

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORT

**CONCEPT OF VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN
SERBIA
- Draft-**

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Introduction

The Concept of Secondary Vocational Education and Training is a general framework and basis for the modernisation of secondary vocational education and training (VET) in Serbia. It provides basic principles and attitudes for the future organisation and processing of secondary VET.

This draft of the *Concept* is based on the *Analysis of the Current State in Secondary Vocational Education in Serbia*¹, *Act on Foundation of Education System in Serbia*² and the following documents of the reforms³:

- *Framework of Vocational Education Development Strategies in Serbia,*
- *Strategic Paths of Adult Education Development,*
- *Decentralisation of Education in Serbia,*
- *Democratisation of Education And Education for Democracy and Civil Society,*
- *System of Monitoring and Quality Assessment in Education,*
- *Reforms of Higher Education in Serbia,*
- *Education and Professional Development of Teachers,*
- *National Curriculum Framework*⁴ .

In developing the *Concept of Secondary Vocational Education and Training* all current solutions and experiences in processing pilot projects of the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia are respected that are implemented in nine fields of work (sectors). The existing tradition and results of secondary VET in Serbia has been also respected.

The Concept of Secondary Vocational Education and Training will be implemented as a whole for the generation of students who will enrol in the 1st grade of secondary vocational schools in 2007. In the period from 2004 to 2007 segments of the *Concept* will be implemented in processing pilot projects: in 26 profiles in 9 fields of work (sectors). The implementation of these pilots has started in the school years 2002/03 and 2003/04.

The public hearing on the *Concept of Secondary Vocational Education and Training* should enable all stakeholders and social partners (schools, social partners, and parents, economy) to take part in the process of developing the final version of this strategic paper. Proposals and suggestions of all those who take part in the public hearing will be a contribution not only to the better quality of this paper but also to the successful processing of the reforms in secondary VET.

After the public hearing this paper will be adjusted and revised and after the Council for Vocational Education and Training endorses it, this *Concept* will be a compulsory strategy paper for the process of reforms of secondary VET. The *Concept of Secondary Vocational Education and Training* is also a strategic basis for all projects realised in VET in Serbia.

¹ *Reforms in Secondary Vocational Education*, Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, 2002

² *Act on Foundation of Education System in Serbia*, "Official Gazette", 62/03

³ All documents (except *General Curriculum Framework*) are published in *Quality Education for All – Path to Developed Society*, Ministry of Education and Sports Republic of Serbia, "Prosvetni pregled", Belgrade, 2003

⁴ *General Curriculum Framework*, draft, Ministry of Education and Sports, "Prosvetni pregled", Belgrade, 2003

The Concept of Secondary Education and Training demands the delivery of a series of individual documents that would elaborate and operationalise the solutions offered in this paper. The delivery of the following documents is of special importance:

- Methodology of Developing New Unique Curriculum of Secondary VET at National and School Level;
- Instructions for Organisation and Realisation of the New Unique Curriculum of Secondary VET (forms, organisation, normative, role of teachers);
- Methodology of Development of Secondary VET Standards (educational standards, trainings standards);
- System of Professional Development of Teachers, School heads and school administration staff in secondary VET (system of pre-service and in-service training, promotion in carrier, system of licensing);
- Quality Assurance System in Secondary VET (function, performance standards, monitoring and evaluation, information management in quality assurance);
- Methodology of Setting Occupational Standards in Secondary VET;
- Certification system in Secondary VET;
- Instructions for Processing Exams in VET and in adult education (final exams, vocational Matura, masters' exam and specialists' exam);
- Social Dialogue in Secondary VET (horizontal and vertical approach);
- School Network of Secondary VET Schools in Serbia;
- Roles and Functions of Institutions in Secondary VET in Serbia;
- Impact of Secondary VET Reforms on the System of Financing (based on the example of pilot schools in the nine fields of work).

Coordination and summary of the public hearing will be processed by the Centre for VET on behalf of the National Council for Vocational Education and Training. Public hearing ends on 15th February 2004.

Reforms of Secondary Vocational Education and Training In Serbia

*“Economic, technological, informational, demographic and political forces have transformed the way people work and live. These changes - and the rate of change- will continue to accelerate. Schools, like business, communities and families, must adapt to changing conditions to thrive...Today’s economy places value on broad knowledge and skills, flexibility, cross- training, multi-tasking, teaming, problem-solving and project-based work”.*⁵

Contemporary tendencies in the development of market oriented countries showed that education and the creation of human resources are priorities for national strategies and policies of social, economic and technological development. Continuous socio-economic changes, fast scientific and technological development, especially the expansion of modern and post-modern forms of technologies require a highly educated population that is in a position to participate effectively in social processes and uses available technology. In this way, modern societies unavoidably turn into learning societies. This form of social organisation is based on knowledge, where education and learning have the status of basic instruments for the totality of social development, responding to basic social problems and the production of social, economic and technological changes. In learning societies, education is democratised, assigned and available equally to all, independent of gender, age, racial, national or religious orientation. Due to this transformation, the continuous reconstruction of the entire education (and especially vocational) becomes an imperative for socio-economic development.

The modernization of society and the orientation towards economical and technological development implies innovation of the general, as well as the specific goals of vocational education. *Vocational education in Serbia, above all, will be directed toward gaining vocational knowledge and the development of key skills necessary for the successful conduct of work, further learning and accomplishment of wider flexibility in overcoming changing demands of the world of work and society as a whole and higher mobility of the working force.* Aside from adequate structuring of formal educational system, it also implies the creation of possibilities for non-formal and informal learning and their closer linking in order to create realistic possibilities for development and refreshment of knowledge and skills during an entire life time.

The basic objective of the reform and further development of vocational education and training in Serbia is its positioning among factors of technical, technological, socio-economical and individual development. The first step in this process is the conceptualization of vocational education and training development and the direction of general educational system towards social and individual needs and possibilities. In order to obtain quality improvement, transform the management system and financing system of education, to include all stakeholders and social partners, enable efficient transfer of knowledge and skill for participants in the educational process with full respect to ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences, the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia has initiated a reorganisation and reform of the VET system. In 2001 the MoES endorsed an interactive approach to creating a plan for processing the reforms. The current system of secondary VET has been analysed⁶ and it has been used as a basis for developing the Strategic Framework of Secondary VET⁷. After public hearings the pilot project of the modernisation of secondary VET has started. New profiles have been introduced in a certain number of VET schools in the field of work *agriculture, food production and processing.*

The proposed changes, presented in the Framework of Strategies and started in the pilot project, have been endorsed by the *Act on Foundation of Education System in Serbia* – delivered in June 2003. Based on legal regulations and on experience of the first year (2002/03) of implementation, the

⁵ LEARNING FOR THE 21st CENTURY, A Report and Mile Guide for 21st Century Skills, 2003

⁶ *Reforms of Secondary Vocational Education and Training: from Discussions to Realisation*, Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, 2002

⁷ *Framework of VET Development Strategies in Serbia*, Belgrade, 2002

pilot project has been broadened in the school year 2003/04 and new profiles have been introduced in further eight fields of work.

Based on the Act on the Frameworks of Education system a Centre for VET has been established and it has been proposed to establish a Council for VET. Its role is to monitor, develop and improve the system of VET in Serbia.

VET Development

Basic Approach

The basic approach in establishing vocational education is its socio-economic and individual relevancy. In accordance with that, curricula within secondary vocational education are directed toward learning outcomes with the incorporation of clearly defined **knowledge, skills, attitudes, (work competences)** and potentials demanded by the labour market, institutions of higher education and individual progress of students.

Objectives of secondary VET

The preliminary approach in the reorganization and modernisation process of secondary vocational education and training determined its objectives. The general objectives of secondary VET enable possibilities for youngsters and adults to gain **skill, knowledge, attitudes (work competencies)** needed for work and employment, further education and learning. More precisely – secondary VET should provide:

- The acquisition of occupation skills and qualifications, or relevant competencies, attitudes; knowledge and skills required for work in a particular field of work;
- Gaining of initial and continuous VET and improvement;
- Obtaining the necessary pre-conditions for employment and economic independence.
- Development of abilities, talents, potentials and self-fulfilment.

The modernisation and development of secondary VET is based on the application of the following principles:

Partnerships Secondary VET is partnership activity and common responsibility of different actors:

- a) Various stakeholders/social partners – state, employers and trade unions,
- b) Stakeholders: chambers, occupational associations, institutions for higher education, scientific and research organizations, NGOs, institutions for secondary vocational education and their associations, parents and
- c) Students and other individuals.

The partnership is manifested:

- d) At all levels of social organization (national, regional, local);
- e) In different spheres of organization and realisation of education (policy, planning and organization of the system, creation of curriculum);
- f) In the management of schools or institutions for education;
- g) In the realisation of different roles and responsibilities of particular partners (investors, organizers, users and promoters of education).

Decentralization The application of partnership principles in education implies decentralization:

- a) in the management of the educational system and schools, or organization in charge for education;
- b) in the creation of programmes and modules, and
- c) in the establishing of school networks and the creation and implementation of enrolment policy

Accessibilities Secondary VET is accessible to all categories of

population independent of gender, age, national, religious or race that fulfil the entry requirements for particular programmes and levels of education. Access requires not only legality, but also the realistic possibility to gain education, which means that secondary VET is achieved:

- a) within conditions and in a manner in accordance with realistic needs, wishes and possibilities of those who learn⁸, and
- b) in accordance with social conditions and the needs of regional and the local community.

