

OECD Skills Studies

Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Portugal

STRENGTHENING THE ADULT-LEARNING SYSTEM

Executive Summary / Assessment and Recommendations



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Executive Summary

A highly skilled workforce is critical to help Portugal recover fully from the last recession and meet the challenges of an increasingly global and digital economy. While Portugal has made great strides in boosting its educational performance, the population is ageing and the skills gap between educated youth and older adults is widening. Many adults are at risk of falling behind.

With an economy that is growing again, Portugal has an opportunity to reinforce the adult-learning system by raising both its accessibility and quality, especially for adults with low skills. This, in turn, can lead to greater growth and well-being for all.

OECD-Portugal collaboration on a National Skills Strategy Action Phase

The project *Building a National Skills Strategy (NSS) for Portugal* began under the XIX Portuguese government. A diagnostic phase was conducted from 2013-2015, identifying 12 key skills challenges for Portugal. These ranged from improving the quality of compulsory education to reducing youth unemployment and targeting adult learning to low-skilled adults.

In 2017, Portugal's XXI Constitutional Government and the OECD initiated work on the Action Phase of the NSS to identify concrete actions to improve adult learning.

The NSS Action Phase involved comparative analysis to identify best practices, collaborative work with an inter-ministerial government team, and extensive engagement with stakeholders, including government, firms, education and training providers, labour unions, employers' associations, academics and civil society organisations.

Improving adult skills is important to boost growth and well-being in Portugal

Successive governments in Portugal have pursued extensive educational reforms. These range from the extension of compulsory schooling and the reorganisation of the school network, to the expansion of vocational education and training options and the creation of new tertiary education pathways. Adult learning has also been a focus, with policies helping to raise interest in learning among adults. However, participation in adult learning remains slightly below the European Union average despite the need for many adults to upskill.

Strengthening adults' motivation for learning is critical for participation

Participation in adult learning remains unequal in Portugal: those with higher levels of education are much more likely to participate. Increasing awareness of the benefits of learning is especially important to overcome motivational barriers. Useful approaches include providing better information on returns and tailoring information to reach low-skilled adults. To boost motivation, Portugal can build on the reinforced guidance role of

its adult-learning centres (Qualifica Centres), its system to assess the skills in demand in the economy (*Sistema de Antecipação de Necessidades de Qualificações*, or SANQ), and recent efforts to develop a culture of lifelong learning in the public administration.

Efforts to raise the accessibility and quality of the system should continue

Mechanisms for recognising the prior learning of adults, modular training opportunities, and employer-sponsored training have expanded in Portugal. However, barriers continue to limit participation, especially for the low-educated. Stakeholders reported the lack of accessible opportunities in some areas and the need to make delivery more flexible and suited to the needs of users and employers. They often noted the need for more and better career guidance.

Better co-ordination between the many entities that provide adult learning is needed to clarify opportunities available to adults and reduce gaps and overlaps in the system. Stakeholders widely noted the value of a robust performance-monitoring and evaluation framework for adult learning, building on the work of the National Agency for Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training (*Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional, I.P.*, or ANQEP).

Stronger governance and financing mechanisms are needed

The adult-learning system in Portugal involves many actors. Portugal could set governance structures that facilitate collaboration between central ministries, levels of government, and between government and stakeholders. Several bodies provide useful foundations, including the ANQEP and the intermunicipal communities (*comunidades intercomunales*, or CIMs). Local business and civil society associations could further co-ordinate their actions to assess skills needs, improve outreach to learners, and develop flexible approaches to adult learning.

The project found a high reliance of the system on EU funding, important variations in funding levels over time, and little use of funding as a strategic policy tool to drive quality and outcomes. Financial incentives to individuals and firms could be better targeted, aligned with labour-market needs, and complemented by guidance measures to boost effectiveness. The Qualifica Programme's renewed focus on adult learning offers an opportunity to establish a longer-term funding approach, which would involve contributions from government and social partners.

Recommendations for action

Overarching recommendation: Develop a coherent adult-learning strategy that encompasses existing and new measures, and is aligned with other key economic policies.

Awareness of the value of skills and motivation for adult learning

1. Improve the collection, use and dissemination of information on skills performance and the returns to skills investments, building on existing tools.
2. Improve the dissemination of information by launching a comprehensive communication campaign to raise awareness of the value of skills and skills investments and tailoring outreach for specific groups.
3. Enhance measures targeting the public administration and providers of social services, to raise awareness of the value of upskilling both for themselves and for their users.

Access, quality and relevance

4. Improve the supply of high-quality, relevant and flexible learning programmes.
5. Improve pathways and the coherence of the adult-learning delivery network.
6. Strengthen quality assurance, including by developing a performance-monitoring and evaluation system and a set of key performance indicators.

Governance and financing

7. Set up dedicated governance bodies to oversee adult learning: a permanent inter-ministerial team and a permanent group within an existing multi-stakeholder institution.
8. Reinforce existing local networks at the municipal level, or develop new ones, to address current and future needs for skills that align with the local economic development context.
9. Establish a stable and quality-oriented funding model through a “skills financing pact”, including targeted financial incentives for learners, employers and providers.
10. Introduce targeted financial incentives for employers (specifically small and medium enterprises) and individuals (specifically disadvantaged groups) to encourage provision of, and participation in, training.

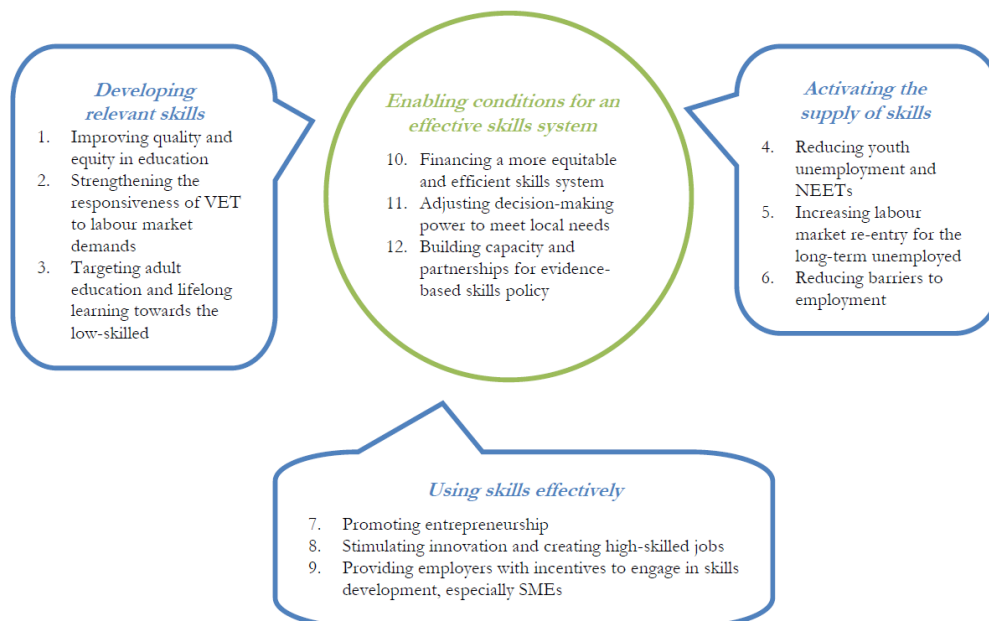
Chapter 1. Improving adult learning in Portugal: Assessment and recommendations

Raising adult skills is a key to Portugal's economic growth and social cohesion

Improving skills is a complex task. It requires reforms in a range of policy areas, from education, training and employment to taxation, economic development and innovation.

In Portugal, the need for multifaceted reforms was demonstrated by the results of the first phase of the OECD-Portugal National Skills Strategy (NSS) project (OECD, 2015^[1]). This work, which engaged a wide range of stakeholders from the public, private and non-profit sector, concluded in 2015. It identified 12 skills challenges in four areas: developing, activating and using skills, and strengthening the skills system (Figure 1.1).

