



Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans
Flagship 10 – Youth Guarantee

GUIDELINES

Preparation of Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans

September 2021

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How to use the Guidelines

The purpose of **these Guidelines** is to support the Youth Guarantee (YG) Coordinator (generally the employment **department**¹ of the ministry in charge of labour), and other stakeholders in the Western Balkans in the process of drafting the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP). In particular, the Guidelines offer guidance for preparing and filling in the **YGIP template**, provided by the European Commission to Youth Guarantee Coordinators in the Western Balkans. The Guidelines clarify some of the terminology used and aim to ensure that YGIPs build on a comprehensive review of all elements that are required for the Youth Guarantee, including policy interventions and structural reforms, providing concrete examples to inform the YGIP.

The Guidelines cover in detail the initial elements of the **process** leading to the formulation and formal adoption of the YGIP, whereby:

- The Youth Guarantee Coordinator works with a small Expert Group (see below), comprising technical staff from relevant public institutions, which is established (see section 2.1) and mandated to carry out the preparatory work (described in detail in sections 2.2 to 2.4).
- A Multi-stakeholder Group (that is, an inter-ministerial task force, with the addition of other relevant stakeholders, such as the social partners and umbrella youth organizations) provides guidance and oversight at the higher level.
- The Expert Group formulates a YGIP proposal (section 3), based on the YGIP template and these Guidelines, and submits it for review to the Multi-stakeholder Group.

Looking at the process beyond the scope of the Guidelines, once the YGIP proposal is finalised by the Expert Group, the content of the proposal should be reviewed and thoroughly discussed by the Multi-stakeholder Group for further refinement. The Youth Guarantee Coordinator can organize presentations with other stakeholders that may be involved in the delivery of the Youth Guarantee in order to discuss roles and responsibilities (see section 2.4.4). Once the YGIP is ready, the Youth Guarantee Coordinator may consider organizing a peer-review process with other Western Balkans economies and/or with EU Member States.

Following the review and endorsement by the Multi-stakeholder Group, the Youth Guarantee Coordinator submits the YGIP to the European Commission at [EU-WB Youth Guarantee@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EU-WB_Youth_Guarantee@ec.europa.eu) and to the responsible EU Delegation/Office.

Based on close cooperation between the European Commission and the Western Balkan economies, a **technical review process** will be organized by the European Commission, together with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Training Foundation (ETF), to provide feedback on the draft and final YGIPs.

The Youth Guarantee Coordinator is encouraged to submit a draft YGIP for comments by 15 April 2022. The purpose is to receive feedback and suggestions on possible improvements of content and quality. It is important that the draft presents a clear overview of the planned actions, their timing and costing. This will be essential to ensure their integration into the budgeting process to allocate necessary domestic resources. It will also be a prerequisite for considering potential future EU support. Draft YGIPs submitted before **15 April 2022** will receive **comments by 20 May 2022**.

¹ The Youth Guarantee Coordinator is a function, not an individual. Given the challenges related to this function, including not only the preparation of the YGIP, but also the coordination of the implementation and the continuous monitoring of the Youth Guarantee, it is advisable that the Youth Guarantee Coordinator be a team/unit/department within the ministry responsible for employment and labour market issues.

Final YGIPs are expected to be submitted by the **end of June 2022** and they will receive **technical comments by 10 September 2022**.

It is understood that each Youth Guarantee Coordinator will follow the relevant procedures to meet the requirements for formal adoption of the Youth Guarantee and the YGIP, as applicable. The completed Youth Guarantee document(s) shall be given official status, as any other domestic policy document, in order to form the basis for accessing EU funding for the Youth Guarantee. In the spirit of cooperation between the European Commission and the Western Balkan economies, the European Commission will be informed of any significant changes introduced in the YGIP thereafter.²

Formats and modalities for reporting on the Youth Guarantee implementation (see section 2.4.2 Data collection and Youth Guarantee monitoring framework) will be discussed with the Western Balkan economies during the first half of 2022 with due consideration to existing monitoring and reporting capacities, and the available technical assistance to enhance them.

In these Guidelines, **Section 1** outlines the key principles that may guide Western Balkan economies during the design and implementation of the Youth Guarantee. These are based on the relevant Recommendations emanating from the Council of the European Union.

Section 2 guides through the process. It provides a step-by-step guide to carry out the necessary analysis and review of both the phases and the cross-cutting enablers underpinning the reinforced Youth Guarantee. This process will generate the relevant information to be summarized and reflected in the YGIP template.

Section 3 describes how the YGIP template should be completed in order to draft the YGIP proposal. The template is provided by the European Commission and accompanied by these Guidelines.

Section 4 provides an overview of the Youth Guarantee Technical Assistance Facility (TAF), a joint initiative of the EU (the European Commission and the European Training Foundation) and the ILO to support Western Balkan economies in the design, implementation, and reporting on the Youth Guarantee.

² The first YGIP may for instance cover a period of 2-3 years and can be revised, under the auspices of the Multi-stakeholder Group, in order to reflect relevant developments and significant policy changes. This period of time would allow to cover stage 2 (preparatory work) and eventually also stage 3 (piloting) of the YG flagship initiative. Some Western Balkan economies may elect to formulate YGIPs that cover a longer timeframe to include also stage 4 (progressive/general deployment), while others may wish to focus the YGIP on the realization of the most urgent policy reforms (stage 2 - preparatory work).

1. Key principles guiding the establishment of a Youth Guarantee

The Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee introduced a youth employment policy framework that applies to all Member States of the European Union. For the first time, Member States committed at EU level to go beyond addressing unemployment and underemployment in order to tackle inactivity and disengagement among young people.

Faced with the Covid-19 crisis and to better respond to new challenges in the labour market, the Council Recommendation on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee of October 2020 supported this policy innovation and pursued further coherence between the youth employment framework and other policy instruments adopted at EU level since 2014. Through investing in the human capital of young Europeans it aims to help to future-proof Europe’s social market economies, and cater for demographic shifts while fully embracing the digital age and the growth of jobs in the green economy, supporting the twin transitions.

In brief: what is the Youth Guarantee?

The Youth Guarantee is a well-tested, inclusive and ambitious **activation scheme that EU Member States have used since 2013** to provide a smooth transition for young people from school to work, support their labour market integration and ensure that no young person is left behind.

It aims **to address the challenge of youth unemployment and inactivity**. Through the EU Youth Guarantee, EU Member States commit to ensuring that **all young people receive a good quality offer** of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship **within four months** of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

The Council Recommendations on the Youth Guarantee establish a set of policy principles, including:

- (i) **Universal reach** – the scheme targets ALL young people below 30 years of age who are not in employment, education or training (NEET);
- (ii) **A “guarantee”** – it obliges public institutions to intervene within four months of young people becoming unemployed or leaving school, creating a right/entitlement for every young person to be supported and offered a job, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship of good standing;
- (iii) **Policy coherence and coordination** – it promotes the integration of different policies, measures and services across employment, education, youth, gender equality, and social protection policies; as well as the adoption of integrated service delivery models;
- (iv) **Adequate policy mix** – it combines long-term reforms with immediate actions and includes prevention and remedial approaches; it includes outreach strategies targeting disengaged young people and individualized support for young people facing multiple barriers in the labour market; it encourages the acquisition of languages, career management, green and digital skills;
- (v) **Quality offers** – it addresses both the quantity and the quality of services and programmes delivered to young people and emphasizes a situation in which young people receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship, in line with established quality frameworks;

- (vi) **Broad-based partnerships** – it fosters cooperation within public institutions at both central and local level, and between these and the social partners, youth and civil society organizations and the private sector as a key dimension of successful design and implementation;
- (vii) **Continuous monitoring** – it promotes a culture of evidence-based policies through continuous monitoring³ to improve design and implementation. The monitoring and evaluation framework of the EU Youth Guarantee requires (i) the collection of aggregate, inflow, outflow and follow-up data according to a jointly agreed set of indicators (see Annex 2); (ii) the appraisal of the quality,⁴ as well as the quantity, of employment after participation; and (iii) impact evaluations.
- (viii) **Optimal use of domestic and other financial resources** – it promotes higher investment of domestic resources in the employment policy framework and pooling of funds with EU instruments and other potential sources.

The 2020 Council Recommendation refers to a series of **policy instruments** that are relevant for the design, implementation and monitoring of Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans, including:

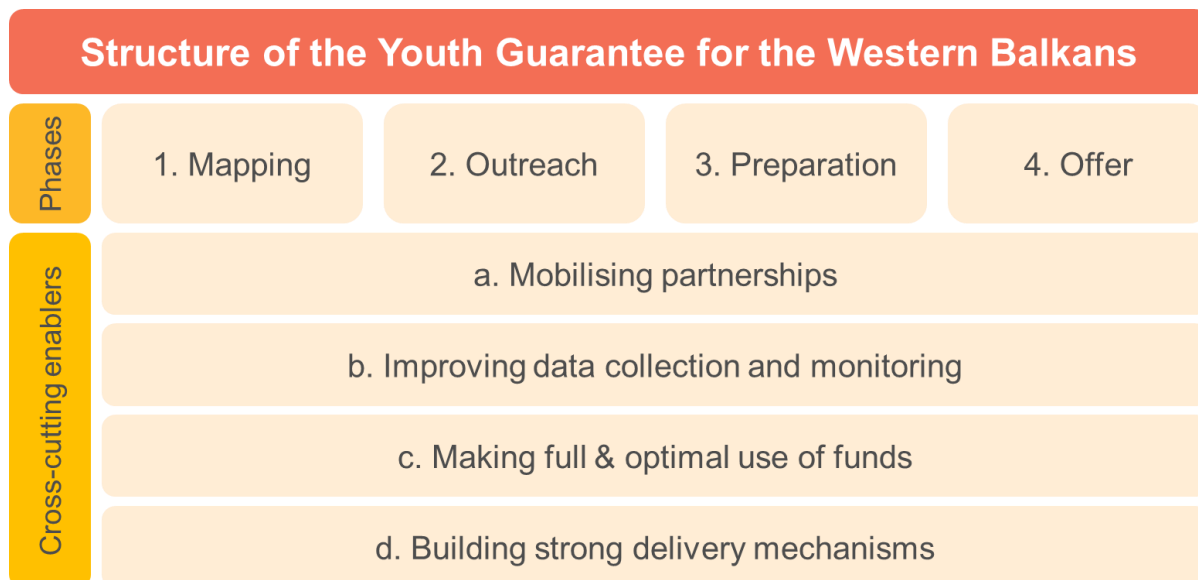
- The twenty principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights (on equal opportunities and access to the labour market; fair working conditions; and social protection and inclusion), notably Principle 4 on *Active Support to Employment*;
- Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving;
- Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- Council Recommendation of 10 March 2014 on a Quality Framework for Traineeships;
- Council Recommendation of 15 February 2016 on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market;
- Council Recommendation of 19 December 2016 on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults;
- Council Recommendation of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships;
- Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning;
- Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 October 2019, which provides a common framework for seven previously independent data collections, including the EU Labour Force Survey. The Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) yield more granular cross-EU comparative data.

In summary, the reinforced EU Youth Guarantee builds on four phases related to policy intervention and three cross-cutting enablers (see Figure 1). Based on this common structure, the scheme is organized in accordance with national, regional and local circumstances. Based on previous assessments and policy dialogue, the regional circumstances in the Western Balkans require incorporating a fourth cross-cutting enabler for establishing Youth Guarantee schemes in the region, namely to build strong delivery mechanisms, for instance in public employment services. This results in the structure for the Youth Guarantee in the Western Balkans depicted in Figure 1, with **four phases and four cross-cutting enablers**, which are specified further in the following sections.

³ The EU Youth Guarantee policy framework includes continuous monitoring of interventions through the multilateral surveillance system of the Employment Committee (EMCO) and analysis of the impact of the policies in place.

⁴ The criteria for appraising the quality of youth employment are specified in the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) monitoring guidelines and are related to the type and duration of the employment contract (permanent and temporary employment, involuntary part-time), remuneration level, level and type of qualification required for the job; and availability of additional job-related training.

Figure 1. Structure of the Youth Guarantee



2. Preparing the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP)

The Youth Guarantee Coordinator should consider some preliminary steps prior to embarking on the drafting of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP). These are as follows:

- (i) **operationalize a (governmental) Expert Group** (see section 2.1 below), involving all relevant public sector institutions, with the task of taking stock of the current situation and proposing relevant policy actions, as well as following up on the establishment (if it does not exist) of a Multi-stakeholder Group;
- (ii) **gather available statistical data** on young NEETs from the Statistical Office and other relevant sources, as well as relevant research and studies produced at the national and local level (2.2)⁵;
- (iii) **review each policy area** of the Youth Guarantee, including the four phases (2.3) and four cross-cutting enablers (2.4), to identify and appraise relevant policies, determine gaps, assess the delivery capacity of institutions/partners and take stock of the financial resources that can be mobilized internally, to be complemented by EU and other sources.

Once these preliminary steps have been concluded, the Youth Guarantee Coordinator shall refer to the Multi-stakeholder Group for further guidance on the actual content of the YGIP.

⁵ Among the important sources are the registers and administrative data from the Public Employment Service (PES), as well as education and social assistance/social protection data. The Youth Guarantee Coordinator will need to combine data from different sources throughout the design, implementation, and monitoring phases.

2.1. Expert Group

The first step in planning the drafting of the YGIP is to set up an Expert Group – under the technical guidance of a senior member of the ministry of labour/employment⁶– tasked with appraising the situation of young NEETs, ongoing policies, funding sources and the ability of domestic institutions and relevant partners to manage the complexities of the Youth Guarantee (such work will then feed into drafting the YGIP). This group should comprise technical experts drawn from the ministries responsible for employment, education and training, economy, finance, youth, gender equality, and social protection, as well as professional staff of the statistical offices, the Public Employment Service (PES) and the Social Work Centres. Experts should have access to relevant administrative datasets and other data sources within their institution and be in a position to draw on them for evidence to support the review process. Additional experts may join the group depending on context-specific needs and local circumstances. More specifically, the areas of expertise that should be covered are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Areas of expertise

Policy area ⁷ (policy areas can be under the purview of one or more institutions)	Specific area of expertise
Education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education ▪ Vocational education and training, including apprenticeship (where available) ▪ Adult education and training, including upskilling and reskilling ▪ Non-formal and informal learning ▪ National Qualification Framework (qualifications, occupational standards, accreditation, recognition of prior learning) ▪ Early school leaving ▪ Second chance programmes ▪ Special programmes for children and youth with disabilities ▪ Education management information system, including tracer studies/graduate tracking practices ▪ Career guidance and education in schools
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Labour relations, employment protection legislation and collective bargaining ▪ Wages and other working conditions ▪ Active and passive labour market policies ▪ Labour market information system and skills forecasting (including skills mismatch) ▪ Employment services, career guidance and orientation services ▪ Gender equality (gender employment and pay gaps)
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Voice and representation ▪ Role and responsibilities of youth workers ▪ Partnership in youth service delivery ▪ Youth organization (coordination and funding)
Social protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social inclusion/anti-poverty programmes ▪ Social assistance including social benefits and services ▪ Disability benefits

⁶ This person could be from the Youth Guarantee Coordinator unit or from another department.

⁷ The list of policy areas does not refer to the mandate of a single ministry or institution. Depending on the local context and institutional set up, multiple institutions can have mandate over different aspects of a given policy area. By the same token, one institution may bring expertise across multiple policy areas.

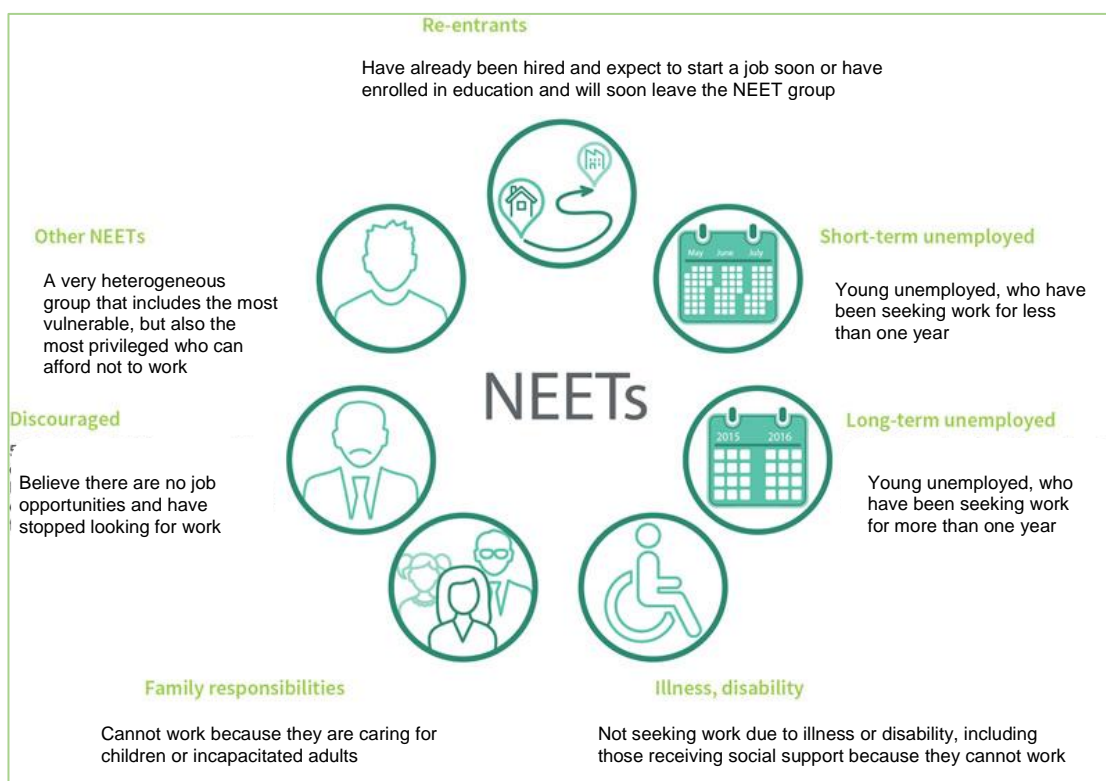
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other benefits and/or in cash or in kind support provided to individual/households
Economy and finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demand-side policies ▪ Support (incentives) to entrepreneurship and private sector development ▪ Pro-employment budgeting
Statistical data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Population ▪ Education (including adult training surveys, PISA) ▪ Labour force survey ▪ Survey on Income and Living Conditions, SILC (or, where the SILC is not yet available, a Living standards measurement study) ▪ Structure of earnings survey

Furthermore, the establishment of a Youth Guarantee scheme requires a high-level commitment by stakeholders and a whole-of-government effort towards realizing the necessary policy reforms and initiatives. A **Multi-stakeholder Group (MSG)**, responsible for providing guidance and oversight to the process can be constituted on the basis of the steering groups and committees that Western Balkan economies generally establish for the formulation of employment policy. These need to be expanded to include not only relevant government ministries and agencies, but also the social partners, civil society organizations and umbrella youth organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, depending on local circumstances, such as local governments. The MSG is chaired by the minister in charge of employment and representation is at the level of minister/deputy minister. Additionally, the MSG plays a role in monitoring the implementation of the YGIP and reviews any changes that may be introduced in the YGIP over time (additional information in Section 2.4.4).