Openness/ Flexibility

Secondary VET is a channel of communication and open distribution system of knowledge, skills, attitudes (work competences) that offer real possibilities for:

- a) entering, leaving and returning into it in accordance with the needs of individuals and/or of the labour market;
- b) vertical and horizontal accessibility;
- c) integration and networking with forms and programmes of education and training in enterprises and labour market⁹;

Diversification of the Programmes

Institutions for secondary VET are developing and implementing different kinds of curricula and modules (formal, non-formal and informal education and learning), respectively curricula of initial VET, qualifications and training and programmes of vocational improvement and re-training, adapted and assigned for different target groups (youth, adults, employed, unemployed, persons with special needs). It creates the possibility that in the fulfilment of society requirements as well as individual development - tasks should employ a strategy for learning and not only a strategy for education and schooling process;

Organizational Diversification

School is basic but not the only institutional form of VET. It is necessary to provide:

- a) different forms of institutional organization, or various legal status of educational institutions (schools, institutes, centres and similar),
- b) various subjects that meet the legal requirements to conduct activities of secondary VET;
- c) the possibilities for the creation of personal routes in the development of competencies in learning and the process of gaining knowledge and skills, that is one of the crucial steps towards the democratization of education and better qualities in education and learning.

Institutional diversity is non-discriminatory in relation to the ownership of institutions for secondary VET that leads towards the creation of an adequate network of educational institutions and organizations, a range of programmes and an adequate offer of educational places. This requires the establishing of a system of accreditation of educational and training programmes.

⁸ Organization and realization of education, or teaching and learning should be in accordance with psycho-social characteristics of those who learn, their social and life conditions (valuing of family and professional roles and responsibilities), for this reason this principle primarily requires equity of conditions for education of young and adults.

⁹ Possibility of using enterprises resources (organisational, technical, material and human) in education and training process.

Professional Development of teachers and school associates

Permanent training of teachers, instructors and coordinators of professional practice/teaching in the vocational field is a necessary process and a direct demand for the modernisation of VET. This process covers:

- a) continuous training of teachers and associates (innovation of professional knowledge and skills, trainings, practical improvement, gaining certain skills, teacher training at home and abroad, team work in teaching);
- b) Obtaining competency for work in several subjects and fields (integrated profiles)...

Adequate pedagogical, adult and psychological education is a condition for entry in to the teaching profession and taking the role and functions of a teacher. This is required to establish:

- a) control of entry in the profession through compulsory initial pedagogical, adult teaching and psychological teacher training at the onset of a teaching career and licensing of their work as teachers;
- b) permanent evaluation of work and system of promotion in work and in career, and
- c) Continuing professional development and teacher training.

Outcomes Oriented

The organization of education, teaching and learning in secondary vocational education is based on the idea of outcomes, on precise and clear definitions of what students know and will be able to do after finalization of the education process or a particular programme, and didactical-methodological expression of means of accomplishment of outcomes. Orientation toward outcomes is a way to support institutional and programme variety. Equity of outcomes is emphasized (no matter on time, place for education and learning, orientation on younger or adult population) and a variety of possibilities, manners and roads in their accomplishment.

Linking labour market and secondary VET

According to analysts¹⁰, today our world is in the process of transition from an industrial era to the era of information and communication – mostly identified as a *learning* society. Such a new society demands various kinds of learning that lead to employment. For the individual, learning for employment means the development of abilities to find, keep and change job or to generate self-employment. Such skills enable vertical and horizontal mobility of workers in the labour market and their adaptability for changes in technologies and new forms of work organisation. From the workers point of view, learning for employment means the realisation of the principles of lifelong learning and individual gaining of competencies that improve the mobility and safety of a job.

For the enterprises and employers, the skills of employment mean that their workers are capable to respond to the changed demands of the working places and improve competition between companies and their development. For the State this concept means the creation of a work force that has adaptive abilities that correspond to the needs of the labour market. However, learning still does not mean automatic employment, as employment depends more on the abilities of the individuals to transfer key competencies from one job into another. Such principles demand that VET be structured and conceived in a way that enables the population that gains education to respond to such demands.

Key knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies that lead to employment, cover:

- intellectual abilities,
- social and interpersonal skills and knowledge (communications, team work, decision making process, taking responsibility);
- business and entrepreneurship skills and knowledge (entrepreneurship abilities, creativity and innovativeness, self-employment) ;
- Manifold technical skills and knowledge.

In order to be able to respond to such demands secondary VET must obtain:

- relevance of programmes, outcomes and profiles, adjusted to labour market needs,
- efficiency in education of high quality workers who are demanded in the labour market and this should enable the use of available resource in the best way and fast employment,
- Equal possibilities for all individuals and groups.

In such a context secondary VET gets the duty to obtain full development of talents and abilities of all students and adults. Better to say, when students and adults leave education or forms of training they must have the appropriate skills needed for employment, they must understand the working environment, they must have professional choices and paths, a solid basis for further education and lifelong learning.

According to this, it is necessary to undertake certain measures that stimulate employers to invest in improving the knowledge of the employed workers so that they would join the process of technological changes. On the other hand, labour market bureaus will show needs for development certain qualifications. This will create systemic and institutional conditions for the close cooperation of enterprises and educational institutions.

The young generation gaining education today enters a world that is undergoing fast changes in all its spheres – in economy, culture, politics, science, technology, social relationships. In these changes education gets one of the key roles – it becomes a factor of unity and integration

¹⁰ The Changing Role of Government and Other Stakeholders in VET: Training Policies and Systems Branch Employment and Training Department, ILO

within the society. It is especially visible within the globalisation process that marks a series of phenomena having universal character with huge effects on all human society. An immediate consequence of this process is economic and technologic change causing direct changes within the educational system. Changes in the sphere of technology and economy are huge, fast, disciplined and, first of all, knowledge guided. In order to respond to these new challenges education must provide:

- the necessary cognitive and theoretical knowledge in order to enable professional skills that are becoming sophisticated due to technological changes in the process of work;
- broad working competencies needed for work in contemporary production and the sphere of services - not only for current production but also for continuing lifelong training and learning of workers;
- Secondary VET that supports self-employment and improves productivity.

General education gives the basis and flexibility for gaining skills for new jobs, the system of training contributes to the raise of quality and efficiency in the development of production. It is of special importance to recognise training for the use of new technologies – acceptance, selection and use and further development of these technologies.

Secondary VET must respond to the needs of the labour market in several typical ways:

- by developing standards and programmes that should reflect changes in labour market demands;
- by designing broad occupational profiles and by introducing key skills;
- By developing and establishing local partnership with employers, social partners and other interested participants.

It is realistic to expect that the economic development of Serbia in the future will be mainly related to the development of small and medium sized enterprises. As its consequence, SMEs and enterprises will become powerful generators of innovation processes and the most important creators of new working places.

Such a trend implies the necessity to introduce entrepreneurial education as a way of developing the entrepreneurial abilities of students – skills, behaviour and values (self-confidence, self-respect, creativity, communication, risk taking, problem solving, team working). In the process of entrepreneurial education, students should undergo the complete cycle starting from creating a business idea, through establishing a new enterprise, managing business, process of growth and development of the enterprise up to its closing down.

The role of social partners in secondary VET reforms

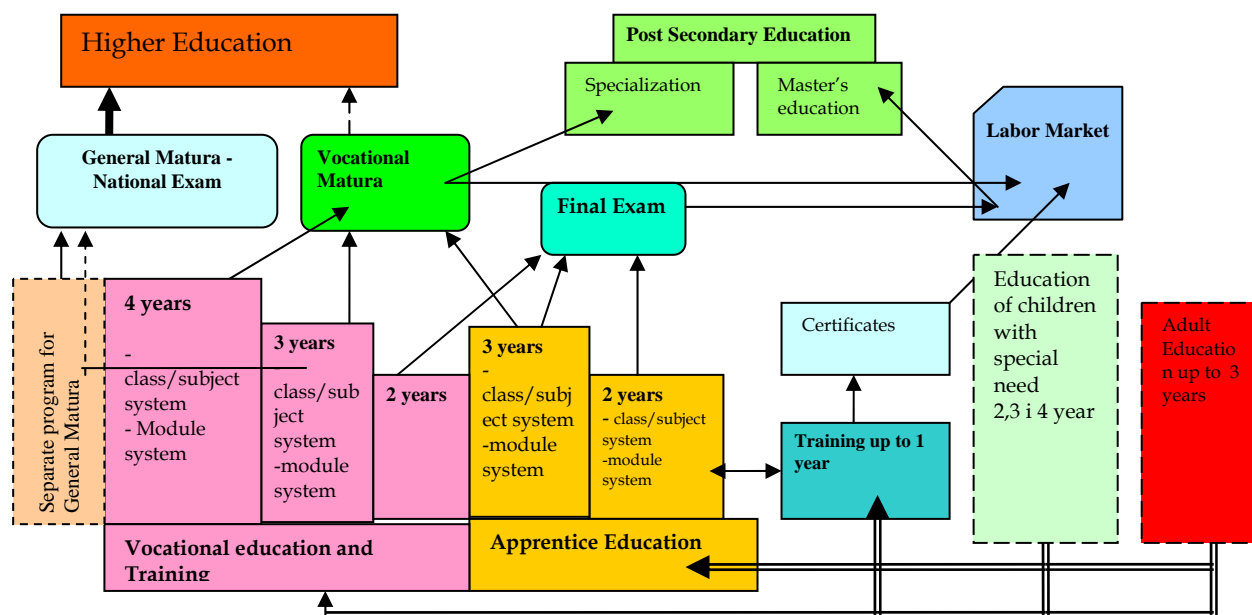
Demonopolisation and decentralisation as a key approach of the strategy and concept of VET reforms, open the issue of responsibility for the network of VET schools, distribution of profiles, introduction of new educational profiles and closing the outdated ones, programmes and many other important issues such as the financing of education.

Regions and local self government and the economic and social infrastructure must take over the responsibility for their own development within the framework of comparative privileges and total resources they have at their disposal. In this sense they have the *responsibility also for human resource development* in their own territory. Social partnership in the form of tripartism is a relevant basis for the delivery of development plans of regions, but at the local level – level of municipalities, it is necessary to *include all interested institutions and organisations* into the dialogue and decision making on human resources as a part of development plans. The network of VET schools and distribution of educational profiles must be adjusted to these needs so that the

development would be supported in the right way. In other words, *secondary VET schools must become a real local source for the working force.*

The issue of adjusting of competencies of the unemployed and updating their knowledge and skills is a special challenge for education reform. Equal availability of education to all and the opening of existing VET schools for adult education is a reform that needs *system support* through the training of teachers to work with adults, establishing standards, modularisation of programmes, etc.