The present report builds on these findings and seeks to provide a detailed set of recommendations for action on improving Portugal's skills system. It focuses on one area that offers a good opportunity for improvement: strengthening the adult-learning system. This topic, identified jointly by Portugal and the OECD, was chosen for a number of reasons. First, there have been notable improvements since 2015 in employment, educational attainment, and in the skills performance of youth, as discussed below. Second, the large number of low-skilled adults in Portugal is a major barrier to growth and social cohesion. Third, leveraging both new government investments in adult learning and the National Skills Strategy process, which is both inter-ministerial and involves active stakeholder engagement, can help Portugal make progress in improving the skills of the adult population.

Figure 1.1. Building a skills strategy for Portugal: Results of the diagnostic phase (2014-15)

Recent reforms have helped improve employment and educational outcomes

Portugal was hard hit by the global financial crisis, and its public finances were severely constrained by the 2011-2014 adjustment programme. Since then, the economic outlook has significantly improved, with GDP growth expected to be about 1.2% in 2017, and more than 2% in 2018 and 2019.

The crisis had a greater impact on the labour market in Portugal than in most OECD countries. After peaking in 2013 at above 16%, the unemployment rate dropped approximately 5 percentage points, to 11% in 2016. In the fourth quarter of 2017, unemployment had further fallen to 8.6%, compared to a EU28 average of 7.6%.

The fall in unemployment is partly a factor of high emigration rates and participation in active labour-market policies (ALMPs). The economic recovery in OECD countries also played a role and in Portugal, employment grew substantially. Between 2013 and 2017, employment increased by 7.4% (an additional 327 000 people were employed), raising the total employment rate from 49.7% in 2013 to 53.7% in 2017. Conversely, unemployment decreased by 45.9% in the same period, which amounted to 392 000 people exiting unemployment (INE, 2017_[2]).

Recent employment protection legislation reforms in Portugal may have also started to produce results (OECD, 2017_[3]). These include changes to unemployment benefits that reduced maximum rates but expanded coverage and strengthened activation measures, such as short-term training opportunities. Other areas of reform included wage-setting mechanisms and options for firms to adjust their working time rather than staff numbers. Current strategies for raising the skills of adults (the Qualifica Programme), promote digital skills (the InCode2030 Strategy) and boost firms' competitiveness (Indústria 4.0) constitute a promising package of reforms to further improve skills, employment and economic growth.

Educational outcomes have also improved significantly in the last decades. Attainment rates at upper secondary and tertiary levels have increased substantially, and Portugal has

steadily reduced the school dropout rate since 2000. The skills of Portuguese 15-year-olds have been steadily improving in science and mathematics, with the average three-year trend in PISA scores in these skills areas among the highest in the OECD. In 2015, Portugal scored above the OECD average in all three domains measured by the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey.

This progress is due, in part, to Portugal's significant educational reforms in the last decades. Compulsory schooling was increased from 9 to 12 years in 2009. In addition, policies have been introduced to provide support for disadvantaged schools, to reorganise the school network to strengthen governance and quality, and to introduce national evaluations and various measures for reducing the school dropout rate, including expanding vocational and educational training (VET) pathways in secondary school (OECD, 2014^[4]; Santiago et al., 2012^[5]).

Skills are essential for better economic and social outcomes

Skills drive well-being

How well Portugal develops its population's skills, especially those of low-skilled adults, and puts these skills to productive use, will help determine the rate of its economic recovery (OECD, 2017^[6]). Such a strategy can also avoid leaving people behind at a time when globalisation and digitalisation are changing the skills needed for success in the labour market and in life.

Adults with higher levels of literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills in a technologically rich environment, and who report using these skills, are more likely to be employed and earn higher wages than those with lower skill levels. They also tend to be healthier, are more likely to trust others and to volunteer more. Governments also stand to gain from a population with higher skill levels: the benefits range from higher tax revenues to lower social spending (OECD, 2013^[7]).

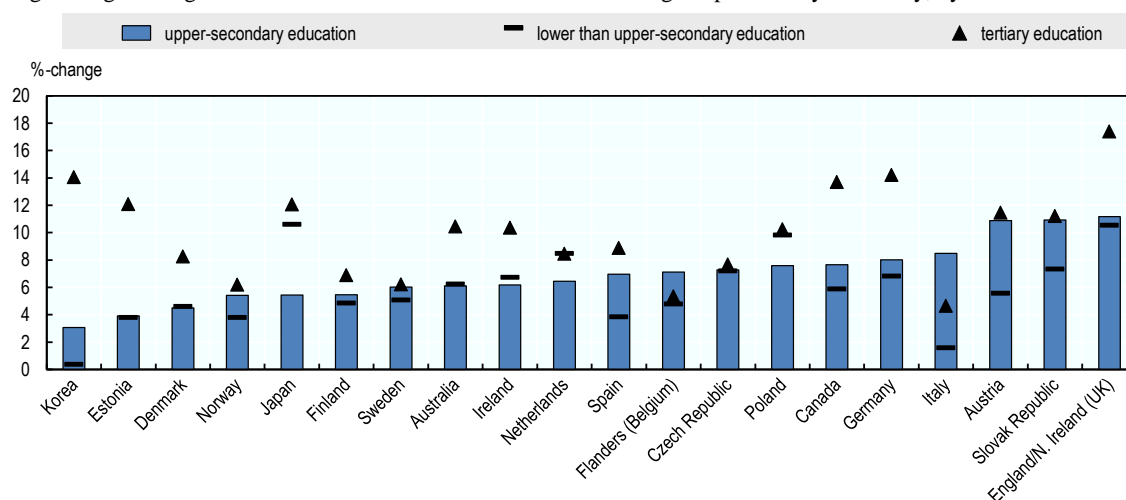
Social and emotional skills, including perseverance, self-esteem and sociability, communication, curiosity and interest in others are also associated with well-being, and increasingly, employers view these skills as complementary, and not secondary, to cognitive skills (OECD, 2015^[8]; Deming, 2017^[9]).

Many countries have increased their emphasis on raising educational attainment to improve skills, but the relationship between skills and qualifications is complex. The OECD Survey of Adult Skills (a product of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies [PIAAC]) shows that a higher level of education has a positive effect on adults' proficiency in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in a technologically rich environment. However, individuals with the same qualifications can have very different skill levels, and skills have a distinct impact on economic and social outcomes that is independent of qualifications.

For example, Figure 1.2 shows that for any given level of education, those with higher levels of skills enjoy higher wages. This reinforces the importance of comprehensive lifelong learning systems that develop skills both in initial education and throughout life, in both formal and informal learning contexts.

Figure 1.2. Effect of literacy proficiency on wages, by education attainment

Percentage change in wages associated with a one standard deviation change in proficiency in literacy, by educational attainment



Note: Coefficients from the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression of log hourly wages on proficiency are directly interpreted as percentage effects on wages. Coefficients adjusted for age, gender, foreign-born status and tenure. The wage distribution was trimmed to eliminate the 1st and 99th percentiles. The regression sample includes only employees. Literacy has a standard deviation of 45.76.

Source: OECD (2013), *OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932902569>.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933711731>

Demographic and economic changes make skills more important than ever

In Portugal, as in many other OECD countries, population ageing is creating pressures that may lead to labour and skills shortages. At the same time, globalisation and technological change are transforming production processes, destroying some jobs and industries, and creating new ones. These trends have important consequences for the skills that are in demand, and those that may be less relevant in the future (see Box 1.1 for examples).

Box 1.1. The impact on skills demand of global value chains and artificial intelligence**Global value chains make high skills more relevant**

In the last two decades, the production of goods and services worldwide has become increasingly fragmented, and a large part of trade has become organised around global value chains (GVCs). Countries now specialise in tasks rather than in specific products, and trade in intermediate goods and services has increased.

New OECD research suggests that participation in global value chains can lead to productivity gains, which depends on a country's endowment of skills. Investing in skills can safeguard against the potential negative impact of global value chains on employment and inequality for at least three reasons:

- 1) High-skilled jobs are less exposed to the risk of offshoring, although this may be changing.
- 2) Using certain types of skills on the job (e.g. those associated with non-routine tasks and tasks involving person-to-person contact) makes jobs less likely to be offshored.
- 3) Developing the skills of workers in small and medium-sized enterprises helps these firms connect with multinationals and benefit from global value chains.

