



EDUCATION REFORM INITIATIVE OF SOUTH
EASTERN EUROPE
(ERI SEE)
WORK PROGRAMME
2023

By Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe Secretariat
8 DEČANSKA STREET | 11000 BELGRADE, SERBIA

ERI SEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023

Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
About Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe	3
Introduction	3
Short overview of the 2022.....	5
I STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	8
1.1. Strategic context	8
1.2. ERI SEE Governing Board.....	8
1.3. Cooperation with international partner organizations.....	9
1.4. Internal organization and visibility.....	11
II THEMATIC AREAS OF INTERVENTION	12
2.1. General Education.....	13
2.3.1 Quality Assurance in Pre-tertiary Education.....	14
2.3.2 Teacher education and training.....	16
2.2 Vocational education and training.....	17
2.2 Higher Education	19
Annex 1. Strategic documents	21
Albania.....	21
Bosnia and Herzegovina	22
Croatia	23
Moldova.....	24
Montenegro.....	25
North Macedonia.....	27
Serbia.....	28
Annex 2. Activity plan 2023.....	30

INTRODUCTION

About Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe

Introduction

The Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe is an international organization, established by the ministries of education from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Its mandate is to enhance regional cooperation in education and training in the SEE region (through various activities - joint projects, peer exchanges, trainings, workshops, conferences etc.) to support national reforms and foster European trends and developments.

The joint vision was agreed among the ERI SEE member countries that ERI SEE acts both at the implementation and coordination level i.e. as the project implementing institution and body coordinating various regional activities, but at the same time continuing the policy dialogue, facilitating policy exchanges and being an valuable asset contributing to the stability in the region.

Back in early 21st century, as a part of the stabilisation process in the South Eastern Europe, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement for South Eastern Europe, heavily supported by the Enhanced Graz Process¹, was signed in 2003. The wider political framework was aimed at creating a progressive partnership between the European Union and Western Balkan economies with a view of stabilising the region and establishing a free-trade area. As a part of the stabilisation process, it was important

¹ The Graz Process was initiated under the Austrian EU presidency in 1998. It was aimed at promoting democratic and peaceful development in South Eastern Europe by supporting and co-ordinating educational co-operation projects in the region

to create a strategic regional framework of cooperation in the field of education and training, for which the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) was initiated. The more concrete areas and modes of cooperation were defined by several Memoranda signed further on:

- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministers of Education and Higher Education of South Eastern Europe (Nicosia, 2003), on the cooperation in the field of education and signed by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia;
- The Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministers Responsible for Education, Science and Research in South Eastern Europe, signed in 2007 in Istanbul by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo, Montenegro and Romania, which renewed the commitment to regional cooperation in education, for mutual benefit, encompassing all aspect of lifelong learning, science and research. This Memorandum insisted on regional cooperation activities considering relevant EU and European developments and trends in education, science and research, but also close links to the national context and priorities of the signatory countries, also by involving the relevant stakeholders;
- And finally, Memorandum of Understanding on the Role and Organisation of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (Brdo, 2010), which reiterated the commitments of signatory parties (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia – ERI SEE member countries) to regional cooperation in the EU accession process and sustainable economic development. The Brdo Memorandum recognized the ERI SEE achievements done so far, and also gave a clear and more operational principles of functioning of ERI SEE and ERI SEE Secretariat as the operational body, at day-to-day level implementing the strategic decisions made by the ministries of education as founders of the ERI SEE. This Memorandum forms the basis of today's operation, status and structure of ERI SEE.

Following the Memorandum of Understanding (Brdo, 2010) and expression of interest from the Serbian Government, the seat of the Agency for Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe, functioning in Zagreb under the Croatian jurisdiction and within the Croatian legislative system, was transferred to Serbia where the new Secretariat for Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe was started being developed, in the form of a international organisation, initially as the Provisional Secretariat within the Centre for Education Policy. After the *Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and other members of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe on the seat of the Secretariat of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe* (hereinafter the Host-country agreement) was signed by all the ERI SEE member countries (in the period from 2013 to 2015), which was ratified in December 2017. Finalizing the procedure of entering into force of the Host-country Agreement, the official legal status of the Secretariat, as an international organisation, support of the Government of the Host Country to the Secretariat and conditions necessary for effective performance, as well as other relevant issues deriving from the Secretariat's status, were regulated.

After finalizing the legal proceedings leading to the establishment of the Secretariat, accompanying financial and operational procedures were completed in January 2018, from when the Secretariat functions as an independent international organization seated in Belgrade, Serbia. The Secretariat is listed and registered in the Diplomatic protocol and holds the status of a diplomatic mission, with its international staff holding diplomatic status

Short overview of the 2022

In 2022 ERI SEE managed, coordinated, organized and facilitated the activities in the area of Quality Assurance in pre-tertiary education and higher education, VET and Teacher Education and Training.

This was strongly supported by ERI SEE partners – Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalization, European Training Foundation (ETF), Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), ministries in charge of education from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, especially representatives of the ERI SEE Governing Board, as well as the national agencies for QA, VET, qualifications and teacher training.

A number of regional products were jointly developed with partners: Shared policy vision for QA in pre-tertiary education; Standard of competences for external evaluators, as a part of QA frameworks in tertiary education; Training needs analysis tool; Competences analysis tool; Training on data management for QA partners in pre-tertiary education; Training on data management for QA partners in higher education; Regional and national occupational standards for agricultural technician in traditional and organic production; Regional and national qualification standards for agricultural technician in traditional and organic production; Material supporting the implementation of Environment, Social and Gender components in the said documents; Action plan for strengthening European Standards and Guidelines in Higher Education institutions in SEE, with a number of meetings and workshops leading to those products.

The 2022 was marked by the implementation of the regional project named Enhancements in the Quality of Education and Training in South Eastern Europe – EQET SEE, divided into two main pillars:

1. Covering the area of Quality Assurance in pre-tertiary education (including both general education and VET)
2. Covering the area of modernization of VET and building connections with the business sector.

The project is of 36-year duration, started in October 2021 and expecting to finish in September 2024; with the budget of approximately 2 mill EUR of which around 80% comes from the Austrian Development Agency and 20 % from ERI SEE.

