

1. Brief information on the national context and baseline

Belgium is a federal State comprising three Regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels) and three Communities (Flemish, French, and German-speaking). Citizens can access three different vocational education and training (VET) systems: Flemish (BE-FL), French-speaking (BE-FR) and German-speaking (BE-DE). Brussels is a specific case, as both BE-FR and BE-FL systems coexist. Despite multiple authorities being responsible for education, training and employment, as well as diverging VET systems, there is political consensus on specific issues. At all levels, VET policies involve social partners in a tradition of social dialogue.

This National Implementation Plan focuses on Flanders. The Flemish Government oversees education and training and employment in Flanders.

The VET system in Flanders

Compulsory education covers learners aged 5 to 18. VET starts at age 14 as school-based programmes (nationally referred to as full-time education) and from age 15 onwards it is also offered in the form of apprenticeships combining company and school-based learning. These are organised by schools or centres and based on a contract with the company involved. VET programmes last four years and comprise:

- technical programmes, which combine technical-theoretical classes and practical lessons. They lead to an upper secondary education diploma including a VET qualification;
- vocational programmes that are more practice-based and aim at direct employment. After successful completion of an additional year (follow-up vocational programme), an upper secondary education diploma is awarded.

Vocational and technical programmes in compulsory learning are now being reformed and aim at a dual track, offered next to non-dual learning. Awaiting the full implementation of the reform towards dual learning, there is still an apprenticeship scheme organised by the regional training providers.

Adults over 18 can choose among a wide range of programmes offered by the formal adult education system and by public and private VET providers, including entrepreneurial training programmes.

At **post-secondary level**, one-year specialisation programmes are offered as follow-up technical programmes, as well as a three-year nursing (HBO5) associate degree programme.

An upper secondary education diploma is necessary to enter **tertiary education**. People who have failed to get this diploma can obtain it via formal adult education programmes later. An exception is the two-year short-cycle programmes (two years, 33% WBL) which can be accessed by VET programme graduates. Professional bachelor programmes (180 credits) are another profession-oriented programme offered in Flanders; graduates can progress to a master's degree after following a one-year transition programme. Higher education is accessible to adults either by full-time pathways, part-time pathways or distance learning.

Public services organise **vocational training** for jobseekers, employees and entrepreneurs. This leads to partial or full professional qualifications, or relates to specific subject areas, such as language learning. It is offered by SYNTRA (for entrepreneurs) and by the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB), which also organises some training in cooperation with public or private VET providers.

More detailed information on VET in Belgium, including a chart of VET in Flanders can be found on [the Cedefop website](#) or on the website of [Refernet Belgium](#).

Professional qualifications and the common framework

In Flanders, at the regional level, a team from the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB) is in charge of the main tool concerning the **definition of professional profiles**: the web-based database 'Competent', which is thus the base used in the anticipation of skill needs. The professional profiles are made on the basis of labour market information obtained from classical monitoring and artificial intelligence, and in consultation with sectors. The employment service publishes each year a report on developments in the employment market and inadequacies between supply and demand in jobs. At sub-regional level, the Recognised Regional Collaboration Associations and the Regional Economic and Social Consultation Committees collect various data to study the specificities of the employment market and its requirements. Moreover, the Steunpunt Werk Survey Institute is responsible for quantitative and qualitative supervision of the employment market and is set up to direct Flemish labour market policy.

In answer to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, the Flemish Parliament approved the **decree on the qualification structure** in 2009, the Flemish qualification structure (Vlaamse Kwalificatiestructuur) consists of eight levels and offers a classification of qualifications recognised by the Government of Flanders. A qualification is a completed and graded set of competencies for which people can obtain a certificate recognised by the Government of Flanders. There are two types of qualifications: a professional and an educational qualification.

A **professional qualification** is a completed and graded set of competencies with which a person can practise a profession. People can acquire professional qualifications through education and other training providers or through a procedure for the recognition of acquired competences (EVC). A professional qualification is established on the basis of a professional qualification file. The Competent database, used by the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB) forms the primary reference framework for this. The labour market actors describe the competencies needed to be able to exercise a certain profession. The competent service of the Government of Flanders, the Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Allowances (AHOVOKS), coordinates the preparation of professional qualification files and organises their validation and grading.

Educational qualifications are sets of competencies with which people can function in society, start further studies and/or perform professional activities. Educational qualifications can only be acquired through education. Educational qualifications that aim to lead to the labour market are substantively based on the competences of one or more professional qualifications.

On the 14th of March 2019 the Flemish Parliament approved a **decree on common principles about the quality assurance in VET offered outside formal education but based on a professional qualification description that is formally linked to the Flemish Qualifications Framework (VKS)**. The decree prescribes the terms for certifying professional qualifications by regulating the conditions for quality control. Every policy area can develop a quality assurance system for vocational training programmes that should respect the common conditions. Those are:

- use the jointly defined quality assurance framework;
- create an objective and neutral quality control organisation and procedure;
- audit every training at least once every six years.

The scope of the decree is covering all the vocational training programmes offered outside formal education but relying on the professional qualifications standard. Vocational education is subject to the quality control by the Education Inspectorate. The jointly defined quality assurance framework is aligned with the quality assurance framework of the Education Inspectorate.

On the 19th of July 2019 the Flemish Government approved the **executive decree in the policy area of Employment and Professional Formation** allowing private and public organisations to organise and certify professional qualifications (Kwaliteitstoezichtbesluit voor de Beleidsvelden Werkgelegenheid en Professionele Vorming van 19 juli 2019). The quality assurance of vocational training programs and RAC-procedures, organized by public or private partners within the regulations of the common quality framework is coordinated by the Flemish Social Inspection and executed together with the Flemish Public Employment Service. The Education Inspectorate will participate in the quality control de first three years to share their expertise.

On the 26th of April 2019, the **decree on the recognition of acquired competences was approved**. This created a common framework for the assessment and certification of acquired competences. It is the Flemish answer to the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The combination of these elements is meant to align the labour market on the one hand and education and training on the other hand. The common framework enhances lifelong learning and mobility on the labour market.

Reforms in VET: dual learning

Since 2018, with the decree on dual learning and the start-up phase, vocational programmes and technical in compulsory learning are being reformed, aiming at a dual track, offered next to non-dual learning. In dual learning, you combine learning in a company with learning at a dual learning provider: a school for full-time secondary education, a centre for part-time education, a Syntra campus or a school for special secondary education - education type 3 or 4.

Awaiting the full implementation of the reform towards dual learning, there is still an apprenticeship scheme organised by the regional training providers. In these apprenticeship programmes, learners follow general and technical courses at school or at a training centre (one or two days per week).

The other days (three or four) are for work-based learning in a company. Graduates receive a vocational qualification and an upper secondary education diploma. These programmes are also accessible to young adults up to age 25. This will, in time, be included in the new dual learning system.

On the **25th of May 2022 the decree enabling dual learning in adult education** was adopted by the Flemish Government. Starting from September 2022 Adult Education Centres (CVO) can offer dual tracks (50% of workbased learning) leading to a professional qualification.

Pilot projects in higher education explore the possibilities of dual learning.

Flemish Resilience Plan (Vlaamse Veerkracht)

To recover from Corona, the Flemish government elaborated an investment plan, including investments in education and employment. The corona crisis accelerated the need for digitalisation and participation in lifelong learning.

This resulted in several plans: Edusprong, Voorsprong, Digisprong, Van Kwetsbaar naar Weerbaar and Alle Hens aan Dek.

Edusprong focuses on stimulating lifelong learning and therefore wants to renew and improve the offer in formal adult education. Special attention is paid to digital competencies and (professional) qualifications. It aims to increase people's chances of succeeding in the labour market.

Voorsprong (head start) aims at higher education and wants to expand lifelong learning and stimulate digitalisation.

Digisprong aims at the overall digitalisation in Flemish compulsory education, to improve its quality.

Van Kwetsbaar naar Weerbaar wants to tackle learning disadvantage caused by the corona pandemic and to improve mental health in education. Special attention is given to technical and vocational secondary education. This is linked to the recovery plan "from vulnerable to resilient", with a focus on VET infrastructure and digitalisation.

Alle Hens aan Dek focuses on relance and transformation of the Flemish labor market. The plan elaborates three priorities: a formation and career offensive, an inclusive and human digitalisation and a strategy for sustainable employment for everybody.

Other initiatives affecting VET

A lot of initiatives of the Flemish government affect VET, even if they have a broader scope. These initiatives are linked to European initiatives all aiming at providing the best education and training for the (European) citizens and equal opportunities and access to the labour market.

In Flanders, "general" initiatives have been taken around:

- STEM
- Lifelong Learning
- Modernisation of secondary education (based on key competences)
- Teacher shortage

- Infrastructure with the Flemish Technological Centres (RTCs)
- Flemish Youth Work plan
- Green skills roadmap

2. Challenges and general objectives of the plan

Main challenges

The main policy initiatives and reforms in Flanders are linked to 5 themes: promoting lifelong learning, strengthening dual learning, reducing early school leaving and activating NEETs, fostering a stimulating learning climate in labour market-oriented education, enhancing innovation and digitalisation. These 5 themes are closely related to the European priorities when it comes to VET, as expressed in the European Semester, the EU skills agenda, the resilience and recovery plans.

Lifelong learning is a major challenge, as participation in adult education and continuing education/training remains comparatively low. According to the Labour Force Survey (EAK), in 2020 8% (per four weeks) of the Flemish population aged 25-64 years participated in formal or non-formal learning for work or private purposes. This puts Flanders below the EU average. People with a high level of education participate significantly more than those with a low level of education. This difference is in Flanders larger than the EU average. To stimulate the participation in lifelong learning, a joint approach is worked out across sectors and policy areas, by setting up a partnership for lifelong learning within the domains of work and education. This should contribute to the synergy and cooperation and make the change to a real learning culture. Special attention is paid to vulnerable groups such as short-skilled employees, who participate far less in lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is pivotal in a quickly changing society and labour market.