2.2. Gathering and analysis of data and information on young NEETs

The first task of the Expert Group is to gather and analyse all the statistical information available at country level on youth employment (labour force participation, employment and unemployment – compared with adults) and on young NEETs (at least for the past five–ten years). This latter data should be disaggregated (at a minimum) by age group (15–24, 15–29, 15–19, 20–24, 25–29), sex, labour market status (unemployed and inactive), educational attainment level (grouped according to ISCED levels), and, if possible, geographic location (sub-national), or at least between urban and rural areas. If possible, data on young NEETs should be disaggregated into the seven sub-categories shown in Figure 2. This information supports the drafting of paragraph 1.2 (*Rationale for establishing a Youth Guarantee*) of the YGIP.

Figure 2: Young NEETs by sub-group



* These sub-groups can be derived from the labour force survey (LFS) through standard definitions applied by the statistical offices

Source: M. Mascherini, S. Ledermaier: *Exploring the diversity of NEETs* (Eurofound, 2016).

Statistical information should be gathered on the economic and social context of the country (GDP growth over the years, economic convergence with the EU, employment and unemployment, labour market challenges endangered by the Covid-19 pandemic, structural transformation, persons at risk of social exclusion and poverty). A summary of this analysis will be included in paragraph 1.1. of the YGIP (*Context*).⁸ The availability of data and research on policy areas such as skills mismatch, quality of educational outcomes, working conditions for young people (atypical work contracts, hours of work, wage gaps, informality), the impact of the tax wedge on youth employment, social protection (contributory unemployment benefit, non-contributory unemployment allowance, social assistance), design, monitoring and evaluation of active labour market policies will help to improve understanding of the policy drivers of youth unemployment and disengagement with a view to identifying policy reforms that could be undertaken under the Youth Guarantee.

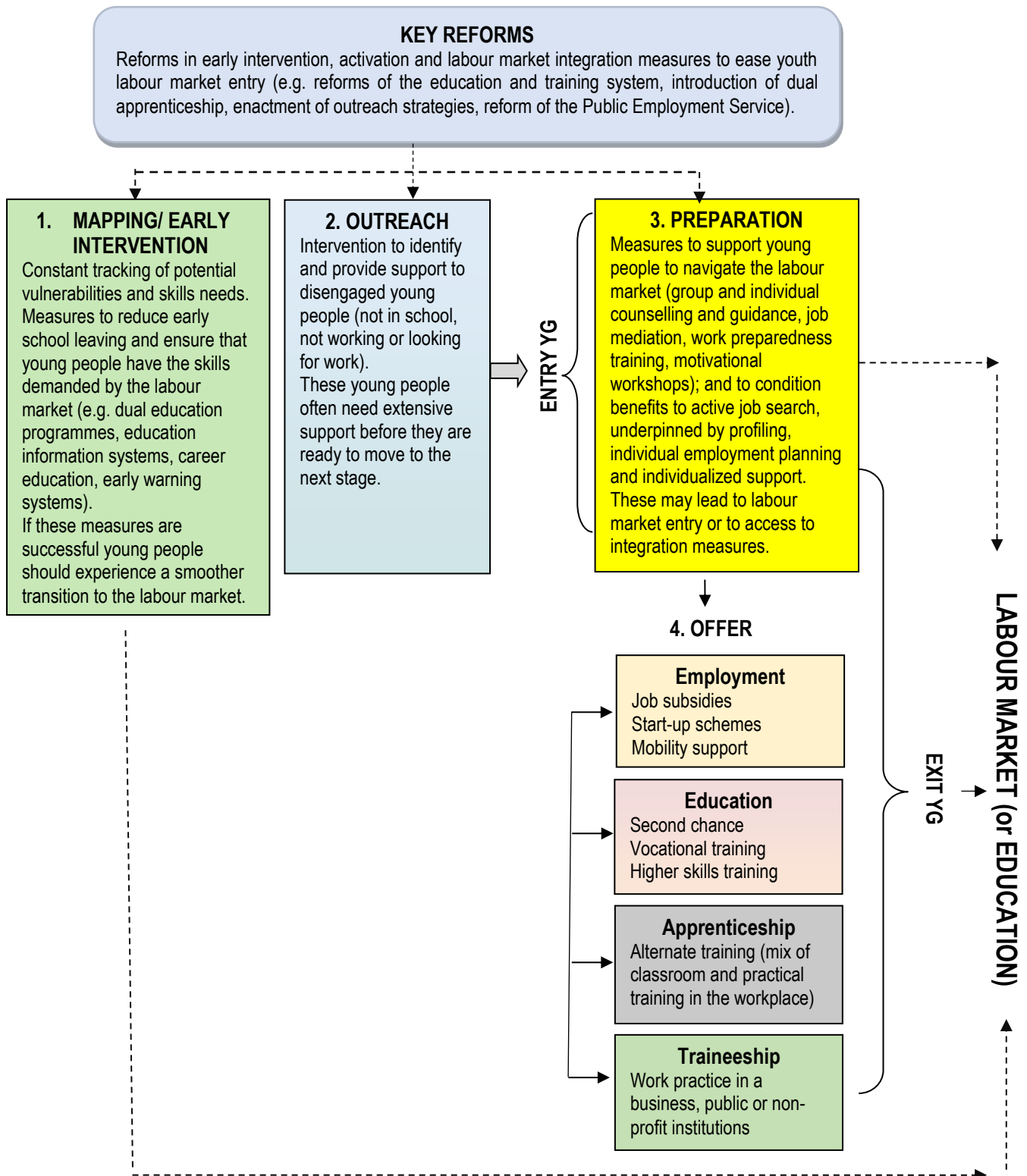
2.3. Review of Youth Guarantee policy requirements (four phases)

Having concluded statistical data collection and analysis, the Expert Group should review each of the youth guarantee policy requirements (the four phases concerning policy interventions, the cross-cutting enablers as well as other requirements for the delivery of Youth Guarantee offers). The intent is to: (i) identify and appraise relevant policies being implemented in the economy; (ii) determine the gap between what is being pursued (policies, services and programmes) and the requirements of the Youth Guarantee (that is, the policy and programmatic changes that are required); and (iii) assess the capacity of institutions and other

⁸ It is advisable also to screen research and studies carried out by international organizations (World Bank, OECD, ILO, UNDP, ETF), which can provide useful insights for compiling the different parts of the YGIP.

stakeholders to deliver on the policy objectives of the Youth Guarantee. The interaction of the four phases of Youth Guarantee schemes is shown in Figure 3. This is further elaborated, based on EU experience, in Annex 1.

Figure 3: Phases of Youth Guarantee schemes



2.3.1. Mapping and early intervention

The first phase of the Youth Guarantee focuses on two separate policy items, namely mapping and early intervention.

Mapping requires that relevant institutions and organizations strengthen their understanding of young NEETs' characteristics, their geographical distribution, and their distance from the labour market, as well as map the services that are already available (type, duration and service providers). Once the data gathering and analysis phase on young NEETs is complete (see above) it becomes easier to understand the information that would be required to design policy interventions. Responsible institutions must recall that NEET rates alone are not helpful in obtaining an understanding of the potential numbers of beneficiaries of the Youth Guarantee, their personal characteristics and geographical location. For example, in a given country young women may be more likely to be inactive due to family responsibilities, while in another the share of university educated short- and long-term unemployed may be the challenge to be addressed. In this part of the YGIP it is necessary not only to consider discrete interventions (for example, a one-off survey to gather missing statistical data), but also to introduce policy reforms aimed at establishing a more granular collection of data on young NEETs (especially at the regional level) that includes not only labour market performance, but also education, social exclusion, youth participation and transition from school to work. A useful tool that Western Balkans economies may also consider is the running of a probability regression model on the micro-data of household-based surveys to try to understand the competitive disadvantage that holders of specific individual characteristics have over others in terms of the risk of becoming NEET. An example of this is provided in the *ILO Guide to develop outreach strategies for inactive young people*.⁹

The additional step of mapping is related to **the identification and assessment of the services that are already available** to different categories of NEETs. This comprises the mapping of: (i) public service providers at the country and local levels (for example, employment, social, health, youth, and education and training services) and their respective resource networks¹⁰; and (ii) community-based organizations, and especially youth associations and their respective resource networks.¹¹ This enables the inclusion of smaller-scale service delivery realities or projects that public authorities may not be aware of. Annex 2 of *ILO Guide to develop outreach strategies for inactive young people* provides guidance on how to design and carry out a geographically based resource mapping.

With respect to **early intervention** and **prevention** policies, at the EU level, the definition of early intervention currently encompasses system-level education reforms, combined with specific measures to reduce school failure and drop-outs.¹² Figure 4 depicts the main elements related to prevention and intervention in early intervention systems in EU countries. In the context of strategies to address early school leaving, early intervention systems are combined with compensation measures. The latter aim to bring young people who have not completed their studies back into education to obtain a qualification. Most of these compensation measures (for example, second-chance programmes, remedial education courses) are included in the offers of the Youth Guarantee.

⁹ ILO: Guide for developing outreach strategies for inactive young people (Geneva, ILO, 2017).

https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_613351/lang--en/index.htm

¹⁰ Relevant examples may include guidance services in Vocational Education and Training (VET) schools that cater to the specific circumstances of NEETs.

¹¹ Tapping into the resource networks of different service providers has a snowball effect, making it possible to expand the research and achieve a more comprehensive mapping of what is available.

¹² European Commission: *Reducing early school leaving: Key messages and policy support*. Final Report of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving (2013). For a complete synopsis of recent country practices on early school leaving see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Cedefop: *Tackling early leaving from education and training in Europe: Strategies, policies and measures*, Eurydice and Cedefop Report (Luxembourg, 2014).

Figure 4: Key features of comprehensive strategies to reduce early school leaving

Prevention	Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to quality childhood education; • relevant and engaging curriculum; • flexible education pathways; • smooth transition between educational levels; • high quality and attractive VET; • involvement of pupils; • teacher education; • strong guidance system and career education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective and evidence-based early warning systems; • focus on individual needs; • systematic support frameworks; • extra-curricular and out-of-school activities • support for teachers; • empowering families and parents.

Source: Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving, OJ C 191, 2011; European Commission, *Reducing early school leaving: Key messages and policy support*. Final Report of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, 2013.

In many EU countries, the prevention measures provided for in YGIPs (left-hand column of Figure 4) included strengthening vocational education and training systems (for example, introduction of dual apprenticeship, work-based learning in VET, career education from an early age¹³), as well as making them more attractive by allowing horizontal and vertical mobility across education pathways. In countries with a dual apprenticeship system (such as Austria and Germany), reforms include the introduction of pre-apprenticeship courses to increase school retention rates, or the expansion of apprenticeship to non-traditional occupations. In the Western Balkans, it would also be important to focus on reforms of the education and training system with a view to increasing its quality, relevance and inclusion. The relevant measure for this would be the national score in the OECD international programme for student assessment (PISA) over time.¹⁴

Early intervention measures (right-hand column in Figure 4) address the difficulties that students may encounter in school. While some of these measures apply to all students and serve as prevention, others specifically target young people who disengage from learning activities and are thus at high risk of dropping out. Reasons for early school leaving can be analysed with the support of data on various aspects. These include the age at which discontinuation of education and training occurs, differences by gender, socioeconomic background, academic performance and education level, and differences in drop-out rates between schools, including their location and the types of education and training they provide. This information is generally included in national student databases, administrative registers or large-scale quantitative and qualitative empirical studies on the reasons for early school leaving. Systems that envisage the further development of data collection systems to identify students at risk of early school leaving, as well as detect those young people who left school early are usually included in YGIPs.¹⁵

¹³ Contextually, countries are trying to implement an important paradigm shift with respect to career guidance, away from the traditional approach based on the provision of information about careers and towards developing career management skills from an early age. Some resources can be found here: [Publications catalogue - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&code=sdg_8_4_1)

¹⁴ All Western Balkan economies participated in the 2018 PISA assessment.

¹⁵ For country examples on early intervention policies and measures included in EU Youth Guarantee plans please see: ILO: Policy brief on early intervention measures and youth employment (Geneva, ILO, 2017), https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_546608/lang--en/index.htm

Early intervention may also encompass policy actions at tertiary level, when the data on the outcomes of young people at this level of education present challenges. For example, a country may have low completion rates at this level of education and relatively high unemployment rates for young graduates. The reasons for such a situation need to be explored (skills mismatch, selection mechanisms to access tertiary education) to identify potential policy reforms that may be addressed through the Youth Guarantee.

2.3.2. Outreach

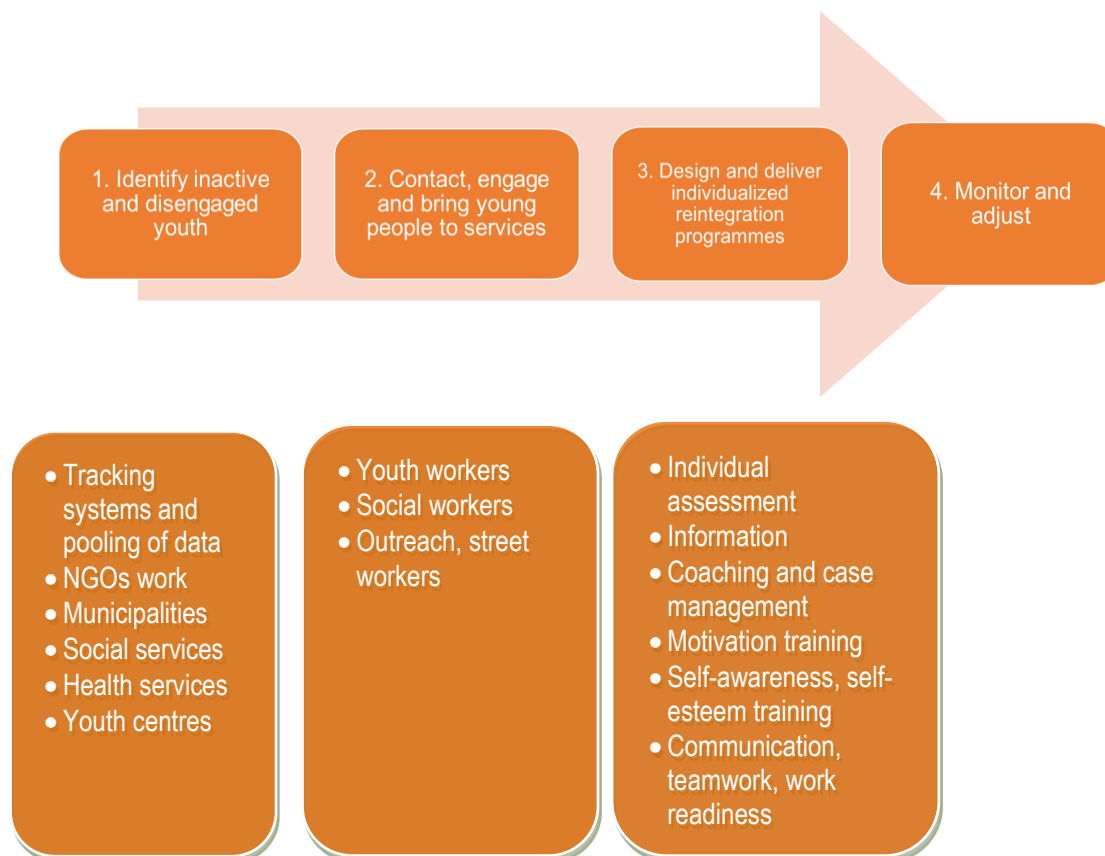
Although there is no acknowledged definition of “outreach”, the term is used mainly when referring to the identification and engagement of young people who are unknown to the public service providers, for instance, not registered at the public employment services or in the social work centres. In particular, outreach often targets young people who are “hard to reach” (early school leavers detached from the labour market, young people facing substance abuse issues, homeless young people) and not registered to receive support. In the context of youth employment, outreach often involves information campaigns and awareness-raising to attract young people to available services; interventions to identify, contact and engage inactive or disengaged young people; and individualized labour market integration services and programmes, delivered locally through community-based organizations, schools, malls, public events, one-stop-shops or mobile settings.

