

Republic of Serbia
YOUTH GUARANTEE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (2023-2026)

FIRST REPORT:
(2023/2024)

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Acronyms

ARDA	Accredited regional development agencies
AEP	Active employment policy
CGC	Career guidance and counselling
CRCSI	Central Register of Compulsory Social Insurance
CSOs	Civil society organisations
DAS	Development Agency of Serbia
ETF	European Training Foundation
IEP	Individual employment plan
IEQE	Institute for Evaluation of the Quality of Education
IIE	Institute for Improvement of Education
ILO	International Labour Organization
Implementation Plan	Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan 2023-2026
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LMIS	Labour market information system
LSGUs	Local self-government units
MoLEVSA	Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs
MoTY	Ministry of Tourism and Youth
NAoYO	National Association of Youth Offices
NAYWP	National Association of Youth Work Practitioners
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NES	National Employment Service
NSCO	National Standard Classification of Occupations
NQFS	National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia
NYCS	National Youth Council of Serbia
ODENQF	Office for Dual Education and National Qualifications Framework
OP	Operational Programme
PUE	Preschool upbringing and education
PFT	Practical forms of teaching
PROAEA	Publicly recognised organisers of adult education activities
PWDs	Persons with disabilities
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
QA	Qualifications Agency
SCTM	Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SORS	Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia
YG	Youth Guarantee
YO	Youth Office

Introduction

The first report on the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan 2023-2026 for 2023 and 2024 is submitted by the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs - Youth Guarantee Coordinator on behalf of the Coordination Body for the Development and Monitoring of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan.

The report is submitted for 2023 when some preparatory work took place, and for 2024 when the piloting of the Youth Guarantee scheme began in three pilot NES branches.

The report was prepared with the active participation of members of the Expert Group of the Coordination Body and other partners in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

As part of the key reforms related to the improvement of regulations in the field of education, labour and employment and youth policy, whose adoption is necessary for the successful completion of the piloting and the beginning of the full implementation of the Youth Guarantee as of 2027, during 2023, amendments to the Law on the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia and the Law on Dual Education were adopted, while activities to improve or to adopt the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance, the Law on Traineeship, the Law on the National Standard Classification of Occupations and the Law on Youth have begun or are planned in the coming period. Additional efforts are needed in order to adopt the planned regulations by the end of 2026.

In terms of strengthening the administrative capacity, primarily of the National Employment Service, as a main implementing partner, during the reporting period seven new youth counsellors were employed in three pilot branches of the National Employment Service. Various training courses for employment counsellors were organized in order to improve the quality of services provided to unemployed persons and employers. Training of the National Employment Service employees should be continuously available activity for all employees who need it.

Additional support towards improving the work process in the National Employment Service, as well as the support to the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, which is responsible for coordinating, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, is ensured through on-going expertise from the International Labour Organization, IPA 2020 project *"Technical assistance for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of employment policies at national and local level and for the strengthening of capacities for participation in the European Social Fund"*, SDC *"Education to Employment - E2E"* project and other donors.

The piloting of the Youth Guarantee started, as it was planned, on the 1st of January 2024 in three previously selected branches of the National Employment Service – Sremska Mitrovica, Kruševac and Niš. These branches are located in the Srem, Rasina and Niš districts and cover 20 local self-government units.

In 2024, In 2024, an influx of 11,396 young people aged 15-29 was recorded in the unemployment records of three pilot branches of the National Employment Service, of whom **8,706 (76.4%) were registered in the Youth Guarantee¹**.

According to the gender structure of young people, similar ratios of men and women were registered (50.1% and 49.9%). According to age categories, the majority of young people is in the age category 25-29 (38.6%), while the least in the age category 15-19 (23.1%). According to the educational structure, the majority of young people has secondary education (62.5%), followed by those with higher education (25.8%), while the least number is of those with no or low level of qualification (11.7%).

The total number of young people exiting the Youth Guarantee was 4,929, out of whom 3,741 young people (76%) had a positive exit (employment or continued education and training), while 1,188 (24%) had a negative exit.

Out of the total number of young people with a positive exit (3,741), the majority found employment (83%), while 17% of the young people continued education or training.

¹ Section 2.3.2.1 presents the number of young people registered as unemployed and the number of young people registered in the YG, as well as the explanation and reasons for the difference in data.

Positive, timely exit within four months of registering in the Youth Guarantee was recorded for 3,265 young people (76.7%). Negative exit within four months was recorded for 991 young people (23.3%).

Key results Youth Guarantee implementation in NES pilot branches – 2024

EMCO monitoring framework	Results
Number of youth included in YG	8,706
Average state	2,087
Number of youth who exited YG	4,929
Positive exit	3,741
Number of youth who exited YG within 4 months	4,256
Positive, timely exit within 4 months	3,265
Main indicator: Share of average number of youth remained in the preparatory phase of YG after 4 months	17.4%
Main indicator: Share of average number of youth remained in the preparatory phase of YG after 6 months	7.3%
Additional indicator: Share of number of youth exiting YG with a known positive exit within 4 months in the total number of YG exits	66.2%

Some challenges, in the reporting period, related to the longer period of preparatory activities for starting outreach activities toward inactive young people, which was overcome in early 2025, so that outreach activities began in 2025.

In 2024, sufficient financial resources were provided from various sources of funding, so that public calls of the National Employment Service for the implementation of active employment policy measures for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee were available almost throughout the year.

For certain active employment policy measures, that were implemented on a smaller scale than planned, the reasons for weaker implementation were examined, so new public calls for the implementation of measures with better defined target groups of young people were announced in early 2025.

However, short training courses as well as labour market training and mentoring services for young people who were granted a self-employment subsidy were not implemented as planned in 2024, mainly due to the longer-than-expected duration of the public procurement procedure, but in the end, the procedures were successfully completed and these measures and services were available to young people in early 2025. One of the identified challenges in the first year of piloting is the insufficient number of publicly recognised organisers of adult education activities (PROAEA) as well as accredited training programs that are in line with the needs of the labour market and their regional availability, but additional activities of the education sector in this direction are expected within the framework of the IPA 2020 project "Increased supply and diversification of accredited training in the field of non-formal education and adult education training providers", which started implementation.

Statistical profiling and online (pre)registration of young people were not introduced in 2024. However, the National Employment Service worked on these activities during 2024, so their launch is expected in 2025. In order to prepare the report, all necessary data were provided and data exchange between authorities and institutions was organized. Activities of relevant authorities on the topic of interoperability of various databases continued at the beginning of January 2025 and perception of opportunities for providing automatic, real-time reporting on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

1. Young people who are not employed, in education or training: An Overview

Positive and resilient economic growth of the Republic of Serbia, in the last decade, led to significant improvement of the overall labour market situation.

In less than a decade (2014-2023) activity rate for working age population (15-64) increased (from 63% in 2014 to 71.7% in 2023), employment rate increased (from 49.7% to 64.7%), while unemployment rate decreased by double (from 21% in 2014 to 9.7% in 2023). Positive trend in the labour market was under high influence of the demographic changes, low birth rate and emigration. In the last few years, the Republic of Serbia is faced with lack of labour force, especially in the information technology sector (IT).

In 2024, positive trend of economy indicators continued and stability of labour market was maintained. Total economic activity in the Republic of Serbia in 2024, measured by real movement of gross domestic product (GDP) recorded an increase by 3.9%, compared to 2023.

According to the data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia from the **Labour Force Survey** for 2024², the employment rate (for age group 15+) in 2024 was 51.4% which represents an increase by 1.2 p.p. compared to 2023. The Unemployment rate, as well as the rate of the population outside the labour force recorded a decrease by 0.8 p.p., leading to an unemployment rate which was 8.6%, while the rate of the population outside the labour force was 43.8%.

In the age group 15-64, the employment rate was 66.3% (1.6 p.p. higher than in 2023), unemployment rate was 8.9% (year-on-year decrease by 0.8 p.p. compared to 2023), while the rate of the population outside the labour force was 27.3% (1 p.p. less than compared to 2023).

Values of the main labour market indicators for **age group 15-29** in 2024 were: employment rate 41.3% (year-on-year increase by 1.1 p.p.), unemployment rate 16.8% (year-on-year decrease by 1.7 p.p.) and the rate of the population outside the labour force 50.3% (year-on-year decrease by 0.4 p.p.).

The share of unemployed 15-29 in the total number of persons in this age group was 8.4% (year-on-year decrease by 0.7 p.p.), while 9.4% was the share of men and 7.3% the share of women. The ratio of unemployed youth 15-29 to unemployed adults 30-64 was 1.4, while the ratio of the unemployment rate of young people 15-29 to the unemployment rate of adults 30-64 was 2.3.

The gender gap in the age category 15-29 was 10.8 p.p. for the employment rate (46.6% men, 35.8% women), 0.1 p.p. for the unemployment rate (16.8% men, 16.9% women) and 12.9 p.p. for the rate of the population outside the labour force (44% men, 56.9% women).

If we analyse the age subcategories 15-24 and 25-29, large differences in the labour market indicators of these two groups can be seen.

The employment rate for the age group 15-24 was 24.9% (compared to 2023, increased by 1 p.p.) and for 25-29 it is 72.2% (increased by 2 p.p.). The unemployment rate for the age group 15-24 was 23% (decreased by 2 p.p.), while for 25-29 this rate was 12.3% (year-on-year decrease by 1.5 p.p.). Rate of the population outside the labour force for the age group 15-24 was 67.6% (year-on-year decrease by 0.5 p.p.) while for age group 25-29 was 17.7% (decreased by 0.8 p.p. compared to 2023).

If we analyse the basic labour market indicators for 2024 for the pilot branches, namely the Nišava, Rasina and Srem regions, it can be noted that the employment rate of young people 15-29 was the highest in the Srem region, where it was 42.3% (higher than the national average), followed by the Niš region with an employment rate of 40.6% and the Rasina region with 38%. Furthermore, the unemployment rate was the lowest in the Niš region, i.e. 13.7%, followed by the Srem region with an unemployment rate of 16.9% and the Rasina region with 18.8%. The rate of the population outside the labour force was the lowest in the Srem region - 49% (lower than the national average), followed by the Niš region with a rate of 52.9% and the Rasina region with 53.2%.

² Data from LFS for 2024 (in which YG piloting started) cannot be compared to data for 2020 that are given in YG Implementation Plan, because in 2021 a LFS methodology changed, while in 2022 a Population Census was conducted. Therefore, the SORS did the revision only for main labour market indicators from 2011 onwards, while the other data were revised from 2021 onwards and in that year there is a break in time series. That is the reason why in the Report, the basic year is 2023 and the data from 2024 are compared to the data from LFS for 2023.

The NEET rate³ in 2024 was 14.9% and, compared to the previous year, decreased by 0.3 p.p.

The NEET rate for the age category 25-29 in 2024 was 18.7% (decreased by 1.7 p.p. compared to 2023), while this rate for age group 15-24 was 12.9% (decreased by 0.5 p.p. compared to 2023).

If we compare the NEET rate per different age groups (25-29 and 15-24), data show that the NEET rate is higher by 5.8 p.p. for age group 25-29.

In the structure of the NEET age group 15-29, it is observed that out of a total of 153.100 persons, 79.400 were outside the labour force, while 73.700 were unemployed NEETs. The number of persons in NEET status was lower than in 2023 by 4.900 persons, while the significant decrease was recorded in the number of NEETs outside labour force (by 4.300 persons).

Also in the structure of the NEET rate, the share of young people outside the labour force was higher compared to unemployed NEETs, in all age groups:

- for 15-29 - 7.2% unemployed and 7.7% outside labour force;
- for 15-24 - 6.3% unemployed and 6.6% outside labour force; and
- for 25-29 - 8.8% unemployed and 9.9% outside labour force.

The NEET rate for women aged 15-29 was 16%, and for men of the same age group, it was 13.8%, so the gender gap in the NEET rate was 2.2 p.p.

Analysing the data on the structure of the NEET population, it can be concluded that more women were outside the labour force (9.9% out of 16%) while the majority of NEET women did not want to work (7.4% out of 9.9%).

The NEET rate for women aged 25-29 was higher than the NEET rate for men of the same age group by 7.4 p.p., while for the age category 15-24, the NEET rate for men was higher by 0.5 p.p. In the age group 15-24, the NEET rate for men was 13.1% (out of which the majority were unemployed - 7.8%), and for women, it was 12.6% (out of which the majority were outside the labour force - 7.9%).

The NEET rate for women aged 25-29 was 22.5% (out of which 13.5% were outside the labour force), and for men 15.1% (out of which 8.8% were unemployed). Almost half of NEET women who were in the age group 25-29 did not want to work (10.2% out of 22.5%), while, at the same time, less than one third of men did not want to work (4% out of 15.1%).

In the age group 25-29 out of a total of 66,500 NEETs, 39,100 were women, of whom 23,600 were outside the labour force. Around 17,800 of NEET women of this age group did not want to work and they would not be possible to be covered with outreach activities, when they start with implementation in the Republic of Serbia.

Unemployed NEETs consisted of total 31,400 persons, 15,900 men and 15,500 women. In the age group 15-24 out of a total of 86,500 NEETs, men were the majority – 45,200 persons, and the majority of them were in the unemployed NEET category – 26,800 persons.

If we analyse age structure of NEET categories, in the year-on-year period, positive trends were recorded for the age group 25-29, but at the same time, worsening of indicators for the age group 15-24 was recorded. Also, a decrease in gender gaps in the structure of NEET in the year-on-year period can be seen.

³ The NEET rate is the participation of persons aged 15-29 who are not employed (unemployed or are outside the labour force), not in education or training, in the total population of a given age.

Table 1. Aggregate macroeconomic indicators for monitoring of Youth Guarantee

Indicator		15-29		
		Men	Women	Total
Main	NEET rate(%)	13.8	16	14.9
	<i>Unemployed (%)</i>	8.1	6.2	7.2
	<i>Outside the labour force (%)</i>	5.7	9.9	7.7
Labour market	Youth employment rate (%)	46.6	35.8	41.3
	Youth unemployment share(%)	9.4	7.3	8.4
	Youth unemployment rate (%)	16.8	16.9	16.8
	Ratio of share of unemployed youth (15-29) compared to share of unemployed adults (30-64)			1.4
	Ratio of unemployment rate of youth and adults (age groups 15-29 and 30-64)			2.3
Education	Young people (20-29) with at least ISCED 3, %	92.6	92.9	92.7
	Employment rate of recent graduates (20-34), %	75.6	70.3	73.1
	Share of young people aged 20-29 with ISCED 0-2, %	7.4	7.1	7.3
	Share of young people aged 30-34 with ISCED 5-8, %	32.3	48	40
	Early education/training leavers (18-24), %	6.8	5.7	6.2

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

In the 15-24 age group, women's participation in formal education was higher than men's participation, so the NEET rate for women was lower. However, after completing their education (when they move into the 25-29 age group), women often leave the workforce due to family responsibilities and caring for household members, so they are more likely to enter the NEET category than men.

If we analyse education indicators from the LFS 2024, the following is observed:

- The percentage of the population aged 20-29 with at least upper secondary education (ISCED level 3 and higher) in the total population of the same age category was 92.7% (92.6% for men and 92.9% for women).
- The employment rate of persons (20-34) who had recently completed education and who were employed one to three years after completing at least upper secondary education in the total population of employed of the same age category that finished education one to three years, regardless of the level of education obtained, was 73.1% (75.6% for men and 70.3% for women).
- The share of persons aged 20-29 with education at ISCED level 0-2 in the total population of the same age category was 7.3% (7.4% for men and 7.1% for women).
- The share of people aged 30-34 with education at ISCED level 5-8 in the total population of the same age group was 40% (32.3% for men and 48% for women).

The early school drop-out rate⁴ was 6.2% in 2024 (6.8 for men and 5.7 for women).

⁴ The early school drop-out rate represents the percentage of young people aged 18-24 who have completed at most primary school and have not continued their education (have not been in education or training in the last four weeks).

2. Implementation of the Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan for the period from 2023 to 2026⁵ (hereinafter: the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan) was developed based on the results of the mapping of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), a review of existing policies and conducted consultation process within the Coordination Body for the Development and Monitoring of the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan.⁶

The planned reforms and interventions are grouped in four Youth Guarantee phases: i) mapping and early intervention; ii) outreach to inactive young people; iii) preparation; and iv) supply, and the transversal drivers needed for the effective implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

During the first year of implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, activities on amending the regulatory framework started, as well as activities toward strengthening the capacity of competent authorities and identified partners at national and local level, primarily the capacity of the National Employment Service as the main implementing partner and entry point of the Youth Guarantee and activities linked to establishment of the Youth Guarantee monitoring framework.

Given the complexity of the planned key reforms, especially those related to improving the regulatory framework in the areas of education, labour and employment and youth policy, these reforms will continue to be implemented until the end of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan validity period.

The piloting of the Youth Guarantee began in January 2024 in the territories of three branches of the National Employment Service: Niš, Kruševac and Sremska Mitrovica, i.e. in the territories of three districts (Niš, Rasina and Srem), which cover 20 local self-government units.

Overview of the progress achieved and challenges in the implementation of key reforms and planned interventions by phases, is given in the continuation of the report.

2.1. Phases

2.1.1. Mapping and Early Intervention

The key reforms planned within this phase are related to the improvement of regulations in the field of education, development of career guidance and counselling system, and establishment of legislative and institutional framework for the further development of the National Standard Classification of Occupations.

In the field of education, the Law on Amendments to the Law on the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia (NQF)⁷ and the Law on Amendments to the Law on Dual Education⁸ were adopted in September 2023.

In order to enhance the quality and efficiency of vocational education, during the reporting period, activities toward the **development of market relevant qualification standards** and based on them new or improved education or training curricula continued. By the end of 2024, **NQF Register** was consisted of 4.741 qualifications, out of which 139 with qualification standard developed in line with the new methodology for the development of qualification standards.

Having in mind that gaining of qualifications is also possible through non-formal education, as well as through the recognition of prior learning (RPL), which is of a key importance for young people that are not part of the formal education system and are lacking appropriate qualifications, skills and knowledge needed for the labour market integration, during reporting period, activities focused on improvement of the training programs offer, their alignment with labour market needs, as well as their availability throughout regions continued. During the reporting period, the number of accredited PROAEAs increased from 148 to 182, while the number of accredited training programs increased from 611 to 839.

⁵ Official Gazette of RS, No.120/23

⁶ <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/odluka/2022/4/5/reg>

⁷ Official Gazette of RS, No.76/23

⁸ Official Gazette of RS, No.76/23

Regarding RPL, the process was gradually introduced in different sectors, focusing on the increase of the number of RPL providers. This enables wider approach toward persons that are seeking for the formal recognition of their non-formal or informal education. Efforts toward establishment of the RPL framework are supported by the development of guidelines, manuals and tools for assessment of the prior learning outcomes, but no significant increase in the number of accredited institutions was recorded during reporting period (from 5 to 7 institutions that are implementing RPL for 11 different qualifications, covering 72 occupations in total).

Since the expansion of the education and training offers of adults school provide to the National Employment Service a wider spectre of quality offers for continued education and training, additional activities in this respect are planned within IPA 2020 *project "Increased supply and diversification of accredited training in the field of non-formal education and adult education training providers"*, which is being implemented.

