8 Education policy

A robust education policy framework is essential for developing human capital and meeting the labour market's need for a skilled and productive labour force. This chapter, composed of four sub-dimensions, assesses the presence and efficacy of education strategies, legislation, programmes and institutions. The first sub-dimension, equitable education for an inclusive society, examines system governance and the quality of pre-university education starting from preschool. The second, teachers, looks at the selection, initial training and ongoing professional development and management of the teaching workforce. The third sub-dimension, school-to-work transition, focuses on VET governance and the labour market relevance and outcomes of higher education. The fourth sub-dimension, skills for green-digital transition, explores the frameworks and initiatives for fostering green and digital skills in education curricula.

Key findings

Kosovo's overall score in education policy remains higher than the WB6 average (Table 8.1) but there was stagnation in the score since the previous *Competitiveness Outlook*. Although there has been marked progress in improving the inclusiveness and quality of education, the relatively weak performance in the area of skills for the green-digital transition, which was assessed for the first time, has kept the score of Kosovo unchanged.

Table 8.1. Kosovo's scores for education policy

Dimension	Sub-dimension	2018 score	2021 score	2024 score	2024 WB6 average
Education	7.1: Equitable education for an inclusive society			3.7	3.3
	7.2: Teachers			3.3	3.1
	7.3: School-to-work transition			3.5	3.4
	7.4: Skills for the green-digital transition			2.3	2.0
Kosovo's overall score		**2.5**	**3.2**	**3.2**	**3.0**

The **key findings** are:

- Kosovo's performance in PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) 2022 has deteriorated compared to PISA 2018 in all three assessed subjects. Furthermore, Kosovo has a notably high proportion of low-performing students, standing at 85% – more than 2.5 times that of the OECD average (31%).

- Since the last assessment cycle, the new Education Strategy 2022-26 has been adopted. It serves as a robust framework that covers all levels of education as well as most areas of education policy, ranging from early childhood education and care (ECEC) to teachers' selection and development to digital skills.

- Although the government of Kosovo has made efforts to enhance its Education Management Information System (EMIS) and establish a centralised digital platform for pre-university education, there remains substantial room to improve the economy's data collection and management. Strengthened collection and analysis of this data could bolster evidence-based policymaking and facilitate better benchmarking with regional and EU counterparts.

- The career development paths for teachers is well-defined by the new "Administrative Instruction on the licensing system and teaching career," passed in 2023. By emphasising strong linkages between teacher performance and promotions, this licensing structure serves to incentivise teachers to continually improve their methods, skills and effectiveness in the classroom.

- The ongoing efforts to restructure the Employment Agency to ensure the proper execution of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan represent a significant advance in Kosovo's endeavours to activate youth not in education, employment or training (NEET), although the NEET rate continues to remain at three times EU levels (32.9% versus 9.9%, respectively).

- There has been some recent progress made in strengthening skills for the digital transition, namely through efforts to adopt the European Digital Competency Framework in its curriculum framework. However, digital skills acquisition among students still remains limited by the inadequate ICT infrastructure in schools.

State of play and key developments

While official statistics on education enrolment rates in Kosovo from international sources are limited, the economy has reported some improvements in enrolment rates in primary education in recent years. For the 2022/23 school year, the gross enrolment rate in primary education reached 100.1%, trailing just one percentage point behind EU levels (Government of Kosovo, 2023[1]; UIS, 2024[2]). Conversely, as education levels advance, this enrolment rate notably declines. For example, gross enrolment rates in lower secondary education – despite increasing by 1.4 percentage points from 2021/22 – were 92.8%. Moreover, enrolment in higher secondary education stood at only 77.9% in the 2022/23 school year, or 30 percentage points lower than the EU average of 109.9%. It is worth noting that the comparability of this data may be limited due to the absence of official data on net enrolment rates.

Kosovo's performance in PISA 2022 was the lowest in the region, and it deteriorated since the last PISA cycle (Figure 8.1). Compared to PISA 2018, Kosovo's score decreased in mathematics, reading and science by 11, 11, and 8 points, respectively. Furthermore, Kosovo's share of students that do not attain the basic level of proficiency in PISA (below Level 2) in mathematics is the highest in the region, at 85% (compared to 66% in the Western Balkans and 31% for the OECD area) (OECD, 2023[3]). In addition, 91% of students at the bottom of the PISA index of economic, social, and cultural status (ESCS) – a tool that enables comparisons between students and schools with different socio-economic profiles[1] – were part of the low performers in PISA 2022 (OECD, 2023[4]).