The project is implemented in close cooperation with the main partners from the region:

- Agencies in charge of quality assurance in pre-tertiary education, gathered under the Regional network of experts in quality assurance in pre-tertiary education and coordinated by the ERI SEE
- Agencies in charge of VET, gathered under the South Eastern Europe VET Network (SEE VET Net) and coordinated by the ERI SEE
- Agencies in charge of qualifications
- Chambers of Commerce, which, together with the SEE VET Net, form the Western Balkans Alliance for Work-based Learning and coordinated by the ERI SEE and Western Balkans 6 Chambers Investment Forum (WB 6 CIF)
- Ministries of education
- Ministries of labour and economy, where applicable.

The project is marked by the strong commitment from regional partners to regional cooperation, improvements in education and training, exchange of expertise and development of joint regional outputs.

For the teacher education and training priority, and members of the South Eastern Teacher Education and Training Network (SEE TET), in strong cooperation with the Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalization, the ERI SEE organized a study visit to Vienna, focusing on digital approaches to teaching and learning and enhancements in the practices of continuous teachers' development.

In the area of higher education (also a priority area for ERI SEE), ERI SEE continued its cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) on the subject of recognition of higher education qualifications and quality assurance, through the work of the ERI SEE – RCC Joint working group on recognition of higher education qualifications. The regional Agreement for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in the Western Balkans, as well as the regional Agreement for the Recognition of Professional Qualifications were signed during the Berlin Summit in November, which is a great success after a number of years of negotiations. Based on the Agreements, implementation procedures will further be developed, to facilitate the processes. In addition, the quality assurance

systems in higher education, managed by the quality assurance agencies, were supported by external studies, recommendations for improvements at both national and regional levels, in line with the European Standards and Guidelines, development of Regional Action Plan and exchange of practices and experiences with Croatian and Slovenian colleagues.

The ERI SEE team is composed of 3 full-time employees (3 FTEs) and 0.3 financial manager, and strategic management structure – the ERI SEE Governing Board, composed of representatives of ministries of education from ERI SEE participating countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia), and partner institutions OeAD and RCC, continuously offered their support in expert, policy, political and strategic form to ERI SEE activities and developments.

A number of regional products were jointly developed with partners:

- Shared policy vision for QA in pre-tertiary education;
- Standard of competences for external evaluators, as a part of QA frameworks in tertiary education;
- Training needs analysis tool; Competences analysis tool; Training on data management for QA partners in pre-tertiary education;
- Training on data management for QA partners in higher education;
- Regional and national occupational standards for agricultural technician in traditional and organic production;
- Regional and national qualification standards for agricultural technician in traditional and organic production;
- Material supporting the implementation of Environment, Social and Gender components in the said documents;
- Action plan for strengthening European Standards and Guidelines in Higher Education institutions in SEE,

with a number of meetings and workshops leading to those products.

I STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

1.1. Strategic context

The strategic context for ERI SEE activities is shaped by the strategic priorities defined by the ERI SEE member states (in their Economic Reform Programmes and other relevant strategic documents in the area of education and training). Also, the European Commission, with its regular Country reports and recommendations, offers a solid analysis of needed actions. Last but not least, the Berlin process, as a political instrument improving and intensifying regional cooperation through connecting Western Balkans 6 economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) with EU member states, thus accelerating the region's closer alignment with the EU, has proven as an important strategic pointer of where the region wants to go – towards the establishment of the Common Regional Market. The „how“ part – the Common Regional Market Action Plan, offers some relevant actions for regional cooperation in the field of education and training, especially in the part dealing with higher education systems and qualifications, as the source of the highly qualified labour marked force in the region.

For the purpose of this Work Programme 23, the Economic Reform Programmes of ERI SEE Member states have been consulted, together with the EC country reports recommendations, as well as Common Regional Market Action Plan. The Strategic documents forming the underlying basis for this Work Programme are listed in Annex 1.

1.2. ERI SEE Governing Board

The strategic management of the ERI SEE is in the hands of the ERI SEE Governing Board, composed of the representatives of ministries of education from 7 ERI SEE Member Countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Role and Organisation of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (Brdo, 2010). The Governing Board also includes representatives of Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalization, and Regional Cooperation Council. The Governing Board is joined by the Consultative Body, composed of representatives of the European Training Foundation and Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, coordinating the implementation of the Danube Strategy in its Priority Area 9: Human Capital Development.

The meetings of the Governing Board and Consultative Bodies are held minimum 2 times a year and are used for strategic discussions and decisions, as well as content consultations and inputs used in the development of the Work Programme and Financial Plan. In 2023, 2 governing meetings of the ERI SEE Governing Board meeting are planned, with continuous communication and consultations in between these meetings.

ERI SEE Governing Board is in charge of monitoring whether the ERI SEE Secretariat, with its plans and activities, supports the mission of the ERI SEE: facilitation of cooperation at regional level, considering relevant European developments and trends in education and training, while at the same time keeping a close link to national context and priorities. ERI SEE thus contributes to sustainable economic developments and sustainable education and training reforms at national and regional levels.

The ERI SEE Governing Board also supports the ERI SEE vision – to provide both the implementation framework for regional cooperation in the area of education and training, as well as providing strong platform for policy dialogue, facilitating policy exchanges thus being an valuable asset contributing to the stability in the region.

1.3. Cooperation with international partner organizations

In 2023 the ERI SEE plans to continue cooperation with relevant and reliable international partners - Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalization (OeAD), European Training Foundation (ETF), Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and Western Balkans 6 Chambers Investment Forum (WB6 CIF). The Memorandum on Cooperation is signed with the WB6 CIF, Letter of Intent with ETF, and Annual Cooperation Agreement with OeAD, while the joint work of the RCC and ERI SEE is defined by the Common Regional Market Action Plan, resulting from the agreements among economies of the region.

Cooperation with the OeAD is formalized every year through the Cooperation Agreement that specifies priority areas (primarily VET), roles and obligations, and financial contributions for the realization of these roles.

In 2021, the Declaration of Intent for 2022 was signed between European Training Foundation and ERI SEE for the 3rd time in a row. The Declaration recognizes different but complementary roles ETF and ERI SEE play in the region in supporting developments in education and training systems and plans to build on these roles through joint activities.

In addition, with the agreed Common Regional Market Action Plan and identified relevant areas in higher education, the work of RCC and ERI SEE is also intensifying through the activities of the Joint ERI SEE – RCC Working Group for Recognition of Academic Qualifications and Quality Assurance.

