

# Skills anticipation in Bulgaria

---

04/2017  [Bulgaria, Skills anticipation in countries](#)

---

## Table of contents



Summary

Overview of the Bulgarian approach

Description

Aims

Legal framework

Governance

The role of stakeholders

Target groups

Funding and resources

Methods and tools

Skills assessment

Skills forecasts

Skills foresight

Other skills anticipation practices

Dissemination and use

Use of skills anticipation in policy

Target groups' uses of skills anticipation outputs

## Summary

Skills anticipation is in its infancy in Bulgaria. Key developments between 2009 and 2013 have been co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) including perhaps the most important one- the creation of the [National Network for Competence Assessment \(NNCA\)](#). In 2013, Bulgaria adopted a formal 'mechanism for including the results of forecasts of supply and demand of labour in developing and implementing government policies.' This clarified the roles of the institutions involved in the process of skills anticipation. Annual reports are submitted by the main government institutions on the effects of the forecasts on policy formulation and design. These reports then feed into an annual synthesis published by the [Ministry of Labour and Social Policy \(MLSP\)](#).

Labour market intelligence is used by public and private stakeholders at a national, regional and local level in the areas of training, vocational education and training (VET), and further education.

Looking forward, the strategy documents for the period 2014-2020, such as the national VET strategy and higher education strategy, establish as a priority inter-institutional cooperation between the education sector and businesses to support skills matching. In this regard, the NNCA's approach to stakeholder involvement is regarded as an effective model and offers potential for further development at sectoral and regional levels.

**Please cite this document as:** Skills Panorama (2017), *Skills anticipation in Bulgaria*

Analytical highlights series. Available

at [http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/analytical\\_highlights/skills-anticipation-bulgaria](http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/analytical_highlights/skills-anticipation-bulgaria)

## Overview of the Bulgarian approach

# Skills anticipation in Bulgaria



## Key actors

Governance

Ministry of  
Labour and Social  
Policy (MLSP)

## Stakeholders

Governmental institutions  
(including Ministry of  
Education and Science)

Training  
providers

Universities  
and research  
organisations

Social partners  
and NGOs

## Target groups

Experts, HR  
and guidance  
practitioners

Students  
and adult  
learners

Employers

National  
Employment Agency  
(NEA) advisers



## Types of skills anticipation

### Quantitative forecasting

MLSP forecasting

### Skills assessments

Skills profiles by the  
National Network for  
Competence Assessment  
(NNCA)

Sector skills  
assessments

### Foresight

Regional, ad  
hoc exercises by  
NEA on  
occupations

### Other

Regular surveys  
of employer  
skills demand by  
NEA



## Dissemination

### Channels

Distribution of  
reports by MLSP  
and NNCA

NEA website

'My  
Competence'  
platform

Social  
dialogue

### Use

Planning of education  
and training provision

Develop sector  
competence models  
(Sector Skills Units of  
NNCA)

## Description

As of late 2016, skills anticipation was still very much in its development phase in Bulgaria. Skills anticipation activities include:

- Skills assessment carried out by the National Network for Competence Assessment (NNCA). The NNCA is run by a [Council](#) which is supported in its activities by the [National Competence Assessment Centre \(NCAC\)](#);
- Employment and skill forecasts undertaken by the [Ministry of Labour and Social Policy \(MLSP\)](#);
- Skills foresight activities at the occupational level carried out on an ad hoc basis by branch associations and social partners;

- Other activities, such as regular employer surveys run by the [National Employment Agency \(NEA\)](#).

A model of skills assessment was developed and implemented with funding from the ESF (2009-2013). The project 'Development of Workforce Competence Assessment System by Sectors and Regions' was managed by the social partners – [Bulgarian Industrial Association \(BIA\)](#), in partnership with the [Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria \(CITUB\)](#) and the [Confederation of Labour Podkrepa \(CL Podkrepa\)](#) – and led to the creation of the NNCA. Amongst other activities, the NNCA provides online competence assessments, free of charge, at the Workforce Competence Assessment System's '[My Competence](#)' portal. This is an information system that comprises five main modules: sector competency models, assessment, sector information, e-learning and development resources.

