

# ADULT LEARNING IN MONTENEGRO

Factsheet

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# INTRODUCTION

This Factsheet was developed in 2025 by the European Training Foundation (ETF) as part of a mapping of Adult Learning (AL) in the EU enlargement area: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine.

This project focuses on AL as a sub-sector of growing importance, given ongoing societal and economic transformations and the increasing demand for monitoring and reporting on reforms aimed at upskilling, reskilling, and overall human capital development.

Adult Learning is understood to be an important part of Lifelong Learning<sup>1</sup> (LLL). It includes formal learning (i.e. linked to formal qualifications) and non-formal learning alike (mainly in companies but also in other learning environments), including upskilling and reskilling activities, and learning aimed at developing a wide spectrum of skills<sup>2</sup>.

In accordance with Article 3 of the Law on Adult Education (*Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No. 51/2025; previously Nos. 20/2011 and 47/2017)<sup>3</sup>, adult education (AE)<sup>4</sup> is part of Montenegro's single education system. Adult Learning in Montenegro focuses on ensuring access and inclusion, providing every citizen with the opportunity for basic education and the first qualification while supporting vulnerable groups through tailored programmes. It strengthens the link with the labour market by offering retraining, additional training, and upskilling for both the employed and unemployed. At the same time, it fosters a culture of lifelong learning through continuous professional development and flexible pathways adapted to individual abilities and life stages. By investing in human resources and promoting competences in civic democracy and environmental protection, AL contributes to personal growth, employability, and sustainable societal development. Adult Learning is delivered as formal education; non-formal education; informal learning; and self-directed learning (Law on Adult Education, Article 9). What in national language is called AE, excluding informal learning, constitutes the scope of this mapping. In other words, in the text of this report, the term 'Adult Learning' will cover what in the country is called 'formal and non-formal adult education', with a legal provision that an adult learner is generally anyone over 15, though those under 15 who are not enrolled in school may also join adult education programmes.

For the development of this Factsheet, a systematic collection of information was conducted through desk research and field work. The analysis is organised around the analytical framework and guiding questions presented in [Annex I](#). Individual interviews were carried out in June, July and August 2025 with representatives of relevant institutions – key actors and stakeholders in AL in Montenegro. The list of interviewees is enclosed as [Annex II](#). This report has been validated by the Directorate for Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation

The information presented in this document reflects on, and offers insights into three important AL dimensions: **1. Strategic and policy frameworks**, **2. Legal/institutional arrangements** and **3. Types and forms of formal and non-formal AL provision**, and it will serve as a basis for the ETF and stakeholders involved to identify priority areas for possible future actions or policy advice.

This factsheet presents factual key-elements about AL in Montenegro, considering the three dimensions mentioned above.

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>1</sup> Cedefop's glossary defines lifelong learning as 'any learning activity undertaken throughout life in a formal, non-formal or informal setting, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and qualifications for personal, social or professional reasons' [lifelong learning | CEDEFOP](#)

<sup>2</sup> Skills are understood in a broad sense, encompassing skills, knowledge and competences for life, well beyond the skills needed for the labour market.

<sup>3</sup> **Law on Adult Education**, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No. 51/2025; previously Nos. 20/2011 and 47/2017. Available at: <https://wapi.gov.me/download/439c7ed8-b8b6-4c79-9cbc-1988c42551e4?version=1.0>

<sup>4</sup> In Montenegro, the term adult education is commonly used to refer to adult learning. However, for the purposes of this report, the term adult learning will be used from this point forward.

## Country context

Montenegro's<sup>5</sup> economy has grown strongly in recent years, driven by tourism and consumption, with rising wages and falling unemployment. The labour market still faces persistent challenges, including youth joblessness, informal employment, and limited institutional capacity.

According to the *Census 2023*, the total number of inhabitants in Montenegro is 623,633. Montenegro is subdivided into three regions and 25 municipalities. Significant regional disparities persist, with the Northern region facing higher poverty, weaker infrastructure, and out-migration, while the Central and Coastal regions benefit from stronger growth, tourism, and investment. Nearly 29% of the population lives in the capital city, Podgorica. In Montenegro, education institutions are predominantly funded by the State, although municipalities also have the authority to establish and fund them.

### Key country insights<sup>6</sup>

- **Demographics:** Montenegro is a diverse and increasingly urbanized but ageing society, marked by regional disparities and ongoing youth emigration. Labour Market: For the people aged 15 to 89 in the second quarter 2025, activity rate is 61.2%; employment rate is 54.8%; unemployment rate is 10.5%, and population outside the labour force rate is 38.8%.<sup>7</sup> There are signs that the labour market in Montenegro has improved in 2025: the unemployment rate dropped to 9.13% by mid-2025, down from about 11.56% a year earlier.
- **Labour market:** For persons aged 15 to 89 in the second quarter of 2025, the activity rate is 61.2 %; the employment rate is 54.8 %; the unemployment rate is 10.5 %, and the population outside the labour force is 38.8 %<sup>8</sup>. There are signs that the labour market in Montenegro has improved in 2025: the unemployment rate dropped to 9.13 % by mid-2025, down from about 11.56 % a year earlier.
- **Youth and Vulnerability:** The NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) rate was about 23.2% in 2022, dropping to around 20.3% for youth aged 15–29 in 2023 (EU: 11.2%). The poverty rate is around 17-20% of the population, depending on the poverty line used - 50% more than the EU average.
- **Digital and Education:** 89.8% of the population were internet users in early 2025, but 41,2% of adults lack basic digital skills (computer literacy declines sharply with age). LLL participation among 18–69-year-olds was 13.9% in 2023 (the data are not complete).
- **Urbanisation:** About 67% live in urban areas. The gap between rural and urban areas deepens disparities in access to education and employment opportunities.

<sup>5</sup> Montenegro is a parliamentary democracy with a unitary state structure. It has been pursuing EU membership since applying in 2004. Montenegro applied for EU membership in 2008, became a candidate in 2010, and opened accession negotiations in 2012. Since then, it has gradually advanced through the negotiating “chapters,” focusing especially on reforms in the rule of law, governance, and the economy. Montenegro aims to complete its accession process by 2028, making it one of the frontrunners for future EU enlargement.

<sup>6</sup> Data of relevance for this section was gathered from following sources: (i) MONSTAT - Montenegrin National Statistical Office <https://www.monstat.org/cq/>; (ii) Ministry of Education, Science and Innovations (2025). *Annual Adult Education Plan for 2025*, <https://wapi.gov.me/download/a9eebdc2-3ed7-4be0-8958-7f1ccaf20f6e?version=1.0>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.monstat.org/uploads/files/ARS/2025/Q2/LFS%20release\\_2025\\_Q2.pdf](https://www.monstat.org/uploads/files/ARS/2025/Q2/LFS%20release_2025_Q2.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.monstat.org/uploads/files/ARS/2025/Q2/LFS%20release\\_2025\\_Q2.pdf](https://www.monstat.org/uploads/files/ARS/2025/Q2/LFS%20release_2025_Q2.pdf).

# CHAPTER I: ADULT LEARNING STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

This Chapter offers insights into the main policy objectives of AL in Montenegro, and their alignment with EU goals and initiatives, national strategic and policy priorities, main indicators and targets to be achieved and their comparison to EU targets.

## Strategies

AL has been and is an integral part of the overall strategic vision on the sustainable development of the education system in Montenegro. The goals, priorities and mid-term plan on the sustainable development of this sub-sector have been set and (re)defined in a continuous manner and stipulated in various strategic documents. AL has consistently occupied a central place within Montenegro's broader vision for building a sustainable education system. Over time, national authorities have set and regularly revised the objectives, priorities and planning frameworks for this sub-sector through a series of strategic documents. Montenegro has adopted two consecutive national strategies for adult education - the first covering 2005–2015 and the second 2015–2025 - underscoring the long-standing priority given to this area. The national approach to AL is comprehensive, encompassing formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities for individuals aged 15 and above (and, in exceptional cases, those under 15 who are not enrolled in formal education) and pursues goals that reach beyond employment-related outcomes.

## Overview on relevant strategic documents

Currently, AL is in the focus of following relevant strategic documents developed at national level presented below.

### The Adult Education Strategy of Montenegro 2015–2025<sup>9</sup>

The Adult Education Strategy of Montenegro 2015–2025 (2015) aims to increase participation in lifelong learning, enhance skills for the unemployed, improve workforce competencies, and ensure quality assurance in adult education. While the 2015–2019 plan reported over 90% implementation, challenges arose in the subsequent years due to insufficient funding and coordination. As a result, the adult participation rate remained low at just 3.2% in 2022, well below the EU average of 10.8%. Additionally, inconsistencies in hiring practices of AL educators and qualifications among providers led to varied teaching quality. The absence of a comprehensive database also hindered tracking of learners, programmes, and outcomes.

An overview of the implementation of the Strategy is enclosed as [Annex III](#)<sup>10</sup>.

### The Education Reform Strategy of Montenegro 2025–2035<sup>11</sup>

The Education Reform Strategy of Montenegro 2025–2035 places significant emphasis on the advancement of AL, addressing the shortcomings of the previous Strategy of Adult Education in Montenegro 2015–2025 and setting clear objectives for the coming decade. One of the central components of the Strategy is found under Operational Goal 1.1, which aims to ensure that all children have access to education and that learning outcomes meet the Sustainable Development Goals while aligning with the average achievements of EU member states. Within this broader goal, Measure 1.1.4 specifically targets AL with the objective to increase adult participation in lifelong learning and improve the regulation of AL.

<sup>9</sup> <https://wapi.gov.me/download/10be3e15-8757-45b1-8566-ab2eb3668e8e?version=1.0>

<sup>10</sup> The document reports on the activities and not on the policy implementation

<sup>11</sup> <https://wapi.gov.me/download/28743ee8-41ee-45a2-b178-3c4c6267ee09?version=1.0>

The Strategy highlights the need to build a strong culture of LLL by offering continuous opportunities for both young people and adults, including skills workshops and online courses adapted to different needs. It also seeks to strengthen links between education and the labour market through closer cooperation with the Employment Agency (EA), mapping skills to employer requirements, and tracking learners to support better job outcomes. Finally, the strategy emphasises accessible vocational training for all age groups, with flexible programmes integrated into the education system to help adults retrain, gain new qualifications, and advance their careers. The development of the core curriculum in Montenegro is currently under way, aiming to ensure a coherent national framework that integrates key competences for lifelong learning across all levels of education, in line with EU standards and labour market needs. The Strategy also aims to develop projects for creating regional centres of vocational excellence for both young people and adults, with one centre planned to cover each of the three regions of the country.

