompanying measures for teacher motivation and retention have been introduced and are effective	Rating 1 – Process initiated	Rating 2 – Moderate progress	Rating 3 – Advanced progress	Periodic survey Teachers' Union NGOs	MoESI
Implementation of an improved teacher performance evaluation system for career progression	Rating 1 – Process initiated	Rating 2 – Moderate progress	Rating 3 – Advanced progress	BES	BES

Measure 2.3.1: Enhance the attractiveness and reputation of the profession of educators, teachers and other education professionals by developing policies to improve working conditions, including salaries, career advancement opportunities and support for mental health and employee wellbeing.						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Establishing a reward system for teachers based on key performance indicators (KPIs), including student achievement (self-evaluation and external evaluation)	Percentage of teachers rewarded	MoESI	Q4 2026	Ongoing	€100,000 annually	Budget
Revising the Rulebook on the Types of Titles, Conditions, Manner, and Procedure for Proposing and Awarding Titles to Teachers as an incentive for the continuous professional advancement of teachers and preschool educators	Rulebook revised	MoESI BES CVET	Q3 2026	Q3 2026	No funds required	–

Implementing team-building activities at the school/preschool institution level to foster positive collegial relationships and strengthen institutional ethos	Reports from self-evaluation and external evaluation	Schools Preschools	Q2 2025	Ongoing	No funds required	–
Revising the existing Rulebook on the Organization of Teachers' Professional Development and the Procedure for Selecting Authors of Professional Development Programmes, in order to achieve the goals of the strategy	Rulebook revised	MoESI BES CVET	Q2 2025	Q2 2025	No funds required	–
Conducting stress management workshops for education staff	Workshops delivered in schools and preschools	Preschools MoESI BES CVET	Q4 2025	Ongoing	No funds required	–

**Measure 2.3.3: Encourage positive student–teacher relationships by providing comprehensive support to teachers, strengthening their competencies in creating an ethical, supportive and inclusive learning environment. Foster a relationship of trust between students, teachers and parents/guardians, promoting gender equality, equal rights and responsibilities for all**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Evaluating the effectiveness of existing forms of cooperation with parents/guardians, such as parent–teacher meetings, plans for individual consultations, open days, etc.	BES and CVET reports	BES CVET	Q1 2026	Ongoing	No funds required	–
Defining online resources for teacher–parent collaboration	Digital communication tools created	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q1 2026	No funds required	–
Ensuring effective cooperation between Parent Councils and Ethics Committees in decision making for the benefit of students and teachers	Percentage of initiatives by the Parent Council and Ethics Committee adopted at the school level	Educational institutions	Q1 2026	Ongoing	No funds required	–
Ensuring the implementation of workshops for parents/guardians in schools and preschool institutions aimed at developing assertive communication, mutual trust and regular cooperation	Self-evaluation reports	Educational institutions BES CVET	Q3 2026	Ongoing	No funds required	–

STRATEGIC GOAL 3		Improving quality and equity in the education system through enhanced governance and financing, with a focus on evidence collection and utilization, as well as participation in decision-making processes				
	Outcome indicator	Baseline 2024	Interim target 2030	Final target 2035	Source of data	Responsible institution
3.0.1	Public expenditure on education per student as a share of total public spending	33% of the EU average	70% of the EU average	90% of the EU average	Law on Budget MONSTAT EUROSTAT	MoF MONSTAT MoESI
3.0.2	External assessment of the adequacy of management and leadership in the education sector	Results obtained through the Functional Review	55% of the maximum score	75% of the maximum score	Functional Review	MPA MoESI
3.0.3	Percentage of headteachers rated as competent or highly competent in the annual performance evaluation	40%	60%	80%	Annual competency assessment report	MoESI BES CVET

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.1	The structures, systems and necessary competencies for managing the education system reflect the key functional requirements of strategic management, system oversight, human resource management, financial management, property and infrastructure management				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Number of implemented recommendations from the functional review with action plans in progress	0%	50%	90%	Annual report of the Monitoring Commission	MoESI BES CVET
Average satisfaction rating of the quality of communication between the MoESI and educational institutions	No assessment conducted	3.5	4.5	Research implementation report	MoESI

**Measure 3.1.1: Conduct a functional review of the ministry and its associated institutions, align the action plan for implementing approved recommendations and initiate implementation**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Conducting functional review	Functional review completed	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q1 2026	€10,000	UNICEF/EU Delegation
Creating an action plan for the implementation of recommendations in the functional review	Action plan with recommendations completed	MoESI	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	No funds required	–
Improving the online communication concept of the MoESI and associated institutions	Improved technical conditions for online communication, 50% of MoESI employees and associated institutions trained and internal procedures created on the use of online communication tools	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2027	€7,000	Budget
Preparing twice-yearly reports on the action plan	Twice-yearly reports completed	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q1 2027	No funds required	–

**Measure 3.1.2: Within the MoESI, establish a directorate/department for strategic management and define its relationship with other directorates and departments**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Establishing a commission to monitor the implementation of the strategy	Commission established at the level of state secretaries, directors of directorates general, directors of educational institutions	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q2 2025	No funds required	–
Amending the Rulebook on the Organization and Systematization of Jobs within the MoESI	Rulebook on the Organisation and Systematisation of Jobs within the MoESI amended	MoESI	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	No funds required	–
Establishing an organizational unit for strategic planning and management	Directorate/ Department for Strategic Planning and Management established	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	No funds required	–
Ensuring material and technical conditions and human resources capacity for functioning	Established material and technical conditions	MoESI	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	€120,000	Budget
Preparing and adopting strategic planning and management acts	Strategic planning and management acts adopted	MoESI	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	No funds required	–
Training officials for monitoring, planning and implementing strategic documents	Training of officials for monitoring, planning and implementing strategic documents conducted	MoESI	Q2 2026	Q4 2026	€10,000	Budget
Preparing annual reports for the government	Annual reports adopted	MoESI	Q1 2026	Continuous	No funds required	–

Measure 3.1.3: Improve the functioning of the Human Resource Management Service within the MoESI						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Conducting an analysis of the state of the Human Resource Management Service, general affairs and human resources, with recommendations for improvement	Analysis conducted	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q1 2026	€1,000	Budget
Strengthening the human resources capacities of the Human Resources Service, general affairs, and human resources	Two new employees hired, one of whom is a psychologist; four team-building trainings organized; practice of individual interviews with employees introduced; number of employees who have completed NLP training increased to 50%	MoESI	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	€150,000	Budget
Implementing joint activities with the Human Resources Administration	Number of employees working in the Human Resources Administration increased by 50%	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q1 2026	No funds required	–

Measure 3.1.4: Strengthen medium-term financial planning and annual budgeting by applying programme-based and priority-driven budgeting methods						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Hiring an external consultant to organize training for senior management and expert staff of the MoESI and relevant institutions regarding medium-term and annual budget planning	Contract signed with an external consultant; training organized for senior management	MoESI MoF	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€10,000	MoESI
Preparing guidelines for internal communication among directorates/ services within the MoESI and institutions under the MoESI's authority during preparation of the medium-term and annual budget	Guidelines prepared	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	No funds required	–

Measure 3.1.5: In collaboration with other relevant ministries and agencies, conduct an analysis and develop an investment plan to address the issue of schools with a low number of students						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Conducting an analysis of all primary and secondary schools, the number of students, schools' spatial capacities, geographical location, number of teaching staff, etc.	Analysis completed	MoESI BES CVET	Q4 2025	Q2 2026	€1,000	Budget
Establishing continuous cooperation with other ministries, local self-government units, international partners, etc.	10 joint projects implemented; six memorandums of cooperation signed; 10 investments made through joint investment	MoESI BES CVET	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€500,000	Budget Donations

Creating measures for the functioning of schools with a low number of students	Instruction for optimal functioning of schools with a low number of students prepared	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	No funds required	–
Implementing measures for the functioning of schools with a low number of students	Construction work completed on 40 schools with a low number of students	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€4,000,000	Budget

**Measure 3.1.6: In collaboration with other relevant ministries and agencies, conduct an analysis and develop an investment plan to address the issue of schools with a high number of students**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Conducting an analysis of all primary and secondary schools regarding the number of students, schools' spatial capacities, geographical location, number of teaching staff, etc.	Analysis conducted	MoESI BES CVET	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€1,000	Budget
Developing measures for the functioning of schools with a large number of students	Guidelines for optimal functioning of schools with a large number of students developed	MoESI BES CVET	Q4 2025	Q4 2026	No funds required	–
Conducting an analysis of teaching staff representation and identify staff shortages	Analysis conducted	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	€5,000	Budget
Presenting recommendations derived from the analysis to all universities and independent faculties	Two round tables organized	MoESI BES CVET	Q4 2025	Q4 2026	No funds required	–

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.2	Strengthen national oversight and planning of teaching staff, improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession, and enhance human resource management practices in institutions				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Estimated competence of institutional leaders and senior managers based on the Human Resources Administration competency framework	50%	80%	100%	Compilation of annual competency assessment reports	MoESI
Attractiveness of the teaching profession among secondary school and university graduates	20%	30%	40%	Universities	MoESI
Proportion of teachers aspiring to higher professional titles	30%	60%	100%	Primary and secondary schools in Montenegro	MoESI

