

National Implementation Plan - The Netherlands

Concerning

The Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience

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The Osnabrück Declaration of 30 November 2020 on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies

The Netherlands, May 2022

1. Brief information on the national context and baseline

In June 2022 The Netherlands has submitted a first version of the National Implementation Plan (NIP) in which our policy measures have been outlined in broad terms. At that time The Netherlands was in the middle of a process to develop policy, based on the coalition agreement of January 2022, with partners that are active in the vocational education field. The development of this new policy was a co-creation between the government and several stakeholders and has led to a joint agenda for VET 'Working Together on Talent' which runs from 2023-2027. This joint agenda is the basis of our updated NIP. In this section the main challenges the Netherlands faces will be outlined. In chapter two we will delve deeper into the strategic frameworks and the main ambitions and challenges. Statistical evidence in this plan is based on data from Nuffic and CEDEFOP.

On the 10th of January 2022, a new government was inaugurated. Four political parties, the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), Christian Democratic Alliance (CDA), Democrats '66 (D66) and Christian Union (CU), agreed a coalition agreement that day, titled: "Looking out for each other, looking ahead to the future." ¹ Since January 2022, the ministry of Education, Science and Culture has two ministers and one state secretary:

- Robbert Dijkgraaf: Minister of Education, Culture and Science. Minister Dijkgraaf is responsible for policy on vocational education and training.
- Dennis Wiersma (resigned In June 2023), succeeded by Mariëlle Paul: Minister for Primary and Secondary Education. Minister Paul is currently responsible for policy regarding adult learning.
- Gunay Uslu (resigned in December 2023), succeeded by Fleur Gräper-van Koolwijk: State-Secretary of Education, Culture and Science. State-Secretary Gräper- van Koolwijk is responsible for culture and media.

The current Ministers and State-Secretary are outgoing since the Cabinet fell on the 7th of July 2023. New elections have taken place on the 22nd of November 2023. A new Cabinet is currently being formed which might affect the policy which is now in place.

In the current coalition agreement, a wide scope of ambitions in different areas is being displayed. These ambitions include for example combating climate change, building affordable new housing, promoting equality of opportunity and fighting discrimination, and investing in future prosperity through education and innovation.

A big challenge the Netherlands faces for the long-term, is to strengthen the quality of education. Everyone in the Netherlands deserves to have a good life and should be able to participate. This starts by ensuring that all children, young people and students have

¹ <https://www.government.nl/documents/publications/2022/01/10/2021-2025-coalition-agreement>

equal opportunities for learning and personal development. To tackle this challenge, the Netherlands wants to develop policy with the following characteristics:

- A good foundation for every child and student. In the Netherlands, the foundational skills (the courses reading, writing, arithmetic and citizenship) of children and students are under pressure. Several studies, among them the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018, suggest that the level of these foundational skills decreases. Therefore, a master plan has been launched by Minister Wiersma.² In July 2023, Minister Dijkgraaf has send a letter to parliament with the outlines of the master plan for VET.³
- Enhancing equal opportunities. A structural budget of €1 billion per year will be invested in enhancing equal opportunities. Important to add, is that not this entire amount is intended for only education.
- Investing in good teachers and school leaders. In order to improve the quality of education in the Netherlands, it is necessary to invest in the quality and number of teachers and school leaders. A structural budget of €800 million per year will be reserved for this.
- Robust vocational education. By means of technology-oriented senior general secondary education (Techniek-HAVO) and small-scale upper secondary vocational education (mbo), the Netherlands will enhance the range of labour-market oriented education and training. The Netherlands will ensure as broad a range as possible of upper secondary vocational courses at the regional level, so that students never have to travel far to school. The Netherlands will boost opportunities by removing obstacles and encouraging progression to further education. Also the regional training centres (ROCs) will be strengthened for upper secondary vocational education, so that they are also equipped to offer lifelong learning for adults and to provide classes for newcomers to the Netherlands from day one, in accordance with the new Civic Integration Act. The equal treatment of students in VET, higher professional education and university will be promoted.
- Safeguards for social safety and equal treatment. The Netherlands will ensure social safety and equal treatment for pupils and teachers at all schools, creating a safe educational environment for all. The Inspectorate of Education will pay extra attention to social safety, and will also be tasked with investigating individual cases, lodging criminal complaints if necessary. The Netherlands will broaden the Safety at School Act to include teachers. Also, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science has the intention to update the vision on internationalization in VET and higher education, in which equal opportunities is a point of attention.

² [Kamerbrief over Masterplan basisvaardigheden | Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl](#); [Kamerbrief over doelen en voortgang Masterplan basisvaardigheden funderend onderwijs | Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

³ [Kaderbrief aanpak basisvaardigheden mbo | Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

Apart from the challenges above, the Netherlands is facing big challenges regarding digitalization and the transition towards a green economy. The nature of work is changing due to, among others, digitalization. The current digital revolution offers tremendous opportunities for the Dutch society and economy. With funding from the National Growth Fund ⁴, it is possible to address the big challenges the Netherlands is facing. In April 2022, the National Growth Fund assigned €560 million to the program Digitaliseringsimpuls Onderwijs (Digitalization Impulse Education) ⁵. Regarding green economy and the climate change, the Netherlands states in the coalition agreement that an ambitious climate policy requires enough skilled professionals, both now and in the runup to 2050. The Netherlands will set to work with educational institutions, public authorities and the social partners to train professionals and provide retraining or refresher training where necessary.

The above mentioned general objectives in the coalition agreement, have been specified and outlined for VET, in the previously mentioned joint Agenda for VET, which the Netherlands has recently developed and which runs from 2023-2027. In this Agenda for VET, representatives of students, teachers, VET schools⁶, local authorities and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science have jointly agreed what they want to achieve in the coming years and what they need to do to that end. This currently is the main strategic framework regarding VET in the Netherlands. Another important strategic framework, is our policy regarding Lifelong Learning (LLL), which in the Netherlands is called Leven Lang Ontwikkelen (LLO). In a letter the previous ministers sent to the parliament in 2020⁷, the outlines of the policy concerning adult learning were described. In September 2022, a new policy letter of the current government has been sent to parliament, with an updated policy agenda.^{8 9 10} Later in this document, more details will follow. In addition to these strategic frameworks, in 2020 the follow-up approach on basic skills, called Tel mee met Taal was launched¹¹. With this program, the Netherlands wants to counter functional illiteracy. In the Netherlands, 2.5 million people are having difficulties with language and arithmetic. Because of this, the Netherlands started this programme, so that every person is able to fully participate in society and on the labour market. This program will run until 2024. Also after this program The Netherlands will continue the efforts in this field. The exact way in which this will be done, is currently being discussed as part of the Work Agenda on VET.

⁴ <https://www.nationaalgroeifonds.nl/english>

⁵ [Vereniging Hogescholen | Programma Digitaliseringsimpuls Onderwijs kan van start met eerste fase](#)

⁶ [Dutch VET | MBO Raad](#)

⁷ [Kamerbrief over Routekaart Leren en Ontwikkelen | Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

⁸ [Kamerbrief over beleidslijnen Leven Lang Ontwikkelen | Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

⁹ [Kamerbrief over vervolg Beleidslijnen Leven Lang Ontwikkelen \(LLO\) | Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

¹⁰ [Kamerbrief over uitwerking onderwijsagenda LLO | Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

¹¹ [Vervolgaanpak laaggeletterdheid 2020 – 2024 Tel mee met Taal | Publicatie | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

Normally, the coalition agreement, the joint policy agenda, the road map for lifelong learning and the Tel mee met Taal program are the most important strategic frameworks for VET and adult learning in the Netherlands. However the Covid-19 pandemic has caused major challenges to the Dutch educational system. Therefore, the government has set up the National Program Education (Nationaal Programma Onderwijs, NPO). The goal of this program is to stimulate and support the recovery and development of education in the Netherlands. For VET and higher education, a budget of €2.7 billion has been made available to close the learning gaps, to complete internships and researches and to enlarge student resilience. It started in 2021 and will finish in 2024.

