

# Improving coordination and provision of adult education

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT**
**PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE**
 **LATVIA**

## Timeline

2016 <b>Approved/Agreed</b>	2017 <b>Implementation</b>	2018 <b>Implementation</b>
2019 <b>Implementation</b>	2020 <b>Implementation</b>	2021 <b>Implementation</b>
2022 <b>Implementation</b>	2023 <b>Implementation</b>	2024 <b>Implementation</b>

**ID number 35428**

## Background

Some fragmentation exists in the national policy for adult education/ lifelong learning, especially regarding its provision at State and municipal level.

A sustainable and comprehensive adult education system needs to be developed in cooperation with stakeholders, including fair financing approach. Such system should reach and support employees, employers, the unemployed and other vulnerable groups. To this end, various support measures and national level projects are being planned and implemented. The system also envisages addressing the most recent EU adult education policy developments, such as individual learning accounts.

In 2021, only 8.6% of the Latvian population aged 25 to 64 were involved in adult education activities, while in the Nordic countries this indicator was 3-4 times higher. Although adult participation in education has increased since then (by 2.0 percentage points compared to 2020), it has remained below the EU average. The involvement of the population in adult education in Latvia has not changed significantly during the last 10 years, and the goal defined for 2020 to increase the involvement of adults in lifelong learning to 15% was not achieved. The policy goal is to reach at least 12% (8% by 2024) of the adult population in education by 2027.

## Objectives

To improve adult education offer (more individualised and flexible), develop VET modular programmes for adults, provide support for employers to upskill and reskill employees, upgrade skills recognition, and improve financing (socially responsible and sustainable), quality, governance and awareness (public and employer) of adult education.

## Description

Several activities support implementing the national policy for adult education:

- (a) updating the information about adult education and its policy making, linking the

- European Union and State priorities in adult education;
- (b) promoting the development of EU programmes in adult education and the dissemination of results in Latvia;
- (c) developing recommendations Upskilling pathways, to help those implementing adult education to implement education in a quality manner, observing the quality criteria set by the State;
- (d) ensuring interinstitutional synergies and effective communication in the development and improvement of adult education policy, involving the social partners and those involved in the field;
- (e) promoting the development of on-the-job training, including among employers.

### **2016 Approved/Agreed**

The Ministers for economy, education and welfare established the Council on employment, aiming to improve coordination between education and employment policies for both initial and continuing VET and to support the involvement of employers in education development and delivery, including key issues:

- (a) network and quality of general education institutions;
- (b) raising the prestige of vocational education;
- (c) increasing adult participation in education;
- (d) higher education development in accordance with the economy needs;
- (e) economic sector workforce needs;
- (f) integration of persons with special needs into the labour market;
- (g) adult education development and quality issues;
- (h) development of the next planning period activities.

The Adult Education Management Board was established.

The State Employment Agency (NVA) approved the Strategy for cooperation with employers 2017-19, targeted at strengthening the agency's capacity to monitor labour market needs.

The labour market forecasting system was established to inform policy-making, taking into account economic needs.

The State Education Development Agency (VIAA) started the ESF project on improving the professional competence of the employed aged 25+.

### **2017 Implementation**

To tackle significant gaps in the adults' learning management system, the education ministry strengthened the Adult Education Government Board. Its task is to define and approve goals and tasks related to the development of human resources, priorities, target groups and sectors, as well as to make decisions on the distribution of available funding.

The discussions took place on the issue of supplementing the quantitative forecasts with qualitative forward-looking scenarios, along with further involving in the process sectoral expert councils, education institutions and regional forums for more precise identification of labour market needs at regional level.

The labour market forecasting system is now providing information on skills and professions in the short, medium and long term, as well as information on learning opportunities. The active labour market policy has been evaluated, and the offer of VET programmes became based on the outcomes of the skills forecasts.

Implementation of the 1st round of ESF project on improving the professional competence of the employed aged 25+ started.

### **2018 Implementation**

In 2018, a study was carried out on the possibilities of improvement of the labour

market forecasting system. Proposals were made regarding the data to be used, exploring ways of integrating data from different registers into the forecast model. A table for matching education and occupation for medium- and long-term labour market forecasting has been developed. Lists of skills relevant to the occupations have been developed for short-term forecasting. The responsibility of stakeholders and principles of cooperation have been formulated. Guidelines were developed for career advisers and education providers for interpretation and practical use of medium- and long-term labour market forecasts. Recommendations were issued.

The Employment council was strengthened by concluding an agreement on the establishment of an Employment council steering group, consisting of the State Secretaries of the economics, education and labour (welfare) ministries, to implement conceptual decisions.

### **2019 Implementation**

In 2019, the three ministries (economics, education and labour) provided in-depth analysis and reporting on the following issues: the Latvian labour market, its development trends and challenges; labour immigration; system of anticipatory restructuring of the labour market (DTAPS) (reported by the Ministry of Economics); topical issues in general education, proposals for school network planning; commercialisation of science (reported by the Ministry of Education and Science); adult education, including training for the unemployed (reported by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Welfare); innovation system management model.

