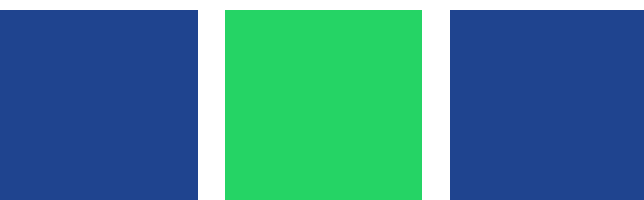

IMPLEMENTING EUROPEAN PRIORITIES IN VET

Making national VET agile,
flexible, innovative, attractive,
inclusive and quality assured

LUXEMBOURG



Implementing European priorities in VET

Making national VET agile, flexible, innovative, attractive,
inclusive and quality-assured:
Luxembourg

[Thematic perspectives](#) provide national overviews of specific themes in a common format and offer comparative dimension across the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway.

This thematic perspectives series complements the general information on vocational education and training (VET) policies and systems provided in [VET in Europe database](#) and the [Timeline of VET policies in Europe](#). The themes presented in the series feature high on the European agenda.

This thematic perspective was prepared based on data/information from 2023.

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CHAPTER 1. Introduction

In 2020, Luxembourg introduced a comprehensive and systematic national approach to tackle the challenges of a rapidly evolving skills demand, on government level, and mandated the OECD to assess the Luxembourgish CVET system and develop recommendations for a long-term strategic development. The COVID-19 pandemic had accelerated the digitalisation of learning and work at an unprecedented pace. Solid previous investments in digital infrastructure of the school system proved to be key to the resilience of the vocational education and training (VET) system. However, in the labour market, the pandemic accentuated the prevalent skilled labour force shortages in several sectors, such as health care, industry, and skilled crafts and trades. In 2022, Luxembourg attracted 47% of its workforce as cross-border commuters from neighbouring countries. The strong economic recovery was paired with an increase in job vacancies (+ 35% between March 2021 and 2022).

The [National Implementation Plan \(NIP\)](#) for Luxembourg was published in 2022 and outlines the country's VET priorities until 2030, in line with the European priorities and recommendations as outlined in the [Council Recommendation on VET](#) and the [Osnabrück Declaration](#). The NIP strongly builds on the development of the future national skills strategy as its most prominent deliverable, involving stakeholders in high-level exchanges and consultations.

This 2023 report provides an update on key developments in initial and continuing VET in Luxembourg, aligning with the NIP priorities with the following six EU priority areas for VET.

- (a) agile and resilient VET, adaptive to labour market needs,
- (b) flexible VET, providing progression and lifelong learning opportunities,
- (c) innovative and excellent VET,
- (d) attractive VET, based on modern and digitalised provision,
- (e) inclusive VET promoting equal opportunities,
- (f) VET underpinned by quality assurance.

Further, this report analyses the involvement of VET stakeholders, evaluates the progress made to date, and identifies the challenges associated with putting the NIP proposed initiatives into practice.

In line with this overarching approach, the NIP announces some main measures which are already in the design or pilot phase. These measures focus on increasing the participation of low-skilled adults in training, enlarging the training offer for basic skills, i.e. literacy in the country's languages, digital literacy and transversal skills. Further measures which are set out in the NIP pursue the objective to foster the labour market integration of vulnerable and low-skilled adult migrants via a tailored offer of intense language training combined with relevant professional training; or to attract young talents and adults wishing to change careers, regardless of their prior educational background, or increasing highly specialised digital training programmes in coding, blockchain, cybersecurity and design thinking, which are in high demand by employers.

In initial vocational education and training (IVET), the NIP sets out general objectives that follow the Ministry of Education and VET stakeholders' policy priorities:

- (a) intensify the use of available data on labour market skills demand to inform IVET

- curricula updates or new VET programmes;
- (b) introduce an offer of small [supplementary certifications](#) in demand on the labour market, as part of regular curricula;
- (c) continue to implement the EQAVET framework, based on quality criteria, especially with regard to improving timeliness of data provision on learners' participation in VET to inform governance.

With regard to the objective to prevent early leaving, a reform of increasing the age of compulsory schooling from 16 to 18 years, including IVET, was adopted by the parliament in 2023.