Structure of Secondary VET System



Scheme 1: Structure of VET System

- direct mobility
- - - → mobility under fulfilling certain conditions
- ⇒ depending on the possibilities, programmes of VET, apprenticeship and (or) trainings and qualifications are processed

Structure of the VET System

Secondary VET covers education for profiles lasting four, three and two years.

Apprenticeship is processed for a certain number of profiles previously approved (by the MoES and the VET Centre) according to the needs and demands of the labour market and of individuals. Education in apprenticeship profiles depends on the work technology and kinds of activities, and it lasts two or three years...

Secondary VET of adults lasts up to three years.

Secondary VET of students with special needs lasts two, three or four years according to the curricula of schools for students with special needs.

Programmes of vocational training and qualifications are special programmes for gaining knowledge, skills and abilities for processing certain jobs and last up to one year. Programmes of training are mainly oriented on gaining skills and abilities for certain operations or jobs; programmes of vocational qualification cover the acquisition of knowledge and skills for occupations. Programmes of training and qualifications must be previously accredited. Programmes of training and qualification can be organised also in special centres outside secondary VET schools that are previously accredited or licensed (also in case of realising international licensed programs).

Post-secondary education covers specialists and masters' education lasting from one to two years after a completed secondary vocational education.

Educational Institutes

According to the *Act on Foundation of Education System in Serbia* in the field of secondary VET the following institutions are established: vocational school, mixed school, school for adult education and secondary school for children with special needs. These schools may organise curricula for secondary vocational education, apprenticeship, adjusted curricula for children with special needs, curricula for adult education, programmes of specialisations and masters' education as well as the accredited curricula of VET.

Secondary VET schools that provide three and four years curricula of secondary VET may organise, according to the interest of students and their parents, a separate curriculum that enables students to take and pass the General Matura. Students have to apply for such programmes at the beginning of their education and the school organises it. Organisation, content and method of processing of this curriculum are set by a separate document on General Matura. Each school defines the direct realisation of this curriculum by its own curriculum.

Gradual system of VET

Gradual system of VET enables a number of broad profiles in secondary VET as well as in apprenticeship to have several final phases. Each final phase provides a trade certificate to leave the education system to find an employment. At the same time it also enables a return into the education process in order to gain a broader profile. Such a system is defined by the character of the profiles in which the students and adults are educated and is possible with broad profiles.

This enables mobility, linking of education and process of work, meeting personal wishes and plans of individuals as well as an easy adaptation to changes in the world of work.

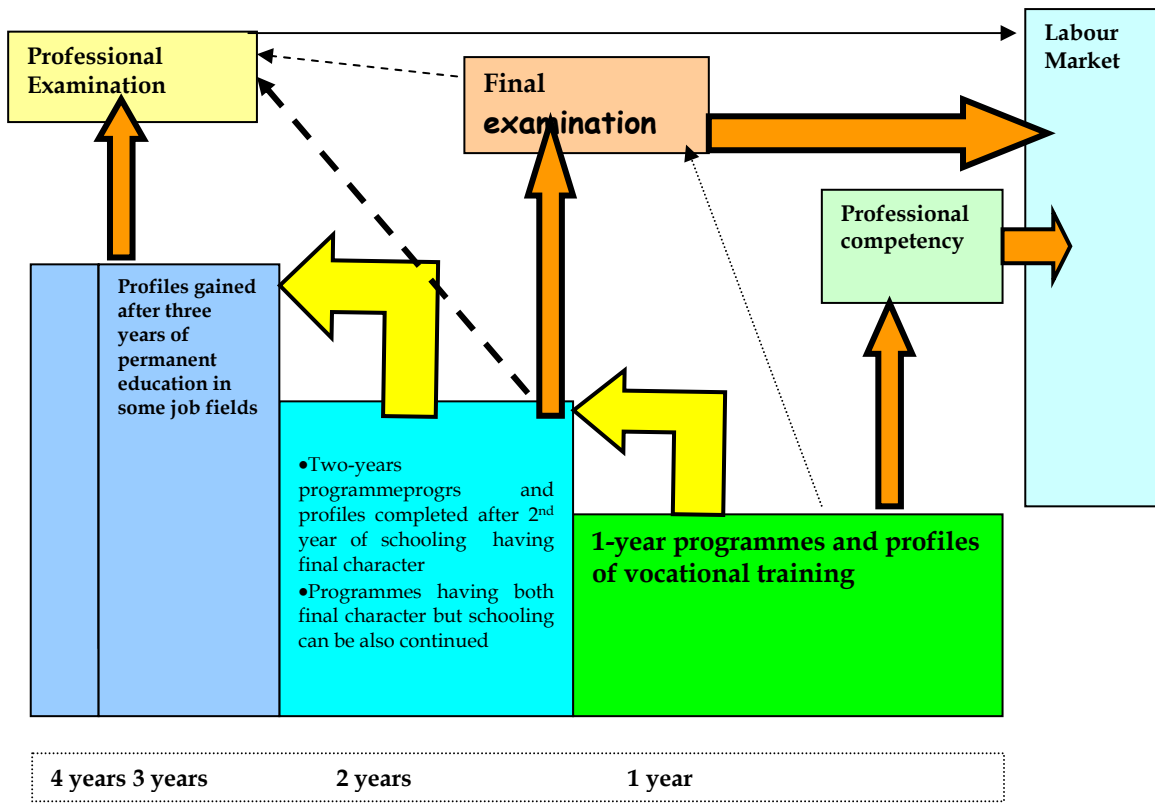
Gradual system enables:

- horizontal and vertical mobility through the whole educational system;
- compliance with labour market needs and link with stakeholders/social partners;
- gaining individual attitudes, competencies, skills and knowledge;
- educational mobility (lifelong learning);
- professional mobility (as a response to the labour market needs and easy adaption to new professions or needs of the labour requirements);
- Mobility to higher educational levels.

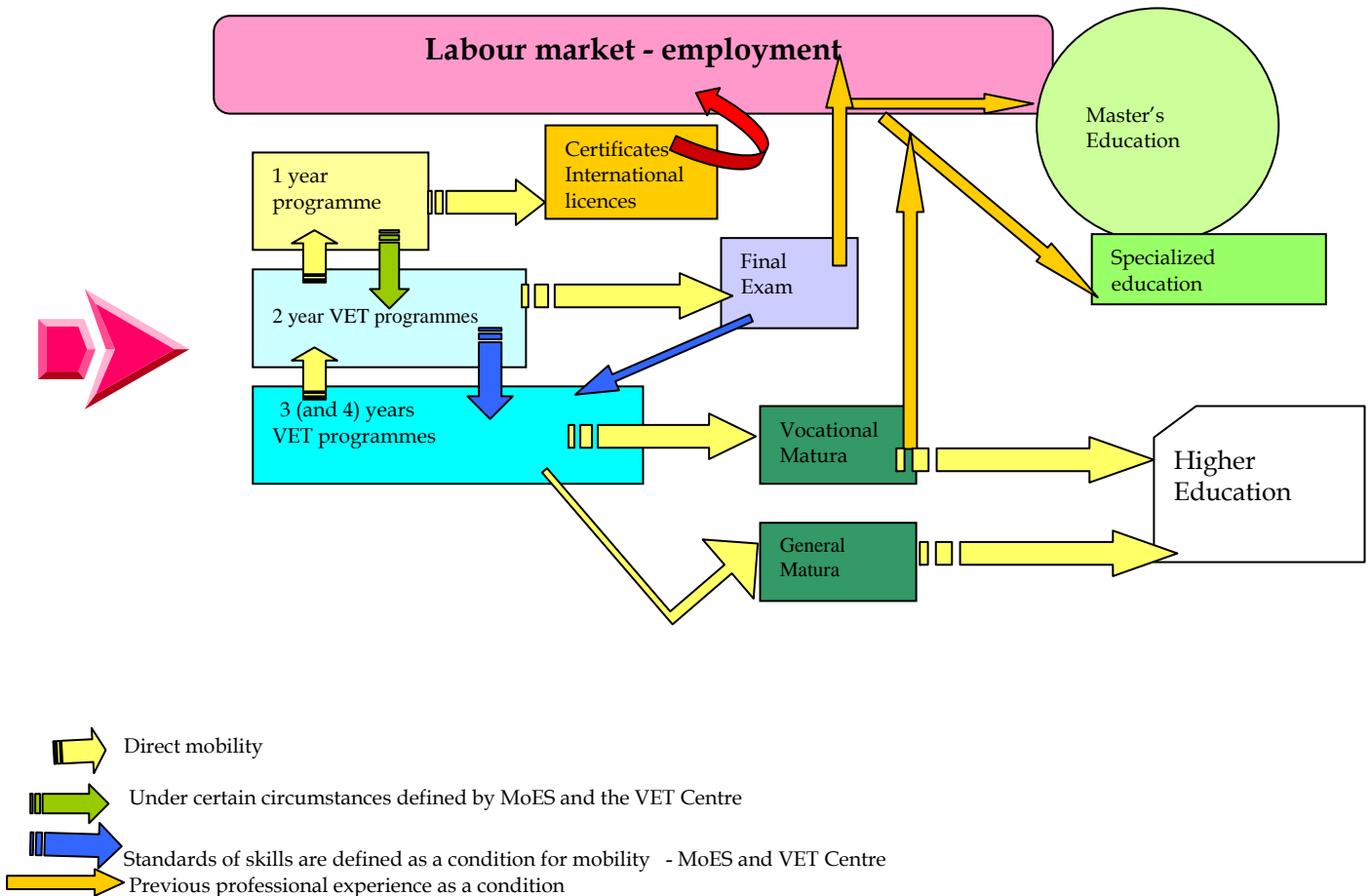
Gradual system ??? enables horizontal and vertical mobility, between different curricula as well as within the VET system as whole. Gradual system enables also designing of:

- programmes for continuous professional learning, development of professional skills, and upgrading of knowledge and skills;
- programmes and forms of informal education;
- different organisational forms and learning models;
- Programmes responding to the need of local community, stakeholders/social partners and other participants in education.