Territorial mapping may help to identify the prevailing characteristics of inactive young people, available services, providers and potential partners, as well as plan policy intervention and resource allocation. The mapping of inactive young people should include geographical distribution, age, gender and educational attainment level, as well as poverty and social exclusion indicators. If household survey data are cross-referenced with other information (for example, data on teen pregnancy, substance abuse, mental health issues and juvenile crime) geographical maps could be generated that highlight barriers to reintegration into the labour market, education or training (such as low skill levels, care responsibilities or physical or mental ill-health), faced by different groups of inactive young people. This, in turn, can be linked to service delivery. The findings from this process can help to shape the development of a relevant outreach strategy by ascertaining where gaps occur in service delivery and identifying organizations best placed to deliver services in each locality. Outreach models usually comprise four stages:

1. **Identification.** This articulates the approaches for identifying disengaged young people (such as the use of tracking systems, data exchange and data warehousing, partnership agreements with youth organizations, and recruitment of outreach or youth workers). One means to be explored for identification is to tap into the registers of social assistance, disability benefit or other social protection beneficiaries, or, where they exist and are well-functioning, the databases used for the ‘social card’.
2. **Contact and engagement.** This stage entails the identification and provision of initial services to engage young people (information, counselling and guidance services) and the organizations or individuals responsible for service delivery (municipalities, professionals of the social protection system, other young people, outreach or street workers, civil society organizations).
3. **Programme delivery.** This stage articulates the mix and sequence of services and programmes to be offered to disengaged young people (individual assessment, coaching, motivation training, self-awareness, self-esteem training, communication, teamwork, work readiness skills, career tasters, advice and referral to specialized services), plans how the whole support system will operate on the ground and details the specific responsibilities of partner organizations (who will do what).

4. Monitoring and adjustment. This final stage of the model details the monitoring system to be used to verify progress in service delivery and how the findings can be used to adjust service and programme delivery.

Figure 5. The four steps of outreach approaches



Developing and delivering an integrated policy response to meet the needs of disengaged youth requires a system of support services available to young people wherever and whenever they need them. In this regard, two service delivery models tend to prevail. The first is the establishment of *one-stop-shops*. While bringing the functions of various public service providers together under one roof may be effective for coordinating interventions and making service delivery more user-friendly, it can be costly to set up and does not solve the issue of reaching out to people who are most disconnected and may not be aware of, or willing to approach, public services. In this model, the approach is mainly passive, with service delivery triggered by individual requests for assistance or through referral mechanisms across service providers. When different services (for example, employment, social assistance, welfare, health and housing) are grouped together, however, there is a greater likelihood of identifying young people who are disconnected. When social assistance benefits are determined based on the assessment of the situation in a household, which is conducted by a professional worker in the social protection system, it is likely that problems faced by children and young people in that household will be spotted and action taken.

The second approach is to set up a *partnership network and referral system*. This aims to connect (and in certain cases expand) existing services and programmes, including the non-institutional networks set up by non-governmental and community-based organizations. It normally works through operators (for example, advisers, counsellors, mentors and mediators) from an institution or organization (municipality, labour offices,

schools, centre for social work, youth organization) that takes the lead in making first contact with disengaged young people.¹⁶

In the development of Youth Guarantee policy initiatives on outreach, Western Balkan economies need to be aware of the following operational difficulties:

- The Public Employment Service (PES) is normally entrusted with the **registration of young NEETs in the Youth Guarantee service delivery process** (preparation and offers) and PES staff have no experience in identifying, contacting and engaging inactive individuals. If outreach is assigned to the PES, additional staff need to be recruited and trained to operate as youth (street or outreach) counsellors who spend most of their working time outside the office contacting and engaging young NEETs (this has long-term budget implications that the country needs to appraise). The number of young (inactive or detached) persons brought to the Youth Guarantee registration process needs to be recorded carefully for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
- **Outreach may be entrusted to youth organizations.** This can be done in various ways. For example, if the country has a Ministry of Youth that also coordinates and finances the activities of youth organizations, this entity may be given the responsibility within the Youth Guarantee to manage outreach interventions through its network of youth organizations. This, however, requires that the youth organizations involved: (i) are able to cover most of the territory; and (ii) use the same system to record beneficiaries and the services that are delivered to them; finally, (iii) a common process needs to be established for bringing these young beneficiaries towards registration in the Youth Guarantee (which in turn may imply a data sharing system between youth organizations and the PES that manages the Youth Guarantee preparation phase and offers). Alternatively, outreach measures can be contracted to youth organizations through a public tender process managed either by the Ministry of Labour (YG Coordinator) or by the PES or by the Ministry of Youth. Here it is necessary to determine: (i) selection criteria for youth organizations; (ii) minimum quantity and quality of services to be delivered to young beneficiaries, and (iii) the process through which youth organizations will accompany the person to registration in the Youth Guarantee service delivery system (including personal data sharing, profiling and individual needs assessment, monitoring).
- The **identification of young NEETs** is one the most problematic aspects of the design of outreach strategies, because in the Western Balkans tracking systems are often unavailable, and where they could be established the legislation on the protection of personal information may limit data and information exchange among institutions. This can be overcome in part by enacting continuous information campaigns, by raising the awareness of institutions and organizations that may get in contact with young NEETs that support is available, and by using youth workers who may, during their regular activities, get to know of these young people.
- **Catering effectively to the diverse needs of detached young people** is something else that needs to be carefully considered. Some of the needs of young NEETs may be particularly complex and require specialized support and time (well over the four-month threshold established by the Youth Guarantee). Here, one possible solution is to keep outreach measures separate from the Youth Guarantee service delivery system until the young person is ready to take on preparation and an offer. For example, a young person with addiction problems needs first to address the physical and psychological issues related to addiction (which usually requires many months and the involvement of several service providers), followed by the issues related to the return to independent, addiction-free

¹⁶ For country examples of outreach interventions in EU countries see ILO: Policy brief on outreach strategies for young NEETs (Geneva, ILO, 2017), https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_546608/lang--en/index.htm; and Guide for developing outreach strategies for inactive young people (Geneva, ILO, 2017), https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_613351/lang--en/index.htm

life. Finally, consideration can be given to registering in the Youth Guarantee scheme to obtain support for education or employment.

- If the country is new to outreach interventions, it may prove difficult to **plan an adequate financial envelope**. One way to project costs is to appraise the overall number of young NEETs who are inactive by reason of inactivity. Not all those who are inactive are willing to work, so at the onset of outreach interventions it would be easier to address these young persons (also to pilot measures and decide what might work with people who are more difficult to bring into the labour market). Among the inactive willing to work there will be many diverse profiles (young women with care responsibilities, young people with disabilities, young beneficiaries of social assistance, young people without parental care, and so on). For each of these groups it will be necessary to estimate both treatment costs (average) and the additional investment required for infrastructure. For example, for young women with care responsibilities first of all care facilities need to be made available at an affordable price (a long-term investment if these facilities are not sufficient to satisfy demand). If, conversely, facilities are available, it is a question of affordability.

Assessing the Youth Guarantee service delivery system

Prior to appraising the Youth Guarantee policies on preparation and quality offers, the organization of the delivery system must be examined (this will also be relevant for the cross-cutting enabler “Strong delivery mechanisms”). In this area, the Expert Group should consider the fact that in all EU countries the Youth Guarantee service delivery is assigned to the Public Employment Service (PES), which manages registration, eligibility checks, first interviews, profiling and needs assessments, delivery of preparation services and quality offers, as well as management of the monitoring framework.

Registration of young NEETs in the Youth Guarantee scheme: In most countries, there are two possible points of entry into the Youth Guarantee: registration with the PES or registration on a dedicated web portal (managed by the PES). Whereas the date of registration in a PES local office is the starting point for counting off the four-month benchmark for the delivery of quality offers, registration on the Youth Guarantee web portal may also require an interview with a PES counsellor to verify that the person can register and that they are entitled to support (this should take place a maximum of one week after web portal registration). The registration date in these instances becomes the date when the PES completes the eligibility check. If, conversely, a central PES is equipped with interoperability (that is, it can verify information related to young persons online by checking several public administration databases) the date of web portal registration becomes the date of Youth Guarantee registration. The registration, service delivery pathways and follow-up of young NEETs should be managed by a separate, but linked, ICT application of the PES, the key characteristics of which are illustrated in the paragraph related to the Youth Guarantee monitoring framework.

Targeted NEETs: A decision has to be taken before drafting the YGIP on whether the Youth Guarantee will, from the very beginning, automatically cover all young NEETs, including those already registered with the PES, irrespective of the duration of their unemployment spell, or only those who decide to register in the Youth Guarantee, usually from a certain date (for example 1 January 2022). In the first instance what happens operationally is that all young persons registered as unemployed on the starting date of the Youth Guarantee will become automatically Youth Guarantee beneficiaries and the four-month benchmark will apply from that date (it does not make sense to register young unemployed according to their original date of registration as the Youth Guarantee will already start with a negative outflow indicator in the monitoring framework). In the second instance, intake is progressive, with young people already registered as unemployed with the PES becoming eligible to register at the time of mandatory re-registration (usually every three months).

Because only North Macedonia has prior experience in managing the Youth Guarantee, other Western Balkan economies are strongly advised to run a pilot in one or two local employment offices (small or medium sized) prior to full roll-out to sort out any potential problems, get a grip on the required workflow and staff workload, and test the ICT data management system (which is of critical importance for the monitoring framework).

Staff resources for delivering the Youth Guarantee: the delivery system requires that dedicated staff be assigned to deal with it, without, however, undermining employment services and programme delivery to other groups of unemployed. In some EU countries, additional staff were recruited and trained by the PES to manage the Youth Guarantee service delivery (with the support of senior staff), while in other countries (where additional recruitment was not possible due to staff recruitment freezes), some PES staff were trained to deal with the Youth Guarantee only (calling on colleague support, when required). In all Western Balkan economies, the availability of a sufficient number of qualified PES staff will be a key issue for the delivery of the Youth Guarantee, especially as the number of eligible young persons increases (that is, all those classified as NEETs by official statistics). Another requirement of the Youth Guarantee is case management and individualized service delivery, which requires the availability of experienced counsellors and career guidance specialists. Besides service delivery, additional staff may be required to manage the Youth Guarantee monitoring framework, which requires the continuous collection, aggregation and analysis of information about young NEETs registered in the scheme and receiving preparation services and subsidized and unsubsidized offers.

One way to obtain a rough estimation of the possible inflow of young people into the Youth Guarantee scheme is to assess monthly inflows into the PES register by local employment offices over one standard year of operation (for example, 2019). This exercise will show the local employment offices where youth inflow is above the national average, and the months in which inflows tend to be higher (usually spring and early autumn). To these numbers, one must add the additional inflows that will be determined by the Youth Guarantee information and awareness-raising campaigns, which will attract young people who would not normally register with the PES, and some inactive persons. Based on EU country experience, a reasonable estimate is to add 20–30 per cent to the monthly inflow per local employment office. Within the Youth Guarantee, the availability of a robust profiling system and of dedicated PES staff is essential to manage intake, preparation services and offers.

2.3.3. Preparation

The preparation of young NEETs to take up an offer of employment, continued education (and training), an apprenticeship or a traineeship (called “activation” in the 2013 Youth Guarantee) includes the whole range of employment services normally delivered by the PES (counselling, career guidance, job mediation, motivational training and so on). This also includes the tools used to improve client segmentation, individualized service delivery and sustainability of outcomes (profiling, individual employment planning, case management, post-placement services).

Profiling: In order to manage the additional workload that accompanies the introduction of the Youth Guarantee, Western Balkan economies are strongly advised to establish a statistical profiling system (which will be useful also for other unemployed in other age groups) and to include this in the YGIP as a policy reform for the PES. The statistical profiling system would allow – based on the variables identified as most significant for the probability of becoming NEET identified during the mapping phase – the preliminary segmentation of young NEETs into three categories: (i) those at high risk of remaining on the register beyond the four-month threshold; (ii) those at moderate risk; and (iii) those at low to no risk. Such an approach, once validated through an interview with a PES caseworker, would help in prioritizing among young people registered in the Youth Guarantee for assistance and devising the most effective sequence of services the young NEET requires to

enter the labour market or return to the formal education system.¹⁷ Committing an adequate level of resources to establishing this system is key to ensuring that it is fair and incorporates the necessary safeguards, notably to avoid the risk of reinforcing existing patterns of inequality and discrimination.

Individualised action plans: Often referred to as individual employment plan (IEP) in the Western Balkans, the individualised action plan is a tool for individuals to determine – with the support of expert PES staff – the sequence and intensity of services and programmes necessary to achieve the desired employment objective. In most instances, however, the IEP in the practice of Western Balkan economies is a legal obligation (to be issued for every single registered unemployed person within a time limit) and it is administered as a procedural requirement, rather than as a tool to enhance individualised service delivery to individuals at risk of labour market exclusion. The introduction of the Youth Guarantee would be a good occasion to revise the IEP’s format, implementation procedures and monitoring (also considering implementation of the statistical profiling system).

Employment services: In all EU countries the Youth Guarantee gives young beneficiaries access to job search assistance and job search training, individualized counselling and career guidance services (including self-assessment tools, group counselling peer assistance, enterprise visits and work trials). Considerable efforts have been made to expand web-based services as part of the Youth Guarantee, including labour market information, self-assessment tools, automated matching, skills assessment and validation of prior learning, and career guidance. Job search monitoring and sanctioning are also used as part of activation strategies of the Youth Guarantee in some countries (Ireland, United Kingdom). Job mediation is also considered part of the preparation phase. When job mediation results in recruitment of a young person, however, it becomes an offer of employment.

Recognition of prior learning: A PES can offer this service to a young beneficiary as part of the Youth Guarantee preparation phase. Usually, PES staff use this instrument to: (i) obtain a skills assessment of a young beneficiary; (ii) assess any additional skills they might need; and (iii) provide the beneficiary with certification of skills that may be used for continued education/training or employment offers. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is usually managed by the Ministry of Education (it is part of the National Qualification Framework). For its inclusion in the Youth Guarantee (as part of the preparation phase of the YGIP), the Ministry of Education – as a key institutional partner – needs to make this service available to the PES staff that manage the Youth Guarantee service delivery system and include the relative costs in the YGIP. If this service is not yet available at national level, consideration needs to be made to the development of RPL mechanisms as part of the Youth Guarantee policy reforms and initiatives.

Training: In delivering employment services, the PES uses several types of short training courses, such as motivation training, job search courses, training in digital and green skills, foreign languages, rights at work, the fundamentals of self-employment and career management. This hands-on training can be a stepping stone towards a full vocational training course, a taster of the world of work, or it can supplement existing education or work experience before the start of the Youth Guarantee offer. Their short-term, informal nature distinguishes them from the *offer* of continued education and training, which leads to a fully or partially recognized qualification. This is why training which does not lead to a recognised qualification should be included in the “Preparation”, and not in the “Offer” phase. Because the reinforced Youth Guarantee pays particular attention to the acquisition of digital skills, the Preparation phase should include courses aligned to the EU Digital Competence Framework (information and data literacy; communication and collaboration;

¹⁷ For a review of EU profiling systems, see ILO: *Profiling youth labour market disadvantage: A review of approaches in Europe* (Geneva, ILO, 2017), https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_613361/lang--en/index.htm

digital content creation; safety; and problem-solving), while education and training offers should include a digital skills component.¹⁸

Case management, mentoring and post-placement services: These approaches are used for the individualized service delivery. In case management approaches, one expert counsellor is assigned to a young beneficiary and thus becomes the reference point for any type of assistance the beneficiary may need until their exit from the Youth Guarantee scheme. Mentors, conversely, help young people to manage the complexities of service and programme delivery. They not only guide them, but should be an accessible contact, a “confidant” for young people facing multiple barriers in the labour market. Post-placement services comprise support by expert staff during the first months after placement (in employment, self-employment, education or training, apprenticeship or traineeship). These activities are normally considered to be part of the “offer” phase, as they aim to ensure the sustainability of successful labour market integration.

2.3.4. Offer

The delivery of quality offers of employment, continued education (and training), an apprenticeship or traineeship to young people registered in the Youth Guarantee scheme requires the consideration of several items.

Definition of a valid offer

The first item to be considered relates to the definition of what constitutes a **valid offer** (the “quality” element is examined later). A **valid offer of employment** is one that leads to the establishment of an employment relationship – as laid down in the Labour Code – between the Youth Guarantee beneficiary and an employer. Self-employment also counts as an “offer of employment” in this context. For self-employment, the offer is valid if it leads to the registration of own account employees, self-employment or business venture, according to national regulations. A valid offer of employment refers to: (i) a job that is obtained through public support and financial resources (for example, a wage subsidy programme, a self-employment grant scheme provided by the PES, or any other measure where there is a disbursement of financial resources to support a specific beneficiary) – subsidized offer; (ii) a job the young person finds on his/her own (for example, a young beneficiary who receives a job offer after having applied independently for a job vacancy posted on a website) – unsubsidized offer; and (iii) a job that is obtained through the job mediation services that can be provided during the preparation phase – unsubsidized offer. In this respect, the Youth Guarantee monitoring framework distinguishes between subsidized and unsubsidized offers, so data needs to be gathered on both types of offer (see the following paragraph on the Youth Guarantee monitoring framework). An ‘unsubsidized’ offer refers to a situation where there is no financial disbursement.

A **valid offer of continued education and training** is, in short, one that leads to a full or partial qualification; that is, one that has received accreditation under domestic regulations.¹⁹ The EU’s *Frequently asked questions* (FAQs) about the Youth Guarantee, in fact, make reference to a series of EU instruments that define the quality of education and training (*Common Principles for Quality Assurance in Education and Training*, the *European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQUAVET)*, *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*).²⁰ All these instruments focus on interaction with the learning environment; the content of education and training;

¹⁸ For more information on the EU Digital Competence Framework 2.0, see <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcomp/digital-competence-framework>

¹⁹ For more details, please refer to the section on continued education on pages 63-64 of the Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a Bridge to Jobs – reinforcing the Youth Guarantee, see https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:32c90ad7-bc3b-11ea-811c-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

²⁰ European Commission: frequently asked questions about the Youth Guarantee (2015).

learning processes; and assessment, validation and certification of learning outcomes as key to the quality of education.²¹ In addition, attention has to be paid to the relevance of digital skills, which should be part of continued education and training courses offered under the Youth Guarantee scheme to advance convergence with the EU digital skills target of the European Pillar of Social Rights (70 per cent of individuals aged 16–74 with at least basic digital skills by 2025). In short, a valid education and training offer includes a vocational training programme that leads to a recognized qualification, a remedial education programme (such as second-chance programme) or a formal education and training course (managed by accredited education and training providers).