In 2021, for the period including 2023, the Memorandum of understanding was signed between the Western Balkans 6 Chambers Investment Forum and ERI SEE, defining cooperation within the scope of the EQET SEE project, but also beyond, in different forms of peer learning, knowledge exchanges, seminars, conferences etc.

Cooperation with other international bodies, such as Austrian Development Cooperation, GIZ, Swiss Development Cooperation, is also going to continue through information sharing and participation at various events, with possibilities of formalizing this cooperation.

1.4. Internal organization and visibility

ERI SEE staff in 2023 will include Director (1 FTE), Regional Project Coordinator (1 FTE), Sector Project Coordinator (1 FTE), and Financial Manager (0,3 FTE).

The websites are extensively used to cover all the areas of ERI SEE activities.

In 2023 ERI SEE Secretariat will, in its day-to-day activities, rely on the 3.3 FTEs. Some expert activities resulting in expert intellectual products, such as Instructions for teachers on cross cutting issues within the EQET SEE project, data management trainings, legal advising, are planned to be sub-contracted externally.

The focus of internal organisation will be on internal quality management, ensuring sustainability and continuity, and increase in the visibility of ERI SEE.

In order to increase its visibility, ERI SEE Secretariat plans to maintain 3 websites:

- regular ERI SEE site (www.erisee.org)
- EQET SEE project site (www.eqet.erisee.org), for the activities related to the EQET SEE project implementation
- WBA4WBL site (www.wba4wbl.com), for the developments in the work-based learning in the region, as well as an archive to the previous regional project – Towards Regionally Based Occupational Standards (TO REGOS)
- WB qualifications site, dedicated to the recognition of qualifications and quality assurance (www.wb-qualifications.org), to serve as the portal about processes and procedures in the recognition of higher education qualifications and register of accredited institutions and/or study programmes.

More attention will be placed on cooperation with partners and their sharing of ERI SEE news on their institutional websites to achieve a wider dissemination effect. The practice of publishing the annual newsletter with the relevant updates on the ERI SEE processes and activities will be continued, and the newsletter will be distributed to the mailing list of around 2000 regional and international decision-makers and education experts with wide networks and further dissemination potential.

II THEMATIC AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Aligned with the regional and national priorities, set by strategic documents of the ERI SEE member countries (please see Annex 1. Strategic documents), the ERI SEE areas of intervention in 2023 will remain consistent and focus on:

1. General education, and supporting quality assurance systems and improvements in teacher education and training.
 2. Vocational education and training and increasing employability through contributing to cooperation between education and business sector.
 3. Higher education and supporting quality assurance systems and facilitating recognition of academic recognition.
-

2.1. General Education

In this thematic area, ERI SEE will cover two topics: Quality assurance in pre-tertiary education, through the EQET SEE project, and Teacher Education and Training, through regular activities and cooperation with ETF and OeAD. The work of 2 regional networks: Regional group of experts in QA in pre-tertiary education, and South Eastern European Teacher Education and Training Network (SEE TET) will be continued.

The activities in the thematic area of general education, planned for 2023, will be divided into two sub-groups:

- a. Quality assurance in pre-tertiary education
- b. Teacher Education and Training

The strategic documents of the South Eastern European economies emphasize the relevance of quality of education for the economic and social prosperity of their citizens. The quality of education is measured through the quality assurance instruments and external and internal evaluation, established in almost all ERI SEE economies on the one hand, and the investments in teachers and their skills through continuous professional development, on the other. These two instruments are seen as tools for the systemic enhancements in the education and training quality and present a cornerstone for ERI SEE's work in this area.

For the reason of assisting economies in systemic enhancements, as of 2018 ERI SEE has been gathering and coordinating two professional and expert groups from the region: Regional group of experts in QA in pre-tertiary education, and other, the South Eastern European Teacher Education and Training Network (SEE TET Network). Both are composed of the representatives of relevant national bodies/agencies/institutes from all ERI SEE participating economies, mandated for the improvements in their respective areas: Regional group of experts in QA in pre-tertiary education are composed of the representatives of agencies for quality assurance for general education and VET; and SEE TET Network is composed of the representatives of Teacher Training agencies and Ministries, dealing with teacher trainings.

In close cooperation with the said members, the main activities planned for 2023 are shaped. In the area of QA, they will be implemented within the scope of the regional project Enhancements in the Quality of Education and Training in South Eastern Europe – EQET SEE; and in the area of Teacher

education and training, out of the regular ERI SEE activities and in cooperation with the European Training Foundation (ETF) and Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalization (OeAD).

2.3.1 Quality Assurance in Pre-tertiary Education

The main focus of 2023 activities in the area of quality Assurance in Pre-tertiary education shall be put on the analysis and revisions of methodologies for external evaluation and development of recommendations, guidelines or best practices; finalization and implementation of the Training Needs Analysis and Evaluation and Self-evaluation questionnaires and development of training programmes for external evaluators and their trainings.

As mentioned earlier, increasing the quality of education, as a pre-requisite for a economic and social prosperity, is the strategic goal of all the economies in the region and the region as a whole. To address this issue, the economies in Albania, Kosovo*, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia have all established specific QA agencies in charge of external evaluation of pre-tertiary education, mandated to improve the education systems and assure their quality through objective, impartial and methodologically agreed ways. ERI SEE has gathered these agencies into the Regional group of experts in QA in general education, back in 2018 and they have been meeting and cooperating ever since. The group was also joined by Croatian and Bosnian and Herzegovinian representatives, even though the systems of quality assurance are arranged differently in these two countries. (In Croatia, the system of quality assurance relies on the external evaluation of knowledge, and not institutions, and pedagogical supervision of individual teachers. However, the system of external evaluation of institutions, which is at the core of the work of the ERI SEE regional work of experts, is not established. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, the systems are established at cantonal and entity levels and there is no one national coordination point or body with national mandate in this area).

In 2022 the EQET SEE project was being implemented, contributing to closer connection and exchanges among the QA Agencies, and regional outputs they developed.

Joint regional work in this area resulted in a policy vision calling for a more formative, or supportive approach to external evaluation, and a more cooperative approach between decision makers, policy implementers and practitioners. The aspect of data and competence building was given a high priority. This is expected to have a positive impact on the development of external evaluation and quality of education as a whole.

