

Collection
**QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND
ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION**

Series
**Education Policy
Instruments**

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING LITERACY 2019–2030



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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SLOVENIA

The National Framework for Quality Assessment and Assurance in Education (MESS 2017)¹ establishes guidelines to integrate the monitoring and evaluation of education in Slovenia into a comprehensive unified system, synthesising various, numerous pieces of information and data in the field of education while promoting the use of information and data in the planning and consideration of strategies and measures for development at the level of the system and educational institutions. This ministerial collection is part of a comprehensive and long-term development process. It is intended to help pave the way for evidence-based policy and practice by publishing concise information and data and making them available to a wider readership. As planned, the series will also include key development documents and examples of best practices in education. The publications are available on the on the National Education Institute Slovenia website (digital reading room) at www.zrss.si/digitalna-bralnica/zbirka-kakovost/

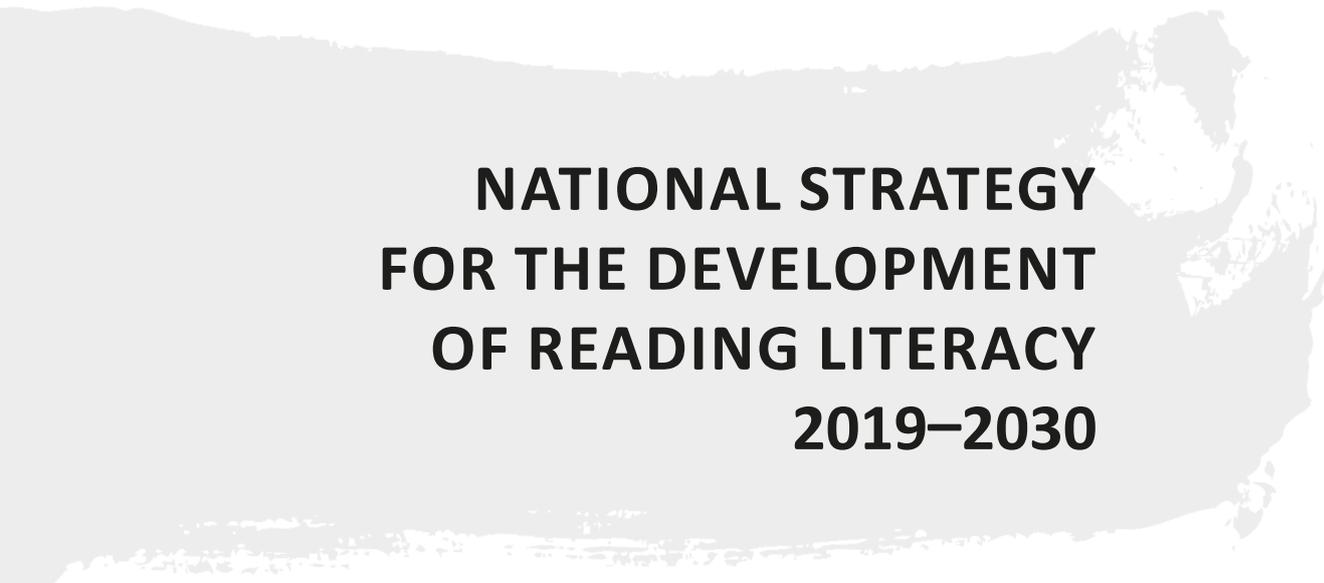
The series on the Education Policy Instruments contains relevant documents on the strategic development of education policy.

¹ The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, 'National Framework for the Quality Assessment and Assurance in Education (2017)' as adopted at the Minister's Collegial Body in April 2017, https://www.eqavet-nrp-slo.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Nacionalni_okvir_Kakovost_Feb_2017-7.pdf





REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING LITERACY 2019–2030

Ljubljana 2024



National Strategy for the Development of Reading Literacy 2019–2030

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Preface

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Quality Office

Toward a national strategy!

Reading literacy is the key to successfully meeting the social challenges of today and tomorrow. It is one of the basic competences that all of us, citizens, need to succeed in learning and our professional lives. It is also key to other literacies and lifelong learning. The results of longitudinal studies show that people with strong reading skills have more positive self-esteem and better health and that a well-developed reading literacy has a beneficial impact on our well-being, ambitions, family life, and social and cultural participation.

The significant importance of literacy for individuals and society compels all of us to address this area. School education is critical to the development of reading literacy and culture, as both contribute to the development of an individual's language abilities. Considerable progress is only possible if the whole country, all of us, are committed to improving reading literacy and culture. From this point of view, the adoption of the National strategy for the development of reading literacy 2019–2030 (henceforth: National Strategy) by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in 2019 was an important step in the right direction. The importance and role of reading literacy in the development of individuals and society were recognised both at the national level and in all areas of social life. The programme was developed by a working group of the ministry responsible for education. The group consisted of professionals from various institutions, namely representatives of higher education institutions, researchers and representatives from various government sectors, public institutes, libraries, and practitioners. It was led by a long-standing and renowned researcher in the field of reading and reading literacy, dr. Sonja Pečjak at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. The platform was composed of various documents: the National Strategy for the Development of Literacy of 2006, recent findings in this field, the results of Slovenian students in large-scale surveys (PISA and PIRLS), and the results of various Slovenian projects in the field of reading literacy. With the new strategy, Slovenia joins the group of countries that are making systematic efforts to develop and promote reading literacy.

The National Strategy introduces a definition of reading literacy and reading culture, and it outlines reasons for its emergence, its vision, principles, strategic goals and objectives, and the literacy level at each stage of education: from early childhood to adulthood. It also established the mechanisms and approaches for achieving all these goals and objectives.