It is thereby to a high extent aligned with the European Skills Agenda<sup>12</sup> and the Union of Skills Communication<sup>13</sup> as well as in compliance with the current national-level developments related to recent amendments of the legal framework for skills development policies.

The Strategy envisages regular evaluation and monitoring of results. Given that the Strategy was adopted recently, no progress reports or evaluation studies are currently available.

### Montenegro's Reform Agenda 2024–2027

Policy Area 3 of the Montenegro's Reform Agenda 2024–2027<sup>14</sup>, as part of the national response to the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans<sup>15</sup>, focuses on human capital development and precisely on 'Education and Skills'. One of the priority reforms addresses labour market mismatches through LLL and the enhancement of graduate employability via practical work, including in the green and digital economy. To support this, the Government has committed to the upskilling and reskilling of the workforce - targeting at least 7% of adults aged 25–64 (of which approximately 50% are women) to participate in such trainings annually. This initiative is designed to strengthen Montenegro's alignment with EU policies on skills and knowledge development, with particular emphasis on supporting the twin transition towards a green and digital economy.

Based on the review of the existing AL system features, as well as on the analysis of the alignment between the educational offer in this field and the needs for knowledge and skills, the development and revision of AL programmes is planned within sectors that include the green and digital economy, as well as other sectors, in line with labour market needs. Montenegro has launched the preparation of its second Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) for 2026–2031, following the first S3 (2019–2024)<sup>16</sup>, which strengthened national research and innovation capacities. Preliminary focus areas include energy and sustainable environment, innovative and sustainable tourism, sustainable agriculture and food value chains, information and communication technologies, and construction, to be further refined through stakeholder consultations. The goal is to revise at least 30 AL programmes for which the highest labour market demand is identified, and to develop at least 10 AL programmes promoting jobs in the green and digital economy. Campaigns to promote AL will focus on the green and digital economy, taking into account the measures from the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, the National Environmental Protection Programme, local environmental protection plans, as well as strategies, plans, and programmes adopted or to be adopted under special regulations in certain areas and segments of the environment.

<sup>12</sup> [https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/skills-and-qualifications/european-skills-agenda\\_en](https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/skills-and-qualifications/european-skills-agenda_en)

<sup>13</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/union-skills\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/union-skills_en)

<sup>14</sup> The Reform Agenda of Montenegro (<https://reform-monitor.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Reform-agenda-Montenegro.pdf>) is a key component of the country's strategy to accelerate its path towards European Union membership and foster socio-economic growth. It outlines a series of reforms aimed at strengthening governance, boosting the economy, and aligning with EU standards. The agenda is supported by the EU's Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans, a €6 billion financial instrument designed to incentivize and support these reforms.

<sup>15</sup> [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/75354ed6-6f5a-426e-9f29-f1c77ce8ce18\\_en?filename=factsheet\\_GP\\_February2024.pdf](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/75354ed6-6f5a-426e-9f29-f1c77ce8ce18_en?filename=factsheet_GP_February2024.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> <https://s3.me/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/SmartSpecialisationStrategyofMontenegro2019-2024.pdf>

To date, no progress report or evaluation study of the National Reform Agenda has been made available.

### The Adult Education Plan of Montenegro 2025–2029<sup>17</sup>

This plan sets out a four-year framework for implementing AL policies in Montenegro through concrete activities derived from the national strategic objectives. It is adopted by the Government based on a proposal from the Ministry, following consultations with key stakeholders, including the Employment Agency, the Chamber of Economy, and local authorities. The plan contributes to the implementation of the Education Reform Strategy of Montenegro 2025–2035, ensuring coherence between AL priorities and broader education system reforms. The Government also approves a progress report on the plan's implementation.

The plan prioritizes enhancing programme quality and teaching, expanding participation through accessible options, promoting LLL, strengthening quality assurance (QA) and monitoring, and preparing for the participation of Montenegro in Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), implemented by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Each year, the Ministry adopts an annual AL plan based on the overarching Education Plan. This annual plan specifies activities, responsible parties, and resources required for implementation, and includes a report on the previous year's activities, which must be approved by January 31 for the ongoing year.

## Legal framework

The legal and institutional framework for AL in Montenegro includes a range of laws, bylaws, strategic documents, and institutions that regulate this area. The first law on AE was adopted in 2002<sup>18</sup>, followed by new laws in 2011<sup>19</sup>, 2017<sup>20</sup>, and 2025.

### Overview of relevant legal framework

The Law on Adult Education (2025) regulates both formal and non-formal education for adults, addressing those who have not completed primary or secondary education and those seeking new qualifications. The Law on Adult Education interacts with Law on National Vocational Qualifications (*Official Gazette of Montenegro*, No. 51/2025; previously Nos. 80/2008, 14/2009, 80/2010, 18/2011, 40/2011, 40/2016, 56/2018)<sup>21</sup>, and Law on the National Qualifications Framework (*Official Gazette of Montenegro*, Nos. 80/2010 and 53/2025)<sup>22</sup>, which were updated at the same time to ensure qualifications are recognised, aligned, and flexible (e.g. through micro-qualifications), while also bringing the system in line with European standards by introducing new concepts and approaches such as key competences, recognition of non-formal and informal learning, and lifelong learning.

In addition to the large number of laws regulating this area, a significant number of rulebooks and methodologies have also been developed in the previous period to further specify AL. Only in 2025 were the following rulebooks adopted: Rulebook on the Form and Content of the Certificate of Acquired National Vocational Qualification and the Certificate of Acquired Micro-qualification or Key Competence; Rulebook on the Manner and Procedure for the Assessment of Knowledge, Skills and Competences in the Process of Acquiring a Micro-qualification or Key Competence; Rulebook on the Manner and Procedure for the Assessment of Knowledge, Skills and Competences in the Process of Acquiring a National Vocational Qualification; Rulebook on the Detailed Manner and Procedure for the

<sup>17</sup> <https://wapi.gov.me/download/a534be63-c8d5-4cf7-9657-70fc3b47e171?version=1.0>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.sluzbenilist.me/propisi/89CF087A-FAB6-469B-8F00-7A2A2F8A1018>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.sluzbenilist.me/propisi/B8328501-A894-4D51-8EA0-92B0B4B1CDC3>

<sup>20</sup> <https://crnvo.me/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Zakon-o-obrazovanju-odraslih.doc.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://wapi.gov.me/download/64ff9f12-9c63-46c7-96e3-c0a350af97b9?version=1.0>

<sup>22</sup> <https://wapi.gov.me/download/a5128d6d-5bd1-460b-94a2-7316961e07a9?version=1.0>

Recognition of Foreign Certificates or Attestations. Naturally, these rulebooks need to be continuously improved and updated in order to keep pace with the rapid changes we are facing.

### Law on Adult Education

The Law on Adult Education (2025), published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MESI), replaces earlier legislation and aims to ensure that every adult can freely engage in education, training, or learning to upgrade knowledge, skills, and competences or obtain appropriate qualifications.

The 2025 update to the Law on Adult Education brings several important changes. It introduces micro-qualifications and new opportunities for self-directed learning, giving adults more flexible ways to build skills. Pilot programmes can now be implemented without formal licensing, though they will only issue certificates rather than diplomas. After the completion of the pilot programme, the organizer of the pilot programme issues a certificate of attendance. Assessments of knowledge and skills will be carried out internally, but the results will remain confidential. Adults pursuing their first qualification will be able to participate free of charge in publicly funded programmes, removing financial barriers to entry. A significant novelty introduced by the 2025 Law on Adult Education is that university teachers and academic staff are now permitted to work in adult education institutions without the obligation to pass the andragogical examination. This change aims to facilitate the engagement of higher education personnel in adult learning provision, expand the pool of qualified trainers, and reduce administrative barriers for institutions.

### The General Law on Education

Through the General Law on Education (*Official of the Republic of Montenegro*, Nos. 64/2002, 31/2005, 49/2007; *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, Nos. 45/2010, 45/2011, 36/2013, 39/2013, 47/2017, 59/2021, 146/2021, 3/2023, 84/2024, 89/2025)<sup>23</sup>, MESI establishes clear rules for AL, including governance by mixed boards, strict director *Gazette* qualifications, licensing for teachers, and timely reporting obligations. To protect learners, institutions must also provide a financial guarantee to ensure programme continuity even if they close early.

### The Law on Vocational Secondary Education and Law on Gymnasium

The Law on Vocational Secondary Education (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro*, Nos. 64/2002, 49/2007; *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, Nos. 45/2010, 39/2013, 47/2017, 145/2021, 69/2025)<sup>24</sup> and the Law on Gymnasium (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro*, Nos. 64/2002, 49/2007; *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, Nos. 45/2010, 39/2013, 47/2017, 145/2021, 60/2025)<sup>25</sup> enable adults to obtain formal secondary qualifications, including vocational and general/gymnasium diplomas. These laws aim to equip adults with qualifications that are aligned with labour market needs, while also fostering the development of life skills, work competencies, and promoting lifelong learning. Additionally, the laws allow for the recognition of previously completed subjects or modules when adults change programmes, providing flexibility in their educational journey.