Before delving deeper into the main ambitions and challenges in the next section, it is necessary to outline some national context of the Dutch VET-system.

In the Netherlands, VET is the main supplier to the labour market and is often regarded as the ‘foundation of the economy’ and the ‘backbone of society’. Approximately 40% of the Dutch working population has obtained a vocational qualification. Since the implementation of the WEB¹² in 1995, the act on VET, two learning pathways were put in the same qualification framework. The first pathway, BOL, is the school-based pathway, with fulltime education. The second pathway, BBL, offers a combination of work and study. Both pathways offer programmes on four different levels:

- Level 1 (EQF1): Entry level
- Level 2 (EQF2): Basic vocational training
- Level 3 (EQF3): Full professional training
- Level 4 (EQF4): Middle-management and specialist training

In both the school-based and the work-based pathways and on every training level, all students have to spend part of their time on work placements in recognized learning companies in order to obtain a diploma. The duration of the courses varies from six months to four years, depending on the level, the earlier achieved competences and other requirements of the course.¹³

Adult education is accessible for adults from the age of 18 onwards and offers various programmes for their development. Adult education includes, for example, basic skills courses (literacy, numeracy and digital skills) and up and reskilling in VET. Adult learning helps to answer the needs of the ever changing labour market and enables people to fully participate in society.

¹² Wet Educatie en Beroepsonderwijs: [wetten.nl - Regeling - Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs - BWBR0007625 \(overheid.nl\)](https://wetten.nl/Regeling-Wet%20educatie%20en%20beroepsonderwijs-BWBR0007625-overheid.nl)

¹³ <https://www.mboraad.nl/english>

2. Challenges and general objectives of the plan

In this NIP, we focus on the two main strategic frameworks which are most relevant: the Work Agenda on VET and the road map for Lifelong Learning. Even though the Osnabrück declaration and the Council Recommendation cover the time period 2021-2025, the content of this NIP regarding the Work Agenda addresses initiatives which run from 2023 until 2027.

Work Agenda on VET

Vocational education and training (VET) is rich in talent that we need to nurture and utilise. VET plays a crucial role in our economy and is of essential value to our society. It functions as the metaphorical engine for addressing major societal challenges, such as the energy transition, housing, education and care. It is the students of today who will devise solutions for the challenges of tomorrow. With its focus on professional practice, VET is a driving force for innovation. The world envies the closely intertwined nature of education and professional practice in our country and the many opportunities this offers to a large proportion of our young people and adults. As such, the Netherlands is proud of its VET sector.

-VET: the foundations are strong

VET embraces a diversity of students, each with their own needs. Over 513,000¹⁴ students are currently in publicly funded VET, and around 45,000¹⁵ students are following educational programmes in non-publicly funded, private VET. The majority of those are first-time students who are receiving training for an occupation or a follow-up educational programme, and are learning good citizenship. In addition, there are workers and jobseekers who want further training or retraining in order to improve their position in the labour market. For them, the focus is on gaining a certificate or diploma, taking part in the civic integration pathway or improving their basic skills. This diversity of needs mirrors the diversity of students. For instance, 11% (over 46,000) of VET students are over the age of 25 (generally not first-time students). One in three students in VET enters from outside education (after an absence of at least one year), and more than one in four have previously gained a VET qualification. Over half of the group aged over 25 consists of students returning to VET after previously gaining a qualification. Nearly 35,000 teachers and other educators work hard to offer the students, young and old, a good foundation for their future. With their knowledge, passion and enthusiasm, they are the ones who can make the difference for students. The over 250,000 work placement companies accredited by SBB and their workplace trainers also perform an

¹⁴ Sub-report on the state of VET in 2022

¹⁵ Sub-report on the state of VET in 2022

essential role in the vocational training of students. They enable students to learn in practice by means of an internship or apprenticeship. On average, VET students rate their education and their VET institution (public or private) as satisfactory. VET schools generally perform in line with the quality ambitions. Their financial health has improved in recent years. So the VET sector is in good shape.

-The challenges of modern-day society call for stronger VET.

With a broad coalition of students and teachers (and other staff), VET schools, employers and local authorities, our ambition is to mobilise all the brainpower and creativity in and around the VET sector in order to further improve and develop VET. And that is definitely needed – the challenges of modern-day society demand it. The personal growth of students, developing in a turbulent world immediately after the coronavirus pandemic in an era economic uncertainty, inequality and labour shortages, is central to this joint Agenda for VET.

-Because VET performs a crucial role in training many young people and adults

Students deserve a sustainable future with decent prospects. A stimulating, safe learning environment in which students are heard and seen, with proper consideration for their personal development and needs, increases students' well-being and trust. Students' mental health contributes to motivated study choices and generates belief in their future. School is also the place where students develop as human beings. There are significant forces conspiring against the well-being of some students, with the impact of the pandemic and the uncertain times in which we live. There are students who face internship discrimination, who are dealing with mental health issues, or who do not experience society and school as safe or accessible. In this Agenda for VET, we are committed to VET that offers a safe and pleasant space for students, where encounters take place and connections are made. In order to be able to offer students the best vocational education, a sufficient supply of good teachers, work placement companies, practical trainers and other educators is needed. The quality of the education depends on education professionals who continue to develop their own skills. As part of this Agenda for VET, we are therefore also pushing for the further professionalization of trainers in VET and helping them with the tasks they face. In this way, VET will remain an attractive sector to work in.

-In VET, everyone participates equally

There are students who due to their personal circumstances (including insufficient financial resources, a disability or chronic illness, an interrupted school career and lack of a supportive environment) need extra help in order to fully develop their skills and potential. In this Agenda for VET, we are committing to giving them the help they need. Every student has the right to equal opportunities in order to develop their skills and talents to the full and to complete an appropriate learning pathway. As such, we consider it important that all students have equal access to internships. Students with a migration background sometimes have to work harder to find an

internship than other students. That is unacceptable. Students must not be discriminated against or experience unequal opportunities based on their backgrounds or other personal characteristics, such as a need for support as a result of a chronic illness, disability or otherwise. We also observe that there are currently too many young people leaving education without a starting qualification. The main causes are the wrong choice of studies, the increased incidence of complex problems among young people and labour market shortages. Dropout rates were exacerbated by the pandemic. We can and must reduce the number of young people without starting qualifications, because students who leave with a diploma have a stronger and more sustainable position in the labour market. Moreover, all students in the Netherlands are entitled to equal treatment. Together with higher professional education (HBO) and university education, VET represents a broad range of training options, each with its own value and unique qualities. Side by side. In order to achieve equality, there are many steps that still need to be taken. For example, in the use of language – distinctions are sometimes unnecessarily made between VET, HBO and university students. In principle, all students in VET, HBO and university education should have the same opportunities in student life. That also goes for gaining international competencies, for example through the experience of spending time abroad.