Dual learning is an alternative learning path by workbased learning for young people and adults, with the goal of improving their qualifications. It is implemented in compulsory education since 2019 and will start in Adult Education Centres (Centra voor Volwassenenonderwijs) in September 2022. In higher education, pilot projects explore the possibilities of dual learning.

The number of **early school leavers** in Flanders dropped, and is at about 7,3%, but the particularly stringent Flemish Pact 2020 target has not yet been reached. The NEET rate in Flanders is 6%. Efforts to reduce the number of early school leavers are being stepped up through reforms such as the modernisation of secondary education, the introduction of dual learning in compulsory education and the quality of education. The policy areas Work, Education and Welfare work together to try to guide early school leavers and NEETs to a job or a qualifying pathway.

Increasing the **attractiveness of VET** remains a challenge. This concerns both the image of VET and the need to stay up to date concerning infrastructure. Within the modernisation of secondary education, particular attention is paid to the link between vocational qualifications and attainment targets so that VET prepares very well for the labour market, but also pays enough attention to basic education. But also, other actions, such as investments in infrastructure, the STEM action plan and a general attention to quality of education and training should make VET a plausible pathway.

The efforts for the attractiveness of VET are closely related to **innovation and digitalisation**. The labour market is changing at a very high pace. Sustainability and the switch to a greener economy and industry become increasingly important. And the corona pandemic has significantly accelerated digitisation. VET must follow, but this is not always easy, because it needs investments and agility. Recently, a lot of initiatives have started, addressing these challenges, also in the context of the Flemish Resilience Plan. But also, the procedures to revise the professional qualifications and a lot of general policy initiatives want to create possibilities to constantly renew and revise VET pathways and implement the latest innovations.

Objectives of the Flemish Implementation Plan

The Flemish Implementation Plan consist of 14 main measures, that all are to greater or lesser extent linked to the above-mentioned challenges and are embedded in the reforms and initiatives mentioned in the first part of this report.

Together these measures cover alle the **building blocks**, based on the 6 objectives of the **Council Recommendation on VET** and the 4 objectives of the **Osnabrück Declaration**.

BLOCK 1 Promoting VET & LLL	BLOCK 2 Increase LLL participation	BLOCK 3 Modernising VET infrastructure	BLOCK 4 Modernising VET offer	BLOCK 5 Teachers, trainers, mentors, SL	BLOCK 6 Transparency, recognition VET qualifications	BLOCK 7 European/international dimension
1 STEM-agenda 2 Incentives	3 Lifelong learning 4 Higher education advancement fund 5 Early school leaving	6 Digitalisation 7 Vulnerable groups	8 Modernising VET 9 Dual learning 10 Innovation	11 Professionalisation and uncerti- fied teachers	12 Validation of vocational training programmes 13 Vocational qualifications and NQF	14 Mobility VET

Building Block 1: *Promoting VET and Lifelong learning*

1 STEM

The STEM-agenda 2030, one of the recent initiatives of the Flemish Government, focuses on a higher intake in STEM courses and careers, on STEM specialists and on the general strengthening of STEM competences in the wider society: “STEM literacy”. This is an initiative to promote VET and Lifelong Learning, but also strengthens key competences in VET.

2 Incentives

The Flemish Government developed incentives in the context of promoting VET and lifelong learning, aiming both at learners and enterprises.

Building Block 2: *Increase Lifelong Learning participation*

3 Lifelong learning (LLL)

A partnership for Lifelong Learning and an action plan should streamline and accelerate the Flemish policy on lifelong learning. Special attention is paid to flexible learning pathways, aiming at reducing barriers for lifelong learning.

The action plan also wants to create equal opportunities, since special attention is paid to accessibility of lifelong learning for low-skilled adults. It also implies guidance within lifelong learning.

4 Higher Education Advancement Fund

The Higher Education Advancement Fund, established within the framework of Flemish Resilience and recovery, wants to make Flemish higher education more digital, flexible and modern. It specifically aims at increasing lifelong learning participation in VET, by examining and developing the possibilities of micro-credentials and more flexible, modular pathways.

Other initiatives linked to higher VET have already been implemented and are not taken into account in this National Implementation Plan. Main example is the [law, adopted by the Flemish Parliament in May 2018, to integrate higher profession-oriented education \(formerly called HBO5 programmes\) into a fully-fledged component of higher education](#) (as short-cycle programmes leading to an associate degree). To stress this difference, the name HBO5 was taken out and replaced by associate degree programmes (HBO programmes). At least one third of the learning period in this type of programme has to be work-based, which is intended to attract additional students who have not yet found their place in higher education. The level of these associate degree programmes is higher than in secondary education, but lower than in a professional bachelor programme (i.e. EQF level 5).

5 Early school leaving

An integrated strategy, involving policy makers at different levels, wants to reduce early school leaving, both by preventing early school leaving and giving early school leavers opportunities in lifelong learning.

In the Flemish Youth Work Plan, transition pathways want to provide more flexibility to keep pupils who are at risk of early leaving in education and training.

Building Block 3: *Modernising VET infrastructure*

6 Digitalisation - Digisprong (“Digital Education Action Plan”)

As part of the Flemish Resilience Plan, the Digital Education Action Plan wants to “jump from ICT backlog to lead”. It pays attention specifically to digital learning resources for practical subjects and labour market-oriented training courses, since for VET, distance learning appeared to be (even) more difficult.

7 Strengthening VET practices (Vulnerable groups)

The Flemish Resilience Plan contains a recovery plan “from vulnerable to resilient”, paying special attention to (ICT) infrastructure for technical and vocational education. It also wants to facilitate digitalisation.

Also, the RTCs bring innovation into VET and play a role within this recovery plan.

Building Block 4: *Modernising VET offer*

8 Modernising IVET

Recently in Flanders, secondary education is being modernised, including VET.

This is implemented gradually and should be finalized on 1/9/2025. It also implies screenings to keep programmes up to date. The combination of both modernizing the offer in VET and a good screening, has to improve the quality of the programmes and increase their attractiveness.

9 Dual learning

The Flemish system of learning and working is being reformed into dual learning. In formal adult education, dual learning will be implemented from September 2022 onwards. In higher education, pilot projects are exploring the possibilities of dual learning.

In general, strengthening workbased learning is a way to reinforce VET, because it makes the link between VET and the labour market stronger.

10 Innovation

The labour market is changing rapidly and constantly. New skills are needed and therefore VET must remain up to date and even innovative. Flemish government therefore supports initiatives with a focus on the innovation in VET, thus striving for a VET system that prepares for the labour market. Also, initiatives to train, retrain and upskill adult employees and jobseekers are valued.

Building block 5: *Teachers, trainers, mentors, school leaders*

11 Professionalisation and uncertified teachers

Flanders faces a growing shortage of teachers and more and more teachers do not have the required qualifications. Actions are put forward to remedy this situation, such as the reform of the initial teacher education, facilitating side-entrance and offering several possibilities for (re)training. Good teachers and trainers are key for good education and training.

Building block 6: *Transparency, recognition VET qualifications*

12 Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) and vocational training programmes

As described in part 1, a decree on the validation of non-formal and informal learning and vocational training programmes is in place. Nevertheless, actions are initiated to promote this way of obtaining qualifications and to make clear how this can help adults in lifelong learning and creating opportunities, both in personal life and on the labour market.

13 Vocational qualifications and the Flemish qualification structure

As described in part 1, a decree on the Flemish Qualification Framework is in place, as well as a decree on a common quality framework.

To fully operationalise this framework, actions are undertaken, and procedures are foreseen to keep the qualifications up to date and capture new skills immediately (cf. **skills intelligence**).

Building Block 7: *European/international dimension*

14 Mobility in VET

Mobility is a way to make VET more attractive and to keep pace with new skills, innovations and developments. Therefore, special efforts are done to promote international learning work experiences, within the context of Erasmus+.

We made the choice to describe seven specific building blocks, although other important blocks were identified when building this NIP. For example:

Equal opportunities, this is paid attention to in all measures. Creating equal opportunities is essential in the Flemish VET policy since it is one of the main drivers for promoting and improving VET. Within each measure, actions are comprised creating opportunities for groups at risk. Of course, some measures do address this more explicitly, for instance **5 Early school leaving** or **6 Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) and vocational training programmes**.

Governance in VET has also been touched upon in all measures: Flanders has a deeply rooted tradition in stakeholder involvement, often, measures are worked out by a partnership between different relevant stakeholders (e.g., partnership lifelong learning, STEM platform, ...) and everything is underpinned by a solid system of quality insurance (e.g., the common quality framework, screening of study programmes, procedures to keep qualifications up to date). The governance of VET is described more in detail in part 4.

Funding and timeline for all these measures are, if possible, clarified in part 3 of this National Implementation Plan.

Statistical indicators:

Objectives until 2025

A. Objectives from the European Agenda for Adult Learning:

- Share of adults aged 25-64 that participated in education and training the last 12 months: 50%
- Share of low-qualified adults aged 25-64 that participated in learning the last 12 months: 30%
- Share of unemployed adults aged 25-64 that recently participated in education and training: 20%

B. VET recommendation indicators

- The share of employed graduates from VET benefit: 82%
- 60% of recent graduates from VET benefit from exposure to work-based learning during their vocational education and training. This also refers to all forms of work-based learning at a workplace, and will also thereby contribute to increased apprenticeship opportunities which can be supported with the Youth Guarantee.
- 8% of learners in VET benefit from a learning mobility abroad

Also useful is the [NEET-indicator](#), presenting the share of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), as a percentage of the total number of young people in the corresponding age group, by gender. This share should decrease.