In 2023 the joint regional work in the area of QA – external evaluation – will be continued, and focusing on the following:

- Analysis and revisions of methodologies used in external evaluation cycles in order to reflect the need for sustainable, inclusive, digital and gender-equal societies, able to respond to new realities of the global world.
- Development of recommendations/best practices/guidelines for new approaches to methodologies for external evaluation
- Finalization of regional questionnaires for Training Needs Analysis and Evaluation and Self-Evaluation for External Evaluators, based on the earlier developed regionally agreed Standard of Competences for External Evaluators, and national adjustments
- Implementation of the Training Needs Analysis at regional level
- Data analysis regarding Training Needs
- Establishment of regional Training Programme
- Training of the External Evaluation Trainers at regional level

in 2023, the work of the QA agencies will go into the depth of the systems, by analyzing methodologies and processes and up-grading them. There is a lot of potential for exchanges and peer learning among economies and possibilities for improvements in both general and VET aspects of quality assurance.

Cooperation with the European Training Foundation (ETF) and Standing International Conference of Inspectorates, the European association of inspectorates or quality agencies is continued in 2023 on the subjects of quality assurance.

The challenges in the implementation of the above mentioned activities include:

- a. Heavy workload of partner institutions, fueled by the shortage of staff at national level, influencing the availability for regional activities
 - To mitigate this risk, constant communication with project partners is held, trying to find suitable dates and periods for regional actions
- b. Strict legal bindings for methodologies for external evaluation (for example, Laws), and recent modification of the external evaluation methodologies which make new adjustments legally difficult, or not possible to be implemented within the current evaluation cycle
 - To mitigate this risk, the other operational documents (such as, for example, checklists or lists of indicators) are going to be analysed as well, with the possibility of making improvements at this level, within the framework of the existing methodology

- Another way to mitigate this risk is to publish separate documents as additional to the methodology, in the form of Guidelines or recommendations, dealing with the intensification of cross-cutting issues, such as environmental and social sustainability and digitalization, which can complement original methodologies without changing them
- Another way to mitigate the risk is to develop certain aspects of the External Evaluation methodologies at regional level, which has not yet been elaborated, for the benefit of all economies (such as, for example, the Thematic analysis within the External Evaluation)

2.3.2 Teacher education and training

The work in the area of teacher education and training is going to rely on continuing the activities of the SEE Teacher Education and Training Network (SEE TET Network), composed of the representatives of the teacher education and training agencies and ministries from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, established in 2018 by ERI SEE and ETF and coordinated ever since. As of 2021, the SEE TET Network is also supported by the OeAD – Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalisation.

The work in this area in 2023 will build on the activities in 2022 and joint regional conclusions on what is relevant for economies:

- continuous teacher trainings, including in the digital form, for which quality criteria need to be established (both for the organization and content delivery, as well as for the impact of effect of those teacher training programmes.
- Continuing exploration of potentials of digital pedagogy, digital and blended teaching and learning and digital material, brought about by the covid-19 pandemic
- Contributing to quality culture building

1 regional event in the blended format is envisaged for 2023.

The activities in this area will be supported by the ETF, OeAD.and RCC.

Risks include:

- a. Lack of financial resources, as this activity is not included in the project-funded activities of the ERI SE
 - As a mitigating measure, additional sources of funding will be looked for.
- b. Changing representatives in the SEE TET Network, appointed by their home institutions, leading to the lack of continuity of clear directions of the work of the Network
 - As a mitigating measure, official permanent appointments will be asked for, with 1 permanent SEE TET Network member and other more flexible, depending on the specific topic.
- c. Lack of formalization of the SEE TET Network (through a cooperation agreement of similar) and lack of regular funding available, which poses threats to the sustainability of the SEE TET Network
 - As a mitigating measure, the Cooperation agreement will be proposed, and alternative ways of working (on-line, or on the margins of some other events) will be explored.

2.2 Vocational education and training

The activities in VET in 2023 will focus on the finalizing the work around the regional and national qualification standard for agricultural technician, and continuing regional cooperation in the area of metal-machinery sector, producing the regional occupational standard and adjuste national ones for locksmith, and then moving further to develop regional qualification standard for locksmith and national versions. In addition, teaching and learning material will be developed

In spite of continuous efforts invested by national and international communities, the youth unemployment remains one of the most challenging areas in the Western Balkans, intensified by commonly identified issue of skills mismatch. The solutions include, among others, closer cooperation between the education and business sector in defining the missing skills and developing occupational standard in close cooperation. This is to ensure that the identified missing skills are later, in the process of curricula development, integrated into the curricula and taken into account when deciding on the learning outcomes. The strategic framework for ERI SEE's activities in this particular area is given by national strategic documents and relevant Economic Reform Programs and European Commission recommendations.

The ERI SEE's involvement in these aspects will include the implementation of the EQET SEE project, funded by the Austrian Development Agency through funds of Austrian Development Cooperation. The Western Balkans Alliance for Work-based learning is the implementing partner in the project at national level of individual economies.

The partners in the process are VET agencies and Chambers of Commerce from the region, gathered under the Western Balkans Alliance for work-based learning (WBA4WBL), Western Balkans Chambers Investment Forum and OeAD.

The project will contribute to the enhancement of the employability and labour mobility of young people (aged 14 – 18) by investing in quality and labour market relevance of VET in the SEE region. As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons of high unemployment rates is the inadequacy of the education systems to deliver for the needs of the labour market. To change this, it is crucial to have strong cooperation mechanisms between private and public sector in VET, and strong involvement of adequate business representatives in the definition of the skills needed on the labour market. The project will continue to build these links in 2023.