**Measure 3.2.1: Implement the recommendations from the functional review related to human resource management and reach an agreement with the Ministry of Public Administration on all structural and systemic changes**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Developing an implementation plan for recommendations from the functional review	Implementation plan for functional review recommendations developed	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	No funds required	–
Organizing employee training	Training conducted for 50% of employees	MoESI MPA	Q2 2026	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget
Monitoring implementation of recommendation	Report on implemented recommendations	MoESI	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	No funds required	–



Measure 3.2.2: Promote the teaching profession with a special focus on gender equality and the inclusion of vulnerable groups						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Creating a social media campaign to promote the teaching profession (gender-balanced) through promotional videos, short video content	Two media campaigns conducted	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€3,000	Budget
Organizing events promoting the teaching profession for all teachers and childcare workers	Events organized	MoESI	Ongoing	Ongoing	€5,000	Budget
Organizing workshops in secondary schools through career orientation teams	10 workshops conducted	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€2,000	Budget
Creating media content promoting inclusive education and addressing the importance of professional development for teachers	Five media contents created	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€1,000	Budget

Measure 3.2.3: Develop support systems for potential shortage occupations in the future						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Conducting a labour market needs analysis and identifying potentially deficient occupations	Analysis with recommendations prepared	MoESI BES Chamber of Commerce Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue	Q4 2025	Q3 2026	€2,000	Budget
Conducting an analysis of current study programmes, identifying areas that need to be adapted to the needs of the labour market	Analysis conducted	Higher Education Institutions MoESI BES Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	€2,000	Budget
Developing incentive measures for students of in-demand professions	Incentive measures developed – 10% increase in the number of scholarships and awards; possibility of continuous professional development – mobility of students of in-demand professions in EU countries increased by 10%	MoESI UoM	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€50,000	Budget
Developing training for specific knowledge required for certain professions (simulations, virtual workshops, 3D modelling, etc.)	Number of trainings held increased by 20%	CVET	Q4 2026	Ongoing	€20,000	Budget

Measure 3.2.4: Improve the competencies of management staff in educational institutions at all levels of education						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Conducting a qualitative analysis of the Training Programme for Headteachers	Completed analysis	BES CVET MoESI	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	No funds required	–

Establishing regional and international cooperation with relevant institutions to improve the programme for headteachers and their assistants	Four consultative meetings held with countries from the region and the EU	BES CVET MoESI	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€10,000	Budget
Improving the Training Programme for Headteachers by adding a module on digital and leadership skills	Training Programme for Headteachers improved	BES CVET MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.3		Digitalization of the education system, including the improvement of the Montenegrin Education Information System (MEIS) to ensure the provision of timely and relevant data for system diagnostics, trend analysis and evidence-based decision making at both the national and institutional levels, the full implementation of the Digital School concept and the digitalization of external knowledge assessment.				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution	
Number of employees in the ICT department working on education digitalization (MEIS, Digital School, etc.)	6	9	12	MoESI	MoESI	
Number of professionals with advanced skills in analysing education statistics for evidence-based planning	0	2	4	MoESI	MoESI	
Number of new modules in the Education Information System	0	3	6	MoESI	MoESI	
Number of electronic services	17	20	23	MoESI	MoESI	
Number of online courses available on the Digital School platform	1,194	1,224	1,249	MoESI	MoESI	
Number of business processes covered by self-guided training	16	22	27	MoESI	MoESI	
Number of professionals with advanced skills in analysing data from external knowledge assessments in education	2	3	5	EC	EC	

Measure 3.3.1: Ensure compliance with legal regulations						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Drafting the Rulebook on the Management of the Education Information System	Rulebook on the Management of the Education Information System adopted	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q3 2025	€800	UNICEF
Developing procedures for creating and storing backups	Procedure for creating and storing backups adopted	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€1,000	Budget
Amending the Rulebook on Norms and Standards for Acquiring Funds from Public Revenues for Institutions Implementing Publicly Recognized Educational Programmes	Amendments to the Rulebook on Norms and Standards for Acquiring Funds from Public Revenues for Institutions Implementing Publicly Recognized Educational Programmes adopted	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q3 2025	No funds required	–
Drafting the Guidelines for the Appointment of School and Regional ICT Coordinators	Guidelines for the Appointment of School and Regional ICT Coordinators adopted	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€800	UNICEF
Developing a Business Continuity Plan	Business Continuity Plan adopted	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€1,000	Budget
Developing a Disaster Recovery Plan	Disaster Recovery Plan adopted	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€1,000	Budget

Developing a procedure for managing virtual machines at a DR location	Procedure for managing virtual machines at a DR location adopted	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€1,000	Budget
Drafting a technical cooperation agreement between the MoESI and Dušan Korać Primary School, Bijelo Polje for DR location	Technical cooperation agreement for DR location signed	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	No funds required	Budget
Drafting a Rulebook on the Organization of Online Educational Work	Rulebook drafted	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€800	UNICEF

**Measure 3.3.2: Improve hardware infrastructure and security**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Establishing internet connection for Disaster Recovery (with public IP addresses)	Internet connection established for Disaster Recovery	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€24,000	Budget
Implementing vulnerability detection system	Vulnerability detection system implemented	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€5,000	Budget
Implementing threat detection system	Threat detection system implemented	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget
Installing fire protection in the Data Centre	Fire protection installed in the Data Centre	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€10,000	Budget
Installing fire protection in the Disaster Recovery	Fire protection installed in the Disaster Recovery	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€4,500	Budget
Replacing and migrating the edu.me mail server	Mail server migrated and operational	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	€3,500	Budget
Maintaining hardware infrastructure at primary and secondary locations	Annual maintenance contracts signed for hardware at primary and secondary locations	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€100,000	Budget

**Measure 3.3.3: Develop and optimize software components**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Enhancing (expanding) software of the administrator module – automating certain processes for system administrators	Administrator module enhanced, five MoESI employees trained	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€15,000	Budget
Creating a new module for tracking employees in educational institutions	Module for tracking employees in educational institutions developed and implemented	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€20,000	UNICEF
Creating a module for tracking Level V qualifications	Module for tracking Level V qualifications developed and implemented	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€20,000	Budget
Creating the 'School Statistics' portal in a new technological solution	New 'School Statistics' portal created	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€9,000	Budget
Creating the 'School Network' portal in a new technological solution	New 'School Network' portal created	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€9,000	Budget
Maintaining software at primary and secondary locations	Annual software maintenance agreements signed for primary and secondary locations	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€100,000	Budget
Developing software for processing data in the process of acquiring national professional qualifications	Software for processing national professional qualifications developed	EC	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€5,000	Budget

Measure 3.3.4: Ensure accurate and reliable data processing and effective utilization						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Conducting training for headteachers and deputy headteachers on the use of the Education Information System module	Six trainings conducted (three per year)	MoESI BES CVET EC	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€3,000	Budget
Conducting training for ICT coordinators on the use of the Education Information System module	Six trainings conducted (three per year)	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€3,000	Budget
Conducting training for teachers and professional staff on data entry in the Education Information System	10 trainings conducted (five per year)	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€5,000	Budget
Promoting the Education Information System	Six presentations conducted (three per year)	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€3,000	Budget
Organizing staff training/ education (MoESI, BES, CVET, EC, BTTA) on the use of data	Four trainings conducted (two per year)	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€2,000	Budget

Measure 3.3.5: Develop and enhance electronic services to ensure seamless and uninterrupted integration						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Creating an e-service for submitting applications for student loan repayment exemptions	E-service for student loan repayment exemptions developed	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q1 2025	€7,000	EU4PA Project
Creating an e-service for submitting applications for recognition of public documents issued by higher education institutions	E-service for public document recognition developed	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	€17,000	EU4PA Project
Creating an e-service for submitting applications for programme accreditation or training for professional development of educational institution employees	E-service for programme accreditation developed	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	€15,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Creating an e-service for submitting applications for obtaining work licences for educational institution employees	E-service for work licences developed	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	€7,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Creating a portfolio for employees	Employee portfolio developed	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€8,000	UNICEF
Enhancing information dissemination to parents with notifications from other sectors (health, internal affairs, social work, etc.)	Parent information system enhanced	MoESI BES CVET EC BTTA	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	No funds required	–
Upgrading the parent portal 'Digital Student Record Book' displaying students' academic records for primary and secondary schools	Parent portal 'Digital Student Record Book' upgraded	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€12,000	Budget
Formulating initial content for creating guidelines – inputs for training packages	Guidelines developed – inputs for training packages	MoESI BES CVET	2025	2025	No funds required	–
Developing a platform for conducting career guidance programmes for children and young people	Career guidance platform developed	BES CVET	2026	2027	€5,000	Budget

Measure 3.3.6: Improve staffing structure						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Creating a training programme for ICT coordinators on using the MEIS application	Training programme created for ICT coordinators on using the MEIS application	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q3 2025	€2,000	Budget
Conducting training for ICT coordinators	10 trainings conducted (five per year)	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€10,000	Budget
Filling vacancies in the ICT Department with employees responsible for digital education tasks	Two employees hired	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€60,000	Budget
Hiring a person to analyse education statistics for data-driven planning	One employee hired	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€30,000	Budget
Providing training for employees in the ICT Department	Four trainings conducted (two per year)	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€8,000	Budget