One of the most important commitments for a common approach to implement the National Strategy was the establishment of the National Council for Reading Literacy (henceforth: National Council) in early 2021. This cross-sectoral council was established to enable the different government sectors to

contribute to the programme's vision that all citizens achieve a level of reading literacy that enables optimal development of competences for active life and work. The main task of the National Council is to develop an action plan with concrete activities to promote and monitor the implementation of the National Strategy. In 2022, the coordination and development of the action plan for reading literacy for the period 2020 to 2025 were set forth. It is planned to amend the action plan also for the period from 2025 to 2030.

The ministry responsible for education has already started to promote reading literacy and reading culture through various mechanisms (annual work plans of public institutes in the field of education, targeted research plans, national projects co-funded by the European Social Fund, etc.). Another step will be the cross-sectoral cooperation aimed at comprehensively integrating joint efforts to improve this competence among different target groups and at various stages of life through the development of programmes, materials, and training and development of education staff in educational institutions and other pedagogical staff, as well as through promotion and networking with various providers, and access to reading materials for all citizens of Slovenia.

Together with the relevant sectors, we at the ministry will continue to play our crucial role in the development of reading literacy and reading culture to advance sustainable and practical knowledge that will enable children and young people to achieve creative personal development and success at school and adults to lead successful professional and personal lives.

At this point, I would like to express my gratitude to dr. Sonja Pečjak, the head of the working group, to all members of the working group, and to all others who participated in the adoption of the document by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. The recognition at the highest level gave the document importance for the whole country.

I am particularly pleased that with this strategic development document, we are introducing the new section on the Education Policy Instruments topic as part of the ministry's Series on Quality Assessment and Assurance. In this way, we hope to contribute to the document's visibility and by extension, reading literacy and reading culture among a broader professional audience. Finally, I would like to remind and invite you all to read the brief presentations of analyses and results of international studies on reading literacy, such as PIRLS, PISA, and PIAAC, which are available in the International Research and Studies series.

CONTENTS



1. WHAT IS READING LITERACY?	9
2. REASONS FOR THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING LITERACY 2019–2030	11
3. VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS OF LITERACY DEVELOPMENT	15
3.1 Vision	16
3.2 Strategic goals	17
4. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY	19
4.1 Reading literacy as a lifelong right, responsibility, and value.....	20
4.2 Awareness of the importance of reading literacy and its promotion	20
4.3 Integrated approach	21
4.4 Accessibility, equality, and fairness	21
4.5 Individualisation and personalisation	21
4.6 Professional excellence and responsibility	22
4.7 High expectations and standards	22
4.8 Diversity of reading	22
4.9 Planning, assessment, and self-assessment	23
5. OBJECTIVES AND LEVELS OF LITERACY BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION	24
5.1 Early childhood education and care	25
5.2 Basic education	26
5.3 Upper secondary education	29
5.4 Short cycle higher vocational and higher education	30
5.5 Adulthood	31

6. IMPLEMENTATIONS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY	32
6.1 Programmes, materials and promotion of reading literacy	33
6.2 Human resources education and training	33
6.3 Network of providers implementing the National Strategy	34
6.4 Accessibility to reading materials	34
6.5 Systemic setting	34
 Annexes	 36
List of tables	37
List of boxes	37



1. WHAT IS READING LITERACY?

1. WHAT IS READING LITERACY?

Reading literacy², as an ability and social practice, develops throughout a person's life under different circumstances and in various areas, permeating all aspects of human activities.

Reading literacy is the foundation of all other literacies.

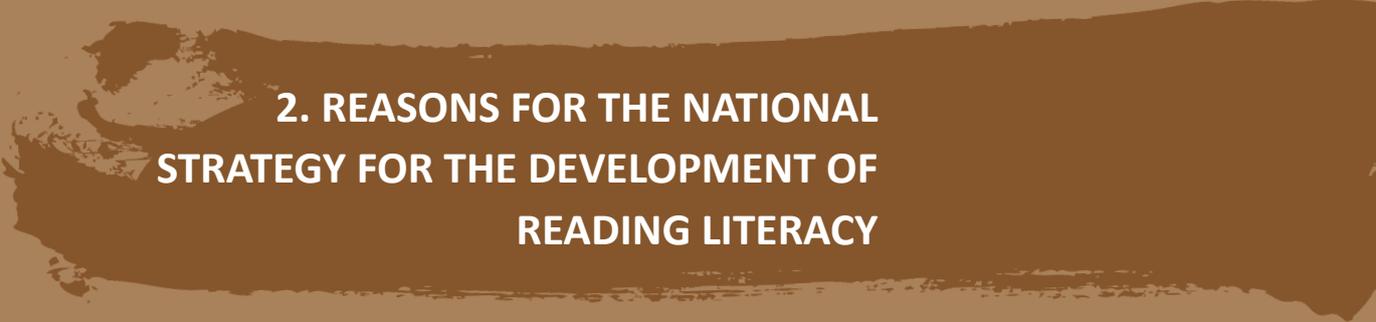
Box 1: Definition of reading literacy in the National Strategy

Considering different concepts, this strategy proposes and applies the following baseline definition:

Reading literacy is the continuously evolving ability of an individual to comprehend, critically evaluate and use written information. This ability includes developed reading skills, the (critical) understanding of what is read and reading culture (the perception of reading as a value and motivation to read). Therefore, it is the cornerstone of all other literacies³ and is crucial for developing the individual's capabilities and successful contribution to society.

³For example *mathematical, science, and digital literacies* indicate the ability/competence of an individual to understand and solve problems in written communications in a specific field (mathematics, sciences, e-materials); *functional literacy* emphasises that reading is not an end in itself, but is intended for the effective functioning of individuals in the environment in which they live; *information and media literacies* highlight the ability to obtain and (critically) process information.

²Reading literacy is only one component of literacy, which in addition to reading includes listening, speaking, and writing. As the present document provides a strategy for reading literacy, our primary focus is on reading activity, while writing is only mentioned in connection with the response to what is read.