In 2023, in cooperation with the VET agencies/qualification agencies and chambers of commerce from the region, the national qualification standards (based on the regionally-developed one, in 2022), for agricultural technician, will be developed. The activities foreseen include the following:

- Maintaining partnership between policy makers and policy implementers – national VET agencies from the region (SEE VET Net) and national chambers of commerce from the region (CIF) – sustaining Western Balkans Alliance for Work-based Learning
- Finalizing activities regarding the regionally-developed qualification standard for Agricultural Technician for organic and traditional production through national meetings
- Development of the Occupational Standards for locksmith/CNC operator through regional and national meetings
- Development of the regional qualification standard for locksmith/CNC operator
- Development of teaching and learning material for agricultural technician and locksmith/CNC operator

- Development of regional guidelines for implementation of WBL components in the curriculum for the agricultural technician and locksmith/CNC operator
- Development of QA recommendations for Work-based learning

The activities and expected results do not come without risks, of which we can identify a few:

1. Heavy workload of the representatives of main institutions in the process, due to their national obligations and activities, because of which activities could be postponed
 - The mitigating action is to plan in close cooperation with the partners early enough so that adequate national planning can be made
2. Lengthy adoption processes of regional documents
 - Mitigating action is to involve stakeholders participating in the adoption process early enough to inform them on regional developments
3. Different pace of development of national inputs, which can slow down regional processes
 - Timely and adequate planning of national and regional processes.

2.2 Higher Education

Quality of higher education in the region is in the focus of the ERI SEE activities: in partnership with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), activities regarding the implementation the Agreement on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualification, will be in focus, together with the Quality Assurance of Higher Education and assistance to the Western Balkans economies in their application of European Standards and guidelines.

Conference on the Quality in Higher Education, taking into account the quality assurance standards, will be organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of North Macedonia.

In November 2022, the Agreement on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualification was signed among the 6 Western Balkans economies, within the Berlin summit, under the Berlin Process.

The Agreement, as a legally binding document, envisages further facilitation of the recognition process in the Western Balkans, regular and open communication channels, joint use of the Regional Recognition Database and Commission of the recognition of qualifications, composed of 3 representatives of economies – signatories of the Agreement and coordinated with the Regional Cooperation Council in partnership with the ERI SEE.

The Agreement envisages various mechanisms enhancing cooperation between recognition and quality assurance in higher education, which was started to be explored during the 2022 activities that ERI SEE organized in cooperation with the Croatian Ministry of Education and Science, and earlier, within the project run by the Croatian Ministry of Education and Science, called Effective Partnership for Enhanced Recognition.

3 activities are planned as a particular way of support from Croatia to Western Balkans 6 and Moldova in this respect:

1. 2 meetings with the ERI SEE – RCC Joint Working Group on Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications, defining and clarifying the concrete implementation mechanisms of the Agreement
2. A peer learning activity for recognition and/or quality assurance relevant topics.

In addition, a strong strategic framework for ERI SEE activities in this area is given by the Common Regional Market (CRM) 2021 – 2024 Action Plan, endorsed by the leaders of the Western Balkans 6 (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia). During the Summit, EU Leaders voiced their strong support for the Western Balkans' EU perspective and expressed their determination to further intensify engagement at all levels to support the region's political and economic transformation, and leaders of the Western Balkans renewed their sustained commitment to inclusive regional cooperation as a fundamental factor for the Western Balkans' EU accession path.

The RCC, as the leading regional organisation mandated to facilitate the implementation of the Action Plan in the area of higher education and free movement of people and capital, is provided with the funding from the EC, while ERI SEE is included in specific actions in line with its scope of work and programme.

Possible risks may include political interventions in the implementation of the Agreement, for which there are no mitigating actions, as well as the lack of adequate funding for in-depth activities on the side of the ERI SEE.

In addition, the conference on the quality in higher education will be organized in cooperation with the North Macedonian Ministry of Education and Science. The conference will embrace the latest developments in the quality area in higher education, as well as provide concrete exchange of best practices supporting the integration of the European Standards and Guidelines 2015 into the higher education systems of Western Balkan 6 economies and QA agencies.

Annex 1. Strategic documents

In the paragraphs below, we relied on strategic documents currently available and up-to-date – main European Commission recommendations from the Country Reports, main structural reform priorities from Economic Reform Programmes 2022 relevant for education and skills, and national educational strategic document - when available, as well as information at the official website of the European Union – Eurydice portal².

Albania

The Economic Reform Programme (ERP) for Albania, 2021 – 2023³ lists structural reform priorities for Albania in the sector of education for the period of 2021 – 2023, which include:

- Finalisation and support to the implementation of the pre-university curricular reform, teacher training and employment
- Inclusive education
- Support the inclusiveness and equality in education
- Improving the quality and coverage of VET while ensuring linkages with the labour market

The European Commission assessment of the ERP for Albania identifies *Increasing innovation and skills of young people and adults to enhance employment* as one of the key challenges.

The European Commission recommendation within the Country Report Albania 2022⁴, within the Chapter 26 Education and Culture, states:

Albania is moderately prepared in the field of education and culture. Some progress was made with the adoption of the 2021-2026 National Strategy for Education and the related action plan; the strengthening of the new National Agency for Employment and Skills; the continued restructuring of the National Agency for Education, Vocational Training and Qualifications; and the implementation of the Albanian Qualification Framework and the Vocational Education and Training Law. Further efforts are required to strengthen quality and inclusiveness of education, with a special focus on the proper implementation of the competence-based approach and digitalisation. Appropriate resources should also be allocated to ensure the implementation of the new policy reform. In the coming year, Albania should in particular: → ensure the optimisation of the VET system to develop services and competences in line with

² https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/national-description_en

³ <https://www.financa.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Economic-Reform-Programme-2021-2023.pdf>

⁴ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/albania-report-2022_en

the needs of the labour market; → improve professional development and training of teachers and trainers, with a specific focus on pedagogical skills related to the implementation of the competence-based inclusive approach and digitalisation from pre-primary to university level, including VET education; → adopt the 2022-2029 National Youth Strategy.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022 Report⁵, European Commission working document, states that Bosnia and Herzegovina is at an early stage of preparation in the area of education and culture. There was no progress in the area, with Bosnia and Herzegovina failing to participate in 2021 PIRLS or 2022 PISA. A fully functional system of accreditation of higher education institutions and in particular study programmes is still lacking. Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to align legislation at all levels of government with the framework laws on education, and ensure application of the common core curriculum based on learning outcomes. Social inclusion at all stages of education needs to be ensured. Youth strategies across the country should be developed and implemented. In the coming year, Bosnia and Herzegovina should in particular: → extend and update the action plan for the national qualification framework (NQF) and establish an inter-sectoral commission for NQF; → ensure a fully functional system of (re-)accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes across the country; → ensure continued participation in international assessment studies and implementation of findings to improve PISA results.

