OECD Skills Studies

OECD Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Korea

STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNANCE OF ADULT LEARNING

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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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Foreword

Adult learning matters for Korea's long-term prosperity and the well-being of its citizens.

Korea has been one of the fastest growing OECD economies in past decades, but economic growth has slowed down in recent years, and since 2020 has been adversely affected by COVID-19. Given the important relationship between skills and economic recovery and growth, developing and upgrading the skills of Korea's population is essential, and Korea has an opportunity to do this by strengthening the governance of its adult learning system. Due to the wide range of actors with an interest and role in adult learning, effective governance arrangements – including collaboration across ministries and levels of government, stakeholder engagement, and financing – are essential to the success of the adult learning system.

Korea has some promising initiatives in the governance of its adult learning system. The Social Policy Ministers Committee promotes horizontal co-ordination across nine ministries on a variety of social policies, including adult learning. Lifelong education promotion councils and regional skills councils co-ordinate adult learning policies across levels of government. Government and stakeholders work together in adult learning policies through the Lifelong Learning City and the Local-based Job Creation Support Programme. Financial incentives such as the National Tomorrow Learning Card and the Lifelong Education Voucher provide individuals with financial incentives to participate in adult learning.

However, some challenges remain. While several ministries partake in the provision of adult learning, a comprehensive and shared vision is missing. Subnational governments vary significantly in their capacity to implement adult learning policies. While government and stakeholders are increasingly involved in social dialogue around adult learning policies, they often lack sufficient capacity to render the engagement effective. Financial incentives need to be tailored and targeted more to support the participation of disadvantaged groups in adult learning.

Recent and planned policy reforms show great promise, but more needs to be done to ensure stronger adult learning governance that involves all relevant ministries, levels of governments and stakeholders, such as employers, unions, education and training providers, non-governmental organisations, and individual learners.

Citizens of all ages and backgrounds should be able to develop and use their skills effectively to take up the opportunities of a rapidly changing society and contribute to Korea's economic recovery and growth.

Based on an analysis of Korea's adult learning governance, as well as findings from widespread engagement with stakeholders in Korea, the OECD has developed a number of concrete recommendations for Korea.

The OECD stands to support Korea as it seeks to implement better skills policies for better lives.

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 is grateful to the Korean National Project Team for its invaluable guidance and input throughout the project, and its help in convening and organising stakeholder workshops. We are particularly grateful to the National Project Leader, Youngsup Choi from the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET), and the national project team members, Hanna Moon from KRIVET, Hyung Man Kim from KRIVET, Min-Hwan Jeon from the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Dasom Choi from the Ministry of Employment and Labour (MoEL) for their strong leadership and co-ordination of the project. The national project support included Minhee Im and Youngeun Jeon from KRIVET. The OECD team wishes to thank Director-General Yeon-hee Koo of the MoE and former Director Jiwan Yoo of the MoE (currently Director-General, Korea National University of Education) for their commitment to this project. We also thank Hyunjin Kim, former Counsellor for Education, Ji Yun Kim, current Counsellor for Education, and Hyun Soo Yang, Counsellor for Employment and Labour at the Permanent Representation of the Korean Government to the OECD, for their insightful advice and continuous support during the project. We also appreciate the useful and constructive comments from Deputy Directors Hye Young Bae from the MoEL and Eunseo Lee from the MoE.

Our warm thanks go to the many representatives of ministries, government agencies, education and training institutions, businesses and business associations, unions and community associations, think tanks and other organisations, and adult learners who generously shared their insights during focus groups and bilateral interviews with the OECD team in Seoul, and for their written input and good practices. During the missions, the OECD team met around 40 stakeholders representing different sectors and institutions, including practitioners and experts from all levels of education, policy makers, employers, trade unions, local authorities, education and labour market researchers. We would also like to take the opportunity to thank the staff of KRIVET for their excellent organisation of the focus group and bilateral meetings and for their hospitality in hosting these events. We also thank the experts who supported the National Project Team and the moderators and translators in the meetings.

We are grateful to the Ministry of Education for contributing both financial support and expertise throughout the project.

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

Samuel Kim was the OECD Project Leader responsible for managing this OECD National Skills Strategy project in Korea. The main authors of this report were: Samuel Kim, Najung Kim and Soumyajit Kar (OECD Centre for Skills).

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As Head of the OECD National Skills Strategy Projects, Andrew Bell provided analytical guidance, comments on chapters and supervision. Stefano Scarpetta (OECD Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs) and Mark Pearson (OECD Deputy 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 following are the main acronyms cited in the report.

Abbreviation/Acronym	Full description
DM	Deputy minister
DPM	Deputy prime minister
EI	Employment Insurance
ESLC	Economic, Social and Labour Council
FKI	Federation of Korean Industries
FKTU	Federation of Korean Trade Unions
HRD Korea	Human Resources Development Services of Korea
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILA	Individual learning accounts
ISC	Industrial skills council
KCCI	Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry
KCTU	Korean Confederation of Trade Unions
KDI	Korea Development Institute
KEDI	Korean Educational Development Institute
KEF	Korea Employers Federation
KEIS	Korea Employment Information Service
KIPA	Korea Institute of Public Administration
KLI	Korea Labour Institute
KLIPS	Korean Labour and Income Panel Study
K-MOOC	Korean Massive Open Online Course
KQF	Korea Qualifications Framework
KRIVET	Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training
KSQA	Korean Skills Quality Authority
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEL	Ministry of Employment and Labour
MoGEF	Ministry of Gender Equality and Family
MoIS	Ministry of Interior and Safety
MPM	Ministry of Personnel Management
NCS	National Competency Standards
NILE	National Institute of Lifelong Learning
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NTLC	National Tomorrow Learning Card
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PIMAC	Public and Private Infrastructure Investment Management Centre
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RSC	Regional skills council
SAMC	Social Affairs Ministers' Committee
SC	Sectoral human resource development council