Scheme 2: Gradual system



Scheme 3: Mobility and flexibility of gradual VET system



Curriculum Development in VET

Unique curriculum of secondary VET

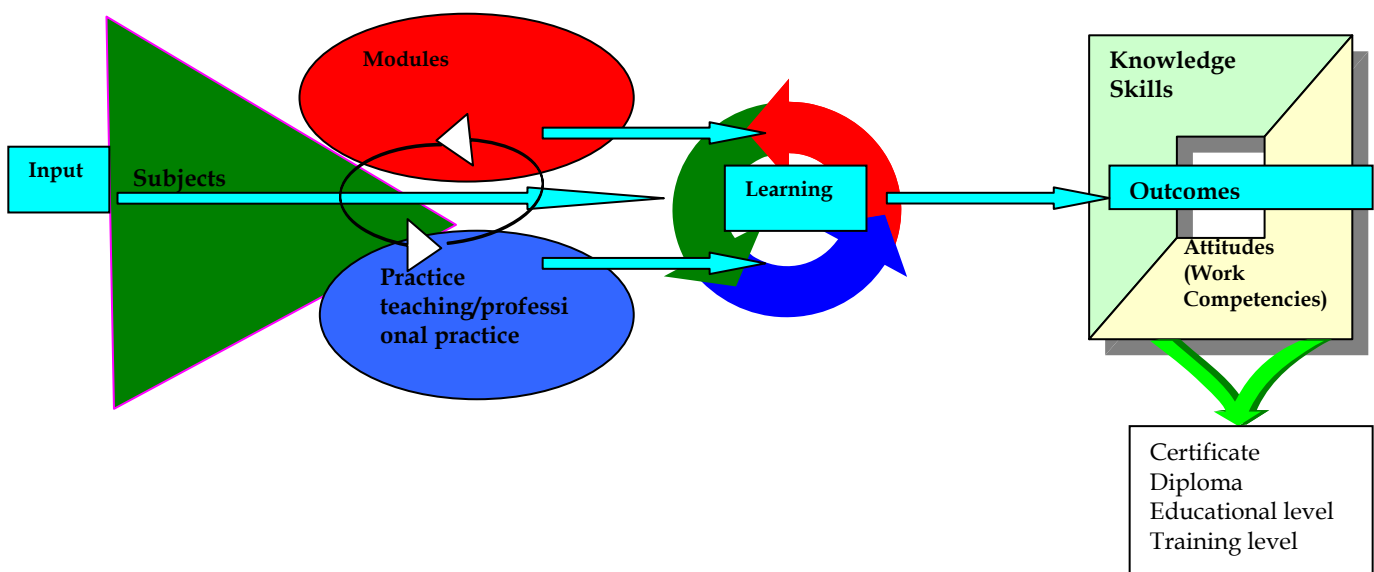
Vocational education offers:

- Diverse curricula of formal and non-formal education and learning. First of all, these are curricula of secondary vocational education, short forms of training qualifications, curricula of post-secondary education and specialisation;
- Diverse organisational forms and teaching and learning methods, and
- Real possibilities for qualification, training and professional practice.

The unique curriculum of secondary VET is the structural framework for the organisation and realisation of education as well as for gaining the intended learning outcomes. The curriculum defines:

- objectives, outcomes and contents of education,
- processes and activities of their achievements and realisation (organisational forms, models and methods of teaching and learning), and
- ways, criteria and standards for assessment of achievements.¹¹

The unique curriculum of secondary VET covers: National and Special Curriculum Frameworks, Learning process and outcomes of learning in secondary VET, Models and Standards of Achievements and Modularisation in VET curricula.



Scheme 4. Key elements of the unique VET Curriculum structure

All processes and activities in education, learning and teaching are aimed at achieving objectives and outcomes of education and must be adjusted, well balanced but also diversified in order to meet broad social needs, needs of local community and of individuals. Diversification of curricula, contents and teaching methods is one of the most complex issues of VET reforms, but it enables the introduction of various forms of curricula according to the needs of profiles and field of work and of the local community and of the school. This contributes to the motivation of the school staff and of the schools. In this way it is possible to introduce new teaching methods,

¹¹ Detailed description given in Chapter on Curricula in Secondary VET

especially forms of active teaching and various combinations of theoretical teaching and professional practice. In this process it is important to obtain:

- a satisfactory balance among general and vocational education, professional theoretical education and professional practice;
- Vertical and horizontal mobility within a curriculum and within the frames of one or more fields of work;
- Introduction to the module working principle of either VET as a whole in all fields of work or in the frames of individual VET schools and educational institutions;
- Links with higher forms of education and providing opportunity for higher education

According to these principles the basic tasks of the unique curriculum of secondary VET are oriented to provide knowledge and skills both to students and adults. The unique curriculum of secondary VET must enable:

- personal development of participants in the educational process,
- quality improvement of the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes (work competency) of an individual for performing jobs;
- meeting the needs of work process concerning vocational attitudes and work competencies;
- Promoting employment and lifelong learning.

Processing of the whole curriculum at the school level must enable the development and improvement of working abilities of students and adults that give them the possibility for further professional and educational development.

Learning - central activity of secondary VET

Learning is the central activity both of the individuals and of schools. It must enable the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the context of certain subjects, or contents and knowledge and skills of learning itself.

Development of information technology, economy and business have altered traditional work-practice and demand different abilities and skills - not only professional/technical "know-how" but first of all the ability to create, analyse and transform information and interact effectively with others. The learning becomes a lifelong activity. Under these new circumstances learning skills become especially important for the students and adults. *Learning skills* should enable students and adults to acquire knowledge, use and processing of information, to transfer this information into new knowledge, skills and values, development of abilities to work with others, learn with and from others.

Learning skills

*Information and
Communication Skills*

Information and media literacy skills:

Analysing, accessing, managing, integrating, evaluation and creating information in a variety of forms and media.

Communication skills:

Understanding, managing and creating effective oral, written and multimedia communication in a variety of forms and context.

Thinking Skills

Information and media literacy skills:
Analysing, accessing, managing, integrating, evaluation and creating information in a variety of forms and media.

Communication skills:
Understanding, managing and creating effective oral, written and multimedia communication in a variety of forms and context.

Interpersonal skills

Interpersonal and collaborative skills:
Demonstrating teamwork and leadership; adapting to varied roles and responsibilities; working productively with others; respecting diverse perspectives

Self-direction:
Monitoring one's own understanding and learning needs, locating appropriate resources, transferring learning from one domain to another

Accountability and adaptability:
Exercising personal responsibility and flexibility in personal, workplace and community contexts; setting and meeting high standards and goals for oneself and others.

Social responsibility:
Acting responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind; demonstrating ethical behaviour in personal, workplace and community context.

The function of learning skills is to enhance and motivate each participant of education in order to improve his/her own work and life, so that by gaining knowledge and skill h/she could respond to the needs not only of the economic development but of the whole life.

National and special framework of curriculum

Vocational education and training is processed based on the curricula delivered by each school or educational institution according to the *Act on Foundation of Education System in Serbia*. Schools are operating based on a curriculum consisting of general and specific parts. The general

part is based on the National Curriculum Framework, the specific one is harmonised with the specific framework and is a result of the type and specific features of the very school depending on the type of education and educational profiles provided in that school.

The National Curriculum Framework is common to all secondary VET schools and is the basis for:

- establishing a curriculum framework according to the types of VET education and occupation profiles;
- final, general and vocational exam programme;
- developing assessment criteria for quality assurance in VET.

The National curriculum framework consists of:

- general objectives, principles and outcomes of education, and according to the types of secondary VET ;
- educational fields with objectives and outcomes ;
- scope of education field in each type of secondary VET ;
- core subjects per levels that are compulsory throughout secondary VET;
- list of obligatory and optional subjects according to the VET levels;
- General standards of knowledge.

The specific part of school curricula is defined according to the types of education and to the educational profiles and it covers:

- goals and outcomes for the subjects according to the VET types and educational profiles;
- obligatory and recommended contents of subject, themes and modules;
- framework of number of classes per subject, themes and modules;
- specific standards of knowledge and skills;
- recommended types of activities in educational process;
- Recommended types of modular teaching.

The school curriculum defines each VET school for itself according to:

- National Curriculum Framework
- Specific Framework of Curriculum

The school curriculum achieves the realisation of the national and specific framework of school curricula and needs of students and parents, schools and local self-government units.