-There is work to be done: VET talent is urgently needed

Right now there is plenty of work. Unemployment is at a historic low and the labour market is exceptionally tight. A tight labour market offers opportunities for people. There is strong demand for VET graduates: 81% will have a job within three months, of which nearly 80% at the level they graduated at and the majority in a role related to the subject they studied. The call for further training and retraining of workers and non-workers is louder than ever. Through VET, adults and career changers can improve their prospects in the labour market. It is therefore all the more important to fully utilise the potential of VET. At the same time, labour shortages are hampering efforts to address societal challenges and achieve broadly-based welfare in the Netherlands. The consequences are there for all to see: fewer trains, restaurants staying closed for lack of staff and long waiting lists for childcare places. Many additional skilled workers are needed, whereas the numbers entering VET from lower secondary pre-vocational education (VMBO) is falling. Students who are properly informed about the education they choose and subsequently receive good training, including an honest perspective on what the future will require and may bring, acquire knowledge and skills that are relevant for the labour market. They make sensible choices about their future and where they want to work. Under these conditions, personal development delivers well-trained and motivated professionals who are ready to contribute to addressing our major societal challenges. In this Agenda for VET, we are committed to providing choices and education that offer students good prospects.

-Focus on solid foundations, excellent talent and research in VET

There are more and more people whose literacy or numeracy are not adequate to keep up in our society. Command of the basic skills is decreasing among young people in the Netherlands. We are concerned about this trend. We want to offer students in VET a solid

foundation. That includes offering generic subjects appropriate to vocational education in ways that are attractive and effective for students. Besides providing a solid foundation, education also needs to offer students opportunities to develop their full potential. Offering opportunities for VET students to excel is part of the next step towards even higher quality in VET. Craftsmanship is a very valuable good. VET is crucially important to successfully addressing the societal challenges facing the Netherlands, such as the climate and energy transition. These rapid changes require education to be up to date and adaptive. Teaching teams are a driving force, because they shape VET in innovative ways. For this reason, we will make sure that working in the VET sector is and remains attractive. In this Agenda for VET, we are committing to innovation and research in our VET, for example through practoren (expertise platforms within VET schools that conduct practice-based research). We are also committed to further developing technical innovations and to digitalisation. Both play an important role not only in regard to the societal challenges referred to above, but also in offering attractive, personalised education geared to the future. Two recently accepted applications to the National Growth Fund, Digitaliseringsimpuls NL and Digitaal Onderwijs Goed Geregeld, will provide a stimulus.

The challenges and objectives of the Agenda for VET are expressed in twelve objectives, divided between three priorities. These priorities are:

1. **Equal opportunities:** All students in VET must be given equal opportunities to develop their skills. They must be able to participate in society and the labour market, which includes giving them extra help if they need it as the result of a disability or a difficult home situation, for example.
2. **Education that is connected with the labour market:** A VET programme must lead to a promising position in the labour market and society. In the Netherlands, there is strong demand for well-trained professionals and VET is important for providing further training and retraining of professionals for various sectors, such as construction, care and education.
3. **Education for the future:** Every VET student must receive a good grounding in Dutch, numeracy and citizenship. Good education requires a sufficient supply of good teachers. For this reason, VET must remain an attractive employer. VET is important for tackling societal challenges. For this reason, VET must focus more on research and innovation, remaining alert to the requirements of cybersecurity and privacy protection.

With the Agenda for VET the government is systematically investing around €367 million extra per year in VET, largely in the three priorities of the Agenda. In addition, the budget for the existing quality agreements (approximately €528 million per year) will be used

by the schools for the objectives set out in the Agenda for VET. Taken together, this means €0.9 billion is available annually for implementing the Agenda, amounting to more than €4 billion throughout its term.

We expect that the Agenda for VET will also contribute to achieving the objectives of the Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (2020/C 417/01) by 2025:

- The share of employed graduates from VET should be at least 82%.
- 60% of recent graduates from VET benefit from exposure to work-based learning during their VET. This objective 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.

Recent research from the OECD reveals that 94% of 25-29 year olds with a vocational diploma have a job, the highest rate in the entire OECD.¹⁶ Regarding students from vocational education with international experience, the situation in the Netherlands is also positive: the targeted percentage of 8% has been achieved, representing the annual average in the Netherlands (excluding 2021 due to travel restrictions resulting from COVID, when the percentage was 4%).¹⁷

To maintain and strengthen this position, the entire vocational education sector is actively working to implement the priorities outlined in the Work Agenda, aligning with the objectives outlined in the national implementation plan. In the fall, an Interdepartmental Policy Study (IBO) on vocational education has been released¹⁸. Additionally, in collaboration with higher education and research, we commissioned a future exploration for vocational education. We recently presented this future exploration to the Second Chamber (Dutch Parliament). All these steps together assist us and the government in further enhancing Dutch VET.

LifeLong Learning

When it comes to VET, lifelong learning (LLL) is a relevant policy area and one we address jointly from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy. Increasing VET participation is a priority for the Netherlands. This can take on two forms: VET as a part of a formal education (or part thereof) or informal learning.

¹⁶ [Publicatie OESO rapport Education at a Glance 2023 | Nieuwsbericht | OCW in cijfers](#)

¹⁷ [Internationale mobiliteit in het Nederlandse mbo \(nuffic.nl\)](#)

¹⁸ [Kamerbrief bij rapport over IBO naar toekomstgericht mbo | Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

While participation rates in LLL are relatively high, recent data shows a stagnating trend in formal course participation and informal learning. Vulnerable groups, such as those with practical education, flexible contracts, and individuals over 55, have limited access to lifelong learning. To increase VET-participation and informal learning the Dutch government focuses on three areas: individuals, employers and educational institution. WE have set the ambitious goals of achieving a LLL-participation rate of 62% of the total labor force in the Netherlands by 2030. To address these challenges, our policy focusses on these three interconnected priorities as described below:

- 1. Individuals in Development:** The government aims to simplify and expand public financing for scholastic opportunities, providing additional support to vulnerable groups through career development advice. Efforts will focus on offering reliable information about available public and private training programs and financing options to facilitate better choices.
- 2. Businesses in Development:** The government will support businesses in creating a learning culture at work and scaling successful lifelong learning initiatives. For this there will be a focus on promoting learning and development within companies, with special attention to small and medium-sized enterprises (Programma Leercultuur). The goal is to raise awareness among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) about the necessity and value of LLL for their organization and to provide tools to make learning and development a natural part of their organization. Over the past few years, we have gained positive experiences with the SLIM scheme, a subsidy that can encourage SMEs and collaborations to invest in learning and development. This support is crucial in nurturing a continuous learning environment that fosters employees' growth and development.
- 3. Educational Institutions in Development:** Educational institutions will be encouraged to tailor their offerings to the needs of workers and job seekers by developing and scaling short training programs and aligning training with prior learning and work experience.

To tackle these challenges the Dutch government has allocated significant funding which will be invested in various LLL initiatives. These investments include individual training budgets for practical education language and vocational skills for low-literate individuals, and relevant training programs related to energy transition. Additional funding aims to strengthen public-private collaboration between vocational education and SMEs.

3.1 Detailed description of main measures and/or their packages (4)

This chapter describes the three objectives of the Agenda for VET and corresponding measures. The fourth paragraph contains a description of the main measures regarding LLL.

Title

1. Equal opportunities

Rationale/background, challenges addressed

Our ambition is that all students in VET should receive optimal opportunities to fully develop their skills and potential and are therefore able to complete an appropriate learning pathway geared towards sustainable participation in society and the labour market. That includes those students who, due to various circumstances (including insufficient resources, a disability, an interrupted school career, lack of a supportive environment), need extra help in order to fully develop their skills and potential.