2. REASONS FOR THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING LITERACY

2. REASONS FOR THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING LITERACY

The language of instruction, literacy development, knowledge of the Slovenian language and literature, development of communication in foreign languages, critical power of thinking and reasoning, ability to understand and communicate, functional literacy, etc. are important terms in the legislation governing the system of education and culture in the Republic of Slovenia. Most often, these terms are used in relation to the educational objectives at individual levels – in kindergartens, basic schools, upper secondary schools, and higher vocational colleges, in higher education or adult education⁴. The language of instruction is laid down under a special provision for all educational levels, which indicates the central role and importance of the Slovenian language in the Republic of Slovenia, or the Hungarian and Italian languages in ethnically mixed areas. Literacy was attached importance in other strategic documents, namely the [White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia \(2011\)](#), [Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2014–2018](#), [Resolution on the National Programme for Culture 2014–2017](#), [Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022](#), [Resolution on the National Higher Education Programme for 2011–2020](#), and [Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia for 2013–2020](#)⁵.

⁴[Kindergartens Act](#) ((Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 100/05 – official consolidated version, 25/08, 98/09 – ZIUZGK, 36/10, 62/10 – ZUPJS, 94/10 – ZIU, 40/12 – ZUJF, 14/15 – ZUUJFO, 55/15, 18/21), [Basic School Act](#) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 81/06 – official consolidated version, 102/07, 107/10, 87/11, 40/12 – ZUJF, 63/13, 46/16 – ZOFVI-K, 76/23, 16/24), [General Upper Secondary School Act](#) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 1/07 – official consolidated version, 68/17, 6/18 – ZIO-1, 46/19 in 53/24), [Vocational and Technical Education Act](#) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 79/06, 68/17, 46/19 in 53/24), [Higher Vocational Education Act](#) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 86/04 and 100/13), [Higher Education Act](#) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 32/12 – official consolidated version, 40/12 – ZUJF, 57/12 – ZPCP-2D, 109/12 and 85/14, 75/16, 61/17 – ZUPŠ, 65/17, 175/20 – ZIUOPDVE, 57/21 – Dec. of the CC, 54/22 – ZUPŠ-1, 100/22 – ZSZUN in 102/23), [Adult Education Act](#) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 110/06 – official consolidated version), [Organisation and Financing of Education Act](#) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 16/07 – official consolidated version, 36/08, 58/09, 64/09 – corr., 65/09 – corr., 20/11, 40/12 – ZUJF, 57/12 – ZPCP-2D, 47/15, 46/16, 49/16 – corr., 25/17 – ZVaj, 123/21, 172/21, 207/21, 105/22 – ZZNŠPP, 141/22, 158/22 – ZDoh-2AA in 71/23).

⁵ *Editor's note*: Amended documents: [Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2021–2025](#), [Resolution on the National Programme for Culture 2024–2031](#), [Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2024–2032](#), [Resolution on the National Programme of Higher Education 2030](#), [Resolution on the National Programme of Adult Education 2022–2030](#).

Other sectors besides education address reading literacy as well. Owing to its fundamental and versatile role, reading has also found its place in the strategic development document Slovenian Development Strategy 2030⁶.

The concern for ensuring the continuous development of reading literacy also arises from the EU recommendations. In 2009, the EU Council for Education adopted a new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training to be implemented by 2020. The framework sets the objective that the share of low-achieving students in reading should be less than 15 % by 2020, which poses a major challenge for the education systems of the EU Member States⁷.

Reading literacy facilitates and fosters the personal development and social inclusion of individuals in the community and the effective economic development of a sustainable society. It provides the basis for all other types of literacy, which makes the National Strategy for the Development of Reading Literacy (hereinafter: National Strategy) a strategic document setting out the priorities and educational objectives in literacy. Adequate reading literacy for Slovenian citizens is, on the one hand, the responsibility of the state, which must ensure the development, amending, and implementation of the strategy; on the other hand, it is also the responsibility of each individual. Reading literacy is one of the cornerstones of developed language ability; it contributes to advancing the command over a person's home language and other languages, enhancing linguistic self-confidence, and the individual's willingness to embrace linguistic and cultural diversity and to integrate effectively into a digitised society. It also helps in the faster development and improvement of professional competences and in obtaining various qualifications at all levels of education. An important part of literacy is a reading culture defined as the attitude (a set of perceptions and values) of an individual and society toward books and reading. Reading literacy is also a foundation for further developing the country and national identity.

The elaboration and revision of this strategy is underpinned by the results of international research studies such as PIRLS, PISA, and PIAAC. These studies have shown that the achievements of Slovenian basic school and upper secondary school students in reading literacy have significantly improved⁸, yet the share of basic school and upper secondary school students who reach higher

Reading has found a place in the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 due to its fundamental and multifaceted role.

Reading culture as an important part of reading literacy is defined as the attitude of individuals and society towards books and reading.

⁶ Slovenian Development Strategy 2030: In the *Knowledge and Skills for a High Quality of Life and Work chapter*, reading literacy and the performance indicator are highlighted among the objectives – to maintain the ranking of the Republic of Slovenia in the top quartile of EU countries according to the results of the PISA study on mean score in reading literacy – see also p. 26 of this document. See the *Culture and Language as Main Factors of National Identity* chapter in the same document.

⁷ *Editor's note*: There are no changes in the [Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond \(2021–2030\)](#) concerning the reading literacy targets to be achieved at the EU level.

