

STARTEGY DOCUMENT

STRATEGY, PILLARS AND MEASURES

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of a nation is fundamentally anchored in two interdependent dimensions: its economic vitality and the well-being of its citizens. Intersecting and reinforcing these dimensions is a third, arguably pivotal factor — education. Education not only equips individuals with knowledge and skills but also functions as the bridge that links economic growth with social welfare, enabling both to reinforce each other. This triad of economy, well-being, and education is recognized as a cornerstone of sustainable development, as reflected in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which prioritize equitable prosperity, social inclusion, and lifelong learning as essential components of a flourishing society. Inclusive, resilient, and equitable economic development therefore constitutes the indispensable foundation upon which societies construct both material prosperity and human dignity.

Economic growth has seldom followed a linear or predictable path; the pursuit of sustainable prosperity is often shaped by cycles of crisis, reconstruction, and structural transformation, with nations that have successfully emerged from poverty, devastation, or political instability achieving lasting progress not merely through material recovery but through deliberate institutional innovation—developing governance models, economic architectures, and social frameworks that incentivize entrepreneurship, safeguard individual initiative, and align public policy with long-term developmental objectives—demonstrating that enduring economic advancement is inextricably linked to adaptive institutions and strategic, forward-looking policy-making.

While conventional economic indicators such as GDP provide a measure of growth, the assessment of social well-being offers a complementary and equally critical lens on development. Among these, the unemployment rate stands out as a key determinant of both economic health and social stability. Countries that have effectively reduced unemployment exemplify best practices that can be adapted across diverse socio-economic contexts. Germany, for example, consistently records one of the lowest youth and overall unemployment rates globally, a success largely attributable to its meticulously structured alignment of labor market demand with workforce preparation. The dual vocational education and training (VET) system exemplifies this alignment: by integrating theoretical education with practical, company-based training, it ensures that young people acquire the precise skills demanded by the labor market, thereby enhancing employability and fostering a dynamic, adaptable workforce.

The German example has inspired numerous countries seeking to emulate its strategic coordination between education and employment. As outlined in the Strategic Analysis Report, lessons from Germany and other leading nations offer valuable insights into designing educational systems that effectively respond to labor market needs, mitigate skill mismatches, and foster sustainable economic growth.

In recent years, Kosovë has embarked on the implementation of dual learning in select profiles, with gradual expansion planned annually and the ICT sector slated for integration in the coming year. The country possesses distinct advantages in this endeavor: it boasts the youngest population in Europe, a cohort of youth with advanced ICT competencies, and a steadily increasing number of ICT enterprises and international branches. Accordingly, the introduction of dual learning in this domain is anticipated to yield substantial success, reflecting both the education system's capacity to respond effectively to labor market demands for specialized ICT profiles and the comprehensive preparation of students for professional engagement.

In this process, STIKK (the Kosovë ICT Association) can play a pivotal role by facilitating stronger engagement between businesses and educational institutions. By actively coordinating with companies, STIKK can help identify specific skill needs, provide mentorship opportunities, and promote internships that align with dual learning curricula. Moreover, STIKK can enhance industry participation by encouraging its members to become active stakeholders in the education process, fostering partnerships, and creating incentives for companies to support training programs. As a member of the ICT Council, STIKK can, through these initiatives, ensure that dual learning not only meets the immediate needs of the ICT labor market but also enhances long-term workforce development and strengthens Kosovë's innovation capacity.

The concept of *Dual Learning* is quite comprehensive, and various countries have developed their own classifications, as it encompasses not only the education of upper secondary school students but also lifelong learning and diverse training programs. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize that this strategy has been specifically developed for dual learning within upper secondary education. The term *dual* refers to an educational approach that combines theoretical instruction delivered in schools with practical, hands-on training conducted within businesses. This model enables students to engage directly with real-world professional environments, applying academic knowledge to practical challenges and developing skills that align closely with labor market needs.

The Strategic Analysis Report provides the essential foundation upon which the Strategy document has been built, offering key insights, evidence, and conceptual guidance for informed decision-making.

In addition, a comprehensive operational and organizational plan will be developed to facilitate structured implementation. By aligning analysis, planning, and execution, this framework aims to maximize effectiveness and create a coherent pathway for achieving the envisioned goals.

