OECD Skills Studies

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ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Foreword

Developing and using people's skills effectively is crucial for Poland's economic prosperity and social cohesion.

Globalisation, digitalisation and demographic change are combining to increase and transform the skills needed to thrive in Polish workplaces and society. People will need a stronger and more well-rounded set of skills, including cognitive, social and emotional, and job-specific skills, to flourish in life both in and out of work. Poland will also need to make better use of people's skills in the labour market and in individual workplaces.

Poland has achieved relatively strong skills performance in various areas. In terms of developing people's skills, Poland's youth perform relatively well in the school years[1], and an increasing number complete tertiary education. In terms of using people's skills, the unemployment rate in Poland is at record low levels, and labour market participation has grown for most groups.

However, Poland faces several complex skills challenges. Skills imbalances are high, and some graduates enter the labour market without a strong and well-rounded set of skills. Many adults have low levels of skills, yet most adults and enterprises in Poland are not engaged in education and training. Polish enterprises are not utilising the full potential of workers' skills to support productivity and innovation.

In recent years, Poland has enacted wide-ranging skills policy reforms spanning all levels of education and training, as well as many areas of labour market policy. Their successful implementation will require strong stakeholder engagement and careful impact monitoring.

Poland has also developed an Integrated Skills Strategy to set the country's priorities for skills development and activation. To support this process, the OECD has conducted a Skills Strategy project with Poland. This has involved detailed analysis and widespread engagement with stakeholders, leading to several tailored recommendations outlined in this report.

The OECD stands ready to support Poland as it seeks to implement effective skills policies and continue its transition to a knowledge-based economy and society.

[1] This publication takes into account data from the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Acknowledgements

This report is part of a series of country projects within the OECD programme of work on “Building Effective National Skills Strategies”.

The OECD team wishes to thank current Minister for National Education, Dariusz Piontkowski, and former Minister for National Education Anna Zalewska for their commitment to this project. We are also grateful to Secretary of State for National Education, Marzena Machałek, for her ongoing support during this project.

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Our warm thanks go to the many government and non-government representatives who generously shared their insights during workshops, focus groups and bilateral interviews with the OECD team in Warsaw and Krakow, and via written input. Over 100 stakeholders participated in the various meetings that took place during OECD missions. These stakeholders represented ministries, government agencies, subnational authorities, education and training institutions, businesses and business associations, unions and community associations, academia, civil society and other organisations[2]. The OECD would also like to take the opportunity to thank the staff of the Ministry of National Education and the Educational Research Institute for their excellent organisation of the stakeholder workshops and for their hospitality in hosting these events. We also thank the many experts who volunteered as moderators and note-takers during the workshops.

The OECD team is grateful to the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission for contributing both financial support and expertise throughout the project. We are especially grateful to Alison Crabb and Michael Horgan, as well as Rafal Janas, Krystyna Marek, Bartosz Otachel, Judit Rozsa and Aneta Sobotka.

While the report draws upon data and analysis from the OECD, Polish authorities and other published sources, any errors or misinterpretations remain the responsibility of the OECD team.

Ben Game (OECD Centre for Skills) was the OECD project leader responsible for co-ordinating the National Skills Strategy project in Poland. The authors of this report from the OECD Centre for Skills were: Chapter 1. Key insights and recommendations (Bart Staats, Ben Game and Stefano Piano);

[2] A full list of participating organisations and stakeholders is included in Annex A.

Chapter 2. Making the education system more responsive to labour market needs (Stefano Piano, with initial contributions from Sylwia Golawska); Chapter 3. Fostering greater participation in adult learning of all forms (Ben Game); Chapter 4. Strengthening the use of skills in Polish workplaces (Bart Staats); and Chapter 5. Strengthening the governance of the skills system (Ben Game). Sylwia Golawska and Andrzej Żurawski (consultants) provided invaluable research assistance, feedback and translations at different stages of the project. Cuauhtémoc Rebolledo-Gómez and Serli Abrahamoglu (Centre for Skills) provided statistical support, while Laura Dimante, Dami Seo, Sam Thomas and Georgina Young (Centre for Skills) provided assistance developing country examples and finalising references. As Head of the OECD National Skills Strategy projects, Andrew Bell (Centre for Skills) provided analytical guidance, comments on chapters and supervision. Montserrat Gomendio (Head of the OECD Centre for Skills) provided guidance, oversight and comments, while Stefano Scarpetta (OECD Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs) provided strategic oversight for the project, as well as comments.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

The main abbreviations and acronyms used in the report are listed below.

AES	Adult Education Survey
AI	Artificial intelligence
ALMPs	Active labour market policies
AMI	Innovation Manager Academy (Akademia Menadżera Innowacji)
ARP	Industrial Development Agency (Agencja Rozwoju Przemysłu)
BKL	Human Capital Survey (Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego)
BUR	Database of Development Services (Baza Usług Rozwojowych)
CIiPKZ	Information and Career Planning Centre (Centrum Informacji i Planowania Kariery Zawodowej)
CKP	Practical Training Centre (Centrum Kształcenia Praktycznego)
CKU	Continuing Education Centre (Centrum Kształcenia Ustawicznego)
CKZiU	Vocational and Continuing Education Centre (Centrum Kształcenia Zawodowego i Ustawicznego)
CVT	Continuous vocational training
EC	European Commission
ECS	European Company Survey
EEA	European Economic Area
ELA	Polish graduate tracking system (*Ogólnopolski system monitorowania Ekonomicznych Losów Absolwentów szkół wyższych*)
EQF	European Qualification Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
EUWIN	European Workplace Innovation Network
EWCS	European Working Conditions Survey
GDP	Gross domestic product
GUS	Statistics Poland (Główny Urząd Statystyczny)
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
HPWP	High-performance workplace practices
HR	Human resources
IBE	Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych)
ICT	Information and communications technology
IPiSS	Institute of Labour and Social Studies (Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych)
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
KFS	National Training Fund (Krajowy Fundusz Szkoleniowy)
LFS	Labour Force Survey

LLP	Lifelong learning perspective
MC	Ministry of Digital Affairs (Ministerstwo Cyfryzacji)
MEN	Ministry of National Education (Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej)
MF	Ministry of Finance (Ministerstwo Finansów)
MIiR	Ministry of Investment and Economic Development (Ministerstwo Inwestycji i Rozwoju)
MKiDN	Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego)
MNiSW	Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego)
MOOC	Massive open online course
MRPiPS	Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej)
MZ	Ministry of Health (Ministerstwo Zdrowia)
NCBiR	National Centre for Research and Development (Narodowe Centrum Badań i Rozwoju)
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIK	Polish Supreme Audit Office (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli)
NPT	National Project Team
NSS	National Skills Strategy
OHP	Voluntary Labour Corp (Ochotniczy Hufiec Pracy)
ORE	Centre for Education Development (Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji)
OSE	National Educational Network (Ogólnopolska Sieć Edukacyjna)
PAN	Polish Academy of Sciences (Polska Akademia Nauk)
PARP	Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości)
PES	Public employment services
PFR	Polish Development Fund (Polski Fundusz Rozwoju)
PIAAC	Survey of Adult Skills (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PKA	Polish Accreditation Committee (Polski Komisja Akredytacyjna)
POWER	Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (Program Operacyjny Wiedza Edukacja Rozwój)
PRK	Polish Qualifications Framework (Polska Rama Kwalifikacji)
PWSZ	Public higher vocational schools (*Państwowe Wyższe Szkoły Zawodowe*)
R&D	Research and development
RDS	Social Dialogue Council (Rada Dialogu Społecznego)
RGNiSW	General Council for Science and Higher Education (Rada Główna Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego)
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
SAA	Skills assessment and anticipation
SIEG	Strategy for Innovation and Efficiency of the Economy
SGI	Sustainable governance Indicators
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SOR	Strategy for Responsible Development (Strategia na rzecz Odpowiedzialnego Rozwoju)
SSC	Sectoral skills councils (*Sektorowe Rady ds. Kompetencji*)
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
VET	Vocational education and training
WBL	Work-based learning
ZSK	Integrated Qualifications System (Zintegrowany System Kwalifikacji)
ZSU	Integrated Skills Strategy (Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności)

Executive summary

OECD-Poland collaboration on the OECD Skills Strategy project

This National Skills Strategy (NSS) project provides Poland with tailored findings and recommendations on its skills performance from an international perspective, and supports the development and implementation of Poland's Integrated Skills Strategy. The NSS project was launched at the Skills Strategy Seminar in Warsaw in October 2018, with senior representatives from the Ministry of National Education; the Ministry of Science and Higher Education; the Ministry of Digital Affairs; the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development; the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy; and the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology. Also present were the Educational Research Institute, the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development and the European Commission. During each OECD mission to Poland in February and May 2019, the OECD engaged with a range of ministries and government agencies and over 50 stakeholder organisations in interactive workshops, group discussions and bilateral meetings (see Annex A). This process provided invaluable input that shaped the findings and recommendations in this report.

Key findings and opportunities for improving Poland's skills performance

Three important themes emerged from the National Skills Strategy project for Poland:

- **Equipping students with skills for the future**: Students and institutions need greater incentives and support to respond to labour market needs, and the adult learning system must do a better job at allowing past graduates to upskill and reskill during adulthood. Adults' skills must be put to better use in workplaces to mitigate skills imbalances, and skills needs information should be improved.
- **Developing a culture of lifelong learning in Poland**: Youth, adults and enterprises require a mindset of lifelong learning. This starts in Poland's formal education system. However, improving the awareness, flexibility and funding of adult learning can help to boost participation. Polish employers can maintain and augment adults' skills by utilising them more fully on the job. This will require effective co-ordination between government, social partners and enterprises.
- **Strengthening co-ordination between governments and stakeholders**: Employers can help improve Poland's skills performance by co-operating with education institutions, supporting worker training and implementing high-performance work practices. Social partners have an important role in raising awareness of skills and learning, supporting employers and employees to develop skills, and contributing to skills governance. Central and subnational governments can build trust and co-operation, as well as improve skills information and funding, to improve Poland's skills performance.

The OECD and the Government of Poland identified four priority areas for improving Poland's skills performance. These priority areas are the focus of this report. The key findings and opportunities for improvement in each of the areas are summarised below and elaborated in subsequent chapters, which also have detailed policy recommendations.

Priority 1: Making the education system more responsive to labour market needs (Chapter 2)

A responsive education system allows graduates to develop a set of skills that are aligned with short- and long-term labour market needs. This can benefit individuals, enterprises and the economy as a whole. However, graduates of the vocational education and training (VET) system in Poland have struggled to find employment, despite strong shortages in vocational occupations. Graduates of the higher education (HE) system have been more successful, but they are often not well matched to their jobs. VET schools and HE institutions have been only partially successful at equipping graduates with strong foundational skills. Recent reforms aim to improve the responsiveness of the VET and HE systems.

Poland has opportunities to make the education system more responsive to labour market needs by:

- Expanding career counselling services in education institutions.
- Strengthening incentives for education institutions to align their offer with labour market needs.
- Improving incentives and support for effective teaching.
- Strengthening collaboration between education institutions and employers.

Priority 2: Fostering greater participation in adult learning of all forms (Chapter 3)

Adults' ongoing, life-wide learning in workplaces, educational institutions, communities and homes is becoming increasingly important for Poland's development. While Poland has successfully raised adult levels of formal educational attainment, many adults in Poland remain low skilled, especially older adults. And despite the growing importance of developing adults' skills for Poland, participation in adult learning of all forms is relatively low. Adults with low educational attainment, in rural areas or working in micro- and small-sized enterprises are particularly disengaged from learning. Many adults in Poland report that they do not participate and do not want to participate in formal and/or non-formal adult education or training. Although the benefits of adult learning in Poland are relatively high, the majority of adults state that they have no need for further learning.

Poland has opportunities to foster greater participation in adult learning of all forms by:

- Raising awareness of adult learning benefits and opportunities.
- Making learning more flexible and accessible for adults.
- Better sharing and targeting financing to increase participation in adult learning.

Priority 3: Strengthening the use of skills in Polish workplaces (Chapter 4)

Putting skills to better use in the workplace is important for workers, employers and the broader economy, with benefits for both the economy and society. However, the skills of Poland's working population are not optimally used in workplaces. While average literacy scores in Poland are comparable with the OECD average, the use of reading skills is far below the OECD average. A similar gap exists for the use of information and communication technology (ICT), writing and problem-solving skills. There is a strong, positive link between the intensive use of skills and the adoption of high-performance workplace practices (HPWP). However, Polish firms are adopting HPWP at a lower rate than their counterparts in most other OECD countries.

Poland has opportunities to strengthen the use of skills in workplaces by:

- Raising awareness of the relevance of effective skills use and related HPWP.
- Supporting enterprises and organisations to adopt HPWP.
- Equipping management staff with the right skills to implement HPWP.
- Engaging employees effectively to implement HPWP.

Priority 4: Strengthening the governance of the skills system in Poland (Chapter 5)

Effective governance arrangements are essential to support Poland's performance in developing and using people's skills, and for achieving the goals of the Integrated Skills Strategy (Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności). The success of policies to develop and use people's skills will require effective co-ordination between government, learners, educators, workers, employers, trade unions, and others.

Poland has opportunities to strengthen the governance of the skills system by:

- Strengthening co-operation on skills policy at the national level.
- Strengthening vertical and subnational co-operation on skills policy.
- Integrating and using skills information effectively.

1 Key insights and recommendations

This chapter summarises the context, key insights and policy recommendations of the OECD Skills Strategy Poland. It applies the OECD Skills Strategy Framework to assess the performance of the Polish skills system. This assessment was discussed with Poland's National Project Team to select the four priority areas of focus in this report. The chapter provides an overview of the policy context of the Polish skills system, and summarises the key findings and recommendations in each of the four priority areas. Subsequent chapters provide more details on the opportunities for improvement, good practices and policy recommendations for Poland in each priority area.

Skills matter for Poland

Skills are vital for enabling individuals and countries to thrive in an increasingly complex, interconnected and rapidly changing world. Countries in which people develop strong skills, learn throughout their lives, and use their skills fully and effectively at work and in society are more productive and innovative, and enjoy higher levels of trust, better health outcomes and a higher quality of life.

As our societies and economies are increasingly shaped by new technologies and trends, getting skills policies right becomes even more critical for ensuring well-being and promoting growth that is inclusive and sustainable. It is crucial that Poland designs, develops and delivers skills policies to raise its capacity to thrive in an interconnected and rapidly changing world.

Skills are essential for responding to global megatrends

Megatrends such as globalisation, digitalisation and demographic change transform jobs and the way societies function and people interact. To thrive in the world of tomorrow, people will need a stronger and more well-rounded set of skills[1], including foundational; cognitive and meta-cognitive; social and emotional; and professional, technical and specialised knowledge and skills. Poland will also need to make better use of people's skills in the labour market and in individual workplaces.

In Poland, as in many OECD countries, the shrinking share of working-age population (OECD, 2018[1]) is reducing the contribution of labour utilisation to economic growth. As a result, productivity growth will be an even more important driver of economic growth in the future, putting more pressure on the need to raise workers' output.

Digital innovations such as machine learning, big data and artificial intelligence (AI) will change the nature of many jobs and reshape how certain tasks are performed. OECD work building on the Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), suggests that about 31% of workers in Poland face a high risk of seeing their jobs automated, and another 20% face significant changes in their job tasks due to automation, a share higher than the OECD average (Nedelkoska and Quintini, 2018[2]).

Contributing further to the uncertainties associated with technological change is the continuing expansion of international trade and global value chains. New technologies and trade liberalisation have led to a more globalised world that is characterised by the expansion of supply chains and the outsourcing of certain forms of work. For Poland, as in all OECD countries, this has strongly affected the competitiveness and success of different economic sectors, as well as the supply of jobs and demand for skills in the labour market (OECD, 2017[3]; OECD, 2017[4]).

People will increasingly need to upgrade their skills to perform new tasks in their existing jobs or acquire new skills for new jobs. Strong foundational skills will make people more resilient to the changing skills demand. Digital skills and other types of skills – including critical thinking, communication skills, adaptability and accountability – will become essential for adults to succeed in both work and life.

As stressed by the first principle of the European Union's (EU) European Pillar of Social Rights, high-quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning should be accessible for everyone to enable full participation in society and to successfully manage transitions in the labour market.

Skills can help drive the next phase of Poland's development

Poland is experiencing robust economic growth (5.1% over 2018), compared with 2.3% in the OECD on average. Labour market performance has improved considerably in recent years, with unemployment rates at record low levels, wages on the rise, and, contrary to many other OECD countries, decreasing wealth and income inequality (OECD, 2017[5]). Overall, well-being has improved considerably in recent decades.

In 2017, Poland scored at or above the OECD average on work-life balance, personal safety and the overall performance of the education system.

However, Poland's economic growth and income convergence has largely been the result of more efficient resource allocation, and new sources of growth are needed (World Bank Group, 2017[6]). Poland is still lagging behind in almost all measures of innovation. To ensure continued convergence to higher living standards and to raise productivity, it should expand its capacity to innovate (OECD, 2018[7]).

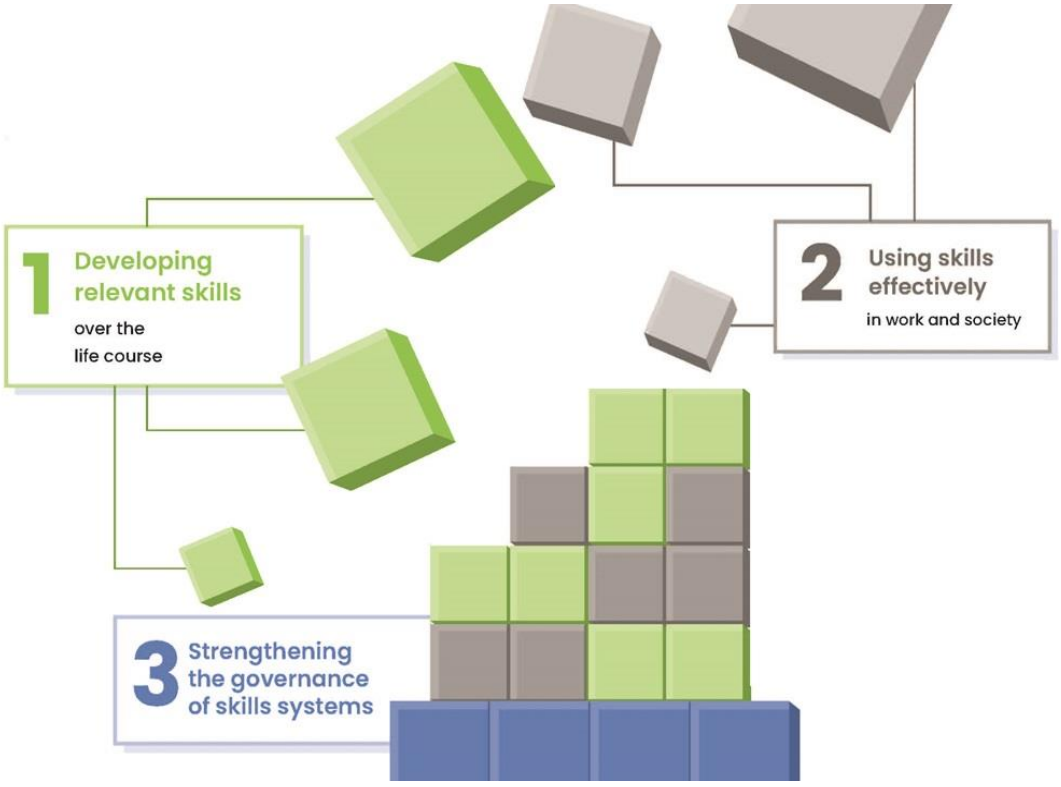
Poland's strong economic situation today gives the country a unique opportunity to strengthen its skills system – how skills are developed and used, and how skills policies are governed. By doing so, Poland can set the foundation for economic prosperity and social cohesion in the long term.

The OECD Skills Strategy project in Poland

OECD Skills Strategy projects provide a strategic and comprehensive approach to assess countries' skills challenges and opportunities, and build more effective skills systems. The OECD works collaboratively with countries to develop policy responses tailored to each country's specific skills challenges and needs. The foundation of this approach is the OECD Skills Strategy Framework (Figure 1.1), the components of which are:

- **Developing relevant skills over the life course.** To ensure that countries are able to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world, all people need access to opportunities to develop and maintain strong proficiency in a broad set of skills. This process is lifelong, starting in childhood and youth and continuing throughout adulthood. It is also "life-wide", occurring both formally in schools and higher education, and non-formally and informally in the home, community and workplaces.
- **Using skills effectively in work and society.** Developing a strong and broad set of skills is just the first step. To ensure that countries and people gain the full economic and social value from investments in developing skills, people also need opportunities, encouragement and incentives to use their skills fully and effectively at work and in society.
- **Strengthening the governance of skills systems.** Success in developing and using relevant skills requires strong governance arrangements to promote co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration across the whole-of-government; engage stakeholders throughout the policy cycle; build integrated information systems; and align and co-ordinate financing arrangements. The OECD Skills Strategy project for Poland supports this by forming an inter-ministerial National Project Team to support the whole-of-government approach to skills policies, and by engaging a large number of stakeholders in two workshops (the assessment and recommendations workshops), as well as in focus group meetings.

Figure 1.1. The OECD Skills Strategy Framework



Source: OECD (2019[8]), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to Shape a Better Future*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en.

Three important themes emerged over the course of the project

Three important themes for Poland emerged from the widespread engagement and analysis undertaken in relation to the three components of the OECD Skills Strategy mentioned above:

- **Equipping students with skills for the future**: Technology, globalisation and demographic change will transform the skills required in Poland's labour market. Poland's graduates will need a strong mix of foundational, transversal, social and emotional and professional skills to succeed in the future world of work. Currently, Poland's youth perform relatively well in the school years, and many complete tertiary education. Yet skills imbalances in the labour market remain high. One reason for this is that Poland's education system is not responsive enough to labour market needs. Too many Polish graduates lack highly sought after professional skills, as well as strong foundation and transversal skills to support their employability today and in the future. Students and institutions need greater incentives and support to respond to labour market needs (Chapter 2). The adult learning system must do a better job at allowing past graduates to upskill and reskill during adulthood (Chapter 3). Workers' skills must be put to better use to mitigate skills imbalances (Chapter 4). Finally, information on skills needs should be strengthened, more integrated and better disseminated to ensure skills development meets current and anticipated labour market needs (Chapter 5).
- **Developing a culture of lifelong learning in Poland**: A relatively large share of adults in Poland have low levels of foundational skills in literacy, numeracy and/or digital literacy. These adults face higher risks of unemployment, inactivity and social exclusion, while their employers face productivity constraints. Even higher skilled adults face challenges from Poland's changing labour market. Poland's adults and the enterprises that employ them thus require a mindset of lifelong

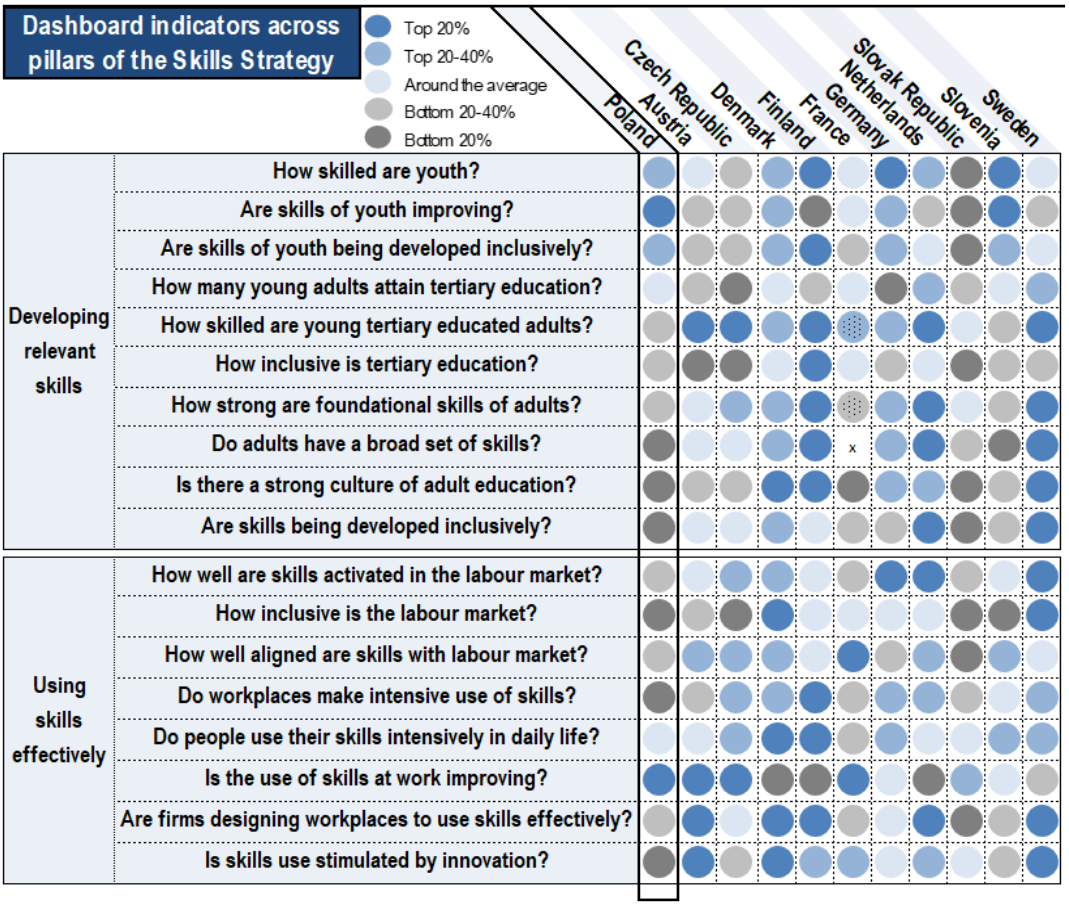
learning. However, the majority of adults in Poland report that they do not want to participate in education and training, stating that they do not need to, and most enterprises do not train their staff. Poland's formal education system can help instil a mindset of lifelong learning (Chapter 2), and the adult learning system can improve awareness, flexibility and funding to boost participation (Chapter 3). Polish employers can help maintain and augment adults' skills by utilising them more fully on the job (Chapter 4). Improved co-ordination between government, social partners and enterprises will be essential for implementing lifelong learning in Poland (Chapter 5).

- **Strengthening co-ordination between governments and stakeholders**: Poland's arrangements for developing and using people's skills are highly dispersed among different ministries, subnational governments and stakeholders. None of these actors alone can ensure people's skills are developed and used to their potential. Employers will have a critical role to play in improving Poland's skills performance by co-operating with education institutions (Chapter 2), supporting worker training (Chapter 3), and implementing high-performance work practices (Chapter 4). Social partners will play an important role in raising awareness of skills, supporting employers and employees, and contributing to skills governance (Chapter 5). Finally, central and subnational governments must build trust and partnerships with each other and with stakeholders, as well as improve skills information and funding, to build capacity and performance in Poland's skills system.

Performance of the Polish skills system

The OECD Skills Strategy Dashboard provides an overview of the relative performance of countries across the dimensions of the OECD Skills Strategy (as presented in Figure 1.2). For each dimension of the strategy there are a number of indicators, which are sometimes composite indicators made up of a number of other indicators. They provide a snapshot of each country's performance (see Annex 1.A for indicators).

Figure 1.2. Skills Strategy Dashboard, Poland and selected European countries



Note: These summary indicators are calculated as a simple average of a range of underlying indicators (see Annex 1.A for indicators). All underlying indicators have been normalised in a way that implies that a higher value and being among the "top 20%" reflects better performance. The "x" indicates insufficient or no available data, and dotted circles indicate missing data for at least one underlying indicator.

Developing relevant skills

Following significant improvements, the skills of youth now exceed OECD averages

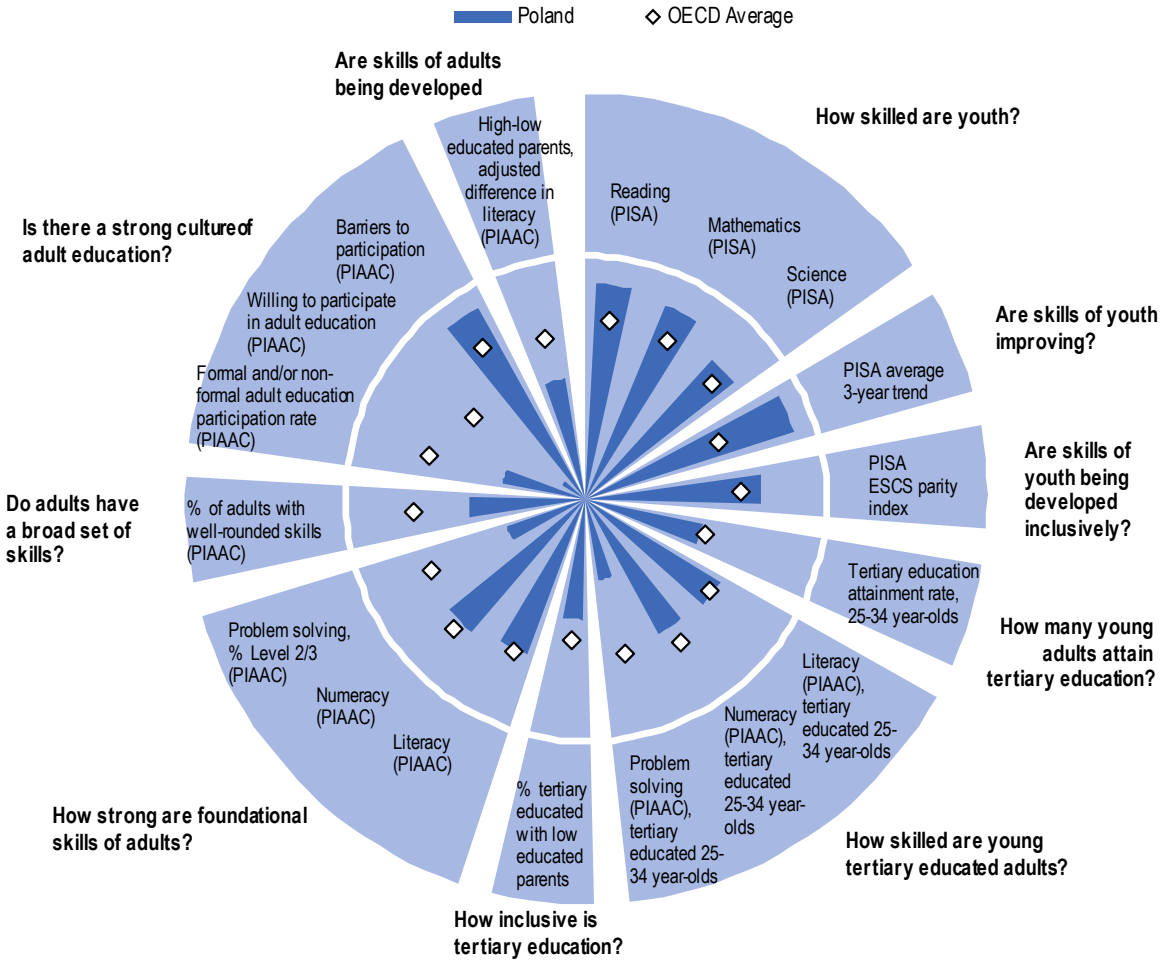
Reforms in Poland have led to great improvements in educational performance. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), student performance improved in recent years, and in 2015, Poland scored above average in mathematics, reading and sciences (Figure 1.3). Poland also has one of the highest shares of attainment in at least upper secondary education among 25-34 year-olds.

Tertiary education has expanded rapidly, but challenges remain

Both the spending on, and enrolment in, tertiary education, have increased rapidly: the percentage of 25-34 year-olds attaining tertiary education jumped from 25% in 2005 to 44% in 2018. However, the rapid expansion of tertiary education may have compromised education quality in some areas and resulted in the skills of tertiary graduates being below or at the level of the OECD average. Only a small share of the publications from universities is among the most cited scientific publications internationally.

Figure 1.3. Key indicators for developing relevant skills

Relative position in country ranking (based on normalised scores), where higher value reflects better performance



How to read this chart: The normalised scores indicate the relative performance across OECD countries: the further away from the core of the chart, the better the performance. For example, indicator "Willing to participate in adult education" has a low score compared to the average, indicating a share of employees willing to participate near the bottom of the ranking.
Note: The OECD average (when using PIAAC data) is based on the sample of OECD countries/regions assessed in the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC). See Annex 1.A. for explanation of sources and methodology.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036177

Many adults do not have the skills to succeed in a digitalised and rapidly changing world

The average skills of Polish adults are below typical OECD levels, with particularly low levels of problem-solving skills. More than one in four adults is an overall low performer (OECD, 2016[9]). Proficiency across multiple skills domains is important for performance in the labour market. In Poland, approximately one in five adults has strong proficiency across a broad range of skills (individuals scoring at least level three in literacy and numeracy and at least level two in problem solving), which is lower than the average of one in four adults across the OECD (PIAAC) countries (OECD, 2019[10]). Poland also lags behind in digital skills – approximately one in two adults has no or only limited experience with computers or lacks confidence in their ability to use computers, compared with one in four on average across the OECD (OECD, 2016[9]).

Participation in adult education and training could be improved

A culture of lifelong learning is important for ensuring that adults keep their skills up-to-date and can adjust to changing skills needs, as well as to reduce inequities in skills performance. However, despite high attainment rates in education, participation in adult education is low. In 2016, one in four adults had participated in formal and non-formal adult education and training in the last 12 months, compared with almost one in two adults across the EU. Participation in informal learning is half the EU average (31% vs. 61%) (Eurostat, 2018[11]). In addition, in 2018 only 5.5% of Polish adults had participated in education and training in the last four weeks (Eurostat, 2018[12]) compared with 11.1% across the EU.

Many adults are not motivated to learn, or face barriers to participation

In general across OECD countries, most adults are not willing to participate in education and training, but in Poland this share is especially high – approximately six out of ten adults are not participating and do not want to participate in education and training (OECD, 2017[13]; Eurostat, 2018[11]). Even when Polish adults are willing to participate, they may face several obstacles. At least one-third of adults willing to learn report time-related obstacles to their participation.

Using skills effectively

The activation of skills in the labour market could be enhanced, despite good progress

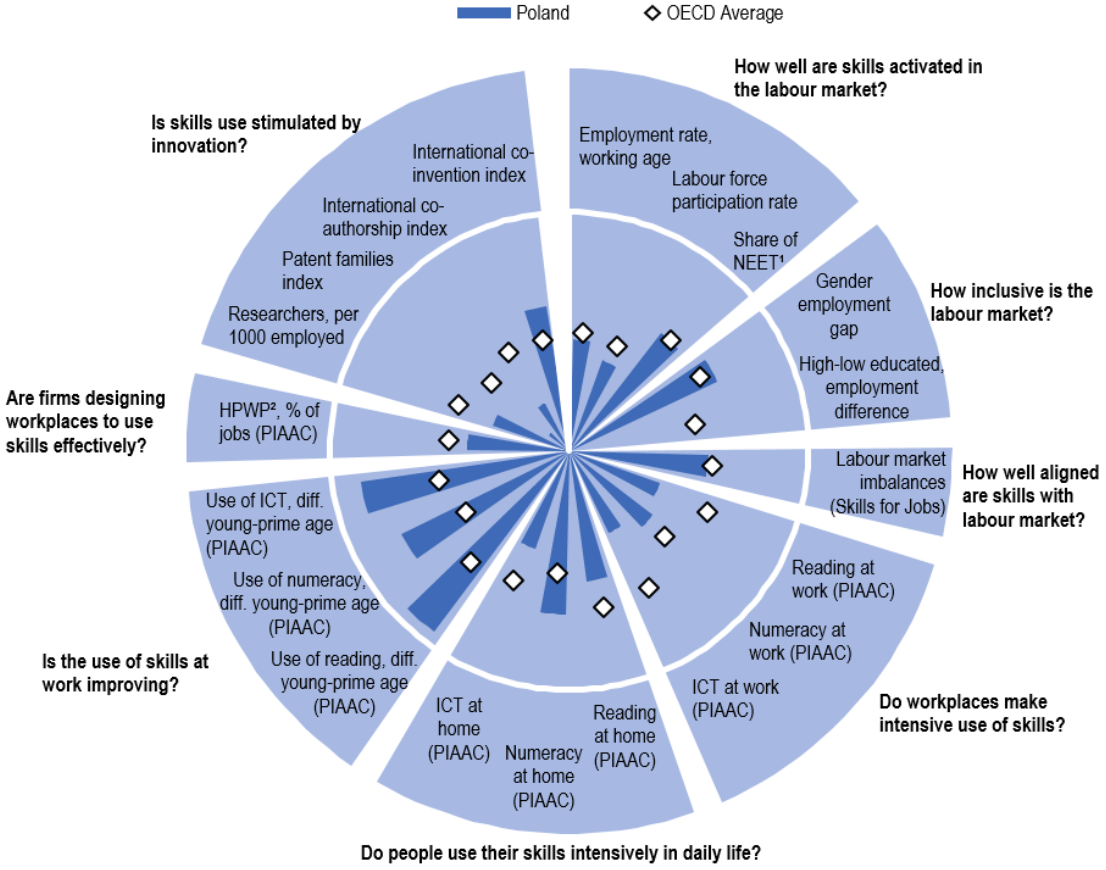
Labour market performance has improved considerably in recent years (Figure 1.4), with unemployment rates at record low levels and wages on the rise. Despite these developments, the employment rate of 67% in 2018 is still slightly below the OECD average (68%), and while unemployment has been falling fast as a result of this rise in employment, it is also the result of a shrinking labour force. In the context of an ageing population, it is crucial that employment and participation continue to increase.

The inclusiveness of the labour market in Poland is a concern

In recent years, the employment rates of workers over 55 years-old have risen quickly, accounting for half the increase in the total employment rate since 2006. However, in 2018, the employment rate of 49% for workers aged 55-64 is still low compared to the OECD average of 61%. Younger generations are not benefitting from the booming labour market, with youth unemployment above the OECD average, and a comparatively large share of youth are not in employment, education or training. Moreover, the participation of women could be enhanced – in 2018, the employment rate for women was 13 percentage points below that of men, and for low educated women the participation rate is declining.

Figure 1.4. Key indicators for using skills effectively

Relative position in country ranking (based on normalised scores), where higher value reflects better performance



How to read this chart: The normalised scores indicate the relative performance across OECD countries: the further away from the core of the chart, the better the performance. For example, indicator 'Reading skills use difference young-prime age' indicates performance above OECD average, i.e. a comparatively large difference in the use of reading skills between younger and older generations indicates relatively strong improvements in the use of these skills.

Note: The OECD average (when using PIAAC data) is based on the sample of OECD countries/regions assessed in the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC). See Annex 1.A. for explanation of sources and methodology.

1. Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET).
2. High-performance workplace practices (HPWP).

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Skills shortages in various sectors hamper growth

Employer surveys point to the presence of significant shortages in the Polish labour market. In 2018, half of Polish employers reported difficulties filling jobs (Manpower Group, 2018[14]), and in 2017, 63% of employers in Poland reported that trouble finding staff with the right skills was a major obstacle to long-term investment decisions (EIB, 2017[15]). The OECD Skills for Jobs Database shows that Poland is experiencing a range of skills shortages and surpluses, and that mismatches in the labour market are prevalent. In 2016, over 9% of workers in Poland were over-qualified (i.e. they had higher qualifications than those required to get their job) and almost 14% were under-qualified (i.e. their qualifications were lower than those required to get their job).

The skills of adults are not used to their full potential in workplaces

The skills proficiency of the working population is around or slightly below the OECD average (OECD, 2016[9]). However, these skills are not optimally used in the workplace, which indicates a waste of initial investment in skills. For instance, while average literacy scores of adults in Poland are comparable with the OECD average, the use of reading skills is far below the OECD average (OECD, 2016[9]). However, comparatively large differences in the use of skills between younger and older generations indicate improvements in skills use. The Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) provides evidence on the strong correlation of skills use with wages and productivity in OECD countries. In Poland, productivity in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) per hour worked is still 40% below the OECD average, indicating that there is a lot of room for improvement regarding the efficient use of adult skills in their jobs in Poland.

Innovations in workplaces and the broader economy can support effective skills use

There is a strong link between the intensive use of skills and the adoption of high-performance workplace practices (HPWP), including 1) flexibility and autonomy in the workplace; 2) teamwork and information sharing; 3) training and development; and 4) benefits, career progression and performance management (OECD, 2016[16]). However, Polish firms are adopting these HPWP at a lower rate than their counterparts in most other countries: about 23% of jobs adopted these practices, compared with 26% on average across the OECD. Rising business investment in a range of intangible assets – such as organisational capital, computerised information, design, and research and development (R&D) – is positively associated with productivity and competitiveness. Poland has one of the lowest expenditure rates on R&D in the OECD, at only 1% of GDP in 2017 (OECD, 2018[1]), and the share of researchers in the workforce is comparatively low. Overall, innovation activity is also weak, especially in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and research activity has little international focus, with weak performance in international co-authorship of research publications – as a measure of international collaboration in science – and a small share of patents developed with foreign co-inventors (OECD, 2017[17]).

Policy context in Poland

In recent years, Poland has taken concrete steps to improve its skills performance and has enacted a range of strategies to guide the development of skills and related policies (see full overview in Annex 1.B.). The 2013 policy report, Lifelong Learning Perspective (LLP) (Government of the Republic of Poland, 2013[18]), provides policy guidance for learning in various contexts (formal, non-formal and informal) and all stages of life, as well as providing guidance on identifying, assessing and validating learning outcomes. The objective of the LLP is to ensure that "all learners [have the] possibility of improving their competencies and obtaining and validating their qualifications in line with the needs and requirements of labour market and civil society, to facilitate movement of persons between sectors and EU states and to contribute to the promotion of civil and social activity." The LLP recognises that given the wide range of actors with an influence and interest in lifelong learning there is a need for ongoing collaboration across ministries and levels of government, as well as with employers, employees and civil society.

Improving the development and use of human and social capital have been recognised as areas of major importance for the achievement of the objectives of the Strategy for Responsible Development (*Strategia na rzecz Odpowiedzialnego Rozwoju*, SOR), which is the main strategic document of the Polish government. The SOR emphasises the importance of improving skills and competencies throughout the life course and raising awareness of the benefits of lifelong learning. It also provides for the introduction of changes in the education system, in particular vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE), in order to improve their responsiveness to the needs of the modern economy.

Poland is currently in the process of developing an Integrated Skills Strategy (*Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności*, ZSU) that will integrate and expand the LLP and the skills-related content of the SOR, as well as other strategies at the subnational level. The overall goal of the ZSU is to "contribute to the development of skills relevant to the needs of learners, society and the economy, and to better co-ordination of the actors involved in skills formation". It seeks to facilitate the achievement of the SOR objective to "maintain and use the country's human capital to increase employment, income growth and economic prosperity, while simultaneously strengthening social, economic and territorial cohesion, and ensuring high quality of life". The ZSU has involved extensive consultation with several ministries and stakeholder groups in Poland.

Poland has also implemented a range of skills and education reforms (see full overview in Annex 1.B.). In formal education, major elements of the reforms include changes in the school structure (raising the school entry age from six to seven, shortening compulsory general education, lowering the age of tracking to general or vocational secondary school, increasing permeability across tracks); new core curricula for primary and secondary schools; the transformation of vocational schools into VET sectoral schools and the promotion of dual vocational training; new measures for financing school education and for teacher remuneration and progression; and changes in the governance and funding of higher education institutions. Furthermore, the Integrated Qualifications System aims to ensure the quality of the qualifications awarded and the recognition of learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal education. It also enables the accumulation and recognition of achievements, provides information on available qualifications, and enables comparisons of Polish qualifications with other EU countries.

Against this backdrop, the OECD supported Poland with a collaborative and tailored OECD Skills Strategy project in 2018-2019. The Ministry of National Education has engaged the OECD to deepen the analysis of the ZSU in specific areas, extend the analysis into other specific areas, and provide policy recommendations for Poland.

Priority areas and recommendations

Based on the assessment of the performance of Poland's skills system and feedback from the Polish government, four priority areas have been identified for the Skills Strategy project:

1. Making the education system more responsive to labour market needs (Chapter 2).
2. Fostering greater participation in adult learning of all forms (Chapter 3).
3. Strengthening the use of skills in Polish workplaces (Chapter 4).
4. Strengthening the governance of the skills system in Poland (Chapter 5).

Based on in-depth desktop analysis, two stakeholder workshops, nine discussion groups and several bilateral meetings in Warsaw and Krakow, the OECD has selected opportunities and developed recommendations for Poland in each of the priority areas. The summaries below highlight the key findings and recommendations for each priority area, and the specific chapters that follow present the complete findings and describe the recommendations in more detail.

Making the education system more responsive to labour market needs

A responsive education system allows graduates to develop a set of skills aligned with labour market needs in the short and long term. This can be beneficial for individuals and the economy as a whole in three ways. First, if the education system is responsive to short-term labour market needs, recent graduates face stronger employability prospects (OECD, 2015[19]). Second, in ensuring that the skills of graduates are consistent with labour market demand, a responsive education system can reduce skills imbalances, i.e. skills shortages and mismatches. Third, the education system can better prepare graduates for

megatrends by equipping them with strong foundational skills so that they can upskill and reskill throughout their lives (OECD, 2019[8]).

VET schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) have an important role to play in a responsive education system. The evidence gathered suggests that graduates of the vocational education system (VET) in Poland have struggled to find employment, despite significant shortages among occupations that require VET graduates. Graduates of the HE system in Poland have been more successful, but they are frequently working in occupations that do not require a tertiary degree, and they do not always possess job-relevant skills. VET schools and HEIs have been only partially successful at equipping graduates with strong foundational skills. Recent reforms aim to improve the responsiveness of the VET and HE systems, and should be closely monitored.

Opportunity 1: Expanding career counselling services in education institutions

Effective career counselling is a crucial element of a responsive education system as it helps students to make study and employment choices aligned with labour market needs (OECD, 2015[19]). To improve the responsiveness of VET and HE systems in Poland, it is crucial to provide effective counselling across all schools and HEIs. Establishing career counselling services in education institutions has remained a challenge in Poland across all levels of education. A new regulation in 2018 introduced improvements in primary and secondary schools, but it will need to be complemented and supported by additional measures. HEIs are autonomous in conducting career guidance services, but the government can influence provision through funding and regulatory requirements.

Opportunity 2: Strengthening incentives for education institutions to align their offer with labour market needs

As well as students being able to make informed study and employment choices, education institutions also need to supply programmes that align with labour market needs, both in terms of mix (the number of places offered) and quality (the content of offerings). This often depends on incentives offered by the central government, for example funding arrangements and regulation (OECD, 2017[20]). Poland has recently introduced reforms to improve incentives for VET schools and HEIs to align their education offer to labour market needs. These reforms will need to be carefully monitored and supported. Going forward, requiring VET schools to participate in a comprehensive graduate tracking exercise could further help ensure alignment between the educational offering and labour market demand.

Opportunity 3: Improving incentives and support for effective teaching

Education institutions need to deliver effective teaching so that students can acquire a mix of technical and transversal skills that allow them to succeed in the short and long term (OECD, 2015[19]). This is especially important in the Polish context, given that both VET and tertiary educated graduates do not always show strong foundational skills. Poland has struggled to offer strong incentives and support for effective teaching, both in VET and tertiary education. A new core curriculum for VET has been launched and will need to be carefully supported and evaluated. In tertiary education, it is uncertain whether the recent reforms in funding will increase incentives for effective teaching. The reforms will need to be monitored and accompanied by more systematic efforts for the professional development of lecturers.

Opportunity 4: Strengthening collaboration between education institutions and employers

Improving the labour market relevance of education requires effective interaction between the education system and employers (OECD, 2015[19]). In VET, employers frequently co-operate both at the national level and the subnational level to suggest adjustments to the curriculum and to feed in other relevant information (OECD, 2019[8]). In HE, employers should collaborate with universities to ensure that the content of curricula is labour market relevant (OECD, 2017[20]). Employers should also collaborate with education institutions to provide work-based learning (WBL) (OECD, 2019[8]). In Poland, collaboration

between education institutions and employers has not been widespread. Recent reforms to strengthen co-operation on the curriculum in VET and to involve employers more actively in decision making in public HEIs will need to be adequately supported. Involving SMEs in training and expanding the recently introduced dual studies in HEIs will be important to strengthen WBL.

Overview of recommendations

Opportunity 1: Expanding career counselling services in education institutions	
Complementing career counselling reforms in schools	• Ensure that counsellors have sufficient time and motivation to deliver a wide range of services. • Ensure that the lifelong guidance system fulfils the needs of school counsellors in terms of access to training, information, and co-operation mechanisms (Chapter 5).
Strengthening career counselling in tertiary education	• Provide targeted funding and introduce clear standards for the provision of career guidance services in universities. • Ensure that the lifelong guidance system fulfils the needs of counsellors in HEIs in terms of access to training, information, and co-operation mechanisms (Chapter 5).
Opportunity 2: Strengthening incentives for education institutions to align their offer with labour market needs	
Supporting and monitoring recent reforms in initial VET funding	• Strengthen the involvement of local stakeholders in providing useful information for the development of the initial VET funding formula. • Develop a graduate tracking system for VET schools through a linked administrative dataset and/or a national graduate survey.
Monitoring the impact of recent HE funding reforms on employability	• Develop a set of indicators to monitor whether the current changes in the HE funding formula provide sufficient incentives to improve employability.
Opportunity 3: Improving incentives and support for effective teaching	
Improving incentives and support for VET teachers	• Develop a recruitment and retention strategy that builds on a broad mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence and extensive consultations with stakeholders.
Supporting the implementation of the new curriculum in initial VET	• Implement a structured programme of teacher training on the new curriculum.
Strengthening support and incentives for effective teaching in HEIs	• Establish a forum responsible for providing guidance and disseminating best practices about the professional development of academic teachers.
Opportunity 4: Strengthening collaboration between education institutions and employers	
Improving subnational co-operation between VET schools and employers	• Strengthen the involvement of local stakeholders in developing the VET offering by expanding existing or establishing new subnational councils.
Supporting and monitoring governance reforms in academic HEIs	• Develop and adopt a clear set of guidelines for the functioning of university councils in public academic HEIs.
Strengthening work-based learning in initial VET	• Provide financial support and technical assistance to SMEs in order to increase work-based learning opportunities.
Expanding dual studies in HEIs	• Provide support for far-reaching co-operation between public professional HEIs and employers.

Fostering greater participation in adult learning of all forms

Adults' ongoing, life-wide learning in workplaces, educational institutions, communities and homes is becoming increasingly important for Poland's development. The megatrends of automation, digitalisation and integration into global value chains are transforming and increasing the skills that individuals need to effectively participate in work and society. While Poland has successfully raised adult levels of formal educational attainment, still many adults have low levels of skills.

Despite the growing importance for Poland of developing adults' skills, participation in adult learning of all forms is relatively low. Adults with low educational attainment, those in rural areas and those working in micro- and small-sized enterprises are particularly disengaged from learning. The majority of adults in Poland report that they do not want to participate (more) in formal and/or non-formal adult education or

training. Although the benefits of adult learning in Poland are relatively high, most adults report having no need for further learning.

Opportunity 1: Raising awareness of adult learning benefits and opportunities

The motivation of adults and employers to engage in learning is strongly linked to the benefits they perceive. Adults can have both intrinsic motives to engage in learning (e.g. learning for its own sake or socialising) and extrinsic motives (e.g. economic benefits, obliged by law or employer, professional, personal). Employers may be motivated by the need to address skills shortages, retain talent, improve productivity and profitability, or meet legislative requirements. Adult learning has relatively large, measurable benefits for Polish individuals and enterprises. However, a large number of adults and employers in Poland are not convinced that they should engage in adult learning, and similarly, many Polish enterprises see no need to offer training. Various policies can be effective in raising the motivation of adults and enterprises to engage in learning, including strategies, campaigns and online portals, as well as targeted guidance and outreach activities.

Opportunity 2: Making learning more flexible and accessible for adults

In Poland, as in other OECD countries, many individuals and employers with the motivation to engage in adult learning face time-related barriers. For individuals, responsibilities for children and/or elderly family members on top of their working schedules may leave them with little time for education and training. For enterprises, staff workloads and the time needed to co-ordinate education and training may leave little time for participation. Poland can reduce time-related barriers to adult education and training in various ways. For individuals, embedding learning into workplaces and making programmes more flexible in terms of delivery (part-time, online) and design (modular, credit-based courses) can reduce time-related barriers. Recognising adults' prior learning can shorten the duration of learning programmes for adults who already possess relevant skills, thereby reducing the time it takes to attain a qualification.

Opportunity 3: Better sharing and targeting financing to increase participation in adult learning

Individuals and employers face various incentives to invest in adult education and training, but market failures and equity concerns also imply an important role for government financing. Targeted public funding is likely to be necessary for disadvantaged groups (such as adults with low incomes), certain types of businesses (such as smaller enterprises) and certain types of training (such as for general skills). Government, employer and individual expenditure on adult learning is relatively low in Poland and could be better co-ordinated and shared. Data on adult learning expenditure by different sectors is limited and spending appears to be fragmented. Public funding of adult learning in Poland is not tied to the performance or outcomes of providers or programmes, and is largely directed to institutions, rather than to individuals or enterprises. Both the accessibility and impact of public funds could be improved.

Overview of recommendations

Opportunity 1: Raising awareness of adult learning benefits and opportunities	
Raising general awareness of adult learning	• Raise general awareness of adult learning benefits and opportunities through improved promotion of the Integrated Skills Strategy (ZSU), campaigns and online portals.
Raising awareness through targeted measures	• Raise awareness through improved targeted guidance and outreach services.
Opportunity 2: Making learning more flexible and accessible for adults	
Expanding adult learning in Polish workplaces	• Collaborate with social partners to expand adult learning, including basic skills programmes, in Polish workplaces.
Increasing the flexibility of adult education and training	• Monitor and support the supply of flexible education programmes for adults.
Improving recognition of prior learning for adults	• Simplify, harmonise and expand recognition of prior learning practices across the education and training system.
Opportunity 3: Better sharing and targeting financing to increase participation in adult learning	
Better sharing the costs of adult learning	• Improve data on individual, enterprise and government expenditure on adult learning. • Better co-ordinate adult learning expenditure, for example through a skills funding pact between governments, employers and individuals. • Increase take up of the National Training Fund (KFS) by raising awareness, simplifying procedures and increasing the total budget of the KFS using public funds.
Better targeting public adult learning expenditure	• Increase the impact of public supply-side funding by partially linking it to the performance of programmes and providers. • Increase demand for adult learning by targeting a higher share of public funding directly to disengaged individuals and enterprises.

Strengthening the use of skills in Polish workplaces

Recently there has been a growing awareness that how well employers use skills in the workplace may be just as important as the skills their workers possess. To make the most of the initial investment in skills development, and to limit the depreciation and obsolescence of unused skills, countries should strive to use the skills of their population as intensively as possible in the economy, workplaces and society (Guest, 2006[21]). Putting skills to better use in the workplace is important for workers, employers and the broader economy, with benefits for both the economy and society (OECD, 2016[9]). Moreover, analysis of the use of skills in workplaces helps to better understand which skills need to be developed, thereby providing relevant input for training and education providers. In the context of megatrends, there is an even stronger need to improve the effective use of skills in the workplaces to ensure the long-term sustainability of Poland's economy.

The skills of the working population are not optimally used in workplaces, which indicates a waste of initial investment in skills. For instance, while average literacy scores in Poland are comparable with the OECD average, the use of reading skills is far below the OECD average (OECD, 2016[9]). Comparable results can be found for the use of ICT, writing, and problem-solving skills; for the use of numeracy skills the performance is slightly better. Furthermore, Polish firms are adopting HPWP at a lower rate than their counterparts in most other countries: about 23% of jobs adopted these practices, compared with 26% on average across the OECD.

Opportunity 1: Raising awareness of the relevance of effective skills use and related HPWP

Poland could raise awareness of the relevance of effective skills use in workplaces and HPWP. Despite a number of programmes and strategies that promote practices related to skills use, there is still significant room to expand these activities and active support measures for enterprises. Poland could better utilise national, regional and sectoral strategies to raise awareness of skills use and HPWP, for example by establishing priorities for using people's skills effectively in workplaces. Poland also could do more to raise

awareness by disseminating good practices of HPWP, for example through targeted campaigns or centralised online information.

Opportunity 2: Supporting enterprises and organisations to adopt HPWP

To improve skills use in workplaces the government should actively support firms, especially SMEs, to adopt HPWP. Evidence suggests that approaches leveraging employer networks and sectoral collaboration are cost-efficient and potentially more effective at catalysing HPWP than centralised approaches. The Polish agencies and organisations involved in enterprise support currently do not always have sufficient capacity to support or promote such a decentralised approach. There are several barriers to the use of these support measures. Existing support measures for HPWP are sometimes administratively complex to access, coordination between various support measures could be improved, and support for firms could be more tailored to their specific needs. By becoming a leader in skills use and HPWP, the public sector could also help promote the adoption of HPWP in other Polish workplaces.

Opportunity 3: Equipping management staff with the right skills to implement HPWP

For the successful adoption of HPWP in organisations, it is crucial to have management "on board" and equipped with the right skills. The stakeholders engaged in this Skills Strategy project frequently identified the limited capacity and knowledge of managers as a barrier to the implementation of HPWP in Poland. The awareness of various management training programmes could be strengthened and there is potential to make training opportunities better targeted and more personalised to improve their quality, relevance and accessibility. Poland's initial and continuing education systems could be more effective at developing students' managerial and entrepreneurial skills, to underpin skills use and HPWP in the Polish workplaces of the future.

Opportunity 4: Engaging employees effectively to implement HPWP

Various studies show that employee engagement is one of the main contributors to skill use and productivity. Strengthening worker participation in firm decisions on the modernisation of work organisation and management practices could increase skills use in workplaces (OECD/ILO, 2017[22]). Currently in Poland, employees are often not highly engaged in decision making in their workplaces, and enterprises may not view workers' skills an integral part of a business's competitive advantage. Employee representative structures, such as works councils in state-owned (*Rady pracownicza*) and private enterprises (*Rada pracowników*) could play a greater role in strengthening employee representation and supporting the expansion of HPWP.

Overview of recommendations

Opportunity 1: Raising awareness of the relevance of effective skills use and related HPWP	
Including the topic of skills use in workplaces and the adoption of HPWP in national, regional and sectoral strategies	• Put skills use and HPWP on the policy agenda by including them more explicitly and more prominently in strategies with targeted, measurable actions.
Disseminating knowledge and good practices related to HPWP through targeted campaigns and centralised online information	• Use targeted online campaigns on skills use and workplace practices and publicly recognise successful enterprises and organisations. • Introduce a centralised portal or website on innovative workplace practices that raise skills use.

Opportunity 2: Supporting enterprises and organisations to adopt HPWP	
Supporting firms, especially SMEs, in the adoption of HPWP	• Enhance and expand support measures for firms by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP), sectoral skills councils and other organisations through the funding of organisational innovation and access to expert consultation and coaching. • Ensure accessibility of support measures by reducing administrative complexity and through the creation of a centralised portal.
Leveraging employer networks and supporting collaboration at the sector level to promote the adoption of HPWP	• Raise the involvement of employers from micro-enterprises and SMEs in collaborative initiatives at the national, local and sectoral level to catalyse change in workplaces. • Improve the effectiveness and increase the impact of existing networks and collaborative initiatives.
Ensuring a leading role for the public sector in the effective use of skills and the adoption of HPWP	• Raise the use of skills and the adoption of HPWP in the public sector by promoting a culture of innovation and knowledge.
Opportunity 3: Equipping management staff with the right skills to implement HPWP	
Supporting the development of managerial skills by strengthening learning opportunities	• Improve managerial skills by raising awareness of their relevance and by expanding existing management training programmes. • Improve the quality, relevance and accessibility of training through targeted and personalised training for management staff at all levels.
Building a strong foundation for managerial and entrepreneurial skills by teaching them in initial education	• Expand and strengthen current programmes that aim to develop managerial and entrepreneurial skills in the education system.
Opportunity 4: Engaging employees effectively to implement HPWP	
Enhancing employee engagement in Polish firms by involving them in company decision making and improving overall job quality	• Promote employers investing in their employees for the long term by moving towards "high road strategies" where employee skills are considered an integral part of a business's competitive advantage.
Strengthening employee representative structures in Polish firms	• Expand and strengthen role of current employee representative structures, most notably the works councils in both state-owned (*Rady pracownicza*) and private enterprises (*Rada pracowników*).

Strengthening the governance of the skills system in Poland

Effective governance arrangements are essential to support Poland's performance in developing and using people's skills, and for achieving the goals of the Integrated Skills Strategy (*Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności*, ZSU). The success of policies to develop and use people's skills typically depends on the responses and actions of a wide range of actors, including government, learners, educators, workers, employers and trade unions. Promoting co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration across the whole of government can lead to more effective and efficient skills policies. Government engagement with stakeholders on skills policy is also important to help policy makers tap into on-the-ground expertise and foster support for policy reform and implementation. Building integrated information systems harnesses the potential of data and information to help policy makers design and implement better skills policies.

Opportunity 1: Strengthening co-operation on skills policy at the national level

Several mechanisms are in place for inter-ministerial co-ordination and stakeholder engagement on skills policy at the national level. However, government and stakeholder representatives (participants) consulted during this project stated that Poland lacks a tradition of collaboration between ministries. As a result, civil servants working on skills policies often lack a clear picture of programmes and actions taken in other ministries, which threatens the coherence and efficiency of skills policy. The government's performance in engaging stakeholders appears relatively low overall, and does not consistently motivate or facilitate stakeholder acceptance of policies. However, there are recent examples of wide-ranging stakeholder engagement on specific skills policies and reforms, such as the Integrated Qualification System Law. Making stakeholder engagement more systematic and impactful will help build trust in the skills system and underpin better skills policies.

Opportunity 2: Strengthening vertical and subnational co-operation on skills policy

Various mechanisms are in place for vertical co-ordination between ministries and subnational authorities, and for co-operation at the subnational level on skills policy. Vertical co-ordination between ministries and subnational authorities is limited, and the relationship between these authorities is sometimes strained. The competencies of centrally appointed and locally elected officials have been a growing point of contention. Furthermore, subnational governments regard the implementation of some central government policies, especially the introduction of the two-tier school system, as shifting unfunded/underfunded mandates to them. Consensus-oriented co-ordination mechanisms like territorial contracts are not utilised specifically for skills policies. Poland's performance in co-operation at the subnational level is limited overall, but with some very promising examples in particular regions. County (*powiat*) representatives involved in this project contrasted improvements in policy co-ordination at the regional level to disjointed and incoherent policies and strategies at the municipal and county levels. For example, some neighbouring counties offer VET qualifications for the same occupations, even when one school could meet demand in both counties. However, some regions have highly developed co-operation mechanisms, such as the lifelong learning partnership in Krakow.

Opportunity 3: Integrating and using skills information effectively

Responsibilities for gathering, disseminating and using information on skills and learning in Poland are fragmented and sometimes undefined, with several ministries, agencies, institutions and social partners currently involved. Although Poland has several systems for collecting and disseminating skills and learning data, participants in this project stated that existing collections are not comprehensive, well-integrated, disseminated in a user-friendly way, or used effectively for evidence-based policy. There are no administrative data collections on non-formal adult education, and expenditure data for adult education are limited and fragmented. With the exception of the Polish Graduate Tracking System (*Ogólnopolski system monitorowania Ekonomicznych Losów Absolwentów szkół wyższych*, ELA), there is little information on the learning outcomes of education and training. The public agencies with responsibility for skills and learning information increasingly release it online, but this information is often not tailored to the needs of different user groups. Poland has high potential for evidence-based skills policy making, but needs to develop a culture of evaluation.

Overview of recommendations

Opportunity 1: Strengthening co-operation on skills policy at the national level	
Strengthening skills strategies and oversight of the skills system	• Clearly define targets, responsibilities, resources and accountability for implementing the Integrated Skills Strategy (ZSU). • Make a whole-of-government and cross-sectoral body responsible for overseeing implementation of the Integrated Skills Strategy. • Review and monitor the effectiveness of existing oversight bodies for skills policy, and improve them over time.
Strengthening other mechanisms for co-ordination at the national level	• Raise the profile of "skills" and Poland's Integrated Skills Strategy in the centre of government. • Assess and build the capacity of ministries and stakeholders to co-ordinate and engage effectively on skills policies.
Opportunity 2: Strengthening vertical and subnational co-operation on skills policy	
Strengthening mechanisms for vertical co-ordination	• Monitor the coherence of subnational policies with the Integrated Skills Strategy to inform the government's co-ordination and outreach efforts. • Raise awareness of skills, the Integrated Skills Strategy and the Integrated Qualification System (ZSK) at the subnational level. • Trial territorial contracts to improve vertical co-ordination and coherence between national and subnational skills policies.