Dutch education is aimed at offering everyone an equal opportunity to successfully complete an educational programme and build a sustainable livelihood. Each student must receive an equal opportunity to optimally develop his or her talents and capacities via the vocational route. As such, we consider it important that the intake and progression processes in vocational education should proceed smoothly for young people. Full participation includes equal treatment for all students in the Netherlands. VET, higher professional education and university education represent a rich array of educational programmes, not a ladder. Our ambition is that everyone in the Netherlands should regard vocational education as a positive choice. Unfortunately, we currently observe differences between groups of young people and adults with regard to their opportunities for building a sustainable livelihood. Current social developments are further compromising equal opportunities.

We observe:

- that the coronavirus pandemic has had negative consequences for the well-being of students, impacting on motivation and development opportunities,
- that labour market shortages make entering the labour market without qualifications attractive,
- the danger that complex problems and/or increased poverty as a result of rising prices and inflation may cause some to drop out of their courses,
- and that currently, after years of decline, there is an upward trend in the number of students leaving education without

qualifications (including those dropping out of school) that we want to turn around,

- that there is scope to provide even better support for students with special needs in order to attain a VET qualification,
- that low literacy is an obstacle on the road to equal opportunities; it limits the emancipatory function of education, often precisely for those people who encountered the same obstacle earlier in their lives.

In order to promote equal opportunities, in the coming years we are going to work together on the five objectives in the table below.

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

All students in VET must be given equal opportunities to develop their skills. They must be able to participate in society and the labour market, which includes giving them extra help if they need it as the result of a disability or a difficult home situation, for example.

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

What	Who	Timeline
<p>1.1 We will contribute to the equal treatment of all students in the Netherlands. For this objective, we will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for VET students to participate in student life, for example via introductory weeks, access to cafes, bars, etc., student associations or sports clubs. • Opportunities for VET students to gain experience abroad and acquire international competencies (this also includes looking into removal of barriers, such as mutual recognition of diplomas between countries). <p>And jointly take any action needed.</p>	<p>OCW, VET Council, JOB, VET schools, Ministry of Kingdom and Interior Relations (BZK), Local authorities, Nuffic</p>	<p>2023-2027</p>
<p>1.2 We will ensure that students do well and feel safe at school and during their internships.</p>	<p>(publicly funded) VET Schools, students, VET Council, NRTO,</p>	<p>2023-2027</p>

<p>We will make it easier for students who need extra help to go into VET and we will do our best to make VET accessible to everyone.</p> <p>For this objective, we will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of students who feel safe at school and at the internship/apprenticeship location. • How VET students rate their well-being. • The percentage of VET students who report experiencing poor mental health. • The proportion of students with support needs who are satisfied with the support they receive at school. <p>And jointly take any action needed.</p>	<p>local authorities, JOB, NRTO, SBB, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (WVS), municipal health services, care and welfare institutions, BVMBO</p>		
<p>1.3 We will improve supervision in education and during the transition from school to work or a follow-up educational programme (in particular for level 2 students).</p> <p>We will maximise our efforts to slow down and turn around the rise in school dropout rates that is now being seen after years of falling numbers. Our target is fewer than 18,000 new school dropouts by 2026.</p> <p>For this objective, we will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The numbers of those dropping out of school each year. • The proportion of those leaving school with VET level 1 (entry-level) or 2 who are in 	<p>Publicly funded VET schools, OCW employers, municipalities, SBB, local authorities, OCW, SZW, MBO Council, NRTO, employers, SZW, UVW, Ingrado</p>	<p>2023-2027</p>	

<p>work after a year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of young people who are satisfied with the support they receive at school. <p>And jointly take any action needed.</p>			
<p>1.4 We will strengthen the vocational route. We will do so by facilitating lower secondary pre-vocational, senior secondary vocational and higher professional education institutions in ensuring a seamless transition when students progress to a related programme. We will encourage intake and progression within the vocational education segment so that everyone gets the opportunity to fully realise their potential. Vocational education is regarded as a positive choice. A re-evaluation of vocational education takes place within society.</p> <p>For this objective, we will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study success rates for young people in the vocational education segment, focusing on the transitions between the different levels of education. The performance of ‘equal opportunities’4 students progressing from secondary education to VET to higher professional education at the system level: the number of those choosing to progress to 	<p>OCW, VET Council, publicly funded VET schools, secondary schools and higher professional education institutions, SBB</p>		

<p>higher professional education who drop out in the first year.</p> <p>And jointly take any action needed.</p>			
<p>1.5 VET will contribute to reducing low literacy by investing in training programmes for those with low literacy.</p> <p>For this objective, we will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in these training programmes, inter alia via the monitoring reports of the National Growth Fund's LLL Collective project. <p>And jointly take any action needed.</p>	<p>Local authorities, VET schools and employers. Participation will be encouraged by VNG, the MBO Council, NRTO, VNO-NCW, MKB Nederland, Central government and local authorities</p>	<p>2023-2027</p>	

<p>3.2 Detailed description of main measures and/or their packages ⁽⁴⁾</p>
<p>Title</p> <p>2. Education that is connected with the labour market</p>
<p>Rationale/background, challenges addressed</p> <p>Our ambition is to offer every VET student, young and old, at the start of their career and for its duration, optimal opportunities to follow an educational programme that matches his or her interests, talents, capacities, and that leads to a promising and sustainable position in the labour market and in society or on a follow-up programme. And we want every VET student to continue to develop throughout their lives after obtaining a VET qualification. VET is a crucial provider of further training and retraining as part of lifelong learning.</p> <p>The quality of VET is high, as is the quality of collaboration between education and professional practice. Practice-based learning, including internships and apprenticeships, forms the heart of VET. The closely intertwined nature of education and professional practice</p>

and the opportunity to combine working and learning makes VET special. As a result, VET graduates are very much in demand among employers: 81% find a job within three months.

At the same time, there is a substantial challenge facing the VET sector over the coming years: providing as many well-trained skilled workers as possible through initial education and further training and retraining of workers and jobseekers.

This is a result of the following trends:

- In our country, we face a large number of societal challenges in the areas of housing, care, education, climate and energy, safety, childcare and digitalisation (where societally relevant). Well-trained workers are indispensable to meeting these challenges.
- There are major shortages in the labour market. We also note that the number of unfilled vacancies is historically high (449,000). There is extremely strong demand for skilled workers.
- We observe that new enrolments in VET from secondary education are falling, partly as a result of demographic contraction and upward pressure. There are not enough young people graduating to fill all the open vacancies.
- In addition, there is a substantial group of people who for various reasons are marginalised and are not at work, or not sustainably so.

We consider it important to maximise opportunities for graduates. We want to achieve the best possible match between the interests, talents and capacities of students and the demand from the labour market. Our aim is that young people and adults should feel well supported in choosing an educational programme and a profession. Secondary education and VET each have a role to play here. In addition, we observe that further training and retraining via VET can make a contribution to resolving the shortages in the labour market, and that training through practice-based learning can help those who are currently marginalised towards sustainable job prospects.

In order to achieve these aims, in the coming years we will be focusing on the objectives in the table below.

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

A VET programme must lead to a promising position in the labour market and society. In the Netherlands, there is strong demand for well-trained professionals and VET is important for providing further training and retraining of professionals for various sectors, such as construction, care and education.