2. STRATEGIC RATIONALE, PURPOSE, VISION, AND OBJECTIVES

This section presents the Strategic Framework underpinning STIKK's Dual Learning Strategy in ICT. It articulates the rationale for developing the strategy, defines its overarching purpose and strategic direction, and establishes the vision, positioning, and high-level goals that will guide implementation. The framework provides the foundation for translating strategic intent into tangible, coordinated actions—aligning stakeholders, leveraging Kosovë's competitive strengths in ICT, and ensuring sustainable, long-term impact. It sets the stage for the subsequent definition of strategic pillars, measures, and mechanisms that will drive successful execution.

2.1 Strategic Rationale

In 2025, the Republic of Kosovë entered the fourth year of implementing dual education, steadily expanding the range of vocational profiles offered under this model. Beginning in 2026, the introduction of the ICT profile is anticipated, marking a significant milestone in aligning education with the evolving demands of the labor market.

While the experiences, challenges, and shortcomings faced by countries that have long implemented dual education offer valuable insights for Kosovë's own journey, it is equally important to draw lessons from the existing domestic profiles that have already undergone early implementation.

The Kosovë ICT sector faces a persistent skills gap. Graduates from traditional educational programs often lack practical experience, and companies struggle to find qualified professionals in software development, cybersecurity, and data analytics. Dual VET offers a solution by combining classroom learning with workplace exposure.

Given these circumstances, the development of a Dual Learning Strategy in ICT has become both urgent and strategically essential. Such a strategy must be designed and executed with professionalism, precision, and a forward-looking approach—acknowledging Kosovë's competitive advantages in the ICT sector and the limited timeframe available to ensure a successful and well-coordinated rollout.

At the same time, this initiative is driven by the growing need to reinforce STIKK's leadership role in shaping and advancing Kosovë's ICT ecosystem through a coordinated, sustainable, and future-oriented approach. As the sector continues to evolve rapidly, there is an increasing demand for stronger industry representation, a highly skilled workforce, and deeper collaboration between education and business to ensure long-term competitiveness and growth.

STIKK's leadership in supporting dual learning and expanding its membership base is essential to ensure that the ICT industry remains competitive, innovative, and responsive to both market and societal needs. This

strategy provides a structured framework to guide these efforts — aligning stakeholders, addressing systemic challenges, and creating long-term value for members and the wider digital economy.

STIKK's support for its member companies—particularly those positioned to contribute to the advancement of dual learning—extends beyond its immediate umbrella, fostering broader business collaboration and simultaneously expanding its membership base.

A comprehensive strategy aimed at strengthening STIKK's membership and institutionalizing dual learning within the ICT sector is vital to ensure cohesive, efficient, and sustainable development. It establishes a structured framework to navigate legal, financial, and operational complexities while uniting stakeholders around shared priorities. The overarching objective of this strategy is to reinforce STIKK's leadership role, deepen member engagement, and cultivate a highly skilled ICT workforce equipped to address both present and emerging industry needs.

2.2 Purpose and Strategic Direction

The purpose of this strategy is to drive the expansion of STIKK's business membership while deepening member engagement in supporting dual learning within Kosovë's ICT sector. By fostering a highly skilled workforce and strengthening the link between education and industry, the strategy aims to stimulate economic growth and reduce unemployment, creating sustainable value for both businesses and society.

To support the growth of STIKK membership and guide the effective implementation of dual learning in the ICT sector, the following strategic objectives have been defined:

1. Expand STIKK membership packages by adding Dual VET activities to the Gold and Silver packages, and offer newly registered companies in Kosovë a 50% discount on the Basic package during their first year.
2. Institutionalize Dual VET as a core component of membership benefits.
3. Build strategic partnerships and strengthen collaboration with educational institutions, government bodies, donors, and regional and international ICT stakeholders, with a focus on advancing dual learning.

Leveraging Kosovë's dynamic ICT ecosystem—with its growing number of active companies and a young, highly skilled talent pool—STIKK aims to advance its mission and maximize its impact on the sector. The strategy focuses on three interconnected objectives. First, to expand membership by enhancing STIKK's value proposition, attracting, engaging, and retaining ICT companies to broaden the association's network and influence. Second, to institutionalize Dual VET as a core membership benefit, systematically integrating dual learning into STIKK's services and programs to develop a workforce capable of meeting current and future industry needs. Third, to strengthen advocacy and build strategic partnerships, enhancing STIKK's visibility and influence in ICT workforce development and policy while fostering collaboration with educational institutions, government bodies, donors, and regional and international ICT stakeholders. Together, these

objectives provide a clear roadmap for sustainable growth, sectoral impact, and long-term value creation for members and the broader ICT ecosystem.