Strengthening mechanisms for subnational co-operation	• Identify and raise awareness of successful examples of subnational co-operation on skills policy. • Support increased use of territorial contracts, inter-municipal unions and agreements and shared service centres for skills policies. • Strengthen the role of subnational authorities and bodies in co-ordinating skills policy. • Add requirements and incentives for subnational co-operation to the central budget funding and European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) allocated to skills policy.
Ensuring subnational actors have the capacity for co-ordinated and effective skills policy	• Assess and monitor the capacity of subnational authorities and stakeholders for co-ordinated and effective skills policy. • Build the capacity of staff within subnational authorities and stakeholder groups for co-ordinated and effective skills policy. • Ensure municipal (gmina), county (powiat) and regional (voivodeship or województwo) governments have sufficient financial resources for co-ordinated and effective skills policy.
Opportunity 3: Integrating and using skills information effectively	
Improving and integrating skills information	• Improve data on adult learning by expanding administrative collections, improving questionnaire design and linking datasets. • Develop a national skills assessment and anticipation (SAA) system that integrates and improves upon existing SAA exercises. • Improve the co-ordination and integration of information by appointing a national cross-sectoral committee to oversee skills and learning information.
Disseminating and using skills information effectively	• Assess, monitor and tailor skills information to the needs of key user groups. • Implement a system of lifelong guidance in Poland to ensure that students and adults have access to high-quality career and learning advice. • Develop a common, robust framework for evaluating the outcomes of skills programmes. • Provide training and guidance to civil servants on policy evaluation to strengthen evidence-based skills policy making.

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Annex 1.A. OECD Skills Strategy Dashboard, Poland

This annex addresses the OECD Skills Strategy Dashboard for Poland. The objective of this Dashboard is to present an overview of the performance of skills systems in OECD countries. It is the starting point for analysis in the diagnostic phase of national skills strategy projects and allows the OECD and the National Project Team to identify the priority skills policy themes to be covered in greater detail in the report. Presenting the relative position of countries on key skills outcomes, the Dashboard provides a general overview of the Polish skills system's strengths and weaknesses. This annex describes the characteristics, presents the indicators and describes the underlying methods for calculating indicators.

Characteristics

The Dashboard is the result of internal consultation and analysis of core indicators used in OECD Skills Strategy projects. It presents a simple, intuitive overview of the outcomes of skills systems that is easy to interpret, and gives a quick impression of a country's skills performance across the dimensions of the OECD skills strategy ("developing relevant skills" and "putting skills to effective use"). The Dashboard applies a broad definition of skills by presenting foundational skills, problem-solving skills and broadness of skill sets, and considers both economic and social outcomes. A total of 38 key outcome indicators were selected and grouped into 18 aggregated indicators.

Indicator selection

The selection of indicators followed a process whereby a longlist of the most commonly used indicators in OECD Skills Strategy reports was gradually reduced to a shortlist of core indicators. This process built on the principle that the indicators describe the core outcomes of the different dimensions of the skills system. In addition, these indicators express outcomes in terms of level, trend, distribution and equity. The indicators need to be comparatively easy to interpret and based on OECD sources, with data as recent as possible.

Method for the calculation of aggregate indicators

To develop aggregate indicators that represent the relative position of countries on key outcomes of the skills system, a number of calculations were made on the collected data. To describe the relative position across countries, a score for each indicator was calculated ranging from 0 to 10, with 0 for the weakest performance and 10 for the strongest performance. This resulted in an indicator that allows comparisons between different types of indicators (e.g. averaging performance of literacy scores and educational attainment rates). The resulting scores were normalised in such a way that better performance results in a higher score. Subsequently, an unweighted average of the indicators was calculated for each of the aggregates, and these scores were then ranked. The final ranking was separated into five groups of equal size, ranging from top 20% performer to bottom 20% performer. Aggregate indicators are only presented in the Dashboard when more than half of the underlying indicators have data available.

Annex Table 1.A.1. Dimensions, aggregates and underlying indicators

Dimension and aggregates	Indicator	Source
Developing relevant skills		
How skilled are youth?	Reading (PISA[1]), mean score, 2015	OECD (2016), PISA 2015. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-8-en
	Mathematics (PISA[1]), mean score, 2015	OECD (2016), PISA 2015. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-9-en
	Science (PISA[1]), mean score, 2015	OECD (2016), PISA 2015. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-6-en
Are skills of youth improving?	PISA[1] average three year trend (reading, mathematics, science) [2]	OECD (2016), PISA 2015. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en.
Are skills of youth being developed inclusively?	PISA[1] economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) parity index, science performance, 2015	OECD (2016), PISA 2015. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-10-en.
How many young adults attain tertiary education?	Tertiary education attainment rate, 25-34 year-olds, 2017[3]	OECD (2018), Population with tertiary education (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/0b8f90e9-en
How skilled are young tertiary educated adults?	Literacy (PIAAC[4]), mean score, tertiary educated 25-34 year-olds, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
	Numeracy (PIAAC[4]), mean score, tertiary educated 25-34 year-olds, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
	Problem solving (PIAAC[4]), % level 2/3, tertiary educated 25-34 year-olds, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
How inclusive is tertiary education?	Share tertiary educated with both parents less than tertiary, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
How strong are foundational skills of adults?	Literacy (PIAAC[4]), mean score, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
	Numeracy (PIAAC[4]), mean score, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
	Problem solving (PIAAC[4]), % level 2/3, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
Do adults have a broad set of skills?	Percentage of adults with a broad set of skills (PIAAC[4]) (level 3-5 in literacy and numeracy and level two-third in problem solving), 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
Is there a strong culture of adult education?	Formal and/or non-formal adult education participation rate (PIAAC[4]), last 12 months, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
	Willing to participate in adult education (PIAAC[4]), percentage of population, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
	Low barriers to participation (PIAAC[4]), low % adults wanting to participate but who didn't, 2012/'15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
Are skills of adults being developed inclusively?	High-low educated parents, adjusted literacy difference (PIAAC[4]), 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
Putting skills to effective use		
How well are skills activated in the labour market?	Employment rate, working age, 2018	OECD (2018), Employment rate (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/1de68a9b-en
	Labour force participation rate, 2018	OECD (2018), Labour force participation rate (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/8a801325-en
	Low share of youth not in employment education or training (NEET), 15-29 year-olds, 2017	OECD (2018), Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) (indicator) https://doi.org/10.1787/72d1033a-en
How inclusive is the labour market?	Gender (male-female), employment rate difference, 2018	OECD (2018), Employment rate (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/1de68a9b-en
	High-low educated, employment rate difference, 2017	OECD (2018), Employment by education level (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/26f676c7-en
How well aligned are skills with the labour market?	Labour market imbalances indicator[3], 2015/2017 (Skills for Jobs)	OECD (2018), Skills for Jobs Database. https://www.oecdskillsforjobsdatabase.org/index.php#FR/ .

Dimension and aggregates	Indicator	Source
Do workplaces make intensive use of skills?	Reading at work (PIAAC[4]), score, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
	Numeracy at work (PIAAC[4]), score, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
	Information and communication technology (ICT) at work (PIAAC[4]), score, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
Do people use their skills intensively in daily life?	Reading at home (PIAAC[4]), score, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
	Numeracy at home (PIAAC[4]), score, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
	ICT at home (PIAAC[4]), score, 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
Is the use of skills at work improving?	Reading skills use at work adjusted difference young (16-25) – prime age (26-54) (PIAAC[4]), 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
	Numeracy skills use at work adjusted difference young (16-25) – prime age (26-54) (PIAAC[4]), 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
	ICT skills use at work adjusted difference young (16-25) – prime age (26-54) (PIAAC[4]), 2012/15	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
Are firms designing workplaces to use skills effectively?	High-performance workplace practices, percentage of jobs, 2012/15 (PIAAC[4])	OECD (2019), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)*, OECD, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.
Is skills use stimulated by innovation?	Researchers, per 1 000 employed, 2016/2017	OECD (2018), Researchers (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/20ddfb0f-en
	Triadic patent families, performance index (STI[5] Outlook), 2016	OECD (2018), Triadic patent families (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/6a8d10f4-en
	International co-authorship, performance index (STI[5] Outlook), 2016	OECD (2018), OECD Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook 2018, https://doi.org/10.1787/sti_in_outlook-2018-en.
	International co-invention, performance index (STI[5] Outlook), 2016	OECD (2018), OECD Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook 2018, https://doi.org/10.1787/sti_in_outlook-2018-en.

1. Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).
2. The average trend is reported for the longest available period since PISA 2006 for science, PISA 2009 for reading, and PISA 2003 for mathematics.
3. Labour market imbalances, average standard deviation across occupations in wages, employment, hours worked, unemployment and under-qualifications, 2015/2017.
4. Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC).
5. Science, Technology and Innovation (STI).

Note: Indicators without a specific source between brackets are OECD indicators from OECD Data (https://data.oecd.org/home/).

Annex 1.B. Strategies and recent and new reforms in Poland related to skills and education

Annex Table 1.B.1. Strategies for skills and education

Strategy	Responsible body	Purpose	Skills content
Integrated Skills Strategy (2019)	Ministry of National Education	Developing skills relevant to needs of learners, society and economy, as well as better co-ordinating actors involved in skills formation.	Diagnose strengths and weaknesses in skills formation, and identify challenges and priorities of future interventions in the development, activation and use of skills.
Strategy for Responsible Development (2017)	Council of Ministers	Creating conditions for increasing the income of the Polish citizens, along with increasing cohesion in the social, economic, environmental and territorial dimension.	Development of human and social capital. Increase activation and currently unused potential of human resources.
Lifelong Learning Perspective (2013)	Inter-ministerial Team for Lifelong Learning, co-ordinated by the Ministry of National Education	Well-prepared lifelong learners, who develop and expand their skills accordingly to challenges they may face in professional, social and personal life.	Development of skills, Integrated Qualification System, adult learning (including in workplace and as part of structured social engagement).
Social Capital Development Strategy (2013)*	Ministry of Culture and National Heritage	Strengthening social capital in the socio-economic development of Poland.	Education and competence development. Using lifelong learning mechanisms in shaping civic attitudes and promoting pro-social activity (e.g. voluntary work).
The Strategy for Innovation and Efficiency of the Economy (2013)*	Ministry of Investment and Economic Development	Highly competitive (innovative and efficient) economy based on knowledge and co-operation.	Development of human capital in the economy through lifelong learning, with the emphasis on key competences (e.g. creativity, entrepreneurship, problem solving, ICT and language skills).
Human Capital Development Strategy (not yet adopted)*	Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy	Developing human capital and social cohesion in Poland by extracting people's potential so that they can participate fully in social, political and economic life over the life course.	Building human capital in various places and forms (in the educational system – from early childhood to adult learning and in natural conditions at all ages, as well as at work and through social involvement). Assessment and validation of outcomes of such learning in the National Qualification Framework (NQF). Improving quality and efficiency of formal, informal and non-formal education and training for people of different age groups.

Note: * means an extensive update of these strategies is pending as of mid-2019.

Annex Table 1.B.2. Recent and new reforms related to skills and education

Name	Description
Higher education reform (2018)	The comprehensive amendments to the Law on Higher Education and Science present systematic changes in the functioning of universities, their financing, and scientific careers. The new law, also referred to as the Constitution for Science, replaced the four existing laws: the Law on Higher Education, the Law on the Principles of Financing Science, the Law on Academic Degrees and Title, and the Law on Student Loans.
Vocational education and training reform (2018)	The amendment to the Law on School Education Act aims to improve the prestige of initial vocational education in Poland, mostly through improving the quality and effectiveness of VET in schools and other institutions. Implementation of the changes began in the school year 2019/2020. Key elements include: 1) changes in the allocation of funds, including increased subventions based on labour market demand and training costs for specific occupations; 2) obligatory sectoral placements for vocational teachers; and 3) better co-operation between VET schools and employers.
Structural reform of school education (2017)	Educational reform in Poland has been implemented since the beginning of 2017 and ends in the school year 2022/23. Its main goal is to offer students a solid background of general education required for further personal development and the needs of the contemporary labour market. The key elements of the reform are: 1) change in the school structure that involves the introduction of a long, eight year primary school, four year general and five year technical upper secondary school, and the replacement of basic vocational school by two-stage sectoral school; 2) change in school entry age from 6 to 7 years and an obligation for 6-year-olds to attend one year of pre-primary education; 3) provision of textbooks free of charge; 4) promotion of co-operation with the business sector.
National Educational Network (OSE) (2017)	The Law on National Educational Network establishes the OSE – free, high-speed Internet access for schools and educational institutions. The aim is to provide fast and safe Internet to every school in Poland, which will guarantee equal access to knowledge, the development of new forms of learning and teaching, and the acquisition of digital competences by students and teachers.
Integrated Qualifications System (*Zintegrowany System Kwalifikacji*, ZSK) (2015)	The Act on the Integrated Qualifications System came into force in 2016. The main instruments of the ZSK include: 1) the 8-level Polish Qualifications Framework that provides information on knowledge, skills and social competences; and 2) the Integrated Qualifications Register and procedures for including a qualification in the system, accrediting an awarding body, and providing external quality assurance. The ZSK aims to: 1) ensure quality of the qualifications awarded; 2) ensure recognition of learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal education; 3) enable the accumulation and recognition of achievements/credits; 4) provide information on qualifications available in Poland; and 5) enable the comparison of qualifications acquired in Poland and other EU countries.
Programming of the 2014 to 2020 financial perspective – Partnership Agreement (2014)	The Partnership Agreement (PA) is a document that defines the strategy of interventions of European funds within the framework of three EU policies: the cohesion policy, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in Poland between 2014 and 2020. The Partnership Agreement indicates that increasing the level of skills and competences, enhancing access to different forms of lifelong learning, and increasing the labour market relevance of education and training systems remain the most important challenges for Poland. In the 2017 revision, it was agreed that a comprehensive skills strategy needed to be developed.
National Training Fund (KFS) (2014)	The amendment to the Act on Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions established the National Training Fund (KFS). The KFS is a separate part of the Labour Fund that is financed by, among others, employer contributions. It is intended for co-financing the education and training of employees and employers that is undertaken on the initiative of, or with the consent of, the employer. The purpose of creating the KFS is to prevent loss of employment by people because of the lack of adequate competences required in a dynamically changing economy. Increasing investment in human resources should improve both the position of companies and employees themselves in a competitive labour market.
Amendment of Law on establishment of Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) (2017)	The amendment of the law on the establishment of PARP from 2017 introduced several articles that enabled the creation of two institutions: sectoral skills councils (SSCs) and the Program Board for Competences. According to the law, SSCs are established on the basis of PARP's tenders, and their members are appointed by a minister responsible for the economy (currently the Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology). The Program Board is a body that consists of representatives of various groups of stakeholders (e.g. employer organisations, labour unions, universities and public administration), and is responsible for making various recommendations in the area of education and labour market. It is intended to co-ordinate the works of SSCs.

Notes

[1] The OECD Skills Strategy applies a broad definition of skills, including: 1) foundational skills, including literacy, numeracy and digital literacy; 2) transversal cognitive and meta-cognitive skills such as critical thinking, complex problem solving, creative thinking, learning to learn and self-regulation; 3) social and emotional skills such as conscientiousness, responsibility, empathy, self-efficacy and collaboration; and 4) professional, technical and specialised knowledge and skills needed to meet the demands of specific occupations.

2 Making the education system more responsive to labour market needs

Making the education system more responsive to labour market needs can help support the employability of recent graduates, minimise skills imbalances and improve the resilience of the workforce to future changes in labour market demand. This chapter explores four opportunities to improve the responsiveness of the education system: 1) expanding career counselling services in education institutions; 2) strengthening incentives for education institutions to align their offer with labour market needs; 3) improving incentives and support for effective teaching; and 4) strengthening collaboration between education institutions and employers.

The importance of a responsive education system for Poland

A responsive education system allows students to develop a set of skills aligned with labour market needs in the short and long term (OECD, 2015[1]). This can be beneficial for individuals and the economy as a whole in three different ways, discussed below.

If the education system is responsive to short-term labour market needs, recent graduates face stronger employability prospects (OECD, 2015[1]). This leads to higher employment rates when students leave education to join the labour force, and can improve well-being later on in life by helping to avoid "scarring effects". This is a situation where individuals exposed to unemployment after finishing education face a higher risk of unemployment and lower well-being as they grow older (Arulampalam, Gregg and Gregory, 2001[2]; Strandh et al., 2014[3])

In ensuring that graduates have skills consistent with labour market demand, a responsive education system can also reduce skills imbalances, i.e. skills shortages and skills mismatches (OECD, 2019[4]). Skills mismatches and shortages can be costly for firms and the economy as a whole through their effects on increased labour costs, lower labour productivity growth, slower adoption of new technologies and lost production associated with vacancies remaining unfilled (OECD, 2016[5]). Skills mismatches are also costly for individuals and can lead to lower job satisfaction and lower earnings (OECD, 2016[5]). For instance, over-qualified workers in Poland earn on average 25% less than workers who are well matched (Montt, 2015[6]).

When the education system is responsive to future labour market needs, graduates are more resilient to future changes in the patterns of job creation. Future dynamics in job creation are inherently uncertain, but they are likely to be driven by megatrends such as globalisation, digitalisation, population ageing, migration and climate change. Education systems can prepare graduates for these megatrends by equipping them with strong foundational skills so that they can upskill and reskill throughout their lives (OECD, 2019[4]).

Assessing the responsiveness of the education system is not a straightforward exercise. The approach taken in this chapter is discussed in Box 2.1.

Improving the responsiveness of the education system has been a key challenge for Poland in recent years, as has been highlighted in several national policy planning documents: the Strategy for Responsible Development *(*Strategia na rzecz Odpowiedzialnego Rozwoju), the Integrated Skills Strategy (Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności*)* and the Human Capital Development Strategy (Strategia rozwoju kapitalu ludzkiego). Better alignment of education and training to labour market needs has been recognised as one of the biggest challenges in the European Commission's Partnership Agreement with Poland on the strategic use of EU Structural and Investment Funds between 2014 and 2020 (MIiR, 2014[7]).

Improving the responsiveness of the education system requires the co-ordinated effort of several actors in the skills system. International evidence suggests that career guidance, effective funding arrangements for education institutions, high teaching quality and collaboration with employers are crucial to improve the responsiveness of the education system (OECD, 2015[1]; OECD, 2019[4]). All stages of the education system have a role to play. Compulsory education should allow students to develop strong foundational skills and positive attitudes towards learning, and post-compulsory education should further consolidate these skills and equip students with job-specific skills (OECD, 2019[4]).

Box 2.1. Assessing the responsiveness of the education system

The responsiveness of the education system is assessed through three sets of key indicators, which reflect the three dimensions where the responsiveness of the education system should have an impact: 1) employability of recent graduates; 2) extent of skills imbalances; and 3) skills levels of recent graduates. The table below provides an overview of their advantages and limitations (Table 2.1). The next section of this report that covers performance also relies on additional evidence from Polish or international sources to complement the insights derived from these key indicators, in order to overcome their potential limitations.

Table 2.1. Key indicators to assess the responsiveness of the education system

Dimension	Indicator	Advantages and limitations
Employability of recent graduates	Employment rates of recent vocational education and training (VET) and tertiary graduates from Eurostat. Recent graduates are defined as 15-34 years-olds who are not in education and training, but who have completed their highest education in the last three years.	The employability of recent graduates should be more sensitive than that of older workers to the performance of the education system. The employability will be influenced by several other factors, including the economic structure and the overall profile of supply/demand for different occupations.
Skills imbalances	Overall skills needs indicator (shortages and surpluses) from the OECD Skills for Jobs database. Shortages indicate that the demand for certain skills exceed the supply, and surpluses indicate that the supply exceeds the demand.	The presence of shortages and surpluses can provide an indication of whether the education system is providing graduates with skills consistent with labour market demand. However, several other factors (technological change, labour market policies, emigration) will affect labour market demand.
	Qualification mismatch from the OECD Skills for Jobs database for younger workers (aged 25 to 34). Qualification mismatch arises when workers have an educational attainment that is higher (over qualification) or lower (under qualification) than that required by their job.	As above, the focus on younger workers (who have graduated more recently) allows to better capture the role of the education system. OECD Skills for Jobs provides the most recent cross-country data on mismatch, but the field-of-study indicator is unavailable for Poland. Skills mismatch is affected by other factors, including whether employers use skills effectively (see Chapter 4).
Skills levels of recent graduates	Performance in literacy, numeracy and problem solving for recent VET and higher education (HE) graduates from the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) 2012/2015. Recent graduates are defined 25-34 years-old individuals who have VET (ISCED level 3 and level 4) and HE (ISCED levels 6-8) qualifications as their highest education.	As above, the education system should have a greater impact on the skills of recent graduates. The focus is on individuals aged 25-34 as in the Skills Strategy Dashboard presented in Chapter 1. PIAAC 2012/2015 provides the latest available cross-country data on foundational skills. However, more recent data would be valuable to better capture the latest changes within the education system.

Note: ISCED is the International Standard Classification of Education.
Source: OECD (2015[1]), *OECD Skills Outlook 2015: Youth, Skills and Employability*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264234178-en; OECD (2017[8]), *Getting Skills Right: Skills for Jobs Indicators*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264277878-en; OECD (2019[4]), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to Shape a Better Future*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en.

As outlined in Chapter 1, Poland has been relatively successful in equipping students with strong foundational skills in compulsory education. This chapter focuses on the responsiveness of initial vocational education and training (VET) institutions (International Standard Classification of Education [ISCED] levels 3-4) and higher education institutions (HEI) (ISCED levels 6-8). It provides an overview of current arrangements and performance indicators for the responsiveness of the education system in Poland and presents four opportunities for improving the responsiveness of the education system, which are consistent with international best practice:

1. Expanding career counselling services in education institutions.
2. Strengthening incentives for education institutions to align their offer with labour market needs.
3. Improving incentives and support for effective teaching.
4. Strengthening collaboration between education institutions and employers.

Overview and performance of the responsiveness of initial VET and tertiary education systems in Poland

Overview of the current arrangements in initial VET and tertiary education

In Poland, the Ministry of National Education (MEN) is responsible for initial VET policy, whereas the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW) and the Polish Accreditation Agency (PKA) are in charge of higher education policy. VET schools offer ISCED level 3 and level 4 qualifications, which were changed by extensive reforms in 2016. Higher education is delivered mostly in public institutions, and a recent change in the funding arrangements will create a distinction between academic (akademickie) and professional (zawodowe) institutions.

Arrangements in initial VET

In Poland, the MEN is responsible for initial VET policy. It develops the core curricula, the general rules on career counselling, the principles for the assessments of learning outcomes in external examinations (through an independent commission, the Central Examination Board [Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna]), and the principles of work-based learning arrangements. School governing authorities (*organy prowadzące*) are responsible for managing VET schools. The counties (*powiats)* are the school governing authority for the majority of VET schools. The remaining schools are managed by the central government (e.g. vocational and fine arts schools) and by non-public bodies, such as religious and social associations (Chłoń-Domińczak, Holzer-Żelażewska and Maliszewska, 2019[9]). The main responsibilities of the VET schools are deciding the local level provision, adjusting the curricula to reflect local needs, organising work-based learning activities and organising career counselling services for students.

To better decide local level provision and adjust the curricula, VET schools are required to collaborate with regional labour market councils *(Wojewódzkie Rady Rynku Pracy)* and local labour market councils (*Powiatowe Rady Rynku Pracy*). The councils provide feedback on proposals for new programmes to be taught in VET schools. The councils are also responsible for providing information to the counties on different aspects of labour market and skills policies (see Chapter 5).

In principle, VET schools can organise learning activities for the development of job-relevant technical skills in three forms: school-based workshops with teachers, practical training within centres for vocational education and work-based learning (including in apprenticeships) with employers. Traditionally, most VET schools in Poland have relied on school-based workshops, whereas work-based learning has remained less common.

The main source of funding for initial VET in Poland is the general subsidy from the State budget (Chłoń-Domińczak, Holzer-Żelażewska and Maliszewska, 2019[9]). The MEN distributes the subsidy through a formula, which specifies the amount of per capita funding on the basis of the type of programme (e.g. the subject) and the characteristics of the students (e.g. whether the student has a disability). Following some recent changes in 2019 (discussed in Opportunity 2), the formula also reflects the demand for specific occupations and training costs for specific jobs.

Poland introduced substantial reforms of primary and secondary education in 2016, which are currently being implemented. Before the introduction of these reforms, there were three main types of school providing VET:

- Basic vocational schools (zasadnicze szkoły zawodowe): led to ISCED level 3 vocational qualifications only, for students aged 16 to 19 years.
- Secondary technical schools (technika): led to ISCED level 3 vocational qualifications and to the maturity certificate (matura) providing access to higher education for students aged 16 to 20 years.
- Post-secondary non-tertiary schools (szkoły policealne): provided ISCED level 4 programmes of 2.5 years and were mainly intended for students aged 19 to 20/21 years who had finished general upper secondary school.

The new reforms transform secondary technical schools into five-year technical secondary schools for students aged 15 to 20 years, and basic vocational schools into three-year stage I sectoral vocational school (szkoła branżowa I stopnia) for students aged 15 to 18 years. Students attending a three-year stage I sectoral vocational school can then join the labour market or attend a newly designed two-year stage II sectoral vocational school (szkoła branżowa II stopnia), offering the opportunity to take the *matura* exam.

In addition to these reforms, Poland has introduced a new regulation (discussed in Opportunity 1) to improve the provision and quality of career guidance offered by VET schools, and has introduced changes to the Law on Higher Education and Science (discussed in Opportunity 4) to strengthen collaboration between VET schools and employers.

In Poland, approximately 45% of secondary graduates attend VET schools (Table 2.2). This proportion has remained roughly stable over the past five years, but has significantly decreased since the 1990s, reflecting an increase in the tertiary attainment rate. Most secondary VET students attend secondary technical schools, as opposed to basic vocational schools.

Table 2.2. VET graduates and school types in the 2016/17 school year

School type	ISCED level	Number of graduates	Number of schools
Secondary technical schools	ISCED level 3	114 967	1 890
Basic vocational schools	ISCED level 3	49 563	1 504
General secondary schools (Licea ogólnokształcące)	ISCED level 3	202 068	3 717
Post-secondary non-tertiary schools	ISCED level 4	70 409	2 167

Source: GUS (2018[10]), *Education in the 2017/18 school year,* https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/edukacja/edukacja/oswiata-i-wychowanie-w-roku-szkolnym-20172018,1,13.html.

Arrangements in tertiary education

Consistent with other OECD countries, HEIs in Poland have a significant degree of autonomy in introducing new study programmes, setting caps on the number of students and establishing internal quality assurance mechanisms. HEIs also establish and provide financing for academic career counselling centres.

The MNiSW and the PKA are responsible for funding and regulating HEIs. The MNiSW distributes funding through a formula, as well as additional competitive financing. The MNiSW also establishes minimum salaries for different academic positions, and in some cases decides on the introduction of new study programmes in HEIs.

The PKA provides an evaluation of the quality of teaching at all Polish HEIs through a programme assessment and a complex assessment. The programme assessment focuses on the quality of teaching in a given field of study, whereas the complex assessment concerns all the fields of study taught at the HEI and focuses on the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms.

There are more than 400 registered HEIs in Poland, which produced almost 400 000 graduates in the 2016/17 academic year (Table 2.3). There has been a rapid increase in the number of students enrolling

in tertiary education over the last 20 years. The tertiary attainment rate has increased from being one of the lowest in the OECD, to being above the OECD average (OECD, 2018[11]).

Approximately two-thirds of HEIs are private institutions, but public institutions account for more than three-quarters of graduates (Table 2.3). Full-time university education in public HEIs is generally free of charge, while fee-based programmes in both public and private HEIs are usually part-time (OECD, 2016[12]). Public universities are generally the most selective and have a better reputation than their private counterparts (OECD, 2016[12]). Among public universities, there are 35 public higher vocational schools (*Państwowe Wyższe Szkoły Zawodowe,* PWSZ) that have a special role in regional development as they are supposed to align their educational offering with regional needs. In particular, PWSZs are supposed to offer professionally oriented programmes in co-operation with local employers (European Commission, 2017[13]).

The requirements for collaboration with employers vary across different types of institutions. Legislation mandates that private HEIs have an advisory body called convention with at least 50% of members representing the socio-economic environment. It can include representatives from local government, businesses and employer organisations. Among public HEIs, public higher vocational schools have an obligation to include regional representation in their governance (European Commission, 2017[13]).

Until recently, the other public HEIs have only had advisory boards including representatives from local government and businesses (European Commission, 2017[13]). However, the new Law on Higher Education and Science introduces the university council as the main governing body, which is required to have at least 50% of its members from outside the given institution.

Table 2.3. HE graduates and institution type in 2016/17 school year

Institution type	Number of graduates	Number of institutions
Public (Szkoły publiczne)	297 274	145
Private (Szkoły niepubliczne)	90 257	267

Source: GUS (2018[14]), *Higher Education Institutions and their finances in 2017,* https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/education/education/higher-education-institutions-and-their-finances-in-2017,2,11.html.

Recent changes in the funding formula (discussed in Opportunities 2 and 3) draw a distinction between academic *(akademickie)* and professional *(zawodowe)* HEIs. Academic HEIs conduct scientific research and award PhD degrees, as well as first, second and long-cycle programmes. Professional HEIs only provide first, second and long-cycle programmes.

Poland's performance

The key indicators and the complementary evidence suggest that the initial VET system has struggled in securing strong employability for recent graduates, despite shortages among occupations that require VET graduates. The higher education system has been more successful in securing employability, but recent graduates frequently work in occupations that do not require a tertiary degree and do not always possess job-relevant skills. The key indicators also show that VET and HEIs have only been partially successful at equipping graduates with strong foundational skills.

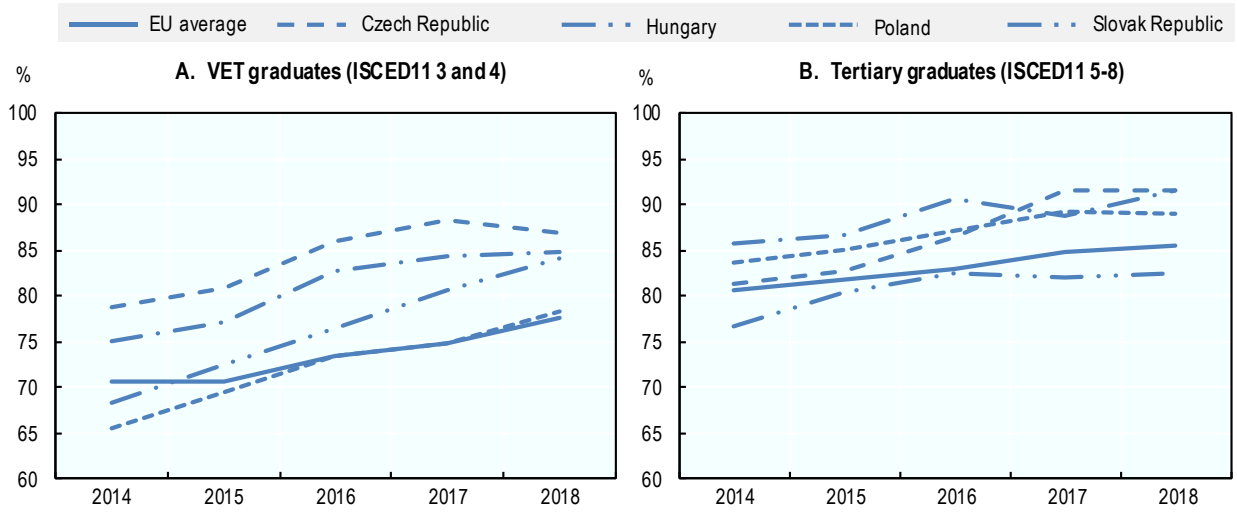
Employability of recent graduates

The employment prospects of Polish graduates differ by level of education (Figure 2.1). The employment rate for recent VET graduates has increased in line with the economic cycle to converge around the EU average. However, it has remained consistently below that of countries with a comparable economic

structure and labour demand, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and the Slovak Republic. Conversely, tertiary graduates in Poland have experienced a relatively high employment rate, which is ahead of the EU average, Hungary and the Slovak Republic.

A comprehensive review of the effectiveness of the VET system by the Polish Supreme Audit Office (NIK) linked the low employability of VET graduates to a lack of responsiveness in the system, caused by inefficient funding and organisational structures (Supreme Audit Office, 2016[15]).

Figure 2.1. Employment rate for recent graduates (one to three years since completion of highest education)



Note: Graduates aged 15-34, who are not in education and training, but who have completed their highest education in the last three years.
Source: Eurostat (2019), Transition from education to work database: Employment rates of young people not in education and training, https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=edat_lfse_24&lang=en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036215

Skills imbalances

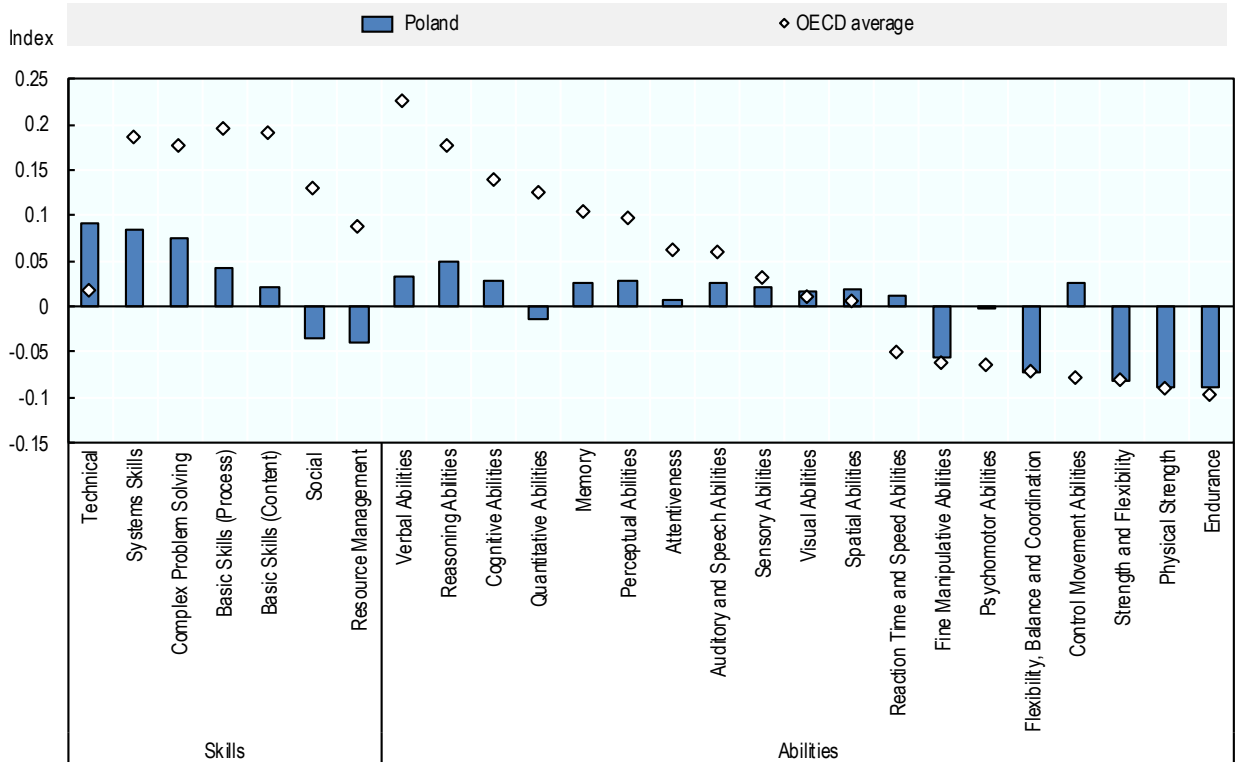
The key indicators on skills imbalances confirm that the VET system has not been entirely responsive to labour market needs and show that the tertiary system has not always enabled graduates to find a good match in the labour market.

According to the OECD Skills for Jobs database, Poland is experiencing stronger shortages of technical skills than the OECD average (Figure 2.2).

The responsiveness of the education system likely plays a substantial role in driving shortages of technical skills. According to the High Priority Mismatch Occupations review by Cedefop, the shortages for information and communication technology (ICT) specialists and science and engineering professionals are driven by the fact that tertiary education is not always tailored to labour market needs, whereas shortages for skilled manual workers are explained by the lack of a well-developed system of professional training (Skills Panorama, 2016[16]).

However, other factors are crucial to explain the observed shortages, most importantly the activation framework for older workers, and emigration (Skills Panorama, 2016[16]; European Commission, 2019[17]).

Figure 2.2. Shortages and surpluses across skills and abilities



Note: Positive values indicate shortages, while negative values indicate surpluses. An indicator value of +1 represents the maximum value across countries in the database, while a value of -1 represents the lowest value.
Source: OECD (2017[8]), *OECD Skills for Jobs* (database), www.oecdskillsforjobsdatabase.org.

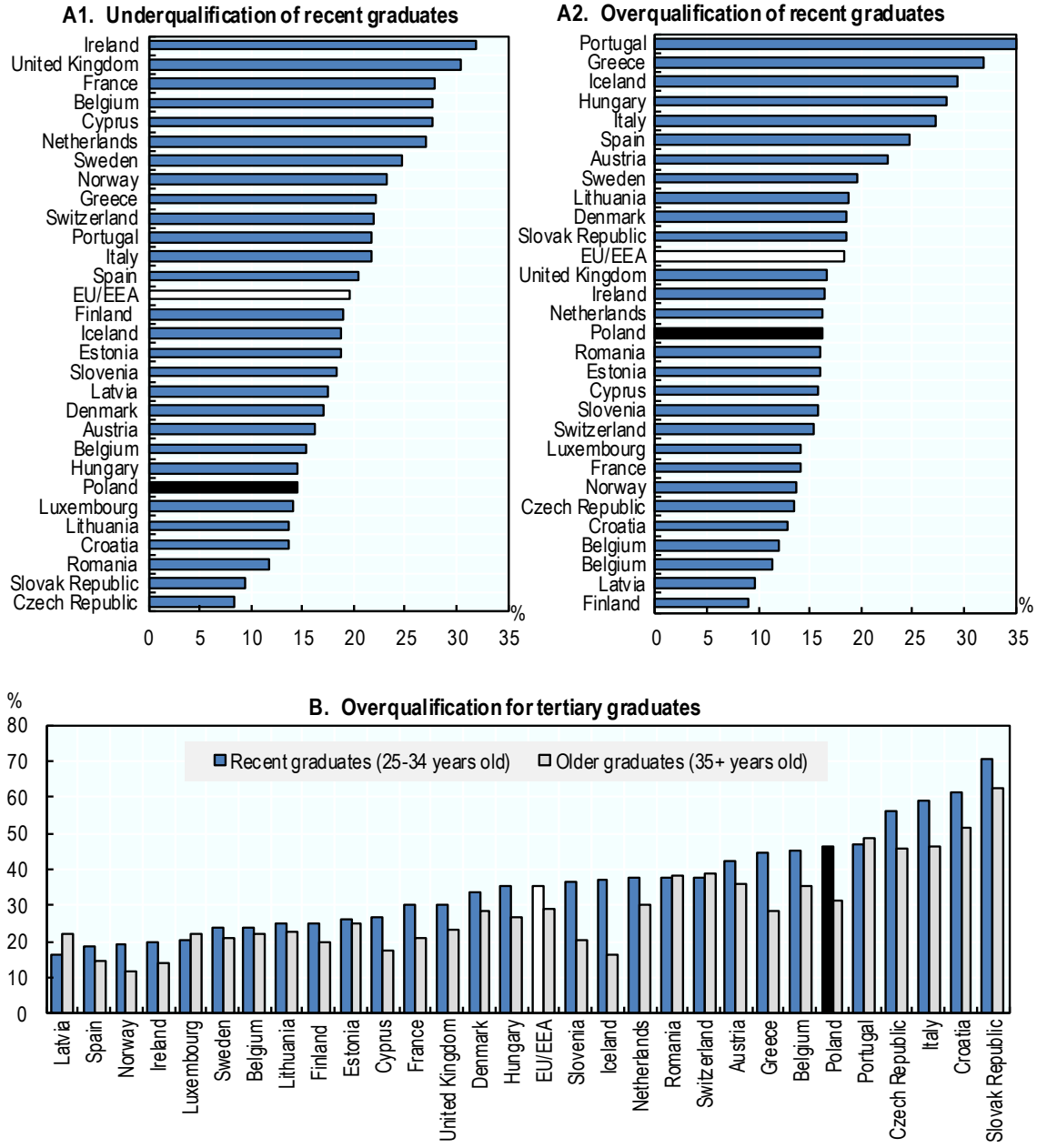
StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036234

According to OECD Skills for Jobs data, many recent tertiary graduates in Poland are over-qualified for their jobs (Figure 2.3). Overall, Poland does not display relatively high levels of under qualification and over qualification among younger workers. However, recent tertiary graduates in Poland are more likely to be over-qualified than recent tertiary graduates in other EU or European Economic Area (EEA) countries. Across most countries, recent graduates are more likely to be over-qualified than older graduates, reflecting the fact that it might take some time for them to find a good match in the job market (OECD, 2017[8]). However, Poland displays the fourth largest differential in over qualification between recent and older graduates across EU/EEA countries, and the largest differential among Visegrad countries.

These results could be driven by the responsiveness of the tertiary education system. Recent graduates might have problems finding a good match in the labour market as they do not have the full set of skills that employers require. However, over qualification in Poland could also arise because employers are unable to use the skills of their workforce effectively (see Chapter 4).

In addition to the qualification mismatch indicator, the OECD Skills for Jobs database has a field-of-study mismatch indicator; however, data are not available for Poland. The results of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) suggest that Poland has levels of field-of study mismatch slightly above the OECD average and other Visegrad countries (OECD, 2016[18]). The responsiveness of the education system could contribute to field-of-study mismatch. VET and HE institutions might not be fully successful at equipping graduates with relevant subject-specific knowledge.

Figure 2.3. Qualification mismatch among younger workers and tertiary graduates



Note: The sample was restricted to EU/EEA countries for this particular indicator, due to data availability. Younger workers include individuals aged 25-34.
Source: OECD calculations based on OECD (2017[8]), *OECD Skills for Jobs* (database), www.oecdskillsforjobsdatabase.org.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036253

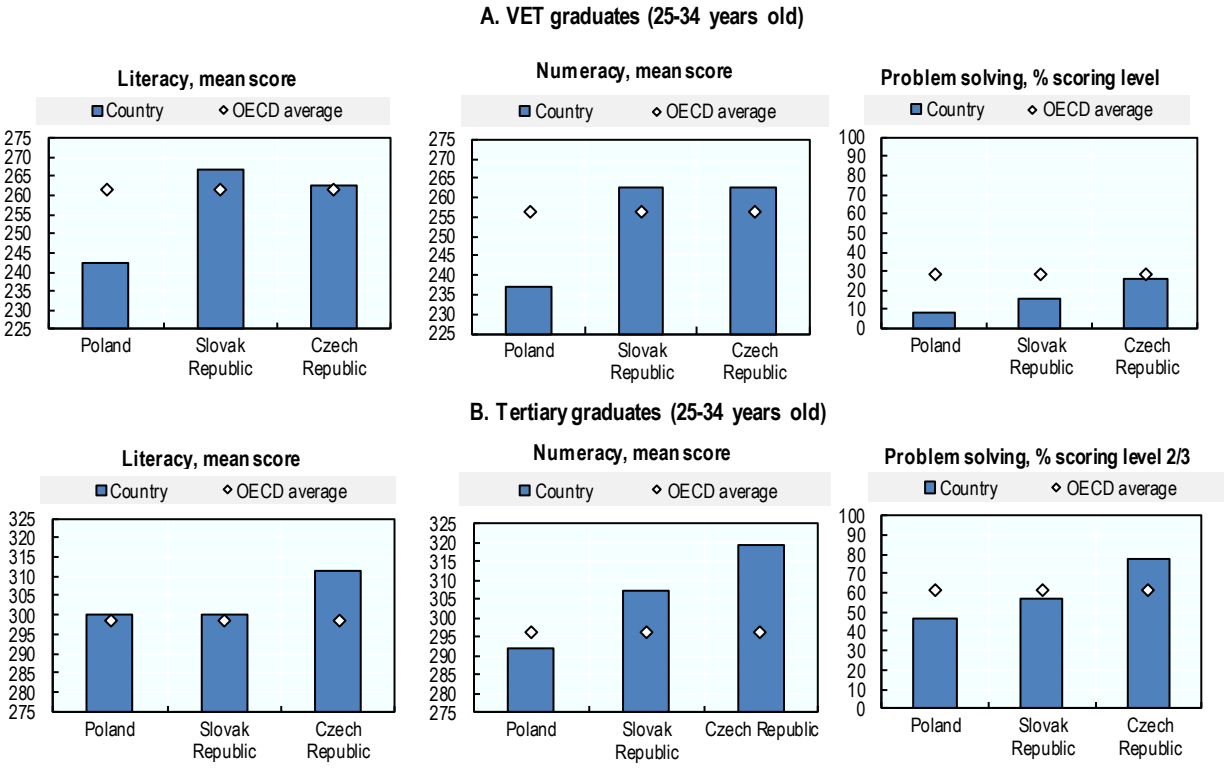
The skill levels of recent graduates

The education system in Poland has struggled to provide VET and HE graduates with strong foundational skills. Recent VET graduates display substantially lower skill levels in literacy, numeracy and problem solving, whereas recent HE graduates underperform in numeracy and problem solving (Figure 2.4).

The average scores of VET graduates in numeracy and literacy are 20 points lower than average scores across OECD countries, and 30 points lower than average scores in other Visegrad countries. These differences are substantial. Across OECD countries, leaving the education system without an upper secondary (ISCED level 3) qualification is associated with a difference of 40 points in literacy scores (OECD, 2016[18]). VET graduates are also less likely to achieve high scores (above level 2/3) in problem solving.

Recent Polish tertiary graduates perform relatively strongly in literacy. However, their average scores in numeracy are slightly lower than average across OECD countries, and roughly 20 points lower than average in other Visegrad countries. Similarly, 47% of Polish graduates achieve high scores in problem solving, compared to 61% of graduates across OECD countries, 57% of graduates in the Slovak Republic and 78% of graduates in the Czech Republic. The relative underperformance of tertiary graduates could also contribute to explaining over qualification: tertiary graduates might be over-qualified when they join the labour market as they fall short of the level of skills required for high-skilled occupations.

Figure 2.4. Skills levels of recent VET and HE graduates



Note: Data for Hungary are not available as Hungary did not participate in the survey.
Source: OECD calculations based on OECD (2018[19]), *Survey of Adults Skills (PIAAC) (2012, 2015)* (database), www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036272

Opportunities to make initial VET and tertiary education systems more responsive

This chapter describes four opportunities to make the education system more responsive to labour market needs. The opportunities are consistent with international best practice, but were selected based on input from literature, discussions with the National Project Team, and feedback from government and stakeholder representatives consulted during the two workshops and focus groups (i.e. participants in workshops and focus groups). As a result, the four opportunities are considered to be the most relevant for the specific Polish context:

1. Expanding career counselling services in education institutions.
2. Strengthening incentives for education institutions to align their offer with labour market needs.
3. Improving incentives and support for effective teaching.
4. Strengthening collaboration between education institutions and employers.

Opportunity 1: Expanding career counselling services in education institutions

Effective career counselling is a crucial element of a responsive education system as it helps students to make study and employment choices that are aligned with labour market needs (OECD, 2015[1]). To improve the responsiveness of the initial VET and HE systems in Poland, it is crucial to provide effective counselling across all schools (including primary schools and general secondary schools) and in HEIs.

Effective counselling within VET schools and HEIs can help students find a good match in the labour market, which increases the employability of VET graduates and lowers mismatch among tertiary graduates. Effective counselling in primary schools could support students and their families in better understanding the VET offering (especially in the context of recent reforms), while effective counselling in general secondary schools can help with the choice of university.

Establishing career counselling services in education institutions remains a challenge across all levels of education. A new regulation in 2018 introduced improvements in primary and secondary schools, but it will need to be complemented and supported by additional measures. HEIs are autonomous in conducting career guidance services, but the MNiSW can influence provision through funding and regulatory requirements.

This opportunity only focuses on career counselling services in education institutions, but there is a strong connection with the establishment of an integrated system of lifelong guidance (see Chapter 5), which should foster co-operation among the different career guidance services available in Poland.

Complementing career counselling reforms in schools

In Poland, the use of career guidance services by students in schools has generally been low. Survey data suggest that only one in five students seeks career advice, most frequently from parents and other family members (MEN, 2011[20]). The low reliance on career advice mirrors inadequate supply and quality in the system of career guidance in schools.

In 2015, the Educational Research Institute *(*Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, IBE) surveyed over 1 000 Polish primary and secondary schools and found that only about 15% employ a full-time career counsellor. In 80% of cases the duties were performed by a person for whom counselling was not the main task and who had no specific training in career guidance. Frequently, career guidance counsellors worked at the same time as a pedagogue or teacher in the school (Podwójcic, 2015[21]). The range of services offered was also limited. Parents did not effectively engage in career counselling, especially in basic vocational institutions. Across all VET schools, co-operation with employers was weak. Only 17% of basic vocational and 15% of technical schools declared that employers or their associations supported the school in the area of career counselling (Podwójcic, 2015[21]).

Poland introduced a new regulation in 2018 to strengthen the provision and quality of vocational guidance and counselling in schools and pre-schools. In accordance with the new regulations, vocational guidance and counselling will be carried out in a systematic way across all levels of education, but the forms and programme content will vary depending on the education level.

In the final years of primary school (ISCED 2), in secondary schools (ISCED 3) and in post-secondary non-tertiary schools (ISCED 4) career guidance will be based on vocational guidance activities that aim to support students in selecting the next stage of their education and occupation. All schools need to develop their intra-school annual vocational guidance programmes that specify content, methods and forms of implementation, and ways to co-operate with stakeholders. Schools are also required to organise compulsory classes for students: ten hours minimum in each class in the final two years of primary school, and a minimum of ten hours throughout the entire teaching period in secondary schools. In order to ensure the quality of service provision, classes will be run by teacher-vocational counsellors who have pedagogical qualifications or qualifications in career guidance.

Poland is also implementing a project to prepare a team of advisors-consultants who will conduct training for those implementing vocational guidance and counselling in schools. Consultants will be prepared to conduct training in the field of vocational counselling, as well as implement frameworks for vocational counselling developed under the programme.

These reforms represent a step in the right direction. However, they will need to be complemented by additional measures to ensure that the supply and quality of career guidance improves going forward.

The reforms put a strong emphasis on career guidance classes at the end of primary school and in secondary schools. These are a crucial component of effective career guidance, but they should be accompanied by one-to-one guidance sessions as these enable the counsellor to better tailor advice to the specific needs of each student (OECD, 2010[22]). Career counsellors should also ensure that students have the opportunity to engage with employers, including bringing people into the school to talk about their work, school visits to workplaces, taster programmes and work shadowing (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[23]). Workplace exposure can help young people become better prepared to make education and training decisions as it allows them to think about the breadth of career choices and routes into different careers (Musset and Mytna Kurekova, 2018[23]).

The Centre for the Development of Talents in Gdansk offers a wide range of career guidance programmes that could be adopted by other regions in Poland to broaden their offering (Box 2.2).

Participants in workshops and focus groups stressed that career counsellors should engage with parents as well as students. International evidence confirms that involving parents is important as they are the most widely accessed source of advice and influence on career paths for young people (Batterham and Levesley, 2011[24]; Howieson and Semple, 2013[25]). The Austrian BiWi system could provide a useful example in this respect (Box 2.2).

During the workshop and focus groups, several participants also pointed out that it might be difficult for career counsellors in schools to have sufficient time and motivation to deliver this wide range of services. The role of career guidance counsellor will be taken up by existing teachers in schools, at least in the short term. However, these teachers will generally receive no additional compensation and might struggle in combining their teaching and career guidance duties.

Going forward, it will be important that career guidance counsellors in schools have access to training opportunities, relevant information (e.g. on labour market trends) and that they collaborate with other career guidance services. The creation of the integrated system of lifelong guidance (discussed in Chapter 5) will help in these respects.

Box 2.2. Relevant examples: Complementing career counselling reforms in schools

Offering a wide range of career guidance initiatives in Poland

The Centre for the Development of Talents (*Centrum Rozwoju Talentów*) is a Polish non-public institution offering a wide range of career guidance services. The centre offers workshops or seminars in the area of labour market transition, personal branding or stress management. Its offer is organised around three programmes: Career Academy (*Akademia Kariery*), which is addressed to schools; Youth Land of Talents (*Młodzieżowa Kraina Talentów*), which is mainly for VET schools; and the Centre of Personal Development (*Centrum Rozwoju Osobistego*), which is addressed to adults. The Career Academy provides workshops and individual consultations for students from secondary schools and the final years of primary school. The offer for the school year 2018/19 was based on topics such as "Discover your talents", "Labour market – future occupations" and "Choice of occupation step-by-step".

Source: Workshops, focus groups and meetings during the missions in Poland, Centrum Rozwoju Talentów (2019[26]), *About Us,* https://centrumtalentow.pl/.

Including parents in career guidance services in Austria

In the Austrian BiWi, career counsellors make a conscious effort to bring parents in as partners in their practice through dedicated activities. These include parents' evenings, during which career counsellors discuss their role in their children's career choice and provide them with an overview of possible learning pathways and the current situation of the labour market; and parent-teacher conferences that target both parents and teachers of young students with a view to presenting the comprehensive career guidance and information offering.

Source*:* Cedefop (2016[27]), "Labour market information and guidance", *Cedefop Research Paper*; No 55, https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5555_en.pdf.

Recommendations for complementing career counselling reforms in schools

- **Ensure that counsellors have sufficient time and motivation to deliver a wide range of services.** The school governing authorities should ensure that counsellors in schools have a fixed amount of time (e.g. one day a week) and well-defined compensation to fulfil their functions. Counsellors should offer other activities besides career guidance classes, including one-to-one sessions, activities with parents, sessions with employers (e.g. bringing people into the school to talk about their work and school visits to workplaces) and seminars offered by external career guidance centres (e.g. the Centre for the Development of Talents). The central government should support any school governing authorities that lack the funds or capacity to implement this recommendation.
- **Ensure that the lifelong guidance system fulfils the needs of school counsellors in terms of access to training, information, and co-operation mechanisms** (see Chapter 5). The MEN should actively participate in the creation of the integrated system of lifelong guidance, making sure that it enables counsellors in education institutions to undertake suitable training opportunities and to access relevant information (e.g. on labour market needs). The MEN should also ensure that the integrated system of lifelong guidance establishes adequate mechanisms for co-operation between counsellors in schools and external stakeholders, such as employer associations, chambers of commerce and trade unions.

Strengthening career counselling in tertiary education

The use of career guidance services has not been widespread among university students. According to the Human Capital Survey (*Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego*, BKL), 11% of students from non-public and 6% from public universities seek advice from academic career offices (Jelonek, Antosz and Balcerzak-Raczyńska, 2014[28]). Some participants in the workshops pointed out that students might not even be aware that such services exist. This is confirmed by a survey conducted by the Czestochowa University of Technology, which found that three-quarters of its graduates did not know that the university had a career guidance centre (Sroka, 2014[29]).

As with schools, the low usage by students corresponds to inadequate supply and quality. According to the MNiSW, in the academic year 2014/2015 one-quarter of Poland's 428 higher education institutions did not operate a careers office. Even in those that did, staff shortages were prevalent. Approximately 45% of career offices has only one full-time employee, while almost 10% has no permanent employees. In more than three-quarters of career offices, employees are delegated to tasks not related to the operation of career offices (Sroka, 2014[29]). Career offices have also struggled to offer high-quality services. Career counsellors are likely to be under-qualified and do not frequently participate in training and professional development. Employees of almost half of career offices did not participate in any form of training and professional development (Sroka, 2014[29]).

The low supply and quality are driven by inadequate funding. Most careers services depend on project funds, which are frequently provided by the EU, making it difficult to develop a sustainable, long-term strategy (European Commission, 2017[13]). Going forward, Poland could take inspiration from Denmark to structure the career guidance offering in universities (Box 2.3).

As with counselling services in schools, the creation of the integrated system of lifelong guidance (discussed in Chapter 5) will help ensure that counsellors in universities have access to training opportunities and relevant information (e.g. on labour market trends), and that they collaborate with other career guidance services.

Box 2.3. Relevant international example: Strengthening career guidance services

Career counselling in HEIs in Denmark

In Denmark, the University Act specifies that universities must offer students at bachelor's and master's level guidance about their current programme, including requirements for master's and PhD programmes (completion guidance), as well as subsequent employment opportunities (career guidance). However, each university is free to decide how and by whom this guidance is offered. Higher education institutions typically have their own career centres that offer a wide range of career counselling services. For example, Copenhagen Business School's career centre offers seminars, events, career fairs, networking, help with CV and cover letter writing, job interview preparation and career clarification.

Source: Eurydice (2019[30]), *Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education*, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/guidance-and-counselling-higher-education-18_en.

Recommendations for strengthening career counselling in tertiary education

- **Provide targeted funding and introduce clear standards for the provision of career guidance services in universities.** The MNiSW should consider providing some targeted funding (e.g. based on student-to-counsellor ratios) for the provision of career guidance services in universities. Poland's HEIs should identify or establish a co-ordinating body in charge of developing standards for career guidance (e.g. minimum levels of career counselling classes/seminars, student-to-counsellor ratios). HEIs should develop their career guidance services in accordance with these standards. The MNiSW should monitor the development of these standards and their impact on improving career guidance services. In the event that the standards or their implementation are insufficient, the MNiSW should consider adding career guidance criteria to the complex assessment conducted by the PKA.
- **Ensure that the lifelong guidance system fulfils the needs of counsellors in HEIs in terms of access to training, information, and co-operation mechanisms** (see Chapter 5). The co-ordinating body should actively participate in the creation of the integrated system of lifelong guidance, making sure that it enables counsellors in HEIs to undertake suitable training opportunities and to access relevant information (e.g. on labour market trends). The co-ordinating body should also ensure that the integrated system of lifelong guidance establishes adequate mechanisms for co-operation between counsellors in HEIs and external stakeholders, such as employer associations, chambers of commerce and trade unions.

Opportunity 2: Strengthening incentives for education institutions to align their offer with labour market needs

Students making study choices aligned with labour market needs is necessary, but insufficient to ensure a responsive education system. Education institutions also need to supply programmes that align with labour market needs, both in terms of mix (the number of places offered across different programmes) and quality (the content of these offerings). This often depends on incentives offered by the central government. Incentives could come in the form of regulation (e.g. setting conditions for the accreditation of university programmes or requiring institutions to collect and publish information) or funding arrangements (e.g.making funding conditional on performance metrics) (OECD, 2017[31]).

In the Polish context, better incentives to accommodate labour market needs could help improve the employability prospects of VET graduates and could help reduce skills imbalances for tertiary graduates by ensuring that they develop job-relevant skills.

Poland has recently introduced reforms to improve incentives for VET schools and HEIs to align their education offer to labour market needs. These reforms will need to be carefully monitored and supported. Going forward, requiring VET schools to participate in a comprehensive graduate tracking exercise could further help ensure alignment between the educational offering and labour market demand.

Supporting and monitoring recent reforms in initial VET funding

VET schools in Poland have not paid sufficient attention to labour market demand when making decisions about their educational offering.

The comprehensive review on the effectiveness of the VET system produced by the Polish Supreme Audit Office (NIK) concluded that the educational offering was mainly determined by the available equipment and human resources. The funding arrangements did not incentivise individual institutions to offer fields of study that were more costly or in higher demand in the labour market. This is because the financing algorithm provided similar per capita funding for different vocational subjects (Supreme Audit Office, 2016[15]).

Following recommendations by NIK, the MEN introduced changes to the funding algorithm for VET schools. Since 1 January 2019, the algorithm has reflected the demand for specific occupations in the region and training costs for specific jobs (European Commission, 2018[32]). To monitor the demand for different occupations, the MEN creates a shortlist of shortage occupations, consolidating different data from skills assessment and anticipation (SAA) tools (see Chapter 5). These shortage occupations receive more funding. As a result of these two adjustments, there are sizable differences in funding across fields of study. For example, for a graduate in mechatronics, school receive, all else being equal in the funding formula, approximately 80% more funding than graduates pursuing other fields of study. These reforms have introduced some positive changes in the funding system, but they will need to be adequately supported and monitored.

Some participants in workshops and focus groups highlighted that local stakeholders should be more involved in the development of the funding formula. This insight is confirmed by international evidence. Across the OECD, countries generally find it difficult to adapt centrally conducted SAA tools to local needs. For this reason, some countries involve local stakeholders in developing and discussing results from SAA tools and/or co-ordinating the local policy response (OECD, 2016[5]).

In principle, regional and local labour market councils should be responsible for gathering opinions from employers and trade unions on the regional and local labour market and skills developments (see Chapter 5). This information could be useful for strengthening the evidence base underlying the development of the funding formula. However, as discussed in Chapter 5, the councils frequently lack the capacity, strategic leadership and/or statutory authority to bring together local stakeholders (OECD, 2016[33]).

Poland could build on the Danish local training committees (Box 2.4) to improve the flow of information from local stakeholders to central government for the development of the funding formula, as well for other decisions on VET policy. The local training committees could also be a relevant example to improve co-operation between schools and social partners at the subnational level (see Opportunity 4).

Going forward, Poland could also benefit from introducing graduate tracking for VET graduates. The implementation of graduate tracking has been identified as a priority by the Council of the European Union (The Council of the European Union, 2017[34]). In Poland, information on the employability of graduates could allow the MEN to better calibrate the funding formula and it could support schools in better adapting the content of programmes to the needs of employers, complementing existing SAA tools (see Chapter 5).

To implement graduate tracking in VET, Poland could leverage the experience acquired in constructing the database of the Polish graduate tracking system (ELA) (Box 2.5). The ELA relies on linked administrative datasets to provide information on employment and earnings after graduation. Poland should also consider introducing graduate tracking surveys in VET schools, building on the initiative launched in the Wejherowski *powiat* (Box 2.4), where schools are now legally bound to conduct a graduate survey that covers information on employment and earnings after graduation, as well as more qualitative information on how well schools prepare graduates for the labour market.

Box 2.4. Relevant Polish examples: Supporting and monitoring recent reforms in initial VET funding

Improving the flow of information between the local and national level

In Denmark, local training committees serve as a link between local and national decision-making levels. They ensure that national level bodies have a good overview of local circumstances and that local policy is aligned with national objectives. Information gathered by these committees regarding local skills needs, and the corresponding training opportunities provided, is important data for national bodies in setting the overall direction of vocational education in Denmark. Each vocational college (providing school-based education and training) works with at least one local training committee. Each vocational college (providing school-based education and training) works with at least one local training committee. Local training include representatives from the vocational college (students, staff and management), local employers and employees. In addition to acting as a link between the local and national decision making levels, the committees play an important role in co-ordinating VET policy at the local level. Representation from local business enables the committees to co-ordinate workplace training: finding and approving relevant internships as well as assisting in resolving disputes between students and work placement providers. The committees also help determine what subjects should be taught and have a key role in shaping the course curriculum.

Source: Kuczera, M. and S. Jeon (2019[35]), *Vocational Education and Training in Sweden*, https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9fac5-en.

Graduate surveys: A local solution in Poland from Wejherowski *powiat*

A local law passed by the Wejherowski *powiat* in Poland introduced a uniform graduate survey in each secondary and post-secondary school. The procedure defines the questions within the survey (e.g. details answers about further education or employment and how well schools prepared them for it), the timeframe (i.e. graduates participate in research 12 months after graduation) and responsibilities for implementation (mainly the school headmaster). The results are published on the school website in an allocated section and are annexed a local-level report on the educational offering. The data are used to analyse and optimise the educational offer in the *powiat,* including deciding which occupations will be on offer and showing possible career paths within career guidance counselling.