Abbreviation/Acronym	Full description
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SMILE	Seoul Metropolitan Institute for Lifelong Education
STEP	Smart Training Education Platform
VET	Vocational education and training

Executive summary

OECD-Korea collaboration on the OECD Skills Strategy project

This OECD Skills Strategy project provides Korea with tailored opportunities and recommendations to strengthen the governance of its adult learning system. The project has benefited from the insights of a wide range of government and stakeholder representatives through two rounds of background questionnaires, written input on the four priority areas, an interactive focus group and bilateral meetings during two OECD missions to Korea, and two Korean expert visits to the OECD. This process provided invaluable input that shaped the findings and recommendations in this report.

Key findings and opportunities for improving the governance of Korea's adult learning system

In recent years, Korea has made significant progress in strengthening its skills and economic performance. The skills of 15 year olds in reading, mathematics and science, as well as the tertiary education attainment rate among young adults, are among the highest across the OECD. The economy has steadily grown, and only recently contracted due to the ramifications of COVID-19, although Korea has been less impacted economically than other OECD countries.

The public health crisis requires immediate policy attention, and large-scale policy responses are required to provide support to those affected, as well as to promote economic recovery. The skills acquired through adult learning can have a positive impact on the economic recovery, and a resilient and adaptable adult learning system can help to mitigate economic and social shocks in the future, as well as help Korea to prepare for the challenges posed by megatrends such as population ageing, technological change and globalisation.

There are some challenges in the current adult learning system. While several ministries are involved in the provision of adult learning, a comprehensive and shared vision is missing. Subnational governments vary significantly in their capacity to implement adult learning policies. Although government and stakeholders are increasingly involved in social dialogue around adult learning policies, they often lack sufficient capacity to render the engagement effective. Financial incentives need to be tailored and targeted more to support the participation of disadvantaged groups in adult learning.

In order to address many of these challenges, Korea has implemented a range of strategies and reforms, such as the Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan (2019-2022). To support these efforts, the OECD and the Government of Korea have identified four priority areas to further improve Korea's adult learning governance. These priorities and the key findings are summarised below.

Priority 1: Strengthening the horizontal governance of adult learning

Having a strong adult learning system requires a co-ordinated effort across a range of government ministries, also referred to as horizontal governance. As adult learning encompasses the domains of diverse ministries, effective policy co-ordination across ministries increases the potential to improve adult learning outcomes. Ministries should work together with stakeholders to create a comprehensive long-term vision for adult learning. The Social Affairs Ministers' Committee, established in 2015 to lead horizontal co-ordination across nine ministries on a variety of social policies, should play a key role in co-ordinating adult learning policies across ministries. Horizontal co-ordination is particularly required to disseminate consistent information about adult learning opportunities.

Korea can strengthen horizontal governance in adult learning by:

- Developing a long-term vision for adult learning and supporting co-ordination across ministries.
- Improving the dissemination of adult learning information in co-ordination with ministries.

Priority 2: Strengthening the vertical governance of adult learning

Multiple levels of government are involved in the design and implementation of adult learning policies. Strong vertical governance arrangements are necessary to co-ordinate the respective roles and responsibilities across these levels for the effective and equitable implementation of adult learning policies across the country. Co-ordination bodies such lifelong education promotion councils and regional skills councils play an important role in co-ordinating across levels of government, and their effectiveness should be raised. Given that the capacity for implementing adult learning policies varies significantly across subnational governments, those with lower capacity require additional support.

Korea can strengthen vertical governance in adult learning by:

- Improving co-operation in adult learning policies across levels of government.
- Supporting subnational governments to effectively implement adult learning policies.

Priority 3: Strengthening stakeholder engagement in adult learning

The effectiveness of adult learning policies depends on the responses and actions of a wide range of actors, including stakeholders. Engaging stakeholders allows for their expertise and knowledge to inform adult learning policies and raises their support for implemented policies. In order for engagement processes to be constructive, government officials and stakeholders need to be aware of why engagement matters, and have the capacity to engage effectively. Strengthening the role of stakeholders, particularly those who are disadvantaged, in the adult learning policy-making process requires diverse and inclusive engagement efforts, as well as effective stakeholder engagement bodies.

Korea can strengthen stakeholder engagement in adult learning by:

- Raising the awareness of, and capacity for, effective stakeholder engagement.
- Involving stakeholders effectively in the adult learning policy-making process.

Priority 4: Strengthening financing arrangements in adult learning

A strong financing model in adult learning facilitates the effective co-ordination of funding sources and funding distribution. The total available funding for adult learning should meet the diverse adult learning needs of society, employers and individuals. At the same time, the distribution of funding needs to be equitable in order for it to be allocated proportionately, based on the ability of the beneficiaries to pay. Given that the national government has the largest amount of available funds it should play an important role in ensuring the equitable distribution of funds for adult learning policies. Disadvantaged subnational

governments will require additional financial support to implement adult learning policies. As the cost of participating in adult learning remains a significant barrier for disadvantaged groups, further improvements regarding financial incentives for individuals are necessary.

Korea can strengthen financing arrangements in adult learning by:

- Co-ordinating adult learning financing arrangements across levels of government.
- Improving financial incentives for individuals to participate in adult learning.

1 Key insights and recommendations

This chapter provides an overall assessment and summarises the findings of the OECD Skills Strategy Governance Review of Adult Learning in Korea. The review covers four aspects of adult learning governance: 1) horizontal co-ordination among ministries; 2) vertical co-ordination across levels of government; 3) stakeholder engagement; and 4) financing arrangements. This chapter introduces these priority areas along with key insights and recommendations, it also describes the context of the skills system in Korea. The subsequent chapters examine each of the four priority areas in greater detail.