Skills forecasts were initiated by the Council of Ministers in 2013 [\(1\)](#) and are the responsibility of the MLSP. These forecasts are based on a macroeconomic model and incorporate data from surveys of employers, the National Statistical Institute (NSI), the National Social Security Institute (NSSI), the National Revenue Agency (NRA), and the NEA. With financial support from the ESF (2013-2015), through the project 'Development of a system for forecasting the needs of labour force with certain skills and characteristics,' the MLSP has undertaken skills forecasting and published a [long term forecast](#) on labour force supply and demand for the period 2014-2028. [\(2\)](#) The methodology used in the forecast provides a basis for the preparation of future forecasts to be funded by the MLSP.

An in-depth analysis of the future skills needs of enterprises was conducted in 2015 by the NEA as a pilot study under the guidance of the MLSP and with financial support from the ESF. The results of the study provided a [short-term forecast](#) of the development of the labour market in Bulgaria. [\(3\)](#) Funding from the MLSP and NEA will allow the survey to be repeated in the future.

Other instruments for the analysis of skills demand include regular surveys by the NEA [\(4\)](#) and the collection and analysis of quantitative data collected through local labour offices. Sector specific skills foresight activities are also undertaken.

## Aims

The mission of the NNCA is to 'enhance labour market adaptability and effectiveness, as well as to strike a greater balance of labour market demand and supply by developing a system for workforce competence assessment by sectors and regions.' [\(5\)](#) The aims of the MLSP's forecasts are closely linked to the country's labour market policy aims. Labour market policy is oriented towards ensuring that the supply of labour is aligned to the qualifications, skills and competences in demand in the labour market. This is set out in the annual National Employment Action Plan (NEAP).

## Legal framework

The most important legal document relevant for skills anticipation, and the systematic use of its results, is the 2013 Council of Ministers' Decision on the 'Mechanism for including the results of foresights of supply and demand of labour in developing and implementing government policies'. The Decision outlines, among other things, the role of individual institutions regarding skills anticipation. According to

the Mechanism, the MLSP has the main responsibility for governance of skills anticipation and provision of annual reports on the labour market needs based on employer surveys and official data from the NSI, the NEA, and the NSSI.

Overall, much of the regulation on VET highlights the importance of skills matching and meeting the needs of the labour market, (6) which can be supported by skills needs anticipation. The 'Strategy for the Development of VET 2015-2020' encourages cooperation and partnership amongst VET institutions and employers to bring about better matching of skills provision to labour market needs. In addition the 'National Strategy for the Development of Higher Education 2014 – 2020' seeks to strengthen the links between the needs of the labour market and higher education providers

## Governance

In accordance with the 'Mechanism for including the results of forecast of supply and demand of labour in developing and implementing government policies,' the MLSP is primarily responsible for the governance of skills anticipation. The Mechanism states that the responsibilities of the MLSP include providing regular reports on labour market needs; the organisation of data collection and analysis; facilitating consultations with stakeholders; policy design; and the monitoring of policy implementation. The MLSP is supported in this regard by the [Ministry of Education and Science \(MES\)](#) that provides data on higher education and VET.

## The role of stakeholders

The NNCA cooperates with employers, trade unions, experts and practitioners in different economic sectors, including substantial stakeholder engagement via its 20 sectoral and 10 regional units. Within the NNCA sits a National Reference Network (NRN) involving a variety of stakeholders, including individual employers and employers' organisations, government experts, trade unions, consultancy companies, and education providers, that have an advisory role. At local and regional levels, more than 300 representatives from business, education, government, trade unions and others participate in the activities of NRN. The NNCA also works closely with two trade unions (the CITUB and the CL Podkrepa), education experts, employers and university researchers in the preparation and dissemination of their labour market skills assessments. The effectiveness of the NNCA is reliant upon stakeholders' cooperation in this regard.