Source: Workshops, focus groups and meetings during the missions in Poland.

Recommendations for supporting and monitoring recent reforms in initial VET funding

- **Strengthen the involvement of local stakeholders in providing useful information for the development of the initial VET funding formula**. In developing the funding formula, the MEN should complement centrally conducted SAA tools with high-quality information on local labour market circumstances (e.g. demand for specific occupations or skills) from local stakeholders and counties. The key bodies involved in gathering and reporting the information on local labour market circumstances could be the newly established subnational councils or the strengthened regional and local labour market offices (see Opportunity 4). The bodies could feed the information directly to the MEN or via the counties.
- **Develop a graduate tracking system for VET schools through a linked administrative dataset and/or a national graduate survey.** The MEN could develop a linked administrative dataset similar to the ELA and/or it could require VET schools to participate in the realisation of a graduate survey. For the linked administrative dataset, the MEN should link information on VET graduates from its own database to social security data. For the graduate survey, the MEN should establish

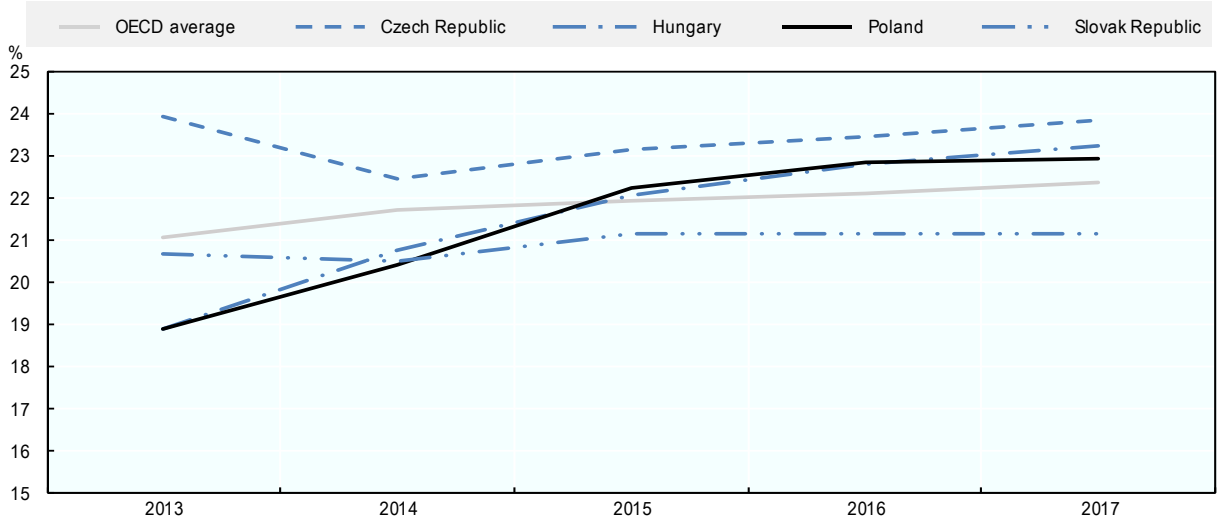
a nationwide template, whereas the survey could be conducted centrally or by the schools themselves (e.g. as in the Wejherowski *powiat)*.

Monitoring the impact of recent HE funding reforms on employability

Tertiary institutions have been able to accommodate higher demand for some fields of study, but they have not always paid attention to the employability of graduates.

Polish tertiary education institutions have recently been able to accommodate for increasing demand for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. These subjects help to fill occupations in high demand in the labour market, such as engineering and ICT technicians, as seen in the performance section of this chapter (Skills Panorama, 2016[16]). The proportion of STEM graduates has increased steadily, reaching values in line with the other Visegrad countries that have a similar economic structure (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5. Share of tertiary graduates in STEM subjects, Poland and selected countries, 2013-2017



Source: OECD calculations based on data from OECD (2019), *OECD Education at a Glance* (database): Graduates by field, http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EDU_GRAD_FIELD.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036291

However, according to an evaluation commissioned in 2014 by the National Centre for Research and Development (Narodowego Centrum Badań i Rozwoju, NCBIR), universities did not always place sufficient emphasis on the employability of graduates when designing study programmes. Only half of universities conducted labour market monitoring in industries and sectors relevant to the offered fields of study (Agrotec, 2014[36]). More generally, when developing their education offer, universities first took into account the background and interests of academic staff, as opposed to the interests of the candidates or the employment prospects of graduates (Agrotec, 2014[36]).

As a result, many Polish students do not feel that their studies prepare them well for the labour market. According to the Eurostudent survey, less than half of the students (44%) in Poland feel that their studies prepare them well for the national labour market. Lower figures can be found only in Lithuania and Romania (42% and 37%, respectively).

The situation has been particularly critical for graduates of public higher vocational schools (PWSZ), which have developed an offering that in most cases is not consistent with labour market needs. Most awarded

degrees are in social and medical sciences, with graduates in the former particularly facing relatively poor labour market outcomes (OECD, 2018[11]; European Commission, 2017[13]).

The recent reforms in funding and quality assurance have introduced changes that should improve incentives for monitoring graduate employability for professional HEIs. Before the reforms in the funding formula, both professional and academic HEIs received their core funding (*dotacja podstawowa*) on the basis of student enrolment and staff costs (80%), scientific activity (10%), and internationalisation (10%). Under the new regime, both professional and academic HEIs will continue to receive the majority of their core funding on the basis of student enrolment and staff costs (90% in the case of professional HEIs and 60% in the case of academic HEIs). Professional HEIs will now receive the remainder on the basis of the relative unemployment rate among their graduates (5%) and the external income they generate (5%). Academic HEIs will receive the rest of their funding on the basis of the quality of their scientific research (25%), their research and development (R&D) spending (10%), and internationalisation (5%).

The proportion of funding conditional on employability outcomes for professional HEIs is broadly in line with comparable institutions in other OECD countries. For example, polytechnics in Finland receive approximately 3% of funding based on graduate employment rates (De Boer et al., 2015[37]).

The new Law on Higher Education and Science also introduces a labour market dimension into the quality assurance process for professional HEIs. The MNiSW can refuse the approval of a new study programme if it does not meet socio-economic needs, given the results from SAA tools (see Chapter 5). These reforms will need to be carefully monitored, especially for academic HEIs.

In the case of academic HEIs, the new regime does not introduce additional incentives to ensure that graduates find a good match in the labour market. In principle, greater pressure from students (see Opportunity 1) or stronger links with employers through the newly introduced university councils (see Opportunity 4) could help in this respect by supporting graduates in developing job-relevant skills. However, introducing some changes in the funding formula might prove necessary in case the employability prospects of tertiary graduates does not continue to improve. In the case of professional HEIs, the introduction of the unemployment criterion could improve employability incentives, but going forward it could be complemented by a wider set of indicators, such as earnings and mismatch metrics.

The MNiSW can use information from the ELA database to monitor the impact of these reforms on the employability of graduates (Box 2.5). The ELA can provide high-quality data on the employment status and earnings of recent graduates. However, the MNiSW could also leverage more qualitative data sources, such as the BKL, which evaluates whether graduates possess skills that are aligned with labour market demand.

Other OECD countries have complemented information from graduate tracking databases (such as the ELA) with surveys of university graduates (Box 2.5). Graduate surveys can provide institution level qualitative data on the university experience (e.g. how useful the university experience was in preparing for the labour market and whether graduates feel they are mismatched) that is not available from graduate tracking databases. The results can be useful to monitor the performance of the HE sector in securing strong employability prospects for graduates. However, they should be interpreted cautiously as they are based on subjective perceptions of the university experience (Frawley and Harvey, 2015[38]).

Box 2.5. Relevant examples: Monitoring recent reforms in HE funding

Linked administrative data for graduate tracking: The ELA database and portal

In Poland, the ELA was developed by the Evaluation of Educational Quality Laboratory of the University of Warsaw (under the supervision of the MNiSW) to track the economic situation of graduates from higher education institutions. The system links administrative data from the social security system and data from the ministry's student database to provide information on employment status and earnings after graduation. The system generates anonymised aggregate reports for annual graduate cohorts according to HEI and type of studies. The findings from these reports are published on a portal (https://ela.nauka.gov.pl) that tailors the information to the needs of different users. Graduates can make use of the basic ELA service, which provides interactive infographics and rankings, whereas policy makers, researchers and HEIs can access the detailed results and specific reports on the ELA PRO service. The latest available version of the ELA (the fourth edition) has integrated information on pre-graduation professional activities into the system, as a result of new provisions in the Law on Higher Education and Science. This enables a comparison of remuneration and employment levels before, during and after university studies.

Source: Workshops, focus groups and meetings during the missions in Poland, ELA (2019[39]), *Infographics*, https://ela.nauka.gov.pl.

Graduate surveys: International examples

The United Kingdom has a long tradition of graduate surveys. Until 2017, institutions were required to gather data for the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey. In 2018, this was replaced by the Graduate Outcome Survey (GOS). The GOS is delivered directly by the Higher Education Statistics Agency 15 months after graduation, using contacts provided by individual institutions. It asks about work and education status, potential mismatch and whether the course programme was helpful towards employability. The EU has recently launched a pilot survey for a new new EU-wide initiative: the Eurograduate Survey. This European-wide graduate survey asks for graduate feedback one and five years after students graduate from both bachelor's and master's programmes. Graduates are sent the survey electronically and answer online. The questions cover topics such as how easy it was to find employment after graduation, the level of pay, the level of satisfaction with the course and whether the course helped develop relevant skills for the labour market. A consortium of partners help to run the survey, bringing together expertise from across the European Union.

Source: Frawley D. and V. Harvey (2015[38]), *Graduate Surveys: Review of international practice*, https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/Graduate-Surveys-Review-of-International-Practice.pdf; HESA (n.d.[40]), *The Survey*, www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/outcomes/survey; Eurograduate (n.d.[41]), *Eurograduate Homepage*, www.eurograduate.eu.

Recommendation for monitoring the impact of recent HE funding reforms on employability

- **Develop a set of indicators to monitor whether the current changes in the HE funding formula provide sufficient incentives to improve employability**. The MNiSW should develop a consolidated set of indicators from the ELA (e.g. earnings after graduation and/or an additional indicator on mismatch among current graduates), the BKL (e.g. skills acquisition) that will allow for the monitoring of different dimensions of employability, as well as other relevant data sources. The indicators should compare specific institutions whenever possible, or professional vs. academic HEIs. On the basis of the indicators, the MNiSW could decide to strengthen employability incentives for academic HEIs and/or introduce additional criteria in the funding formula for professional HEIs.

Opportunity 3: Improving incentives and support for effective teaching

The responsiveness of the education system does not only depend on choices made by students or on the offering by education institutions. Education institutions need to deliver effective teaching so that students can develop a mix of technical and transversal skills that allow them to succeed in the short and long term (OECD, 2015[1]). This is especially important in the Polish context, as both VET and tertiary educated graduates do not always show strong foundational skills (as discussed in the performance section of this report).

Given the structure of the Polish education system, the MEN can influence teaching quality in VET schools through teaching policies and the structure of the curriculum. HEIs are autonomous when it comes to setting pay and organising the professional development of academics, but the MNiSW can influence outcomes through funding and regulatory requirements.

Poland has struggled to offer strong incentives and support for effective teaching in both VET and tertiary education. In VET, it has launched a new core curriculum, which will need to be carefully supported and evaluated. In tertiary education, it is difficult to say whether the recent reforms in funding will increase incentives for teaching quality. The reforms will need to be monitored and accompanied by more systematic efforts in terms of the professional development of academics.

Improving incentives and support for VET teachers

The workshops and focus groups conducted as part of this project suggested that the whole of the teaching workforce in Poland is facing challenges in terms of motivation and professional development. These insights are validated by international and Polish evidence.

According to the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2013 survey, the key problems affecting Polish lower secondary school teachers include unsatisfactory income, low prestige of the profession, work overload and no job security. For instance, 18% of teachers reported that the teaching profession is valued by society, compared to a TALIS average of 31% (Hernik et al., 2015[42]). These problems likely have an impact on making the teaching profession attractive and keeping motivation high. The Human Capital Survey (BKL) also shows that fewer than 50% of teachers continuously develop their competences (Górniak, 2015[43]). The Teacher's Charter Law (*Karta Nauczyciela*) prescribes that every teacher is obliged to develop their skills in accordance with the needs of the school. However, several teachers do not perceive developing their competences as important to effectively perform their duties (Górniak, 2015[43]).

The VET teaching profession faces similar and potentially more serious challenges. There are generally three types of teacher in VET schools in Poland: teachers of general subjects (e.g. mathematics), teachers of theoretical vocational education and teachers of practical vocational education.

VET schools face significant problems in the recruitment of teachers: 69% of schools reported facing recruitment problems in a recent survey (Lis and Miazga, 2014[44]). The career is seen as unattractive, in particular for vocational subjects that compete with occupations in high demand in the private sector, which typically have higher salaries (Lis and Miazga, 2014[44]). Possibly as a result of the unattractiveness of a VET teaching career, the workforce is relatively aged, in line with other OECD countries. In 27% of VET schools, approximately 17% of teachers are above the retirement age, compared to 10% in general education (Lis and Miazga, 2014[44]).

The VET teaching workforce is also not strongly engaging in professional development activities. The review of the effectiveness of the VET system produced by NIK found that in approximately half of VET schools there were teachers who had not engaged in professional development in the past year (Supreme Audit Office, 2016[15]).

Poland has introduced some new measures that aim to strengthen professional development for VET teachers. Recent legislation introduces obligatory sectoral placements in enterprises for vocational teachers. This will contribute towards upgrading the skills and competences of teachers, and provide them with access to new technologies and enterprises in a given branch of industry.

Going forward Poland could benefit from adopting a more systematic approach to recruit, retain and train VET teachers. It could gather more comprehensive evidence about the relative importance of different factors in influencing the retention of VET teachers (e.g. pay vs. benefits) and different form of support, as in England (Piano, S. et al., 2018[45]). Poland could then learn from the experiences in Northern Ireland and Australia to improve incentives and support for VET teachers (OECD, 2013[46]).

Box 2.6. Relevant international examples: Incentives and support for VET teachers

Gathering evidence for teacher recruitment and retention: An example from England

England has undertaken significant efforts to improve incentives and support for VET teachers. The Department for Education (DfE) has conducted quantitative research to identify occupations that are comparable to VET teachers across different subject areas. Using the results from this quantitative exercise, it has explored differences in pay between VET teachers and the private sector. The DfE has also conducted a qualitative survey that provides information on experience, qualifications and expectations of teachers in secondary schools and VET. The survey involved approximately 10 000 teachers out of an estimated population of 67 000.

Source: Piano S. et al. (2018[45]), "Identifying further education teacher comparators", Research Brief by the Department for Education, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/757565/Identifying_further_education_teacher_comparators.pdf.

Incentives and support for teachers: Examples from two OECD countries

Northern Ireland established a Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD) scheme in 2005, which is a systematic process to support all principals, vice principals and teachers with their professional development and career planning. The components of the review process include three stages: planning, monitoring and reviewing. The PRSD is closely linked to a school's strategic plan for improvement: the school development plan (SDP). The SDP brings together the school's priorities, the main measures it will take to raise standards, the resources dedicated to these, and the key outcomes and targets it intends to achieve. It sets out the overall "roadmap" for the three years ahead, with a focus on the school's key priorities and action plans.

In Australia, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) prepared the Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders. This document aims to promote a strong professional learning culture that entails continuous improvement throughout teaching careers. Successful professional learning is characterised as relevant, collaborative and future focused. This framework encourages schools to become learning communities that rely on their own resources, with the AITSL offering global support. The support consists of tools and resources to back the enactment of the charter, including case studies from schools and systems willing to share their strategies for establishing professional learning cultures. AITSL also supports research into determining useful and practical methodologies for teachers and school leaders to apply in order to effectively evaluate the impact of professional learning in their school.

Source: OECD (2013[46]), *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264190658-en; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2012[47]), *Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders*, www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/national-policy-framework/australian-charter-for-the-professional-learning-of-teachers-and-school-leaders.pdf?sfvrsn=6f7eff3c_4.

Recommendation for improving incentives and support for VET teachers

- **Develop a recruitment and retention strategy that builds on a broad mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence and extensive consultations with stakeholders.** The MEN should consider conducting quantitative (e.g. on differences in pay between private and public sector) and qualitative research (e.g. a teacher survey) to develop a new package of incentives and support. This should include VET teachers, but it could also be expanded to the whole of the teaching workforce. The MEN should ensure that teachers and other social partners have an opportunity to provide meaningful input on the evidence gathering process and the development of the strategy.

Supporting the implementation of the new curriculum in initial VET

The initial VET curriculum adopted in 2012 has not supported VET graduates in Poland to develop the full set of skills required by employers.

The review of the effectiveness of the VET system produced by NIK concludes that the curriculum adopted in 2012 did not push graduates to develop self-organisation, professional and interpersonal skills (Supreme Audit Office, 2016[15]). However, the review has praised the introduction of the revised curriculum in the context of the recent reforms. The revised curriculum reflects the key objectives of the education reform, including putting greater emphasis on key competences, strengthening education in the field of modern foreign languages, developing students' entrepreneurship skills, and the efficient use of ICT in everyday life. Some participants within workshops and focus groups disagreed with the assessment by NIK, feeling that the revised curriculum was too rigid and traditional.

The introduction of the new curriculum in the context of the recent reforms will need to be carefully evaluated. However, the immediate priority is to ensure that teachers have sufficient support to deliver it successfully.

Teachers need to become comfortable with the structure of the new curriculum and need to receive sufficient support to meet is objectives, especially in terms of developing students' entrepreneurship and ICT skills. Poland has already undertaken an initiative that could help in this respect. The Centre for Education Development (Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, ORE) has launched training programmes to ensure that teachers and schools are well prepared for the adoption of the new curriculum (Box 2.7). Poland could deliver these training programmes, as well as other relevant training opportunities, through a structured plan, comprising of face-to-face lessons, workshops and online courses. A similar approach has been implemented in England for the introduction of new technical qualifications (Box 2.7).

The successful adoption of the new curriculum could also require that schools receive sufficient funding to update equipment. However, this should not come at the expense of a stronger focus on work-based learning (see Opportunity 4). The NIK review finds that more than one-third of school directors believe that the equipment in schools is not adequate for the implementation of the new curriculum (Supreme Audit Office, 2016[15]). The new curriculum specifies a mix of equipment that must be present in schools, including equipment used to teach job-related skills in school-based workshops (e.g. electric machines used to train electricians). International evidence suggests that effectively designed work-based learning arrangements can be more efficient than school-based workshops to enable students to develop job-related technical skills that are aligned with labour market needs (OECD, 2018[48]). In the short term it will be important for Poland to ensure that there is good quality equipment for teaching job-related skills in school-based workshops. However, in the future, in light of the international evidence, it would be preferable for Poland to strengthen the provision of work-based learning for the development of technical skills (see Opportunity 4).

Box 2.7. Relevant examples: Implementation of the new curriculum in initial VET

The training programmes offered by the Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji

In Poland, the Centre for Education Development (Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, ORE) has developed online training programmes to improve the support offered to schools and teachers in the adoption of the new curriculum. The online programmes have the following objectives: explaining the structure of the new curriculum, strengthening the preparation of the planning of the didactic process, and improving the skills (e.g. ICT skills) involved in the organisation and implementation of the new curriculum.

Source: Workshops, focus groups and meetings during the missions in Poland; The Education Development Centre (2019[49]), Implementation of education according to new vocational curricula, www.ore.edu.pl/2019/04/realizacja-ksztalcenia-wedlug-nowych-programow-nauczania-do-zawodow/.

Introduction of the T-Levels in England

T-Levels are new two-year technical programmes being introduced in England in phases, starting in September 2020. They are an upper secondary programme designed to be the vocational equivalent of the more academically focused A-Level qualifications. The UK's Education and Training Foundation (ETF) will deliver the T-level Professional Development Programme to ensure that teachers understand what the new qualifications involve, and to enable teachers to update their subject and industry knowledge. Over 25% of the ETF budget for 2019-20, GBP 6.6 million (British pounds), has been set aside for the delivery of the T-level Professional Development Programme, making it the single largest UK-wide training programme for 2019-20. Teachers will be able to undergo training on pedagogy, subject knowledge, professional practice and assessment, as well as access help in developing English, mathematics and digital skills teaching for T-Levels. Training will be delivered through face-to-face programmes, online modules, webinars and workshops. For example, the training element focusing on pedagogy will include a series of face-to-face programmes delivered around the country and online modules.

Source: Education and Training Foundation (2019[50]), *T Levels*, www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/technical-education/t-levels/; Cotes, R. (2019[51]), *2019-20 Grant Offer Letter to the Education and Training Foundation,* www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ETF-GoL-19-20.pdf.

Recommendation for supporting the implementation of the curriculum in initial VET

- **Implement a structured programme of teacher training on the new curriculum.** The MEN should implement a structured training programme for the development of the new curriculum, comprising of a mix of face-to-face programmes, online modules, webinars and workshops. The MEN could ensure that all teachers can access the online training courses developed by the ORE. The MEN could complement these online programmes with face-to-face sessions and workshops.

Strengthening support and incentives for effective teaching in HEIs

Teaching in Polish universities has been oriented towards transferring knowledge rather than stimulating and developing a broad set of cognitive skills.

The teaching methodology in Polish universities has remained relatively traditional, typically relying on lecture style teaching. All HEIs that responded to the 2016 Leader Survey, which covered 39 public and non-public universities, indicated that lectures are the most common teaching method, whereas work-based methods (e.g. problem-based learning) and other forms of blended learning are used much

less frequently (OECD/EU, 2017[52]). These approaches are more time consuming, but they can be beneficial for critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Hoidn and Kärkkäinen, 2014[53]).

The traditional teaching techniques could be related to the low availability of professional development opportunities for academics. The MNiSW has mandated pedagogical training for all new staff; however, Polish institutions have institutional autonomy in the area of continuing professional development, and there is no system-wide organisation responsible for establishing a common framework and sharing best practice (European Commission, 2017[13]). The outlook has recently been improving through the launch of large-scale training programmes targeting teaching quality, which rely on EU funding (European Commission, 2017[13]). However, it is not clear what percentage of teaching staff have benefited. This insight was confirmed by some participants within workshops, who felt that there are no centralised efforts to train academics.

The reliance on traditional methods could also be related to a lack of incentives to improve teaching quality. A survey comparing the work situation of the academic profession across 12 European countries has concluded that academic teachers in Poland did not think that evaluation plays a role at their institution in encouraging them to improve their instructional skills (Teichler and Höhle, 2013[54]).

The newly introduced funding formula (discussed in Opportunity 2) could affect incentives to improve teaching quality, but evaluating its impact is not straightforward.

As discussed in Opportunity 2, academic HEIs will now receive stronger incentives to focus on the quantity and quality of scientific research (35% of total funding conditional on research performance as opposed to 10% previously), whereas professional HEIs will no longer receive funding on the basis of their research performance (0% of total funding conditional on research performance as opposed to 10% previously). In principle, stronger incentives to conduct research could disincentivise academics from investing their time in providing effective teaching (Lindsay, Breen and Jenkins, 2002[55]). However, conducting higher quality research can push academics to improve teaching quality (Cadez, Dimovski and Zaman Groff, 2017[56]; García-Gallego et al., 2015[57]). Conducting higher quality research can strengthen knowledge and competence, enabling academics to become more effective teachers (Lindsay, Breen and Jenkins, 2002[55]). These two competing effects make it difficult to evaluate the impact of the recent funding reforms on incentives to improve high-quality teaching.

Aside from the funding formula, the MNiSW has implemented two initiatives in support of teaching quality: it has allocated extra funding to ensure that a student-teacher ratio of 13:1 will be fulfilled, and it will provide some additional funding to support the development of education quality through the Excellence in Teaching initiative. Within this scheme, academic HEIs will be able to receive additional funding to improve the quality of education by presenting a detailed six-year development plan. The successful academic HEIs will receive extra funding so that their student-teacher ratio is 10:1.

These initiatives could help strengthen teaching quality in academic and professional HEIs. However, going forward Poland could still benefit from making professional development efforts more systematic by creating a forum to disseminate national and international best practice (Box 2.8). This will help ensure that all academics receive more comprehensive support to adopt more innovative teaching practices.

Box 2.8. Relevant examples: Incentives and support for effective teaching in HEIs

Professional development bodies in Norway and Ireland

In Norway, centres for excellence in education (*SFU-ordningen*) aim to develop good learning and teaching practices in specific fields of study, as well as innovative approaches such as the use of online tools, flipped classrooms, problem-based learning, seminars and group work. The centres of excellence have successfully aligned programmes with broader higher education strategies, supported relevant research in their areas of teaching, and led to better and more collaboration among academic staff. External experts evaluate how needs for training are detected and what support is offered to staff, as well as how continuing pedagogical development is maintained.

In Ireland, the National Forum in HE has developed a national professional development framework that provides guidance for planning, developing and engaging in professional development activities. There are also several nationally funded collaborative projects that target various skills among academics, including digital literacy and foreign language skills. In addition, the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning provides a range of services, including the dissemination of good practice and scholarships to develop a better understanding of effective learning and teaching practices.

Source: OECD (2018[58]), *Higher Education in Norway: Labour Market Relevance and Outcomes*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264301757-en.

Professional development of academics in Poland: Two relevant examples

- The Competence Development Programme (*Program rozwoju kompetencji*) is a pilot project of the MNiSW that aims to strengthen the qualifications and competences necessary in the labour market through supporting modern teaching methods, emphasising workshop classes, using new technologies, and supporting module education and the interdisciplinary nature of studies. The pilot project has been evaluated positively by the MNiSW, but requires more funding to be extended and to become sustainable.
- The Masters of Didactics transnational co-operation (*Mistrzowie dydaktyki)* project aims to develop modern teaching methods at Polish universities through co-operation with the best foreign universities from the Top 100 of the Shanghai Ranking. Partner universities will develop an effective programme of training/study visits for tutors (employees of Polish universities) on the basis of their own good practice, organise and conduct training/study visits, and create tutoring models for Polish universities in co-operation with Polish experts.

Source: Workshops, focus groups and meetings during the missions in Poland.

Recommendation for strengthening support and incentives for effective teaching in HEIs

- **Establish a forum responsible for providing guidance and disseminating best practice about the professional development of academic teachers**. Poland's HEIs should identify or establish a co-ordinating body in charge of setting up a forum that provides guidance for planning, developing and engaging in professional development. The forum could also gather and disseminate information on best practice, taking inspiration from the ongoing projects in Poland (e.g. the Competence Development Programme) and internationally (e.g. the Masters of Didactics).

Opportunity 4: Strengthening collaboration between education institutions and employers

Improving the labour market relevance of education requires effective interaction between the education system and employers (OECD, 2015[1]).

In VET, employers frequently co-operate with VET institutions at the national and subnational level to suggest adjustments to the curriculum and feed other relevant information (Kuczera and Jeon, 2019[35]). This opportunity focuses on co-operation between education institutions and employers at the subnational level; co-operation at the national level between employers and the MEN (within the newly established sectoral skills councils) is discussed in Chapter 5. In HE, employers should collaborate with universities to ensure that the content of the curriculum is labour market relevant (OECD, 2017[31]).

Employers should also collaborate with education institutions to provide work-based learning. As anticipated in Opportunity 3, work-based learning enables students to develop work-relevant technical skills using up-to-date equipment and work practices, as well as soft skills that are valuable in the workplace (OECD, 2015[1]; OECD, 2018[48]).

In Poland, participants in workshops signalled that strengthening collaboration between education institutions and employers is a crucial opportunity as it can help improve the employability of VET graduates by ensuring that they develop the skills in high demand in the labour market. It could also help to minimise skills mismatch, especially among recent tertiary graduates, through a better alignment between the curriculum and labour market needs.

In Poland, collaboration between education institutions and employers is not widespread. Recent reforms have aimed to strengthen co-operation on the curriculum in VET and to involve employers more actively in decision making in public HEIs, but they will need to be adequately supported. Involving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in training and expanding the recently introduced dual studies in HEIs will be important to strengthen work-based learning.

Improving subnational co-operation between VET schools and employers

Collaboration on curriculum development between the VET system and employers in Poland remains difficult. Generally, there is a lack of dialogue between employers and vocational schools. According to a survey of more than 500 enterprises and almost 400 vocational schools, both schools and enterprises are willing to engage in far-reaching co-operation. The main reasons for the lack of co-operation over one-third of directors and entrepreneurs indicated that no one has come to them with such offer (Maison, 2015[59]).

There is a growing number of enterprises collaborating with vocational schools to develop curricula, and sending external examiners to participate in vocational exams. However, reaching SMEs, which make up more than 90% of all firms in Poland, remains a challenge (OECD, 2016[12]).

The information gathered in workshops, focus groups and bilateral meetings confirmed that co-operation between the VET system and employers at the subnational level is generally low. In principle, regional and local labour market councils should be responsible for providing meaningful input for the development of the educational offering to counties and schools. However, as mentioned in Opportunity 2 above and discussed in Chapter 5, the councils generally lack the capacity to engage with local stakeholders. Some regions (e.g. Małopolska) have been able to build strong platforms for co-operation between VET schools, counties and employers (Box 2.9), but these efforts have not been systemic across Poland.

The new law on VET makes progress in this respect by specifying that the VET system is supported by employers, employer organisations, other economic organisations, professional associations and sectoral skills councils (see Chapter 5). The law stipulates that schools are required to partner with employers when launching new classes. This co-operation is carried out under a contract or agreement and covers at least one education cycle. It includes activities such as patron classes and the organisation of vocational exams.

Going forward, Poland could further strengthen the involvement of local employers in the development of the educational offering by expanding their role and representation in subnational councils. Some participants in workshops and focus groups suggested that Poland could establish subnational level bodies that bring together VET school representatives, employers and other social partners (such as with the partnership for lifelong learning in Małopolska or the Danish local training committees in Box 2.4). However, given that establishing these new bodies could be costly and operationally challenging, Poland could also consider strengthening the effectiveness of regional and local labour market councils, potentially building on the Norwegian vocational training boards (Box 2.9).

Box 2.9. Relevant examples: Subnational co-operation between VET schools and employers

Co-operation between the VET system and employers in Poland: The Małopolska region

In the Małopolska region, the Partnership for Lifelong Learning provides a platform for co-operation between education institutions and associations of employers so that they can exchange information to ensure that the school offering in terms of subject mix and curriculum is consistent with labour market needs in the region. However, the scope of the partnership is much broader as it covers the whole of the lifelong learning spectrum (from schools to training providers). The region has also established regional sectoral councils in seven sectors, in collaboration with the Department of Education in the voivodeship (regional) marshal's office. The councils are composed of representatives of VET schools and centres for adult learning, as well as local employers and business associations. The councils allow local employers to communicate information on skills needs in specific sectors, enabling VET teachers in related subjects to provide good quality vocational qualifications that are linked to labour market needs.

Source: Workshops, focus groups and meetings during the missions in Poland.

Involving social partners in VET: An example from Norway

In Norway, social partners sit on 19 vocational training boards, one for each county. They provide advice on quality, career guidance, regional development and the provision in the county to meet local labour market needs. County authorities are also responsible for approving enterprises that provide apprenticeship training. While counties are free to develop their approval procedure, they typically involve social partners from the relevant sector in the process.

Source: Kuczera, M. and S. Jeon (2019[35]), *Vocational Education and Training in Sweden*, https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9fac5-en.

Recommendation for improving subnational co-operation between VET schools and employers

- **Strengthen the involvement of local stakeholders in developing the VET offering by expanding existing or establishing new subnational councils**. The MEN and the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (MRiPS) could consider strengthening the capacity and expanding the composition (e.g. to include school representatives) of regional and local labour market councils so that these bodies are able to provide useful information for schools to adapt their offering to labour market needs and to feed useful information on local circumstances to central government for the development of the funding formula (see Opportunity 2). Alternatively, the MEN could guide the establishment of subnational councils that bring together representatives from employers, VET schools and other social partners to fulfil these two functions.

Supporting and monitoring governance reforms in academic HEIs

Collaboration on curriculum development between employers and HEIs has not been stronger. A 2014 survey of over 1 600 employers concluded that consultations on the design of study programmes, as well as on the creation of new and the cancellation of courses with relatively weaker labour market demand are not common (Agrotec, 2014[36]). The HEI Leader survey shows that HEIs in Poland appear to be involved in active partnerships and knowledge exchange with the business community, as well as with local government and regional development agencies. However, these relationships are often reliant on personal initiatives rather than strong institutional linkages (OECD, 2016[12]).

As seen in the description of current arrangements, until recently advisory boards were the only formal bodies for collaboration between employers and public academic HEIs. However, these bodies were not found to be sufficiently systematic to allow for the effective representation of external stakeholders in the governance of universities (European Commission, 2017[13]).

Conversely, arrangements for the involvement of outside stakeholders in private HEIs and public higher vocational schools (PWSZ) were found to be sufficient (European Commission, 2017[13]).

The new Law on Higher Education and Science introduces a new body in public academic HEIs, the university council, with people from outside the given institution constituting at least 50% of its composition. These reforms are a step in the right direction, but it will be important to ensure that the bodies function effectively and build a constructive dialogue with employers and other local partners. Poland could use the experiences of fellow OECD countries to further support these reforms (Box 2.10).

Box 2.10. Relevant international example: Governance reforms in academic HEIs

Improving co-operation between employers and HEIs

In Scotland, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) developed a guide that reviewed case studies and set out success factors to improve co-operation between employers and HEIs. The success factors include setting clear timelines and objectives, having adequate resources, agreeing on a shared set of goals, and setting evaluation mechanisms. The guide was shared with HEIs to aid them in engaging with employers in the curriculum.

Source: Bottomley A., and H. Williams (2006[60]), *A Guide to International Best Practice in Engaging Employers in the Curriculum*, www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/docs/ethemes/employability/employability---best-practice-in-engaging-employers-in-the-curriculum.pdf?sfvrsn=f340f681_14.

Recommendation for supporting and monitoring governance reforms in academic HEIs

- **Develop and adopt a clear set of guidelines for the functioning of university councils in public academic HEIs.** Poland's HEIs should identify or establish a co-ordinating body in charge of developing success factors and practical arrangements (e.g. duration, reporting) for effective dialogue in university councils. The university councils should function in accordance with these guidelines. The MNiSW should monitor the development of these guidelines and their impact on effective dialogue. In the event that the guidelines or their implementation are insufficient, the MNiSW should consider adding criteria on the effective functioning of university councils to the complex assessment conducted by the PKA.

Strengthening work-based learning in initial VET

Work-based learning in the VET system in Poland is not particularly common, with 35% of students at vocational schools still obtaining their practical training in workshops dedicated exclusively to educational purposes, rather than in the workplace (OECD, 2016[12]). Only 7.7% of technical education students carry out practical activities with employers (including a small share of students who carry out these activities on farms). The incidence of firm-based practical activities in technical education is substantially lower than in basic vocational schools, where the share of students who carry out at least part of their practical activities in firms is 66.2% (Hoftijzer, Stronkowski and Rozenbaum, 2018[61]).

One of the key factors behind this is the difficulty in reaching out to SMEs), which make up more than 90% of all firms in Poland (OECD, 2016[12]).

Polish SMEs face strong financial barriers in providing work-based learning. A 2017 study showed that financial support directed at the development of programmes or the reimbursement of costs for remuneration of a trainee would be the most important initiative to improve work-based learning in SMEs (Strzebońska, 2017[62]). Employers stressed that they have to adjust workplaces to the needs of trainees, including the purchase of necessary equipment and software, as well as employ a trainee mentor/supervisor (Strzebońska, 2017[62]).

Another important factor is the lack of awareness of current arrangements for work-based learning. The SME sector lacks knowledge on the legal conditions related to the organisation of apprenticeships and internships. The lack of access to information was emphasised primarily by representatives of microenterprises. In addition, the content of the available information is not adapted to the style of communication (language too technical and complicated) of enterprises (Strzebońska, 2017[62]). Several participants in workshops and focus groups confirmed that these financial and informational barriers are significant in preventing SMEs from engaging in work-based learning. Poland could benefit from learning from the experiences of other OECD countries in improving the participation of SMEs in work-based learning (Box 2.11).

Box 2.11. Relevant international examples: Work-based learning in VET

Training associations in Switzerland

In Switzerland, the government established vocational training associations (Lehrbetriebsverbünde) through the 2004 Act on VET. These are associations of two or more training firms that share apprentices, whose training is organised across several firms on a rotating basis. The aim is to enable the engagement of firms that lack the capacity and resources to provide the full training of an apprentice, and to lower the financial and administrative burden on individual firms. The Confederation subsidises the associations with initial funding during the first three years for marketing, administrative and other costs necessary to set up the joint training programme. After this initial support, the training associations are supposed to be financially independent. An evaluation (*Resultate Evaluation Lehrbetriebsverbünde*, OPET, Bern) found that the majority of firms participating in training associations would not have engaged in training otherwise.

Source: Kuczera M., V. Kis and G. Wurzburg (2009[63]), *OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training: A Learning for Jobs Review of Korea 2009*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264113879-en

Training associations and subsidies in Austria

Austria complements training associations with direct subsidies. Companies that cannot fulfil certain standards (e.g. because they are too small or too specialised) may form training alliances (*Ausbildungsverbünde*) to share apprentices. Alliances of training firms are supervised at the state level by apprenticeship offices (*Lehrlingsstellen*), but business organisations help to find partners for firms willing to create new training alliances. An evaluation has suggested that training alliances in Austria help to improve the quality of apprentice provision. Tax incentives for employing apprentices were abolished in 2008 and replaced by direct subsidies for apprenticeships. The Ministry of Economics and Labour concluded that the tax incentive scheme failed to target companies that would benefit most from additional support for apprenticeships. Under the grant system, the amount of grant received by the employer decreases depending on the year of apprenticeship (decreasing with each year) and on the characteristics of the apprentice (e.g. apprentices facing learning difficulties receive more funding). Employers also receive additional funds for apprentices who excel in the final exams.

Source: Kuczera, M. (2017[64]), "Incentives for apprenticeship", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 152, https://doi.org/10.1787/55bb556d-en.

Recommendation for strengthening work-based learning in initial VET

- **Provide financial support and technical assistance to SMEs in order to increase work-based learning opportunities.** School governing authorities should consider offering incentives to set up training associations to share the costs of organising apprenticeships among a group of SMEs. The school governing authorities could also consider implementing targeted grants to encourage SMEs to offer work-based learning. The amount of the grant could vary depending on the characteristics of the learners and on their performance in final exams. The financial incentives should be complemented by technical assistance, which could be provided through the newly formed subnational level councils (see previous recommendation) and/or trade associations. The central government should support school governing authorities that lack the funds or capacity to support or assist SMEs.

Expanding dual studies in HEIs

Poland has an underdeveloped offering of higher VET programmes that involve a strong work-based learning element (OECD, 2018[11]). These programmes typically combine theoretical study with practical application, include work placements and actively involve employers in curriculum design. Across Europe, this type of programme is generally offered at levels 5-6 of the European Qualification Framework (EQF). Examples include the dual study programmes in Germany (offered at EQF level 6) and the Italian short-term professional bachelor programmes (offered at EQF level 5) (Ulicna, D. et al., 2016[65]). Recent legislation has introduced such programmes in Poland, and they are referred to as dual studies (studia dualne). The legislation specifies that the organisation of the studies should be defined in a contract between HEIs and employers, and that the education should be partly carried out in a real work environment.

Several participants in workshop and focus groups expressed enthusiasm for the introduction of dual studies. The programmes could be very important going forward in reinvigorating the educational offering of public higher vocational schools (PWSZ), which are struggling to develop an offering that is consistent with local labour market needs (as seen in Opportunity 2). Introducing dual education could enable these institutions to better prepare graduates for the needs of the labour market.

Poland has introduced some short-cycle pilot programmes at EQF level 5. Going forward, it could take inspiration from examples in other OECD countries (e.g. Italy or Austria) to facilitate the roll-out of dual studies. These are reviewed in the box below (Box 2.12).

Box 2.12. Relevant international examples: Dual studies in HEIs

Professional bachelor courses in Austria: The Joanneum University of Applied Science

In Austria, dual study programmes are offered at universities of applied science and have become increasingly popular in the recent past. The Joanneum University of Applied Science was the first institution to introduce dual study programmes in 2003. The programmes have generally delivered strong employability for graduates. By 2015, Joanneum had co-operated with about 200 companies in different sectors, ranging from prefabricated houses to medical equipment. Employers were initially sceptical about dual study programmes, but they have progressively become more eager to co-operate. They are involved in selecting the students, designing the learning content, implementing practical learning phases, and evaluation and further development.

Introduction of professional bachelor courses in Italy

Italy introduced EQF level 5 professional bachelor courses in 2010 within newly formed education institutions (ITS). There are currently 75 of these institutions and approximately 350 activated programmes for almost 8 000 admitted students. The ITS have delivered strong outcomes for graduates. According to the latest monitoring report by the Italian Ministry for Education (*Miur*), 80% of graduates are in employment after one year (compared to 71% for individuals with a bachelor's degree and 74% for master's graduates). The ITS are overseen by a foundation that brings together employers, research centres and subnational authorities. Companies are deeply involved in the governance of the ITS: they are members of the participation council, which takes decisions of an administrative nature, and of the directive council, which defines the course content. Every year the programmes are innovated on the basis of feedback from the partner companies.

Source: Ulicna D. et al (2016[65]), *Study on higher Vocational Education and Training in the EU*, https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=15572&langId=en.

Recommendation for expanding dual studies in HEIs

- **Provide support for far-reaching co-operation between public professional HEIs and employers.** The MNiSW should consider providing additional resources and support to enable public professional HEIs to strengthen co-operation with employers in professional HEIs in the context of dual studies. The MNISW could develop a good practice guide that contains a series of relevant examples to help public professional HEIs expand dual study programmes. The MNiSW should collaborate with sectoral skills councils (see Chapter 5) in developing the good practice guide and in the promotion of dual studies among prospective employers.

Overview of recommendations

Opportunity 1: Expanding career counselling services in education institutions	
Complementing career counselling reforms in schools	• Ensure that counsellors have sufficient time and motivation to deliver a wide range of services. • Ensure that the lifelong guidance system fulfils the needs of school counsellors in terms of access to training, information and co-operation mechanisms (see Chapter 5).
Strengthening career counselling in tertiary education	• Provide targeted funding and introduce clear standards for the provision of career guidance services in universities. • Ensure that the lifelong guidance system fulfils the needs of counsellors in HEIs in terms of access to training, information, and co-operation mechanisms (see Chapter 5).

Opportunity 2: Strengthening incentives for education institutions to align their offer with labour market needs	
Supporting and monitoring recent reforms in initial VET funding	• Strengthen the involvement of local stakeholders in providing useful information for the development of the initial VET funding formula. • Develop a graduate tracking system for VET schools through a linked administrative dataset and/or a national graduate survey.
Monitoring the impact of recent HE funding reforms on employability	• Develop a set of indicators to monitor whether the current changes in the HE funding formula provide sufficient incentives to improve employability.
Opportunity 3: Improving incentives and support for effective teaching	
Improving incentives and support for VET teachers	• Develop a recruitment and retention strategy that builds on a broad mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence and extensive consultations with stakeholders.
Supporting the implementation of the new curriculum in initial VET	• Implement a structured programme of teacher training on the new curriculum.
Strengthening support and incentives for effective teaching in HEIs	• Establish a forum responsible for providing guidance and disseminating best practices about the professional development of academic teachers.
Opportunity 4: Strengthening collaboration between education institutions and employers	
Improving subnational co-operation between VET schools and employers	• Strengthen the involvement of local stakeholders in developing the VET offering by expanding existing or establishing new subnational councils.
Supporting and monitoring governance reforms in academic HEIs	• Develop and adopt a clear set of guidelines for the functioning of university councils in public academic HEIs.
Strengthening work-based learning in initial VET	• Provide financial support and technical assistance to SMEs in order to increase work-based learning opportunities.
Expanding dual studies in HEIs	• Provide support for far-reaching co-operation between public professional HEIs and employers.

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3 Fostering greater participation in adult learning of all forms

Fostering greater participation in adult learning of all forms can help adults to upskill and address deficiencies in their skill sets, or reskill to respond to changing labour market needs. Adult learning can improve adults' employment and social outcomes, as well as enterprises' productivity and performance. This chapter explores three opportunities to foster greater participation in adult learning in Poland: 1) raising awareness of adult learning benefits and opportunities; 2) making learning more flexible and accessible for adults; and 3) better sharing and targeting financing to increase participation in adult learning.

The importance of adult learning for Poland

The ongoing, life-wide learning of adults in workplaces, educational institutions, communities and homes is becoming increasingly important for Poland's economic and social development.

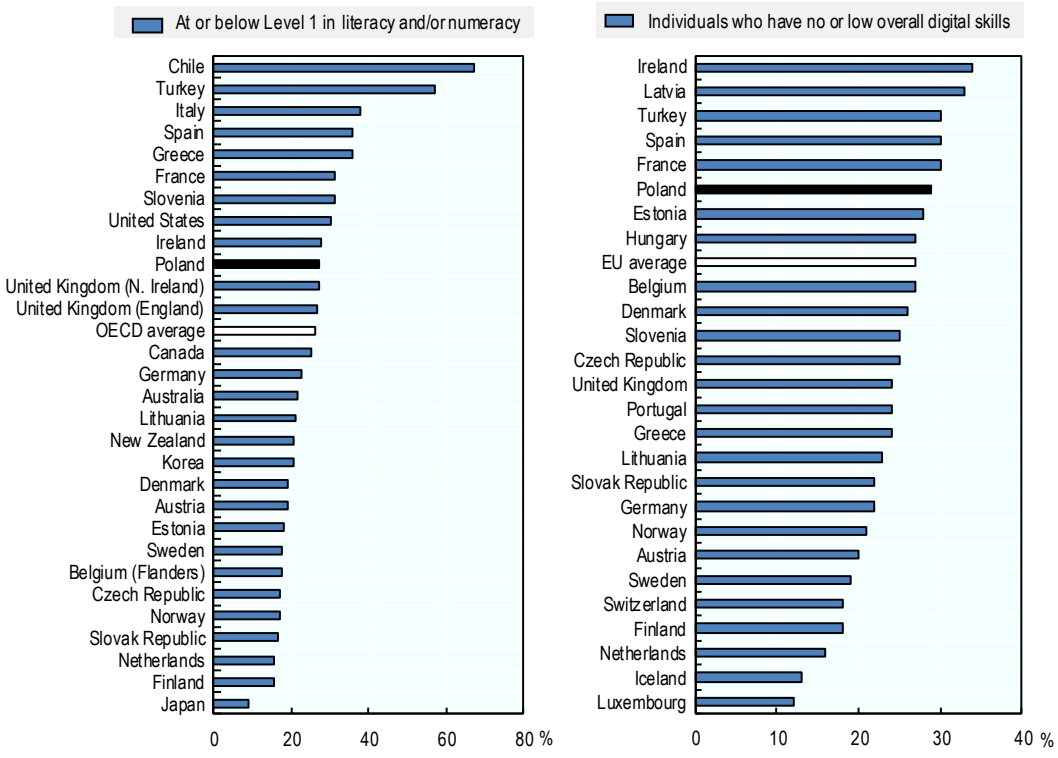
Poland has successfully raised adult levels of formal educational attainment: over the last two decades, the tertiary educational attainment of 25-64 year-olds has almost trebled to 30% (OECD, 2019[1]), while the share of adults with only below upper secondary education has fallen by two-thirds, to below 8%. The improvements are even more evident for younger adults: higher education attainment among 30-34 year-olds has more than trebled to 46%, and Poland has the lowest share of low-educated young adults in the European Union (EU) (5% in 2018) (Eurostat, 2019[2]). Young people in Poland get a relatively good start in developing skills: 15-year-old students in Poland performed above the OECD average in science, reading and mathematics in the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Adult skill levels have improved considerably: between 1994 and 2012, Poland attained the largest increase in adult literacy proficiency among the 19 countries for which similar data are available (OECD, 2016[3]).

However, many adults in Poland today still have low levels of skills, and will be in the labour market for decades to come (Figure 3.1). According to the OECD Survey of Adults Skills (PIAAC) implemented in Poland in 2011/12, about 27% of adults were low skilled in literacy and/or numeracy, a slightly higher share than the OECD average. These adults can successfully complete reading tasks that involve only short and simple texts, and mathematics tasks involving only basic operations. As in many OECD countries, low-skilled adults in Poland typically earn less, have lower employment rates, report poorer health, feel more excluded from political processes and have less trust in others than high-skilled adults. Furthermore, many Polish adults lack "digital" skills. According to a 2017 survey, about 54% of 25-64 year-olds in Poland had no or low digital skills, or had not used the Internet in the last three months. This was a higher share than the average for EU countries (41%) (Eurostat, 2019[4]).

Low-educated and older adults in particular have low levels of skills in Poland. As in most other OECD countries, the educational attainment of adults appears to have the largest impact on literacy skills. In Poland, adults aged 25-65 with a tertiary education have literacy proficiency scores about 55 points higher than those who have not attained an upper secondary qualification, after adjusting for other differences (age, parents' educational attainment, etc.) (OECD, 2016[5]). In light of Poland's large gains in educational attainment, younger adults are typically higher skilled than older adults. The literacy and digital skill levels of 16-24 year-olds in Poland are above the OECD and EU averages respectively, while the skills of 25-34 year-olds are slightly below average (OECD, 2016[5]; Eurostat, 2019[4]).

The importance of individuals developing and maintaining skills during adulthood is growing for Poland. In Poland, as in other OECD countries, the megatrends of automation, digitalisation and integration into global value chains are transforming the skills individuals need to effectively participate in work and society. Polish jobs face a higher risk of automation than jobs in most other OECD countries (Figure 3.2). The shrinking of Poland's labour force arising from population ageing and emigration is putting greater pressure on individuals to upskill and reskill during adulthood to meet evolving skills needs. High- and low-skilled adults increasingly need to upgrade and reskill in order to adapt to more frequent transitions between jobs, non-standard forms of work (and by extension less access to employer sponsored training) and the lengthening of working lives.

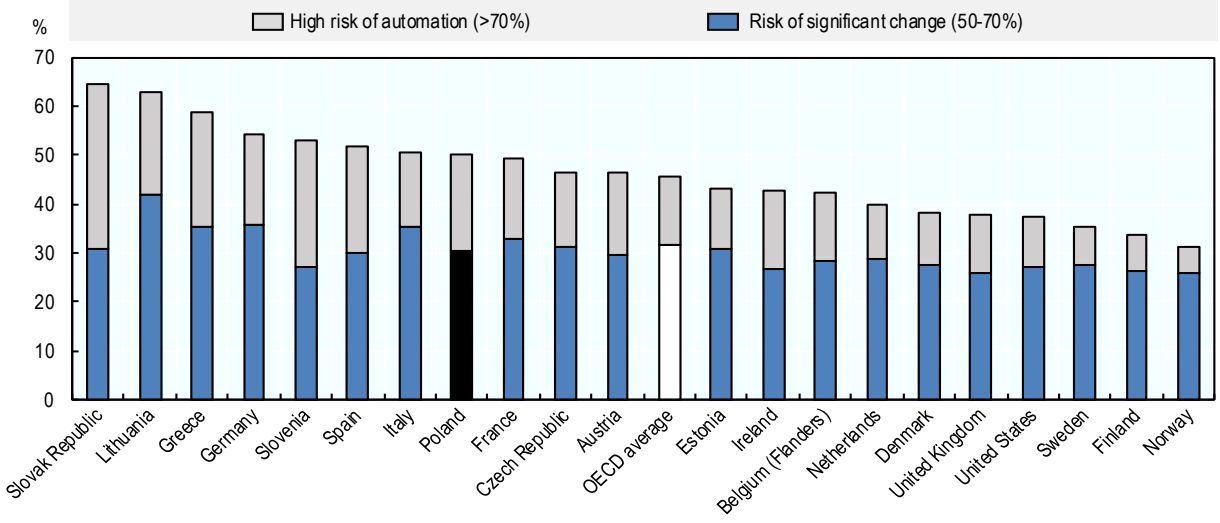
Figure 3.1. Adults with low literacy, numeracy or digital skills



Source: Panel A: OECD (2019[6]), *Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)* (database), http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933366131; Panel B: Eurostat (2019[4]), *European Statistical System 2019 (database)*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036310

Figure 3.2. Jobs at risk of automation



Source: Nedelkoska, L. and G. Quintini (2018[7]), "Automation, skills use and training", *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 202, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/2e2f4eea-en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036329

Effective adult learning systems help individuals, enterprises and countries respond to these challenges. Adult learning can take several forms and is "life-wide" as it occurs in diverse contexts (Box 3.1).

Ensuring the sufficient quantity and quality of adult learning in Poland is a priority for the country. Poland has established adult learning as a priority and set goals in several strategies: the 2013 Lifelong Learning Perspective (*Perspektywa uczenia się przez całe życie*), the Strategy for Responsible Development (*Strategia na rzecz Odpowiedzialnego Rozwoju*, SOR), and now the Integrated Skills Strategy 2030 (General Part) (*Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności [część ogólna]*, ZSU) (Eurydice, 2019[8]).

Box 3.1. Definitions: Adult learning and learning contexts

Adult learning encompasses any education or training activity undertaken by adults for job-related or other purposes, and includes:

- **Formal education or training**: education or training activity that leads to a formal qualification (at primary, secondary, post-secondary or tertiary level).
- **Non-formal education or training**: education or training activity that does not necessarily lead to a formal qualification, such as on-the-job training, open or distance education, courses or private lessons, seminars or workshops.
- **Informal learning**: learning that results from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. It may be unintentional from the learner's perspective.

Adult learning is therefore "life-wide", occurring in the following diverse contexts:

- **Education and training institutions**: traditional providers of formal education, such as schools, colleges or universities, or specialised adult or continuing education and training centres. They may be public or private institutions (Table 3.2).
- **Workplaces**: typically as informal learning or non-formal education and training. It can also include the work-based learning component of formal education.
- **Community**: typically as informal learning or non-formal education and training through participation in civic and cultural activities, social networks, sports, volunteering activities, etc.
- **Homes**: typically as informal learning through interactions with family members, reading books, Internet use, watching television, listening to the radio, etc. It may also involve formal or non-formal education and training via online or correspondence courses.

This chapter mainly focuses on non-formal and formal education and training in institutions and workplaces, as well as recognition of non-formal and informal learning. This is because policy makers have the most data and direct influence on these aspects of adult learning. Furthermore, informal learning is typically job related and strongly associated with high performance work practices (HPWP) in firms, which encourage informal learning and increase its returns (Fialho, Quintini and Vandeweyer, 2019[9]). Chapter 4 of this report makes recommendations to expand HPWP in Poland.

Source: OECD (2019[10]), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to Shape a Better Future*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en; OECD (2015[11]), *Skills for Social Progress: The Power of Social and Emotional Skills*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264226159-en.

Overview and performance of Poland's adult learning system

Overview of Poland's adult learning system

As in other OECD countries, responsibility for adult learning in Poland is fragmented across ministries and different levels of government. The Ministry of National Education (MEN), the Ministry of Family, Labour

and Social Policy (MRPiPS); the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology; the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW); and the Ministry of Digital Affairs (MC) have primary responsibility at the national level. Regions (voivodeships, also known as województwo) and counties (powiat) have responsibility for educational facilities (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Polish ministries and subnational authorities responsible for adult learning

Body	Responsibilities
Central authorities	
Ministry of National Education	Non-tertiary schools and the system of vocational and general courses for adults. Has the main responsibility for general education and initial vocational education and training (VET) through organising providers, timetables, assessment, validation, online learning, guidance and stakeholder and European engagement in adult learning. Co-ordinates the Integrated Qualifications System, which aims to integrate the qualifications awarded in various subsystems, including VET, higher education and non-formal (market) qualifications.
The Ministry of Science and Higher Education	Provides tertiary education for adults. Sets basic conditions for higher education institutions to provide non-degree postgraduate programmes, specialised training (level 5 of the Polish Qualifications framework) professional higher education (HE), and other forms of training for adult learners.
Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy	Developing adults' skills for the labour market. Responsible for policies related to continuing education for unemployed adults and some categories of jobseekers. Manages the National Training Fund (Krajowy Fundusz Skoleniowy, KFS), which supports the lifelong learning of employers and employees by providing funding for skills training. Is involved in career guidance.
Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology	Skills for entrepreneurship, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and sectoral skills councils. The ministry presides over the School for Innovators (Szkoła dla innowatora) pilot programme in conjunction with the Ministry of National Education.
Ministry of Digital Affairs	Digital skills of adults. The ministry's Open Data and Competence Development department oversees a digital skills development ecosystem for citizens concerning the use of technology, as well as running the Open Data website https://dane.gov.pl.
Other ministries	Responsible for the inclusion of Integrated Qualifications System (Zintegrowany System Kwalifikacji, ZSK) qualifications within their domains. Involved in other sectoral non-formal education.
Regional authorities (voivodeship/województwo)	
Voivodeship marshall office (Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa)	Responsible for public education, including higher education. Tasks include establishing and administering public in-service teacher training centres, libraries, and networks of schools and institutions at regional and supra-regional levels. Regional authorities also lead voivodeship labour offices.
Voivode (wojewoda) - Regional representative of central government in a voivodeship	Appoints heads of regional education authorities (kurator oświaty) who exercise pedagogical supervision over education providers.
District (county) authorities (powiat)	Responsible for establishing, administering and financing public post-primary schools and continuing education centres, practical training centres, and further in-service training centres. They also run powiat labour offices, delivering services to the unemployed, some categories of jobseekers and employers. They are also engaged with MRPiPS in the distribution of funding from the KFS.
Municipal (commune) authorities (gmina)	Responsible for establishing, administering and financing public primary schools (and lower secondary schools until they are phased out).

Source: Eurydice (2019[12]), *Distribution of Responsibilities*, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/distribution-responsibilities-53_en; MC (2019[13]), Ministry of Digital Affairs Portal, www.gov.pl/web/cyfryzacja; MPiT (2019[14]), Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology Portal, www.gov.pl/web/przedsiebiorczosc-technologia.

Social partners in Poland also have an important role in adult learning. Chambers of commerce can promote, provide or potentially subsidise education and training for their members. Trade unions can also promote and provide learning to their members. Together, social partners negotiate rights to education and training in Poland's collective agreements, and discuss the qualifications to include in the Integrated Qualifications System, among other things. Social partners, government and other actors can co-ordinate on the development of adult learning in Poland through the Program Council on Competences and sectoral skills councils (see Chapter 5).

As in other OECD countries, adult education and training in Poland is provided by a diverse range of public and private institutions (main providers are listed in Table 3.2). According to Poland's Human Capital Survey (Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego, BKL), there were nearly 16 000 providers of adult education and training in Poland in 2014 (Szczucka, Turek and Worek, 2014[15]). These include education and training institutions, and organisations for whom education and training is not their primary activity. These providers are predominately non-public or private (nearly 90%) and micro- or small-sized (80%). About 20% operate in the Mazowieckie region that includes Warsaw, with the remainder spread across the country.

Table 3.2. Main types of providers of adult education and training in Poland (2019)

Main providers	Programmes and target groups	Number of providers	Number of participants
Primary schools for adults	Primary school programme for low-educated learners aged 18+.	117 (2018/19)	5 712
Lower secondary school for adults (in the process of being phased out)	For primary school graduates aged 18+.	55 (2018/19)	1 713
Upper secondary schools for adults	For lower secondary school graduates aged 18+. Pathway to post-secondary/tertiary education.	1 299 (2018/19)	131 510
Post-secondary schools for adults	For upper secondary school graduates aged 18+. Mainly non-public providers.	1 634 (2018/19)	195 659
Public institutions providing continuing education for adults			
Continuing education centres (CEC)	Vocational qualification courses, vocational skills courses and general competence courses for adults who are out of school. For teachers and lecturers employed in adult education.	218 (2018/19)	22 658
Practical training centres (PTC)	Vocational qualification courses and vocational skills courses for adults who are unemployed and registered as a jobseeker with the labour office.	173 (2018/19)	35 815
Further and in-service training centres (FITC)	Vocational qualification courses, vocational skills courses and general competence courses for adults who want to gain additional knowledge, skills and qualifications.	369 (2018/19)	73 987
Vocational and continuing education centres (VCEC)	Combined centres of CECs, PTCs and FITCs offering all of their services to adults who want to gain additional knowledge, skills and qualifications.	85 (2018/19)	8 811
Training institutions			
Non-public continuing education and practical training centres	For adults intending to extend their qualifications.	2 054 (2018/19)	805 455
Institutions providing training for the unemployed and jobseekers, registered in a Register of Training Institutions*	For those unemployed and jobseekers registered with public employment services (PES), aged 18+ (before reaching the retirement age).	12 124 (September 2019)	NA
Institutions providing training, registered in a Database of Development Services[1]	For adults intending to extend their qualifications.	4 469 (September 2019)	NA

Main providers	Programmes and target groups	Number of providers	Number of participants
Higher education			
Higher education institutions (HEIs) offering non-degree postgraduate programmes	For higher education graduates.	396 (2017/18)	159 475 (2017/18)
Third age universities	May be non-governmental organisation (NGO) or local government third age universities or third age universities within higher education institutions.	640 (2018)	

1. Provider may be a CEC, PTC, HEI, private company, NGO, etc., so numbers may overlap with other categories.
Note: This table does not include all providers. The listed providers have the status of an education system institution or register training services in employment and entrepreneurship support systems (the Register of Training Institutions and the Database of Development Services). The table excludes providers from smaller registers, providers that do not register training services as their main activity, and some providers that register training as a business activity. Some providers may be double counted in different registers.
Source: Eurydice (2019[16]), Main providers, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/main-providers-53_en; MEN (2019[17]), Educational Information System, https://sio.men.gov.pl/; GUS (2018[18]), Adult Education 2016, https://stat.gov.pl/download/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5488/3/3/1/ksztalcenie_doroslych_2016.pdf; GUS (2018[19]), Education in the 2017/18 school year, https://stat.gov.pl/download/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5488/1/13/1/oswiata_i_wychowanie_w_roku_szkolnym_2017_18.pdf; GUS (2017[20]), Education in the 2016/2017 school year, https://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5488/1/12/1/oswiata_i_wychowanie_w_roku_szkolnym_2016-2017.pdf.

Poland's performance

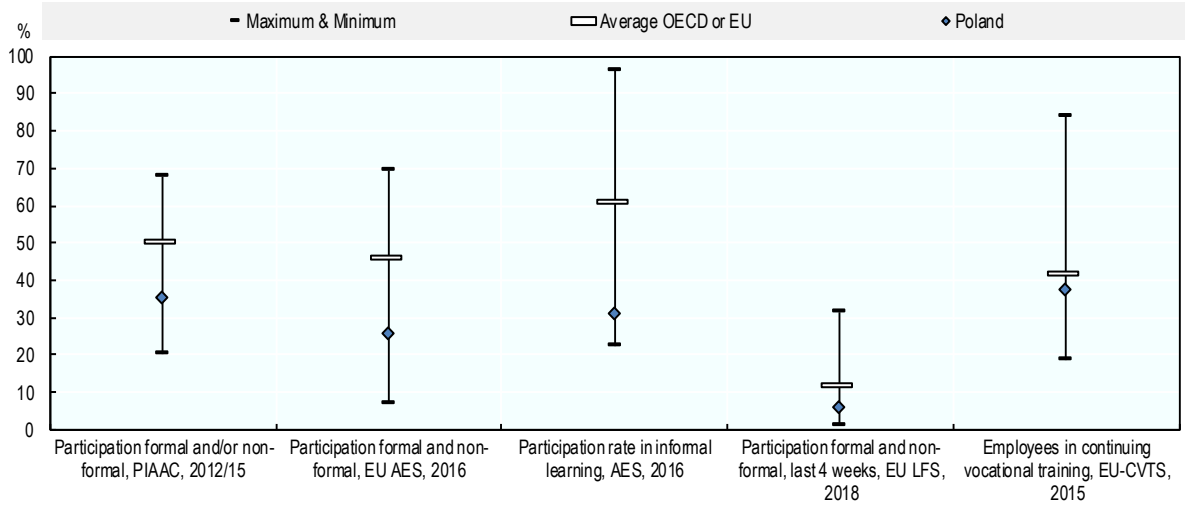
Despite the growing importance for Poland of developing the skills of its adults (Figure 3.1, Figure 3.2), international surveys show that participation in adult learning is relatively low (Figure 3.3). According to the Adult Education Survey (AES) 2016, for example, only 25.5% of adults in Poland participated in formal and/or non-formal education during the 12 months before the survey, which is well below the EU average (45.1%) (Eurostat, 2019[21]). Participation is also well below the EU average according to the 2018 Labour Force Survey (LFS) (Eurostat, 2019[22]). Poland's participation shortfalls are most pronounced for non-formal education and training and informal learning. For example, adult participation in informal learning is lower in Poland than in every other EU country except Lithuania (Eurostat, 2019[21]).

