

Skills anticipation in Slovenia

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Summary

Some skills anticipation activities take place in Slovenia, although there is no comprehensive and co-ordinated system in place. The main forms of skills anticipation used in the country concern:

- gathering administrative data on vacancies and unemployment; and analysing relevant data such as those from the Labour Force Survey;
- employer surveys (carried out by the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) and employers' organisations) as well as surveys by labour market intermediaries and recently by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS);
- skills forecasts within international networks, primarily CEDEFOP; and
- dialogues with representatives of key stakeholders.

The [Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities](#) (MoLFSA) (Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MoESS) have central roles in the key skills anticipation activities. The ESS, labour market intermediaries and employers' organisations are also active and there are numerous (ongoing) projects related to skills anticipation.

The Slovenian government has allocated resources and efforts in the development of skills anticipation activities and improvement of the relevant tools. Many of the recent methodological improvements have been co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF), while previous budget limitations due to the economic crisis seem to have been overcome.

Skills intelligence deriving from skills anticipation activities is available primarily to policy makers and key stakeholders, but is not widely visible to the public. The use of skills anticipation information in the framework of developing occupational standards and Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses is well-developed.

Although the importance of monitoring and anticipating skills needs and supply is recognised and there have been attempts for improving the existing approach, a comprehensive and co-ordinated system is still to be established. Moreover, with the exception of employers' involvement in the structure and content of vocational education and training, it is unclear how information from skills anticipation exercises is translated into policy and how stakeholders are involved in this process. Some of these problems may be overcome by the methodological and practical changes that are under development.

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Overview of the Slovenian approach

Skills anticipation in Slovenia



Key actors

Governance	Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) under Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLFSA)	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MoESS)		
Stakeholders	Government (Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education)	ESS and Statistical Office (SORS)	Employer organisations	Institute for Vocational Education and Training (CPI)
Target groups	Policy makers (education, employment)	VET and higher education institutions	Career counsellors	



Types of skills anticipation

Quantitative forecasting	ESS employer survey (Employment Forecast report, bi-annually)	Economic trends by Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development	Ad-hoc exercises and pilot studies
Skills assessments	Periodic sectoral skills assessments	Surveys of employers' skill demand assessments	
Foresight	None		
Other	Skills assessments by individual employers (ad hoc)	Projects by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry	



Dissemination

Channels

ESS
webportal

Presentations of
project results,
conferences

Online
publication
of reports

Use

Prepare and
implement
active labour
market policies

Inform
career
guidance
activities

Inform the
development of VET
programmes and
occupational standards

Description

Slovenia does not have a comprehensive and co-ordinated system of skills needs anticipation. Several types of activities take place, which focus more on skills assessment and anticipation. These activities are only weakly coordinated and interrelated. There is a strong reliance on administrative data and information gathered via employers' surveys and stakeholder dialogue. Some skills anticipation needs can also be generally identified by the economic forecast reports of the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (IMAD).

Nonetheless, a large scale project is currently being carried out by the ESS with co-funding from the ESF to develop more complex skills anticipation methods and better co-ordinate the existing activities.

Aims

The main goals of current developments in skills anticipation activities in Slovenia are to inform policy makers about labour market developments and provide data to support the on-going transformation of the VET and higher education HE systems. The development of a co-ordinated system for skills anticipation has been a long-term goal of Slovenian policy, which has yet to be achieved.

Legal framework

Currently there is little or no statutory regulation regarding skills anticipation. Relevant legislation regards:

The *Labour Market Regulation Act* (2010)(1) regulates the duty of employers to notify the Employment Service of Slovenia about vacancies (2).

The National Reform Programme of Slovenia 2016-2017(3) focuses, among others, on the effective monitoring of developments in the labour market and better understanding of long-term labour market needs. The Programme foresees the set-up of a system for monitoring the employment of graduates (eVŠ).

Governance

Lacking of a coordinated approach, there is no clearly identified "governing" institution. Tasks and

responsibilities related to skills anticipation are shared by the following ministries and government bodies:

- the *Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities* (MoLFSA) is responsible for planning labour market policies and overseeing the *Employment Service of Slovenia* (ESS). ESS gathers skills intelligence and publishes analyses based on it;
- the *Ministry of Education, Science and Sport* (MoESS) regulates VET and HE. It co-operates with MoLFSA to respond to the results of skills anticipation exercises and coordinates the ESS's large scale skills anticipation system project.

The role of stakeholders

Besides the ministries involved in skills anticipation activities, the ESS and IMAD hold key roles in running relevant exercises and disseminating the results. Individual employers and employers' organisations provide significant skills intelligence through their surveys, while they can be involved in decisions relevant to the provision of VET. For example, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Craft and Small Businesses are involved in dialogue with VET providers in developing a range of activities, for example curricula. The *Institute for Vocational Education and Training Republic of Slovenia* (4) (CPI, Center RS za Poklicno Izobraževanje) works with stakeholders (the Ministry of Education, VET institutions and the Chamber of Craft and Small Business and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry) at the national level to co-ordinate dialogue on occupational profiles and standards and promote vocational training to young people.