The Economic Reform Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2021 – 2023⁶ for the area of education foresees economic measure of improving the link between education and the labour market. Improving the harmonization of education with the requirements of the labour market is the main goal of this reform measure, in order to provide educated and professional staff to the economy and increase the number of employed persons.

A state-level policy document setting priorities for developing higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2016-2026 was adopted in March 2016 and the *Republika Srpska* entity adopted its education development strategy for 2016-2021 in April 2016. At the level of the Federation, the Strategic directions of Higher Education Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina were adopted for the period 2012 – 2022.⁷, which reiterates the commitments to the principles of the Bologna Declaration and strategic goals contributing to the Bologna process implementation.

⁵ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/bosnia-and-herzegovina-report-2022_en

⁶ <http://www.dep.gov.ba/naslovnica/?id=2439>

⁷ http://fmon.gov.ba/Upload/Dokumenti/9fef4cd0-f57a-4b51-aaa0-aaeadd4da691_Strate%C5%A1ki%20pravci%20razvoja%20visokog%20obrazovanja.pdf

Priorities for 2016 – 2026 Higher Education Development in BiH⁸ include the main measures and activities that need to be implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to strengthen the development of higher education on the one hand, and, on the other hand, achieve full inclusion in the European Higher Education Area. The priorities for the development of higher education are grouped into seven key areas: good governance and management, resources; the integration of the labor market and higher education; standards of qualifications, student experience, internationalization and statistics.

The Platform for development of preschool education in BiH for the period 2017 - 2022 was adopted - the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, in cooperation with the competent educational authorities in BiH, in the period 2015-2016, with the support of UNICEF in BiH, worked intensively on the Platform document for the development of pre-school education in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2017-2022.

The document Priorities in the integration of entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial key competences into the education systems of Bosnia and Herzegovina was adopted for the period 2020 - 2030⁹, stating the importance of introducing entrepreneurial behaviour early on.

The document Improvement of the quality and relevance of VET in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the light of Riga Conclusions, for the period of 2021 – 2030¹⁰, was adopted. The document recognizes VET as a generator of economic development and societal progress, since it enables the acquisition of skills relevant for the labour-market, stimulates employability, social inclusion and prosperity of an individual, but also of the society as a whole.

Last but not least, in 2022 the consultations about transforming education were undertaken across the relevant policy-making bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which resulted in the adoption of the Statement of Commitment to Transform Education supported by Line Education Ministries in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to define the paths of transformation of education and to provide quality, inclusive and accessible education to all children and youth in BiH.

Croatia

The 2022 Country Report for Croatia¹¹ states:

Croatia is facing various challenges in relation to education and training (see also Annex 13). Participation in formal childcare for children under 3 continues to increase (to 20.4% in 2020). However, the rate remains below the EU average of 32.3%. Too much focus on theoretical knowledge and not enough practical skills development in vocational education and training continues to create a mismatch between graduates' education and skills and labour market needs. By aligning new

⁸ <http://www.sluzbenilist.ba/page/akt/e8wfeohz4nh78h77G7ohz4nh78h77yE>

⁹ <http://www.sluzbenilist.ba/page/akt/RSjNohz4nh78h77BrEHKw=>

¹⁰ <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/node/168218>

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-croatia_en.pdf

programmes with the Croatian system of occupational and qualification standards, the labour market relevance of education and training is expected to increase, helping to reduce skills mismatches and labour shortages. Participation in adult learning over the past four weeks has been well below the EU average (5.1% against 10.8% in 2021), especially for low-qualified workers. The newly adopted Act on Adult Education should contribute to achieve the 2030 EU headline target on adult learning.

Employment rates vary widely across educational attainment groups. In 2021, the employment rates of low-qualified and medium-skilled workers (respectively 42.1% and 67.1% against 54.9% and 72.8% in the EU) considerably lagged behind that of high-qualified workers (84.1% against 85% in the EU), and all are clearly lower than the EU average. This drives home the importance of strengthening upskilling and reskilling measures, to help reduce skills mismatches and the resulting severe labour shortages. There are also significant regional differences in employment levels and security, as well as in education, with differing participation rates in early childhood education and care, and lower percentages of pupils in general secondary schools (see Annex 13).

Few pupils leave school early, but basic skills are often low.

Tertiary attainment rate (TEA) is characterized by significant gender gaps and urban-rural divide.

The overall number of pupils is rapidly decreasing as a result of population decline.

The rate of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) has been steadily increasing since 2019, while prevention and outreach measures for inactive NEETs remain underdeveloped.

In July 2021 the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026¹².

In the area of education the focus is on: a) supporting structural reform of early childhood education and care, primary and secondary education, and b) modernisation of higher education.

Investments include: construction and reconstruction of kinder-gardens, primary schools (in order to enable one-shift classes and whole-day school approach), as well as construction and reconstruction of secondary schools. In the area of higher education investments are focused on digital transformation of higher education institutions, mainly digital infrastructure and equipment.

Moldova

The United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018 - 2022 for Republic of Moldova¹³ states that Moldova has adopted numerous strategies to overcome key social challenges, including those in education.

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/recovery-and-resilience-plan-croatia_en

¹³ <https://moldova.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/UNDAF%20Moldova%20EN.pdf>

In line with the SD4 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, Moldovan goals are, by 2030, to:

- substantially increase the number of young people and adults who have relevant skills for the labour-market;
- ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities and children in vulnerable situations;
- ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development;
- build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive, and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

Ensuring quality education for all and promote lifelong learning opportunities is also one of the long-term objectives of the National Development Strategy „Moldova 2030“¹⁴

Montenegro

Montenegro 2022 Report¹⁵ by the European Commission states the following_

- Montenegro has a good level of preparation in this area. Some progress was made regarding the recommendation on inclusive education but for other recommendations much more effort is needed and thus, they remain valid. In the coming year, Montenegro should in particular: → adopt a costed plan for wide ranging education reforms including inclusive education and improving access to quality education at all education levels; → implement the new strategy on early and pre-school education 2021-2025 to improve pre-school enrolment for all children; → finalise then initiate the national Vocational Education and Training (VET) implementation plan 2022-2023 of the VET Strategy 2020-2024, as well as putting in place the evaluation mechanism of practical learning at VET and higher education levels.