The strategic direction builds on the evolving needs of businesses across specific ICT profiles, leveraging Kosovë's dynamic ICT ecosystem to drive growth and sectoral impact. Identified companies are offered tailored STIKK membership packages designed to incentivize enrollment while providing added value, creating a strong foundation for engagement and collaboration.

Currently, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) serves as the primary coordinator of dual learning initiatives. Under the revised approach, coordination will be placed under the Agency of Professional Education, with the Chamber of Commerce serving as the initial focal point. All key stakeholders—including donors, schools, businesses, and other relevant actors—will participate through the Council of ICT, which is established as a permanent, collaborative, and decision-making structure to ensure systematic cooperation, monitor progress, and align initiatives with sectoral needs, labor market developments, and technological trends.

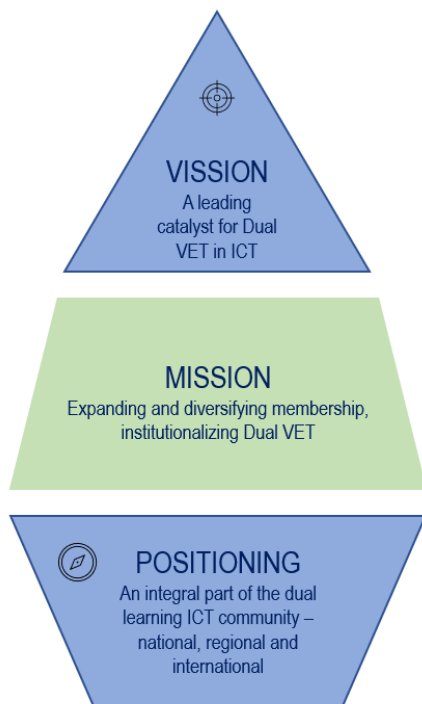
STIKK must maintain active and comprehensive engagement ensuring that new ICT companies are promptly identified and effectively integrated into the ecosystem. In addition, STIKK is expected to coordinate closely with ICT centers and technology parks, such as ITP in Prizren and facilities in Vitomirice and Kamenice, to strengthen industry linkages and support program implementation. By identifying new ICT businesses early, STIKK can develop membership packages that are both highly attractive and responsive to business needs.

Proximity to businesses enables STIKK to detect and address challenges at the earliest stages, preventing delays or failures in program delivery. The Agency and the ICT Sectoral Skills Council (ICT SSC), including STIKK representatives, will support additional training for educators, assist in updating curricula, and guide other corrective measures to ensure high-quality outcomes.

The ultimate objective of the strategy is to expand STIKK membership and drive the successful implementation of dual learning in ICT, enabling businesses to fully leverage the workforce. Over a three- to six-year horizon, the strategy aims to achieve a significant reduction in unemployment—particularly within the ICT sector—while reinforcing the integration between education, industry, and workforce development to ensure sustainable, long-term impact.

2.3 Strategic Vision and Positioning Framework

The statements below articulate STIKK's strategic identity, providing a clear sense of direction and purpose. They define what the organization aspires to achieve (Vision), how it intends to realize that ambition (Mission), and the distinctive role it seeks to play within the national and international dual learning ecosystem (Positioning).

**Vision:**

A leading catalyst for dual learning in Kosovë's ICT sector, driving innovation, competitiveness, and sustainable workforce development.

Mission:

Expanding and diversifying membership, institutionalizing Dual VET as a cornerstone of ICT talent development, and strengthening organizational capacity to ensure a continuous pipeline of skilled professionals aligned with industry needs.

Positioning:

An integral part of the dual learning ICT community at the national, regional, and international levels.

Figure 1 STTIKK – Vission, Mission and Positioning

2.4 High - Level Goals, SubGoals and Target System

Effective realization of STIKK's Membership Growth and Dual Learning Strategy in the ICT sector requires a phased and multi-dimensional implementation framework encompassing institutional, operational, and technological domains. This framework promotes coordination, accountability, and sustainability while driving continuous improvement and long-term impact.