CHAPTER 2. Main policy developments in 2023

2.1 Agile and resilient VET, adaptive to labour market needs

In February 2023, the OECD published the results of the assessment process in the '[Skills Strategy Luxembourg - Assessment and Recommendations](#)' report. The OECD study can be considered as an important milestone in line with Osnabrück Declaration priority 2.1, "Develop national skills strategies for quality and inclusive lifelong learning with all relevant national, regional, sectoral stakeholders and social partners. The report consists of findings on skills in Luxembourg and recommendations adapted to the specific situation of the country and is organised around four priority areas:

- (a) providing labour market relevant adult learning opportunities;
- (b) guiding and incentivising skills choices;
- (c) attracting and retaining talent to fill skills shortages;
- (d) strengthening the governance of skills data.

Besides, in 2023 the Public Employment Service (PES) published two new sectoral skills studies, which are based on published online job vacancies and focus on the [Social Work Activities](#) and [Health and Care](#) sectors. These sectoral studies contribute to skills anticipation, combining a big-data-driven approach with quantitative and qualitative analyses. The measure targets jobseekers and employers, as well as sectoral federations.

The Ministry of Education has continued in 2023 to implement the provision of small [supplementary certifications](#) as an agile means to adapt IVET curricula to changing skills requirements. The standardised certifications (e.g. SAP, KNX, ICDL, Safety handling of climate-hazardous gases etc.) are integrated into the regular IVET curricula. The micro-credentials are issued by accredited schools. The measure allows to swiftly implement occupation-specific and green skills to facilitate the digital and green transition.

2.2 Flexible VET, providing progression and lifelong learning opportunities

In line with the EU priority of CVET programmes designed to be 'adaptable to labour market, sectoral or individual up- or reskilling needs' and in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights' targets to increase adult participation in training, the measures set out in [the new coalition agreement \(2023-28\)](#) set a strong focus to foster participation in CVET via incentives, introduce new [up- and reskilling programmes](#) for both employed and unemployed tailored to skills demand, improve guidance provision for adults and foster participation of low-skilled

adults.

The Ministry of Education inaugurated the *Université Populaire* ('UniPop') in April 2021. As one of the measures of the NIP, the UniPop is an important body to increase the participation of lifelong learning. UniPop brings together, on one site, the basic training offer and adult learning opportunities of three public bodies, namely the Luxembourg National Languages Institute (INLL), the up- and reskilling offer of the National Centre for Continuing Vocational Training (CNFPC) on behalf of the PES, and adult education offer dedicated to basic skills, digital literacy as well as personal development by the Ministry of Education's Adult Education Department (SFA). For the school year 2022/23, the INLL recorded 15 259 registrations, which is an increase compared to 15 166 in 2021/22. The general adult education managed by the SFA recorded 23 695 registrations; more than 80% of them are for language courses, reflecting the specific multi-lingual reality of the country and the importance of language skills for labour market integration, especially for migrants.

The [coalition programme for 2023-28](#) confirms that one of the priorities for adult education will be to develop the offer for general culture of the UniPop, in close collaboration with adult education partners. A broader legal framework is planned to be established to support this initiative.

The Ministry of Education inaugurated the [Digital Learning Hub](#) (DLH) in 2022 to support Luxembourg's digital transition and to address the shortage in highly skilled ICT professionals. The DLH offers high-end training programmes to national and cross-border talents, regardless of their qualification(s). Training programmes are offered for coding, blockchain, design thinking and cybersecurity within an innovative learning environment that encourages creativity, autonomy, and peer-to-peer learning. Target groups include talented young adults, regardless of their educational achievement, professionals in employment, jobseekers for IT careers.

In 2023, the DLH launched a new training offer [42 Luxembourg](#), a three-year programme leading to a certificate equivalent to a Bachelor diploma. Candidates were selected during a 25-day selection process building on gamified challenges. 143 students joined the school in February 2024. In total, in 2023, DLH offered 306 courses, in which 3 645 learners took part.

2.3 Innovative and excellent VET

Since 2018, Luxembourg pursues a strategy to introduce coding and computational thinking in school curricula, from an early age, aligning with the EU's priority of including digital skills, which provide strong foundations for resilience, lifelong learning, lifelong employability, social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development. The ministry also supports extra-curricular learning for motivated learners to develop digital competences. Solid investment in digital infrastructure, such as Wi-Fi coverage in all schools, the One-2-One social lease plan programme to equip learners in secondary education with iPads, and free access of all learners to applications via a centralised platform helped minimise school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensured VET as an attractive and modern choice.

In 2023, the secure portal [EduGuichet](#) was launched, offering several additional features and centralising access to all relevant day-to-day procedures for learners and parents, across the formal, non-formal and extra-curricular offer.

Investment in digital infrastructure also continued in 2023 and amounted to a total of EUR 1.8 million. It covered 3D glasses, simulators, GPS-steered agricultural machines, as well as work drones as educational resources; investment in special equipment in secondary schools, including VET.

To attract learners of both genders to STEM and Digital Sciences, the Ministry of Education has introduced in 2018 coding and computational thinking in primary schools.

From the school year 2022/23, 'Digital sciences' were generally introduced as a subject in all classes of the first year of lower secondary education, including VET, after a pilot phase in 2021/22 in 18 secondary schools. In the 2023/24 school year, the digital sciences course was extended by one year, in lower secondary education, including VET programmes; as of the school year 2024/25, they will cover the entire lower secondary cycle.

In order to support the implementation of 'Digital Science' in education, the [national training institute for teachers](#) (IFEN) is offering [continuing professional development courses tailored to teachers](#). In 2023, IFEN expanded its training offer to include training on artificial intelligence.

2.4 Attractive VET, based on modern and digitalised

Awakening young people's interest in vocational training and the related trades and professions, is high on the agenda of the Ministry of Education. To attract learners to VET, in April 2023 the [YEP!](#) (Youth, Education, Professionals) National School Fair opened its doors to about 6 000 learners from the final classes of primary education and lower secondary education. Nine immersive professional universes, ranging from Technology to Health and Beauty Care, Arts, Music and Literature, Construction, Restaurants, Industry and Mechanics, Education, Commerce to Agriculture were organised by the VET Department of the Ministry of Education (SFP) and the National Centres for Continuing Vocational Training (CNFPC), in cooperation with secondary schools and professional chambers. They offered hands-on workshops, to allow learners to try out and discover real-scale machines, e.g. an aircraft motor, simulators for welding and logistics, virtual 3D glasses, robots, cooking, painting, etc. to introduce them in a playful way to the various occupations, as an opportunity to confirm or discover their passions and orient their choices. The school fair also encompassed school guidance, shows and workshops by the Department for Coordination of Educational and Technological Research and Innovation (SCRIPT) of the Ministry of Education, as well as the [Léierplazendag](#), an initiative by the PES to allow learners (including adults) to find an apprenticeship placement, offering speed-dating with employers.

In October 2023, the first edition of the week of robotics ([Robotikwoch](#)) took place to promote robotics and smart technologies. It was organised by the SCRIPT in collaboration with the CNFPC and featured 15 educational workshops and demonstrations in the field of robotics. More than 40 classes, nearly 1 000 learners, from primary and secondary schools, took part in the event. One afternoon was dedicated to smart technologies training: six secondary schools offered training in intelligent technologies to young people, parents and the general public.

2.5 Inclusive VET promoting equal opportunities

On 20 July 2023, the law extending compulsory education from currently 16 to 18 years old was adopted and will come into force in 2026. This law constitutes an important part of the strategy to tackle school dropouts and youth unemployment, allowing each learner to benefit from longer schooling, thus increasing their chances of success in the labour market.

To anticipate the effects and accompany the reform, Socio-Professional Integration Centres (*Centres d'insertion socio-professionnelle, CISP*) building on the infrastructure and expertise of providers in the social sector, has been announced in May 2022. The main distinctive features of the CISP are that they establish a national framework that enables early detection of absenteeism, reinforces guidance for both families and the pupils at risk of dropout, and enables a formal collaboration between the school sector and youth and family assistance sector. For VET specifically, it establishes a competence framework that introduces a common standard in assessment learning outcomes of alternative workplace learning, that can lead to micro-certifications. For early leavers from VET above the age of 16, 'RECONNECT' classes are creating an alternative educational scheme, combining professional training, upskilling in maths and languages, and reinforced socio-emotional accompaniment. The training allows learners to acquire, upon an individualised training plan, professional skills of individual IVET modules that are certified, depending on their individual progress, via official micro-certifications. Certified modules are stackable and have lifelong validity. They are recognised once the learner continues a VET programme, immediately or later in their pathway via adult apprenticeship. This measure is an important step towards flexible learning pathways. In September 2023, a new CISP was opened, expanding the available places to 110.

As from September 2023, an IVET offer for refugees (18-25 year-old) who cannot access regular IVET due to a lack of language skills, was introduced by the Ministry of Education. In 2023/24, six CCP programmes (EQF 2) were offered. They combine intensive professional language training of 20 hours per week and practical training at the CNFPCs premises. The programmes, leading to a regular CCP certificate, aim to foster the employability and long-term integration of young non-qualified migrants.

2.6 VET underpinned by quality assurance

In response to the priority to further implement the EQAVET framework, Luxembourg has chosen a system level approach to improve the availability of administrative data for monitoring purposes. Following the 4th [EQAVET peer review on 'Using administrative data to monitor the quality of initial VET in Luxembourg'](#) held in Luxembourg in October 2022, the VET Department of the Ministry of Education established an action plan for the development of a data-based quality monitoring in the VET system. In 2023, the pilot data set and a longitudinal analysis on a set of indicators for a group of occupations was presented to the VET steering committee and was validated. The analysis underpins the reform of two IVET programmes, and the approach is currently scaled up for other occupations under revision.

CHAPTER 3. Involvement of VET stakeholders in the implementation of policy developments related to NIP

In 2020, the tripartite coordination committee (*Comité de coordination tripartite*) introduced the ‘*Skillsdësch*’ ⁽¹⁾, which periodically united principal high level partners, i.e. the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Education, Childhood and Youth and Minister of Higher Education, employers’ and employees’ representatives, sectoral federations for Skilled Crafts, Industry and Employers federations. Its mission consisted in initiating the process towards a national skills strategy, and identifying overarching national reform measures to be implemented.

For CVET, the national skills strategy is an outstanding process to unite the entire ecosystem to devise a concerted plan.

The [OECD Skills Strategy for Luxembourg](#) was based on a questionnaire sent to relevant institutional partners, written input from main stakeholders and a series of meetings (bilateral interviews, conferences and focus groups), involving 160 actors from the Luxembourgish skills ecosystem.

Three ministries are involved in the implementation of the adult learning and CVET measures relevant for the delivery on the NIP: the Ministry of Education, responsible for IVET and CVET, as well as basic literacy and basic digital literacy training for low-skilled adults; the Ministry of Labour, which is responsible for the training offer implemented by the PES addressed primarily to the unemployed, and the Ministry of Higher Education.

On the level of implementation, for IVET, the professional chambers are involved, by regulation, on all levels. Besides their representation at the VET steering committee (*groupe de pilotage*), trilateral collaboration takes place in the framework of curricula update and review on VET governance and curricular level, each, programme being under the responsibility of the respective professional chamber. In all reported measures concerning IVET, stakeholders are involved by default.

For transversal policy developments concerning national primary and lower secondary education, general academic and technical education (nationally understood as ‘classical’ and ‘general education’), alternative schooling as well as for the equipment and resources of schools and national training centres, the Ministry of Education is the only responsible body; however, by regulation, the professional chambers and employees’ chamber are officially consulted during the legislative procedures for each law project prior to the vote at the parliament.

CHAPTER 4. Achievements of implementation

The publication of the OECD report in February 2023, presenting assessment and recommendations for the elaboration of a [national skills strategy](#) is a milestone in the implementation of the NIP. The government is examining the recommendations closely,

⁽¹⁾ The *Skillsdësch* is part, as a key reform measure, of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (2021-23, updated in January 2023). In the 2023 National Reform Plan (European semester), under Pillar of social rights 1 A: ‘Skilling, Reskilling et Upskilling’ the government commits to settle a monitoring committee between the relevant ministries and social partners during the elaboration of the National Skills Strategy.

supplementing them with additional studies and analyses to translate them into concrete actions to be discussed with the national stakeholders.