Countries' skills endowments and skills-related policies can shape a country's specialisation in GVCs and its opportunities to specialise in sophisticated industries, such as complex business services and high-tech manufacturing industries.

Artificial intelligence may further displace low-skilled workers

The rapidly growing ability of artificial intelligence to conduct tasks is reshaping the employment structure of economies and the skills requirements for jobs. In an exploratory study based on an expert assessment of computer capabilities, using data from the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), 62% of workers in OECD countries were found to use literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills in a technology-rich environment at a proficiency level that computers can currently reproduce or are close to reproducing. Only 13% of workers were found to use these skills on a daily basis with higher proficiency than computers, raising concerns about further job displacement.

Sources: (OECD, 2017^[10]; Elliott, 2017^[11])

The impact of these changes on employment and skills is highly relevant for all OECD countries. On the one hand, economists have highlighted the positive effect of increased productivity resulting from globalisation and technological change on aggregate employment: more jobs are created than destroyed.

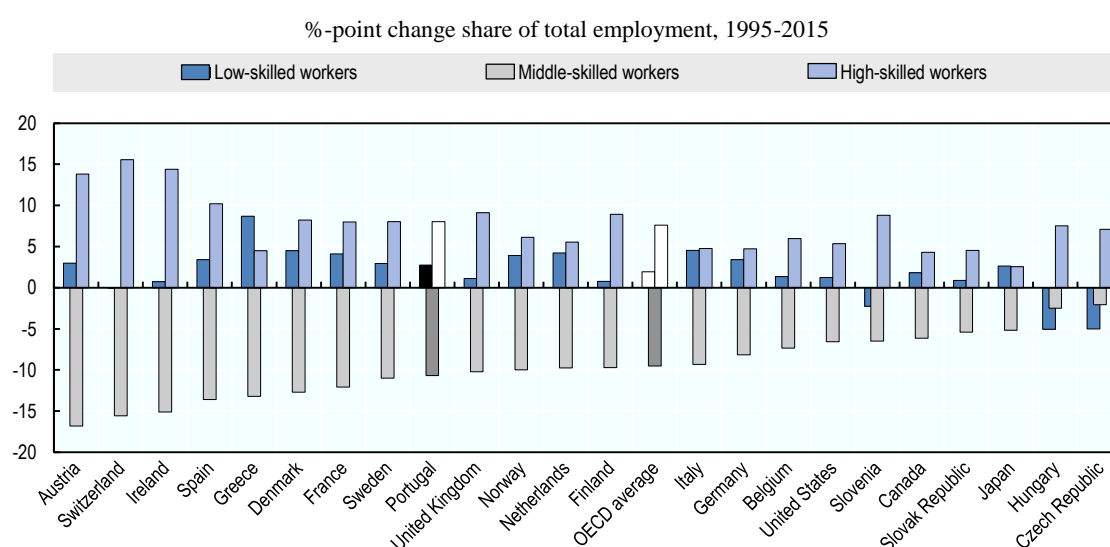
On the other hand, job destruction and creation has led to job polarisation. This is notable in OECD countries: the share of total employment in middle-skilled/middle-paying jobs has declined and is offset by increases in the shares of jobs requiring both high and low levels of skills. Most job creation is in the high-skilled, rather than middle- or low-skilled, category (OECD, 2017^[12]; Autor, 2015^[13]; Autor and Salomons, 2017^[14]). This is likely to result in further inequality among individuals of different skill levels and calls for strong skills policies.

Like other countries, Portugal has been experiencing job polarisation, as shown in Figure 1.3.

The number of jobs in sectors such as construction, agriculture and mining has declined in the last decade, while the number of jobs in arts, recreation and health services increased. Yet, in 2016, the largest number of jobs was still in the manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade sectors (OECD, 2018_[15]).

Projections of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) for the next decade suggest that the number of jobs in some of these sectors with the highest employment will drop and that sectors such as trade, professional and administrative services, accommodation and real estate will hire more people. The rise in demand for higher levels of skills is expected to continue, with an increase for technical and professional occupations (CEDEFOP, 2017_[16]).

Figure 1.3. Job polarisation in the past two decades



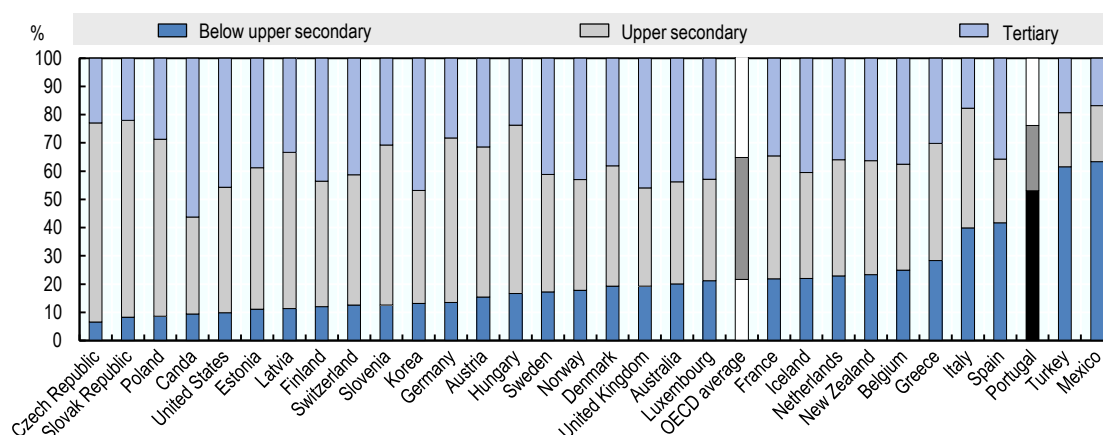
Note: See description of method in source below.

Source: OECD (2017), *Employment Outlook 2017*, Figure 3.A1.1, Job polarisation by country, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933477940>.

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Improving the learning and skills of adults in Portugal with limited education shows great potential

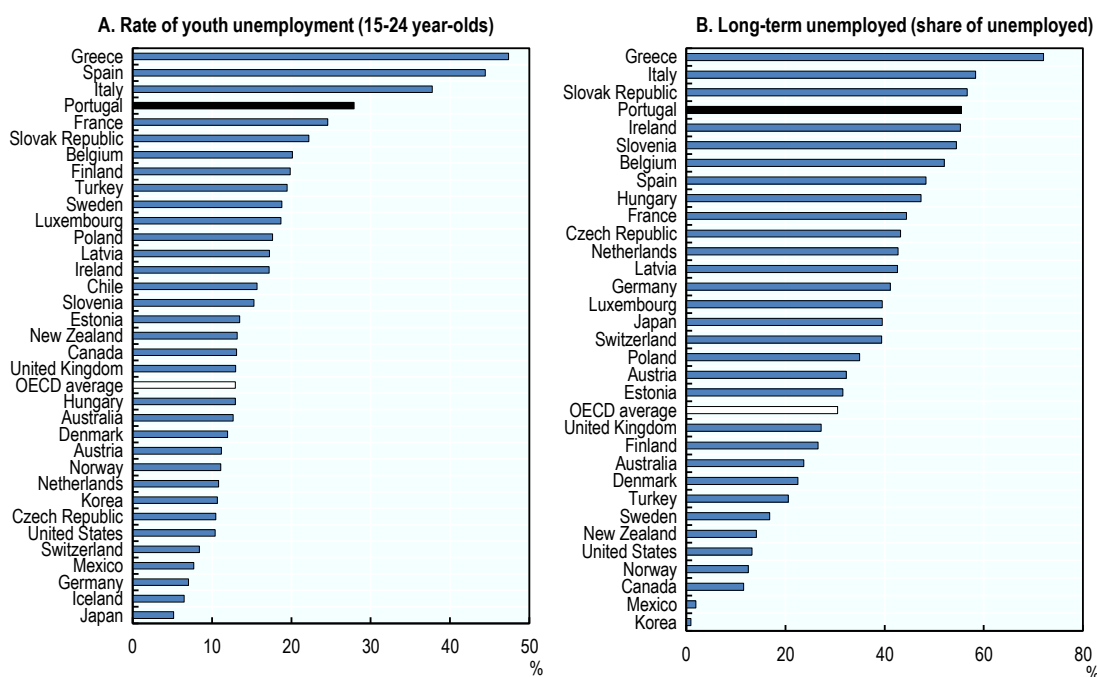
The low educational attainment of a large percentage of adults in Portugal suggests that many of these adults have low skills. In 2016, 53% of Portuguese adults aged 25 to 64, and 31% of 25-34 year-olds, had not attained upper secondary education (Figure 1.4). Only in Portugal and two other OECD countries, Turkey and Mexico, have most adults aged 25 to 64 not completed upper secondary education (OECD, 2018_[17]).