The general and specific framework of school curricula are processed in accordance with the established minimum number of educational work, depending on the school grades in the following percentages:

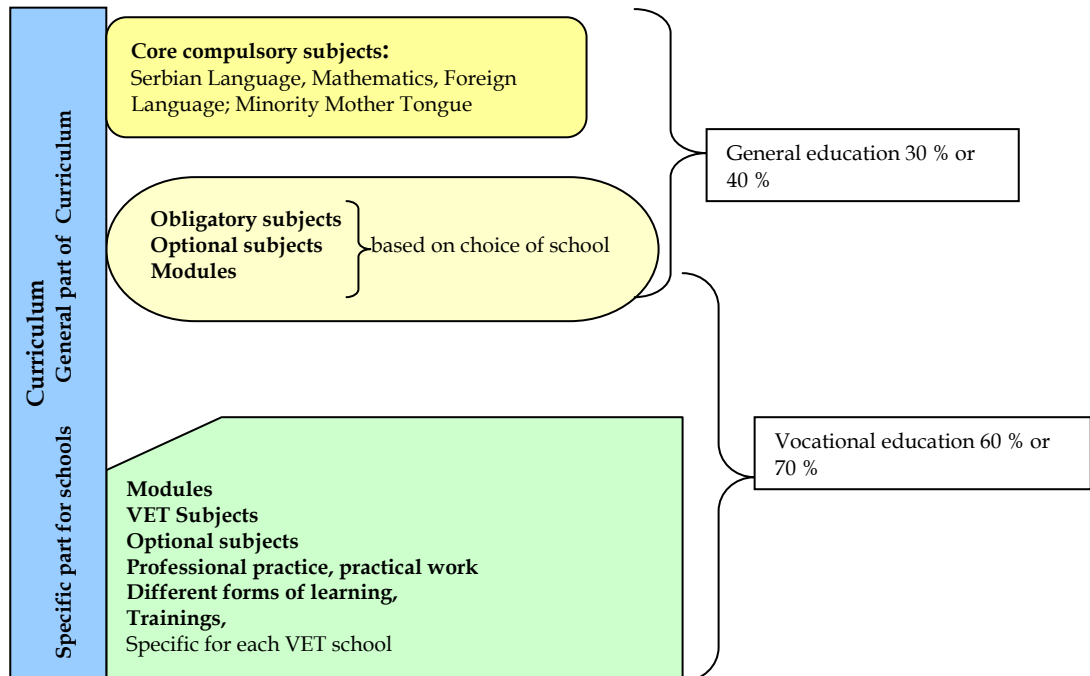
- In secondary VET - minimum 40% of annual obligatory number of classes;
- In secondary VET for apprenticeship education - minimum 30% of annual obligatory number of class.

The obligatory fund of contact hours is defined by a special paper delivered by the minister of education.

The school curriculum consists of:

1. Name, type and duration of curriculum;
2. Obligatory and optional subjects or topics per grades;
3. Ways and procedures of realisation of the defined framework of curricula and achieving outcomes per grades;

4. total number of hours per each subject or topic;
5. total number of hours for each grade;
6. curriculum content and activities for realisation of the specific part of the curriculum;
7. Name, type and ways of realisation of modules.

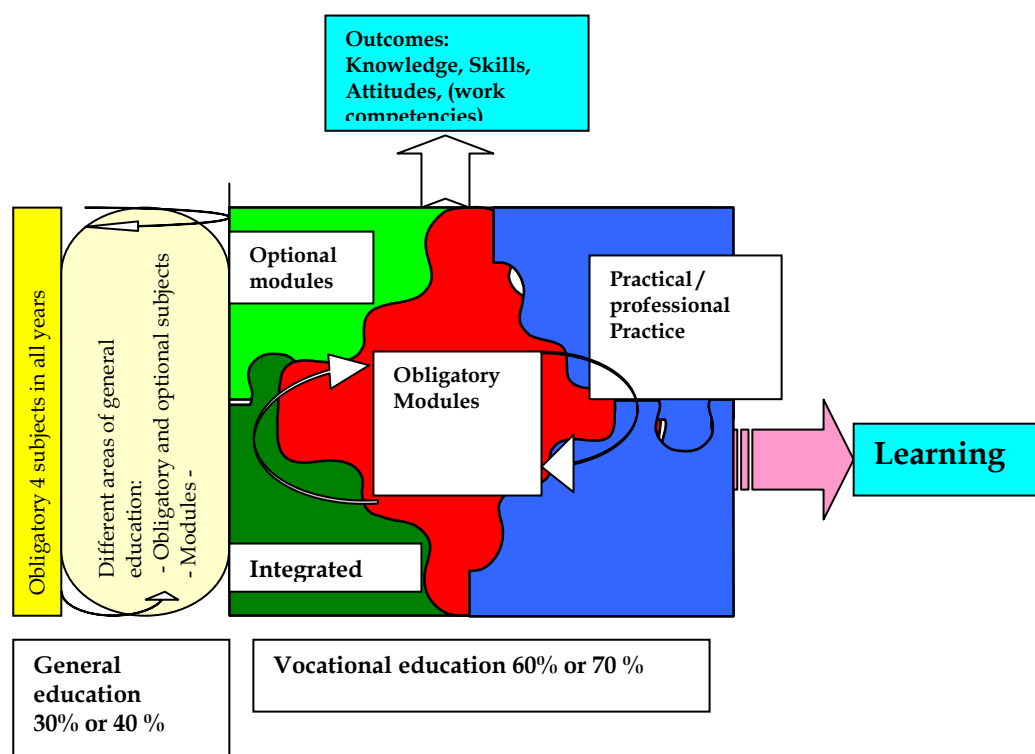


Scheme 5. School Curriculum in Secondary VET

The curriculum, national and specific frameworks are the foundations for the defining of curricula according to types and educational profiles as well as for delivering the programmes of final and matura exams and quality assessment of education.

The National and specific framework is defined by the Minister of Education and Sports based on the proposal of the National Council for VET.

Outcomes of general education in secondary VET must be defined according to the occupational standards, concept and kind of profile or cluster of occupation.



Scheme 6. Inner structure of VET School Curriculum

Forms of realisation of curricula in secondary VET schools:

- Obligatory subjects
- Optional subjects
- General education subjects
- Modules
- Professional practice/practical work

Organisation of curricula

Secondary VET must be focused on gaining adequate professional competencies. The reform of secondary VET develops the possibility for didactic reforms. In comparison to the current school, the focus must shift from teaching to learning; this needs changes not only of curricula but of methods and organisation of teaching.

According to the new Act, within the curricula there is an annual, not weekly, amount of hours for all forms of teaching. As the curriculum is realised through subjects, modules and practical teaching/vocational practice, with various durations during the school year, the organisation of teaching/learning must be more flexible. Therefore, within the school and within the real working place, where, up to this moment, only professional practice was processed, the teaching of theory and practice must be adjusted in time. The school schedule in such a curriculum structure cannot exist any more as a rigid schedule that cannot be changed throughout the school year. The school's schedule must be permanently adjusted to the curriculum. This creates an issue concerning problems of space and equipment, training of teachers, norms of

teacher's contact hours at weekly and annual level, different way of assessment of results of work both of teachers and students, and a permanent need for professional improvement of teachers through training.

The structure of the curriculum is not unique for all educational profiles. It differs within apprenticeship profiles, three and four years profiles, so that the organisation of the educational process cannot be the same - it must meet the demands of each single educational profile.

Outcomes in vocational education

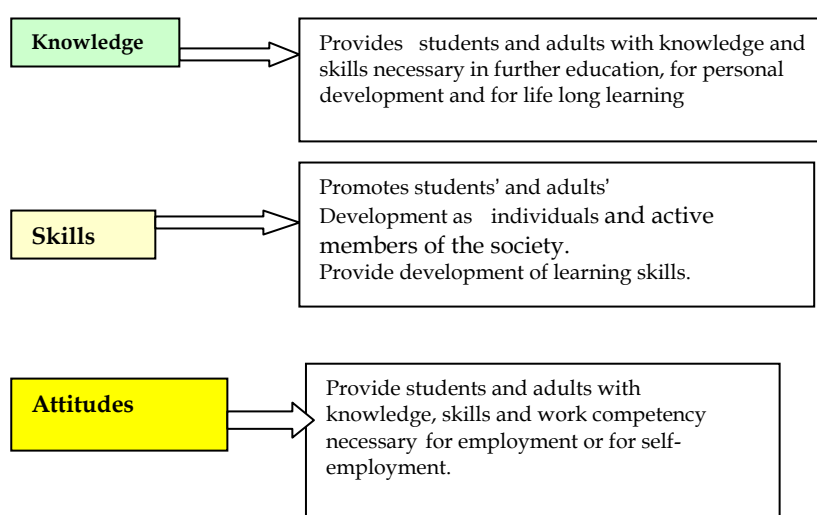
The main characteristic of vocational education, i.e. the curriculum implemented therein, is the outcomes orientation. The outcomes are clearly and unequivocally defined - knowledge, skills and attitudes (work competencies) that are achieved after a specific programme, i.e. education and learning process. Defined in that manner, they form the basis for planning, organization and the realisation of vocational education and the evaluation of achievements and of the whole education and training process. The outcomes induce teachers and students to share the responsibility for educational achievements, providing both groups with a clear idea of what they could expect after the completion of a specific programme, i.e. the education and learning process.

The education process always results in some kind of outcomes but their nature is often vague and undefined. In vocational education as well, programmes with inadvertent, inadequate and imprecisely defined outcomes are not rare and this results in the "production" of people with formally recognised qualifications but who lack some elementary work competencies that they are expected to possess.

A significant difference exists between the simple "production" of outcomes and outcome-oriented education. In outcome-oriented education, the outcomes are defined prior to the education process and are known to teachers and students who during the learning process receive the necessary support in the form of an adequate and thoroughly thought through approach to achieving outcomes. This means that the outcomes determine and define the education and learning process and that the school and the institution whose curricula are based on outcomes should:

- Identify the outcomes of a specific programme, explain them and make them completely public and let them be known to all interested population;
- Elaborate ways of education and learning organization through which the outcomes are achieved, i.e. through which students can be successful in achieving the outcomes;
- Define standards of achievements in subjects, subject areas and modules.

Specification of outcomes:



Specification of outcomes is carried out on the basis of clearly defined procedure and work methodology. Different participants can be involved in the outcomes specification:

- vocational school teachers and instructors;
- university teachers and experts from research institutes;
- practice workers;
- Representatives of employers, trade unions and students' parents and students.

Modularisation in secondary VET

Modules are specific, separate segments of learning packages that lead to achievements of defined outcomes. Modules may be independent or parts of broader programmes/ organisational units. They are designed on the bases of complementary principles, diverse educational demands and defined thematic tasks. Within their structure, modules obtain gaining knowledge and competences, development of relevant sets of skills and interdisciplinary/ cross-subject linking.

Modules can cover several different disciplines. Each discipline has its own clearly defined goals and tasks. According to their flexible structure there are no strict lines between these disciplines so that they enable interference, correlation and creation of unique modular educational packages. The real world of work defines work competences of occupations including their development component.