Objectives Osnabrück Declaration

In reference to the [short-term deliverables 2021-2025](#), the Flemish NIP objectives coincide primarily with the following Osnabruck actions:

- Support the development of digital infrastructure for learning and teaching purposes in VET including artificial intelligence and AR/VR technologies and develop suitable institutional teaching and training arrangements underpinned by adequate infrastructure, especially in remote and rural areas thus ensuring social inclusion
- Reinforce work-based learning and apprenticeships by implementing the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and making use of the on-demand support services, and policy learning initiatives. Strengthen the use of quality and inclusive apprenticeships as a tool to support school/training-to-work transitions of vulnerable groups and to improve citizens' qualification levels.
- Develop national and regional skills intelligence systems including skills anticipation and graduate tracking; enable social partners, decision-makers, stakeholders and providers to adapt and update VET programmes, curricula and guidelines in a timely and effective manner
- Develop national skills strategies for quality and inclusive lifelong learning with all relevant national, regional, sectoral stakeholders and social partners. Besides education and training provision, the national skills strategies may include guidance, incentives for improved skills provision by employers, increased participation by employees, validation of prior learning and targeted public approaches for reaching out to inactive and unemployed individuals, NEETs or individuals at risk of unemployment
- Work with respective stakeholders to develop digital learning solutions supporting access to CVET opportunities and the awarding of CVET credentials and certificates, thereby opening the possibility to obtain full qualifications without neglecting on-the-job CVET and the positive effects of learning conducive work environments

- Support VET teachers, trainers, guidance counsellors, adult educators and mentors by equipping them with the adequate skills and tools for and through digital technologies; in particular through systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, initial and continuous professional development in both school and work-based settings, as well as distance education and training, enabling them to progress in their careers
- Define labour-market-relevant skills for the green transition that are to be incorporated in curricula and VET provision, including basic skills across all sectors and occupations and sector-specific skills in cooperation with the social partners
- Define and support opportunities to enable teaching and training staff, managing teams in VET providers and trainers and mentors in companies to act as multipliers and mediators, in view of increasing digitalisation and sustainability within the provision and management of training programmes
- Support and facilitate the mobility of VET and adult learners, including apprentices, for example by developing support structures and providing information on opportunities in host countries

3. Detailed description of main measures and/or their packages (¹)

Content:

3.1 STEM

3.2 Incentives

3.3 Lifelong learning (LLL)

3.4 Higher Education Advancement Fund

3.5 Early school leaving

3.6 Digitalisation - Digisprong (“Digital Education Action Plan”)

3.7 Strengthening VET practices (Vulnerable groups)

3.8 Modernising IVET

3.9 Dual learning

3.10 Innovation

3.11 Professionalisation and uncertified teachers

3.12 Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) and vocational training programmes

3.13 Vocational qualifications and the Flemish qualification structure

3.14 Mobility in VET

3.1 STEM

¹ A package (of measures) is a coherent set of measures that address a particular challenge, one or several priorities and principles of the VET recommendation and/or objectives of the Osnabrück Declaration.

<p>Rationale/background, challenges addressed</p> <p>In 2010, the Flemish Parliament requested to increase the intake, transfer and outflow of graduates in exact science and engineering disciplines. Therefore, the “Action Plan to promote jobs in mathematics, science and technology” (also called the “STEM action plan” was developed. This action plan has been operational until 2020.</p> <p>In June 2021, the STEM-agenda 2030 has been published, focusing on a higher intake in STEM courses and careers, on STEM specialists and on the general strengthening of STEM competences in the wider society: “STEM literacy”.</p>
<p>Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan</p> <p>- Promoting VET and lifelong learning</p>
<p>Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline</p> <p>1. Sustainable STEM communication in relation to VET With a sustainable and inclusive communication strategy,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attention will be paid to the low and barely increasing participation rate of girls; • societal transitions will be placed in a central position (VET and STEM contribute to these transitions); • high-quality and instructive practices will be disseminated towards the STEM and VET ecosystem; • the players in that ecosystem will be connected and linked more strongly to each other. <p>Every two year, the large group of STEM stakeholders are to be brought together in a bigger State-of-the-STEM network event. The first edition of State-of-the-STEM, planned on the 3rd of October 2022, figures as the kick-off for the STEM-agenda 2030 and the sustainable STEM communication.</p> <p>2. Sustainable STEM monitoring and sustainable STEM research agenda STEM in Flanders is also aiming for a sustainable research and monitoring approach that will point the way to goal-oriented actions in the next years. VET will be given special attention in this context. Sustainable communication, research and monitoring should connect all stakeholders in a sustainable way, with a specific objective to pay particular attention to certain groups, including explicitly the VET students and trainees.</p> <p>3. Strengthening and connecting STEM actions In the period 2010-2020, at the instigation of the STEM action plan, a lot of new(structural) initiatives emerged. In the new STEM agenda 2030, an action programme will be developed. This however will not focus on elaborating new actions, but rather on establishing sustainable interconnections between existing initiatives and actions, hence the emphasis on communication and bringing together all stakeholders.</p>

For the **further operationalisation** of the STEM agenda 2030, advice will be requested to the various stakeholders via the concerned advisory councils, which are VLOR (Vlaamse Onderwijsraad / Flemish Education Council), VARIO (Vlaamse Adviesraad voor Innoveren & Ondernemen / Flemish Advisory Council for Innovation & Enterprise) and SERV (Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen / Social and Economic Council of Flanders).

The **key indicators** for the STEM agenda 2030 are under construction, but will be determined toward mid 2022 by the Flemish STEM-ministers. They will include VET-indicators, concerning intake, transfer and outflow in VET.

In addition to this set of key indicators, that can serve as a kind of STEM dashboard, the STEM research agenda will allow for **additional studies on specific themes**, e.g., on inclusion or on the impact of STEM actions. These studies can enrich the STEM dashboard, investigate the causes of certain trends, provide more qualitative analyses, lead to adjustments of actions or to new actions, ...

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET

- A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges.
- B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET.
- C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand.
- D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills.
- E. VET promotes equality of opportunities.
- F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.

Osnabrück Declaration

- 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET.
- 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation.
- 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET.
- 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)

- initial VET (IVET)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)
Scope (national, regional, local)
<input type="checkbox"/> national <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local
Beneficiaries/target groups
<p>LEARNERS</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young people (15-29 years old) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners with migrant background, including refugees <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners with disabilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult learners (25-64 years old) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unemployed and jobseekers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low-skilled/qualified persons <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or socio-economic disadvantaged position)
<p>EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teachers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trainers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School leaders <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult educators <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guidance practitioners

<p>ENTITIES PROVIDING VET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Companies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VET providers (all kinds) <p>SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)
<p>Responsible ministries/bodies</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flemish Ministry of Education and Training - Flemish Ministry of Work and Social Economy - Flemish public employment service (VDAB) - Flemish Ministry of Economy, Science & Innovation - Flemish Agency for Innovation and Entrepreneurship
<p>Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)</p>
<p>Monitoring on STEM / VET is core business of the respective departments of the Flemish Governments. Possible additional investments regarding monitoring are to be determined. Also, the funding of the STEM communication and the STEM research agenda has not yet been definitively decided.</p>

<h2>3.2 Incentives</h2>
<p>Rationale/background, challenges addressed</p>
<p>Several incentives have been developed in the context of VET and lifelong learning, aiming both at learners and enterprises. By offering (financial) support to individuals and enterprises, Flemish government wants to stimulate lifelong learning, since studies show that in Flanders, participation in lifelong learning is low.</p>
<p>Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan</p>

- Promoting VET and lifelong learning

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

The Flemish government provides several (mainly financial) incentives for learners and enterprises to stimulate lifelong learning. An overview:

- **Starting bonus for learners** ([startbonus](#))

Young persons (minus 18 at the start of the school year for which this bonus is claimed) in work-based learning or dual learning with a contract of alternating training can be eligible for a starting bonus. The bonus is awarded once per school year with a maximum of three times (EUR 500 the first two times and 750 for the third).

- **Internship bonus for companies** ([stagebonus](#))

This is a premium for companies that train young learners (minus 18 at the start of the school year for which this bonus is claimed) in work-based learning or dual learning with a contract of alternating training. The bonus is paid once per school year with a maximum of three times per learner (EUR 500 the first two times and 750 for the third).

In the school years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 the Flemish government decided to provide an internship bonus also for companies that train 18+ learners (EUR 500, two times), as part of the Flemish Resilience plan 'Alle Hens Aan Dek'.

- **Reduction for mentor** ([mentorkorting](#))

Enterprises can receive this reduction if they employ one or more experienced employees as mentor to accompany trainees in VET-programmes and trainees in professional formation by the Flemish PES (reduction of maximum EUR 800 per quarter of a year on the employer's social security contribution which companies pay for the mentor).

- **Target group reductions** ([doelgroepverminderingen](#))

The Flemish target group reductions imply a reduction on the employer's social security contribution which companies pay for employees. One of the target groups are learners in workbased learning namely:

- Low-educated young people
- Apprentices in alternating learning
- Part time working young people in vocational secondary education

- **Flemish training incentives** ([Vlaamse opleidingsincentives](#))

With 3 training incentives, the Flemish government wants to give employees a helping hand when they want to combine work and training.

1) Flemish educational leave (Vlaams Opleidingsverlof): this system aims to encourage employees to enrol in training courses (up to 125 hours per year) to reorient themselves professionally and/or to keep their skills up to date. It allows employees to take leave from work to follow recognised training courses without (or with limited) loss of income. To compensate for the wage costs of employees taking leave, employers can be reimbursed a lump sum.

Initially, Flemish educational leave could only be taken on the initiative of the employee who wanted to enrol in training courses. However, as part of the Flemish Resilience Plan 'Alle Hens aan Dek', a temporary joint decision-making right was made possible for the school year 2021-2022. This experiment allows extra hours (up to another 125 hours a year) and budget to be used to follow training on the joint initiative of the employer and the employee. This gives the employer an explicit role to propose training courses to the employee that can improve his/her future opportunities in the sector or on the Flemish labour market.