### Law on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The 2025 amendments to the Law on the National Qualifications Framework<sup>26</sup> modernize the system to better align with European standards and labour market needs. A key innovation is the formal introduction of micro-qualifications, short learning achievements based on specific outcomes and issued by licensed providers, which give adults and young people more flexible ways to gain recognized skills. The minimum number of credits for micro-qualifications may not be less than one. The law also formally includes integrated higher education programmes of 300 and 360 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) points within the framework, ensuring that all levels of study are consistently recognized. In addition, the amendments strengthen the requirement that

<sup>23</sup> <https://wapi.gov.me/download/170edb3a-1d18-46a7-9adf-5d5fc96a721d?version=1.0>

<sup>24</sup> <https://wapi.gov.me/download/4c4d52af-ba9b-4678-8e2e-595ab614b67b?version=1.0>

<sup>25</sup> <https://wapi.gov.me/download/16a58db6-399d-462d-976b-d8ea147957cb?version=1.0>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.sluzbenilist.me/propisi/A6733D7B-2238-4609-89B8-E5F4437D8DA0>

qualifications be defined through clear learning outcomes — knowledge, skills, and competences — across all types of education and training. Alongside these changes, the law clarifies the categories of qualifications, modules, and sub-levels, improving transparency and progression pathways for learners. It also updates the roles and responsibilities of the institutions involved in proposing, classifying, and approving qualifications, ensuring better governance of the system. By reinforcing coherence between formal, non-formal, and informal learning, and by aligning national levels with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the new law creates a more flexible, transparent, and reliable qualifications structure. The amendments entered into force on 6 June 2025.

### **The Law on National Vocational Qualifications**

The Law on National Vocational Qualifications (2025)<sup>27</sup> in Montenegro enables adults to obtain recognized vocational qualifications through the validation of prior learning, exams after training, or the completion of programme modules based on occupational standards. A qualification is earned through an exam, which is certified with a public document. The Examination Centre (EC) organizes the testing, and an exam catalogue defines all technical and educational requirements. Key competencies are assessed by licensed evaluators, while micro-qualifications are evaluated by provider-appointed commissions, which are approved by the Centre for Vocational Education (CVE). For the acquisition of a micro-qualification – examiners who meet the requirements in accordance with the education programme, of whom two members are appointed by the education provider and one member is appointed by the Centre. The revised Law on National Vocational Qualifications allows multiple pathways to a vocational qualification through modules, AL assessments, or direct evaluation of skills. It sets clear credit ranges for vocational qualifications (6–119 MCTS - Montenegrin Credit Transfer System) and for micro-qualifications and key competences (1–5 MCTS), and provides for the recognition of foreign certificates under defined rules. The law also strengthens governance by requiring provider licensing, supervised examination commissions, comprehensive record-keeping, and penalties for non-compliance, while transitional provisions ensure that existing certificates and programmes remain valid during the shift to the new system.

## **Policies on Adult Learning**

The Adult Education Plan of Montenegro 2025–2029, and the 2025–2026 action plan (The Education Reform Strategy of Montenegro 2025–2035) for AL focus on:

### **Enhancing programme quality and teaching**

The accent is on revising and modernising existing programmes while introducing new ones tailored to current labour market needs. This includes updating retraining and first-qualification programmes, along with curricula for teaching assistants and mediators supporting the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptians (RE). Examination catalogues for adult programmes will also be revised, and new ones created in areas linked to the green and digital economy.

### **Expanding participation through accessible options**

At the same time, the plans emphasise innovation and accessibility by developing online learning opportunities and establishing AL centres within schools and universities.

### **Promoting LLL**

To foster a culture of LLL, promotional campaigns and events will be organised. Legal measures will be adopted to improve data quality and availability, while both providers and learners will receive targeted support for obtaining first qualifications, retraining, and upskilling to strengthen professional development.

**Strengthening quality assurance (QA) and monitoring** - experience from previous years has prompted a series of recent legislative reforms in AL, aimed at enhancing its overall quality.

<sup>27</sup> <https://wapi.gov.me/download/64ff9f12-9c63-46c7-96e3-c0a350af97b9?version=1.0>

AL providers must obtain a licence from MESI, valid for five years, and may renew it if they continue to meet prescribed standards regarding premises, equipment, staff, and programme quality. Quality is monitored by the CVE, using a national methodology for assurance and improvement in vocational and AL institutions. All vocational schools may be licensed as AL providers, provided that they meet the requirements for delivering such programmes, both in terms of human and material resources (workshops, laboratories, or signed agreements with employers in cases where the school lacks the necessary equipment). It may be somewhat surprising that only a small number of vocational schools are involved in the delivery of these programmes. Programmes must be delivered by qualified educators who often undergo andragogical training, while examinations are overseen by licensed examiners through officially appointed commissions. Learners can request internal assessments of knowledge, skills, and competences from providers, though certificates from these assessments are not public documents. Providers also have strict obligations for record-keeping, data reporting, and transparency, ensuring that outcomes and participant information are systematically collected and available for oversight.

**Preparing for OECD PIAAC participation** - strategically, joining PIAAC signals Montenegro's commitment to evidence-based AL and skills policy. Once the assessment is implemented, Montenegro will receive detailed data on adult skill levels and gaps, enabling it to benchmark against OECD and EU countries, track progress over time, and better target reforms in education, training, and employment.

Statistical data on participation in adult learning programmes can be obtained in [Annex IV](#).

## National performance against key EU targets on adult learning

### Participation of adults in learning

In this section, data on participation of adults in learning at national level will be compared to the EU benchmarking indicators, by taking into account the following reference targets set by EU member-states:

EU Target by 2025 and 2030	National Montenegro Target
At least 47% of adults aged 25-64 should have participated in learning during the last 12 months, by 2025.	According to the Report on the Implementation of the Annual Adult Education Plan for 2024 <sup>28</sup> , the participation rate of adults in lifelong learning activities was 5.47% <sup>29</sup> . In 2023, it was 13,09%.
At least 60% of adults aged 25-64 should have participated in learning during the last 12 months, by 2030.	At least 7% of adults aged 25–64 (of which approximately 50% are women) <sup>30</sup>

Source: Author

A major challenge in Montenegro is the lack of data on participation in LLL, as well as the absence of performance indicators in strategies and plans related to AL. When reporting on participation over the previous 12 months, the implementation reports of the annual adult learning plans rely primarily on data provided by state institutions (ministries and state agencies). However, there are significant challenges regarding the availability and consistency of data, particularly from local governments, which limits the completeness of reporting. There are no data on training in either state-owned or private companies, which raises questions about the validity of the available figures. National strategic documents more often use the percentage referring to participation in LLL during the four weeks preceding the survey and base their activities on this rate (around 3%).

<sup>28</sup> <https://wapi.gov.me/download/6ee33d02-bbe3-4f08-bdad-802a35ed1ecf?version=1.0>

<sup>29</sup> However, the reporting data did not include all planned actors, as not all institutions submitted the requested information, and a number of ministries did not participate in providing data during the preparation of the Plan.

<sup>30</sup> In Montenegro, the most commonly cited figure for the lifelong learning participation rate refers to participation during the four weeks preceding the survey, rather than over a 12-month period; therefore, the rate is most often reported as 3%.

## New targets for 2030 based on the Union of skills

Patterns of participation in adult learning are often shaped by individuals' prior experiences in formal education. Examining key indicators of young people's educational outcomes can offer valuable insights into current dynamics and levels of engagement in adult learning.

### Underachievement in basic/digital skills and top performance in basic skills

EU target by 2030	State of play in Montenegro
The share of underachievement in literacy, mathematics, science and digital skills should be less than 15%, whereas the share of top performance in literacy, mathematics and science should be at least 15%.	Montenegro's average scores among 15-year-olds in PISA 2022 were lower than OECD averages in all three tested domains: mathematics ( $\approx$ 406), reading ( $\approx$ 405), and science ( $\approx$ 403). Montenegro ranked 54th in mathematics, 56th in reading, and 62nd in science among participating countries. There has been a decline in performance from the 2018 PISA cycle in all three domains. In all three domains, only about 1% or fewer of students in Montenegro reached the highest proficiency levels. ( <i>PISA 2022</i> ). Over half of Montenegrin students are low achievers (compared to ED-27 of 26.2%) - Mathematics: $\sim$ 53% of 15-year-olds (OECD average: 31%); Reading: $\sim$ 52% (OECD average: 26%); Science: $\sim$ 48% (OECD average: 25%) ( <i>Eurostat</i> ).

Source: Author

The country has set national targets and relative monitoring mechanisms corresponding to PISA targets. The Strategy of Education reform 2025-35 sets a clear direction—raise Montenegro's PISA performance steadily through 2035 (with mid-term checks in 2030) by increasing the share of 15-year-olds who reach at least Level 2 in reading, maths and science and by shrinking the share below Level 2. It tracks progress against those Level-2-and-above rates, using the 2022 PISA baselines (approximately 47% in reading, 41% in maths, and 45% in science) and locks the concrete percentage targets and yearly milestones into the rolling, costed two-year Action Plans (the first covers 2025–2026) and the Strategy's monitoring framework.

### STEM in VET

EU target by 2030	State of play in Montenegro
The share of students enrolled in STEM fields in initial medium-level VET should be at least 45%, with at least 1 out of every 4 students female	20,57% of IVET students were in STEM fields in 2023/24.

Source: Author

### STEM in higher education

EU target by 2030	State of play in Montenegro
The share of students enrolled in STEM fields in third- level education be at least 32%, with at least 2 out of 5 students female	n.a. <sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> There isn't an official, up-to-date published percentage of university students in STEM for Montenegro that can be cited. However, an estimate using the University of Montenegro's 2025 intake plan by faculty can be done: adding up the classic STEM faculties (Electrical, Civil, Mechanical, Metallurgy/Technology, Natural Sciences/Math, Maritime, Biotechnical—and optionally Architecture and Medicine), there are about 1,630 out of 3,311 planned first-year seats, which is roughly 49%. That comes to about 42% if one excludes Medicine and Architecture, and 37% if one also excludes Biotechnical. Since the University of Montenegro (UoM) enrolls about 68% of all higher education students in the country, the estimated national undergraduate intake in STEM is around 40–45%, depending on how STEM is defined.

Source: Author

## ICT PhD programmes

EU target by 2030	State of play in Montenegro
1. The share of students enrolled in ICT PhD programmes should be at least 5%, with at least 1 out of every 3 students female.	In the academic year 2023/2024, there were 232 students enrolled in doctoral (third cycle / PhD) studies in Montenegro. The total number of higher education students in that same year was 20,230. Based on those numbers, PhD students make up about 1.15% of all enrolled higher education students. There is (currently) no publicly available breakdown showing how many of those 232 PhD students are specifically in ICT fields.

