

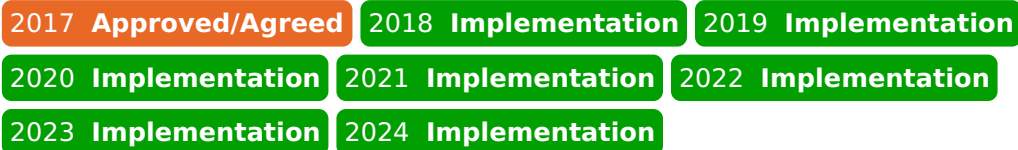
Investment in skills plan: building a skills society

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 FRANCE

Timeline



ID number 28235

Background

Initial findings suggested that 50% of jobs would be transformed within 10 years, that the unemployment rate was worse for the least skilled, and 13% of young people were NEET. The Investment in skills plan is a change in scale from previous annual plans which aim to combat social determinism, to show that leaving school does not mean leaving behind opportunities, to make sure no one is left behind and to transform the training system to support the competitiveness of businesses.

Objectives

The objective of the investment plan is to support access to employment for two million people, mainly those socially excluded, and prepare them for the challenges of the future.

Description

The Skills Investment plan (*Plan d'investissement dans les compétences*, PIC) is a government initiative aimed at improving job related skills and employability of 1 million job seekers and 1 million young people. Launched in 2018, this 5-year plan focuses on providing training programmes to help people gain qualifications that match the needs of the job market. Its goal is to reduce unemployment and promote social inclusion by investing in the development of skills that are in demand, particularly in sector with labour shortages or emerging industries.

A strand of the main investment plan, the Investment in skills plan (*Plan d'investissement dans les compétences*, PIC) is structured along three lines:

- (a) better analysing skills needs to focus training policies and guide people better. In 2018, a call for projects targeted at sectors resulted in selecting ten projects to address businesses' recruitment needs better;
- (b) financing new training pathways and support for sound employment. In 2018, 148 000 training actions for young people and low-qualified jobseekers were funded through State-Regions agreements. Calls for projects were launched, including

- '10Knum' (to fund more than 10 000 training courses in digital trades) and '10Kvert' (for trades in relation to the ecological transition);
- (c) innovating and transforming training provision through experimenting. In 2018, three calls for proposals were launched, targeting VET providers and aiming to promote: most innovative approaches to social and professional inclusion; projects to foster the professional integration of refugees; and apprenticeship preparatory courses, to secure success in apprenticeships.

2017 Approved/Agreed

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

About half the total planned budget is allocated to regional implementation. The skills investment plan is tailored to each region through regional pacts for investment in skills (*Pactes Régionaux d'Investissement dans les compétences*, PRIC), signed by the State and the regional authorities concerned.

In 2019, all the regions have a regional skills investment pact (PRIC) (implemented by the public employment service in two regions); the results for 2019 are 450 000 additional people entering training and 320 000 support services provided.

The skills investment plan is implemented at national level through calls for projects. Among the projects developed in 2019:

- (a) developing existing schemes: 38 000 jobseekers benefited from *Operational preparation for collective employment* to acquire skills for jobs corresponding to needs identified by a professional branch;
- (b) innovation projects: 60 projects have been selected, allowing the integration into the workforce of 2 000 refugees;
- (c) new programmes: pre-apprenticeship has 4 500 spaces for young people aged 16 to 29 who are specifically from urban policy priority areas, NEETs or disabled;
- (d) regional initiatives: the Bourgogne Franche Comté region has launched courses based on skills blocks in the construction and building trades, enabling the development of versatility in the related trades. Occitanie has developed an *Observatory 4.0* that uses artificial intelligence technologies to adjust training offers. In Normandy, the use of digital badges makes it easier for companies to see the skills present in their territory.

2020 Implementation

The Scientific Committee of the Investment in skills plan released its first report in October 2020. It observes that the PIC was adjusted quickly to adapt to the health crisis, for example by strengthening the training offered to young people, particularly in the healthcare sector, by highlighting training for digital skills or by upgrading pay of apprentices.