Valid offers of apprenticeship and traineeship are those that comply with the principles set forth by the respective Council Recommendations.²² Apprenticeships need to: (i) be part of the formal vocational education and training system, and combine and alternate periods of theoretical classroom learning and practical training at a workplace, leading to a formal qualification recognized in the labour market; (ii) be based on an agreement defining rights and obligations of the apprentice, the employer and, where appropriate, the vocational education and training institution, and (iii) envisage an apprentice wage or other type of compensation for the work-based component of the system. A traineeship needs to: (i) be based on a written traineeship agreement specifying the rights and obligations of trainees and host organizations (learning objectives, working conditions, traineeship allowance, certificate at the end of the period); (ii) be no longer than six months; and (iii) provide for an assessment and certificate by the host organization.²³

Definition of quality offers

The Youth Guarantee specifies that offers need to be of “good quality”. The Commission’s documents on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Youth Guarantee provide some guidance on what constitutes a quality offer, but the task of precisely defining minimum quality criteria for offers is left to individual countries. The Commission’s guidance documents use an outcome-based definition, whereby a good quality offer is one that results in sustainable integration in the labour market (in other words, the offer is of good quality if the young person who benefits from it does not return to unemployment or inactivity thereafter).²⁴ This definition is complemented by the criteria established to assess the quality of employment that young people gain through interventions supported by European funding mechanisms (*Youth Employment Initiative and European Social Fund*). The job quality features to be taken into account are: (i) type and duration of the employment contract (part-time and full-time; fixed-term and open-ended contract; involuntary part-time); (ii) remuneration level; (iii) level and type of qualification required; and (iv) availability of additional job-related training.²⁵ This outcome-based approach applies also to offers of continued education (and training), apprenticeship and traineeship, as their objective is to provide young people with the knowledge, skills and work experience required to get a quality job.

In order to define the “quality” of employment offers, countries may take into consideration the 2017 ILO Guide on assessing the quality dimensions of youth employment offers, which builds on several existing job quality frameworks.²⁶ For quality traineeship, please refer to the ILO tool on Developing quality traineeship offers.²⁷

²¹ UNICEF, *Defining Quality in Education*, UNICEF, New York (2000).

²² Council Recommendation on a quality framework for traineeship (2014) and Council Recommendation on a European framework for quality and effective apprenticeship (2018).

²³ For additional examples, see ILO: *Policy brief on labour market integration measures for young people* (Geneva, ILO, 2017), https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_546608/lang--en/index.htm

²⁴ See European Commission, *Frequently asked questions about the Youth Guarantee*, April 2015 and European Commission, *The Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative three years on*, Strasbourg, 2016.

²⁵ European Commission, *Guidance on evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative*, September 2015, pp. 8–17.

²⁶ ILO, *Assessing the quality of youth employment offers* (Geneva, ILO, 2017), https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_613353/lang--en/index.htm

²⁷ ILO, *Developing quality traineeships for young people* (Geneva, ILO, 2017), https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_613352.pdf

Types of offers

The Youth Guarantee envisages four possible pathways for young beneficiaries: employment and self-employment; continued education and training; apprenticeship; and traineeship. Offers include both those that are subsidized by the Youth Guarantee and those that come from the open market without any public subsidy. This latter requirement means that the Youth Guarantee's main implementing partner needs to continuously check whether registered young people are still in the preparatory phase or if they have found an offer (or they decided to drop out).

Considering in detail the types of offers that are fully or partially subsidized:

Subsidized employment offers are the various types of job subsidies used by the PES for young people registered as unemployed. These can take various forms (waiver of social security contributions, subsidy covering part of the gross wage or a tax refund for employers recruiting certain categories of persons) and have different conditionalities (a typical condition is the issuance of a fixed term contract of minimum duration, with the obligation on the employer to maintain the employment relation for a minimum additional period). The start date of the work contract is the date of the offer and the date of exit from the Youth Guarantee. Some Western Balkan economies have generalised subsidies targeting young people (this means that by simply recruiting a person falling in the target group, the employer is exempt from the payment of social security contributions and/or personal income tax). This latter type may be considered a quality offer of employment under the Youth Guarantee if the young person recruited is registered in the scheme (otherwise neither the person nor the subsidy can be recorded under the aegis of the Youth Guarantee).

Subsidized self-employment offer: typically, the self-employment package in Western Balkan economies includes: (i) counselling for self-employment (preparation service); (ii) business training to develop a business plan (preparation service unless the course leads to a partial or full qualification); (iii) non-refundable start-up grant (Youth Guarantee offer of employment); and (iv) mentoring, post-start-up advisory services (this can be considered part of the offer). The date of the start of the offer is when the young person registers self-employment activity and becomes eligible for/receives the grant. Access to loans guaranteed by the State may also be considered a quality offer (even though this cannot be costed in advance), provided that beneficiaries are registered in the Youth Guarantee.

Subsidized continued education and training: These offers comprise: (i) vocational training programmes organized as part of ALMPs (upskilling, reskilling, additional qualification), provided that these training courses lead to a full or partial qualification; and (ii) programmes organized as part of the formal education system (for example, a *Second chance* programme to provide early school leavers with a recognized qualification, or short vocational education courses leading to labour market entry). These courses may include the validation of non-informal and informal learning as part of the package. In several EU countries, short VET courses (one or two years) were organized in the formal education system to target early school leavers and young people with no qualifications. Both types of courses need to be costed accurately (the first by the PES, the second by the Ministry of Education).

Subsidized traineeship: As mentioned above, these programmes are organized as part of ALMPs to provide young people out of the school system with a six-month period of work experience with a host organization (private company, civil society organization, public entity). Authorities must recall, however, that as much as possible these programmes need to lead (eventually) to a job.

Subsidized apprenticeship: As already mentioned, these refer to the dual apprenticeship programmes that are part of the formal education system. If apprenticeships are available in a country, implementation of the offer passes on to the Ministry of Education (responsible also for determining the average costs of these programmes). Alternate training programmes and on-the-job training are not "apprenticeship" offers but offers of continued education and training, if they lead to a full or partial qualification.

What is the start and end date of an offer?

According to the EU Guidance on the Youth Guarantee monitoring framework, the start date of an offer (the date when the four month count ends) is the date when the young beneficiary starts the apprenticeship, or traineeship or training programme, employment relation or self-employment venture. For instance, if on 6 May the PES enrolls a young beneficiary on a training course leading to a recognised qualification set to start on 15 November, the start date of the offer is 15 November (and not 6 May) and this becomes the date of exit from the Youth Guarantee service delivery system. The date when the young beneficiary concludes the offer (apprenticeship, or traineeship or training programme) is the date from which the follow-up indicators start to be measured (after 6, 12 and 18 months). For employment and self-employment offers the start date coincides with the date of exit from the Youth Guarantee and becomes the date from which follow-up indicators are measured. For example, suppose that a young person starts a subsidized job offer on 1 January and the scheme envisages a six-month subsidy plus a six-month obligation on the employer to retain the person. The end date of the programme is 31 December, but the date of exit is 1 January. This is also the date from which follow-up indicators are counted (at 6 months the situation is checked at the end of June, at 12 months the situation is checked at the end of December and at 18 months the situation is checked at the end of June the following year).

2.4. Review of Youth Guarantee policy requirements (four cross-cutting enablers)

2.4.1. Partnerships

The Youth Guarantee requires the building up of a strong partnership-based approach. In the EU, Member States have followed a variety of approaches. Some countries have created new institutions (such as the Coordination Council in Bulgaria and the Youth Guarantee Monitoring Board in Latvia), while others have used existing coordination mechanisms such as working groups (for example, the Czech Republic), monitoring boards (for example, Poland) or other bodies. They were all multi-stakeholder bodies involving ministries, educational institutions, youth organizations, social partners, PES and other public administrations (for example, Spain). These coordination bodies were convened during the drafting of the YGIP, but subsequently met only sporadically in the first three years of implementation.

The role played by the social partners in the development of the Youth Guarantee also varies substantially between countries and partly depends on the country's previous institutional setting and social dialogue practices. The same applies to youth organizations, often involved in the day-to-day implementation of the Youth Guarantee (and especially in outreach activities), but with little voice in the design of the framework.

Strong partnerships are needed at institutional level (and especially across the ministries in charge of labour, education and training, the economy and finance); with employers (for the recruitment of young beneficiaries); with civil society organizations (for outreach, but also to raise young people's awareness of the support available to them); and with public and private training providers. Some countries also involve private employment agencies in the delivery of Youth Guarantee offers. The institutions, agencies and organizations that are required to partner in the Youth Guarantee will depend on the relevant structure and organizational arrangements, as well as the institutional setting.

2.4.2. Data collection and Youth Guarantee monitoring framework

The data collection exercise run during the preparatory work for Youth Guarantee preparations should have identified the data gaps to be filled by relevant policy action. This serves – at least in part – also to comply with the Youth Guarantee monitoring framework, one of the most challenging implementation tasks.

The *Indicator framework for monitoring the Youth Guarantee* encompasses three categories of indicators, to be collected and reported on annually:

1. **Aggregate monitoring:** macroeconomic indicators (EU Labour Force Survey [LFS] data);
2. **Direct monitoring:** monitoring of Youth Guarantee delivery (inflow/outflow indicators, based on administrative data);
3. **Follow-up monitoring:** monitoring of the situation of young people who have exited the Youth Guarantee preparation phase (result/outcome indicators, based on administrative and survey data).

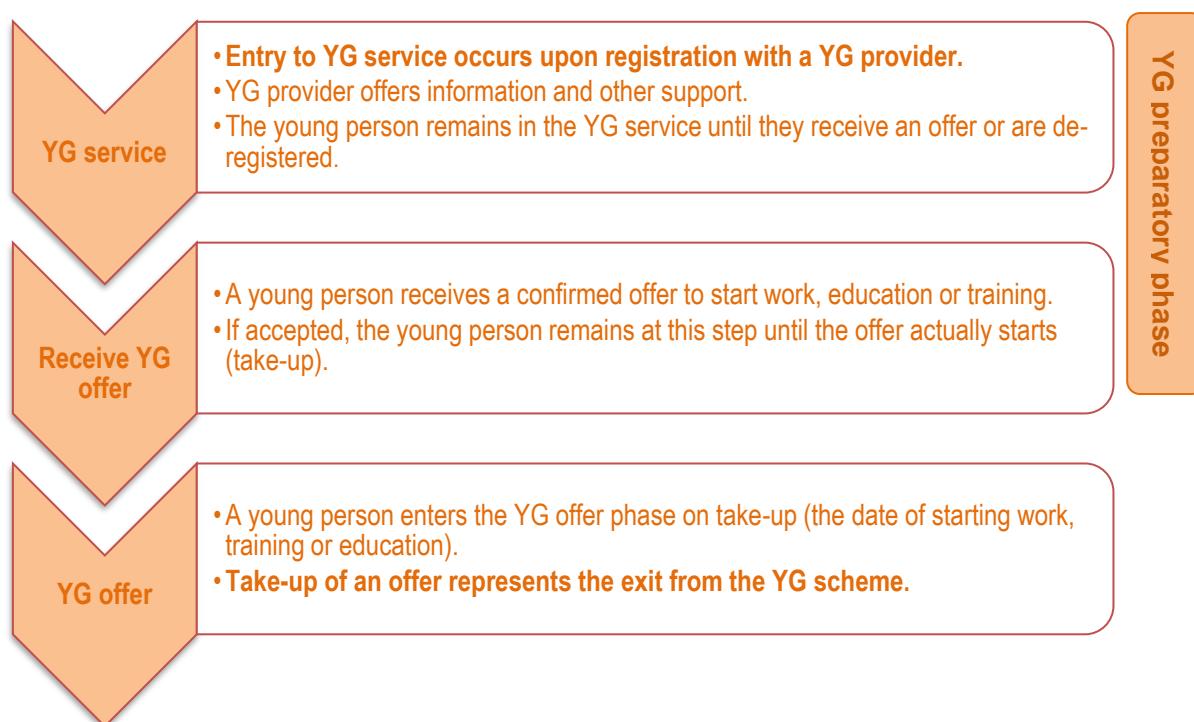
These indicators serve to measure: (i) the results of the Youth Guarantee on the overall situation of young NEETs; (ii) the efficiency of Youth Guarantee service delivery; and (iii) the sustainability of outcomes achieved by individuals going through the scheme.

Aggregate macroeconomic indicators – computed from the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS) – describe the context of Youth Guarantee implementation in each country and its evolution over time. They are considered an indirect means of monitoring the effects of implementation and also reflect the impact of prevention measures to prevent young people from falling into inactivity and unemployment. With regard to NEETs, the EU emphasizes that there are important differences between the number of young NEETs based on LFS data, the number of unemployed (ILO definition), and the number of young people registered with the Public Employment Service (PES). The stock of potential beneficiaries of a Youth Guarantee scheme is calculated by adding up the number of young people aged 15–29 who are unemployed and those who are inactive (LFS data). This total is then compared with the annual average number of young people registered with the PES as unemployed in the same period.

The main aggregate indicator in this framework is the NEET rate, complemented by additional indicators of the labour market situation and educational attainment of the youth population. Annex 2 details the indicators' definition, measurement methods, data sources, and required disaggregation.

Direct monitoring: The indicator framework for monitoring Youth Guarantee delivery is based on the analysis of inflows and outflows of young beneficiaries. This requires clear entry and exit points into/from the Youth Guarantee scheme, as well as the calculation of the number of young persons who take up an offer of employment, continued education and training, apprenticeship, or traineeship within the four-month timeframe. Although this monitoring framework envisages only three implementation indicators (share of young people still in the preparation phase after four months; share of young people with a positive and timely exit from the preparation phase; and coverage of the scheme); and two results indicators (situation of young people after exiting the preparation phase and situation after exiting by type of offer); the calculation methods and level of disaggregation are rather complex. The 2015 version of the indicator framework distinguishes three steps of support, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Progression through the different steps of the Youth Guarantee service delivery system



Source: European Commission Employment Committee: *Indicator framework for monitoring the Youth Guarantee (YG) methodological manual* (Brussels, 2015), p. 5.

During their participation in the **Youth Guarantee scheme** (from date of registration until receipt of an offer), young beneficiaries receive information, guidance, skills assessments, individual action planning, and also training services (digital, green and entrepreneurial skills, core employability and career management skills, short language courses). The **receipt of a Youth Guarantee offer** lasts from the date when an offer is made/delivered until the date the offer actually starts (the two dates may not coincide). These two elements make up the **preparation phase**, which covers the period from registration (inflow) to take-up (start) of an offer or de-registration (outflow). The **offer phase** lasts from the date of take-up of the offer until the date of leaving the offer (irrespective of completion).

The **inflow/outflow indicators** of direct monitoring are described in Annex 2/Table 2. The baseline is nil. The data source is the Youth Guarantee administrative records, to be provided on an annual basis (calendar year) by the country-wide coordinating authority. A young person is considered to have entered the Youth Guarantee scheme if they have registered with a provider. This means that the young person:

1. has contacted a Youth Guarantee provider (also through a web platform);
2. has been assessed as eligible for support;
3. has had their personal details recorded in some form of register/database of Youth Guarantee clients.

This definition has several implications for Youth Guarantee implementing partners. First, contacting a provider, signing up on a web platform, or registering with the PES does not constitute entry in the scheme. Only once the individual has been screened according to the eligibility criteria set by the Youth Guarantee and their personal data have been recorded in the Youth Guarantee register/database do they become a “Youth Guarantee beneficiary” (and they are recorded as inflow). Second, young

persons who are registered (that is, they have contacted a provider, they are eligible, and have recorded their personal details in the register/database) need to be followed up in the four-month window to verify that they are still in the preparation phase (that is, they did not find anything on their own, or decided that the Youth Guarantee does not interest them, or they were sanctioned for failure to comply with obligations). The personal data of all individuals in the Youth Guarantee service delivery system need to be maintained to measure outcomes (situation of young clients after exiting the preparation phase at six, 12 and 18 months), irrespective of whether they took up an offer or not. Young people in the preparation phase remain in this status until:

- They take up (start) an offer (of employment, education or training, apprenticeship, or traineeship) either delivered by a Youth Guarantee provider or by self-initiative; or
- They exit the preparation phase for any other reason (drop-out or sanction or unknown reason).

The concept of an offer entails that the young person be presented with a confirmed offer to: start work (employment contract) or set up a business; (re)enter education or training (invitation to enrol in an education course or training programme); start an apprenticeship (apprenticeship contract); or start a traineeship (confirmation of a traineeship place). The offer may be received from an implementing partner or through self-initiative.

Offers need to be grouped by type of destination (employment; education and training; apprenticeship; and traineeship).

1. **Employment, including self-employment:** performance of work, even for just one hour per week, for pay, profit, or family gain. Self-employment is understood as persons working in their own business, farm, or professional practice. A self-employed person is considered to be working if they meet one of the following criteria: they work for the purpose of earning a profit, spend time in the operation of a business, or are in the process of setting up a business.
2. **Continued education (and training):** enrolment in formal education or adult training programmes leading to a recognized qualification (measured in terms of ISCED levels or levels of the National Qualification Framework [NQF]).
3. **Traineeships:** They refer to a limited period of work practice spent in enterprises, public bodies, or non-profit institutions, in order to gain practical work experience ahead of taking up regular employment. Traineeships that form part of academic or vocational curricula and traineeships that form part of mandatory professional training (such as law, medicine) do not constitute an offer, because participants in these schemes do not fall, by definition, in the category of NEETs.
4. **Apprenticeships:** the characteristics of the apprenticeship (for example, occupation, duration, skills to be acquired, wage, social protection entitlements) are defined in a training contract or formal agreement between the apprentice and the employer directly or via the educational institution. Apprenticeships are normally part of formal education and training at upper secondary level (ISCED 3); the duration of the training is on average three years; and successful completion leads to a nationally recognized qualification in a specific occupation.

