



ITU REGIONAL FORUM FOR EUROPE ON DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Digital Skills in Albania

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UNIT FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND COOPERATION

MISSION AND ACTIVITIES

- *The Unit of Development Programs and Cooperation guides and prepares national development programs, in accordance with the priorities and objectives of the Government. It leads and ensures effective inter-institutional cooperation with all program directorates in all line ministries, institutions and relevant actors. in specific it:*
- *Coordinates the drafting of national and international strategic development programs, with the objective of economic and social development of the country, in accordance with the priorities and objectives of the Government,*
- *Ensures efficient inter-institutional cooperation, as well as coordination at central technical level of institutions at regional level in cooperation with the Prime Minister Cabinet,*
- *Contributes and participates in inter-institutional working groups within the EU integration process, in order to align policies, programs, initiatives and commitments of the Government and the Prime Minister Office at national, regional and international level,*
- *Provides central level coordination of institutions for the preparation and implementation of Smart Specialization Strategy (S3), playing leading role of working group and technical secretariat, and providing support, cooperation and coordination with the European Commission and other bodies in function of finalizing S3,*

Government institutions responsible for digital skills development in Albania



National Strategic Documents with reference to digital skills development




Draft pillars of the Digital Agenda 2021 - 2025


- I. Further development of the information society and promotion of the economy, culture and digital tourism
 - i. Further development of e-Government*
 - ii. Promoting and enabling the digital economy, culture and tourism*
 - iii. Improving cyber security and trusted services*
- II. Development of national electronic communications infrastructure and regulations in the field of audiovisual media
- III. Enabling and developing basic and advanced digital skills in order to broadly involve the population in ICT services and increase ICT professionals**
- IV. Policy development and piloting, testing and experimentation in new ICT fields

Demand for digital skills in Albania

The current demand for digital skills in Albania is linked to the changes that the economy is undergoing and the desire of society to move closer to digitalization. In an increasingly digital world, Albania, as a middle income country, has high demands for digital skills development but few opportunities to acquire these skills



The majority of society owns basic digital skills and technology competence, such as using electronic products, software programs, social medias and making easy online transactions such as searching on internet and sending and receiving e-mails



A significant part of the population, mainly people around 15-25 years old, owns intermediate digital skills, thanks to the knowledge they receive in education system. On the other hand, only people who have completed university studies and people who work in the growing digital sector itself possess more advanced skills

Demand is related to both digital skills as a key competence and specialised digital skills related to specific occupations. Both types of skills are integrated into the VET curriculum

- *The government of Albania has already embarked on a journey to enable a **pro-innovation environment** especially for **youth**, which is directly linked to boosting their digital skills by providing more opportunities for upskilling and to young people but also reskilling for adults, capacity building and business orientation, and increasing the innovation potential of the country by ensuring a **well-coordinated approach between all actors***

SOFT MEASURES

legal and administrative requirements and policy framework for a vibrant innovation and start up ecosystem

- Preparing and approving a **new start-ups law** that will make it easier and with less administrative burden for young people to start and manage a business and incorporate innovative practices in it. The draft Law is currently under public consultation process.
- **Drafting a Start-ups & Innovation program**, targeted mainly at youth. The main objective is the increase the number of employed and self-employed, innovative SMEs and promote entrepreneurial culture and innovation through capacity building, acquisition of new competitive skills and education (re-skilling and up-skilling of SMEs)

HARD MEASURES

will serve as the connecting nodes between labour markets and young

- **Implement technical/infrastructural measures that will enable the innovation ecosystem.** CRM 2021-2024 Digital Pillar foresees a set of measures related to broadband infrastructure development in WB6. In this respect a fully-fledged feasibility study of broadband development in Albania has been already been prepared.

New Instruments to boost digital skills in younger generation and women

- Techspace
- Multifunctional Center "Pyramid" (TUMO)
- Pilot training program (develop digital skills) to support young Albanian women

TechSpace, technology lab available to young people

- TechSpace halls are available for all startups that frequent the center, where they are represented with an office of their own.
- TechSpace halls are designed to enable the co-design of innovative products, their testing, the sharing of ideas and the creation of prototypes as well as the relaxation in dedicated spaces.
- In these workspaces there are digital tools available for the development of startup ideas, which are used for free.
- Furthermore, through incubation programs is provided a professional consulting and step-by-step follow-up and support of startup ideas by experts specialized in various fields (ICT, marketing, legal, economic, finance, etc.)