Poland's own national survey (BKL) uses different terminology and records higher rates of participation than the EU surveys on non-formal education and training and informal learning. When asking adults about participation in non-formal education and informal learning, the BKL avoids using certain terms that may cause confusion in Poland.[1] According to the BKL, in 2017 adult participation in formal and non-formal education and training was over 20% in the four weeks before the survey (4% in the LFS), and 56% in the 12 months before the survey (25.5% in the AES 2016). Opportunities for improving skills and learning information in Poland, including through improved surveys, are discussed in Chapter 5.

International surveys conducted in Poland show that the duration and intensity of adult education and training is high. Polish adults who do participate in formal and non-formal education and training spend an average of 145 hours in training, compared to 118 hours on average across the EU. On the one hand, this can be a positive signal of the depth of learning that is occurring. Indeed, reported satisfaction with and objective measures of the employment benefits of this training are relatively high in Poland (see Opportunity 1: Raising awareness of adult learning). On the other hand, the long duration and high intensity of education and training may signal a lack of flexible or short-duration courses (see Opportunity 2: Making learning more flexible and accessible for adults).

According to the Adult Education Survey (Eurostat, 2019[23]), a relatively high share of adult education and training in Poland is non-formal and job related (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.3. Adult participation in education and training in Poland



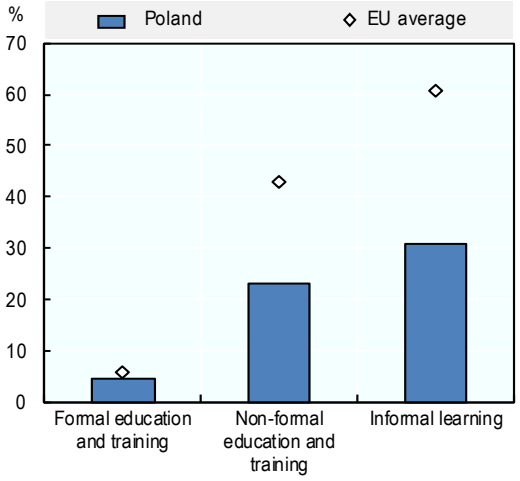
Note: PIAAC = OECD Survey of Adult Skills; AES = Adult Education Survey; LFS = Labour Force Survey; CVTS = Continuing Vocational Education Survey.

Source: OECD, (2016[24]), *Education at a Glance*, Table C6.2 http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933398735; Eurostat (2019[21]), Adult Education Survey 2016 (database), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database; Eurostat (2019[22]), European Union Labour Force Survey 2018: Adult learning (database), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database; Eurostat (2019[25]), Continuing Vocational Education Survey 2015 (database), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database.

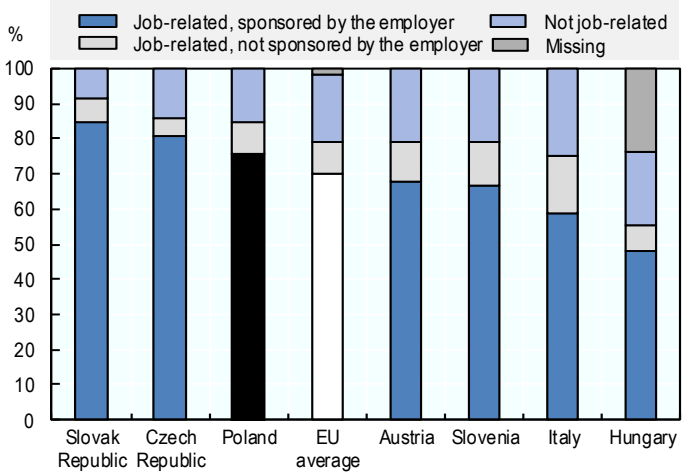
StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036348

Figure 3.4. Adult participation in different types of learning, 2016

A. Participation in formal and non-formal education and training, and informal learning (last 12 months), Poland and EU



B. Characteristics of non-formal education and training, Poland and comparator countries



Source: Eurostat (2019[26]), Adult Education Survey 2016, Panel A: Participation rate in education and training by sex; Panel B: Distribution of non-formal education and training activities by type and sex, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database.

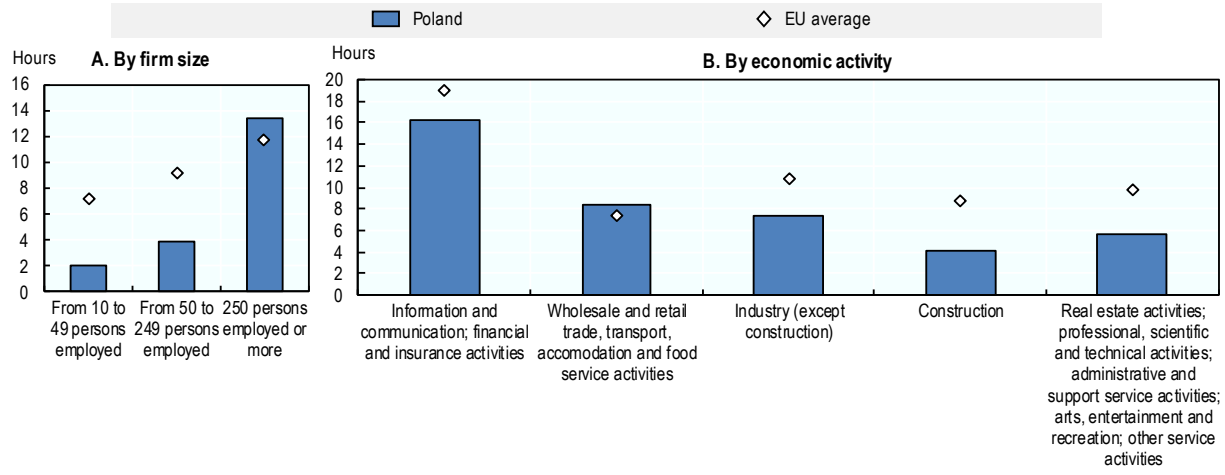
StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036367

Some groups of adults and enterprises are very disengaged from learning. As in other EU countries, Polish adults with low educational attainment, older adults and those in rural areas have the lowest participation in formal and/or non-formal adult education and training (Eurostat, 2019[27]). Among firms, participation in training in large-sized enterprises is higher in Poland than the EU average, whereas participation in training in small- and medium-sized enterprises is well below the EU averages (Figure 3.5). Training participation

by economic sector follows the pattern across the EU, although Poland's participation is consistently below the EU average with one exception: Wholesale and retail trade; transport; accommodation and food service activities.

Figure 3.5. Participation gaps in enterprises, Poland and EU

Hours spent in continuous vocational training courses per person employed in all enterprises, 10+ employees (2015)

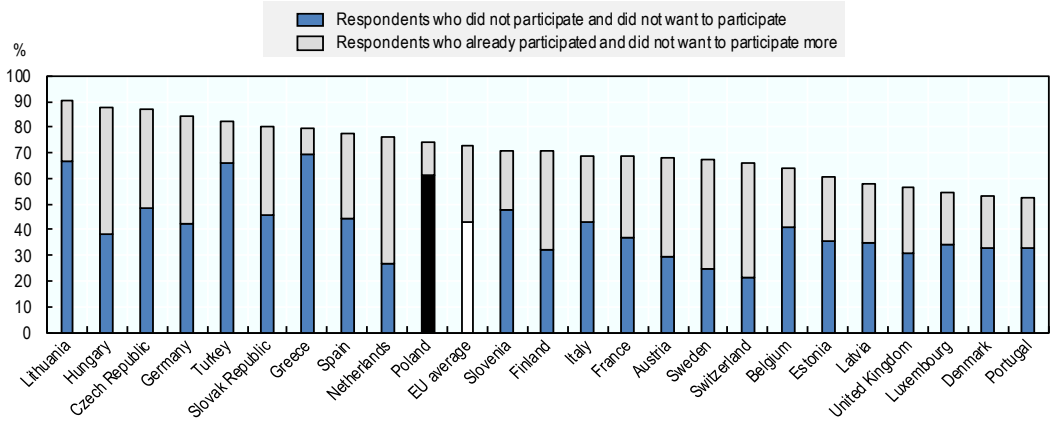


Source: Eurostat (2019[28]), The Continuing Vocational Training Survey 2015, Hours spent in CVT courses by NACE Rev. 2 activity - hours per person employed in all enterprises; Hours spent in CVT courses by size class - hours per person employed in all enterprises, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng_cvt_23n2&lang=en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036386

In Poland, as in other OECD countries, motivation to learn is arguably the most important determinant of observed participation in adult education and training. Motivating adults to learn is a major challenge to raising participation in Poland. About 61% of Polish adults report that they do not participate and do not want to participate in formal and/or non-formal adult education or training (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6. Willingness to participate in formal and/or non-formal education, 2016



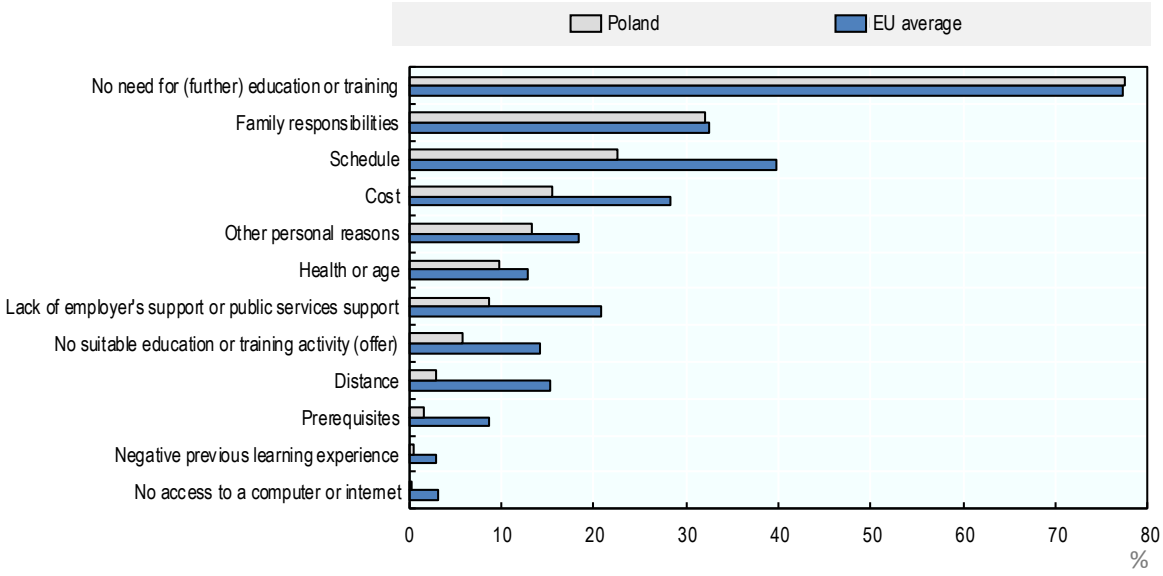
Source: Eurostat (2019[29]), Adult Education Survey 2016, Distribution of the will to participate, or participate more, in education and training, https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng_aes_175&lang=en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036405

Adults in Poland most commonly report no need for education and training, time and cost as obstacles to participating in education and training (Figure 3.7). Almost 80% of Polish adults who do not participate cite no need for education and training as an obstacle. Time – "family responsibilities" and "schedule" – is the next most common obstacle, followed by the cost of education and training (although this is less common than the EU28 overall). Of particular concern is the fact that adults in low-skilled occupations in Poland, such as craft and related trades and elementary professions, are the most likely to report no need for further training (Kocór et al., 2015[30]). Similarly for enterprises, many Polish firms see no need to offer training. About 55% of Polish enterprises do not offer training to employees. These enterprises cite the sufficiency of both "workers' existing skills" and "recruitment" as the main reasons for not offering training, more so than time constraints or the cost or irrelevance of available training (Eurostat, 2015[31]).

Figure 3.7. Obstacles to adult participation in formal or non-formal education and training, 2016

Percentage of non-participating adults who reported the obstacle



Source: Eurostat (2019[32]), Adult Education Survey 2016, Obstacles to participation in education and training by sex, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng_aes_176&lang=en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036424

The available data suggest that Poland is currently not facing major problems with the quantity (supply), quality or relevance of adult learning opportunities. Very few adults cite a lack of "suitable" learning opportunities (6%) or distance (3%) as obstacles, much less than the EU average. The benefits of participating in adult learning are high in Poland, with the estimated wage returns to adults participating in job-related non-formal education and training (15%) and informal learning (8%) larger than in almost all other OECD countries (Fialho, Quintini and Vandeweyer, 2019[9]). According to various international surveys, adult learners in Poland report above-average benefits in terms of the usefulness of acquired training, use of acquired skills and impact on employment outcomes (OECD, 2019[33]). Polish enterprises also report various benefits to investing in training. In Poland's 2017 and 2018 BKL surveys, about three-quarters of Polish enterprises stated that training they had sponsored had medium or large impacts on staff creativity, innovation, co-operation between employees, reducing turnover and/or increasing the company's prestige (PARP, 2018[34]).

Motivating adults to learn starts in the early years, and Poland is making progress in this area. The quality of teaching and the curriculum, as well as the engagement of students with different skill and motivation

levels, influence attitudes to learning. A positive learning experience during childhood fosters a positive attitude towards learning and increases the probability of seeking out and taking up learning opportunities in adulthood (OECD, 2019[10]). This is particularly relevant for students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as those with low socio-economic family status, immigrant backgrounds and parents with low education levels. According to PISA 2015, for example, between 2006 and 2015 students' enjoyment of learning science increased by a greater amount in Poland than in every other PISA country except Ireland (OECD, 2016[35]). Since 2012, the Polish Qualifications Framework (Polska Rama Kwalifikacji) has included a separate pillar for learning skills applicable to all stages of formal education, which could help foster positive learning attitudes (MEN, 2019[36]).

Beyond the early years, however, there are also steps that governments, social partners and other stakeholders can take to motivate adults and enterprises to engage in learning. Awareness raising is essential to change attitudes and behaviour (see Opportunity 1: Raising awareness of adult learning benefits and opportunities). Policies are needed to reduce time-related obstacles to adults participating in learning (see Opportunity 2: Making learning more flexible and accessible for adults). Effective funding arrangements are also critical to overcome financial barriers to learning, especially for certain groups of adults and enterprises (see Opportunity 3: Better sharing and targeting financing to increase participation).

Opportunities to raise adult learning participation in Poland

According to available data and the views of Polish participants in this project, a range of factors likely contribute to low participation in and motivation for adult learning in Poland. Individuals and enterprises may not be convinced of the importance and benefits of adult education and training. Even if they are disposed to engage in education and training, the time and funds required for education and training may be an obstacle for them. To this end, Poland has opportunities to raise adult learning participation by:

1. Raising awareness of adult learning benefits and opportunities.
2. Making learning more flexible and accessible for adults.
3. Better sharing and targeting financing to increase participation in adult learning.

Opportunity 1: Raising awareness of adult learning benefits and opportunities

The motivation of adults and employers to engage in learning is strongly linked to the benefits they perceive. Adults can have both intrinsic motives to engage in learning (e.g. learning for its own sake or socialising) and extrinsic motives (e.g. economic benefits, obliged by law or employer, professional, personal). Employers may be motivated by the need to address skills shortages; retain talented workers; improve productivity, creativity, innovation and profitability; or meet legislative requirements.

Individuals' and employers' perceptions of the potential benefits of engaging in adult education and training depend on many factors. These include their perceptions about their learning needs and future skills needs, as well as the availability, quality, relevance and cost of training. Policy makers have an important role in monitoring and assuring the quality and relevance of adult learning (see Opportunities 2 to 4). In addition, public authorities, social partners, learning providers and career guides must actively raise awareness of the importance and value of learning.

Poland's Integrated Skills Strategy (ZSU) identified the insufficient creation of active learning attitudes and learning skills to be a challenge (MEN, 2019[37]), and highlights the importance of policy responses to help cultivate such learning attitudes. Various policies can be effective in raising the motivation of adults to participate in adult learning. These include raising awareness about the benefits of adult learning, engaging social partners to promote learning, and providing targeted guidance to adults about learning opportunities (European Commission, 2015[38]).

Raising general awareness of adult learning through strategies, campaigns and online portals

A number of measures are in place in Poland that help to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of adult learning, as well as available learning opportunities (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3. Measures helping to promote adult learning in Poland

	Description
Strategies	
Integrated Skills Strategy 2030 (General Part) (*Zintegrowana Strategia* Umiejetnosc, ZSU) (2019)	The ZSU seeks to ensure that Poland develops skills relevant to the needs of learners, society and the economy, and better co-ordinates the stakeholders involved in skills development.
Lifelong Learning Perspective (2013)	Seeks well-prepared adult learners in Poland who develop and expand their skills in response to challenges they may face in their professional, social and personal lives.
Human Capital Development Strategy (2013)	Seeks to ensure Poland develops human capital and utilises people's potential to participate fully in social, political and economic life over the life course. Raising competences and qualifications of citizens is one of the key goals, in particular in terms of lifelong and life-wide learning.
Awareness campaigns and awards	
Edurośli	A campaign from 15 September to 15 October 2019 to raise awareness about the importance of lifelong learning and its benefits. It will involve conferences, seminars, workshops, open days and meetings, educational picnics, outdoor training, shows, competitions and webinars.
Online portals of learning opportunities	
Database of Development Services (Box 3.2) https://uslugirozwojowe.parp.gov.pl/	Information on education and training offers (including vocational courses, counselling, postgraduate studies, mentoring or coaching). Helps individuals and employers to find courses suited to their needs and make informed adult learning decisions.
Integrated Qualifications Register (*Zintegrowany Rejestr Kwalifikacji*) www.kwalifikacje.gov.pl	Portal that collects information about qualifications included in the Integrated Qualifications System. The qualifications can be from general education and initial VET, higher education, and regulated and market qualifications. The users can find information on institutions awarding qualifications, intended learning outcomes or validation criteria.
Register of Training Institutions (*Rejestr Instytucji Szkoleniowych*)	Register of the institutions that can apply for public funding for training for those unemployed and jobseekers. Register is organised by voivodeship labour offices.
Navoica education platform https://navoica.pl/	A platform of massive open online courses (MOOCs) that advertises free online courses offered by Polish universities and institutions. Created by a consortium of institutions with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Source: PARP (2018[39]), Database of the Development Services, https://uslugirozwojowe.parp.gov.pl/; MEN (2019[40]), Integrated Qualification Register, www.kwalifikacje.gov.pl; Voivodeship Labour Offices (2019[41]), Register of Training Institutions, http://stor.praca.gov.pl/portal/#/ris.

Various national strategies since 2013 have promoted the importance of adult learning for Poland, but with mixed results. Individuals consulted in this project stated that stakeholder interest and engagement in the Lifelong Learning Perspective (2013) was short-lived. More recently, the government has consulted with a wide range of ministries and stakeholders to develop the ZSU (General Part). Over 90 stakeholders commented on the draft version. However, some individuals consulted in this project stated that there remains a lack of awareness about the ZSU, particularly in regional and rural areas (see Chapter 5).

Greater awareness about the concept of life-wide adult learning is needed in Poland. The country lacks widely understood terminology for adult learning that distinguishes it from adults' past experiences in formal initial education. Some participants in this project stated that the current terminology in Poland – Lifelong learning (*uczenie się przez całe życie*), adult education (AE) (*edukacja dorosłych*), adult education and training (AET) (*kształcenie i szkolenie dorosłych*) and continuing education (CE) (*kształcenie ustawiczne*) – is neither sufficiently comprehensive nor widely understood by adults. In particular, Poland is seeking to improve awareness of the potential of non-formal education and informal learning, for example by collecting better data on adult learning through the BKL.

Poland has made limited use of awareness campaigns. These may promote the benefits of adult learning, advertise specific programmes for adult learning or reach out to under-represented groups (OECD, 2019[42]). Research based on in depth case studies suggests that raising awareness of the benefits of adult learning can increase participation, and increase earnings for workers (European Commission, 2015[38]). Public awareness raising campaigns come in many forms in other OECD countries (Table 3.4). Poland is planning a nationwide campaign called *Edurośli* (www.edurosli.pl) to raise awareness about the importance of lifelong learning and its benefits. The campaign is planned to take place from 15 September to 15 October 2019 and will include conferences, seminars, workshops, open days and meetings, educational picnics and happenings, outdoor training, shows, competitions and webinars. It acknowledges the importance of dialogue and collective effort for improving lifelong learning in Poland and brings together different stakeholders, including government ministries and agencies, employers and employer associations, training providers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), subnational governments, artistic schools, sports clubs, museums, libraries, community centres and local activists.

Social partners do not seem to be highly involved in awareness raising activities. Vocational and continuing education centres appear to be the only career guidance providers collaborating with employers and their associations (Eurydice, 2019[43]). One notable exception is the Malopolska lifelong learning partnership (see Box 5.5. in Chapter 5). In some OECD countries social partners have an important role in promoting adult learning. For example, the Learning Regions – Promotion of Networks programme in Germany is comprised of regional networks designed to build linkages between employers, formal and non-formal education and training providers. Evaluations of the programme showed that the networks and engagement of social partners has led to increased participation in learning, especially among socially disadvantaged groups (European Commission, 2015[38]).

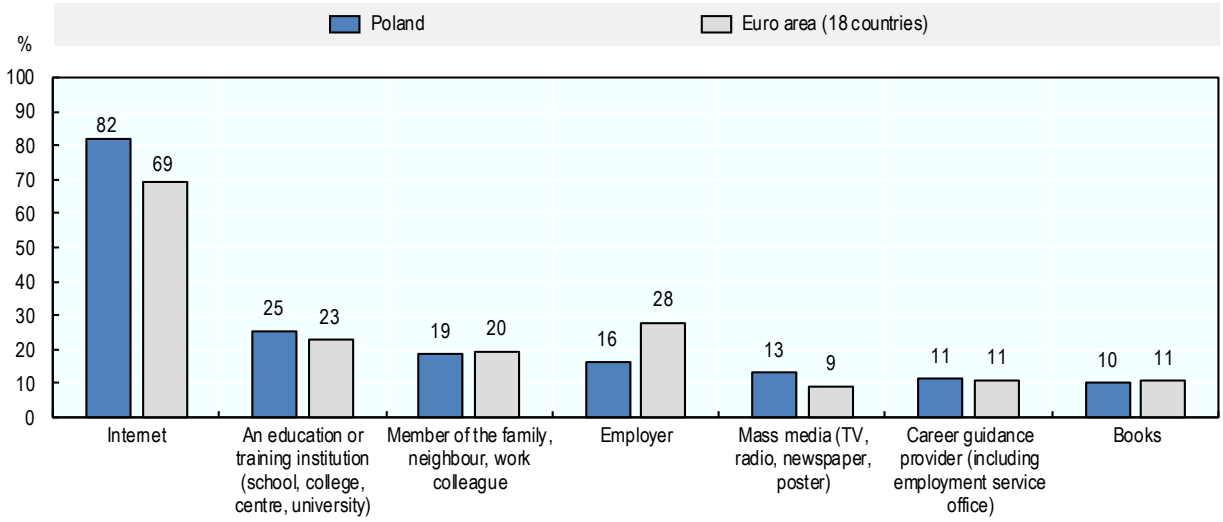
Table 3.4. Public awareness raising campaigns and their focus in selected OECD countries

	Focus						Name
	General adult learning	Specific programmes	Specific target groups	Basic skills	High-demand skills	Firms	
Estonia	x	x	x	X			*Jälle kooli* (Back to school again)
Germany		x	x	X		x	*Zukunftsstarter* (Future starter) *Nur Mut* (Courage)
Hungary		x					*Szakmák Éjszakája* (Night of Vocations)
Ireland		x	x	X	x		Take the first step
Korea		x			x	x	Vocational Skill Month
Portugal	x	x		X			*Qualifica*
Slovenia	x	x	x	X			Lifelong Learning Week
Switzerland	x	x	x				*Simplement mieux* (simply better)

Source: OECD (2019[42]), *Getting Skills Right: Future-Ready Adult Learning Systems*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264311756-en.

There are a number of different channels through which adults can access information on available learning opportunities. In Poland, as in many other EU countries, most individuals look for information through the Internet. Since online information requires digital skills and Internet access, it mainly benefits high-skilled adults and needs to be complemented with other information channels for low-skilled adults. A relatively high share of Polish adults seek information from education and training institutions, but relatively few seek information from their employers (Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8. Where adults look for information on learning possibilities, 2011

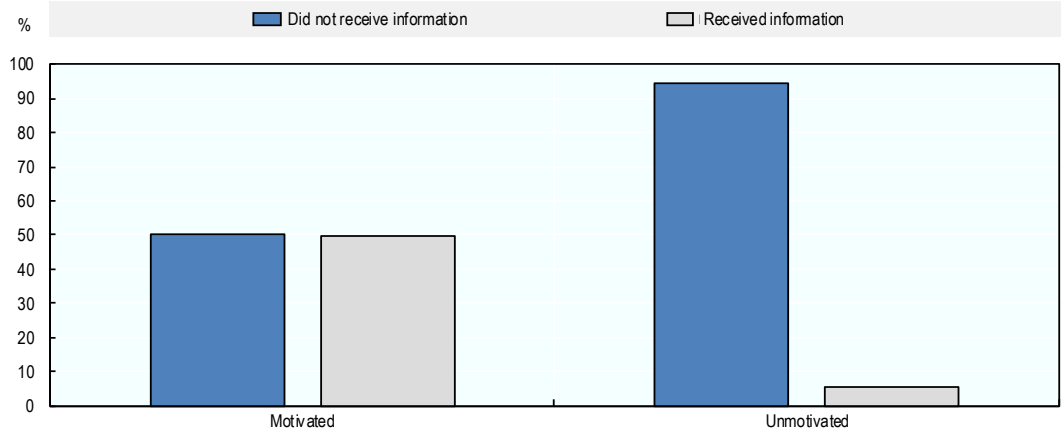


Source: Eurostat (2019[44]), Adult Education Survey 2011, Distribution of sources to look for information on learning possibilities, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng_aes_187&lang=en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036443

Despite these varied information sources, relatively few Polish adults (5%) with low motivation to participate in education and training receive information on adult learning opportunities, compared to 50% of adults with motivation to participate (Figure 3.9). This suggests that more needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of these channels and to tailor them specifically to adults lacking motivation to participate. Additional public awareness examples that Poland could consider are featured in Table 3.4.

Figure 3.9. Information about adult learning reaching adults, by motivation level



Note: "Motivated" are respondents who participated in education or training but wanted to participate more. "Unmotivated" are respondents who did not participate and did not want to participate.
Source: OECD calculations based on Eurostat (2019[23]), Adult Education Survey 2016 (database) https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036462

The Database of Development Services (BUR) has recently become Poland's main online portal on adult learning opportunities (Box 3.2). It is growing in its coverage and provides complementary information on, for example, available funding and user satisfaction with different training programmes.

Box 3.2. Relevant Polish example: Database of Development Services

The Database of Development Services (***Baza Usług Rozwojowych***, BUR) is a nationwide, free online information platform that provides common access to information on education and training offers (including vocational courses, counselling, postgraduate studies, mentoring or coaching). It helps individuals and employers find courses suited to their needs and make informed learning decisions.

The database, administrated by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP), contains detailed information on available training programmes and their providers, distinguishing between services that can be subsidised by the European Social Fund (ESF) and those funded through private funds. It also provides some information on user (participant and employer) satisfaction of training. Training providers registered in the database are verified by the PARP based on their capacity to provide high-quality educational services. Sectoral skills councils issue recommendations on learning outcomes that should be covered by programmes in the BUR, and some funding is available to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) using such programmes.

Since its launch in 2017, the database has registered over 4 591 education and training providers offering over 314 000 services, among which about 85% can be subsidised from the ESF. It is expected that by the end of 2023 approximately 5 000 entities will be registered and will provide development services via the BUR to ensure the availability and quality of these services for entrepreneurs and employees.

Source: PARP (2019[45]), Database of Development Services, https://uslugirozwojowe.parp.gov.pl/; MIiR (2018[46]), *Wytyczne w zakresie realizacji przedsięwzięć z udziałem środków Europejskiego Funduszu Społecznego w obszarze przystosowania przedsiębiorców i pracowników do zmian na lata 2014-2020* [Guidelines for the implementation of European Social Fund supported projects for entrepreneurs' and employees' adaptation to change for 2014-2020], www.funduszeeuropejskie.gov.pl/media/49444/Wytyczne_adaptacyjnosc_1012018.pdf.

However, the BUR has some limitations. According to an evaluation study, users find navigation and registration difficult. It also lacks widespread recognition as a commercial tool among education and training providers, and as a source of information for adults. Only limited data are collected on the usage of the portal and user characteristics, which inhibits further tailoring to users' needs and means that those implementing the BUR lack knowledge about usage patterns and users' experiences with the tool (PARP, 2017[47]). PARP has made progress implementing the recommendations of the evaluation study, and should continue to do so in order to improve awareness of adult learning.

Raising awareness through these channels is necessary, but may be insufficient for motivating some Polish adults to learn. Even when the information reaches disengaged adults they may be unable and/or unwilling to utilise it effectively. Adults may be overwhelmed by the diversity of adult education and training providers and programmes (Table 3.2), and inhibited from choosing the most relevant option. It is therefore important to complement awareness raising initiatives with career guidance services.

Recommendation for raising general awareness of adult learning

- **Raise general awareness of adult learning benefits and opportunities through improved promotion of the Integrated Skills Strategy (ZSU), campaigns and online portals**. The government should increase efforts to promote the Integrated Skills Strategy 2030 (ZSU) in regional fora and social partner dialogue, such as labour market councils and conventions. The government, subnational authorities and social partners should implement an ongoing multimedia campaign to raise awareness of adult learning. The campaign should promote the concepts, importance and benefits of lifelong and life-wide learning; available learning programmes and

recognition of prior learning opportunities; and career guidance services and funding support (including the National Training Fund [KFS]). It could include a national award scheme that publicises stories of individuals and enterprises successfully engaging in different forms of adult learning. The Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) should continue to implement the improvements recommended in recent evaluations of the Database of Development Services (BUR), in order to make the portal more user-friendly and comprehensive (in terms of the programmes included, user satisfaction data, career advice, recognition of prior learning and available public funding).

Raising awareness through targeted guidance and outreach activities

Guidance and counselling are defined as "a range of activities such as information, assessment, orientation and advice to assist learners, trainers and other staff to make choices relating to education and training programmes or employment opportunities." (Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council). These activities can include counselling for personal, career development or educational guidance; assessment of skills and mental health; information on learning and labour market opportunities; consultation with peers, relatives or educators; vocational preparation; and referrals to learning or career specialists (Raschauer and Resch, 2016[48]).

A range of organisations provide education and career guidance to adults in Poland. Public employment services at the county level are the major providers of guidance services, but these focus on unemployed adults. Centres for information and career planning at voivodeship labour offices offer services to all adults regardless of their employment status. Adults can also receive guidance from education and training institutions directly, or other non-government sources (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5. Career guidance and counselling services for adults in Poland

Provider	Target groups/clients	Guidance services	Number of providers	Number of clients
Schools, including schools for adults	Students	Psychological and educational support, counselling and guidance sessions, workshops and training in education and career guidance.	All schools	Obligatory classes for all students, except adults, other services for all
Academic career offices in higher education institutions (see Chapter 2)	University students and graduates	Providing information on the labour market and possibilities of raising professional qualifications; collecting, classifying and sharing job offers, internships and training; keeping a database of university students and graduates interested in finding a job.	About 340 (2015)	NA
Centres of vocational activisation (*Ośrodki Aktywizacji Zawodowej*)	Soldiers, former soldiers and their families	Career guidance and counselling, support in requalification and apprenticeships. They work under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence.	8 regional + 1 central	NA
Public employment agencies:				
County (*powiat*) labour offices	Registered unemployed and jobseekers	Career advisers provide guidance to individuals or groups on changing qualifications, skills/career self-assessments and learning opportunities, among other things.	341	277 865 + 77 444 in groups (2017)
Centres for information and career planning at (*województwo*) voivodeship (regional) labour offices	Unemployed people, jobseekers, school leavers, young people in schools, employers	Choosing or changing a career, career planning, gaining higher qualifications, identifying own competencies and interests, career development planning.	45	NA

Provider	Target groups/clients	Guidance services	Number of providers	Number of clients
Voluntary Labour Corps (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy)	Youth (15-25 years-old), in particular those disadvantaged	Group and individual counselling, workshops, support in entering a labour market.	49 information centres, 99 youth career centres, 106 job clubs	NA
Employment agencies (*Agencje zatrudnienia*)	Jobseekers and employees	Employment agency (including part-time jobs), personal counselling, career counselling.	8 599, out of them 1 464 offer career counseling services	NA
Non-governmental organisations and private entities	Unemployed, jobseekers, employees	Various services related to career and personal counselling, often offered by individuals.	NA	

Source: Eurydice (2019[43]), *Guidance and Counselling in a Lifelong Learning Approach*, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/guidance-and-counselling-lifelong-learning-approach-50_en; Euroguidance (2018[49]), *Guidance System in Poland* www.euroguidance.eu/guidance-system-in-poland; MRPiPS, (2010[50]), *System poradnictwa zawodowego w Polsce* [Vocational counselling system in Poland], http://eurodoradztwo.praca.gov.pl/publikacje/46.pdf; Voivodeship Labour Offices (2019[51]), Register of Employment Agencies, http://stor.praca.gov.pl/portal/#/kraz/wyszukiwarka; Nyms-Gorna and Sobczak, (2018[52]), *Akademickie biura karier i ich rola w poradnictwie zawodowym dla studentów* [Academic career offices and their role in vocational counselling for students], http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-fdb63bfa-c7de-4b13-8e25-059ead69bc4b/c/zn26_9.pdf.

Despite these varied providers, few Polish adults receive guidance on learning opportunities. The 2011 Adult Education Survey (AES) found that about 11% of Polish adults sought information on learning possibilities from a career guidance provider (including employment service office), which is consistent with the EU average. The number of career advisers available for adults is low: in 2017, there were 2 144 career adviser in the public employment service, equating to one adviser per 564 unemployed people (MRPiPS, 2016[53]). Although this ratio has improved in recent years due to the fall in unemployment exceeding the fall in the number of advisers, participants in this project highlighted the size of the workforce as a constraint to reaching adults. Indeed, the OECD previously recommended expanding career guidance services in active labour market policies (ALMPs) (OECD, 2018[54]).

Tools for assessing adult learning needs can reveal specific benefits of learning, but are not widely utilised in Poland by career guides. Methods to gather information on adults' needs can include psychological tests, questionnaires and assessments (Euroguidance, 2007[55]). For example, the OECD's Education and Skills Online assessment tool provides individual level results measuring literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments, among other things. In Poland, psychological measurement tools are only occasionally used by career advisors in some labour offices (Euroguidance, 2018[49]), and Poland's ZSU identified the country's limited experience in assessing and addressing adults' individual learning needs as a challenge (MEN, 2019[37]). Career guides – trained professionals who advise adults on job and learning opportunities – have a critical role to play in highlighting the potential benefits of learning to adults through such tools.

Poland lacks services to raise awareness among enterprises of training opportunities and benefits. According to the Law on Employment Promotion, career guidance services focus on supporting individuals by providing information on employment opportunities, career paths or choosing an occupation. Although the KFS can fund services for identifying an enterprise's skill needs, the uptake of such services has been low (MRPiPS, 2019[56]). However, PARP runs several projects that aim to support enterprises identify development barriers, create development plans, and diagnose skill or training needs (see Chapter 4).

Apart from guidance services, some programmes seek to reach out to adults to motivate them to learn. Centres of knowledge and education (Lokalne Ośrodki Wiedzy i Edukacji, LOWE) is a pilot project from 2016 that aimed to reach parents and carers with low skills living in disadvantaged areas through their children, and to help these adults develop key competences to improve their prospects in the labour market. The project also aimed to develop methods and tools used by teachers to work with adults. The pilot programme resulted in the educational activation in five provinces of 3 700 adults who had not participated, or had only participated sporadically, in any form of organised learning.

Recommendation for raising awareness through targeted measures

- **Raise awareness through improved targeted guidance and outreach services**. The government should systematically monitor the effectiveness of publicly funded career guidance services for adults. It should ensure a sufficient and equitable supply of career advisers for adults across regions, and consider funding private career guidance services. Career guidance providers should more systematically use available skills profiling tools and skills needs information. PARP and social partners should collaborate to expand outreach activities to micro- and small-sized enterprises, particularly in low-value-added sectors. The government should collaborate with schools, welfare offices, libraries and other public institutions to clarify and support their role in outreach to disengaged adults. Finally, these improvements should be made in the context of developing a system of lifelong guidance in Poland (see Chapter 5).

Opportunity 2: Making learning more flexible and accessible for adults

In Poland, as in other OECD countries, many individuals and employers with the motivation to engage in adult learning face time-related barriers. For individuals, responsibilities for children and/or elderly family members on top of their working schedules may leave them with little time for education and training. For enterprises, staff workloads and the time needed to co-ordinate education and training may leave little time for participation. As noted earlier, after "no need for further training" (Opportunity 1), Polish adults identify time – "family responsibilities" and "schedule" – as the next most common obstacle to participating in adult learning (Figure 3.7). Furthermore, about 25% of enterprises that do not provide training report that "high workload and limited/no time available for staff to participate in continuous vocational training (CVT)" are an obstacle (Eurostat, 2015[31]). In both cases, though, time-related barriers are less common than for the EU overall.

Countries can reduce time-related barriers to education and training in various ways. For individuals, embedding learning into the workplace (including basic skills training for the low skilled) and making programmes more flexible in terms of delivery (part time, online) and design (modular, credit-based courses) can reduce time-related barriers. Recognising adults' prior learning can shorten the duration of learning programmes for adults who already possess relevant skills (Kis and Windisch, 2018[57]). While aged and childcare services can give adult carers more time for education and training, many participants in this project questioned the desirability and feasibility of reducing adults' "family responsibilities", given the importance afforded to these responsibilities in Polish culture. Participants also stated that policies like training leave (which already exist in Polish legislation) are unfeasible for most Polish enterprises as they are small and have limited resources. For employers, flexibility and external support to identify and implement relevant training can reduce time-related barriers. It is essential that policies for reducing such obstacles are targeted at the adults and enterprises that engage the least in learning – such as low-skilled and older adults and those in rural areas, as well as SMEs.

Expanding adult learning in Polish workplaces

Work-based learning is highly accessible for employed adults, who do not need to add time to their working day to participate. There are also many reasons why providing work-based learning makes sense for employers, including higher productivity and profits. However, a range of market failures and barriers (e.g. information failures, liquidity constraints and the risk of poaching) mean that employers' actual investments in education and training by may be suboptimal (OECD, 2017[58]). The barriers are likely to be larger for SMEs, which have less capacity to absorb the time and costs of training, and who may not want to risk training employees in transferable skills to then have them "poached" by other employers. Public financial support is likely to be needed to help reduce such barriers to work-based training (Opportunity 3).

Poland is not taking full advantage of work-based non-formal or informal learning as a means to minimise time-related barriers. Although the intensity of adult education and training in Poland is relatively high overall, workplace training rates and intensity are relatively low (Eurostat, 2015[31]). According to PIAAC 2012, about 60% of workers in Poland participated in job-related informal learning in 2012, below the OECD average (about 70%). According to a 2015 survey of enterprises, about 37% of workers in Poland (in enterprises with 10+ employees) participated in vocational training provided by their employer, slightly below the EU average (41%). The intensity of workplace training (21 hours per participant) in Poland is also lower than the EU average (25 hours per participant) and the intensity of other types of training in Poland. The country directs less public funding to enterprise training than the OECD average: only 0.17% of enterprises that provide training in Poland reported benefiting from government subsidies and/or tax incentives to provide training, compared to 8.7% across the OECD on average (Eurostat, 2015[31]). Public funding has increased with the introduction of the KFS in 2015 (Box 3.6), but there are challenges to firms effectively utilising these funds (Opportunity 3).

In particular, Poland is not utilising the work-based provision of basic skills training to reach low-skilled adults. International evidence suggests that integrating basic skills training into the workplace is a relatively effective way to reach low-skilled adults (Windisch, 2015[59]). If the course is run in worktime and paid it can reach those who are not normally involved in continuing education and training (Benseman, 2012[60]; Hollenbeck and Timmeney, 2009[61]; Vorhaus et al., 2011[62]). For employees who participate on a voluntarily basis and have the opportunity to use their (improved) skills in the workplace (Wolf, Evans and Bynner, 2009[63]), basic skills training can lead to improved literacy, numeracy and confidence (Benseman, 2012[60]); enhanced job performance (Bates and Holton, 2004[64]); job retention (Campbell, 2003[65]); and promotions (Askov, 2000[66]). For employers, workplace basic skills provision can lead to reduced error rates, better safety records, increased employee retention and morale, and an improvement of the lifelong learning culture in the workplace (Benseman, 2012[60]; Conference Board, 2006[67]).

However, Poland's basic skills programmes are largely classroom based within educational institutions, offered as part of formal or non-formal education. In 2016, schools and other training institutions in Poland offered 507 general competence courses, including foreign languages, information and communication technology (ICT), entrepreneurship, and other courses (Eurydice, 2019[68]). Poland's "Digital Poland of Equal Opportunities" training programme has sought to increase digital literacy skills among adults aged 50 and over. To date, however, trainers and employers have not collaborated to embed such training into workplaces, including into existing on-the-job training. The OECD recently concluded that reaching out to employers, in particular Poland's SMEs, to involve them in planning vocational education and adult training and providing work placements would create more learning opportunities in line with labour market needs (OECD, 2018[54]).

Poland's new project, Chance – New Opportunities for Adults, provides an opportunity to pilot the workplace provision of basic skills training. The project aims to identify innovative educational ways to support low-skilled adults, and involves the development and testing of ten different support models for at least 1 000 adults with low basic skills. A substantial scope of the project concentrates on identifying new ways of reaching and encouraging adults to raise their skills, and on the development and testing of new ways/methods of education in terms of form, time and place – addressing the individual needs of participants. After completing the path of support provided within the project, the skills, knowledge and competences of participants will be validated. The project will be implemented by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System in co-operation with the Educational Research Institute. It has a budget of approximately PLN 30 million (Polish zlotys, approximately EUR 7.2 million). Trade unions and employer associations will have an important role to play in expanding adult learning for workers, as they have in the United Kingdom and Ireland (Box 3.3).

Box 3.3. Relevant international examples: Expanding adult learning for workers

United Kingdom - Unionlearn

With the 2001 adoption of the Skills for Life strategy, which sought to strengthen the literacy and numeracy skills of adults in the United Kingdom, the role of the trade union has gradually expanded to be the facilitator of learning in the workplace. The union acts as an advocate of learning and supports both employers and workers to increase the provision of education programmes. According to the House of Commons, about 15-20% of the union agenda is now dedicated to learning. In the United Kingdom, the Department for Business, Information & Skills (DfBIS) funds union-supported training in the workplace, while unions fund the other half.

The main body responsible for this role in the United Kingdom is Unionlearn, established by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in 2006 to initiate union-led learning. Some 40 000 trained volunteers make up the Union Learning Reps (ULRs), who carry out the agenda on the ground. ULRs encourage the demand side of learning by emphasising the value of learning, and assist the supply side by engaging with workplace training centres to increase the relevance of learning that meets the needs of enterprises.

A central component of the programme is the Union Learning Fund, established in 1998, which involves Unionlearn, the TUC's Learning and Skills Organisation and DfBIS. Although DfBIS does not provide direct funding, it provides direction on the type and level of learning administered by the fund. The fund aims to engage with employers to develop new apprenticeship standards to help the government-wide effort to deliver 3 million apprenticeships by 2020, as well as to build union capacity in skills training and to engage the most disadvantaged learners. The fund now supports more than 50 unions in 700 workplaces.

Ireland - Software Skillnet

Technology Ireland is the largest business organisation representing Ireland's tech sector of ICT, digital and software technology companies. The association has over 200 members and its activities include promoting and facilitating collaboration between tech companies, pooling industry knowledge and experience to develop expertise, accelerating the transfer or knowledge and information between members and leading training programmes and initiatives for people working in the Irish technology sector.

In 2006, Technology Ireland established the Software Skillnet, the National Training Network for the Software and Technology sector in Ireland. The Software Skillnet's mission is to enable companies with tech functions to remain competitive by facilitating active talent development and continuous up-skilling for workers. The initiative is primarily targeted towards those in employment within the technology sector, allowing companies within the Technology Ireland association access to quality skills training for their employees and ensuring that educational programmes continue to align with changing sector needs. These opportunities facilitate the development of both technical skills and core professional skills, and expose participants to practical uses of these skills.

Over the past six years, 3 500 people from 450 companies have participated in programmes run by the Software Skillnet. Courses vary from single and multi-day workshops to two year post graduate diplomas and a MSc programme.

Source: Unionlearn (2018[69]), *Introduction to the ULF - Unionlearn*, www.unionlearn.org.uk/introduction-ulf; Windisch (2015[59]), *Adults with low literacy and numeracy skills: a literature review on policy intervention*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264272415-en; Technology Ireland (2019[70]), *Software Skillnet*, https://www.softwareskillnet.ie/who-we-are/; Technology Ireland (2019[71]), *Technology Ireland*, https://www.technology-ireland.ie/.

Recommendation for expanding adult learning in Polish workplaces

- **Collaborate with social partners to expand adult learning, including basic skills programmes, in Polish workplaces**. The government, in collaboration with employer associations and trade unions, should raise awareness of opportunities for, and benefits of, non-formal and informal learning in workplaces. As part of the new project, Chance – New Opportunities for Adults, government, social partners and experts should pilot the delivery of publicly funded basic skills programmes (literacy, numeracy, ICT, financial, literacy) in workplaces. These should be targeted to low-skilled occupations and sectors in the first instance, such as craft, related trades and elementary professions. In light of lessons from the pilot, the government and social partners should set targets for allocating part of the National Training Fund (KFS) to adult learning in workplaces (see Opportunity 3: Better sharing and targeting financing to increase participation in adult learning).

Increasing the flexibility of adult education and training

Some participants in this project stated that formal education programmes in Poland are too inflexible for adults. Many countries offer flexible education and training programmes for adults, including on a part-time basis, in the evenings, on weekends, as online distance learning, as MOOCs, via gamification, and in modular and/or credit-based formats (OECD, 2019[42]).

Flexible learning opportunities for adults are limited in post-secondary education. Higher education institutions deliver a relatively high number of courses on a part-time basis, and the percentage of students in part-time programmes is among the highest in the OECD (30%) (OECD.Stat, 2017[72]) despite part-time students having to pay tuition fees. However, modular courses are non-existent in higher education. Modular courses allow adult learners to complete self-contained learning modules on the skills they currently lack, and combine modules from different kinds of subjects and provision to eventually gain a full (formal) qualification (OECD, 2019[42]). There are no plans to introduce these types of courses in Poland. The current supply of formal programmes designed for first-time students may be unattractive for adult learners who need to develop specific skills and who are relatively time-constrained. Expanding flexible learning will likely require stronger incentives for institutions and support for teachers (see Chapter 2).

Trials of modular VET courses in Poland have had mixed success, but new efforts are underway. In the period 2014-2016, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy ran a project to develop modular courses for many occupations. They were considered of good quality, but did not gain popularity because they required a change of teaching paradigm, new teaching methods and teacher training. Poland has since introduced short vocational courses (*kwalifikacyjny kurs zawodowy*, KKZ, and *kurs umiejętności zawodowych*, KUZ). KKZ is a course for adults outside of schools that allows them to participate in the same exams for vocational qualifications as graduates of initial VET schools. KUZ is a course that covers part of a vocational programme to supplement adults' prior learning. The exam success rate for participants of KKZ is significantly higher than for those of regular VET schools (85% vs. 72% in 2018) (Central Examination Board, 2018[73]). Poland could potentially learn from Denmark's experience implementing flexible vocational training for adults (Box 3.4).

The online delivery of formal education in Poland has been limited, but appears to be growing. About 4% of Polish adults who use the Internet participated in an online course, compared to 7% for the EU (2017) (Eurostat, 2019[4]). However, the share of adults who undertook some training as distance learning was higher in Poland (43.7%) than in all OECD PIAAC countries except Lithuania (2012). The latest data from BKL (2017) show a slight increase in online participation to 6%. A national platform (Navoica education platform) has recently been created to enable higher education institutions to provide free and widely available courses (MOOCs). This involves public co-financing of the design and implementation of one of the two types of e-learning courses: 1) educational courses recommended for students, constituting an additional element of the education process; and 2) courses available to all users.

One expected outcome of the platform is the increased involvement of adult learners in higher education. As of August 2019, however, there were only five courses offered on the platform (MNiSW, 2019[74]).

Box 3.4. Relevant international example: Flexible formal education for adults

Denmark – Labour market training centres

The Danish adult learning system offers a high degree of flexibility. The adult vocational training programmes provided by labour market training centres (*Arbejdsmarkedsuddannelse,* AMU) are geared to equip low-skilled and skilled workers resident in Denmark who are currently in employment, which emphasises the flexibility of training provision to accommodate working schedules.

AMUs offer learners the freedom to select courses individually from its catalogue of 3 000 adult vocational training programmes, and to combine courses from the 200 single-subject courses in the general education system. Moreover, students can combine courses from non-formal education programmes in independent institutions and across different subjects. As these courses are short term, ranging from half a day to six weeks, with an average of three days, they can easily be combined to meet an individual's needs.

The flexibility of training courses extends into the learning environment, where training can take place in a traditional classroom, in open workshops, through distance learning or in the workplace. Although many training programmes take place during working hours, weekday evenings and weekends are also available. Once a course is completed, an AMU certificate is issued and can be included in an assessment of prior learning for credit transfer to a mainstream VET programme in the same field. Such a high degree of flexibility in formal education lowers barriers to adult learning.

Source: OECD (2019[42]), *Getting Skills Right: Future-Ready Adult Learning Systems*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264311756-en; Ministry of Children and Education (2018[75]), *Adult vocational training*, www.eng.uvm.dk/adult-education-and-continuing-training/adult-vocational-training.

Recommendation for increasing the flexibility of adult education and training

- **Monitor and support the supply of flexible education programmes for adults**. The MEN and the MNiSW should monitor the availability and uptake of flexible (modular, part time, online, etc.) higher education and VET programmes for adults. Building on the lessons learned from this monitoring, the ministries, with social partners, should support the expansion of flexible programmes. They should do this by raising awareness among providers, enterprises and individuals of the opportunities for, and benefits of, flexible delivery. The ministries should consider funding the development of modular programmes in higher education, and associated guidance and building capacity, as well as setting institutional targets for flexible delivery.

Improving recognition of prior learning for adults

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is not yet widespread or standardised in Poland. According to participants in this project, some sectors do have well-developed RPL systems, such as craft chambers and blacksmiths. However, Poland does not yet have a single coherent system for the validation of learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal education. Existing procedures are applied in various sectors and related to various practices and validation processes (Eurydice, 2019[76]). Poland's ZSU identified weak procedures for validating skills acquired outside the education system.

Intensive work has been underway for several years to introduce changes to RPL. This involves changes in the legislation; the development of a system for validation, certification and transfer of learning outcomes and qualifications; and the revision and standardisation of terminology.

The Integrated Qualifications System (Zintegrowany System Kwalifikacji, ZSK) is the underpinning system for RPL in Poland. It includes non-formal market-based qualifications in the Integrated Qualifications Register according to the 8-level Polish Qualifications Framework, which articulates the knowledge, skills and social competences of different levels and types of qualifications. However, enterprises offering tailored internal training may not see any benefits from formally validating workers' skills. Some enterprises perceive that validating workers' skills under the ZSK is administratively burdensome and, by virtue of making workers' skills more transparent, could lead to 'poaching' by competitors (Cedefop, 2016[77]). More specific challenges revealed by the piloting of the ZSK include: 1) problematic recording of step-by-step validation; 2) problems with documentation (e.g. lack of habit in collecting documents); 3) difficulties in determining competences through self-assessment; and, 4) mastering the validation-related terminology (IBE, 2015[78]).

Extramural exams for adults in external locations were introduced in initial VET education and are organised by the Central Examination Board. Any adult wishing to complete this education level can enter, and after passing exams receive a formal diploma, equal to those awarded to school graduates. In the school year 2017/18, some 895 adults took part in extramural exams, with a success rate of 87% (Central Examination Board, 2018[73]).

In 2014 a system of RPL was introduced in Polish higher education. All universities were obliged to introduce a mechanism that allowed individuals to recognise their formally or non-formally obtained learning outcomes. Ongoing research on the RPL practices in Poland's higher education system suggests that those solutions are rarely put into practice. Individuals and institutions are often unaware of their rights and responsibilities for RPL, or otherwise report low benefits or incentives to implementing RPL (Gmaj et al., 2019[79]).

There are several initiatives supporting RPL in the Polish education system. The Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, IBE) designed two tools that aim to support these processes. The Database of Good Practices in Validation and Quality Assurance (http://walidacja.ibe.edu.pl/dobrepraktyki/) collects international and national examples on the use of non-standard validation practices that support RPL and work-based learning. "My portfolio" (https://mojeportfolio.ibe.edu.pl/) is an online tool that helps individuals collect all of their achievements, both formal (diplomas, qualifications etc.) and informal (e.g. samples of manufacture products), and present them in a form that is clear for employers and education authorities. Both of these tools have the potential to enhance RPL in Poland, but will need to be further developed and better promoted among stakeholders. This could be informed by the experiences of The Netherlands and Portugal in implementing RPL (Box 3.5).

Box 3.5. Relevant international example: Recognition of prior learning

Netherlands – Recognition of prior learning (*Erkenning van Verworven Competenties*)

Through its adoption of the Lisbon Strategy to bolster Europe's competitiveness and to make it a knowledge-based economy, the Netherlands institutionalised RPL and established the Dutch Knowledge Centre for RPL in 2000. Prior to reform in 2016, the RPL (*Erkenning van Verworven Competenties*, EVC) process would lead to a certificate of experience (*Ervaringscertificaat*) for formal accreditation, or an experience profile (*Ervaringsprofiel*).

With the implementation of the 2016 reform, existing EVC was categorised into two tracks: labour market and education. In the labour market track, the certificate of experience that validates knowledge, skills and competences is used towards career mobility or advancement. Individuals apply for an assessment at a private EVC provider. The cost of attaining EVC varies between EUR 1 000 and EUR 1 500, depending on the providers and on the size of the portfolio (for individuals, the costs of EVC assessment can be deducted from income tax). The certificate can be used as a demonstration of an individual's skills, for job interviews or for a career development plan. In the education track, an individual applies for an assessment with an education institution, which can determine whether to conduct the assessment with or without a private EVC provider. Under the new system, education institutions are responsible for validating learning outcomes to ensure effective learning provision, as the learner could be granted an exemption when qualified.

The diffuse responsibilities throughout validation and certification processes reflect a strong tradition of involving social partners in Dutch society, and emphasise the shared responsibilities in the skills system.

Portugal – Sistema Nacional de Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Competências

Portugal's prior learning assessment and recognition system is called the *Sistema Nacional de Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Competências* (RVCC). As a part of the New Opportunities Initiative (*Iniciativa Novas Oportunidades*, NOI), which launched in 2005, RVCC has led to the recognition of skills for over 500 000 adults. Portugal's 303 Qualifica Centres have been integral in the recognition process by offering services in RVCC, as well as providing vocational guidance to adults. Qualifica Centres report enrolment information and activities to the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional, ANQEP), which feeds analysis back to the centres for an effective self-evaluation process.

Source: OECD (2017[80]), *Getting Skills Right: Good Practice in Adapting to Changing Skill Needs: A Perspective on France, Italy, Spain, South Africa and the United Kingdom*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264277892-en; OECD (2018[81]), *Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Portugal: Strengthening the Adult-Learning System*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264298705-en; OECD (2019[42]), *Getting Skills Right: Future-Ready Adult Learning Systems*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264311756-en; OECD (2017[82]), *Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report: Netherlands*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264287655-en; The Knowledge Centre (2014[83]), *Recognition of prior learning (RPL) in the Netherlands*, www.nationaal-kenniscentrum-evc.nl/images/English/RPL-in-the-Netherlands.pdf; EMCC (2019[84]), *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/emcc/erm/support-instrument/recognition-of-prior-learning-rpl.

Recommendation for improving the recognition of prior learning for adults

- **Simplify, harmonise and expand the recognition of prior learning practices across the education and training system**. The MEN and MNiSW should monitor the quantity of RPL occurring across the education system and sectors. They should accelerate implementation of RPL to enable adults to fast-track qualifications. This should involve raising awareness among responsible institutions about their capacities and duties in relation to RPL, identifying opportunities to simplify RPL procedures, creating stronger incentives for enterprises to participate in RPL, and formalising and standardising RPL processes across sectors and institutions based on best practices.

Opportunity 3: Better sharing and targeting financing to increase participation in adult learning

Individuals and employers face various incentives to invest in adult education and training, but market failures and equity concerns also imply an important role for government financing.

Individuals can accrue direct personal, employment and social benefits from participating in adult learning. Employers benefit when education and training leads to more motivated, adaptable and productive workers. Society as a whole benefits from adult learning when it improves employment and earnings, as this increases tax revenues and lowers public spending on labour market programmes. Society also benefits from adult learning that empowers adults to be healthier and more trusting of others, and active in volunteering and voting (OECD, 2016[5]).

However, despite these widespread benefits, in certain cases adult learning may not occur without targeted government support (OECD, 2017[58]). Financial barriers are acute for those earning low incomes and older workers. Individual employers may lack financial incentives to invest in workers' general skills as opposed to those specific to their business. Smaller employers in particular may lack the management capacity, time and budget to make substantive investments in training. Targeted public funding is therefore likely to be necessary for disadvantaged groups (such as adults with low incomes), certain types of businesses (such as smaller enterprises) and certain types of training (such as for general skills). However, public budgets for adult education and training are constrained, and within the EU often highly reliant on European Structural and Investment Funds.

These challenges make effective cost sharing and the efficient allocation of public funds essential for Poland as it seeks to raise participation in adult learning. Individuals, employers and government should find ways to share the cost of adult learning, based on who benefits from and has the capacity to pay for different types of adult learning and skills. Public funding for adult learning should increasingly be allocated based on evidence about where it yields the largest benefits and assists the most disadvantaged groups.

There are a number of different financial instruments that can help reduce the cost of adult learning. These can be largely classified into four categories (OECD, 2017[58]): 1) supply-side measures focusing on education and training providers; 2) demand-side measures targeting the individual; 3) demand-side measures targeting employers; 4) comprehensive measures covering both the supply and demand side (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6. Financial incentives for steering education and training

Supply-side measures *Institutions*	Demand-side measures *Individuals*	Demand-side measures *Employers*	Cross-cutting/ comprehensive measures
• Subsidies • Performance-based funding • Performance contracts • One-off (capital) funding • Regulating start-up of new programmes • Tuition fee policy	• Subsidies • Savings and asset building mechanisms • Time accounts • Tax incentives • Loans • Study/training leave	• Subsidies • Tax incentives • Loans • Training levies/funds • Job rotation • Payback clauses • Public procurement	• Subsidies • Sector covenants • Grants

Note: Not all measures can be easily classified into these categories. Measures designed to nudge behaviour on the supply side often have repercussions on the demand side, and the other way round.
Source: OECD (2017[58]), *Getting Skills Right: Financial Incentives for Steering Education and Training*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264272415-en.

Several ministries are involved in funding adult learning in Poland, drawing on different international and national funds and utilising the various mechanisms described above (Table 3.7). Some of this funding is channelled through counties and municipalities. In addition, many Polish individuals and enterprises are investing in different forms of education and training, although data on private expenditure are limited to irregular international surveys.

Table 3.7. Major funding sources for adult education in Poland

Funding sources	Details	Funding mechanism	Funding amount (million)
School education part of the general state budget subsidy	Funds for local government units running schools for adults, based on number of unrolled students*	Subsidy to institutions (supply side) Subsidies for individuals (demand side)	All subsidy: PLN 45 907*
Labour Fund	Expenditure of county (*powiat*) labour offices on: 1) training 2) traineeships 3) postgraduate studies		1) PLN 107 (2018) 2) PLN 851 (2018) 3) PLN 6 (2018)
	National Training Fund (KFS)	Subsidies for employers (demand side)	PLN 102 (2018)
	Apprenticeships for young doctors	Subsidies for individuals (demand side)	PLN 1 429 (2018)
	Vocational education and training of young people	Subsidies for employers : 1) subsidising the costs of young people's education 2) reimbursement of remuneration paid to young employees and social insurance contributions from reimbursed remuneration	PLN 459 (2018)
EU funds and other international assistance programme funds	Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (*Program Operacyjny: Wiedza, Edukacja, Rozwój*, PO WER) (ESF)	Subsidies for individuals and employers, loans for individuals (demand side)	EUR 1 591 ** (2014-2020)
	Regional operational programmes (RPO) (European Regional Development Fund [ERDF] and to a lesser extent ESF)	Subsidies for individuals, employers (demand side)	EUR 2 399 ** (2014-2020)
	Rural Development Programme (PROW) (European Agricultural Rural Development Fund, EARDF)	Subsidies for individuals and employers (demand side)	EUR 58
	Programme education (Norway grants)	Subsidies for educational institutions (supply side)	EUR 20 *
Central government budgets	For the training of specific occupational groups (e.g. government officials, medical doctors, teachers, soldiers)	Subsidies for institutions (supply side) and individuals (demand side)	
Other public programmes	Various programmes, e.g. ASOS*** programme, National Freedom Institute grants, grants of State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People, local government programmes	Subsidies for institutions (supply side) and individuals (demand side)	
Private funds (including employer funds)	Private spending on training is VAT exempt according to law	Tax incentives (demand side)	

Note: * Most of the subsidy is spent on education and training for students, not adults.
** A small share of the funds is spent on education and training for students, not adults.
*** Government's Programme for Social Activity of the Elderly (*Rządowy Program na rzecz Aktywności Społecznej Osób Starszych*, ASOS) is a programme from the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy.
Source: Eurydice (2019[85]), *Adult Education and Training Funding: Poland*, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/adult-education-and-training-funding-56_en; European Commission (2014[86]), *Partnership agreement with Poland – 2014-2020*, https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/partnership-agreement-poland-2014-20_en.

Better sharing the costs of adult learning

Government, employer and individual expenditure on adult learning is relatively low in Poland, and could be better co-ordinated and shared.

Government expenditure on adult education and training in Poland is relatively low by international standards according to various measures. Relatively few unemployed people are offered training as part of ALMPs (although for those who do receive training, Poland has relatively high expenditure per participant). Few individuals in job-related training (4.8%) (Eurostat, 2019[23]) and few enterprises (0.17%) (OECD, 2019[33]) report receiving public funding. Some public funding is distributed via county and municipal governments, who are responsible for managing primary and post-primary schools for adults, continuing education centres, practical training centres and further and in-service training centres (Eurydice, 2019[85]). Although data on adult learning spending by subnational authorities are not collected by central authorities, individual municipal budget documents suggest that adult learning spending is typically a very small part of the budget and generally targeted to second-chance schooling for adults.

Although data are limited, employer and individual expenditure on adult education and training also appear to be relatively low in Poland. Employer investment in training of employees as a percentage of total investment, and in non-formal training as a percentage of gross value added, are both below the OECD averages (OECD, 2019[33]). About 34% of the Polish enterprises that do not provide training cite cost as a reason, which is above the EU average (28%) (OECD, 2019[33]). According to PIAAC (2012), individuals in Poland are less likely to spend money on non-formal education and training and more likely to find training too expensive than their peers in other OECD countries. However, more recent data from the AES (2016) show that about 16% of adults in Poland cite cost as an obstacle to participating in adult learning, which is below the EU average (29%) (Figure 3.7).

The KFS is Poland's main measure to raise employer investment in adult learning (Box 3.6).