### **2020 Implementation**

In 2020, the Employment council developed proposals for 16 measures for the development of human capital after the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2020, the Cabinet of Ministers decided to support activities to overcome the COVID-19 crisis and economic recovery: the digital training programme, high level training and consultation for business managers, monitoring of higher education and secondary vocational education institution graduates, and an information society campaign to motivate people for lifelong learning. The responsible authority for the implementation of these activities became the Ministry of Economics.

The work on the employer survey was completed. The aim was to provide the State Employment Agency (SEA) with data for the preparation of short-term labour market forecasts in the econometric model in order to adjust the forecasts, taking into account employers' plans for hiring / dismissing employees and to determine the labour market needs. The survey of employers provides information in which occupational groups and in which region employers plan to create new jobs, eliminate existing jobs or replace existing employees in the coming year. The survey of employers also provides information on the number of long-term (more than three months) vacancies in companies during the previous year, indicating in which occupational groups there have been long-term vacancies and the reasons for not filling them. The results of the survey are to be used both in the preparation of short-term labour market forecasts and for preparing the report on the results of the survey. These results are to be published online.

It was decided that at least, twice a year the Adult Education Management Board (which includes representatives from relevant ministries, social partner organisations and regional governments) in close cooperation with sectoral expert councils define priority learning areas according to economic trends and labour market short-, medium- and long-term forecasts.

Since 2020, the ESF project on improving the professional competence of the employed aged 25+ has made support available for regional mobility to participants in the qualification practice within continuing (further) education VET.

### **2021 Implementation**

In 2021, the education ministry requested technical assistance through the European Commission's technical support instrument (TSI project) to support employers in promoting skills development. The technical assistance has been provided by the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) and the OECD for the period 2021-23. The main objective of the project, Supporting employers to promote skills development in Latvia, is to enable Latvian authorities to draft a regulatory framework aiming to support employers (including SMEs) to up-/re-skill their employees. The activities within the project:

- (a) an assessment report on key barriers and enabling conditions, and EU good practices for employers to support training for their employees;
- (b) practical guidelines to develop the regulatory framework for implementing a policy package for employers;
- (c) a roadmap for potential supplementary measures.

In 2021, the TSI project was launched and presented to the broader public on the webinar with the representation of OECD, DG REFORM and high-level management and public administration representatives of Latvia. The project's advisory group including representatives of the education, the economics and the labour ministry, employers and employee stakeholders, was established. The Inception note was developed, reviewing the general context, main legislation, key stakeholders and presenting the project and its work plan.

The meeting of the Employment Council on the issues of education quality and labour demand was held remotely. Representatives of education ministry discussed issues of raising the quality of education in general, vocational secondary, and adult education, as well presenting the Action plan for the implementation of the Guidelines for the development of education. Representatives of the ministry of economics and the State employment agency presented an interactive labour market forecasting platform, which summarises current information on the labour market.

The regular short-term labour market forecasts were prepared along with the results of the employer survey. The report was published on the SEA website. In August 2021, new visualisation tools for short-term and long-term labour market forecasts were launched. The tool provides an interactive way of presenting the forecasts, and combining it with up-to-date labour market information, such as wages in different occupations, to support more informed choices by labour market participants.

The following improvements were introduced in the ESF project on improving the professional competence of the employed aged 25+:

- (a) the support for employed persons was expanded, in addition to continuing vocational education programmes, providing the opportunity to acquire a module or set of modules of basic or secondary vocational education programmes;
- (b) development and selection of a training offer was improved by applying an in-depth analytical approach to training offer in order to ensure a better match with labour market needs;
- (c) more targeted measures to inform about learning possibilities were introduced to reach different adult audiences, especially adults with a low level of education;
- (d) new activity - measurement of the level of knowledge / skills of the participants - was introduced to form homogeneous learning groups. Priority was given to supporting employees from social risk groups.

To ensure recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the development of adults' professional competence in accordance with the needs of today's economy was promoted. Vocational development (upskilling) education programmes, modules or set of modules in vocational continuing (further) education and, for the first time, a study module or study course in a higher educational institution (university) were offered in an additional distance learning round of training.

To enhance the quality of adult education, in the Erasmus+ project "National Coordinators for the implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning in Latvia", a new in-service training programme for adult educators without pedagogical training (72 hours) was designed and piloted by the University of Latvia (64 adult

educators participated in the pilots and received certificates).

The network of adult education coordinators was developed and managed. To support municipalities in the organisation of adult education, 'Guidelines for the management of adult education in municipalities' were designed.

## **2022 Implementation**

To promote quality and introduce quality criteria for non-formal education, the Amendments to the Education Law were approved by the Parliament in 2022.