2) Flemish training credit (Vlaams Opleidingskrediet): employees working in the private and/or social profit sector, who interrupt their careers to take part in training, can receive a supplementary benefit from the Flemish government, on top of the benefit from the National Employment Office (RVA)

3) Training vouchers : employees and temps in the Flemish or Brussels regions who want to follow a training course to strengthen their position on the labour market, can pay for part of that training with a training

These training incentives aim at labour market or career-oriented training and access to them may be subject to conditions.

The "Guide to Flemish Training Incentives" (Wegwijzer Vlaamse Opleidingsincentives) indicates which Flemish training incentives one is eligible for.

- **Financial support measures** exist, addressing the fact that adults – especially those undertaking formal education and training programmes – may need to reduce or interrupt their gainful work. Thus, participation in education and training may entail indirect costs: a reduction in or even loss of income. Grants or loans to cover living costs are among the instruments helping to address this issue.
- **Special employment support measures** ([Bijzondere tewerkstellingsondersteunende maatregelen / BTOM](#))
People with a health problem or disability can apply for employment support measures, e.g. a free interpreter for the deaf or hard of hearing, reimbursement of work tools and clothing, reimbursement of transport, Flemish support premium (Vlaamse ondersteuningspremie / VOP).

A reform of the incentives for qualifying learning (starting bonus and internship bonus, reduction for mentor, target group reduction for apprentices in alternate learning) is planned for 2023.

The Flemish Coalition Agreement 2019-2024 and the Policy Document Word and Social Economy 2019-2024 formulate the ambition to work towards an individual learning and career account (individuele leer- en loopbaanrekening / LLR). To implement this ambition, a vision note draws up

a growth path for the gradual elaboration of the learning and career account in Flanders. This vision note has been adopted by the Flemish Government in March 2022 and provides input for the further development and design of the different steps, in dialogue with stakeholders.

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET. <input type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)

- initial VET (IVET)
- continuing VET (CVET)

Scope (national, regional, local)

- national
- regional
- local

Beneficiaries/target groups

- 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 (25-64 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 socio-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)

SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)

Responsible ministries/bodies

Flemish Ministry of Work and Social Economy

Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
Flemish Government

3.3 Lifelong learning (LLL)
Rationale/background, challenges addressed
<p>Flanders needs to increase the participation in lifelong learning, since studies show it is rather low.</p> <p>Therefore, in 2020, the Partnership for Lifelong Learning (Partnerschap Levenslang leren) was established. This Partnership prepared an action plan with which it wants to streamline and accelerate the policy on lifelong learning. This is essential to increase the innovation potential and productivity and to prepare Flanders for transformations such as climate change and the ageing population.</p>
Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan
- Increase lifelong learning participation
Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline
<p>The Action Plan “Setting course to a learning Flanders”, prepared by the Partnership for Lifelong learning, was presented by the Ministers of Work and Education in the meeting of Government of Flanders on December 17.</p> <p>The Action Plan aims to provide a coherent and mobilising framework for all partners involved in realising a lifelong learning culture in Flanders.</p> <p>It is set out with the year 2030 as the horizon but its focus lays first and foremost on the period up to 2024. It consists of a “compass” with orienting goals and several thematic “flagships” with actions within a matrix structure underneath. The Action Plan aligns with the ambition of the European Union to achieve a participation rate of 60 % for (non-)formal learning by 2030. This lead indicator will be <u>s</u>upplemented by other relevant sub-indicators, that are under construction.</p> <p>1. The Compass</p> <p>The compass includes 10 goals for policy orientation with the ambition to bring Flanders at the level of top performing European countries and regions:</p> <p>1. Placing the learner at the centre in relation to his/her environment(s)</p>

2. Development of LLL competence combined with consistent sensibilisation and mobilisation in view of a learning society
3. Promoting inclusive learning
4. Permanent quality assurance
5. Generating more impact by providing more transparency
6. Flexible and sustainable coordination
7. Effective cooperation
8. Reinforcing work-based learning and learning-based working
9. Developing monitoring instrument and collective knowledge
10. Implementing technology in and through learning

2. Flagships

The flagships are ordered according to a matrix structure with axes for target groups and themes. An overarching concern is the efficient tackling of concrete obstacles for the realisation of the 47 actions listed under the respective flagships, which are 7 in number:

1. Knowledge agenda for LLL
2. Mobilisation strategy for each segment in society
3. LLL incentive strategy based on individual follow-up
4. Holistic strategic competence framework
5. Enabling accompanying policies for guidance and support for LLL
6. Guidance and support to LLL providers
7. Future-proof strengthening of LLL partnerships

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET. <input type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	
VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)	
Scope (national, regional, local)	
<input type="checkbox"/> national <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> regional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local	
Beneficiaries/target groups	
LEARNERS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young people (15-29 years old) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners with migrant background, including refugees <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners with disabilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult learners (25-64 years old) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unemployed and jobseekers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low-skilled/qualified persons <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or socio-economic disadvantaged position)	
EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teachers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trainers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School leaders	

- Adult educators
- Guidance practitioners

ENTITIES PROVIDING VET

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

SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)

Responsible ministries/bodies

Lifelong Learning is the core responsibility of the:

- Flemish Ministry of Education and Training
- Flemish Ministry of Work and Social Economy

Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)

Budget for the Expertise Centre Innovative Learning Pathways (Expertisecentrum Innovatieve Leerwegen - o.a. research agenda, public procurement): 714 k euro each year.

The roll-out of the action plan is currently being prepared. This will also include funding. The action plan includes other initiatives (within the framework of Flemish Resilience and the current or planned initiatives of various policy areas of the Flemish Government).

3.4 Higher Education Advancement Fund

Rationale/background, challenges addressed

In the context of Flemish Resilience, a strategic fund for the innovation of higher education courses and training infrastructure in higher education has been set up: the Higher Education Advancement Fund ([Voorsprongfonds](#)). The objective is to make higher education in Flanders more digital, flexible and modern. One of the key points is to further develop lifelong learning in higher education, including more focus on the labour market.

The current associate degree, bachelor and master programmes certainly have a role to play in the supply of lifelong learning, but there is also a need for shorter, more flexible and modular pathways that can be offered as retraining and further training or as a deepening or broadening pathway. This could be post-initial education, but also micro-credentials, allowing to certify a shorter pathway in higher education.

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

- Increase lifelong learning participation

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

Main actions within the key point “further developing lifelong learning in higher education” are:

1. Agile offer of lifelong learning

There is a need for retraining, reorientation and reskilling. This includes developing micro-credentials and reshaping the programs. It is essential to strengthen cooperation with the private sector, e.g., in the context of dual learning. New, innovative pathways should also be elaborated, aiming at vulnerable target groups, e.g., jobseekers, non-native speakers or newcomers whose higher education degree is not (fully) recognised.

2. Vision development on lifelong learning in higher education

In Flanders, there is a need for a widely supported and shared vision on lifelong learning in higher education. The government, together with the higher education institutions, social partners and involved actors, will develop this vision. This also implies examining the possibilities for developing a business model or funding mechanism to stimulate lifelong learning in higher education.

The European guidelines on reporting will be followed. The roll-out of the Higher Education Advancement Fund will be steered and monitored by a steering committee, in which not only the Flemish government but also the implementing institutions and the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) are represented. In addition, Thorough (scientific) monitoring of the various actions and results, will be provided for, both process-related and qualitative, both on the Flemish and the institutional level.

For each action, a follow-up and evaluation strategy is provided. The efficient use of resources is monitored closely by Government Commissioners.

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.
VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
<input type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)	
Scope (national, regional, local)	
<input type="checkbox"/> national <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local	
Beneficiaries/target groups	
LEARNERS <input type="checkbox"/> Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young people (15-29 years old) <input type="checkbox"/> Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners with migrant background, including refugees <input type="checkbox"/> Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers <input type="checkbox"/> Learners with disabilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult learners (25-64 years old) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 socio-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)

SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)

Responsible ministries/bodies

Flemish Ministry of education and Training

Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)

Flemish Government

3.5 Early school leaving

Rationale/background, challenges addressed
Every year, approximately 8.000 pupils leave Flemish secondary education prematurely. The Flemish government want to guarantee the right to education and to obtain a qualification for every child and young person. To reduce early school leaving, the government elaborated an integrated strategy, involving policy makers at different levels.
Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan
- Increase lifelong learning participation
Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline
<p>Action plan “together against school leaving”</p> <p>In 2016, the Flemish government adopted the action plan “together against school leaving”, with 52 concrete actions that can be grouped within 5 themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Actions identifying the challenges 2. Coordinating actions 3. Preventive actions 4. Actions for intervention once a pupil risks leaving compulsory education 5. Compensatory actions for young people who drop out of school a qualification <p>In every Flemish province and in Brussels, a coordinator has been appointed to initiate and connect actions within the province and across policy areas.</p> <p>A renewed action plan is being developed.</p> <p>VET graduate tracking</p> <p>In 2017, the Flemish PES (VDAB) and the Flemish Ministry of Education concluded an agreement to enrich their data on school leavers (dropouts and graduates). The common monitoring profile contains 5 indicators: labour market position (working / seeking job / inactive), work experience, work regime, sector of employment and remuneration. This data comes from the Belgian Crossroads Bank for Social Security as part of a pilot.</p>

The Flemish Ministry of Education provides schools with data on the transition of their IVET graduates to the labour market. VDAB delivers information on labour market participation of IVET graduates at the level of field of study, to provide information to support the study choice (<https://www.vdab.be/trends/schoolverlatersrapport>).

Flemish Youth Work Plan

VDAB recently updated their Youth Work Plan.

Together with the Department of Education and Training, ESF launched the call “transition pathways for pupils in the second and third stage of vocational secondary education who are at risk of early leaving’. Within this call, VDAB together with the Specialised Mediation Team (Gespecialiseerd Team Bemiddeling – GTB) and several SERV-partners, launched the Flip the Switch project with 75 trajectories. This started on 1 December 2020 and will continue until 31 December 2023.