Introduction: The importance of adult learning in Korea

Korea has been one of the fastest growing OECD economies in past decades, but economic growth has slowed down in recent years and has been further affected by COVID-19. Korea's rapid transformation has relied on a well-educated population and a business environment that encourages innovation, world trade and integration in global value chains. The Korean economy recorded a 2.7% gross domestic product (GDP) increase in 2018 and renewed growth in 2019 (2%). Due to COVID-19, the economy contracted by 1.1% in 2020, which was the smallest decline across OECD countries. Assuming that there is no resurgence of the pandemic, the economy is projected to grow again by 2.8% in 2021 and 3.4% in 2022 (OECD, 2020[1]). Given that Korea's rapidly ageing society is reducing the contribution of labour utilisation to economic growth, labour productivity growth will be an even more important driver of economic growth in the future (OECD, 2016[2]; 2018[3]). The important relationship between skills and productivity mean that developing and upgrading the skills of Korea's population will be important for the country's long-term prosperity and the well-being of its citizens.

Due to the wide range of actors with an interest and role in adult learning, effective governance arrangements – including collaboration across ministries and levels of government, stakeholder engagement and aligned financing – are essential for the success of adult learning systems. Effective government arrangements involve relevant government ministries and agencies at multiple levels, education and training institutions, individuals, employers, labour unions, among others.

Adult learning matters in the context of demographic change, digitalisation, globalisation and COVID-19

A highly skilled workforce is critical for economic recovery and growth in Korea, and will help meet the challenges of a rapidly ageing society. Among OECD countries, population ageing will be the fastest in Korea, leading to a shrinking labour force. The OECD estimates that in 2050, for every ten individuals of working age in Korea there will be seven individuals not in the workforce. This is 20 percentage points above the corresponding OECD average (OECD, 2018[3]). The needs of a rapidly growing elderly population will lead to the expansion of healthcare and social services sectors. In Korea, workers are often forced out of firms around age 50 due to their relatively lower levels of skills and seniority based wages. A large share of older adults find themselves working in poor quality jobs with low and insecure earnings and little to no social protection. This contributes to the high poverty rates among adults aged 65 and over (46% compared to the OECD average of 13%) (OECD, 2018[4]). One key challenge for Korea will be to increase the life and job quality of older workers. It will be important to provide older adults with adequate opportunities to reskill and upskill through a strong adult learning system (OECD, 2019[5]) so that they can be better retained in the labour market and continue to contribute productively to the economy.

Technological change is affecting the nature of many jobs and the skills required. The OECD estimates that in Korea, about 10% of workers face a high risk of seeing their jobs automated, and another 33% will face significant changes in their job tasks due to automation (Nedelkoska and Quintini, 2018[6]). In addition, an estimated 20% of workers aged between 16 and 65 have moderate or significant training needs to prepare for the high risk of automation. At the same time, the digital transformation is creating new opportunities. Reaping the full benefits of digitalisation will ultimately depend on the ability of each country to develop a set of policies that help workers adapt to these changes and develop relevant skills to thrive in the digital world. The OECD Skills Outlook 2019: Thriving in a Digital World showed that most young people in Korea are equipped with digital skills, but that the share of older people (aged 55-65) lacking basic digital skills is relatively high (OECD, 2019[7]). Results from the Survey of Adult Skills (2012) show that below 5% of adults aged between 55 and 65 have good ability (proficiency at level 2 and 3) in problem solving in technology-rich environments, compared to nearly 65% of those aged 16 to 24 (OECD, 2016[2]).

The continuing expansion of international trade and global value chains also underscores the need for further adult learning. The general trend in OECD member countries, including Korea, is for low-skilled, routine tasks to be offshored, leading to the loss of jobs in developed countries and the corresponding gains in developing and emerging countries (OECD, 2019[5]). Over the last two decades, Korea has increased its participation in global value chains and specialised in technologically advanced industries (OECD, 2017[8]). Due to automation and globalisation, adults in Korea need to continuously upskill and reskill in order to move from low-skilled and routine task-based jobs to high-skilled and non-routine task based jobs.

COVID-19 is interacting with megatrends in complex ways. The increased use of digital solutions to overcome social distancing and quarantine requirements has accelerated digitalisation in learning and work in Korea. The need for production processes to be more resilient to supply shocks is incentivising Korean businesses to embrace automation and new technologies in their activities. As a consequence, new skills are required in the labour market and society, and individuals need to more frequently update and improve their set of skills. Skills are vital in enabling all individuals in Korea to adapt and eventually thrive in response to changing economic, social and environmental conditions in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Skills are critical to reduce Korea's high level of inequality, which is being further exacerbated by COVID-19. Despite impressive economic growth in past decades, Korea has the third highest relative poverty rate and the seventh highest income inequality across the OECD (OECD, 2020[9]). COVID-19 has further increased inequalities, as disadvantaged groups have been particularly vulnerable to the economic and social ramifications of the pandemic. Non-regular workers[1] have been more likely to lose their jobs than regular workers and have less access to adult learning opportunities to support their transition to other jobs. Older workers, many of whom work in small businesses, have struggled to acquire the necessary digital skills to effectively use online platforms and other digital tools to telework. Women in general, and mothers in particular, have had relatively less time to acquire new skills for, and effectively participate in, remote working in light of their additional care responsibilities (OECD, 2020[9]). Adult learning is critical to ensure that all individuals form and maintain the required broad set of skills to adapt in a changing working environment and succeed in a dynamic society. A strong adult learning system will not only boost Korea's recovery today, but also build resilience and achieve long-lasting improvements for the future, without leaving any groups behind. For the definitions of "skills" and "adult learning", please see Box 1.1.

Box 1.1. Definitions of "skills" and "adult learning"

Definition of "skills"

The OECD Skills Strategy defines "skills" (or competences) as the bundle of knowledge, attributes and capacities that can be learnt and that enable individuals to successfully and consistently perform an activity or task in the labour market and society. Skills can be built upon and extended through learning. This definition includes the full range of cognitive, technical and socio-emotional skills. The concepts of "skill" and "competence" are often used interchangeably. The sum of all skills available to the economy at a given point in time forms the human capital of a country. The OECD Skills Strategy shifts the focus from traditional proxies of skills, such as years of formal education and training or qualifications/diplomas attained, to a much broader perspective that includes the skills people acquire, use and maintain – and also lose – over the course of a lifetime. People need skills to help them succeed in the labour market, contribute to better social outcomes, and build more cohesive and tolerant societies.

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Definition of "adult learning"

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 is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.

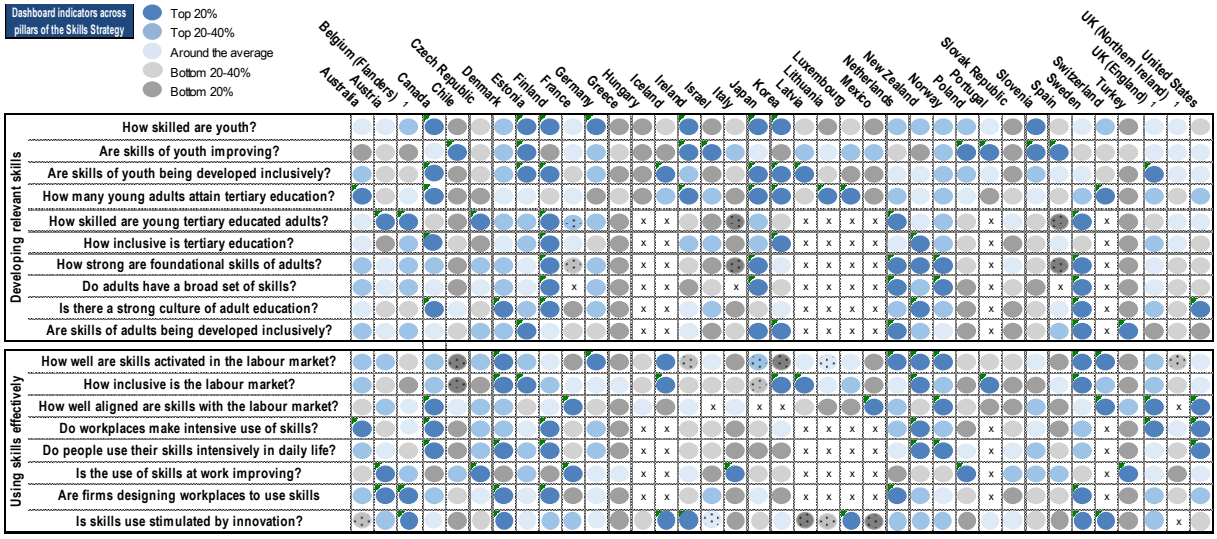
For the purposes of this report, adult learners are defined as individuals aged 25+ who have left the initial "first chance" education system (either primary, secondary, post-secondary or tertiary level) but are engaged in learning. In the Korean context, the Ministry of Education (MoE) refers to adult learning as "lifelong learning", while the Ministry of Employment and Labour (MoEL) refers to it as "vocational skills development". Therefore, when referring to the specific adult learning programmes of the MoE and the MoEL, their respective terminologies are used.

Source: OECD (2012[10]), *Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives: A Strategic Approach to Skills Policies*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264177338-en. OECD (2019[5]), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to Shape a Better Future*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en.

Developing relevant skills and using skills effectively

The OECD Skills Strategy Dashboard provides an overview of the relative performance of countries across two dimensions of the OECD Skills Strategy: developing relevant skills and using skills effectively (as presented in Figure 1.1). 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, that provide a snapshot of each country's performance (see Annex 1.A. OECD Skills Strategy Dashboard for indicators and method). The two dimensions are important to keep in mind when considering Korea's adult learning system.

Figure 1.1. OECD Skills Strategy Dashboard: Summary indicators of skills performance



Notes: Indicators are selected, aggregated and normalised in a way to ensure that a higher value and being among the "Top 20%" reflects better performance. Colours in the dashboard represent the quintile position of the country in the ranking, with dark grey indicating performance at the bottom, and dark blue indicating performance at the top of the ranking. The "x" indicates insufficient or no available data for the underlying indicators, and dotted circles indicate missing data for at least one underlying indicator. Only OECD sources have been used (see OECD (2019[5]) for overview).

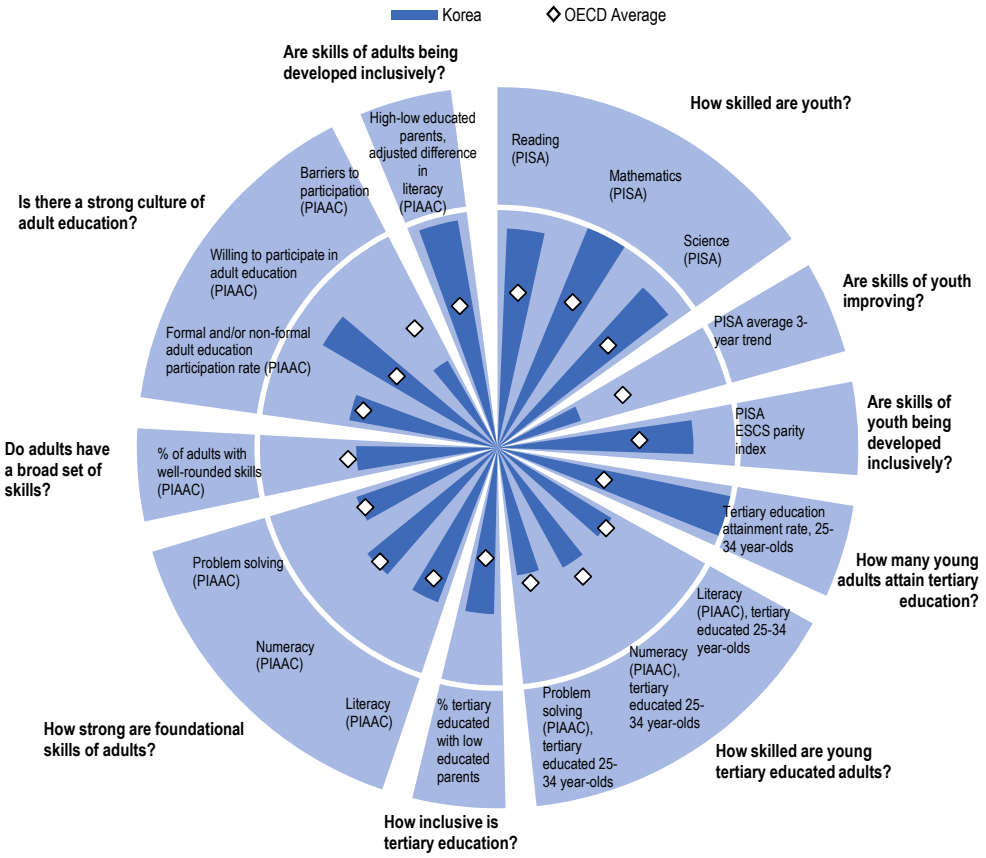
1. For Belgium (Flanders), United Kingdom (UK) (England and Northern Ireland), a combination of regional (Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] and Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies [PIAAC]) and national data have been used.

Source: OECD (2019[5]), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to Shape a Better Future*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en.

Although Korea is a top performer in developing the skills of its youth, the skills development of adults is less impressive (Figure 1.2). The latest 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) round shows a declining trend; however, scores for 15 year olds are still relatively high in reading, mathematics and science. Furthermore, student performance has relatively little to do with socio-economic background, which suggests that even students with socio-economic disadvantages are receiving the required support to perform well. While the 70% tertiary education attainment rate among young adults (25-34 year olds) in Korea is the highest among OECD countries, tertiary educated young adults have low levels of proficiency in foundation skills such as literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments compared to their peers in other countries. The share of adults in Korea with well-rounded foundation skills (i.e. levels 3-5 in literacy and numeracy and levels 2 and 3 in problem solving in PIAAC[2]) is also below the average. Participation in formal and non-formal adult education is slightly above average, but there is still room for improvement. Encouragingly, a comparatively high percentage of adults in Korea report a willingness to participate in adult learning. However, a significant share of adults report facing barriers to participation (OECD, 2016[11]).

Figure 1.2. Key indicators for developing relevant skills

Normalised score from 0 to 10, (0=minimum, 10=maximum) based on relative position in range of scores among countries, where a higher value reflects better performance.



Note: Relative position in country ranking (based on normalised scores), where higher value reflects better performance. The OECD average (when using PIAAC data) is based on the sample of OECD countries/regions assessed in the Survey of Adult Skills. ESCS = economic, social and cultural status.

Source: Authors' calculations based on OECD (2019[12]), *PISA Results (Volume I): What Students Know and Can Do*, https://www.oecd.org/publications/pisa-2018-results-volume-i-5f07c754-en.htm and OECD (2020[13]), *Survey of Adults Skills (PIAAC) (2012, 2015)*, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.

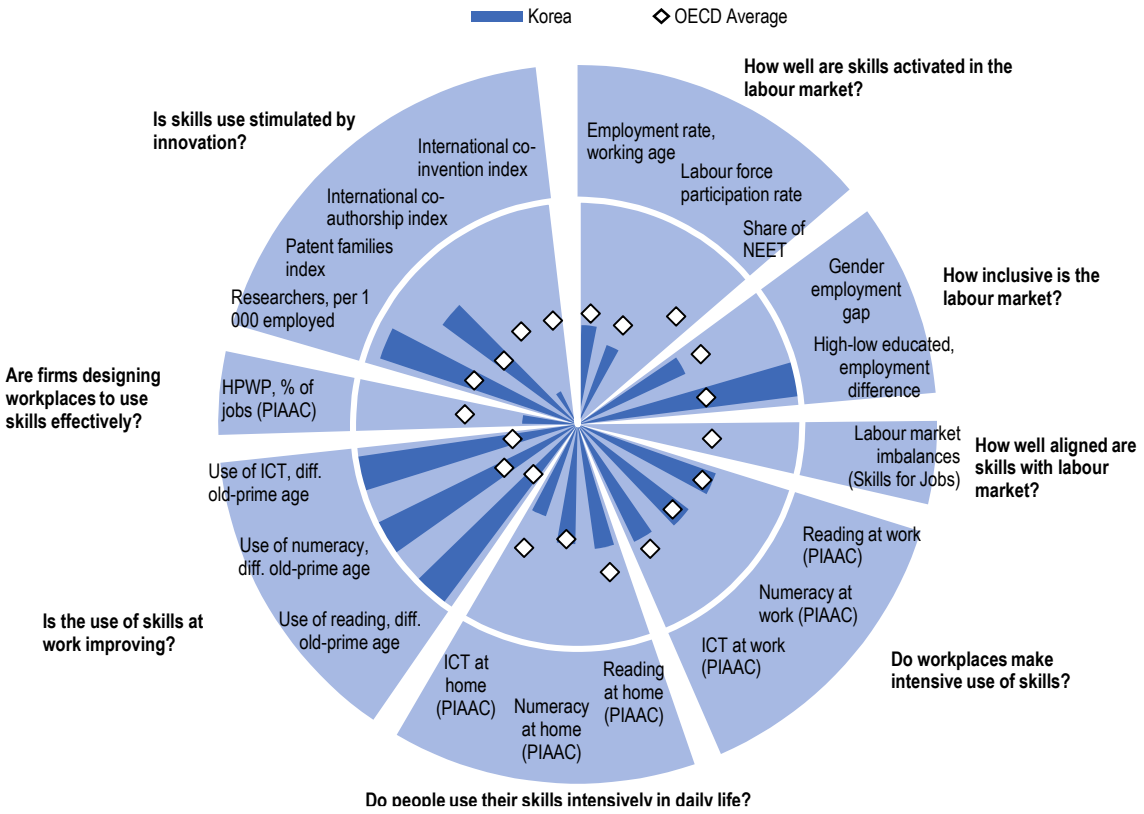
StatLink https://stat.link/mbczhx

Korea's performance in using the skills of its adult population effectively is relatively low. As Figure 1.3 demonstrates, Korea's employment and labour force participation rate is lower than the OECD average. Women are less likely to participate in the labour market due to the challenges of combining family and career responsibilities. Furthermore, there is a high share of tertiary educated adults who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), as many such graduates face challenges in entering the labour market. While Korea is a high performer in skills development, it is only an average performer in the extent to which it uses the skills of its adults. Although the use of reading and numeracy skills at work are slightly above average, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) skills at work is below average. In all these three skills domains, the use of skills at home is even weaker in relative terms. While the intensity with which skills are being used at work has increased for the younger generations compared to the older generations, there is still more that can be done. In PIAAC, relatively few workers report working in firms that have adopted high performance workplace practices (HPWP), which are practices associated with the more effective use of skills. Such practices include aspects of work organisation and job design (e.g. teamwork, autonomy, task discretion, mentoring and job rotation) and management practices

(e.g. incentive pay, training practices and flexibility in working hours). Skills use could also be further stimulated by innovation. Skills use performance in Korea highlights the need to ensure that the adult learning system is well aligned with the evolving skills demands of the labour market and society.

Figure 1.3. Key indicators for using skills effectively

Normalised score from 0 to 10, (0=minimum, 10=maximum) based on relative position in range of scores among countries, where a higher value reflects better performance.



Note: Relative position in country ranking (based on normalised scores), where higher value reflects better performance. The OECD average (when using PIAAC data) is based on the sample of OECD countries/regions assessed in the Survey of Adult Skills.
Source: Authors' calculations based on OECD (2020[13]), *Survey of Adults Skills (PIAAC) (2012, 2015)*, http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/; and OECD (2020[14]), OECD statistics, https://stats.oecd.org/.

StatLink https://stat.link/z692ic

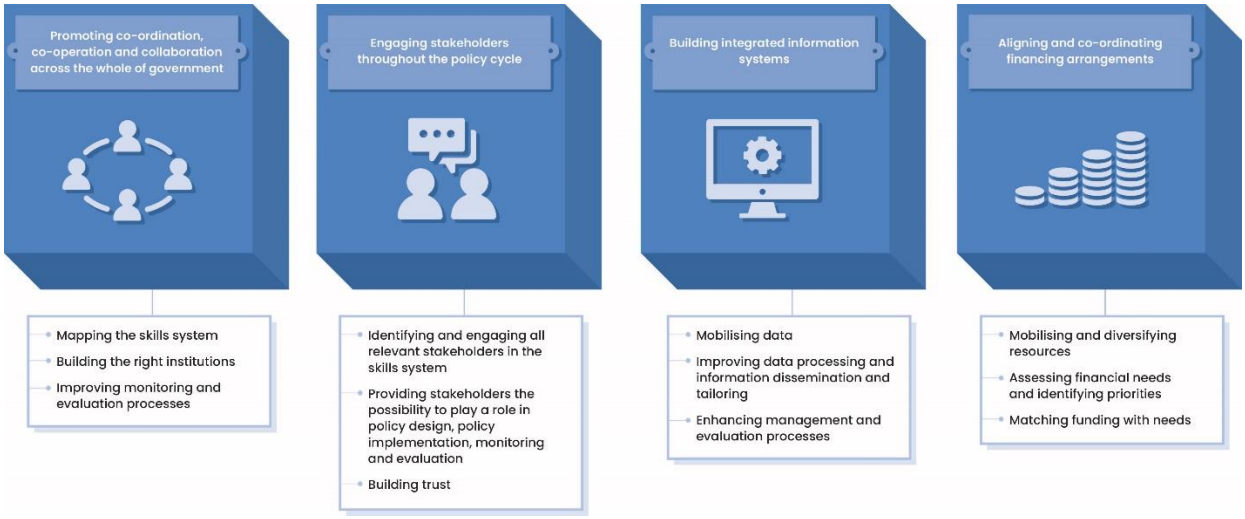
The importance of the effective governance of adult learning

Effective governance arrangements are the foundation for improving Korea's performance in adult learning. The success of adult learning policies to improve the development of skills depends on the responses and actions of a wide range of actors, including government, students, teachers, workers, employers and trade unions (OECD, 2019[5]). Investing in skills is popular across different electoral and political constituencies as the benefits for economic development and social inclusion are broadly recognised. However, adult learning policy is more complex than many other policy areas as it is located at the intersection of education, labour market, industrial and other policy domains (Busemeyer et al., 2018[15]). Adult learning policies therefore implicate a more diverse range of government ministries, levels of governments and stakeholders. Governance should occupy a central position in adult learning policy to facilitate a concrete vision and longer-term strategy, and avoid the pitfalls of reactive policy making and uncoordinated investments in adult skills (OECD, 2020[16]).