There is no specific data available publicly detailing the exact share of students enrolled in ICT PhD programmes within Montenegro's higher education system. However, the country's education strategy prioritizes improving human resources in various sectors, including higher education, and aims to strengthen the capacity of universities.

## Conclusions

### Strengths

- AL is integrated into the overall education reform vision and strongly aligned with EU frameworks (European Skills Agenda, Union of Skills Communication).
- A comprehensive legal and strategic framework exists: Adult Education Strategy 2015–2025, Education Reform Strategy 2025–2035, Reform Agenda 2024–2027, Adult Education Plan 2025–2029.
- Recent legislative reforms (2025) modernised adult learning through micro-qualifications, flexible pathways, free access to first qualifications, and stronger links to labour market needs.

### Challenges

- Participation remains low: only 5.47% of adults engaged in lifelong learning in 2024 (and often cited 3% based on 4-week survey data), compared with EU benchmarks of 47% (2025) and 60% (2030).
- Lack of reliable data: incomplete reporting from ministries, absence of data from local governments and companies, and no unified database on learners, providers, or outcomes.
- Performance of youth in formal education is weak (over half of 15-year-olds are underachievers in PISA 2022), limiting future adult learning participation.
- Gender and equity issues: STEM participation among IVET students is low (20.6% vs. 45% EU target), and there is no disaggregated data for ICT PhD programmes.

### State of Play

- The strategic vision for adult learning (AL) in Montenegro prioritizes human capital development and employability in line with labour market needs, broader access and participation—especially of vulnerable groups—and alignment with EU standards, including green and digital skills.
- Continuous reforms have strengthened the legal and strategic framework through the adoption of the Law on Adult Education (2025), the Education Reform Strategy 2025–2035, and the Adult Education Plan 2025–2029. While adult learning is a stated government priority, all evidence sources—including reports, analyses, and interviewees—converge in noting that public investment remains low.
- The development of the legal framework corresponds with the strategic framework, ensuring policy coherence.

- The AL legal framework is **largely aligned** (fully to partially aligned) with national policy objectives and strategies, though the adoption of some secondary legislation is still pending for full implementation.
- The strategic framework is **partially aligned** with regional and local labour market needs, as policy planning remains centralized and does not fully account for local specificities.
- Current policy efforts in adult learning are concentrated on technical areas such as accreditation, validation, and modular programme design, while broader coordination and strategic direction are still being developed.
- Participation in AL and skills levels are the main indicators in use, but no national targets or systematic monitoring of employment outcomes are in place. The adult participation rate (5.47% in 2024) remains well below the EU average.
- Significant gaps remain in participation and performance outcomes, despite the existence of benchmarking indicators and national targets.

# CHAPTER II: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND GOVERNANCE OF ADULT LEARNING

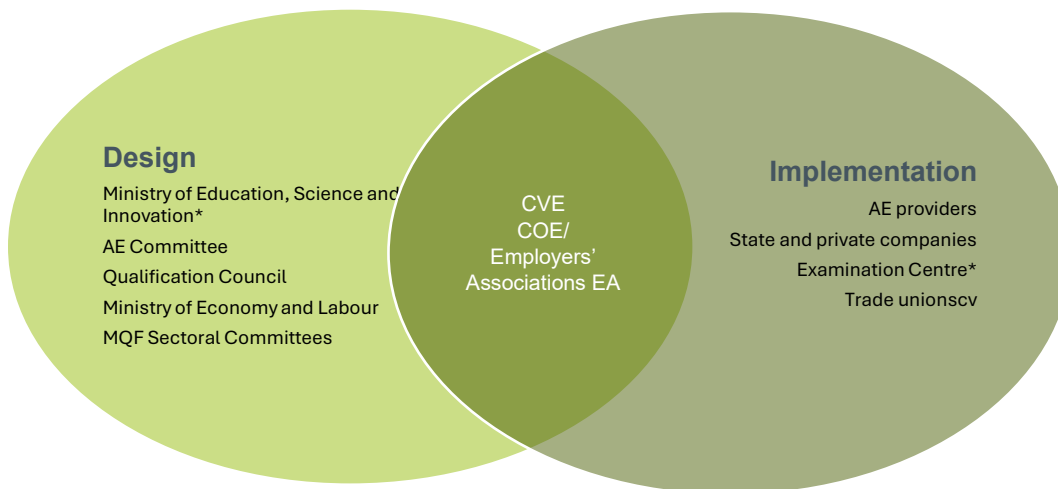
This Chapter analyses and presents the division of roles and responsibilities among institutions in charge as well as the main features of the model of governance in place for AL sub-sector.

## Institutional arrangements

The governance of adult learning is predominantly centralized, with national authorities overseeing strategic planning, funding allocation, and programme development. Local governments mainly play a supportive role within this framework. Key public institutions involved in AL policy include MESI, CVE, EC, EA, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue, Qualifications Council, Sectoral Commissions, National Council for Education (through the Adult Education Committee), units of local self-government (ULSG), adult education providers, and other social partners.

## Roles and responsibilities in AL

The diagram below offers an insight into the responsibilities of each of the involved institutions as defined by the adopted legal framework. A detailed overview of the institutions and their responsibilities is enclosed as [Annex V](#).



\* These institutions are also involved in AE Monitoring and Evaluation

In practice, the responsibilities assigned to various institutions are not fully utilized, and there are instances of ineffective processes. This may be due, in part, to the high number of stakeholders involved.

## Adult Learning governance model

The governance of the AL system in Montenegro is centralised, with institutional roles and responsibilities defined by law. Recent legal amendments have further clarified the distribution of tasks, aiming to enhance system efficiency and streamline processes and procedures.

## Intra-sectoral cooperation and coordination

In principle, Montenegro's AL governance highlights cooperation with social partners and civil society, involving bodies like the CoE, Employers' Federation (EF), trade unions, the Union of Municipalities, and NGOs in policy development and implementation. Although the institutional framework formally recognises CSOs as stakeholders in adult education and allows them to contribute to policy and programme design, their actual participation remains minimal; CSOs themselves report that they are rarely involved in policy development and, in practice, often do not apply to join drafting processes or take part in public consultations, which further undermines meaningful engagement and the inclusiveness of governance.

A detailed overview of the representation and composition of the various institutions in governance, steering and coordination bodies relevant to AL is enclosed as [Annex VI](#). This model provides a space for dialogue and joint action, enabling stakeholders to identify challenges, address current mismatches between labour market skill needs and AL provision, and develop sustainable forms of cooperation that better align supply with demand.

## Providers of formal and non-formal AL

As per the Law on Adult Education, AL providers may include schools, specialised AL organisations, driving schools, residential care institutions for persons with special educational needs (SEN), and other legal entities holding a valid operating licence in accordance with the law. The diversity of AL providers along with a brief description of their scope of work is as follows:

- Adult primary education is provided by public primary and secondary schools that are licensed by MESI to implement special AL programmes.
- Secondary education for adults can be offered by the gymnasiums and VET schools, under conditions defined per Law and with the obligation to attend so-called preparatory classes
- Post-secondary VET for adults is provided by the post-secondary vocational schools and universities
- Non-formal AL is offered by public and private education providers, by legal entities with registered activity in AL, local and international NGOs, Citizens Associations, CoE, trade unions, and other organisations of employers.
- The Employment Agency is charged with implementing education and training initiatives specifically for unemployed people or workers who have been laid off.

## Funding of Adult Learning

AL in Montenegro is financed by:

1. The State budget of Montenegro
2. The budgets of the Units of local self-government
3. Learners' self-financing
4. Donations, loans, donor contribution through projects
5. The Employment Agency (Active Labour Market Policies - ALMPs)
6. Companies

Montenegro's public expenditure on education has fluctuated around 4.2% to 4.8% of GDP over the past decade. For example, around 2015 it was about 4.7%, then dipped to around 3.8% in 2019, before rising again to roughly 4.7% in 2020. Municipalities contribute very little to secondary education.

AL has not had a dedicated budget line within the overall state education budget until this year (2026). Because funding comes from fragmented sources, the total volume of spending on AL cannot be fully

tracked. Data are available only for certain items, such as ALMPs, while for others — like financing adult primary education through MESI — no specific allocations were defined in advance.

A summary of the funding sources, types and available data on funding volumes is enclosed as [Annex VI](#).

Despite the inability to determine the exact amount of funding for AL, there is unanimous agreement that the funds are insufficient and need to be diversified. A significant number of AL programmes require participants to pay fees, which likely contributes to lower participation.

## Monitoring and Quality Assurance

### Institutional roles and responsibilities

Quality assurance of AL is a shared responsibility involving several institutions, each with clearly defined roles in the legal framework, as follows:

- **MESI** - grants and renews licences for adult education providers (valid for 5 years); adopts regulations, supervises implementation, and can suspend or revoke licences if quality standards are not met.
- **CVE** - develops methodologies for quality assurance and improvement in vocational and AL institutions; provides professional support to providers in developing programmes, exam catalogues, and occupational standards and qualification standards that serve as the basis for adult education programmes; conducts external evaluation of educational work.
- **EC** - organises and supervises assessment and certification of knowledge, skills, and competences; trains and licenses examiners and oversees exam commissions to ensure impartiality and transparency.
- **Adult Learning Providers (ALP-s)**, such as schools, training centres, universities - must establish internal quality assurance mechanisms (self-evaluation, record-keeping, reporting); keep detailed documentation on participants, programmes, and outcomes, submitted to the Ministry.
- **National Council for Education (NCE) / Adult Education Committee (AEC)** - advises on quality standards, validation of programmes, and improvement of lifelong learning policies; reviews and proposes programmes, qualification standards, and exam catalogues.

