

Digital Start - Empowering Young NEETs for the Digital Era

Digitálny štart - Aktivácia mladých NEET pre digitálnu dobu

Brief description of the tool/toolkit

The Digital Start project helps young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) to rediscover their potential and build the digital and personal skills needed for the jobs of tomorrow. Implemented across Slovakia by the Digital Coalition in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, it offers innovative online diagnostics and counselling potentially for thousands of NEETs.

Participants engage in an online assessment that helps identify their employability potential, personal qualities and digital readiness. The toolkit includes:

- a work-personality questionnaire;
- an interest inventory;
- a digital skills test; and,
- an optional cognitive test.

Upon completion, each participant receives a personalised feedback report highlighting their key strengths, development areas, and suggested learning or career paths.

The project also offers up to 10 hours of individual counselling, supporting motivation, self-confidence, and resilience in entering the labour market. These sessions guide participants in setting realistic goals, identifying suitable career opportunities, and preparing participants for job applications.

Beneficiaries

NEETs in recent search

Individuals at risk of becoming NEET. It may also include university students, employed persons, and self-employed individuals.

NEETs in long-term search

Categories:

- Re-entrance
- Young people with disabilities
- Young people from marginalised Roma communities
- Third-country nationals, including migrants
- Young parents up to the age of 30, who may be either employed or self-employed
- People with low qualifications, i.e. individuals with educational attainment at ISCED levels 0–2 (pre-primary, primary, and lower secondary education), according to the ISCED.
- Young adults leaving Centres for Children and Families
- Young people after serving a prison sentence

Final-year pupils of primary and secondary schools (who are not eligible for online career guidance)

Countries

 Slovakia

Organisations/institutions involved in the tool/toolkit

The Digital Start toolkit was developed by the Digital Coalition (Digitálna koalícia) in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of Slovakia. Digital Coalition is a national initiative established at the initiative of the European Commission within the framework of the Digital skills and jobs coalition policy. Its mission is to improve digital skills in Slovakia.

Date of creation of toolkit and periodicity of updates

Created in Q1 2025, ending Q3 2027. The implementation of the Digital Start initiative begun in early 2026.

Purpose of the toolkit

The Digital Start project supports young people under the age of 30 who are currently outside education and employment systems or are at risk of dropping out. All these target groups are considered equally important to the project. Its mission is to help them understand their strengths, develop digital competences and regain motivation to actively participate in the labour market. A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is to reach 5,000 NEETs in Slovakia.

Detailed description of the components of the tool/toolkit

The Digital Start toolkit consists of the following components:

1. Introductory questionnaire: helps to better understand the participant's education, strengths, and the type of work they would most enjoy.
2. Work interest questionnaire: helps identify what kind of work the participant might enjoy and in what environment they would feel comfortable working (approx. 10–15 minutes).
3. Personality questionnaire: shows how the participant typically behaves at school or work – how they make decisions, their relationships with people, and how they approach tasks; helps them better understand how they collaborate with others (approx. 25 minutes).
4. Digital skills test: maps how well the participant navigates the world of computers, the internet, and online tools; assesses how they search for information, protect their data, use programmes, and communicate online; advises where they can improve to feel more confident with technology (approx. 45 minutes).
5. Cognitive abilities test (optional): assesses how quickly the participant can think and solve problems; tests logical thinking and numerical ability; helps prepare for situations that may arise during job application tests or interviews (approx. 30 minutes).

minutes).

Upon completing the diagnostics, each participant receives a structured feedback report containing their work styles, interests and strengths, digital skills level and recommended occupational groups and specific jobs suited to their profile, along with practical tips for further development.

The toolkit also includes a series of short educational videos covering foundational digital skills topics (e.g. how to use cloud services, search for information online, write a CV, prepare for an online interview, and use AI tools safely), and up to 10 hours of individual counselling with a career guide who helps participants interpret their results and plan their next steps.

Target group

The project is addressed to:

- Youth workers and career counsellors
- NGOs supporting young people at risk of social exclusion
- Local government agencies implementing NEET-targeted initiatives
- Non-profit and third-sector organisations working with youth
- Low-threshold and community centres
- Schools and educational institutions (primary, secondary, vocational, and academically focused -grammar- schools) and youth activity centres
- Counselling and prevention centres
- Children's homes and families from resocialisation facilities
- Municipal and local government authorities
- Private sector organisations interested in supporting youth employment initiatives

Type of guidance given to users

The toolkit provides guidance to youth workers, career counsellors, and practitioners on how to administer online diagnostic assessments and interpret results with NEETs.

It supports professionals in helping participants understand their employability potential, digital skill gaps, and personal strengths.

Method and/or information used for developing the tool/toolkit

The tool was developed by the Digital Coalition in cooperation with experts. The Digital Coalition adapted and modified existing diagnostic tools (CABIN-NET, IPIP NEO and ICAR). For the questionnaires, first the necessary permissions were secured from the original authors for their use and subsequently a professional translation into Slovak was carried out using the back-translation method. The aim was to preserve the original meaning of the items as accurately as possible and to prepare the tools for further validation of their psychometric properties in the Slovak context.

The results of the questionnaires were both conceptually and methodologically linked to the O*NET database, and a career recommendation algorithm was developed. For the assessment of digital literacy, the IT Fitness Test was used, which was developed by the Digital Coalition and has been used for a longer period of time.

Link/s to the toolkit and further information

The tool can be accessed here: www.digitalnystart.sk. Further information can be found on the website of the Digital Coalition of Slovakia: <https://digitalnakoalicia.sk/en-gb/home/>.

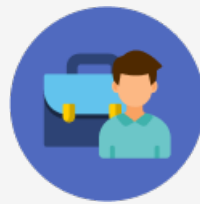
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Related intervention approaches



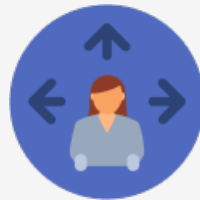
**NEETs living in remote areas
- Bridging the geographic divide**



Easing transitions into work



Skills development



**Lifelong guidance:
supporting NEETs to
manage their careers**

Related risk factors



Living in remote areas

Migratory background



Discouragement

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