

# Action plan for lifelong learning

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN

 BELGIUM-FL

## Timeline



ID number 43782

## Background

Lifelong learning is a major challenge, as participation in adult education and continuing education/training remains comparatively low. According to the Labour force survey (EAK), in 2021 10.8% (per 4 weeks) of the Flemish population aged 25-64 years participated in formal or non-formal learning for work or private purposes. This puts Flanders below the EU average. People with a high level of education participate significantly more than those with a low level of education. This difference is larger in Flanders than the EU average.

## Objectives

The action plan for lifelong learning aims to transform Flanders into a lifelong learning society. This is essential to increase innovation potential and productivity and to prepare Flanders for transformations such as climate change and the ageing population. This is an initiative to promote VET and lifelong learning; it also strengthens key competences in VET.

## Description

On 30 October 2020, the lifelong learning partnership was established, to stimulate the participation in lifelong learning through working out a joint approach across sectors and policy areas. This partnership is composed of representatives from the Socio-Economic Council of Flanders (SERV), education and training providers, the private training providers, the Lifelong Learning Committee of the Flemish Education Council (VLOR) and a higher education expert from the Vlerick business school.

The lifelong learning partnership was tasked by the government of Flanders to prepare an action plan for lifelong learning. The plan *Setting course to a learning Flanders* was then presented to the government in 2021.

The action plan aims to provide a coherent and mobilising framework for all partners involved in realising a lifelong learning culture in Flanders. With these actions we aim to involve all possible stakeholders involved in lifelong learning: government, VET institutions, sectors, companies, guidance practitioners, teachers, educators and all possible learners. Different stakeholders are linked to the 47 actions listed in the plan. This should contribute

to synergy and cooperation and make the change to a real learning culture. Special attention is paid to vulnerable groups such as low-skilled employees, who participate far less in lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is pivotal in a quickly changing society and labour market. It is set out with the year 2030 as the horizon but its focus is initially on the period up to 2024. The action plan aligns with the ambition of the European Union to achieve a participation rate of 60% for (non-)formal learning by 2030. This lead indicator will be supplemented by other relevant sub-indicators, that are under construction. The action plan consists of a 'compass' with orienting goals and several thematic 'flagships' initiatives with actions within a matrix structure underneath.

## 1. The Compass

The compass includes 10 goals for policy orientation with the ambition to bring Flanders to the level of top performing European countries and regions in lifelong learning (LLL):

- (a) placing the learner at the centre in relation to his/her environment(s);
- (b) developing LLL competence combined with consistent sensibilisation and mobilisation in view of a learning society,
- (c) promoting inclusive learning;
- (d) permanent quality assurance;
- (e) generating more impact by providing more transparency;
- (f) flexible and sustainable coordination;
- (g) effective cooperation;
- (h) reinforcing work-based learning and learning-based working;
- (i) developing monitoring instrument and collective knowledge;
- (j) implementing technology in and through learning.

## 2. Flagships initiatives

The flagships are ordered according to a matrix structure with axes for target groups and themes. An overarching concern is the efficient tackling of concrete obstacles for the realisation of the 47 actions listed under the respective flagships, which number 7:

- (a) knowledge agenda for LLL;
- (b) mobilisation strategy for each segment in society;
- (c) LLL incentive strategy based on individual follow-up;
- (d) holistic strategic competence framework;
- (e) enabling accompanying policies for guidance and support for LLL;
- (f) guidance and support to LLL providers;
- (g) future-proof strengthening of LLL partnerships.

### 2020 Design

In 2020, the partnership for lifelong learning was established and designed the Action plan for lifelong learning in collaboration with representatives of stakeholders including education, training, sectors and labour market partners.

### 2021 Approved/Agreed

The action plan was adopted by the Flemish Government in December 2021.

### 2022 Implementation

In 2022, the action plan's flagships are set into motion. Of the 47 actions, one has been realised, 27 are being implemented, nine are in the process of being launched and 10 are being prepared for launch or implementation. The partnership follows up on the implementation.

### 2023 Implementation

In 2023, the action plan's flagship initiatives continue to be implemented. The partnership follows up on the implementation. The [annual report](#) provides a complete

overview of the developments and the progress made in 2023, such as:

- (a) the Center for Innovative Learning Pathways organized an inspirational conference in December 2023 on the current state of lifelong learning in Flanders, within the framework of the TWIN transition;
- (b) the LLL Dashboard was published, along with research aimed at developing a roadmap for its further evolution;
- (c) continued work on the knowledge agenda included the completion of three studies in 2023: a review of lifelong learning regulations, an analysis of the lifelong learning landscape, and the LLL Dashboard. Additionally, three new research projects were initiated or continued: research on bridge figures & conversation methodologies, follow-up research on the OECD segmentation study on learning profiles, and research on informal workplace learning & the development of a learning climate assessment tool;
- (d) the launch of the lifelong learning portal website.

Furthermore, the Learning Collective project aims to support local breakthroughs regarding lifelong learning and fostering a learning culture in various organisations and enterprises.

### **2024 Implementation**

Based on a preliminary assessment, progress on the Action Plan for Lifelong Learning will be reported on in the annual report.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Flemish Department of Work and Social Economy
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## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Young people (15-29 years old)  
Adult learners

### **Education professionals**

Teachers  
Trainers  
School leaders  
Adult educators  
Guidance practitioners

### **Entities providing VET**

VET providers (all kinds)

## **Thematic categories**

### **Governance of VET and lifelong learning**

Coordinating VET and other policies  
Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

### **Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation**

Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning  
Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

# European priorities in VET

## VET Recommendation

VET promoting equality of opportunities

VET underpinned by a culture of quality assurance

## Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

## Subsystem

IVET CVET

## Further reading

[Action plan 'Setting course to a learning Flanders'](#)

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[Lifelong learning webpage](#)

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[Annual report](#)

### “ ... ” Cite as

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