### Monitoring

The Montenegrin Educational Information System (MEIS) is a centralized education information system. It collects and manages data on formal education institutions (preschool, primary, secondary schools) as well as licensed adult education providers. MEIS supports the automation of processes, record-keeping on staff, learners, licenses, and programmes, and it ensures institutions report data on AL participants and programmes to the Ministry. As of recent reports, 140 licensed adult education providers are registered in MEIS. The General Law on Education has introduced punitive measures for adult education providers who fail to enter data in accordance with the law. However, challenges remain: the system is sometimes not regularly updated, procedures for changes are lacking, IT capacity is limited, and there is a risk it may not function optimally without strategic planning and maintenance.

### Continuous professional development of AL practitioners

In the context of assuring quality of the verified special non-formal AL programmes, the Law on Adult Education envisages regulations related to the teaching staff performing educational work with adults, as follows:

- Adult education may be carried out by teachers, associates, vocational instructors, lecturers, programme coordinators, and other qualified professionals, in line with the applicable education laws and the approved programmes. Instructors and trainers employed by licensed institutions are required to possess andragogical qualifications as prescribed by this Law.
- Andragogical training, delivered by CVE through an approved programme, leads to a certificate of qualification. Academic staff at higher education institutions may obtain this certificate upon request. The Ministry regulates the training process and certificate format.

Amendments to the Andragogical Training Programme for teaching staff, aimed at its modernisation, were adopted by the National Council for Education in 2019. To further regulate this area, a Rulebook on Andragogical Training was also adopted in line with the Law. To date, 926 teachers, instructors, professional associates, and other teaching staff previously employed in AL institutions have been trained under this programme.

Currently, there is only one active verified programme for Trainers of adult learners, offered by **CVE**.

The andragogical training programme consists of six modules delivered through a series of seminars:

- Specific characteristics of adults in the process of education and adult learning
- Communication in adult education
- Organisation, planning and programming in adult education
- Moderation of the educational process and group dynamics
- Methods of adult education
- Evaluation and self-evaluation in adult education

Professional development of staff working in the field of AL is mainly carried out through ad hoc projects, since the national budget does not allocate funds for this purpose.

There remains a need to improve information, awareness, and capacity building for staff in institutions that are directly or indirectly engaged in AL.

## Conclusions

### Strengths

- Institutional roles and responsibilities in AL are well defined by law, with recent amendments clarifying governance and procedures. The participation of the actors and representation in various coordinative bodies is participatory.
- QA mechanisms are well-established. Systematic approach to quality assurance: licensing of providers (valid for five years), monitoring by CVE, and obligations for record-keeping and transparency.
- A structured andragogical training programme is in place, consisting of six modules, with almost 1,000 practitioners (926) already trained. The standards are defined by a Rulebook, and higher education staff may also obtain certification. However, there is a continued need for better information, awareness-raising and capacity-building measures to support adult learning practitioners in understanding how to have their competences validated and to obtain the necessary licences in line with the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) procedures.
- Multiple funding streams is in place: State budget, local governments, learners' contributions, EA, companies, and donor projects all contribute.

## Challenges

- The system remains highly centralised, which reflects the country's size and administrative capacity. Nonetheless, there is scope to enhance the role of municipalities in reporting and monitoring labour market developments.
- Funding and coordination gaps undermined the implementation of the 2015–2025 Strategy.
- Limited inclusiveness: Social partners and NGOs are formally included, yet civil society notes that its role in policymaking is limited, even though organisations themselves seldom seek to participate in the design process.
- Funding gaps: A separate adult learning budget line has been set up just recently; fragmented financing prevents a full overview of resources; insufficient and unsustainable funding; many programmes require learner co-payment, which discourages participation. Institutional representatives stress the urgent need to establish a systemic and sustainable mechanism for collecting data on financial allocations across all relevant sectors, to ensure transparency and provide a comprehensive overview of adult learning financing.
- Underutilisation of roles: Despite a well-defined institutional framework, the full use of assigned responsibilities remains limited, contributing to uneven and sometimes inefficient implementation practices.
- Uneven teaching quality: inconsistencies in hiring practices and educator qualifications persist.
- Capacity issues: Professional development of staff depends mainly on ad hoc projects since no stable national funding exists for continuous training.
- Quality risks: Although QA structures exist, enforcement and monitoring can be inconsistent.
- Lack of human capacities of the responsible institutions in performing monitoring and QA in AL, which remains rather limited as a responsibility of MESI and CVE.
- The MEIS system, while promising, is underutilised, with incomplete and irregular updates and limited IT capacity.

## State of Play

- A broad range of institutions participate in AL policy design and implementation, with roles defined by law as advisory, consultative, or decision-making.
- The existing financing model for AL is not adequate at all, characterised by fragmented funding sources, lack of a dedicated budget line, and insufficient reporting mechanisms. Public investment remains limited, while municipalities and employers contribute marginally, and there are no established financial incentives or training funds.
- There is a moderate diversity of stakeholders with clearly defined legal responsibilities, yet practical implementation is hindered by overlapping mandates, insufficient coordination, and limited human and institutional capacities dedicated to AL.
- The management of AL policies is centralised, with national authorities retaining almost exclusive responsibility for decision-making and resource allocation, leaving little room for local-level autonomy or provider-level initiative.
- AL outcomes and qualifications are fully integrated and linked to NQF and the Law on National Vocational Qualifications, ensuring consistency, recognition, and portability.
- Monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms are partially covered, with clearly defined institutional roles but limited resources, irregular data collection, and ad hoc professional development of trainers due to the absence of sustainable funding.
- Employers, chambers, and civil society organizations are formally included in consultations and in every working group for amending laws and around 20 bylaws, regularly participate in programme development—which cannot be adopted without their opinion or approval—and engage in joint projects, although their coordinated advocacy for adult learning advancement remains limited.

## CHAPTER III: ADULT LEARNING PROVISION

This Chapter offers insight into the AL provision in Montenegro as the third dimension in the focus of this Factsheet. It presents the existing AL programmes as well as the support measures and services made available to adult learners.

### AL types and programmes

#### Programmes for remedial education for adults

Formal AL is organised through primary, secondary and post-secondary education programmes tailored to the needs and capabilities of adults organised in educational institutions that are verified for these programmes.

The below table presents the types of programs for acquisition of qualifications through formal AL and verified non-formal AL:

Type of programme	Provider(s)	Target group	Final certification/ qualification
1. Remedial education – Completion of primary education for adults	Primary schools, ALPs accredited	15+	Diploma for completed primary education with a diploma supplement for Level I of NQF
2. Remedial education – Completion of secondary education for adults	Secondary schools	Persons with completed primary school or level II/III/IV of secondary education (reskilling/upskilling)	Diploma and diploma supplement for Levels II to IV of NQF
3. Post-secondary education of adults a) Post-secondary VET b) Master Craftsman Exam	a) 1) Sergije Stanic VET School 2) Police Academy  b) still in preparation	a) Persons with completed secondary VET on Level III plus Master Craftsman Exam and Level IV of NQF  b) Persons with completed secondary VET from Level III + 3 years of work experience to Level IV + 2 years of work experience of NQF	a1) – a2) Diploma for two-year post-secondary VET with diploma supplement on Level V of NQF  b) Diploma for master craftsman on Level V of NQF
4. Special programmes for non-formal AL – partial of full vocational qualification	Accredited providers – secondary VET schools, ALPs, universities, private entities with registered AL activity	15+	For partial qualification: a confirmation of the acquired part of the vocational qualification. For full qualification: Vocational qualification certificate and a certificate supplement
5. Special programmes for non-formal AL for acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences which do not lead to a vocational qualification	Accredited providers – secondary VET schools, private entities with registered AL activity	15+	A confirmation of the acquired micro-qualification or key competence

Type of programme	Provider(s)	Target group	Final certification/ qualification
6. VNFIL vocational qualification  VNFIL Micro qualification or key competence	Examination Centre  VNFIL accredited public AL providers	15+	Certificate for a vocational qualification Levels II - IV of NQF and certificate supplement  A confirmation of the acquired micro-qualification or key competence
7. VNFIL educational qualification – Primary education	VNFIL accredited public AL institutes	15+	Certificate for an educational qualification on Level I of NQF and certificate supplement

In Montenegro, completion of primary education for adults is a key focus of AL policy and is provided free of charge when pursued as a first qualification. The programmes are delivered by public primary schools licensed by MESI to implement special AL curricula and include mandatory preparatory classes. Upon successful completion, learners receive a Diploma of Completed Primary Education, accompanied by a diploma supplement indicating Level I of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Secondary education is not in focus as, based on the 2023 Census of Montenegro, about 79.3% of the population aged 15 and over have completed at least secondary education (i.e. secondary or higher).

### Regional provision of AL

AL in Montenegro is delivered through a network of 129 licensed providers, but their geographical distribution is uneven. The majority are located in the central region (81), while the northern region hosts 31 and the southern 17. Around three-quarters are private institutions (94), with the remainder being public providers, including schools and training centres. There is a major regional imbalance: in 2024 around 89% of participants in formal adult education were concentrated in the central region, with only 6% in the north and 5% in the south.

This uneven regional spread reflects broader demographic and economic patterns: the central region, especially Podgorica (the capital), has more developed infrastructure and higher demand for training, while rural northern municipalities and coastal areas often face limited provision. The bulk of programmes offered are vocational in nature - covering sectors such as tourism and catering, business and economics, health, and ICT- reflecting labour market needs and the influence of EU and donor-funded projects that focus on upskilling.

The dominant forms of participation are vocational qualification programmes and key competence programmes (especially ICT and languages), together making up over 85% of all enrolments. Participation in basic adult education remains minimal, reflecting both low demand and limited provision.

### VET schools as AL providers

While most adult education is delivered by private providers, a number of vocational (VET) schools also play an active role, particularly in regulated occupations or fields with strong links to the labour market. These schools are legally allowed to offer adult education once they obtain the relevant licence, often working with the VET Centre to adapt curricula for adult learners, modularise programmes, and provide requalification pathways.