During reporting period, special attention was given to the development of the market relevant **dual education programmes**, enhancement of the quality and increase of the coverage of work-based learning, simplifying employers accreditation procedure and establishment of regulatory frame for the financial support for pupils/students and employers within the dual education system, in line with available funds in the budget of the Republic of Serbia. Greater availability of work-based learning in secondary and tertiary education, should provide improved employability of young people and ease their transition from world of education to work. In secondary schools, 9,546 pupils are participating in dual education, while 674 higher education students are in the dual model.

Regarding the early intervention reform, which refers to the development of **career guidance and counselling system**, as a system of services that are supporting young people in the process of education selection in relation to occupation that they would like to perform and further career development, activities toward improvement of CGC system continued. During 2023, evaluation of CGC services available in the education, employment and youth sector was conducted, while during 2024 the Proposal of enhanced standards of CGC services was prepared, along with the career practitioners competences. CGC standards are of an importance for the establishment of a unified CGC quality system. In order to facilitate their usage by all CGC service providers, the knowledge in this area for employees in schools participating in CGC teams, as well as employees in the National Employment Service, private employment agencies, civil society organizations etc. providing these services, should be increased.

During the reporting period, several documents, analyses and tools were developed, on the basis of which, during 2024 Working group for the enhancement of CGC services prepared a professional guide for CGC teams in secondary schools. The consultation process for the purpose of establishing a special Working group for the **development of CGC Portal** started and analyses were conducted as the basis for further work on Portal development.

In 2023 and 2024, the **Ministry of Tourism and Youth**, through public calls, supported several civil society organizations in implementation of activities in the field of CGC, which enabled significant involvement of young people in CGC services and the development of digital competences.

The **development of the National Standard Classification of Occupations (NSCO)**, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, is also recognized as an early intervention reform. In the previous period, MoLEVSA has intensified its activities on the development of the NSCO, with the comprehensive and continuous support of the SDC *"Education to Employment - E2E"* project. In the reporting period, the translation of the descriptions of the definitions of ISCO-08 classification units was harmonized with the Occupation Codebook and local circumstances, and the second cycle of testing of the Proposal of the Methodology for the Development of Occupational Standards was carried out through the development of standards for 23 occupations, including proposals for standards for the occupations **Career Counsellor, Career Guidance and Counselling Expert** and **Employment Counsellor**. Two-minute video materials were also developed for the occupations CNC operator, locksmith, head chef and hotel front desk clerk. The revision of the Proposal of the Methodology is on-going, based on the results and experiences gained through two testing cycles. For the purpose of the NSCO development, as well as to ensure the participation of all stakeholders, a new Working Group for the development of NSCO was established.

Within the framework of the reform processes, amendments to the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance are foreseen by the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan for the period 2023-2026, stating the key objectives of these amendments, which include, among other things, the standardization of the NSCO. Regarding its importance within the framework of employment policy, the full implementation of the results achieved so far, and for the purpose of further development, it was decided to regulate this area by a separate **Law on the National Standard Classification of Occupations**. The purpose of passing the Law on the NSCO is legal regulation and formalization of this

area and establishment of a stable institutional frame. The selection of consultants for the preparation of an *ex ante* analysis of this regulation in accordance with the Law on the Planning System is on-going. The planned deadline for the preparation of the Draft Law on the NSCO is the second quarter of 2026.

The Statistical Mapping of NEET Youth in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2021-2024 is in progress, with the support of the International Labour Organization. The identification and assessment of the needs of young NEETs who, despite being registered with the NES as unemployed, are excluded from the labour market, implies improved individualized support for young people, which is additionally supported by the implementation of specially designed support measures. The essence of improved support means fully individualized approach in working with the person, which should be achieved through quality profiling and, in accordance with the results obtained, by intensifying contacts with the person. In this regard, deadlines that entail more intensive and frequent contacts with the counsellor from the moment the person registers, depending on the assessed needs, have been defined. Through guidelines and instructions for the work of the National Employment Service, an additional motivation-related tool/instrument was introduced. In order to examine the reasons for youth inactivity, with the support of the European Training Foundation, focus groups were held with inactive young people, with representatives of authorities and institutions, as well as with representatives of civil society organizations in early 2025. In 2025, with the support of the IPA 2020 project *"Technical assistance for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of employment policies at national and local level and for the strengthening of capacities for participation in the European Social Fund"*, an additional analysis of NEET youth registered with the National Employment Service who are distant from the labour market will be conducted, as well as in-depth interviews with young people, in order to gain a more detailed insight into the obstacles they face during activation.

In partnership with UN Women, the **Study on Reconciling Work and Family Life of Young Women who are not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)** was conducted, which allows understanding of the factors that hinder the (re)entry of young women into the labour market, as well as the extent to which family responsibilities affect employment prospects. The document represented a good analytical basis for the development of the Action Plan for the period 2024-2026 for the implementation of the Employment Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 201-2026⁹. Thus, during the planning of measure 2.4: *Improving the labour market position of women*, activity 2.4.3: *Piloting the provision of additional support services to women included in ALMP measures or employed through the mediation of the National Employment Service* (e.g. individualized support, childcare allowance, etc.) was defined.

At the end of 2023, the first phase of mapping services and available support for young people at the local level was completed with a focus on local self-governments in which the Youth Guarantee was being piloted, within the IPA 2020 project *"Technical assistance for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of employment policies at national and local level and for the strengthening of capacities for participation in the European Social Fund"*. The mapping included providers of employment-related services (outreach, activation, job search assistance, CGC, training, etc.), early childhood education services and mentoring for persons to whom self-employment subsidy was granted. Since that outreach activities to young NEETs that are outside the system, will start in 2025, it is planned to organize an exchange of experiences and examples of good practice between civil society organizations, local self-governments and other stakeholders at the local level at the end of the first year of implementation of outreach activities. Also, in order to determine existing and missing capacities and services at the local level, as well as to plan further interventions, the second phase of mapping will be carried out within the framework of the aforementioned project in the territory of the entire Republic of Serbia.

TABLE 2.1.1: KEY REFORMS AND INITIATIVES – MAPPING AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Name of the reform/initiative	Key objective(s)	Target group, including number of people covered (if available)	Name and role of organisation in the lead and cooperating partners	Timetable for implementation	Implementation cost, if applicable, and source of funding	Progress 2023-2024
Planned reforms						
Amendments to relevant laws and by-laws in the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop the NQFS system Introduce the option of acquiring partial qualifications and improve the ways of 	Pupils Students Young NEETs	Ministry of Education ODENQF	2023-2026	RSD 13,200,000.00 Source: SDC project "Support for the reform	The Law on Amendments to the Law on NQFS ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 76/2023) has been adopted.

⁹ Official Gazette of RS, No. 22/24.

of education	<p>including key competences into standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop market relevant qualification standards and teaching and learning programmes based on them and training programs • Improve PFT in secondary vocational education • Further improve the implementation of dual education in secondary education and further development of the dual study model • Improve the accreditation of training programmes in non-formal education and the RPL procedure and increase the number of issued accreditations • Improve the strategic and normative framework for the services of CGC 	Youth Adults	QA Social partners		<p>of the dual system of secondary vocational education and the National Framework of Qualifications in the light of lifelong learning in Serbia”</p> <p>RSD 18,000,000.00 Source: IPA 2020* (Ministry of Education)</p>	<p>A comparative study of different models of including (partial) qualifications obtained outside of formal education in the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia was conducted and legal options for improvement of the NQFS were proposed.</p> <p>4,741 qualifications were entered into the NQFS Registry. Qualification standards were developed for 139 qualifications. In 2023, 30 qualification standards, while in 2024 additional 21 qualification standards were developed.</p> <p>Activities related to adoption of 60 qualification standards in tertiary education by 2027, planned within Growth Plan, started.</p> <p>Activities related to standardizing practical forms of teaching (PFT) in school and companies were implemented.</p> <p>Amendments to the Law on Dual Education enabled a significant increase of the hours spent in work-based learning, as well as simplifying procedure for including employers in dual education.</p> <p>Amendments to the Law on NQFS have simplified and precisely identified the PROAEA accreditation and RPL procedures.</p> <p>The preparation of amendments to the by-laws related to the Law on Amendments to the Law on NQFS was initiated, where the said by-laws should improve CGC standards, including the competences of career practitioners.</p>
Development of the career guidance and counselling (CGC) system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure availability and quality of CGC services in the system of education, employment and the youth sector and their compliance 	Pupils Students Persons looking for employment	Ministry of Education (lead) MoLEVSA MoTY	2023 - 2026	RSD 3,400,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (Ministry of Education)	The Working Group for improvement of CGC services has produced the proposal of Professional instruction for CGC Teams in secondary schools.

	<p>with CGC standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the capacities of CGC service providers • Develop a Portal for CGC and a digital system for monitoring the implementation of CGC services and monitoring the implementation of CGC standards • Improve/revise CGC standards • Develop occupation standards relevant for CGC area • Ensure interoperability • Digitalise the services of the CGC 	Young NEETs	QA ODENQF NES CSOs		<p>RSD 7,000,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoTY)</p> <p>RSD 12,000,000.00 Source: IPA 2020* (Ministry of Education)</p> <p>RSD 3,600,000.00 – 2023 Source: SDC - “Education to employment-E2E” Project</p> <p>RSD 2,768,000.00 – 2023 The Youth Alliance of the Association 'Novi Sad Youth Capital of Europe – OPENS</p> <p>RSD 24,000,000.00 Financial gap for the CGC Portal**</p>	<p>By the end of 2024, 17 schools or other organizations have been accredited to provide 19 CGC programmes and services.</p> <p>With support of SDC project “Education to employment-E2E”, CGC services were, during 2023 provided by 10 CSOs, while in 2024 by 13. Two trainings on CGC standards were organized for 17 employment counsellors from private employment agencies. Manual for career practitioners – CGC standards was developed.</p> <p>21 NES employment counsellors from 3 pilot branch offices have participated in CGC training.</p> <p>During 2024, CGC services to young people were provided by the OPENS Youth Centre.</p> <p>The Working Group for the Development of CGC Portal is being established.</p> <p>The evaluation of CGC programmes and services in the education, employment and youth sectors has been implemented, and a Proposal of Improved CGC services standard has been prepared, along with career practitioners competences.</p> <p>The evaluation of the implementation of CGC programmes and services in the dual education system at all NQFS levels has been initiated, and it will form a basis for the drafting of a proposal for their improvement.</p> <p>The proposal of occupation standards for Career Counsellor, Career Guidance and Counselling Expert and Employment Counsellor have been produced.</p> <p>Career practitioners from the local Job info centres, within the „Education to</p>
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						<p>Employment-E2E” project, have established cooperation with the schools in their regions project and supported the work of CGC school teams, and enabled the usage of developed CGC tools.</p> <p>In the framework of the Education to Employment-E2E project, career practitioners in Job Info Centres, provide CGC services and use different digital assessment tests.</p> <p>NES is working on the digitization of CGC services. A questionnaire for self-assessment of professional interests has been prepared. With the GIZ technical support, in progress is the development of an appropriate web-application which will be uploaded on the NES website. Questionnaires for self-assessment of soft skills are being developed which will be transformed into a web app on NES website.</p>
Establishment of a legislative and institutional framework for the further development of the NSCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop standards for as many occupations as possible • Collect the necessary information about occupations in order to provide quality services of CGC and mediation in employment • Connection of the NQFS and NSCO systems and the development of qualification standards based on occupational standards 	Pupils Students Persons looking for employment Young NEETs Adults	MoLEVSA (lead) NES QA Social partners SDC – “Education to employment-E2E” Project	2023-2026	<p>Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia - current costs of employees</p> <p>RSD 6,000,000.00 - 2023</p> <p>Source: SDC - “Education to employment-E2E” Project</p>	<p>Proposals for 23 occupation standards were prepared in the reporting period.</p> <p>In total, 33 proposal occupation standards were prepared, based on the results of two cycles of piloting the Methodology for the development of occupation standards. The translation of the description of definitions classification units ISCO-08 was aligned with the Occupation Codes in RS and local circumstances.</p> <p>The planned deadline for the development of the Draft Law on NSCO is the second quarter of 2026.</p>
Planned initiatives (measures)						
Mapping of young NEETs 2021/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the structure of young NEETs and compare the obtained results with previous mapping in order to examine trends • Collect information on the relationship between education and employment and 	Young NEETs	MoLEVSA (lead) ILO SORS NES CRCSI	2023	Source: Technical support EC-ILO	Statistical mapping of NEET youth for the period 2021-2024 is in progress.

	youth exposure to discouragement, poverty and underutilised skills by including additional data sources from administrative records.		Ministry of Education			
Identification of young NEETs who are on the NES registry, but are distant from the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify young people who, despite being on the NES registry as unemployed, are excluded from the labour market (identification and assessment of needs) Collect the necessary data to create dedicated support for youth excluded from the labour market based on individual needs (outreach, support and preparation) 	Young NEETs registered with NES, but are distant from the labour market	NES	2025-2026	Source: Financial plan of NES - current costs of employees	<p>Focus groups were held with inactive youth, with representatives of authorities and institutions, as well as with representatives of CSOs, with the support of the ETF.</p> <p>An additional analysis of NEET youth registered by the NES who are distant from the labour market will be carried out, as well as in-depth interviews with young people, with the support of the IPA 2020 technical assistance project.</p>
Research on reconciliation of work and family life of young NEET women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify factors that hinder the (re)entry of young women into the labour market and assess the extent to which family obligations affect employment prospects Prepare the analytical basis needed for the development of policies and measures aimed at the activation and employment of young women with family responsibilities 	Young NEET women	MoLEVSA (lead) UN Women	2023	Source: UN Women Project "Support to Priority Actions for Gender Equality in Serbia II"	<p>Study on Reconciling Work and Family Life of Young Women who are not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) was conducted, in cooperation with UN Women.</p> <p>The findings served as a basis for drafting of the Action Plan for period 2024-2026 for the implementation of the Employment Strategy.</p>
Mapping services and available support for young people at the local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect necessary information for the introduction of the YG Facilitate the exchange of experiences and examples of good practice between local self-government units and other actors at the local level 	LSGUs Young NEETs	MoLEVSA MoTY NYCS NAYWP NAoYO CSOs SCTM	2023 – First phase 2025 – Second phase	Source: IPA 2020 – Technical support (MoLEVSA and NES)	In late 2023, the first phase of mapping of services and support available to young people at local level has been completed, with a special focus on the local self-governments where YG is being piloted.
Expansion of dual education coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable secondary vocational school students and higher education students to learn through work in a real work environment and acquire the soft skills needed to work for an employer Increase the number of educational institutions in the system of dual education and upbringing. Improve cooperation with the private sector and strengthen the capacities of employers for inclusion in dual education Increase youth employability 	Pupils (increase in the participation of pupils enrolled in the first year in the dual education system in relation to the total number of students enrolled in the first year of secondary	Ministry of Education ODENQF	2023-2026	<p>RSD 40,000,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (ODENQF)</p> <p>RSD 19,416,000.00 Source: SDC project "Support for the reform of the dual system of secondary vocational education and the National Framework of Qualifications in the light of lifelong learning</p>	<p>Competitions for financial support for 1,400 pupils in dual education system have been implemented.</p> <p>The dual education system at secondary education level includes 206 schools, 1110 companies and 86 dual education profiles. Dual education system at tertiary education level includes 13 faculties and 54 study programs. In secondary schools 9.546 pupils were under dual education, while in tertiary dual education 674 students.</p> <p>Ministry of Economy in cooperation with</p>

		vocational education of 12%) 850 higher education students			in Serbia"	ODENQF has implemented a Competition for capacity building of employers included in dual. 113 employers received grants. The Framework for Monitoring and Valuing of Dual Education was developed, and additional standards and indicators of dual education quality were recognized, as well as the entire vocational education system.
Expanding the offer of non-formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills through the system of non-formal education in order to enter the labour market competitively • Accredite additional 300 market relevant training programmes (PROAEA) • Establish 14 regional training centres • Develop 30 new short study programmes at universities • Improve the regional availability of training programmes 	Young NEETs Adults	Ministry of Education QA ODENQF IIE IEQE	2023-2026	<p>RSD 1,184,000,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (ODENQF)</p> <p>RSD 24,000,000.00 Source: IPA 2020* (Ministry of Education)</p> <p>RSD 60,000,000.00 Financial gap to support the development of training centres**</p>	<p>By the end of 2024, a total of 182 PROAEA and 839 programmes were accredited.</p> <p>Training centres in the Technical school in Valjevo and Airforce Academy in Belgrade and Vršac were established.</p> <p>If we look at regional distribution of PROAEAs, the Belgrade region is represented with 44.1%, the Vojvodina region with 23.2%, the Šumadija and Western Serbia region with 21.4% and the Southern and Eastern Serbia region with 11.3%</p> <p>Concerning regional distribution of accredited training programmes, the Belgrade region is represented with 44.5%, the Vojvodina region with 16.6%, the Šumadija and Western Serbia region with 24.4% and the Southern and Eastern Serbia region with 14.5%.</p>
Implementation and continuous improvement of the RPL procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable knowledge and skills acquired outside the education system to be recognised by obtaining a (public) document and thus recognisable on the market, which will facilitate employment • Introduce 30 new programmes into the RPL procedure • Train career counsellors to recognise persons who could be included in RPL 	Young NEETs Adults	Ministry of Education QA ODENQF IIE	2023-2026	<p>RSD 66,720,000.00 Source: IPA 2020* (Ministry of Education)</p>	<p>The Working group for further improvement of RPL process was established.</p> <p>Consultations are on-going in relation to the produced Proposal of improved standard of CGC services which contains RPL elements, and which is expected to be finalized in the first quarter of 2025.</p> <p>The RPL process is being implemented by 7 accredited institutions, offering the</p>

						recognition of 11 different qualifications, covering a total of 72 occupations.
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2.1.2. Outreach

The key reforms planned under this phase relate to the improvement of the legislative framework in the area of youth policy and the development of the Model for outreach and activation of young NEETs that are outside of the system.

When it comes to youth policy, the **new Law on Youth** should recognize the concept of outreach in the youth sector and ensure sustainable financing of youth outreach activities. In 2023, analyses of the existing Law on Youth were performed and a first draft of the new Law was prepared. In 2024, the Ministry of Tourism and Youth conducted consultative processes to collect opinions and suggestions from stakeholders in the process of developing the new legislative framework.

Regarding the **development of the Model for outreach and activation of young NEETs that are outside the system** (Outreach Model), preparatory activities were carried out during the reporting period and a meeting of the core composition of the Expert Group of the Coordination Body was held (on 7 December 2023), which was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, the National Employment Service, the Ministry of Tourism and Youth and the National Youth Council of Serbia. Key steps in relation to the development of the Outreach Model were agreed upon. The Outreach Model was developed within the framework of the IPA 2020 project *"Technical assistance for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of employment policies at national and local level and for the strengthening of capacities for participation in the European Social Fund"*. The Outreach Model includes a methodology, minimum service standards, tools for outreach, activation and providing support to young people who are distant from the labour market or at risk of social exclusion, as well as referral rules and a framework for monitoring the results of the services provided. This Outreach Model allows outreach activities to be carried out not *ad hoc*, but systematically and in accordance with pre-set standards. At the meeting of the Expert Group of the Coordination Body on 19 April 2024, the Outreach Model was presented. It is planned to revise and improve the Outreach Model, within the framework of the aforementioned project, after the end of 12 months piloting phase.