Figure 8.1. Performance in reading, mathematics and science in Kosovo, the WB6 economies and the OECD (2015-22)

Scoring in mathematics, reading and science is expressed in points
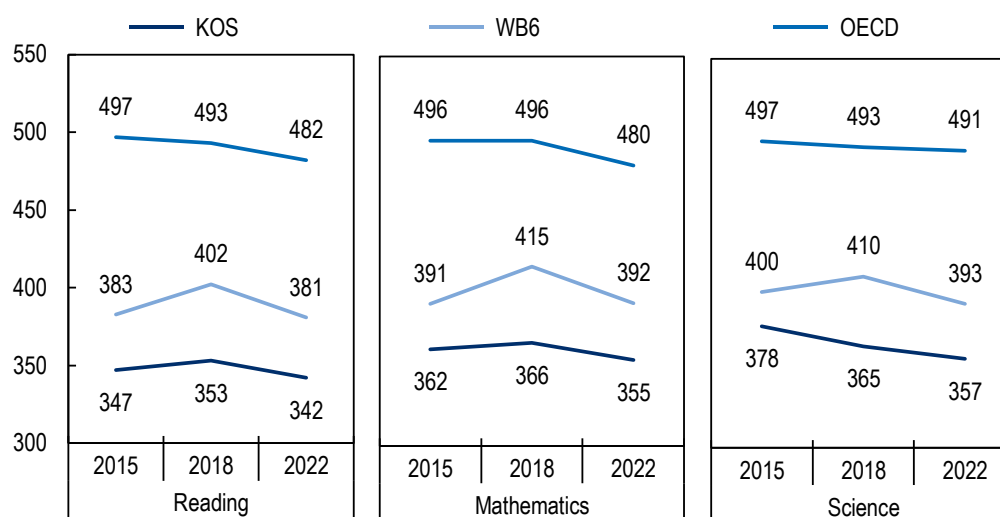
Notes: WB average excludes Bosnia and Herzegovina for PISA 2015 and PISA 2022 and excludes Serbia for PISA 2015. EU average excludes Luxembourg.
Source: OECD (2023[3]).

StatLink https://stat.link/6b598x

Sub-dimension 7.1: Equitable education for an inclusive society

Kosovo's **education system governance** is largely defined by its comprehensive Education Strategy 2022-26, which encompasses all levels of education from early childhood education (ECE) to higher education (Government of Kosovo, 2022[5]). The strategy is accompanied by an Action Plan 2022-26, which outlines the responsibilities and tasks of relevant government institutions to achieve the objectives of the strategy. The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) oversees the development and implementation of these strategic documents. Additionally, the Minister of Education also chairs a Working Group for Monitoring the Education Strategy. Established in March 2023, this group seeks to bring together stakeholders across the government to discuss education policies and reforms.

A crucial aspect of the education system's governance is the use of independent evaluations and research to assess the Education Strategy's effectiveness. MESTI conducts annual evaluations of the strategy's implementation. Currently, an evaluation covering the period from 2022-23 is under way with the support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and is expected to be finalised by mid-2024. Moreover, at the end of each Strategy's validity period (i.e. every four years), MESTI publishes a comprehensive report, detailing progress achieved since the start of the strategy. Apart from these analyses on the central education strategies, there are evaluations completed on specific topics or thematic issues conducted by institutions such as the Kosovo Education Centre or the World Bank.

These evaluations are complemented by systematic data collection efforts. Every year, MESTI publishes a statistical report with information on key indicators on pre-university education. The data included in these reports come from Kosovo's Education Indicators Framework. Developed with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the framework contains nearly 40 indicators on access and participation of students, learning conditions and financial resources (Government of Kosovo, 2018[6]). These indicators are internationally comparable. MESTI uses this information to support evidence-based policy making and consequently enhance the design of future education policies.

Additionally, Kosovo has established a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in alignment with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Aligning the NQF with the EQF facilitates co-operation and mutual recognition of qualifications between Kosovo and the EU, thereby enhancing the mobility and employability of Kosovo's citizens through improved recognition and comparability of their qualifications. The NQF facilitates the collection of data on the types of qualifications, the number of certified students or candidates, and the number of accredited institutions.