A good example is the Maritime High School in Kotor, which runs a Centre for Adult Education offering requalification and professional upgrading for maritime occupations, including Nautical and Marine Engineering Cadet programmes. Another key institution is VET school “Ivan Uskoković” in Podgorica, which in cooperation with the national railway company delivers adult training programmes for railway professions, including conductor, locomotive driver, dispatcher, and transport clerk. Nikšić Vocational

School also provides adult training in several technical and service professions such as electrical installation, telecommunications, IT, and hairdressing. These schools leverage their infrastructure and staff to deliver programmes that are often not widely available through private centres, thereby filling important regional and sectoral gaps.

Although their overall number is still modest compared to private providers, the involvement of VET schools in adult education is significant because they often offer nationally recognised qualifications and provide structured requalification pathways. Strengthening their role - especially outside the central region - could help address current regional imbalances and make adult education more accessible to adults in northern and coastal municipalities.

## Non-formal AL provision

Adults can be engaged in non-formal AL provision through a variety of programmes offered by public and private providers, companies, citizens' associations, local and international NGOs, Chambers, etc.

There are two types of programmes offered in non-formal AL:

### 1. Verified non-formal programmes

As the Law on Adult Education stipulates, non-formal education shall be acquired through adult education programmes, which shall include programmes for acquiring:

- a. National vocational qualifications.
- b. Micro-qualifications.
- c. Knowledge and skills for professional development, specialisation, and performing specific work tasks in the workplace (workplace learning).
- d. Other qualifications.
- e. Key competences.
- f. Knowledge and skills for personal and social development: civic democracy, environmental protection, sustainable development, family life, successful social integration, improving quality of life, health education, social skills, third age (senior learning), working with persons with special needs, and similar.

An insight into the participation rate can be obtained in the [Annex IV](#).

### 2. Non-verified non-formal AL programmes

In Montenegro, many adults attend non-formal education programmes that are not formally verified by MESI. These programmes are typically organised by NGOs, private companies, or associations, and while they provide useful skills and knowledge, they do not lead to an officially recognised certificate. Instead, participants usually receive only a confirmation of attendance, which means the learning outcomes are not formally integrated into the national qualifications system. A typical example of a non-verified non-formal education programme might be a short training on youth work and leadership, organised by a local NGO or youth association.

Private companies are also important providers of non-formal learning, especially in areas closely linked to labour market needs. They often organise short courses, workshops, or in-house training on topics such as ICT skills, foreign languages, customer service, or health and safety at work. If a company chooses to align its training with national standards and obtain verification, the programme can then lead to a recognised certificate issued as a public document.

## Programmes for improving skills, qualifications and employability

### 1. Operational Plan for active employment programmes and measures and labour market services

The active employment programmes and measures and labour market services<sup>32</sup> have been offering possibilities for participation in AL programmes to unemployed.

ALMPs are:

#### a. Education and training

Education and training are implemented through ALMPs for: i) acquiring vocational qualifications, key skills, or key competences; ii) completing an internship in order to gain the work experience necessary for independent performance of tasks at a qualification level; iii) training to acquire the knowledge and skills required to perform the tasks of a specific job with an employer

#### b. Employment incentives

#### c. Self-employment incentives

#### d. Direct job creation and

#### e. Other ALMPs, depending on labour market needs and the identification of target groups, as defined in the EA's Work Programme.

In the first half of 2025, EA adopted nine ALMPs for 1,100 individuals, including 256 young NEETs from three pilot municipalities of the Youth Guarantee implementation, with a total value of €3,663,390. Of these nine programmes, conditions were created for the implementation of eight, which the Agency will carry out in cooperation with education providers and employers for 874 individuals, in the amount of €1,635,536.76, of which €121,196.81 has already been allocated for the implementation started for 34 young NEETs.

## Support measures and services to adult learners

### Information and outreach

In order to disseminate information on existing AL programme opportunities and also to raise awareness on AL and LLL opportunities, CVE has set up and maintains a Database of non-formal AL providers and programmes<sup>33</sup>. The register of providers is available on the Ministry's website, and the list of education programmes is available on the CSO website. The initial idea was to provide up to date information on both providers and programmes.

MESI published a Guide to the Non-Formal Education System in Montenegro in 2016, which was updated in 2019 with support from Erasmus+ funding. The Guide provides an overview of the non-formal education landscape, including enrolment procedures, the importance of foreign languages as a key skill, as well as a list of available courses and their licensed providers.

The AL awareness raising concept envisaged in the Action plan of the Education Reform Strategy 2025-35 has not been developed yet, thus activation of adults for AL and LLL opportunities is rather low and made upon individual's decisions in most of the cases.

<sup>32</sup> In Montenegro, active labour market policy measures—ranging from education and training to employment and self-employment incentives, direct job creation, and targeted programmes—are implemented by the Employment Agency in line with labour market needs. Active labour market measures focus on improving employability, supporting vulnerable groups, and aligning skills with labour market demand. <https://www.zzzcg.me/programi/programi-aktivne-politike-zaposljavanja/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.gov.me/cso/obrazovanje-odraslih-i-cjelozivotno-ucenje/ustanove-za-obrazovanje-odraslih>;  
<https://www.gov.me/cso/obrazovanje-odraslih-i-cjelozivotno-ucenje/programi-obrazovanja-odraslih>

## Validation on non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL)

The overall responsibility for information and guidance within the process of obtaining qualifications lies with MESI, CVE, CoE, authorised trade union, authorised associations of employers, EA, Chamber of Crafts (CoC) and education providers. However, information, outreach and promotion work is sporadic and linked to specific projects or initiatives implemented e.g. by EA.

A comprehensive system for informing about and promoting the VNFIL in Montenegro has not yet been fully established. Targeted initiatives exist, notably through the Employment Agency's ALMPs and the AL Days coordinated by CVE, where information is tailored for specific target groups and delivered through various channels, including digital formats.

The legal framework enables validation across vocational qualifications at levels 1–5 of the MQF, and several accredited adult-learning providers are authorised to implement validation procedures. In practice, however, VNFIL remains limited in scope and largely concentrated in vocational education. Between 2019 and 2022, 988 certificates were issued for key competences—mainly in foreign languages and digital skills—within adult-learning measures implemented by the EA, while only a small number of adults obtained full vocational qualifications through validation routes.

The absence of a systematic information and monitoring mechanism constrains visibility and consistent reporting of VNFIL outcomes. Strengthening data collection, expanding provider engagement, and promoting VNFIL more widely across sectors and MQF levels could enhance its overall reach and relevance.

## Micro-qualifications

Micro-qualifications are included as a novelty into the Law on Adult Education, as defined in Article 8. Micro-qualification means the acquired knowledge, skills, and competences that a learner gains based on one or more learning outcomes by this Law, and which is recognised in the process of obtaining a vocational qualification.

Montenegro has been involved in several international projects on micro-credentials, including CRED4TEACH (developing MOOC-based micro-credentials for teacher training), MICROBOL (supporting European frameworks for recognition), and BEM (adapting VET experience into micro-credentials). In addition, a national project under the Adult Learning Agenda aims to expand trusted AL opportunities, explicitly including micro-credentials.

## Career guidance and counselling of adult learners

Career guidance and counselling (CGC) for adults is available mainly through EA, ALPs, and occasional NGO or international projects, with services largely focused on unemployed persons. Access for employed adults, NEETs, women, and other vulnerable groups is limited, and provision is often project-based rather than a systematic part of AL.

CGC services are mostly offered to students in formal education and to unemployed persons registered with EA, but the quality of these services is rather low. Formal education does not provide CGC in a systematic way and usually only offers basic information on further schooling opportunities. EA mainly provides CGC in a traditional manner and needs to modernise its services. Other large groups, such as employees, NEETs, women, and other vulnerable groups, rarely have access to CGC services. CGC provision is usually funded from the state budget, but funds are not specifically allocated for CGC, rather for the regular activities of the mentioned institutions. Public institutions sometimes provide small grants (usually) to the NGO sector or professional associations to implement projects that include CGC. International organisations, primarily through projects in education, employment, labour market and other sectors, also contribute to funding CGC provision.

The Government officially adopted the Strategy for Career Guidance and Counselling 2025-2030<sup>34</sup> in July 2025. The Strategy introduces measures to expand and modernise services for both young

<sup>34</sup> <https://wapi.gov.me/download/c5343fcc-2a27-49ea-9a91-6c117b009076?version=1.0>

people and adults. It foresees the establishment of a national Career Centre, the training of counsellors, and clearer standards and indicators for QA. For adults, the plan emphasises better access to guidance for both unemployed and employed persons, stronger links with AL programmes, and more transparent information about available services. By 2030, the goal is to provide systematic, high-quality career support across all education levels, including AL. One of the indicators is the creation of a database to monitor the career trajectories of pupils, students, and adults through 2028.

Recently, the National Council for Education issued a positive opinion on the following documents: the Career Management Skills Framework, together with the Competence Profile and the Code of Ethics for Career Guidance Practitioners, developed in cooperation with the ETF.

## Conclusions

### Strengths

- AL in Montenegro is characterised by a broad and diverse provision of programmes. Adults can pursue formal education at all levels, from primary and secondary to post-secondary vocational and master craftsman qualifications, as well as a wide range of non-formal programmes.
- The country has also developed a system of verified non-formal programmes, which cover vocational qualifications, micro-qualifications, key competences, and skills for personal and social development.
- CGC for adults has gained new momentum with the adoption of the 2025–2030 Strategy, which foresees the establishment of a Career Centre, new training for counsellors, and clear standards for service delivery.
- Clear emphasis on green and digital skills, including commitments to revise 30 programmes and develop 10 new ones in these areas.

### Challenges

- The state of implementation of VNFIL reflects an early developmental phase, characterised by low participation rates, limited sectoral coverage, and underdeveloped monitoring and guidance structures.
- While the verification process for non-formal programmes is an important QA tool, it does not systematically take labour market relevance into account, reducing its potential impact on employability. In practice, many adults still attend non-verified non-formal programmes organised by NGOs or private companies; although these courses provide valuable skills, they only award confirmations of attendance and are not recognised within the national qualifications system.
- Awareness-raising efforts are developing. CVE has established a database of providers and programmes, the relevant sections of the website are in place, and public initiatives to promote adult learning are gradually being strengthened.
- CGC services are still largely concentrated on unemployed persons registered with EA, while employed adults, women, NEETs, and vulnerable groups have little or no access. The majority of services remain project-based and lack consistent funding, which undermines continuity and reach.