The Economic Reform Programme 2021 - 2023¹⁶ envisages the following:

The European Commission assessment of the ERP for Montenegro identifies *Increasing employment, particularly of women and young people, and tackling long-term unemployment* as one of the key challenges.

Based on the EURIDICE report¹⁷, “the vision of the Montenegrin education system is to develop Montenegro as a society of knowledge, where education, as the key factor of economic and social development will be of high-quality, flexible, efficient, with the professional human resources who will have competitive knowledge, skills and competences and who will be qualified to take part in the

¹⁴ <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/mol191490.pdf>

¹⁵ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/montenegro-report-2022_en

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.me/en/documents/993f6bc7-bace-4ec7-b49a-f58419ec9804>

¹⁷ https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/crna-gora/ongoing-reforms-and-policy-developments_en#:~:text=The%20vision%20of%20the%20Montenegrin,skills%20and%20competences%20and%20who

labour market, where each individual has equal opportunities for personal and professional development. Most significant recommendations and steps which should ensure the sustainability of the education reform and enable the implementation of this vision are as follows:

1. Further development of social partnership and active involvement of partners in planning, organization and implementation of education and training, thus providing faster response to the labour market needs.
2. The improvements of flexibility of VET through development of modularized curricula based on vocational and key competences, which ensure wide basic vocational knowledge and which, by the means of elective modules, satisfy special interests and affinities of pupils.
3. The development of indicators for institution quality assessment, defining procedures for curricula evaluation, as well as the evaluation itself, will contribute to the improvement of quality of education.
4. Early school leaving prevention, taking into account its complexity and influence on individuals and society in general. Develop career guidance system for all types of education.
5. The improvement of initial and continuing professional training of teaching staff has been recognized as a key factor of education quality. Special attention will be dedicated to the education of teachers of practical training.
6. Finding out the way to involve local community representatives and employers in the financing of education to the possible extent, which should encourage better cooperation between school and local community.
7. Preparation for the implementation of a model of financing per capita, which would ensure more efficient expenditures, with greater autonomy of both school and local community. Developing role of school will be encouraged.
8. One of the priorities in the upcoming period has been defining of enrolment policy which will reflect labour market needs as well as Montenegrin mid-term and long-term development policy requirements, along with further work on the creation of relevant working conditions at schools, school equipment and teaching aids upgrading and development of textbooks and relevant learning materials.
9. International context will be taken into account in the envisaged activities.
10. Linking higher education and labour market and increasing entrepreneurial and innovation character of education,
11. The share of population with higher education degrees aged 30-34 should be at least 40% in 2020,
12. Establishing a model of lifelong learning based on a good international practice,
13. Research oriented higher education,
14. The National Qualification Framework will ensure the quality of qualifications, the connection and comparability of the outcomes, achieved through different learning types. When it comes to Teacher Education and Training, the 2017-2024 Strategy for teacher

education¹⁸ has the objective to create policies and practices of initial and continuous teacher education and training, which will offer support to teachers in performing their complex role as educator, on whose work the quality, persistence and application of knowledge which the students will gain, depends on, at all levels of education, their personal and professional development, social inclusion and readiness to become active citizens.

North Macedonia

North Macedonia 2022 Report¹⁹ states:

North Macedonia is moderately prepared in the area of education and culture. Limited progress was made in the reporting period, still impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The implementation of the 2018-2025 education strategy is slow, as is the development of a proper monitoring system. The recommendations of last year's report were only partially addressed and most remain valid. In the coming year, North Macedonia should in particular: → adopt the Vocational Education and Training (VET) law and establish and operationalise the regional VET centres; → finalise and adopt the Law for Adult Education; → improve access to quality education for all, in particular children with disabilities and children from Roma communities increase pre-school enrolment and continue improving support for teachers' training and professional development.

Draft Economic Reform Programme 2022 - 2024²⁰ envisages further development of the qualification system which includes continuing cooperation between higher education institutions and the private schools, as well as secondary vocational schools and the private sector in order to ensure practical work for students in companies; validation of non-formal education – recognition of previous learning, and development of qualifications at level 5 and the opportunity for self-employment in craft activities, as well as establishment of a new financing model for primary and secondary education (block granting formula based on standardized input parameters).

Overall national education strategy and key objectives

In January 2018 the Government of the Republic of Macedonia has adopted the new Strategy for Education for the period 2018-2025 and corresponding Action Plan, and consequently it was published by the Ministry of Education and Science in Macedonian, Albanian and English language. The process of adoption has been preceded by public debates and analysis of the content of the document by experts, national and international, stakeholders and working groups.

The new Strategy for Education and its Action Plan encompass all fields and levels of education. The vision of the Strategy itself is that the education is key for the strengthening of the national economy and the wellbeing of the Macedonian citizens and therefore it is essential to put efforts for

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/6d7f693f-fd43-4869-80a5-09cba4f2e87a>

¹⁹ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/north-macedonia-report-2022_en

²⁰ <https://finance.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Draft-Chapter-5.ERP-2022-2024-public-consultation-1.pdf>

development of inclusive and integrated education system which is “student-centered”, which implements modern programmes that will enable the future generations to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies compliant to the needs of the democratic multicultural society, labor market and for the new challenges of the global scientific and technological setting.

Education strategy 2018-2025

According to this vision, the Strategy will be mainly targeted to the improvement of:

- Quality of education and its relevance to North Macedonia’s society development priorities (particularly in terms of having productive and engaged citizens) and the needs of the labour markets, guided towards the expected learning outcomes, as well as acceptance of multiculturalism, interethnic integration, respect for diversity and democratic values;
- Development of generic and core competencies of pupils (and all learners), in order for them to develop into critical thinkers, active and relevant participants in social life;
- Education system infrastructure, including building facilities, equipment and teaching and supportive technologies in order to ensure appropriate learning environment in general and inclusion of persons with special education needs in particular;
- Capacities of human resources including managers, teaching and support staff;
- Quality and results of the educational process by means of improving the assessment/evaluation at all education levels: pupil, teacher, school and system;
- Autonomy of institutions in education, particularly of universities, as well as autonomy of entities in the education process;
- Legislation, Management and Funding.