There is a strong legislative and strategic framework that sets out clear objectives, an implementation timeline and a budget for **early childhood education and care (ECEC)** as part of the overarching goal to increase inclusion and participation in early childhood educational development services (ISCED 01) and pre-primary education (ISCED 02).[2] The new Law on Early Childhood Education,[3] approved in 2023, mandates the last year of pre-primary education for children aged 5-6 years. This final year will now be part of compulsory education starting from the 2024/25 school year. On a strategic level, the Law aims to promote the comprehensive development of young children by providing the necessary regulatory framework to improve the quality and coverage of education and care services. To realise this objective, the Law outlines measures for strengthening co-ordination between institutions, introducing a new curriculum, improving training of service providers and enhancing systems for inspection and licensing. The Advisory Committee for Early Childhood Education (ACECE) is an advisory body of the Ministry of MESTI, composed of relevant actors in the ECEC field.

Curricular frameworks have been developed covering both early childhood educational development services and pre-primary levels. The new curriculum for ECEC is based around five developmental components for children; its open design allows for the implementation of various pedagogical approaches and methodologies. In February 2023, the curriculum's pilot phase began in 10 municipalities, covering

17 pre-elementary classes across 12 institutions. A total of 184 educational professionals have been trained to support this pilot effort, which is expected to last until the end of the school year.

The qualification of ECEC staff is determined by the "Administrative Instruction on the professional framework of general education," which was revised in 2022. ECEC staff receive continuous training through programmes accredited by MESTI. About 700 pre-primary educators in service in Kosovo have been trained in enriching their classes with practical activities and contemporary methodologies.

To ensure **quality instruction for all**, Kosovo has in place school evaluation processes, comparable information about student learning outcomes, an aligned curriculum and learning standards and measures to support vulnerable students. Funding to support implementation of the Education Strategy 2022-26 is available through the central budget (rather than exclusive reliance on donor support). Data on enrolment, completion and retention rates are collected to monitor quality and equity in the education system, but these data are rarely disaggregated by student background or demographics.

Learning standards for students are defined by the Curriculum Framework and Core Curriculum. These documents outline key competencies by subject and by level of education (from pre-primary through upper secondary school). Additionally, the former sets out a list of indicators for measuring teaching and learning in schools. These are monitored by the school director, municipality and regional inspectors, which are part of the central ministry office. The Strategy and Curriculum Framework cover teaching and learning quality, but there are no set school quality standards. The relevant Municipal Education Directorate (MED) and the school director carry out the internal evaluation of the school, while the Education Inspectorate performs an external evaluation. Both assessments then offer recommendations to the schools for improvement or change based on the findings.

To assess student learning outcomes, Kosovo carries out two central examinations: one at the end of Grade 9 (known as an "achievement test" that impacts students' progression to upper secondary school) and one at the end of Grade 12 (which is the State Matura, which is necessary to pass to continue to tertiary education). Moreover, students from Kosovo participate in numerous international assessments, including PISA, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), the International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS) and the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) study.

Different measures have been undertaken to support the prevention of early school leaving. From a policy perspective, the Education Strategy 2022-26 aims to increase the inclusion and participation of students from diverse groups by creating an encouraging, supportive climate. Additionally, there is support at the school municipality level to empower prevention and response teams in the fight against dropping out and early school leaving. Awareness activities that aim to prevent school dropping out are carried out by the MESTI through its annual "Week against School Drop-out." Furthermore, the MESTI has designed manuals on child protection policy and activities for education inspectors from MEDs. Finally, scholarships and other types of financial support are available to students for whom cost is a barrier to participating in education. For instance, enrolment fees in public ECEC institutions are determined by municipalities based on average income, and children from socio-economically disadvantaged groups are exempt from fees. Similarly, in higher education institutions disadvantaged students or students with special education needs (SEN) are exempted from university payments, including tuition fees, accommodation in dormitories and food.

Sub-dimension 7.2: Teachers

Initial teacher education (ITE) and selection in Kosovo is moderately well developed compared to the rest of the region. ITE programmes are exclusively provided by public universities. Like other higher education programmes, they must receive accreditation from the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA). This accreditation process marks a relative strength of the economy's education system, as the KAA's

implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area helps to ensure a systematic and rigorous approach to quality assurance.