These ESF-projects are testing ground for VDAB to work with instruments such as transition pathways or cooperation models as in the “local partnerships”, to identify potentially vulnerable young people at an early stage, to reach them and lead them to educational training or to a professional qualifying pathway.

A data link was established in 2017 between education and the VDAB, to identify unqualified early school-leavers and to reduce their number. In the future, NEETs up to 30 years old will be included in the specific approach to NEETs.

VDAB also has cooperation agreements with the educational umbrella organisations.

ESF capacity building

From 2024, in the capacity building project, a new way of cooperating will be examined in which partnerships of service providers can be formed in an open and flexible way, offering integral support to people with complex problems. Special attention will be paid to NEETs, including insights from all projects in which young people are coached.

Learning jobs

It is not feasible for all early school leavers to return to education. Hence VDAB wants to use the expertise built up by the apprenticeship (Syntra) to develop a professional qualifying pathway, with the emphasis on learning on the job. To investigate the possibilities, an ESF-call was launched in 2022.

Monitoring

Early school leaving is monitored by the Flemish government. For international comparison, the [EAK-indicator](#) is useful.

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET

- A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges.
- B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET.
- C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand.
- D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills.
- E. VET promotes equality of opportunities.
- F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.

Osnabrück Declaration

- 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET.
- 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation.
- 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET.
- 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)

- initial VET (IVET)
- continuing VET (CVET)

Scope (national, regional, local)

- national
- regional
- local

Beneficiaries/target groups

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 (25-64 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 socio-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)

SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)

Responsible ministries/bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flemish Ministry of Education and Training - Flemish public employment service (VDAB)
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
Flemish Government ESF

3.6 Digitalisation - Digisprong (“Digital Education Action Plan”)
Rationale/background, challenges addressed
<p>Various studies and international comparisons a.o. PIAAC, MICTIVO ICT Monitor, PISA, TALIS) show that Flemish education is lagging behind in terms of digitalisation compared to other countries. The coronavirus crisis has only made this backlog in Flemish education more manifest. This crisis is seized as an opportunity to jump from (ICT) backlog to lead. With the Digital Education Action Plan (Digisprong) several challenges are addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The availability of ICT infrastructure for all schools in compulsory education - The need for schools to develop and implement a school-specific ICT policy, by the ICT coordinator or the ICT team of the school - Develop teachers and schools ICT skills and provide them with digital learning resources - Create a knowledge and advice centre ‘Digisprong’ to serve the field of education
Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modernising VET infrastructure
Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline
<p>The Digital Education Action Plan (Digisprong) includes several actions relevant to VET:</p> <p>ICT infrastructure</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide every pupil in secondary education with a device - Provide ICT equipment for teachers through the school - Bolster the ICT infrastructure withing the school - Facilitate the use of connectivity and telecom services with special attention to security and speed through a new framework agreement. <p>ICT policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reinforce ICT coordination for all levels of education <p>Digital learning resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening initiatives that develop digital learning resources for practical subjects and labour market-oriented training courses, including through InnoVET. 	
EU policy priorities addressed	
Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration
<input type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET. <input type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.
VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET) <input type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)	
Scope (national, regional, local)	
<input type="checkbox"/> national	

regional

local

Beneficiaries/target groups

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 (25-64 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 socio-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)

SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)

Responsible ministries/bodies

- Flemish Ministry of Education and Training
- Flemish Agency for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)

EU: RRF (Recovery and Resilience Facility)

Budget for education (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training)

Funding from the Flemish Agency for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (via the action plans Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity)

3.7 Strengthening VET practices (Vulnerable groups)

Rationale/background, challenges addressed

Vocational education needs to prepare pupils to successfully enter the labour market. To provide them with the necessary skills, a good infrastructure is indispensable. This is not always easy for schools since equipment often is very specialised and expensive. Further, the digitalisation of vocational education, especially for technical skills linked to the learning objectives of a subject, is rather difficult, because of the lack of tools.

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

- Modernising VET infrastructure

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

From vulnerable to resilient

Within the Framework of the Flemish Resilience Plan, the recovery plan [“from vulnerable to resilient”](#) has been elaborated. This plan pays particular attention to infrastructure for technical and vocational education. This relates to good practices, additional ICT infrastructure and XR materials (eXtended Reality).

1. Good practices

A study is being carried out are (1) to identify the pedagogical-didactic principles that are beneficial and effective for the diverse student population of the vocational track of the first stage of secondary education, (2) to analyze the context of the vocational track in the first stage of secondary education and to identify current innovative practices within this context, (3) to assess the degree in which innovative practices are based on the identified principles extracted from the review study, and (4) to critically analyze the effectiveness and conditions of a selection of teaching practices aimed at vocational-technical education. Next, these results will be collected in a small teacher professional development program aiming at the integration of effective pedagogical-didactic principles in their teaching. The intention is to develop a website with a digital toolkit, including inspiring examples, lesson recordings, concrete materials and tools, such as observation tools and viewing guides, by April 2024.

2. ICT infrastructure

The recovery plan “from vulnerable to resilient” points out the need for innovative digital learning materials. This is also part of the Digital Education Action Plan (Digisprong, see 3.6). In addition to that plan, it is the intention to provide the vulnerable pupils in special education (OV1 and OV2), part-time vocational education and apprenticeships with digital accommodation (ICT infrastructure and devices).

3. Extended Reality (XR) in technical and vocational education

XR in education leads to better learning outcomes, because students can practice situations in a safe and controlled way that would otherwise be difficult or impossible for financial or safety reasons.

An [action plan to deploy XR in technical and vocational education](#) has been adopted by the Flemish government. This action plan contains four closely interrelated actions.

- Practice-oriented research: this is needed to underpin the innovation with (scientific) evidence of its effectiveness
- Hardware: the RTCs will establish a lending service, which, in addition to hardware, will offer prospects for content-related support and training
- Software: this implies making existing software projects (which are not always adapted to education) more sustainable and initiating new software projects, in line with InnoVET (see 3.10)
- Support with the implementation and further training provided by an XR-Academy

<p>Furthermore, the Regional Technological Centres (RTCs) ensure a better alignment of education and training with innovative challenges and the needs of the labour market. To this end, the RTCs gather partners from education and the world of work, for example regarding the sharing of infrastructure and the lending service for XR-hardware.</p>	
<p>EU policy priorities addressed</p>	
<p>Council Recommendation on VET</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.</p>	<p>Osnabrück Declaration</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.</p>
<p>VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)</p>	
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)</p>	
<p>Scope (national, regional, local)</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> national</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> regional</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local</p>	
<p>Beneficiaries/target groups</p>	

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 (25-64 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 socio-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)

SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)

Responsible ministries/bodies

Flemish government
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For infrastructure: budget from the Flemish government (Ministry of Education and Training) for ICT infrastructure and devices: 9.936.000€ - XR-plan: 6,5 million€ from the Flemish government - RTC: approximately 2 mio euros per from the Flemish government on a structural basis via a Government decree and a management agreement. They are legally bound to increase their public funds by co-funding from sectoral funds, companies etc.

3.8 Modernising IVET
Rationale/background, challenges addressed
<p>Secondary education in Flanders scores well internationally. Nevertheless, studies and experiences point to important points for improvement. Therefore, secondary education, including IVET, is being redesigned. The six main reasons for this modernisation are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce early (unqualified) school leaving 2. Reduce differences between study programmes when it comes to the preparation to higher education or the labour market 3. Allow for differentiation in case of substantial deficits 4. Eliminate social inequalities 5. Better achieve the learning outcomes 6. Maintain the (dropping) level of Flemish Education
Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modernising VET offer
Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The orientation function of the first grade of secondary education is strengthened. Therefore, the basic options and professional fields have been screened and adapted. Both the A and B streams now have basic options with underlying packages. The number of basic options has been reduced compared to the past and the content focus has been updated. These new basic options are already operative. They enable a broader observation and orientation of the pupil.

- The new classification of the study programmes ensures a **more rational and transparent offering in the second and third stages**. All programmes are arranged in one matrix with finalities, educational forms and eight study domains. A study domain is a thematic entity that contains study programmes that are abstract-theoretical and practical-applicable. In this way, the entire range is visible and coherent.
- The **educational goals become more ambitious**. The labour market-oriented programmes will be strengthened, both in terms of general and vocational education.
 - Vocational goals are aligned to professional qualifications, to improve the link to the labour market. These are also aligned between education providers and labor market sectors.
 - All basic educational goals in the modernised secondary education are related to 16 key competences that aim for a broad curriculum with attention to ‘traditional’ content such as Dutch and mathematics, but also to transversal competences and 21st century skills. Pupils must be provided with sufficient baggage to develop personally, but also to participate in the 21st century society. All attainment targets, except for the attitudinal goals but including e.g., citizenship, the financial and economic, physical health etc., must be attained by the pupils.

The new attainment targets for the first grade are in force since 1/9/2019 and those for the second grade since 1/9/2021. The moment of implementation of the new attainment targets for the third grade has yet to be determined by the Flemish Government. The modernisation of secondary education will be finalised on 1/9/2025. The vocational part will be completed with professional qualifications and follows the same timing.

To keep the study programmes up to date, all programmes will be screened every five school years at the latest. If necessary, adjustments will be made. The educational goals will also periodically be screened for their topical value and to keep them in line with the challenges and expectations of society.