“Start-up Program 2020: Roadmap to Silicon Valley”

- The “Roadmap to Silicon Valley” program is an initiative of TechSpace and Junior Achievement of Albania (AADF).
- The selected start-ups are trained through an intensive program of workshops, related to start-up development. The trainers have been selected as the best international experts with successful experiences.
- The program lasted several months and included: Supervision and mentoring; Ongoing training and; Specific consultancy for the needs of start-ups. The final phase of the program, the visit to Silicon Valley has been postponed due to the pandemic and is thought to take place in hybrid format, as physical movement is impossible and most companies operating in Silicon Valley are working remotely.

Information sessions from Microsoft

- Numerous information sessions on digital transformation and discussions with young people have been conducted on TechSpace by various Microsoft experts.
- These meetings focused on the introduction of new technologies. In these sessions are treated formulas for professional success, presentations of new ICT fields in the world artificial intelligence, quantum computing, blockchain etc...
- In these information sessions with young people in the field of ICT is reinforced the idea that even in small countries like Albania, talented young people who have a passion for technology, can become competitive with other more developed countries.

Multifunctional Center in the heart of Tirana - Pyramid

- Co-working space
- Digital skills learning for high school students (TUMO)
- Innovation Center

Pilot training program to support young Albanian women

- Goal: Helping more Albanian women to access online work opportunities
- The training program seeks to:
 - equip pilot training participants with the marketable skills needed to earn income on online freelancer websites
 - serve as proof-of-concept that – if successful – could serve as blueprint for training scale-ups in Albania and beyond.

Digital Skills in the field of education – Steps for the future

in pandemic conditions/circumstances

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES

- 1. Identification and promotion of good e-learning practices** (effective / appropriate online platforms for interactive learning to take place).
- 2. Increasing the capacity of online teaching through:**
 - *Training teachers for the use of online platforms / adoption with the distance learning methods of teaching / adaptation of the curriculum for online teaching / equipment with digital tablets of pre-university students*
 - *Preparing / designing user friendly guides for teachers and students (2 different ones) and make it easier for students to use online learning platforms.*
 - *Equipping pre-university students with digital tablets / internet sticks, especially those in distant areas where there is no internet coverage*
 - *Adaptation of legislation regarding digital skills – foreseen also in the new Strategy for Education*
- 3. Regional cooperation**
 - *Digitalization of Higher Education system – implementation of blockchain technology for automatic recognition of qualifications (in line with CRM 2021-2024)*
 - *Regional digital competition on digital smart solutions*

Digital Skills in the field of education – Future Steps

in

pandemic conditions/circumstances

MEDIUM TERM OBJECTIVES:

1. Investment in digital infrastructure for supporting:

- *e-learning, to ensure high speed and very high connectivity to make possible the quality learning*
- *increasing e-skills mainly for micro businesses that operating in remote areas of Albania*

2. Investments in digital skills for jobs / digital economy, through increasing the digital skills of SMEs. In the short term, the focus can be on e-commerce:

- *Functional e-commerce practices*
- *Support to increase the digital skills of businesses*
- *Assistance for the legal framework for the provision of online services*
- *Design a guide to educate the public on how to stay safe when shopping online*

3. Design and approve a comprehensive digital skills strategy

4. Establishment of a Regional Digital Transformation Academy related to the development of digital skills for labor force / SME and digital economy

5. Secure support to introduce Micro-Credentials - new flexible and alternative pathway of learning in HE

Recommendations and proposed actions

- *Establishment of legislation, regulation, and standards for the digitalization and foster e-commerce;*
- *Increase digital skills in SMEs through matching start-ups with existing SMEs*
- *Continue with the digitalization of entire public service, ensuring the good coordination between different domains of online public service;*
- *Organize public information campaign on using digital services in response to the COVID-19 crisis and economic activities;*
- *Work with the private sector on encouraging ICT development, with the adoption of certain policy incentives.*
- *Digitalisation of Pre-University education, providing tablets to students and quality on-line education;*
- *Application of blockchain technology for the modernization of HE system and Automatic recognition for academic qualifications;*
- *SNQA (skills need and qualification) Analysis in the context of S3 Strategy - to help understand the shortages in skills (including the digital ones) with the aim to address them in the S3;*

Thank you for your attention!

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