Box 3.6. Relevant Polish example: National Training Fund (*Krajowy Fundusz Szkoleniowy*, KFS)

The KFS is a part (2%) of the Labour Fund, which itself is funded from a levy on employers (2.3% of the basic salary per employee). The planned budget of the KFS for 2019 is about EUR 53 million (PLN 228 million). Any enterprise can apply to the KFS for an 80% refund of training costs, while micro-sized enterprises can apply for 100%, up to a maximum of 300% of Poland's average monthly salary per employee (equating to about EUR 3 200 [PLN 13 700] per employee in 2018). In 2017, over 18 000 enterprises received KFS funds, half of which were micro-sized enterprises.

The KFS is administered by different actors to achieve a wide range of priorities. The Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy sets priorities for 80% of the KFS budget. In 2019, these priorities included supporting adult learning to fill occupations experiencing skills shortages, and supporting low-educated adults, disadvantaged groups, teachers and trainers in VET, and people older than 45. The Labour Market Council sets priorities for the remaining 20% of the KFS budget. In 2019, these priorities included support for training employees of social integration centres and adults with disabilities, and for using new technologies. Voivodeship labour offices and the ministry itself receive 1% of the KFS for the promotion, evaluation etc. of the KFS. The remaining sum is distributed to enterprises (via *powiat* labour offices) (80%), and a reserve is at the Labour Market Council's disposal (20%).

Source: MRPiPS (2019[56]), National Training Fund, http://psz.praca.gov.pl/-/55453-krajowy-fundusz-szkoleniowy.

However, uptake of the KFS has been limited and many applications are unsuccessful. In 2017, 32% (10 000) of KFS applications were unsuccessful, because the funds were exhausted by the other 68% of applications. Although the cap for KFS applications is about EUR 3 200 per employee,

in 2017, successful enterprises received only about EUR 3 000 in total on average. A survey in the Dolnośląskie region (Grabowski and Janiszewski, 2016[87]) found that there was low awareness among enterprises of the KFS, and some enterprises reported too much bureaucracy associated with accessing the funds. Other evaluations of the KFS highlighted labour offices' concerns with the complexity of assessing applications (Szymańska and Ostrogórska, 2015[88]).

European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) have helped raise total investments in adult learning and encouraged cost sharing between governments, employers and individuals. The state, the European Commission and enterprises co-fund several temporary adult learning programmes. Poland's Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 allocates EUR 4 billion from various funds within the ESIF – the ESF, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Agricultural Rural Development Fund (EARDF) – to "Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning" (European Commission, 2014[86]). The co-financing from the ESF is targeted at employers and employees from micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. National and local governments and enterprises participate in funding. This support can be between 50% and 80% of the course/service costs. The highest co-financing is prioritised for enterprises with a smaller number of employees (up to ten). For larger enterprises to receive the higher level of co-financing, they need to meet other criteria, such as operating in industries with the largest development potential or regional strategic value, providing learning for older or low-skilled adults, or offering courses leading to qualifications from the Integrated Qualification Register (Zintegrowany Rejestr Kwalifikacji) (European Commission, 2014[86]).

However, Poland's reliance on the ESIF for adult learning has several drawbacks (OECD, 2018[54]). First, EU funding may fall in the future, as the EU reconsiders its priorities in a context of increased demands, from migration to security and defence. Second, as EU structural funds are time limited, gaps can open up in the provision of learning opportunities in between programmes or programming periods, or when policy changes occur and require public authorities to re-apply for EU funds and launch public tenders. The reliance on EU funding involves requirements and builds capacity for Poland to meet the European Commission's growing expectations of evaluation and accountability in adult learning (see the section below on Better targeting public adult learning and Chapter 5 on evaluation).

Given the number of actors involved in funding adult learning in Poland, and the limited data available on subnational, enterprise and individual spending, effective co-ordination will be highly important. Several OECD countries have designed programmes that seek to address skills challenges in a holistic manner by encouraging collaboration between all stakeholders (OECD, 2017[58]). For example, in Canada, workforce development agreements (WDAs) between central and provincial governments provide provinces and territories CAD 722 million (Canadian dollars) annually for the development and delivery of services that help Canadians receive training and gain work experience. Canadian provinces and territories have the flexibility to respond to the specific employment and skills needs of their region. Funding is also targeted towards persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, youth, older workers and newcomers to Canada. As an example, British Columbia's Employer Training Grant scheme combines WDA funds with employer contributions to co-fund skills training that aligns with employers' business needs, responds to automation and technological advancements, and supports unemployed or underemployed citizens (Government of Canada, 2019[89]; Province of British Columbia, 2019[90]).

Norway and Netherlands have implemented comprehensive approaches to sharing the costs of financing adult learning by establishing agreements and pacts between government and stakeholders (Box 3.7).

Box 3.7. Relevant international example: Sharing the costs of adult learning

Norway – Strategic approach to cost sharing in adult learning

Norway's shared funding model for adult learning seeks to assign responsibility for funding to the party that is expected to benefit from the education or training. It considers that government and society benefit most from increasing the basic skills of its population, while employers benefit from job-specific training leading to productivity gains, and individuals from training that raises their employability or mobility in the labour market.

For developing basic skills the national Ministry of Education and Research supports basic skills through funding The Basic Competence in Working Life Programme (EUR 16.4 million in 2017) in workplaces. Any employer can apply for funding for projects that meet key criteria defined by the Ministry of Education and Research, such as basic skills training that links to job-related activities and skills taught corresponding to those of lower secondary school level. Courses need to reflect competence goals in the Framework for Basic Skills for Adults and courses be flexible to meet the needs of all participants.

For second-chance school, municipal or county authorities cover the cost of primary and secondary level education for adults. In tertiary education, individuals or their employers pay for continuing education courses in public universities and university colleges that prepare them for the labour market or improve the quality of life. In general non-formal education and training, the government and individuals co-fund non-formal adult learning and education. In job-related non-formal education and training, private enterprises providing further education for their employees, in the form of on-the-job training, cover the full costs. Trade unions also have funds for further and continuing education, for which their members can apply.

Netherlands – *Techniekpact* (Technology Pact)

Techniekpact (Technology Pact) is a nationally-co-ordinated strategy that involves the central government, regional authorities, the world of education, the organized business community, the trade unions and workers, to ensure technology and technical skills training for children, young adults and adult learners, to deliver technical skills training for the jobs of tomorrow. Techneikpact is funded by more than sixty partners, including national ministries, the education sector, the five regions, industry and employer organisations and labour unions. An investment fund was created in which central government, employers and the regions each contributed EUR 100 million towards public-private education partnerships within the region.

Implementation of the Teckniekpact programme takes place at regional level, allowing regions to adapt more directly to the needs of their labour market and their worker population. Each of the five regions of the Netherlands has their own Technology Pact. The initiative is steered by the National Technology Pact Co-ordinating Group (Landelijke Regiegroep Techniekpact), which co-ordinates, tracks and monitors the implementation of the strategy at regional and sectoral level. The co-ordinating group is composed of representatives from the five regions, central government, employers, workers, the top sectors and the education community.

Source: OECD (2018[81]) *Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Portugal: Strengthening the Adult-Learning System,* http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264298705-en; Eurydice (2019[91]) *Adult Education and Training Funding: Norway*, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/norway/adult-education-and-training-funding_en; Bjerkaker (2016[92]), *Adult and Continuing Education in Norway*, http://dx.doi.org/10.3278/37/0576w; Techniekpact (2013[93]), Summary: Dutch Technology Pact 2020, www.techniekpact.nl/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Dutch-Technology-Pact-Summary.pdf; EU STEM Coalition (2019[94]), Techniekpact (Technology Pact), www.stemcoalition.eu/programmes/techniekpact-technology-pact.

Recommendations for better sharing the costs of adult learning

- **Improve data on individual, enterprise and government expenditure on adult learning.** The government should collate existing data on adult learning expenditure by different ministries, subnational authorities, employers and individuals, and fill gaps in this data through new administrative and survey collections (see also Chapter 5).
- **Better co-ordinate adult learning expenditure, for example through a skills funding pact between governments, employers and individuals**. Governments, social partners and representatives of adult learners could develop a high-level "funding agreement" for shared and sustainable funding to reduce cost-related barriers to adult learning participation. The agreement should outline broad parameters for how the government, employers, social partners and individuals will share the costs of different types of adult learning based on who benefits the most, who incurs the costs of the adult learning, and who has capacity to pay. It should also specify the main funding mechanisms (for example, sectoral training funds or government subsidies) and target levels of expenditure for each sector in order to contribute to achieving the priorities of the Integrated Skills Strategy.
- **Increase take up of the National Training Fund (KFS) by raising awareness, simplifying procedures and increasing the total budget of the KFS using public funds**. The government should raise awareness of the KFS via career advisors, labour offices, social partners, online portals and other means. The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy should streamline the process for labour offices and enterprises to apply to the KFS. The government should consider increasing the total budget of the KFS by co-contributing public funds to it, thereby ensuring the KFS' sufficiency for achieving labour market priorities.

Better targeting public adult learning expenditure

The public funding of adult learning is not tied to the performance or outcomes of providers or programmes, and is largely directed to institutions (supply side).

The impacts of the KFS are not systematically or regularly monitored or evaluated, which limits the ability of authorities to target funding to programmes that work best. Available evidence on the impact of the KFS is ad hoc and at the regional level. This evidence suggests that KFS results are mixed. For example, a survey in the Dolnośląskie region (Grabowski and Janiszewski, 2016[87]) found that about 80% of employers had a positive opinion of KFS-supported training. However, the vast majority of learners already had a post-secondary education, and 25% of enterprises reported that the training had no impact on performance. Other evaluations of the KFS at the subnational level identified concerns among some labour offices and employers about the impact and value of training (e.g. for high-skilled adults and for non-formal or "soft-skill" training), although participants were overwhelmingly positive (Grabowski and Janiszewski, 2016[87]).

Evaluation of ESIF funded programmes is more systematic, but focuses on inputs and activities rather than learning outcomes. Several evaluations have been undertaken, including the "Evaluation of support implemented in the area of education under the European Social Fund" and "Evaluation of social innovations under the Knowledge Education Development – 2nd thematic report". However, two meta-analyses of ESIF evaluations (MR, 2016[95]; 2017[96]) showed that success indicators for these programmes are usually very general (e.g. "ratio of VET school students to general upper secondary" or "ratio of students with very low achievements"), which makes it difficult to show causation. Researchers also point to the fact that the significant majority of analyses were performed regionally, with a very limited number of studies at a national level.

Neither performance monitoring nor performance-based funding are widely used in adult learning, unlike in VET and higher education. Some efforts are underway to link the public financing of adult education and

training to outcomes. From 2018, the new financing algorithm for general and post-secondary non-tertiary schools introduces a new method of financing by dividing the current subsidy into two parts: per enrolment (50%) and per exam passed (50%) (MEN, 2018[97]). Performance monitoring and performance-based funding are relatively more developed in Poland's VET and higher education systems (see Chapter 2), and could potentially be adapted to publicly funded adult learning.

Adult learning funding in Poland is largely directed to institutions (supply-side funding), which may be less effective at incentivising individuals and enterprises. Some participants in workshops stated that directing funding to institutions gives individuals and enterprises less choice of training. The main challenge for raising the participation in and funding of adult learning in Poland appears to be on the demand side. As discussed earlier, a high share of Polish adults state that they have no need for training, and very few adults report supply problems such as a lack of a "suitable offer" or "distance" as obstacles to learning (Figure 3.7).

Demand-side funding to individuals and enterprises can have several benefits, if complemented with effective quality assurance, information and guidance. In Poland, as in other countries, the vast majority of adult education and training providers are private (Table 3.2.). There is limited public funding available for the training offered by these institutions. Moreover, workers and enterprises wanting to engage in training often have to stop work or production, which adds significantly to the cost of training. In these cases, there is scope to make more use of direct financial incentives (OECD, 2017[58]). OECD countries use a range of demand-side funding measures directed at individuals and enterprises, including subsidies, savings accounts, time accounts and training leave (Table 3.6).

One pilot loan scheme in Poland targeted funding directly at learners. The scheme was popular and over-subscribed (Box 3.8).

Box 3.8. Relevant Polish example: Loans for Education

"Loans for Education" (2017) targeted adults (working, self-employed and out of work) who wanted to develop their skills and competences. Adults could apply for a loan of up to PLN 100 000 to finance selected postgraduate studies, courses or training (except for first, second and third cycle studies) that lasted no longer than 24 months. Loans were interest-free and could finance the entire cost of training/study. The repayment period was up to three years. Completing the studies or the course was the basis for redeeming 20% of the loan. For people who were unemployed and who during or after the training took up employment, or for those with incomes below the national average, the remission could be subject to 25% of the loan. As part of the first call, which was opened in September 2017, almost 1 700 applications were submitted, and over 1 000 loans were granted. More than half of borrowers (52%) were women, and almost every tenth loan was granted to non-working people who wanted to increase their qualifications.

Source: Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego w Starachowicach (2019[98]), *Invest in development – loans for education*, https://inwestujwrozwoj.pl/.

Recommendation for better targeting public adult learning expenditure

- **Increase the impact of public supply-side funding by partially linking it to the performance of programmes and providers**. The MEN and the MRPiPS, in collaboration with experts, should systematically measure the outcomes (employment, skills, further learning, completions, etc.) achieved by publicly funded adult learning programmes and providers (see Chapter 5). Subsequently, they should partly link public funding to these outcomes in the form of performance-based funding. Such funding arrangements should be informed by similar initiatives in Poland's VET and higher education systems.

- **Increase demand for adult learning by targeting a higher share of public funding directly to disengaged individuals and enterprises**. The government should allocate a higher share of public funding for adult education and training directly to individuals and enterprises. In the case of individuals, this should be targeted to inactive, unemployed and employed low-skilled adults, including the self-employed. It could start with pilots of subsidies, accounts and/or paid study/training leave. In the case of employers, this should be targeted to micro- and small-sized enterprises. It could be achieved by increasing the budget of the KFS using government co-contributions, or introducing new, additional transfers directly to enterprises. It will be essential that the government ensures the quality of education and training programmes receiving demand-side funding. The government could do this initially by limiting the use of the funds to trusted providers (e.g. registered on the Database of Development Services), and ultimately through effective performance monitoring.

Overview of recommendations

Opportunity 1: Raising awareness of adult learning benefits and opportunities	
Raising general awareness of adult learning	• Raise general awareness of adult learning benefits and opportunities through improved promotion of the Integrated Skills Strategy (ZSU), campaigns and online portals.
Raising awareness through targeted measures	• Raise awareness through improved targeted guidance and outreach services.
Opportunity 2: Making learning more flexible and accessible for adults	
Expanding adult learning in Polish workplaces	• Collaborate with social partners to expand adult learning, including basic skills programmes, in Polish workplaces.
Increasing the flexibility of adult education and training	• Monitor and support the supply of flexible education programmes for adults.
Improving recognition of prior learning for adults	• Simplify, harmonise and expand recognition of prior learning practices across the education and training system.
Opportunity 3: Better sharing and targeting financing to increase participation in adult learning	
Better sharing the costs of adult learning	• Improve data on individual, enterprise and government expenditure on adult learning. • Better co-ordinate adult learning expenditure, for example through a skills funding pact between governments, employers and individuals. • Increase take up of the National Training Fund (KFS) by raising awareness, simplifying procedures and increasing the total budget of the KFS using public funds.
Better targeting public adult learning expenditure	• Increase the impact of public supply-side funding by partially linking it to the performance of programmes and providers. • Increase demand for adult learning by targeting a higher share of public funding directly to disengaged individuals and enterprises.

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Notes

[1] In international surveys the main word used to describe non-formal education is the same as the word most often used to describe school education ("*kształcenie*"). Furthermore, the main word used to describe training ("*szkolenie*") is clearly associated with the word school ("*szkoła*"). In an attempt to better measure learning participation, questions about non-formal education and training in the BKL 2017 avoided using these terms, instead focusing on different ways of developing skills.

4 Strengthening the use of skills in Polish workplaces

The effective use of skills in workplaces has potential benefits for employers, employees and the society as it can raise productivity, wages and job satisfaction. Policy makers can work with employers to provide direct support or to help create the conditions to increase skills use in workplaces. This chapter explores four opportunities to strengthen the use of skills in Polish workplaces: 1) raising awareness of the relevance of effective skills use and related high-performance workplace practices (HPWP); 2) supporting enterprises and organisations to adopt HPWP; 3) equipping management staff with the right skills to implement HPWP; and 4) engaging employees effectively to implement HPWP.

The importance of the effective use of skills for Poland

Skills policies tend to focus primarily on the supply side of skills – the development of skills in education and training and linking these skills with the labour market (see Chapters 2 and 3). Recently there has been a growing awareness that how well employers use skills in the workplace may be just as important as the skills their workers possess. To take full advantage of the initial investment in skills development, and to limit the depreciation and obsolescence of unused skills, countries should strive to use skills as intensively as possible in the economy, workplaces and society (Guest, 2006[1]).

Putting skills to better use in the workplace is important for workers, employers and the broader economy. Studies using data from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) (Box 4.1) demonstrate the positive effects of the effective use of skills on performance in both the economy and society (OECD, 2019[2]). Analysis of the use of skills in workplaces can aid understanding of which skills need to be developed, thereby providing relevant input for training and education providers. For Poland, as in most OECD countries, a number of megatrends are reinforcing the importance of the effective use of skills in workplaces to ensure the long-term sustainability of Poland's economy.

Box 4.1. Definitions, measurement and scope of skills use

The OECD Skills Strategy framework (OECD, 2019[2]) and its pillar on "using skills effectively" describes skills utilisation in both the labour market (also referred to as "activation") and in workplaces. This chapter will solely address the latter interpretation of skills use because it is less intensively covered in other studies, and because it is very relevant for the productivity, demographic and innovation challenges in Poland.

The Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) is one of the main sources used to analyse the use of information processing skills in workplaces, including reading, writing, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), and problem solving. The approach used in PIAAC follows the job requirements approach (JRA), whereby the survey enquires about the frequency with which tasks relevant to each skill are carried out. For example, the survey measures the frequency (from 1 "never carried out" to 5 "carried out every day") for ICT-related tasks such as the use of email, spreadsheets and programming languages, which results in a composite variable for the use of ICT skills. To assess the "effectiveness" of skills use, these frequency indicators need to be analysed in combination with actual skill levels. The method has some limitations, including that 1) these measures are developed on self-reported data and could be affected by workers' skills and perceptions; and 2) the measures are based on task frequency and thereby possibly do not capture the full list and complexity of tasks for skill types (OECD, 2016[3]).

In 2014/2015, Poland conducted a follow-up study of PIAAC (post-PIAAC) to collect longitudinal information and additional background information of participants, as well as to include measures of non-cognitive skills (Palczyńska and Świst, 2016[4]). These data, however, do not present additional measures of the use of skills in workplaces.

Source: OECD (2016[3]), *Skills Matter: Further Results from the Survey of Adult Skills*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264258051-en; OECD (2019[2]), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to Shape a Better Future*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en; Palczyńska and Świst (2016[4]), *Measurement Properties of Non-cognitive scales in the Polish Follow-up Study on PIAAC (POSTPIAAC)*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/c533e448-en.

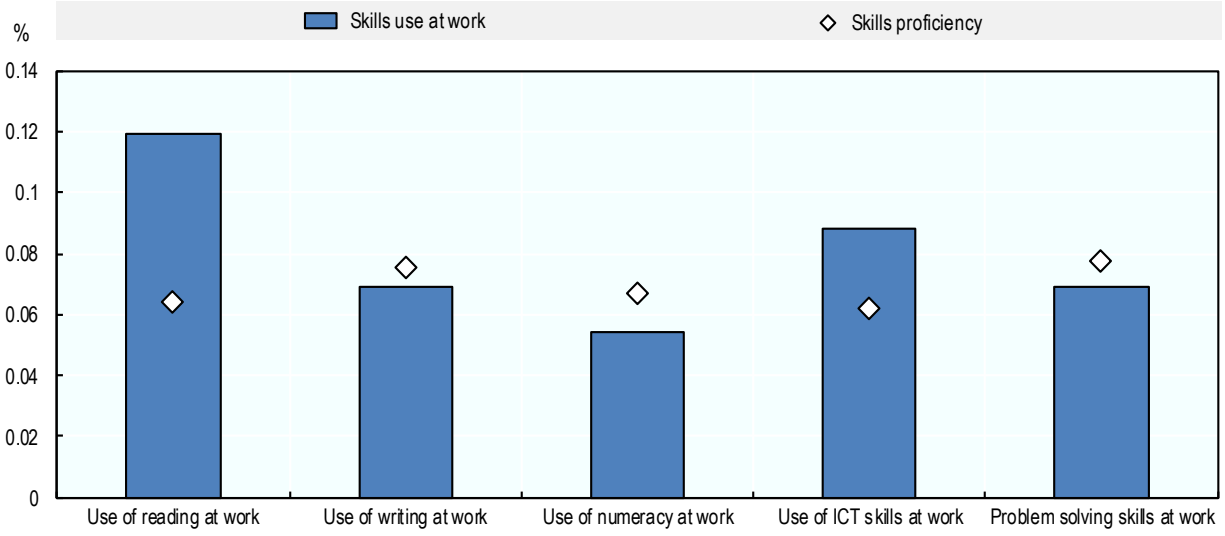
Using adults' skills more effectively in the workplace could help to raise Poland's labour productivity, which is still 40% below the OECD average (OECD, 2019[5]). In the context of an ageing society and continued emigration, population growth will contribute less to Poland's gross domestic product (GDP) growth, and productivity growth will be an increasingly important driver behind economic growth. PIAAC demonstrates that skills use in workplaces has a positive effect on productivity; for instance, the use of reading skills

explains a considerable share (26%) of the variation in labour productivity across PIAAC countries, even after controlling for average proficiency scores in literacy (OECD, 2016[6]).

The more effective use of skills in workplaces could make Polish jobs more attractive to highly skilled and highly mobile workers. Poland is strongly affected by immigration – after the 2004 European Union (EU) accession, the emigration of primarily working-age people, often highly educated, intensified considerably, which has hurt various sectors of the Polish economy (OECD, 2016[7]). To retain talent, jobs need to move towards internationally competitive wages and job quality. OECD analysis indicates that workers in Poland who use their skills more intensively at work – beyond having attained these skills – tend to have higher wages (Figure 4.1) and are more satisfied with their job (OECD, 2016[3]). Furthermore, optimising the use of employees' skills in workplaces could benefit firms in the long term by supporting the transition towards higher-value-added jobs.

Figure 4.1. Wage returns to skill use and skills proficiency in Poland

Percentage change in wages associated with a standard deviation increase in skills proficiency and skills use



Note: Skills proficiency includes literacy for reading and writing at work, numeracy for numeracy at work, and problem solving in technology-rich environments for ICT and problem solving. One standard deviation corresponds to the following: 47 points on the literacy scale; 53 points on the numeracy scale; 44 points on the problem solving in technology-rich environments scale; 1 for reading use at work; 1.2 for writing and numeracy use at work; 1.1 for ICT use at work; and 1.3 for problem solving at work. Estimates are from Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions with log wages (converted into USD Purchasing Power parity (PPP), and 1st and 99th percentiles are eliminated) as the dependent variable. Values are statistically significant, the regression sample includes only employees and controls for age, gender, and foreign-born.
Source: Calculations based on OECD (2019[8]), *OECD Survey of Adults Skills (PIAAC) (2012, 2015)*, www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.

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Strengthening skills utilisation in workplaces also has the potential to stimulate the adoption of innovations and new technology by firms. Enhanced competition resulting from a globalised and interconnected world creates the need for firms to be internationally competitive, for which innovation and technological change are essential. In recent decades, economic growth in Poland has been stimulated by gains from the better and more efficient reallocation of resources between sectors and firms, and within firms. However, Poland is reaching the end of potential economic growth based on catching up, and it is becoming increasingly important to move towards new drivers of economic growth, with a central role for innovation (World Bank Group, 2017[9]).

Many firms in all OECD countries are still not optimally using the skills of their employees, partly because they are not organising workplaces in a way that supports effective skills use. The main determinants of effective skills use are a variety of organisational and management practices that shape how and why skills are used in the workplace. Practices that are known to positively affect the performance of employees and firms are often referred to as high-performance workplace practices (HPWP) (Box 4.2), and PIAAC demonstrates that there is a strong link between the adoption of HPWPs and the intensive use of skills (Figure 4.2). Examples of HPWPs are work flexibility and autonomy; teamwork and information sharing; training and development; and benefits, career progression and performance management. There are, however, barriers to the extent to which skills use can be enhanced – external factors such as the general economic context, local or regional skills landscapes, and the broader value chain or industrial clusters, may also play a factor in decisions related to skills use (OECD, 2016[6]; OECD/ILO, 2017[10]).

Box 4.2. Definitions, measurement and scope of high-performance workplace practices

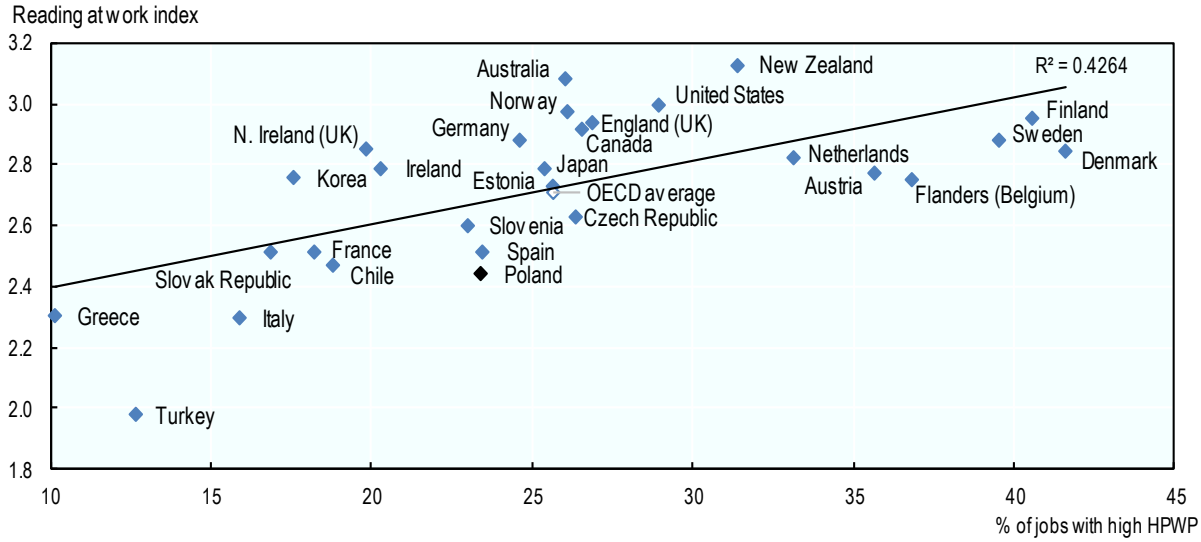
Despite considerable literature on HPWP, there is no consensus on the exact definition (UKCES, 2009[11]; Posthuma et al., 2013[12]). There is no universal list of HPWP that can be applied to any organisation, since their effect can depend heavily on organisational context. Organisations should implement a system of practices that complement and reinforce each other and fit the specific organisation. A number of authors have tried to identify specific practices and different categories of HPWP, for example Posthuma et al. (2013[12]) and Sung and Ashton (2006[13]), and a definition of HPWP has been developed based on PIAAC data. These taxonomies differ in both depth and breadth.

This report applies a pragmatic approach, where broad categories of workplace practices are selected based on existing taxonomies and driven by available data on underlying indicators. The following broad categories of HPWP have been selected:

- **Flexibility and autonomy:** including working time flexibility, flexibility in tasks, involvement of employees in setting tasks, planning activities and applying own ideas.
- **Teamwork and information sharing**: including receiving support from colleagues, working in a team with autonomy and sharing work-related information with colleagues.
- **Training and development:** including continuing vocational and on-the-job training.
- **Benefits, career progression and performance management:** including bonuses, prospects for career advancement, performance appraisal and competency profiles.

Source: UKCES (2009[11]), *High Performance Working: A Synthesis of Key Literature*, http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/9239; Posthuma et al. (2013[12]), *A High Performance Work Practices Taxonomy: Integrating the Literature and Directing Future Research,* https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0149206313478184; Sung, J. and D. Ashton (2006[13]), *High Performance Work Practices: linking strategy and skills to performance outcomes*,www.longwoods.com/articles/images/High%20Performance%20Work%20Practices_UKReport2011.pdf.

Figure 4.2. Relation between the use of reading skills at work and the adoption of HPWP



Note: Skill use indicators show how often skills are used, scaled from 1 "Never" to 5 "Every day". The share of jobs with high HPWP is based on various average of HPWP measures included in PIAAC.
Source: Calculations based on OECD (2019[8]), *OECD Survey of Adults Skills (PIAAC) (2012, 2015)*, www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.

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Overview and performance of skills use in Poland

Overview of current arrangements for skills use in Poland

Policies that affect skills use are being developed throughout the government in a large number of ministries, most notably the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development (MIiR), the Ministry of National Education (MEN), the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW), the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (MRPiPS), and the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology. Multiple other public and private organisations, institutions and agencies are involved in activities that could indirectly affect skills utilisation in workplaces, including sectoral organisations, public employment services, labour market councils, the Social Dialogue Council (Rada Dialogu Społecznego, RDS), the Innovation Council (Rada ds. Innowacyjności), and employee and employer organisations. However, there are only a few organisations where programmes and activities directly affect practices in the workplace.

At the national level, one of the main government agencies for providing support to employers and entrepreneurs is the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości, PARP). For over ten years, PARP has been contributing to the creation and effective implementation of policies related to enterprise development, innovation and human capital development in enterprises. It targets primarily small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with funding coming from the state budget and European funds. PARP also conducts research activities in various areas, such as enterprise development innovation. The activities of PARP can be organised into six categories: 1) start-ups are supported through various programmes and funding, for instance by helping them to scale-up through advisory, mentoring and financial support; 2) training and other services are offered through, for example, the PARP Academy and Innovation Manager Academy, and supported by, among others, the Database of Development Services (BUR); 3) PARP invests in enterprise innovation, for instance by co-financing the implementation of research and development (R&D); 4) other services for enterprises are offered, such as support for the protection of industrial property, R&D and design services;

5) PARP assists with entry to foreign markets for enterprises; and 6) PARP promotes business environment institutions and clusters that assist SMEs to enhance their innovative capacities. The relevant programmes of PARP and their role in enhancing skills utilisation will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter.

Several other agencies and programmes that support innovation in firms also have an impact on skills utilisation in firms. At the national level, there is the National Centre for Research and Development (Narodowe Centrum Badań i Rozwoju, NCBiR), which is the implementing agency of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. While the organisation puts more emphasis on technical innovation rather than organisational innovation, it does promote co-operation between science and enterprises, with various programmes that support R&D and innovation, including the implementation of these practices in firms and research institutes (OECD, 2016[14]). The Industrial Development Agency (Agencja Rozwoju Przemysłu, ARP) also supports enterprises in innovation, restructuring and investments. In addition to funding specific innovative projects, the ARP has launched initiatives that benefit skills development and use. These projects are often at the sector level, for instance, ARP provides support programmes for specific sectors that involves developing comprehensive development plans for industries.

Poland's future ambitions, as expressed in the 2017 Strategy for Responsible Development, describe plans that could result in the better skills utilisation of Polish workers (MIiR, 2017[15]). The strategy has a broad scope and aims to create conditions to increase the income of Polish citizens and to reduce social, economic and territorial inequalities. The strategy emphasises that enterprises play a central role in this process by increasing their productivity and innovativeness. Subsequently, it describes initiatives that could increase and improve the use of human capital in the labour market, including the development of innovative companies (see Opportunity 1 for more detail). Skills use and workplace practices are also expected to be addressed extensively in an upcoming productivity strategy for Poland.

Poland's performance

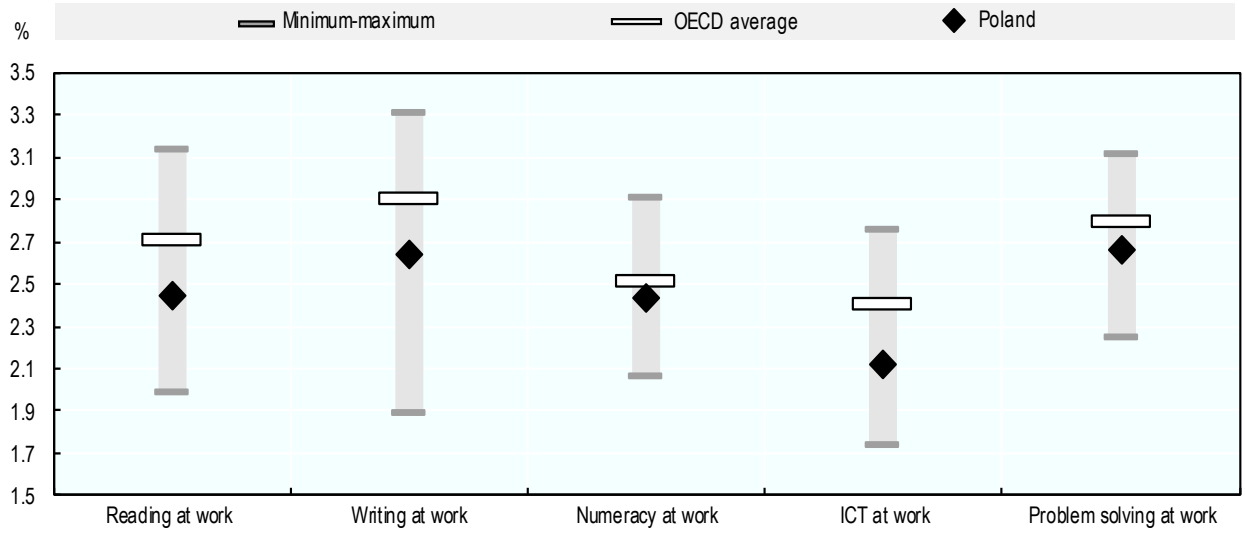
The use of skills in Polish workplaces

The skills proficiency of the working population is around or slightly below the OECD average. However, these skills are not optimally used in the workplace, which indicates a waste of initial investment in skills. For instance, while average literacy scores in Poland are comparable with the OECD average, the use of reading skills lags far behind (OECD, 2016[3]). Comparable results can be found for the use of writing and problem-solving skills (Figure 4.3). And while numeracy proficiency is much lower in Poland than in countries like Norway, Israel and Denmark, the use of numeracy skills the performance is slightly better compared with these countries. When examining underlying tasks, Poland performs comparatively weakly in most categories. Performance can especially be improved for various tasks related to the use of literacy skills in reading and writing, such as for manuals, memos, mails, and forms, as well as tasks that involve numeracy skills, such as the calculations of fractions or percentages, and calculating costs and budgets (calculations based on PIAAC (OECD, 2019[8])).

The use of ICT skills at work could be improved. While many new technologies such as cloud computing and big data are widely available, they have been adopted and used by employees in a comparatively small share of Polish firms. Only 11% of Polish enterprises used cloud computing services in 2018 (26% across the EU) and 8% analysed big data (12% in the EU) (Eurostat, 2019[16]). Young enterprises adopt the latest technologies more often than established enterprises in Poland, but both young and older Polish firms are using the latest technologies less frequently than on average across the EU (Tarnawa et al., 2017[17]). Furthermore, one in five Polish workers use computers almost all the time, compared with one in three on average across the EU, and while Polish firms increasingly adopt existing technologies, there are still many firms that could gain from catching up (Eurofound, 2019[18]).

Figure 4.3. Skills use at work indicators, Poland and OECD average

Skill use indicators show how often skills are used, scaled from 1 "Never" to 5 "Every day"



Source: Calculations based on OECD (2019[8]), *OECD Survey of Adults Skills (PIAAC) (2012, 2015)*, www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.

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The skills of some workers are particularly underutilised in Poland, which is largely driven by whether they actually possess these skills – i.e. the intensity of skills use is naturally restricted by the skills that adults possess. Consequently, low-skilled adults are using their skills least intensively, and since low skill levels are especially prevalent among low-educated and older adults, these groups are naturally lagging behind (OECD, 2016[3]). For example, upper secondary educated workers in Poland use their ICT skills far less than tertiary educated workers with the same skills and in the same occupation. However, in Poland, skills use remains below the OECD average for all age groups, with older workers particularly using skills far less intensively than in most OECD countries.

As to be expected, there is large variation in the use of information processing skills between different firms and sectors – for example, ICT skills are likely to be less needed in construction than in the financial sector. Skills use is also highly correlated with firm size – larger firms generally use the skills of employees more effectively than smaller firms. As a consequence, the aggregated use of skills in workplaces is largely shaped by the sectoral composition and distribution of firm sizes in a country. In Poland, the comparatively low performance in the use of skills could therefore partly be explained by the relatively large number of those working in agriculture and manufacturing (OECD, 2019[19]), as well as the large share of micro-enterprises – 88% of enterprises have fewer than ten employees, compared with 79% on average across the OECD in 2016 (OECD, 2019[20]).

The adoption of high-performance workplace practices in Poland

As shown in Figure 4.2, the adoption of HPWP is associated with the more effective use of skills. Polish employers are adopting HPWP at a lower rate than their counterparts in most other countries: about 23% of workers were employed in jobs where these practices were adopted, compared with 26% in the OECD on average. HPWP capture a very diverse range of practices (as discussed in Box 4.2), covering: 1) flexibility and autonomy in the workplace; 2) teamwork and information sharing; 3) training and development; and 4) benefits, career progression and performance management.

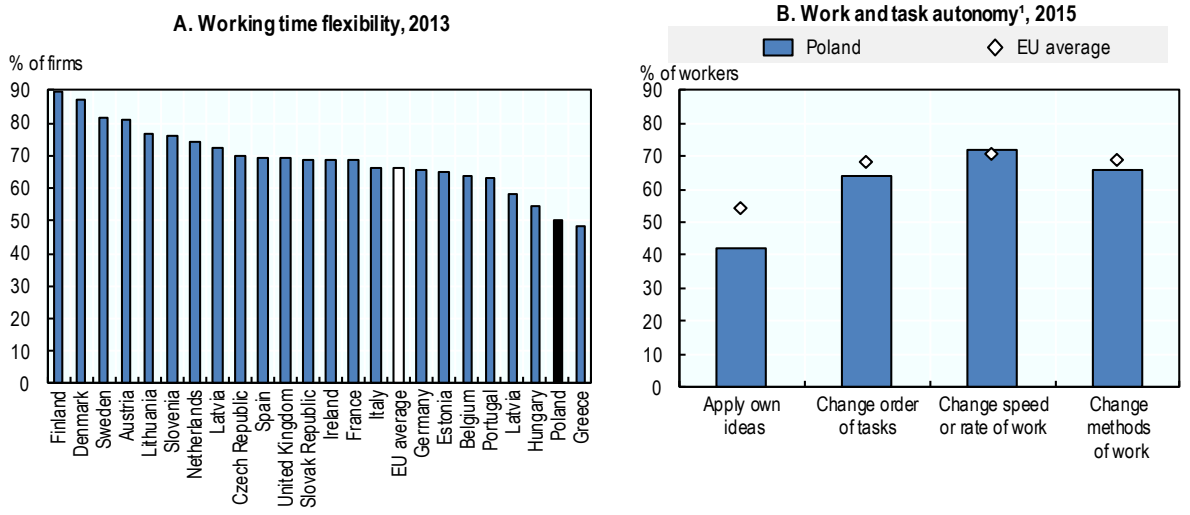
Flexibility and autonomy

Government and stakeholder representatives (participants) consulted during this project stressed the importance of having flexibility at work and autonomy in performing tasks in the workplace. Employee control (autonomy) over aspects of their job is considered the job characteristic with the most significant benefits for firms and employees in various theoretical frameworks for job design (Morrison et al., 2005[21]). Moreover, the introduction of various new technologies enhances momentum for more flexibility and autonomy. For instance, new technologies allow for accessible and reliable software that supports teleworking and communication through video and conference calls, which creates less need for physical presence in the workplace.

Data show that working time flexibility can be enhanced in Poland. In 2015, only 13% of workers were able to adapt working hours to some extent (19% in EU) (Eurofound, 2019[18]), and the share of firms offering part-time work is slightly below the EU average (65% vs. 69%) (Eurofound, 2015[22]). In 2013, one in two employees indicated having flexible working times, compared with two out of three employees in the EU (Figure 4.4) (Eurofound, 2015[22]).

Work autonomy could be strengthened in Poland. A large share of employees report not being involved in setting tasks for work, and many employees have limited opportunities to apply their own ideas to their work (Eurofound, 2019[18]). In addition, the share of employees reporting that they can change the order of tasks and methods of work is below average (Figure 4.4) (Eurofound, 2019[18]), although PIAAC measures show slightly more positive results for indicators related to work autonomy.

Figure 4.4. Adoption of practices that enhance the work flexibility and autonomy of employees



Note: 1. Share of workers indicating having work and task autonomy "always or most of the time".
Source: Eurofound (2015[22]), European Company Survey 2013 (ECS), http://dx.doi.org/10.2806/417263; Eurofound (2019[18]), European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) 2015, https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/european-working-conditions-survey.

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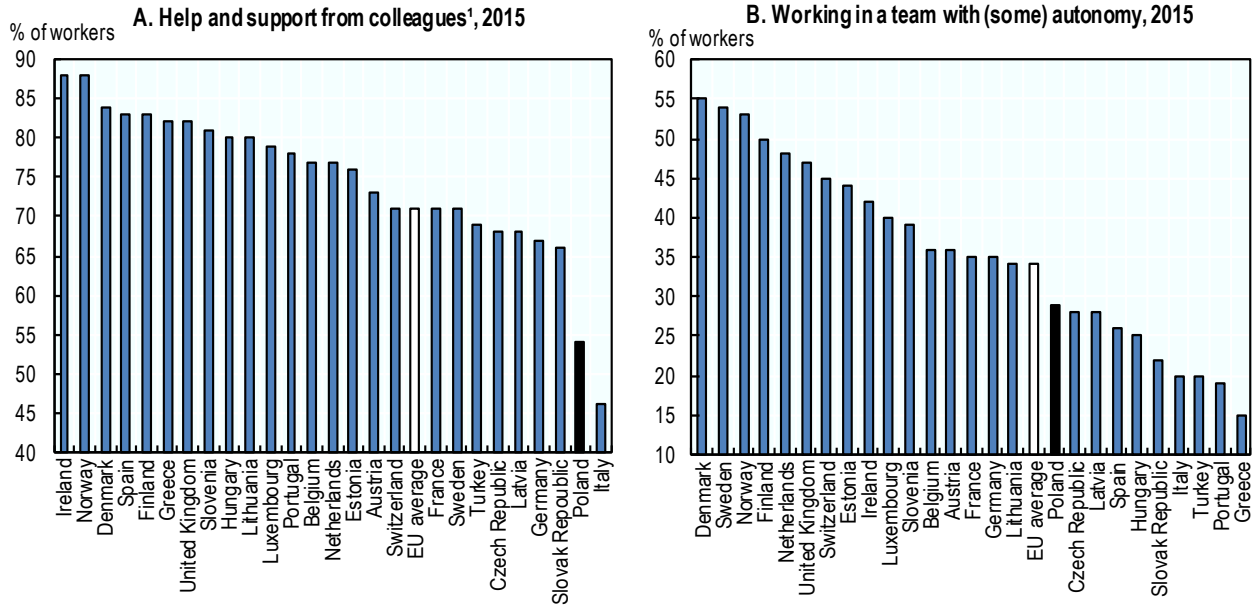
Different sectors of the economy are adopting these types of working practice to different extents, largely related to the types of job they offer. For example, it can be expected that opportunities for work flexibility are naturally more limited for workers on an assembly line than for office employees. In Poland, however, the differences in the adoption of HPWP between sectors appears to be comparatively large. A share comparable with the OECD average of employees using HPWP can be found in high-skill sectors such as information and communication, and professional, scientific and technical activities (calculations based on PIAAC (OECD, 2019[8])), but for most sectors, the adoption of HPWP is below the OECD average, especially in real estate, mining, financial and insurances, and public administration.

Teamwork and information sharing

Individuals working in teams generally use their skills more intensively. For instance, employees who say that they co-operate with co-workers to some or to a very high extent are using their skills more intensively than employees who do not co-operate with co-workers (OECD, 2016[3]). Workplaces where information is freely shared and where colleagues instruct and train each other reflect a working culture that supports the optimal use of skills. In Poland, there are signs that there is room to strengthen such a working culture.

Some 54% of workers (71% in the EU) have colleagues who help and support them, with only Italy out of the other EU countries having a lower share (Figure 4.5), and 50% of workers indicate not working in a team, compared with 45% in the EU (Eurofound, 2019[18]). PIAAC-data present more positive results, with more than half of Polish employees co-operating with co-workers more than half of the time, and three out of four employees sharing work-related information with colleagues on a daily or weekly basis.

Figure 4.5. Co-operation between colleagues and teamwork in Polish firms



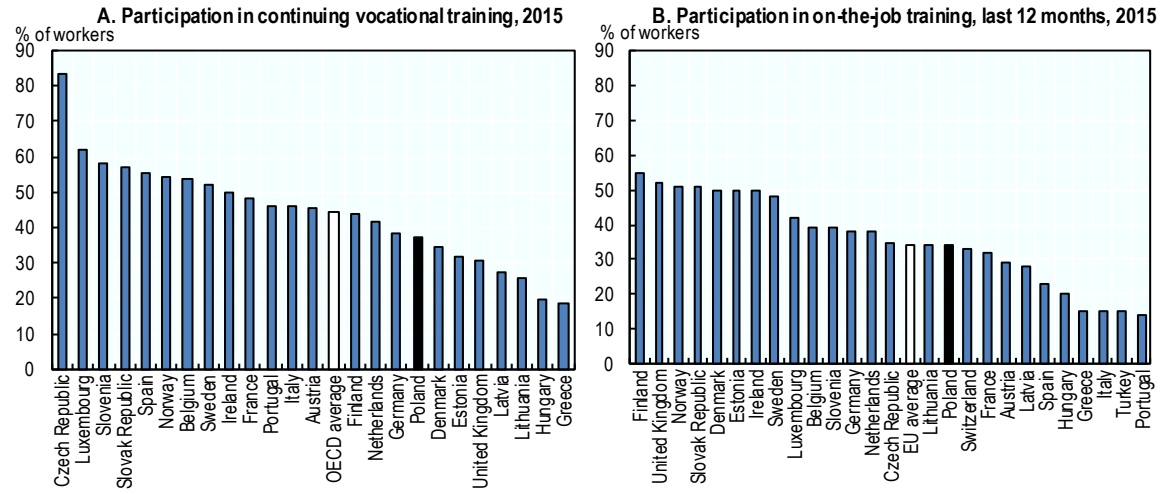
Note: 1. Share of workers indicating to get help and support from colleagues "always or most of the time"
Source: Eurofound (2019[18]), European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) 2015, https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/european-working-conditions-survey.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036557

Training and development

The adoption of practices related to training and development is mixed, as discussed in Chapter 3. The share of employees participating in continuing vocational training courses in Poland (37.1% in 2015) is below the EU average (40.8%) (Eurostat, 2018[23]) (Figure 4.6), and participation in non-formal and informal learning in workplaces could be improved (Eurostat, 2018[24]). However, more generic on-the-job training is relatively common in Poland, with one in three employees participating in this type of training, a share comparable with the EU average (Eurofound, 2019[18]).

Figure 4.6. Participation in continuing vocational and on-the-job training



Source: Eurostat (2018[23]), Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) 2015, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/continuing-vocational-training-survey; Eurofound (2019[18]), European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) 2015, https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/european-working-conditions-survey

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036576

The type of training offered in workplaces is diverse in Poland, but the most popular is through instruction, for example handling new equipment, machinery or software. For high-educated Polish employees, however, training in the form of inter-team meetings to exchange knowledge and experiences is more popular (Górniak, 2018[25]).

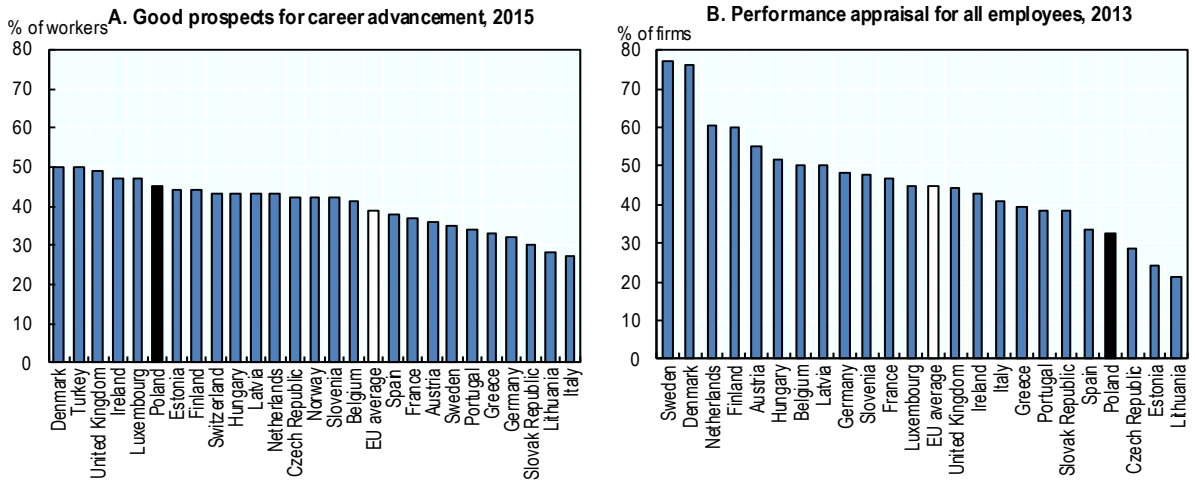
A culture of firms actively supporting training for employees could be strengthened – only 7% of firms have a training budget and use training as a non-financial motivator. The vast majority of employers are satisfied with the current skills of their employees, although only one in three Polish entrepreneurs conduct an assessment of skills deficits among employees, and only half do this systematically (Górniak, 2018[25]).

Benefits, career progression and performance management

Various studies provide evidence on the positive effects of incentive pay on skills use and productivity. Both individual and group performance-based bonuses (including in the public sector) have a positive effect on productivity (Bloom et al., 2010[26]). For Poland, bonuses have a comparatively strong effect on skills use – the differences in skills use (of all types) between employees who receive and who do not receive bonuses is larger than in most OECD countries (calculations based on PIAAC (OECD, 2019[8])). However, the share of employees that receive yearly bonuses is only average (approximately 45%, as measured by PIAAC). Moreover, participants consulted during this project indicated that for many firms, regular bonuses are a way to compensate for a lower basic salary, and stakeholders from primarily traditional industries consider linking basic salaries with qualifications more effective than bonuses.

Data also show that the adoption of other types of performance management and career progression practices could be improved in Poland. Only one in four Polish entrepreneurs conduct an evaluation of their employees, and 14% investigate the effectiveness of human resources (HR) management tools (Górniak, 2018[25]). While seven out of ten firms have some sort of performance appraisal system – a share comparable with the EU average – a relatively small share of firms have these systems for all employees (32% vs. 45% in the EU) (Figure 4.7) (Eurofound, 2015[22]). Despite this, the share of workers indicating that they have good prospects for career advancement is relatively high, 45% vs. 39% in the EU.

Figure 4.7. Career advancement prospects and performance appraisal systems



Source Eurofound (2019[18]), European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) 2015, https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/european-working-conditions-survey; Eurofound (2015[22]), European Company Survey 2013 (ECS), http://dx.doi.org/10.2806/417263

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036595

Jobs appear to be relatively static in Poland: a relatively small share of workers experience yearly changes in elements of their job, for instance in working hours per week, salary, influence over work or tasks and duties (Eurofound, 2019[18]). Job rotation with the intention to train new skills is relatively rare in Poland – only 9% of employees indicate participating in this form of training (Górniak, 2018[25]).

Opportunities to improve the effective use of skills

To improve performance in the use of skills, this chapter describes four opportunities for Poland. This selection is based on input from literature, discussions with the National Project Team, and discussions and remarks made by government and stakeholder representatives (participants) in two workshops and several meetings. The selected opportunities are:

1. Raising awareness of the relevance of effective skills use and related HPWP.
2. Supporting enterprises and organisations to adopt HPWP.
3. Equipping management staff with the right skills to implement HPWP.
4. Engaging employees effectively to implement HPWP.

Opportunity 1: Raising awareness of the relevance of effective skills use and related high-performance workplace practices

Despite a number of programmes promoting practices that affect skills use to some extent, as well as strategies that have been introduced (e.g. the Strategy for Responsible Development), there is still significant room to raise skills use and strengthen practices in Polish workplaces. Policies that aim to raise awareness of the relevance of effective skills use and HPWP could be a relevant first step, and could be accompanied by more active support measures for enterprises (as will be discussed in Opportunity 2).

There are many measures that could potentially contribute to the overall awareness of the relevance of skills use and HPWP. However, this opportunity and the corresponding policy recommendations will focus primarily on raising awareness of skills use in workplaces and HPWP through inclusion in national, regional and sectoral strategies, as well as the dissemination of knowledge and good practices on HPWP through targeted campaigns and centralised online information.

Including the topic of skills use in workplaces and the adoption of HPWP in national, regional and sectoral strategies

In Poland, as in many OECD countries, skills utilisation in workplaces has not been given a great deal of consideration by policy makers. The reason for this lies partly in the difficulty of identifying the determinants that affect skills use, directly and often indirectly; the fact that there is little precedent for public intervention at the level of the workplace; and insufficient clarity for policy makers about their role and what levers to use to influence skills use (OECD/ILO, 2017[10]). A different policy approach is needed that includes all stakeholders, and there is a significant role for soft regulation, i.e. non-binding persuasive policy intervention (Alasoini, 2016[27]). Strategies on different levels could support the adoption of such a policy approach by raising awareness of skills use and HPWP.

Poland should include the topic of skills use in its national, regional and sectoral strategies for economic development, human and social capitals, industry and innovation. At the national level, skills use is addressed indirectly in some strategies, but not mentioned explicitly. The strategy that addresses skills use most directly is the Strategy for Responsible Development (Box 4.3). This strategy is a good start, and Poland should ensure that the actions described within the strategy are implemented. Various other strategies include measures and actions that directly or indirectly support skills use, especially strategies related to innovation (Klincewicz and Marczewska, 2018[28]) such as the National Smart Specialisations, the Regional Smart Specialisations, and several sectoral programmes of the NCBiR developed in partnership with industry stakeholders.

Box 4.3. Relevant Polish example: Skills use in workplaces and HPWP in strategies

The Strategy for Responsible Development

The Strategy for Responsible Development is a key document regarding medium- and long-term economic policy (MIiR, 2017[15]). One of the first objectives is "Sustainable economic growth increasingly driven by knowledge, data and organisational excellence", which captures the element to ensure an 'innovative business development'. Here, skill use is addressed through the objective of building pro-innovation attitudes through optimal use of human capital and strengthening social capital. The strategy focusses primarily on skills development in this context – including strengthening human and social capital by forming pro-innovation attitudes, promoting knowledge of the opportunities to implement innovations in companies and their related advantages, and managing innovative processes. The strategy does however address various measures that affect the use of skills in workplaces.

Most importantly, the strategy emphasises the need to create a culture of innovativeness in companies by disseminating knowledge about methods of introducing innovations and improving related management skills. It addresses the need to establish a culture of innovativeness and learning in public administration, as well as promoting inter- and intra-sectoral mobility. In addition, for SMEs the strategy intends to promote stable forms of employment and flexible working arrangements among entrepreneurs, and increase the use of the potential of modern telecommunication technologies in micro and small enterprises. So far, several concrete programmes have been launched that address the issues raised in the Strategy for Responsible Development, including Innovation Manager, SME Manager Academy, and the AMI alumni network that will be addressed in the next opportunity.

Source: MIiR (2017[15]), *Strategy for Responsible Development*, www.miir.gov.pl/media/48672/SOR.pdf.

A number of conditions could improve the effectiveness of these strategies and programmes. Strategy actions related to the effective use of skills and HPWP could be supported by indicators that measure the implementation of these practices. For skills use and related HPWP, quantitative and measurable targets that are understood and supported by all stakeholders would raise the success of implementation and

would support the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy. Targets and indicators for the proposed actions in the Strategy for Responsible Development have not been identified. It is also important for Poland to ensure that the strategies are consistent and well aligned. While this is not yet an issue for strategies addressing skills use, aligning the large number of innovation strategies is considered a challenge for Poland (Klincewicz and Marczewska, 2018[28]) as it reduces their effectiveness. Poland should continue simplification efforts, including by stimulating initiatives such as the National Smart Specialisations and the Regional Smart Specialisations.

Recommendation for including the topic of skills use in workplaces and the adoption of HPWP in national, regional and sectoral strategies

- **Put skills use and HPWP on the policy agenda by including them more explicitly and more prominently in strategies with targeted, measurable actions**. Government (national and regional) and sectoral organisations should include skills use and HPWP in their strategies, with actions and targets as concrete as possible. The effectiveness of these actions should be raised by including measurable indicators to monitor and evaluate implementation. Build on current proposed actions in the Strategy for Responsible Development and ensure consistency between strategies by aiming to simplify, consolidate and co-ordinate actions.

Disseminating knowledge and good practices related to HPWP through targeted campaigns and centralised online information

The awareness of the importance of effective skills use could be raised by informing employers, managers and entrepreneurs about the relevance of workplace innovations and the benefits for their companies. Participants in the workshops and meetings during this project indicated that many firms are currently not aware of these benefits, and that they find it difficult to find relevant information. While there are websites and tools available, there is not sufficient co-ordination, and the highly dispersed information is a barrier to their use. The Strategy for Responsible Development has stressed the need for disseminating knowledge about methods of introducing innovation in workplaces.

To raise the motivation of employers, managers and entrepreneurs to adopt these practices, benefits should be made tangible and clear, especially given that the benefits of HPWP are not always directly visible. For instance, results from their implementation, such as a rise in productivity, take time (OECD/ILO, 2017[10]). Information on workplace practices should be concrete, applicable and relatable, for instance by showing examples of good and bad practices.

Different formats could be used to raise awareness of new and innovative workplace practices. The Polish government and stakeholders could raise awareness through targeted campaigns (see Box 4.5 for international examples). Contests for best-performing companies are considered effective in bringing public attention to workplace practices, encouraging companies to rethink their activities, and helping to change organisational culture. Government and stakeholders could more actively use different types of media, including social media, to make campaigns more targeted and ensure that groups most in need are reached. In Poland there are already a number of campaigns that indirectly promote workplace practices and the effective use of skills. For example, the Leader in Human Resource Management initiative (Box 4.4), organised by the Institute of Labour and Social Studies (Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, IPiSS), is a competition to identify effective solutions, disseminate good practices, and create standards for HR management with the aim of raising efficiency in Polish workplaces. Other examples of competitions include the Polish Confederation Lewiatan, which gives awards to outstanding entrepreneurs and opinion leaders. PARP has also recently launched several campaigns that it plans to expand.

Awareness of HPWP could also be raised through centralised online information. In conversation with the OECD, PARP emphasised the need to provide practical knowledge in addition to campaigns, which are primarily useful to change mindsets. Despite a number of websites in Poland with information for employers

and entrepreneurs (e.g. https://www.parp.gov.pl/, https://www.biznes.gov.pl and https://uslugirozwojowe.parp.gov.pl/ [the Database of Development Services, BUR]), none of these can be considered a centralised website for workplace practices and innovation. As a response to this dispersed information, many participants in workshops expressed their support for a centralised portal or database that captures all relevant information on workplace innovation, and shows examples of good practices and successful projects. Some participants introduced the idea of developing and including a tool on such a website that assesses the skills of employees to better understand which skills they have and how to use them more effectively. Such a website could also be accompanied by information on existing public support. This could be a first step to motivate employers, managers and entrepreneurs to change their organisational culture and workplaces, complemented by more active support that will be discussed in Opportunity 2.

Various institutions and organisations could play a role in raising awareness about skills use and good workplace practices. PARP should be key in this process given its central role in the adoption of innovation in SMEs. In addition, the decentralised Polish public employment services (PES) can reach a large number of employers and have a crucial position in the distribution of funding for firms. The voivodeship labour offices (part of the regional government – voivodeship) and county (*powiat*) labour offices (part of local government at the district level) of the PES particularly have a potentially important role to play in raising awareness (OECD, 2016[14]). However, while labour offices do work with employers, their tasks mainly target those who are unemployed, especially for county labour offices. Awareness raising campaigns could also be driven by employer organisations and trade unions.

Sectoral skills councils could potentially have a role in raising awareness of skills use and workplace practices as they are already active in discussing the skills potential and current and future skill needs of sectors. There are currently seven sector councils with representation from social partners from a given sector, entrepreneurs, public institutions and representatives of the education and training sector. However, based on an evaluation by PARP (Śnieżek et al., 2017[29]), the success of sectoral skills councils appears to be mixed: there are various organisational and managerial issues that need to be addressed, and workplace practices are currently largely outside their scope of activities. It should be noted that the councils are still at the development stage, and many stakeholders during the project indicated that they should extend their activities at regional and local levels in order to successfully participate in awareness raising. Some sectoral skills councils are already active in sharing good practices and distributing information. For instance, the sectoral skills council on finance has introduced “Learning Open Days”, where colleagues from financial and other institutions have the opportunity to learn from each other and to share best work practices.

Box 4.4. Relevant Polish example: Targeted campaign and centralised online information

Leader in Human Resource Management

The Leader in Human Resource Management (HRM) initiative by the Institute of Labour and Social Studies (Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, IPiSS), launched in 2000, serves to emphasise the strategic role of human capital in an organisation and to appreciate the specific efforts of participants in the field of HRM. The goals of the competition are to disseminate knowledge in the field of HRM, identify effective solutions, disseminate good practices, create standards for HRM in the specific conditions of the Polish economy, and support the increase in the efficiency of companies. The competition covers almost all areas of HRM, including recruitment, assessment, employee development practices, remuneration, terms and conditions of employment, corporate social responsibility, and work-life balance.

Source: IPiSS (2019[30]), Institute of Labour and Social Studies website, www.ipiss.com.pl/?lang=en.

Box 4.5. Relevant international example: Targeted campaigns on workplace practices

European Workplace Innovation Network (EUWIN)

In Europe, the European Commission created the European Workplace Innovation Network (EUWIN) in 2013 to stimulate awareness of workplace innovation and to share knowledge and experience between enterprises, researchers, social partners, and policy makers through conferences, workshops, film, social media and an online knowledge bank.

Regional initiatives to raise awareness of HPWP in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, various initiatives led by the government, companies and knowledge institutes aim to increase the awareness and managerial applicability of HPWP. For example, the region of Noord-Brabant is one of the leading regions in the Netherlands on various types of innovation. In this region, companies can win a Social Innovation Award as recognition for a promising HPWP initiative. The Expedition Social Innovation, funded by the Dutch government, involves a group of entrepreneurs and managers meeting and discussing what HPWP can mean for their organisation and how they can introduce these practices into their organisation.

Source: OECD/ILO (2017[10]) *Better Use of Skills in the Workplace: Why It Matters for Productivity and Local Jobs*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281394-en; OECD (2017[31]), *OECD Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report: Netherlands 2017*, https://doi.org/10.1787/23078731.

Recommendations for disseminating knowledge and good practices related to HPWP through targeted campaigns and centralised online information

- **Use targeted online campaigns on skills use and workplace practices and publicly recognise successful enterprises and organisations.** The Polish government, public employment services, PARP, trade unions, and other stakeholders should raise awareness of skills use and good workplace practices through targeted online campaigns (e.g. by using social media), and by publicly rewarding good practices (e.g. the Leader in Human Resource Management initiative).
- **Introduce a centralised portal or website on innovative workplace practices that raise skills use.** This portal or website could summarise all relevant information on workplace innovations, show examples of good practices, and feature descriptions of successful projects. This information could be accompanied by information on available public support. The website could potentially be based or an extended version of websites www.parp.gov.pl/, www.biznes.gov.pl or www.uslugirozwojowe.parp.gov.pl (BUR).

Opportunity 2: Supporting enterprises and organisations to adopt high-performance workplace practices

While promoting HPWP through soft regulation plays an important role in the adoption of HPWP in workplaces (as described in Opportunity 1), this may not be sufficient, especially for employers and entrepreneurs who are already aware of the relevance of HPWP. A Polish study by PARP suggests that the main barriers to the growth and change of Polish firms are internal, including weak management skills, limited delegation of tasks, poor organisation of work and weak teamwork skills, limited planning, and the domination of ad hoc tasks (PARP, 2014[32]). It is not a lack of motivation and awareness that prevents many firms from adopting HPWP, but insufficient resources and limited know-how.