A **MODULE** is a functionally linked unit of knowledge, skills and attitudes (work competences) that are necessary for a job/task. Each occupation is defined as the cluster of modules having Vocational Matura of external character as its final outcome.

- A module must not be an occupation, nor a year,
- A module must not be just theoretical teaching or professional practice only,
- In two and three years education, modules have to rely on each other,
- Training can be one module,
- Occupations must be broad ones (training provides narrow skills), our goal is to have integrated, wide profiles,
- Modules request team work in performing teaching.

Kinds of modules:

Compulsory modules make the minimal standard and cover those modules that give the first level of work competencies or abilities for processing jobs in a profile, occupational cluster or occupation.

Compulsory modules may be the condition for the progress of a student or for the horizontal transfer between programmes or profiles.

Modules by Choice are modules chosen by the student according to his/her own wish, abilities and plans; these modules enable the forming of the personal profile of each individual.

Integrated modules are professional-theoretical modules that provide knowledge and are an addition to or basis for compulsory modules or professional practice.

There are numerous and diverse reasons for introducing modules in VET. First of all modules enable:

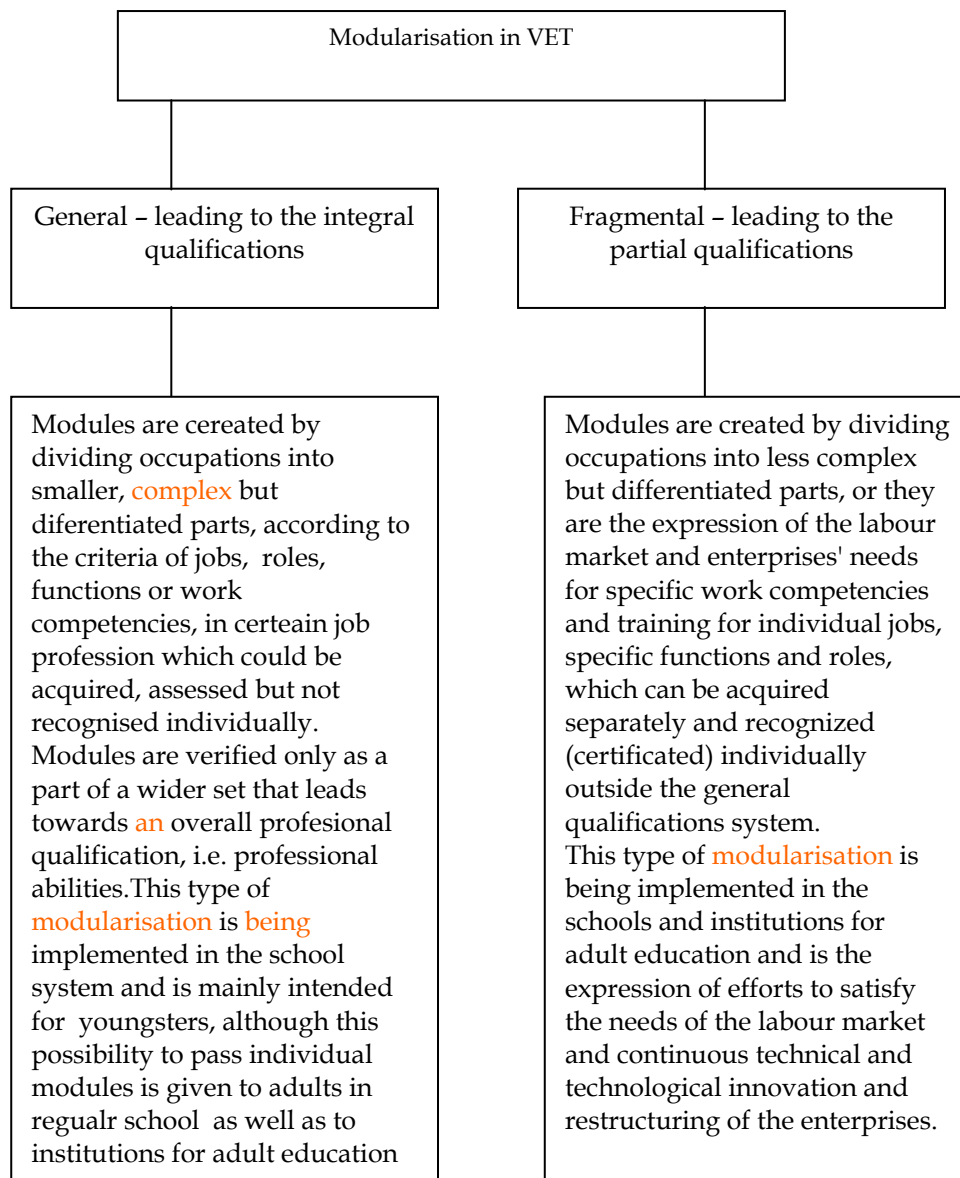
- Greater flexibility in planning and organisation of the educational process,
- Greater economic efficiency in education cost,
- Better adjustment to the needs of the labour market, concrete working environment and job,

- Better vertical and horizontal mobility,
- A more suitable way to overcome the gap between school academic knowledge/qualification and knowledge and practice gained by experience,
- Better responses to individual learning needs and capability of students,
- Enhanced student possibility to choose his/her own path, way of learning and gaining qualifications and work competencies,
- Continuing education and possibility to discontinue the gaining of qualifications and work competencies.

The concept of education or qualification is a reference framework for modularisation and a precise description of the occupation is the basis for modular design. In the educational system, occupations are represented as cluster modules –a set of functionally and organizationally linked packages, learning units. The same modules can be part of different occupational clusters; this enables horizontal and vertical mobility within an education system.

In the Serbian secondary VET system there will be developed two equal modular concepts and two methodologies for developing modules:

- general modularisation – leading to the integral qualifications,
- Fragmental modularisation - leading to partial qualification and training for individual jobs and working function.



Final exams in VET

Vocational Matura

The Vocational Matura is taken by students after finished third or fourth grade of secondary VET school and gain the right to enrol respective institutions of higher education according to the defined conditions of enrolment. The Vocational Matura consists of theoretical and practical part and it is a checking of general, vocational-theoretical knowledge, vocational skills, and within the practical part checking of professional abilities for certain jobs. Vocational Matura can be partially or fully external. It is realised according to special rules developed by the

VET Centre and endorsed by the MoES. Members of the Exam Committees for vocational Matura are teachers who do not teach the student taking the Matura and representatives of the stakeholders/social partners. The selection and functioning of these committees are defined by regulation.

The VET Centre develops a catalogue of knowledge and exam catalogues that provide the basis for preparing vocational Matura.

Final Exam

Final exams are taken by students after finishing two years secondary VET line and after gaining two or three years apprenticeship education. The final exam consists of checking knowledge and practical attitudes. The practical part of the exam can be taken in institutions outside the school if these institutes are accredited and function according to accredited curricula.

Organisation, content, conditions and assessment systems are defined by a separate regulation prepared by the VET Centre and endorsed by the MoES of the Republic of Serbia.

The exam committees are proposed by the VET Centre and endorsed by the MoES of the Republic of Serbia.

Exam for checking professional attitudes

Exams for checking *professional attitudes* are taken by students or adults after completing a training or qualification programme or after the first or second grade of secondary VET school. The practical part of the exam that checks the gained abilities to perform certain tasks (working competencies) can be taken in institutions outside the school, if that institution is accredited for performing these exams and if functions according to accredited programmes.

The organisation, content, conditions and assessment systems are defined by a separate regulation prepared by the VET Centre and endorsed by the MoES. The exam committees are proposed by the VET Centre and endorsed by the MoES.

The accreditation of programmes for professional trainings and qualifications is done by the Centre for Accreditation in cooperation with the VET Centre.

Masters' and specialists' exams

Masters' and specialists' exams are taken after master/specialist education. The exam covers theoretical and practical aspects and is realised in institutions accredited for performing these exams and work according to accredited programmes.

The organisation, content, conditions and assessment systems are defined by a separate regulative developed by the VET Centre and endorsed by the MoES.

Profiles and standards in vocational education

Occupational profile

The occupational profile is developed based on the profile of the working process and describes skills, knowledge and attitudes (work competencies) that the performer of the job must have in order to perform that job.

The occupational profile is the basis for development of occupational standards and it is its constituent part. The occupational profile also provides the basis for development of the educational programme.

Educational profile

The educational profile, together with the occupational profile creates the basis for developing the programme of education and obtains the links between general and vocational contents and knowledge within a certain occupation. It also enables the organisation of education for groups of occupations and clusters of occupations in this way obtaining broad working and educational profiles.

Depending on the development level of the programme, an education profile may be equal to occupation, but it can cover a larger number of a kin occupations.

Occupational standards

The basic reform intention for VET is its linking to the labour market. To train people to give a successful response to the demands of a job, working place and to work well and efficiently demands the identification of indicators by which their achievement can be assessed and evaluated. That means that each profession or occupation, as a generalised description of and linked groups of jobs, must have clear and public clarification of what qualified experts of that occupation know and can perform. This kind of clarification/description is called the *occupational standard*.

Therefore, occupational standards are description of:

- working activities (tasks, jobs, duties, functions of roles) that are performed within a certain occupation and
- Work competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) necessary for efficient working activity and respective achievement in that occupation.

Occupational standards enable:

- selection and development of people for the needs of a certain occupation ,
- identification of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the work in an occupation,
- identification of needs for education and learning
- designing of programmes of education, teaching and learning
- evaluation of programme and education process,
- counselling and guidance in VET and adult education
- Development of procedures for accreditation and certification of education.

Occupational standards are national as they are:

- developed for the needs of the national economy,
- the result of general agreement on their contents ,
- Accepted and adequately assessed at the labour market throughout the country.

Procedures of developing national occupation standards, based on the national classification of occupations, are developed by social partners, the state, employers and employees and by their represents.