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

What	Who	Timeline
<p>2.1 More students are making a considered choice of education geared towards a promising occupation that matches their interests, talents and capacities. The programme offers them the prospect of a sustainable position in the labour market and of a livelihood. It is clear to workers and jobseekers, employers, SBB and professionals from UWV and local authorities which further training and retraining opportunities are offered by public and private VET providers.</p> <p>For this objective, we will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of students who are positive about the support they receive from their schools in choosing between continued learning (follow-up educational programmes) or work (labour market). • The percentage of young people opting for educational programmes offering promising and sustainable prospects in the labour market, with a particular focus on educational programmes that are required to help address the societal challenges in housing, care, education, climate and energy, 	<p>OCW, VET schools, local authorities, employers, JOB, Secondary Education (VO) Council, MBO Council, Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (VH), publicly funded VET schools, secondary education and higher professional education (including teacher training courses), Careers Guidance Expertise Centre, employers, workers, jobseekers and OCW, VET schools, local authorities, UWV, SBB, partners of KiesVET (MBO Council, VO Council, social partners, NRTO) OCW, employers, SBB, (organised) businesses.</p>	<p>2023-2027</p>

<p>safety, childcare and digitalisation (where societally relevant). And make adjustments where necessary.</p>			
<p>2.2 Students in VET will receive a high quality internship or apprenticeship that is in line with each student's educational programme and development needs. We will eliminate internship discrimination and students will receive appropriate remuneration.</p> <p>For this objective, we will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of students who are satisfied about the support they receive from the institution (and from the work placement company) during the internship or apprenticeship. • The number of internships in proportion to the number of students (shortages of internships). • The proportion of students receiving appropriate remuneration. • Developments in combating internship discrimination. • The effort required to find an internship/apprenticeship based on background characteristics. And make adjustments where necessary. 	<p>JOB, BV MBO, MBO Council, NRTO, VNO-NCW, MKB-Nederland, VNG, SBB, CNV Onderwijs, CNV Jongeren, FNV, FNV Young & United, AOb, FvOv, SZW, OCW, BV VET, MBO Council, NRTO, social partners, OCW, in partnership with VET schools</p>	<p>2023-2027</p>	
<p>2.3 The VET sector contributes to the further training and retraining of workers and jobseekers (tailored, modular and work-based</p>	<p>VNO-NCW/ MKB-Nederland, SBB, VET schools, employers, MKB-Nederland, NRTO, MBO Council, SBB, OCW, BV VET,</p>	<p>2023-2027</p>	

<p>(BBL) tracks). Our focus will be specifically on further training and retraining within the context of the societal challenges (housing, care, education, climate and energy, safety, childcare and, where societally relevant, digitalisation). In addition, we will also focus on training (via practice-based learning in VET) for people who are marginalised for various reasons and are not in work, or not sustainably so. Employers, VET schools and the SBB will make agreements about this together, making use of the subsidy scheme for practice-based learning. VET schools and employers also work together in the LLL Catalyst project.</p> <p>For this objective, we will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The offering and take-up of tailored programmes (both work-based (BBL) and school-based (BOL) tracks), shortened programmes for students who already have the required learning and work experience and qualifications – with a specific focus on the offering related to housing, care, education, climate and energy, safety and childcare, and on digitalisation (where societally relevant). • The number of students achieving their diplomas through the work-based (BBL) track, with a focus on career changers and those switching from the school-based (BOL) track. 	<p>social partners,</p>		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participation of employers, local authorities, public and private VET schools in the National Growth Fund's LLL Catalyst project. • The number of certificates of acquired skills issued. <p>And make adjustments where necessary.</p>			
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3.3 Detailed description of main measures and/or their packages ⁽⁴⁾
Title 1. Quality, research and innovation
Rationale/background, challenges addressed
<p>-Every student receives a solid foundation in VET. Our ambition is that all students in VET should be given the greatest possible encouragement to work on Dutch, numeracy and citizenship. We will do this by providing basic skills appropriate to the specific situations of the different groups of students in vocational education and to their own living and working environments.</p> <p>-Sufficient high-quality teachers to achieve our ambitions Our ambition is to have sufficient high-quality teachers who want to work in, or remain in, VET. For this reason, it is important that the VET sector is regarded as an attractive employer and remains so.</p> <p>-VET is future-proof and of top quality, thanks in part to a commitment to research, innovation and digitalization Our ambition is that VET should become the centre for innovation and vocational education, thanks to research, innovation and digitalisation being firmly embedded in the sector</p>

The Netherlands currently faces a major societal challenge in terms of basic skills: Dutch, numeracy, citizenship and digital literacy. There are more and more people whose literacy or numeracy are not adequate to keep up in our society. This may have been exacerbated by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on education. Illustrative of this phenomenon is the decline in the command of various basic skills in lower secondary pre-vocational education (VMBO). We observe (based on the level seen in VMBO) that the national trend is that the number of students whose basic skills are lacking at the start of their VET programmes is increasing. For VET students and graduates, good basic skills are an important enabling condition for keeping up in society and in their profession. The most important enabling condition for being able to offer high quality education is an adequate supply of good teachers. For this reason, we are committed to ensuring that there are sufficient, competent teachers who continue to engage in their own professional development. VET is and must remain an attractive sector to work in, with sufficient teachers and other teaching staff together providing the best vocational education for students in teaching teams and enjoying high job satisfaction. The Netherlands faces various societal challenges, for example in the areas of climate and energy, in which technical innovations and digitalisation play an important role. These challenges have major implications for VET. VET is crucially important for successfully addressing these challenges now and in the future. This requires that research and innovation be structurally embedded in VET, and VET in the national research and development infrastructure. We want to increase the innovation and research capacity of VET and ensure that insights from research flow back into VET. Digitalisation can play a role in increasing innovative capacity. Cybersecurity and the protection of privacy are preconditions for safe digitalisation in education.

In order to offer every student high-quality, future-proof education at VET level, we are working on the following objectives in the table below.

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

Every VET student must receive a good grounding in Dutch, numeracy and citizenship. Good education requires a sufficient supply of good teachers. For this reason, VET must remain an attractive employer. VET is important for tackling societal challenges. For this reason, VET must focus more on research and innovation, remaining alert to the requirements of cybersecurity and privacy protection.

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

What	Who	Timeline
3.1 We will improve the command of Dutch and arithmetic among VET students. We will ensure that the quality of the teaching staff	OCW, VET Council, BVMBO, JOB, teacher training course, NRTO, BVMBO, VET schools	2023-2027

<p>who teach Dutch and arithmetic (and citizenship, see 3.2) is enhanced.</p> <p>For this objective, we will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of Dutch and maths teachers who meet the requirements that will apply as the result of the minister's decision. • The ratings that VET students give for the quality of education in basic skills they receive. • The level of command of the basic skills among VET students. And make adjustments where necessary. 			
<p>3.2 Citizenship education contributes to students' all-round development, for example by helping to enhance their societal, social and critical thinking skills. We will improve the quality of citizenship education.</p> <p>For this objective, we will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The citizenship skills of VET students. • The ratings that students give for the quality of citizenship education. • The proportion of teachers who feel competent to teach citizenship education. • The degree to which teachers feel that the qualification requirements for citizenship education have been clarified. And make adjustments where necessary. 	<p>OCW, MBO Council, NRTO, BVMBO, JOB, unions</p>	<p>2023-2027</p>	