Social partners at national level also sit on consultative bodies relevant to skills anticipation in, for instance, the MLSP, the NEA, the MES and the [National Agency for VET \(NAVET\)](#). Stakeholder involvement is also significant in regional administrations, municipalities and local labour offices. Additionally, NGOs and other forms of citizens' representation are invited to assess any policy initiatives and legislative changes through the [Public Consultations Platform](#) at the Council of Ministers. Notably, the NNCA was developed jointly by the social partners.

Employer organisations are actively involved at the planning stage of policies relating to higher education and VET. For example, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) sends official queries to the four main employers' organisations and other competent authorities during the preparation of the annual admission plan to education in higher secondary schools and VET schools. The key stakeholders

involved in steering education and training provisions, are the MES, the MLSP, the NAVET, higher education institutions, VET providers, the social partners, and NGOs. Their representatives sit in consultative committees which advise the MLSP (e.g. in the [National Employment Promotion Council, Coordination Council for Implementation and Monitoring of the National Plan for European Youth Guarantee 2014-2020](#)).

The NAVET operates on a tripartite principle. The Governing Board and expert committees for different vocational areas involve employers, trade unions, state organisations, and VET experts. This involvement arguably helps to ensure that VET standards and the respective skills offered in education and training courses take labour market requirements into consideration.

It is also of relevance to note that training was provided in 2014 to government officials in the NEA, regional employment directorates and labour offices to increase their knowledge of and involvement in the MLSP forecasting exercise.

## Target groups

The NNCA activities target a wide range of groups such as employers, employees, human resources managers, policymakers and experts in the fields of education and training and labour market, university researchers, trainers, training institutions, students, and all potential users of the Workforce Competence Assessment System 'My Competence.' Surveys run by NEA are intended for regular use by labour market experts, guidance practitioners, recruitment agencies, training providers and employers. Meanwhile, the MLSP's skills forecasts are targeted mainly at policymakers.

## Funding and resources

As noted above, funding from the ESF has been used to develop skills anticipation in Bulgaria. The MLSP funds forecasting work, while the NEA's regular surveys are financed from its own budget (via the MLSP). The continuation of activities to sustain skills anticipation activities has been guaranteed through the State's financing of active labour market policy measures, the MLSP's forecasting work, and the NEA's regular surveys (the NEA's activities are funded via the MLSP).

---

## Methods and tools

Various tools are used for skills anticipation in Bulgaria.

## Skills assessment

Much of the work of the NNCA focuses on developing standards of workforce competence (i.e. 'skills profiles' for each occupation). Additionally, a substantial element of its work relates to providing analytical information on the demand for qualified workers at the sectoral and regional levels.

Analytical information on skills demand and supply is collected through [macroeconomic analysis of labour force skill needs \(7\)](#) and [sectoral skills assessment analyses\(8\)](#) which are available on the [NRN website](#). In this regard, the input by the NNCA provides valuable information regarding the adjustment of educational programmes at secondary and tertiary levels including VET.

There are ten Regional Competence Assessment Centres in place. The National Competence Assessment Centre supports them in terms of the assessment methodology used. The Regional Competence Assessment Centres carry out the coordination, information exchange and implementation of competence assessment in their respective regions. The regional advisors are responsible for analysing the results and expert opinions stemming from the surveys conducted in the regions, while consulting the survey participants when competence assessment takes place at organisation level.

The role of the NNCA will be further expanded as a result of the project 'Development of a National Competence Assessment System,' which will be carried out by the MLSP with co-finance from the 'Human Resources Development' Operational Programme 2014-2020 under the ESF. The project will expand the capacity and coverage of 'My Competence,' which will be further promoted as a National Competence Assessment System through the elaboration of competence models for 20 key jobs in five sectors of the Bulgarian economy: construction, automotive, energy, mining, and the cosmetics and perfumery industry. Several tools will also be developed under the project, such as: e-tools for the analysis and monitoring of developments in the skill content of occupations, tools for competence assessment, seven e-training models, etc.