The **follow-up indicators** focus on the status of young people after exiting the preparation phase, disaggregated by type of destination (employment, education and training, apprenticeship, traineeship). These indicators measure young people's situation by type of destination at three time-intervals (six, 12, and 18 months). The baseline is nil and the source of data is administrative records. Because there is a general assumption that most young people in the scheme will receive an offer to participate in employment, education or training, apprenticeship or traineeship programme (listed under the

implementation plan and delivered by a partner organization), the situation of these young people (at least at the six-month interval) should be reflected in the Youth Guarantee register/database.

The calculation of the indicator **Situation of young Youth Guarantee beneficiaries after exiting the preparation phase** requires the observation of each young person who left the preparation phase after six, 12, and 18 months from the date of exit. The measurement needs to be done based on the monthly outflows from the Youth Guarantee register and requires that young people are followed through administrative data throughout their pathway. This indicator measures three groups of young persons, namely:

1. **Young people who exited the Youth Guarantee preparation phase to take up a subsidized offer** made by a partner provider/implementing organization and who were enrolled as participants in one of the measures ("*positive known outcome*"). For this group, it is necessary to refer to the database of participants.
2. **Young people who exited the Youth Guarantee preparation phase to take up an offer found by self-initiative** (positive known outcome). For this group it is necessary to refer to domestic administrative registers (employment, education, apprenticeship and traineeship contracts, if available).
3. **Young people who exited the Youth Guarantee preparation phase with a negative outcome** (known or unknown). This group comprises young people who returned to unemployment or inactivity. Data on these two groups may be collected through the unemployment register, social security institute, or other administrative sources.²⁸

Monitoring of Youth Guarantee implementation is essential to analyse how well the scheme performs and to indicate potential weaknesses that need to be fixed. The Commission will encourage a regular reporting by Western Balkan economies on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee to provide necessary technical assistance and also to promote peer learning among Western Balkan economies.

The *Indicator framework* for monitoring the Youth Guarantee provides a clear method for monitoring the service delivery system, but **it does not** include guidance on how to measure the overall progress made in enacting policy reforms. **The ILO Guide on monitoring the performance of the Youth Guarantee offers suggestions on how to design and implement a comprehensive monitoring system to measure the performance of the whole Youth Guarantee (including necessary structural reforms).**²⁹

In the Western Balkans, North Macedonia is able to report on all aggregate indicators (which are also reported to EUROSTAT). The Employment Service Agency (ESA) can report on the Youth Guarantee service delivery system with data related to offers within four months and follow-up situation at 6 and 12 months.

Additionally, the ETF has adjusted its regular collection of key education, skills, and employment indicators to support comparative monitoring at regional level.

²⁸ The ILO has prepared a training package on Youth Guarantee monitoring and evaluation. See ILO, *Monitoring the performance of Youth Guarantees: A learning package* (Geneva, ILO, 2017), https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_583560/lang--en/index.htm

²⁹ ILO, *Guide to monitor the performance of youth guarantee* (Geneva, ILO, 2017), https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_613585/lang--en/index.htm

2.4.3. Use of funds (costing and mobilization of financial resources)

In the experience of EU member states, the funding earmarked under Youth Guarantee implementation plans was often below the level required to target all young NEETs and undertake the planned reforms.³⁰ During the development of YGIPs in 2013, precise estimates of the costs to be incurred at national level were not done, with the result that funds were quickly exhausted and countries had to delay interventions pending. This is why preliminary costing the planned actions is important (examples are provided in the YGIP template).

Once the country achieves a better understanding of the range of reforms to be introduced, the type of subsidized offers that can be made available, and the projected numbers of young NEETs, a preliminary cost estimate can be made of the overall cost of the Youth Guarantee.

For costing the Youth Guarantee service delivery system (subsidized preparation services and offers) countries can start to analyse the annual costs of existing labour market programmes targeting young people (job subsidies, various training programmes, self-employment schemes and traineeships) with a view to determining the “average cost per participant” of a potential portfolio of offers. The costs to be included comprise disbursements to service providers (for instance, the reimbursement of training expenses to a training provider) and to individuals (for example, traineeship allowances, the self-employment grant) and any other additional expenditure related to the programme. In order to account for the costs of preparation services (delivered by PES staff and not entailing a disbursement) and the administration of programmes, countries normally add 20–30 per cent to the overall cost of programmes. For example, suppose that a beneficiary is offered a three-month training programme. The programme is delivered by a VET adult centre, and costs €200 per person; the young beneficiary receives a monthly allowance of €50 per month, plus €10 a month for transport costs. The overall cost of the programme is €380 per participant (€200 + €150 + €30), while the preparation costs and programme administration will cost approximately €75. The overall cost for treating a beneficiary, therefore, is €455.

Once the costs of all programmes delivered to young people in a given year has been calculated, dividing the overall costs by the number of young participants will provide an “average cost per participant”. Because during the year young participants will have attended different programmes (training, subsidies, self-employment) with different lengths and different costs, this simple method of calculation will provide a sort of general average cost that can be used to estimate the costs of Youth Guarantee service delivery. The service delivery system, however, represents only one part of the Youth Guarantee. The costs of policy reforms (education and training, outreach, PES) must be included, as well as the costs of interventions under the mapping/early intervention and outreach phases.

Once all costs have been estimated, it is necessary to first plan the domestic resource envelope before submitting requests for EU funds. The costing of the actions, and its integration into the domestic budgeting process will be a prerequisite for considering potential future EU support. The Youth Guarantee actions can also be complemented by other lines of financing.³¹

One source of funding that may be included in the Youth Guarantee is the proportion of the ALMP budget annually allocated to young people (under the general presumption that the majority of young people will register with the Youth Guarantee), plus the budget already allocated to planned reforms in education, youth, and social protection policies that have a bearing to Youth Guarantee implementation. For example, a budgeted policy initiative aimed at improving primary education curricula and teaching methods, and introducing a national assessment to verify learning outcomes may be included in the YGIP as instrumental in reducing early school leaving, and improving skills matching and the quality and relevance of primary

³⁰ V. Escudero et al., “Youth labour market prospects and recent policy developments” in M. Á. Malo and M. A. Moreno (eds), *European Youth Labour Markets. Problems and Policies* (Springer, 2018).

³¹ For example donor technical cooperation projects on employment, loans from international financing institutions.

education. Another example would be a budgeted policy initiative aimed at integrating career guidance and education in secondary schools and VET institutions. As such these reforms can be included – with their respective budget – in the YGIP.

2.4.4. Strong delivery mechanisms

The final cross-cutting enabler to be appraised is the mechanism to be established for Youth Guarantee delivery. This enabler requires a decision on the roles and responsibilities of institutions at the central and local level, as well as those of partners.

The first decision to be taken concerns the **Youth Guarantee Coordinator**, that is, the public institution that will bear the primary responsibility for managing the Youth Guarantee and report to the Government and the European Commission. In EU countries, the Youth Guarantee coordinator is usually a technical unit within the ministry in charge of labour/employment (typically drawn from the Employment Department). The Youth Guarantee Coordinator is responsible for monitoring and reporting to the government and European Commission on the progress of Youth Guarantee reforms and interventions, for managing data collection and the monitoring and evaluation system, for convening sessions of the inter-institutional group/committee/commission and, generally, for addressing any problem that may arise during Youth Guarantee implementation.

Contextually, a decision needs to be taken about the **composition of the Multi-stakeholder Group** that will have the ultimate responsibility for the preparation of the YGIP, supervise implementation and review monitoring results. The Multi-stakeholder Group comprises the Youth Guarantee Coordinator and representatives of the ministries of education, youth, the economy, finance, EU affairs/integration (that is, an inter-ministerial component), as well as representatives of employers' and workers' organizations, of civil society (youth and other non-governmental organizations), the Public Employment Service, Social Work Centres and any other actor that has a stake in youth inclusion. Each member of the Multi-stakeholder Group will have the responsibility to report on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee policy reforms and interventions that fall under their mandate, and to collect and analyse the relevant data and deliver them to the Youth Guarantee Coordinator.

Special consideration needs to be given to the service delivery system (preparation and offers) and the role of the PES, which in all EU countries manages Youth Guarantee registration, preparation services and quality offers. The requirement to guarantee quality offers of employment or education and training opportunities to all young NEETs within a specific timeframe had a sensible impact on policy design and implementation at national level and especially on the structure, organization and service delivery model of the Public Employment Service, which in most EU countries has the primary responsibility for implementing the Youth Guarantee. These services had to adapt their workflow to the needs of young people and the four-month intervention requirement; to offer additional integration pathways into the labour market; and to find new ways of approaching employers to identify additional jobs, apprenticeships and traineeship places. This required an upgrading of management and administrative capacity; the introduction of new sequences of service delivery; the upscaling of profiling systems; the recruitment and training of additional staff,³² and, first and foremost, the investment of additional financial resources in employment service structures. The universal reach of the Youth Guarantee required the PES to scale up their efforts to approach employers and find quality employment, apprenticeship and traineeship places for young people. The engagement of employers in Youth

³² This is an important benchmark as it signals the readiness of the public employment service to deal with the increase in the inflow of clients due to the Youth Guarantee. Based on international experience, the ILO recommends a staff/clients ratio in the range of 1:100. This needs to be estimated based on the number of front-office staff at the PES, i.e. staff directly in contact with and providing advice to clients.

Guarantee delivery has been an explicit objective in a number of countries, where public authorities have sought to secure employers' engagement through national or regional agreements and joint initiatives (for example, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain).³³ In some countries where there was a degree of political or economic demand, like in Austria and France, the engagement with employers has led to some innovation in the role of the public employment service with respect to promoting, for instance, the 'green jobs' agenda. This was usually based on engaging with employers, trade associations, and other stakeholders to train and place jobseekers in green jobs. The public employment service of France also created a specialist department working on green jobs and skills projects in order to expand the opportunities for placing young people into new green occupations. This represented a shift away from the traditional role of PES as neutral agents, focused on matching jobseekers with available employment, toward PES as 'market makers'.

The Youth Guarantee has also provided an impetus to further tailor counselling, guidance and individual action planning services to young people's specific needs. The emphasis has been placed on streamlining procedures, expanding individualized service delivery through case management approaches, and offering personalized guidance from registration to placement. Several EU PES have also invested in making effective use of IT in the careers information, advice and guidance and recruitment process to help people self-manage their labour market progress. Approaches to profile individual needs were also upgraded to ensure that young people received the type and intensity of support they needed (for example, the profiling systems in Ireland, Italy, Malta and Portugal). In several countries, the expansion of individualized services to support disengaged young people facing multiple and complex needs was addressed through the restructuring of the Public Employment Services (for example, Belgium, Croatia and Ireland), as well as the introduction of specialized youth counsellors (for example, Bulgaria, Hungary and Latvia) or multi-disciplinary teams (for example, Sweden).

In light of the above, this part of the preparatory work for drafting the YGIP needs to outline how the country will upgrade its institutional structures to effectively manage the Youth Guarantee; how the service delivery system will be progressively introduced; and the roles and responsibilities that the different Youth Guarantee partners will progressively take on. The exercise to be carried out at this stage of the preparatory work for YGIP drafting is to give priority to those reforms/interventions without which Youth Guarantee delivery would be hampered.

For example, if the PES becomes the main implementing partner for the delivery of the preparation and offer phases and if it is necessary to recruit and train additional staff to ensure individualized service delivery, this is one of the first reforms/actions to be undertaken. YGIPs should make adequate budgetary provisions for the additional human resources and physical infrastructure that PES may require. Some of the EU Member States have invested, as part of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, in the modernization of the PES through digitalization and interoperability of information systems³⁴, in order to improve both internal processes (including monitoring) and service delivery. An ILO/WAPES survey³⁵ of digitalization trends among public employment services notes how countries have tried to balance 'digital first' orientations with ensuring equal access to clients with low digital literacy, as part of a blended service delivery approach.

If the country has no experience with outreach activities, the first action should be to map the services that are already available and their providers to initiate a dialogue on how the outreach system may be organized.

³³ European Commission, *The Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative three years on*, 2016, op. cit.

³⁴ Examples of such approaches exist also in the Western Balkans. In early 2021, for instance, the Ministry of Economic Development of Montenegro convened an inter-institutional working group to devise a plan aiming at supporting the modernization of the Employment Agency through interoperability. https://www.ilo.org/budapest/what-we-do/publications/WCMS_811864/lang-en/index.htm

³⁵ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_761924.pdf

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If the protection of personal information does not allow the sharing of information across public institutions, an adequate legislative reform needs to be proposed to allow the establishment of a tracking system (for early intervention and outreach) and for complying with the Indicator framework for monitoring the Youth Guarantee.

3. Completing the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan template

The work of the Expert Group should provide all the preparatory work, including information and data, required for the drafting of the YGIP, starting from the policy reforms and interventions to be included in the plan, to implementation arrangements and monitoring framework. This preliminary work serves as background for the Multi-stakeholder Group to prioritize the policy actions to be included in the Youth Guarantee and make an informed decision of how the scheme will be introduced in the country.

At this stage, all the elements and the technical content of the YGIP will have been laid out by the Expert Group. The Multi-stakeholder Group will have expressed its political considerations and carried out adequate consultations with relevant stakeholders.

This combined **preparatory work will result in the completion of the YGIP, based on the template** provided by the European Commission, and its submission to the Multi-stakeholder Group.

The following paragraphs provide some **guidance on how to fill in different sections of the YGIP template**. They include notes on the content of the relevant section, the editorial approach/style to be used, and provide **concrete examples** of the information to be provided in each of the sections of the YGIP template.

1. INTRODUCTION

(approx.: 500 words = 1 page)

This part of the YGIP needs to be compiled last and it should read as an executive summary.

The content refers to: (i) the economic and employment situation of the country and main issues related to youth NEETs; (ii) the rationale for establishing the Youth Guarantee; (iii) the main policy-related phases to be addressed; and (iv) coordination and implementation arrangements.

1.1 Context

(approx.: 500 words = 1 page)

{see Guidelines; section 2.2}

This part summarizes key economic and employment developments in the country over the past few years, including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on labour market, economic growth, and poverty trends. It needs to provide a general framework for understanding the situation of young NEETs (to be examined in the next paragraph), as well as a snapshot of relevant reforms already introduced/being introduced (such as the policy priority given by the government to increasing the skills of the workforce, reforms to reduce skills mismatches, Youth Employment Plan).

Please refer only to relevant policies enacted recently (on employment, youth employment, human resource development, economic reform); do not summarize each policy; provide hyperlinks to relevant supporting documents where possible.

1.2 Rationale for establishing a Youth Guarantee

(approx.: 1,000 words = 2 pages)

{see Guidelines; section 2.2}

This part provides highlights on the situation of young people (aged 15–29) who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) over time (past 5–10 years) at country-wide and regional level. If available, data should be disaggregated by NEET sub-groups (short- and long-term unemployed, inactive due to care responsibilities, illness/disability, other

inactive) and geographical distribution. At the very minimum, data should be disaggregated by sex, age groups (15–29, 15–24 and 25–29) and educational attainment levels (International standard classification of education, ISCED). The analysis should provide an idea of the personal characteristics that are likely to determine NEET status. An important item to consider is the overall number of young NEETs in the country at the time of drafting the YGIP (which will become the baseline against which progress in the aggregate indicators of the Youth Guarantee will be measured) to be compared to the average stock of young people registered with the Public Employment Service (PES). **In 2019, for example, the number of young NEETs in North Macedonia was 99,595 (51,625 unemployed and 47,970 inactive), while the number of young people registered as unemployed with the Employment Service Agency in the same year was 20,700 (or 40 per cent of unemployed NEETs).**

This should be followed by a short analysis of the main youth employment challenges (skills mismatch, lack of work experience, limited job opportunities, educational outcomes not responsive to enterprise requirements) and of the actions already taken by the government in this regard.

Useful data to be included in this part of the YGIP are the aggregate indicators of the Youth Guarantee monitoring framework (for example, youth unemployment rate, youth employment to population ratio, youth-to-adult unemployment ratio, educational attainment level, employment rate of recent graduates, early school leavers, proportion of young people aged 20–29 with at most ISCED 2).³⁶ Any gap related to statistical data availability can be addressed in the Section “Mapping” of Chapter 2 of the YGIP template.

The final part of this Section should provide the rationale for introducing a fully-fledged Youth Guarantee. Possible areas to explore are related to: (i) the economic and social costs of having a large share of young people who are NEETs (loss of human capital, lower economic growth due to lower individual earnings and consumption, the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next, loss of productive and innovative capacity, social protection spending); (ii) the requirement to increase policy coherence and coordination (across different ministries, between central and local level authorities, and between the government, the social partners, and civil society); (iii) the need to design and implement coordinated actions across different policy areas to be sustained over time; and (iv) the requirement to pool available resources with a view to maximizing their impact.

2. IMPLEMENTING THE YOUTH GUARANTEE

(approx.: 250 words = 0.5 pages)

This part has three functions:

- (i) it introduces the overall principles guiding Youth Guarantee implementation, with due consideration to the European Pillar of Social Rights (equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, social protection and inclusion) and the principles of the reinforced Youth Guarantee (see Guidelines; section 1);
- (ii) it provides a snapshot of implementing arrangements (to be further elaborated in Section 2.2.1 *Mobilizing partnerships*);
- (iii) it provides an overview of the timeframe envisaged for implementation.

For example, countries could envisage an implementation process in three stages: in the first stage the necessary legal amendments and structures are established; in the second stage policy reforms that are instrumental to delivery are introduced and the Youth Guarantee delivery system is piloted in one or two areas; and in the third stage the Youth Guarantee is rolled out fully.

³⁶ The full Youth Guarantee indicator framework is annexed to the ILO guidance on the preparation of the YGIP.

2.1 Phases (of policy intervention)

(approx.: 250 words = 0.5 pages)

This section needs to provide a summary of the main policy reforms and interventions planned under each of the four Youth Guarantee phases (mapping, outreach, preparation and offer) and an explanation of how their interaction will address the NEET challenges identified in Chapter 1 (Introduction) of the YGIP.