To improve the use of skills and the adoption of HPWP the government should actively support firms to adopt HPWP. Evidence suggests that approaches leveraging employer networks and sectoral collaboration are cost-efficient and potentially the most effective at catalysing change, rather than

centralised approaches. Governments should support and promote such a decentralised approach. To improve the use of skills and the adoption of HPWP in Polish firms, the public sector should set a good example by becoming a leader in the adoption of new technologies and workplace practices.

Supporting firms, especially SMEs, to adopt HPWP

Firms in Poland face difficulties in the adoption of many categories of HPWP, and there are large differences in the adoption of HPWPs across firms and sectors, with those lagging behind likely to face barriers beyond limited awareness and motivation. For change to occur in workplaces, employers must have significant buy-in and investment in the benefits of prioritising and developing human resources. Public interventions can help to incentivise and support actions by employers (see Box 4.7 for international examples on interventions for the adoption of HPWP).

SMEs face particular difficulties in adopting HPWP, often due to an inadequate HR function (OECD/ILO, 2017[10]). Many micro-enterprises are already innovative in terms of developing new products and services, but organisational innovations are limited (Zadura-Lichota, 2015[33]). The main barriers to innovation in these enterprises are the scarcely available resources to implement new solutions and the lack of time. For instance, many small firms cannot afford to have their employees attend training during working hours as they do not have the human resources to replace them.

This is particularly relevant for Poland, as a comparatively large share of firms and employees are SMEs, with an over-representation of micro-enterprises that have fewer than ten employees. While employers of almost all sizes in Poland use workers' skills less frequently, on average, than those in other OECD countries, micro-enterprises and large firms in particular are adopting HPWP at a lower rate than their counterparts in other OECD countries (calculations based on PIAAC (OECD, 2019[8])). The Strategy for Responsible Development highlights the need to support SMEs by adapting mechanisms of support to implement necessary structural transformations in the SME sector.

A number of organisations actively support Polish SMEs. PARP arguably has the most prominent role, with a number of programmes having an impact on workplace practices. A good example is the ScaleUP programme (Box 4.6), which is a pilot dedicated to micro or small enterprises that aims to accelerate the creation of start-ups and the development of products and services for commercialisation. The design of the ScaleUP programme has been considered to have the potential to raise the innovativeness of enterprises in Poland, promote open innovations and help start-ups find committed corporate partners (Klincewicz and Marczewska, 2018[28]).

Other organisations also run programmes that affect workplace practices, especially the promotion of innovation. For example, the Innovation Pitch events, organised by the Industrial Development Agency (ARP), promote co-operation between SMEs and large firms. In these events, the SME sector presents its innovative technological solutions that can successfully be applied commercially. The programme results in innovative ideas and co-operation between firms, helps to build a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, and stimulates the development of SMEs.

Public employment services in Poland, especially county (*powiat*) and voivodeship labour offices, also work closely with employers to address workplace practices, mainly through counselling services. These services consist of supporting the professional development of employers and their employees, as well as other activities. A 2015 OECD survey among employees working in county labour offices showed that almost one in three respondents work with local employers to improve practices related to HR and workplace organisation (OECD/ILO, 2017[10]). In some regions, centres dedicated to supporting start-ups and SMEs have even been established within the structure of labour offices, for instance the Poznań Centre for Entrepreneurship Support. However, as discussed in Opportunity 1, the role of labour offices is limited given that their tasks mainly target those who are unemployed, especially for county labour offices.

Box 4.6. Relevant Polish example: Supporting firms to adopt HPWP

ScaleUP programme

ScaleUP by PARP is the first public programme to support the acceleration of young, innovative companies in Poland. The programme supports co-operation between start-ups and large companies, which share infrastructure, technical facilities and knowledge, and are looking for new, revolutionary solutions and products. The programme is dedicated to start-ups with the greatest potential and that can get involved in the programme for three to six months. It offers advice, mentoring and financial support. The unique feature of Scale Up is the inclusion of large companies as the potential recipients of solutions developed by young companies.

The 2016 ScaleUp pilot programme contributed to the creation of ten accelerators, with the participation of 276 start-ups. Some 190 new solutions were implemented in the value chains of large companies, with 31 solutions introduced to the market so far. The second edition of the ScaleUp programme started in 2019, and emphasises the acceleration of start-ups whose projects fit into Poland's areas of specialisation, including the industrial Internet of Things, bioeconomy, FinTech, artificial intelligence, Smart City, cybersecurity and space technologies. As part of the programme, start-ups will benefit from individual development paths conducted by experienced experts, advisory and mentoring services with a value of up to PLN 50 000 (Polish zloty), and financial support up to PLN 200 000. It is planned that over 400 start-ups will benefit from the programme.

Source: PARP (2018[34]), *Report Scale Up*, www.parp.gov.pl/storage/publications/pdf/20190123134917fec5k.pdf.

Financial support for HPWP related to training and development comes primarily from the National Training Fund (Krajowy Fundusz Szkoleniowy, KFS). As a separate component of the Labour Fund, the KFS is intended for the co-financing of training for employees and employers, with different spending priorities every year. Any kind of training that employers consider necessary can be financed, with the KFS contributing 80-100% of the course or service costs. Prioritisation of the highest amount of co-financing is given to micro-enterprises. However, participants in the workshops and meetings, as well as social partners from the Social Dialogue Council, emphasised that funds for the KFS are currently insufficient in relation to the needs reported by employers. It is therefore unlikely that the KFS with current funding will drive an increase in training and development in workplaces in the short term.

Companies can benefit from a number of other funding opportunities for HPWP-related to training. For instance, as part of the EU financial perspective 2014-2020, Poland introduced a new financial system for training enterprises and employees linked to European Social Funds: *Podmiotowy System Finansowania* (PSF). Launched in 14 regions, the PSF allows entrepreneurs to decide on their own development, with funding available for education and training offers included in the Database of Development Services (BUR). The training offer in the BUR does not include opportunities relevant for all sectors and skills (many target soft skills) – for example, there are 84 training offers in construction vs. 6 068 offers in "personal development" – but this issue can be solved with the functionality of the BUR to request "tailor-made" training offers. In addition, firms can generally obtain support for training through various business support institutions, such as technology parks, technology and business incubators, technology transfer centres, innovation centres, regional and local loan funds, credit guarantee funds, business angel networks, and training and consulting centres. In 2014, there were 681 of these entities in Poland (Klincewicz and Marczewska, 2018[28]).

Despite these efforts to support Polish enterprises to adopt HPWP, more could still be done. First, not all firms have access to support measures because of the targeted nature of many existing programmes. Although PARP manages to primarily target SMEs, and more specifically micro-enterprises (a very high share [83%] of funding from the Innovative Economy Operational Programme between 2007 and 2016 went to SMEs, and 54% to micro-enterprises (PARP, 2018[35])), many existing programmes target

innovative firms and new start-ups. PARP and other stakeholders in the workshop indicated that some types of enterprise are therefore excluded, for instance existing SMEs that have been in operation for more than two years.

Second, there are several barriers to the use of these support measures. As indicated in the Strategy for Responsible Development, support for SMEs is currently somewhat dispersed, and there is the need to concentrate support for enterprises and entrepreneurship, which is one of the objectives of the Polish Development Fund (*Polski Fundusz Rozwoju*, PFR). This state-owned financial group offers instruments that support the development of companies, local governments and individuals, and both PARP and ARP are part of the fund. In workshops and meetings, participants proposed a centralised portal with information on all support measures (as also discussed in Opportunity 1). Furthermore, PARP has acknowledged the need for more high-level co-ordination between, and sustainability of, different measures. Public organisations (for instance PARP, the Educational Research Institute [Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, IBE] and different ministries) could strengthen their efforts to co-ordinate their projects and activities related to human capital development. Access to many programmes, especially those relying on EU funding, is complicated by excessive administrative procedures. Many SMEs do not have the capacity to deal with these procedures, and the administrative burden is considered one of the main barriers to the development of entrepreneurship (Klincewicz and Marczewska, 2018[28]). In some programmes, Poland has already made progress in reducing the administrative burden. For the PSF, for example, Poland successfully simplified and shortened administrative procedures, with significant reductions in waiting time for subsidised services. Despite these improvements, administrative burdens remain relatively onerous (OECD, 2018[36]).

Third, support for firms could be more tailored to the specific needs of firms and sectors. In general, since jobs in different sectors of the economy require different approaches to HPWP and skills use, sector-based strategies can be particularly effective as they are better able to take into account the overall "skills ecosystem" that serves as the broader context for how skills are used in the workplace (OECD/ILO, 2017[10]). For Poland, the Strategy for Responsible Development points out that formerly implemented instruments of support for SMEs have not fully considered their specific needs and development potential. According to PARP, such a tailored approach could start with a diagnosis of the firm on selected topics, it could then build knowledge and expertise on these topics, and finally practice the project implementation. All of this would be accompanied by evidence-based information and the sharing of knowledge and practice with other companies. PARP indicates that in this process, mentoring and coaching programmes are most successful in changing organisational practices, especially in co-operation with the business environment. However, since these work practices are often sector specific, the number of organisations and consultants with the required expertise is often limited (OECD/ILO, 2017[10]). The sectoral skills councils with their sector specific knowledge, expertise, and network could potentially play an important role in the development of such a tailored approach.

Box 4.7. Relevant international examples: Supporting firms to adopt HPWP

High-Performance Working Initiative in New Zealand

New Zealand has centred its pursuit of workplace innovation on improving productivity performance, and has singled out the poor use of skills in workplaces as a key policy issue. The High-Performance Working Initiative provides business coaching for SMEs to help streamline work practices to improve performance, while also increasing employee engagement and satisfaction. Business improvement consultants work with firms to improve their productivity. Funding is provided by the government agency Callaghan Innovation, with the firm providing half the funding.

Australian examples of increasing innovation and productivity in firms

In Australia, policy engagement with HPWP has been driven by a perceived need to increase innovation and productivity. A number of Australian initiatives have sought to promote best practice in this area, from the Best Practice Demonstration Programme in the early 1990s to the more recent Partners at Work Grants Programme in Victoria. This programme offers competitive grants to assist workplace changes that benefit all stakeholders, and is designed to encourage the development of co-operative workplace practices. It provides funding to support the appointment of consultants to work with organisations and for relevant training investments.

Initiatives to support the adoption of HPWP in Singapore

In Singapore, interventions that support the adoption of HPWP involve funding and other types of support for employers to reshape their workplaces and move towards higher-value-added production. These can include strengthening HR systems to better link skills acquisition to career trajectories; hiring consultants to review compensation structures to retain skilled workers; or hiring consultants to assess the training needs of an organisation and to adapt available training to these specific needs. An example of such a programme is the Enterprise Training Support scheme. Introduced in 2013, the scheme aims to 1) raise employee productivity and skill levels; 2) attract and retain employees by developing good HRM systems and practices tied to training; and 3) attract and retain valued employees by benchmarking compensation and benefits.

Source: OECD/ILO (2017[10]), *Better Use of Skills in the Workplace: Why It Matters for Productivity and Local Jobs*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281394-en.

Recommendations for supporting firms to adopt HPWP

- **Enhance and expand support measures for firms by PARP, sectoral skills councils and other organisations through the funding of organisational innovation and access to expert consultation and coaching.** Ensure the relevance of measures for firms, especially SMEs, through tailored support in the form of mentoring and coaching programmes, where specific characteristics of the industry are taken into account. Continue to expand and strengthen current good examples (e.g. ScaleUp and Innovation Pitch), strengthen the co-ordination between, and sustainability of, existing measures, especially measures related to human capital development, and take into consideration support for HPWP in formulating priorities for operational programmes.
- **Ensure accessibility of support measures by reducing administrative complexity and through the creation of a centralised portal.** Strengthen current efforts to reduce the administrative burden related to support measures and assist applicants by establishing a centralised portal with information on all available support. Although support should still target SMEs, ensure that all firms can access support measures if needed. More specifically, support should not only be accessible for the most innovative firms and start-ups, but also for existing enterprises.

Leveraging employer networks and supporting collaboration at the sector level to promote the adoption of HPWP

Bringing together employers on a sectoral or regional basis can stimulate more strategic thinking about various work practices (OECD/ILO, 2017[10]). Evidence suggests that approaches that leverage employer networks or collaboration at the sector level are cost efficient and potentially more effective at catalysing change than centralised approaches. These networks and clusters can take a number of forms, from informal networking, to social contact, to formal networks with a central hub organisation that has a membership structure, fees and formal governance arrangements (see Box 4.8 for international examples).

There are already initiatives in Poland where networks are stimulated. For instance, PARP runs a number of projects where groups of employers and other stakeholders come together, including sectoral skills councils, and it has a large network of enterprises. Based on experiences and feedback from employers, managers and entrepreneurs, PARP explained to the OECD that some of its most valuable programmes are informal learning and networking programmes based on smaller workshops and seminars provided on a regular basis throughout the year. By bringing together entrepreneurs, participants can share their experiences and learn from each other.

Business clusters play an important role in bringing together employers. According to a study carried out by PARP, the number of business clusters has significantly expanded in recent years, and there are now approximately 130 clusters and cluster initiatives in Poland. These clusters include 3 374 entities, mostly SMEs, and represent slightly more than 4% of employees in the Polish enterprise sector. The infrastructure for information and research is one of the main strengths of Polish clusters, and they are generally well organised, with strategic documents and employees dealing with the affairs of their members (Dębczyński et al., 2018[37]). The Polish government supports clusters with various programmes. For instance, PARP runs the ClusterFY project, which aims to intensify clusters for specific industries, foster inter-regional co-operation among clusters and business networks, and encourage their integration into value chains.

Some 16 of the 130 clusters are national key clusters, which means that they are of vital importance for the Polish economy, with high levels of international competitiveness and potential for innovation. National key clusters are the only clusters that receive national funding from European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) (in the current financial perspective 2014-2020) (Klincewicz and Marczewska, 2018[28]). PARP also directly supports these clusters with the Internationalisation of National Key Clusters programme.

The PARP study demonstrated that there are still significant possibilities to further improve the functioning and management of these clusters, and that the availability of public funds for clusters sharply decreased from PLN 140 million in the period 2012-2014 to PLN 23.5 million in 2016-2017 (Dębczyński et al., 2018[37]).

There are several other examples of initiatives and programmes where networks are stimulated, especially to support innovation. For example, the National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR) stimulates the formation of sectoral interest groups by launching dedicated R&D funding schemes based on research agendas jointly prepared by representative bodies. The Startup Poland Foundation is the community voice of new Polish technology-based companies, and has proven to be very influential in raising awareness of the potential of Polish start-ups among policy makers. The Coalition for Polish Innovations (Koalicja na rzecz Polskich Innowacji), formed in 2015, involves various employers, government agencies and non-governmental organisations. It actively engages in public consultations of legal regulations and promotes good practice in research and innovation, for instance through the publication of best practices for implementing employee innovation systems.

Collaboration among employers and entrepreneurs is supported by the various representative organisations of Polish enterprises, including employer associations such as the Polish Confederation Lewiatan, Employers of Poland (Pracodawcy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej), the Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers (Związek Przedsiębiorców i Pracodawców), and the Union of Polish Crafts (Związek Rzemiosła Polskiego). Most of these associations frequently engage employers in outreach activities related to research and innovation.

At the local level, co-ordination and co-operation can take the form of a local partnership, local platform for skills or local skills councils; however, despite a number of initiatives targeted at building local partnerships in Poland, many have not succeeded (OECD, 2016[14]). There are laws that promote the creation of local partnership institutions (LPIs), which could be, for instance, a partnership between a local university, business centre and municipal companies to establish specific study programmes. These LPIs may be initiated by anyone and funding is available from the Labour Fund for business activity. However, not

everybody is aware of this opportunity, and in practice it appears to be difficult to create an LPI, often due to limited support from authorities (OECD, 2016[14]).

Many stakeholders consulted in the course of this project indicated that the low level of association among employers, especially from the micro and SME sectors, is an issue for Poland. In most of the programmes described above, SMEs are under-represented. According to PARP, it is necessary to better explain to SMEs the benefits of working together (in an association or industry organisation) rather than taking individual action. In many other government programmes there are systemic problems in involving employers. For instance, in workshops and meetings, labour offices indicated that employers were difficult to engage in many of their programmes, often because they do not see the benefits of participation.

Box 4.8. Relevant international examples: International employer networks

Germany KMU-NEtC – Improved access of SMEs to research networks and clusters

In 2016, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research launched the funding programme KMU-NetC to promote ambitious R&D and innovation collaborations through networks and clusters. Priority is given to networks and clusters that have a concentration of SMEs. The objective of the initiative is to promote new ideas, new applications and new business models, and improve the dissemination and use of research results and model solutions among SMEs. KMU-NetC foresees fostering the innovation strategies or technology roadmaps of German networks and clusters. It is part of the federal programme "Priority for the small business".

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a cross-border exchange programme that gives newly established or potential entrepreneurs opportunities to learn from well-experienced managers of SMEs in other European Union member states. The exchange of expertise is implemented by the new entrepreneur staying with the host entrepreneur, who helps the former to acquire the skills necessary to manage a small company. For both entrepreneurs, the activity brings important added values, such as fresh ideas, knowledge sharing, opportunities to expand their networks of business contacts throughout Europe and exploring foreign markets.

The Enterprise Europe Network

The Enterprise Europe Network is the world's largest support network for SMEs with international ambitions. It has 3 000 experts across 600 member organisations in more than 60 countries. Member organisations include chambers of commerce and industry, technology centres, and research institutes. Network consultants offer comprehensive services for SMEs and help to fully develop the potential and innovative capabilities of companies.

Source: OECD (2019[38]), *SME and Entrepreneurship Outlook 2019*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/34907e9c-en; PARP (2019[39]), Polish Agency for Enterprise Development website, https://en.parp.gov.pl/.

Recommendations for leveraging employer networks and supporting collaboration at the sector level to promote the adoption of HPWP

- **Raise the involvement of employers from micro-enterprises and SMEs in collaborative initiatives at the national, local and sectoral level to catalyse change in workplaces.** The Polish government, PARP, labour offices, employer organisations and related institutions should raise employer awareness of the opportunities and benefits of joining employer networks, employer associations, clusters and partnerships, by providing information on the benefits of association and listing the possibilities for firms (e.g. on a centralised website as discussed in previous sections). Moreover, the government could potentially stimulate the association of employers through incentives and funding and raise their involvement in government initiatives. Promoting

co-operation between the public and private sector (especially SMEs) could help to raise awareness and motivate SMEs to adopt relevant HPWP.

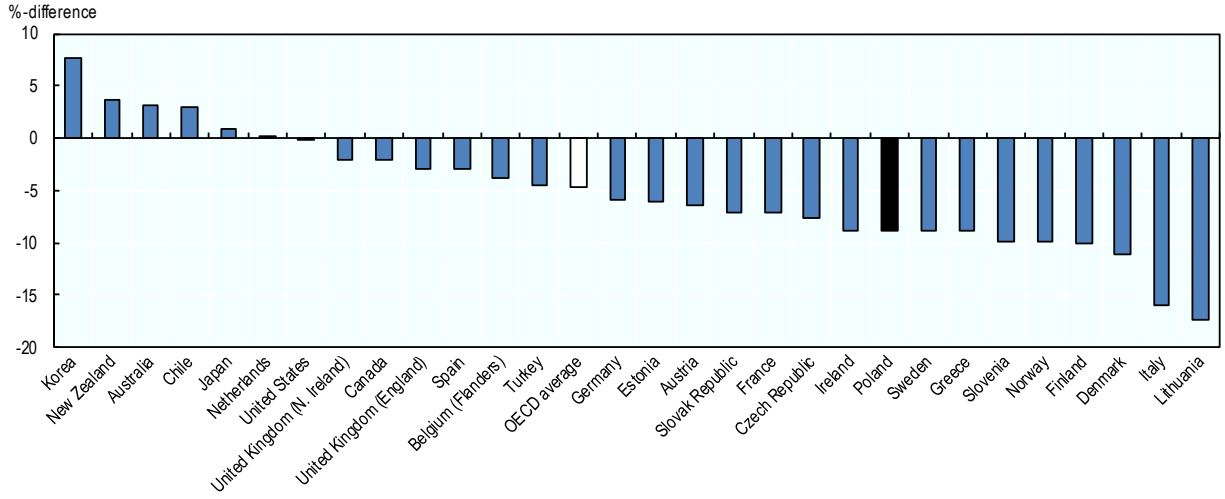
- **Improve the effectiveness and increase the impact of existing networks and collaborative initiatives.** The Polish government should ensure that current initiatives that bring together employers are effective and beneficial for members. For instance, the effectiveness and success of business clusters could be enhanced through the provision of adequate support (financial and non-financial) to all clusters, not solely the national key clusters. Barriers to the creation of local partnership institutions should be removed.

Ensuring a leading role for the public sector in the effective use of skills and the adoption of HPWP

To improve the use of skills and the adoption of HPWP in Polish firms, the public sector should become a leader in the adoption of new technologies and workplace practices. The public sector could not only set a good example, it could also spread and promote good practices by adopting them. However, PIAAC data show that there is considerable room to improve the use of skills in the public sector in Poland, for example, the use of ICT skills is almost 9% lower in the public sector than in the private sector, adjusted for skill levels and job characteristics, which is a large compared to most OECD countries (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8. Use of ICT skills in public and private sector

Adjusted difference between public and private sector in the average use of ICT skills



Note: Adjusted estimates are based on OLS regressions including controls for skill levels, hours worked and occupation dummies (International Standard Classification of Occupations [ISCO] one digit).
How to read this chart: For Poland, the value of -9 indicates that average use of ICT skills is 9% lower in the public sector than in the private sector, corrected for differences in skills, hours worked and type of occupation.
Source: Calculations based on OECD (2019[8]), *OECD Survey of Adults Skills (PIAAC) (2012, 2015)*, www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036614

Based on case studies across OECD countries, different approaches to promote innovation in the public sector could be applied, including introducing award and recognition programmes that encourage new ideas in all levels of government, establishing innovation-oriented networks and mobility programmes, and applying holistic approaches to managing staff to create a framework for supporting innovation (OECD, 2017[40]). Overall, it is relevant to create an organisational culture where employees feel empowered and do not see risks in experimenting. Furthermore, flexibility in budgets, supported by outcome goals and strong performance management, could help to create incentives for innovation, and initiating a unit within government specifically dedicated to innovation could help to overcome barriers. The success of

innovations could be improved by appropriate risk management strategies as well as a free flow of information, data and knowledge across the public sector (OECD, 2017[40]).

The low comparative performance in skills use in the Polish public service can be partly explained by the average skill levels of civil servants, with the skills gap between public and private sectors comparatively large (Mazar, 2018[41]). To raise the use of skills and to strengthen innovation in the public sector, it is therefore essential that Polish civil servants develop the right skills. For a 21st century public service, the OECD identified six skill areas for civil servants: iteration, data literacy, user centricity, curiosity, storytelling, and insurgency (OECD, 2017[42]).

There are already various good examples in Poland of efforts to strengthen the skills of civil servants. For example, the OECD (2017[42]) highlighted the Lech Kaczyński National School of Public Administration (Krajowa Szkoła Administracji Publicznej im. Lecha Kaczyńskiego) as a good example of how to train and prepare civil servants. Since 1991, it has been tasked with training and preparing Polish civil servants and high-ranking officials from the administration. Only 40 students per year are selected for the full-time programme, and graduates have guaranteed employment in the public administration after 18-20 months of training. For the continuous training of public administration employees, the organisation offers a number training courses, including in law, administration and finance, clerical skills, staff management, and foreign languages.

There are indications that learning opportunities for civil servants could be further strengthened. PARP highlighted the need to build more knowledge among public administration representatives (nationally and regionally), especially in the field of adult learning and support for HR development. Poland could introduce systemic peer learning activities specifically for the public sector, where information on the various activities by the EU, PARP and related organisations could be presented and discussed. Moreover, the Polish government could develop a strategic vision for the skills of civil servants, including skills assessments and activities to strengthen and further develop their skills (see international example in Box 4.9).

Box 4.9. Relevant international example: Skills initiatives in the public sector

United Kingdom civil service skills initiatives

The UK civil service has been taking steps to align its skills strategy with the civil service strategic vision. The 2012 Civil Service Reform Plan identified skills gaps that must be addressed in order to meet the objectives of reducing public expenditure while meeting citizens' growing service expectations. In 2013, the UK civil service published a capabilities plan for the whole civil service which identified four priority skills gaps central to support the 2012 civil service reform: 1) leading and managing change; 2) commercial skills and behaviours; 3) delivering successful projects and programmes; and 4) redesigning services and delivering them digitally.

The 2013 plan lays out ways to build, buy and borrow the capabilities needed. Building internal capabilities through learning and development, buying through contracting and/or recruiting, and borrowing through loans between departments and secondments with the private sector. These strategies are reinforced in the UK's civil service plan 2016-2020, which sets out five areas for action: 1) open up recruitment across the civil service to attract and retain people of talent; 2) build career paths through professional development to map out key skills and experiences, and ways to aid their development; 3) develop leadership through a leadership academy; 4) focus on employee inclusion, with a goal for the civil service to become the most inclusive employer in the United Kingdom; and 5) look at pay and rewards with a view to increased flexibility for market attraction of scarce skills.

Source: UK Cabinet Office (2016[43]), *Civil Service Workforce Plan 2016-2020*, www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536961/civil_service_workforce_strategy_final.pdf.

Recommendation for ensuring a leading role for the public sector in the effective use of skills and the adoption of HPWP

- **Raise the use of skills and the adoption of HPWP in the public sector by promoting a culture of innovation and knowledge**. The Polish government should ensure that public administration representatives (at the national and regional level) develop the skills needed for a 21st century public service, including by introducing more programmes targeted at civil servants, launching systemic peer learning activities specifically for the public sector, and developing a strategic vision for the skills of civil servants. Promote innovation in the public sector by ensuring that the public sector is at the forefront of adopting new technologies and workplace practices. To develop a culture of innovation, the Polish government could introduce award and recognition programmes that encourage new ideas, establish innovation-oriented networks and mobility programmes, and promote management practices that encourage employees to experiment with new innovations. The government could also strengthen incentives to innovate (e.g. by raising flexibility in budgets and strong performance management) and remove barriers to innovation (e.g. by setting up a dedicated unit)

Opportunity 3: Equipping management staff with the right skills to implement high-performance workplace practices

While it is essential that employers and entrepreneurs are motivated to adopt HPWP, it also is important that the individuals responsible for implementation have the skills and know-how to implement these practices. In many SMEs, this individual is often the employer or entrepreneur, but for larger firms, the management level is generally responsible for the actual implementation. For the successful adoption of HPWP in organisations, it is crucial to have management "on board" and equipped with the right skills to implement these practices.

In consultations with stakeholders, the limited capacity and knowledge at the managerial level (in both private and public organisations) was frequently identified as a barrier to the implementation of HPWP in Poland. This opportunity and the corresponding policy recommendations will therefore explore how to improve the capacity and knowledge of management staff in order to raise skills utilisation. This will involve addressing the development of managerial and entrepreneurial skills both in initial and continuous education.

Supporting the development of managerial skills by strengthening learning opportunities

Strong and effective management has various benefits for firms – it is associated with higher levels of employee engagement, willingness to invest effort in work, and enjoyment of work. Furthermore, there is evidence that managers with more advanced management skills are more likely to innovate, launch new products and services, adopt higher quality-based product market strategies, and be aware of what kind of practices are needed to improve firm performance (UKCES, 2014[44]).

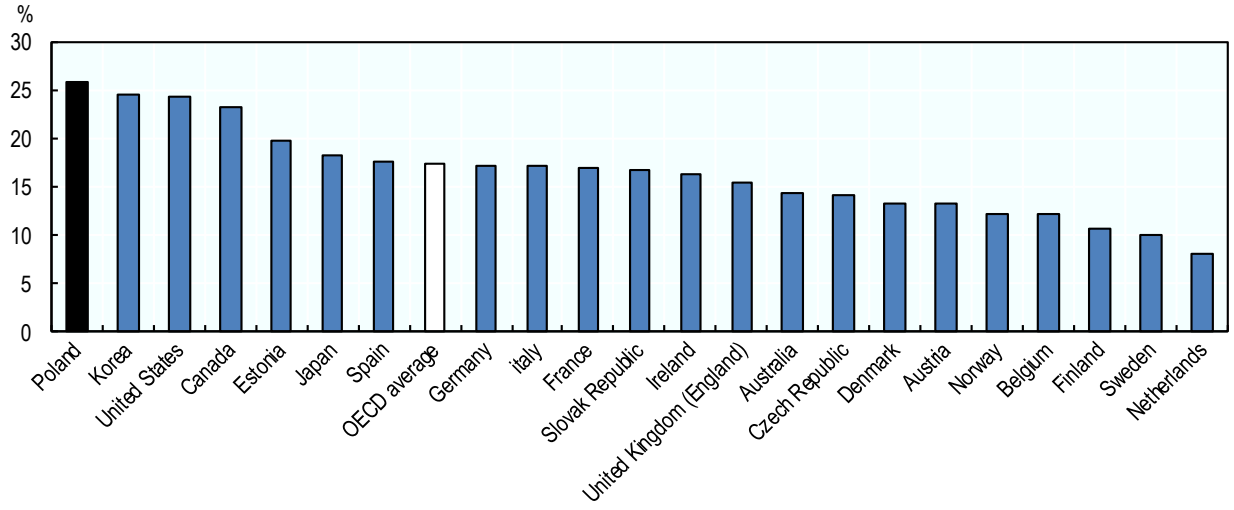
Firms have different types of management staff that require different skills. For larger firms, the levels (and related roles and responsibilities) of management should be taken into account. Strategic HR management at the highest level require skills such as developing new ideas, inspiration of staff and setting out visions, while middle managers who are more responsible for line management need the skills to implement these ideas in the company (UKCES, 2014[44]). For micro-enterprises and SMEs, management is often the owner and entrepreneur. Given the comparatively large share of these smaller firms in Poland, which are also often family businesses, the skills of these types of managers are especially relevant.

A number of studies show that the skills of management in Poland can be improved. The limited number of highly skilled managers is considered one of the main barriers to the growth of Polish firms, and the lack of support from management is a barrier to innovation (Zadura-Lichota, 2015[33]). The Study of Human

Capital (BKL) (Górniak, 2018[25]) found that Polish managers often do not have adequate levels of a variety of skills, including assessing own strengths and weaknesses, risk assessment, creativity, ability to change opinions, listening to others and drawing conclusions, and professional skills related to a given sector. Deficiencies of such important managerial skills might hinder the growth of Polish companies. Moreover, over one in four managers (based on the ISCO08 occupation classification) are low-skilled as measured by PIAAC, which is the highest share among PIAAC (2012 round) countries (Figure 4.9). The share of firms with professional management, defined as professional managers chosen for merit and qualifications, is also comparatively low in Poland (World Economic Forum, 2018[45]). These challenges are expected to deepen, since the demand for managers is still high and expected to further increase in the coming years (Cedefop, 2019[46]).

Related to the comparatively low skills of managers is the overall quality of management in Poland. The 2015 European Working Conditions Survey revealed that workers in Poland give a comparatively low ranking to the quality of management (Eurofound, 2019[18]), and fewer than five out of ten workers indicate that management helps and supports them always or most of the time, compared with almost six out of ten in the EU. Based on data from the World Management Survey, the overall quality of management in manufacturing appears to be low compared to other OECD countries (Bloom et al., 2012[47]), especially in domestically owned firms (OECD, 2018[36]). Many Polish firms are not implementing management practices that are considered to have strong workplace outcomes. Only a relatively small share of employers adopted management practices that can be described as “systematic and involving” and “interactive and involving”; however, these are practices that have been demonstrated to result in the highest well-being in workplaces (Eurofound, 2015[22]).

Figure 4.9. Share of low-skilled managers, 2012



Note: Share of managers with at least upper secondary education and aged 20-65, scoring below level two in at least one of the PIAAC proficiency scales, i.e. literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in technology-rich environments.
Source: OECD (2018[36]), *OECD Economic Surveys: Poland*, https://doi.org/10.1787/1999060x.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036633

The Polish government is aware of this challenge and has taken action to address this comparatively low performance in management. In recent years, PARP has introduced several promising programmes targeting managers. For instance, the SME Manager Academy (see Box 4.10 for description) finances training and advisory support for SMEs in the area of business management, and PARP and stakeholders emphasised its potential to grow and expand. The Innovation Manager Academy, the co-financing of strategic management, and the PARP Academy are also initiatives with great potential (Box 4.10). Some strategies have sections that address the low levels of managerial skills, such as the 2013 Strategy for

Innovation and Efficiency of the Economy (SIEG) as part of the medium-term National Development Strategy 2020. The main objective of the SIEG is the creation of a highly competitive economy based on knowledge and co-operation. The improvement of the managerial skills of enterprises, particularly in SMEs, is a separate objective within this strategy. Related measures include the dissemination of innovative managerial practices in the area of human management, strategic planning, process management, and professionalisation of the manager's function (MEN, 2013[48]).

There are indications that existing activities can still be expanded. For instance, Polish managers are not actively participating in training and development – PIAAC shows that managers do participate more in adult education and training than employees not in management positions, but the share is low compared to the OECD average (65% in Poland and 71% on average across the OECD) (OECD, 2019[8]). For the initial development of managerial skills, stakeholders during this project indicated that management education is currently insufficient – management skills are only taught as part of larger programmes in universities, vocational schools and training companies.

Feedback from PARP and stakeholders consulted in the course of this project suggests that the current offer of learning opportunities for managers could be improved in a number of ways. First, the accessibility of the training offer could be improved. For most managers, time for training activities is limited, and a flexible training offer could help to raise the current low participation. PARP also sees a potentially larger role for online courses, such as the PARP Academy, which receives positive feedback from managers. Participants also stressed the importance of simplifying the administration and procedures of training, especially the training offer linked to EU financing.

Second, the quality and relevance of the training offer could be improved. Stakeholders indicated the need for individual, targeted and personalised training for management staff, starting with an assessment of the skills needs and with a more prominent role for coaching, possibly making it mandatory. PARP indicates that the training potential could be improved at both the administrative level (e.g. more analysis of needs, monitoring, evaluation) and content level (e.g. quality of trainers, use of modern tools), possibly supported by better guidance services.

Third, the financing of training for managers could be strengthened. In Poland, the KFS is intended to co-finance the training of employees and employers; however, it primarily targets lower skilled workers, as well as micro and small enterprises, and the total funding available is unlikely to be sufficient to support all firms in their training needs. As a result, it is unlikely to become the main source of funding for management training. PARP indicates that it would be necessary to further develop, test and implement different financial schemes to finance the upskilling and reskilling of enterprises, for instance through individual learning accounts, loans or bank guarantees.

A large number of stakeholders consulted during the course of this project noted that the lack of awareness about the benefits of upskilling, reskilling and increasing managerial skills was a main obstacle for the skills development of managers, especially for SMEs. Therefore, it would also be important for Poland to build awareness of the issue of managerial skills through softer regulations. This could include, for instance, a campaign where the concrete benefits of good management practices are presented or where success stories are shared. Additionally, a central platform (e.g. database/website, as proposed in Opportunity 1) with information on practices specifically for management, as well as practical information on how to implement these practices, could help to raise awareness and support change in workplaces. Finally, employer networks (as proposed in Opportunity 2) could play an important role by supporting the exchange of knowledge and best practices between managers. To raise awareness, PARP has proposed strengthening and increasing the impact of the sectoral skills councils, and expanding the involvement of the chambers of commerce and other sectoral organisations.

Box 4.10. Relevant Polish examples: Programmes by PARP that support management

SME Manager Academy

Launched in 2018, the SME Manager Academy (*Akademia Menadżera*) is a programme administrated by PARP that finances training and advisory support for managerial staff in SMEs in the area of business management, including HR. Financing is provided for education and training from the BUR, with the aim to 1) diagnose the needs of SMEs and skills gaps of owners and managers; and 2) train SME managers. Education and training services can be financed through the programme if they meet the needs identified in the diagnosis, and are included in the PARP "Description of universal managerial skills". Financial support provided covers up to 80% of the project, while the remaining 20% is covered by the SME.

The Innovation Manager Academy

The Innovation Manager Academy (*Akademia Menadżera Innowacji*, AMI) is a programme administrated by PARP that aims to increase the skills and expertise of companies in the field of developing and implementing innovations. The programme is addressed to managers employed by enterprises to help them transfer knowledge, develop skills and form attitudes and behaviours that stimulate innovation. It offers training in the form of theoretical lectures and practical workshops, and provides companies with the support of a consultant and a thematic expert throughout the programme. It also offers an assessment of the company's innovation, as well as access to the interactive AMI Knowledge Base and to the AMI Alumni network.

Co-financing strategic management

PARP can co-finance strategic management in firms. Entrepreneurs receive support through advisory services provided by experts from employers' organisations, trade unions and business self-government organisations. The aim is to support the identification of development barriers and draw up a development plan for the company.

PARP Academy

The PARP Academy, launched in 2006, is an e-learning platform that offers 50 free-of-charge online training sessions, tailored to the needs of the SME sector, in four thematic areas related to setting up and running a business (strategic and operational management, managerial and personal skills, marketing and sales, and business environment), including training dedicated to trainers. The PARP Academy also offers short educational forms, for example "knowledge pills". Since 2006, over 180 000 participants have benefited from the PARP Academy's training.

Source: PARP (2019[39]), Polish Agency for Enterprise Development website, https://en.parp.gov.pl/.

Recommendations for supporting the development of managerial skills by strengthening learning opportunities

- **Improve managerial skills by raising awareness of their relevance and by expanding existing management training programmes.** Expand existing programmes (e.g. the SME Manager Academy and the Innovation Manager Academy by PARP), introduce new specialised programmes for the development of managerial skills, and build awareness of the need for upskilling, reskilling and improving managerial skills through campaigns, sharing of good practices, centralised information and employer networks.
- **Improve the quality, relevance and accessibility of training through targeted and personalised training for management staff at all levels.** Training programmes should have a strong emphasis on coaching modules supported by active guidance, and use specialised trainers

that have access to modern tools. Accessibility could be enhanced through the simplification of administrative procedures to participate in training and enhanced flexibility of the training offer (e.g. through stimulating online courses). Poland could also explore new financial support measures to support the training of management staff, such as learning accounts, loans or bank guarantees.

Building a strong foundation for managerial and entrepreneurial skills by teaching them in initial education

While there is not a standard definition of entrepreneurial and managerial talent and skills, they are generally considered to be general skills such as the ability to build teams, motivate, communicate, mentor and develop, as well as engage in entrepreneurial activities. To develop these entrepreneurial and managerial skills it is also generally recommended to include soft skills, such as creativity and deep thinking in the learning process (OECD, 2011[49]). The perceptions of stakeholders consulted in workshops and meetings conducted for this project were that a holistic approach to managerial skills that emphasises soft skills, emotional skills and self-organisational skills is desirable.

Not all managerial and entrepreneurial skills can be acquired through learning, training and experience, but there is a general consensus on the need to teach these skills in schools (OECD, 2011[49]). Teaching entrepreneurship in education has the potential to trigger deep learning and stimulate engagement, joy, motivation, confidence and feelings of relevancy among students. There is evidence of positive effects of entrepreneurial teaching on job creation, economic success, and innovation for individuals, organisations and society at large (OECD, 2015[50]). There is growing awareness of the potential of entrepreneurship education to shape the mindsets of young people and to provide the skills, knowledge and attitudes essential for an entrepreneurial culture. As a result, developing and promoting entrepreneurship in education has become a key policy objective for the EU and its member states, with several Nordic countries even developing specific entrepreneurship education strategies (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2016[51]).

Early exposure is essential for the development of managerial and entrepreneurial skills, and there is evidence of a strong correlation between perceived entrepreneurial skills and early stage entrepreneurial activity (OECD, 2011[49]; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2016[51]). The OECD Skills Strategy supports early exposure to these skills, since building strong foundations in the early stages will support a lifetime of learning, where learning at every stage of the lifecycle builds on learning outcomes and experiences from previous stages (OECD, 2019[2]).

In Poland, there are indications that participation in entrepreneurship education is above the average. In 2012, 30% of respondents to a survey on entrepreneurship said that they had taken part in a course or activity at school related to entrepreneurship – defined as turning ideas into action and developing one's own project – compared with 27% across OECD-EU countries (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2016[51]). Moreover, Poland has an official definition for entrepreneurship education, and related courses are explicitly integrated into the curricula. For instance, in upper secondary education, there is a compulsory subject called “Introduction to Entrepreneurship” that involves students in social and civic activities and develops their creative skills and initiative.

Despite these positive outcomes, the development of managerial and entrepreneurial skills in education can still be improved. There are, for instance, indications that teacher quality in these programmes can be raised. There is no specific provision for entrepreneurship education as part of teacher education (see Box 4.11 for example from Estonia), and participants in workshops and meetings indicated that teachers are seemingly randomly selected to teach “Introduction to Entrepreneurship”. The involvement of enterprise representatives in these courses could be stimulated. Moreover, Poland does not have a strategy for entrepreneurship education, it is only addressed in several broader strategies, including the Lifelong Learning Perspective Strategy. Following the example of a number of Nordic countries (see

example of Finland in Box 4.11), Poland could consider developing a specific strategy for entrepreneurship education. Internships could play an important role in the development of these skills, but the current arrangements for internships show room for improvement. Participants in the workshops indicated a need to remove the current age barrier to participate in internships, and to improve the evaluation of internships.

Across EU countries there are several common lessons to improve the teaching of managerial and entrepreneurial skills in education that are relevant for Poland, including introducing comprehensive learning outcomes linked to entrepreneurship education, improving the monitoring of programmes, reducing reliance on EU funding, strengthening guidelines for teaching, and the inclusion of practical entrepreneurial practices (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2016[51]).

Box 4.11. Relevant international examples: Strategies for teaching managerial and entrepreneurial skills in initial education

Finland's Guidelines for Entrepreneurship Education strategy

Finland issued its Guidelines for Entrepreneurship Education strategy in 2009. The strategy is supported by a network of 19 regional entrepreneurship education resource centres and aims to support a more entrepreneurial culture, active citizenship and business start-ups. The centres place an emphasis on networking, support and training for and with teachers. Strategy actions have led to large scale projects such as Me & MyCity, which engages with a high share of school learners. The strategy places an emphasis on economic growth, innovation and youth start-ups, highlighting the comparatively low rate of start-ups among under-35s in Finland.

Estonia's "Be enterprising!" strategy

The objective of the Estonian strategy for entrepreneurship education is to raise awareness of entrepreneurship education, train teachers, provide teaching materials, and allocate resources. Concrete actions include awareness raising activities via events and social networks, the development of materials and instructions for courses (both students and teachers), and an evaluation system. The strategy includes a map of entrepreneurial learning outcomes and focuses on integrating these into curricula. Entrepreneurship education is explicitly referred to in the curricula as a general skill, a cross-curricular objective in ISCED 1-3, and is taught in several optional and compulsory subjects.

Note: ISCED is the International Standard Classification of Education.
Source: European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2016[51]), *Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe*, http://dx.doi.org/10.2797/301610.

Recommendation for building a strong foundation for managerial and entrepreneurial skills by teaching them in initial education

- **Expand and strengthen current programmes that aim to develop managerial and entrepreneurial skills in the education system.** Build on current programmes (e.g. Introduction to Entrepreneurship), strengthen internship programmes and make them more accessible, and potentially develop a strategy specifically for developing managerial and entrepreneurial skills in the education system. Improve the quality of teachers in entrepreneurship education, including by more actively involving representatives of enterprises in the teaching and design of courses. Promote and share best practices of co-operation between enterprises and schools at all levels of education and among all those involved, including pupils, parents, teachers and local authorities.

Opportunity 4: Engaging employees effectively to implement high-performance workplace practices

Employee engagement reflects the willingness of employees to invest effort in their work and the enjoyment they get from their work. It can be enabled through various practices, including clear leadership, listening to employees and organisational integrity (UKCES, 2014[44]). Various studies show that employee engagement is one of the main contributors to skills use and productivity. Strengthening employee engagement by involving them in company decisions on the modernisation of work organisation and management practices could be considered a viable option to encourage a better use of skills in the workplace (OECD/ILO, 2017[10]).

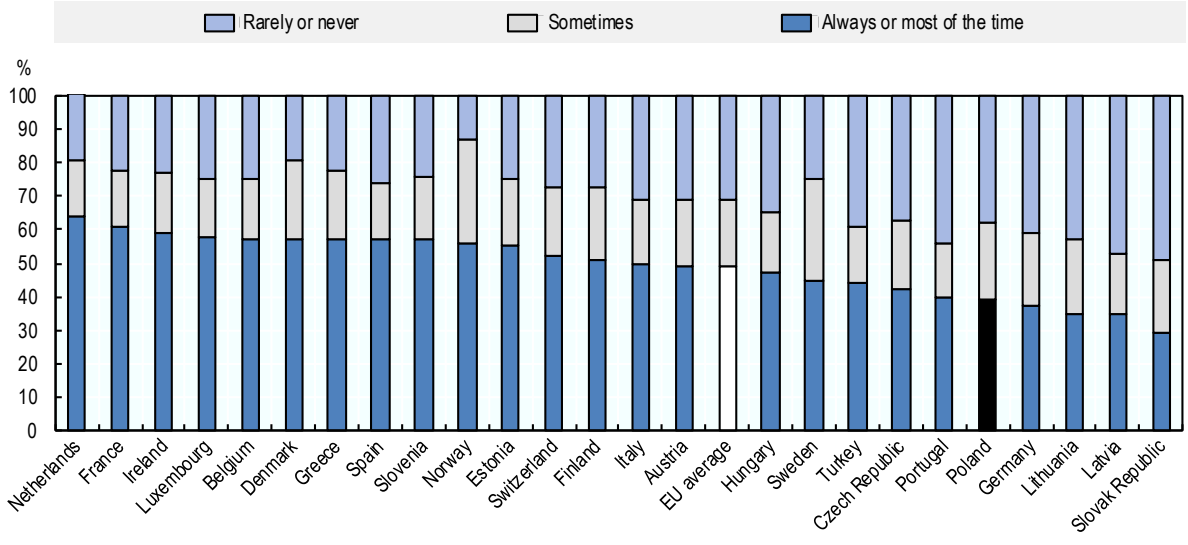
This opportunity and the corresponding policy recommendations will include both informal and formal approaches to raise employee engagement. By involving employees in firms' decision making, and by raising overall job quality, employees are likely to be more engaged in their firm. More formal employee representative structures can also play an important role in influencing firms' investment in staff, with large potential benefits for employee engagement.

Enhancing employee engagement in Polish firms by involving them in company decision making and improving overall job quality

Various studies and surveys show that employee engagement can be improved in Poland. A relatively small share of employees feel regularly involved in improving their work organisation and processes, or in influencing decisions relevant for their work (Figure 4.10) (Eurofound, 2015[22]), and for 63% of firms the decision-making process for daily tasks is top-down. It is also not common practice to have regular meetings where employees can express their views about what is happing in the organisation – 36% of Polish workers have these meetings, compared with 55% in the EU.

Figure 4.10. Involvement of employees in the improvement of work, 2015

Distribution of answers to the question "Are you involved in improving the work organisation or work processes of the department or organisation?" OECD-EU countries



Source: Eurofound (2019[18]), *European Working Conditions Survey 2015*, www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-working-conditions-surveys/.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036652

To improve the involvement and engagement of employees, Polish employers should aim for "high road strategies", where employees and the skills they possess are viewed as an integral part of a business's competitive advantage, rather than "low road" strategies, where labour is considered a commodity and workers are seen as a cost to be minimised. High road strategies also entail higher quality jobs, and many dimensions of job quality are proven to be positively associated with the better performance of employees in terms of skills use and productivity (OECD/ILO, 2017[10]). Based on discussions and conversations as part of this project, the absence of high road strategies in many Polish firms appears to be an issue. Participants in workshops and meetings indicated that employees are regularly not appreciated, not trusted and not respected by employers and management staff, which negatively affects employee satisfaction and their performance. Worryingly, one in four workers feel that a large part of their work is not useful – after Turkey, Poland has the largest share in the EU who say this – and one in five workers indicate that they do not get the recognition they deserve for their work (Eurofound, 2019[18]).

There are signs that job quality is a concern for Poland (see an example of how to improve job quality in Box 4.12), with workshop participants, when surveyed, ranking a preliminary recommendation on improving job quality of highest importance in Poland. This finding is supported by a number of surveys – for instance, around one in three employees work more than 40 hours per week, 59% of workers occasionally work weekends at least once per month, and routine work is comparatively common, with more than half of workers indicating that they perform monotonous tasks (Eurofound, 2019[18]).

Large differences exist between different groups of employees. The Study of Human Capital in Poland (BKL) 2014 shows that satisfaction with conditions for performing work, promotion opportunities, and the possibilities for personal development and training are strongly related to the level of education. Adults with tertiary education are most satisfied with these elements of their job, while adults with basic vocational education and lower secondary education are the least satisfied (Górniak, 2015[52]).

Firm size is also strongly linked to employee engagement and job quality – it is five times more likely that a large enterprise will invest in its employees than a micro-enterprise. The average weak performance across measures of employee engagement is therefore also partly the result of the large share of micro-enterprises in Poland. Sectoral differences are also profound – a high probability of investment in employees is seen among companies operating in education, healthcare, and specialised services sectors, while traditional sectors such as industry, construction, hotels and mining lag behind (Górniak, 2015[52]).

For Poland specifically, the issue of job quality is strongly related with the type of contract of the employee. Despite improvements, Poland has one of the largest share of workers with temporary contracts in the OECD, especially for the young and the low skilled. While non-standard work has benefits, in Poland these workers tend to suffer from a wage penalty and low job security and quality compared to workers on permanent contracts with otherwise similar characteristics. Both PIAAC and post-PIAAC studies demonstrate that fixed contract jobs and temporary agency jobs adopt HPWP to a much lower extent than employees in jobs under indefinite contracts (Chłoń-Domińczak and Palczyńska, 2015[53]).

Box 4.12. Relevant international example: Improving job quality

Scottish Business Pledge

In Scotland, employers can sign up for the Scottish Business Pledge if they pay a living wage and meet the requirements of at least two other pledge elements (and make a commitment to meeting the other requirements over the long term): not using exploitative zero hours contracts; supporting progressive workforce engagement; investing in youth; making progress on diversity and gender balance; committing to an innovation programme; pursuing international business opportunities; and playing an active role in the community. As of April 2016, almost 250 businesses had signed up for the pledge, accounting for over 57 000 Scottish jobs.

Source: OECD (2016[14]), *Employment and Skills Strategies in Poland*, OECD Reviews on Local Job Creation, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264256521-en.

Recommendation for enhancing employee engagement in Polish firms by involving them in company decision making and improving overall job quality

- **Promote employers investing in their employees for the long term by moving towards "high road strategies" where employee skills are considered an integral part of a business's competitive advantage.** The Polish government, labour offices, employer organisations and others should aim to raise respect and trust in employees, and improve the job satisfaction of Polish workers, including by setting and enforcing higher labour standards and by motivating employers to raise job quality (e.g. with a business pledge), especially for low-educated workers, smaller firms, traditional sectors and workers on temporary contracts. Address the low levels of employee engagement by improving employees involvement in firm decision making, including by promoting regular meetings where employees can express their views about what is happening in the firm.

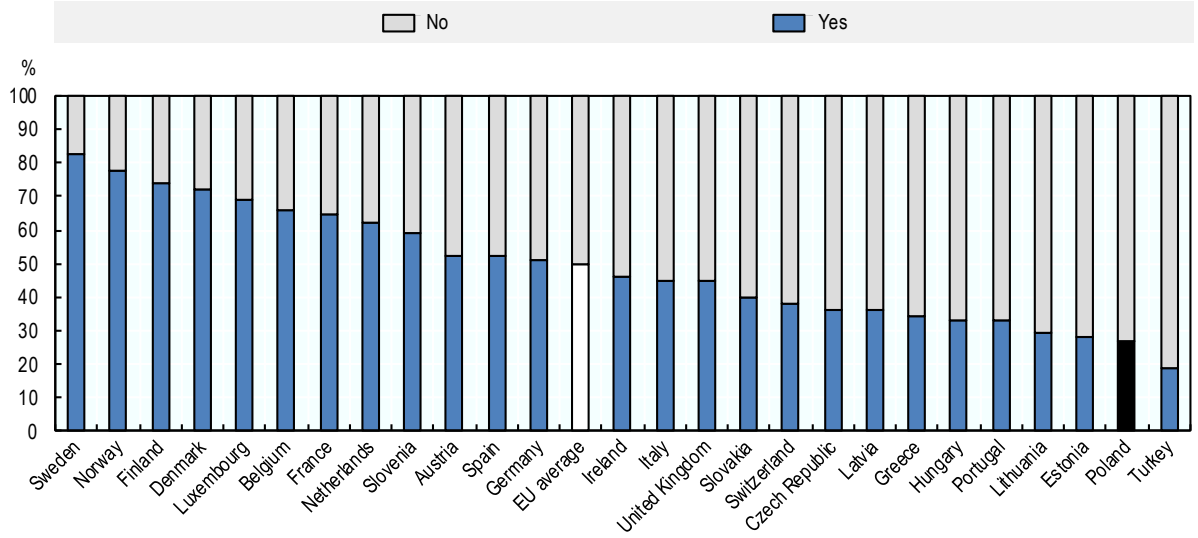
Strengthening employee representative structures in Polish firms

Employee representative structures can play an important role in influencing firms' investment in staff. Data from PIAAC show that institutions with strong collective bargaining and unionisation are associated with a higher utilisation of workers' skills in the workplace (OECD, 2016[6]; OECD/ILO, 2017[10]). Furthermore, economic theory suggests that there are positive economic effects related to works councils. Although empirical research is limited and with mixed results, it does show that there are positive effects of exchange of information, consultation and employee participation linked to works councils (CESifo, 2015[54]).

In Poland, there are signs that employee representative structures can be strengthened. One in four workers indicate that there is a trade union, works council or a similar committee representing employees in their company, compared with one in two workers in the EU, and only Turkey has a lower share in the EU (Figure 4.11). The share of firms with direct employee participation that is extensive and supported by the employer is only average, and overall trust in employee representation is low (Eurofound, 2019[18]).

Figure 4.11. Representation of employees in Polish firms, 2015

Distribution of answers to the question "Does your organisation have a trade union, works council or similar committee representing employees?" OECD-EU countries.



Source: Eurofound (2019[18]), *European Working Conditions Survey 2015*, www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-working-conditions-surveys/.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036671

In Poland, the main bodies for employee involvement in firms are the works councils in both state-owned enterprises (*Rady pracownicza*) and private enterprises (*Rada pracowników*). Introduced in 2006, these bodies used for informing and consulting employees can be established in companies with more than 50 employees. Unfortunately, the works councils have not succeeded in promoting social dialogue and creating a strong institution for employee participation. Their role in Polish industrial relations remains negligible – only approximately 2% of Polish enterprises have adopted them (Skorupinska, 2015[55]). Box 4.13 presents international examples of works councils.

In addition to works councils, there are a number of trade unions that represent employees in almost all sectors. However, only 12% of employees belong to a trade union in Poland, one of the lowest shares in the EU and OECD (OECD, 2019[56]). Trade unions do participate actively in negotiations at the national level, with three federations of trade unions meeting criteria of national representativeness. These federations participate, for instance, in the Labour Market Council (Rada Rynku Pracy) – where trade unions and employer organisations set the priorities for funding – and in the Social Dialogue Council (Rada Dialogu Społecznego, RDS) – the main tripartite body for social dialogue at the national level.

In Poland there is a widespread use of forms of direct participation in firms, but the scope and distribution have less intensity. The main motives for introducing forms of direct participation in enterprises were economic (productivity), and the primary benefit was an improvement in the quality of products and services (Skorupinska, 2015[55]).

Box 4.13. Relevant international examples: Employee representative structures in firms

European works councils

Since 1994, European works councils have represented the European employees of a company. Through them, workers are informed and consulted by management on the progress of the business and any significant decisions at the European level that could affect their employment or working conditions. European works councils can be formed in companies or groups of companies with at least 1 000 employees in the EU, and in the other countries of the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) when there are at least 150 employees in each of two member states. The councils can be formed following a request by 100 employees from two countries or following an initiative by the employer, with the composition and functioning of each council adapted to the company's specific situation. In 2008, the directive for European works councils was changed in order to ensure the effectiveness of employee transnational information and consultation rights, increase the number of councils, and enable the continuous functioning of existing councils.

Works councils in Germany

In Germany, the most important employee representative body is the works council (*Betriebsrat*). In establishments with more than five regularly employed employees who are eligible to vote, a works council can be elected, with the size of the works council depending on the size of the firm. The formation of a works council is not mandatory for employees, and the initiative must come from the employees or the unions, with the employer bearing the costs of the works council to perform its duties. Works councils are set up especially in medium size and large enterprises, and more rarely in small enterprises: councils are organised in 97.5% of firms with more than 1 000 workers, and in 4.2% of firms with 5 to 20 employees. The works council has general information and consultation rights under the Works Constitution Act. To perform its duties, it must have an established dialogue with the employer, and together they can agree on work agreements, which are binding for all employees. These work agreements are a special type of contract regarding the working conditions of individual employees, with the same direct and binding effect on individual employment relationships as statutory law.

Source: European Commission (2019[57]), *Employee involvement – European Works Councils*, https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=707&langId=en&intPageId=211; DICE Database (2015[58]), *Workplace Representation – Legal Basis and Thresholds*, http://www.ces-munich.de/de/ifoHome/facts/DICE/Labour-Market/Labour-Market/Unions-Wage-Bargaining-Labour-Relations/Workplace-representation-legal-basis-thresholds.html.

Recommendation for expanding and strengthening employee representative structures in Polish firms

- **Expand and strengthen the role of current employee representative structures, most notably the works councils in both state-owned (*Rady pracownicza*) and private enterprises (*Rada pracowników*).** To improve the engagement of employees in Polish firms, the Polish government should consider making legislative changes for works councils and other types of employee representation to ensure that they become more active and effective, including by removing barriers to their formation. Moreover, government, employer organisations and other stakeholders should raise awareness of the benefits of works councils by providing information and sharing good practices, and aim to improve the overall trust in these structures.

Overview of recommendations

Opportunity 1: Raising awareness of the relevance of effective skills use and related HPWP	
Including the topic of skills use in workplaces and the adoption of HPWP in national, regional and sectoral strategies	• Put skills use and HPWP on the policy agenda by including them more explicitly and more prominently in strategies with targeted, measurable actions.
Disseminating knowledge and good practices on HPWP through targeted campaigns and centralised online information	• Use targeted online campaigns on skills use and workplace practices and publicly recognise successful enterprises and organisations. • Introduce a centralised portal or website on innovative workplace practices that raise skills use.
Opportunity 2: Supporting enterprises and organisations to adopt HPWP	
Supporting firms, especially SMEs, to adopt HPWP	• Enhance and expand support measures for firms by PARP, sectoral skills councils and other organisations through the funding of organisational innovation and access to expert consultation and coaching. • Ensure accessibility of support measures by reducing administrative complexity and through the creation of a centralised portal.
Leveraging employer networks and supporting collaboration at the sector level to promote the adoption of HPWP	• Raise the involvement of employers from micro-enterprises and SMEs in collaborative initiatives at the national, local and sectoral level to catalyse change in workplaces. • Improve the effectiveness and increase the impact of existing networks and collaborative initiatives.
Ensuring a leading role for the public sector in the effective use of skills and the adoption of HPWP	• Raise the use of skills and the adoption of HPWP in the public sector by promoting a culture of innovation and knowledge.
Opportunity 3: Equipping management staff with the right skills to implement HPWP	
Supporting the development of managerial skills by strengthening learning opportunities	• Improve managerial skills by raising awareness of their relevance and by expanding existing management training programmes. • Improve the quality, relevance and accessibility of training through targeted and personalised training for management staff at all levels.
Building a strong foundation for managerial and entrepreneurial skills by teaching them in initial education	• Expand and strengthen current programmes that aim to develop managerial and entrepreneurial skills in the education system.
Opportunity 4: Engaging employees effectively to implement HPWP	
Enhancing employee engagement in Polish firms by involving them in company decision making and improving overall job quality	• Promote employers investing in their employees for the long term by moving towards “high road strategies” where employee skills are considered an integral part of a business’s competitive advantage.
Strengthening employee representative structures in Polish firms	• Expand and strengthen the role of current employee representative structures, most notably the works councils in both state-owned (*Rady pracownicza*) and private enterprises (*Rada pracowników*).

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5 Strengthening the governance of the skills system in Poland

Effective governance arrangements are essential to support Poland's performance in developing and using people's skills. The success of skills policies typically depends on the responses and actions of a wide range of actors, including government, learners, educators, workers, employers and trade unions. A whole-of-government approach, effective stakeholder engagement, integrated information systems and co-ordinated financing arrangements are essential to improve skills development and use. This chapter explores three opportunities to strengthen the governance of the skills system in Poland: 1) strengthening co-operation on skills policy at the national level; 2) strengthening vertical and subnational co-operation on skills policy; and 3) integrating and using skills information effectively.

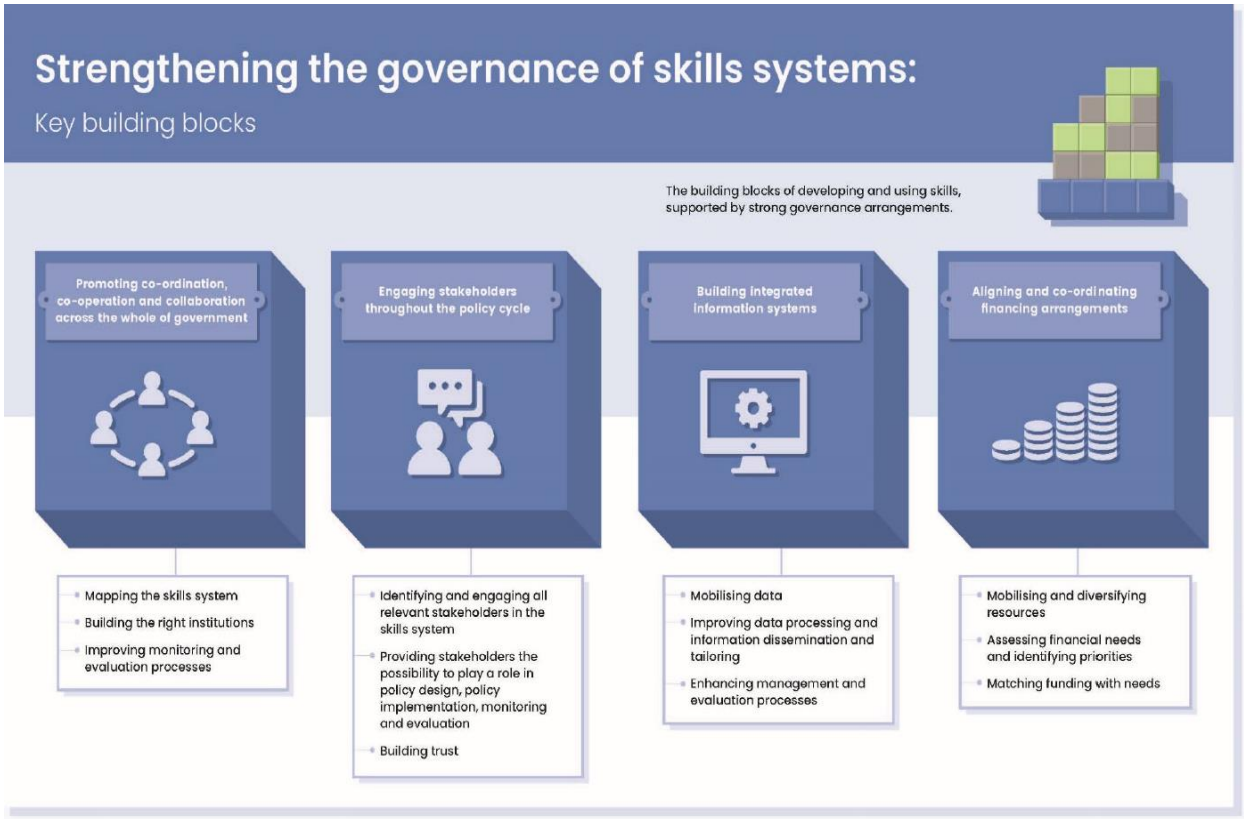
The importance of governance for Poland's skills system

Effective governance arrangements are essential to support Poland's performance in developing and using people's skills, and for achieving the goals of the Integrated Skills Strategy (Zintegrowana Strategia Umiejętności, ZSU).