## Skills forecasts

Since 2014, the MLSP has run an annual workforce demand forecast, providing analysis of the labour market disaggregated by age, gender, economic activity, groups and clusters of occupations, and level of education at both regional and local levels.

The methodology used by the MLSP for this forecasting exercise will be further developed in the future. Medium- and long-term forecasts (until 2032) of the demand and supply of labour will be analysed under the 'Increasing the Effectiveness of the Employment Policy' project, which will be financed by the 'Human Resources Development' Operational Programme 2014-2020.

A number of forecasts (up to 2028) of future developments in the labour market by occupation and clusters of occupations have been produced (see: [long term forecast on labour force supply and demand for the period 2014-2028](#); short-term forecast for 2015 based on a 2014 survey in enterprises; and [summary of labour market needs 2014-2018](#) which was prepared by the MLSP as part of the regular activities of the Labour Market Policy Directorate).

## Skills foresight

Skills foresight activity is limited, related mainly to the regional foresight activities occasionally carried out by the NEA. These focus on competences required in certain occupations.

## Other skills anticipation practices

The NEA regularly carries out surveys of employers to understand their skills needs so that it can better match jobseekers to the jobs available or likely to become available.

A further anticipation exercise is expected to start in 2017. (9) The district Employment Commission, (10) in collaboration with the Administrative-Regional Council for Development, will run an employer survey twice a year on local short-term labour demand in each of the 28 regions of Bulgaria. The collected information will be processed and provided to the NEA. As a result, it can be expected that the short-term needs of local employers will be taken into account in developing more suitable employment policies, programmes, and other measures.

---

### Dissemination and use

There is no overall dissemination strategy regarding the results of the skills anticipation activities. The results are disseminated to target groups mainly through the involved actors websites (NNCA's [Workforce Competence Assessment System](#) ('My Competence'), the website of NEA etc.).

The MLSP and the NEA issue forecasting reports targeted at policy makers, social partners, labour market and educational experts. Results of the surveys of employers, which are run by the NEA, are published in monthly bulletins and annual reviews available at the NEA website (Statistics and Analyses section).

Plans to improve dissemination are underway. There are also plans to provide information campaigns to encourage students towards occupations and skills which are needed in the labour market, while also increasing the amount of information available online.

### Use of skills anticipation in policy

The skills intelligence produced is mainly used by:

- The NNCA, which uses the intelligence to coordinate the development of skills models (11) and coordinate training programmes (targeting both the employed and unemployed); and
- The 20 Sector Skills Units of the NNCA, whose expert teams' primary activities relate to the development of sector competence models.

The skills intelligence produced and the resulting analysis by the NNCA are used by education providers, mainly VET and higher education institutions and centres of professional training. The competence standards developed by the NNCA are used to adjust the educational programmes offered and their respective curricula so that graduates meet the labour market demand for specific competences. Therefore, despite the fact that the NNCA was only established in 2010, one can already identify its contribution and thus the influence of skills intelligence.



The MLSP forecasting reports are used by state institutions and other ministries for the development and implementation of policies in their respective fields. The data are also used in the preparation of the NEAP as an instrument for active labour market policy implementation.

## Target groups' uses of skills anticipation outputs

The Workforce Competence Assessment System of the NNCA contributes towards the definition, assessment and development of workforce competences by sector and region. Its web portal users are employees, HR managers, education experts, training providers, jobseekers and students.

Under the plans for the modernisation of the NEA service (2016), the Workforce Competence Assessment System will be extended and integrated into the information system of the NEA. The BIA, as an initiator and coordinator of the NNCA, is developing a module called the 'personal profile of the job seeker' that will create an area on the 'My Competence' platform applicable for the needs of the NEA's labour offices. (12)

The NEA surveys are regularly used by labour market experts, guidance practitioners, recruitment agencies, training providers and employers.