In 2019, through PIC it became possible to recover a level of new training courses close to that of 2016 (the latter linked to the previous plan for additional training courses: Plan 500 000 formations supplémentaires): 964 000 jobseekers entered training in 2019 (more than one million if we add employees in professional integration schemes). The rate of access to training for the least-qualified jobseekers returned to growth in 2019 (10% compared with 8.4% in 2018). To encourage the employment of the least qualified, the new national programmes of PIC have been introduced, specifically preparatory programmes for entry into qualifying training. After falling in recent years, the percentage of these preparatory training courses has returned to its 2015 level.

2021 Implementation

The scientific committee of the Investment in Skills plan (PIC) published a second mid-term review report. It noted a rapid and significant deployment of training actions for

job seekers in 2019 compared to 2017, including, significantly, 100 000 new admissions to training programmes for the low qualified unemployed. The rate of access to training of job seekers (1 year after registration with the PES services) has increased from 8% to 11%. This momentum has been stopped by the COVID-19 crisis. The number of training admissions remained stable in 2020, due to the increase of training actions initiated by learners through the individual learning account scheme (*compte personnel de formation, CPF*), which offset the reduction in training offered by the Regions or the public employment service (Pôle emploi).

By studying a few sectors in detail, the scientific committee noted that the training system held up well during the crisis, thanks, in particular, to the use of digital tools to maintain contact with trainees. This is a practice that was encouraged by the PIC. The PIC aims to radically transform the continuing training system by strengthening the logic of upskilling pathways, developing training provision and improving its quality, changing learner perception and attracting the least qualified into training. Structural changes are necessarily long-term, and continuity has been disrupted by the crisis. The participation of low-qualified people (the main target group of the PIC) increased, but no more than in the other categories.

In June 2021, the component of the PIC relating to modernisation gave rise to a EUR 100 million call for projects linked to France innovative digital training schemes (*Dispositifs France formation innovante numérique, Deffinum*). This call for proposals was aimed at *'consortia and groups of stakeholders who wish to speed up the hybridisation of their training and deploy innovative teaching methods, in particular more active teaching methods, in order to make the learner truly an active participant in his learning'*.

A *Training transformation and digitisation plan*, led by the High Commissioner for Skills, aims to broaden and speed up the integration of contributions from the digital, immersive and cognitive science fields into training. As such, regional calls for projects for creating *third-party training facilities* are foreseen in the first quarter of 2022.

A plan to reduce recruitment pressures was presented by the government in September 2021. It includes a training component and provides for it to be updated by the Regions through the regional skills investment pacts (*Pactes régionaux digital challenges*' and *'Measure Contributing to equal opportunities in all areas' / d'investissement dans les compétences, Pric*).

2022 Implementation

From 2022 this policy development is part of the NIP: *'Measure Anticipating and facilitating ecological and digital transitions' / Action: 'Adapting vocational diplomas to ecological and Action: 'Measures to support entry into training'*.

In 2022, under the *'Training Transformation and Digitisation Plan'* and more specifically the *'Deffinum call for proposals'*, with a budget of 100 millions Euros, 62 projects proposed by training providers at a national or interregional level were selected and granted. The projects include a strong drive for educational innovation, in particular integrating the contributions of digital and immersive technologies, cognitive sciences and on-the-job training.

Furthermore, the PIC skills investment plan's scientific assessment committee has published its third assessment report. The report looks at the effects of the plan on the trajectory of the least qualified people for the period 2018-2021. According to the findings of the report, access to training for the least qualified jobseekers has increased significantly. Thus, the rate of jobseekers with a qualification level below EQF4 taking up a training has increased from 8.6% in 2017 to 11% in 2021, within one year after being registered by the Public Employment Service. However, the authors of the report note that their proportion among the total number of trainees remains stable, as half of the trainees.

The PIC has also enabled the development of courses aiming at preparing for further entry into training actions leading to a qualification: remedial basic knowledge courses, guidance and motivation support, pre-qualification. The effects of these

preparatory training courses, in terms of exiting to another training pathway, are measured to be increasing: 32% in the following year for people who have followed a training targeting basic knowledge and key competences in 2020, compared to 24% in 2017.