Serbia

European Commission’s Country report Serbia 2022²¹ states:

Serbia remains at a good level of preparation in the area of education and culture. Some progress was made on the implementation of last year’s recommendations, by consolidating the national qualifications framework (NQF) system and taking some steps to ensure compliance of the quality assurance system in higher education with the recommendations of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The COVID19 pandemic somewhat disrupted the organisation and quality of instruction on all levels of education. The recommendations for the 2021 report remain largely valid. In the coming year, Serbia should in particular: → increase participation in early childhood education and care, in particular of children from disadvantaged backgrounds; →

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/serbia-report-2022_en

continue with the operationalisation of the NQF system, with additional focus on the quality and scope of non-formal education; → ensure full compliance of the policy and insitutional framework for quality assurance in higher education with the recommendations of the ENQA.

The European Commission assessment of the ERP for Serbia identifies *Increasing employment, in particular of young people and women, and social protection against poverty* as one of the key challenges.

In addition, the Economic Reform Programme 2021 – 2023²² identifies the following priorities:

- Qualifications oriented to the needs of the labour market: Continuation of the reform of secondary vocational education by improving the model of dual education through the establishment and implementation of a framework for monitoring and evaluation of dual educational profiles, which enables data-based decision making and ensures the quality of dual education, as well as infrastructure and training centres. As one of the answers to the new epidemiological situation, an online database will be created, which will contain teaching units that are implemented in educational institutions and topics for learning through work in companies. In terms of the implementation of the NOKS system, it is planned to pilot the procedure of recognition of prior learning, as well as to enter data into the NOKS Register.
- Digitalization of the education system and introduction of a uniform information education system - the reform implies the introduction of the Unified Information Education System, as an IT basis for the modernization of management and decision-making, which will contribute to the modernization and digitalization of the education system. It is also planned to develop a repository of open educational resources (didactic materials), as a database of digital resources for schools.

²² <https://rsjp.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Economic-Reform-Programme-2021-2023.pdf>

Annex 2. Activity plan 2023

Timeline 2023	CORE ERI SEE Activities	Deliverables
February	ERI SEE Governing Board Meeting, on-line	Adopted Work Programme 2023; Financial Plan 2023, Activity Report 2022, Financial Report 2022
March	Meeting of the RCC – ERI SEE-RCC Joint Working Group on Recognition of Academic Qualifications	Training on the Regional Recognition Database
April/May	Meeting of Teacher education and training network (SEE TET), blended	Guidelines for digital material
May	International conference on higher education North Macedonia	Recommendations on QA in higher education
June	Meeting of the RCC – ERI SEE Workgroup on the recognition of academic qualifications	Procedures for the Commission for recognition
September	Higher education study visit / workshop, blended	Recommendations on the aspects of ESG
October	Meeting of the RCC – ERI SEE Workgroup on the recognition of academic qualifications	Implementation of the Agreement on recognition of HE qualifications - guidelines
November	ERI SEE Governing Board meeting	Reporting on the implementation of the Financial Plan and Work Programme 2023
December	Newsletter	December

ENHANCEMENTS IN THE IMPROVEMENTS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SEE: QUALITY ASSURANCE – CONTENT-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Time/ Theme	Activity / Description	Indicators
COMPETENCES DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL EVALUATORS		
January - March 2023	Finalization of the questionnaires for training needs analysis and evaluation and self-evaluation, based on the agreed regional standard, at regional level	2 questionnaires developed: 1 for TNA and 1 for evaluation and self-evaluation

April 2023	Preparing the TNA questionnaire for on-line implementation at regional level	Survey monkey licenses
May 2023	Implementation of the tools (testing) at regional level	On-line implementation
May 2023	National meetings for TNA questionnaires adjustment	National meetings as 7 economies
June 2023	Data analysis and identification of missing needs – at regional level	min. 1 regional meeting on the presentation of analysis of the results, min. 15 participants; conclusions on the themes of the modules published on www.erisee.org .
June 2023	Implementation of the tools (testing) at national level	On-line implementation
July – September 2023	Data analysis and identification of missing needs – at national level	National activity
November 2022	Analysis of QA frameworks and accompanying instruments (standards, indicators, checklists)	On-line
ENHANCEMENTS IN THE PROCESSES OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION		
January 2022	Continuation of the analysis of QA frameworks and accompanying instruments (standards, indicators, checklists) – if needed	1 regional meeting
January / March 2023	Development of regional methodology, guidelines and instruments	5 regional meetings Developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional metamethodology proposal or - Regional indicators and checklists proposals - ESG included in the methodology, indicators or checklists - Digital approaches included in the methodology, indicators or checklists
April/May 2023	Adjustments of regional products to national circumstances	2 national meetings, min. 7 participants, integrated methodology into national procedures or policies
June - September 2023	Development of regional modules for trainings of trainers	min. 4 meetings, 25 participants, of which min 30% female, min. 3 training modules developed

		Developed minimum standards of the trainings Defined objectives of the trainings Developed content of the trainings Including ESG elements in the trainings
September – December 2023	Implementation of regional trainings of trainers of external evaluators	3 regional meetings

**ENHANCEMENTS IN THE IMPROVEMENTS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SEE:
VET – CONTENT-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

AGRO-CULTURAL TECHNICIAN		
January – February 2023	Regional development of teaching and learning material	2 working days Developed teaching and learning material
March – April 2023	Regional development of WBL components in curricula	Curricula with WBL elements
April - May 2023	Regional development of regional guidelines for QA	Guidelines for QA
June 2023 – July 2023	Adjustment and integration into national procedures	Adopted regional documents
LOCKSMITH/CNC TECHNICIAN		
January 2023	Regional consolidation of national inputs - regional preparatory and final meeting	2 regional meetings Consolidated and validated second occupational standard
February 2023	National adjustment meetings	1 national meeting per occupation per economy 6 adjusted occupational standards, national meeting material
March – May 2023	Regional qualification standard development	5 regional meetings Developed regional qualification standard
May - July 2023 -	Development of national qualification standards	National meetings, 5 per economy Developed 6 national qualification standards
September 2023	Regional development of teaching and learning material	2 regional meetings Developed Teaching and learning material
October 2023	Regional development of WBL components in curricula	Guidelines for the implementation of WBL
November – December 2023	Adjustment of the material at national level	National meetings