For example, if early school leaving has been identified as a key challenge, then there needs to be a policy reform and a series of interventions aimed at ensuring that young people remain in the education system until they have acquired the competences they need. If knowledge of young NEETs is scant, a possible policy reform may relate to the introduction of a regular ad hoc module attached to the Labour Force Survey run by the Statistical Office to gather additional information on young NEETs, their poverty profiles and the transition from school to work.

For example, as part of the YGIP, Malta conducted a NEET Census.³⁷ Slovenia recently carried out a data pooling exercise to identify young NEETs.³⁸

2.1.1 Mapping

(approx.: 1000 words = 2 pages)

This section requires that the YGIP identify policy reforms and initiatives in two separate policy areas. The first is mapping, that is, the building up/strengthening of knowledge about young NEET characteristics, geographical distribution, distance from the labour market, as well as the identification of services that are already available to them (type, duration and service providers). The second concerns early intervention (formal education and training system) and more specifically policy reforms and initiatives geared to identify young people at risk of leaving school early and providing them with additional support to remain at school and acquire a recognized qualification.

(See Guidelines; paragraph 3.3.1 for additional examples.)

The YGIP should provide a succinct narrative of the policy actions to be taken. In the table, the YGIP identifies precisely the reforms (to be listed in the first part of the table) and the specific initiatives (second part of the table). For both reforms and policy initiatives, countries need to state: the objective to be attained (in measurable terms) within the period of the YGIP, the specific target group (for example “primary and secondary education students at risk of dropout”) and their expected number; the scale (national, regional); the lead organization (for example, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labour, Public Employment Centre); cooperating partners (for example, vocational education schools, Career Guidance Centre); the time frame of implementation and the overall planned costs.

The YGIP template provides additional examples of information that can be included in the table.

³⁷ See the Knowledge Centre of the Youth Guarantee for a summary of this experience, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1327>

³⁸ See OECD, *Policy challenges in supporting youth: The hidden NEETs in Slovenia* (Paris, OECD, 2020), <https://www.oecd.org/employment/youth/OECD-2020-Hidden-NEETs-Slovenia.pdf>

Name of the reform/initiative	Key objective(s)	Target group, including number of people covered (if available)	Scale	Name and role of organization in the lead and cooperating partners	Timetable for implementation	Implementation cost, if applicable, and source of funding
Planned reforms						
Example 1) Introduce an ad hoc module on young NEETs in the national Labour Force Survey to be run every three years	To acquire granular data on young NEETs' characteristics, geographical distribution and other variables that determine the probability of becoming NEET	Statistically representative sample of the 15–29 population with regional and gender stratification	National	National Institute of Statistics (lead) Ministry of Labour Ministry of Youth	2022 Pilot phase 2023 roll-out of ad hoc module	€50,000 (already in the approved budget of the Central Statistical Office for the period 2022–2025)
Example 2) Develop an early intervention system	To identify early students in primary and secondary education at risk of early school leaving (truancy, absenteeism, low grades)	Primary and secondary education students (6–18 years of age)	National	Ministry of Education and Science (lead)	2022	€250,000 (of which €100,000 already secured by the public budget)
						...
Planned initiatives						
Example 3) Develop a probability model to be applied to LFS micro-data on young NEETs	To determine the variables that are statistically significant for becoming a NEET to feed into the PES profiling system	Population 15–29 years of age	National, regional	National Institute of Statistics (lead) PES	June–July 2023	...
Example 4) Pilot tracking system for all students (primary, secondary and tertiary) with early warning	To map educational pathways and their returns in the labour market; identify early signs of dropout risk	Students (6–23 years of age)	Two regions	Regional education authorities Ministry of Education and Science	January–June 2022	...
Example 5) Pilot means tested conditional cash transfer paid for staying in full-time education.	To prevent young people from disadvantaged backgrounds leaving school early	Students (14–16 years of age)	Five municipalities	Regional education authorities, Centre for Social Welfare	August 2022–June 2024	€3,000,000 (of which €2,000,000 already secured through a project financed by....)
Example 6) Develop tools to monitor skills in demand on the labour market	To understand requirements of businesses and target better upskilling and reskilling, as well as offers of continued education	Population 15–29 years of age	National, regional	Ministry of Labour Statistical Office	January–June 2022	€100,000 (of which €50,000 pledged by international donor XXX)

2.1.2 Outreach

(approx.: 1000 words= 2 pages)

{see Guidelines, paragraph 3.3.2 for additional information}

This part of the YGIP focuses on reforms and interventions to reach out to young NEETs who are not registered for support with any public service provider (PES, schools, local branches of the social protection system). As highlighted in the Guidelines, there are two main modes for organizing outreach, namely one-stop shops or partnership networks and referral systems, while the stages are the same for both delivery modes (identification, contact, engagement, service delivery, monitoring). An important component is information and awareness-raising, which could be a task shared across several partners (youth organizations, PES, schools and universities) through the use of various means (leaflets, billboards, social media, influencers, YouTube).

One key challenge in the implementation of outreach strategies is the “identification” stage. Ideally, by pooling administrative data on education, employment, unemployment, social protection, and tax administration it should be possible to identify those young people who left school, but have no record of employment, self-employment, unemployment or benefit disbursement. Often, however, the legislation on the protection of personal information does not allow the sharing of data across different institutions, thus de facto impeding the preliminary identification of these young people. This can be overcome through legislative changes (policy reforms) or by relying on a network of “street workers” tasked with identifying young NEETs. The latter may be staff of partner youth organizations, or staff of the education and training system, or staff of the Public Employment Service (PES) or of the Social Work Centres (SWCs).

Prior to compiling this Section of the YGIP, countries are strongly advised to develop a design for the outreach system (responsible institution, methods to be deployed to reach out to young NEETs, data gathering and monitoring, type of services to be delivered, human and financial resources required).

The text and the table must reflect the decisions taken at national level on how the outreach system will operate. Please avoid generic statements and focus on the operational aspects.

Name of the reform/initiative	Key objective(s)	Target group, including number of people covered (if available)	Scale	Name and role of organization in the lead and cooperating partners	Timetable for implementation	Implementation cost, if applicable and source of funding
Planned reforms						
Example 1) Reform of the Youth Act	To lay down provisions on disclosure of information for the purposes of youth outreach work	Young persons under 25 years of age without upper secondary schooling	Specify: national, regional, local	Ministry of Youth (lead), Ministry of Education (consultation)	September 2022: legislative proposal	For example, N/A
Example 2) Amendments to the protection of personal data legislation	To allow for the disclosure of personal information for outreach	Young people 15–29 years of age	National	Ministry of Labour Ministry of Youth	2022	No cost
Planned initiatives						
Example 3) Navigators for “Young People Programme”	To establish 20 “Youth Guarantee focal points” in PES, providing a one stop shop (= 1 in each PES in the pilot regions x,y,z)	NEETs aged 15–29 in region x, y, z (= 58,400 people); particular focus on young people from minority communities	For example, regional (regions x, y, z)	For example, Regional Employment Authority (lead) Regional Education Authorities (cooperating partners)	For example, June 2022: 10 navigators trained and deployed December 2022: 10 navigators trained and deployed December 2023: evaluation and possible scaling up	€300,000 (already in the approved budget of the Ministry of Youth)
Example 4) Youth outreach	To train 100 youth workers of partner civil society organizations to identify and engage young people	Young NEETs, not registered with any support organization, 15–29 years of age, with priority assigned to young women with care responsibilities	Three regions	Ministry of Youth Civil society organizations	2022–2023	€40,000 to be mobilised through development partners

2.1.3 Preparation

(approx.: 1000 words= 2 pages)

{see Guidelines; paragraphs 3.3.3 and 3.3.4}

From this section onwards the implementation plan needs to outline the service delivery structure of the Youth Guarantee, including the institution/organization/entity responsible for delivery (usually the PES), type of services to be provided to young NEETs, as well as the tools (profiling, individual employment planning, case management, mentoring) that will enhance service delivery.

In this section it is important to highlight the institutional reforms that the PES (or the institution that will manage the Youth Guarantee service delivery system) needs to undertake to introduce, manage and monitor the Youth Guarantee effectively (including financial and human resources, ICT platform), while maintaining a reasonable service delivery for other unemployed. In many EU countries, the PES had to re-design the workflow (registration, profiling, counselling interview, individual employment planning, career guidance provision), the ICT platform managing PES data, the employment service delivery system (group and individual counselling, short training courses, job search assistance, job mediation), the design of active labour market programmes and the monitoring and evaluation system. These changes were accompanied by amendments to the legislative framework (for example on apprenticeship and traineeship, on individual employment planning, individual allowances), new partnership approaches (for example, the contracting out of outreach activities to civil society organizations, or outsourcing part of employment service delivery to private employment agencies), and different resource allocation methods (funding envelope for the ICT platform, for active labour market policies, for the recruitment of additional human resources). Even though several economies of the Western Balkans within the given timeframe will be able to pilot the Youth Guarantee service delivery system only in some regions, the necessary infrastructure needs to be in place.

A key issue to be recalled during the drafting of this part of the YGIP is that the short courses normally provided by PES (job search training, IT skills, languages) do not constitute a **quality offer of additional education and training** but are part of the "Preparation" phase and should be listed in the table below and not under "offers".

Name of the reform/initiative	Key objective(s)	Target group, including number of people covered (if available)	Scale	Name and role of organization in the lead and cooperating partners	Timetable for implementation	Implementation cost, if applicable
Planned reforms						
Example 1) Reform of the PES service delivery system to allow the effective delivery of the Youth Guarantee	To equip the PES with the resources and tools required to implement the Youth Guarantee	Young people 15–29 years of age who register in the Youth Guarantee	National	PES, Ministry of Labour Ministry of Finance	2022–2025	€1.5 million, of which €500,000 already provided by project XXX
Example 2) Legislative amendments to the Employment Promotion Law	To revise the provision relating to: (i) registration, re-registration and de-registration of unemployed persons and jobseekers with the PES; (ii) individual action plan; (iii) type of employment services and programmes; and (iv) performance monitoring system	Young people aged 15–29 registering in the Youth Guarantee	National	PES, Ministry of Labour Ministry of Finance	2022	No cost
Example 3) Legislative amendments to enable outsourcing of training courses	To enable the diversification of training offers provided by public vocational training centres by allowing the outsourcing of missing courses or those that are in strong demand	Young people 15–29 years of age registering in the Youth Guarantee	National	Ministry of Labour PES	June 2022	No cost
Planned initiatives						
Example 4) Statistical profiling system based on probability	To improve young client segmentation approaches and prioritize service delivery	Young people 15–29 years of age registering in the Youth Guarantee	National, with local-level adjustments	PES, Ministry of Labour National Statistical Office	End 2022	€40,000
Example 5) Provide basic digital skills training to all young people registering in the Youth Guarantee	To improve the digital skills of young beneficiaries of the Youth Guarantee	Young people 15–29 years of age registering in the Youth Guarantee (approx. 5,000 young people)	National	PES, Ministry of Labour National Innovation Agency	2022	€500,000 of which €300,000 from the PES budget)
Example 6) Train PES staff to deliver tailor-made counselling, guidance and mentoring	To improve the skills of PES staff to work with young people based on their individual needs	8 PES workers per PES office * 30 offices = 240 staff	National	PES	End 2022	€36,000 (secured in the PES budget of 2022)

2.1.4 Offer

(approx.: 1000 words= 2 pages)

{see Guidelines; paragraphs 3.3.5 and 3.3.4}

This section requires responsible authorities to outline the employment, continued education and training, apprenticeship and traineeship offers to be provided by the Youth Guarantee to young NEETs. Offers need to comply with the rules established at EU level on what constitute “quality offers” and they comprise not only active labour market programmes, but also the education and training provision of the formal education system. For example, “apprenticeship offers” refer to alternate training that is part of the formal education system and leads to a recognized qualification. As such, it is provided by vocational education institutions and when an offer of apprenticeship is made, this means that the PES refers the young NEET to a vocational school that will deliver the apprenticeship programme.³⁹ In a similar way, young NEETs in need of remedial education are referred to the education institutions that offer these programmes. This action is grounded on an agreement between the PES/Ministry of Labour and the Ministry Education, whereby the latter made a certain number of apprenticeships and remedial education places available to young Youth Guarantee beneficiaries.

Institutions may include in this section those active labour market programmes that are already being delivered to young people, provided they comply with the “quality” criteria of the Youth Guarantee (for employment offers, quality refers to contract duration, wage levels, career opportunities, occupational health and safety, working conditions, job aligned to the educational attainment and competence of the individual), as well as new types of offers (for example, a new traineeship programme, or a different type of wage subsidy). The policy reforms that may be required in this area include the alignment of active labour market programmes and targeting criteria to the requirements of the Youth Guarantee, implementation approaches (mentoring, case management) and the performance monitoring framework (because the Youth Guarantee requires the collection of inflow and outflow data, alongside performance indicators on outcomes, see also Section 2.2.2 of this template).

³⁹ In contexts where an apprenticeship system is not in existence nor planned, there will be no apprenticeship offers at this stage.

Name of the reform/initiative	Key objective(s)	Target group, including number of people covered (if available)	Scale	Name and role of organization in the lead and cooperating partners	Timetable for implementation	Implementation cost, if applicable
Planned reforms						
Example 1) Apprenticeship Act	To recognise vocational training as equivalent to general education at upper secondary level	Students in upper secondary schooling (approx. aged 16–18)	Specify: national, regional, local	Ministry of Education (lead), Employers' and workers representatives (consultation on legislative proposal)	February 2022: Legislative proposal September 2022: implementation with start of academic year	No cost for legislative reform €300,000 in apprenticeship incentive for employers
Example 2) Law on traineeship	To regulate the traineeship schemes offered as part of ALMPs (duration, allowance, host organizations, certification)	Young people aged 20–29	National	Ministry of Labour (lead) PES	February 2022	No costs
Planned initiatives						
Example 3) Wage subsidies for apprenticeships	To increase labour market relevance of vocational training by introducing an obligatory company-based placement of min. 12 months in upper secondary vocational training	Students in upper secondary vocational education (aged 16–18): Academic year 2019/20: 30,000 (30 per cent of VET students) Academic year 2020/21: 60,000 (60 per cent of VET students)	Specify: national, regional, local	Ministry of Education (lead), Employers' and workers representatives (consultation on planning of programme) Businesses and VET providers (implementing)	Gradual rollout 2022–2025 Full roll-out planned for 2025	€3,000/student/year
Example 4) Wage subsidy for first time jobseekers	To provide an incentive to employers to recruit new VET graduates with limited work experience	New VET graduates (18–20 years of age), 1,000 young people per year	National	PES (lead) Ministry of Labour	End 2022 Roll out 2023–2025	€1,500,000, of which €500,000 from PES budget and €250,000 from project YYY

2.2 Cross-cutting enablers

(approx.: 250 words = 0.5 pages)

This section needs to provide: (i) an overview of the partners that are engaged in the design, implementation and monitoring of the Youth Guarantee; (ii) how the data collection for monitoring will be organized; (iii) a statement of the financial resources required for implementation of the Youth Guarantee, their sources (for example, national, European Commission, other) and management method; and (iv) a description of the planned delivery mechanism; and of the reforms and initiatives that are instrumental for efficient delivery.

2.2.1 Mobilising partnerships

(approx.: 1000 words= 2 pages)

This section needs to detail the organizational setting envisaged for delivery of the Youth Guarantee, as well as all the actors that will be involved. Usually, at national level there is a Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG), responsible for designing and monitoring the YGIP. It may comprise representatives of different ministries (education, employment, youth, economy, finance, local administration) and institutions/agencies (PES, Social Work Centres, statistical office); regional and local authorities; employers' and workers' organizations; and representatives of civil society organizations. Following the preparation and adoption of the YGIP, the MSG usually meets twice a year (for monitoring and reporting purposes).

Another institution required for Youth Guarantee delivery is the Youth Guarantee Coordinator, comprising expert staff of the Ministry of Labour/employment, responsible for managing day-to-day implementation, collecting and analysing data from monitoring and reporting to the government and the EC. The ministries involved in implementation normally appoint focal points responsible for supporting the Youth Guarantee Coordinator in areas related to the different ministerial mandates. In order to coordinate initiatives at the local level, a Group/Committee/Commission (with a similar composition to the national one) is set up at regional level. The PES usually appoints a group of senior staff at headquarters to manage Youth Guarantee reforms and initiatives, while at local employment office level (depending on the size of the office and catchment area), a team of senior staff supports the Director in steering the work of frontline staff in delivering preparation services and offers.

The table needs to provide a list – as complete as possible – of partners that will be involved in Youth Guarantee delivery and their respective roles.