⁸ *Editor's note*: The reading performance of Slovenian fourth-grade students in the PIRLS 2021 declined. The percentage of students who did not reach the lowest milestone of the international reading achievement scale has increased; also, the rate of students reaching milestones in reading (comprehension) achievement decreased. The 2022 PISA data for Slovenia also shows an overall decline in mathematical, reading, and science literacy among 15-year-olds. Although the average performance in mathematics and science is still above the average of OECD member countries, the performance in reading literacy was below the average of OECD member countries compared to the 2009 and 2012 achievements.

levels of reading literacy is still insufficient. Although many students master less challenging (basic) reading processes, they have difficulties reaching a higher reading response level (e.g., the critical evaluation of what is read). As regards adults, the survey shows an insufficient level of reading literacy. Consequently, a planned approach is required, and development incentives should be designed. The implementation of the strategy is designed in such a way that it complements and builds on the various already-adopted programmes for the development of Slovenian society, while also containing measures that will further accelerate the development of reading literacy. With the National Strategy the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the government) assumed its share of responsibility for developing reading literacy among Slovenian citizens. Implementing the strategy at the systemic level is under the authority of the ministry responsible for education, the ministries responsible for culture, family affairs, and health and others take on their share of responsibility. Only literate individuals facilitate the overarching development of Slovenian society.

Various ministries are responsible for implementing the National Strategy at systemic level, but above all the ministry responsible for education.

3. VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS OF LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Vision

3.2 Strategic goals



3 VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS OF LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Vision

The Republic of Slovenia strives to provide all its inhabitants with the necessary level of reading literacy so they can optimally develop their ability to live and work actively. By creating the conditions for effective progress in reading literacy, it will be easier to achieve economic progress, implement sustainable development policies, and strengthen social cohesion in Slovenia. The process of lifelong learning at the national level can be effectively implemented only through the continuous development of reading skills in all age groups.

Box 2: Vision of the reading literacy development in Slovenia

The aim is to make the reading-literate inhabitants of Slovenia aware that education is a lifelong process, that the circumstances in which we live, and work are constantly changing, and, with that, we change. Adapting to new conditions is a vital necessity, and well-developed reading literacy is a fundamental building block of development. The inhabitants of Slovenia are aware of the importance of reading literacy at all stages of life, and we experience reading as a value important for personal growth and the development of the Slovenian and international knowledge-based society. We understand reading in the broadest sense as a basic means of acquiring new knowledge that we must constantly develop independently, in a guided manner, and cooperation with various institutions.

With a positive attitude towards reading literacy and effective state-supported infrastructure for acquiring knowledge, skills, and abilities, Slovenia stands shoulder to shoulder with the most developed literate countries in terms of the level of achievements. As a successful country, it participates equally in globalisation processes, co-creates economic, technological, social, and cultural movements, and enables its inhabitants to have a high-quality and creative life.

3.2. Strategic goals of literacy development

The strategic goal of reading literacy development is to develop skills, abilities, attitudes, and knowledge related to reading among all inhabitants of Slovenia, to enable a healthy, environmentally, and socially responsible life and work, as well as effective and creative professional and social functioning.

To achieve the highest possible level of literacy in all areas of private and social life, it is necessary to:

Create an effective social framework for the development of reading literacy:

- Spread the understanding that reading literacy is a fundamental skill for acquiring and generating new knowledge in personal and professional life and working in the community
- Ensure basic standards of reading literacy for successful integration into society
- Develop a reading culture – the attitude of an individual and society toward reading and a variety of reading materials
- Develop internal, social, and external motivation to read and to express what is read.

Develop the reading literacy of individuals who have distinct roles, needs, and requirements at different stages of their lives, and thus enable the continuous development of society and the economy:

- Develop reading literacy and reading culture in the family, at school, at work, during leisure time, and elsewhere
- Develop reading strategies and the ability to read critically
- Increase social engagement in literacy development for vulnerable groups⁹
- Monitor or review reading literacy levels and compare them with international outcomes
- Promote research, development, and expertise in reading literacy.

Improve access to books and other reading materials:

- Systematically encourage investment in the production of good-quality books and other reading materials
- Support library activities and various projects to effectively promote reading in the community
- Provide access to a wide range of reading materials and guidance in their selection and use at all stages of their life.

⁹ Vulnerable population groups are people at higher risk of social exclusion and with unequal opportunities ([Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2007–2013. Ljubljana: Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy, 2008](#)). In the field of literacy, these groups include, among others: the poor, less educated adults, migrants, refugees, Roma, children and adults with special needs, etc.

Pay greater attention to individual age/target groups within the education system:

- Develop reading literacy and reading culture in the family, as well as build emergent literacy skills among preschool children for the successful further development of literacy
- Ensure early measurement of reading literacy levels in the language of instruction, and based on this, develop differentiated programmes for its development, e.g., for low performing in reading literacy and talented readers
- Develop basic and internationally comparable reading skills in the early years of schooling and develop and maintain positive attitudes toward reading
- Develop reading literacy in later grades of basic school and upper secondary school for successful further schooling, learning, and vocational training
- Promote the further development and improvement of reading literacy and awareness of the importance of lifelong literacy development among students in short-cycle higher vocational education and higher education
- Promote the development of reading literacy and reading culture among adults in the context of formal, non-formal, and informal learning.

4. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

4.1 Reading literacy as a lifelong right, responsibility, and value

4.2 Awareness of the importance of reading literacy and its promotion

4.3 Integrated approach

4.4 Accessibility, equality, and fairness

4.5 Individualisation and personalisation

4.6 Professional excellence and responsibility

4.7 High expectations and standards

4.8 Diversity of reading

4.9 Planning, assessment, and self-assessment



4 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY



Literacy is an asset of civilisation and one of the conditions for preserving national identity. Reading literacy is crucial for all areas of social life and activity. The basic principles of the National Strategy set out general guidelines at all levels, areas, and activities that influence the development of reading literacy and create learning environments for its development.

4.1 Reading literacy as a lifelong right, responsibility, and value

The state provides its inhabitants with the right to develop reading literacy at all stages of life and within the framework necessary to ensure a good quality of life, effective education, and professional and social functioning.

The development of reading literacy is the responsibility of the government, ministries, media, local communities¹⁰, other education providers, employers, parents, and everyone.

Promoting reading literacy as one of the most important values of Slovenian society is the responsibility of professional and political circles.