### State of play

- Despite a solid policy and institutional framework, adult learning still lacks comprehensive support mechanisms. Guidance and counselling services for adults are present but remain underdeveloped and insufficiently connected to training and employment pathways.
- Adult learning in Montenegro includes formal programmes (primary, secondary, and post-secondary education for adults) and verified non-formal programmes leading to vocational or partial qualifications, key competences, or micro-qualifications. These are mainly designed to enhance employability and lifelong learning opportunities. The offer partially matches the needs of diverse adult groups, as participation among vulnerable, low-skilled, and rural populations remains limited and regional disparities persist.
- AL is delivered by a mixed network of public and private providers, including primary and secondary schools, VET institutions, universities, NGOs, and private training centres. While verified programmes dominate policy attention, a large share of non-verified non-formal provision operates outside the

formal framework. Overall, the offer is moderately attractive, with vocational and key competence programmes most popular. However, access is uneven, and awareness of available opportunities, especially in the north and south, remains low.

# CONCLUSIONS

Taking into account all the information gathered and analysed for the purpose of development of this factsheet, the following conclusions can be made:

## Dimension I: Strategic and legal framework

Montenegro has established a solid strategic and legal framework for AL, including recent reforms that introduced micro-qualifications, flexible pathways, and free access to first qualifications. However, participation remains very low: just 5.47% of adults engaged in lifelong learning in 2024, compared to the EU target of 47% by 2025. Weak implementation of the 2015–2025 Adult Education Strategy, insufficient funding, and lack of coordination have slowed progress. Reliable data is scarce, with incomplete reporting from ministries and no contributions from local governments or private companies. Uneven educator quality and weak performance in compulsory education (as reflected in PISA 2022) also undermine the foundation for lifelong learning.

## Dimension II: Governance and institutional arrangements

Governance is centralised and roles are defined by law, but the system struggles with inclusiveness, funding, and capacity. Municipalities have limited autonomy and rarely fulfil their legal obligation to report on labour market needs, leading to fragmented planning. Although social partners and NGOs are formally included, their participation in policy design is not extensive. Funding remains the most critical gap: adult learning has no dedicated budget line, financing is fragmented across several sources, and many programmes require learners to pay, which limits access. Professional development of staff depends mainly on temporary projects, making capacity building unsustainable. While quality assurance mechanisms exist, monitoring and enforcement are inconsistent, which affects trust in the system.

## Dimension III: Provision and programmes of AL

AL provision is broad, from remedial education to non-formal programmes and micro-qualifications. Yet the offer only partially matches the needs of diverse adult groups. Non-verified non-formal programmes are widespread, providing useful skills but no recognised qualifications. The verification process does not sufficiently assess labour market relevance, weakening its contribution to employability. Many programmes require co-payments, discouraging participation, and awareness-raising initiatives remain minimal: the national database of programmes is empty, campaigns are rare, and activation of adults largely depends on individual initiative. Information systems like MEIS exist but are underutilised, with irregular updates and limited IT capacity. CGC services are still dominated by a traditional focus on the unemployed, while employed adults, women, NEETs, and other vulnerable groups remain underserved. The 2025–2030 Strategy on career guidance is a positive step, but implementation will be decisive in addressing these gaps.

# ANNEX I – ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

Chapters	Guiding questions [1]	Sources/ methods
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country context (governmental and administration features over education and training affairs, main legal frameworks, placement of AL sub-sector within the wider education &amp; training system)</li> <li>Specific elements related to the country political situation, constitutional arrangements, territorial/regional autonomies and jurisdiction over education sector</li> <li>Presentation of the country paper structure and objectives</li> </ul>		Desk review
<p><b>Chapter 1. AL Strategies &amp; Policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AL national and regional strategies (existing, past and present, or under preparation and expectations on its adoption) – approach to AL (broad, narrow), main strategic objectives, results obtained to date, and targets to be achieved, comparative analysis with EU policy priorities alignment, existing legal framework; level of priority attributed to AL, plans for reforms or large-scale programmes)</li> <li>AL national policies (overview of the main policy objectives, national and regional policy measures implemented or under implementation, target-population, equity and inclusiveness gaps identified, sources of funding, stakeholders' participation, monitoring &amp; evaluation mechanisms)</li> <li>National targets vs EU targets (analysis of the 5 key indicators of NEAAL and Union of Skills 2030 at national level, plus indicators related to AL from Growth Plans/National Reform Agendas)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the main priorities of existing AL national/regional strategies? Where do they intend to bring AL in the country? Currently, is AL a priority, does the government intend to advance AL, do social partners and/or other non-state actors advocate for progress in AL?</li> <li>2. Is the legal framework adjusted to the national/regional strategies and policy objectives? Do they correspond to specific needs of regions? Is there a mismatch between the different levels of policy definition (fully aligned/partially aligned/not aligned at all)?</li> <li>3. What is the level of fragmentation of AL policies within the wider education and training system of the country (highly fragmented/fragmented/not fragmented much)?</li> <li>4. What are the main indicators in use and related targets for AL sector (e.g. participation rates, skill levels, employment outcomes)?</li> <li>5. Where relevant and possible, compare with EU policy objectives in the NEAAL 2030 and the Communication on the Union of Skills, as well as benchmarking indicators and other national targets (fully matched/partially matched/not matched at all)?</li> </ol>	Desk-review Interviews Data Analysis
<p><b>Chapter 2. AL Institutional arrangements &amp; Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutional arrangements (responsible institutions at national and regional levels, roles and responsibilities, coordination bodies,</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which institutions are responsible for the coordination and implementation of AL policies, and how are roles and responsibilities divided among ministries, agencies, and other relevant actors? Which coordination mechanisms are in place (e.g. AL council. Inter-ministerial</li> </ol>	Desk-review Interviews

Chapters	Guiding questions [1]	Sources/ methods
<p>type of providers (public/private/others), coverage of the territory and gaps in the AL supply and demand, participation of employers and other players from the world of work, funding sources and financing models)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ AL Governance models (key-features of the governance model, i.e. centralized/decentralized, participative, co-decision (diversity of actors, autonomy of the providers), supervision and coordination processes, relation to NQFs)</li> <li>▪ Monitoring and Quality Assurance, data collection and analysis on AL, including evaluation.</li> </ul>	<p>Committee on AL, Economic and Social Council, etc.) and what are their roles (i.e. advisory, consultative, decision-making)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. What are the main sources of funding of AL provision? Are there public-private partnerships related to AL funding, e.g. training funds, tax exemptions, levies, etc.? Are the financing model and funding sources sufficient and adequate? (very adequate/moderately adequate/not adequate at all)?</li> <li>3. Which stakeholders (for example employers, trade unions, civil society, learners) are involved in the planning, design, implementation, and monitoring of AL initiatives and to what extent there is a wide participation of relevant players in the different areas of AL governance (high diversity of stakeholders/somehow diverse/not diverse at all)?</li> <li>4. How well coordinated is the management of AL policies implementation as per the country's institutional arrangements? Do they correspond to the adopted legal frameworks and to a more centralised or decentralised model? (very centralised/to a certain extent centralised/decentralised)?</li> <li>5. How far are the recognition, portability and integration of AL outcomes/qualifications integrated in/linked to national qualification frameworks/national qualification systems (fully integrated/to a certain extent/not integrated at all)?</li> <li>6. What mechanisms (at national/regional/provider level) are in place to ensure the quality of AL provision? How is the monitoring of results implemented and what type of programmes are covered? How is the quality of trainers/facilitators ensured (fully covered/to a certain extent/not covered at all)?</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Chapter 3. AL Provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ AL Programmes (main existing formal and non-formal programmes, complementary services such as outreach, coaching, career guidance and validation of skills including the broader range of learners, objectives and relation to upskilling and reskilling initiatives, types of provision, recent initiatives in the AL domain for specific target groups, skills acquisition)</li> <li>▪ AL Provision (Size of the provision, number of enrolled learners, completion of the programmes)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What types of AL programmes are currently available (formal and non-formal), and what are their primary objectives and target groups? To what extent does the AL provision match the needs of different groups of adult learners and address the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion (fully match/partially match/ not matching at all)?</li> <li>2. Which are the current providers of AL and are there significant differences between formal and non-formal provision? How attractive are the existing programmes (formal and non-formal)? Are there significant gaps in AL provision? (highly attractive/moderately attractive/not attractive at all)</li> </ol>	<p>Desk-review Interviews Statistical data analysis</p>

Chapters	Guiding questions [1]	Sources/ methods
<p><b>Conclusions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Main findings</li> <li>▪ Main successes, what is working well, as well as challenges identified at each level (chapters 1, 2, 3)</li> <li>▪ Specificities of AL findings, perspectives in AL, source of policy learning.</li> <li>▪ 1 to max 3 conclusions to be highlighted.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the main findings in each of the 3 dimensions.</li> <li>2. What indicates progress (a new law under preparation, more funding for AL, government calling non-state actors to mobilise and contribute to AL, very successful programmes, etc.)?</li> <li>3. What remains a (old) challenge, or what are the emerging challenges?</li> <li>4. Do the findings in 1, 2 and 3 support the study assumption that AL is recognised as a priority and there is progress?</li> <li>5. What are the sources of 'policy learning' (sources of inspiration: neighbours, EU countries, international practices, etc.)?</li> </ol>	<p>Expert's own analysis, based on key qualitative and quantitative information collected through desk research and interviews</p>

[1] These guiding questions were used as check list for the authors to use while drafting the different sections of the reports, in particular in the Conclusions boxes of each Chapter – 'State of play' section.

