

VET agreement

POLICY DEVELOPMENT**STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN** PORTUGAL

Timeline

2021 Approved/Agreed**2022 Implementation****2023 Implementation****2024 Implementation****ID number 41462**

Background

Portugal's structural skills gap continues to be a key factor in inequality of opportunity and an inhibiting element in the competitiveness of enterprises in different sectors of activity. Portugal's position in the European Union (EU) framework continues to be marked by a disadvantage in qualifications, having the highest proportion of adults aged 25 to 64 who did not complete secondary education in the European Union in 2020 (PT 44.6%; EU-27 20.8%) along with a relevant proportion of young people (20-24 years old) who enter the labour market without having completed this level of education (PT 18.3%).

Objectives

The VET agreement enables conditions for vocational training, particularly the certified variety, to be a significant part of the growth effort, ensuring recognised training, alignment with the needs of companies and sectors, and recognition of individual training, improving their employability.

It also aims to deepen the role of the social partners in the training system. This will be done without prejudice to the need to integrate the reflection in a global vision of the National Qualification System (SNQ).

It creates the conditions to increase participation in training and qualification levels and to converge towards the European target of at least 60% of adults participating annually in lifelong learning by 2030. It also supports the EC objective of effective active support for employment in the post-COVID-19 crisis period.

Description

The VET agreement is to be a common ground of a tripartite understanding, between the government and the social partners, in the following areas of intervention:

- (a) regulation and governance of the vocational training system (framework and regulation, regulation model and financing sources and quality improvement);
- (b) further development of the system's instruments and responsiveness (improve the flexibility of the SNQ, strengthen responses to sectoral needs and dynamics and

improve incentives for the participation of companies and individuals);
(c) raise the population qualifications level and the *Qualifica* programme;
(d) post-secondary training and intermediate qualification levels;
(e) innovation and flexibilisation of training modalities and responses;
(f) digital area and distance learning.

It is expected that implementation of the agreement will affect individuals, considering the interconnection between vocational training and qualification: more training, better levels of personal and citizenship skills, better career paths and better salary levels, and also in the competitiveness of the economy and society as a whole.

2021 Approved/Agreed

On 28 July 2021, the Government and the majority of social partners signed a strategic document for VET named Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualification: a strategic goal for people, for companies and for the country (*Acordo para a Formação Profissional e Qualificação: um Desígnio Estratégico para as Pessoas, para as Empresas e para o País*), 14 years since the last VET Agreement.

2022 Implementation

Some of the measures foreseen in the VET Agreement have been implemented through new legislation or revision and updating of existing legislation, such as Impulse adults programme, Apprenticeship programmes; Recognition Validation and Certification of Competencies (RVCC); Technological specialisation courses (CET); Professional higher technical courses (CTesPs); Adult education and training courses (EFA).

2023 Implementation

Following on from the VET agreement goals the programme *Qualifica Indústria* was launched in September 2023 by the Ordinance No 282/2023, of 14 September. This programme is in line with the objective of the VET agreement, which stipulates the reinforcement of the need for alignment and articulation between public policy initiatives for vocational training and the prioritisation of emerging areas of the labour market.

2024 Implementation

The agreement was operational and ran as regular practice.

Bodies responsible

- Government
- Social partners

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)
Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)
Learners with migrant background, including refugees
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers
Learners with disabilities
Adult learners
Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)
Unemployed and jobseekers

Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment
Low-skilled/qualified persons
Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or social-economic disadvantaged position)

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers
School leaders
Adult educators
Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

Companies
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

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

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Subsystem

CVET

Further reading

[Agreement for Vocational Training and Qualification: a strategic goal for people, for companies and for the country](#)

[Ordinance \[Portaria\] No 282/2023, of 14 September 2023](#)

[Ordinance \(Portaria\) No 399/2023, of 30 November 2023](#)

Related policy developments

2024 Implementation

Qualifica Indústria programme

It consists of financial support for upskilling and reskilling training plans of workers of SME businesses in industries experiencing reduced orders or less turnover. A budget allocation of EUR 10 million covers salary costs and sector-specific training.



PORUGAL

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

2024 Implementation

Modernisation of the vocational training centres network of IEFP

In September 2021, the IEFP signed a financing agreement for the application of EUR 230 million with the *Estrutura de Missão Recuperar Portugal*, the body responsible for negotiating, contracting and monitoring the implementation of the national recovery plan, as part of the implementation



PORUGAL

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Sectoral and regional training programmes

The programmes of the tourism sector are developed by the tourism schools of Portugal, in partnership with municipalities as agents closer to local realities and mobilisers of the strategic change that it is intended to achieve.



PORUGAL

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

2024 Implementation

Training voucher

Training voucher is a direct financial support for vocational training to be granted to employees and the unemployed as a way of providing individual access to training.



PORUGAL

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

2024 Implementation

Apprenticeship programmes

Apprenticeship courses allow for academic and vocational certification, emphasising inclusion in the job market, boosted by a strong training component undertaken in a work context and pursuing higher-level studies.

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

2024 Implementation

Professional programmes

Professional programmes (*cursos profissionais*) are IVET upper secondary education programmes leading to EQF level 4 (academic and professional certification); they are part of compulsory education and of the formal education and training system.

**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2024 Implementation

High professional technical programmes

High professional technical programmes (CTESP) correspond to a short cycle linked to the Bologna Process, provided exclusively by polytechnic higher education institutions, within the first cycle of higher education.

**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2024 Implementation**Technological specialisation courses**

Technological specialisation courses (CET) are a modality of education and training at post-secondary non-tertiary levels that enables specialised training paths in different technological areas, developing professional skills.

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation**Modular training courses**

Modular training courses (*Formação Modular Certificada*) are addressed to adults aged 18 and over, employed or unemployed, who do not have the appropriate qualifications to enter or progress in the labour market, especially, those who have yet to complete basic or upper secondary education.

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation**Adult education and training courses**

Adult Education and Training courses (EFA) are a flexible training pathway of variable duration, according to the certification level.

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Valorizar social programme

The training programme is based on a set of specialised training sessions in management, finance, leadership, innovation and digital areas.



Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

2024 Implementation

Agreement for vocational training, qualification of the social economy

The agreement responds to the sector's training needs and emerging challenges, which require continuous knowledge and skill updating, an increase in specific training offers, and the development of tailor-made continuing training.



Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Qualifica programme

The *Qualifica* programme is based on:



Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC)

Ordinance No 232/2016 consolidated the rules of RVCC, introduced *Qualifica* centres, described a simple process of creating and authorising them, strengthened the teams of professionals in these centres and expanded the network.

**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation**System for the anticipation of qualifications needs**

In 2015, SANQ was set up under a coordination council that includes ANQEP, the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), the Cohesion and Development Agency (AD&C) and social partners.

**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation**Competence-based qualifications in specific sectors**

In 2014, the Portuguese confederation of tourism (CTP) commissioned the project Competence-based qualifications for the tourism sector. It aimed to develop qualification standards based on a diagnosis of skills needs in the tourism sector.

**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). VET agreement: Portugal. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online]

tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/41462>