Name of key organizations	Type of organization	Level of responsibility	Role in implementing the Youth Guarantee scheme	Ensuring the success of partnerships
Example 1) for example, Youth Cooperation Association, Public Employment Service, Employers' Association, etc.	For example, NGO, public authority, Social Partner, etc.	Specify: national, regional, local	For example: - conveys voice of young people - provides net new traineeships and apprenticeships in its member associations - contributes to the mapping of young NEETs - reaches out to NEETs via its member youth associations (see section 2.3) - hosts local "one-stop shops" for young people - etc.	For example, how partnerships among key organizations will be coordinated (for example, committees, IT platforms, wikis...), cooperation with other services involved
Example 2) Ministry of Labour	Public authority	National	Youth Guarantee coordinator Chair of Multi-stakeholder Group Monitoring Youth Guarantee and reporting to government and European Commission	
Example 3) National Employment Agency	Government agency	National with local network	Youth Guarantee main implementing partner Implementation of service delivery system (preparation and offers) Management of Youth Guarantee indicator framework Coordinator Youth Guarantee outreach	
Example 4) Ministry of Education	Public authority	National	Youth Guarantee implementing partner responsible for early intervention policy reforms Offers of apprenticeship and remedial education	

2.2.2 Improving data collection, monitoring and evaluation of schemes

(approx.: 1000 words = 2 pages)

This section describes the actions that need to be taken to comply with the Employment Committee (EMCO) *Indicator framework for monitoring the Youth Guarantee*, including any changes/upgrading to the PES ICT platform that may be required. The data collection system for monitoring the Youth Guarantee comprises three sets of indicators: (i) aggregate indicators (employment and education) collected through the Labour Force Survey (if the national LFS is not aligned to Eurostat standards, this can be included as a reform in the “Mapping” section) by the Youth Guarantee coordinator; (ii) direct monitoring (inflows and outflows from the Youth Guarantee) that requires the establishment of a new data collection system distinct from the traditional one used by PES; and (iii) follow-up indicators (at 6, 12 and 18 months after exit from the Youth Guarantee). The direct and follow-up monitoring system poses several challenges to the PES. First, the indicator framework is designed to measure inflows of young NEETs into the Youth Guarantee scheme (by individual characteristics, disaggregation between unemployed and inactive, and by registration with the PES) and outflows (by type of offers, subsidized or not). This requires: (i) clear points of entry into the Youth Guarantee scheme (usually registration with PES and a dedicated web portal); (ii) reliable entry and recording of experiences of beneficiaries (date of registration for different services, date of offer being made, date of start of offer, date of end of offer); (iii) well-designed coding of preparation services and offers. The second challenge is that the Youth Guarantee should also encompass offers that young people find on their own. This requires that the main implementing partner continuously check whether Youth Guarantee beneficiaries are still in the service delivery system or have exited the Youth Guarantee for employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship. This requires interoperability of public service databases (PES; social security contributions, pension fund or tax authority; education and training; management of information system) to be able to check in real time the situation of each person registered in the scheme. The third challenge is that the Youth Guarantee has exact definitions of what constitutes a quality offer, entry into and exit from the Youth Guarantee service delivery system, date of start of the offer and so on, which need to be complied with. The fourth challenge is the monitoring of follow-up indicators over time - done through administrative data – which requires interoperability of databases on unemployment, employment, education and training and any other data source that may be useful to verify the status of Youth Guarantee beneficiaries. The monitoring of follow-up indicators must be continuous because young people will have different exit dates and the count (situation at 6, 12 and 18 months) starts from the date of exit from the Youth Guarantee service delivery system. The fifth challenge is that the Youth Guarantee requires an impact evaluation of offers made to young NEETs (at least of one of the subsidized offers).

Finally, the Youth Guarantee comprises not only the Youth Guarantee service delivery system, but also policy reforms and interventions in the areas of mapping, early intervention, outreach and institutional arrangements, which need to be monitored (through the development of measurable indicators) and reported upon (to the government and the EC). For more detailed information on the indicator framework for monitoring the Youth Guarantee service delivery system, as well as the monitoring of progress in policy reforms and interventions, please see the ILO guidance on the drafting of YGIPs.

Against this backdrop, the table must record all policy reforms and specific interventions to be undertaken to fully comply with the Youth Guarantee indicator framework.

As already mentioned, examples of reforms could include legislation geared to ensure full interoperability of administrative databases and to allow access of public service providers to personal information, or amendments to the employment promotion legislation, if this latter details the performance monitoring system to be applied to active labour market policies. Specific interventions may relate to the upgrading of the ICT platform of the PES and the training of its staff in order to precisely record the data required by the indicator framework, or the alignment of the PES classification system to that of the national statistical office, or the amendment of PES rulebooks for service delivery to young NEETs.

Name of reform	Expected change	Means through which change will be measured	Source of information / planned evaluations
Example 1) Apprenticeship Act	For example, to recognise vocational training as equivalent to general education at upper secondary level	For example, legislation on access to tertiary education, survey of employers	Explain how the reform will be assessed
Example 2) Law on interoperability of administrative databases	To continuously monitor the situation of young NEETs registered in the Youth Guarantee scheme and allow data gathering for follow-up indicators	Legislative changes, protocols for data exchange across different public institutions, pilot-testing of data gathering on Youth Guarantee beneficiaries	Official Gazette, protocols of agreement, data gathering exercise
Name of initiative	Expected change	Means through which change will be measured	Source of information / planned evaluations
Example 3) Revision and update of PES management information system	To digitalise processes and insert cross-checks with other databases in other institutions (civil register, education, tax office, etc.)	Availability of online registration in Youth Guarantee scheme; tracking of participants function	Periodic reports

2.2.3 Making full and optimal use of funds

(approx.: 1000 words= 2 pages)

This section provides a summary of all costs envisaged by the Youth Guarantee scheme (policy reforms and initiatives under the four phases, as well as the costs of the service delivery system), with an indication of the source of funding (domestic funds, European Commission, other sources), and the arrangements that will be introduced to manage the financial resources to be available to the scheme. Submitting institutions must include in this table the investment to be made over the years from the national budget (allocation to the Ministry of Education for education and training policy reforms and specific initiatives, a portion of the public investment on active labour market policies and so on), while the description of how the funding mechanism will be managed is to be included in the descriptive part.

Ongoing initiatives that are already financed and fall within the scope of the Youth Guarantee should be included. For example, if the country has a project with an international organization for the reform of primary education curricula, the upgrading of teaching standards and teachers’ training, the relevant funding allocation can be included in the YGIP, because these are early intervention policy actions.

There are certain costs – required by the extent of policy reforms and interventions – that will have to be borne fully by national budgets. For example, if the PES must recruit additional staff to manage the Youth Guarantee delivery system, this is a structural long-term cost that will have to be shouldered by national governments. The same applies, for instance, to staff costs related to increasing early childhood education provision to reduce young women’s inactivity because of care responsibilities, or additional teachers to be recruited to deliver apprenticeship and remedial education offers.

Name of reform/initiative	Years for which funding is planned	Sources and levels of funding				Number of beneficiaries planned (when applicable)				Cost per beneficiary (when applicable)
		Domestic Funds (e.g. national), including co-funding	EU/IPA	Regional/local funds	Employer funds	Other (please specify)	Male	Female	Total	
PLANNED REFORMS										
PLANNED INITIATIVE										
Example 1) Wage subsidies for apprenticeships	2023	€8 million	€5 million	–	–	€2 million (donor X)	2,500	2,500	5,000	€3000/student/year
	2024	€18 million	€10 million	–	–	€2 million (donor X)	5,000	5,000	10,000	€3000/student/year

2.2.4 Building strong delivery mechanisms for authorities and stakeholders

(approx.: 1500 words = 3 pages)

This section of the YGIP is of critical importance for Western Balkan economies, as it will outline how institutions will progressively implement the policy reforms and specific interventions required to commence the piloting of the Youth Guarantee service delivery system in one or two regions of the country and – finally – to the full roll-out of the Youth Guarantee. In order to plan for the introduction of the scheme, responsible authorities are advised to follow the steps highlighted in the Guidelines (Expert Group, data collection and analysis, review of ongoing policies and appraisal of institutional capacity, analysis of phases, requirements and planning), also with a view to prioritizing actions instrumental to delivery (early intervention, outreach, registration of young NEETs, preparation services and offers, monitoring indicators) and therefore for the running of the pilot scheme. The Youth Guarantee pilot needs to be carried out in one or two areas (to coincide with the catchment areas of local PES offices). Because the Youth Guarantee is universal, it is not possible to limit the number of young NEETs who will register and become entitled to receive an offer within four months (the only limit being the funds available for subsidized offers). In order to appraise the potential number of young people who will participate in the pilot, it is advisable to analyse monthly inflows of young people into local employment offices in a standard, non-crisis year (for example, 2019) compared with the overall number of young NEETs in the same area (if available). Because the Youth Guarantee requires awareness-raising and information campaigns to increase intake, the inflow data need to be increased (by 20 or 30 per cent). This will provide a basis on which to plan the potential number of Youth Guarantee beneficiaries during the pilot.

Consideration needs to be given to the possibility of piloting other interventions required by the Youth Guarantee. For example, if the country has little experience in the organization of outreach activities, a pilot may be designed and implemented in selected areas of the country to gather information on what works and for whom, the type of activities that are most attractive to young people, the overall duration of outreach activities, as well as the type of expertise that outreach workers need to develop.

Name of reform/initiative	Key objective(s)	Target group, including number of people covered (if available)	Scale	Name and role of organization in the lead and cooperating partners	Timetable for implementation	Implementation cost, if applicable
Planned reforms						
Example 1) Reform of PES registration and service delivery processes	To ease registration of unemployed persons and of job vacancies, introduce a statistical profiling system and develop service lines based on the risk faced by individuals in the labour market	PES staff Individuals (15–64 years of age) registering as unemployed Employers	National, local	Public Employment Service (lead) Ministry of Labour Ministry of Finance	2022–2025	€2 million
Planned initiatives						
Example 2) Amendments to the law on employment and insurance against unemployment	To revise data collected on individuals and employers at registration To amend requirements related to individual action plans (timeframe, sanctioning mechanism)	Unemployed individuals Employers	National	Ministry of Labour (lead) PES	2022	No cost
Example 3) Development of a new functional organization of the PES at central and local level, including recruitment of specialized staff for service delivery	To ensure efficient service and programme delivery to young people registering in the PES and the Youth Guarantee	Young people (below 30 years of age) registering in the Youth Guarantee scheme Unemployed individuals Employers	National, local	PES (lead) Ministry of Labour Ministry of Finance	2022	€5,400 annually for each new staff member recruited, costs to be shouldered by the public budget

4. Available Technical Assistance for the establishment, implementation, and consolidation of the Youth Guarantee in the Western Balkans

4.1 The EU/ILO Technical Assistance Facility: general description

On 8 July 2021, at the second EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Meeting on Employment and Social Affairs, the Western Balkans ministers and representatives responsible for employment endorsed a [Declaration on ensuring sustainable labour market integration of young people](#). The Declaration recognises the disproportionate impact of the ongoing crisis on young people and spells out the commitment to gradually establish, implement, and enhance Youth Guarantee schemes in the region, based on the EU [Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020 on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee](#).

In order to support this endeavour, the European Commission (EC), the European Training Foundation (ETF), and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have established a Technical Assistance Facility (TAF), which works with all stakeholders involved in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the YG to address potential risks and technical challenges.

The EU/ILO Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) on the Youth Guarantee in the Western Balkans builds on:

- (i) The [EC/ILO Joint Action on the Youth Guarantee](#), whereby the ILO assisted EU Member States in enhancing institutional capacities for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, including monitoring. Additionally, starting in 2017, the ILO has been working with the Government of North Macedonia on the implementation of the pilot Youth Guarantee and its scaling up. A number of [tools, knowledge resources](#), and lessons learnt have emerged from these technical assistance packages, which can provide guidance to the WB-6 during the establishment of a Youth Guarantee.
- (ii) The ETF policy expertise and advice on challenging areas of reform in education and training, including Vocational Education and Training, and sharing of experience in areas of critical importance for the successful implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes such as work-based learning, career guidance, as well as upskilling and reskilling measures. The support will thereby build on the findings of the Torino Process 2020, the outcomes of monitoring of Riga policy deliverables, and the follow up of the Osnabrück Declaration⁴⁰ covering vocational education and training priorities.

The EU/ILO TAF on the YG in the Western Balkans offers high-level technical assistance and policy advice that is delivered at country and regional level through ILO/ETF expert missions mobilised at short notice. Amongst its activities, TAF carries out stocktaking and mapping missions, programming support, studies and analytical work, report writing, technical seminars, document preparation, advanced trainings, and peer-learning exercises.

The work conducted under TAF falls within four broad categories of support which can be interlinked in a TA package:

- 1) **Policy reviews and policy advice.** Stakeholders receive support to analyse the key features of the policies underpinning the Youth Guarantee and receive tailor-made technical guidance, which should find expression in planned reforms and policy actions. This could include, for instance, guidance on strategies to develop career management skills for school and VET learners or address early school

⁴⁰ <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/news-and-events/news/eu-stakeholders-agree-vocational-education-way-forward-osnabruck-declaration>

leaving, activation strategies, expansion of work-based learning, diversification of ALMPs, inclusion and validation of non-formal and informal learning, as well as advice and coaching on relevant criteria for defining a 'good quality offer' under the Youth Guarantee. Experts from the ILO and the ETF are involved in policy reviews and advise on the reforms that are auxiliary to the Youth Guarantee, based on the specific local circumstances.

- 2) **Technical reports and guidance tools.** ILO and ETF experts review specific features of the Youth Guarantee implementation mechanism, such as models and approaches to statistical profiling, outreach practices and outsourcing of service delivery, online delivery of basic services, etc. The reports provide technical recommendations to policymakers and practitioners on changes and adjustments required to support the functioning of the Youth Guarantee implementation mechanism. This could include work on improving the quality dimensions of youth employment offers, the design of national outreach strategies for inactive young people, the establishment of adequate performance monitoring systems and monitor the performance of YG schemes, the generation of new evidence on skills mismatches, new forms of employment (including platform work).
- 3) **Learning packages.** The learning packages support human resources assigned to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. They focus on building capacities around specific roles that staff of institutions involved in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee will need to perform. The learning packages, some of which are already hosted by the ILO on-line as self-paced E-learning journeys for PES practitioners, can be accessed in all the local languages of the Western Balkans, thanks to the generous contribution of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). They include a wide range of topics, such as services for employers, outreach strategies, and performance monitoring of the Youth Guarantee.
- 4) **Peer-learning and regional/country policy exchanges.** The peer-learning events around the YG build on the peer-learning programme that the ILO has been running since 2017 in cooperation with practitioners from EU Member States (and in consultation with the EU PES Network). Modelled on the EU Mutual Learning Programme (MLP), the ILO peer-learning programme (co-funded with the ADC until the end of 2021) allows practitioners from the Western Balkans to meet with their peers from EU Member States, with the technical facilitation of the ILO, to address practical issues encountered throughout the implementation of the YG. The ETF will be a partner in the delivery of selected peer-learning events. In particular, the ETF will facilitate dialogue on companies' role in securing apprenticeships, internships, and other forms of work-based learning. The ETF will also organise regular sharing of experience and expertise on skills needs identification and anticipation through the ETF's network of experts and researchers, qualification frameworks' development, quality assurance in VET and governance aspects of lifelong learning. The ILO and the ETF support the Western Balkans to adapt ideas and solutions implemented in the EU Member States to their local circumstances and state of institutional development.

The TAF has a regional window and country-specific windows. This distinction is based on light earmarking by development partners contributing financial resources to the TAF. The ETF also provides guidance on re-focusing IPA planning/execution to serve the preparation and testing of the Youth Guarantee.

TAF support is demand-driven: national or local authorities and other stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of the Youth Guarantee submit requests for technical assistance, either directly to the ILO or through the respective EU Delegations, based on the TAF Application form. Once reviewed and discussed, ILO and ETF experts reformulate the request into specific Terms of Reference and then launch the assignment within two weeks.

4.2 Requests for Technical Assistance through the EU/ILO TAF

Submissions to the EU/ILO TAF can be made in English or any of the languages of the Western Balkans. Please contact: crnjanskivljajcic@ilo.org for further guidance on this matter and to receive the TAF Application form and accompanying Instructions in the preferred language.

Applications to the EU/ILO TAF must contain the following:

1. Application Form in accordance with the available instructions
2. Tentative Budget request (to be further refined with the help of ILO/ETF experts)

All documentation will be submitted electronically to: crnjanskivljajcic@ilo.org. All relevant documents are to be scanned or in pdf (read-only) format and attached to the email.

Annex 1: Innovation in youth employment policy in the European Union

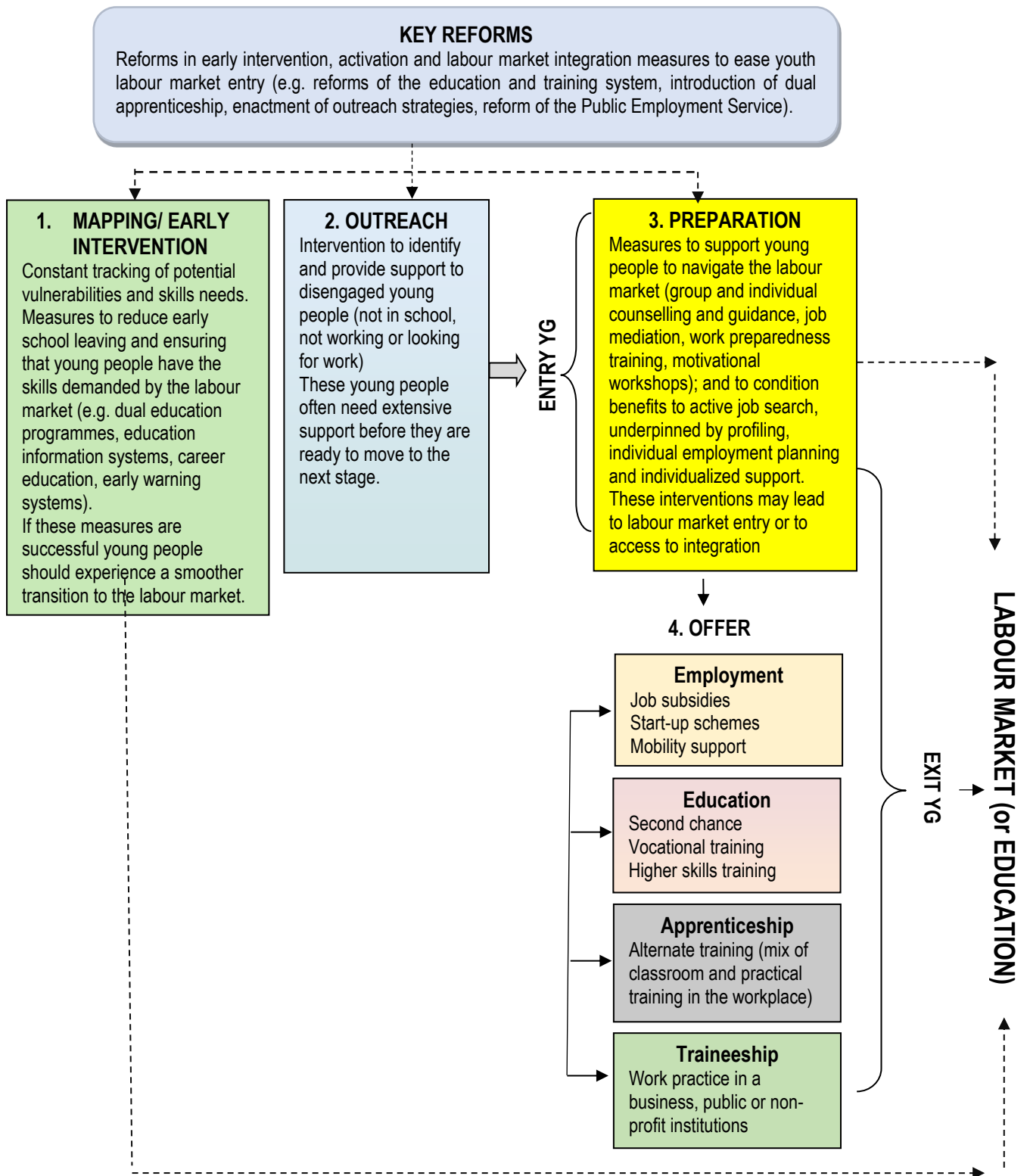
- The 2013 [Council Recommendation](#) on establishing a Youth Guarantee
- The 2020 [Council Recommendation](#) on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee

Following the 2013 Council Recommendation, all EU countries developed Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans (YGIPs) that outlined longer-term reforms and the early intervention, activation and labour market integration initiatives to be implemented to promote youth employment and improve the school-to-work transition. In October 2020, the Council of the EU adopted a new Recommendation aimed at reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and at ensuring policy coherence between the youth employment framework and other new policy instruments adopted at EU level since 2014. Several elements characterize the reinforced Youth Guarantee.