2.4.1 High-Level Goal 1: Establish Robust Institutional and Governance Structures

Subgoals:

- Develop and offer tailored STIKK membership packages for businesses that actively support and participate in Dual Learning, including benefits, incentives, and recognition mechanisms.
- Establish the ICT Sectoral Skills Council (ICT SSC) within the Agency for Professional Training and Dual VET Support to guide ICT skills development, align education with labor market needs, and foster collaboration among STIKK, businesses, education providers, chambers of commerce, and employee associations.

The ICT SSC will include representatives from STIKK, ICT businesses, vocational and higher education providers, chambers of commerce, and employee associations active in the ICT sector.

- Strengthen policy coherence through alignment with the the ICT Sectoral Skills Council (ICT SSC).

Target System:

- Membership & Engagement: Structured packages for businesses promoting Dual Learning
- Institutional: ICT Sectoral Skills Council (ICT SSC)
- Governance: Regular quarterly reviews, annual ICT profile validation, national policy integration

2.4.2 High-Level Goal 2: Strengthen Strategic Planning and Preparation Processes

Subgoals:

- Identify priority ICT occupational profiles aligned with current and emerging market demands.
- Map and select schools and ICT companies for pilot and scale-up implementation.
- Design and standardize student selection and enrollment procedures.
- Align ICT curricula with business needs and ensure mutual recognition of skills.
- Train educators and company mentors for high-quality dual instruction delivery.

Target System:

- Operational: Curriculum alignment matrix, training programs for mentors/teachers
- Institutional: ICT Sectoral Skills Council (ICT SSC)
- Data System: Industry profile mapping database

2.4.3 High-Level Goal 3: Ensure Quality Implementation and Continuous Improvement

Subgoals:

- Implement structured monitoring and supervision mechanisms across schools and enterprises.
- Conduct regular student assessments and certification to ensure skill standardization.
- Perform annual curriculum and ICT profile reviews informed by labor market intelligence.
- Establish a feedback and corrective mechanism to address operational bottlenecks.

Target System:

- Quality Assurance: Monitoring dashboards, evaluation templates, certification standards
- Performance Metrics: Completion rates, employer satisfaction, certification success ratio

2.4.4 High-Level Goal 4: Facilitate Regional Expansion and Program Sustainability

Subgoals:

- Expand dual learning programs to additional profiles, municipalities and regions in a phased approach.
- Foster collaboration with regional ICT centers and technology parks (e.g., ITP Prizren, Vitomiricë, Kamenicë).
- Offer tailored STIKK membership packages for Dual VET participants to enhance engagement and ecosystem integration.

Target System:

- Geographic Expansion: Regional implementation roadmap
- Sustainability: Membership growth indicators, regional coordination units

2.4.5 High-Level Goal 5: Develop a Sustainable Financial and Legal Ecosystem

Subgoals:

- Design a multi-source financing model combining public, donor, and private sector contributions.
- Ensure ongoing review and adjustment of the legal and regulatory framework to support ICT dual learning.
- Institutionalize financial accountability through transparent budget tracking and annual audits.

Target System:

- Financial: Co-financing agreements, transparent expenditure tracking system
- Legal: Updated regulatory guidelines, inter-institutional MoUs

2.4.6 High-Level Goal 6: Deploy Digital Tools and Strengthen Data-Driven Management

Subgoals:

- Develop and operationalize two digital applications:
 1. National Dual Learning Management Platform (NDLMP): A centralized system for managing data on enrollment, profiles, legal frameworks, finances, and performance reports.
 2. User-Level Application: A digital interface for students, schools, and businesses to manage participation, track progress, and access learning materials.

Target System:

- Technological: Integrated digital infrastructure
- Data Governance: Real-time reporting and analytics dashboard

2.4.7 High-Level Goal 7: Build Post-Certification Pathways and Career Continuity

Subgoals:

- Develop career progression mechanisms for certified ICT students, ensuring employment or advanced education opportunities.
- Partner with higher education institutions to enable seamless transition into advanced ICT programs.
- Create employer-led internship-to-employment pipelines to sustain workforce integration.