4.2 Awareness of the importance of reading literacy and its promotion

Raising awareness of the importance of reading culture and reading literacy and its effective promotion are integral to implementing the National Strategy. Kindergartens, schools, universities, adult education providers, libraries, cultural institutions, employers, trade unions, NGOs, the media, and other institutions of public interest that integrate reading literacy into their strategic plans play a key role in raising awareness and promotion.

¹⁰ In the National Strategy, the term ‘professionals’ refers to professional workers engaged in education (preschool teachers, teachers, professors, school librarians, counsellors, etc.), culture, and other institutions of public interest.

4.3 Integrated approach

Activities to raise reading literacy levels include all ages – children, adolescents, and adults. The lifelong integrated development of reading literacy is carried out for different needs at all stages of life.

This development is included in the strategic documents of governmental and non-governmental organisations and other institutions of public interest.

Reading literacy and reading culture are developed through formal and non-formal education and informal learning. National and local policies develop long-term, coherent, and interrelated programmes and measures to develop reading literacy and reading culture. They also ensure the cooperation of various institutions and cover various areas of activity, partnerships, and mutual support at the national, regional, and local levels.

Those responsible at the national and local levels provide opportunities for the continuous development of good reading literacy practices and their integration into all systems.

4.4 Accessibility, equality, and fairness

Accessibility to all levels and areas of education and training is a prerequisite for the lifelong development of reading literacy and reading culture, which can be achieved by maximising local coverage, thus ensuring the possibility of learning at all stages of life. Kindergartens, schools, adult education providers, libraries, and cultural institutions play a key role here. The planning of activities is based on the needs of people, the environment, and professional principles.

To ensure equality and fairness, the level of reading literacy achieved needs to be monitored among the entire population, while any disparities between social groups and individuals need to be systematically addressed. Particular attention is paid to identifying the levels of early reading literacy achieved and to taking appropriate measures to ensure that any lagging behind can be addressed in a timely manner. The necessary measures are also planned and implemented by regarding positive discrimination against vulnerable groups.

4.5 Individualisation and personalisation

Professionals and other education providers ensure that reading literacy is advanced according to individuals' prior knowledge, interests, and other characteristics. This applies to both less proficient readers and those with a higher level of reading literacy. They remove potential barriers to reading literacy development, regularly monitor progress, raise awareness of the reading process, and reinforce the belief that achieving reading goals involves hard work and perseverance.

4.6 Professional excellence and responsibility

The commitment to developing one's own reading literacy and reading culture, as well as to developing the reading literacy and reading culture of learners, is the responsibility of all professionals at all levels and areas of education and training: namely, from those responsible for (pre)literacy to teachers, lecturers in all subjects at all levels of education, non-formal education and training (particularly those providing education for the profession of a teacher and librarian), and professionals in other areas (culture, health, etc.). Therefore, all of them – both present and prospective professionals – need to be provided with the necessary skills at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels of education, and through continuous professional training. Their motivation and professional autonomy need to be facilitated by providing opportunities for continuous professional growth.

Thus, we systemically ensure the high-quality development of emergent literacy and initial literacy and the further development of reading literacy at all stages of life. It bears adding that the participation of all stakeholders in the preschool period and the initial period of schooling is particularly important.

4.7 High expectations and standards

Regarding the development of reading literacy, our expectations are high for all, regardless of personal, socio-economic, and other social differences between individuals and groups. The achievement levels in reading literacy are systemically checked and assessed at the transitions from one educational period to another and from one level of education to another. Considering the verification and assessment results, responsible educational institutions prepare appropriate measures for individuals, various groups, and the entire population.

4.8 Diversity of reading

Reading materials for learning and leisure should be diverse in terms of their format (printed, electronic, and interactive material), content, and language. The right to choose, understand, and evaluate the text should be respected.

Children, adolescents, and adults learn to apply different reading strategies for reading texts from various fields, in different circumstances, and for various purposes. A reading culture needs to be developed across all age groups and leisure reading encouraged, with professionals in education and parents working closely with cultural institutions and libraries.

4.9 Planning, assessment, and self-assessment

The activities for the development of reading literacy should be continuously planned and monitored systemically, and the achieved levels of reading literacy should be (self-)assessed. The relevant institutions should cooperate and work together in transferring research results and findings into practice and in exchanging good practices.

External verification with a focus on measuring reading literacy levels should be defined and strengthened at all levels of education and in all age brackets.

The implementation of the National Strategy and other relevant documents related to literacy development needs to be continuously monitored, which is the responsibility of the ministry responsible for education.

5. OBJECTIVES AND LEVELS OF LITERACY BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

5.1 Early childhood education and care (0–6 years)

5.2 Basic education

5.2.1 First educational cycle (6–9 years)

5.2.2 Second educational cycle (9–12 years)

5.2.3 Third educational cycle (12–15 years)

5.3 Upper secondary education (15–19 years)

5.4 Short cycle higher vocational and higher
education (19 years and older)

5.5 Adulthood



5 OBJECTIVES AND LEVELS OF LITERACY BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION



5.1 Early childhood education and care – ECEC (0–6 years)

Table 1: Specific objectives and literacy levels in ECEC

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES ¹¹	LITERACY LEVELS AT THE END OF ECEC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Raise awareness of all current and prospective parents about the importance of family reading, early literacy development, and reading culture through organised forms of education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Through various organised forms of education, informed parents are made aware of the importance of family reading, early literacy, and reading culture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide all children in kindergarten and other forms of organised care with stimulating pre-reading and pre-writing activities to develop the conception of printing, phonological awareness, graphomotor skills, and visual perception, according to their developmental characteristics and considering individual needs, interests, and environment from which they come. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Children have developed pre-reading and pre-writing skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide children with opportunities through didactic play to learn the language, develop speaking skills, expand vocabulary, develop an understanding of what they read, and develop positive attitudes toward reading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Children are motivated to listen to and read texts. – Children talk about what is read.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Instil in children the habit of using literary and non-literary materials and various media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Children, together with adults, use literary and non-literary materials, and various media, and visit the library.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide a range of free quality leisure activities in local communities to promote the development of emergent literacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Children are involved in a variety of free leisure activities to promote the development of emergent literacy.