To enter ITE programmes, candidates must submit their secondary school grades alongside the results from both the Matura exam (end of Grade 12) and an entrace exam (for tertiary education). Prospective teachers are required to complete practical teaching experiences as part of their initial teacher education. In their second year of ITE, they must complete two weeks of practice, followed by one month of practice during their third year of ITE and one semester (i.e. three months) during their fourth year. They must also pass a final exam that evaluates their professional practice. Once ITE is completed, candidate teachers must complete a one-year probationary period in a school and pass an evaluation conducted by the school principal in order to be officially contracted by MEDs.

Recruitment of teachers is done by a commission that includes two members of the relevant MED and the school principal. In general, union representatives should observe the work of hiring commissions, although not all municipalities have applied this requirement. Individuals from outside education who wish to enter the profession can participate in pre-qualifying programmes and trainings to fulfil a pedagogical aspect of preparation. Candidate teachers are required to pass an exam after their studies.

Regardless of their pathway into the profession, new teachers can benefit from special professional development programmes provided by MESTI during their first five years. This support is particularly focused on implementation of the curriculum as well as the adoption of new teaching methodologies. Moreover, these teachers can apply for further training or assistance through their MED. However, funding for ITE remains relatively unstable, which can restrict the availability of such programmes to new teachers.

Kosovo's has a fairly comprehensive strategic framework in place guiding **teachers' professional development and management**. The Education Strategy 2022-26 has an overarching objective focused on quality teaching, with a specific goal to enhance opportunities for teachers' professional growth and career progression. Complementing this strategy's high-level objective setting is the "Strategic Framework of Professional Development of Teachers," which defines professional standards for educational staff and outlines pathways for career advancement. Additionally, in 2023, three new administrative instructions were introduced that cover teachers' performance evaluations, professional development and licensing process.[4]

One of these new instructions, "Administrative Instruction on the licensing system and teaching career", specifically outlines the career development paths for teachers in Kosovo and establishes criteria and conditions for licensing. In Kosovo's education system, there are several potential licences: career teacher, advanced teacher, mentor teacher and merit teacher (Box 8.1). Promotions are accompanied by a 10% salary increase. The State Council on Teachers Licensing is responsible for the licensing and advancing teacher careers. Given the strong linkages between teacher performance and licensing, the use of advancement via licences (which also corresponds to increasing responsibilities and competencies) serves as an effective way to incentivise continuous improvements to the quality of teaching.

As stipulated in the administrative instruction guiding the evaluation of teachers' performance, teachers are subject to both internal (self-appraisals) and external assessments (appraisals carried out by school leadership teams[5]). These evaluations, in addition to questionnaires and interviews carried out by school quality co-ordinators, all serve as regular appraisal mechanisms for informing the offering of professional development programmes to teachers.

> **Box 8.1. Kosovo's licensing progression for teachers**
>
> For teachers in Kosovo, there are several types of licences available, depending on their years of experience, number of hours of training, and performance. New teachers receive a temporary licence, with which they must complete 30 hours of basic training and receive a positive evaluation within one year. Afterwards, they are eligible to obtain a regular career licence, which must be renewed every 5 years so long as they complete 100 training hours and a satisfactory performance.
>
> Once a teacher has held a career licence for at least 5 years – and has finished 300 training hours – they can apply for an advanced teacher licence. After an additional 5 years, they then become eligible for the mentor teacher licence, which must be accompanied by 450 training hours and a recommendation from the school's principal. The most advanced licence is the merit teacher licence; teachers who receive this qualification must have held a mentor licence for 10 years and completed 650 hours of training. Moreover, promotions between licence levels at all stages requires a positive performance evaluation. As such, this licence structure in Kosovo provides a very clear pathway for career progression and the professional development for teachers.
>
> Source: Likaj (2016[7]).

Funded by the MESTI, professional development activities range from in-person and online courses or seminars to peer coaching and professional learning networks. The effectiveness of professional development programmes is evaluated by trainers, school committees, school directors and inspectors and by the State Council for Teacher Licensing, which accredits programmes. There are sometimes supplementary professional development programmes related to the implementation of new reforms. Notably, participation in professional development is not mandatory, but remains popular – with between 4 000 and 5 000 teachers participating annually – due to the linkages with promotions (and salary increases).