## ANNEX II – LIST OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Institution	Interviewees
Centre for Vocational Education	Adult Education Department within CVE
VET schools	VET schools Adult Education Coordinators

### List of individual interviews

Institution	Interviewee
Centre for Vocational Education	Head of Department for Adult Education
Ministry of Education, Science and Innovations	Head of Directorate for Adult Education and Lifelong Learning
Chamber of Economy	Head of Department for education
Employers Federation	Counsellor for Marketing and Education
Junior Achievement Montenegro (NGO)	Head Director

## ANNEX III – THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY 2015–2025

The Adult Education Strategy 2015–2025 in Montenegro has been accompanied by several partial analyses and reports rather than a single comprehensive review. Recent studies, such as the Analysis of Adult Education in Montenegro (2025) and the Analysis of Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (2025), highlight ongoing challenges in access, quality, funding, and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. They also underline the need for stronger cooperation with employers and more affordable training opportunities.

Other documents, including the Annual Adult Education Plan Report for 2022, civil society analyses from 2017–2018, and the EAEA Country Report on Montenegro (2021), provide useful insights into specific years or aspects of the system. However, reporting has been fragmented and limited in scope. A key weakness of the Strategy is the absence of clear and measurable indicators. Without defined benchmarks and with no monitoring and evaluation mechanism in place, it is not possible to systematically track progress or assess the overall impact of the Strategy. This gap highlights the need for stronger evaluation structures in future policy frameworks.

Document	Date / Author	Content / Key Findings	Relevance to Strategy Implementation
Analysis of Adult Education in Montenegro	2025 / Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation	Provides a detailed review of the adult education system, highlights challenges and recommendations regarding access, quality, funding, and cooperation with employers.	Recent; offers insight into how the Strategy goals are being achieved and identifies remaining gaps.
Analysis of Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning	2025 / Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation	Examines the system of validation of non-formal and informal learning; identifies regulatory gaps and barriers and provides recommendations for improvement.	Directly linked to the Strategy goal of enabling recognition of non-formal and informal learning.
Report on the Implementation of the Annual Adult Education Plan (2022)	2022 / Government of Montenegro	Covers the implementation of the annual Adult Education Plan; includes participation data, training areas, and activities carried out.	Part of Strategy implementation through Action Plans; provides concrete data for 2022.
Analysis of the Adult Education System in Montenegro (Working Group, Civil Society)	2017–2018 / CRNVO and partners	Evaluations of the adult education system for specific years; points out systemic challenges, participation trends, and financing issues.	Useful for tracking early and mid-term progress in Strategy implementation.
EAEA Country Report: Montenegro	2021 / European Association for the Education of Adults	Provides an update on national policies, implementation progress, and the role of civil society; mid-term assessment of adult education in Montenegro.	Contextualises strategy implementation within European frameworks, highlights achievements and challenges.

# ANNEX IV – STATISTICAL DATA ON PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

## Participation in adult education programmes

Year	Total participants	Central region	Northern region	Southern region	Change vs. previous year
2023	3,706	3,268	244	185	–
2024	2,126	↓ (all regions)	↓	↓	–1,580

## Participation in adult education programmes per number of adult learners by region and programme type in 2024

Programme Type	Central Region	Northern Region	Southern Region	Total
Basic adult education (primary)	46	20	8	74
Vocational qualification programmes	1,186	132	84	1,402
Key competence programmes (e.g. languages, ICT)	908	71	43	1,022
Professional development / further training	128	31	18	177
Other forms of adult education (non-formal etc.)	228	46	35	309
Total (formal adult education)	2,496	169	152	2,817

## Participants in Vocational Qualification Programmes

Year	Number of participants
2023	1,844
2024	1,422

## Most In-Demand Vocational Qualification Programmes (2024)

Programme	Certificates issued
Security Guard	211
Teaching Assistant	208
Accounting Technician	112
Forklift Operator	106

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Other programmes	< 100 each
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Source: Montenegrin Educational Information System (MEIS)

# ANNEX V – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN ADULT LEARNING

Institution	Responsibility
<b>Ministry of Education, Science and Innovations (MESI)</b>	<p>Planning, monitoring, and analysing AL</p> <p>Proposing strategic improvements and drafting relevant laws</p> <p>Preparing methodologies and system-level documents</p> <p>Coordinating with key partners such as CVE, EC, and BES</p> <p>Managing budget planning and inter-institutional cooperation, including with entities like the Ombudsman.</p>
<b>Centre for Vocational Education (CVE)</b>	<p>Designing and adapting AL programmes to meet the evolving needs of learners</p> <p>Monitoring the implementation of these programmes, ensuring they are delivered effectively</p> <p>Supporting innovation and modernization in AL, helping to keep programmes relevant and up to date</p> <p>Providing advisory services and offering teacher training to enhance the quality of education</p> <p>Promoting LLL, encouraging continuous education and development throughout individuals' lives</p>
<b>Examination Centre (EC)</b>	<p>Training and licensing examiners for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)</p> <p>Organizing examiner training and assessments, issuing examiner licenses (with 148 licenses proposed for 2024), and coordinating qualification examinations across 49 vocational areas.</p> <p>Ensuring the quality and transparency of the assessment processes, maintaining high standards in vocational qualifications.</p> <p>Overseeing of the development of procedures and methodologies, ensuring that they align with international best practices. This role also involves monitoring global trends and adopting innovative approaches to improve the examination process.</p> <p>Maintaining the examiner registry and ensuring QA throughout the examination process, contributing to the Centre's commitment to providing reliable and transparent vocational assessments.</p>
<b>Employment Agency (EA)</b>	<p>Supporting unemployed individuals through its ALMPs.</p> <p>Providing information, counselling, and job matching, helping individuals connect with suitable employment opportunities.</p> <p>CGC and support for those interested in self-employment, assisting them in developing entrepreneurial skills.</p> <p>Training, requalification, and professional rehabilitation to enhance the employability of individuals.</p>
<b>The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue (MLESD)</b>	<p>Overseeing the training and requalification of unemployed adults in Montenegro.</p> <p>Co-creating legislation related to AL and workforce development. Developing programmes aimed at skills development and LLL, ensuring that adults are equipped with the necessary competencies to improve their employability.</p> <p>Participating in the Qualifications Council</p>
<b>The Qualifications Council (QC)</b>	<p>Governing NQF in Montenegro.</p> <p>Adoption and classification of qualifications, ensuring that they align with national standards.</p> <p>Approving occupational and qualification standards</p> <p>Overseeing the coding and formal recognition of qualifications, ensuring that they are properly documented and accredited</p> <p>Monitoring the work of sectorial commissions, ensuring that the qualifications system remains relevant and effective in meeting labour market needs</p>
<b>Sectorial Commissions (SCs)</b>	<p>Identifying labour market demands and skills gaps across various industries.</p> <p>Recommending updates to existing qualifications or the creation of new ones, ensuring that the qualifications system remains responsive to evolving needs</p>

Institution	Responsibility
	<p>Drafting qualification proposals and exam catalogues, which help standardize assessments and certification processes</p> <p>Promoting qualifications within their respective sectors, encouraging their recognition and use</p>
<p><b>The National Council for Education (NCE)</b></p>	<p>Adopting AL programmes, exam catalogues, programmes for key competencies, and programmes for vocational qualifications.</p>
<p><b>Adult Education Committee (AEC)</b></p>	<p>Monitoring the quality of AL programmes and recommending improvements to ensure they meet the needs of learners and the labour market.</p>
<p><b>Adult Learning Providers (ALPs)</b></p>	<p>Delivering AL programmes.</p> <p>Issuing public calls for enrolment, ensuring that adult learners have access to relevant educational opportunities.</p> <p>Developing and implementing education programmes that meet the needs of adult learners.</p> <p>Ensuring that their educators are trained on andragogy</p>
<p><b>EPALE ambassadors</b></p>	<p>Promoting the platform within their local communities, engaging new members, training platform users, publishing content, and thereby improving the quality of AL while fostering cooperation among institutions across Europe.</p>

## ANNEX VI – INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN GOVERNANCE, STEERING AND COORDINATION BODIES

Participating institution	National Council for Education	AE Committee	Qualifications Council	Sectorial committees	Governing boards of AE providers
Ministry of Education, Science and Innovations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Centre for Vocational Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Examination Centre			✓		
Bureau for Educational Services	✓		✓		
Chamber of Economy	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Employment Agency	✓		✓		
Ministry of Labour			✓		
IVET/CVET providers		✓			✓
Sectorial Chamber				✓	
Employers Federation	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Trade Unions	✓		✓	✓	
Universities	✓		✓	✓	
Line Ministry				✓	
Sectorial employers' associations				✓	

## ANNEX VII – SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR ADULT LEARNING

Source of funding	Type of programmes	Funding volume
<b>The Budget of Montenegro covers legally mandatory</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Programmes for completion of primary education of adults</li> <li>2. Programmes for acquiring the first qualification</li> <li>3. Training / professional development for public administration employees</li> <li>4. Education and training programmes for unemployed people</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This budget line is newly introduced. Amount in this budget line is not pre-defined</li> <li>2. To be shared by data validation from MESI</li> <li>3. N/A</li> <li>4. Collecting data</li> </ol>
<b>The Budget of Montenegro may/can cover - not legally mandatory</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Teaching, and other types of equipment for the public AL institutions</li> <li>6. The costs for VNFIL, leading to acquisition of an NQF Level I qualification (primary education)</li> <li>7. Cost for implementation of special AL programmes</li> <li>8. Development and implementation of AL programmes</li> </ol>	<p>No funding To be confirmed through data validation</p>
<b>Operational plan for active labour market programmes and measures</b>	Segment 3 – Trainings, Segment 4 – Digital skills and Segment 5 - Traineeships	Collecting data

## ACRONYMS

AE	Adult Education
AL	Adult Learning
AEC	Adult Education Committee
ALP	Adult learning Provider
BES	Bureau for Educational Services
CVE	Centre for Vocational Education
EA	Employment Agency
EC	Examination Centre
EAAL	European Agenda on Adult Learning
ETF	European Training Foundation
EPALE	Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe
EU	European Union
ICT	Information and communication technology
LLL	Lifelong Learning
ULSGs	Units of Local Self - Government
MQF	Montenegrin Qualifications Framework
MESI	Ministry of Education, Science and Innovations
MED	Ministry of Economic Development
MLESD	The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NQF	National Qualifications Framework

OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
MNE	Montenegro
MONSTAT	Montenegrin Statistical Office
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VNIFL	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
WBL	Work-based learning

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