*Please cite this document as: Skills Panorama (2017), Skills anticipation in Bulgaria. Analytical highlights series.*

Available at [http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/analytical\\_highlights/skills-anticipation-bulgaria](http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/analytical_highlights/skills-anticipation-bulgaria)

---

## Bibliography

[Bulgarian Industrial Association](http://en.bia-bg.com/) (homepage). 2015. As of 22 February 2017 <http://en.bia-bg.com/>

[Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria](http://www.knsb-bg.org/) (homepage). N.d. As of 22 February 2017 <http://www.knsb-bg.org/>

[Confederation of Labour Podkrepa](http://podkrepa.org/) (homepage). N.d. As of 22 February 2017 <http://podkrepa.org/>

[Coordination Council for Implementation and Monitoring of the National Plan for European Youth Guarantee](https://www.mlsp.government.bg/index.php?section=POLICIESI&l=654) 2014-2020. 2014. As of 22 February 2017 <https://www.mlsp.government.bg/index.php?section=POLICIESI&l=654>

Council of Ministers. 2013. *Mechanism for including the results of forecasts of supply and demand of labour in developing and implementing government policies*. As of 22 February 2017  
<http://www.government.bg/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0228&n=4964&g>

EEPO. 2015. *Skills governance in the EU Member States* Developed by the European Employment Policy Observatory for the European Commission. Brussels: European Commission.  
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=15587&langId=en>

Ministry of Education and Science (homepage). 2014. As of 22 February 2017 <http://www.mon.bg/>

MLSP (homepage). 2014. As of 22 February 2017 [https://www.mlsp.government.bg/index.php?section=HOMEN2&lang=\\_eng](https://www.mlsp.government.bg/index.php?section=HOMEN2&lang=_eng)

MLSP. 2015. *Analysis of situation in enterprises with a view on human resources development. Short-term forecast for development of labor market in Bulgaria*. Sofia.  
[https://www.mlsp.government.bg/ckfinder/userfiles/files/politiki/zaetost/informaciq%20za%20pazara%20na%20truda%20tekusto%20systoqnie%20i%20prognozi/Doklad\\_Forecast\\_1.pdf](https://www.mlsp.government.bg/ckfinder/userfiles/files/politiki/zaetost/informaciq%20za%20pazara%20na%20truda%20tekusto%20systoqnie%20i%20prognozi/Doklad_Forecast_1.pdf)

MLSP. 2014. *report on forecasting labour force supply and demand 2014-2028* Sofia.  
Available online:  
[https://www.mlsp.government.bg/ckfinder/userfiles/files/politiki/zaetost/informaciq%20za%20pazara%20na%20truda%20tekusto%20systoqnie%20i%20prognozi/Doklad\\_prognozirane.pdf](https://www.mlsp.government.bg/ckfinder/userfiles/files/politiki/zaetost/informaciq%20za%20pazara%20na%20truda%20tekusto%20systoqnie%20i%20prognozi/Doklad_prognozirane.pdf)

MSLP. 2014. *Summary of labour market needs 2014-2018* As of 22 February 2017:  
<https://www.mlsp.government.bg/index.php?section=POLICIESI&lang=&l=246>

National Agency for VET (homepage). 2017. As of February 22 2017: <http://www.navet.government.bg/>

National Employment Agency (homepage). 2013. As of 22 February 2017:  
<https://www.az.government.bg/en/pages/za-nas/>

National Employment Agency. 2013. *Yearly Bulletin*. As of 22 February 2017:  
<https://www.az.government.bg/stats/4/>

National Employment Promotion Council (homepage). 2014. As of 22 February 2017:  
<https://www.mlsp.government.bg/index.php?section=POLICIESI&l=472>