Measure 3.3.7: Full implementation of the Digital School concept						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Improving the 'Digital School' portal	'Digital School' portal improved	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€8,500	Budget
Creating self-paced trainings on implementation of business processes in education	10 self-paced trainings created and delivered (five per year)	MoESI BES CVET EC BTTA	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€22,000	Budget
Creating digital content for children (STEM, arts, reading, sports, etc.)	Six digital contents created (three annually)	MoESI BES CVET BTTA	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€60,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Organizing training sessions for headteachers, assistant headteachers, and ICT coordinators on implementing the 'Digital School' concept	Four trainings organized (two per year)	MoESI BES CVET	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€4,000	Budget
Presenting and training staff from the MoESI, BES, CVET, EC and BTTA on the tools and principles of the 'Digital School' concept	Four trainings organized (two per year)	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€4,000	Budget
Conducting an analysis of the use of digital tools in schools	Analysis report produced	MoESI BES CVET EC Educational institutions	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€5,000	Budget

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3.4	Financing, management and planning of education serve to ensure quality, equity and development of the education system.				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Strengthened links between budget policy and priorities, reflected in the percentage of spending on key areas identified in the strategy; Or Percentage of education expenditure not related to salaries in relation to total education spending.	9%	12%	15%	MoESI MONSTAT	MoESI BES EC CVET
Number of trained officials and senior management staff in medium-term and budget planning	40%	90%	100%	MoESI	MoF MoESI



Measure 3.4.1: Increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of education spending						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Conducting analysis and assessment of the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of expenditures allocated by the government for education	Analysis with recommendations prepared	MoESI	Q2 2026	Q2 2026	€3,000	Budget
Conducting counselling sessions for employees related to financial analysis and reporting	Counselling sessions held	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	No funds required	–
Conducting training sessions for senior management	Two training sessions held	MoF MoESI	Q1 2025	Q3 2025	€5,000	Budget
Preparing reports containing an overview of the proposed budget for the next fiscal year, with key data on total expenditures, main areas of spending and significant changes compared to the previous year	Reports prepared	MoESI	Q2 2026	Q2 2026	No funds required	–

Measure 3.4.2: Increase the level of available resources for education						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Organizing counselling sessions with existing partners, including international financial institutions (CEB, EIB, EBRD), to establish a framework for additional education sector financing	Information submitted to the government with a framework for additional financing	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q2 2025	No funds required	–
Preparing the first draft of the grant scheme application through the WBIF (for implementing infrastructure from the Growth Plan)	Solution and draft prepared	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q2 2025	€3,000	Budget
Hiring consultants to prepare grant scheme application documents	Contract signed for engagement	MoESI	Q4 2024	Q1 2025	€20,000	CEB grant funds
Organizing workshops and training sessions for all stakeholders to familiarize them with the standards and rules for applying for international funding	Training conducted	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q1 2025	€10,000	Budget

STRATEGIC GOAL 4		Educational infrastructure and modern teaching resources support contemporary, high-quality, equitable and safe education for all children and young people				
	Outcome indicator	Baseline 2024	Interim target 2030	Final target 2035	Source of data	Responsible institution
4.0.1	Number of new places (according to regulations setting standards) in preschool educational institutions	N/A	2,000 for ages 0–3 and 4–6	3,000 for ages 0–3 and 4–6	MoESI MEN ACP	MoESI MEN ACP
4.0.2	Percentage of primary schools providing extended stay	1,270 children in 52 schools (31.9% of schools)	> 40% of primary schools	100% of primary schools	MoESI	MoESI
4.0.3	Maximum number of shifts per school building	6	4	2	MoESI	MoESI ACP

4.0.4	Number of schools implementing the full-day student stay concept	0	9	21	MoESI	MoESI
4.0.5	Percentage of educational institutions that have developed protection and rescue plans for various types of risks within their premises, trained staff, as well as established emergency protection plans and all necessary signage on the premises.	< 10%	> 40%	> 60%	Survey	MoESI

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.1	Improve the network of educational institutions to ensure quality, equitable and safe education for all children and young people				
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Number of school units assessed for compliance with construction and educational process standards, inclusive education standards, safety and management requirements	44	813	100% of school buildings	UNOPS EIB	MoESI
Number of school units for which a feasibility study has been conducted on implementing the extended care concept	0	50	100	MoESI	MoESI
Number of school units for which a feasibility study has been conducted on implementing the full-day programme concept	0	10	20	MoESI	MoESI
Number of primary/secondary schools renovated during the reporting period in accordance with new construction standards, including energy efficiency, disaster risk reduction and improved water supply and sanitation standards	N/A	Primary: > 100 Secondary: > 30	Primary: > 150 Secondary: > 35	MoESI ACI	MoESI ACI
Number of new primary/secondary schools built and put into operation during the reporting period in accordance with new construction standards, including energy efficiency	N/A	Primary: > 10 Secondary: > 5	Primary: > 13 Secondary: > 8	MoESI	MoESI

Measure 4.1.1: Ensure new school infrastructure for public preschool education is in accordance with new construction standards, starting with areas where the need is most urgent						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Preparing project tasks, announcing tenders and creating conceptual architectural designs for new kindergartens in Stari Aerodrom, Tuški Put and Zlatica	Concept design created	MoESI MSPUSP	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	€90,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Preparing project tasks, announcing tenders and creating conceptual architectural designs for a new kindergarten in Tivat and for the reconstruction and extension of the kindergarten in Donja Gorica	Concept design created	MoESI MSPUSP	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	€45,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures and developing/revising the main design for the kindergartens in Stari Aerodrom, Tuški Put and Zlatica	Revised main design completed	MoESI ACP	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€558,652	CEB loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures and developing/revising the main design for the new kindergarten in Tivat and the reconstruction/extension of the kindergarten in Donja Gorica	Revised main design completed	MoESI ACP	Q4 2025	Q4 2026	€213,520	Budget (Growth Plan)
Developing the main design for the reconstruction and extension of the kindergarten in Kotor	Revised main design completed	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	€207,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures and developing/revising the main design for the kindergarten in Žabljak	Revised main design completed	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	€139,259	Budget (Growth Plan)

Conducting tender procedures and developing/revising the main design for the kindergartens in Bijelo Polje and Budva	Revised main design completed	MoESI ACP	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	€110,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures and developing design documentation for kindergartens in Bijelo Polje and Budva	Main design completed	ACP	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	€230,000	CEB loan
Conducting tender procedures to select contractors and supervisors, and beginning construction of the kindergartens in Stari Aerodrom, Tuški Put and Zlatica	Construction works completed	ACP	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€7,891,588	CEB loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures to select contractors and supervisors, and beginning construction of the new kindergarten in Tivat and the reconstruction/extension of the kindergarten in Donja Gorica	Construction works completed	ACP	Q3 2025	Q1 2027	€5,741,800	Budget (Growth Plan)
Carrying out construction works and supervision for the kindergarten in Bar	Construction works completed	ACP	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€6,372,863	CEB loan
Conducting tender procedures to select contractors and supervisors, and beginning construction of the kindergarten in Ulcinj	Construction works completed	ACP	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€3,186,431	CEB loan
Conducting tender procedures to select contractors and supervisors, and beginning construction of the kindergartens in Zabjelo and Kotor	Construction works completed	ACP	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€8,086,197	EIB loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures to select contractors and supervisors, and beginning construction of the kindergarten in Momišići, Podgorica	Construction works completed	ACP	Q4 2025	Q3 2026	€3,735,791	EIB loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures to select contractors and supervisors, and beginning construction of the kindergarten in City Kvart	Construction works completed	ACP	Q1 2025	Q1 2027	€5,754,556	CEB loan
Conducting tender procedures to select contractors and supervisors, and beginning construction and reconstruction of kindergarten facilities in Berane	Construction works completed	ACP	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€2,466,810	CEB loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures to select contractors and supervisors, and beginning construction and reconstruction of kindergarten facilities in Plav, Bijelo Polje and Budva	Construction works completed	ACP	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€6,000,000 €1,355,483	CEB loan Budget (Growth Plan)

**Measure 4.1.2: Ensure the implementation of the extended stay concept in primary schools**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Developing a feasibility study for the entire network of institutions (including tender procedures for selecting consultants and the implementation period)	Feasibility study completed	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€35,000	Budget
Developing a feasibility study with bills of quantities and cost estimates for five facilities where the full-day stay concept would be piloted	Feasibility study completed	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€50,000	Budget
Developing a project for the adaptation and equipping of at least 30% of school facilities (including tender procedures and implementation period)	Project completed	MoESI	Q4 2025	Q2 2026	€180,000	Budget

Conducting works and equipping a minimum of five facilities to enable implementation of the full-day programme pilot project (including the tender process for selecting contractors and supervisors, and implementation period)	Works completed and facilities equipped	ACP	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€450,000	Budget
Conducting works and equipping a minimum of 50 facilities to enable the establishment of a full-day programme (including the tender process for selecting contractors and supervisors, and implementation period)	Works completed and facilities equipped	ACP	Q2 2026	Q4 2026	€800,000	Budget