Additional support was provided by the SDC project *"Education to Employment - E2E"* for the development of a Training Program for Outreach and Activation of young NEETs based on the developed Outreach Model. A civil society organization was selected in a public procurement procedure implemented by the National Employment Service with the funds allocated within IPA 2020 project - Direct grant to the NES (on 6 December 2024, a 12-month contract was concluded between the National Employment Service and the Educational Centre Kruševac, which will implement outreach activities in all three pilot branches). A three-day training of workers from the Educational Centre Kruševac was held (11-13 December 2024). Employment counsellors from the three pilot branches also participated in the training. In order to further improve the work of these counsellors, a one-day info session was conducted in January 2025, as a continuation of the training, which covered additional topics including rights of young people at work and in relation to work, social protection services at the local level, the offer of PROAEA in the Nišava, Rasina and Srem districts, as well as the presentation of the Visibility and Communication Instructions. Participants were also presented with formats for collecting data and reporting on activities implemented within the Outreach Model.

Given the time required to implement the preparatory activities, including further consideration of the scope of the outreach activities to be piloted and, in this regard, consideration of ways to increase the amount of funds originally allocated for the implementation of the outreach activities, as well as the unplanned length of the public procurement procedure for the selection of the contractor, the outreach activities did not start as originally planned in early 2024, but will begin in February 2025.

The Ministry of Tourism and Youth, together with its partners, has been working intensively on the further professionalization of youth work in the past period. The key partner of the Ministry of Tourism and Youth in this field is NAYWP, which in 2023, revised and adopted new quality standards for youth work programs. With the support of the SDC project *"Education to Employment - E2E"* and with the active participation of NAYWP representatives, a draft standard for the occupation of Youth Worker has been developed. Also, work is underway to prepare an initiative for the development of youth worker qualification standards, in cooperation with the education sector.

With the support of the Ministry of Tourism and Youth, 90 young people participated in youth work programs in six cities. A conference was organized for 113 youth workers, leaders and representatives of institutions, and through a consultative process with 75 stakeholders, the first national youth work programme for youth mental health was created. This programme enabled the improvement of the capacities of 10 youth workers and 20 psychologists, who will cover 10 local communities. A system for monitoring the success of the programme has been developed and an online platform for mentoring and supervision has been defined.

TABLE 2.1.2: KEY REFORMS AND INITIATIVES – OUTREACH

Name of the reform/initiative	Key objective(s)	Target group, including number of people covered (if available)	Name and role of organisation in the lead and cooperating partners	Timetable for implementation	Implementation cost, if applicable, and source of funding	Progress 2023-2024
Planned reforms						
The development and adoption of the new Law on Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise and promote outreach activities Set the stage for sustainable funding of outreach activities 	Young NEETs CSOs	MoTY (lead) Social partners MoLEVSA MoTY NYCS NAYWP NAoYO SDC - "Education to employment" Programme	2025	RSD 2,000,000.00 2024-2025 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoTY)	During 2023, the analyses of the current Law on Youth were prepared, and the first draft of the new law was produced. The Ministry of Tourism of Youth has organized consultations during 2024.
Development of a Model for outreach and activation of young NEETs outside the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop methodology and tools for establishing contact, activation and providing support to youth who are distant from the labour market or at risk of social exclusion Establish minimum service standards for young NEETs and a framework for monitoring the results of services 	Young NEETs CSOs	MoTY (lead) Social partners MoLEVSA MoTY NYCS NAYWP NAoYO SDC "Education to employment – E2E" Project	2023	Source: IPA 2020 - Technical support (MoLEVSA and NES)	In 2024, a Model for outreach and activation of NEET youth which remains out of the system was developed.
Planned initiatives						
Professionalization of youth work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop occupational standards and qualification standards for different levels of youth work and non-formal education 	Youth workers Young NEETs	MoTY NAYWP MoLEVSA QA	2023-2026	RSD 17,060,000.00	A proposal of the occupation standard for Youth Worker has been developed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> programmes based on them Establish a professional association of youth workers Ensure quality provision of youth outreach services 		SDC "Education to employment – E2E" Project		Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoTY) RSD 393,111,000.00 Source: The Foundation Tempus	At the end of June 2023, the Tempus Foundation organized a training on the topic "Mental Health in Youth Work", which brought together 29 youth workers from various European countries, including the Republic of Serbia.
Piloting Model for outreach and activation of young NEETs outside the system - implementation of outreach activities by CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify, activate and offer support to young people who are distant from the labour market or at risk of social exclusion Collect necessary information for further improvement of Model and outreach activities Collect additional information on the characteristics and needs of young people who are inactive for "other" unspecified reasons 	8,666 young NEETs	CSOs (lead) YOs MoLEVSA MoTY NES NYCS NAYWP	2024 – 2026	RSD 3,600,000.00¹⁰ Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020 - Direct grant for NES RSD 12,000,000.00 Financial gap for the piloting of Model for outreach and activation of young NEETs for 2025 and 2026	Having in mind that the implementation of the Contract has begun on 6 December 2024, no outreach activities during the reporting period were organized. Trainings for selected CSOs which are to implement outreach activities have been organized in line with the Outreach Model in December 2024 and January of 2025, where these we also attended by Employment Counsellors from the three pilot branch offices. Outreach activities will be launched in February of 2025.

2.1.3. Preparation

The planned key reform within this phase relates to the improvement of the legislative framework in the field of employment, which should respond to the requirements of the system for providing effective Youth Guarantee services and quality offers (registration, profiling, segregation of employment services and active employment policy measures in accordance with the Eurostat methodology, improvement of the individual employment plan, support after inclusion in the measure/employment, referral to partners and external contracting of services (outsourcing), etc.). In the reporting period, *ex-post* and *ex-ante* analyses of the impact of the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance were conducted with the support of the SDC project "*Education to Employment - E2E*". The selection process for experts who are to support the drafting of the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance has been initiated. Given the scope of the planned amendments, and in accordance with the analyses, the deadline for the adoption of this law has been extended from 2025 to 2026. Also, based on the request of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs for technical support from the International Labour Organization, a technical mission of experts was organized in early 2025 to prepare a Functional analysis of the National Employment Service, i.e. to review the existing capacities of this Service, with the aim of improving the work process and preparing for the full implementation of the Youth Guarantee from 2027 onwards.

¹⁰ In relation to the originally allocated funds amounting to RSD 3,600,000.00, within the IPA 2020 – Direct Grant NSZ, based on savings made, a redistribution of funds was carried out, resulting in a total of RSD 5,880,000.00 being secured.

One of the main tasks of the National Employment Service within the Youth Guarantee scheme is to intensify individual counselling work with young people in order to motivate them, identify factors that influence their disadvantageous position in the labour market and define appropriate offers. In order to improve this process, an online application for pre-registration and statistical profiling has been prepared. Testing of the statistical model in the existing profiling framework has been completed, as well as the enabling of individual online pre-registration. In the first half of 2025, it is expected to be launched and training for all employees in the employment mediation sector, i.e. all counsellors and registrars of the National Employment Service, will be organized.

In order to implement statistical profiling, the service provision model in the form of online pre-registration has been adapted. Job seekers who wish to apply for registration will have the opportunity to register on-line to collect the data required for profiling. A prerequisite for using the pre-registration service will be the prior registration of the person on the eGovernment portal of the Republic of Serbia. In this regard, technical obstacles are being resolved. Support for these activities is planned for the coming period through the first Direct Grant of the IPA Operational Programme for the 2024-2027 period.

In order to strengthen human resources capacities and provide adequate support to young people included in the Youth Guarantee programme, seven employment counsellors had been employed in the pilot branches to provide support to young people. In addition to increasing the number of employees, activities were carried out to implement training aimed at professional development of employees for the purposes of working with hard-to-employ individuals and employers, as well as to introduce them with planned outreach activities. During 2024, a total of 64 employees of the National Employment Service who work directly with clients (unemployed individuals, individuals seeking a change of employment and employers) were included in various trainings aimed at improving skills need for work with clients, provision of CGC services, cooperation with youth workers who will conduct outreach activities, etc.

Within the framework of the IPA 2020 project *"Technical assistance for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of employment policies at national and local level and for the strengthening of capacities for participation in the European Social Fund"*, a training was prepared for NES employment counsellors on the topic of individualized work with unemployed persons, to improve the skills of employment counsellors to work with unemployed persons based on their individual needs. Unemployed individuals from the category of hard-to-employ, especially those facing multiple difficulties, require additional support in order to be integrated into the work environment, since they have lost work habits, knowledge and their skills have become outdated, and their motivation and self-confidence have diminished due to their absence from the labour market. For this reason, a concept of individualized services for long-term unemployed individuals included in active employment policy measures has been developed, with the goal of easier integration into the work environment and maintaining employment. After the implementation of this concept for long-term unemployed individuals, a concept tailored to the needs of young people will be developed with the support of the SDC *"Education to Employment - E2E"* project.

In late 2023, the Instruction for the work of employees in pilot NES branches was developed, and it regulates the intensity of contacts between an unemployed person and an employment counsellor. Also, guidelines for identifying barriers faced by the unemployed, for the purpose of better selection of persons when including them in active employment policy measures were provided. Meetings were also organized in pilot branches regarding the implementation of these instructions. Depending on the estimated level of support, the frequency of contact between employment counsellors and unemployed youth is determined at intervals of seven to 30 days. After the implementation of the statistical model in the existing profiling concept, internal procedures will also determine the deadlines for agreeing on a revision of the individual employment plan in accordance with the results of statistical profiling. The assessment of the level of motivation of young people will be done through a motivational interview, which will help employment counsellors to activate young people, to strengthen the motivation of a young person to change his/her approach or implement certain activities in the job search process, etc.

By strengthening employment mediation services, which are the primary means of preparing young people with no or limited barriers to entering the labour market, 194 young people were employed in 2024 through direct job-matching by the National Employment Service in line with the job vacancies request submitted by employers.

In the preparation phase, 17,668 individual interviews were conducted, 9,678 individual employment plans were established, including revisions, 1,002 young people completed active job search training, 364 young people were sent to a job fair, 226 young people were included in career development counselling, 160 young people were included in a job search club, 132 young people without qualifications and low-skilled young people completed motivational activation training, 37 young people were informed about career development opportunities, while 18 young people were included in self-efficacy training, etc. 511 young people were provided with information and counselling services in the field of entrepreneurship and 320 young people completed entrepreneurship development training - The Path to a Successful Entrepreneur.

As a result of further strengthening of cooperation with employers, expansion of employer services, monitoring of their needs and intensifying contacts with local employers, in 2024, 2,657 employers used employment mediation services in three pilot branches of the National Employment Service, or submitted requests for participation in active employment policy measures, of which 1,691 (63.64%) were employers who had not used the aforementioned services in the previous year (2023). On 18 September 2024, the National Employment Service organized a Virtual Job Fair under the slogan "Youth Guarantee - New Opportunities and Possibilities", which was an additional opportunity for young people to apply for open job vacancies submitted by employers.

Based on an assessment of the individual needs for short training courses (which do not lead to the acquisition of recognized qualifications) and an analysis of the training programme offered by available potential providers, the training courses that will be available to young people in pilot branches were defined, namely English and German language courses, digital skills training and soft skills training. Due to the unexpected length of the public procurement procedure and contracting of training providers, the short training courses did not start in 2024, however, a training provider was contracted, from IPA 2020 funds - Direct grant to the NES, and the selection of persons to be included in the training in 2025 was initiated. Also, the procedure for selecting providers for short trainings was launched and will be funded from the national budget funds, and in the first quarter of 2025, it is expected for the contracts to be concluded with the selected training providers and for the implementation to begin. On 28 February 2024, the National Employment Service announced public calls for proposals for the implementation of active employment policy measures, which also enabled the exercise of the right to payment of a cash allowance for childcare. Out of 295 young people for whom this type of support was planned in 2024, it was provided to one. In the coming period, the reasons for the unsuccessful implementation of this type of support will be analysed, where the following will be taken into consideration: the capacities of accredited preschool institutions, the need for additional motivation of the unemployed and employers, the design of support, the flexibility of the costs justification method, the inactivity of persons registered with the National Employment Service, etc., on the basis of which a decision will be made on further types of support.

With the support of the IPA 2020 project "*Technical assistance for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of employment policies at national and local level and for the strengthening of capacities for participation in the European Social Fund*", a training programme is being prepared for NES employment counsellors on the topic of the RPL process so that they can identify persons who could be included in the RPL process, while being familiar with the legislative and institutional framework. The training of employment counsellors, primarily in pilot branches, will be organized in the first half of 2025. Also, the Instructions for the Inclusion of Persons in the RPL Process, intended for employment counsellors, is being prepared.

The digitalization process began with the digitalization of the CGC services: a self-assessment questionnaire of professional interests and corresponding printouts have been prepared, with the support of the GIZ project, and are to be converted into a web app that will be available on the website of the National Employment Service. Also, a soft skills self-assessment questionnaire is being developed, which should also be digitized and posted as a web app on the website of the National Employment Service.

Online training for mentors/instructors in companies where trainings for persons included in measure Training at the employer's request are organized, has been developed, with the support of the SDC project "*Education to Employment - E2E*". The training for mentors can be accessed via the website of the National Employment Service: <https://nsz-onlineobuke.nsz.gov.rs/course/index.php?categoryid=1>.

TABLE 2.1.3: KEY REFORMS AND INITIATIVES – PREPARATION

Name of the reform/initiative	Key objective(s)	Target group, including number of people covered (if available)	Name and role of organisation in the lead and cooperating partners	Timetable for implementation	Implementation cost, if applicable, and source of funding	Progress 2023-2024
Planned reforms						
Amendments to the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harmonise the national normative framework with the requirements of the YG service provision 	Unemployed	MoLEVSA (lead) NES Social partners	2023 - 2025 Adoption in the	Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia - current costs of employees	Both <i>ex-post</i> and <i>ex-ante</i> analyses of the impact of the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance were prepared, and the process of selection of experts to support the drafting of the Draft Law is in progress.

	system (registration, profiling, separation of employment services and AEP measures, IEP, support after inclusion in the measure/employment, referral to partners and external contracting service (outsourcing), NCSO standardisation).			third quarter of 2025	RSD 5,500,000.00 - 2023 Source: SDC "Education to employment – E2E" Project	Having in mind the extent of the planned amendments in line with the analyses, the deadline for the adoption of the law was changed from 2025 to 2026.
Planned initiatives						
Introduction and continuous improvement of online (pre)registration and statistical profiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable unemployed persons to register online (pre) registration on the NES registry • Enable online (pre)registration for young NEETs in YG • Collect data needed for profiling and segmentation of clients • Facilitate the work of employment counsellors when profiling, segmenting clients and arranging IEP • Estimate the probability that a young person is in the NEET category • Digitalise IEP and enable the unemployed/young people to enter data in the job search journal 	Unemployed Young NEETs	NES	2023 – 2026	RSD 10,200,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020 - Direct grant for NES RSD 9,000,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant for NES	<p>Testing of the statistical model in the existing profiling framework has been completed, as well as the enabling of the online (pre)registration of individuals. It is expected that everything will be launched in the first half of 2025.</p> <p>The activities on IEP digitization will begin in 2025.</p>
Strengthening the capacity of employment counsellors for individualised approach to unemployed persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the skills of employment counsellors for working with the unemployed based on their individual needs, which will also have an impact on the quality of negotiating IEPs • Improve the CGC service provision through continued implementation of internal training in NES • Ensure cooperation with workers in the field 	Unemployed Young NEETs	NES	2023-2026	Source: IPA 2020 – Technical support (MoLEVSA and NES)	<p>In 2024, a total of 64 front staff (working directly with clients – unemployed persons, person looking to change their job and employers) have participated in various trainings.</p> <p>The NES organized CGC training for 21 employment counsellors from its three pilot branches.</p> <p>Joint trainings for CSOs workers and employment counsellors from three pilot branches of the NES, that are conducting outreach activities were organized in December 2024 and January 2025.</p>

	implementing outreach activities (CSOs)					
Improvement of the procedure and technique for agreeing and revising individual employment plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensify contacts between the unemployed and employment counsellors • Recognise the barriers faced by the unemployed on the NES registry, and establish a more comprehensive approach in responding to their needs • Improve CGC and targeting/selection of persons when including in AEP measures • Internal procedures determine the deadlines for agreeing on an IEP in accordance with the results of statistical profiling 	Unemployed Young NEETs	NES	2023-2026	Source: IPA 2020 – Technical support (MoLEVSA and NES)	<p>An assessment of the IEP was conducted in 2024 and recommendations were made for its improvement (in terms of content) and digitalization.</p> <p>The Instruction for the work of employees in pilot NES branch offices focusing on segmentation of clients in line with the risk of long-term unemployment, deadlines for developing IEPs, as well as the intensity of contacts between an unemployed person and an employment counsellor depending on the employability assessment, so that meeting are more frequent for persons from vulnerable groups was developed.</p>
Implementation and continuous improvement of the mediation in employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the employment of unemployed persons and NEET youth • Respond to applications of the employer's need for employment 	Unemployed Persons looking for employment Young NEETs Employers	NES	2023-2026	Source: Financial plan of the NES - current costs of employees	With the direct NES mediation in line with the job vacancies submitted by employers, 194 young people were employed in 2024.
Improvement of cooperation with employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of employers who cooperate with the NES, use the services of the NES and participate in the measures of AEP • Organize six info sessions in three pilot branches with employers • Increase the range of offers (for employment, continuing education and training and traineeships) for young NEETs • Introduce counsellors for employers (in pilot branches that do not have them) 	Unemployed Persons looking for employment Young NEETs Employers	NES (lead) LSGUs	2023-2026	<p>Source: IPA 2020 – Technical support (MoLEVSA and NES)</p> <p>RSD 180,000.00</p> <p>Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020</p>	<p>In 2024, 2,657 employers used employment mediation services or submitted requests for participation in AEP measures.</p> <p>In 2024, seven info sessions for employers were organized in 3 pilot branch offices.</p> <p>The scope of offers was increased by pooling of funds from various sources of funding (EU funds including IPA funds, funds from the NES Financial plan, funds from the national budget (MoLEVSA)) which enabled the active employment measures to be available throughout the year.</p> <p>Counsellors working with employers were assigned and trained in three pilot branches.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the capacities of counsellors for employers 					In May 2024, an analysis of cooperation between the NES and employers was conducted and recommendations were made for improving cooperation. Based on the analysis, training for NES counsellors working with employers was prepared and implemented in December 2024.
Development of additional/complementary employment services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train employment counsellors to recognise persons who could be involved in RPL • Piloting RPL • Develop support services after inclusion in the measure/employment in the NES portfolio • Introduce complementary services for youth (unemployed single parents of child/children under 7 or families where one spouse is employed and the other is unemployed and has the obligation of caring for child/children) in the form of a cash allowance for childcare • Delegate short trainings (digital skills, languages) to partners and private providers • Digitalise the offer of NES services. 	<p>Unemployed Persons looking for employment</p> <p>Young NEETs 10 young people registered in YG included in the RPL piloting procedure</p> <p>701 young people (unemployed single parents of child/children under 7 or families where one spouse is employed and the other is unemployed and has the obligation of caring for child/children) registered in the YG received a cash allowance for child care</p>	<p>NES</p> <p>SDC “Education to employment – E2E” Project</p>	2023-2026	<p>Source: IPA 2020 – Technical support (MoLEVSA and NES)</p> <p>RSD 3,600,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant for NES / piloting RPL</p> <p>RSD 12,066,444.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020 - Direct grant for NES / cash allowance for child care</p> <p>RSD 11,371,500.00 Financial gap for cash allowance for child care for 2025</p> <p>RSD 5,670,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant for NES / cash allowance for child care</p> <p>RSD 14,955,840.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020 - Direct grant for NES / short training courses</p> <p>RSD 14,955,840.00</p>	<p>The preparation of a training programme on the RPL procedure for counsellors from three pilot branches of the NES and the development of the Instruction are underway. The training is planned for the first half of 2025.</p> <p>The piloting of RPL is planned for 2026 through the IPA OP 2024-2027.</p> <p>With the aim of creating sustainable employment, a concept of individualized services for the long-term unemployed included in active employment measures was developed. Based on the experience of this concept, an adapted concept will be applied to young people.</p> <p>Out of 295 young people for whom the support in the form of childcare cash allowance was foreseen in 2024, one person used this type of support. The reasons for poor implementation and the possibility of this support in the future under more favourable and relaxed conditions will be considered.</p> <p>In 2024, a provider for short training courses financed from IPA 2020 funds – Direct grant to NES was selected. A call for the selection of providers for short training courses to be financed from the budget of the Republic of Serbia has been announced.</p> <p>With the support of the GIZ project, the digitalization process began with the digitalization of CGC services. The development of a soft skills self-assessment questionnaire is also in the process of preparation.</p> <p>The online training for mentors/instructors in companies where the Training at the request of employer is being organized, was developed.</p> <p>The development of tools for the assessment and self-assessment of digital skills is planned for 2026, within</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop tools for assessment and self-assessment of digital skills 	1,100 young people registered in YG included in short training courses			<p>Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2024 (MoLEVSA) / short training courses</p> <p>RSD 10,080,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2025 (MoLEVSA) / short training courses</p> <p>RSD 13,440,000.00 NES Financial Plan for 2025 / short training courses</p> <p>RSD 10,080,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2026 (MoLEVSA) / short training courses</p> <p>RSD 13,440,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant for NES¹¹ / short training courses</p> <p>RSD 9,000,000.00 Source: IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant for NES / for digital skills assessment and self-assessment tools</p>	the IPA OP 2024-2027, through the first direct NES grant.
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2.1.4. Quality Offer