Target groups

The results from the skills anticipation activities primarily aim to serve policy makers, particularly in the fields of education and employment. Therefore, the relevant ministries and national authorities, the VET and HE providers and institutions are the key target groups. Given the central role of the ESS in skills anticipation, career counsellors are another important target group, as relevant skills intelligence is provided to them as input for their work (see section on "Dissemination and use"). Therefore, jobseekers, but also prospective students and parents are indirectly targeted.

Funding and resources

Some of the skills anticipation activities and the development of new tools and methodologies are partially financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). Otherwise, funding is provided by the MoLFSA – and thereby to the ESS - and the MoESS.

Methods and tools

Slovenia's decentralised approach to skills anticipation relies on administrative labour market data, employer surveys, and dialogue with core stakeholders. Most skills needs analysis is performed within the ESS's skill anticipation activities, the framework of developing occupational standards and within ongoing research and development projects

Skills assessment

Recently, several *Competence Centres for Human Resources Development* (KOC)(5) programmes have been launched by the Slovene Human Resource Development and Scholarship Fund to promote the delivery of adequate training and counselling activities to employees, based on the identification of training/skills needs. The KOCs' main purpose is to encourage co-operation among companies – at the sectoral level – to develop a model for defining skills profiles for specific professions / jobs and to tackle employees' skill shortages through targeted training. A tender announced in October 2016 added the element of skills foresight in order to better anticipate skill needs at the sectoral level. Within five years of implementation (2011-2015) the KOCs have developed 19 models of sectoral skills needs that are valuable information sources for the Centre for Vocational Education in identifying priorities for the vocational education and training system.

The eVŠ platform (framework) that is currently at pilot stage, will - when fully developed - provide information on skill demand for monitoring the employability of HE graduates in Slovenia (Ministry for Education, Science and Sport MoESS). Students' and graduates' records included in the eVŠ will become an official source of information on student status; this information will be used by public institutions that grant or are responsible for scholarships, subsidies for nutrition, transport, and dormitories, as well as health insurance, pensions, and student work. Another function of eVŠ is the prevention of student enrolment that are no longer entitled to publicly financed full-time studies in tertiary education (both short- and full-cycle of HE), and provide an analytical tool for analysing paths from secondary to tertiary education and then into the labour market. The eVŠ pilot began in 2014/2015 and will be rolled out nationally in coming years. The MoESS aims to upgrade the eVŠ with a survey that will, amongst other things, provide information on the characteristics of individuals, their education and qualifications, work experience, self-assessment of acquired skills (in order to match skills supply to the requirements of work); and self-evaluation of the basic characteristics of their work and career opportunities.

Skills forecasts

Regular skills forecasts are not produced in Slovenia. Skills forecasts are prepared within international networks, such as CEDEFOP's forecasting model.

Nevertheless, ESS is working with employers via surveys to achieve a proxy sample of vacancies in the short term. ESS's report *Employment Forecast* (6) is the key, national-level skill anticipation exercise in Slovenia. It is based on a survey of a representative sample of employers with 10 or more employees (2,553 in May 2015, representing a 60 per cent response rate)(7). The data are presented in the "Employment Forecast" report on short-term labour and skills needs. Analysis of labour and skills demand and actual supply (c.f. unemployed people) provides information on short-term occupational/qualification mismatches in the labour market. This bi-annual survey allows the anticipation of employment demands over the next six months. Data are presented by occupation and sector. In addition, an indication is provided of the (general) skills that employers report as being in demand.

New forecasting methods are currently under development under the project “[Increasing effective coordination of supply and demand in the labour market \(2016-2022\)](#)”(8) , co-ordinated by the ESS (9) . The main aim of the project is to improve the matching between labour demand and supply. The matching includes skills assessment of the workforce (those in employment, first-time jobseekers, unemployed people, etc.) and employers’ skills demands. This new, more advanced skills-based matching (i.e. “matching engine”) is expected to allow for more efficient placement services and, in the long term, improved skills forecasting.

Two to four times per year, the [Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development](#)(IMAD, Urad RS za Makroekonomske Analize In Razvoj) develops an internal document, the “[Forecast of Economic Trends](#)” (Napoved gospodarskih gibanj) (10) . This report regards an analysis of economic trends, including forecasts of employment trends. The latter are based on national accounts (Statistical Register of Employment). The forecast is prepared only at sectoral level, as data by occupation or skill level are not available.

There are also a few ad-hoc analyses and pilot studies taking place in the country. For example, a recent future-oriented study on [Health workforce forecasting study in Slovenia \(2015-2035\)](#)(11) sought to provide input for the strategic planning of human resources in the health sector. The forecasting study was based on the National Health Care Providers Database (the registry of health professionals). Researchers first assessed the quality of data sources and then developed a mathematical model to forecast the future number of physicians and nurses required. The model was based on demographic characteristics of the current workforce, including anticipated retirement, mortality and unemployment rates, and the expected number of new graduates.