Sub-dimension 7.3: School-to-work transition

Facilitating the school-to-work transition has proved to be a notable challenge for Kosovo. The economy has the highest rate of youths not in education, employment or training (NEET) of the WB6 economies. In 2022, Kosovo reported a youth NEET rate of 32.9% – more than 12 percentage points above the regional average (20.8%) and 23 points above the EU average (9.9%) (World Bank, 2024[8]).

In Kosovo, the quality assurance of **vocational education and training (VET)** governance is overseen by three central agencies: MESTI, the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE), and the National Qualification Authority (NQA). Additionally, the Council of Vocational Education and Training and for Adults (CVETA) serves as an advisory body to MESTI. While municipalities at the local level are responsible for various VET governance functions, their mandates do not extend to decision making.

The National Development Strategy (2022-30) and the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2022-26 are the two main policy documents that provide essential links and references to VET. Moreover, during 2022, key mechanisms were established to enhance the VET system, including an executive commission at the government level, a task force for the functional governance of the annual action plan, and a second task force for initiating and implementing dual education.

These two task forces notably involve relevant social partners, allowing for increased engagement in decision-making processes. Social partners also actively participate on the boards of the AVETAE and NQA as well as contribute to the development of standards for professions, curricula, and teaching

materials. Three employer representatives (along with employee and government representatives) are members of the CVETA. Such extensive involvement of social partners reflects the government of Kosovo's willingness to strengthen vertical co-operation.

Efforts to address skills demand include surveys and studies conducted by development partners as well as the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. These surveys focus primarily on sectors of high economic interest. MESTI also collects data on the completion and employment rates of VET programmes from both public and private VET schools, publishing a Labour Market Information Report in collaboration with the Kosovo Statistical Office. This report is used to inform policy measures. However, no information is collected on hiring rates after participation in work-based learning or on the average earnings of VET graduates.

VET programmes themselves are defined by clear quality standards and regulations. They must undergo an accreditation process, and VET providers are subject to regular evaluations and inspections. Furthermore, there are mandatory assessments to ensure that VET qualifications are rigorous, transferable and understood by the public. However, the overarching structure of VET governance in Kosovo could be improved. Firstly, there are no incentives for employers to encourage apprenticeships or other forms of work-based learning. Another challenge is the lack of analysis of the effectiveness of the career guidance information provided to students. There is no mechanism for monitoring how these programmes impact students' decisions regarding their education and training pathways.

Kosovo's current education strategy addresses the importance of the **labour market relevance of higher education** (HE). Scholarships are available for Ph.D. students who study abroad at selected top international universities. The Ministry of Education partners with higher education institutions (HEIs) in the majority of their international projects through supporting capacity building and implementing related reforms. Through the ministry, Kosovo's HEIs can participate in programmes such as the Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies (CEEPUS), Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, European Co-Operation in Science and Technology (COST), and the U.S. Fulbright Faculty Development Programme. For most of these initiatives, the ministry co-finances the participation of HEIs. The Law on Higher Education calls for the ministry to promote mobility within the European and International Zone of HE and to encourage the use of the English language for learning alongside the official languages.

Kosovo has an Agency for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, and a National Authority for Qualification. The Ministry of Education publishes decisions on granting licences to institutions. The accreditation agency also publishes decisions on accredited institutions and programmes. Many universities and faculties have set up advisory committees or industrial boards to facilitate collaboration between higher education and businesses (e.g. to update the curriculum or support student internships).

A range of data sources is collected to monitor labour market information, such as employer surveys, surveys of workers or graduates, quantitative forecasting models and sector studies. However, there are no data on employment rates by field of study. The Agency for Statistics, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (through its Labour Market Information System) and the Employment Agency publish data and annual reports on labour market information. Additionally, Kosovo has in place the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), which enables the monitoring of trends in enrolment in HEIs. However, ongoing barriers to data collection and entry in the HEMIS limit the platform's ability to effectively promote evidence-based policymaking by the Ministry of Education (Government of Kosovo, 2022[5]). Indeed, the HEMIS still is not fully integrated or linked with other relevant institutions' platforms or databases, thereby limiting the government's ability to effectively use this information for evidence-based policymaking.

There are a number of mechanisms that help align programmes with labour market demand. For example, most HEIs offer scholarships for students enrolled in in-demand programmes, such as science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM). Additionally, there are communication and awareness campaigns

carried out to provide prospective students with information about available programmes. However, while these tools are used to align higher education programmes with the demands of employers, labour market information is not used to inform curriculum design.