At this stage, the key reform refers to the **adoption of the Law on Traineeships**, in order to align traineeships with the quality criteria set out in the 2014 EU Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeship (which includes a duration of up to six months, provided mentor support, remuneration during the traineeship, a certificate of acquired knowledge and skills, etc.). This Law aims to enable young trainees to gain quality work experience in safe and fair conditions. The adoption of the Law on Traineeship is conditional, among other things, on the adoption of the Directive on improving the working conditions of trainees and combating the misrepresentation of

¹¹ Planned through IPA Operational Programme 2024-2027, Direct grant for NES which will be implemented in 2026, 2027 and 2028. In the first year of implementation, the funds will be used for the final YG piloting year, i.e. 2026.

employment relationships as traineeship, which is in the process of being prepared within the EU. The Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs adopted a new Decision on the formation of the Working Group for the Draft of the Law on Traineeship at the beginning of 2025, given the personnel changes.

Employment counsellors provide services to young people who have knowledge and skills in accordance with the needs of the labour market and the requirements of employers, which is a part of the non-subsidized offer. Also, a significant number of young people find a job independently. Out of a total of 3,101 employments, 2,405 (77.6%) people were employed without subsidies, while 194 young people were employed through direct mediation by the National Employment Service which represents realization of 34% of the 2024 plan (570 young people). This data highlights the need for better matching of young job seekers with the job offers from employers for which they meet the criteria. Subsidized offers are available to young people who do not have the necessary skills or knowledge and who have difficulties with the job search process, based on individual needs and the assessment of the employment counsellor.

Table 2.: Realization of active employment policy measures – subsidized offer of the National Employment Service

Subsidised NES offer		Number of youth
EMPLOYMENT	Subsidies for the employment of young people belonging to hard-to-employ categories and young PWDs without work experience, and employment by the employer after completing the training at the employer's request (not PROAEA)	102
	Self-employment subsidy	338
	Youth internship	207
	Acquisition of practical knowledge	24
	Public works	25
Total employment		696
CONTINUED EDUCATION AND TRAINING	Professional practice and Professional Practice – “Talents in the Public Sector” Programme	359
	Labour market training	64
	Training at the employer's request	12
	Functional Primary Education of Adults	13
Total continued education and training		448
TRAINEESHIP	Programme “My First Salary”	3
Total traineeship		3

EMPLOYMENT OFFER

Subsidized Youth Employment

A total of 98 people were employed with a one-off financial incentive to private sector employers for employing young unemployed persons from hard-to-employ categories, or with a monthly wage subsidy for employing young persons with disabilities without work experience, which represents 52.1% of the planned number of beneficiaries (188 young people).

Based on the measure implementation monitoring, it was determined that employers are less likely to decide to use these kinds of measures, because in the case of termination of the measure by a person, they are obliged to replace that person with a person who is also included in the Youth Guarantee scheme, which in the first months of the implementation of the scheme narrowed the selection of potential other candidates (with the same characteristics, e.g. in terms of level of qualifications, belonging to the hard-to-employ category, age, etc.), because the entry of unemployed young people under 30 years in the Youth Guarantee began on 1 January 2024. This is especially pronounced for measures related to persons with disabilities.

Based on the experience in applying the concept of individualized support for the long-term unemployed included in AEP measures with the aim of maintaining employment, which has already been developed, concept adaptation activities will be performed in order to apply it to young people included in the subsidized employment measures, during the first year of their employment with the aim of preventing termination of that employment.

In addition, four persons signed employment contracts with employers after completing Training at the request of the employer, funded from the NES Financial Plan, and the aforementioned employment is defined as subsidized employment.

In total, 102 young people were employed through inclusion in various measures of subsidized employment.

Subsidized Self-employment

In 2024, 338 people were employed with a one-off subsidy to a young unemployed person to start their own business, which is 112.7% of the plan (300 young people).

The significant interest of young people included in the Youth Guarantee for starting their own business influenced the inclusion of a larger number of beneficiaries than planned. This measure was financed from the budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA), but due to interest and high quality of business plans, an additional number of people were financed from the funds of the Financial Plan of the National Employment Service.¹² In this way, through financial support for business beginners, the development of youth entrepreneurship was encouraged.

Additional funds were also allocated from the IPA 2020 project - Direct grant to the NES, by redirecting funds from measures that were not fully implemented to this measure, for which young people showed an interest. Recognizing the risks that subsidized self-employment may entail, and in order to ensure the sustainability of the measure, specific activities were undertaken, including a qualitative assessment of business plans, the introduction of a minimum threshold for points on the basis of which the subsidy is provided. For the beneficiaries of this measure, the implementation of additional external mentoring support in the areas of accounting, marketing and sales is also envisaged.

Before the subsidy for self-employment is granted, counselling by NES employees to young people interested in starting their own business was provided, as well as training in entrepreneurship development. The provision of mentoring support was planned for 200 people, but no person received this support during 2024 due to the prolonged public procurement procedure for the selection of mentoring service providers. The needs for specific mentoring support are determined during the implementation of the contract on subsidized self-employment, and for this reason, beneficiaries of the self-employment subsidy will use mentoring support from the beginning of 2025. At the end of 2024, mentoring service providers were contracted for the pilot branches in Sremska Mitrovica and Kruševac, while the contract for the pilot branch in Niš is expected to be signed in 2025.

¹² The additional number of people is included from the funds of the NES Financial Plan in all offers.

Youth Internships

The internships for young people, which are organized for the purpose of professional training for independent work in an occupation for which at least secondary education has been acquired, with the employment relationship for a period of six to 12 months, included 207 young people, of whom 137 with higher education and 70 with secondary education, which represents 79.6% of the plan (260 young people). Given the slightly weaker implementation than planned, the public call for the implementation of this measure through the funds of the IPA 2020 project - Direct grant to the NES has been extended until the end of February 2025 and the inclusion of an additional number of people is expected.

Acquisition of practical knowledge

This measure involves acquisition of practical knowledge and skills by performing specific tasks, through establishing an employment relationship with an employer from the private sector and is intended for young people with no or low level of qualifications. 24 young people were included in the measure, which represents an implementation of only 16% compared to the plan (150 young people).

On the one hand, challenges relate to the low motivation and readiness of this target group of young people to be included in the measure, and on the other, to the relatively low interest of employers given the obligation to have an employed mentor, as well as technical, spatial and other conditions for implementing this measure. Therefore, in the coming period, additional work will be done with employers and unemployed persons, especially by highlighting the advantages of sustainable employment to unemployed persons, especially compared to short-term work engagements with perhaps better financial incentives, but without the possibility of acquiring specific knowledge and skills that are more widely applicable in the labour market.

The new public call for this measure in 2025, in addition to young people with no or low level of qualifications, will also include young people facing multiple vulnerability factors (Roma men and women, persons with disabilities, beneficiaries of cash social assistance and other social protection services and young people who have been registered as unemployed for more than 12 months, regardless of the level of qualification acquired).

Public Works

Through public work, work engagement for 25 young people from hard-to-employ categories and young people in social need was provided, which is 50% of the plan (50 young people).

In previous years, public works have been implemented in greater scope and interest in this measure existed among both individuals and contractors. A lower number of individuals are planned for 2024 in order to assess the justification of this measure for the purpose of its planning in the future. Since the circumstances in the labour market have changed, in terms of a larger number of available vacancies, as well as other measures that are better adapted to the needs of young people, there was lower interest for this measure, which is why its implementation from the budget of the Republic of Serbia is not planned for 2025.

Programme for Encouraging Entrepreneurship Development

In the framework of the Programme for Encouraging Entrepreneurship Development through Financial Support for Business Start-ups and Youth in 2024 (allocation of funds for the purchase of equipment, furnishing of premises and financing of operating costs), funds were approved for who two young people were previously registered in the Youth Guarantee.

Tax Benefits

One person was employed in line with tax benefits defined by the Law on Individual Income Tax and the Law on Contributions for Compulsory Social Insurance. The condition for granting the benefit is that the person, prior to entering the employment relationship, was registered with the National Employment Service for at least six months without cease and for a person considered as an intern, for at least three months. In the coming period, activities to inform employers will be intensified, while in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance possibilities for relaxation of the condition for granting the tax benefit for young people registered in the Youth Guarantee will be examined.

CONTINUED EDUCATION AND TRAINING OFFERS

Professional Practice

In this measure, which entails vocational training for independent work in an occupation for which at least secondary education has been acquired, without establishing an employment relationship, for a maximum of six months, 197 young people were included, which represents an extremely high implementation (197%) compared to the plan (100 young people).

Due to the very high interest of employers and young people, part of the funds was redirected from measures for which less interest was recorded.

Additionally, 80 young people with tertiary education were included in Professional Practice for a period lasting longer than 6 months, through regular public calls financed by NES Financial Plan.

Professional Practice – “Talents in the Public Sector” Programme

This programme was not originally planned as an offer for continued education and training. The programme is implemented on the basis of a Government Conclusion and enables beneficiaries of the Young Talent Fund scholarship, after completing basic academic studies and master's academic studies at tertiary education institutions founded by the Republic of Serbia, and registering as unemployed, to carry out professional practice with a public sector employer for a period of three months with the possibility of extension up to six months, so the programme can last up to nine months. Young people participating in this programme do not enter into an employment relationship, but they are provided with a monthly remuneration.

In 2024, 82 young people from three pilot branches of the National Employment Service were included in this programme.

Labour Market Training

In order to improve the competences and employability of unemployed youth, in 2024, 64 young people participated in labour market trainings (for bookkeeping and digital marketing), which represents an implementation of 18.6% compared to the plan (345 young people). The trainings were implemented online. Contracts with selected providers were available throughout the year, so that the unemployed could continuously participate in these trainings.

The implementation of the labour market training was a challenge during 2024, given that there are not enough PROAEAs, nor accredited training programmes aligned with labour market demands, while, trainings in accordance with the European Commission Guidelines, should lead to obtaining a partial or full qualification. In 2024, a training catalogue was developed, taking into account the needs of the labour market, the availability of PROAEAs and accredited training programmes, as well as the individual needs of young people.

During 2024, the public procurement procedure was completed from the funds of the IPA 2020 project - Direct grant to the NES and providers were selected to implement trainings for various types of products and services for 300 young people, which will begin in 2025.

Training for 45 people for occupations in production, IT and other services was planned from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, but the public procurement procedure was not successfully implemented, since no valid offers were submitted by potential training providers. The aforementioned public procurement procedure will be repeated in 2025.

In the coming period, an increase in the number of accredited training providers and an expansion of the offer of accredited training is expected, as a result of activities that are being implemented through the IPA 2020 project *"Increased offer and diversification of accredited training in the field of non-formal education and adult education training providers."*

Training at employer's request

In order to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to perform tasks in a specific workplace, 12 young people participated in Training at the employer's request, which represents an implementation of only 8% compared to the plan (150 young people).

The implementation of this measure was also a challenge during 2024, given that there are not enough PROAEAs in the Republic of Serbia, nor accredited training programmes aligned with the demands of the labour market, with which employers establish cooperation, if they do not have PROAEA status themselves.

An additional 20 people were included in the measure - Training at the employer's request funded by the NES Financial Plan, where it was not required as a condition that the training provider/employer have PROAEA status, and for this reason these beneficiaries are not considered to be included in the offer for continued education and training. However, if an employment relationship with the employer was established after the completion of training, the employment is treated as subsidized and a total of four people were employed after the training.

This measure is expected to be better implemented in the coming years through the support of the IPA 2020 project *"Increased supply and diversification of accredited training in the field of non-formal education and adult education training providers"*, in the sense of increasing the number of accredited training providers and their availability per region, as well as expanding the offer of accredited trainings.

Functional Primary Education of Adults

In order to obtain primary education, 13 unemployed young people participated in Functional Primary Education of Adults, which represents an implementation of 16.3% compared to the plan (80 young people).

Very low motivation of individuals caused by unfavourable living conditions, low financial incentives and, at the same time, the long duration of the programme, are the causes of the poor implementation of this measure. In the coming period, together with the Ministry of Education, possibilities will be considered to enable more flexible entry into the Functional Primary Education of Adults in accordance with the needs and capabilities of individuals.

Based on the exchange of data between the National Employment Service and the Ministry of Education, in the reporting period, 189 young people independently continued their education and training, of which 175 persons acquired higher education student status, one person joined the training conducted by the PROAEA, three persons enrolled in Functional Primary Education of Adults, while for 10 young people, the type of continued education and training is unknown.

TRAINEESHIP OFFERS

Traineeship

The Working group for drafting the Law on Traineeship has been formed. The adoption of this Law is a prerequisite for traineeship becoming a quality offer for young people.

Youth Employment Promotion Programme "My First Salary"

By adopting the Law on Traineeship, a legal basis is obtained for regulating the Youth Employment Incentive Programme "My First Salary" (the "My First Salary" Programme) (in accordance with the EU quality framework). The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan indicates the need to revise the "My First Salary" Programme, in order to meet the conditions of the quality offer for young people in accordance with the European Commission Guidelines.

In 2024, the implementation of the new cycle of the "My First Salary" Programme was paused, due to the ongoing evaluation of the four previously implemented cycles of this programme and the assessment of necessary changes.

This programme was implemented in accordance with the Regulation on the Youth Employment Promotion Programme "My First Salary" and was intended for young people up to 30 years of age, with at least secondary education, without prior work experience, in order to prepare them for independent work, with a duration of nine months. The explanation for the small number of young people included in this programme in 2024 is as follows: The last public call for the implementation of the "My First Salary" Programme was announced at the end of 2023, when the selection of unemployed persons was carried out, and the training of selected persons under that programme began in 2024. Since the registration of persons for the Youth Guarantee began in January 2024, only three persons from the pilot branches of the NES registered in the Youth Guarantee could be included in the "My First Salary" Programme, given that almost all employers whose applications were approved had already selected persons.

TABLE 2.1.4: KEY REFORMS AND INITIATIVES FOR PROVIDING YOUTH GUARANTEE OFFERS

Name of the reform/initiative	Key objective(s)	Target group, including number of people covered (if available)	Name and role of organisation in the lead and cooperating partners	Timetable for implementation	Implementation cost, if applicable, and source of funding	Progress 2023-2024
Planned reforms						
Adoption of the Law on Traineeship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulate traineeship in line with the Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships from 2014 Ensure that young people acquire needed experience, practical knowledge and skills for their future careers 	Adoption of the Law on Traineeship	MoLEVSA (lead) NES Social partners	2023/2024	Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia - current costs of employees RSD 1,200,000.00 - 2023 Source: SDC "Education to employment – E2E" Project	The Working Group for Drafting of the Law on Traineeship has been formed, but the adoption of the Law is conditional on, among other things, the adoption of the Directive on improving the working conditions of trainees and combating the misrepresentation of employment relationships as traineeships, which is in the EU's agenda.
Planned initiatives						
Conducting an analysis of the prerequisites for the introduction of training vouchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the necessary changes to the existing legislative framework, primarily the Law on Public Procurement for the introduction of training vouchers Improving the organisation and implementation of training for the labour market Improving the availability and effects of training for the labour market 	Unemployed Young NEETs	MoLEVSA NES Ministry of Finance	2024	Source: IPA 2020 - Technical support (MoLEVSA and NES)	An analysis of the preconditions for the introduction of training vouchers was implemented and it contains recommendations and a roadmap, which are important for the revision of relevant regulations, especially the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance.

Employment mediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment of youth 	1,700 young NEETs	NES	2024-2026	Current costs of employees	Through direct employment mediation by the NES, 194 young people were employed, which represents 34% of the plan for 2024 (570).
Subsidies for the employment of young people from the category of hard-to-employ and young PWDs without work experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage employers to hire hard-to-employ young people • Encourage employers to employ young PWDs without work experience 	468 young NEETs and young PWDs	Subsidies for the employment of young people from the category of hard-to-employ and young PWDs without work experience	2024-2026	<p>RSD 36,832,896.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020 - Direct grant for NES</p> <p>RSD 22,923,926.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2024 (MoLEVSA)</p> <p>RSD 19,191,600.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2025 (MoLEVSA)</p> <p>RSD 31,566,000.00 Source: NES Financial Plan for 2025</p> <p>RSD 19,191,600.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2026 (MoLEVSA)</p> <p>RSD 31,566,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and IPA OP 2024-2027 - Direct grant for NES</p>	98 people were included for whom 108 subsidies were approved (23 from the RS Budget, 64 from IPA DG 2020, 21 from the NES FP) ¹³ . Additionally, four individuals entered an employment relationship with the employer after completing the Training at the employer's request.
Subsidy for self-employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the youth in launching own business by awarding them a subsidy for self-employment and providing mentoring support. 	1,340 Young NEETs	NES	2024-2026	<p>RSD 52,733,340.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020 - Direct grant for NES</p> <p>RSD 51,005,340.00 Source: Budget of the</p>	Self-employment subsidy was granted for 338 persons (156 with funds from RS Budget, 150 with funds from DG IPA 2020, 32 with funds from the NES FP).