Figure 1.4. Educational attainment of adults (25-64 year-olds) in Portugal, 2016

Source: OECD (2018), Adult education level (indicator), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/36bce3fe-en>.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933711769>

Opportunities for individuals to use and further develop their skills, including at work, are also important. Despite Portugal's falling unemployment, the rates of youth unemployment and long-term unemployment remain high compared to the European average, and will need to be tackled to avoid an erosion of skills over time (Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5. Youth unemployment and long-term unemployed, 2016

Source: OECD (2017), Youth unemployment rate (indicator), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/c3634df7-en>; long-term unemployed (indicator), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/c3634df7-en>.

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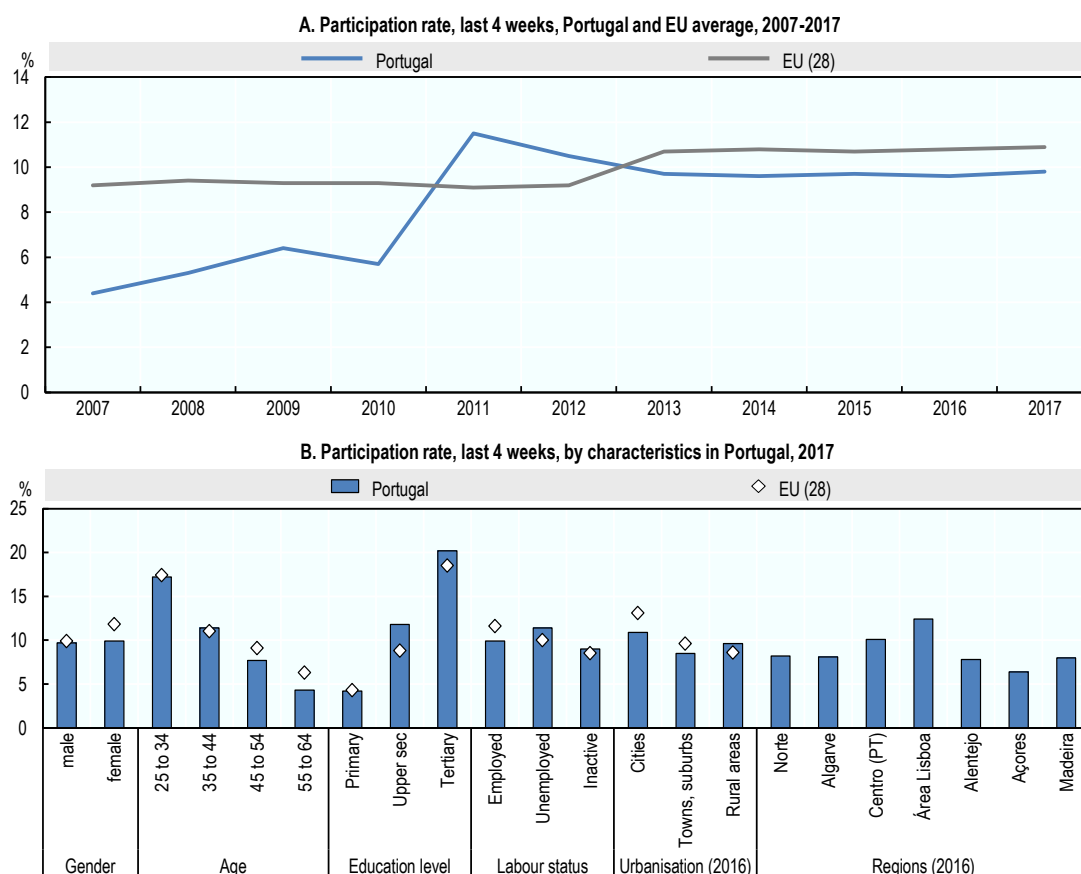
In Portugal, the participation of 25-64 year-olds in adult learning has grown in the past decade (for a definition of adult learning, see Box 1.2). It peaked and briefly surpassed

the European Union (EU) average in 2010-2011, then declined and stabilised slightly below the OECD average in 2013 (see Figure 1.6). While Portugal is close to the EU average, the large number of low-skilled adults in the country calls for particular attention to boosting participation.

As in other countries, the least skilled are also the least likely to participate in adult learning. Consistent with the EU average, people in Portugal with lower levels of education and jobs requiring lower levels of skills participate the least in adult learning.

Employer-sponsored training represents the majority of all adult learning in Portugal, with over 800 000 individuals taking part in some form of employer-sponsored training in 2015. Yet, as will be shown in Chapter 3, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and in particular, micro-enterprises with fewer than ten employees, are much less likely to provide training than larger ones. Micro-enterprises represented 83% of all firms in Continental Portugal in 2015, almost a quarter of the employed workforce (Ministério do Trabalho, 2017^[18]).

Figure 1.6. Participation rate in education and training 2007--17, and by characteristics



Note: Participation is measured in terms of participation in at least one learning activity in the four weeks preceding the labour force survey.

Source: Eurostat (2018), *EU Labour Force Survey 2017*, Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks), trng_lfs_01, trng_lfs_02, trng_lfs_03, trng_lfs_14, trng_lfs_04, trng_lfs_05, trng_lfs_06, trng_lfs_08b, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Adult_learning_statistics.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933711807>

Boosting demand for skills can strengthen incentives to invest in skills

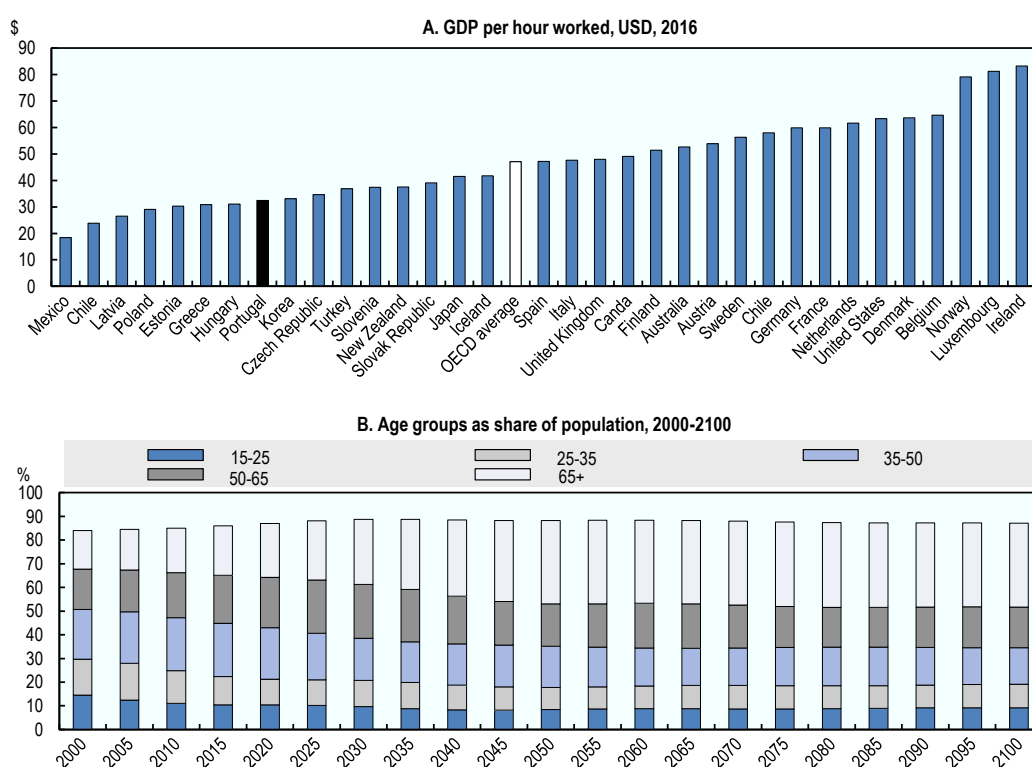
Skills development is not all that matters. The demand for skills, and whether a country's economic fabric can absorb skilled workers and use their skills effectively, is just as critical.