Sub-dimension 7.4: Skills for the green-digital transition

Digital skills development for students is covered in the Education Strategy 2022-26. The strategy includes a separate objective on the digitalisation of education with five specific objectives. These are creating a centralised digital platform for pre-university education, producing high-quality digital teaching materials for different levels, improving IT infrastructure in the education sector, developing digital competencies; and establishing institutional mechanisms for the implementation of digitalisation and technology in education. The strategy includes a detailed Action Plan, with an estimated cost of EUR 51.6 million for the digital strategic objective over the course of five years.

Additionally, MESTI, with the technical assistance of GIZ, is working to adapt the European Digital Competency Framework (DigComp) to reflect the specific context of Kosovo. This involves matching the competencies from DigComp with key competences from the Kosovo Curriculum Framework and developing practical guidelines for their inclusion in the national curriculum. While Kosovo possesses a common curriculum framework covering primary and secondary education, the incorporation of the Digital Competency Framework into ICT curricula is still pending.

Currently, primary and secondary schools are not specifically required to use computers with Internet access, but they must incorporate them to facilitate the ICT curriculum. Moreover, schools are highly encouraged to incorporate ICT into all other subjects and cross-curricular topics, whereas tertiary institutions maintain full autonomy in developing their digital skills curricula. Regulations and guidelines regarding the use of ICT in schools are still under development. Teachers receive some support through the government digital platform[6] and training organised at the municipal level. Beginning in 2023, the government has planned to allocate funding for the employment of 100 ICT specialists to assist schools with the maintenance of ICT equipment. However, there is a prevailing shortage of ICT equipment in schools, which in turn can limit students' ability to cultivate their digital skills. For example, in Kosovo, the average computer-to-student ratio is 1:27.4 – more than 20 times the OECD average (1 computer for every 1.2 students).[7]

Regarding the development of **green skills**, Kosovo is currently developing new guidelines on the integration of EntreComp (the European Entrepreneurship Competency Framework) and GreenComp (the European Sustainability Competency Framework) into VET. Additionally, green competencies that will be incorporated into secondary school curricula will include green knowledge, green skills, green abilities, green attitudes, green behaviour and green awareness. These guidelines also are expected to be revised based on regular evaluation activities. However, because this policy is not officially adopted, there is an ongoing need for a concrete framework guiding students' acquisition of green skills.

Overview of implementation of Competitiveness Outlook 2021 recommendations

Kosovo has made notable progress toward implementing past CO Recommendations for education policy (Table 8.2). Namely, the economy achieved moderate progress in strengthening data collection and evaluation and reporting within the education sector. Similarly, the new Education Strategy (2022-26) emphasises the continued development of teacher policies. However, there is still room for Kosovo to further strengthen its performance by translating these strategic objectives and commitments into new programmes or mechanisms.

Table 8.2. Kosovo's progress on past recommendations for education policy

Competitiveness Outlook 2021 recommendations	Progress status	Level of progress
Strengthen data collection and management across the system	The Education Strategy (2022-26) foresees the creation of a centralised digital platform for pre-university education. This aims at the digitalisation and integration of data and processes in order to improve the quality of services and increase well-informed decision making, transparency and accountability in the field of education. The evaluation of the previous education strategy reports that the framework of indicators, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Statistical Office of the European Union (EUROSTAT) and the OECD, has been completed as foreseen by KESP, and a Guide for calculating public expenditure indicators for pre-university education in Kosovo has been drafted. On the other hand, no measures have been taken to develop procedures for data management and their use.	Moderate
Improve evaluation and reporting on the education system	Following the expiration of the Education Strategy (2017-21), the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-21 was published. Additionally, an interim evaluation on the current Education Strategy (2022-26) covering the period from 2022-23 is expected to be published in mid-2024.	Moderate
Continue to develop and refine teacher policies	In its new Education Strategy (2022-26), Kosovo continues to prioritise teacher policies with the objective of the full implementation of the teacher licensing system and increased opportunities for teachers' professional development (TPD) and advancement based on teaching standards. Through new instructions, Kosovo is trying to adapt TPD based on the priorities and national education policies, the needs of teachers, the results of the evaluation of the performance of teachers, and the teachers' professional development offer.	Moderate

The way forward for education policy

Despite the notable advances made in several areas of education policy, Kosovo still has significant scope to further strengthen its education system. As such, policy makers may wish to:

- **Enhance the quality and equity of education performance in line with findings of international assessments, such as PISA.** Kosovo's weak performance in PISA underscores the importance of improving student learning outcomes and ensuring that they can meet baseline proficiency levels. Improvements to the accessibility and quality of schools' materials and infrastructure as well as to the quality of teaching would likely contribute to enriched student learning. Moreover, Kosovo should continue to participate in these international assessments to monitor its progress.