¹³ A total of 108 subsidies were awarded, of which 92 were subsidies for the employment of young people from the hard-to-employ category and 16 subsidies for unemployed persons without work experience, with 10 unemployed persons using both subsidies, and that accounts for the total of 98 people.

					<p>Republic of Serbia for 2024 (MoLEVSA)</p> <p>RSD 52,017,600.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2025 (MoLEVSA)</p> <p>RSD 58,012,800.00 Source: NES Financial Plan for 2025</p> <p>RSD 52,017,600.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2026 (MoLEVSA)</p> <p>RSD 4,320,000.00 Source: NES Financial Plan for 2026 / mentoring</p> <p>RSD 53,692,800.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and IPA OP 2024-2027 - Direct grant for NES/Subsidy for self-employment</p>	
Internship for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide professional training for young people for independent work in an occupation for which they have acquired the appropriate education while establishing an employment relationship 	626 young NEETs	NES	2024-2026	<p>RSD 116,572,560.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020 - Direct grant for NES</p> <p>RSD 77,305,968 .00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2024 (MoLEVSA)</p> <p>RSD 77,205,600.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2025 (MoLEVSA)</p> <p>RSD 83,144,400.00 Source: NES Financial</p>	207 people were included (70 with funds from RS Budget, 103 with funds from DG IPA 2020, 34 with funds from NES FP).

					Plan for 2025 RSD 72,454,560.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2026 (MoLEVSA) RSD 83,144,400.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and IPA OP 2024-2027 - Direct grant for NES	
Acquisition of practical knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable young people to acquire practical knowledge and skills through the performance of specific jobs by establishing an employment relationship with the employer 	318 young NEETs	NES	2024-2026	RSD 24,541,440.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020 - Direct grant for NES RSD 12,270,720.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2024 (MoLEVSA) RSD 8,316,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2025 (MoLEVSA) RSD 17,820,000.00 Source: NES Financial Plan for 2025 RSD 8,910,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2026 (MoLEVSA) RSD 14,850,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and IPA OP 2024-2027 - Direct grant for NES	24 people were included (7 with funds from RS Budget, 13 with funds from DG IPA 2020, 4 with funds from NES FP).
Public works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable work engagement of hard-to-employ youth and youth in a state of social need 	110 young NEETs	NES	2024-2026	RSD 7,822,560.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA	25 people were included (20 with funds from IPA 2020 DG, 5 with funds from NES FP).

					2020 - Direct grant for NES RSD 5,680,800.00 Source: NES Financial Plan for 2025 RSD 5,680,800.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and IPA OP 2024-2027 - Direct grant for NES	
A programme to encourage the development of entrepreneurship through financial support for business beginners and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to young people in the initial phase of business and those who just want to start their own business • Encouraging entrepreneurship as a career option 	Young NEETs	Ministry of Economy	2024-2026	Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (Ministry of Economy) 2024 - within RSD 310 million ¹⁴ 2025 - within RSD 320 million 2026 - within RSD 330 million Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia	Under this Program, funds were approved for two young people who had previously applied to the Youth Guarantee.
Tax benefits in accordance with the Law on Individual Income Tax and the Law on Contributions for Compulsory Social Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage employers to hire new people 	Unemployed Young NEETs	Ministry of Finance Tax Administration	2024-2026.	Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (Ministry of Finance)	One person was employed with tax benefits.
Professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide young people with professional training for independent work in an occupation for which appropriate education has been acquired, for a duration of 6 months, without establishing an employment relationship 	380 young NEETs	NES	2024-2026	RSD 12,500,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2024 (MoLEVSA) RSD 12,500,000.00 Source: NES Financial Plan for 2024 RSD 14,000,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2025 (MoLEVSA) RSD 35,000,000.00 Source: NES Financial Plan for 2025	197 people were included (127 with funds from the RS Budget, 70 with funds from the NES FP). Additionally, 80 young people were included in professional practice lasting longer than six months with funds from the NES Financial Plan. 82 people were included in Professional Practice – “Talents in the Public Sector” Programme, funded from the NES Financial Plan.

¹⁴ Through the budget rebalance of the Republic of Serbia, in 2024, RSD 100 million was available, instead of the initially planned RSD 310 million.

					RSD 18,000,000 .00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2026 (MoLEVSA)	
					RSD 45,000,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and IPA OP 2024-2027 - Direct grant for NES	
Labour market training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable young people to acquire professional theoretical and practical knowledge and skills in accordance with the needs of the labour market and employers • Improve the employability of young people without qualifications or with low qualifications • Enable young people to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to work in the ICT sector 	665 young NEETs	NES	2024-2026	RSD 58,899,240.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020 - Direct grant for NES	64 persons were included (with funds from NES FP).
					RSD 8,834,886.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2024 (MoLEVSA)	
					RSD 13,363,200.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2025 (MoLEVSA)	
					RSD 22,272,000.00 Source: NES Financial Plan for 2025	
					RSD 13,363,200.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2026 (MoLEVSA)	
					22.272.000,00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and IPA OP 2024-2027 - Direct grant for NES	
Training at the employer's request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable young people to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to perform work at a specific workplace at the employer's request 	310 young NEETs	NES	2024-2026	RSD 37,118,880.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020 - Direct grant for NES	12 people were included (with funds from DG IPA 2020).

	through trainings accredited				RSD 5,692,800.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2024 (MoLEVSA) RSD 14,232,000.00 Source: NES Financial Plan for 2025 RSD 5,692,800.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2026 (MoLEVSA) RSD 14,232,000.00 Source: NES Financial Plan for 2026 RSD 5,692,800.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and IPA OP 2024-2027 - Direct grant for NES	
Functional Primary Education of Adults	• Offer young people without completed primary education the opportunity to obtain their first qualification accredited trainings.	240 young NEETs	NES	2024-2026	RSD 2,400,000.00 Source: Financial Plan of the NES for 2024-2026.	13 people were included (with funds from NES FP).

2.2. Transversal engines

2.2.1. Partnership mobilization

The Decision amending the Decision on the Establishment of the Coordination Body for the Development and Monitoring of the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan was adopted on the 25 October 2024 due to personnel changes¹⁵.

It is proposed that the Central Register of Compulsory Social Insurance, with which cooperation was subsequently established, but which was not initially recognized as a partner, is to be included in the work of the Coordination Body and the Expert Group.

¹⁵ Clean text: <https://pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/odluka/2022/4/5/reg>

Table 2.2.1: Key actors and organisations

Name of organisation	Type of organisation	Role in implementing the Youth Guarantee scheme	Ensuring the partnership success	Progress 2023-2024
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (MoLEVSA)	Public administration authority	Coordinator of the YG Monitoring and reporting to the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the EC on the progress of reforms and interventions foreseen in the Implementation Plan Managing data collection and evaluating the impact of the YG Presiding over the Coordinating Body and the Expert Group of the Coordination Body		During 2023, several meetings were organized to develop the YG Implementation Plan and to prepare for the piloting of the YG, as follows: 15 November - meeting of the Coordination Body and the Expert Group for the development and monitoring of the implementation of the YG Implementation Plan; 7 December - meeting of the core composition of the Expert Group of the Coordination Body, as well as representatives of other bodies and organizations, at which the Proposal for the Model for Outreach and Activation of NEET Youth was discussed; local preparatory meetings: in Sremska Mitrovica (25 December), Kruševac (27 December) and Niš (28 December). During 2024, the following meetings were organized: 31 January - meeting of the Youth Guarantee Coordinator (MoLEVSA) and representatives of the NES; 19 April - meeting of the Expert Group of the Coordination Body for the Development and Monitoring of the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan; 17 December - meeting of the Expert Group of the Coordination Body for the Development and Monitoring of the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan regarding the collection of data for the preparation of the first report.
National Employment Service (NES)	Public administration authority	Main implementation partner of the YG Entry point of the YG Data collection for monitoring direct and follow-up indicators of the YG		Pilot branches are in regular contact with relevant partners (local self-governments, employers, schools, faculties, youth offices, civil society organizations, regional development agencies, regional chambers of commerce, centres for social work, etc.).
Ministry of Education	Public administration authority	The main partner in the implementation of early intervention reforms and initiatives		The Ministry of Education, in addition to the adopted amendments to two regulations in the field of education and other initiatives within the framework of early intervention, is striving to encourage an increase in the number of PROAEAs and accredited training programmes in line with the needs of the labour market and expand their regional availability. This is directly related to the possibility of ensuring and implementing a quality offer of education and training in the YG. Additional activities are expected within the framework of the IPA 2020 project " <i>Increased offer and diversification of accredited training in the field of non-formal education and training providers for adult education</i> ", which has started its implementation.
Qualifications Agency (QA)	Public administration authority	Comprehensive monitoring of the implementation of CGC standards. Development of market-relevant qualification standards and accreditation of training programmes in non-formal education for other organisations.		By amendments to the Law on NQFS, QA is recognized as an institution that monitors the implementation of CGC activities and prepares annual reporting. NES is in continuous contact with QA in order to present the needs for new trainings for the labour market, and to motivate potential contractors to initiate the process of acquiring PROAEA status.
Office for Dual Education and National Qualifications Framework (ODENQF)	Public administration authority	Expansion of dual education coverage Preparation of by-laws arising from the Law on NQFS, which regulates the services of CGC, RPL, training, etc. Harmonisation of the NQFS system		ODENQF monitors and prepares draft laws and bylaws on dual education in secondary vocational education, dual study model in higher education, career guidance and counselling, as well as NQFS.

		with sectoral policies		
Ministry of Tourism and Youth (MoTY)	Public administration authority	Main partner in development and implementation of outreach activities and activation of young NEETs		Considering that the NES is currently managing the youth outreach and activation through cooperation with the civil sector, it will be of a great importance for the MoTY to have insight into the lessons learned.
Ministry of Economy	Public administration authority	Partner in the implementation of offers for self-employment of young NEETs		The Ministry of Economy needs to improve the system and instruments for monitoring and reporting on persons covered by the measures provided from this sector, to digitalize this process and to integrate it with other IT systems such as the one available to the NES.
Ministry of Finance	Public administration authority	Partner in the realisation of tax benefits for the employment of young NEETs		The Ministry of Finance has an important role, given that this Ministry determines tax benefits for employers which employ certain categories of unemployed people, but in the future it is necessary to consider, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and MoLEVSA, the possibilities for relaxing the conditions for approving tax benefits for young people included in the Youth Guarantee.
Tax Administration	Public administration authority	Partner in monitoring the implementation of the YG		The Tax Administration (an administrative body within the Ministry of Finance) has an important role in the domain of monitoring and reporting on YG implementation, but data on the number of young people who found employment with tax benefits after participating in the YG can also be obtained from the CRCSI with which cooperation was subsequently established, but which is not recognized as a partner.
National Youth Council of Serbia (NYCS)	Association	Participates in the development of the Model for outreach and activation of young NEETs outside the system and the coordination of piloting outreach activities for young NEETs outside the system, and in mapping of available services to young people at the local level		NYCS participated in the organization of local preparatory meetings, together with the Coordinator of the Youth Guarantee and the National Employment Service, and presented the topic "The Role of Youth in the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee Piloting". NYCS participated in the meetings of the Core Expert Group of the Coordination Body in the Development of the Outreach Model.
Civil society organisations (CSOs)	CSOs	Implementation of outreach and activation activities for young NEETs outside the system		The training, which was intended for CSOs, established cooperation between workers, who will perform outreach and activation activities for NEET youth, with employment counsellors from three pilot branches of the NES and the YG Coordinator.
Employers' organisations	Social partners	Participation in dual education and non-formal types of work based learning Cooperation with the NES and the Ministry of Education		The Serbian Association of Employers participated in local preparatory meetings. In order to strengthen and empower the capacity of employers involved in dual education, a competition was implemented by the Ministry of Economy in cooperation with ODENQF.
Trade unions	Social partners	Participation in the preparation and adoption of normative and strategic documents Organising info sessions on the rights of young people at work and related to work		Representative trade unions participate in the Working group for the development of planning documents in the field of employment, monitoring implementation and preparing reports, as well as in the Working group for the development of the NSCO.
Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS)	Public administration authority	Monitoring macroeconomic indicators of the YG Establishing and coordinating the single Labour Market Information System (LMIS)		Cooperation has been established regarding the provision of data required for reporting in accordance with EMCO macroeconomic indicators.

Local self-governments	Local administration authorities	Ensuring compliance of local planning documents and coordination of local initiatives and activities relevant for the delivery of YG services		Local self-governments in which the YG is being piloted participated in local preparatory meetings, and in the following period, within the framework of the IPA 2020 - Technical Support project, it is planned to organize meetings and provide additional support to local self-governments in planning local planning documents in the field of employment with the aim of expanding the offer for young people included in the YG.
Standing Conference of Towns and Town Municipalities (SCTM)	Association	Support local self-governments in establishing appropriate platforms for continuous dialogue and cooperation between different local actors. Support in organising the exchange of experiences and examples of good practise between local self-governments in collecting information and mapping services provided to young people.		SCTM participated in local preparatory meetings.
The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	Agency for Development and Cooperation	Supporting the Ministry of Education and MoLEVSA in improving the strategic and normative framework, develop NQFS and NSCO. Participates in the development of the Model for outreach and activation of young NEETs who are outside the system, as well as the development of training programmes for reaching out to and activating young NEETs youth and the realization of trainings for reaching out to young NEETs. Development of individualized support for persons included in AEP measure (post-placement support).		In the reporting period (from 1 May 2024), the third phase of the SDC project " <i>Education to Employment - E2E</i> " began. The support of the MoLEVSA within this project is implemented on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding between that Ministry and the Swiss Confederation (through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation - SDC). In addition to the realized activities listed in the narrative of the report, in 2025, in cooperation with the project, an evaluation of the training measure for the needs of the labour market is planned in 2025 with recommendations that may be important for improving the design of this measure.
UN Women	United Nations Agency for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	Conducting research on reconciliation of work and family life of young NEET women		A study on the reconciliation of work and family life among young women who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) has been carried out. In 2024, an analysis of subsidized self-employment of women was agreed and initiated, with recommendations that may be important for improving the design of this measure.

2.2.2. Improvement of data collection, monitoring and evaluation of the Youth Guarantee

All authorities and organizations participating in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee are obliged to regularly exchange information on the number and structure of young people included in the Youth Guarantee, in compliance with the provisions of the Law on the Protection of Personal Data, for the purpose of reporting and monitoring the effects of the Youth Guarantee.

The National Employment Service submits to the Youth Guarantee Coordinator regular reports on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee piloting: reports on the participation of persons in the Youth Guarantee (monthly and upon request) as well as reports on the implementation of active employment policy measures and the expenditure of financial resources from various sources of funding (IPA 2020 - DG NES, RS budget, NES Financial Plan, etc.).

The method and deadlines for reporting on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee are also regulated through the Performance Agreement of the National Employment Service, which is signed annually by the minister responsible for employment affairs and the director of the National Employment Service.

All recognized partners, members of the Expert Group of the Coordination Body, actively participated in the preparation of the report on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

The Ministry of Economy submitted data on the implementation of the Programme for Encouraging Entrepreneurship Development through Financial Support for Business Start-ups and Youth in 2024, while the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia submitted data from the Labour Force Survey for 2024 for monitoring aggregate macroeconomic indicators for monitoring the Youth Guarantee.

The Central Register of Compulsory Social Insurance (CRCSI) has an important function for generating reports on the number and status of persons after inclusion in the Youth Guarantee, given the employer's obligation to register persons for compulsory social insurance/the obligation of entrepreneurs to register for compulsory social insurance. The exchange of data between the National Employment Service and CRCSI, which was previously regulated by law, operates without major challenges. This exchange is automated because the National Employment Service has access to CRCSI data.

Regarding the collection of data on young people who have been employed with tax benefits for employers, which are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance and implemented by the Tax Administration, there are no obstacles in this segment either, as the data can be obtained from the CRCSI database, since the CRCSI can identify young people under 30 years of age who have been employed with the aforementioned benefits and submit this data to the National Employment Service for recording it as subsidized youth employment in the Youth Guarantee.

It has been agreed with the Ministry of Education to review the necessary changes in the education information system that will enable data on a person's qualifications, completed training and other programmes, as well as programmes that a person is currently attending (for example, enrolled studies, FPEA, etc.), to be visible in the information system of the National Employment Service for persons who have been registered or are registering. This would remove the need to submit lists of persons for verification, as the data would be automatically available/visible. For the purposes of preparing the report for 2024, the Ministry of Education submitted data on young people who were included in the Youth Guarantee and who in the meantime continued their education and training independently, e.g. studies, functional primary education of adults, training with the PROAEA, etc., so that this data could also be recorded when preparing the report.

TABLE 2.2.2: KEY REFORMS AND INITIATIVES FOR IMPROVEMENT OF DATA COLLECTION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Name of the reform	Expected change	Means through which the change will be measured	Progress 2023-2024
Amendments to the normative framework in order to achieve a unified approach when connecting electronically with the appropriate	Universal monitoring of the situation of young people involved in the YG within the framework of various electronic records	Availability of data on the situation of each person registered in the YG in real time	There were no amendments of the normative framework.

records maintained by the competent authorities			
Name of the special initiative	Expected change	Means through which the change will be measured	Progress 2023-2024
Upgrade of the NES ICT platform for data management and processing, as well as reporting	Establishing and developing a framework for monitoring the YG, i.e., continuous monitoring of the situation of young people who have registered for inclusion in the YG	Availability of data for calculation of indicators of direct and follow-up monitoring	Planned for the upcoming period.
Ensuring the interoperability of the NES ICT platform with other institutions	Establishing and developing a framework for monitoring the YG, i.e., continuous monitoring of the situation of young people who have registered in the YG	Availability of data for calculation of indicators of follow-up monitoring	A meeting of relevant authorities was organized on the topic of interoperability of different databases in early January 2025 and to consider possibilities for providing automatic real-time reporting on the YG implementation.
Development of the internal procedures of the NES in order to enable the smooth implementation of the YG service provision system	Enabled provision of services in the YG system	Availability of data on services provided to young people from the YG	The procedures regulating work in the NES will continue to be updated and adjusted in the coming period, with the aim of the smooth implementation of the YG scheme
Establishing a unified labour market information system (LMIS)	Improved information on the state and trends in the labour market at the national and local level	Availability of data at the local level. Availability of data on job vacancies. Availability of data on required skills in the labour market.	The project under IPA 2022 was approved to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia at the end of 2024, and its implementation will begin in January 2025 and will last until the end of 2027.

2.2.2.1. Analysis and reporting on EMCO monitoring framework data

At the end of December 2024, the National Employment Service's unemployment records in the pilot branches of Niš, Kruševac and Sremska Mitrovica contained a total of 7,745 unemployed young people aged 15-29, of whom 1,095 persons were in the 15-19 age group, 2,911 in the 20-24 age group, and 3,739 in the 25-29 age group. During 2024, the total influx of youth to NES registry was 11.396 persons, while outflow was 9.931 persons.

At the end of December 2024, the National Employment Service registered 4,231 young people in the Niš Branch, of whom 2,197 were women, the Kruševac Branch had 2,223 young people, of whom 1,276 were women, and the Sremska Mitrovica Branch had 1,291 young people, of whom 760 were women.