Latvia continued participating in the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), which allows to evaluate skills of 16-65 years old population in main information processing areas - literacy, numeracy and problem solving and their use in daily life and in the work environment.

The Adult Education Management Board regularly evaluated the implementation and impact of adult learning initiatives. The board highlighted the need for improving cooperation between all engaged stakeholders, in particular, sectoral representatives at national, regional and local levels for implementing labour market demand-based adult education provisioning, as well as ensuring its quality and sufficiency.

Within the Erasmus+ project 'National Coordinators for the implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning in Latvia', a new training programme for adult educators with pedagogical education (3 modules, 36 hours) was designed and piloted in cooperation with the Latvian Association of Higher Education Institutions for Lifelong Learning (LAKMA), the University of Latvia, the University of Liepaja, the Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, the Riga Technical University and the Rezekne Academy of Technologies. The total number of the participants from VET and higher education was 130.

The competence development programme for the adult education coordinators was designed and piloted with 54 participants. Regular seminars, PLAs, study visits have also been organised for the coordinators.

Adult education curricula (skills for life modules) were designed emphasising digital and financial competences. The piloting of the programme 'Digital Skills for Everyday Situations' started in 12 local municipalities.

## **2023 Implementation**

In 2023, the Human Capital Development Council was established. The Council assesses the labour market situation and labour market forecasts, takes decisions in the field of human capital development, prepares proposals on support measures for human capital development, assesses the functions and tasks of institutions subordinate to the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Education and Science in the field of lifelong learning, labour market and sectoral competitiveness promotion, makes proposals for their more effective implementation to promote the supervision, quality and efficiency of adult learning, prepares proposals on adult education training, quality requirements for adult education providers, prepares proposals to address issues related to lifelong learning, employment and the competitiveness of the economy. The Council is composed of the Minister for Economics, the Minister for Education and Science and the Minister for Welfare. The secretariat of the Council shall be provided by the Ministry of Economics.

The implementation of the 2017-23 ESF project 8.4.1 'Improvement of professional competences of employees' was completed. By the end of the project, 88 347 employees got new professional qualifications, improved their professional competences, including 50 535 who acquired digital skills. The project supported the acquisition of continuing professional development (CPD) programmes and upskilling courses, as well as the assessment of professional competence acquired outside formal education system for the employed adults 25+, including those having a low level of education.

On 17 June 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted Regulation No.395 'Procedure for issuing permits for the implementation of non-formal education programmes'. The regulation ensures that non-formal education programmes provide a description of achievable learning outcomes and determine the language of instruction, the content, materials, and human resources necessary for the implementation of the programme. A certificate (aplēcība) is now also issued at the completion of such programmes. This government regulation also envisaged the use of the EU DigComp framework for formulating digital skills in non-formal education programmes.

Erasmus+ project 'National coordinators for the implementation of the European programme in Latvian adult education' developed guidelines for non-formal education programme providers and for municipal staff controlling the quality of their provision.

In 2023, several activities focused on the improved adult education coordination mechanisms and the development of the concept of individual learning accounts (hereinafter - ILA).

On 4 July 2023, a report prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science on the digital transformation and the development of ILA approach was approved by the government.

The ILA concept and the concept for the skills platform for ILA administration were developed in 2023. The ILA concept aimed to implement ILA in Latvia by mid-2026, involving 3 500 people in a pilot project.

## 2024 Implementation

Preparatory works for implementing ILA approach started in October 2024.

In 2024, two ESF+ projects were launched: Support for adult education based on industry needs (Skills funds) (EUR 6.84 million, 4.2.4.1) and Support for adult education based on the individual needs of adults (EUR 34.62 million, 4.2.4.2);

Another project was prepared to be launched - Increasing the skills of the employed and support for obtaining qualifications, support for workforce training in accordance with the company's request (EUR 19.95 million, 6.1.1.5).

## Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Science
- State Education Development Agency (VIAA)
- National Centre for Education (VISC)
- Employers' Confederation of Latvia (LDDK)
- Free Trade Union Confederation
- Academic Information Centre (AIC)
- Ministry of Economics
- Ministry of Welfare

## Target group

### Learners

Adult learners

### Education professionals

Adult educators

### Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

## Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)  
National, regional and local authorities

## Thematic categories

### Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

## European priorities in VET

### VET Recommendation

VET as a driver for innovation and growth preparing for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand

### Osnabrück Declaration

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

## Subsystem

CVET

## Further reading

[Statutes of the Human Capital Development Council](#)

[Regulations on the National Standard for Continuing Professional Education and Professional Development Education](#)

## Related policy developments

**2021 Completed**

### The 2015-17 implementation plan for the 2014-20 Education development guidelines

The implementation plan adopted in June 2015 provides directions for improving the access to education and preventing early school leaving from general and vocational education, especially for young people subjected to social exclusion.

 LATVIA

#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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