Skills foresight

There is no information available on skills foresight activities being carried out in Slovenia. As noted above, the KOCs recognise the importance of foreseeing future skills needs; and a skills foresight element was included in a recent tender for services to be delivered to the KOCs.

Other skills anticipation practices

Many Slovenian employers run some form of skills needs analysis: according to the [Cranet survey](#) (12) (2014), approximately 73 per cent of Slovenian organisations with 100 or more employees assess their employees’ training needs.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia also runs projects which link skills anticipation with training. For example, the [skillME](#) project (2014-2017) within the ERASMUS framework aims to: identify skill gaps in the advanced manufacturing sector; create curricula which will fill the skill gaps; and integrate the curriculums into VET education system (13).

In addition, there is an ongoing study under the MoESS focusing on developing a methodology to assess the need for study programmes at national level.

Dissemination and use

Overall, there is limited information available on how skills anticipation information is disseminated and used by stakeholders in Slovenia.

The main dissemination channels regard the ESS online portal as well as conferences, published reports, and presentations of good practice for particular projects.

Use of skills anticipation in policy

Labour market intelligence gathered and published by the Statistical Office and the ESS is available to all stakeholders through ESS' online portal.

Administrative data and the findings of the IMAD's Employment Forecast are used to:

- Prepare and implement active labour market policies;
- inform career guidance activities;
- inform the development of VET programmes and occupational standards.

Target groups' uses of skills anticipation outputs

Besides policy makers and stakeholders, regional career guidance experts also use skills intelligence data in their work. Skills intelligence supports these experts' work when advising employers looking for workers (especially in areas with skills deficits); as well as supports them in their policy-oriented discussions with other stakeholders.

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Endnotes

(1) 'Labour Market Regulation Act (ZUTD)', 2010, http://english.ess.gov.si/_files/3773/ZUTD_angleski_prevod.pdf.

(2) The ESS homepage is available here: http://english.ess.gov.si/about_ess/legislation

(3) Government RS, 'NACIONALNI REFORMNI PROGRAM 2016 – 2017', April 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/nrp2016_slovenia_sl.pdf.

- (4) The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training is responsible for defining, creating and updating the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications and the corresponding Modular Catalogue of Vocational Education and Training.
- (5) 'Kompetenčni Centri Za Razvoj Kadrov (KOC)|Javni Sklad RS Za Razvoj Kadrov in Štipendije'|*Javni Sklad RS Za Razvoj Kadrov in Štipendije - Homepage*, accessed 2 November 2016, <http://www.sklad-kadri.si/si/razvoj-kadrov/projekti-2007-2013/kompetencnicentri/>.
- (6) Zavod RS za zaposlovanje, 'Napovednik Zaposlovanja 2016/1' (Zavod RS za zaposlovanje), accessed 2 November 2016, http://www.ess.gov.si/_files/8690/Nap_Zap_2016_1.pdf.
- (7) Since 2013, a change in the legislation lifted employers' obligation to announce their job vacancies in official newspapers and at the PES/ESS. Therefore, ESS had no tools any more to obtain an insight on vacancies or intentions of employers to hire in the short /medium term. As a result, ESS developed its own employers' surveys to acquire at least some information on these trends. As a response to the same lack of information on vacancies, the Statistical Office launched its own surveys. At the end, there are two parallel surveys on labour market needs, which are to certain extent replacing missing data and information.
- (8) Zavod RS za zaposlovanje, 'Napovednik Zaposlovanja 2016/1' (Zavod RS za zaposlovanje), accessed 2 November 2016, http://www.ess.gov.si/_files/8690/Nap_Zap_2016_1.pdf.
- (9) Consideration is being given at the ESS to develop / introduce the occupational barometer at the level of ESS regional offices following the Finnish example. Here the short-term occupational needs will be systematically monitored. The development of long-term sectoral forecasts for specific competencies is also being planned.
- (10) UMAR, 'UMAR - Napoved Gospodarskih Gibanj', *Urad Za Makroekonomske Analize in Razvoj - Homepage*, accessed 2 November 2016, http://www.umar.gov.si/publikacije/napoved_gospodarskih_gibanj/zapisi/?no_cache=1.
- (11) R. Pribakovic Brinovec, T. Albreht, and M. Omerzu, 'Health Workforce Forecasting Study in Slovenia (2015-2035)', *The European Journal of Public Health* 25, no. suppl 3 (1 October 2015): ckv176.136, doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckv176.136.
- (12) First, a broad list was developed of skills required to meet identified future trends. Next, the set of skills was screened by representatives of large companies, smaller high growth companies, and academics using the Delphi method. In the last phase, these skills were assessed in the companies by their representatives and workers. Information is also available her: <https://kpz.gzs.si/vsebina/O-projektu>
- (13) Cranet is an international network, which regularly undertakes international comparative surveys of organisational policies and practices. The project's website is available here: <https://eng.gzs.si/Novice/ArticleId/55112/skillme-11-2014-10-2017-erasmus>

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