- **Foster a smoother school-to-work transition by better aligning VET and higher education programmes with labour market needs.** Given the economy's high rate of youth NEET, the government of Kosovo should prioritise ensuring that students in both VET programmes and HEIs benefit from up-to-date curricula that confers relevant skillsets and competencies. With respect to VET, Kosovo should expand its work-based learning opportunities by strengthening co-operation with the private sector and encouraging businesses' participation (such as through financial incentives). To improve the labour market relevance of higher education, the MESTI and universities should start using labour market information to adjust curricula.

- **Continue to strengthen data collection and management.** Kosovo is already strengthening the interoperability of EMIS, but there is a clear need for rigorous, timely and comparable data on the education system. To this end, it is important that Kosovo continues participating in large-scale international surveys that generate valuable comparable data, and establishes protocols for mapping and defining indicators and co-ordinating data collection among public agencies (to avoid

overlap across the government). The education information system in Korea could be a useful example for Kosovo, given the strong linkages across the government (Box 8.2).

Box 8.2. Improving data management: Korea's National Education Information System

The National Education Information System (NEIS) in Korea seeks to centralise and streamline information sharing across a range of stakeholders, including offices for education, schools, teachers and families of students. Currently, the system contains administrative data from an estimated 12 000 schools in addition to 17 metropolitan and regional offices of education. Data on students include their admission and enrolment rates, results from school assessments as well as standardised examinations, and transfer student qualifications. The NEIS also houses information on teachers, including their salaries and participation in professional development training.

To accommodate these different users, there are several distinct interfaces. For example, the interface for parents ("NEIS for parents") differs from that for school leadership and teachers. The NEIS is also linked with the other 15 government agencies in Korea, which not only improves the efficiency of sharing this data but also expands the information available for use by educational institutions or policy makers.

Source: OECD (2023[9]).

- **Continue efforts to adopt a policy framework guiding the development of green skills**. While the ongoing integration of EntreComp and GreenComp into the VET curriculum marks a significant development, Kosovo should also establish policies or guidelines to incorporate skills for the green transition across all education levels (starting in primary school). This initiative should ensure a seamless progression of these skills and competencies as students advance from one educational level to the next.

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Notes

[1] In PISA, students are considered socio-economically advantaged if they are amongst the 25% of students with the highest values in the ESCS index in their country or economy; students are classified as socio-economically disadvantaged if their values in the index are amongst the bottom 25% within their country or economy.

[2] ISCED is the International Standard Classification of Education. For more information see: https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf. For more on ISCED level 0 programmes, please see: https://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/isced-0-early-childhood-education-includes-isced-01-and-isced-02.
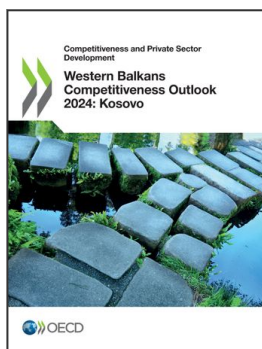
[3] The strategy can be accessed here: https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=79000.

[4] There are three new administrative instructions (2023): Administrative Instruction MESTI No. 14/2023 on the Licensing system and teaching career; Administrative Instruction MESTI No. 15/2023 on evaluation of teachers' performance; and Administrative Instruction MESTI No. 16/2023 on teachers' professional development.

[5] In Kosovo, these teams are established by the school principal and generally consist of either the principal or vice principal, the quality co-ordinator, the head of the professional activity, another teacher, and a psychologist.

[6] See: https://www.shkollat.org.

[7] Data on the computer-to-student ratio in Kosovo were provided by MESTI from its most recent internal reports. The OECD average can be found here: https://gpseducation.oecd.org/IndicatorExplorer?plotter=h5&query=34&indicators=N051.