The OECD Skills Strategy 2019 identifies four building blocks for strengthening the governance of skills systems (Figure 1.4) (OECD, 2019[5]):

- Promoting collaboration, co-ordination and co-operation across the whole of government, horizontally across ministries, and vertically across national and subnational governments.
- Engaging stakeholders meaningfully throughout the policy cycle, allowing them to play a role in policy design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation, while also building trust.
- Building integrated information systems to mobilise data and improve data processing with the goal of enhancing management and evaluation processes.
- Aligning and co-ordinating financing arrangements by matching funding with needs and diversifying sources of financing.

Figure 1.4. Building blocks for the strong governance of skills systems



Source: OECD (2019[5]), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to Shape a Better Future*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en.

Adult learning policies are shared responsibilities between government and stakeholders. Higher levels of co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration have the potential to improve adult learning. The co-ordination of different policy areas is facilitated when there is a shared commitment and a clear vision that adult learning is a national priority. In the Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan (2019-2022), Korea has established some medium-term policy goals, such as raising participation in adult learning (from 35.8% to 42.8%), adult vocational education and training (VET) (from 24.7% to 26%) and work-based learning in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (from 7.9% to 14%) (Table 1.1). Other plans, such as the fourth Lifelong Learning Promotion Basic Plan, the third Vocational Skills Development Basic Plan for Innovation and Inclusive Growth, the Five-year Roadmap for Job Policy, and the State Management Five-year Plan have set specific goals for increasing the provision of adult learning programmes (e.g. adult learning centres, adult learning programmes for disabled citizens) and the number of beneficiaries in specific adult learning programmes (e.g. Lifelong Education Voucher users, literacy education participants).

Governments need to identify and engage with relevant stakeholders and encourage co-ordination between national and subnational authorities. Co-ordination efforts should be supported by the right institutions and through the appropriate formal engagement bodies, such as councils and committees. Formal engagement bodies allow stakeholders to participate in the policy-making process through providing feedback and suggestions. Such engagement processes ensure that policies benefit from the expertise and knowledge of stakeholders, have higher legitimacy, and are more likely to be implemented effectively. In Korea, several formal engagement bodies play an important role in adult learning (Table 1.2).

Table 1.1. Long-term adult learning policy goals in Korea

Name	Year	Description
Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan	2019	Promotes enhanced and equitable access to lifelong learning and adult VET opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged groups (i.e. SME employees, non-regular and self-employed workers).
The fourth Lifelong Learning Promotion Basic Plan (2018-2022)	2018	Increases the online and industry-specific adult learning ecosystem. Expands the network of university lifelong learning centres. Raises the number of beneficiaries of Lifelong Education Vouchers (up to 45 000) and literacy education (up to 640 000), as well as increases the number of adult learning programmes for disabled citizens to 60 by the year 2022.
The third Vocational Skills Development Basic Plan for Innovation and Inclusive Growth	2017	Establishes an online VET platform, including the learning management system using big data, Internet of Things and artificial intelligence (AI) via Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), flipped learning and blended learning. Strengthens the prior learning accreditation system for eventual alignment to credit accumulation towards a degree.
Five-year Roadmap for Job Policy	2017	Increases the number of *Meister* (VET) and polytechnic schools to strengthen sectoral-academic ties. Assesses the implementation of the lifelong vocational training account, long-term paid training leave, and guidance and counselling systems (this pilot started in 2018 and was made compulsory by 2019).
State Management Five-year Plan	2017	Provides nanodegree programmes and online learning programmes (e.g. K-MOOC) to promote adult learning.

Source: Korea (2019[17]), OECD Skills Strategy for Korea Questionnaire.

Table 1.2. Councils and committees related to adult learning

Government level	Councils and committees	Purpose	Examined in chapter
National	Social Affairs Ministers Committee	Evaluate and review social issues and policies. Plans related to adult learning are presented, discussed and reviewed.	Ch2. Horizontal Governance
National	Job Council	Deliberate and co-ordinate policies related to job creation and improving job quality.	Ch2. Horizontal Governance
National	Economic, Social and Labour Council	A social dialogue body where labour, management, government and public interest groups consult on labour, industrial, economic and social policies.	Ch4. Stakeholder Engagement
National	Lifelong Educational Promotion Committee	Main agency that reviews matters related to the promotion of lifelong education policies.	Ch2. Horizontal Governance
Regional/ local	Industrial skills councils (ISC)	Provide industry-led human resource development programmes, establishing and disseminating standards for industrial vocational abilities.	Ch3. Vertical Governance Ch4. Stakeholder Engagement
Regional/ local	Sectoral human resource development councils	Distinct from ISC, operates in the area of human resource development by industry under the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy.	Ch4. Stakeholder Engagement
Regional/ local	Lifelong education promotion councils	Evaluate implementation plans for lifelong education policies and co-ordinate with lifelong education promotion institutions.	Ch3. Vertical Governance
Regional/ local	Regional employment policy councils	Address employment-related issues and seek solutions.	Ch3. Vertical Governance
Regional/ local	Local labour and management committees	A consultative body that identifies, discusses, and deliberates issues related to local employment, human resource development and labour-management co-operation for regional economic development.	Ch3. Vertical Governance Ch4. Stakeholder Engagement
Regional/ local	Regional skills councils	Cultivate manpower needed for local SMEs by conducting a survey of labour market needs and providing training for recruitment.	Ch3. Vertical Governance Ch4. Stakeholder Engagement

Source: Korea (2019[17]), OECD Skills Strategy for Korea Questionnaire.