- The Council Recommendation refers to a series of policy instruments adopted since 2014, which are relevant to the design, implementation and monitoring of Youth Guarantee plans. These comprise the twenty principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights (on equal opportunities and access to the labour market; fair working conditions; and social protection and inclusion); as well as the Recommendations on the validation of non-formal and informal learning; on upskilling pathways and key competences for lifelong learning; on the quality framework for traineeships and for apprenticeships; and on the Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) framework).
- The reinforced Youth Guarantee underlines the need to: (i) strengthen outreach strategies targeting disengaged young people; (ii) improve the quality of offers provided to young people; (iii) address the persisting gender gaps; (iv) provide individualized support to young people facing multiple barriers in the labour market (low-skilled, early leavers from education, young persons with disabilities, minorities); and (v) support young people in the acquisition of languages, career management, green and digital skills.
- The new Youth Guarantee emphasizes the importance of coherence and coordination across employment, education, youth, gender equality and social protection policies, as well as the adoption of integrated service delivery models.
- The scope of the reinforced Youth Guarantee has been expanded to all young people up to 30 years of age who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) through schemes structured around four phases (mapping, outreach, preparation, and offer). Instrumental to the effective implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes are cross-cutting enablers, namely the mobilization of partnerships; the improvement of data collection, monitoring and evaluation; the optimal and efficient use of funds; and the building of strong delivery mechanisms.

The interaction of the four phases of Youth Guarantee schemes is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: The phases of Youth Guarantee schemes (2014)



At the top, there are the structural reforms to be implemented to ease the transition from school to work, reduce youth disengagement from the labour market and ensure that young people receive the support they need to obtain decent work. The second level comprises the specific interventions to be undertaken in the areas of early intervention, outreach and activation. The third and final level encompasses quality offers of employment, continued education and training, apprenticeship and traineeship to be provided to young people within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving school.

The Youth Guarantee framework, by requiring EU countries to act within four months, made early intervention the cornerstone of youth employment policies. Within the Youth Guarantee, early intervention also consists of system-level education reforms (prevention measures) combined with specific initiatives to reduce school failure and drop-out (early intervention measures).⁴¹ In the context of strategies to address early school leaving, early intervention systems are combined with compensation measures aimed at offering young people the opportunity to re-enter education to obtain a qualification. Most of these compensation measures (such as second-chance programmes) are included in the labour market integration phase of the Youth Guarantee.⁴²

The universal character of the Youth Guarantee envisages the coverage of all young people who are unemployed (including those who are not registered with an employment service) and inactive (and not in education or training). This requires the setting up of outreach approaches to identify and support “disengaged” young people. In the context of the Youth Guarantee, outreach encompasses information campaigns and awareness-raising to attract young people towards available services; interventions to identify, contact and engage inactive or disengaged young people; and individualized labour market integration services and programmes, delivered locally through community-based organizations, schools, malls, public events, one-stop-shops or mobile settings.⁴³

The main elements of preparation (profiling of individual needs, job search assistance, counselling and guidance services, individual action planning, job search monitoring and sanctioning) are included in Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans.⁴⁴

The offers envisaged by the Youth Guarantee centre on: offering low-skilled young people and early school leavers the possibility to return to education; enhancing young people’s skills to service labour demand needs; using targeted recruitment subsidies to ease the transition to work; and making available more effective business start-up services.⁴⁵ In most EU countries, the labour market measures implemented during the crisis have been adjusted in design, expanded in scope and grouped into the four pathways of the Youth Guarantee, namely: (i) employment; (ii) continued education (and training); (iii) apprenticeship; and (iv) traineeship.⁴⁶

The Youth Guarantee policy framework includes the continuous monitoring of interventions through the multilateral surveillance system of the Employment Committee (EMCO) and impact analysis of existing policies. This monitoring framework makes it possible to measure the coverage of the Youth Guarantee, progress made in the delivery of offers to young people within the established timeframe, the sustainability of the measures implemented (through the monitoring of young beneficiaries’ labour market status over time), but also the effects that policies, services and measures have at the aggregate level on education and

⁴¹ European Commission, *Reducing early school leaving: Key messages and policy support* (Final Report of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, 2013). For a complete synopsis of recent country practices on early school leaving see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Cedefop, *Tackling early leaving from education and training in Europe: Strategies, policies and measures* (Luxembourg, Eurydice and Cedefop Report, 2014).

⁴² International Labour Office (ILO), *Policy brief on early intervention measures and youth employment* (Geneva, 2017).

⁴³ ILO, *Policy brief on outreach strategies for young NEETs* (Geneva, 2017).

⁴⁴ ILO, *Policy brief on activation strategies for youth employment* (Geneva, 2017).

⁴⁵ European Commission, *The Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative three years on* (op. cit., 2016).

⁴⁶ ILO, *Policy brief on labour market integration measures for young people* (Geneva, 2017).

employment opportunities (NEET, employment and unemployment rates; early school leaving rates; and educational attainment level).

The monitoring and evaluation framework of the Youth Guarantee differs from the traditional monitoring and evaluation approaches applied by EU countries in three main ways. First, it requires the collection of aggregate, inflow, outflow and follow-up data according to a jointly agreed set of indicators. This allows performance comparison across countries and for a longer period (18 months), as well as benchmarking the Youth Guarantee contribution to aggregate changes in youth education and labour market indicators. Second, the monitoring framework requires authorities to appraise the quality, as well as the quantity, of employment that young people obtain after participating in Youth Guarantee measures. The criteria for appraising the quality of youth employment are specified in the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) monitoring guidelines and relate to the type and duration of employment contracts (permanent and temporary employment, involuntary part-time), remuneration levels, levels and types of qualifications required for the job; and availability of additional job-related training.⁴⁷ Finally, the framework makes the running of impact evaluations compulsory in order to improve the design and implementation of programmes and to support policymakers in shaping youth employment strategies.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ European Commission, *Guidance on evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative* (September 2015, pp. 8–17); European Commission, *Monitoring and evaluation of European Cohesion Policy- European Social Fund. Programming period 2014–2020* (June 2015, p. 27).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Annex 2: Indicator framework for monitoring the Youth Guarantee service delivery system

The monitoring and evaluation framework of the Youth Guarantee differs from the traditional monitoring and evaluation approaches applied by EU countries in three main ways. First, it requires the collection of aggregate, inflow, outflow and follow-up data according to a jointly agreed set of indicators. This allows performance comparison across countries and for a longer period (18 months), as well as benchmarking the Youth Guarantee contribution to aggregate changes in youth education and labour market indicators. Second, the monitoring framework requires authorities to appraise the quality, as well as the quantity, of employment that young people obtain after participating in Youth Guarantee measures. The criteria for appraising the quality of youth employment are specified in the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) monitoring guidelines and relate to the type and duration of employment contracts (permanent and temporary employment, involuntary part-time), remuneration levels, levels and types of qualifications required for the job; and availability of additional job-related training.⁴⁹ Finally, the framework makes the running of impact evaluations compulsory in order to improve the design and implementation of programmes and support policymakers in shaping youth employment strategies.⁵⁰

Table 1: Aggregate indicators

Main indicator	Measurement, source of data, and disaggregation
NEET rate (percentage of population aged 15–29)	<p><i>Percentage of the population aged 15–29 of a given sex who are not employed and not involved in further education or training</i></p> <p>The numerator of the indicator is young individuals who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) are not employed (that is, they are unemployed or inactive according to the ILO’s definition); b) have not attended any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey <p>The NEET rate is the main indicator for measuring (indirectly) the effect of the Youth Guarantee as it relates to the primary group targeted by early intervention, preparation and labour market measures. Data sources include national LFS, annual estimates, and the baseline is the NEET rate in 2021.</p>
Labour market indicators	Measurement, source of data, and disaggregation
NEET rate (aged 15–29) by labour market status (percentage of population)	<p><i>Percentage of the population aged 15–29 (who did not receive any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey), who are unemployed and inactive</i></p> <p>This indicator requires the disaggregation of young NEETs into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unemployed young people: individuals who: a) were without work during the reference week, b) were currently available for work, and c) were actively seeking work in the past four weeks;

⁴⁹ European Commission, *Guidance on evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative* (September 2015, pp. 8–17); European Commission, *Monitoring and evaluation of European Cohesion Policy-European Social Fund. Programming period 2014–2020* (June 2015, p. 27).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inactive persons: individuals who are not employed and not unemployed and were not in education or training at the time of the survey. <p>The source of data is the LFS, annual estimates and the baseline is the annual NEET rate (aged 15–29) in 2021, disaggregated by labour market status.</p>
<p>Employment-to-population ratio of youth aged 15-29 (percentage of the population)</p>	<p><i>Percentage of the population of a given age and sex who are employed</i></p> <p>The numerator is all young persons who are employed and the denominator is the total population of the same age group and sex.</p> <p>Employed persons are individuals who performed work, even for just one hour per week, for pay, profit, or family gain during the reference week, or who were not at work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent.</p> <p>Employment is an indicator of labour demand and accounts for the total number of persons who contributed to national production. The employment-to-population ratio generally moves slightly faster than the labour force participation rate and slower than the unemployment rate. This ratio is often regarded as a lagging indicator of economic performance.</p> <p>The source of data is the LFS, annual estimates, and the baseline is the annual employment-to-population ratio (aged 15-29) in 2021.</p>
<p>Youth unemployment rate (percentage), aged 15–29</p>	<p><i>Percentage of labour force of a given age and sex who are unemployed</i></p> <p>The numerator is all persons who are unemployed and the denominator is the sum of employed and unemployed individuals (labour force) of the same age group and sex.</p> <p>Unemployed persons are individuals who: (i) were without work during the reference week, (ii) were currently available for work, and (iii) were actively seeking work in the past four weeks.</p> <p>The unemployment rate represents the extent of unutilized labour supply in the country. It is also sometimes used in a general sense as an indicator of the health of the economy, not just the labour market.</p> <p>The source of data is the LFS, annual estimates and the baseline is the annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15–29 in 2021.</p>
<p>Youth unemployment ratio (percentage), aged 15–29</p>	<p><i>Percentage of population of a given age and sex who are unemployed</i></p> <p>The numerator is all persons who are unemployed and the denominator is the population of the same age group and sex.</p> <p>The unemployment ratio serves to measure unemployment trends over time by excluding the effects of labour force participation changes.</p> <p>The source of data is the LFS, annual estimates, and the baseline is the annual unemployment-to-population ratio (15–29) in 2021.</p>
<p>Youth unemployment ratio (aged 15–29) to adult unemployment ratio (aged 30–74)</p>	<p><i>Ratio of unemployed youth population over the ratio of unemployed adult population</i></p> <p>The youth unemployment ratio is divided by the adult unemployment ratio to assess the relative position of young people in the labour market compared with that of adults.</p> <p>The source of data is the LFS, annual estimates, and the baseline is the annual youth unemployment ratio (aged 15–29) over the adult (aged 30–74) unemployment ratio in 2021 .</p>

	<p>A more immediate measure of youth labour market disadvantage is the ratio of youth to adult unemployment rate (that is, the youth unemployment rate divided by the adult unemployment rate).</p>
Educational attainment indicators	Measurement, source of data, and disaggregation
<p>Youth (aged 20–29) educational attainment level (ISCED 3 and over), percentage</p>	<p><i>Percentage of the population aged 20–29 with at least upper secondary education (ISCED level 3 and over)</i></p> <p>The numerator is all persons aged 20–29 who have attained International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 3 and above, while the denominator is the total population aged 20–29.</p> <p>All indicators in the group “Educational attainment” need to be analysed together to understand whether progress is being made in raising the overall level of young people’s qualifications and their labour market preparedness (see below, indicator “Employment rate of recent graduates”).</p> <p>This indicator is disaggregated by ISCED levels 0–2 (below primary, primary and lower secondary); levels 3–4 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary), and levels 5–8 (short-cycle tertiary, bachelor or equivalent, master or equivalent and doctoral or equivalent).</p> <p>The source of data is the LFS, annual estimates, and the baseline to be considered is the percentage of young people (aged 20–29) with ISCED level 3 and above in 2021.</p>
<p>Employment rates of persons (aged 20–34) recently graduated (ISCED 3–8), percentage</p>	<p><i>Percentage of population in the given age and sex group, recently graduated who are employed one to three years after leaving education and training</i></p> <p>The numerator is all persons aged 20–34 who: (i) are employed, (ii) have educational attainment at ISCED levels 3–8, and (iii) left education one to three years previously. The denominator consists of the employed population in the same age group, who left education one to three years previously, irrespective of educational attainment.</p> <p>This indicator measures the labour market outcomes of young people with upper secondary education and over. Its trend over time serves to help us understand whether education pays a premium in terms of employment.</p> <p>This indicator may be disaggregated by ISCED levels 3–4 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary), ISCED levels 5–7 (tertiary education), and ISCED levels 7–8 (master and doctoral studies).</p> <p>The source of data is the LFS, annual estimates, and the baseline is the respective LFS figure for 2021.</p>
<p>Proportion of young people aged 20–29 with low educational attainment level (ISCED 0–2), percentage</p>	<p><i>Percentage of population in the given age and sex group with lower secondary education or less</i></p> <p>The numerator comprises all persons in the given age and sex group who left education and training with at most lower secondary education level (ISCED levels 0–2). The denominator consists of the population in the same age group and sex.</p> <p>The source of data is the LFS, annual estimates, and the baseline is the respective LFS figure for 2021.</p>
<p>Proportion of young people aged 30–34 with tertiary educational</p>	<p><i>Percentage of population in the given age and sex group with educational attainment at ISCED levels 5–8</i></p>

<p>attainment level (ISCED 5–8), percentage</p>	<p>The numerator comprises all persons in the given age and sex group who have tertiary educational attainment (ISCED levels 5–8). The denominator consists of the population in the same age group and sex. The source of data is the LFS, annual estimates, and the baseline is the respective LFS figure for 2021.</p>
<p>Early school leavers (aged 18–24), percentage</p>	<p><i>Percentage of population aged 18–24 who have attained at most lower secondary education and not been involved in further education or training</i></p> <p>The numerator of the indicator refers to persons aged 18–24 who meet the following two conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The highest level of education or training they have completed is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3C short; b) they have not received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. <p>The denominator consists of the population of the same age group, excluding respondents who did not answer the questions “highest level of education or training successfully completed” and “participation in education and training”.</p> <p>The source of data is the LFS, annual estimates, and the baseline is the respective LFS figure for 2021.</p>

Table 2: Summary table of EU indicators for monitoring the Youth Guarantee scheme

Source	Type	Indicator statement	Disaggregation
Indicator framework to monitor the Youth Guarantee	Implementation (output/process)	Proportion of young people in the Youth Guarantee scheme beyond the four-month target, percentage (inflow/outflow Youth Guarantee service)	Inflows: by sex, age-group (aged 15–29), labour market status, educational attainment (ISCED levels), prior Youth Guarantee experience, individual disadvantage Outflow: by type of offer (employment, education or training, apprenticeship, traineeships), type of outcome (positive/negative), within four, six, or 12 months
		Positive and timely exit from Youth Guarantee service, percentage	By personal characteristics: (sex, age group, labour market status, educational attainment, prior YG experience, individual disadvantage) and type of positive outcome (employment, education/training, apprenticeship or traineeship)
		Coverage of Youth Guarantee, percentage	By sex, age group: (aged 15–29), labour market status, educational attainment (ISCED groups)
	Result (outcome)	Situation of young Youth Guarantee clients after exiting scheme (at six-, 12-, and 18-month intervals), percentage	By personal characteristics: (sex, age group, labour market status, educational attainment, prior Youth Guarantee experience; individual disadvantage) By outcome: (i) positive outcome status (employment, education/training, apprenticeship, traineeship), (ii) negative outcome status (unemployed or inactive), and (iii) unknown status Timeframe: six, 12, and 18 months after exit
		Situation of young Youth Guarantee clients after exiting scheme (at six-, 12-, and 18-month intervals), by type of offer, percentage	By personal characteristics: (sex, age group, labour market status, educational attainment, prior Youth Guarantee experience; individual disadvantage) By type of offer: (employment, education/training apprenticeship and traineeship) By outcome: (i) positive outcome status (employment, education/training, apprenticeship, traineeship), (ii) negative outcome status (unemployed or inactive) and (iii) unknown status Timeframe: six, 12, and 18 months after exit