Measure 4.1.3: Optimize the maximum number of shifts per school building						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Preparing project tasks, announcing tenders and creating conceptual architectural designs for the new primary school facility in Zabjelo	Concept design completed	MoESI MSPUSP	Q2 2025	Q2 2025	€41,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Preparing project tasks, announcing tenders and creating conceptual architectural designs for the new gymnasium in Podgorica	Concept design completed	MoESI MSPUSP	Q2 2025	Q2 2025	€66,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Preparing project tasks, announcing tenders and creating conceptual architectural designs for the new primary school in Bečići-Budva and the new gymnasium in Bar	Concept design completed	MoESI MSPUSP	Q3 2025	Q1 2026	€77,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Preparing project tasks, announcing tenders and creating conceptual architectural designs for the facility of the new primary school in Zabjelo	Concept design completed	MoESI MSPUSP	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	€41,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Preparing project tasks, announcing tenders and creating conceptual architectural designs for the new primary school in Stari Aerodrom, Blok 35–36, Podgorica	Concept design completed	MoESI MSPUSP	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	€77,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Preparing project tasks, announcing tenders and creating conceptual architectural designs for the facilities of the new primary school in Tivat and the new primary school in Igalo	Concept design Developed	MoESI SPUSP	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€77,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedure and creating and revising the main project for the facility of the new primary school in Zabjelo	Revised main project developed	MoESI ACP	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€494,187	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedure and creating and revising the main project for the facility of the new gymnasium in Podgorica	Revised main project developed	MoESI ACP	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€370,600	Budget (Growth Plan)
Creating and revising the main project of the new primary school in City Kvart	Revised main project developed	ACP	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€198,500	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedure and creating and revising the main project for the facility of the new primary school in Karabuško Polje	Revised main project developed	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€215,478	EIB loan
Conducting tender procedures and creating and revising the main project for the facility of the new primary school in Bečići and gymnasium in Bar	Revised main project developed	ACP	Q4 2025	Q4 2026	€200,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures and creating and revising the main project for the facility of the new primary school in Stari Aerodrom and Blok 35–36	Revised main project developed	ACP	Q4 2025	Q4 2026	€721,720	Budget (Growth Plan)

Conducting tender procedures and creating and revising the main project for the facility of the new primary school in Tivat	Revised main project developed	ACP	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	€335,950	Budget (Growth Plan)
Preparing project tasks, announcing tenders and creating a conceptual design for the facility of the new Mladost Primary School in Bijelo Polje	Concept design developed	MoESI MSPUSP	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€9,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures and creating and revising the main project for the facility of the new Mladost Primary School in Bijelo Polje	Revised main project developed	ACP	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	€47,200	Budget (Growth Plan)
Creating and revising the main project for the facility of the new pavilion at Oktoih Primary School in Podgorica and performing works under supervision selection procedures	Revised main project developed	ACP	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€2,587,500	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures for selecting contractors and supervisors for construction works, and the construction timetable for the new school in Zabjelo	New facility built	ACP	Q4 2025	Q4 2027	€13,377,471	EIB loan
Conducting tender procedures for selecting contractors and supervisors for construction works, and the construction timetable for the new gymnasium in Podgorica	New facility built	ACP	Q3 2025	Q4 2027	€9,985,000	EIB loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures for selecting contractors and supervisors for construction works, and the construction timetable for the new primary school in City Kvart	New facility built	ACP	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€11,857,000	EIB loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures for selecting contractors and supervisors for construction works, and the construction timetable for the new primary school in Karabuško Polje	New facility built	ACP	Q4 2025	Q4 2026	€5,794,695	EIB loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting tender procedures for selecting contractors and supervisors for construction works, and the construction timetable for the primary school in Stari Aerodrom and Blok 35–36	Contract with supervisors signed	ACP	Q2 2026	Q4 2026	€852,250	Budget (Growth Plan)

**Measure 4.1.4: Develop and update construction standards for educational institutions, ensuring that buildings are climate-resilient and energy-efficient, in line with the findings of a comprehensive school infrastructure analysis**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Concluding an agreement between UNOPS, the EIB and UNICEF on implementing the relevant activities through the School Infrastructure Mapping project	Agreement signed	UNOPS EIB UNICEF	Q2 2025	Q2 2025	No funds required	–
Forming engineering teams for data collection in the second phase of the mapping process (approximately 600 facilities)	Teams formed	MoESI UNOPS	Q2 2025	Q2 2025	€10,000	EIB grant
Visiting schools and collect data	Database established	MoESI UNOPS	Q3 2025	Q1 2026	€600,000	EIB grant
Conducting analysis of collected data	Document and map of school infrastructure developed	MoESI UNOPS	Q3 2025	Q3 2025	€50,000	EIB grant
Analysing the existing legislation and international practices	Analysis with recommendations developed	MoESI UNICEF	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€50,000	EIB grant
Preparing, creating and adopting a set of documents (rules and guidelines) for the purposes of project design and licensing of educational institutions	Rules and guidelines adopted	MoESI UNICEF	Q4 2025	Q2 2026	€250,000	EIB grant



<b>Measure 4.1.5: Improve the preparedness of educational institutions for disaster risk reduction by ensuring trained staff, established emergency response plans and all necessary safety signage within school facilities</b>						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Developing guidelines for planning activities in the field of disaster risk reduction	Guidelines adopted and distributed to schools	MoESI	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	€3,000	Budget
Creating an analysis of the current condition of equipment (fire extinguishers, hydrants, signs, alarm systems, first aid, etc.)	Analysis and inventory of equipment developed	MoESI MIA	Q1 2025	Q1 2026	€2,000	Budget
Developing procurement plans for acquiring equipment, as well as plans for protection and rescue in the case of various types of risks (fire, earthquake, etc.) in all educational institutions. Additionally, ensuring the provision of services for the printing and distribution of manuals (both digital and printed versions) and guidelines (graphical animations) for procedures in the field of disaster risk reduction.	Procurement plan developed	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q2 2026	€1,000	Budget
Procuring necessary equipment for 40% of the school facilities	Goods procured and delivered	MoESI	Q2 2026	Q4 2026	€230,000	Budget
Procuring services to develop protection and rescue plans for 20% of the school facilities	Protection and rescue plans prepared	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€300,000	Budget
Organizing seminars for school headteachers	Report on seminars conducted	MoESI BES	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€7,000	Budget
Organizing seminars for teachers	Report on seminars conducted	MoESI BES	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€25,000	Budget

<b>Measure 4.1.6: Improve sustainable administrative, infrastructural and technical solutions to enhance the existing water and sanitation facilities and/or develop new ones. This includes procuring and installing the necessary equipment and devices, as well as strengthening the capacities of individuals and institutions for adequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in educational institutions.</b>						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Establishing a registry of the existing secondary legislation regulating hygiene and sanitation requirements in educational institutions	Interactive registry published on MoESI website	MoESI WASH Committee Working group	Q1 2025	Q1 2025	€1,500	Budget
Revising and amending the existing secondary legislation and standards concerning hygiene and sanitation requirements in educational institutions based on the working group's analysis	Revised standards published in the Official Gazette of Montenegro and on the MoESI website	MoESI WASH Committee Working group	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	€3,000	Budget

Improve water supply systems in educational institutions where inadequate drinking water quality was identified during the most recent water quality control.	<p>Improved water supply conditions in the following institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrkojevići Primary School, Bar</li> <li>• Bač Primary School, Rožaje</li> <li>• Braća Ribar Primary School, Nikšić</li> <li>• Radoje Čizmović Primary School, Nikšić</li> <li>• Donja Lovnica Primary School, Rožaje</li> <li>• Milun Ivanović Primary School, Rožaje</li> <li>• Marko Nuculović Primary School, Ulcinj</li> <li>• Rifat Burdžović Tršo Primary School, Lozna, Bijelo Polje</li> <li>• Balotić Primary School, Rožaje</li> <li>• Vuk Karadžić Primary School</li> <li>• 25. maj Primary School</li> <li>• Milovan Jelić Primary School, Bijelo Polje</li> <li>• Donja Ržanica Primary School, Rožaje</li> <li>• Krsto Radojević Primary School, Bijelo Polje</li> <li>• Đerđ Kastrioti Skenderbeg Primary School, Tuzi</li> <li>• Milomir Đalović Primary School, Bijelo Polje</li> <li>• Mladost Primary School, Bijelo Polje</li> <li>• Trpezi Primary School, Petnjica</li> <li>• Šukrija Međedović Primary School, Bijelo Polje</li> <li>• Polica Primary School, Berane</li> </ul>	MoESI WASH Committee Working group Local self-government Local water companies	Q2 2025	Q4 2026	€100,000	Budget
Conducting regular monitoring of drinking water quality in educational institutions in accordance with the National Drinking Water Monitoring Programme	National Monitoring Plan developed and published on government website	MoESI MoH IPH	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€120,000	MoESI budget IPH budget
Establishing an interoperable connection between the information systems of the Institute of Public Health and the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation to ensure timely and continuous data exchange aimed at improving the monitoring of drinking water quality	IT platform for data exchange on water quality established	MoESI MoH IPH	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€25,000	MoESI budget MoH budget IPH budget
Training assessors for implementing the WASH assessment in educational institutions (WinS)	Certificates issued to participants: 3	UNICEF IPH	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	€1,200 €600	UNICEF IPH
Conducting a second round of WASH assessments in educational institutions (WinS)	WinS report published	MoESI UNICEF IPH	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	€30,000	MoESI

Establishing an online platform for data entry and monitoring of WASH status in educational institutions	IT platform for data collection and monitoring established	MoESI IPH UNICEF	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€5,000 €5,000	MoESI UNICEF
Developing educational programmes and materials (protocols and guidelines) for teachers and students on hygiene practices in schools	WASH content updated and improved, training plan developed and promotion plan prepared	MoESI IPH UNICEF	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€10,000	MoESI
Developing an infrastructure improvement plan for prioritizing WASH in schools (WinS)	Infrastructure improvement plans developed for 163 primary schools, 51 secondary schools, and 21 preschools	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€150,000	MoESI
Implementing necessary infrastructure improvements for prioritized WASH facilities	Infrastructure improvements implemented	MoESI	Q4 2026	Ongoing	€100,000	MoESI