NNCA. 2014. *Labour Force Competence assessment – state of the art, challenges, analytical systems and tools*. Sofia.  
<http://www.competencemap.bg/>

NNCA. 2014. *E-training models on competences* As of 22 February 2017:  
<http://en.mycompetence.bg/compcatalog/view/7>

OECD. 2016. *Getting Skills Right. Assessing and Anticipating Changing Skill Needs* Paris: OECD Publishing. Available online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264252073-en>

Workforce Competence Assessment System (homepage). 2013. As of February 22 2017: <http://en.mycompetence.bg/>

World Bank. 2007. *Bulgaria – Education and Skills for the Knowledge Economy - A Policy Note- Executive summary*.  
[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTBULGARIA/Resources/EducationPolicyNote\\_EN.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTBULGARIA/Resources/EducationPolicyNote_EN.pdf)

---

## Endnotes

(1) Formal approval of coordination and organisation of skills forecast was done by the Council of Ministers in 2013 by adoption of 'Mechanism for including the results of forecasts of supply and demand of labour in developing and implementing government policies'. The Decision is available at: <http://www.government.bg/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0228&n=4964&g=>

(2) MLSP report on forecasting labour force supply and demand 2014-2028 was published in 2014. Report is available in BG at: [https://www.mlsp.government.bg/ckfinder/userfiles/files/politiki/zaetost/informaciq%20za%20pazara%20na%20truda%20tekusto%20systoqnie%20i%20prognozi/Doklad\\_prognozirane.pdf](https://www.mlsp.government.bg/ckfinder/userfiles/files/politiki/zaetost/informaciq%20za%20pazara%20na%20truda%20tekusto%20systoqnie%20i%20prognozi/Doklad_prognozirane.pdf)

(3) 'Analysis of situation in enterprises with a view on human resources development. Short-term forecast for development of labor market in Bulgaria', Sofia 2015. The document is available in BG at: [https://www.mlsp.government.bg/ckfinder/userfiles/files/politiki/zaetost/informaciq%20za%20pazara%20na%20truda%20tekusto%20systoqnie%20i%20prognozi/Doklad\\_Forecast\\_1.pdf](https://www.mlsp.government.bg/ckfinder/userfiles/files/politiki/zaetost/informaciq%20za%20pazara%20na%20truda%20tekusto%20systoqnie%20i%20prognozi/Doklad_Forecast_1.pdf)

(4) EA provides monthly, periodically and yearly report on the labour market needs at the regional and local level. Reports are available at: <https://www.az.government.bg/stats/4/>

(5) See: <http://en.competencemap.bg/about+the+project/1/YdK3clajYNevltKTcRaDg9ejlNKzYdaHMFODchOfIZK3cderYBaXINavIRKnIR>

(6) c.f. the Law on Pre-school and School Education (2016) / changes made in 2016 to the VET Act

(7) Labour Force Competence assessment – state of the art, challenges, analytical systems and tools, Sofia 2014. Report is available at NRN site: <http://www.competencemap.bg/>

(8) Sectoral analyses of the NRN have been prepared in period 2012-2014. They cover the following sectors: security and protection, meat processing, construction, tourism, chemistry production, electrical installations, mechatronics and transport. All summaries are available at the NRN site. The full version of documents is available for registered users only.

(9) According to 2016 amendments of the Employment Promotion Act.

(10) Every district in Bulgaria has a regional employment commission, whose members include representatives of the social partners, NGOs, the local business, municipalities, local authorities etc.

(11) A sector competence model includes: a list of key positions in the sector, a description of the key business processes and a catalogue of core managerial and specific competencies typical for the job positions included. A sector competence model supports the improvement of qualifications by providing transparency with regard to the qualifications needed for working as a professional in a particular role in the sector or in a particular organisation. It acts as a link between an employer, an employee and a student by describing the competences necessary for workplace success.

(12)<http://www.bia-bg.com/news/view/22413/>

---

© CEDEFOP 2019

POWERED BY:

