



CEDEFOP
European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training



Financing adult learning The role of public funding

20 and 21 October 2025
Thessaloniki, Greece

cedefop.europa.eu

Parallel working session: Digital platforms

One of the barriers preventing adults from participation in education and training is lack of awareness of and difficulty in accessing suitable, high-quality learning opportunities. Digital platforms bringing together a broad range of learning offers may help to overcome this barrier. The Council Recommendation on ILAs recommends Member States to establish and keep updated a national public registry of quality training, career guidance and validation opportunities that are eligible for funding from ILAs. Moreover, the Recommendation calls for an accessible single national digital portal which would allow and help individuals to access their individual learning account and navigate the registry easily (while using secure electronic authentication).

Some countries have implemented or are developing ILA portals. French ‘Mon Compte Formation’ is an example of the portal supporting implementation of a fully-fledged, large-scale ILAs, serving as a one-stop-shop for both learners and providers. More recently, Lithuania has developed a national digital portal ‘KURSUOK’ which also provides a platform for learners and providers.

In several EU countries¹, a plethora of (well-developed) portals/databases providing information on/access to learning, guidance, validation and funding opportunities currently exist. They may operate at national, regional or local level, cover specific education sector or address specific target group. A national ILA platform would likely need to build upon or integrate such existing datasets and digital services. However, integrating existing diverse datasets and digital services may not be without challenges, it may be costly, and it strongly depends on the quality of existing data.

Drawing on various countries’ experiences, it is possible to identify some essential functionalities/services (‘minimum viable solution’) required for an effective and user-friendly portal supporting implementation of ILA system and serving its primary stakeholders: learners, education and training providers and administrators. But it is also advisable to consider future potential advancements, i.e. in terms of inclusion of other functionalities/services to achieve ‘optimal solution’ as well as integration of national ILA portals within common EU frameworks² and with national and international standards.

¹ Including countries covered by Cedefop ILA study, such as Austria, Germany, Ireland.

² For example, the Council Recommendation on ILAs states that single national portal should be established in line with the principles of the Commission communication of 23 March 2017 on a European

Many of these issues have also been recently explored in-depth by the RALExILA project³, the results of which will also be presented during this session.

The workshop participants will be specifically invited to discuss the following questions:

- To what extent, in your country, are the existing educational datasets/registries and digital authentication systems sufficient for building an ILA system, or rather they would need to be adapted and/or new ones would need to be set-up?
- What are the governance implications of utilising existing digital services and database for an ILA platform, given their diverse institutional ownership and administration arrangements?
- To what extent, in your country, could a digital ILA platform build upon/integrate existing guidance, validation and quality assurance services?

Interoperability Framework. It also invites Member States to make registry compatible with the European Learning Model.

³ <https://ralexila.eu/>



CEDEFOP
European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training



Financing adult learning The role of public funding

20 and 21 October 2025
Thessaloniki, Greece

cedefop.europa.eu

Parallel working session: Funding and Governance

Successful implementation of a novel-type, full-scale ILAs in line with the Council Recommendation will require mobilising substantial and stable funding in the long run. The funding needs to be earmarked not only for a (demand-side) funding instrument, but also for strengthening the 'enabling framework' - career guidance and validation, paid training leave, national registry of quality training and other areas (e.g. professionalisation of teaching staff) requiring improvement to ensure ILA effectiveness.

To provide adequate level of funding for ILA, it will be necessary to secure stable (additional) funding streams. These are needed to guarantee the funding for an established individual entitlement even during economic crises or during the phases where higher than expected numbers of adults decide to use their entitlements. The stable source of funding will also be essential where accumulation of yearly entitlements over longer stretches of time will be allowed for, as this may include strongly growing proportions of entitlements used over time.

The workshop will review different potential sources of funding for ILAs. It will also discuss methods and relevant factors for estimating the likely size of the budget of a fully operational ILA system. To this end, a basic approach for ILA budget projection will be outlined, also, to the extent possible, taking into account the main ILA features such as the level of individual entitlement, eligible group, education and training supported. This will be complemented by a reflection on financial implications of different specific ILA designs, i.e. how elements such as accumulation, co-payment, occasional top-ups, may determine the level of funding required.

The discussion will centre around, building on the experience of full-fledged ILA schemes in France and Singapore as well as the on-going pilots in the EU, on the overall costs involved as well as factors that may affect them, the importance of ensuring efficient pricing (i.e. avoiding price inflation), the potential sources of funding as well as governance arrangements.

The piloting exercise of ILA in Cyprus will provide illustrative example of how national financial resources can be combined with the EU funds to finance ILAs. Emphasis will be given to the source of national funding, namely the Human Resource Development Training Fund operating at national level, the main income of which comes from a training levy based on company payroll. The tripartite governance of the authority responsible for the use of the collected funds and the method for determining the level of funding devoted to ILAs (piloting) will also be explained. During the small-group discussions, the participants are expected to reflect on:

- What is the expected size of the annual cost of fully operational ILA in their country
- How this cost compares to the current levels of public expenditure on adult learning
- What are the potential sources of funding that could be set-up to finance ILA



CEDEFOP
European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training



Financing adult learning The role of public funding

20 and 21 October 2025
Thessaloniki, Greece

cedefop.europa.eu

Parallel working group: Relevance and quality

The relevance and high-quality of services eligible for ILAs - adult learning/training provision, lifelong guidance and validation opportunities - are vital to ILAs successful implementation. To this end, there is a need for a comprehensive quality assurance system.

According to [Cedefop terminology of European education and training policy](#), ‘quality assurance in education and training’ is defined as any activity implemented to ensure that education and training (content of programmes, curricula, assessment and validation of learning outcomes, etc.) meet the quality requirements expected by stakeholders. It includes activities related to planning, implementation, education and training evaluation, and review. This definition is in line with the [European quality assurance reference framework for vocational education and training \(EQAVET\)](#), a cornerstone for supporting quality assurance in VET across Europe.

With the increasing shift to learning outcomes and the expansion of national qualification systems which allow qualifications to be acquired through diverse learning pathways, quality assurance of learning provision alone cannot be the only element underpinning the awarding of qualifications. In this context, the [2017 Council Recommendation on the European Qualifications framework for lifelong learning](#) (EQF recommendation) in its Annex IV presents common principles for quality assurance in higher education and VET for qualifications with an EQF level, to strengthen trust in their quality and level.

Furthermore, according to the Council Resolution on a new [European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030](#), quality assurance in adult learning entails continuous monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of provision, with a focus on outcomes and recognition of prior learning. Ensuring quality requires both internal and external mechanisms to safeguard standards, maintain relevance, and strengthen trust in adult education systems. In addition, [Cedefop’s study on CVET in Europe: the way ahead](#) stresses that quality in CVET also depends on robust guidance and validation processes.

Building on this, recent policy documents, including the [Council Recommendation on VET](#), the [Osnabrück Declaration](#), the [Union of Skills](#) and the [Herning Declaration](#), stress the need for a strong culture of quality assurance in VET, particularly in CVET, as it drives competitiveness, innovation, and growth. [Cedefop highlights](#) the growing emphasis on lifelong learning - especially upskilling and reskilling - and will examine how changes in the CVET landscape, such as increasing modularisation, the use of learning outcomes,

and the proliferation of programmes and providers, influence the way quality assurance is conceptualised and implemented, including within ILAs.

The workshop will explore concepts and frameworks for quality assurance in adult learning - drawing on EU policy documents and Cedefop's work - with a particular focus on the dimensions most relevant to ILAs. It will also examine the French experience with the *Compte Personnel de Formation (CPF)*, highlighting the systems and measures introduced to ensure the relevance and quality of training provision financed through CPF and to prevent fraud and misuse of public funding.

Workshop participants will be invited to share insights on the quality assurance arrangements in their own countries and reflect on which elements merit greater attention in the context of ILAs. They will also consider what additional aspects could be considered to develop a comprehensive and robust quality assurance system that effectively supports the delivery of ILAs.

The participants will discuss the following questions:

- To what extent could the ILA system in your country build on existing quality assurance mechanisms? What additional elements might be needed?
- In your country, how is it (or could be) decided which training programmes should be eligible for funding through ILAs?
- What measures are/should be in place in your country to prevent fraud and misuse of public funding in the ILA scheme?



CEDEFOP
European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training



Financing adult learning The role of public funding

20 and 21 October 2025
Thessaloniki, Greece

cedefop.europa.eu

Parallel working group: Training leave and income replacement

The availability of training leave is a fundamental support for participation in adult learning. The [Council Recommendation on individual learning accounts](#) ‘supports the implementation of paid training leave’ as a key component of the ‘enabling framework’¹. ‘Member States are recommended to introduce paid training leave or income replacement provisions or review the adequacy of exiting provisions’.

Challenges involved in aligning education with work schedules constitute a significant impediment to participation in individually initiated adult learning. For more extended learning activities, the pressure of learning tasks alongside full commitments at work and other adult responsibilities can easily become overwhelming. Providing time off from gainful work is therefore a key strategy for promoting participation in adult learning, formal and non-formal alike.

Training leave may be short, covering only a few days, or may result in an extended relief from work duties, spanning several months or even years. For shorter training leaves, employers may either continue wage payment (paid leave) or interrupt it (unpaid leave). In the case of paid leave, employers may receive a contribution to the incurred wage costs from various sources. For longer leaves, employers typically discontinue wage payments; however, individuals may receive wage-replacement payments or contributions to subsistence costs from public sources.

Irrespective of the type of training leave – short or extended, paid or unpaid – it is crucial that employees retain their (accrued) employment rights beyond wages and the right to return to their job. In some countries, requesting training leave is an individual employment right that the employer cannot deny, while in other countries, agreeing to a leave depends on the employer’s discretion.

The workshop will explore the variety of, and often long-standing, traditions of short and extended, paid and unpaid training leave arrangements across the EU-27. Emphasis will be given to recent changes in the policy area across the Member States, including cases of incremental change and wholesale reform. This EU overview will be complemented with Danish example of implementing paid training leave where employers receive a

¹ ‘Enabling framework’ refers to complementary policies (including paid training leave, career guidance and validation opportunities) that ‘promote effective take-up of individual training entitlement’.

partial reimbursement of the incurred wage costs. Alternatively, in case wage payment is disrupted, the employee can claim a wage replacement payment. Moreover, the leave is linked to the Danish approach of public funding for CVET (the so-call AMU system (Arbejdsmarkedsuddannelser)).

Workshop participants will be invited to share their insights into the respective arrangements in their country. They will look into the challenges involved, which may limit uptake, cause equity issues, or make scheme costs unsustainable under existing public funding arrangements. The workshop will also explore what is required to make training leave an effective, widely used arrangement.

The participants will discuss the following questions:

- What are the main limitations of existing training leave arrangements in your country (e.g. coverage, duration, income replacement, need of employer agreement etc.)?
- What factors may inhibit the actual take-up of training leave even when the arrangements are relatively generous and how these barriers could be overcome?
- If in place, how do the schemes providing subsidies or wage replacement work for unemployed or inactive people? What challenges are involved in aligning the strands of support for different target groups?
- What are the forms of financial support for longer training programmes (where the wage payment by employer is usually discontinued)?