Target System:

- Career Development: Graduate tracking system, alumni-employer engagement portal
- Education Linkage: Articulation agreements with universities and professional academies

3. STRATEGIC PHASING AND TIMELINE

The Strategy itself has been structured across three distinct time horizons to ensure both immediate impact and long-term sustainability:

- **Short-term (12 months):** Focused on rapid, actionable initiatives that address urgent priorities and lay the groundwork for broader strategic objectives. Key priorities include expanding STIKK's membership base and initiating the practical groundwork for the integration of dual learning within the ICT sector.
- **Medium-term (1–2 years):** This phase seeks to consolidate the progress achieved during the initial stage, scale up pilot initiatives, and refine methodologies based on insights gained from early implementation. It focuses on identifying and addressing legal, financial, and operational challenges related to both the initial STIKK membership expansion strategy and the introduction of dual learning within the ICT sector.
- **Long-term (3+ years):** This phase focuses on systemic transformation, embedding sustainable practices, and ensuring lasting institutional, social, and economic impact. By this stage, the first generation of students will have graduated and entered the workforce, followed by subsequent cohorts. As the dual learning model becomes established and scaled, a measurable reduction in national unemployment levels should begin to emerge.

3.1 Strategic Phasing and Timeline

The implementation of the strategy is organized into three distinct phases to ensure a gradual, coordinated, and sustainable progression toward achieving the strategic goals. Each phase outlines specific priorities, milestones, and responsibilities for key stakeholders — including STIKK, ICT businesses, educational institutions, government bodies, and development partners.

3.1.1 Short-term phase (up to 12 months)

The first 12 months focus on establishing the foundations of Dual Learning in ICT, launching early implementation, and actively expanding STIKK membership to engage businesses and stakeholders. Key activities include:

- Identification of priority ICT profiles, schools, and students for Dual VET programs, aligned with market and business needs.
- Development of tailored membership packages and active engagement of businesses to support Dual ICT training and encourage participation in Dual VET initiatives.
- Development and alignment of curricula for ICT subjects and related courses.
- Training of ICT teachers in both theoretical instruction and practical laboratory exercises.
- Preparation of business budgets for student participation in the following year, including detailed projections for transport and other operational expenses, to ensure the Ministry is fully informed.
- Plan and establish the ICT Sectoral Skills Council (ICT SSC) within the Agency to oversee ICT skills development and coordinate ICT-specific Dual Learning initiatives.
- Design and rollout of STIKK membership offers, including targeted packages to attract non-member ICT companies.
- Review and update of legal and financial frameworks to support Dual Learning implementation in the upcoming year.
- Conduct meetings with businesses to identify potential financial incentives, such as tax relief, co-financing with donations, or other support mechanisms, that encourage and facilitate their participation in Dual Learning initiatives.
- Establish relationships with regional and international companies, and maintain membership in global organizations to enhance collaboration on Dual Learning initiatives.

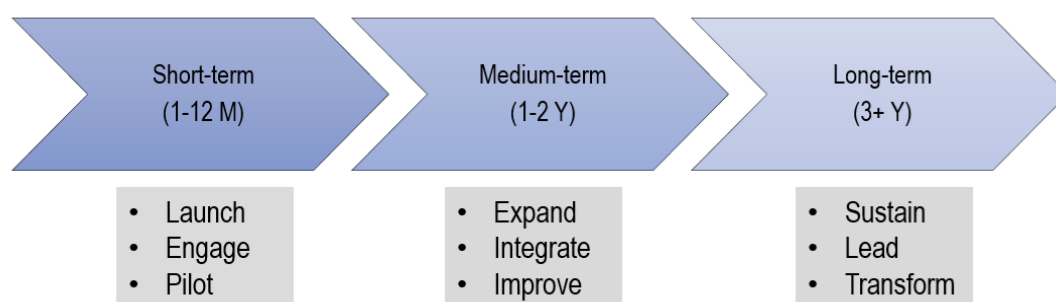


Figure 2 Strategic phasing

3.1.2 Medium-term phase (1–2 years)

The medium-term phase emphasizes consolidating and expanding Dual Learning implementation across all profiles, while growing STIKK's membership base to engage a broader range of businesses and stakeholders. Key activities include:

- The ICT Sectoral Skills Council (ICT SSC) within the Agency is fully operational and provides effective oversight, coordination, and guidance for ICT-specific Dual Learning initiatives.
- Review and address challenges and shortcomings identified during the first year to refine processes and ensure effective program delivery.
- Develop a digital platform within the Agency, initially focused on the ICT sector and the ICT Sectoral Skills Council (ICT SSC), to manage comprehensive data including student enrollments, schools, participating businesses, financial and legal frameworks, research and analyses, collaboration, and participation in regional meetings, with the potential to expand to all Dual VET sectors.
- Creation of a user-level digital application to track student participation in schools and businesses, monitor continuity, and support ongoing assessment.
- Planning for post-certification pathways for students, covering further education or employment over a three-year horizon, including curriculum enhancements for ICT and support mechanisms for businesses employing graduates.
- Strategic planning for successive cohorts, ensuring smooth transition as the first generation completes three years, and assessing the implications for businesses and financial support.
- Continuous expansion of STIKK membership and the development of attractive membership packages for businesses supporting Dual Learning.
- Initiation of broader regional and cross-sector collaboration to strengthen engagement and scale impact.