**Measure 4.1.7: Repurpose school buildings that are no longer used for educational activities into facilities for educational, cultural, tourism-related and other purposes**

Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Forming interdepartmental groups to analyse data collected during the mapping process and to create a case study based on Slovenia's experience	Interdepartmental group report	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q1 2026	No funds required	–
Developing feasibility studies based on the interdepartmental group's report, collected data and a plan for activating these facilities, including cost estimation	Feasibility study developed	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	€50,000	Budget
Activating the facilities	One facility activated	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€1,000,000	Budget
Establishing cooperation with international financial institutions	Agreement signed	MoESI, MoF	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	No funds required	–

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.2		Ensuring that all educational institutions have specialized facilities and functional furniture, aligned with the developmental and educational needs of children and young people			
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Construction/renovation of educational institutions with functional classrooms, facilities, furniture and sports halls	N/A	> 70%	> 90%	Annual report	MoESI
Procurement of missing furniture and replacement of existing furniture for all schools in Montenegro	N/A	100%	–	Annual report	MoESI
Procurement of specialized equipment for secondary vocational schools	N/A	60%	90%	Annual report	MoESI
Percentage of schools equipped with: a) Art classrooms b) Sports halls c) Science laboratories	a) 20% b) 30% c) 10%	a) 50% b) 55% c) 40%	a) 80% b) 70% c) 70%	Annual report on capital budget realization	MoESI

Measure 4.2.1: Construct and renovate all educational institutions with functional classrooms, facilities, furniture, and sports halls						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Conducting the tender procedure and creating and revising the main project for the reconstruction of Tanasije Pejatović Gymnasium, Pljevlja	Main project revised	MoESI ACP	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€28,500	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting the tender procedure and creating and revising the main project for energy efficiency reconstruction (EBRD project) for Group I – six facilities	Main project revised	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	€60,500	EBRD loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting the tender procedure and creating and revising the main project for energy efficiency reconstruction (EBRD project) for Group II – six facilities	Main project revised	MoESI	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	€60,500	EBRD loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting the tender procedure and creating and revising the main project for energy efficiency reconstruction (EBRD project) for Group III – six facilities	Main project revised	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	€60,500	EBRD loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting the tender procedure and creating and revising the main project for energy efficiency reconstruction (EBRD project) for Group IV – six facilities	Main project revised	MoESI	Q2 2025	Q3 2026	€60,500	EBRD loan (Growth Plan)
Performing construction and supervision works on the reconstruction of the sports hall of the Secondary Vocational School in Podgorica	Sports hall reconstructed	ACP	Q1 2025	Q4 2025	€936,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting the tender procedures for selecting contractors and supervisors for Tanasije Pejatović Gymnasium, Pljevlja	Facility reconstructed	ACP	Q2 2025	Q3 2026	€1,681,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting the tender procedures for selecting contractors and supervisors for Group I – six facilities under the EBRD project	Facility reconstructed	MoESI	Q4 2025	Q4 2026	€6,000,000	EBRD loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting the tender procedures for selecting contractors and supervisors for Group II – six facilities under the EBRD project	Facility reconstructed	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q3 2026	€6,000,000	EBRD loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting the tender procedures for selecting contractors and supervisors and performing reconstruction for energy efficiency (EBRD project) Group III – six facilities	Facilities reconstructed	MoESI	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	€6,000,000	EBRD loan (Growth Plan)
Conducting the tender procedures and revising the main projects for the reconstruction of sports halls at Radomir Mitrović Primary School, Berane and Lovčenski Partizanski Odred Primary School, Cetinje	Main project revised	ACP Old Royal Capital, Cetinje	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	€100,000	Budget (Growth Plan)
Conducting the tender procedures for selecting contractors and supervisors and construction of the sports hall at Bajo Jojić Primary School, Andrijevica	Sports hall constructed	ACP	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	€3,200,000	Budget (Growth Plan)

Conducting the tender procedures for selecting contractors and supervisors and reconstruction of the sports halls at Radomir Mitrović Primary School, Berane and Lovčenski Partizanski Odred Primary School, Cetinje	Facilities reconstructed	ACP	Q2 2025	Q2 2026	€4,714,280	Budget (Growth Plan)
Delivering school furniture to all schools in Montenegro	Furniture delivered	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q3 2025	€4,000,000	EIB loan
Procuring and delivering special equipment for students with special needs in Montenegrin schools	Equipment delivered	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q1 2026	€4,000,000	EIB loan

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4.3		Ensure that all educational institutions are fully equipped to provide quality education in the modern digital era through adequate didactic materials and functional digital infrastructure, including connectivity, hardware and software.			
Output indicator	Baseline	Interim target (2030)	Final target (2035)	Source of data	Responsible institution
Student-to-computer ratio in schools (equipment no older than five years)	1:13	1:12	1:11	MoESI	MoESI
Internet coverage in satellite school units	47%	80%	100%	MoESI	MoESI
Number of EdTech hubs	100	120	140	MoESI	MoESI

Measure 4.3.1: Ensure that all educational institutions have adequate didactic materials and functional digital infrastructure, including connectivity, hardware and software						
Key interventions	Result indicator	Responsible institution	Start date	Planned completion date	Funds allocated for implementation	Funding source
Equipping primary and secondary schools with basic computer equipment	Computer-to-student ratio in schools 1:12, computers no older than five years	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€2,000,000	EIB
Equipping preschool institutions with basic computer equipment	20% of premises equipped with basic computer equipment (10% per year)	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€150,000 per year; €300,000 for two years	Budget
Equipping resource centres with basic computer equipment	100% of premises equipped with basic computer equipment (50% per year)	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€27,000 per year; €54,000 for two years	Budget
Equipping music schools with basic computer equipment	100% of premises equipped with basic computer equipment (50% per year)	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€130,000 per year; €260,000 for two years	Budget
Procuring licensed operating systems	Contract signed for procuring licensed operating systems	MoESI	Q3 2025	Q4 2026	€150,000 per year; €300,000 for two years	Budget
Procuring licensed application software	Contract signed for licensing four application software packages (two years)	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€180,000 per year; €260,000 for two years	Budget
Conducting procurement of satellite internet services	Contract signed for providing satellite internet services	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€36,500 per year; €73,000 for two years	Budget
Providing internet connection in regional educational institutions	Internet provided in 50 regional institutions	MoESI in cooperation with operators	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	No funds required	Crnogorski Telekom Mtel
Equipping existing EdTech hubs with additional equipment	100 EdTech hubs equipped with additional equipment	MoESI	Q1 2025	Q4 2026	€350,000	Budget
Analysing the available assistive technologies to support children with disabilities with participation from Resource Centres	Assistive technology analysis completed	MoESI BES	Q2 2025	Q4 2025	€6,000	Budget
Equipping specialized classrooms for assistive technology, early intervention and individualized support in Resource Centres and schools with integrated classes	10 specialized classrooms equipped	MoESI BES	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€300,000	Budget
Establishing support centres within schools and equipping them with assistive technology	Support centres established and equipped in six regions	MoESI	Q1 2026	Q4 2026	€150,000	Budget





## (G) FINANCIAL ESTIMATES RELATED TO THE ACTION PLAN PERIOD

The Action Plan for Implementation of the Education Reform Strategy (2025–2035) for the period 2025–2026, includes four strategic goals, 15 operational goals and 644 activities. A total of €145,086,857 has been allocated for the implementation of the action plan for 2025–2026.

Table 1: Estimated budget costs per strategic goal

Strategic goals budget by year	2025	2026
SG 1	€911,108.00	€2,298,463.00
SG 2	€454,809.00	€528,380.00
SG 3	€857,171.00	€5,230,229.00
SG 4	€53,111,322.00	€81,695,376.00
Total	€55,334,410.00	€89,752,447.00

Table 2: Estimated additional budget costs per operational objective

	Operational objectives budget by year	2025	2026
SG 1		€911,108.00	€2,298,463.00
Operational objective	1.1	€570,009.00	€1,514,891.00
	1.2	€87,267.00	€197,233.00
	1.3	€213,956.00	€453,215.00
	1.4	€3,333.00	€6,667.00
	1.5	€36,543.00	€126,457.00
SG 2		€454,809.00	€528,380.00
Operational objective	2.1	€13,778.00	€112,211.00
	2.2	€441,031.00	€411,169.00
	2.3	–	€5,000.00
SG 3		€857,171.00	€5,230,229.00
Operational objective	3.1	€411,333.00	€4,895,167.00
	3.2	€37,738.00	€49,262.00
	3.3	€373,100.00	€282,800.00
	3.4	€35,000.00	€3,000.00
SG 4		€53,111,322.00	€81,695,376.00
Operational objective	4.1	€36,323,537.00	€57,673,880.00
	4.2	€15,414,818.00	€21,486,962.00
	4.3	€1,372,967.00	€2,534,533.00
	Total	€55,334,410.00	€89,752,447.00

Table 3: Estimated additional budget costs per strategic goal with source of financing