This is a concern in Portugal, which remains one of the European countries with the highest rates of tertiary-educated individuals who emigrate (11.4% in 2014, according to data from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education). In addition, many employers consulted during the project report a relatively low demand for high-level skills in many parts of the economy – except for specific sectors well-integrated into the global economy.

Boosting innovation and productivity both requires and encourages investment in skills. Portugal faces challenges in raising innovation and productivity, as illustrated in Figure 1.7. This is critical for supporting economic growth and offering enough good jobs for highly skilled citizens. By increasing innovation and productivity with such policies as Indústria 4.0, Portugal could strengthen the incentives for all parties to invest in skills, as well as discourage emigration.

The alignment of skills policy and economic development policy such as Indústria 4.0 is essential for achieving better economic outcomes and improving social well-being. The importance of co-ordinating key policies is emphasised in the overarching recommendation presented at the end of this chapter.

Figure 1.7. Labour productivity and labour force development



Source: OECD (2018), GDP per hour worked (indicator), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/1439e590-en>; United Nations (2017), *World Population Prospects 2017*, <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/>.

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Improving skills development in adulthood will require co-ordinated action

Focus on adult learning: definition and considerations

This National Skills Strategy Action Phase project examines four key themes identified as particularly relevant to adult-learning policy in Portugal: raising awareness of the value of skills and adult learning, improving access and quality, strengthening governance, and enhancing the financing of the system. This report is structured according to these four topics.

Improving adult learning involves many challenges, from both an analytical and policy perspective. Many of these are not unique to Portugal.

Defining adult learning is a first issue. The definition used in this report is aligned with other OECD and European Union definitions. However, it also allows some flexibility for studying groups of interest to the government of Portugal, such as young adults, who typically fall outside the definition of adults for the purpose of analysing adult learning (see Box 1.2). Challenges involving a lack of data, differing perspectives on the goals of adult learning, and different measurement approaches must be also kept in mind in assessing the scope and performance of adult learning systems.

Box 1.2. Definition of adult learning

Adult learning is understood in this report as including both formal, non-formal and informal learning and the diverse contexts in which it is taking place. The purpose of adult learning may be either employment-related or broader, such as improving civic participation and improving preparedness for further learning.

Adult learners are defined as adults of between 25 and 64 who have left the initial education system (either primary, secondary, post-secondary or tertiary level) and are engaged in learning. However, for this project, the government noted the importance of adult learning for a broader group, including those of 18 to 24 and 64 to 75. For reasons of data availability, this report essentially focuses on the 25 to 64 age group. However, where available, it discusses groups that fall into the broader government definition, for example young adults who are neither employed nor in education or training (NEET).

In many OECD countries, adult learning has proved to be a challenging policy area involving complex problems of co-ordination (OECD, 2005^[19]; Windisch, 2015^[20]; Desjardins, 2017^[21]). Portugal also faces these challenges, outlined below, and they are addressed throughout the report:

- **A lack of interest in pursuing adult learning is the main reason adults in OECD countries do not engage in learning.**

In contrast to compulsory or higher education, the returns of adult learning are not well monitored and are not always clear. Furthermore, the barriers to participation are difficult to surmount (e.g. participation in adult learning is non-statutory and competes with other priorities, including work, family, etc.).

Understanding why motivation for learning in adulthood is low, and raising awareness of the benefits of learning, is thus crucial. Equally, so is enhancing the rewards of learning by aligning education and skills policy with economic development and innovation policies, and removing barriers that limit access and success in adult-learning programmes.

- **Ensuring access and quality is complicated by the diversity and complexity of adult-learning systems.** In most countries, adult learning involves activities of different durations and intensity. Work-relevant or work-based learning may or may not be involved, as may formal education components and testing of the knowledge and skills acquired. The diversity of adult-learning systems has benefits: it allows the means and purposes of adult learning to reflect the diverse needs of adult learners. However, it can also make these systems difficult to navigate, especially for those with low skills.
- **Effective governance and financing mechanisms are needed to underpin adult learning.** However, both are often weaker than in other parts of the education and skills systems. Responsibility for adult learning is typically shared by several ministries or public agencies and different levels of government. Adult-learning programmes are often provided by private and not-for-profit organisations, making monitoring more complex. Finally, by comparison with formal education or active labour-market policies, adult-learning policies tend to be piecemeal, and funding is limited.

The collaborative process of the Action Phase: Engaging stakeholders

A highly collaborative process was used to produce this report. The OECD team worked closely with the Portuguese National Project Team (NPT), which included expert advisors from the cabinet of seven ministers and the Prime Minister. Ministries represented included: Education (lead Ministry); Labour, Solidarity and Social Security; Science, Technology and Higher Education; Economy; Finance; Infrastructure and Planning; Presidency and Administrative Modernisation.

Input was sought from the NPT and stakeholders through six country visits between February and November 2017, including two workshops that each brought together about 80 participants from a range of sectors, including employers, unions, education and training providers, academia, community organisations, think tanks, government (at national and local level) and users of the adult-learning system (see table below and Annex D, Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Portugal OECD © 2018).

Table 1.1. Action Phase: engagement of Portuguese stakeholders

	Objectives	Participants
Kick-off seminar – Lisbon, 9-10 February 2017	Refine focus for Action Phase among ministers	Ministers and State Secretaries
Fact-finding mission – Lisbon, 22-24 March 2017	Map the current adult-learning system in Portugal	National Project Team and key government services
First stakeholder workshop and fact-finding mission – Lisbon, 3-5 May 2017	Understand barriers in the current system from stakeholders' perspective (including learners)	Diverse stakeholders
Fact-finding mission – 26-30 June 2017, Lisbon, Porto, Beja	Understand challenges in the provision of learning and the demand for skills	Employers, education and training providers, unions, etc.
Recommendations discussion mission, 9-10 October 2017	Obtain feedback on draft recommendations	National Project Team and key government services
Second stakeholder workshop – Coimbra, 10 November 2017	Obtain feedback on the implementation considerations for each recommendation	Diverse stakeholders

Other strands of work contributing to the Action Phase included comparative analysis on good practices in adult learning, which are included throughout the report. Additional tools developed to support the ongoing assessment of Portugal's adult-learning system include:

- A mapping of the current adult-learning system in Portugal (Annex A, Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Portugal OECD © 2018).
- A conceptual framework and potential key performance indicators, to help Portugal assess the performance of its adult-learning system (Annex B, Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Portugal OECD © 2018).
- A survey of participants in the second stakeholder workshop, on the relative importance of the recommendations and the key considerations for implementation (Annex C, Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Portugal OECD © 2018).

The input of stakeholders was instrumental in developing the report's recommendations and identifying the key considerations for implementation.

Highlights of stakeholder input

Overall, stakeholders agreed that no single issue can help improve adult learning in Portugal, but rather that improvements are required in the area of awareness, access and quality, governance and financing. Stakeholders attributed challenges in these areas to a combination of factors. These include: poor economic conditions, which reduce demand for skills and interest in investing in skills; the lack of a coherent adult-learning policy; inconsistent financing; and a complex patchwork of adult-learning programmes. Insufficient guidance and support helping learners to overcome barriers were noted as challenges particularly relevant for adults with low skills. Table 1.2 provides highlights of stakeholder perspectives in the four key themes discussed in this report.

As for possible solutions, the stakeholders who responded to the survey on implementation (see Annex C, Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Portugal OECD © 2018) rated each of the report's recommendations as "very important" or "essential" on a five-point scale. Strong consensus emerged on the importance of some recommendations, but the relative importance of others was debated. For example, all or most respondents, across various sectors, agreed that the quality of adult learning could be improved by performance monitoring and evaluation. They also noted the importance of better information to raise awareness of the benefits of learning. Opinions on governance and financing, however, varied widely. Non-governmental stakeholders, such as private companies and non-profit associations, for example, stressed the importance of financial incentives for learners and employers, and of both national and local governance bodies.

Table 1.2. Summary of stakeholder perspectives

General perspectives on adult learning in Portugal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further consensus about the notion of “skills” and the value of acquiring skills in adulthood is needed in Portugal. Portuguese citizens continue to value formal education qualifications more than skills or competencies. • Vocational education and training and learning in adulthood continue to be seen as options that are inferior to higher education, which is only accessible to a minority of individuals. • The lack of a coherent and long-term adult-learning policy limits improvements in the adult-learning system, despite progress in the past two decades. • The demand for skills appears to be limited, largely due to continuing high employment in some areas and low productivity and innovation in many firms. 	
Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced technical skills and transferable skills (e.g. communication, management and “learning to learn” skills), are important but are insufficiently recognised. • Adults with low educational attainment tend to be less motivated to participate in learning, as are micro-enterprises. Many young adults are not interested in VET. • The motivation to provide employer-sponsored training tends to be lower in smaller than in larger firms. Not all firms have activities that require highly skilled workers. • Many factors influence adults’ motivation to learn. These include how the adult-learning system is organised, whether broader public services (e.g. public transport, social support, etc.) are available to overcome barriers to access, and the economic context. 	Access and quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current system could be more accessible and flexible to attract low-skilled adults and help them succeed. • Dedicated financial support for adults undertaking learning above the secondary level and broader support (e.g. transport, social) could boost participation. • Employers noted the limited effectiveness of the regulatory regimes for employer-sponsored training. They also indicated a preference for tailor-made solutions. • The current regulatory framework could be more efficient and effective, for example the process to update the National Catalogue of Qualifications. Data collection exercises required of providers need to be streamlined, and these data need to be better used to assess performance and improve programmes.
Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of a clear “owner” of adult-learning policy weakens coherence in the adult-learning system. • Government efforts to engage local actors to improve collaboration and co-ordination could be improved, to help narrow the gap between national policy and local needs. • Local partnerships exist, but incentives for the sustained engagement of key players in these partnerships are limited, particularly for employers. • Stakeholders noted the importance of having well-identified governance bodies in charge of adult-learning policy to strengthen policy coherence. However, some pointed out that, to avoid duplication, the existing opportunities should be used to the extent possible. 	Financing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluctuations in funding have reduced the accessibility of learning opportunities. • Financial incentives to increase investments from individuals and employers are an area where most new government funding is needed. • Stakeholders noted that funding decisions on learning are highly centralised. This makes it difficult to use public funding for training solutions tailored to the particular location. Adult-learning providers are limited in their ability to adjust their staff and financial resources to respond rapidly and adequately to local needs.

Note: The summary of input on the four themes is based on the overall input received during the project. The views reflected in the implementation of recommendations reflect on average the views of the 38 respondents to the implementation survey (for details, see Annex C, Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Portugal OECD © 2018).

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed using input from stakeholders and in close collaboration with Portugal's National Project Team. They offer specific advice and, taken together, provide a map for action.

Overarching recommendation

Develop a coherent adult-learning strategy that encompasses existing and new measures, and is aligned with other key economic policies.

Building on Portugal's existing policy efforts, lay out the blueprint for a coherent adult-learning strategy.

Key elements for consideration in such a strategy include:

- Identifying the key skills important for Portuguese citizens, from early years to adulthood, to succeed in the labour market and in life.
- Aligning Portugal's vision and goals for adult learning with other key policies, including basic, secondary and higher education strategies, economic development policies, such as Indústria 4.0, and other policies promoting innovation, productivity and job creation.
- Ensuring the strategy is supported by sustainable financing and governance arrangements.

A consultative and collaborative process should be undertaken within six months of the completion of the Action Phase to secure broad support, and should:

- Include consultation on Portugal's adult-learning policy with key national consultative bodies responsible for education, economic and social issues.
- Engage all political parties to encourage broad-based support.
- Engage national and local public service administration staff at all levels.

Awareness of value of skills and motivation for adult learning (Chapter 2)

1. Improve the collection, use and dissemination of information on skills performance and the returns to skills investments, building on existing tools.

This recommendation includes the following specific actions:

- Participate in Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), to generate information on skill performance and the returns to skills.
- Pursue the implementation and improvement of the current skills needs assessment and anticipation system (*Sistema de Antecipação de Necessidades de Qualificações*, or SANQ).
 - Expand the use of SANQ to plan the adult-learning provision locally. Local networks (see Recommendation 8), should be involved in this work.

- Improve the SANQ's governance, human resources capacity and funding for operations. This could be a priority for action of a skills council (see Recommendation 7).
- Strengthen the reliability of SANQ assessments and projections through incorporating international best practices and undertaking complementary data collection exercises where needed (e.g., on specific regions/economic sectors, on SMEs and sectors that provide the most and the least training to better understand motivations and obstacles).

As part of complementary exercises, sectoral exercises would be important. One potential approach could be to establish sectoral commissions at the regional or local level, as needed, in specific sectors, involving relevant players from the education and training sector, government and industry. Such commissions could lead the annual diagnosis of training needs and alignment of the regional or local supply. They could be part of local networks (see Recommendation 8).

- Improve systematic collection and dissemination of data on the outcomes of adult learning, to raise awareness of its benefits:
 - Explore opportunities to construct a publicly accessible adult-learning database, following the approach of *Infocursos* for tertiary education and *Infoescolas* for secondary education.
 - Leverage existing data collection exercises that can shed light on the returns to adult-learning programmes (e.g. leverage data required for EU funds for policy and programme improvement purposes (see Recommendation 6, on a performance-monitoring framework and key performance indicators).
 - Expand data linking pilot projects across public institutions for policy purposes, and make key datasets (e.g. social security/tax information) available to researchers to enhance analysis of such data.

2. Improve the dissemination of information by launching a comprehensive communication campaign to raise awareness of the value of skills and skills investments and tailoring outreach for specific groups.

This recommendation includes the following specific actions, building on existing tools:

- Develop a multi-pronged, ongoing communication campaign, with a focus on proactive guidance tools.
 - The purpose would be to emphasise the value of acquiring skills in adulthood, and the range of available learning opportunities for different profiles of learners. It would also showcase the real-life impacts of learning such as successful personal experiences, as well as best practices in adult learning through national competitions/awards for employers. This, in particular, could encourage investment in training and highlight the benefits from the employers' perspective.

This campaign should build on and further improve existing tools, such as the Qualifica Portal, and TV campaigns such as *Minuto Qualifica*, and interactive guidance tools such as the *Qualifica Passport*. Improvements should include: i) the co-ordination of different tools and sustainable

funding to help strengthen the culture of lifelong learning over time in Portugal; ii) improved clarity and relevance of the information provided to different learners; and iii) the use of “nudge” strategies, such as the design of information provided strategically to prospective learners where they are likely to be receptive to it (e.g. providing adult-learning information for parents, and possible support to apply for a programme, at one-on-one parent-teacher meetings).

- Measure the impact of communication tools over time, to ensure that those that are most effective are identified and maintained over time.
- Tailor information and communication approaches to reach key target groups.
 - These include the low-educated/low-skilled, unemployed and inactive adults, youth, especially those at risk and NEETs, employers and specifically SME and micro-enterprise owners and managers.
 - This tailoring of information should be based on understanding the needs of these groups, which requires adequate training of staff in Qualifica Centres and education and training providers (see Recommendation 6).

3. Enhance measures targeting the public administration and providers of social services, to raise awareness of the value of upskilling both for themselves and for their users.

This recommendation includes the following specific actions:

- Use the strategy of the Directorate-General for the Qualification of Public Servants (INA) to identify key skills needed in the public service, and raise awareness and motivation about the value of skills at all levels of government. This should include:
 - Expanding approaches to identify skills needs at various levels and identify relevant training opportunities.
 - Incorporating upskilling in the core business of public administration staff, e.g. through accountability tools.
 - Developing incentives for staff to actively pursue training (e.g. job promotion opportunities, etc.).
- Develop training approaches tailored to local public and community services staff, to raise their awareness of the value of skills and upskilling, and raise their capacity to provide information and guidance to their clients about learning.
 - A large range of local services should be considered, including for example Qualifica and Public Employment Service (*Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional*, or IEFP) Centres, youth services, as well as other key social services (health, housing, etc.).
 - Incorporate a focus on raising awareness about the value of skills, and the provision of information and guidance, in the pre-service training required for adult-learning staff.

*Access, quality and relevance (Chapter 3)***4. Improve the supply of high-quality, relevant and flexible learning programmes.**

This recommendation includes the following specific actions:

- Assess the current provision of adult-learning programmes and identify where gaps need to be filled to raise the participation and improve the outcomes of key groups, in particular:
 - For low-educated adults, NEETs and the long-term unemployed: Ensure the availability of flexible opportunities that combine basic skills upgrading and work-relevant learning, in formats suitable to adults.
 - For employers, especially SMEs and micro-enterprises: Monitor existing programmes to ensure they reach a critical mass of SMEs and provide relevant training.
 - For young and medium-skilled adults: ensure that VET provision at both secondary and post-secondary levels is of sufficient quantity and quality, taking into account i) the urgent needs of certain economic sectors for skilled professionals (e.g. tourism), ii) the large number of young NEETs, and iii) the growing number of graduates from the vocational stream of secondary education (*cursos profissionais*) who may lack pathways to labour-market learning opportunities at the post-secondary level.
- Improve the quality of existing adult-learning programmes by filling gaps in provision and by funding models that demonstrate good results:
 - Leverage EU funding (e.g. develop Upskilling Pathways models) and provide targeted government funding to develop or scale up programmes that have shown positive results. Also pursue private funding through co-financing arrangement (see Recommendation 9 in Chapter 5).
 - Establish clear criteria for allocating funding, so that adult-learning programmes are designed or redesigned in a way that reflects good practice. This can be implemented when new measures are developed, or by including such criteria in calls for providers to design and deliver new programmes. These criteria may include a combination of the following, identified as good practice based on international evidence:
 1. clear objectives and relevant performance-measurement approaches and indicators
 2. strong justification for creating a new programme rather than using existing programmes (e.g. demonstrate existing gaps in the system, growing demand from employers and/or individuals that cannot be met with the current supply, etc.)
 3. relevant content: As currently done in Portugal, combine provision of foundational and transversal skills training with technical/job relevant skills training. This includes expanding work-based learning opportunities, collaboration between different training providers (e.g. schools and employers) in the delivery of training, and involving local stakeholders in the design of adult-learning programmes, to ensure that they are relevant in the labour market

4. effective and efficient delivery: Ensure all learning opportunities allow for flexible and modular approaches to address adults' time constraints and their potential need to stop and/or resume training at different stages; encourage co-location of services for more efficient delivery, etc.
5. transferability: Pathways and recognition mechanisms must allow movement and progression between new and existing programmes (see Recommendation 5).
6. Provide targeted financial and non-financial support to improve the access and success of disadvantaged groups. Also, ensure adequacy of broader support at the local level (e.g. transport, child care) as a key enabling condition for the participation and success of learners.

5. Improve pathways and the coherence of the adult-learning delivery network.

- Assess the adult-learning delivery network in its entirety, to identify gaps and duplication, and adapt provision to the population density, client profiles and economic needs. This should involve an in-depth evaluation of the network's strengths and weaknesses, and areas where it can be more efficient and effective, which should be done in addition to the existing annual exercises conducted to plan for the provision of learning opportunities.
 - Build on approaches used by ANQEP to select Qualifica Centres, to ensure that the scale of provision reflects local population density, different client profiles and economic context.
 - Differentiate training provision based on the strengths of providers, and improve complementarities and synergies at the local level (e.g. by bringing together multi-disciplinary teams).
 - For example, providers with strong associations with local companies could assume a greater role in i) learning options that provide labour-market relevant skills, ii) improving access to work-based learning, and iii) facilitating the employment of learners after completion. Providers with a good track record in basic skills training should play a key role in delivering such training. Partnerships between these different providers are critical for ensuring that learners can benefit from the best-quality learning both in basic skills and in skills that are relevant in the labour market.
 - Efforts should meanwhile be made to maintain accessibility, for example by leveraging online learning options and providing supports for transportation.
 - Consider strengthening the role of polytechnics in providing adults with high-quality training, including both labour-market relevant and basic skills training.
 - Ensure the offer of VET for both youth and adults is coherent and easy to understand for users.
- Improve the assessment of clients' needs and matching learners to the right opportunities, to improve retention and completion:

- Build on the Qualifica Passport and international best practices to develop advanced ways of determining user needs.
 - Ensure adequate training of adult-learning staff (see Recommendation 7).
- Develop or strengthen pathways between programmes.
 - These include pathways between different programmes, to allow low-skilled adults to progress between different programmes as they gain higher levels of skills. For example, this can include pathways allowing progress from basic skills provision and secondary school level, e.g. education and training courses for adults (*Educação e Formação de Adultos*, or EFA), and certified modular training (*Formação Modular Certificada*, or FMC) onward to post-secondary, non-tertiary options, e.g. technical specialisation post-secondary non-tertiary vocational courses (*Cursos de Especialização Tecnológica*, or CET) and then to tertiary education, e.g. short-cycle tertiary education courses (*Cursos Técnicos Superiores Profissionais*, or CTeSP) and bachelor-level education.

6. Strengthen quality assurance, including by developing a performance-monitoring and evaluation system and a set of key performance indicators.

This recommendation builds on Portugal's existing work implementing the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) framework and the new system to monitor the activities of the Qualifica Centres. It includes the following specific actions:

- Establish a performance-monitoring and evaluation framework for the adult-learning system, to articulate objectives, inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes.
 - Select a specific organisation with adequate resources to lead this work, ensuring that it complements and does not duplicate existing work. A skills council may, for example, lead this type of work (see Recommendation 7).
 - Based on international best practice, including EQAVET work, develop a limited set of key performance indicators that can be monitored publicly.
 - Include: i) core indicators common to all programmes and relevant to the adult-learning system (for concrete examples, see Annex B, Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Portugal OECD © 2018), and ii) indicators tailored to specific programmes with different goals and learner profiles.
 - As a condition of receipt of public funding, require regular and comparable third-party evaluations for adult-learning programmes, to increase understanding of their impact, challenges and practices that work, allowing progress over time.
- Streamline and strengthen the quality-assurance system:
 - Simplify the reporting requirements required of service providers by:
 - Co-ordinating data collection across ministries (e.g. single request).
 - Requiring submission through a single and simple digital system.

- Reducing the data requirements, focusing only on indicators relevant to the performance-monitoring and evaluation system.
 - Shift to a risk-based auditing approach: Dedicate resources for more frequent on-site audits in institutions that perform less well, based on the results of the performance-monitoring and evaluation system.
 - Reduce the number of institutions in charge of quality assurance for adult learning, or establish requirements to align practices across institutions.
 - Provide appropriate financial and human resources for institutions in charge of quality assurance.
- Ensure that adult-learning professionals are available in sufficient numbers, with the appropriate skills:
 - Identify the current supply of adult-learning staff compared to anticipated staffing needs once the ramp-up of Qualifica Programme is complete.
 - Encourage effective hiring and training practices to ensure that the adult-learning workforce has the right level and mix of skills for a variety of clients (including employers) and needs (e.g. teaching, but also guidance).
 - Make sure ANQEP continues to develop summative and formative evaluations of the Qualifica Centres, and extend this model to other organisations providing career management and training. This could involve legislative changes to allow the ANQEP to take on such role, and require additional resources for such task.
 - Engage in peer learning with countries requiring certifications for adult-learning providers, to assess the benefits and drawbacks of such models.

Governance (Chapter 4)

7. Set up dedicated governance bodies to oversee adult learning: a permanent inter-ministerial team and a permanent group within an existing multi-stakeholder institution.