¹¹ Vulnerable population groups should be able, depending on their characteristics, to always achieve these objectives, through different forms of support and assistance.

5.2 BASIC EDUCATION ¹²

Tables 2a, 2b, 2c list specific objectives and literacy levels in basic education by cycle.

5.2.1 First educational cycle (6–9 years)

Table 2a: Specific objectives and literacy levels in the first educational cycle

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	LITERACY LEVELS AT THE END OF THE FIRST EDUCATIONAL CYCLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop through an individualised approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reading culture and motivation for students to read » Reading fluency and comprehension of what is read » Technique of writing and producing texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students are motivated to read. – They read texts fluently and with comprehension of at least 500 words. – They speak clearly and intelligibly about what they have read. – They write clear, varied, and comprehensible texts about what they have read, ranging from 100 to 150 words.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Expand the vocabulary of students intensively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students learn the vocabulary that allows them to read, learn, and communicate successfully.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Raise parents' awareness of the importance of family reading and the development of reading culture through organised forms of education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students read a variety of reading materials in their free time (family incentives).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Learn about the locations and use of reading resources and other information sources (e.g., libraries, Internet, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students know and use the locations of reading resources (libraries, Internet, etc.) in meaningful ways.

¹²The compulsory basic education in Slovenia is organised as a single-structure primary and lower secondary education divided into three educational cycles.

5.2.2 Second educational cycle (9–12 years)

Table 2b: Specific objectives and literacy levels in the second educational cycle

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	LITERACY LEVELS AT THE END OF THE SECOND EDUCATIONAL CYCLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop a reading culture and motivate students to read different types of texts at school and in their free time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students are motivated to read at school and elsewhere.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop automated reading techniques and reading with comprehension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students read texts fluently, aloud and silently, and comprehend what they read.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Systematically build vocabulary necessary for reading with fluency and comprehension. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Teach students to use reading comprehension strategies, e.g., the main idea strategy, understanding relationships between parts of a text, summarising and comparing parts of a text. – Raise awareness of their own reading process and learning through reading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students are familiar with and use basic and (some of them) also complex reading strategies to identify the main idea, summarise, edit, and critically evaluate information.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Teach students to use complex strategies to achieve higher literacy levels in longer texts (find and organise multiple parts of the text, use important information to solve new problems, strategies for critically evaluating a text). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Teach students to respond to what they read by independently writing a text and justifying their responses. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Train students to use print and digital (online) reading sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students use various reading sources mostly independently and critically.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop critical thinking skills in selecting and using a variety of reading sources. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Teach and encourage students to use school and public libraries independently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students use school and public libraries mostly independently.

5.2.3 Third educational cycle (12–15 years)

Table 2c: Specific objectives and literacy levels in the third educational cycle

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	LITERACY LEVELS AT THE END OF THE THIRD EDUCATIONAL CYCLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a reading culture and motivation to read longer and more challenging texts in all subjects in and out of school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are motivated to read at school and elsewhere.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop comprehension of what is read through a fluent, flexible reading¹³ of a variety of texts. Systematically build vocabulary that enables reading comprehension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students read longer and more challenging texts fluently and adjust their reading speed to the demands of the text.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train students to select and use basic and complex reading strategies to achieve a basic and higher level of reading literacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students independently select print and other sources of information according to purpose and apply appropriate reading strategies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the ability to accept and understand reading content critically: Form assumptions and find arguments for them in the text, use the information to solve new problems, compare multiple texts, and evaluate text(s) using a variety of criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students compare multiple texts and evaluate them using a variety of criteria. Students independently form and justify assumptions based on data contained in the text.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the ability to write independently and justify answers to questions about what is read. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students independently write texts and justify their answers to what they have read.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn to make an independent, purposeful, critical, and responsible choice, and use print and other sources of information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students independently select and use print and other sources of information in a purposeful, critical and responsible manner.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn how to use school and public libraries independently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students independently use school and public libraries. They use what they have read to solve problems in various situations – in learning situations and in situations in their personal lives.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level at the end of the basic school programme: At least the basic level of reading literacy¹⁴ is achieved by at least 90 % of the students; the highest level of reading literacy (competence) is expected¹⁵ to be reached by at least 10 % of the students¹⁶.

¹³ Flexible reading: the reader's ability to use different reading speeds depending on the purpose and type of reading material.

¹⁴ The basic level of reading literacy is the second level in the PISA survey.

¹⁵ The highest levels of reading literacy are the fifth and sixth levels in the PISA survey.

¹⁶ In connection with the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030, the indicator of progress is to maintain the ranking of the Republic of Slovenia in the top quartile of EU countries according to the results of the PISA study on mean score in reading literacy.

5.3 UPPER-SECONDARY EDUCATION (15–19 years)

Table 3: Specific objectives and literacy levels in upper-secondary education

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	LITERACY LEVELS AT THE END OF UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and develop the building blocks of reading literacy for independent work with texts, i.e., commitment, perseverance, and knowledge about reading processes that enable good reading comprehension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are motivated to read a variety of texts and insist on more challenging reading tasks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a stimulating environment for the development of a reading culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can justify the importance of literacy for working in society and identity building.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the ability to connect, interpret and critically evaluate information in a variety of text types, and the ability to justify an opinion about what is read. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students read independently and summarise texts orally or in writing in accordance with the complexity of the programme. They link and critically evaluate information in different types of texts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain in-depth knowledge of the linguistic and sociocultural features of written communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students demonstrate reading and writing through meaningful text that is stylistically and linguistically correct. Students know and consider the characteristics of text types and language rules when responding to what they read orally or in writing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of reading learning strategies in all subjects and/or education programmes at upper secondary level for use in a variety of contexts (reading for personal development, for further education, and for working in a profession and society). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students select and explain effective strategies when reading and composing written texts, and, depending on purpose and content, relate the text appropriately to their conceptions of the world, of learning, and of future profession. Students understand and compose specialised texts and use specialised terminology.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn further how to use sources in school and public libraries meaningfully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students know and use sources in libraries meaningfully.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the use and critical evaluation of traditional and new reading and writing technologies and sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students read, update, and edit information from electronic and print texts; handwrite and compose their texts in electronic form.