2023 Implementation

The government has decided to extend the PIC until 2023, but with reduced resources. A review of the plan's mechanisms is scheduled for 2023 in order to assess whether it should continue to be financed from ordinary budgetary funds and to examine ways of continuing the regional implementation of employment and training policies.

2024 Implementation

A new generation of Regional Skills Investment Pacts (*Pactes Régionaux d'Investissement dans les Compétences*, PRIC) for 2024-27 is currently under development, with the contractualisation process underway. Initiated in 2020 by the PIC Scientific Evaluation Committee, these studies aim to analyse the effects of the pacts on regional orientation and training ecosystems. Conducted between 2021 and 2023, 8 regional case studies—covering Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Brittany, Centre-Val de Loire, Grand Est, Martinique, Normandy, Occitanie, and Pays de la Loire—shed light on processes, incentives, and decision-making impacts over the 2018-22 period.

In 2024, evaluations assessing the impact of previous PRIC initiatives have been published. The implementation of regional pacts has strengthened coordination between the State, Regions, and the national public employment service, France Travail, but has also revealed challenges in local governance and alignment between national and regional programmes. Despite increased efforts to reach job seekers furthest from employment—through financial support, outreach initiatives, and preparatory training—difficulties in recruiting trainees and competition between programmes have limited their impact. Progress has been made in improving the continuity of training pathways with the introduction of career advisors and modular training programmes, yet the divide between preparatory and qualifying training remains a challenge. Regions have enhanced their dialogue with businesses and experimented with tailor-made training programmes to meet labour market needs, although employer involvement remains insufficient, particularly in workplace-based learning. Additionally, pedagogical transformation, including the expansion of remote and work-based training, has faced organisational and financial constraints. These findings have helped shape the next generation of the PIC by emphasising more effective governance, better targeting of priority job seekers, stronger training continuity, increased support for pedagogical innovation, and greater employer engagement to better align with labour market demands and beneficiary needs.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Professional Integration (until 2022)
- Regional councils for employment, training and vocational guidance
- Regional authorities
- Ministry of Labour, Full Employment and Inclusion

Target group

Learners

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Learners with migrant background, including refugees

Unemployed and jobseekers

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)

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Establishing and developing skills intelligence systems

Modernising VET infrastructure

Modernising infrastructure for vocational training

Improving digital infrastructure of VET provision

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Diversifying modes of learning: face-to-face, digital and/or blended learning; adaptable/flexible training formats

Acquiring key competences

Integrating green transition and sustainability in VET curricula and programmes

Integrating digital skills and competences in VET curricula and programmes

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 agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

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

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

VET promoting equality of opportunities

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

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

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Building a skills society project \[Edifier une société de compétences\]](#)

[Ministry of Labour, Skills investment plan](#)

[Investment in skills plan - state of play \(October 2020\)](#)

[Ministry of Labour, Employment and Integration - Training Transformation and Digitalisation Plan](#)

[Third-party training facilities: calls for projects to be published by the end of the first quarter of 2022](#)

[Plan to reduce recruitment pressure: meeting business needs now and preparing for the future - press kit 27 September 2021](#)

[Ministry of Labour, Full Employment and Integration, 2022 - Training Transformation and Digitisation Plan: 62 winners selected as part of the Deffinum call for proposals](#)

[Third report from the Skills Investment Plan's scientific assessment committee](#)

[Dares. \(2024, September\). Evaluation of the Skills Investment plan \(PIC\) at regional level. \[Évaluation du déploiement du Plan d'investissement dans les compétences à l'échelle régionale\]](#)

[Evaluation of the implementation of the Skills Investment Plan at the regional level - cross-sectional summary of regional case studies](#)

Related policy developments

2024 Implementation

Skill sets in vocational qualifications

Skill sets are 'homogeneous and coherent sets of competencies that contribute to the autonomous exercise of a professional activity, which can be evaluated and validated'. Reforming vocational qualifications into skill sets (*blocks de compétences*) started in 2016.

 FRANCE

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Training actions for jobseekers

In January 2016, the government launched a plan to create 500 000 training places for jobseekers (*Plan 500 000 formations pour demandeurs d'emploi*).

 FRANCE

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). Investment in skills plan: building a skills society: France. 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/28235>