Across OECD countries the success of policies to develop and use people's skills typically depends on the responses and actions of a wide range of actors, including government, learners, educators, workers, employers and trade unions. In many regards, skills policy is fundamentally different from other policy areas. On the one hand, investing in skills is widely popular across different electoral and political constituencies (Busemeyer et al., 2018[1]) as the benefits for economic development and social inclusion are broadly recognised. On the other hand, skills policy is more complex than many other policy areas because it is located at the intersection of education, labour market, industrial and other policy domains. Skills policies therefore implicate a diverse range of government ministries, levels of governments and non-government stakeholders. For instance, labour market policy typically involves trade unions and employers' associations, and education policy involves parental and student associations, teacher associations and educational institutions, and others (OECD, 2019[2]).

The OECD Skills Strategy (2019[2]) identifies four building blocks for strengthening the governance of skills systems (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. The building blocks of strong governance for skills systems



Source: OECD (2019[2]), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to Shape a Better Future*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en.

It is essential that a whole-of-government approach is taken to increase skills development and use. A wide range of actors have roles and responsibilities in Poland's skills system (Table 5.2).

Promoting co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration across the whole of government can lead to more effective and efficient skills policies. This approach typically requires a shared conviction of the importance of skills, co-ordination between central and subnational authorities, mapping the policies and actors in the skills system, and institutions that adopt a "life course perspective" and monitor and evaluate the skills system. For Poland, as in other countries, whole-of-government co-ordination is essential on at least two levels:

1. Horizontal (inter-ministerial): co-ordination between the ministries of the national government on skills policy.
2. Vertical: co-ordination between ministries and subnational authorities (region [voivodeship or *województwo*], county [*powiat*] and municipalities [*gmina*]) on skills policy.

Government engagement with non-government stakeholders (employers, trade unions, education and training providers, civil society organisations, etc.) on skills policy throughout the policy cycle is also important as it can help policy makers tap into on-the-ground expertise and foster support for policy reform and implementation. Effective stakeholder engagement requires that the costs of participation are minimised for stakeholders, and that the benefits are maximised by ensuring visible impacts on policies. It also involves avoiding "capture" by individual interest groups (OECD, 2019[2]).

Building integrated information systems harnesses the potential of data and information to optimise the design and implementation of skills policies. Such systems ensure that policy makers, firms, individuals and others have access to accurate, timely, detailed and tailored information on skills development activity and outcomes across the life course, available learning opportunities, and current and anticipated skills needs. These systems also employ a "user-centred" approach to ensure that data become actionable information, including as evidence in skills policy making.

Aligning and co-ordinating financing arrangements is essential to ensure the sufficiency and sustainability of skills investments. Skills funding should rely on flexible cost-sharing mechanisms from multiple sources, with public funds allocated to achieve outcomes and ensure equal opportunities for developing and using skills. Aligning and co-ordinating financing typically involves identifying funding gaps in the system, aligning investments to the government's medium-term priorities, and ensuring that those with responsibilities for skills have the resources to fulfil their role effectively (see Chapter 3 for a discussion on financing adult learning).

This chapter provides an overview of Poland's current arrangements and performance in relation to governing the skills system. It then explores opportunities for Poland to strengthen skills governance arrangements by strengthening co-operation on skills policy at the national level, strengthening vertical and subnational co-operation on skills policy, and integrating and effectively using skills information. For each opportunity, the available data are analysed, relevant national and international policies and practices are discussed, and recommendations are given.

Overview and performance of skills governance in Poland

Overview of current roles and responsibilities for skills policy

Current roles and responsibilities for skills policy in Poland are linked to the country's political and administrative structure of four levels of government. The European Commission is also an important part of this structure at the supranational level (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. Poland's political and administrative structure

Governmental tier	Count	Political structure	Political executive
Supranational (European Union)	1	The European Parliament is a directly elected body that consists of 751 Members of the European Parliament (MEP). The Council of the European Union is the decision-making body whose members are the government ministers from European Union (EU) countries.	The European Council is made up of the heads of state or government from EU member countries and defines the political agenda and priorities.
Central government	1	A directly elected president and a prime minister who is appointed by the president and confirmed by the *Sejm*.	Lower house (*Sejm*) of 460 members (*poslowie*) and Senate of 100 members (*Senat*).
Region (voivodeship)	16	Regional directly elected assembly (voivodeship *sejmik*). Regional representative of central government (voivode).	Marshal (*marszalek*), deputy marshals and board members elected among the assembly's ranks or outside the assembly from the executive office (*zarząd województwa*).
County (*powiat*)	314 (including 66 cities with county [*powiat*] status)	Directly elected council.	County chairman (*starosta*), deputy county chairman and board members elected by county council from the county executive (*zarząd powiatu)*.
Commune/municipality (*gmina*)	2 478	Directly elected council.	Directly elected mayor.

Source: OECD (2018[3]), *Rural Policy Reviews: Poland 2018*, https://doi.org/10.1787/19909284; The Economist Intelligence Unit (2019[4]), *Political structure*, http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1507485734&Country=Poland&topic=Summary&subtopic=Political+structure; European Union (2018[5]), *Institutions and bodies*, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies_en.

As a result of the political and administrative structure, a diverse range of actors have roles and responsibilities in developing and using people's skills in Poland (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2. Roles and responsibilities for developing and using people's skills

Actor	Roles and responsibilities
Central authorities	
Ministry of National Education (MEN)	Oversees education (up to ISCED 4) policy and funding. Co-ordinates the Lifelong Learning Perspective and leads the development of the ZSU. Co-ordinates the Integrated Qualifications System (Zintegrowany System Kwalifikacji, ZSK) to consolidate qualifications acquired outside the education system, including vocational education and training (VET), higher education, and non-formal learning. Develops model programmes for vocational qualifications courses, vocational skills courses, general competence courses and multimedia courses for distance learning.
Ministry of Science and Higher Education	Sets and finances higher education policies affecting ISCED 5-8, although ISCED 5 has yet to be implemented after the reform of the system of higher education and science (known as "Constitution for a Science"). Authorises new study programmes in higher education institutions (HEI) that provide non-degree postgraduate programmes. Manages the national platform to provide massive open online courses (MOOCs) to facilitate users developing skills in language, digital literacy, problem solving, communication and entrepreneurship.
Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy	Manages the Labour Fund, including the National Training Fund (Krajowy Fundusz Szkoleniowy, KFS), and finances active labour market policies, including vocational and education training and guidance. Develops tools such as "Infodoradca+", which provides detailed descriptions of tasks and skills required for different occupations. Conducts European Social Fund (ESF) financed projects to develop the skills of those socially excluded on the labour market. Designs the legislative framework of the functioning of public employment services and the labour code.
Ministry of Digital Affairs	Oversees the development of the information society and counteracting digital exclusion. Is responsible for strategic co-ordination of the operational programme "Digital Poland", which involves training activities for the development of digital skills in Polish society among students, teachers and adults.
Ministry of Investment and Economic Development	Manages and implements all ESF-funds directed to skills-related programmes. Co-ordinates and undertakes direct actions in areas that impact the realisation of objectives included in the Strategy for Responsible Development.

Actor	Roles and responsibilities
Subnational authorities	
Voivodeship marshal's offices	Administer public education, including higher education. Operate public in-service teacher training centres, educational resource centres/libraries, and networks of schools and institutions at regional and supra-regional levels. Manage European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programmes (regional operational programmes). Responsible for the works of voivodeship labour offices.
Voivodes	Regional representative of central government that adapts governmental policies to local needs. Administer regional educational authorities (*kuratoria*).
Voivodeship labour offices (public employment service)	Responsible for active labour market policies at a regional level, which includes skills forecasting or setting training priorities for a region. Maintain the register of training institutions operating within their jurisdiction. Monitor local labour markets, with a special role of regional labour market observatories.
District (county) authorities (*powiat*)	Establish, administer and finance public post-primary schools and continuing education centres, practical training centres and further and in-service training centres.
Municipal (commune) authorities	Establish, administer and finance public pre-primary education and primary schools (and lower secondary schools until they are phased out).
County (*powiat*) labour offices (Public employment service)	Implement active labour market policy instruments, Organise and provide training, internships, postgraduate studies, training loans, training vouchers, internship vouchers, tripartite training agreements and apprenticeships for adults. Distribute funds for lifelong learning through the KFS.
Government agencies	
Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP)	Supports employers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through various programmes, such as the Database of Development Services and PARP Academy that seek to provide development information catered to entrepreneurs and employees. Creates, together with business representatives, sectoral skills councils to identify skills needs and develop appropriate strategies to enhance vocational education. Provides programmes that target managers and improve their skills.
Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, IBE)	Conducts interdisciplinary research concerning the functioning and effectiveness of the education system, participates in national and international research projects, prepares reports and expert opinions, and carries out advisory functions. Main research areas include new core curriculum and teaching methods, measurement and analysis of educational achievement, relationship between education and the labour market, lifelong learning and national qualifications framework, economic determinants of education, teaching conditions and quality, and institutional issues in education and policy. The institute is supervised by the MEN.
Centre for Education Development (Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, ORE)	Undertakes and implements activities to improve the quality of education in accordance with the state education policy, adapted to or in accordance with changes introduced into the education system. Areas of work include teacher training, management of education at the regional level, education supervision, labour market education, educational and vocational counselling, key competencies development, and special needs education.
Foundation for the Development of the Education System (Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji, FRSE)	Co-ordinates the implementation of EU educational programmes in Poland, including Lifelong Learning Programme initiatives Erasmus and Erasmus+, Leonardo da Vinci, Cemenius and Grundtvig, and the Youth in Action programme in Poland. Responsible for European informational and educational initiatives such as European Language Label, eTwinning, Eurodesk, Europass and Eurydice, as well as operating the Scholarship and Training Fund as part of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the European Economic Area (EEA) Mechanism.
Central Examination Board (Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna)	Preparing, determining and disseminating materials for the eighth grade, matriculation, professional and extramural examinations.
Industrial Development Agency	Provides initiatives that benefit skills development and use, including various support programmes for specific sectors where comprehensive development plans for industries are created.
Polish Accreditation Committee (Polska Komisja Akredytacyjna, PKA)	Responsible for the accreditation of HEIs, which need PKA approval to open a study programme. Provides support for public and non-public higher education institutions to enhance the quality of education and build a quality culture. Conducts programme evaluation.

Actor	Roles and responsibilities
Non-governmental actors	
Education and training providers	Provide formal education and training to students and adults (ISCED 1-8), non-formal education and training programmes to adults and enterprises (e.g. market qualifications), and offer guidance services and recognition of prior learning. Retain autonomy of provision depending on the level and type of provider.
Employer associations and trade unions	Set additional priorities for the distribution of funds from the KFS reserve (20%) and decide on the allocation of these funds in accordance with the adopted priorities. Provide input to draft strategies, programmes and other government documents regarding planned activities of the Council of Ministers.
Sectoral skills councils	Established in 2016 in for the health, construction, finance, tourism, fashion, information and communication technology (ICT), and automotive sectors. Co-ordinate a dialogue between sectoral representatives (employers organisations, trade unions, other institutions) and ministries on meeting sectoral skills needs with competencies and qualifications. Make proposals on new occupations, provide opinions on qualifications in the ZSK, set funding priorities for sectoral training, and advise employees to be prepared for changes to the sector.

Note: ISCED is the International Standard Classification of Education.
Source: Eurydice (2019[6]), *Poland Overview*, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/poland_en; PKA (2019[7]), *Polska Komisja Akredytacyjna* [Polish Accreditation Commission], www.pka.edu.pl/en/.

Whole-of government co-ordination on skills

Several mechanisms are in place for the inter-ministerial co-ordination of skills policies. The Chancellery of the Prime Minister, as an executive office for the prime minister, serves as a gatekeeper of the policy agenda. Before draft bills go to the Chancellery's Council of Ministers (Cabinet) they are reviewed by the Cabinet Committee Department (Matthes and Markowski, 2018[8]). There are not many cabinet committees, but in 2016 the government set up an Innovativeness Council of nine ministries to improve inter-ministerial development and the co-ordination of innovation policies, as well as an Economic Committee to co-ordinate implementation of the Strategy for Responsible Development (Breznitz and Ornston, 2017[9]; Wielądek, 2016[10]). Deputy ministers co-ordinate with each other through the Cabinet's Permanent Committee, which prepares all meetings of the Cabinet, and in the Committee for European Affairs, which is in charge of EU co-ordination. Inter-ministerial oversight bodies have been created to support specific reforms and strategies, such as the Inter-ministerial Team for the Lifelong Learning Perspective.

Some mechanisms are in place for vertical co-ordination between ministries and subnational authorities on skills policies:

- The Joint Central Government and Local Government Committee established a forum to determine a common national and local government position on state policy towards self-government (OECD, 2018[3]). It is composed of a minister responsible for public administration along with 11 national appointees and representatives of local government from national organisations, and is supported by experts. The forum develops joint opinions on legislation, programme documents and policies that have the potential to impact local governments, including their finances. A national Social Dialogue Council (Rada Dialogu Społecznego) provides a forum for trilateral dialogue between central government and Poland's 16 regional councils (described below).
- The regions have a centrally appointed head of regional administration (voivode) who is responsible for ensuring that national policies are implemented and that state institutions operating in the region perform their functions properly. In education and employment policy, the main task of the vovoide is to elect and supervise the regional education authority (kurator oświaty), which supervises schools in a region and implements national education policies.
- Territorial contracts aim to enhance co-ordination vertically between subnational and central levels, and horizontally at the subnational level (OECD, 2013[11]). They are written agreements between central and subnational governments that seek to facilitate a partnership. They set priority goals, methods of policy co-ordination and funding mechanisms for key initiatives. For example, a territorial contract for the Kujawsko-Pomorskie region regulated policies for 2014 to 2023, with a

main focus on the realisation of the regional operational programme, which allocates funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for a region. Increasing the level of education and competences of the regional population was one of ten priorities for the region (Marshal's Office of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship, 2014[12]).

Stakeholder engagement with policy makers

The government is obliged by law to consult all parties affected by proposed legislation. Since 2001, Poland has established a relatively comprehensive system of regulatory impact assessment (RIA), which remains in place today. Online consultation with citizens is limited, but government agencies are obliged to provide public information online, and government services are increasingly delivered online (e.g. through the e-PUAP system). The government established a Social Dialogue Council in 2015 to improve the implementation of socio-economic development policies, including for education quality. The members are appointed by the president and include representatives of the government, employees and employers. The council replaced the traditional Tripartite Commission, which ceased operations in June 2013 (Matthes and Markowski, 2018[8]).

Additional stakeholder engagement mechanisms have been created for specific skills-related strategies and reforms. For example, the Integrated Qualifications System (*Zintegrowany System Kwalifikacji*, ZSK) reform introduced the Board of Stakeholders of Integrated Qualifications System, which is composed of representatives of various stakeholders groups such as ministries, employer organisations, trade unions, and higher education institutions to ensure that policies related to the ZSK reflect their needs. The Labour Market Council brings together representatives of trade unions, employer associations, the Joint Commission of Central Government and local governments and gives opinions on the priorities and distribution of a portion (20%) of the National Training Fund (*Krajowy Fundusz Szkoleniowy*, KFS). The ZSU is also an example of a process involving various stakeholders, as political decisions on its scope were preceded by a variety of consultations and seminars co-ordinated by Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, IBE).

A variety of mechanisms are in place in Poland to facilitate co-operation between actors at the subnational level (OECD, 2018[3]):

- Regional councils for social dialogue (*Wojewódzka Rada Dialogu Społecznego*) in each of the 16 regions convene representatives of the marshal of the region (*marszałek województwa*), the regional governor (voivode*, wojewoda*), employers and trade unions to co-operate on regional development (OECD, 2018[3]).
- Regional labour market councils (*wojewódzkie rady rynku pracy*) bring together regional representatives of employer organisations, trade unions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) appointed by voivodeship marshals. Their main task is to stimulate the development of the regional labour market, including by giving opinions on new vocational programmes (professions) to be taught in VET schools, and assessing how the KFS is spent.
- County labour market councils (*powiatowe rady rynku pracy*) bring together local representatives of employer organisations, trade unions and NGOs appointed by county *starosta*. They advise on new professions to be taught in VET institutions, discuss the financial plan of the county labour office (public employment service), and assess the county's programmes.
- ERDF-funded programmes can spur intra-regional and public-private partnerships. Funds are often allocated at a regional level, and stakeholders need to co-operate to successfully bid for and access the funds. Acknowledging this potential, the Pomorskie Region Development Strategy 2020 (*Strategia Rozwoju Województwa Pomorskiego 2020*) identifies co-operation between researchers and businesses as a major weakness to be addressed through ERDF-funded programmes (Sejmik Województwa Pomorskiego, 2012[13]; Pomorski Urząd Wojewódzki, 2019[14]).

- Regional agencies can also facilitate co-operation between provinces, counties, districts, communes, employers, unions, education and training providers, and civil society organisations. For example, the Poznań Centre for Entrepreneurship Support operates within the framework of the Poznań county labour office to provide information, consulting and education services to bolster entrepreneurship for small businesses. The centre co-operates with the Poznań Department of Economic Activity and Agriculture and local stakeholders, including labour market institutions, business institutions, training providers and universities (OECD, 2016[15]; POWP, 2019[16]).
- Territorial contracts aim to enhance co-ordination horizontally at the subnational level (OECD, 2013[11]). So far, they are focused on infrastructure projects (e.g. a major road linking Małopolskie and Śląskie regions). However, the Dolnośląskie region's contract includes the trans-regional co-operation of higher education institutions.
- Poland currently has two main legal forms of co-operation between municipalities (as specified in the Law on Local Government, 1990) (OECD, 2018[3]):
    - Inter-municipal unions are corporations of public law created by local governments. Their primary objective is to implement specific public tasks. There are presently 313 such unions in Poland. The vast majority have been adopted to manage the sewage system, but some have also been adopted to promote investment in areas such as the agri-food sector or the development of tourism, sport and leisure.
    - Inter-municipal agreements do not constitute a separate legal entity, but allow a municipality to entrust certain public tasks, rights and obligations to another municipality (usually for transport or sewage). The supported municipality finances at least part of the costs related to the implementation of these tasks.
- Local authorities can create shared service centres whereby schools, kindergartens and social welfare centres in one municipality can share common accounting, information technology services, and human resource systems, etc. Such local service centres also enable one municipality to act as a co-lead for others; for example, one accounting service for schools and kindergartens can be adopted across several municipalities.
- The Metropolitan Union Act in Śląskie Voivodeship (2017) formalised a framework for inter-municipal collaboration. Some 41 municipalities with more than 2 million inhabitants participate in the union, which aims to co-ordinate tasks such as integrating public transport and supporting regional social and economic development. The union receives 5% of the personal income tax paid by inhabitants, and allocates its budget to regional services and infrastructure such as transportation.
- Regional territorial observatories (RTOs) provide analyses of regional development in all 16 voivodships. They co-operate with institutions at the national level (e.g. Statistics Poland, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development, other RTOs) and the regional level (e.g. voivodeship labour offices, regional bureaus and agencies).
- Local action groups (LAGs) under the EU LEADER Programme (https://enrd.ec.europa.eu) are a form of inter-municipal partnership, usually in rural territories, that involve other private sector and non-profit actors. Poland currently has 324 LAGs that have undertaken a range of development projects, such as small business incubators, tourism promotion networks, and training and skills upgrading for marginalised groups.
- Subnational authorities of various types and levels form associations in order to enhance inter-regional co-operation. Examples include the Association of Polish Cities (Związek Miast Polskich), the Association of Polish Counties (Związek Powiatów Polskich), the Association of Rural Municipalities in Poland (Związek Gmin Wiejskich Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej), and the Convention of Marshals (Konwent Marszałków Województw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej).

Building integrated information systems

Responsibilities for gathering, disseminating and using information on skills and learning in Poland are fragmented and sometimes undefined, with several ministries, agencies, institutions and social partners currently involved (Table 5.3). The ministries of education and higher education manage the main databases on students and institutions. With the exception of the Polish graduate tracking system (*Ogólnopolski system monitorowania Ekonomicznych Losów Absolwentów szkół wyższych*, ELA), information on learning outcomes is generated by ad hoc evaluations. Three bodies operate websites on learning opportunities, but with different target groups. The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy oversees various skills assessment and anticipation exercises, but these are largely conducted by subnational authorities.

Table 5.3. Responsibilities for skills and learning information in Poland

Actor	Information on learning participation, expenditure and outcomes	Information on available learning opportunities	Information on current and anticipated skills needs
Ministry of National Education	Operates the System of Education Information (*System Informacji Oświatowej*), an administrative database with detailed data on participation, students and schools.		Prepares the prognosis of labour demand for professions delivered in the vocational education system. Uses information on skills shortages to direct funding to specific VET programmes.
Ministry of Science and Higher Education	Operates a POL-on, which is a database of HEIs with information on students, fields of study, academic staff, etc. Operates the ELA, a higher education graduate tracking system that collects information on the labour market outcomes of higher education graduates (employability and salaries).	Administers/funds the http://studia.gov.pl/ online portal that provides students with information on study options and benefits.	
Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy	Collects information on active labour market policy (ALMP) expenditure and effectives, and on KFS expenditure and outcomes.	Administers the Register of Training Institutions together with voivodeship labour offices.	Oversees subnational agencies in their conducting of skills assessment and anticipation (SAA) exercises. Manages some national SAA exercises.
Ministry of Finance	Collates and publicly reports central expenditure on skills-related programmes.		
Central Examination Board (Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna)	Collects and presents data on external exam scores, including on "educational value added", which is a measure of school performance.	Provides information on external exams, including those for non-formal learners.	
PARP	Surveys of adult skills and learning through the Human Capital Survey (*Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego*, BKL).	Administers a database of development services for adult education and training opportunities (https://uslugirozwojowe.parp.gov.pl/) and PARP Academy, a web platform offering online training for entrepreneurs.	
Voivodeship labour offices (public employment service)	Run ad hoc regional surveys and evaluation studies on KFS utilisation.		Collects information on local labour market needs via regional observatories of labour market.
Regional territorial observatories	Collect and analyse data in order to evaluate the impact of development policies locally.		

Actor	Information on learning participation, expenditure and outcomes	Information on available learning opportunities	Information on current and anticipated skills needs
Educational Research Institute	Ad hoc evaluation of student, school or programme outcomes.	Runs an Integrated Qualifications Register that has information on all the qualifications included in the Integrated Qualifications System.	

Note: For more detailed information see Table 5.9, Table 5.10 and Table 5.11.
Source: MEN (2019[17]), Education Information Centre, https://cie.men.gov.pl/; MNiSW (2019[18]), Integrated System of Information on Science and Higher Education, https://polon.nauka.gov.pl/; ELA (2019[19]), *How do graduates spend their time?*, https://ela.nauka.gov.pl/pl/infographics; Studia (2019[20]), Better studies, http://studia.gov.pl/; CKE (2019[21]), Central Examination Board website, www.cke.gov.pl/; PARP (2019[22]), The Database of Development Services, https://serwis-uslugirozwojowe.parp.gov.pl/; Provincial Labor Office in Krakow (2019[23]), Małopolska Observatory of the Labour Market and Education, http://wupkrakow.praca.gov.pl/-/848672-malopolskie-obserwatorium-rynku-pracy-i-edukacji; MEN (2019[24]), Integrated Qualification Register, https://rejestr.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/.

Poland's performance

Whole-of-government co-ordination on skills

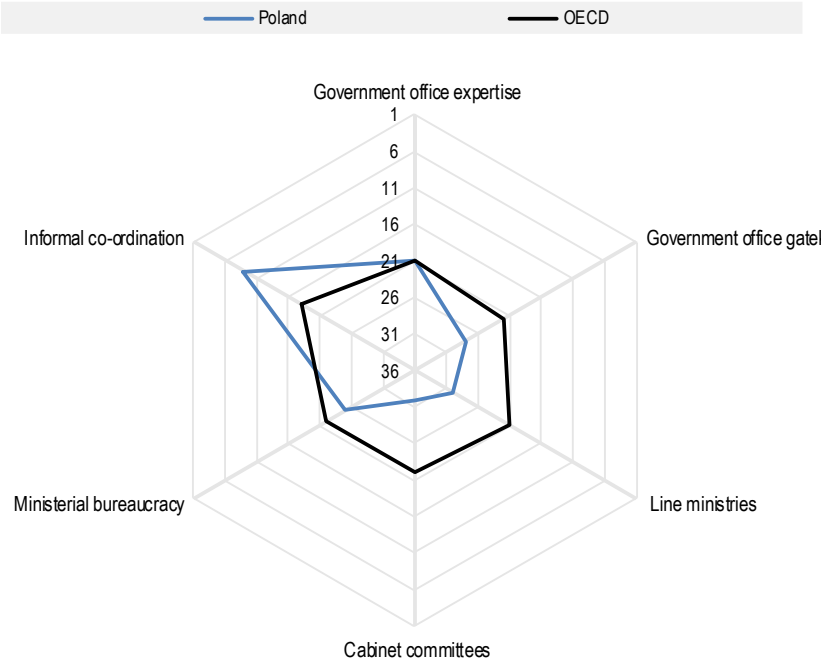
Several government and stakeholder representatives (participants) consulted during this project stated that Poland lacks a tradition of collaboration between ministries. As a result, civil servants working on skills policies are often unaware of what other ministries are doing on skills, which threatens the coherence and efficiency of skills policy.

According to the Bertelsmann Foundation's 2018 Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI), Poland is ranked 32nd out of 41 OECD and European Union countries on inter-ministerial co-ordination (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018[25]). While not specific to skills policy, this reflects relatively low performance in several areas (Figure 5.2).

In most cases, informal co-ordination mechanisms are relatively effective and support inter-ministerial co-ordination. The policy expertise of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, "Government office expertise", to evaluate draft bills is consistent with the average for OECD countries. However, the number and role of cabinet committees in reviewing or co-ordinating cabinet proposals is limited. The gatekeeping role of the prime minister's office has also been limited by several factors, including the proliferation of ministries (now 21) and the enhanced role of some ministers. While senior ministry officials play a substantial role in inter-ministerial co-ordination ("ministerial bureaucracy"), co-ordination at lower levels of the hierarchy is still relatively limited.

Figure 5.2. Poland's performance on inter-ministerial co-ordination

International rankings based on scores given by experts in 36 OECD and EU countries.



Note: The highest rank (1) denotes the highest performance, and is shown on the outer edge of the figure.
Source: Bertelsmann Stiftung (2019[26]), *Sustainable Governance Indicators*, https://www.sgi-network.org/2018/Downloads.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036690

Vertical co-ordination between ministries and subnational authorities is more limited, and the relationship between these authorities is sometimes strained. The competencies of centrally appointed and locally elected officials have been a growing point of contention. The Polish ministries involved in this project indicated that political differences often inhibit effective vertical co-ordination. Furthermore, subnational governments regard the implementation of some central government policies, especially the introduction of the two-tier school system, as shifting unfunded/underfunded mandates to them (Matthes and Markowski, 2018[8]). Some national laws and regulations tightly constrain the actions of subnational governments, making it difficult for them to innovate or tailor policies locally (OECD, 2018[3]). The limited subnational evaluations of territorial contracts as a co-ordination mechanism in Poland suggest that subnational actors generally see the contracts as effective, but their scope as too narrow or not sufficient due to conditional rules of financing (Instytut Badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową; Taylor Economics, 2017[27]; Dębczyński et al., 2018[28]). The participants in this project stated that different regions have very different levels of capacity for effectively co-ordinating with central authorities and fulfilling their responsibilities for skills policy.

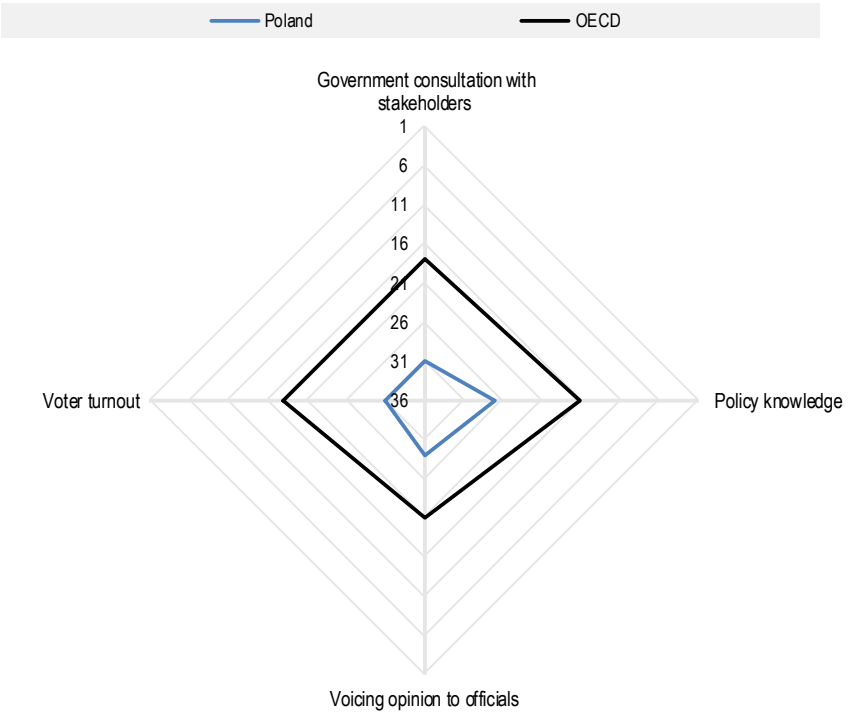
Stakeholder engagement with policy makers

Poland's performance in the government engagement of stakeholders is relatively low overall, but with some good recent examples of engagement on skills reforms. Trust underpins government-stakeholder engagement, while high-quality engagement with visible results also builds trust. By various international measures, trust in parliament, government and public institutions is relatively low in Poland (European Commission, 2014[29]; World Values Survey, 2014[30]).

Results from the SGI suggest that the Polish government's performance in engaging stakeholders is below the EU and OECD averages (Figure 5.3), reflecting several factors. Government consultation with stakeholders does not consistently motivate or facilitate stakeholder acceptance of policies. Furthermore, few citizens appear to be well-informed of government policies ("policy knowledge"). The shares of Polish citizens who voice their opinions to officials (15%) or vote in elections (51%) are among the lowest of 41 OECD and EU countries.

Figure 5.3. Poland's performance on stakeholder engagement

International rankings based on scores given by experts in 36 OECD and EU countries.



Note: The highest rank (1) denotes the highest performance, and is shown on the outer edge of the figure.
Source: Bertelsmann Stiftung (2019[26]), *Sustainable Governance Indicators*, https://www.sgi-network.org/2018/Downloads.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934036709

However, there are recent examples of wide-ranging stakeholder engagement on specific skills policies and reforms. The passage of the Integrated Qualification System Law through parliament was preceded by several years of preparation involving stakeholders (pre-consultation) and feasibility studies. Most parties in the Sejm (parliament) voted in favour of the law (Sejm, 2015[31]). In addition, there were extensive consultations in sectoral seminars in relation to the VET reform, which introduced the restructuring of basic vocational institutions, secondary technical institutions and sectoral vocational schools, as well as redefined International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 3 and 4 qualifications. The reforms were adopted unanimously by the Sejm (with one abstaining vote) (Sejm, 2018[32]).

Furthermore, Poland has made progress with digital stakeholder engagement. According to the World Economic Forum's 2018 Global Competitiveness Index, Poland is ranked 31st of 140 countries, and is outperforming Switzerland, Austria and Belgium for e-participation. However, Poland's performance is driven largely by the use of online services to facilitate the provision of information by governments to

citizens ("e-information sharing"), rather than interaction with stakeholders ("e-consultation") and engagement in decision-making processes (World Economic Forum, 2018[33]).

Poland's performance in subnational government co-ordination and stakeholder engagement is limited overall, but with some very promising examples in particular regions. A recent OECD review found limited co-operation among municipalities and among the regional arms of national ministries, as well as ongoing conflicts between municipal, county and regional authorities over regional spending priorities (OECD, 2018[3]). The extent and quality of co-ordination, integration and communication between different actors varies across regions. Existing co-operation is often formal, limited to information sharing and reliant on the motivation of individuals (OECD, 2016[15]). County representatives involved in this project contrasted improvements in policy co-ordination at the regional level to disjointed and incoherent policies and strategies at the municipal and county levels. For example, there are examples of neighbouring counties offering VET qualifications for the same occupations, even when one school could meet demand in both counties. However, some regions have highly developed co-operation mechanisms, such as the lifelong learning partnership in Krakow. In the case of local labour market councils, their limited capacity, strategic leadership and/or statutory authority has restricted their ability to convene and guide diverse actors (OECD, 2016[15]). Municipal government engagement with enterprises is generally weak (OECD, 2018[3]).

Building integrated information systems

Poland has several data systems for learning participation, expenditure and outcomes, available learning programmes, and labour market skills needs. However, participants in this project stated that there are gaps in existing information collections, and that they are not well integrated. There are no administrative data collections on non-formal adult education, and expenditure data for adult education are limited and fragmented. With the exception of the ELA graduate tracking system, there is little information on learning outcomes in VET and post-secondary education. None of the existing bodies overseeing skills policies has responsibility for co-ordinating skills and learning information. The participants in this project stated that Poland's greatest informational challenges for skills policy relate to disseminating information in a user-friendly way, and using the information effectively in evidence-based policy making. The public agencies holding skills and learning information increasingly release it online, but it is often not tailored to the needs of different user groups. Poland has high potential for evidence-based skills policy making, for example from the Human Capital Survey (*Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego*, BKL). However, there is not a culture of evaluating skills policies, which undermines evidence-based policy making.

Opportunities to strengthen skills governance in Poland

According to the participants in this project and research evidence, a range of factors likely inhibit the effectiveness of skills governance arrangements in Poland. At the core appears to be the lack of a co-operation culture. Several government representatives in this project referred to "departmental Poland" ("*Polska resortowa*"), and stated that the country lacks the "social capital" required for deep co-operation. According to the World Economic Forum's 2018 Global Competitiveness Index, Poland is ranked 70th out of 140 countries for "Social Capital", a concept that captures the strength of social cohesion and engagement, community and family networks, political participation and institutional trust. Building attitudes, social capital and trust to underpin co-operation will require a systemic, multi-pronged and long-term approach. Poland has opportunities to strengthen the governance of the skills system by:

1. Strengthening co-operation on skills policy at the national level.
2. Strengthening vertical and subnational co-operation on skills policy.
3. Integrating and using skills information effectively.

Opportunity 1: Strengthening co-operation on skills policy at the national level

A holistic approach to skills requires effective co-operation mechanisms. To foster whole-of-government, cross-sectoral and regional co-operation on skills policies, governments may use: vision setting and strategies; co-ordinating bodies; legal mechanisms and standard setting; contracts, agreements and pacts; subnational mergers, structures or authorities; and performance measurement (OECD, 2019[2]) (OECD, 2018[34]).

Strengthening skills strategies and oversight of the skills system

Strategies and co-ordinating bodies for skills can play a vital role in supporting whole-of-government and cross-sectoral co-operation on skills. However, they must be well designed and monitored to ensure their impact.

Strategies and action plans are important for setting goals and clarifying roles to co-ordinate the efforts of government and stakeholders in the skills system. They can articulate and raise awareness of the challenges that require co-operation; clarify important concepts such as "lifelong learning" and "skills use"; establish goals, priority groups and targets; allocate responsibility; and foreshadow accountability arrangements. The Polish ministries that responded to a questionnaire at the outset of this project cited Poland's Strategy for Responsible Development and ZSU as providing important opportunities for ministries to collaborate on cross-cutting policies.

A holistic approach to skills requires effective co-ordination structures that encompass all stages of, and contexts for, skills development and use. Many OECD countries have institutions to co-ordinate skills policies. Oversight bodies can establish priorities, define appropriate financial incentives, and improve the quality of policy through collaboration among the different partners involved. The level of responsibility given to these institutions can range from "advisory" to "policy making" (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4. Oversight bodies for skills policy with varying degrees of policy responsibility

Advisory bodies	These focus on including partners and providing advice to the central authorities in charge of skills policies or to the relevant ministries. They traditionally include the social partners, private or public suppliers of learning, and local development agents.
Co-ordination bodies	These focus on developing mechanisms for joint planning or delivery where appropriate. They seek to improve information or to set up better evaluation efforts, rather than simply offering a forum for providers to share information about their activities.
Policy-/decision-making bodies	These focus on improving provision of services, research, information and guidance – in short, they function as a central authority for skills policies. Their role is to establish national priorities to balance education and labour market programmes, vocational and non-vocational programmes, and the relative roles of national and local governments. They also set training priorities for specific groups such as women and immigrants, and for potential new programmes and services.

Source: Adapted from OECD (2005[35]), *Promoting Adult Learning*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264010932-en.

Poland has sought to take a whole-of-government and cross-sectoral approach to skills via several major strategies (see Table 1.B.1 in Chapter 1). These include the 2013 Lifelong Learning Perspective (Perspektywa Uczenia się przez całe życie), the Strategy for Responsible Development (Strategia na rzecz Odpowiedzialnego Rozwoju) and the ZSU (in progress). Poland is now embarking on an OECD Skills Strategy to strengthen the performance and governance of its skills system. It has also established a range of oversight bodies to co-ordinate policies or support the development of specific strategies and reforms (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5. Poland's national oversight bodies with a role in skills development and use

Body	Purpose	Level of decision-making authority	Members
Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers	Co-ordinating the finalisation and implementation of the Strategy for Responsible Development.	Co-ordination	President of the Council of Ministers. Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Council of Ministers. Ministers of: Culture and National Heritage; Energy; Finance; Maritime Affairs; Infrastructure; Investment and Economic Development; Entrepreneurship and Technology; Family, Labour and Social Policy; Agriculture; and Environment. State Secretary for European Affairs.
Committee for European Affairs	In charge of EU co-ordination and the strategy of operation of Poland within the EU.	Co-ordination	MSZ, Council of Ministers, sometimes also representatives of other institutions e.g. National Bank of Poland (*Narodowy Bank Polski*)
Social Committee	Co-ordinating government initiatives in areas of support for families; supporting employment and educational activities; support for elderly.	Co-ordination	Ministers of: Culture and National Heritage (chairman); Science and Higher Education; National Education; Finance; Investment and Economic Development; Family, Labour and Social Policy; Agriculture and Rural Development; Sport and Tourism; Environment; Justice; Interior and Administration; Health. Other persons.
Public Benefit Committee	Co-ordinating co-operation between public administration and NGOs; participation in various initiatives supporting civic society.	Co-ordination	Representatives of ministries (ministers or state secretaries) and a director of the National Institute of Freedom.
Social Dialogue Council	Giving opinions on draft strategies, draft programmes and projects of other government documents (including the Strategy for Responsible Development, SOR). Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of SOR implementation. Recommending solutions and proposals for legal changes, particularly in employment policies.	Advisory	Representatives of four employer organisations, three nationwide trade unions, the government and one representative each of the president, the National Bank of Poland governor and the Central Statistical Office.
General Council for Science and Higher Education	Co-operating with the Minister of Science and Higher Education and other public authorities in developing national policies for higher education, research and innovation. Giving opinions and submitting proposals in all matters concerning higher education, research and culture.	Advisory	Academics, representatives of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Polska Akademia Nauk, PAN) and other research institutes, students, representatives of trade unions and employer organisations.
Labour Market Council	Giving opinions on the priorities and distribution of the KFS, and deciding on the allocation of the KFS reserve (20%). Issuing opinions on legislation related to employment promotion and professional activation.	Advisory	All representative trade unions and employers' organizations, one representative from Joint Commission of Central Government and Local Government
Inter-ministerial Taskforce for Lifelong Learning and the Integrated Qualifications System (ZSK)	Monitoring the implementation of lifelong learning. Monitoring the Implementation of ZSK. Co-operating with partners and institutions important for the development of lifelong learning, including the ZSK Stakeholder Council.	Co-ordination	Ministries of: National Education (co-ordination); Digital Affairs; Maritime Affairs; Culture and National Heritage; Science and Higher Education; National Defence; Family, Labour and Social Policy; Investment and Economic Development; Sport and Tourism; Interior and Administration; and Health. Minister from the Chancellery of the Prime Minister.

Body	Purpose	Level of decision-making authority	Members
ZSK Stakeholder Council	Discussing systemic questions of ZSK and setting priorities for the development of a system. Setting opinions on the market qualifications and sectoral qualifications frameworks to be included in the ZSK. Taking part in accreditation of external quality assurance bodies.	Co-ordination	Social partners (representatives of trade unions, employer organisations, educational institutions, training providers), local government and central administration.
Programme Council on Competences/Advisory Council on Competences	Co-ordinating work of sectoral skills councils. Proposing amendments of law and public policies in the area of skills. Setting strategic objectives concerning matching the educational offer to the needs of the economy.	Co-ordination	19 members, including the representatives of the Ministries of National Education; Family, Labour and Social Policy; and Entrepreneurship and Technology; civic and economic organisations; employers' associations and educational institutions.
Sector skills councils	Stimulating public debate on skills and qualifications. Proposing sector qualifications frameworks. Recommending legislative solutions and changes in the field of education.	Advisory	Depending on council: entrepreneurs; employer and employee organisations; and representatives of education, science, administration and labour market institutions.

The large number of oversight bodies and strategies that cover skills is a positive sign of growing awareness, but may complicate national co-ordination. There has been a proliferation in bodies in recent years, often arising from particular strategies and reforms. While there are benefits to highly tailored oversight bodies, it has resulted in some overlap of remit and membership. For example, the ZSK Stakeholder Council and the Programme Council on Competences both monitor demand for skills and qualifications and share some of the same members (Table 5.5). The hierarchy and reporting lines between these bodies are largely undefined and/or underdeveloped. Participants in this project highlighted the risks of "too many meetings" and the negative impact they can have on willingness to co-ordinate. Looking for opportunities to reduce the quantity and increase the quality of skills oversight bodies and strategies could improve co-ordination at the national level.

Awareness of "skills" and the ZSU could be increased at the national level. Some stakeholders in this project displayed limited familiarity with the strategy and process. In general, many business leaders report that the government lacks a long-term vision. According to the World Economic Forum's 2018 Global Competitiveness Index, Poland is ranked 106th out of 140 countries for "government's long-term vision". Raising awareness of skills and the ZSU is particularly important at the subnational level (see section below on Strengthening mechanisms for vertical co-ordination) and to boost adult learning (see Chapter 3).

The ZSU has very limited focus on how workers' skills are used within workplaces. It does cover activating people's skills in the labour market. For example, priority 6 emphasises the need for policies to support disadvantaged adults with tailored training and lower barriers to labour market integration. However, in addition to getting adults into jobs, it is essential to consider whether their skills are fully utilised within their jobs. There is a strong correlation between a country's labour productivity and the level of skills use in workplaces. Skills use and its key drivers, such as high-performance workplace practices in firms, are a growing area of policy interest (OECD, 2019[2]). Raising skills use in Poland will be essential for the country to reap the benefits of people's skills (see Chapter 4).

Clear responsibilities, targets and accountability will be essential for the ZSU to have its intended impact. Participants in this project reported that Polish strategies often lack measurable targets, clear responsibilities and accountability for achieving goals (such as public reporting, or performance-based budgeting). This was described as one reason why the Poland 2030 strategy was dropped after acceptance of the Strategy for Responsible Development (MIiR, 2017[36]). The ZSU sets important priorities for skills development in Poland, including creating effective mechanisms for inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral co-operation in skills development. It will be essential that the ZSU action plan makes these goals

and the responsibilities for achieving and monitoring them more concrete, and that subnational authorities and social partners are effectively engaged in the action plan.

The government does not monitor the effectiveness of oversight bodies in order to improve their functioning over time. Government and stakeholder representatives consulted for this project stated that existing bodies sometimes lose momentum and don't fulfil their initial remit in the implementation phase, providing the Inter-ministerial Taskforce for Lifelong Learning as an example (Table 5.5). However, there is no other qualitative or quantitative evidence on the performance of these oversight bodies, which inhibits their ability to adapt to changing needs and maximise their effectiveness.

Subnational authorities and representatives of micro- and small-sized firms are under-represented in existing oversight bodies. Only a few bodies include representatives of regions, counties or municipalities; for example, in the Labour Market Council there are representatives of the Union of Powiats and the Union of Voivodeships, while the ZSK Stakeholder Council includes representatives of the Joint Central Government and Local Government Committee. A more fundamental issue is that entrepreneurs and micro- and small-sized businesses in Poland lack their own chambers and associations. They are represented in existing bodies only if they are members of the larger employer associations who are members of those bodies.

None of the oversight bodies with responsibility for skills have decision-making authority in policy making or implementation. At most, they have co-ordination capacity on specific policy areas, such as priority setting for market-based qualifications under the ZSK (Table 5.5). Assigning decision-making capacity is difficult for something as broad as "skills policy", as responsibilities are dispersed in legislation. However, giving some decision-making capacity to the body overseeing implementation of the ZSU, for example on co-funded programmes between ministries, could help ensure its impact on skills.

It is not yet clear whether it will be an existing or a new body that will oversee implementation of the ZSU. However, it will be important that this body has whole-of-government (inter-ministerial and multi-level) and cross-sectoral representation.

The Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy 2017-2021 is an example of a high-level skills strategy overseen by a whole-of-government, cross-sectoral council (Box 5.1).

Box 5.1. Relevant international example: Strengthening skills strategies and oversight

In 2017, Norway adopted the Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy 2017-2021, following up on the recommendations of the 2012-14 OECD Skills Strategy Project. This advised Norway to develop a skills strategy that incorporated a whole-of-government approach and strong stakeholder involvement.

The Norwegian strategy is a binding agreement among the strategy partners, namely the government, employer associations, trade unions, the voluntary sector and the Sami Parliament. It delineates the roles and responsibilities of each partner. For example, the government (ministries), in co-operation with social partners, is responsible for the development and implementation of the skills policy and for ensuring co-ordination across policy sectors and levels of government. Municipalities, including local and regional authorities, are the school owners and provide numerous services to the end user. Employers provide training in the workplace, often in collaboration with other partners. The Sami Parliament ensures that the authorities enable the Sami people to have the necessary linguistic and cultural expertise to develop Sami society and businesses. The voluntary sector contributes to skills development both within and outside the labour market.

The strategy also notes the importance of partners working together to develop and implement measures. For example, Norwegian county municipalities are responsible for the development of

regional skills policy, with other skills policy partners. Vocational and professional institutions and employers co-operate to allow work placements during the period of study.

The Norwegian strategy is overseen by the Skills Policy Council and includes the Future Skills Needs Committee. The council consists of representatives of all strategy partners and is in charge of the follow-up of the strategy. The council meets regularly during the strategy period and discusses feedback from the Future Skills Needs Committee, as well as other relevant issues. It is responsible for assessing the strategy and will decide whether it should be renewed. The committee is in charge of compiling and analysing information about Norway's skills needs, both national and regional, and consists of researchers, analysts and representatives of all strategy partners.

Source: (OECD, 2019[37]) *Getting Skills Right: Future-Ready Adult learning Systems* https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264311756-en, Government of Norway (2017[38]), *Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy 2017-2021*, www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/3c84148f2f394539a3eefdfa27f7524d/strategi-kompetanse-eng.pdf.

Recommendations for strengthening skills strategies and oversight of the skills system

- **Clearly define targets, responsibilities, resources and accountability for the Integrated Skills Strategy (ZSU)**. Ministries, subnational authorities and social partners should collaborate to: establish specific, measurable and time-bound targets for achieving the main objectives and goals in the ZSU; allocate responsibility for achieving the targets; document how public and private resources will be allocated to achieving the objectives and goals; and develop accountability mechanisms, for example through monitoring and reporting to parliament and possibly through the performance-based public funding of service providers.
- **Make a whole-of-government and cross-sectoral body responsible for overseeing implementation of the ZSU**. This body should include all key ministries; representatives of regions, counties and municipalities; social partners; and other stakeholders. It should have ministerial leadership and report to the Cabinet, the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, and/or the parliament on progress in implementing the ZSU. The government should consider the scope to give this body some decision-making capacity and budget, for example to support inter-ministerial and/or public-private partnerships to achieve the goals of the ZSU. The relationship, hierarchy and reporting lines between this body and existing bodies should be clearly articulated.
- **Review and monitor the effectiveness of existing oversight bodies for skills policy, and improve them over time**. The goals of each body should be clearly and formally articulated, and performance indicators developed. The government should regularly monitor the effectiveness of the bodies against these indicators. This monitoring should involve consultations with members themselves and identify areas for continuous improvement to improve the impact of bodies on skills policies. Monitoring should inform decisions about closing down or merging bodies.
- **Raise awareness of the Integrated Skills Strategy at the subnational level and among stakeholders.** See Opportunity 2: Strengthening vertical and subnational co-operation on skills.

Strengthening other mechanisms for co-ordination at the national level

Inter-ministerial co-ordination and stakeholder engagement on skills policy could be strengthened through mechanisms other than strategy setting and oversight bodies.

Poland has no council or committee responsible for co-ordinating skills policies in the centre of government, but there are five major committees comprised of ministers for cross-cutting policies. For example, the Development Policy Co-ordination Committee is a body of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister that plans consultation for medium- and long-term national development strategies and relevant sub-strategies (OECD, 2018[3]). There are inter-ministerial taskforces responsible for more specific issues (including one

for lifelong learning), as well as government proxies – individuals nominated to oversee a single area on behalf of the Council of Ministers (e.g. a proxy for children's social development in schools). Some participants in this project suggested appointing a committee for skills in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister to co-ordinate and raise the profile of the skills agenda in Poland.

Ministries do not have specific individuals or units devoted to inter-ministerial co-ordination on skills policies. As a result, staff voluntarily take on extra responsibilities to participate in cross-cutting skills projects, such as the ZSK. Staff from multiple ministries and the IBE have taken on additional responsibilities to co-ordinate market-based qualifications, but are often overburdened by the workload. Examples of inter-ministerial co-ordination in other OECD countries include Slovenia, where some ministries have appointed individuals and/or units to work on cross-cutting policy issues such as adult learning (OECD, 2018[34]), and Canada, where deputy minister committees advance integrated policy development and policy coherence (OECD, 2016[39]).

The capacity of Polish stakeholders to effectively engage in the skills policy process is limited in some areas. As noted earlier, the capacity of citizens to participate is limited and few are politically active. Poland has a relatively developed network of employer associations and trade unions, which have become increasingly professional over time. However, self-employed, micro- and small-sized enterprises lack their own representation. Most OECD countries, including Austria, Canada, Slovenia and Sweden, have employer associations specialised in representing these groups (OECD, 2017[40]). Poland has a large number of non-work-related interest associations, but their capacity is limited. These civil society groups are relatively small, and only a few focus on and are capable of developing policy proposals (Matthes and Markowski, 2018[8]). The United Kingdom has implemented programmes to build the capacity of government officials and stakeholders to co-ordinate in policy making (Box 5.2).

Sector skill councils are one way for government and stakeholders to engage on VET policy, and their capacity is supported by ESF funds. However, although there has been relative success in the finance sector (Box 5.3), the performance of these councils in other sectors has varied widely. Some participants in this project stated that a major problem sector skill councils face is insufficient legal recognition, which precludes skills councils from responding to public tenders to develop VET curricula or engaging in broader government engagement with stakeholders on skills policy. The total budget for the councils over the period 2016-2022 is EUR 30.3 million, EUR 25.6 million of which is from the ESF. In the future, the councils will face the problem of sourcing funds once ESF funding ceases.

More information is needed on the capacity of civil servants and stakeholders for effective co-ordination at the national level. The Ministry of Interior and Administration's strategy, Efficient State Strategy 2020, identifies co-ordination and co-operation on policy implementation as a priority goal. It proposes the introduction and promotion of various forms of co-operation, designing a clear legal framework with rules and procedures of co-operation, and increasing the role of public-private and public-social partnerships in the implementation of policies (Council of Ministers, 2013[41]). The Ministry of Interior and Administration could assess the capacity of ministries through a survey and provide recommendations to increase their co-ordination capacity, for example through training. The government could also survey key stakeholder groups to identify opportunities to build capacity for engagement on skills policy, and increase the benefits and decrease the costs of engaging.

Box 5.2. Relevant international example: Building capacity for national co-ordination

United Kingdom – Building government capacity to create better services

Building capacity in officials

Communities of practice bring together practitioners from across government who share common job roles, responsibilities or remits so that they can share challenges, best practices and develop their capabilities. This supports better services for users and a better working environment for civil servants. Exchanges within these communities allow participants to road-test ideas and share opinions in confidence, while fostering an inclusive work culture. Learning and development practices that stem from participation in these communities contribute to the general skills development of government workers.

Building capacity in stakeholders

The Consultation Institute (TCI) is a member-based not-for-profit organisation for individuals, public and private sector operators engaged in public or stakeholder consultation. It supports programmes of change and upskilling employees to tackle difficult scenarios. TCI offers online, public and in-house training courses to build knowledge and skills among members and clients. Membership of TCI allows for exchanges with the rest of the institute's member base to enhance capabilities in public engagement and skill building, share best practices and acquire recognition for training undertaken.

Source: Cabinet Office (2014[42]), *Community development framework*, www.gov.uk/guidance/community-development-framework; The Consultation Institute (2019[43]), The Consultation Institute, www.consultationinstitute.org/.

Box 5.3. Relevant Polish example: Stakeholder engagement at the national level

Sector skills council for the finance sector

The sector skills council for the finance sector was initiated through a partnership between the Warsaw Banking Institute, the Polish Bank Association and the Polish Chamber of Insurance. In total, 35 entities are represented in the council, including commercial and co-operative banks, industry organisations, higher education institutions, and training companies. A representative of the Ministry of Finance participates as an observer.

The council is very active (and one of the most advanced among all Polish skills councils) in the implementation of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework and its inclusion in the Integrated Qualifications System, which will ensure that Polish sectoral qualifications are linked with the European market. It also took an active part in the process of developing the sectoral human capital survey report, which contains an analysis and forecast of the development trends and needs of the financial sector, and a set of strategic recommendations.

Source: PARP (2018[44]), Evaluation of Sectoral Skills Councils, https://poir.parp.gov.pl/storage/publications/pdf/2018_POWER_ocena_sektorowych_rad.pdf; Fundacja Warszawski Instytut Bankowości (2018[45]), Sectoral Council for Competencies in the Financial Sector, http://rada.wib.org.pl/.

Recommendations for strengthening other mechanisms for co-ordination at the national level

- **Raise the profile of "skills" and Poland's Integrated Skills Strategy (ZSU) in the centre of government**: Poland should consider establishing a skills council or commission in the Prime Minister's Chancellery to improve inter-ministerial co-ordination and elevate Poland's skills agenda. The body could potentially have a role in overseeing implementation of the ZSU.
- **Assess and build the capacity of ministries and stakeholders to co-ordinate and engage effectively on skills policies**: Survey ministries and key stakeholder organisations (e.g. employer associations, trade unions) about the extent of their current co-ordination and engagement activities, the strengths and weaknesses of existing co-ordination and engagement mechanisms, and their capacity (people, skills and funding) to effectively co-ordinate and engage with others on skills policies. The government should consider allocating responsibility to teams within each ministry for participating in inter-ministerial processes for skills-related policies. It could also offer support to small business associations and civil society associations to effectively engage them in the skills policy process. Support could be in the form of training, peer learning, funding or other tools (see also recommendation in Opportunity 2).

Opportunity 2: Strengthening vertical and subnational co-operation on skills policy

Effective vertical and subnational co-operation on skills policy is essential for well-designed and well-implemented skills policies. Co-ordination between central and subnational governments can ensure that national priorities are informed by local intelligence and are pursued locally. Co-operation between subnational actors themselves can reduce duplication and gaps in service provision, reduce costs by achieving economies of scale, and raise quality by harnessing dispersed expertise.

Subnational governments have their own strategies covering different elements of skills development and use (Table 5.6). The system of nested strategies at national, regional and local levels can inform one another and provide a complementary set of objectives across levels of government (OECD, 2018[3]). They can also support regional co-operation by setting a vision to guide activities within regions.

Table 5.6. Poland's subnational strategies of relevance to skills development and use

Strategy	Responsible body	Purpose	Skills content
Regional development strategies (RDS) (*Strategie rozwoju województw*)	Appointed by voivodeship *sejmiks* (regional parliaments). Voivodship marshal's offices are responsible for implementation.	Sets priorities for the regional development of a voivodeship. They include a diagnosis of key issues and an assessment of the best way to channel resources to meet these issues. Regional operational programmes in voivodeships are usually strictly based on a strategy.	Dependent on voivodship priorities. For example, in Świętokrzyskie "Building human capital and a basis for innovative economy" is one of six key priorities; in Łódzkie "Advanced knowledge based economy" is one of nine operational goals.
Municipal strategies of community and economic development (*strategie rozwoju gmin lub miast*)	Appointed by local governments (municipality or city boards) and implemented by *starosta* offices or city offices.	Set goals for the development of counties (*powiaty*).	Highly dependent on county (*powiat*) structure and priorities. For example, in Jastrzębie-Zdrój skills content is hidden in a strategic goal of increasing and diversifying the local economy (specific goals related to knowledge economy), whereas Lidzbark Warmiński defines one of its operational goals as increasing access to and quality of education.

Source: OECD (2018[3]), *OECD Rural Policy Reviews: Poland 2018*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264289925-en.

Subnational actors also have their own oversight bodies covering different elements of skills (Table 5.7). They help subnational actors co-ordinate their input to central government and can facilitate co-operation between subnational actors.

Table 5.7. Poland's subnational bodies with a role in skills development and use

Body	Purpose	Level of decision-making authority	Members
Regional labour market councils (*Wojewódzkie Rady Rynku Pracy*)	Advisory body in area of labour market policies at a voivodship level. Give opinions on new vocational programmes (professions) to be taught in VET schools.	Advisory	Representatives of employer organisations and trade unions, farmers associations, NGOs.
Local labour market councils (*Powiatowe Rady Rynku Pracy*)	Advisory body in area of labour market policies at a *powiat* level. Give opinions on the fields of VET taught in public schools.	Advisory	Appointed by a *starosta*, from candidates proposed by representative employer organisations, trade unions, farmers associations and NGOs in the county (*powiat*).
Regional agencies for development (*Wojewódzkie Agencje Rozwoju Regionalnego*)	Publicly funded and owned enterprises that seek to support regional enterprises. Regarding skills they run projects such as developing managerial skills or supporting labour market activity.	Policy	NA

Source: OECD (2016[15]), *Employment and Skills Strategies in Poland,* http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264256521-en.

It is essential that subnational actors have the capacity to contribute to co-ordinated and effective skills policy. In order to effectively fulfil their responsibilities, engage with the central government and co-operate with each other, civil servants and stakeholder organisations at the subnational level (e.g. employer associations, trade unions) need appropriate human resources – people, skills and time. However, they also need sufficient financial resources, commensurate to their responsibilities and local needs, for delivering education, employment and related services.

Strengthening mechanisms for vertical co-ordination

There is significant variation in the degree to which regions, counties and municipalities adopt national skills objectives. Some regions, such as Pomorskie, have implemented the European Commission's Human Capital Programme regionally, and have already adopted elements of Poland's ZSU into their regional development strategy. However, according to subnational representatives in this project, many other regions are far less proactive.

Many subnational governments in Poland still lack awareness of the importance of human capital, and remain focused on physical capital. Subnational representatives in this project noted that the bulk of responsibilities delegated to subnational governments relate to providing and/or maintaining physical infrastructure, such as transport, public spaces and buildings. EU regional funds also place a high priority on developing physical infrastructure in the regions, with ESF-funded projects accounting for, on average, one-quarter of regional operational programmes. For this reason, a concerted awareness raising effort is needed to ensure that subnational governments understand the importance of skills for Poland's future, as well as the role of the ZSU, in order that they consistently adopt Poland's skills agenda. This should complement a national awareness raising campaign for adult learning (see Chapter 3).

The responsibilities of centrally appointed regional authorities vis-à-vis locally elected officials *have been a point of contention in Poland. The Polish ministries involved in this project indicated that economic and* political differences often inhibit effective vertical co-ordination on education policy. For example, local governments are responsible for administering schools, whereas issues related to the content of education are supervised by regional education authorities (REA). As a consequence it is unclear who is responsible for the quality of teaching, with some local governments relying on REAs, and others taking their own steps to ensure quality (Trutkowski, 2015[46]).

The performance of territorial contracts as a vertical co-ordination mechanism in Poland has not been evaluated systematically. Some regional policy evaluations suggest that subnational actors generally see the contracts as effective, but that their scope is sometimes too narrow or limited due to contract conditions (Dębczyński et al., 2018[28]). Existing contracts are very similar in scope and structure across regions, suggesting that their potential for being tailored to regional challenges has not been fully utilised. Furthermore, contracts only exist at the regional level, whereas such mechanisms could have benefits at the county and municipal levels (Obrębalski, 2015[47]). Extending the scope of contracts to concrete policies that support skills development and use in regions could have several benefits, including ensuring that the financing of skills initiatives is sufficient.

There have been no evaluations of the effectiveness of the Joint Central Government and Local Government Committee or the national and regional social dialogue councils in facilitating vertical co-ordination for skills policy. However, earlier publications on the Tripartite Commission and regional commissions for social dialogue (predecessors of social dialogue councils) show that such co-operation was very much limited. The reorganisation of the institutions for social dialogue was done in part to improve their funding and performance (Czarzasty, 2016[48]).

Box 5.4. Relevant international example: Vertical co-ordination mechanisms

Finland's PARAS multi-level governance reform

Finland's multi-level governance reforms, underpinned by targeted supports from sectoral ministries, have driven collaboration between local areas and regions on education and training services.

The PARAS reform in Finland was a multi-dimensional reform that included municipal mergers, inter-municipal co-operation for service provision (in particular in the areas of healthcare and education), and better governance in urban regions. In merging or co-operating municipalities, the reform also had an impact on managerial practices (organisational restructuring, introduction of new practices, etc.). Decisions to merge or co-operate were taken on a voluntary basis.

Legislation to support the reform was enacted in 2005 and 2007, and the implementation of the first phase of the reform was planned over 2007-08. Legislation introduced quantitative thresholds to be reached for healthcare and education provision. Municipalities or inter-municipalities authorised to provide basic education services had to have at least 50 000 inhabitants. The local authorities involved could agree that the functions of co-management areas would be conducted jointly or by one local authority on behalf of one or more other local governments.

Municipalities and urban regions had to submit their reports and implementation plans to the central government by the end of August 2007. In 2008, central government evaluated the reform progress, based on supplementary information submitted by municipalities. The reform was implemented between 2009 and 2012. As decisions were voluntary, each municipality/urban region implemented (or not) its plans at its own pace. In 2009, the central government submitted a report to the parliament on the reform to restructure municipalities and services. At the end of the reform period, a questionnaire was sent by central government to municipalities to find out what decisions they had taken within the framework of the reform.

The establishment of quantitative thresholds for education services drove collaboration and was supported by a joint project by the Ministry of Education and Culture and education providers to ensure structural and economic support for education and training across regions. However, one criticism of the threshold was that in urban regions it risked encouraging wealthy "inner-ring" municipalities to co-operate with central municipalities while maintaining their own services.

Source: OECD (2017[49]), *Multi-level Governance Reforms: Overview of OECD Country Experiences*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264272866-en.

Recommendations for strengthening mechanisms for vertical co-ordination

- **Monitor the coherence of subnational policies with the Integrated Skills Strategy (ZSU) to inform the government's co-ordination and outreach efforts**. The government should monitor whether regional, county and municipal development and sectoral strategies and policies prioritise skills development and use in a way that complements the ZSU. It should use the results of this monitoring to target communication and co-ordination efforts with the subnational level, as well as for potential capacity building efforts.
- **Raise awareness of skills, the Integrated Skills Strategy and the Integrated Qualification System (ZSK) at the subnational level**. The government should support subnational authorities to incorporate key elements of the ZSU into their own development plans. They could do this by raising awareness of its key content and publicising examples of regions (e.g. Pomorskie) adopting major elements of the ZSU. The government should seek to reach out to regional development agencies, national and subnational associations of employers, employees (trade unions), education and training providers, and others with the main messages of the strategy and to raise awareness of the Integrated Qualification System. This could be done by marshals (as the government's representative in the regions), through the Joint Central Government and Local Government Committee, and/or via regional ZSK co-ordinators. There could be regional information sessions and a dedicated website for the ZSU. This should complement a national awareness raising campaign for adult learning (see Chapter 3).
- **Trial territorial contracts to improve vertical co-ordination and coherence between national and subnational skills policies**. Ministries should identify opportunities to utilise territorial contracts for skills policy, drawing on existing examples such as the Kujawsko-Pomorskie territorial contract 2014-2023. The contracts should set shared priorities, co-ordination methods and funding mechanisms for skills. They could involve performance-based budgeting, whereby subnational authorities are partly remunerated for achieving agreed outcomes.

Strengthening mechanisms for subnational co-operation

Although several mechanisms are in place to support subnational co-operation, their use and effectiveness differ considerably across regions and counties. Existing co-ordination mechanisms tend to focus on regional policies overall, of which skills policies are just one part.

Regional councils for social dialogue were introduced in 2015 to replace regional committees for social dialogue, at the same time as the national level Tri-partite Commission became the National Council for Social Dialogue. These changes took place due to a perceived ineffectiveness of the former institutions. The limited role of social partners, in particular labour unions, was perceived as a major weakness of the old institutions. The transformation of committees into councils sought to increase their role through more stable organisational arrangements and some additional funding. Some experts raised concerns that these changes were not enough, and that placing councils in the voivodeship marshal's office does not foster the equal role of all participants. There have been no evaluations of regional councils so far, and their impact needs to be monitored (Czarzasty, 2016[48]).

The role and success of regional agencies in co-ordinating stakeholders has been mixed, with several promising examples but a lack of systematic co-ordination. The labour office of the Małopolska region has facilitated a major and ongoing partnership for lifelong learning involving 55 institutions (Box 5.5). However, these good practices are not systemic across Poland, and awareness of them seems to be limited outside of the region. Some regional arms of national ministries may lack the authority to work with their counterparts without explicit approval on a case-by-case basis from head offices in Warsaw (OECD, 2018[3]). Regional territorial observatories could support the efforts of regions to identify opportunities and encourage inter-municipal partnerships, especially in rural areas (OECD, 2018[3]).

Box 5.5. Relevant Polish example: Effective co-operation between subnational actors

Poland - Pomorskie

Konwent starostów is a convention (forum) of 16 *starosta* (county chairman), each of whom represents their county. Each *starosta* is elected by the board of the county and is responsible for county management.

The convention takes positions on issues facing the locality and presents them to the management board of the Association of Polish Counties (Związku Powiatów Polskich, ZPP) if it wishes to intervene in matters concerning ZPP statutory objectives. Although limited to an advisory role, the convention reinforces the idea of self-government by empowering subnational actors and building social trust at a local level. It also represents the multilateral, regional development strategy that integrates common interests of the region. The convention co-operates as needed with government, such as the marshal's office, the labour office of its respective province, and municipal offices.

In the province of Pomorskie, the convention has presented its position on diverse issues such as the care in nursing homes, the increase of teachers' salaries, the regional action plan for employment and the creation of the Central-Pomeranian voivodeship.

Poland - Małopolska

In pursuit of achieving the goals outlined in the Declaration of the Province of Malopolska on the Development of Continuing Education, the Malopolska Partnership for Lifelong Learning (*Małopolskie Partnerstwo na rzecz Kształcenia Ustawicznego*, MPKU) was implemented in 2008, involving 55 institutions representing labour, education and training institutions in Kraków. The partnership has since grown to include 131 subnational members, including training and continuing education centres, training providers, employer associations, counselling centres, district labour offices, and the voivodeship labour office in Kraków.

Various stakeholders are involved in the partnership to improve the quality of lifelong guidance and monitoring, which are crucial components in skills development. These stakeholders include the provincial employment office (WUP) in Kraków; the Department of Education and Continuing Education of the Province Marshal Office in Kraków; and subregional partnerships consisting of schools, voluntary labour corps, and branches of the subregional information and career planning centre (*Centrum Informacji i Planowania Kariery Zawodowej*, CliPKZ). This co-operation between subnational actors extends into collaboration with national actors such as the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy.

In Poland, where there is a weak culture of co-operation, the partnership represents a unique model that involves subnational actors and fosters collaboration that expands beyond the advisory role. It highlights good practice of joint decision making, from setting a comprehensive long-term agenda that is supported by the annual action plan, to engaging the right stakeholders from the beginning of the policy cycle, to establishing the monitoring mechanism of programmes.

Source: UMWP (2019[50]) *Portal Urzędu Marszałkowskiego Województwa Pomorskiego*, https://pomorskie.eu/zadania-samorzadu; Kaczmarek (2016[51]), *Administrative division of Poland – 25 years of experience during systemic transformation*, http://journals.openedition.org/echogeo/14514; ZPP (2019[52]), Association of Polish Counties, www.zpp.pl/konwenty-powiatow; Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Krakowie (2014[53]), Action Plan of the Malopolska Partnership for Continuing Education by the Year 2020, www.pociagdokariery.pl/upload/2019/MPKU%20-%20publikacje%20i%20dokumenty/plan_wykonawczy_MPKU.pdf.

Inter-municipal agreements, unions and associations in Poland are not focused on skills issues currently. Agreements and unions are increasingly popular in such areas as water and waste management or broadband and road infrastructure, but remain limited in education and other sectors (OECD, 2018[3]). In the course of this review, project participants did not offer evidence or examples of these mechanisms covering education and employment services. Inter-municipal associations do not prioritise skills issues presently. However, one promising practice is the Association of Polish Cities, which runs the Commission for Education and has a dedicated website (www.miasta.pl/edukacja/) to share good practices between local governments. The slow uptake of such mechanisms may be in part due to a lack of adequate knowledge about how they work and the risks involved. National and regional governments should actively promote and support inter-municipal co-ordination and demonstrate its benefits (OECD, 2018[3]).

Counties could play a greater role in subnational co-ordination on skills policies. City counties, which combine the authority of a municipality and county, are a recognised contact point and could help foster co-operation among municipalities. Conventions of county leaders "*Konwent starostów*" have been successful in some regions to improve subregional co-ordination (Box 5.5), and could be expanded.

Local councils and groups could play a more effective oversight role at the local level. In many cases, local labour market councils lack the capacity, strategic leadership and/or statutory authority to effectively bring together and guide participating sectors. Local stakeholders lack real influence on education and employment services in the councils. As county offices lead local labour market councils, the role of employers, unions and other members is often limited to an advisory capacity (OECD, 2016[15]). Local action groups (*Lokalne grupy działania*, LAGs) have faced barriers to becoming effective local co-operation fora due to their dependence on external funding (especially from the EU) and local authorities, and the lack of a clear strategy (jumping between different projects from different policy fields) (Kołomycew, 2018[54]).

European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and state funds could include stronger requirements and incentives for subnational co-operation. ESIF regional funds are perhaps the best example of using funding as a tool for subnational co-operation. Development policy in Poland is co-ordinated through national and regional operational programmes led by the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development, but also involving municipalities, the private sector and academia (OECD, 2018[3]). In the Pomorskie region, for example, various sectors had to co-operate to access funding from the Human Capital Operational Programme. The Wielkopolskie voivodship made funds available to support village renewal conditional on local actors first elaborating a local development strategy, thereby building local capacity for co-operation (OECD, 2018[3]).

Box 5.6. Relevant international example: Strengthening mechanisms for subnational co-operation

Quebec's 2014 National Rural Pact

Quebec has implemented three rounds of a rural development plan called the National Rural Pact (*Politique nationale de la ruralité*, PNR), which aims to build entrepreneurial and socio-economic capacity in rural communities, and revitalise areas affected by demographic and economic changes. During the plan's 2007 to 2014 round, rural laboratories were supported, including the Association le P'tit Bonheur de Saint-Camille, whose model for rural development was focused on community learning and innovation, with an emphasis on training current and future workers.

The third and the latest generation of PNR commits to invest CAD 470 million (Canadian dollars) over a period of ten years from 2014 to 2024, and to expand more evidence-based policies through the results from previous rounds. At the heart of the current plan is a new strategy called "Pacts Plus" that will add substantial financial resources, up to CAD 750 000 each year, in a cross-sectoral approach to

enhance flexibility in developments affecting rural and urban areas. The current PNR also aims to promote more robust citizen participation and a fair approach to sustainable territorial governance.

The pact represents a devolution of decision making and financing power to local authorities, Residents and elected representatives in local committees decide on projects to be undertaken within their communities. This arrangement not only clearly delineates each actor's responsibility and accountability, but also symbolises capacity building and bottom-up strategies that empower local actors.

Evaluations of the PNR suggest that while it is championed as a partnership between provincial and local governments and their networks, it has understated the importance of the private sector and public-private partnerships to local development. The combination of subnational budget constraints and the sheer number of projects under the PNR has also caused challenges for consistently rigorous programme evaluation.

Sources: El-Batal and Joyal (2015[55]), *La Politique nationale de la ruralité québécoise relève-t-elle d'une gouvernance synergique territoriale ?*, http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1036354ar; Parti Québécois (2014[56]), *Politique nationale de la ruralité 2014-2024* https://pq.org/nouvelles/dinformation-politique-nationale-de-la-ruralite-20/;
Dufresne (2012[57]), *Une communauté apprenante, innovante et solidaire : un modèle porteur de développement rural*, http://recitsrecettes.org/sites/default/files/un_modele_porteur_de_developpement_rural.pdf.

Recommendations for strengthening mechanisms for subnational co-operation

- **Identify and raise awareness of successful examples of subnational co-operation on skills policy**. The central government and regional authorities should identify successful examples of inter-county, inter-municipal and public-private partnerships to develop and deliver skills policies. The authorities should publish guidelines and set up a webpage with information on the benefits, available mechanisms and successful examples of subnational co-operation from across Poland. Authorities could consider publicly recognising successful examples of subnational co-operation via a national award scheme (e.g. see Chapter 3).
- **Support increased use of territorial contracts, inter-municipal unions and agreements, and shared service centres for skills policies**. The central government should provide support to subnational authorities and stakeholders to use territorial contracts, inter-municipal unions and agreements, and shared service centres for skills policies. This support should focus initially on less-developed regions, and could include publicly funded advisory services and grants to reduce the costs to subnational actors of setting up such mechanisms.
- **Strengthen the role of subnational authorities and bodies in co-ordinating skills policy**. Subnational authorities should review and monitor the effectiveness of regional councils for social dialogue, regional and local labour market councils, county conventions, and local action groups at co-ordinating skills policies specifically. In light of this information, subnational authorities should either improve the effectiveness of these bodies or create a new body focused specifically on skills development and use. Regional and county authorities should more proactively foster and seek partnerships on skills policies. For example, city counties, as a local contact point, should play a greater role in fostering co-operation between municipalities.
- **Add requirements and incentives for subnational co-operation to central budget funding and European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) allocated to skills policy.** Central and regional governments should consistently make state and ESIF funding for skills policy (partly) conditional on inter-municipal and/or public-private partnerships, thereby creating financial incentives and investing in local capacity for co-operation.

Ensuring subnational actors have the capacity for co-ordinated and effective skills policy

It is essential that subnational actors have the capacity for co-ordinated and effective skills policy. In order to effectively fulfil their responsibilities, engage with the central government and co-operate with each other, civil servants and stakeholder organisations at the subnational level (e.g. employer associations, trade unions) need appropriate human resources – people, skills and time. They also need sufficient financial resources, commensurate to their responsibilities and local needs, for delivering education, employment and related services. A lack of fiscal capacity at the subnational level reduces the ability of governments to deliver infrastructure and services and to pursue interventions based on their own priorities. It can leave them beholden to the funding structures imposed by other levels of governments (OECD, 2018[3]).

Participants in this project stated that subnational authorities and stakeholders often lack the capacity to ensure co-ordinated and effective subnational skills policies. Subnational actors are often inhibited by a lack of human resources (personnel, skills and experience) and financial resources (budget). The extent of these capacity constraints differs markedly across regions, and is most pronounced in rural localities.

The human resources of subnational authorities to co-ordinate and engage on skills policy is highly variable across regions. Some municipalities embrace a participatory approach to policy development to create their community and economic development strategies; however, the capacity of different municipalities for this approach can vary significantly (OECD, 2018[3]). Research by the IBE into career counselling in regions found that the skills and responsibilities of municipal staff in the same policy area differed significantly across municipalities (Kamieniecka and Maliszewzka, 2018[58]). The capacity of municipalities is not monitored on an ongoing basis.

As noted in the OECD Rural Policy Review of Poland (2018[3]), a debate continues in the country about whether fiscal decentralisation has adequately kept pace with the devolution of responsibilities to subnational governments. Regional and county governments in particular rely heavily on national transfers and have limited own-source revenue-raising abilities. Municipalities are more able to raise revenue, but successive OECD reviews have identified concerns that fiscal decentralisation to the municipal level is not commensurate with the growing responsibilities of municipalities (OECD, 2008[59]; 2013[11]; 2018[3]). Subnational governments in Poland regard the implementation of some central government policies as shifting unfunded/underfunded mandates to them (Matthes and Markowski, 2018[8]).

Table 5.8. Subnational government finances in Poland and EU countries, 2015, 2016

	Poland	EU average
Subnational government expenditure		
USD per capita (PPP)	3 487	6 133
as a % of GDP	12.9	15.5
as a % of public expenditure	31.3	33.4
% spent on education	28.2	19.6
% spent on social protection	12.5	22.2
Subnational government revenue		
USD per capita (PPP)	3 555	6 160
as a % of GDP	13.1	15.6
as a % of public revenue	34.0	34.8
% from taxes	32.7	41.1
% from grants and subsidies	57.6	44.1

Note: PPP (Purchasing Power Parity); GDP (Gross Domestic Product).
Source: OECD (2018[60]), *Subnational Governments in OECD Countries: Key Data 2018 Edition (brochure)*, www.oecd.org/regional/regional-policy/Subnational-governments-in-OECD-Countries-Key-Data-2018.pdf.

Despite their responsibilities, local government expenditure and revenue are relatively low in Poland. Expenditure is relatively concentrated in education (Table 5.8), with the largest portion allocated to teachers' salaries. Furthermore, since 2014 central transfers to subnational government have increased, but at a slower rate than subnational expenditures. This has contributed to a growing gap between subnational revenues and expenditure related to education (Association of Polish Cities, 2018[61]).

Regions and counties, and by extension municipalities, are highly reliant on and exposed to changes in EU funds. In order to fulfil their responsibilities for skills policy, subnational governments are under increasing pressure to find new streams of revenue from central transfers, or raise revenue themselves.

Box 5.7. Relevant international example: Building subnational capacity for skills policy

Germany – "*Lernen vor Ort*" (Learning on the Local Level)

This federal programme ran from September 2009 to August 2014. It brought together 46 educational foundations to help communes manage their education programmes and build networks for knowledge transfers across regions.

The programme supported local governments in building capacity for education monitoring and management, as well as creating sustainable networks between local administrations and civil society actors. The programme provided a total of EUR 100 million to support local districts and municipalities in setting up network structures and developing capacities. Districts and municipalities had to compete for funding and their participation was entirely voluntary.

Following the end of the programme, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research established eight regional transfer agencies across the country as part of the transfer initiative local education management (*Transferinitiative Kommunales Bildungsmanagement*). These transfer agencies provide advice to local authorities, support their education management and spread best practices. They help local authorities analyse their current situation, facilitate local dialogue between different actors and stakeholders, offer advice about relevant tools and instruments, and offer capacity building and professional development.

Source: Santiago et al. (2017[62]), *OECD Reviews of School Resources: Chile 2017*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264285637-en; Busemeyer and Vossiek (2015[63]), *Reforming Education Governance Through Local capacity-building*, http://doi.org/10.1787/5js6bhl2mxjg-en.

Recommendations for ensuring that subnational actors have the capacity to contribute to co-ordinated and effective skills policy

- **Assess and monitor the capacity of subnational authorities and stakeholders for co-ordinated and effective skills policy**. Building on similar research by the Education Research Institute, the central government, in collaboration with subnational authorities and co-ordination bodies, should survey regional, county and municipal authorities, as well as key subnational stakeholder groups, to understand whether they have sufficient human and financial resources to fulfil their responsibilities and effectively co-ordinate with others on skills policies.
- **Build the capacity of staff within subnational authorities and stakeholder groups for co-ordinated and effective skills policy**. Based on data about the relative capacity and needs of different subnational actors, central and regional governments should target support to municipal and county authorities, as well as subnational stakeholder groups. Support could be in the form of public funding for targeted training, inter-municipal or inter-sectoral assignments (exchanges), mentoring, coaching, networking, and peer learning.

- **Ensure municipal (*gmina*), county (*powiat*) and regional (voivodeship or *województwo*) governments have sufficient financial resources for co-ordinated and effective skills policy.** Central and regional governments should help ensure that counties and municipalities have sufficient financial resources to fulfil their responsibilities for skills policies by helping to reduce costs to counties and municipalities. Central and regional governments can do this by promoting and financially supporting shared service delivery and other partnerships (see the section on Strengthening mechanisms for subnational co-operation). Furthermore, the evaluation of skills programmes should be more systematic and used to allocate funding away from low-performing and towards high-performing programmes (see Opportunity 3: Integrating and using skills information effectively).

Opportunity 3: Integrating and using skills information effectively

Ministries, subnational authorities and social partners are needed to generate, and can also benefit from, high-quality, integrated information on skills and learning. This information can help diverse actors in the skills system form a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to skills, which can underpin effective co-ordination and partnerships. Comprehensive, reliable and accessible information is particularly important for:

- **Learning participation, expenditure and outcomes**: this information helps policy makers identify challenges and opportunities in the system, and target programmes and funding where the expected impacts will be highest.
- **Available learning opportunities, services and government support**: this information can make accessing training easier and more attractive for students, adults and enterprises.
- **Skills, knowledge and abilities needed in the labour market now and in the future**: this information supports the learning and career decisions of students and adults, the advice of career guides and counsellors, the supply decisions of education and training providers, and the investments of governments.

The effective use of this information is not automatic; it must be accessible and tailored to the needs of different user groups – policy makers, students, adults, enterprises, career guides, and education and training providers. Some actors may face barriers to using the information effectively, for example because of capacity or procedural constraints to evaluation and evidence-based policy in the civil service. Actors may require support and incentives to use such information effectively in decision making (OECD, 2019[2]).

Poland has several data systems and surveys in place to understand education and training patterns (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9. Lifelong learning participation databases and surveys in Poland

Database/system	Responsible authority	Coverage: Formal education (ISCED 1-8)	Coverage: Adult education and training (formal and non-formal)
Databases			
System of Education Information (*System Informacji Oświatowej*)	Ministry of National Education	Administrative database for the education system with detailed data on participation, students and schools (ISCED 1-4)	Yes (provides data on formal education in schools for adults).
POL-on system (*Zintegrowany System Informacji o Szkolnictwie Wyższym i Nauce*, POL-on)	Ministry of Science and Higher Education	A database of HEIs, with information on students, fields of study, academic staff, etc. (ISCED 5-8)	N/A

Database/system	Responsible authority	Coverage: Formal education (ISCED 1-8)	Coverage: Adult education and training (formal and non-formal)
Surveys			
Human Capital Survey (*Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego*, BKL)	PARP in partnership with Jagiellonian University	Yes	Representative survey including adult skills and learning, with national and regional data in the first cycle (2010-2014) and national data in the second cycle (2017-2023).
Conditions for educational decisions (*Uwarunkowania decyzji edukacyjnych*, UDE)	Educational Research Institute	Longitudinal survey of Polish households held in 2010-2015	Data on lifelong learning participation (formal, non-formal, informal) and on factors influencing decisions in this area.
Labour force survey (LFS) (*Badanie Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności*)	Statistics Poland	Yes	Yes.
Adult Education Survey (AES) (*Kształcenie dorosłych*)	Statistics Poland	Yes	Yes.
Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) (*Charakterystyka ustawicznego szkolenia zawodowego w przedsiębiorstwach*)	Statistics Poland	No	Yes.
Survey of Adult Skills (OECD PIAAC)	Educational Research Institute	No	Yes.

Poland also has several websites that provide information on education and training opportunities (Table 5.10).

Table 5.10. Online portals with information on learning opportunities in Poland

Platform name	Responsible organisation	Levels and forms of education covered (ISCED, adult learning)	Providers listed (number)	Programmes listed (number)
Integrated Register of Qualifications https://rejestr.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/	Educational Research Institute	All formal full qualifications (ISCED 1-8) and non-formal qualifications included in the Integrated Qualifications System.	1 781	9 692 (including 9 022 higher education, 2 postgraduate, 600 initial VET, 25 “regulated”, 25 market qualifications and 18 crafts)
Studia http://studia.gov.pl/	Ministry of Science and Higher Education	Formal higher education, ISCED 5-8.	385	5 399
Database of Development Services https://uslugirozwojowe.parp.gov.pl/	PARP	Adult learning in non-formal forms, higher education postgraduate programmes.	4 591	33 800
PARP Academy http://www.parp.gov.pl/component/site/site/kursy-online	PARP	Free adult learning in non-formal forms, mainly e-learning.	1	16

Finally, Poland has several approaches and systems for assessing and anticipating skills needs in the economy (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11. Skills assessment and anticipation related exercises in Poland

Name/activity	Responsible organisation	Coverage (occupations, sector, region)	Timeframe	Methodology
Tool for analysing demand for employees in professions taught in sectoral vocational education	Ministry of National Education and the Educational Research Institute.	Occupations from the list of formal VET (ISCED 3 and 4 levels). National and voivodeship levels.	Current, short- and medium-term skills needs (over the next 5 years). Annual exercise.	Forecast-based projections and quantitative models (national), focus groups/round tables, Delphi style methods, scenario development.
Human Capital Survey (*Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego*, BKL)	PARP in partnership with Jagiellonian University.	National level of the supply of and demand for skills.	Performed annually in 2010-2014, three bi-annual editions since 2017.	From 2017 a representative survey of 3 500 employers, 4 000 adults and 1 000 representatives of training institutions.
Sectoral Human Capital Survey (*Branżowy Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego*, BBKL)	PARP with Jagiellonian University, sector skills councils.	Performed in all sectors with sectoral skills councils.	Planned two editions for every sector between 2017 and 2023.	Survey of 1 400 employers and 800 employees of the given sector.
Barometer of Professions (*Barometr Zawodów*)	Initiative of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy. Co-ordinated nationally by the Voivodeship Labour Office of Małopolskie. and regionally by voivodeship labour offices.	Information on regional/local labour market needs at both voivodeship and county (*powiat*) levels.	Short-term forecast (a year ahead) performed annually since 2016, in Małopolskie since 2011.	Qualitative research, expert panels.
Monitoring of shortage and surplus professions (*Monitoring Zawodów Deficytowych i Nadwyżkowych*, MZDIN)	Voivodeship labour offices.	Demand for occupations at the voivodeship level.	Annually.	Analysis of secondary sources and job offers.

Source: Government of the Republic of Poland (2018[64]), *Rządowy projekt ustawy o zmianie ustawy – Prawo oświatowe i ustawy o systemie oświaty oraz innych ustaw*, http://legislacja.rcl.gov.pl/projekt/12313102/katalog/12518244#12518244; Cedefop (2017[65]), *Skills anticipation in Poland*, https://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/analytical_highlights/skills-anticipation-poland.

Improving and integrating skills information

Participants in the OECD skills strategy project in Poland stated that existing information collections have gaps and are not well integrated.

Poland lacks comprehensive administrative data on adult education and training participation and participants. It has a detailed human capital survey that covers adult learning; however, the survey has not run every year and there have been changes to its design over time. Poland lacks administrative data on adult participation in non-formal education and training, including market-based qualifications. The MEN's System of Education Information only collects data on adult participation in formal education and training.

The government does not have comprehensive financial data on how ministries, subnational governments, employers and individuals spend on skills development, especially adult learning. Various information is collected in different places and it is difficult to provide general analyses. As in other OECD countries, there is a major gap in access to data on private spending. International surveys such as the Adult Education Survey (AES) and the Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) are conducted irregularly and include limited details. The OECD has encouraged the transparency of human capital investments in firms and the inclusion of training investments in company accounting procedures (OECD, 2005[35]).

Some policy makers and researchers in Poland question the accuracy of international adult learning survey data, which undermines use of the data in policy making. As detailed in Chapter 3, questionnaire design may partly explain Poland's low rates of participation in adult learning in international surveys. According to preliminary research by Jagiellonian University (Uniwersytet Jagielloński) (PARP, 2019[66]), the adult learning participation rate derived from Poland's own Human Capital Survey increased significantly after researchers altered the design of the questionnaire. In the European Labour Force Survey, breaks in data have led to large step increases in estimated adult learning participation rates for France and Portugal (Eurostat, 2019[67]).

Information on available learning opportunities is relatively comprehensive for formal education, but partial for non-formal education and training. The Database of Development Services (*Baza Uslug Rozwojowych*) is a nationwide platform providing common access to information on education and training providers, along with their offer. The database contains information about entities providing educational, training and counselling services financed through both ESF and private funds. In the absence of a suitable education and training offer, the database also offers the possibility to order "tailor-made" services. However, it has been difficult to convince some education and training providers to register with the portal, and the vast majority of non-formal programmes are not registered (PARP, 2017[68]). Furthermore, this database does not include information on the labour market outcomes of graduates from specific programmes or providers.

Information on current and anticipated skills needs is relatively detailed in certain regions, but less so in others and at the national level. A growing number of skills anticipation exercises take place in Poland. At the end of 2016, more comprehensive solutions were put in place that provided methodologies to be implemented at the regional or local level. However, this still does not amount to an integrated system that is embedded in national legislation, co-ordinated at the national level, and carried out consistently and regularly (Cedefop, 2017[65]). There is a lack of a uniform methodology for carrying out skills assessment exercises, and the quality of exercises can differ across regions. The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy is developing a tool for skills anticipation to 2050 in the project "Forecasting system of the Polish labour market", available by the end of 2020. However, it is not clear whether this will lead to an integrated, national skills assessment and anticipation (SAA) system. Participants of this project raised concerns about duplication between SAA exercises lowering their effectiveness.

Co-ordination of Poland's skills and learning information is weak, particularly at the national level. In the case of skills assessment, a range of stakeholders are involved, such as employer organisations, education and VET institutions, and the public employment service (PES). Co-ordination of these actors is relatively good in some regions and sectors through voivodeship labour offices, labour market councils and sectoral skills councils. However, co-ordination is lacking at the national level, and could be more consistent across regions. Discussions of results from SAA exercises, and the development of the corresponding policy response, take place only within the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (OECD, 2016[39]). Ministries and agencies such as the Central Statistical Office of Poland (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, GUS) often work independently (Cedefop, 2017[65]). The quality of co-ordination within regions is variable and appears to depend on the efforts of individual voivodeship labour offices.

Formal responsibilities for generating skills and learning information are unclear at the national level. For example, there is no legislation in place to specifically regulate SAA exercises. The PES is legally responsible for diagnosing demand for skills and qualifications in regional and local labour markets, while regional governments are required to monitor deficit and surplus occupations. While the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy is the most active national authority in skills assessment, it is not formally responsible for developing a national SAA system (Cedefop, 2017[65]).

Some of Poland's skills and learning information systems are dependent on and exposed to changes in ESF funding. The majority of skills and learning databases (Table 5.9), portals (Table 5.10) and skills needs exercises (Table 5.11) in Poland have benefited from EU funding, and the evaluation of learning

programmes and forecasting of skill needs in particular have been highly reliant on EU funding. This high reliance on European funding risks the sustainability of these initiatives should funding be discontinued. The sustainability of the forecasting tool, *Prognozowanie Zatrudnienia*, and the forecasts beyond 2022 remain uncertain (Cedefop, 2017[65]).

The Ministry of Digital Affairs is developing the "Integrated Analytical Platform" which, while not specific to skills and learning information, should help to centralise and co-ordinate data collected by public agencies (Box 5.8).

Box 5.8. Relevant Polish examples: Improving and integrating skills information

Integrated Analytical Platform

The Integrated Analytical Platform (ZPA) will be the central system for analysing data collected and created by the public administration, as well as data available from other sources. The need to create such a system results from the fragmentation of current reporting and analytical solutions used by various state institutions, which has made it impossible to analyse data at the supra-ministerial level and make decisions of a scope wider than one institution.

The Ministry of Digital Affairs will spearhead the project, with additional support from the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy; the Ministry of Science and Higher Education; the University of Warsaw; and the Main Business School in Warsaw. Created within the framework of the Efficient State 2020 Strategy, the project is funded by the Operational Program Digital Poland from the EU and supplemented by the state budget.

The platform will offer centralised IT solutions to provide advanced analysis based on high-quality data. It will pay close attention to constructing an advanced security mechanism that will safeguard confidentiality and privacy of information. The implementation will lead to a better, more streamlined decision-making process and management of institutions.

SL2014 centralised database of ESF beneficiaries

SL2014 is the main application of the central teleinformation system that supports the implementation of all operational programmes under the European funds for 2014-2020. It contains information on all project participants who have received support under the ESF. For example, the system collects information on the status of the labour market and the type of support received.

Beyond acting as the payment processor for the beneficiaries, the system follows operational programmes from beginning to end. SL2014 starts with the signing of the contract of projects, provides access to information on ongoing projects, and certifies expenditure submitted by the beneficiaries to ensure that the co-financing mechanism is following national and EU law.

Polish institutions, such as the Joint Secretariats in the Centre of European Projects, the Office of the Voivode Controller and the Centre of European Projects, have signed competence agreements. These institutions are to designate an institution substantive administrator (ISA) to streamline implementation of SL2014.

Source: MC (2018[69]), Integrated Analytical Platform, www.gov.pl/web/cyfryzacja/zintegrowana-platforma-analityczna; MIiR (2016[70]), Central ICT System, www.funduszeeuropejskie.gov.pl/strony/o-funduszach/centralny-system-teleinformatyczny/; Department for Co-ordination of Implementation of EU Fund et al. (2018[71]), *SL2014 Institution Employee Manual*, https://southbaltic.eu/documents/10195/288463/2018-12-13+SL2014+Institution+Employee+Manual_v4.pdf/b44ceaba-7659-484e-8513-578df863547b.

Recommendations for improving and integrating skills information

- **Improve data on adult learning by expanding administrative collections, improving questionnaire design and linking datasets**. The government should require that all providers of adult education and training who receive public funding and/or deliver market qualifications submit activity data to government. In light of the results of Human Capital Survey (BKL) research, the government should improve the design of adult learning questionnaires to improve data reliability. The government should collate data on spending on adult education and training by ministries, subnational authorities, firms and households. The Ministry of Digital Affairs, in collaboration with other ministries and subnational authorities, should ensure that the Integrated Analytical Platform collates all available skills and learning data to underpin evidence-based skills policy making.
- **Develop a national skills assessment and anticipation (SAA) system that integrates and improves upon existing SAA exercises**: Poland's ministries involved in skills policy should develop an integrated, national SAA system in collaboration with other ministries, subnational authorities and social partners. This system should be designed based on the needs of key user groups. It should integrate successful existing SAA exercises, and augment them as needed, to ensure a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as sufficient regional and occupation breakdown.
- **Improve the co-ordination and integration of information by appointing a national cross-sectoral committee to oversee skills and learning information**: The government should appoint a national cross-sectoral and whole-of-government body, such as the Labour Market Council, to co-ordinate the improvement, collection, integration and dissemination of skills and learning information. A new or existing subnational body, such as labour market councils, could co-ordinate skills and learning information at the regional level, and sectoral skills councils at the sectoral level, reporting to the national oversight body.

Disseminating and using skills information effectively

Participants in this project stated that Poland's greatest informational challenges for skills policy relate to disseminating information in a user-friendly way, and using the information effectively in evidence-based policy making.

The public agencies involved in collecting skills and learning information release much of this information online, but it is not highly tailored to users' needs. Anonymised micro-data from the BKL are publicly available so that others are able to undertake secondary data analysis, and the Jagellonian University and PARP publicly release their research of BKL data as reports. However, several participants in this project stated that this information is not sufficiently user-friendly for subnational agencies or stakeholders such as potential learners and training providers. The websites of portals such as the *Prognozowanie Zatrudnienia* and *Monitoring zawodów* have made some progress, but could be improved further.

Portals on available learning opportunities could be more user-friendly in order to have more impact on learning and career decisions. An evaluation of the Database of Development Services found that the website was hard to use, especially for older adults, that many education and training providers weren't convinced of the benefits of registering, and that government did not effectively monitor the website's use and effectiveness. Awareness among employers of the Integrated Qualifications System (ZSK) for formal and recognised qualifications is still low, in part because too little accessible information and support to utilise and benefit from the ZSK is available. A previous OECD study found that it is difficult for potential learners to make a comprehensive assessment of learning opportunities due to a lack of current and widely available information on training courses and VET education for adults at the regional and subregional levels (OECD, 2016[15]).

A major challenge for the dissemination of skills information in Poland has been implementing an integrated system of lifelong guidance. As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, career services are fragmented, underdeveloped and underutilised. On 1st September 2018, a new regulation related to Polish schools entered into force, stipulating that vocational guidance and counselling should be carried out in a systematic way in all types of school, with the exception of art schools (Cedefop, 2019[72]). Vocational guidance should be integrated into career counselling and guidance in higher education, and made available for adults, to ensure lifelong access to these services and consistent service quality and advice at all levels. Scotland has taken innovative approach to integrating career guidance across the life course (Box 5.9). The extent to which skills needs data are used by career guidance counsellors or guides is unclear (Cedefop, 2017[65]). As Poland's career guidance and counselling workforce develops, it will be essential that staff have access to and consistently use high-quality information on skills needs and learning opportunities.

Box 5.9. Relevant international example: Integrated career guidance

Scotland – Career information, advice and guidance

The Scottish Government funds a national public body, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), to deliver work-based learning, engage employers in learning, and deliver independent and impartial career information, advice and guidance (CIAG). The end goal is to help Scotland's people create and implement their own personal plans in an increasingly complex and fluid world of work.

The all-age CIAG service is delivered in schools, via a network of local high street centres, and in local partnership and outreach premises. The skills planning model used by SDS allows career practitioners to be equipped with the most recent available labour market intelligence that is provided in an easily accessible format. They also have up-to-date information on the full range of routes and pathways that can be taken into those careers, including options for work-based learning.

Scotland recognises that "career guidance is a distinct, defined and specialist profession which demands a unique set of core skills" and expects all career guidance practitioners to be professionally qualified" and fulfil a minimum of 21 CPD hours annually.

Source: Musset and Kurekova (2018[73]), *Working it out: Career Guidance and Employer Engagement,* https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/51c9d18d-en.

Poland has high potential for evidence-based skills policy making. The Human Capital Survey (BKL) gives in-depth annual data on the skills and skills needs of individuals and employers. A range of universities and non-government and government institutes are active in undertaking research and analysis on skills policies. Unlike many OECD countries, Poland has conducted its own follow-up survey to the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC). It is also increasingly monitoring the labour market outcomes of graduates from formal education.

There are several examples of skills and learning information being utilised in evidence-based policy making. Results from the BKL have been integrated into programming documents, such as the Operational Programme Knowledge, Education, Development (2014-2020), which pointed to the BKL study as a basis for tailoring future training supply to meet labour market demand. Changes to the core curriculum for VET were informed by a study undertaken by the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (Krajowy Ośrodek Wspierania Edukacii Zawodowej i Ustawicznej, KOWEZiU) (Cedefop, 2017[65]). A decision to shift public support from fields of study to transversal skills (*Kierunki zamawiane*) in degree programmes was the result of a detailed evaluation study. Some regional territorial observatories collect and analyse data to evaluate and monitor the impact of policies with a territorial impact (OECD, 2018[3]).

However, the use of skills and learning information for evidence-based policy making is not systematic at the national or subnational levels. According to the SGI 2018, Poland is ranked 39th out of 41 OECD and European Union countries on evidence-based instruments (Matthes and Markowski, 2018[8]). This primarily reflects relatively low performance in the extent and quality of Poland's regulatory impact assessment (RIA) processes. Some participants in this project cited the low quantity and quality of RIAs for skills policy in Poland. Intelligence from skills anticipation activities feeds into strategic policy making only on an ad hoc basis (Cedefop, 2017[65]).

The outcomes achieved by adult learning providers and programmes are not measured in Poland. Although measuring graduate outcomes is becoming systematised in vocational and tertiary education, measuring the employment outcomes of adult learners is not. Data on the qualifications acquired by adults are also not systematically collected, except for some data collected by the Central Examination Board. County labour offices gather only partial data on how the KFS is spent on specific skills and target groups.

County labour offices regularly monitor the effectiveness of active labour market policy measures, and some regularly publish the results. However, the effectiveness of their support is measured only three months after the end of participation in the services, which is not sufficient for a reliable assessment of the effectiveness of labour market programmes. Local institutions very rarely conduct a professional and rigorous evaluation of their activities. In the course of the OECD's 2016 report, "Employment and Skills Strategies in Poland", only one example of an evaluation conducted by the county labour office in Radom was identified (which was not publicly available) (OECD, 2016[74]) (Box 5.10). Poland is creating a system for monitoring the effectiveness of labour market institutions (over a period longer than 12 months). It will also include tools for assessing the quality of public employment services, for example, the level of customer satisfaction.

Evaluation is relatively more developed for ESF-funded projects, with participants in this project highlighting the "two worlds" of evaluation for ESF vs. state-funded projects. Evaluation generally relates to active labour market policy measures (e.g. activities addressed to the elderly or youth), education, social integration, and economic development. The number of evaluations has rapidly increased during recent years, mostly because they are required and European funds are available to finance them. However, the knowledge and use of these evaluations at the local level seems to be rather limited, mostly due to the limited involvement of local partners in the evaluation process.

The OECD's 2016 report, "Employment and Skills Strategies in Poland", recommended increasing the availability and use of data at the subnational level and building a stronger evaluation culture (OECD, 2016[15]). The capacity of the civil service, especially at the subnational level, is a critical challenge for high-quality evaluation and evidence-based policy (see Opportunity 2: Strengthening vertical and subnational co-operation on skills policy). Strengthening capacity and the methodologies used by public agencies, using longer-term outcomes to measure the success of programmes, and better leveraging other administrative data (e.g. from social insurance institutions) can contribute to improving how evidence is used. Ireland and Slovenia have similarly taken steps to improve evaluation of skills development programmes (Box 5.11).

Box 5.10. Relevant Polish example: Evidence for skills policy making

Radom labour office

While many county labour offices face challenges in conducting professional monitoring and evaluation, the county labour office in Radom presents a positive example of evaluation. In a county with one of the highest unemployment rates, the county labour office is particularly concerned with the number of jobs offered to its residents. To bolster the local economy, the office provides potential investors with extensive information on local human capital, educational institutions, the labour market situation and wages.

The regional employment office in Radom provides career planning support, particularly VET offers at the local level for youth. It has an integrated management system of education, which works in alliance with the VET schools by providing information on the description of occupations and qualifications, the number of available placements, and the number of applications submitted.

With this established system, the Radom labour office was able to evaluate, for example, the sustainability of new enterprises. The research showed that the sustainability of new enterprises after four years was very high, at 85%.

Source: OECD (2016[74]), *OECD Reviews on Local Job Creation: Employment and Skills Strategies in Poland*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264256521-en.

Box 5.11. Relevant international examples: Evidence for skills policy making

Ireland – Skillnet

Skillnet is a publicly funded agency dedicated to increasing company participation in enterprise training by operating enterprise-led learning networks in different economic sectors and regions. Skillnet programmes are subject to an annual evaluation conducted by an independent agency. The evaluation assesses the alignment of activities and outcomes of Skillnet programmes, following the requirements of the National Training Fund, to ensure the best use of public funds. The evaluation process requires extensive primary research involving direct consultations and surveys, and is complemented with detailed data from internal and external sources, such as the Central Statistics Office. It takes place at programme, training activity and network level to examine inputs, activities, outcomes and impacts of all Skillnet components.

Some highlights of the 2016 evaluation of Skillnet were that member companies and adult learners reported high levels of satisfaction in the relevance and quality of training, as well as in personal learning and development. For example, 99% of companies surveyed would recommend becoming part of a Skillnet network to other companies.

Slovenia – Evaluation of active labour market policy

Slovenia's public employment service (*Zavod Republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje*, ZRSZ) has a clear and detailed legislative basis for monitoring and evaluating outcomes in accordance with active labour market policy guidelines (*Smernice aktivne politike zaposlovanja*, ALMP) and labour market regulation (*Zakon o urejanju trga dela*).

ZRSZ maintains a detailed register of participants in the APZ.net database, including personal data of participants, the type, duration and providers of services, and financial resources spent. APZ.net is connected with other national databases to enable the monitoring of employment outcomes. The ZRSZ conducts surveys on how participants assess the skills they acquired in the programme, and details these results in its annual reports.

The effectiveness of education and training is assessed by various external evaluations and academic studies that use methods such as surveys, interviews, propensity score matching, cost-effectiveness estimates and parametric estimation. The outcomes from the studies include the probability of post-programme employment, the programme's impact on the quality of post-programme jobs, cumulative employment and earnings, and the cost-effectiveness of the programmes.

Source: Adapted from OECD (2018[34]), *Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Slovenia: Improving the Governance of Adult Learning*, https://doi.org/10.1787/23078731.

Recommendations for disseminating and using skills information effectively

- **Assess, monitor and tailor skills information to the needs of key user groups.** The government should assess the needs, familiarity and satisfaction of users regarding dissemination channels for skills and learning information. This assessment should particularly cover existing online portals, such as the Database of Development Services (*Baza Uslug Rozwojowych*). User needs and satisfaction should be monitored on an ongoing basis. Use information from the assessment to expand user-friendly and interactive online portals to release skills and learning information.
- **Implement a system of lifelong guidance in Poland to ensure that students and adults have access to high-quality career and learning advice**: The government should further strengthen career guidance in Poland by integrating services at all levels. In practical terms, this could involve common professional and quality standards, information systems (e.g. on learning opportunities and skills needs) to underpin advice, and levels of service availability (per capita).
- **Develop a common, robust framework for evaluating the outcomes of skills programmes**. Government and experts should collaborate to develop this framework, which should specify the most appropriate approaches for evaluating outcomes of different levels and types of education and training, as well as employment and career guidance services. It should be informed by and disseminate current good practice, such as graduate outcomes monitoring, and evaluations of ESF programmes, regional labour market observatories, and others.
- **Provide training and guidance to civil servants on policy evaluation to strengthen evidence-based skills policy making**. See Opportunities 1 and 2 in this chapter.

Overview of recommendations

Opportunity 1: Strengthening co-operation on skills policy at the national level	
Strengthening skills strategies and oversight of the skills system	• Clearly define targets, responsibilities, resources and accountability for implementing the Integrated Skills Strategy (ZSU). • Make a whole-of-government and cross-sectoral body responsible for overseeing implementation of the Integrated Skills Strategy. • Review and monitor the effectiveness of existing oversight bodies for skills policy, and improve them over time.
Strengthening other mechanisms for co-ordination at the national level	• Raise the profile of "skills" and Poland's Integrated Skills Strategy in the centre of government. • Assess and build the capacity of ministries and stakeholders to co-ordinate and engage effectively on skills policies.
Opportunity 2: Strengthening vertical and subnational co-operation on skills policy	
Strengthening mechanisms for vertical co-ordination	• Monitor the coherence of subnational policies with the Integrated Skills Strategy to inform the government's co-ordination and outreach efforts. • Raise awareness of skills, the Integrated Skills Strategy and the Integrated Qualification System (ZSK) at the subnational level. • Trial territorial contracts to improve vertical co-ordination and coherence between national and subnational skills policies.
Strengthening mechanisms for subnational co-operation	• Identify and raise awareness of successful examples of subnational co-operation on skills policy. • Support increased use of territorial contracts, inter-municipal unions and agreements and shared service centres for skills policies. • Strengthen the role of subnational authorities and bodies in co-ordinating skills policy. • Add requirements and incentives for subnational co-operation to the central budget funding and European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) allocated to skills policy.
Ensuring subnational actors have the capacity for co-ordinated and effective skills policy	• Assess and monitor the capacity of subnational authorities and stakeholders for co-ordinated and effective skills policy • Build the capacity of staff within subnational authorities and stakeholder groups for co-ordinated and effective skills policy. • Ensure municipal (*gmina*), county (*powiat*) and regional (voivodeship or *województwo*) governments have sufficient financial resources for co-ordinated and effective skills policy.
Opportunity 3: Integrating and using skills information effectively	
Improving and integrating skills information	• Improve data on adult learning by expanding administrative collections, improving questionnaire design and linking datasets. • Develop a national skills assessment and anticipation (SAA) system that integrates and improves upon existing SAA exercises. • Improve the co-ordination and integration of information by appointing a national cross-sectoral committee to oversee skills and learning information.
Disseminating and using skills information effectively	• Assess, monitor and tailor skills information to the needs of key user groups. • Implement a system of lifelong guidance in Poland to ensure that students and adults have access to high-quality career and learning advice. • Develop a common, robust framework for evaluating the outcomes of skills programmes. • Provide training and guidance to civil servants on policy evaluation to strengthen evidence-based skills policy making.

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Annex A. Engagement

The National Skills Strategy project involved ongoing oversight and input from an inter-ministerial team (the National Project Team). The National Project Team was co-ordinated by the Polish Ministry of National Education and composed of experts from various other ministries and organisations, as outlined in Table A.1 below. Various experts supported the project (Table A.2).

The European Commission was represented by Rafal Janas (Team Leader, EU policies Poland, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion), Krystyna Marek (Policy Officer, Poland Desk, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion), Bartosz Otachel (Intelligence Analyst, Directorate-General for Communication), Judit Rozsa (Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) and Aneta Sobotka (Programme Officer, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion).

Table A.1. National Project Team

National Project Team	
Maciej Lasota	Head of Unit for Strategy and Integrated Qualifications System, Ministry of National Education
Katarzyna Świader	Chief Expert, Ministry of Science and Higher Education
Violetta Syzmanek	Counsellor to the Minister of Digital Affairs
Beata Lewczuk	Senior Expert, Ministry of Investment and Economic Development
Paweł Zdun	Head of Unit, Ministry of Investment and Economic Development
Agnieska Majcher-Teleon	Chief Expert, Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy
Marcin Łata	Counsellor to the Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology
National Support Team	
Aleksandra Jackiewicz	Ministry of National Education
Daniel Nowak	Polish Agency for Enterprise Development

Table A.2. Supporting experts

Supporting experts	
Dr Piotr Mikiewicz	Director, Centre for Educational Innovations, University of Lower Silesia (dyrektor Dolnośląskiego Centrum Innowacji Edukacyjnych, Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa)
Andrzej Żurawski	National Consultant, Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych)
Department of Education, Marshal's Office of the Malopolska Region (Departament Edukacji, Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Małopolskiego)	
Małopolska Partnership for Lifelong Learning (Małopolskie Partnerstwo na rzecz Kształcenia Ustawicznego)	
Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości)	
Regional advisors for the Integrated Qualification System in the Malopolska Region (Regionalni doradcy Zintegrowany System Kwalifikacji Małopolska)	
Jagiellonian University (Uniwersytet Jagielloński)	
Regional Labour Office Krakow (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Krakowie)	

Workshop moderators and note-takers

Staff of the Ministry of National Education (Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej) and Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych) acted as moderators and note-takers during the workshops in February and May 2019.

OECD missions to Poland

The OECD held three missions to Poland between October 2018 and May 2019 and met with a broad range of stakeholders, including representatives of municipalities, regional development agencies, adult education providers, employers, employer associations and trade unions. The missions included large interactive workshops, in-depth thematic sessions and bilateral meetings.

Mission 1: Skills Strategy Seminar

During the first mission from the 9th to 11th October 2018, members of the OECD team:

1. Held a high-level meeting with state secretaries and directors from 12 ministries to present and receive feedback and endorsement on the main elements of the project.
2. Held a technical-level meeting with representatives of 12 ministries and 2 agencies to discuss and receive feedback on the main elements of the project.
3. Held five bilateral meetings with different ministries to discuss their major responsibilities, their initial insights into the four priority areas of the project, and their expectations of the project.

Representatives of several ministries and offices, as well as the European Commission, attended the senior official discussion and the technical-level meeting in Warsaw on the 10th of October (Table A.3).

Table A.3. Senior officials, technical-level and bilateral meetings, Warsaw, 10 to 11 October 2018

Marzena Machałek	State Secretary, Ministry of National Education (Sekretarz Stanu w Ministerstwie Edukacji Narodowej)
Piotr Müller	State Secretary, Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Sekretarz Stanu w Ministerstwie Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego)
European Commission	
Ministry of National Education (Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej)	
Ministry of Digital Affairs (Ministerstwo Cyfryzacji)	
Ministry of Finance (Ministerstwo Finansów)	
Ministry of Investment and Economic Development (Ministerstwo Inwestycji i Rozwoju)	
Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego)	
Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego)	
Ministry of National Defence (Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej)	
Ministry of Entrepreneurship of Technology (Ministerstwo Przedsiębiorczości i Technologii)	
Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej)	
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi)	
Ministry of Sport and Tourism (Ministerstwo Sportu i Turystyki)	
Ministry of the Interior and Administration (Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji)	
Ministry of Justice (Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości)	
Ministry of Environment (Ministerstwo Środowiska)	
Ministry of Health (Ministerstwo Zdrowia)	
Central Examination Board (Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna)	
Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych)	

Mission 2: Assessment mission

During the second mission from the 4th to 7th February 2018, members of the OECD team:

1. Held an Assessment Workshop with around 90 participants from national ministries and agencies, subnational authorities, employers, trade unions, education and training providers and others, as well as the European Commission. The workshop focused on discussions of Poland's challenges and opportunities, current reforms and the next key priorities for the country regarding skills.
2. Hosted four in-depth focus group discussions with subject matter experts and practitioners in the four areas of focus for the project. These sessions convened policy makers, ministry officials, public agencies and stakeholders to explore Poland's challenges and opportunities in each priority area and to discuss current skills reforms underway in Poland to help respond to these priorities.

Representatives of several ministries and offices, the European Commission, and numerous stakeholder groups attended the assessment workshop and focus group discussions in Warsaw on the 5th-7th February 2019 (Table A.4 and Table A.5).

Table A.4. Organisations participating in the Assessment Workshop, Warsaw, 5 February 2019

Ministries and agencies
European Commission
Ministry of National Education (Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej)
Ministry of Sport and Tourism (Ministerstwo Sportu i Turystyki)
Ministry of Digital Affairs (Ministerstwo Cyfryzacji)
Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej)
Ministry of Investment and Economic Development (Ministerstwo Inwestycji i Rozwoju)
Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego)
Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology (Ministerstwo Przedsiębiorczości i Technologii)
Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych)
Stakeholders
Polish Nationwide Federation of Association Third Age Universities (Ogólnopolska Federacja Stowarzyszeń Uniwersytetów Trzeciego Wieku)
Polish Chamber of Commerce for Electronics and Telecommunications (Krajowa Izba Gospodarcza Elektroniki i Telekomunikacji)
Bartender's Training Centre (Centrum Szkolenia Barmanów)
Building Research Institute (Instytut Techniki Budowlanej)
Scientific and Research Centre for Fire Protection National Research Institute (Centrum Naukowo Badawcze Ochrony Przeciwpożarowej Państwowy Instytut Badawczy)
Practical Training Centre Warsaw (Centrum Kształcenia Praktycznego w Warszawie)
Polish Bank Association (Związek Banków Polskich)
Polish Confederation Lewiatan (Konfederacja Lewiatan)
University of Lodz (Uniwersytet Łódzki)
Marshal's Office of the Pomeranian Voivodeship (Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Pomorskiego)
Association of School and Professional Counsellors in the Republic of Poland (Stowarzyszenie Doradców Szkolnych i Zawodowych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej)
Centre for Education Development (Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji)
Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone "Invest Park" (Wałbrzyska Specjalna Strefa Ekonomiczna "INVEST-PARK")
Małpolska Regional Development Observatory (Małopolskie Obserwatorium Rozwoju Regionalnego)
Voluntary Work Corps (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy)
Jagiellonian University Krakow (Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie)
Polish Federation of Engineering Associations (Naczelna Organizacja Techniczna Federacja Stowarzyszeń Naukowo-Technicznych)
Integrated Qualification Strategy Stakeholders Council (Rada Interesariuszy Zintegrowany System Kwalifikacji)
National Educational Section of NSZZ Solidarnosc (Sekcja Krajowa Oświaty i Wychowania NSZZ Solidarność)
Institute for Structural Research (Instytut Badań Strukturalnych)
Conference of Rectors of Vocational Schools in Poland (Konferencja Rektorów Zawodowych Szkół Polskich)

Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management Gdansk (Wyższa Szkoła Turystyki i Hotelarstwa w Gdańsku)
Legnica Special Economic Zone (Legnicka Specjalna Strefa Ekonomiczna)
WSB University Toruń (Wyższa Szkoła Bankowa w Toruniu)
Confederation of Building Industry and Real Estate (Konfederacja Budownictwa i Nieruchomości)
Education Office Bydgoszcz (Kuratorium Oświaty w Bydgoszczy)
Institute of Mechanised Construction and Rock Mining (Instytut Mechanizacji Budownictwa i Górnictwa Skalnego)
Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości)
Sectoral Council for Competence in Fashion and Innovative Textiles (Sektorowa Rada ds. Kompetencji Moda i Innowacyjne Tekstylia)
Marshal's Office of the Pomeranian Voivodeship Olsztyn (Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie)
Sectoral Council for Competences in Information Technology (Sektorowa Rada ds. Kompetencji Informatyka)
Voivodeship Labour Office Gdansk (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy Gdańsk)
Civic Educational Association (Społeczne Towarzystwo Oświatowe)
Sectoral Council for Competences in Tourism (Sektorowa Rada ds. Kompetencji Turystyka)
Association of Tourism Employers Lewiatan (Związek Pracodawców Turystyki Lewiatan)
National School of Public Administration (Krajowa Szkoła Administracji Publicznej)
International Faculty of Engineering, Lodz University of Technology (Centrum Kształcenia Międzynarodowego, Politechnika Łódzka)
NGO Trainers' Association (Stowarzyszenie Trenerów Organizacji Pozarządowych)
Academic Andragogic Society (Akademickie Towarzystwo Andragogiczne)
Lifelong Learning Consortium Toruń (Konsorcjum Lifelong Learning w Toruniu)
Voivodeship Labour Office Katowice (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Katowicach)
Tourism Staff LLC (Kadry Turystyki Sp. ZOO)
Learnetic Joint Stock Company
Polish Automotive and Industrial Employers Association (Związek Pracodawców Motoryzacji i Artykułów Przemysłowych)
Warsaw Institute of Banking (Warszawski Instytut Bankowości)
Polish HR Forum (Polskie Forum HR)
Foundation of the Development of the Education System (Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji)
Voivodeship Labour Office Krakow (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Krakowie)
VCC Foundation (Fundacja VCC)

Table A.5. Organisations and stakeholders participating in focus group discussions, Warsaw, 6 to 7 February 2019

Ministries
Ministry of National Education (Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej)
Ministry of Digital Affairs (Ministerstwo Cyfryzacji)
Ministry of Investment and Economic Development (Ministerstwo Inwestycji i Rozwoju)
Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego)
Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej)
Ministry of Sport and Tourism (Ministerstwo Sportu i Turystyki)
Stakeholders
Federation of Third Age Universities (Federacja Uniwersytetów Trzeciego Wieku)
Academic Andragogic Society (Akademickie Towarzystwo Andragogiczne)
Lifelong Learning Consortium Toruń (Konsorcjum Lifelong Learning w Toruniu)
National Federation of Entrepreneurs and Employers Przedsiębiorcy (Ogólnopolska Federacja Przedsiębiorców i Pracodawców Przedsiębiorcy)
Sectoral Council for Competences in Tourism (Sektorowa Rada ds. Kompetencji Turystyka)
Sectoral Council for Competences in Information Technology (Sektorowa Rada ds. Kompetencji Informatyka)
Jagiellonian University Krakow (Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie)
Krakow University of Economics (Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Krakowie)
Scientific and Research Centre for Fire Protection National Research Institute (Centrum Naukowo Badawcze Ochrony Przeciwpożarowej Państwowy Instytut Badawczy)
Warsaw Institute of Banking (Warszawski Instytut Bankowości)
Sectoral Council for Competences in the Financial sector (Sektorowa Rada ds. Kompetencji Finanse)

Labour Office in Poznan (WUP Poznań Voivodeship)
Institute for Structural Research (Instytut Badań Strukturalnych)
Marshal's Office of the Pomeranian Voivodeship Olsztyn (Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie)
Voivodeship Labour Office Krakow (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Krakowie)

Mission 3: Recommendations mission

During the third mission from the 27th to 31st May 2019, members of the OECD team:

1. Hosted a Recommendations Workshop for representatives of national ministries and agencies, subnational authorities, employers, trade unions, education and training providers and others, as well as the European Commission. The workshop involved discussion and development of the recommendations for improvement in Poland in each of the four priority areas of the project.
2. Hosted four in-depth focus group discussions, one for each of the priority topics for the project, to test areas for recommendations, present findings and pose questions to local experts and practitioners in the priority areas of the project.
3. Visited Krakow to meet with local experts, academics and stakeholders about the regional challenges and opportunities for each of the priority areas of the project. Following presentations from local officials, the issue of vertical and subnational co-ordination of skills policy within Poland was explored.

Representatives of several ministries and offices, the European Commission, and numerous stakeholder groups attended the recommendations workshop and focus group discussions in Warsaw and Krakow on the 28th-31st May 2019 (Table A.6, Table A.7 and Table A.8).

Table A.6. Organisations participating in the Recommendations Workshop, Warsaw, 28 May 2019

Ministries and agencies
European Commission
Ministry of National Education (Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej)
Ministry of Digital Affairs (Ministerstwo Cyfryzacji)
Ministry of Investment and Economic Development (Ministerstwo Inwestycji i Rozwoju)
Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego)
Ministry of Sport and Tourism (Ministerstwo Sportu i Turystyki)
Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych)
Stakeholders
Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości)
Leader 100 Foundation (Fundacja Leader100)
JSW (Jastrzębska Spółka Węglowa SA)
Institute for Sustainable Technologies Radom (Instytut Technologii Eksploatacji w Radomiu)
Marshal's Office of the Pomeranian Voivodeship Olsztyn (Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie)
Warsaw School of Economics (Szkoła Główna Handlowa)
Centre for Continuing Education Sopot (Centrum Kształcenia Ustawicznego Sopot)
University of Lodz (Uniwersytet Łódzki)
Confederation of Building Industry and Real Estate (Konfederacja Budownictwa i Nieruchomości)
Trade Unions Forum (Forum Związków Zawodowych)
Polish Free Trade Union, Solidarity Education (Wolny Związek Zawodowy Solidarność Oświata)
National Freedom Institute (Narodowy Instytut Wolności)
Małopolska Chamber of Local Government (Fundacja Małopolska Izba Samorządowa)
Institute of Sport, National Research Institute (Instytut Sportu, Państwowy Instytut Badawczy)
WSB University Toruń (Wyższa Szkoła Bankowa w Toruniu)
University of Lower Silesia (Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa)

Association of Tourism Employers Lewiatan (Związek Pracodawców Turystyki Lewiatan)
Foundation of the Development of the Education System (Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji)
Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (Konferencja Rektorów Akademickich Szkół Polskich)
General Council for Science and Higher Education (Rada Główna Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego)
Sectoral Council for Competences in the Financial sector (Sektorowa Rada ds. Kompetencji Finanse)
NASK National Research Institute (NASK Państwowy Instytut Badawczy)
Polish HR Forum (Polskie Forum HR)
Voivodeship Labour Office Krakow (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Krakowie)
Voivodeship Labour Office Rzeszow (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Rzeszowie)
Cisco Poland (Cisco Polska)
National Federation of Entrepreneurs and Employers Przedsiębiorcy (Ogólnopolska Federacja Przedsiębiorców i Pracodawców Przedsiębiorcy)
Voivodeship Labour Office Szczecin (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Szczecinie)
University of Warsaw (Uniwersytet Warszawski)
Scientific and Research Centre for Fire Protection National Research Institute (Centrum Naukowo Badawcze Ochrony Przeciwpożarowej Państwowy Instytut Badawczy)
Wałbrzych Special Economic Zone “Invest Park” (Wałbrzyska Specjalna Strefa Ekonomiczna “INVEST-PARK”)
Federation of Engineering Associations Wrocław (Wrocławska Rada Federacja Stowarzyszeń Naukowo-Technicznych)
Institute for Sustainable Technologies, National Research Institute (Instytut Technologii Eksploatacji, Państwowy Instytut Badawczy)
Association of School and Professional Counsellors in the Republic of Poland (Stowarzyszenie Doradców Szkolnych i Zawodowych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej)
Polish Chamber of Training Companies (Polska Izba Firm Szkoleniowych)
Education Office Bydgoszcz (Kuratorium Oświaty w Bydgoszczy)
Humanitas University (Wyższa Szkoła Humanitas)
Polish Chamber of Automotive Industry (Polska Izba Motoryzacji)
Sectoral Skill Council for the Automotive Industry (Sektorowa Rada ds. Kompetencji Motoryzacja i Elektromobilność)
Voivodeship Labour Office Gdansk (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy Gdańsk)
Polish Information Processing Society (Polskie Towarzystwo Informatyczne)
Sectoral Council for Competences in Tourism (Sektorowa Rada ds. Kompetencji Turystyka)
National School of Public Administration (Krajowa Szkoła Administracji Publicznej)
Academic Andragogic Society (Akademickie Towarzystwo Andragogiczne)
Lifelong Learning Consortium Toruń (Konsorcjum Lifelong Learning w Toruniu)
Voivodeship Labour Office Rzeszow (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy Rzeszów)

Table A.7. Organisations and stakeholders participating in the focus groups, Warsaw, 30 to 31 May 2019

Ministries and agencies
Ministry of National Education (Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej)
Ministry of Digital Affairs (Ministerstwo Cyfryzacji)
Ministry of Investment and Economic Development (Ministerstwo Inwestycji i Rozwoju)
Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego)
Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej)
Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych)
Stakeholders
Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości)
Leader100 Foundation (Fundacja Leader100)
Polish Confederation Lewiatan (Konfederacja Lewiatan)
Marshal’s Office of the Pomeranian Voivodeship Olsztyn (Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie)
Voivodeship Labour Office Krakow (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Krakowie)
Sectoral Council for Competences in Tourism (Sektorowa Rada ds. Kompetencji Turystyka)
Polish HR Forum (Polskie Forum HR)
County Office Kwidzyn (Starostwo Powiatowe w Kwidzynie)

Table A.8. Organisations participating in the regional engagement with Krakow, 29 May 2019

Ministries and stakeholders
Ministry of National Education (Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej)
Voivodeship Labour Office Krakow (Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy w Krakowie)
Jagiellonian University Krakow (Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie)
Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości)
Małopolska Partnership for Lifelong Learning (Małopolskie Partnerstwo na rzecz Kształcenia Ustawicznego)
Department of Education, Marshal's Office Małpolska Region (Departament Edukacji, Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Małopolskiego)
Regional Advisors, Integrated Qualification System, Małpolska Region (Regionalni doradcy Zintegrowanego Systemu Kwalifikacji Małopolska)

OECD Skills Studies

OECD Skills Strategy Poland

ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Skills are the key to shaping a better future. Skills are central to the capacity of countries and people to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world. Megatrends such as globalisation, technological advance and demographic change are reshaping work and society, generating a growing demand for higher levels of skills, as well as new sets of skills.

OECD Skills Strategy projects provide a strategic and comprehensive approach to assess countries' skills challenges and opportunities, and build more effective skills systems. The OECD works collaboratively with countries to develop policy responses that are tailored to each country's specific skills needs. The foundation of this approach is the OECD Skills Strategy framework, which allows for an exploration of what countries can do better to i) develop relevant skills over the life course, ii) use skills effectively in work and in society, and iii) strengthen the governance of the skills system.

This report, *OECD Skills Strategy Poland: Assessment and Recommendations*, identifies opportunities and recommends actions to make the education system more reponsive to labour market needs, foster participation in adult learning, increase the use of skills in workplaces and strengthen the governance of the skills system in Poland.

Consult this publication on line at ***https://doi.org/10.1787/b377fbcc-en***.

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