This screening will start with a try-out in the first grade in the school years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET. <input type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	
VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET) <input type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)	
Scope (national, regional, local)	
<input type="checkbox"/> national <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local	
Beneficiaries/target groups	
<p>LEARNERS</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young people (15-29 years old) <input type="checkbox"/> Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) <input type="checkbox"/> Learners with migrant background, including refugees <input type="checkbox"/> Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers <input type="checkbox"/> Learners with disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Adult learners (25-64 years old) <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed and jobseekers <input type="checkbox"/> Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment <input type="checkbox"/> Low-skilled/qualified persons <input type="checkbox"/> Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or socio-economic disadvantaged position)	

<p>EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Teachers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Trainers</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School leaders</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adult educators</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Guidance practitioners</p> <p>ENTITIES PROVIDING VET</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Companies</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> VET providers (all kinds)</p> <p>SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)</p>
<p>Responsible ministries/bodies</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flemish Ministry of Education and Training - Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Allowances (AHOVOKS)
<p>Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)</p>
<p>Budget for education (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training)</p>

<h2>3.9 Dual Learning</h2>
<p>Rationale/background, challenges addressed</p>

For **secondary education**, an evaluation of the existing system of learning and working showed some drawbacks. To mitigate these drawbacks, the system of dual learning was created. Therefore, in 2018, the Decree on the legislative framework for the implementation of dual learning at secondary education level was adopted.

Also in 2018, it was agreed to investigate whether dual learning can also be implemented in higher education and formal adult education. This way, the government of Flanders aims to intensify and increase the share of work-based learning in higher education and formal adult education programmes to close the gap between education and the labour market.

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

- Modernising VET offer

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

Secondary education

- In 2016 the Decree to regulate certain aspects of alternating education (starting on 1/9/2016) was adopted. This Decree stipulates which agreements can be concluded between companies, students and schools to regulate the workbased learning and which are the rights and obligations of the 3 parties. Also the recognition conditions for companies are determined, as well as the establishment of the Flemish Partnership of Dual Learning and the Sectoral Partnerships.
- In 2018, the [Decree on the legislative framework for the full-scale implementation of dual learning](#) (starting on 1/9/2019) was adopted. This Decree initiates a shift from learning and working to dual learning. On April 21, 2022, a decree was approved in the Education Committee of the Flemish Parliament that further shapes the phasing out process. This conversion process is closely linked to the modernisation of secondary education (see 3.8) and follows the same timing. It must be completed in the school year 2025-2026. Several actions are included, including a new structure, study programmes that are embedded in the new matrix for secondary education, obligatory mentor training.
- [ESF call 480 Impuls for Dual Learning in Secondary Education \(Impuls Duaal Leren in SO\)](#) aims to strengthen the (local) alignment between demand (labour market) and supply (schools / centres) of dual programmes, or to prepare and implement new dual programmes, to increase the intake of pupils in dual programmes in Flanders and to increase the quality of dual programmes with good opportunities on the labour market.
- The **Flemish Partnership dual learning** is a council with representatives of employers and employees, educational institutions, other providers of dual learning (training centres for entrepreneurial training, 'Syntra'), the Flemish public employment agency (VDAB), Department of Work, Department of education. It is established with the authority to recognise a company as a high-quality workplace in the context of dual and

other alternating courses. It is also responsible for monitoring the implementation of the agreements in the workplace, informing companies about dual learning, supporting and mobilising companies according to the supply of workplaces and to provide advice on dual learning, such as through annual monitoring reports. As a workplace director, it strives for a network of sufficient and high-quality learning workplaces for all pupils in a dual or alternating programme. The decree assignments of the Partnership are delegated to the sectoral partnerships and the Flemish Department of Work and Social Economy (DWSE), in the absence of a sectoral partnership. In addition, the individual school also make an important contribution in the search for new workplaces. In the Annual Monitoring Report of the Flemish Partnership dual learning 2020-2021 ([Jaarrapport Vlaams Partnerschap Duaal Leren 2020-2021](#)) an overview is offered of the actions it set up in and of the sectoral partnerships in the school year 2020-2021. These sectoral partnerships strengthen the landscaped of recognised apprenticeships by, among other things, informing companies, ensuring timely recognition of apprenticeships and monitoring mentors.

- In order to strengthen the partner role of the sectors within dual learning, [dual addenda to the sector covenants](#) were made. After all, sectors form the bridge to companies and can help to remove the barriers that companies encounter.

Higher education and formal adult education

- The government of Flanders aims to intensify and increase the share of work-based learning in higher education and formal education and to introduce dual learning in both systems.
For formal adult education, a decree was adopted on the 25th of May 2022 by the Flemish Government. Starting from 1 September 2022 Centra voor Volwassenenonderwijs (CVO) can offer dual tracks (50% of workbased learning) which lead to a professional qualification. For higher education, dual learning is tested with pilot projects (see further).
- ESF call 523 [Dual Learning Higher Education – Adult Education bis \(Duaal Leren Hoger Onderwijs – Volwassenenonderwijs bis\)](#) aims to stimulate dual learning in higher education and adult education by preparing and implementing pilot projects, to facilitate the broad implementation of dual learning in these education levels and to embed the learning experiences from the pilot projects.

Communication and support

- In March 2022, a [campaign on dual learning started](#) in about 200 Flemish schools. It focuses on young people from the second and third grade and involves teachers and parents as important intermediaries. The campaign should make dual learning more visible as a fully-fledged learning pathway within secondary education and should build a positive and attractive imago for dual learning.
- In May 2022, an inspirational event on dual learning is planned, for all forms of education. The focus is on exchanging ideas, experiences and best practices on specific aspects of dual education programmes.

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET. <input type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.
VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)	
Scope (national, regional, local)	
<input type="checkbox"/> national <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local	
Beneficiaries/target groups	
LEARNERS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young people (15-29 years old) <input type="checkbox"/> Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners with migrant background, including refugees <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners with disabilities	

- Adult learners (25-64 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 socio-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)

SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)

Responsible ministries/bodies

- Flemish Ministry of Education and Training
- Flemish Ministry of Work and Social Economy
- Flemish Partnership Dual Learning

Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)

Budget for education (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training)
ESF-funds
Budget for dual addenda to sectoral covenants (Flemish Ministry of Work and Social Economy): 1,5 million€ in 2022

3.10 Innovation
Rationale/background, challenges addressed
Rapidly changing society (digitisation, ageing, migration flows) leads to change in the labour market: new skills are needed, such as learning to deal with evolutions and transitions, circular economy, ...). This implies challenges for labour market-oriented education, that must keep pace with the changes and constant innovations.
Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan
- Modernising VET offer
Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline
<p>To modernise the VET offer and include innovation in the VET programmes, several initiatives are being taken. Some examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • InnoVET (Innovative programmes in vocational education and training) aims to familiarise teachers and pupils with the labour market of today and tomorrow. This is realised by stimulating labour market-oriented schools to develop and test innovative materials and methodologies through projects. In the first InnoVET cycle (2019-20), 13 projects were funded, nine in the second InnoVET cycle (2020-21) and eight in the third InnoVET cycle. Each project is a partnership between teachers (with other teachers and teacher teams from different levels of education, directorates, and other schools), sectors, companies and experienced employees (regional, Flemish and international), and Flemish and regional partners, including the regional technological centres (RTC), pedagogical support services (PBD), research and knowledge centres and private partners (such as software suppliers). The results and findings of these projects are spreaded to all labour market-oriented programmes in Flanders. • Edusprong is situated within the recovery plan “Flemish resilience”. It wants to give a boost to formal adult education. One of the priorities within Edusprong is strengthening labour market opportunities through training and upskilling.

Key element and starting point for operationalising Edusprong, is the **regional scan**, where the centres for adult education make an analysis of the regional training need together with partners. The results of this regional scan are used for renewing and fine-tuning the programmes within adult education to the needs of learners and potential partners.

Within Edusprong, project calls are launched, for local implementation of the programmes in cooperation with other partners. A first call was launched in July 2021, a second one in February 2022.

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET

- A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges.
- B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET.
- C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand.
- D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills.
- E. VET promotes equality of opportunities.
- F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.

Osnabrück Declaration

- 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET.
- 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation.
- 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET.
- 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)

- initial VET (IVET)
- continuing VET (CVET)

Scope (national, regional, local)

- national
- regional
- local

Beneficiaries/target groups

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 (25-64 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 socio-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)

SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)

Responsible ministries/bodies
- Flemish Ministry of Education and Training
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
InnoVET project call: annual max. 250.000 euro (total) To execute the regional scans, centres of adult education received temporary funds: 3 million euro. Project calls Edusprong: 30 million euro

3.11 Professionalisation and uncertified teachers
Rationale/background, challenges addressed
The shortage of teachers continues to grow. As a result, more and more teachers do not have the right qualifications. At the same time, good and qualified teachers are one of the prerequisites for good education.
Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan
- Support teachers, trainers, mentors, SL in VET
Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline
Several actions are put forward to strengthen professionalisation of teachers, axed around three themes: initial teacher education, side-entrants and (re)training. Initial teacher training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018, the decree on the reform of initial teacher education was adopted, with effect from 1 September 2019. Following this decree, there are six teacher training programmes, including an associate degree in education, a specific two-year programme for teachers in technical and vocational subjects in secondary education. • The basis competences for the teaching profession were reviewed and this new set of basic competences was implemented in September 2019.

- Since the academic year 2017-2018, all students enrolling in initial teacher education at bachelor level must take a non-binding admission test on study skills and motivation and knowledge of Dutch. Students enrolling in initial education programmes for primary education take additional tests on knowledge of mathematics and French. The aim of the test is to provide an insight into the expected initial competences for the program and to give prospective students an insight into their own strengths and weaknesses and possible points to work on. The rationale for this test is that a more qualitative intake should lead to an increase in study efficiency and a decrease in the time to graduation and drop-out. The Flemish government plans to make remediation compulsory in case of low test results, as of the academic year 2023-2024. The government has already approved a preliminary draft decree to make the remediation compulsory.