<p>3.3 We will ensure that working in VET is and remains attractive. We will look at the workload and career prospects of teaching staff. We will reduce dropout rates among newly qualified teaching staff. All employees in the VET sector, including specifically teachers and other educators, have sufficient opportunities to develop and professionalise.</p> <p>For this objective, we will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National pay grades for VET teachers. • How VET teachers rate their workload. • The dropout rate among newly qualified teachers. • The available learning offering for teachers, together with their teaching teams, and the degree to which teachers actually make use of it/are able to make use of it. • The professional development options available to teachers who provide Dutch, numeracy or citizenship education and the extent to which those options are taken up. • The connection between teaching teams and knowledge/science, so that teaching teams can work in an evidence-based way. • Shortages of teaching staff (once they have been catalogued by the MBO Council and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science). 	<p>(Publicly funded) VET schools, social partners, VNO NCW/MKB Nederland, OCW, VET Council, Council VH, teacher training courses, BVMBO</p>	<p>2023-2027</p>	
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And make adjustments where necessary.			
<p>3.4 We will ensure that VET becomes a full and equal partner in the research and knowledge networks in the realm of research and innovation.</p> <p>For this objective, we will monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of relevant schemes and calls that include VET. • The number of practoratens and the proportion of VET schools participating. • The offering of excellence pathways. <p>And make adjustments where necessary.</p>	OCW, publicly funded VET schools, BVMBO, teachers.		

EU policy priorities addressed	
Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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.

⁴ 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.

<input type="checkbox"/> F. VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.	
VET subsystem (IVET, CVET, or both)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>initial VET (IVET)</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>continuing VET (CVET)</i>	
Scope (national, regional, local)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>national</i> <input type="checkbox"/> regional <input type="checkbox"/> local (this plan we focus mainly on national measures)	
Beneficiaries/target groups	
<input type="checkbox"/> Students and adult learners	
Responsible ministries/bodies	
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	
Source of funding (National, EU funds, sectoral)	
With the Agenda for VET the government is systematically investing around €367 million extra per year in VET, largely in the three priorities of the Agenda. In addition, the budget for the existing quality agreements (approximately €528 million per year) will be used by the schools for the objectives set out in the Agenda for VET. Taken together, this means €0.9 billion is available annually for implementing the Agenda, amounting to more than €4 billion throughout its term.	

3.4 Detailed description of main measures and/or their packages (4)			
Title			
4. Lifelong Learning (LLL)			
Rationale/background, challenges addressed			
While participation rates in LLL are relatively high, recent data shows a stagnating trend in formal course participation and informal learning. Vulnerable groups, such as those with practical education, flexible contracts, and individuals over 55, have limited access to lifelong learning. To increase VET-participation and informal learning the Dutch government focuses on three areas: individuals, employers and educational institution. We have set the ambitious goals of achieving a LLL-participation rate of 62% of the total labor force in the Netherlands by 2030.			
Specific objectives of the measure/package and their relation to the general objectives of the plan			
While the main goal is to increase LLL-participation rate (mainly formal and non-formal learning), it is important to realize that a roughly 91% of learning occurs informally. This underlines the importance of recognizing informal learning and acknowledging/validating informal learning <i>experiences</i> . To get a good grip on informal learning we need effective measurement and evaluation. The Netherlands has taken proactive steps to develop robust indicators for monitoring progress in this domain, in collaboration with research agencies. In May 2023 the European Council kicked off the "Year of Skills", which will serve as a significant milestone in this journey. In this regard the Netherlands will host a dedicated work-conference on informal learning, providing a platform for stakeholders of all member states to convene and share insights.			
Description of main actions and activities comprising the measure/package, including implementation milestones and indicative timeline			
	What	Who	Timeline
	4.1 Individuals in Development: The government aims to simplify and expand public financing for scholastic opportunities, providing additional support to vulnerable groups through career development advice.	OCW, SZW, EZK, social partners & stakeholders	2022 - 2026

<p>Efforts will focus on offering reliable information about available public and private training programs and financing options to facilitate better choices.</p> <p>For the overarching objective of increasing LLL-participation we will employ the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “STAP”, or the Stimulus for Labor Market Position, which is an initiative in the Netherlands aimed at encouraging lifelong learning and enhancing the skills of individuals. It provides individuals with an individual budget that they can use to invest in their personal development through education and training. STAP will stop on 01-01-2024 • “Lifelong Learning Credit” is a financial aid scheme in the Netherlands that offers loans to individuals pursuing further education and training. It supports those who are not eligible for regular student finance and wish to continue their education throughout their lives. • “Leeroverzicht” (www.leeroverzicht.nl) is a centralized platform that houses all educational opportunities, including available financing options, in one convenient location." 			
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<p>4.2 Businesses in Development: The government will support businesses in creating a learning culture at work and scaling successful lifelong learning initiatives. This support is crucial in nurturing a continuous learning environment that fosters employees' growth and development.</p> <p>For the overarching objective of increasing LLL-participation we will employ the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Incentive Scheme for Learning and Development in SMEs (SLIM), which is a Dutch program designed to encourage learning and development within small and medium-sized enterprises. It provides financial support for projects that enhance skills, promote learning cultures, and boost workforce development. • “Tel mee met Taal”, which is a Dutch initiative aimed at promoting literacy and language skills. It encourages collaboration between various stakeholders, including schools, libraries, and employers, to enhance language proficiency among children and adults, ensuring equal opportunities for all. • The “subsidieregeling praktijkleren” is a 	<p>OCW, SZW en EZK</p>	<p>2022 - 2026</p>	

<p>subsidy scheme in the Netherlands that supports companies in offering practical training and apprenticeships to students. It provides financial incentives to employers who provide valuable on-the-job learning experiences to students pursuing vocational education.</p>			
<p>4.3 Educational Institutions in Development: Educational institutions will be encouraged to tailor their offerings to the needs of workers and job seekers by developing and scaling short training programs and aligning training with prior learning and work experience.</p> <p>For the overarching objective of increasing LLL-participation we will employ the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “LLO Katalysator” (LLL Catalyst). An initiative funded in the second round of the National Growth Fund (NGF). It serves as a catalyst for enhancing lifelong learning opportunities, focusing on skill development, training, and educational initiatives to drive individual and workforce growth. Part of the NGF's second round, is a collaborative effort aimed at addressing the learning needs of low-skilled individuals and those with low literacy levels. It supports initiatives that provide 	<p>OCW, SZW, EZK, social partners and stakeholders</p>	<p>2022-2026</p>	

<p>accessible and tailored education and training opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microcredentials and VET-certificates, which are recognized qualifications that validate specific skills or competencies obtained through short courses or training programs. They offer a flexible way to gain targeted expertise, and VET-certificates are particularly relevant in the context of vocational education. • Focusing on broadening vocational training opportunities for individuals transitioning into new careers, ensuring that their skills align with the demands of their chosen industries. • Emphasizing the expansion of partnerships between public educational institutions and private sector entities to enhance the relevance of vocational education and align it with industry needs. 			
EU policy priorities addressed			
Council Recommendation on VET	Osnabrück Declaration		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A. VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges. ✓ 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. ✓ D. VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills. <input type="checkbox"/> E. VET promotes equality of opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET. ✓ 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.
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4. Governance of the implementation of the plan

Promoting equal opportunities, contributing to a good alignment between education and the labour market, and further developing future-proof VET are challenges we can only tackle together. The national Agenda for VET sets out ambitious goals and substantial investments for VET, so providing direction for the efforts needed over the coming years. The VET schools cannot achieve those ambitions alone. Close cooperation and a substantial contribution from regional and sectoral partners are needed in order to be able to achieve them. With the signing of the Agenda for VET by national parties such as SBB, VNO-NCW/MKB-Nederland, JOB MBO, BVMBBO and VNG, we are taking an important step. Because by signing the Agenda for VET, these parties are committing themselves to informing and mobilising their regional and sector grassroots. The government is also making extra money available for a number of national parties. What is needed now is for regional and sectoral coalitions to be formed in order to jointly address the challenges facing VET. It is up to the schools to work together with the regional and sectoral partners to translate the aims set out in the national Agenda for VET to their own professional field. That means schools and their partners making choices with regard to their agendas and policies which are appropriate to the current challenges in their respective regions. We call on the VET schools to make a regional translation of the national objectives, stating how the partners in the region will jointly translate the ambitions set out in the Agenda for VET into practice. Collaborating partners from education, government and business (the social and the economic domain) must be included in this process.