According to the publication of the assessment of the legislative period 2018-23, the education system, including VET, has kept pace with developments in society. New vocational training programmes have been created and others have been modernised to meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving skills demand, and the diversity of learners from various language backgrounds. With regard to adapting VET to the green and digital transition, three [new IVET programmes](#) have been introduced (DAP smart materials and electro-technologies (EQF 3), and a [DT electromobility](#), EQF 4). In order to swiftly adapt programmes to skills demand and labour market requirements, each year, [new supplementary certifications](#) are introduced in IVET programmes.

To address school dropout, the age of compulsory schooling has been extended from 16 to 18 (entry into force in 2026), accompanied by the further development of centres for socio-professional integration.

The Ministry of Education has set up measures to respond to the advent of digital technology, both by adapting the content and creating new programmes but also by equipping the learners and education staff (digital science in lower secondary education, *Medienkompass*, One2one tablet lease plan). The Digital Learning Hub has embraced 42 Luxembourg School, broadening its offer to train high-end IT professionals.

To support and strengthen lifelong learning, the *Université Populaire* (UniPop) has been initiated.

Green skills have been integrated into IVET programmes and new IVET programmes have been introduced to [support the green transition](#). Moreover, the CVET training offer for green skills at the National Centres for Continuing Vocational Training (CNFPC) has been broadened to help ensure that the workforce is equipped to address environmental challenges and that individuals are skilled to tackle the twin, green and digital, transition.

CHAPTER 5. Challenges of implementation

Alongside the strong achievements, some challenges persist to date. Due to the small size of the country, and the specificity that approximately half of the working population are cross-border workers, most of them not being trained in the national system, comparative large scale European surveys (Adult education Survey and Labour Force Survey) which are focusing on the resident population, are not accurately reflecting the state-of-play. Comprehensive data on skills are currently not available on national level. Hence, a consistent data governance strategy is one of the priorities to be addressed by the OECD recommendation informing the [national skills strategy](#).

Some issues mentioned in the NIP with regard to differences in achievement in IVET, due to the country's multilingualism, remain. This applies especially for the school attainment of children and young people from different language and socio-economic backgrounds, which are addressed via long-term-oriented measures. Significant efforts and progress have been made by the Ministry of Education to introduce a public school offer in French, German and English, from primary to upper secondary education levels (EQF 0-5), leading to international Baccalaureate, A-levels, and Abitur and to enlarge the VET programme offer available in

French or English instead of German as teaching languages. Despite that, the positive impact of these long implementation might take years until it will be reflected in the statistics.

CHAPTER 6. Conclusions

Luxembourg has made progress in its effort to align with the priorities set in the Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration, with a focus on continuous improvement of the skills system.

The aforementioned recent developments in terms of providing guidance opportunities, adapting and/or creating relevant training programmes, making IVET programmes more attractive, and dealing with the digital and green transitions provide solid evidence of Luxembourg's progress.

The challenges of the multilingualism on the IVET outcomes and inclusiveness are addressed through the increased diversity of programme languages.

Skills development in CVET is high on the political agenda. Supported by the OECD-led study and based on nationwide stakeholder consultations, the upcoming [nationalskills strategy](#), will provide a roadmap for creating a unified vision to address skills shortages and provide its workforce with the necessary skills to support the twin transition and the new skills requirements, strengthening data-driven decision-making and enhancing regional cooperation. To implement this vision, foreseen developments will focus on promoting in-company CVET training (e.g. through a development of the existing incentives, currently under analysis), enhancing the transparency and accessibility of CVET options (e.g. through improving personalised guidance), as well as expanding the training offer of digital, transversal, and green transition-related skills provided by public training providers.

In the area of IVET Luxembourg will continue to:

- (e) further develop data-based analyses and surveys of sectoral skill needs for curricula revision, jointly with the professional chambers;
- (f) introduce small [supplementary certifications](#) into standard IVET curricula;
- (g) enhance the implementation of the EQAVET framework;
- (h) introduce micro-certifications to support flexible pathways for vulnerable learners at risk of dropout.

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