

ALBANIA’S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION and TRAINING SYSTEM

“Challenges and Opportunities”

A Modern and Inclusive VET Landscape

Albania’s vocational education and training (VET) system has undergone major transformation over the last decade, aligning closely with **EU standards, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), and Cedefop/ETF policy recommendations. The National Agency for Employment and Skills (AKPA / NAES)**, under the Ministry of Economy and Innovation, leads implementation of national employment and skills development strategies.

In 2023, Albania continued to strengthen its **network of vocational education schools and training centers**, supported by projects such as Skills for Jobs (S4J) financed by the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** and implemented by Swisscontact. This modernization aims to improve **employability, digital skills, and labor market relevance** of training – all central to the VRinVET project’s vision for immersive and future-ready learning.



Policy Landscape and Strategic Vision 2030

Albania’s government has made a long-term commitment to employment, education, and skills development through the **National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023–2030**, which builds upon the earlier 2019-2022 plan. This strategy emphasizes:

- **Work-based learning and lifelong learning** as core tools for sustainable employment.
- **Digital transformation** in teaching and learning, with stronger ICT infrastructure and e-learning systems.
- **Environmental sustainability and green skills** development aligned with the EU Green Deal and Western Balkans Growth Plan.
- **Inclusion of vulnerable groups**, ensuring equitable access to quality education and training.

According to ETF (2024), the strategy represents a “renewed social contract” between education and labour market actors, promoting **dual learning pathways, micro-credentials, and skills intelligence mechanisms** for labour market forecasting.



3. Key Labor Market Indicators

The Statistical Bulletin 2023 shows that Albania’s labor market continues its post-pandemic recovery:

- The **employment rate** increased modestly, while **unemployment** decreased among both men and women.
- **90,000 jobseekers** were registered with public employment offices in 2023.
- **Women represent about 50%** of the registered unemployed population, with targeted gender inclusion programs now being implemented.
- The **youth unemployment rate** remains high, but progress has been recorded through new internship and entrepreneurship programs.
- **8,200 individuals** were certified by public VTCs in 2023, confirming demand for vocational qualifications.

ETF’s Country Fiche 2024 further notes that Albania’s **informal employment**—estimated at around **37% of the economy**—continues to hinder social protection and decent work objectives. Efforts are ongoing to formalize employment through tax reform and digitalization.

Vocational Training Centres – National Network and Reform Directions

Albania operates **10 Public Vocational Training Centers (VTCs)** offering modular, competency-based courses in priority sectors:

- **ICT, mechatronics, tourism, textiles, energy, and construction.**
- Training is free for registered unemployed individuals and aligned with **AKPA’s occupational standards.**



The *National Tracking Report of Certified Trainees 2023* revealed that:

- **37.7%** of certified trainees entered employment within 12 months.
- **30%** found jobs within the first 3 months.
- **45%** of participants were women, showing growing gender balance.
- **Self-employment and entrepreneurship** continue to expand as alternative career paths.

Reforms under the **2030 Skills Strategy** aim to expand these centers into regional innovation hubs integrating **VR/AR simulations, digital labs, and green technology workshops**. These align directly with the **VRinVET project's goals**.

Vocational Education Schools – Pathways to Employment and Higher Learning

In 2023, **36 public vocational secondary schools** under AKPA/NAES supervision served more than **12,000 students**, with **3,009 graduates**. The 2024 tracer study shows:

- **71% employed** within a year of graduation.
- **18% continued education** or took additional training.
- **11% unemployed**, mostly in rural areas.
- Most graduates in **ICT, electrical engineering, hospitality, and transport** find jobs aligned with their studies.

The **average job-search time** is 1-3 months. **Internships, private networks, and school-business partnerships** remain key employment routes.

The ETF (2024) report confirms that Albania's **dual education model** is maturing and increasingly supported by private sector engagement.

Inclusion, Challenges, and Demographic Shifts

Despite progress, Albania faces deep-rooted structural challenges:

- **Demographic decline:** Population decreased to **2.77 million (2023)**, with emigration and low birth rates continuing [【31†Country Fiche_Albania_2024_EN_web_0.pdf†L4-L5】](#).
- **Youth migration:** Nearly **half of young Albanians (49%)** consider emigrating for education or work opportunities.
- **Low education spending:** Only **2.75% of GDP** is allocated to education, below the EU average of 5%.
- **Female participation in VET** remains below 40% in technical fields, though it is increasing in tourism, design, and ICT.
- **Informality** and limited social insurance coverage continue to challenge fair employment.

Still, Albania has halved **early school leaving** from **31.9% in 2010** to **below 15% in 2023**, and its **Human Development Index** rose from **0.660 (2000)** to **0.796 (2021)**. These gains reflect sustained efforts to expand access and quality across education levels.

Opportunities for Immersive Learning and VRinVET Integration

The Albanian VET ecosystem presents fertile ground for **virtual reality-enhanced learning**:

- AKPA and ETF support the integration of **simulation-based learning** to improve engagement and reduce gender disparity in technical fields.
- The **Digital Skills Agenda (2023-2030)** promotes **digital competence frameworks, e-learning modules**, and **micro-credentials** for upskilling adults.
- **VRinVET's immersive training modules** align perfectly with these goals, providing scalable, inclusive, and cost-effective training.

Through **pilot initiatives**, Albania can adopt VR for:

- Safety and industrial operations training.
- Energy efficiency and sustainable construction simulations.
- ICT and robotics instruction through virtual labs.

Such innovations enhance accessibility for learners in rural and remote areas, reduce training costs, and improve labor market readiness.



Outlook for 2030 and Beyond

By 2030, Albania envisions a **sustainable, inclusive, and digital VET system** integrated with European standards. Key goals include:

- Increasing participation in adult learning to **15%**, up from 10% in 2023.
- Reducing informal employment below **30%**.
- Expanding **green and digital skills** programs nationwide.
- Strengthening partnerships with EU countries through projects like **VRinVET, S4J, and EU4Education**.

This trajectory positions Albania as a leader in **Western Balkan VET transformation**, embracing technology, partnerships, and lifelong learning.



References

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