Below you find a table with the most relevant stakeholders involved in the Agenda for VET:

Stakeholder	Description organization	Role
OCW	The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is a Dutch governmental department that is responsible for policies related to education, culture and the arts.	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda And Party in the implementation of the LLL Agenda
VET council (MBO Raad)	The MBO Council is a representative body that serves as the collective voice for Dutch vocational education institutions (MBO). It works to strengthen the quality and relevance of MBO education and advocates for the interests of the sector at the national level.	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda And Party in the implementation of the LLL Agenda
VNO NCW / MKB NL	The Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (known as VNO-NCW) is the largest employers' organisation in the Netherlands. VNO-NCW represents the common interests of Dutch business, both at home and abroad and provides a variety of services for its members	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda
FNV	The Netherlands Trade Union Confederation (FNV) has 1.1 million members, making it the largest trade union in the Netherlands.	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda
NRTO	The NRTO is the Dutch association/ council for training and education (in Dutch "Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding")	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda Party in the implementation of the LLL Agenda
JOB	The Youth Organisation Vocational Education (Jongeren Organisatie Beroepsonderwijs) was founded in 1999 by the National Action Committee	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda

	School Pupils (Landelijk Actie Komitee Scholieren). The Youth Organisation Vocational Education is active at the national level.		
VNG	The Association of Netherlands Municipalities (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten, VNG) represents all municipalities in the Netherlands. It plays a crucial role in policy-making, advocating for local interests, and fostering cooperation between municipalities and other stakeholders, including in the field of education and vocational training.	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda. Party in the implementation of the LLL Agenda	
SBB	The Foundation for cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven, SBB) is a professional organisation at the heart of senior secondary vocational education and training and business, trade and industry.	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda Party in the implementation of the LLL Agenda	
BVMBO	The Beroepsvereniging voor het MBO (BVMBO) is a professional association that represents and supports educators working in vocational education (MBO). They aim to promote excellence in teaching, provide professional development opportunities, and foster collaboration among MBO educators.	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda Party in the implementation of the LLL Agenda	
Dutch Inspectorate of Education	The Dutch Inspectorate of Education is responsible for the inspection and supervision of school governing bodies, schools and educational institutions.		
AOb	De AOb is a trade union for educational staff working in primary education, secondary schools, secondary vocational education, colleges and universities. The union is affiliated with the largest employee organization in the Netherlands, the FNV	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda.	
UWV	UWV is the Employee Insurance Agency in the Netherlands that focuses on labor market services and employee insurance schemes. Their role involves facilitating employment, providing benefits to those who are unable to work, and supporting job seekers in their pursuit of suitable opportunities	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda Party in the implementation of the LLL Agenda	

SZW	The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, is a Dutch governmental department responsible for policies related to social welfare, labor, and employment. They work to ensure fair working conditions, social security, and promote the inclusion and well-being of citizens in the labor market.	Policymaker in the implementation of the LLL Agenda
Social Partners	Social Partners are the representatives of management and labour (employer organizations and trade unions), and in some contexts public authorities, that engage in social dialogue, make collective labour agreements and invest significantly in LLL through employee and R&D funds	Party in the implementation of the LLL Agenda
DUO	DUO is the Education Executive Agency responsible for implementing various educational laws and regulations in the Netherlands. They manage student grants, loans, educational data, and ensure the smooth administration of educational processes and services.	Party in the implementation of the LLL Agenda
UNL	UNL represents universities in the Netherlands. Their mission is to promote excellence in practical higher education, facilitate collaboration between institutions, and advocate for the interests of universities of applied sciences at national and international levels.	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda.
VH	VH is the Association of Hogescholen in the Netherlands. They work to uphold the quality and integrity of academic research and education, foster cooperation among schools, and advocate for the advancement of higher education and research.	Party in the implementation of the Work Agenda.
Local Municipalities	Local municipalities in the Netherlands are autonomous administrative units responsible for local governance. They play a crucial role in providing public services, including education, healthcare, and social services, tailored to the needs of their communities. Local municipalities work closely with national and regional governments to address local needs and concerns.	Party in the implementation of the LLL Agenda
VWS	The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, is a Dutch governmental department responsible for policies concerning public health, healthcare,	Party in the implementation of the LLL Agenda

	social support, and sports. They aim to improve the health and well-being of citizens, provide quality healthcare, and promote active lifestyles.		
BZK	The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, is a Dutch governmental department focusing on domestic affairs, governance, and relations with the Kingdom's constituent countries and municipalities. They work to ensure effective governance, strengthen democratic processes, and foster cooperation between different levels of government.	Party in the implementation of the LLL Agenda	

Table 4. Relevant stakeholders Lifelong Learning

ReferNet NL will be actively involved in the monitoring, evaluation and reporting process. Since the Work Agenda is also being monitored by an external party, ReferNet NL will work closely together with this party to avoid double monitoring. Furthermore, the implementation of the NIP will be a recurring point on the agenda of the steering group on internationalisation in VET. This steering group consists of all national stakeholders involved in internationalisation and meets every three months.

5. Expected effects of the plan

This plan contributes to a wide array of goals, on different levels: the coalition agreement, the Work Agenda, the LLL Agenda and the Osnabruck declaration and the Council Recommendation on VET.

Broadly speaking, this plan contributes to the general objectives of the coalition agreement. The expected effects are as follows:

- A good foundation for every child and student.
- Enhancing equal opportunities.
- Investing in good teachers and school leaders.
- Robust vocational education.
- Safeguards for social safety and equal treatment.

Regarding the Work Agenda, this plan contributes to the general objectives of the Work Agenda. This means the expected effects are that we have contributed to more equal opportunities for VET students. They have been given equal opportunities to develop their

skills and are able to participate in society and the labour market, which includes that they have been given extra help if they need it as the result of a disability or a difficult home situation, for example. Secondly a VET programme will lead to a promising position in the labour market and society. In the Netherlands, there is strong demand for well-trained professionals and VET is important for providing further training and retraining of professionals for various sectors, such as construction, care and education. Thirdly we strive for a good grounding in Dutch, numeracy and citizenship for every VET student. Good education requires a sufficient supply of good teachers. For this reason, VET must remain an attractive employer. VET is important for tackling societal challenges. For this reason, the goal and expected effect is that VET will focus more on research and innovation, remaining alert to the requirements of cybersecurity and privacy protection. In conclusion, all actions and measures mentioned in this NIP will lead to the strengthening of VET in order to be ready for the challenges of our time.

Regarding LLL the expected effects are as follows:

- Stronger legal positioning of participation in components of formal education.
- Optimizing return on investment in public educational institutions by increasing options for usage towards private goals
- Fostering an optimal learning culture among employers.
- An increase in tailormade learning possibilities
- Lowering the financial threshold for LLL-participation.
- An increase in validating informal learning.
- An increase in regional cooperation among businesses, private, and public educators.

Among possible factors that can hinder the implementation of the National Implementation Plan of the Netherlands, are:

- In November 2023 elections have been held in the Netherlands. A new government might have impact on the current plans which have been laid out in this NIP.

VET Recommendation priorities	Detailed VET recommendation priorities	Osnabrück Declaration objectives	Specific national level actions by 2025
	to create work-based learning opportunities in different sectors of the economy.		
B. Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of vocational education and training	<p>B.1 learner centred VET programmes that offer access to face-to-face and digital or blended learning, flexible and modular pathways based on the recognition of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning and open up career and learning progression; continuing vocational training programmes designed to be adaptable to labour market, sectoral or individual up- or reskilling needs; and</p> <p>B.2 VET programmes which are based on modules or units of learning outcomes and validation mechanisms allowing the transfer, recognition and accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to gaining a qualification, a partial qualification, as relevant in the national context.</p>	2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation	2.1. 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
C. Vocational education and training is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for the digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand	<p>C.1 integration of VET into economic, industrial and innovation strategies, including those linked to recovery, green and digital transitions; expansion of the training offer fostering the acquisition of entrepreneurial, digital and green skills;</p> <p>C.2 establishment of Centres of Vocational Excellence, which act as catalysts for local business investment, supporting recovery, green and digital transitions, European and regional innovation and smart specialisation strategies, development of vocational education and training, including at higher qualification levels (EQF levels 5-8), in line with national context and provide innovative services such as clusters and business incubators for start-ups and technology innovation for SMEs, as well as innovative</p>	<p>1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET</p> <p>3. Sustainability – a green link in VET</p>	<p>1.4. Support Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) and improve permeability between vocational and academic pathways, including work-based learning and enhanced cooperation between VET, HE and research centres, thus establishing quality and effective VET and apprenticeship programmes at EQF level 5 and above</p> <p>3.1. Create incentives for greening VET programmes, including education and training in green technologies and innovation, in energy efficiency, circular economy, environmental awareness, sustainable use of learning and training material, digitalisation to reduce climate effects</p> <p>3.2. 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</p>

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	<p>reskilling solutions for workers at risk of redundancy; and</p> <p>C.3 access to state-of-the-art infrastructure, digitalisation strategies in line with national context and environmental and social sustainability in VET programmes and organisational management, thus contributing to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.</p>		<p>occupations and sector-specific skills in cooperation with the social partners</p> <p>3.3. 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</p>
<p>D. Vocational education and training is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills</p>	<p>D.1. permeability between both initial and continuing vocational education and training, general education and higher education;</p> <p>D.2 development of VET at EQF levels 5 to 8;</p> <p>D.3 delivery based on a mix of open, digital and participative learning environments, including learning conducive workplaces supported by state-of-the-art and accessible infrastructure, equipment and technology, and accompanied by versatile pedagogies and tools (e.g. ICT based simulators, virtual and augmented reality);</p> <p>D.4 initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers to foster technical and digital skills and effective innovative training methods, including teaching in virtual environment, in line with state of the art vocational and digital pedagogy, work with digital learning tools, and in diverse and multicultural environments;</p>	<p>1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET</p> <p>2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation</p>	<p>1.2. 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</p> <p>2.2. Develop targeted information measures on the benefits of CVET and ensure user-friendly access to information on IVET and CVET offers at national and regional levels addressing gender and other stereotypes for an equal, fair and diverse society</p> <p>2.5. 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</p> <p>4.1. Support and facilitate the mobility of VET and adult learners, including apprentices, for example by developing</p>

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	<p>D.5 internationalisation strategies supporting a strategic approach to international cooperation in VET;</p> <p>D.6 Opportunities for learning mobility of vocational learners and staff, including virtual mobility, long-duration mobility and mobility to Partner Countries are in place, facilitated by the use and recognition of units of learning outcomes and of relevant European tools (Memorandum of Understanding and the Learning Agreement); and</p> <p>D.7 high quality lifelong learning and career guidance services, making full use of Europass and other digital services.</p>	<p>4. European Education and Training Area and international VET</p>	<p>support structures and providing information on opportunities in host countries</p> <p>4.2. Increase the rate of mobility of VET learners as well as teachers and trainers, while strengthening measures to ensure the quality and recognition of learning outcomes, as well as adequate support structures. Foster longer periods of mobility for VET learners abroad and ensure that apprentice work placements are in line with the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships , taking into account national regulations and collective agreements, including health and safety provisions</p> <p>4.3. Develop VET internationalisation strategies, mobilising partnerships and including commitments for concrete and targeted actions, with all relevant stakeholders in accordance with national or regional regulations</p> <p>4.5 Cooperate with other EU countries in preparing national teams for international competitions such as WorldSkills and EuroSkills</p>
<p>E. Vocational education and training promotes equality of opportunities</p>	<p>E.1 inclusive and accessible programmes for vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, low-qualified/skilled persons, minorities, people with migrant background and people with fewer opportunities because of their geographical location and/or their social-economically disadvantaged situation; targeted measures and flexible training formats prevent early leaving from education and training and support the school-to-work transition;</p> <p>E.2. programmes accessible through digital learning platforms, supported by tools, devices and internet</p>	<p>1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET</p> <p>2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation</p>	<p>1.2. 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</p> <p>2.2. Develop targeted information measures on the benefits of CVET and ensure user-friendly access to information on IVET and CVET offers at national and regional levels addressing gender and other stereotypes for an equal, fair and diverse society</p>

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	<p>connection, in particular for vulnerable groups and people in rural or remote areas; and</p> <p>E.3 targeted measures promoting gender balance in traditionally “male” or “female” professions and address gender related and other types of stereotypes together.</p>		
<p>F. Vocational education and training is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance</p>	<p>F.1 further development of national quality assurance systems, for both initial and continuing VET, in all learning environments (such as school-based provision and work-based learning, including apprenticeship schemes) and all learning types (digital, face-to-face or blended), delivered by both public and private providers, underpinned by a set of indicative descriptors and common reference indicators for quality assurance in vocational education and training applied both at system and provider level as defined in Annex II of the Council Recommendation on VET.</p> <p>F.2 Quality Assurance National Reference Point for VET to: take concrete initiatives to implement and further develop the EQAVET Framework, inform and mobilise a wide range of stakeholders, including Centres of Vocational Excellence, to contribute to implementing the EQAVET framework, support self-evaluation as a complementary and effective means of quality assurance to allow the measurement of success and the identification of areas for improvement, including with respect to digital readiness of VET systems and institutions, participate actively in the European network for quality assurance in vocational education</p>		

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	and training, provide an updated description of the national quality assurance arrangements based on the EQAVET Framework, engage in EU level peer reviews of quality assurance to enhance the transparency and consistency of quality assurance arrangements, and to reinforce trust between the Member States;		
Making best use of the European transparency tools		2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation	2.3. 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 2.4. Support linking national VET platforms or databases to the Europass in accordance with the Europass decision and the EQF Recommendation where appropriate
Sustainable partnerships at national, regional and sectoral level, involving all relevant stakeholders			
Best use of European Union funds and instruments such as the Next Generation EU (Recovery and Resilience Facility, REACT-EU), European Social Fund+, SURE, the European Regional Development Fund, InvestEU, Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Interreg, Digital Europe, the Just Transition Mechanism and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the Modernisation Fund			