Side-entrants

- Tracks for side-entrants are offered in every teachers training programme. These tracks are adjusted to the needs of the target group, for example in terms of evening classes, distance learning and geographic location.
- The [concept note “Revaluation of the teacher”](#) contains some measures encouraging side entrance:
 - Seniority is elevated to 10 years.
 - In accordance with the Flemish educational leave (see 3.2), part-time educational leave will be introduced for side-entrants without educational qualification.
 - VET teachers in technical and vocational secondary education can charge up to 10 years of useful experience on top of their 10 years of seniority.

(Re)training

- In the context of Digisprong (see 3.6), the need to strengthen teachers’ digital competences is put forward. In Edusprong (see 3.10) the possibility for centres of adult education to develop a qualitative offer for education professionals on ICT-competences is suggested.
- [ESF-call 482 Pilot projects dual teachers \(Proeftuinen duale leerkrachten\)](#) was set up around a new concept, that of employees who, from their employment in a private company temporarily take on teaching assignments in an educational institution. This concept, “dual teachers”, offers an answer to the shortage of teachers and strengthens, thanks to the interaction between education and companies, the specific expertise, know-how and capacity of education. The aim of these projects is to remove thresholds and identify the necessary prerequisites.

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET.

<input type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.
VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)	
Scope (national, regional, local)	
<input type="checkbox"/> national <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local	
Beneficiaries/target groups	
LEARNERS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young people (15-29 years old) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners with migrant background, including refugees <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners with disabilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult learners (25-64 years old) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unemployed and jobseekers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 socio-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)

SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)

Responsible ministries/bodies

Flemish Ministry of Education and Training

Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)

Budget for education

3.12 Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) and vocational training programmes

Rationale/background, challenges addressed

In Flanders, two kinds of pathways to obtain a professional qualification (outside of formal education) exist: validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) and vocational training programmes.

The aim of **VNIL** is to help individuals to achieve personal development, to contribute to a higher level of employment, to improve access to formal education systems and to stimulate lifelong learning. Several professional qualifications can be acquired through the validation of non-formal or informal learning. In Flanders, the term EVC (erkennen van verworven competenties – recognition of acquired competences) is used to refer to the validation of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Vocational training programmes also lead towards a professional qualification and are not organised by formal education, but e.g. by VDAB.

To guarantee the quality of both pathway (VNIL and vocational training programmes), a common quality framework and neutral and independent quality supervision was implemented.

The common frame of reference are the professional qualifications. They are also a tool to shape their offer.

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

- Transparency, Recognition of VET qualifications

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

Several actions and activities are to be mentioned:

- A new website on EVC is being developed, aimed at citizens and future test centres. A modest communication campaign will launch the website.
- For VNIL, several validation standards for professional qualifications are already developed and more will follow. Public and private education and training providers can apply for accreditation to become assessment centre (validation body). The assessment instruments, based on the validation standards and used by the assessment centres are subject to a quality check.
- Several vocational training programmes have already been recognised. The aim is to expand the offer. If an organisation wants to organise a qualifying training or RAC pathway, that pathway must be recognised by the Department of Work and Social Economy. A [register](#) keeps track of all recognised pathways.
- In the framework of Edusprong (see 3.10 and 3.11) actions are foreseen to:

- Increase the number of updated labour market-oriented training profiles, with a particular focus on the IT cluster;
- expand EVC in the centres of adult education (developing more instruments for validation but also the possibility to improve the quality of existing instruments);
- share knowledge between all partners involved in the EVC field and to strengthen the quality of guidance of potential EVC candidates and the accompanying tools and instruments;
- conduct research into whether a more structural embedding of guidance of EVC candidates within the centres of adult education can be developed.
- Within the initiative [LEAH \(Learning At Home\)](#), seven centres of adult education, all to be situated within Catholic Education Flanders, bundled distance learning programmes via an online learning platform, aiming to appeal to new target groups.
- The [ESF call 553 VNIL and qualifying training pathways \(EVC en Beroepskwalificerende trajecten\)](#), limited to the Flemish PES (VDAB), has the objective to prepare and develop a vocational qualifying offer for unqualified (incoming) jobseekers, based on the possibilities of the existing VNIL policy and the Common Quality Framework for vocational qualifying pathways. In addition, this call is aimed at making competences visible and qualifying them in the context of career-long learning, with in the first phase a special focus on specific niche jobs within the scope of this call.
- The [ESF call 472 Workers and qualifying pathways \(Werkenden en kwalificerende trajecten\)](#) has the objective to finance pilot projects that explore the possibilities and preconditions for the participation of workers in vocational and educational qualifying pathways, in order to provide training, retraining and extra training. The pathways must fit within the Flemish Qualification Structure and lead to an educational or vocational qualification.

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET

- A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges.
- B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET.
- C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand.
- D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills.
- E. VET promotes equality of opportunities.
- F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.

Osnabrück Declaration

- 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET.
- 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation.
- 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET.
- 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial VET (IVET) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> continuing VET (CVET)	
Scope (national, regional, local)	
<input type="checkbox"/> national <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local	
Beneficiaries/target groups	
<p>LEARNERS</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young people (15-29 years old) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners with migrant background, including refugees <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners with disabilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult learners (25-64 years old) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unemployed and jobseekers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low-skilled/qualified persons <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or socio-economic disadvantaged position)	
<p>EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teachers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trainers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School leaders	

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult educators <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guidance practitioners ENTITIES PROVIDING VET <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Companies <input type="checkbox"/> Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) <input type="checkbox"/> VET providers (all kinds) SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)
Responsible ministries/bodies
Flemish Ministry of Education and Training Flemish Ministry of Work and Social Economy
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
Flemish Government European Funding (ESF-Flanders & Recovery funding)

3.13 Vocational qualifications and the Flemish qualification structure
Rationale/background, challenges addressed
<p>With the decree on the Flemish Qualifications Framework (FQF), the Flemish Parliament and Government adopted in 2009 a comprehensive qualifications framework based on learning outcomes and covering all types and levels of qualifications from formal education and training and from the professional qualifications system. In 2011, the FQF was referenced to the EQF and has been filled with qualifications. The reference report was updated in 2014 and will be updated again in 2022.</p>

<p>Professional qualifications and training profiles are the basis for the VET offer in Flanders. Vocational qualifications describe what one needs to know and be capable of to practice a profession. These qualifications are developed by representatives of the labour market. Educational qualifications are the whole of final attainment goals, specific final attainment goals, basic competences and possibly professional qualifications to which a study programme leads. The functioning and content of both professional and educational qualifications is constantly being updated.</p>	
<p>Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan</p>	
<p>- Transparency, Recognition of VET qualifications</p>	
<p>Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline</p>	
<p>Some specific actions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Learning and evidence of experience database (LED) collects data from certificates of qualification (diplomas, certificates, experience certificates, etc. It provides clarity on the authenticity of qualifications and makes the data easily accessible. • Procedures have been developed for both the development and the update of educational and professional qualifications. Not only is it necessary to capture new professions or study programmes, but also to monitor the current offer and to adjust it where necessary. • In Flanders, a green skills roadmap is being drawn up, with support from Europe. Stakeholder involvement, including educational actors, is applied to the maximum here. The project should identify the major opportunities to overcome the main skills bottle necks holding back the green economy transition in Flanders. 	
<p>EU policy priorities addressed</p>	
<p>Council Recommendation on VET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance. 	<p>Osnabrück Declaration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.

VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
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Responsible ministries/bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flemish Ministry of Education and Training - Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Allowances (AHOVOKS) - Flemish Ministry of Work and Social Economy
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)
Budget for education (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training)

3.14 Mobility in VET
Rationale/background, challenges addressed
<p>The need for skills in globalisation In a globalising society, there is a need for new competences in the work environment, which often exceed the specific technical competences. These new competences are needed to adapt to working in an internationally influenced environment and include intercultural competences, speaking foreign languages, self-management and adaptability.</p> <p>The need for internationalisation of Flemish VET institutions VET institutions that want to work on internationalisation face barriers or challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge of the possibilities when it comes to internationalisation activities

- High planning and task load of the staff
- Limited interest of the target group of students and VET staff to participate in internationalisation activities
- Limited (cross-network) cooperation between different VET institutions and with different VET levels on internationalisation, causing expertise, experience and workload to be insufficiently shared and distributed
- Limited or non-existent network of foreign partners

The need to make VET more attractive

There are limitations for VET students to participate in international activities. More information concerning mobility for VET students in Belgium, see [this link](#).

Due to the COVID-19 situation, VET institutions were confronted with the search of alternatives and/or complementary ways to make workplace learning possible. The digital route offers alternatives that have not yet been structurally embedded.

Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan

- European/international dimension in VET

Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline

Internationalisation continues to gain importance, also in VET. Skills in globalisation can be developed in the (often multicultural) school context, but only if the education staff have already acquired these competences themselves. It is even better if learners and teachers are immersed in an international learning work experience. Erasmus+ traineeship for VET learners for instance will have a positive effect on the attractiveness of VET in Flanders. But also staff mobility should be promoted.

- Mobility of learners and staff is promoted within the context of Erasmus+, Key Actions 1, 2 and 3. The intention is to see an increase in the number of participants in mobilities.
- Since 2018, Flanders has also been directly supporting (by means of personnel resources) cross-educational network cooperation to set up mobilities for learners and staff in VET. The most important example is the [ErasDu project](#). The consortium around this project, Connectief, has been accredited.
- Connectief want to increase VET internationalisation, by participating in [the European National Networks for the Enhancement of VET](#) (a KA3 project) and by supporting schools that want to set up KA2 project.

EU policy priorities addressed

Council Recommendation on VET

- A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges.
- B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET.

Osnabrück Declaration

- 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C. VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of CVET and digitalisation. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Sustainability – a green link in VET. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4. European Education and Training Area and international VET.
VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
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Low-skilled/qualified persons

Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or socio-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)

SOCIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Social partners (employers organisations and trade unions)

Responsible ministries/bodies

Flemish Ministry of Education and Training

Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)

Erasmus+ fundings

4. Governance of the implementation of the plan

Stakeholder involvement

All measures within the Flemish NIPVET are initiated by the Flemish government.