Financing sources by strategic goal by year	2025	2026
<b>Strategic Goal 1</b>		
Budget	€578,708.00	€2,065,663.00
Budget (Growth Plan)	€58,069.00	€85,831.00
CVET	€213,119.00	€107,881.00
Donations	€9,571.00	€8,429.00
UoM	€2,333.00	€4,667.00
UNICEF	€15,200.00	€2,500.00
BTTA	€24,286.00	€6,714.00
BES	€5,536.00	€11,064.00
EAM	€4,286.00	€5,714.00
<b>TOTAL SG1</b>	<b>€911,108.00</b>	<b>€2,298,463.00</b>
<b>Strategic Goal 2</b>		
Budget	€192,987.00	€294,402.00
Budget (Growth Plan)	€229,621.00	€206,779.00
UoM	€5,000.00	–
UNICEF	€7,200.00	€7,200.00
<b>TOTAL SG2</b>	<b>€434,809.00</b>	<b>€508,380.00</b>
<b>Strategic Goal 3</b>		
Budget	€575,605.00	€4,848,595.00
Budget (Growth Plan)	€51,500.00	€61,500.00
CEB grant	€20,000.00	–
Donations	€166,667.00	€333,333.00
EU4PA project	€17,200.00	€6,800.00
UNICEF	€30,400.00	–
<b>TOTAL SC3</b>	<b>€877,171.00</b>	<b>€5,250,229.00</b>
<b>Strategic Goal 4</b>		
Budget	€13,661,969.00	€14,281,279.00
IPH budget	€600.00	–
CEB grant	€593,333.00	€366,667.00
CEB loan	€29,001,053.00	€48,653,596.00
EBRD loan	€2,181,500.00	€16,060,500.00
EIB	€666,667.00	€1,333,333.00
EIB loan	€7,000,000.00	€1,000,000.00
UNICEF	€6,200.00	–
<b>TOTAL SC4</b>	<b>€53,111,322.00</b>	<b>€81,695,376.00</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>€55,334,410.00</b>	<b>€89,752,447.00</b>

Table 4: Estimated cash flow by strategic goals and quarters (€)

Strategic goal	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026
1	91,909.00	198,149.00	289,483.00	331,567.00	341,600.00	690,167.00	640,050.00	626,646.00
2	89,174.00	116,612.00	113,078.00	115,945.00	133,862.00	212,728.00	109,062.00	112,728.00
3	83,633.00	142,657.00	294,240.00	336,640.00	1,317,715.00	1,258,549.00	1,328,565.00	1,325,399.00
4	4,852,167.00	11,001,707.00	16,595,198.00	20,662,250.00	23,508,577.00	22,128,015.00	19,298,867.00	16,759,917.00
Total	5,116,883.00	11,459,125.00	17,291,999.00	21,446,402.00	25,281,755.00	24,280,459.00	21,376,544.00	18,824,689.00

Table 5: Estimated costs by strategic goals and quarters by source of funding (€)

Cash flow projection by quarter	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026
STRATEGIC GOAL 1								
Budget	42,579.00	98,700.00	188,867.00	248,561.00	263,678.00	616,245.00	596,161.00	589,578.00
Budget (Growth Plan)	7,275.00	15,418.00	15,418.00	19,958.00	22,958.00	22,958.00	19,958.00	19,958.00
CVET	36,071.00	66,238.00	66,238.00	44,571.00	43,405.00	41,905.00	14,071.00	8,500.00
Donations	1,750.00	2,607.00	2,607.00	2,607.00	2,107.00	2,107.00	2,107.00	2,107.00
UoM	–	–	1,167.00	1,167.00	1,167.00	1,167.00	1,167.00	1,167.00
UNICEF	4,233.00	4,233.00	4,233.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	–	–
BT TA	–	8,095.00	8,095.00	8,095.00	1,679.00	1,679.00	1,679.00	1,679.00
BES	–	1,429.00	1,429.00	2,679.00	2,679.00	2,679.00	3,479.00	2,229.00
EAM	–	1,429.00	1,429.00	1,429.00	1,429.00	1,429.00	1,429.00	1,429.00
Total	91,909.00	198,149.00	289,483.00	331,567.00	341,600.00	690,167.00	640,050.00	626,646.00
STRATEGIC GOAL 2								
Budget	39,561.00	53,275.00	49,242.00	50,909.00	44,492.00	143,359.00	51,442.00	55,109.00
Budget Growth Plan	47,813.00	59,870.00	60,370.00	61,570.00	67,570.00	67,570.00	55,820.00	55,820.00
UoM	–	–	1,667.00	1,667.00	–	–	–	–
UNICEF	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00
Total	89,174.00	116,612.00	113,078.00	115,945.00	113,862.00	212,728.00	109,062.00	112,728.00
STRATEGIC GOAL 3								
Budget	65,167.00	85,524.00	190,024.00	232,691.00	1,218,899.00	1,159,732.00	1,235,399.00	1,234,565.00
Budget Growth Plan	7,500.00	22,500.00	9,750.00	9,750.00	12,083.00	12,083.00	9,833.00	7,500.00
CEB grant	–	20,000.00	–	–	–	–	–	–
Donations	–	–	83,333.00	83,333.00	83,333.00	83,333.00	83,333.00	83,333.00
EU4PA Project	3,500.00	6,900.00	3,400.00	3,400.00	3,400.00	3,400.00	–	–



UNICEF	7,467.00	7,733.00	7,733.00	7,467.00	–	–	–	–
Total	83,633.00	142,657.00	294,240.00	336,640.00	1,317,715.00	1,258,549.00	1,328,565.00	1,325,399.00
STRATEGIC GOAL 4								
Budget	1,393,128.00	3,247,095.00	4,171,585.00	4,850,162.00	4,821,739.00	4,671,426.00	2,658,490.00	2,129,624.00
IPH budget	300.00	300.00	–	–	–	–	–	–
CEB grant	–	26,667.00	266,667.00	300,000.00	283,333.00	83,333.00	–	–
CEB (Growth Plan)	2,064,306.00	5,381,963.00	9,448,280.00	12,106,505.00	13,029,838.00	13,029,838.00	11,296,960.00	11,296,960.00
EBRD	60,500.00	10,083.00	40,333.00	2,070,583.00	4,040,333.00	4,010,083.00	5,010,083.00	3,000,000.00
EIB	–	–	333,333.00	333,333.00	333,333.00	333,333.00	333,333.00	333,333.00
EIB (Growth Plan)	1,333,333.00	2,333,333.00	2,333,333.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	–	–	–
UNICEF	600.00	2,267.00	1,667.00	1,667.00	1,667.00	–	–	–
Total	4,852,167.00	11,001,707.00	16,595,198.00	20,662,250.00	23,508,577.00	22,128,015.00	19,298,867.00	16,759,917.00



## (H) COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGY

The successful implementation of the 2025–2035 Education Reform Strategy requires effective and transparent communication about the reform activities, as well as about their outcomes. This communication aims to inform all relevant actors about the reform processes, raise awareness of the importance of educational reform and ensure the support of key stakeholders, as well as establish a communication system internally within the education system and externally towards the public, media, interested parties and the general public.

Therefore, in this segment, we will outline the key messages and target groups to whom these messages are addressed, as well as communication tools, all with the aim of achieving the full effect of the planned activities through clear and comprehensive public information.

**KEY GENERAL MESSAGE OF THE STRATEGY:** *Education reform in Montenegro is aimed at creating a higher-quality, more inclusive and modern education system capable of responding to the challenges of the future!*

### SPECIFIC MESSAGES OF THE STRATEGY:

1. The strategy promotes the quality of education and is directed at all educational levels. The key message of the strategy is: **Education reform is a necessity for the future development of Montenegrin society and is based on analyses and expert recommendations.** This message will be directed at the general public, as well as parents, pupils/students, universities and the academic community, who need to understand the necessity of the upcoming changes.
2. The education reform strategy will enable improvements in quality, personalized, fair, stimulating and inclusive learning and development environments, and the key message is: **Education reform brings better readiness for future labour market challenges.** This message will be directed at young people who want to acquire knowledge and skills for their future professional lives.
3. The education reform strategy pays special attention to marginalized groups, and the key message is: **Education reform pays special attention to marginalized groups to help them reach their full potential in the best possible way.** This message will be directed at members of the Roma and Egyptian population, migrants and children with special educational needs, to help them better understand the aims of the reform and the changes expected in the education system.
4. The education reform strategy focuses on supporting teachers through their initial education and continuous professional development. The key message is: **Education reform encourages lifelong learning for teachers, because being a teacher means changing the world!** This message will be directed at education professionals in Montenegro and aims to increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession.

5. The education reform strategy envisages the introduction of new educational programmes, as well as revision of the existing ones. The key message is: ***Education reform will bring about fundamental changes in the quality of educational programmes in order to stimulate innovative thinking among students, inclusivity in learning and a focus on sustainable development through knowledge and curiosity.*** Education reform is a process that is transparent and subject to evaluation.
6. The education reform strategy also relates to improving education management at all levels and providing a financial framework for its implementation. The key message is: ***Education reform brings new investments into the education system in order to achieve better results.***
7. The education reform strategy brings improvements and expansion of school infrastructure, including the provision of high-quality and inclusive didactic materials. The key message is: ***Education reform brings new investments and enhances the existing ones with the aim of improving the quality of the education system.***

The objectives of communication with the public are to inform them about the reform activities, their goals and expected outcomes, as well as to build trust in the reforms through open and two-way communication with all interested parties.

Communication will also be directed towards involving parents, teachers, students and the wider community in the reform process, ensuring the transparency of the strategy's implementation through regular reporting.

