Rationale of the strategy
Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance are seen as tools for forming a knowledge society and meeting the challenges of economic development (e.g., increased need of frequent and flexible change of qualifications, need of employment in new professions). There is a need to systematically incorporate existing subsystems of education, to mutually open and interconnect them in such a way that they would respond to the real needs of citizens, employers, public administration and educational institutions. The strategy aims to obtain easier access to new qualifications (through formal, non-formal and informal learning). It seeks to help people to sustain the highest possible employment level and to increase participation in lifelong learning to 15 per cent of the population. The strategy targets all citizens, employers, public administration and educational institutions.

Concept of lifelong learning
Lifelong learning is defined as the sum of educational activities throughout an individual’s life span, the aim of which is to improve knowledge, skills and competence. It is a concept encompassing all systems of education (formal, non-formal and informal) and all levels of education (from pre-school to higher and further education, including vocational training).

Lifelong guidance is a compilation of counselling and guidance services. Based on values of equality, lifelong guidance refers to the assistance of individuals, regardless of age, during the decision making process concerning issues of education, vocational training, choice of employment and career development in any phase of their lives.

Main challenges
- Low flexibility of the formal system of education and insufficient ability to respond to arising needs of the labour market
- Absence of recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal and informal education and missing regulations (guarantee of quality, financing, recognition of education achievements)
- Absence of on-going monitoring and surveying of education needs on the national level
- Absence of the system of lifelong guidance for all phases of education

Main targets and measures
The strategy includes all sectors of the education system with an emphasis on adults

- Development of an open system of lifelong learning
  - Monitoring and survey of the educational needs
  - Education quality management (emphasis on non-formal and informal learning)
  - Recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning for obtaining qualification
  - Supporting tools of financing for lifelong learning
- Development of a system of lifelong guidance
  - Regarding the functions and possibilities of all educational sectors
  - Developing various types of services for people of every age and status

- Elaboration of a Lifelong Learning Act
- Implementation of an information system for lifelong learning and lifelong guidance
- Creation of a National Qualification Framework (NQF)
**Particular feature of the strategy**

The strategy considers the recognition of learning outcomes and provides detailed descriptions of recognition practices. There are two possible ways of recognition:

1) Credit system for the programs of non-formal education: citizens who obtain a particular number of credits for graduation of educational activities in the non-formal system will be able to accumulate credits and model their partial or full qualification. The credit system will enable the transfer of credits into the formal educational system (with defined extent).

2) Recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal education and informal learning through the national authority: credits can be obtained for work experience in a given field and through the verification of competence – passing an exam with defined standard of knowledge and skills, at an authorized entity.

**Relevant documents that the strategy refers to:**
- Commission of the European Communities. 2000. *Memorandum for Lifelong Learning*

**Stakeholders responsible for implementation of the strategy:**
- Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
- Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge Society
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
- Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, Social partners
- Representatives of self-governments

**Further readings and web links:**
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic: [https://www.minedu.sk](https://www.minedu.sk)