The share of young people in the three pilot branches in the total number of young people registered as unemployed with the National Employment Service at the end of 2024 was 11.9%, down by 0.5 percentage points compared to December 2023 (12.4%).

In 2024, an influx of 11,396 young people aged 15-29 was recorded in the unemployment records of the three pilot branches of the National Employment Service, of whom **8,706 (76.4%) were registered in the Youth Guarantee**.

From 1 January 2024, when the Youth Guarantee pilot began, newly registered unemployed young people were given the option of choosing whether to register in the Youth Guarantee or not. In accordance with the recommendations of the ILO, from 1 August 2024, all young people up to 30 years of age would be automatically registered in the Youth Guarantee when registering with the National Employment Service, except for persons who are temporarily prevented from working in accordance with the regulations. Taking into account the above recommendation, young people who had been registered in the unemployment register since the beginning of 2024 and who were not registered in the Youth Guarantee were subsequently registered with the Youth Guarantee. The number of 8,706 includes young people who were immediately registered in the Youth Guarantee upon registration, as well as those young people who registered in the unemployment register before August 2024 and were subsequently registered in the Youth Guarantee. However, for a significant number of people registered in the unemployment register before August 2024, it was not possible to register in the Youth Guarantee subsequently, so the difference between 11,396 registered in the unemployment register and 8,706 registered in the Youth Guarantee (2,690 people) is made up of people who were temporarily prevented from working in accordance with the regulations,

as well as people who have in the meantime found a job, participated in active employment policy measures, and were deleted from the unemployment register, e.g. due to non-response, non-reporting, etc. as well as persons who have crossed the age limit, i.e. have meanwhile reached the age of 30.

According to data as of 31 December 2024, compared to 2023, a decrease in the number of unemployed young people in the pilot branches was recorded in all age categories (15-19, 20-24, 25-29) and for both sexes. The decrease in the number of unemployed young people in the pilot branches is greater than the national average (11.9%), i.e. in the Niš Branch it is 15.7%, in the Kruševac Branch 16% and in the Sremska Mitrovica Branch 14%. The reason for the decrease in the number of youth can be different – decrease in the total population of young persons, better labour market situation, migration factors, while the effects of Youth Guarantee will be analysed after the completion of the piloting phase.

Of the 8,706 young people registered in the Youth Guarantee in 2024, 4,399 young people were registered in this scheme in the last four months of 2024, so that by the end of 2024, the period for their timely exit from the Youth Guarantee had not elapsed.

According to the gender structure, out of a total of 8,706 young people (15-29) registered in the Youth Guarantee, 4,361 were male, while 4,345 were female (49.9%).

At the end of 2024, out of 8,706 young people registered in the Youth Guarantee, 8,232 young people had no previous experience in this scheme, i.e. they were registered in the Youth Guarantee for the first time. A total of 474 young people (5.4%) had previous experience (having left and re-entered the Youth Guarantee during the reporting period). Of these 474 young people, 423 had previously accepted an offer, while 51 had not accepted the offer.

Out of 423 young persons that returned to Youth Guarantee, 183 are persons aged 25-29, of whom 108 women, 163 persons are from age group 20-24, of whom 96 women, and 77 persons are from 15-24 age group, of whom 26 women.

Out of 423 young persons that returned to Youth Guarantee, 33 were previously given a subsidized employment offer or the continuation of employment, while 390 young persons was employed with no incentives.

On the basis of this data it can be concluded that subsidized employment offer and continuation of education and training were of higher quality, since the small number of persons returned to Youth Guarantee (33 of them out of 1,147, which represents 2.9% of those that received subsidized offers).

By age category, the highest number of young people registered in the Youth Guarantee was in the 25-29 age group – 3,364 young people (38.6%), followed by the 20-24 age group – 3,330 young people (38.2%), while the lowest number of young people was in the 15-19 age group – 2,012 young people (23.1%).

According to the educational structure, the largest number of young people had secondary education – 5,445 young people (62.5%), followed by those with higher education – 2,243 young people (25.8%), while the smallest number of young people was with no qualifications and low qualifications – 1,018 (11.7%).

In relation to the total number of young people registered in the Youth Guarantee, the number of young people from hard-to-employ categories was 1,128 (13%), of whom the largest number are Roma – 780 or 9%, followed by beneficiaries of cash social assistance - 241 or 2.8%, 60 persons with disabilities (0.7%), etc.

Out of the total number of young people registered in the Youth Guarantee, the majority were in the Niš Branch 5,114 (58.7%), followed by the Kruševac Branch 1,986 (22.8%), while the smallest number was recorded in the Sremska Mitrovica Branch 1,606 (18.4%).

Table A: EMCO monitoring framework: the newly registered

Entrants (inflow) to the Youth Guarantee scheme (§57)							
Breakdown by sex (§63) and age (§64)	Total entrants (§57)	Status on entry (§68-69)	Previous YG experience (§71)				
		Registered unemployed	None	With previous experience			Unknown
				Total	Did not take-up an offer	Took-up an offer	
Total (men and women)							
Total aged 15-29	8,706	8,706	8,232	474	51	423	-
15-19	2,012	2,012	1,923	89	12	77	-
20-24	3,330	3,330	3,143	187	24	163	-
25-29	3,364	3,364	3,166	198	15	183	-
Men							
Total aged 15-29	4,361	4,361	4,139	222	29	193	-
15-19	1,163	1,163	1,104	59	8	51	-
20-24	1,632	1,632	1,552	80	13	67	-
25-29	1,566	1,566	1,483	83	8	75	-
Women							
Total aged 15-29	4,345	4,345	4,093	252	22	230	-
15-19	849	849	819	30	4	26	-
20-24	1,698	1,698	1,591	107	11	96	-
25-29	1,798	1,798	1,683	115	7	108	-

Source: NES

Average monthly Youth Guarantee stock (Stocks) (for a 12-month period in 2024) was 2,087, of whom 1,723 young people (82.6%) were less than four months in the Youth Guarantee, 211 young people (10.1%) were between four and five months and 153 (7.3%) were between six and 11 months. There were no significant differences by gender and age categories.

Although the average number of youth in the Youth Guarantee with less than 4 months was 1,723 young people, it should be noted that 4,479 young people were registered in the Youth Guarantee in the last 4 months of 2024.

Table B: EMCO monitoring framework: Average annual stock of young people

Stocks: annual average stock of young persons registered in the YG scheme (preparatory phase) (§59-60)						
Breakdown by sex (§63) and age (§64)	Breakdown by duration (§73-76)					
Total (men and women)	Total	<4 months	4-5 months	6-11 months	12+ months	
Total aged 15-29	2,087	1,723	211	153	-	
15-19	503	416	55	32	-	
20-24	762	639	70	53	-	
25-29	822	668	86	68	-	
Men	Total	<4 months	4-5 months	6-11 months	12+ months	
Total aged 15-29	1,044	864	108	72	-	
15-19	281	236	29	16	-	
20-24	380	314	38	28	-	
25-29	383	314	41	28	-	
Women	Total	<4 months	4-5 months	6-11 months	12+ months	
Total aged 15-29	1,040	858	103	79	-	
15-19	220	179	26	15	-	
20-24	382	325	32	25	-	
25-29	438	354	45	39	-	

Source: NES

The total number of young people exiting the Youth Guarantee was 4,929, of whom 3,741 young people (76%) had a positive exit with offer of employment, education continuation or training, while 1,188 (24%) had a negative exit. Looking at gender and age categories, the largest share of positive exits in the total number of exits was for women in the age category 25-29 (803 out of 970 or 83%), and the smallest share was for men in the age category 20-24 (658 out of 946 or 70%). Women were significantly more represented than men in positive exits into further education and training (70%).

Of the total number of young people who had a negative exit (1,188) which included unemployment, inactivity or unknown outcome, the most young people - 1,119 young people or 94.2% had an unknown outcome. 55 young people or 4.6% had a negative exit into unemployment, while 14 young people or 1.2% had a negative exit into inactivity. Unknown outcome means that reliable information is not available on whether it is unemployment or inactivity.

Of the total number of young people with a positive exit (3,741), the majority were employed - 3,101 young people or 83%, then 637 young people or 17% continued education and training and three young people joined the Programme "My First Salary " (which can be classified as a positive outcome - traineeship).

Out of the total number of youth with a positive exit (3.741), 1.147 persons or 30,7% had a positive exit since they participated in some of subsidized offers: employment¹⁶ (696 or 60,7%), further education or training¹⁷ (448 or 39%) and traineeship¹⁸ (3).

The highest number of subsidized exits in the total number of exits (275 out of 965 persons or 28.5%) was represented by women in the age category 20-24, and the lowest number was represented by men aged 15-19 (109 out of 664 persons or 16%).

Of the total 3,101 employments, 696 (22.4%) were subsidized, while 2,405 young people (77.6%) were employed without subsidy. This indicates that many young people find work through preparation services, through employment mediation and independently.

If we look at the data on subsidized employment, out of the total number (696), the largest number of men in the age group 25-29 were employed in this way – 170 men or 24.4%, while the smallest number of subsidized employment was among women in the age group 15-19 – 33 women or 4.7%.

The largest number of young people was included in the following subsidized offers, where there are large differences by gender: self-employment 338 young people (111 women 32.8%) and professional practice 277 (202 women or 73%).

Of the total number of young people who have left the Youth Guarantee with a positive outcome, the highest number is in the Kruševac Branch (821 people or 81.9%), followed by the Sremska Mitrovica Branch (735 people or 77.5%), while the lowest number of young people with a positive outcome is in the Niš Branch (2,185 people or 73.4%).

Within individual branches, the Kruševac Branch had the most young people with a positive exit (821 people, 81.9%), followed by Sremska Mitrovica (735 people, 77.5%), while the Niš Branch had the lowest percentage (2,185 people, 73.4%).

Compared to the total number of young people exiting the Youth Guarantee (4,929), 4,256 young people exited the Youth Guarantee within four months.

Of the total number of young people who exited the Youth Guarantee within 4 months, 3,265 young people (76.7%) had a positive exit, and 991 young people (23.3%) had a negative exit. In the structure of negative exits, the most young people – 936 or 94.5% – have an unknown outcome, 43 young people or 4.3% exited into unemployment, while 12 young people or 1.2% exited into inactivity.

Of the total 3,265 positive exits within four months, 997 young people (30.6%) accepted the subsidized offer.

When it comes to employment, 2,690 young people found employment, which accounts for 82.4% of the total positive exits within four months (3,265), of whom 586 young people (21.8%) were employed with a subsidized offer, while 2,104 young people (78.2%) were employed without a subsidized offer.

When viewed by gender and age groups, similar conclusions are reached as for total exits.

In 2024, 780 Roma were registered in the Youth Guarantee.

The total exit of Roma from the Youth Guarantee was 423, of whom 361 within four months.

269 Roma had a positive exit from the Youth Guarantee, of whom 240 within four months.

¹⁶ Subsidized employment and self-employment, internship, practical knowledge acquiring, public works, tax incentives etc.

¹⁷ Professional practice, training for the labor market, training for the known employer, Functional Elementary Adult Education etc.

¹⁸ „My First salary“ program

Table C: EMCO monitoring framework: Exits

Exits												
Exits (outflow) from the YG scheme (preparatory phase) , from 1.1.2024 to 31.12.2024												
All exits	Total (All exits)	Breakdown by destination										
		Positive destinations								Negative destinations		Unknown
		Total				Of which subsidised						
		Total positive	Employment	Education	Traineeship	Total	Employment	Education	Traineeship	Unemployment	Inactivity	
Total exits (all durations)												
Total (men&women)	4,929	3,741	3,101	637	3	1,147	696	448	3	55	14	1,119
15-19	1,121	828	705	122	1	206	108	97	1	13	2	278
20-24	1,911	1,420	1,145	274	1	457	266	190	1	21	4	466
25-29	1,897	1,493	1,251	241	1	484	322	161	1	21	8	375
Men	2,537	1,829	1,634	192	3	510	382	125	3	17	4	687
15-19	664	481	434	46	1	109	75	33	1	3	1	179
20-24	946	658	588	69	1	182	137	44	1	8		280
25-29	927	690	612	77	1	219	170	48	1	6	3	228
Women	2,392	1,912	1,467	445		637	314	323		38	10	432
15-19	457	347	271	76		97	33	64		10	1	99
20-24	965	762	557	205		275	129	146		13	4	186
25-29	970	803	639	164		265	152	113		15	5	147
Exits within 4 months												
Total (men&women)	4,256	3,265	2,690	572	3	997	586	408	3	43	12	936
15-19	984	737	624	112	1	178	88	89	1	10	2	235
20-24	1,683	1,263	1,009	253	1	408	232	175	1	17	4	399
25-29	1,589	1,265	1,057	207	1	411	266	144	1	16	6	302
Men	2,164	1,580	1,414	163	3	426	316	107	3	12	4	568
15-19	581	427	383	43	1	94	62	31	1	1	1	152
20-24	822	580	519	60	1	157	119	37	1	5	0	237
25-29	761	573	512	60	1	175	135	39	1	6	3	179
Women	2,092	1,685	1,276	409		571	270	301		31	8	368
15-19	403	310	241	69	0	84	26	58	0	9	1	83
20-24	861	683	490	193	0	251	113	138	0	12	4	162
25-29	828	692	545	147	0	236	131	105	0	10	3	123

Source: NES

Table D: EMCO monitoring framework: YG monitoring indicators

Panel A

Main direct monitoring indicator: The share of the average number of young people in the Youth Guarantee preparatory phase **after four months** from the date of registration compared to the average number of young people in the Youth Guarantee preparatory phase was **17.4%**. *For women, this indicator was 17.5%. (EU in 2022 was 62.8%)*

The share of the average number of young persons in the Youth Guarantee preparatory phase **after six months** from the date of registration compared to the average number of young people in the Youth Guarantee preparatory phase was **7.3%**. *For women, this indicator was 7.6%.*

Indicators (all indicators for reference year T)

Direct monitoring indicators

Main indicator (§87-88): Proportion of young people in the YG preparatory phase beyond the 4 month target

Average annual stock of young people still in the YG preparatory phase 4 [6, 12] months after the date of registration /
Average annual stock of young people in the YG preparatory phase (%)

Still in YG service after:	All young persons aged 15-29			Young persons aged 15-19			Young persons aged 20-24			Young persons aged 25-29		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
4 months	17.4%	17.2%	17.5%	17.3%	16.0%	18.6%	16.1%	17.4%	14.9%	18.7%	18.0%	19.2%
6 months	7.3%	6.9%	7.6%	6.4%	5.7%	6.8%	7.0%	7.4%	6.5%	8.3%	7.3%	8.9%
12 months	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Additional direct monitoring indicator: The share of young people exiting the Youth Guarantee with a positive known exit **within four months** in relation to the total number of exits from the Youth Guarantee was **66.2%**.

For women, this indicator was 70.4% and was significantly higher than for men, 62.3%.

Women in the age group 25-29 had the highest exit in employment 56.2%, while for men, employment was highest in the age group 15-19, 57.7%. *For Roma included in the Youth Guarantee, this indicator was 56.7%.*

Out of the 3,265 young people with a timely positive exit, within four months, from the Youth Guarantee in 2024, 1,685 were women (51.6%) and 240 were Roma (7.4%).

Panel B

Supplementary indicator (§89-90):

Positive and timely exits from the YG preparatory phase

Number of young people exiting the YG service with a positive known outcome within 4 months / total exits from the YG service (%)

Destination:	All young persons aged 15-29			Young persons aged 15-19			Young persons aged 20-24			Young persons aged 25-29		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
All known destinations	66.2%	62.3%	70.4%	65.7%	64.3%	67.8%	66.1%	61.3%	70.8%	66.7%	61.8%	71.3%
Employment	54.6%	55.7%	53.3%	55.7%	57.7%	52.7%	52.8%	54.9%	50.8%	55.7%	55.2%	56.2%
Education	11.6%	6.4%	17.1%	10.0%	6.5%	15.1%	13.2%	6.3%	20.0%	10.9%	6.5%	15.2%
Apprenticeship	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Traineeship	0.1%	0.1%	:	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Of which subsidised	20.2%	16.8%	23.9%	15.9%	14.2%	18.4%	21.4%	16.6%	26.0%	21.7%	18.9%	24.3%
Employment (subsidised)	11.9%	12.5%	11.3%	7.9%	9.3%	5.7%	12.1%	12.6%	11.7%	14.0%	14.6%	13.5%
Education (subsidised)	8.3%	4.2%	12.6%	7.9%	4.7%	12.7%	9.2%	3.9%	14.3%	7.6%	4.2%	10.8%
Apprenticeship (subsidised)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Traineeship (subsidised)	0.1%	0.1%	:	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%

2.2.3. Optimal usage of financial resources

The estimated costs of policy reforms and initiatives (measures) planned in the YG Implementation Plan amount to approximately RSD 4.5 billion (approximately EUR 37.7 million), while the realized costs in the reporting period for 2023 and 2024 amount to RAD 3.9 billion (approximately EUR 32.4 million). During the piloting phase some of the reforms and initiatives were financed from additional sources of funds, mainly from donor funds. Out of the total funds provided, 21.5% was financed from the state budget, 2.7% from EU funds, while 75.8% was provided from donor funds. This funding structure illustrates the importance of donor and EU funds in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee scheme, but also the importance of domestic funding as basic stable support.

The IPA 2020 project in the field of education began implementation of project activities in the first half of 2024. In the previous period, the necessary experts were engaged and the preparation of analyses began, which in 2025 will be a relevant analytical basis for proposing improvements to the NQF system and lifelong learning, so the expenditure of funds is expected to be presented in the next reporting period.

Within the YG Implementation Plan, the SDC project "Education to Employment - E2E" planned funds only for 2023, as the third phase of the project was not planned or budgeted at the time of the preparation of this Plan. Since the third phase of the project began with implementation on 1 May 2024, and the second phase, which was supposed

to be completed on 31 December 2023, was extended until 30 April 2024, the report presents activities carried out in 2023 and 2024, as well as funds spent in both observed years.

A detailed overview of the funds spent, the number of beneficiaries involved, as well as the costs per beneficiary, by all sources of funding, as well as by the phases of the Youth Guarantee scheme, is presented in the Annex to this report.

The analysis shows that, given that this is the first year of piloting the Youth Guarantee, the largest part of the funds — around 84.7% — is directed to the mapping and early intervention phase, with donor funds participating with as much as 90.4% in this phase, while the state budget participation is 75.1%. The offer phase, with a participation of 6.5% in total funds, is characterized by the largest share of European Union funds — as much as 66.9%, while the state budget participates with 21.7%, which indicates significant cooperation between national and European sources of funding in this key phase of the scheme. The preparation and strong delivery mechanisms phases are currently less financially covered, with a total share of 0.4% and 0.9% respectively, and it is necessary to further strengthen capacities in these segments for the coming years. The outreach phase has not started the implementation of the funding of outreach activities in 2024, which will be the subject of monitoring in future reports.

This funding structure clearly shows that donor funds play a key role in the mapping and early intervention phase, while European Union funds mostly support the supply phase. At the same time, the participation of the state budget is significant in all phases, especially in the mapping and early intervention phase and the supply phase.