**The target groups** with whom we will communicate are: students and parents, teachers, professors, educational workers, educational institutions and professional organizations, decisionmakers and relevant ministries, the wider public and the media.

During the planning and implementation cycle of the strategic document, communication of the planned activities is an integral part of the implementation phase and includes conducting various campaigns, training, PR activities, preparing informational brochures and publications of analyses, with the aim of affirming the importance of education reform.

#### **Communication channels with the public include:**

- **the ministry's official website** – regular updating of information, publishing of reports and progress analyses.
- **Social media** – interactive content, video materials and short informational posts for easier public access.
- **Media (TV, radio, press, online portals)** – organizing regular press conferences and publishing statements about key reforms.
- **Thematic round tables and forums** – enabling discussions with teachers, parents and students.
- **Newsletters and bulletins** – periodic progress reports delivered via email to the relevant stakeholders.
- **Public debates and workshops** – encouraging open dialogue about reform measures and their implementation.

**Monitoring and evaluation of communication activities** will be carried out to measure the success of communication through analyses of media presence and public perception via public opinion surveys, monitoring engagement on social media and the ministry's website, collecting feedback through workshops, surveys and discussions, and regular reports on implementation of the communication strategy.

With this approach, the 2025–2035 Education Reform Strategy ensures that reforms are clear, accessible and accepted by the key stakeholders, thereby increasing the chances of their successful implementation.

# (I) KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS

## TEACHERS

- Qualitative (online questionnaire) and quantitative (focus groups) research.
- The online questionnaire was completed by 2,485 teachers (1,929 female teachers and 556 male teachers), ~15 per cent of the teaching staff. Respondents were mostly from primary schools (65.67 per cent).
- Twenty-five focus groups with 313 teachers from all levels of education, including resource centres.
- Low motivation among teaching staff is evident, mainly because they expressed doubts that the results of such research would significantly influence changes.

### Key findings:

- Most teachers, especially younger ones, say they often or always use active teaching methods, digital content and modern technologies. Self-assessment indicates that teachers from primary schools are better-equipped to apply these methods.
- However, teachers do not feel sufficiently trained to provide support to vulnerable groups of students, particularly those working with children from different language backgrounds.
- The most attention and support are given to children with special educational needs, while significantly less attention is paid to children from the Roma and Egyptian populations. Statistically, teachers in secondary schools are less equipped to work with these groups of students.
- Teachers say they love their work and consider themselves very competent, but they are dissatisfied with their social and economic status. They see the lack of support and respect for the teaching profession as the biggest challenge to quality education. At the same time, they show the highest level of agreement regarding the quality of communication with the school administration, which also provides them with key support.
- They believe that the key factors for improving the quality of the educational process are beyond the teachers' influence and almost exclusively depend on "the system". The main problems they cite include: the number of students in classrooms; the lack of support staff, i.e. professional associates; insufficient practical teaching; an excessive curriculum; incomprehensible textbooks; inadequate classroom equipment; an outdated curriculum, working in multiple shifts; etc.
- Teachers consider themselves adequately trained to assess students but express concerns that the final grading process is strongly influenced by colleagues, parents, influential acquaintances and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the school management. Such views are particularly prominent in the central region.

- The qualitative research highlighted teaching conditions and student participation as key obstacles to a successful educational process. Existing conditions do not meet all students' developmental and academic needs, and children from vulnerable groups require more support, teaching skills and openness.
- Teaching is largely traditional and insufficiently adapted to the needs of students, as well as to the individual capabilities of children, with teaching focused on knowledge that is not practical.
- The level of teacher motivation is also low, with a pronounced rigid attitude towards change, identifying politicization, nepotism, non-transparent management and employment, and selective treatment by school administrations as major systemic problems.
- With a lack of psychologists, assistants and support networks, with poor system connectivity, an inadequate number of schools, large numbers of students, shift work, and outdated equipment, the overall conditions for learning, socialization and creating a stimulating environment for children are unfavourable in many institutions.

## STUDENTS

- Qualitative research conducted through 25 focus groups.
- A total of 305 students from primary and secondary schools, as well as from resource centres across all three regions, respecting the principles of inclusivity and equal representation of urban, suburban and rural schools, as well as schools with varying numbers of students.
- Thirty-six children from the Roma and Egyptian communities and nine children with special educational needs.

### Key findings:

- Regardless of the type of school, students see the general curriculum as demanding and inadequate in terms of not offering enough options for adaptation and innovation.
- They largely do not see or feel the school as being a centre for development, learning and progress.
- Students notice differences in individual teachers' approaches and state that they particularly value empathy, active listening, readiness and openness to exchange opinions and experiences with children.
- In most cases, current learning methods are perceived as passive and demotivating. Students do not feel adequately prepared through primary and secondary education for further schooling and/or employment. Therefore, it is very important for them that the teaching and teaching staff are open to their interests. They are more motivated to engage in schools that are better technically equipped.
- Primary school students state that teaching is mainly delivered in a lecture-based, "frontal" style, especially by older teachers who "just talk, dictate and refer them to the textbook". There is almost no agreement or discussion with teachers, which students say they deeply miss. This lack of engagement leads to a lack of interest and decreased motivation to learn.
- Students cite an overloaded curriculum, incomprehensible textbooks, uninteresting lessons and a lack of adequate help/support for children as the main obstacles to quality

teaching. When asked what is needed for quality teaching, most students first mention the relationship between the teacher and the student as a necessary precondition, even before choosing from the provided options. They point to the importance of building trust and creating a psychologically safe classroom environment – a space where children feel they have the right not to know, not to understand, to make mistakes, to disagree and to express their opinions and suggestions.

- Secondary school students see themselves as almost “invisible in the education system” and overwhelmingly feel that their voices and opinions do not matter, and that they are only passive participants in the educational process. They highlight the importance of active participation, development of critical thinking, an individualized approach and greater flexibility in the teaching process to adjust lessons, topics and lectures. They find the curriculum overly extensive and dry, and do not see any practical value or application in the knowledge they acquire. They are highly sensitive to recognizing and valuing teachers who innovate in their teaching and show personal motivation in their work. They identify the frequent unrealistic expectations of individual subject teachers as major issues, which, in addition to creating pressure, distract them from their main interests and the subjects they would like to focus on. They believe that large class sizes and the lack of school-based activities (recreational, additional, practical) diminish their view of school as a place where they enjoy spending time.
- Children at all levels of education point out that there is inequality in schools and a lack of access to necessary, additional and professional support, meaning that equal opportunities for all do not exist.

## PARENTS

- Quantitative research was conducted using an online questionnaire with a sample of 5,573 parents of preschool, primary and secondary school children.
- Qualitative research was conducted through panel discussions with parents, teachers and decisionmakers at the local level in seven municipalities across all three regions.

### Key findings:

- According to parents, the current education system does not fully meet their expectations, with significant challenges identified in many areas, particularly regarding the quality of the education system. Almost a third of parents (29 per cent) graded the quality of the education system negatively (with 1 or 2), while 38.1 per cent gave it a passing grade. The quality of the teaching programme received even lower ratings, while slightly fewer parents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the quality of teaching.
- Nearly half of the parents believe that an overloaded curriculum is the main obstacle to obtaining quality education, followed by the poor quality of textbooks, a lack of practical teaching, and uninteresting lessons that do not motivate students and do not foster curiosity and creativity. At the same time, one-fifth of parents believe that the content their children learn is not aligned with the needs of modern society.
- Regarding the fairness of the grading system, most parents hold a neutral stance, indicating the perception that the grading system in the education system is neither entirely fair nor unfair. Only 13.2 per cent of parents rated the grading system as excellent (5), suggesting they consider it to be absolutely fair. At the same time, more than half of the



parents believe that some parents influence the grading process, as well as other teachers or school administrations, but to a slightly lesser extent (48.1 per cent), indicating that the unfairness of the grading system is a highly ranked element of the learning process.

- Half of the parents help their children with learning and homework daily, with a significant proportion of parents spending additional financial resources on extra lessons, i.e. private tutoring, outside school hours, for one or more subjects.
- Only 34 per cent of parents believe that the number of educational institutions in their municipality is sufficient, while dissatisfaction with the number of teaching staff is significantly higher, regardless of the level of education, including preschool. Generally, parents consider the number of teachers inadequate and insufficient to meet children's educational and developmental needs.
- Inclusivity and accessibility of education for all children, regardless of economic or social status, is not a problem for almost two thirds of respondents who agree or strongly agree that educational institutions are inclusive and accessible to all children, regardless of parental income and social status. However, only a third of parents believe that schools are adequately adapted to children with special educational needs, and that the dedication of teaching staff is equal for all children, regardless of socio-economic status, gender, citizenship, origin, ethnicity, or religious affiliation.
- The competence of teaching staff is not a problem for half of the parents, but less than a third believe that educational institutions attended by their children adequately recognize and nurture their talents.
- Parents also consider school infrastructure a very important element of the educational process. Almost half of the respondents believe that their children's school buildings need renovation, including improvements to the hygiene infrastructure. Additionally, hygiene practices in schools are a matter of serious concern for every third parent, almost to the same extent as the insufficient amount of teaching materials.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Teachers