Within the Flemish Government, both the Minister of Education and Training and the Minister of Work and Social Economy are in charge of VET.

The **Minister of Education and Training** is responsible for the formal education system, including initial secondary VET. The department of education and training within the ministry cooperates with several agencies to implement policies:

- **Education Inspectorate;**
- **AGODi:** the Agency for Education Services;
- **AHOVOKS:** the Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Allowances.
- **AGIO:** the Agency for School Infrastructure

The **Minister of Work and Social Economy** is responsible for VET for jobseekers and workers, as well as entrepreneurial training. Similarly, a special department within the ministry works with agencies that implement policies:

- **VDAB** (the Flemish public employment service)

Also, the **agency Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship** (VLAIO) participates in some of the measures. It is situated in the policy domain economy, science and innovation.

Advisory bodies participate in policy debates, they are the **Flemish Education Council (VLOR)**, the **Flemish Economic Social Consultative Committee (VESOC)** and the **Social and Economic Council of Flanders (SERV)**.

Representatives of all the different stakeholders in education and training meet in the **VLOR**: education providers, education staff, learners, directors, socio-economic organisations and socio-cultural organisations. The VLOR provides advices, practical implementation support to new governmental educational initiatives.

SERV is the advisory body on work, economy, energy and (vocational) education and training and gathers representatives of the Flemish social partners. It is also in charge of organising the secretariat of **VESOC** which is thus an ongoing forum for policy debates between social partners and the government; the meetings can result in official agreements.

Overall, Flanders has a strong tradition in stakeholder involvement. This is reflected in the measures described in this NIPVET.

The **Flemish Partnership dual learning** is a council with representatives of employers and employees, educational institutions, other providers of dual learning (training centres for entrepreneurial training, 'Syntra'), the Regional public employment agency (VDAB), Department of Work, and Department of education.

This Flemish Partnership dual learning may delegate responsibilities to so called **sectoral partnerships**. A sectoral partnership is a consultation platform with both educational and work partners from a certain sector (e.g., construction, textile, technological industry, ...). The Department of Work and Social Economy facilitates the sectoral partnerships and organises a monthly feedback group to discuss aspects of dual learning.

The **sectors** (sectoral social partners) closely work together with the Department of Work and Social Economy in the context of the **sectoral covenants** (sectorconvenanten). A sectoral covenant is an agreement between the Flemish Government and the sectoral social partners, initiated by the latter. In these covenants, the sectors take on commitments regarding the link between education and the labour market, lifelong learning and diversity. Next to these sectoral covenants, also **education covenants** exist. These education covenants are agreements with concrete arrangements for cooperation between a professional sector and educational authorities. They are focused on a better alignment of vocational education with the evolutions on the labour market and improve cooperation.

Different stakeholders may also be involved in VET related non-profit organisations. An example of this are the regional technological centres (RTCs). In the executive board, stakeholders are included by decree. Also, RTCs are meant to be a platform bringing together different stakeholder.

Stakeholders engage in the development of professional qualifications: representatives of the labour market draw up a professional qualification file. This file is validated by representatives of the interprofessional social partners, VDAB, VLAIO and AHOVOKS. The scaling of the professional qualification is done by representatives of SERV, Vlor, VDAB, VLAIO and AHOVOKS.

The **Partnership Lifelong Learning** is composed of members of SERV, representatives of the educational landscape and the training providers, representatives of the private training providers, a representative of the local level, a business school representative, a representative of the VLOR Lifelong Learning Committee.

Monitoring and reporting

Participation of stakeholders is assured in the Flemish NIPVET at the level of the measures. They are implied in monitoring, evaluating and adjusting the underlying actions.

As for the NIPVET itself, monitoring and reporting will be done in consultation with SERV and Vlor, the two bodies that already have been consulted when preparing this NIPVET.

5. Expected effects of the plan

Effects in time

Our society is changing, today faster than ever. Trends in various social domains mean that changes follow each other faster and faster:

- Demographic trends: population growth, aging, migration;
- Scientific and technological trends: the emergence of disruptive technologies, driven by science and innovation;
- Ecological trends: climate change and pressure on natural resources;
- Economic trends: disruptions resulting from technological breakthroughs, shift of the world's economic centre of gravity in the world to the East, industrial transformations, new relationships between producers and consumers;
- Political and administrative trends: changed geopolitical relations, transformations of governments and institutions;
- Social trends: individualization and diversity.

Moreover, all these evolutions influence each other, so that the world not only changes, but is dramatically reformed and begins to function fundamentally differently. The labour market of the future will also look substantially different. How we work today is already fundamentally different than it was 20 years ago.

With the proposed measures, we want to

- Make labour market-oriented courses in secondary education more attractive

In order to give shape to the trends described above, the need for technical profiles is high and will only increase. Figures from the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB) show that technical professions have been the mainstay of the annually published bottleneck professions for more than 10 years. At secondary education level, they include maintenance mechanic, production operator, construction worker, electrician, etc. But also, in the so-called 'soft' sectors there are persistent bottleneck professions: e.g., nurse, (auxiliary) cook, ... In these sectors, too, changes such as digitization, increasing diversity, the ageing of the population, and ecological challenges require innovative solutions.

On the other hand, the labour market-oriented courses in secondary education are losing their attractiveness. Figures from the Department of Education show that enrolment figures in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades of technical and vocational secondary education (TSO and BSO) have shown a declining trend for almost 10 years. **We want to change this trend and safeguard the future of VET.** Making these courses more attractive is high on the policy agenda. Ensuring that they keep up with the latest techniques in industry and the innovations in the labour market of the future, is seen by both the schools themselves and the government as a remedy for turning the tide. It is necessary for their relevance to employers, for their attractiveness to young people and their parents, and their social status in general.

To monitor the effect, the [distribution of enrolments in secondary education by type of education and by finality](#) can be taken into account.

- Strengthen the role and knowledge of teachers and trainers

In this regard, teachers are essential bridge figures. A crucial pillar for the quality of education is the quality of teachers. Teachers are a crucial factor in student learning and in improving learning outcomes. Not only do they prepare young people in terms of content for the job market of tomorrow, but they can also warm them up to the profession and make them realize the importance of their role in society. However, they themselves are also increasingly confronted with the rapidly growing knowledge base in education and beyond. Professions and sectors are evolving so rapidly that it is a great challenge for teachers in labour market-oriented training programs to keep up with the growing knowledge base. For this reason, the professional development of teachers and their participation in professionalization activities throughout their careers is important. **Professionalization activities should be well-equipped and up to date to match recent and future innovative developments in the labour market.** A good cooperation between actors from education and the labour market is crucial for this.

Advantages for target groups

The definitions of target groups and their needs vary widely between - and sometimes within countries. In Europe, target groups are mostly specified as students with low socioeconomic background, migrant status (and/or disabilities), whereas criteria like geographical area or students' ethnic origin are used less often. A few education systems also use criteria such as educational attainment, grade repetition or behavioural problems (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2016).

In general, there are two modes of targeting:

- (1) based on individual student characteristics, or
- (2) based on geographical areas.

To monitor the effect on target groups, [the distribution of enrolments in secondary education by gender and by pupil characteristics](#) will be useful.

In the case of **individual student targeting**, schools receive equity funding, depending on the proportion of students with a disadvantaged background served by the school. Students can be disadvantaged in several ways: children belonging to ethnic or linguistic minorities, children from traveling or itinerant families, or children who are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Belonging to a less privileged group often implies a cumulation of educational disadvantages, complicating the integration and educational success. For example, many students with a low socioeconomic status also belong to an ethnic and/or linguistic minority group.

The second mode of targeting is based on **geographical areas** (educational priority areas), which are disadvantaged regions or neighbourhoods. Here, the majority of the population is affected by poverty, unemployment, dependency on social benefits, educational difficulties, etc.

See <https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/documenten/bestand.ashx?nr=11495>

All target groups are targeted within VET programmes. General measures linked to target groups (concerning fundings, access, wellbeing), also apply in VET programmes. Furthermore, specific target groups are addressed by organising summer schools to catch up with general competences, or by providing specific measures at workplaces for pupils with special educational needs.

All measures presented in this National Implementation Plan aim at enabling schools to respond more adequately to the individual characteristics of pupils, by means of all kinds of broadening of the scope of care and differentiation. These themes are also extensively discussed in teacher training and retraining.

Overall, the indicators mentioned in part 2 will monitor the effect of this National Implementation Plan.

Risks

Some obstacles or risk factors could hinder the implementation of the Flemish NIP.

The **image of VET** is not overall positive at the moment. This affects the choice of learners for VET, especially in compulsory education. VET is very often a 'negative' choice, not a choice made out of intrinsic motivation. Several measures within the NIPVET do want to improve the image of VET,

but the negative image may be persistent. The same goes for the intake of teachers. There is a shortage anyhow, but especially for VET, this is even more pressing. The reevaluation of initial teacher training for VET, emphasis on and facilitating of side-entrance could tackle this obstacle.

Because of the very quickly changing world of work, technology and digitalisation, **qualification may become obsolete and outdated**. If this is the case, employees do not have the right skills anymore. Therefore, it is important to regularly update qualifications and to retrain employees if necessary.

The recent pandemic has shown the **impact of unexpected closures due to force majeure**. Several reasons can cause this: a new corona episode or a new pandemic, natural disaster, effects of the war in Ukraine. The corona experience has pointed out the importance of digitalisation in such situations. Not only teachers had to switch to distance learning, but the pandemic also influenced work-based learning, since the number of workplaces for pupils significantly decreased. Therefore, digitalisation is accelerated, both when it comes to infrastructure as to digital materials for VET.

This plan features the measures that are anchored in legislation and initiatives supported by the current Flemish government. New elections are foreseen in 2024. This might imply that some measures will not be continued or other measures will be implemented.