5.4 SHORT CYCLE HIGHER VOCATIONAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION (19 YEARS AND OLDER)

Table 4: Specific objectives and literacy levels at the end of short cycle higher vocational and higher education

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	LITERACY LEVELS AT THE END OF THE SHORT CYCLE HIGHER VOCATIONAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Create a stimulating environment for the development of a reading culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students have developed a reading culture – they value reading and are aware of its importance to personal development and the development of society.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop and promote motivation to read and write professional and scientific texts in the Slovenian language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students are motivated to use the Slovenian language in their profession.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop knowledge of the professional language and a positive attitude towards its use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students are proficient in the language of their profession(s) and can write specialised and popular professional texts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improve existing reading literacy to gain learning and cognitive experience in independent learning and research based on a variety of sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students use complex reading strategies according to their needs and critically select information sources in independent learning, research work, and daily activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop further reading literacy to formulate problem questions and strategies to find answers to research questions. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promote critical (reading) literacy to evaluate the appropriateness of sources and to critically evaluate information for educational, research, and other purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students critically evaluate written and spoken texts and use information meaningfully and creatively in a variety of situations.

5.5. ADULthood

Table 5: Specific objectives and literacy levels in adulthood

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	LITERACY LEVELS IN ADULTHOOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Motivate adults according to their basic reading literacy skills to read and critically evaluate the texts they read from a variety of domains and a variety of genres at all stages of life¹⁷. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Literate adults can read, comprehend, and critically evaluate a variety of texts for the needs of work, life-long learning, and active leisure¹⁸.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adults should be able to read and develop reading literacy in a variety of circumstances and for a variety of purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Literate adults have high proficiency in reading literacy in a variety of circumstances and for a variety of purposes according to their abilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Create a stimulating environment for the development of a reading culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Literate adults have a developed reading culture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage adults to participate in collective and inter-generational forms of reading (dialogic methods). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Literate adults participate in collective forms of reading.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop a system for individual assessment of reading literacy that allows comparison with national targets and/or population outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Literate adults formulate a personal reading literacy development plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop basic and higher-level adult literacy skills to obtain, comprehend, critically evaluate, and use information from a variety of information sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Literate adults master a variety of reading strategies to obtain, comprehend, critically evaluate, and use information in the learning process and to solve problems in everyday life and at work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage adults to use infrastructure to access a variety of quality information sources and materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Literate adults independently and consciously use libraries and access a variety of other relevant and quality providers of information and materials.

¹⁷In the PIAAC international survey of adult skills, as many as one-fifth of the participants from the age of 16 to 65 years reached the lowest levels of literacy skills in Slovenia (Level 1 or below). According to the PIAAC, these adults are only able to read short and simple texts. Slovenia thus ranks among the countries with the highest share of the active population at the lowest skill levels. In Slovenia, little time is devoted to reading at work, especially by those with a lower education level (ranking 29th out of 33 countries) (Berzelak, Jernej, Katja Bider, Petra Javrh, Franci Lajovic, Špela Lenič, Marijan Manoillov, Jasmina Mirčeva, Estera Možina, Urška Pavlič, and Vasja Vehovar. 2016. [Poročilo o raziskavi spretnosti odraslih PIAAC 2016, Metodologija, izvedba in kakovost raziskave: raziskovalno poročilo](#). Ljubljana: Andragoški center Slovenije. Further analyses and studies of the data from the PIAAC survey have shown that higher levels of skills are intricately linked to higher productivity, employment, and wages. Skills are also crucial in promoting social participation and inclusion, as people with better skills have more trust in institutions, are more active in civic and political life, and are healthier (OECD, 2017). ([Spretnosti odraslih. 2018. 2., Revised and Amended Issue](#). Ljubljana: Andragoški center Slovenije). and Domadenik Muren, Polona, Daša Farčnik, Robert Kaše, Katarina Katja Mihelič, Irena Ograjenšek, and Nada Zupan. 2019. [Značilnosti in vpliv neujemanja izobrazbe in spretnosti z zahtevami delovnega mesta na ekonomske dosežke in zadovoljstvo odraslih v Sloveniji](#). Ljubljana: Ekonomska fakulteta, Založništvo)

¹⁸In the PIAAC survey, about 5.6% of adults in Slovenia achieved the highest levels of literacy skills (Level 4 or 5), which is much less than the average of all adults from the OECD participating countries, standing at 10.6%. High-performing adults can relate, explain, and connect information from longer texts containing conditional or contradictory information, draw complex conclusions, and apply general knowledge; conditional information is frequently present, and distracting information is seemingly as prominent as correct information. Around 31.2% of adults reached Level 3 in literacy skills (the average of all adults from the OECD participating countries stands at 35.4%). Adults who reach this level understand and respond correctly to concise and longer texts, which often contain conflicting information, can identify, explain, and evaluate information or more information, often draw conclusions, extract meanings, and neglect the non-essential (OECD, [Skills Matter: Further Results from the Survey of Adult Skills, OECD Skills Studies \(Pariz: OECD, 2016\)](#)). If Slovenia wants to reduce its development gap in this area and at least get closer to the international average, it will need to improve adult skills and significantly increase the share of high-performing adults (Level 3 and above). The Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia delivered the audit report on the lifelong learning activities of Slovenia focusing on adults. In the [report](#), we learn about how Slovenia approached and addressed the risks that adults with basic skills at the lowest levels pose for the ageing society in times of unprecedented technological advances.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

6.1 Programmes, materials and promotion of reading literacy

6.2 Human resources education and training

6.3 Network of providers implementing the National Strategy

6.4 Accessibility to reading materials

6.5 Systemic setting

6.5.1 National Council for Reading Literacy

6.5.2 Funding



6 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

To ensure the implementation of the National Strategy, it will be essential to put in place programmes for the systematic development of literacy, relevant staff, networks of providers and system settings that ensure maximum accessibility for all inhabitants. In doing so, the National Strategy should pay attention to different groups and given their specificities, introduce different approaches to developing their reading literacy.