1. Through continuous education and in accordance with research results, enhance and empower teaching staff (especially secondary school teachers) according to the real needs of teachers through good practice examples, revision of existing seminars and their relevance in multiple areas, including:
  - a) Active participation, two-way communication, participation and advocacy
  - b) Application of active teaching methods, with more frequent use of active learning/teaching methods, project-based teaching, and methods and techniques that encourage cooperative learning
  - c) Use of digital content and modern technologies
  - d) Working with children from vulnerable groups
  - e) Practical guidance – coaching
2. Define national standards regarding class size and the number of students, especially considering the needs of talented children, children with special educational needs, children from Roma and Egyptian communities and children from other language areas for whom an adequate period of intensive language learning is required before integration into regular schooling, alongside revising enrolment policies. Pay special attention to working with talented children. At the same time, it is necessary to take a systematic approach to the reorganization of supplementary (remedial), additional (advanced), and elective (optional) teaching.
3. Streamline administration to enable more time to be devoted to each child/student.
4. Work on promoting the teaching profession and building attitudes that the reputation of the profession is earned through quality work and recognizable results.
5. Build and strengthen an environment and value system where teachers are protected from external influences on grading. At the national level, grading criteria for all subjects should be defined so that teachers of the same subject can apply uniform criteria and develop a better mechanism for the transition from descriptive to numerical grading in the third grade.
6. Improve subject curricula with special emphasis on STEM and the arts. In this process, consider the results of international and external research as well as consultations with practitioners, increase the number of teaching hours and adapt content including the selection of literary texts, improve vertical and horizontal correlation between “related” subjects. In accordance with the revised programmes, reduce the number of subjects while increasing the number of lessons per subject, modernize textbooks, provide the option to choose publishers and develop new digital textbooks.
7. Ensure the inclusion of a larger number of adequately trained assistants and social mediators, adapt schools for children with special educational needs, provide appropriate assistive technologies and improve teamwork when developing the Individual Educational Development Programme (IEDP).

8. Specifically, improve the education system's response to violence, challenges, problems and conflicts by developing services and establishing quality cooperation and trust with services in the local community, employing a larger number of psychologists, special educators and social workers in schools.
9. Begin revising the Higher Education Strategy with a special focus on improving motivation and support for young people's training for teaching professions.

## Students

1. Improve understanding of students' needs by building the capacities of the teaching staff and establishing regular and acceptable communication channels through which students can express their needs and expectations from the educational system and process.
2. Implement and make regular the periodic process of analysing the content of educational programmes and curricula, focusing on practical skills and improving applicability in everyday life and work, with more practical exercises, provision of appropriate equipment and resources for more engaging theoretical teaching and higher-quality practical teaching.
3. Revise the number and scope of subjects through greater cross-curricular integration of content.
4. Enable more interactivity in the educational process by emphasizing working in smaller groups with greater student engagement through projects and taking more responsibility for their own learning.
5. Implement teaching principles aimed at development and learning, "coaching" and highlighting progress, while moving away from principles focused on identifying and "counting mistakes".

## Parents

1. Conduct a revision of school subjects with a particular focus on the number and scope of subjects taught, with a mandatory reduction of both the number of subjects and content of the curriculum.
2. Carry out a revision of the existing textbooks and modernize them through an inclusive consultation process with children and teachers, making them more accessible and understandable.
3. Modernize textbooks and learning material to align with current trends and the needs of both children and teachers.
4. Organize teaching in a way that allows children to acquire knowledge and skills at school, without having to rely on daily assistance or private tutoring to keep up with the curriculum.
5. Improve and modernize teaching overall, with a focus on practical lessons and teaching based on developing skills and knowledge essential for everyday life.
6. Ensure meaningful and effective inclusion of children with developmental difficulties by providing a greater number of teaching assistants, working according to defined individual educational development plans and ensuring school facilities are accessible to all children.
7. Work on increasing the number of kindergartens and schools, and on improving the existing educational infrastructure and overall environment to promote availability, accessibility, inclusiveness, respect for diversity and a sense of belonging.





## (II) WORKING GROUP FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGY 2025–2035

Pursuant to Decision No. 05-011/24-1462 of 20 April 2024 and the Decision on Amendments to the Decision on the Appointment of the Working Group No. 05-011/24-1462/2 of 27 September 2024, the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation established the Working Group for the 2025–2035 Development of the Education Reform Strategy, composed of the following members:

1. Danijela Bokan, Lovčenski Partizanski Odred Primary School, Cetinje, member
2. Dragan Marković, Kekec Primary School, Bar, member
3. Irena Vasiljević, Mileva Lajović Lalatović Primary School, Nikšić, member
4. Milivoje Đukić, Petar Lubarda Secondary School of Fine Arts, Cetinje, member
5. Tijana Ilić, Vasa Pavić School of Music and Ballet, Podgorica, member
6. Milomir Šumić, First Vocational Secondary School, Nikšić, member
7. Marijana Antonijević, Resource Centre 'Podgorica', member
8. Ivona Adžić, Slobodan Škerović Gymnasium, Podgorica, member
9. Nataša Lučić, Vocational Secondary School, Nikšić, member
10. Svetlana Jovetić Koprivica, Mixed Secondary School, Golubovci, Zeta, member
11. Milada Miličić Krivačević, Dr Dragiša Ivanović Primary School, Podgorica, member
12. Sava Kovačević, Oktoih Primary School, Podgorica, member
13. Nada Vujičić, Vuksan Đukić Mixed Secondary School, Mojkovac, member
14. Danijela Došljak, Dr Branko Zogović Secondary Medical School, Berane, member
15. Milana Raičević, Secondary Medical School, Podgorica, member
16. Gordana Nišavić, Ivan Uskoković Vocational Secondary School, Podgorica, member
17. Radomir Božović, Education Union of Montenegro, member
18. Svetlana Perović (PhD), Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, member
19. Tatjana Novović (PhD), Faculty of Philosophy, member
20. Prof. Miljan Bigović (PhD), Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, member
21. Jovana Marojević (PhD), Faculty of Philosophy, member
22. Nikola Konatar (PhD), Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, member
23. Nataša Jovović (PhD), Faculty of Philosophy, member
24. Aleksandra Vešović, Bureau for Education Services, member
25. Dijana Kadović, Đina Vrbica Preschool Institution, member
26. Ivan Marković, Centre for Vocational Education and Training, member
27. Vjera Mitrović Radošević, Centre for Vocational Education and Training, member

Gender composition of the Working Group: 44 women (72 per cent) and 17 men (28 per cent).



## CORE TEAM OF THE WORKING GROUP

To ensure the efficiency of the work process, a core team was formed within the working group, reflecting the structure of the working group itself, composed of the following members:

1. Marija Gošović, Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, chairperson
2. Vesna Pejović, Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, member
3. Nahida Jahić, Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, member
4. Marina Matijević, Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, member
5. Tamara Milić, Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, member
6. Spasoje Ostojić, Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, member
7. Jelica Đurić, Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, member
8. Gordana Bošković, Centre for Vocational Education and Training, member
9. Anita Marić, Bureau for Education Services, member
10. Ljiljana Ivanović, Bureau for Education Services, member
11. Nevena Čabrilo, Bureau for Education Services, member
12. Divna Paljević, Examination Centre, member
13. Radule Novović, Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids, member
14. Zoran Lalović, Education Committee of the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts, member
15. Sanja Ognjanović, Slobodan Škerović Gymnasium, Podgorica, member
16. Dijana Vučković, Faculty of Philosophy, member
17. Jelena Krivokapić, Vasa Pavić School of Music and Ballet, Podgorica, member

Gender composition of the Core Team: 14 women (82 per cent) and three men (17 per cent).

## STEERING COMMITTEE

The steering committee of the project consisted of representatives of relevant ministries, central educational institutions, the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts, civil society organizations, as well as the European Union Delegation to Montenegro and UNICEF:

28. Prof. Anđela Jakšić Stojanović (PhD), Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation
29. Marija Gošović, Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation
30. Isaksson Liselotte, EU Delegation
31. Brigitte Kuchar, EU Delegation
32. Sabina Žunić, UNICEF
33. Svetlana Dujović, Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography
34. Sreten Jakić (MA), Ministry of Health
35. Radmila Martinović, Ministry of Finance
36. Prof. Veselin Mićanović (PhD), University of Montenegro
37. Prof. Slobodan Backović (PhD), Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts
38. Prof. Saša Raičević (PhD), National Education Council

39. Prof. Biljana Maslovarić (PhD), Faculty of Philosophy, UoM
40. Miloš Trivić (MSc), Examination Centre
41. Raba Hodžić, Bureau for Education Services
42. Aleksandra Hajduković (MA), Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Aids
43. Aleksandra Lalević, Centre for Vocational Education and Training
44. Prof. Mladen Perazić (PhD), Chamber of Economy of Montenegro
45. Sabra Đečević, NARDOS
46. Kristina Mihailović, NGO 'Parents'
47. Sanja Bošković, NGO 'Our Initiative'
48. Petar Špadijer, NGO 'Teachers Association'
49. Danijela Perišić, Education Union
50. Samir Jaha, NGO 'Young Roma'
51. Pavle Đurović, Union of High School Students of Montenegro

Gender composition of the steering committee: 15 women (63 per cent) and nine men (37 per cent).

## CONSULTANTS

To support the development of the Framework for the 2025–2035 Education Reform Strategy, including the preparation of strategic goals and operational objectives, key measures, and indicators, an international consultant, Tinde Kovač-Cerović, was engaged.

Additionally, a team of experts from the international consultancy agency Genesis Analytics was engaged to support the process of developing the strategy, including the elaboration of strategic and operational goals, key interventions, indicators and the preparation of the action plan and budget.



Ministry of  
Education, Science  
and Innovation