During the coming years of piloting, and especially after the launch of the Youth Guarantee in the territory of the entire Republic of Serbia, it is expected that this funding structure will evolve with a gradual increase and diversification of funding sources.

This dynamic provides a solid basis for the sustainability and expansion of the Youth Guarantee scheme, but at the same time points to the need for more intensive engagement in the preparation phases and strong delivery mechanisms, as well as the importance of maintaining and strengthening the budgetary participation for the sake of stability and continuity of support.

Additional funds were provided for the implementation of active employment policy measures within the Financial Plan of the National Employment Service and are marked in Table 2.2.3 with *.

2.2.4. Development of strong delivery mechanisms for competent authorities and partners

The main challenges in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in the Republic of Serbia are related to key reforms regarding the improvement of regulations in the field of education, labour and employment and youth policy, whose adoption is necessary for the successful completion of the piloting phase and starting the full implementation of the Youth Guarantee from 2027. These reform processes have been initiated, but additional efforts are needed to adopt the planned regulations by the end of 2026.

The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, as the Coordinator of the Youth Guarantee, is responsible for coordinating, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan. The mentioned responsibilities, including regular tasks related to creating employment policy and others, are performed by one organizational unit within the Department for Labour and Employment, which is why it is necessary to increase the number of employees in the coming period and build their capacity to perform very complex, extensive and responsible tasks.

The existing capacities of the main implementing partner, the National Employment Service, still need to be strengthened, both in terms of increasing the number of employment counsellors and in terms of further training in order to improve the quality of services provided to unemployed persons and employers.

In the previous period, activities were carried out to strengthen the administrative capacities of the National Employment Service. Seven youth counsellors were employed in the pilot branches in December 2023 and January 2024. Although after a year, they are trained to perform the duties of counsellors, there is still a need for their training to work especially with young people, who register in the unemployment register and the Youth Guarantee but are still not motivated or discouraged to actively seek a job or to engage in active employment policy measures. Therefore, it is necessary to organize additional training for employment counsellors who work with young people who are discouraged or not motivated to actively search for a job.

The National Employment Service must also be further strengthened with knowledge so that it can introduce statistical profiling, online (pre)registration of the unemployed as soon as possible, accelerate the implementation of public procurement procedures for the selection of training providers, and improve the analytical capacities of employees in order to better monitor the situation in the national and local labour market and prepare periodic reports necessary for the work of employment counsellors.

Furthermore, at the request of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, a technical mission of experts from the International Labour Organization was implemented from 7 to 10 May 2024, which included visits to pilot branches of the National Employment Service to provide support regarding challenges during the piloting.

A Report of the International Labour Organization has been prepared with conclusions and recommendations for improving the work process, monitoring and reporting methods, and through the Table of Activities for Improving the Piloting Process of the Youth Guarantee Program, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and the National Employment Service regularly monitor and update the implemented activities.

Based on an additional request from the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs for technical support from the International Labour Organization, a technical mission of experts was organized in early 2025 to prepare a Functional Analysis of the National Employment Service, i.e. to review the existing capacities of this institution, with the aim of improving the work process and preparing for the full implementation of the Youth Guarantee from 2027.

The main findings and recommendations of the Functional Analysis of the National Employment Service of the NES indicate the need to improve the organizational structure of the National Employment Service, which entails, among other things, an increase in the number of employees performing core functions (providing services to unemployed persons and employers) in relation to supporting functions. Reducing administrative work for counsellors, digitalization of support tasks, a clear and improved work process that represents the basis for the application of modern methods and techniques of work as well as more intensive work with unemployed persons, and consequently can contribute to improving the performance and effects of services and measures. Also, the introduction of modern human resources development practices (application of a competitive procedure during employment with a focus on employee competences, application of position rotation mechanisms in order to improve employee competences, quality offers of internal training based on individual and organizational needs, etc.) are necessary for increasing the performance, adaptability and motivation of employees.

Improved access to employers, strengthened mediation services, especially for the long-term unemployed, strengthened analytical capacities of employees and the establishment of a developed performance management system are key requirements placed on the National Employment Service in order to increase the efficiency of active employment policy services and measures.

One of the identified challenges in the first year of piloting is the insufficient number of PROAEAs as well as training programmes (the outcomes of which should lead to partial or full qualifications). This is directly related to the possibility of providing and implementing a quality education and training offer, which is why it is necessary for the Ministry of Education and other competent authorities in the education sector to intensify activities in order to provide a greater number of PROAEAs and accredited training programmes in accordance with the needs of the labour market, but also to expand their regional availability. Additional activities in this direction are expected within the IPA 2020 project *"Increased supply and diversification of accredited training in the field of non-formal education and adult education training providers"*, which has started its implementation.

In cooperation with the GIZ, a survey of employers' needs was initiated, which should result in a report and projections of the necessary knowledge and skills at the national, regional and district levels, with the aim of better responding to labour market demands and meeting employers' employment needs. Mapping of civil society organizations at the local level showed that the capacities of these organizations, which should implement activities for reaching out to and activating NEET youth, are insufficient. In this regard, by developing an Outreach Model and training youth workers in accordance with this model, it was ensured that outreach activities are implemented in accordance with the defined methodology and minimum service standards. The implementation of outreach activities will be monitored in the coming period in order to determine the needs for revision of the Outreach Model based on experience and achieved results, but also to continue to develop the capacity of civil society organizations.

In order to inform relevant local stakeholders about the Youth Guarantee scheme, local preparatory meetings were organized in pilot branches of the National Employment Service at the end of December 2023, which were attended by around 120 representatives of partners at the local level (local self-governments, civil society organizations, employers' associations, regional chambers of commerce, schools, NES branches) and in the coming period, it is planned to organize additional meetings and provide support to local self-governments in planning local planning documents in the field of employment in order to expand the offer for young people registered in the Youth Guarantee.

In order to prepare the report, all necessary data was provided and data exchange organized between authorities and institutions. A meeting of relevant authorities was also organized on the topic of interoperability of various databases in early January 2025 and to consider the possibility of ensuring automatic reporting in real time on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

In order to better inform the public and promote this scheme, an information campaign was launched. The Youth Guarantee logo was created, brochures were created and printed to inform NEET youth, partners and the general public about the Youth Guarantee, two videos were made, an electronic address for communication was opened (garancijazamlade@minrzs.gov.rs), as well as the Youth Guarantee web page within the website of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs (<https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr/garancija-za-mlade>).

TABLE 2.2.4: KEY REFORMS AND INITIATIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF STRONG DELIVERY MECHANISMS

Name of the reform/initiative	Key objective(s)	Target group, including the number of people covered (if available)	Name and role of the organisation in the lead and cooperating partners	Timetable for implementation	Implementation cost, if applicable and source of funding	Progress 2023-2024
Planned reforms						
Reform of the organisational structure of the NES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the organisational and personnel structure of the NES at the national and local levels in order to ensure efficient and timely delivery of services of the YG 	NES	NES	2024-2026	Source: Financial Plan of the NES (no additional financial resources are required)	It is planned to pilot a new concept of working with service beneficiaries in the Belgrade NES Branch Office. A request for technical support has been submitted to ILO, with the aim of conducting a functional analysis of the NES, in order to reorganize and improve the work process.
Planned initiatives						
Hiring and training of additional human resources in the Department for Labour and Employment, MoLEVSA - employment of civil servants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the coordination capacities of MoLEVSA as YG Coordinator 	MoLEVSA - Sector for Labour and Employment - 2 civil servants	MoLEVSA Ministry of Finance	2024-2026	Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia Source: (MoLEVSA and NES) IPA 2020 - Technical support	The document – Strengthening the system of coordination of public policies for the implementation of YG and mechanisms of mainstreaming at the national and local level, was prepared.
Engagement of additional human resources in NES pilot branches -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide individualised access and support to NEET youth registered in the YG Ensure timely preparation services and provision of a 	NES pilot branch - 7 newly employed youth employment counsellors	NES Ministry of Finance	2024-2026	RSD 30,240,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES	In the three NES branch offices where the YG is being piloted since January 2024, an additional seven youth

employment of youth counsellors	<p>quality offer to young NEETs during the pilot phase of the YG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure improved cooperation with employers 					<p>counsellors have been hired to provide advisory support to young people in the job search process.</p> <p>The NES has also recognized the need to further strengthen the capacity of the pilot branch offices to work with employers. Several meetings have been organized with the offices piloting the YG to exchange information relevant to the piloting process.</p>
Inclusion in AEP measures available throughout the year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a smooth path for young NEETs from registration in the YG to receiving an offer 	Unemployed Young NEETs	NES (lead) MoLEVSA Ministry of Finance	2024-2026	<p>Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and Financial Plan of the NES</p> <p>Source: IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES</p>	YG public calls are available throughout the year.
Upgrade and continuous improvement of the NES ICT platform for monitoring the YG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect the necessary data for direct and subsequent monitoring of the YG • Ensure data exchange and interoperability 	Unemployed Young NEETs	NES	2023-2026	<p>RSD 10,200,000.00 Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia (MoLEVSA) and IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES</p> <p>RSD 9,000,000.00 Source: IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant to NES</p>	<p>Cooperation has been established with CRCSI to obtain data on employment with tax benefits for persons who were in the Youth Guarantee.</p> <p>Activities are planned to connect the databases of the NES and the Ministry of Education (JISP), in order to enable the download of both data on acquired qualifications and on the inclusion of persons in educational programs.</p>
Strengthening the capacity of CSOs and YOs to implement outreach activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure effective outreach towards young NEETs for their inclusion in the YG • Ensure that provision of outreach activities and monitoring of the effects of outreach activities is in line with the standards 	CSOs/youth workers YOs	MoTY MoLEVSA NYCS NAYWP SDC - "Education to Employment – E2E" Project	2023-2026	<p>RSD 1,700,000.00 - 2023 Source: SDC - "Education to Employment – E2E" Project</p>	<p>A Training Program for Outreach and Activation of NEET Youth Outside the System was developed. A three-day training and additional info session was held for workers from CSOs who, based on a contract with the NES, will</p>

	established within the Model for outreach					implement activities to reach out to inactive young NEETs. The training was attended by eight CSO representatives and eight employment counsellors from the NES piloting branch offices.
Strengthening the capacity of partners to implement the YG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure commitment of partners to actively work on reforms and initiatives of the YG Improve the capacities of institutions and bodies from the education sector, social protection, youth sector, etc. for the implementation of YG services Create a Guide to the YG for all partners, promotion Organise employer forums Organise info sessions on the rights of youth at work and related to work 	Ministries Educational institutions PROAEAs QA Social protection institutions Employers Trade unions etc.	MoLEVSA NES MoE ODENQF Trade unions	2023-2026	Source: (MoLEVSA and NES) IPA 2020 - Technical support	Youth Guarantee logo has been designed. An electronic address for communication has been opened (garancijazamlade@minrz.s.gov.rs). Brochures on the YG scheme have been created and printed. Two YG videos have been made. A web page for the YG has been set up within the MoLEVSA website (https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr/garancija-za-mlade). In 2024, 17 forums with employers on the Youth Guarantee were held in pilot branches.
Preparation of local partners for the implementation of YG piloting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all recognised actors at the local level are prepared for the start of YG piloting Organise local preparatory meetings Prepare the necessary analyses of local labour markets 	NES branch offices LSGUs Educational institutions PROAEAs Local employment councils Employers Trade unions CSOs YOs Regional chambers of commerce	MoLEVSA	2023-2024	Source: Budget of the Republic of Serbia and Financial Plan of the NES	Local preparatory meetings were organized in pilot branch offices in late December 2023, and were attended by 120 representatives of local partners.

3. Conclusions

The Republic of Serbia has confirmed the *Western Balkans Declaration on Ensuring Sustainable Labour Market Integration of Young People* and has agreed to work on the gradual introduction of the Youth Guarantee scheme, given that the position of young people in the labour market of the Republic of Serbia is less favourable compared to the general population, as well as compared to their peers in the European Union. The piloting of the Youth Guarantee has begun, which aims to provide young people with a quality offer of employment, continued education or training within four months.

In accordance with the aforementioned Declaration, the Youth Guarantee has been identified as one of the priorities of the political plan and program, through allocation of necessary human resources and financial resources, as well as the defining of the priority objective related to the Youth Guarantee in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Government Program, but also by establishing success indicators within the Reform Agenda of the Republic of Serbia.

In the period from 2023 to 2024, the implementation of the Youth Guarantee showed significant progress, although certain challenges arose that delayed some activities. In 2023, the main activities were focused on preparing for the introduction of the scheme, while in 2024, the piloting was successfully launched in three branch offices of the National Employment Service. The results showed good progress in the inclusion of young people in the program, with a large number of positive exits, mostly in the form of employment.

The challenges in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee relate to key reforms in the fields of education, labour and employment, as well as youth policy. The adoption and effective implementation of these regulations are necessary for the successful completion of the piloting phase and the start of the full implementation of the Youth Guarantee from 2027. In 2023, amendments to the Law on the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia and the Law on Dual Education were adopted, while activities to improve and adopt the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance, the Law on Traineeship, the Law on the National Standard Classification of Occupations, and the Law on Youth were initiated or planned in the coming period. Although reform processes have already been initiated, additional efforts are needed to adopt these regulations by the end of 2026.

The effective implementation of the Youth Guarantee requires significant capacity building to perform complex and responsible tasks, both in the coordination and implementation of the scheme, and in monitoring the results of its implementation. In the previous period, the National Employment Service improved the quality of services for young unemployed people by employing counsellors and organizing training. However, in the coming period, it will be necessary to increase the number of employees and improve capacities, both in the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, and in the National Employment Service, in order to more effectively implement the Youth Guarantee.

Challenges in the preparatory actions for starting outreach activities to inactive youth were overcome in early 2025, so outreach activities started in 2025.

Although the piloting was successfully started, some activities, such as the implementation of short training courses, labour market training and mentoring services for young people who were granted a self-employment subsidy, were not implemented as planned during 2024. The main reason for the delay was the longer than expected public procurement procedure, but in the end all procedures were successfully completed and this set of measures and services will be available to young people in early 2025. The challenges that have arisen will be subject to review and resolution in the coming period, with the aim of ensuring faster and more efficient implementation of the scheme.

The lack of a sufficient number of PROAEA and accredited training programs in line with labour market needs, as well as their regional availability, were factors that slowed down the implementation of quality education and training. In the coming period, the Ministry of Education and other competent authorities in the education sector will intensify activities to ensure a greater number of PROAEA and accredited training programs in line with labour market needs, but also to expand their regional availability. These activities will also be implemented within the IPA 2020 project "Increased supply and diversification of accredited training in the field of non-formal education and adult education training providers.

On-line (pre)registration of youth and statistical profiling were not introduced in 2024, but are expected to be implemented during 2025.

In 2024, it was ensured that active employment policy measures were available throughout the year, through funding from various sources. The reasons for the less successful implementation of certain active employment policy measures were analysed, and new public calls with more clearly defined target groups of young people were launched in early 2025.

During 2025, it is expected that the obstacles and challenges in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee will be overcome, and all activities will be intensified to make up for the delay in 2024. In addition, the start of outreach activities will lead to a greater influx of young people into the Youth Guarantee, and the introduction of online (pre-)registration and statistical profiling will facilitate and accelerate the processes of YG registration and ensuring of adequate offers in the shortest possible time.

The assumption on which this scheme is based is that young people are not a homogeneous group and that it is necessary to adapt measures to increase employability to their individual needs. The emphasis will be on job mediation, i.e. matching employers and young people, as the primary tool for preparing young people with no or limited barriers to enter the labour market. Cooperation with employers at the local level is a key factor for success. The dedicated engagement of all institutions and partners involved in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan is expected, along with strengthening partnerships with local self-governments. In order to achieve positive results, and especially due to the expansion of the scheme to the entire territory of Serbia from 2027, it is necessary to ensure sufficient institutional, human and financial capacities that are in line with the growing needs. The experiences and final evaluation of the pilot process will be of particular importance for the development of a new Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan for the period from 2027 to 2029. The successful implementation of the scheme requires continuous financing and adaptation of services and measures of active employment policy, i.e. the Youth Guarantee offer.

4. Annex

TABLE 2.2.3: YOUTH GUARANTEE FUNDING

Name of the reform/initiative	Years for which funding is planned	Sources and levels of funding			Planned number of beneficiaries	Costs per beneficiary
MAPPING AND EARLY INTERVENTION		Budget of the Republic of Serbia	EU/IPA	Other funds	In total	
Planned reforms						
Amendments to relevant laws and by-laws in the field of education	2023-2026		(Ministry of Education) RSD 18,000,000.00 IPA 2020*	RSD 13,200,000.00 SDC project "Support for the reform of the dual system of secondary vocational education and the National Framework of Qualifications in the light of lifelong learning in Serbia"	N/A	N/A
Development of the career guidance and counselling (CGC) system	2023-2026	RSD 2,800,000.00 – 2023 (RSD 800,000.00 Ministry of Education and RSD 2,000,000.00 MoTY) RSD 3,800,000.00	(ODENQF) RSD 12,000,000.00 IPA 2020*	RSD 3,600,000.00 - 2023 SDC - "Education to Employment" Programme RSD 2,768,000.00 – 2023	N/A	N/A

Year	Allocation of the planned funds			Number of beneficiaries	Costs per beneficiary
	Budget of the Republic of Serbia	EU/IPA	Other funds	Total	
2023-2024		2,101,705.00 RSD (ERASMUS EU projects)	20,357,037.00 RSD SDC project "Support for the reform of the dual system of secondary vocational education and the National Framework of Qualifications in the light of lifelong learning in Serbia" 4.447.665.00 RSD SDC – "Education to Employment – E2E" Project	N/A	N/A
2023-2024	Ministry of Education 1,512,000.00 RSD 2023 MoTY 2023 – 6,200,000.00 RSD 2024 – 8,700,000.00 RSD		RSD 1,500,000.00 SDC - "Education to Employment – E2E" Project RSD	N/A	N/A

		– 2024 (RSD 800,000.00 Ministry of Education and RSD 3,000,000.00 MoTY) RSD 2,900,000.00 – 2025 (RSD 900,000.00 Ministry of Education and RSD 2,000,000.00 MoTY) RSD 900,000.00 – 2026 (Ministry of Education)		The Youth Alliance of the Association 'Novi Sad Youth Capital of Europe – OPENS RSD 24,000,000.00 Financial gap for CGC Portal**		
Establishing legislative and institutional frameworks for further development of NSCO	2023-2026	Current costs of employees		RSD 6,000,000.00 - 2023 SDC - "Education to Employment" Programme	N/A	N/A
Planned initiatives (measures)						
Mapping of young NEETs 2021/2022	2023			Technical support EC-ILO	N/A	N/A
Identification of young NEETs who are on the NES registry, but distant from the labour market	2025-2026	Current costs of employees			N/A	N/A
Research on reconciliation of work and family life of young NEET women	2023		UN Women Project „Support to Priority Actions for Gender		N/A	N/A

			8,020,132 ¹⁹ SDC - "Education to Employment – E2E" Project RSD 845,126.00 2024 The Youth Alliance of the Association 'Novi Sad Youth Capital of Europe – OPENS		
2023-2024			RSD 10,594,388 SDC - "Education to Employment – E2E" Project	N/A	N/A
2023				N/A	N/A
2023-2024				N/A	N/A
2023				N/A	N/A

¹⁹ This amount includes the development of three occupational standards, which are also included in the amount spent within the reform "Establishment of a legislative and institutional framework for the further development of the National Occupational Standards".