- Make the National Skill Strategy project team, which involves seven ministries and four national support organisations, a permanent body.
 - Select an appropriate ministry/centre-of-government agency for the new Skills Team to report to.
 - Include a mechanism for consulting local-level entities involved in the planning of adult learning, such as CIMs, on a regular basis.
- Consider creating a permanent skills council to steer adult learning taking a whole-of-government and whole-of-society perspective over the long term.
 - Ideally, position this group in an existing national advisory body that has a secretariat and that involves participants from both government and stakeholders, to avoid reduplication of governance bodies.
 - Consider the Co-ordinating Council of the System for the Anticipation of Skills Needs (SANQ) created in 2014, due to its core stakeholder

participation within and outside government, but also make it responsible for monitoring results and reporting to the public.

- For these two bodies:
 - Ensure an appropriate legislative basis and clear mandate for action, with public accountability requirements.
 - Provide dedicated budget and staff support.

8. Reinforce existing local networks at the municipal level, or develop new ones, to address current and future needs for skills that align with the local economic development context.

- Create or activate an appropriate number of local networks throughout Portugal for regular collaboration between local actors, including municipalities; intermunicipal communities; parishes; local enterprises; local trade unions/employee representatives; chambers of commerce; sectoral councils for qualifications; social service providers; community organisations; education and training providers, etc.
- The purpose of such networks would be to ensure a forum where key actors can:
 - Work with partners involved in implementing Portugal's system of skills assessment and anticipation (SANQ). Assess both short- and longer-term economic and labour-market needs in the local area (e.g. both immediate shortages reported by employers and the need to grow human capital to move up global value chains).
 - Develop plans to align local supply with identified needs.
 - Seek to maximise policy synergies by, for example, ensuring that funding targeted to regional development, both national and from the EU, take into account skills needs. Conversely, ensure that skills initiatives and funding support economic development.
- Wherever possible, use an existing local organisation to host and co-ordinate such local networks, and allocate dedicated funding to support the work of these organisations to strengthen adult learning (e.g. for a small secretariat staff). This funding should be linked to the relevant performance indicators.
 - The *Rede Social* is an example of a local network bringing together several community associations that, together with local education and local youth councils, could form a basis for establishing such a network.
 - Special attention should be paid to securing representation from the demand side (employers and industry associations).
- Develop a governance structure for the network (e.g. select a single co-ordinating organisation) and targeted incentives, to allow all key stakeholders, and employers in particular, to participate in these local networks (see Recommendation 9 on “skills financing pact”).
- Pilot the approach in two or three local areas for 12 months, then undertake an evaluation before expanding the model.

*Financing (Chapter 5)***9. Establish a stable and quality-oriented funding model through a “skills financing pact”, including targeted financial incentives for learners, employers and providers.**

As a first step, develop an inventory of funding sources (national, EU, employer expenditure, individuals’ expenditure), annual amounts and allocation methods for distributing this funding to education and training providers or end users.

- Analyse the distribution of funding according to regions/local areas, demographic characteristics of learners/employers covered, and the types of programmes.
- Identify initiatives with greater potential for co-financing with employers.

Develop a “skills financing pact” signed by government and social partners that establishes a multiyear (e.g. five-year) funding commitment that would be subsequently renegotiated. This pact would lay out:

- The respective roles of various actors in financing adult learning, including EU, national and private sources, and notional amounts to be contributed, either as a requirement (e.g. from the state budget) or as an “aspirational target”, in the next five years.
- Any co-funding requirement that could condition new employer-focused subsidies to a specific financial contribution from employers. Such requirements could vary based on company size and other factors.
- The types of priority initiatives to be funded, in line with evidence-based need and broader policy goals.
- The types of entities eligible for funding, including individuals and employers.
- High-level criteria and procedures for allocating funding to eligible entities, with a focus on incentivising quality provision and co-operation (see next section).
- Provisions to ensure funding to cover the delivery of programmes, administrative costs and provide flexibility for managing human and financial resources at the local level. Some funding may also be set aside for research and development in adult learning to test innovative practices.
- The pact should reflect the key objectives of the adult-learning policy and the performance-monitoring framework. Robust monitoring of programmes is critical for assessing the returns on investment made through the pact.

The pact should include incentives for providers to promote quality and co-operation:

- Review the “+23 route” and assess the size of the demand of adults for higher education. Incentivise universities and polytechnics to i) adjust the number of places for adult learners to meet demand, and ii) provide support services to increase the access, retention and success of adult learners.
- Ensuring funding to providers for expanding the CTeSP can serve a larger and more diverse population and address current gender and age imbalances. This funding could also help build bridges with providers that deliver adult learning at lower skill levels and may serve adults who may choose to pursue higher education in future.

- Use funding levers to promote an adequate supply of adult-learning opportunities, based on a robust assessment of skills demand now and in the future.
 - Levers might range from targeting new public incentives towards programmes that serve specific populations, to performance contracts, or the regulation of new publicly funded training programmes (e.g. by conditioning public funding for new programmes on meeting certain criteria – see Recommendation 4 on high-quality programmes).
 - Funding should also be used to support the system as a whole, for example to promote strategic partnerships that support the alignment of skills supply and demand, such as local networks.
- Assess how providers of non-formal learning, ranging from employers to social organisations, might be incentivised to provide quality training:
 - Better target employer incentives (see Recommendation 10).
 - Ensure that funding for social/community organisations supports high-quality, relevant training, and is coupled with relevant accountability mechanisms (see Recommendation 6 on key performance indicators).

10. Introduce targeted financial incentives for employers (specifically small and medium enterprises) and individuals (specifically disadvantaged groups) to encourage provision of, and participation in, training.

- Review the effectiveness of current incentives.
 - Assess the impact on the productivity of both individuals and companies of incentives, and whether training would have been undertaken even if the subsidy had not been provided.
 - Analyse the impact of the tax system, including the structure and progressivity of the personal income tax and the amount of social security contributions on the returns to skills (and thus the incentives whether to upskill), and on the willingness of individuals to supply skills to the labour market.
- Consider larger and more targeted subsidies, using best practice to guide the amount and mechanisms used. Targeting should focus on:
 - Employers who provide the least training and individuals who participate the least.
 - Encouraging the provision and take-up of skills training with potentially broader and longer-term effects (e.g. foundational and transversal skills).
 - Encouraging training in sectors of high demand that are aligned with the country's economic development goals, including those where shortages currently exist or are expected to emerge in future.

When developing new incentives, involve individuals from target groups, to better understand their motivation and increase effectiveness.

- Strengthen complementarities between employment and training incentives for the unemployed.

- Consider coupling current targeted hiring subsidies provided through the public employment and vocational training service (IEFP), such as those targeted to youth, the low-skilled and the long-term unemployed, with incentives for employers to also train these individuals.
- Combine financial incentives with non-financial support (e.g. information, guidance, staff capacity for advising target client groups).
- Consider linking public procurement policies with requirements for successful bidders, to provide a specified amount of work-based training, such as apprenticeships, internships and other options, especially in sectors with shortages/tight labour markets.

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Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Portugal

STRENGTHENING THE ADULT-LEARNING SYSTEM

Executive Summary / Assessment and Recommendations

Raising skills is critical to Portugal's economic success and social well-being. As globalisation and digitalisation are transforming how people work, how societies function and how individuals interact, Portugal needs to equip its entire population with strong skills so that they can benefit from new opportunities.

Portugal has put education and skills at the forefront of the political agenda for many years, but more than half of adults have not completed upper secondary education. With the population ageing rapidly and a growing skills divide between generations, Portugal needs to further strengthen its adult-learning system. To make change happen, Portugal will need a clear vision for the adult-learning system and a strong partnership between all stakeholders – all levels of government, education and training providers, employers, trade unions, the non-profit sector and learners.

This report outlines areas where the accessibility, flexibility and quality of the adult-learning system can be improved, where governance and financing mechanisms can be strengthened, and provides examples of international and national good practice to help achieve these objectives. The report provides a series of concrete actions to help Portugal improve the adult-learning system and in turn enhance economic growth and social cohesion.

Consult this publication on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264298705-en>.

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