The role of the state as the key conveyor of the policy of education and employment is in monitoring and improving links between education and socio-economic development especially within measures that regulate mismatches between qualifications and labour market needs. This needs also the anticipation of the influence of globalisation on the national economy and human resources. State representatives also take the responsibility for evaluation of qualifications from the standpoint of the existing and future needs of national economy including national priorities in developing core competencies, openness of educational system and economic justification of certain solutions.

Employers and other representatives of the economy, who need a working force of suitable competences, deliver the basic content for the development of occupational standards. Trade unions have influence on the kind and process of developing standards with the basic aim to increase employment. Their basic demands refer to the relevance of occupations and qualifications and real possibilities for gaining them.

A respective national body defines the procedure for developing occupational standards, methodology that is used in that process and respective structure of actors who take part in that process.

Educational standards

The organisation and realisation of secondary VET are based on clearly defined standards. Basic elements of the structure of vocational educational standards are the following:

- specification of occupations covering the work competencies that are necessary for performing certain jobs and tasks,
- specification of learning that refers to the aims, contents and outcomes, methods and techniques of learning,
- specification of evaluation and assessment concerning estimation and assessment of gained knowledge's, skills and attitudes,
- Specification of conditions and norms (material, technical, human) in which the process of education and learning is realised.

Occupational standards and educational standards are basic elements for the operationalisation of key issues of educational process and definition of roles and responsibilities of key partners in that process.

Key issues	Standards	Key actors
Knowledge, skills and attitudes (work competencies) needed for working in an occupation	Standard (specification) of occupation.	Social partners and stakeholders
How can they be gained successfully?	Standard (specification) of learning.	Teachers and other experts in education.
Under which circumstances the process of education and learning is performed	Normative and standards for schools and other educational institutions	Represent of the government in the field of education

In which way is it possible to check what and in which extent is learned	Standard (specification) of achievement	Experts in the field of education, employers
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Standards of achievement

Standards of achievement at represent the development of the student's abilities and at the same time they define the expectations that the student must realise in the educational process. These standards obtain shared reference points for teachers in the process of monitoring, assessment and reporting on the students' achievement in a certain period of time. These standards are measures for quality achievement of the programme.

Certification

A certification system in education is one of the ways to link non-formal education and valid public papers or certificates of vocational qualifications notwithstanding the way they were gained. Qualifications gained through a certificate system is based on endorsed occupational standards and educational standards, in this way ensuring their recognition in various working environments and in the national labour market. Accreditation of VET curricula is made by the Centre for Accreditation in cooperation with the VET Centre.

VET in Adult Education

Adult education is a manifestation of lifelong learning and an integral part of the education system. The attitude, skills and knowledge of the adult population are the key to socio-economic transformation and development of Serbia and its efforts to be part of an interactive world. Adult education and learning are a powerful mechanism for:

- the development of human capital and the establishment of the economy and social organization based on knowledge;
- individual and social productivity strengthening, economic development of the country and its integration in the global economy;
- Life quality improvement, creating possibilities for full social participation, employment, employability and professional development and mobility.

However, at the same time adult education is a powerful mechanism for individual development and moulding individual capabilities and goals, which can be recognized as personal and attainable. It provides a real possibility for an individual to:

- Be employed,
- Obtain a higher salary,
- Obtain independence,
- Remain healthy and active,
- Perform jobs of higher quality,
- Strengthen the family and
- Encourage the independence of its members.

On account of all this, adult education in Serbia must be based on new foundations. It is not a sign of economic and technological backwardness, instrument of political training and indoctrination but a way of acquiring new knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and models of thinking, working and living. Adult education must be recognized as a crucial instrument and mechanism for economic growth stimulation, employment and increased employability, economic restructuring and technical and technological development. Thus it is necessary to redefine the goals, the organization and the structure of the whole adult education system, and to establish it on the concept of lifelong learning and make it accessible to all population categories. The situation in which education and learning is accessible only to children and younger generations must be overcome and the legislative and institutional preconditions for adult education and learning must be created.

In this context the vocational education of the adults has special value. The vocational education of adults is an integral part of the vocational education system and is closely related to the labour market, economy and other social systems. On the secondary education level it encompasses:

- short-term training programmes,
- regular vocational education programmes,
- post-secondary education programmes and
- Continuous vocational education and knowledge refreshment programmes.

Bearing in mind that around 50% of adult population in Serbia belongs to the category that does not possess elementary working (and living) skills and that there is a pressing need for productivity and competitiveness increase, products and services innovation, new technologies implementation and the transformation of value system, cultural norms and orientations, the strategic goals of the adult education are to:

- strengthen the network and structures for adult education and make quality education and learning accessible to adult population, which will be accomplished through:

- ◆ Opening regular schools for adults, i.e. adapting their programmes and organization to the needs of adults. This means:
 - development of curricula and modules of VET for adults
 - development of standards of education and training of adults, and
 - development of models and procedures of development of standards of occupations,
 - development of a methodology for adjusting programmes to needs and possibilities of adults,
 - Evaluation in adult education and development of standards for outcome achievements for adults.
- ◆ revitalization of the existing network of institutions and organizations for adult education and training,
- ◆ strengthening the educational function of the enterprises and the development of the possibility of workplace learning,
- ◆ Establishing new institutions and organizations for adult education such as regional centres for adults or other types of institutions for adult education. Regional centres for adults are adjusted institutions that have open curricula for the needs of economy and labour market. Their basic activities are the following:
- ◆ development and realisation:
 - curriculum of vocational education (from individual modules to full curricula of vocational education leading to general qualification),
 - curriculum of vocational training (I and II level of vocational qualification);
 - curriculum of vocational short-term training;
 - curriculum of postsecondary vocational education;
 - curriculum of continuous vocational improvement;
 - Curriculum for non-formal education for specific needs.
 - accreditation of previous learning and knowledge and skills gained in a non-formal way;
 - information, counselling and guidance in the selection of programmes of short-term training, training and career guidance of education according to the individual preferences, needs of the local community and labour market. This is realised in close cooperation with regional and local employment services.
- Understand and implement the adult education reform as an integral part of the education system reform, and especially of the vocational education reform. In this context, the revitalization of the existing, and especially establishment of new institutions for adult education must be conducted in synergy and cooperation with general reform efforts to correspond to social needs.
- Establish adult education on social partnership and real social and individual needs. Through communication with enterprises, employers and the local community, the schools and institutions for adult education must recognize the needs for education and training and provide quality support to satisfy them.

- Achieve increasing diversity of curricula for adults and of conditions and forms of their implementation. According to the changeable and diverse needs of the labour market and individuals, the adult education is being developed as a combination of:
 - ◆ Formal,
 - ◆ Non-formal
 - ◆ Informal and
 - ◆ Self-directed education and learning.
- Create legislative and institutional preconditions, which will allow the students to obtain school, i.e. academic qualifications, relevant in the labour market, through adult education process. Hence it is necessary to develop the system of:
 - ◆ Accreditation of curricula for adult education and training,
 - ◆ Certification of short-term forms of vocational education
 - ◆ Accreditation of previous non-formal learning and professional experience and knowledge, and credit system exams
 - ◆ Evaluation and standardisation of non-formal education, primarily education in the field of information technology and foreign languages.
- Conceive and develop key qualifications system as a means of accomplishing working flexibility, adaptability, professional mobility and linking formal with non-formal education and learning. Key qualifications are a supplement to general vocational knowledge and skills, and they comprise two dimensions: a) Social-valuable - understanding of the social and working surroundings, readiness for cooperation, adequate communication including communication in foreign languages and through different information systems and media; b) Cognitive and affective - capability to analyse, conceptualise, critically thinking, moral reasoning and continuous learning. The development of the concept of key qualification means:
 - ◆ Assessment and standardisation of non-formal education, primarily education in the field of information technology and foreign languages, introducing international standards and certificates in these fields.
- Develop the system of adult, psychological, and especially didactical and methodical training and education of teachers and instructors in adult education and introduce the system of licensing their work.
- Develop norms and standards for institutions working on adult education and the system of accreditation of their programmes.

Teachers and associates

Teachers and associates in secondary VET are the basic actors of its reforms and continuing transformation and adjustment to social and individual needs, they are the basic factors of its efficiency. Therefore, their socio-economic position are professional and reform imperatives.

The socio-economic status of secondary VET teachers, as the basis of their motivation for work and efficiency must be based on the following:

- real social possibilities and needs,
- establishing firm links between the institutions of secondary VET to the local community, enterprises and the labour market
- flexible ways of financing secondary VET (per capita) and adult education based on state grants for special programmes,
- Economic price of certain educational programmes.

The basis of teachers professionalism and professional development is not only the orientation to students but also the definition of their own position and possibilities in the process of development and learning of the student. At the same time it is their will and ability to support students in achieving the highest standards and levels of performance in learning and education.

The Act on Foundations of Educational System established key segments for the professional development of teachers and associates in education in Serbia. According to this, teachers and associates in secondary VET and adult education have the possibility for qualitative and continuous professional development. This process of development is realised within the framework of the:

- system of selection and choice ,
- initial professional training,
- system of licensing,
- continuous teacher training,
- professional (career) promotion,
- initial preparing and training in the field of subject or discipline field, and
- pedagogic, andragogic and psychological training and improvement

Initial pedagogic, andragogic and psychological training and improvement of secondary VET teachers and adult education are a precondition for entering teachers' profession. It must enable teachers to gain basic knowledge and key skills needed for achieving general goals of secondary VET and special goals of subjects and modules.

Quality assessment in secondary VET

In secondary VET a special system of quality assurance in education, learning and quality of education outcomes is established. Assessment of the efficiency of the educational process is mainly focused on the analysis of successful achievement of educational tasks, training and teaching process in order to estimate the functioning of educational system. In this process it is important:

- that the efficiency of the VET system is assessed by the extent of functionality and flexibility of system in a certain period of time;
- the extent is taken into account of the influence of learning and teaching on the individual development, learning outcomes, needs of the working process and cultural development;
- to identify the level and type of development of educational resources and learning methods.