			Equality in Serbia II“											
Mapping services and available support for young people at the local level	2023-2025		IPA 2020 – Technical support		N/A	N/A						N/A	N/A	
Expansion of dual education coverage	2023-2026	(ODENQF) RSD 10,000,000.00 - 2023 RSD 10,000,000.00 - 2024 RSD 10,000,000.00 - 2025 RSD 10,000,000.00 - 2026		RSD 19,416,000.00 SDC project “Support for the reform of the dual system of secondary vocational education and the National Framework of Qualifications in the light of lifelong learning in Serbia”	N/A	N/A			2023-2024	ODENQF RSD 8,800,000.00 - 2023 RSD 10,000,000.00 - 2024		RSD 12,579,786.00 SDC project “Support for the reform of the dual system of secondary vocational education and the National Framework of Qualifications in the light of lifelong learning in Serbia”	N/A	N/A
Expanding the offer of non-formal education	2023-2026	(ODENQF) RSD 296,000,000.00 - 2023 RSD 296,000,000.00 - 2024 RSD 296,000,000.00 - 2025 RSD 296,000,000.00 - 2026	(Ministry of Education) RSD 24,000,000.00 IPA 2020*	RSD 60,000,000.00 Financial gap to support the development of a training centre**	N/A	N/A			2023-2024	ODENQF RSD 296,000,000.00 - 2023 RSD 296,000,000.00 - 2024		RSD 2,609,358,670.00 SDC project “Support for the reform of the dual system of secondary vocational education and the National Framework of Qualifications in the light of lifelong learning in Serbia”	N/A	N/A
Implementation and continuous improvement of the RPL procedure	2023-2026		(Ministry of Education) RSD 66,720,000.00 IPA 2020*		N/A	N/A			2023-2024				N/A	N/A

Name of the reform/initiative	Years for which funding is planned	Sources and levels of funding			Number of beneficiaries planned	Costs per beneficiary		Year	Implementation of the planned funds			Number of beneficiaries	Costs per beneficiary
		Budget of the Republic of Serbia	EU/IPA	Other funds					Budget of the Republic of Serbia	EU/IPA	Other funds		
OUTREACH					Total							Total	
Planned reforms													
The development and adoption of the new Law on Youth	2024 and 2025	(MoTY) RSD 1,000,000.00 - 2024 RSD 1,000,000.00 - 2025	/		N/A	N/A		2023-2024	MoTY 2024 – 1,000,000.00 RSD	/		N/A	N/A
Development of a Model for outreach and activation of young NEETs outside the system	2023	/	(MoLEVSA and NES) IPA 2020 – Technical support		N/A	N/A		2023				N/A	N/A
Planned initiatives (measures)													
Professionalization of youth work	2023-2025	(MoTY) RSD 5,520,000.00 - 2023 RSD 5,520,000.00 - 2024 RSD 6,020,000.00 - 2025	/	RSD 393,111,000.00 2023-2025 The Foundation Tempus	N/A	N/A		2023-2024	MoTY 2023 – RSD 5,462,000.00 2024 – RSD 8,465,000.00	/	RSD 131,488,567.00 - 2023 The Foundation Tempus RSD 143,283,956.00 - 2024 The Foundation Tempus RSD 349,418.00 ²⁰ SDC -	N/A	N/A

²⁰ This is an amount that has already been included in the amount spent under the reform "Establishment of a legislative and institutional framework for the further development of the National Health Insurance Scheme".

											"Education to Employment – E2E" Project		
Piloting of the Model for reaching and activating young NEETs who are outside the system - implementation of outreach activities by CSOs	2024-2026	(MoLEVSA) RSD 972,000.00 – 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES)	RSD 2,628,000.00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES	RSD 12,000 Financial gap for piloting of the Model for reaching and activating young NEETs who are outside the system in 2025 and 2026	8.666	RSD 1,800.00		2024	/	/	/	/	/
Name of the reform/initiative	Years for which funding is planned	Sources and levels of funding			Number of beneficiaries planned	Costs per beneficiary		Year	Allocation of the planned funds			Number of beneficiaries	Costs per beneficiary
		Budget of the Republic of Serbia	EU/IPA	Other funds					Budget of the Republic of Serbia	EU/IPA	Other funds		
PREPARATION					Total								
Planned reforms													
Amendments to the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance	2023-2025	Amendments to the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance		RSD 5,500,000.00 - 2023 SDC - "Education to Employment" Programme	N/A	N/A		2023-2024			RSD 4,966,143.00 SDC - "Education to Employment – E2E" Project	N/A	N/A
Planned initiatives (measures)													
Introduction and continuous improvement of online (pre)registration and statistical profiling	2023-2026	(MoLEVSA) RSD 2,754,000.00 - 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES) RSD 1,800,000 -	RSD 7,446,000.00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES RSD 7,200,000.00		N/A	N/A		2023-2024	RSD 2,670,165.00 (co-financing Direct grant to NES)	RSD 7,219,335.00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES		N/A	N/A

		2026 (OP co-financing)	IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant for NES									
Strengthening the capacity of employment counsellors for individualised access to unemployed persons	2023-2026	/	(MoLEVSA and NES) IPA 2020 - Technical support		N/A	N/A	2023-2024				N/A	N/A
Improvement of the procedure and technique for agreeing and revising individual employment plans	2023-2026	/	(MoLEVSA and NES) IPA 2020 - Technical support		N/A	N/A	2023-2024				N/A	N/A
Implementation and continuous improvement of the mediation in employment	2023-2026	Current costs of employees	/		N/A	N/A	2023-2024				N/A	N/A
Improvement of cooperation with employers	2023-2026	(MoLEVSA) RSD 48,600.00 - 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES)	RSD 131,400.00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES (MoLEVSA and NES) IPA 2020 - Technical support		N/A	N/A	2023-2024	MoLEVSA RSD 19,818.00 – 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES)	RSD 53,582.00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES		N/A	N/A
Development of additional/complementary employment services	2023-2026	Cash allowance for child care (MoLEVSA) RSD 3,257,940.00 – 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES) RSD 1,134,000.00 - 2026	RSD 8,808,504.00 in 2024 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES RSD 4.536.000,00 – IPA OP 2024-2027 - Direct grant to NES RSD	RSD 11,371,500.00 Financial gap for allowance for child care for 2025	Cash allowance for child care 701 unemployed youth (single parents of child/children under 7 or families where one spouse is employed	RSD 41.634 RSD 69.726,00	2023-2024	Cash allowance for child care (MoLEVSA) RSD 2,289.00 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES)	RSD 6,189.00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES		Cash allowance for child care 1	RSD 8,478.00

		OP co-financing	10,917,763.00 IPA 2020 – Direct grant to NES		and the other is unemployed and has the obligation of caring for child/children)										
		Short training courses (MoLEVSA) RSD 4,038,077.00 - 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES) (MoLEVSA) RSD 14,955,840.00 – 2024 (RS budget) (MoLEVSA) RSD 10,080,000.00 – 2025 (RS budget) RSD 13,440,000 – 2025 NES Financial Plan (MoLEVSA) RSD 10,080,000.00 – 2026 (RS budget) RSD 2,688,000.00 - 2026 (co-financing OP)	10,752,000.00 IPA OP 2024-2027 - Direct grant to NES / short training courses		Short training courses 1,1000 (short training courses on increase of employability)										
			RSD 7,200,000.0												

		RSD 1,800,000 – 2026 (OP co-financing) / digital skills assessment and self-assessment tools	0 IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant for NES / digital skills assessment and self-assessment tools		10 (RPL piloting procedure)	RSD 360,000.00					Digitalize NES service offer		
		RSD 720,000.00 – 2026 OP co-financing / RPL piloting	RSD 2,880,000.00 – IPA OP 2024- 2027 – Direct grant for NES / RPL piloting (MoLEVSA and NES) IPA 2020 - Technical								RSD 595,000.00 SDC - “Education to Employment – E2E” Project		

Name of the reform/initiative	Years for which funding is planned	Sources and levels of financing			Number of beneficiaries planned	Costs per beneficiary
OFFER		Budget of the Republic of Serbia	EU/IPA	Other funds	Total	
Planned reforms						
Adoption of the Law on Traineeship	2023/ 2024	Current costs of employees		RSD 1,200,000.00 - 2023 SDC - “Education to Employment – E2E” Project	N/A	N/A
Planned initiatives (measures)						

Year	Allocation of planned funds			Number of beneficiaries	Costs per beneficiary
	Budget of the Republic of Serbia	EU/IPA	Other funds	Total	
2023-2024			RSD 440,928.00 SDC – “Education to Employment – E2E” Project	N/A	N/A

Creating an analysis of the prerequisites for the introduction of training vouchers	2024		(MoLEVSA and NES) IPA 2020 - Technical support		N/A	N/A
Employment mediation	2024-2026	Current costs of employees			1,770	N/A
Subsidies for the employment of young people from the category of hard-to-employ and young PWDs without work experience	2024-2026	(MoLEVSA) RSD 9,944,882.00 - 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES) (MoLEVSA) RSD 22,923,926.00 2024 (RS budget) (MoLEVSA) RSD 19,191,600.00 2025 (RS budget) RSD 31,566,000.00 2025 NES Financial Plan (MoLEVSA) RSD 19,191,600.00 2026 (RS budget)	RSD 26,888,014.00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES 78 (PWDs without work experience) RSD 25,252,800.00 IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant to NES		390 (hard-to-employ categories) 78 (PWDs without work experience)	RSD 291,454.00 RSD 642,292.00
Subsidy for self-employment	2024-2026	(MoLEVSA) RSD 14,238,002.00 - 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES) (MoLEVSA)	RSD 38,495,338.00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES		840 (subsidy for self-employment) 500 (mentoring)	RSD 361,345.00 RSD 43,200.00

	2024				N/A	N/A
	2024.				194	N/A
	2024.	(MoLEVSA) RSD 4,416,356.00 – 2024 (cofounding Direct NES grant) MoLEVSA RSD 5,033,697.61 – 2024 (RS budget) NES financial plan * RSD 7,658,468.00 NES financial plan * RSD 1,227,472.00	RSD 11,940,517.00 IPA 2020 – Direct NES grant 16 (PwDs without work experience) 4 (training in a company)		92 (hard-to-employ category) 16 (PwDs without work experience) 4 (training in a company)	RSD 257,377.36 RSD 875,526.00
	2024	(MoLEVSA) RSD 12,150,000.00 - 2024 (cofounding Direct NES grant) (MoLEVSA)	RSD 32,850,000.00 IPA 2020 - Direct NES grant		338 (subsidy for self-employment) /	RSD 300,000.00

		RSD 51,005,340.00 2024 (RS budget) (MoLEVSA) RSD 52,017,600.00 2025 (RS budget) RSD 58,012,800.00 2025 (NES Financial Plan) (MoLEVSA) RSD 52,017,600.00 2026 (RS budget) RSD 4,320,000.00 2026 (NES Financial Plan / mentoring) RSD 10,738,560.00 - 2026 (co-financing OP / employment subsidy)	RSD 42,954,240. 00 IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant to NES / employment subsidy			
Internship for young people	2024-2026	((MoLEVSA) RSD 31,474,591.00 - 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES) (MoLEVSA) RSD 77,305,968.00 2024 (RS budget)	RSD 85,097,969. 00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES		366 (higher education) 260 (secondary education)	RSD 1,119, 062.00 RSD 419,66 7.00

	RSD 46,800,000.00 2024 (RS budget) NES financial plan* RSD 9,600,000.00			(mentoring)	
2024	(MoLEVSA) 7,600,874.00 RSD -2024 (cofounding Direct NES grant) (MoLEVSA) 13.085.168,75 RSD 2024 (RSD budget)	RSD 20,550,513.00 IPA 2020 - Direct NES grant		139 (high education) 70 (secondary education)	RSD 1,026,000.00 RSD 450,000.00

		(MoLEVSA) RSD 77,205,600.00 2025 (RS budget) RSD 83,144,400.00 2025 (NES Financial Plan) (MoLEVSA) RSD 72,454,560.00 2026 (RS budget) RSD 16,628,880.00 - 2026 (co-financing OP)	RSD 66,515,520. 00 IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant to NES			
Acquisition of practical knowledge	2024-2026	((MoLEVSA) RSD 6,626,189.00 - 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES) (MoLEVSA) RSD 12,270,720.00 2024 (RS budget) (MoLEVSA) RSD 8,316,000.00 2025 (RS budget) RSD 17,820,000.00 2025 (NES Financial Plan) (MoLEVSA) RSD 8,910,000.00	RSD 17,915,251. 00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES RSD 11,880,000. 00 IPA OP		318	RSD 279,80 5.00

	NES financial plan* 7,016,917.00 RSD				
2024	(MoLEVSA) RSD 409,112.00 - 2024 (co-funding Direct NES grant) (MoLEVSA) RSD 421,769.14 2024 (RS budget) NES financial plan* RSD 877,306.00	RSD 1,106,119.00 IPA 2020 - Direct NES grant		24	RSD 380,769.23

		2026 (RS budget) RSD 2,970,000.00 - 2026 (co-financing OP)	2024-2027 – Direct grant to NES			
Public Works	2024-2026	(MoLEVSA) RSD 2,112,091.00 - 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES) RSD 5,680,800.00 2025 (NES Financial Plan) RSD 1,136,160.00 - 2026 (co-financing OP)	RSD 5,710,469.00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES RSD 4,544,640.00 IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant to NES		110	RSD 178,390.00
A programme to encourage the development of entrepreneurship through financial support for business beginners and young people	2024-2026	(Ministry of Economy) Financing is carried out from a total of RSD 310.000.000,00 ²¹ – 2024 320,000,000.00 - 2025 330,000,000.00 - 2026			N/A	N/A
Tax benefits in accordance with the Law on Personal Income Tax and the Law on Contributions for Compulsory Social Insurance	2024-2026	/	/	/	N/A	N/A

2024	(MoLEVSA) 801,869.00 RSD - 2024 (co-funding Direct NES grant) NES FP funds RSD 9,839,929.00	RSD 2,168,017.00 IPA 2020 - Direct NES grant		25	RSD 147,838.80	
2024	RSD 3.813.525,00 Source: RS budget (Ministry of Economy)			2	N/A	
2024	/			1	N/A	

²¹ The budget rebalance of the Republic of Serbia made 100 million RSD available in 2024, instead of the originally planned 310 million RSD.

Professional practice	2024-2026	(MoLEVSA) RSD 12,500,000.00 2024 (RS budget) RSD 12,500,000.00 2024 (NES Financial Plan) (MoLEVSA) RSD 14,000,000.00 2025 (RS budget) RSD 35,000,000.00 2025 (NES Financial Plan) (MoLEVSA) RSD 18,000,000.00 2026 (RS budget) RSD 9,000,000.00 – 2026 (co- financing OP)	RSD 36,000,000. 00 IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant to NES	/	380	RSD 350,000
Training for the labour market	2024-2026	(MoLEVSA) RSD 15,902,795.00 - 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES) (MoLEVSA) RSD 8,834,886.00 2024 (RS budget) (MoLEVSA) RSD 13,363,200.00 2025 (RS budget)	RSD 42,996,445. 00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES	/	665	RSD 213,924.00

2024	(MoLEVSA) RSD 8,069,788.48 2024 (RS budget) NES financial plan * RSD 32,822,566.23 NES financial plan * RSD 6.301,289.00			277	RSD 206,011.90
2024	NES financial plan * RSD 1,872,000.00			82 - Public sector talents	RSD 382,500.00
2024				64	RSD 29,250.00

		RSD 22,272,000.00 2025 (NES Financial Plan) (MoLEVSA) RSD 13,363,200.00 2026 (RS budget)											
		RSD 4,454,400.00 - 2026 (co-financing OP and RS budget)	RSD 17,817,600. 00 IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant to NES										
Training at the employer's request	2024-2026	(MoLEVSA) RSD 10,022,098.00 - 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES) (MoLEVSA) RSD 5,692,800.00 2025 (RS budget) RSD 14,232,000.00 2025 (NES Financial Plan) (MoLEVSA) RSD 5,692,800.00 2026 (RS budget) RSD 14,232,000.00 2026 (NES Financial Plan) RSD	RSD 27,096,782. 00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES		310	RSD 272,246.00		2024	(MoLEVSA) RSD 435,522.00 - 2024 (co-funding Direct NES grant)	RSD 1,177,522.00 IPA 2020 - Direct NES grant		12	RSD 177.385,00

		1,138,560.00)	RSD 4,554,240.00 IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant to NES										
Functional Elementary Adult Education	2024- 2026	(NES Financial Plan) RSD 800,000.00 - 2024 RSD 800,000.00 - 2025 RSD 800,000.00 - 2026	/	/	240	RSD 10,000 .00		2024	NES financial plan RSD 113,603.00			13	RSD 113,147.35
Youth Employment Incentive Programme "My First Salary"								2024	NES financial plan* RSD 904,500.00			3	RSD 301.500.00

Name of the reform/initiative	Years for which fundin g is plann ed	Sources and levels of financing			Number of beneficiar ies planned	Costs per benefi ciary	Year	Allocation of planned funds			Numb er of benefi ciarie s	Costs per beneficiary
		Budget of the Republic of Serbia	EU/IPA	Other funds				Budget of the Republic of Serbia	EU/IPA	Other funds		
BUILDING STRONG DELIVERY MECHANISMS					Total						Total	
Planned reforms												
Engagement of additional human resources in NES pilot branches - employment of youth counsellors	2024- 2026	(MoLEVSA) RSD 8,164,800.00 (co-financing Direct grant to NES)	RSD 22,075,200. 00 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES	/	7	RSD 4,320, 000.00	2024	(MoLEVSA) RSD 3,963,564.00 (co-funding Direct NES grant)	RSD 10,716,302.0 0 IPA 2020 - Direct NES grant		7	RSD 2,097,123.7 5
Upgrade and continuous improvement of the NES ICT platform for monitoring the YG	2023- 2026	(MoLEVSA) RSD 2,754,000.00 - 2024 (co-financing Direct grant to NES)	RSD 7,446,000.0 0 IPA 2020 - Direct grant to NES	/	N/A	N/A	2023- 2024	(MoLEVSA) RSD 5,345,730.00 - 2024 (co-funding Direct NES grant)	RSD 14,453,270.0 0 IPA 2020 - Direct NES grant		N/A	N/A

		RSD 1,800,000 – 2026 (co- financing OP)	RSD 7,200,000.0 0 IPA OP 2024-2027 – Direct grant to NES									
Strengthening the capacity of CSOs and YOs to implement outreach activities	2023- 2026	/	/	RSD 1,700,000.00 - 2023 SDC - “Education to Employment – E2E” Project	N/A	N/A	2023- 2024			RSD 2.060.460,00 SDC – “Education to Employment – E2E” Project	N/A	N/A
Strengthening the capacity of partners to implement the YG	2023- 2026	/	(MoLEVSA and NES) IPA 2020 - Technical support	/	N/A	N/A	2023- 2024				N/A	N/A