6.1 Programmes, materials and promotion of reading literacy

To ensure the systematic development of literacy and reading culture at all levels — from pre-reading to third stage of life — it is essential to:

- Encourage the development and implementation of publicly available literacy promotion programmes at the national and local levels and target different audiences
- Complement and update curricula in formal and non-formal education
- Expand the range of different quality programmes in non-formal education for various target groups
- Develop training programmes for a network of providers who will be responsible for developing reading literacy and reading culture at different levels
- Ensure the promotion of literacy and reading culture development programmes in the media and to the public
- Produce high-quality reading materials to examine the level of literacy achieved and identify differences to the desired higher level; ensure quality control in achieving the knowledge standards through external and internal evaluation and assessment.

6.2 Human resources education and training

With a view to ensuring the effective development of reading literacy and reading culture, it will be essential to:

- Integrate, continuously update and upgrade the contents for the development of literacy and reading culture at the university level of all teaching staff
- Develop and strengthen the role of teachers, lecturers, and other professionals as reading models

- Strengthen a culture of high expectations and achievements and a commitment to achieving higher literacy levels
- Provide further education and training for all preschool teachers, school teachers, lecturers, and other education staff for the development of literacy in all fields and in all subjects, based on theoretical and practical innovations to foster literacy development (examples of good practice)
- Continuously train the professional staff in developing reading literacy and reading culture in all types of libraries, cultural, other public interest institutions at various stages of life and different levels.

6.3 Network of providers implementing the National strategy

To improve reading literacy and develop a reading culture, it will be essential to:

- Create a national inter-ministerial network of providers for developing and coordinating reading literacy and reading culture development programmes
- Increase the number of providers of reading literacy and reading culture programmes
- Increase the number of programme implementations and accessibility to programmes for different target groups in all regions
- Ensure the participation of a variety of institutions at different levels (local, regional) and all stakeholders at the kindergarten/school level in the development of reading literacy and reading culture
- Create a partnership between school libraries, higher education libraries, and public libraries for joint planning of programmes based on professional platforms for achieving objectives and levels of reading literacy.

6.4 Accessibility to reading materials

The Slovenian citizens shall have access (free of charge for vulnerable groups) to:

- Sources of information using modern technology, and
- Quality and diverse reading materials in all relevant formats.

6.5 Systemic setting

6.5.1 National council for reading literacy

In accordance with Article 5, Rules of Procedure of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 43/01, 23/02 – corr.,54/03, 103/03, 114/04, 26/06, 21/07, 32/10, 73/10, 95/11, 64/12 and 10/14), the government appoints the National Council for Reading Literacy to monitor the implementation of the National Strategy. Its members are professionals in the field of literacy covering all stages from the pre-reading period to the third stage of life (up to ten members), various

aspects of literacy development, and representatives of line ministries crucial to literacy development (up to five members). The Ministry of Education is responsible for the implementation, technical support, and funding of operations. The National Council runs its operations by its Rules of Procedure¹⁹.

The tasks of the National Council for Reading Literacy are to:

- Promote reading literacy and reading culture within the framework of normative and strategic acts covering this domain
- Coordinate tasks and responsibilities between line ministries in the drawing up of an action plan
- Promote the National Strategy and its implementation with professional circles and the public
- Present a wide range of materials and background papers that influence the implementation of the National Strategy
- Monitor and promote the implementation of the National Strategy or action plan and draw up conclusions and proposals for continuous activities
- Produce annual reports and a report to the government on implementing the National Strategy.

The National Council for Reading Literacy forwards initiatives and proposals to the government and the relevant working body of the National Assembly.

6.5.2 Funding

The financial resources for the action plan will be provided by the competent ministries (in cooperation with the government), based on proposals from the National Council for Reading Literacy, which will ensure that reading literacy and reading culture are included in the national strategic documents.

¹⁹ *Editor's note:* The National Council for Reading Literacy was established by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia at the beginning of 2021.

Annexes

List of tables

List of boxes





List of tables

Table 1: Specific objectives and literacy levels in ECEC

Table 2a: Specific objectives and literacy levels in the first educational cycle

Table 2b: Specific objectives and literacy levels in the second educational cycle

Table 2c: Specific objectives and literacy levels in the third educational cycle

Table 3: Specific objectives and literacy levels in the upper secondary education

Table 4: Specific objectives and literacy levels in the short cycle higher vocational and higher education

Table 5: Specific objectives and literacy levels in adulthood

List of boxes

Box 1: Definition of reading literacy in the National Strategy

Box2: Vision for the development of reading literacy in Slovenia

Together with the relevant sectors, we at the ministry will continue to play our crucial role in the development of reading literacy and reading culture to advance sustainable and practical knowledge that will enable children and young people to achieve creative personal development and success at school and adults to lead successful professional and personal lives.

Maja Mihelič Debeljak (Preface)

Reading literacy is at the core of all other literacies, thus the National strategy for the development of reading literacy is a strategic document that identifies priority tasks and educational objectives in the field of literacy. Promoting an adequate level of literacy among Slovenian citizens is, on the one hand, the state's responsibility as the state is responsible to draft, amend and implement the strategy, on the other hand, it is also the responsibility of every individual.

National Strategy for the Development of Reading Literacy 2019–2030 (Ch. 2, p. 10)

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