The system of quality assurance in the whole education system of Serbia covers two levels of activities:

- at national level – activities focused on the assurance of high quality in the whole education;
- At school level – covering estimation and assessment of achievements in all segments of work in secondary VET schools.

According to the basic concept of quality assurance at national level this process in secondary VET covers the :

- defining of educational standards and their operationalisation;
- Competencies of key actors (employed in educational institutions and relevant services in the Ministry of education and sports of the Republic of Serbia, in the Centre for Evaluation) for the assessment of process and outcomes of education and learning.

The process of quality assurance at school level covers following instruments in the field of secondary VET:

- The development of school self evaluation (support, improvement of the system and its forms),
- The implementation of external forms of evaluation,
- The introduction of school development planning.

The evaluation system of secondary VET in Serbia covers activities of monitoring, measuring and assessing of the system of secondary VET (network of schools, etc), individual schools as well as curricula.

Evaluation has three phases: before, during and after the implementation of documents and foreseen activities. The results of evaluation will influence the modification of evaluated processes and effects of activities in the course of realisation.

Two evaluation approaches will be used:

- Internal evaluation, conducted by the participants and creators of secondary VET reforms and this covers self-evaluation of the

- External evaluation processed by the Centre for evaluation of the quality of education, expert teams, interest groups according to legal procedures.

The process and methods of evaluation in secondary VET is defined by the Centre for evaluation of quality in education, MoES and VET Centre. Monitoring of the evaluation process is done by the VET Centre.

Decentralisation in Secondary VET

The process of decentralisation is one of the great issues of any secondary VET reform. In Central and Eastern European countries this is a frequent way to break with the tradition of central planning and decision making in education. Transferring authority to regional and local level is a support to all social and economic reforms and is a direct means of achieving efficiency and of better results in education at local level. The current results of the decentralisation process in the region show that in VET it has been accepted that the State must have overall responsibility for the structure and system control, but the common duties of the State and of social partners should be the development of standards, system of qualifications and certifications. Flexibility in meeting special needs when regional and local authorities take over the responsibility for development of single schools, financial arrangements, and cooperation with local employers.

Decentralisation in education is one of the key issues of total VET reforms in Serbia. The process of VET decentralisation means a gradual and rather cautious activity that will be processed in several phases. The main fields of decentralisation are the following:

- Decentralisation of school government, that means the defining of regional responsibility in managing secondary VET schools;
- Decentralisation in creating and realisation of curricula that open the possibility for including special needs of the local community and of the region in the realisation of the VET programme;
- Decentralisation of enrolment policy enables the empowering of cooperation with the local community and will have an impact on meeting local regional needs in secondary VET.

This means that the realisation of this process will enable new partners to join the process of education. Instead of de facto decision making of a centre - individual schools, municipalities and other will take part in this process and will achieve a certain level of independence. At national level, consultative bodies outside the ministries will be formed as independent decision making bodies. At the school level *school boards* and *parents councils* will be formed.

As decentralisation and regionalisation of VET mean quality and quantity management in VET, the new Act on education opened various possibilities in this field. It has been proposed to form a *National Council for Secondary VET and Adult Education*. The role of the National Council is to project and propose the development and improvement process of VET. Therefore, its duty is, among others, to propose various forms and ways of standardisation in secondary VET, management trends and forms for network of secondary VET schools, list of educational profiles, programme of vocational Matura and final exams, programme of masters' and specialists education and exams, etc.

Having in mind the fact that there are complex and deep links between secondary VET and various forms of economic and social development of the society and that a more efficient, qualitative and faster implementation of VET reforms is needed, based on the new education Act the Government of the Republic of Serbia has established a National Centre for VET and Adult Education in August 2003. The mission of this Centre is the following:

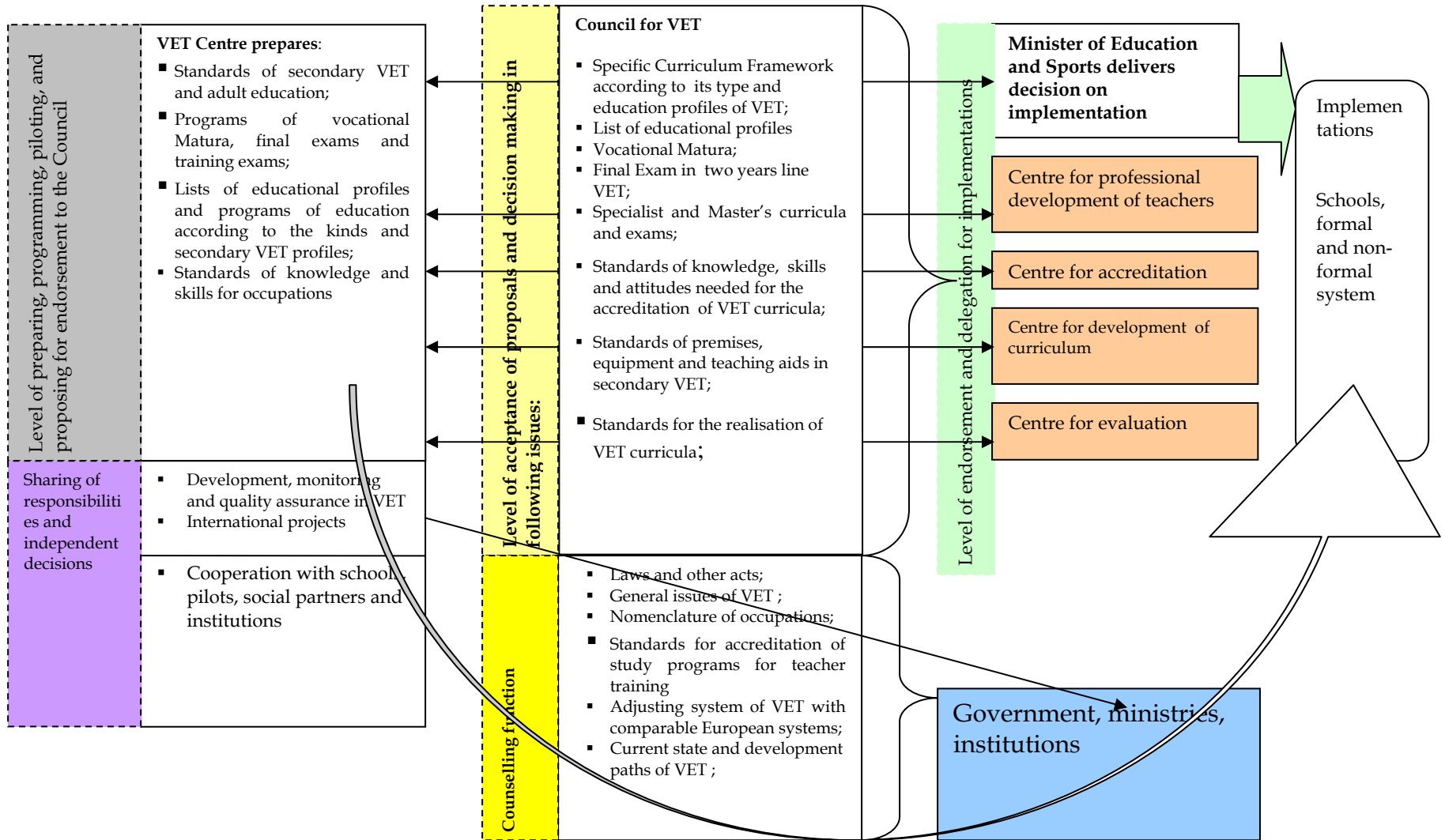
- Support to the socio-economic development of Serbia by improving and developing VET in the country;
- Development of social partnership and support to social partners in realisation of their role and responsibility in the field of VET;

- Support to development and realisation of the concept of lifelong learning/education, and
- Support to individual professional development.

According to this, key fields of activities of the Centre are the following: development of VET; linking work and education; development of social partnership; contribution to the concept of lifelong learning; introduction of European dimension of vocation education; adopt VET to individual needs and possibilities.

VET Centre has the following tasks:

- Development, monitoring and assurance of quality in VET
- Prepare standards of secondary VET and adult education;
- Develop programmes of vocational Matura, final exams and exams of vocational training;
- Prepare lists of educational profiles and programmes according to their type and education profiles of secondary VET;
- prepare standards of knowledge and skills for occupations;
- process international projects in VET and adult education;
- accreditation of curricula for special professional training and teacher training of teachers of vocational subjects;
- counselling in VET;
- collecting and distribution of information on VET and their linking with the labour market;
- Development of various forms and models of cooperation with social partners (employers, chambers, trade unions, local communities).



According to its programme goals and planned activities the VET Centre realises a complex and diverse cooperation with a wide range of institutions and organisations within and outside of the education sphere. Such a heterogenic role is defined by the structure and goals of VET.

Ministries: The Centre has a direct cooperation and acts in line with the MoES in all important issues of VET development and improvement in Serbia. A special segment of this co-action is in the field of the VET reforms.

The Centre establishes links with the Ministry of Foreign Economic Affairs, Ministry of Privatisation and Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Stakeholders/Social partners: The Centre for VET obtains and establishes various kinds of partnerships and cooperation with all categories of stakeholders/social partners: chambers, trade unions, Republic Labour Market Bureau and its regional and local centres, trade unions, employers, entrepreneurs, Agency for SMEs, industrial and other subjects and with all other partners in the economy of the Republic of Serbia. The character, form and way of cooperation are regulated by separate agreements between the Centre and partner/cooperation organisation.

Various institutions and associations: the VET Centre has various forms of cooperation with institutions of higher education and with universities, associations, NGOs, associations and interest groups that have or may have an influence on the development and improvement of VET.

Secondary schools, Associations of VET schools, teachers: The VET Centre has a direct cooperation and partnership development with secondary VET schools, association of VET schools and teachers in development and improvement of VET in Serbia.

International organisations: The VET Centre will have international cooperation in the field of VET (UNESCO, European Training Foundation, National Observatory, GTZ and others). Besides cooperation with various international organisations, the VET Centre will establish partnerships and project cooperation with various international organisations/donors.