3.1.3 Long-term phase (3+ years)

In the long-term phase, the focus shifts to institutionalizing Dual Learning in ICT, expanding its impact, and delivering measurable outcomes across Kosovë's broader education and labor ecosystem. STIKK is envisioned as the central umbrella organization, bringing together ICT companies in the country and fostering comprehensive stakeholder engagement. Key activities include:

- Position STIKK as the national leader in ICT workforce development, driving innovation, skills advancement, and industry standards across Kosovë
- Regular meetings and reporting by the ICT Sectoral Skills Council (ICT SSC) to ensure ongoing coordination and accountability.
- Rapid identification and resolution of challenges and operational issues as they arise.
- Implementation of attractive financial incentives and support mechanisms for businesses actively participating in Dual Learning in ICT.

- Establishment and enforcement of appropriate regulations and legal frameworks governing Dual Learning in ICT.
- Annual review and adjustment of ICT profiles based on business needs, expansion of participating schools, increase in student enrollment, and periodic revision of curricula.
- Initiation of systematic analysis to measure reductions in unemployment, with annual targets reflecting the success of Dual Learning initiatives not only in ICT but across other sectors as well.
- Preparation of students for domestic, regional and international labor markets, ensuring that skills and certifications meet broader workforce demands, while highlighting success stories of students, schools, and participating businesses to showcase impact and best practices.

4. STRATEGIC PILLARS AND KEY ACTIONS

The table below presents STIKK's strategic pillars and corresponding key actions, providing a structured framework to guide implementation, monitor progress, and achieve measurable impact across ICT membership growth and Dual Learning initiatives.

Table 1 Strategic pillars and Key actions

Strategic Pillar	Key Actions / Tasks
Membership & Industry Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop tailored STIKK membership packages to attract and retain ICT businesses - Expand and sustain a diverse and active membership base - Build regional and international partnerships to enhance collaboration and knowledge exchange - Strengthen PR efforts to boost STIKK's visibility and attract new members
Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify priority ICT profiles, schools, and students - Develop and align ICT curricula - Train teachers in theoretical and practical instruction - Prepare students for domestic and regional labor markets - Plan post-certification pathways (education/employment)
Digitalization & Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop digital platform for ICT Sectoral Skills Council to manage schools, profiles, and student data - Use platform analytics for demographics, research, and collaboration tracking - Create user platform for students, teachers, and businesses to support learning, coordination, and feedback - Digitalize administrative and reporting processes - Promote innovation through digital tools and data-driven practices
Governance & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish ICT Sectoral Skills Council (ICT SSC) - Ensure effective operations - Review and update legal and financial frameworks - Implement systematic monitoring, reporting, and annual adjustments - Measure impact on employment and ICT workforce outcomes

5. CONCLUSION

This strategy provides STIKK with a detailed and actionable roadmap to expand membership, institutionalize Dual VET, and strengthen its organizational capacity to address Kosovë's evolving ICT workforce needs. By systematically linking private sector incentives with educational outcomes, STIKK can build a resilient, skilled ICT workforce, promote innovation, and maintain its position as the primary representative of the ICT sector.

The phased approach—spanning short-term foundation-building, medium-term consolidation and expansion, and long-term institutionalization—ensures that both STIKK and its partners can scale impact effectively while addressing operational, legal, and financial challenges. Active engagement with stakeholders—including businesses, educational institutions, government entities, donors, and regional and international partners—is critical for the success of dual learning initiatives.

Through structured implementation, continuous monitoring, and strategic learning, STIKK can achieve measurable outcomes, including increased member participation, improved employability of ICT graduates, reduced unemployment—particularly in the ICT sector—and sustained sectoral growth. The strategy ultimately positions STIKK not only as a national leader in ICT workforce development but also as a key driver of innovation, collaboration, and long-term competitiveness in Kosovë's digital economy.