Priority areas and recommendations

This report provides policy recommendations in four priority areas for the governance of adult learning in Korea. These priorities were selected based on close consultation with Korean experts and available literature. Expert opinions were collected through two rounds of background questionnaires, written input on selected topics, two missions of the OECD team to Korea, and two Korean expert visits to the OECD.

The priority areas identified by Korea in reviewing the governance of adult learning are:

1. Strengthening the horizontal governance of adult learning (Chapter 2).
2. Strengthening the vertical governance of adult learning (Chapter 3).
3. Strengthening stakeholder engagement in adult learning (Chapter 4).
4. Strengthening financing arrangements in adult learning (Chapter 5).

The governance building block on integrated information systems (see Figure 1.4 above) is embedded across the other four identified priority areas.

Strengthening the horizontal governance of adult learning

Having a strong adult learning system requires a co-ordinated effort across a range of government ministries. Horizontal governance refers to co-ordination between the ministries of the national government on adult learning policies. As adult learning encompasses the domains of diverse ministries, effective policy co-ordination across ministries increases the potential to improve skills outcomes (OECD, 2019[5]).

Opportunity 1: Developing a long-term vision for adult learning and supporting co-ordination across ministries

Creating a comprehensive long-term vision for adult learning is essential for clarifying roles and responsibilities, setting targets, and identifying adult learning policies for government and stakeholders to implement. A comprehensive long-term adult learning vision is currently lacking in Korea, and government officials report the frequent change of policy priorities set by the government as the second most important obstacle to their work. Although the Lifelong Education Act requires the consultation of all relevant ministries in the design of the Lifelong Learning Promotion Basic Plan, it does not require the engagement of stakeholders. Making stakeholder engagement mandatory in the process of developing an adult learning vision, and getting more stakeholders engaged by raising their awareness about the importance of adult learning, would foster an inclusive vision development process that is owned and supported by all relevant actors. The vision development process would also benefit from being guided by an evidence-based approach, so that proposed adult learning policies in the vision are more likely to succeed when implemented. An evidence-based approach could be fostered by having an adult learning research institute co-ordinate adult learning relevant research efforts and actively inform the vision development process.

As adult learning policies fall under the domains of many ministries, strong horizontal co-ordination is key to effective policy implementation. The Social Affairs Ministers' Committee (SAMC), which is headed by the minister of education and includes senior representatives across eight other ministries, should play a greater role in co-ordinating adult learning policies. However, due to the broad mandate of the SAMC, its effectiveness in co-ordinating adult learning policies has been limited. Therefore, the SAMC's co-ordinating role in adult learning policies should be supported by a working level co-ordination group to promote ongoing discussions among relevant ministries. Such a working level co-ordination group, composed of representatives of relevant ministries, could regularly discuss in-depth adult learning policies, facilitate the preliminary co-ordination of adult learning policies across ministries, and provide recommendations on adult learning policies for the SAMC to consider. The SAMC should be further supported with adult learning policy experts who could exchange adult learning policy information across relevant ministries, gather

relevant adult learning policy research findings, prepare substantive input on adult learning for the SAMC to consider, and follow-up on any decisions. The two existing and relevant national adult learning co-ordination bodies – the National Lifelong Education Promotion Committee and the Employment Policy Deliberative Council – should also support and inform the work of the SAMC.

Opportunity 2: Improving the dissemination of adult learning information in co-ordination with ministries

The dissemination and management of adult learning information needs to improve. The various online portals established by the MoE and the MoEL provide a wide range of information on adult learning opportunities and keep track of individual adult learning participation records. Both ministries are currently making efforts to consolidate adult learning information from various information sources under their auspices in an online portal (National Lifelong Learning Site [MoE] and Goyong21 [MoEL]). However, there is not enough co-ordination between the MoE and the MoEL across their respective online portals, which leads to inconsistent information and makes the access and usage of the portals more complex for end users. The information provided on the various online portals should be consistent and complementary. Introducing a single account to access the different portals would simplify accessibility and facilitate usage by making it easier for users to update adult learning participation information across portals. It would also create a unified track record of adult learning participation and make it possible to analyse more comprehensively adult learning participation to inform the design of adult learning policies. The provision of adult learning information should be complemented with customised counselling and guidance services, particularly for disadvantaged groups. The information provided by these services (e.g. Work-net, Career-net) also needs to be consistent, rely on the latest labour market data, and be tailored to individual profiles and needs (Korea, 2019[18]).

Recommendations for strengthening the horizontal governance of adult learning

Policy directions	Recommendations
Opportunity 1: Developing a long-term vision for adult learning and supporting co-ordination across ministries	
Creating a comprehensive and long-term vision for adult learning	1.1. Develop a comprehensive long-term vision for adult learning that is based on social consensus and reinforced by awareness-raising activities. 1.2. Establish or designate a research institute to co-ordinate research efforts on adult learning and inform the development of the national adult learning vision.
Supporting horizontal co-ordination of adult learning policies	1.3. Support the Social Affairs Ministers' Committee with a working level co-ordination group responsible for co-ordinating adult learning policies among relevant ministries. 1.4. Support the co-ordination role of the Social Affairs Ministers' Committee with adult learning policy experts.
Opportunity 2: Improving the dissemination of adult learning information in co-ordination with ministries	
Improving the dissemination of adult learning information	1.5. Introduce a single account for users to access the online adult learning information portals, and track their adult learning participation history across online portals. 1.6. Co-ordinate counselling and guidance services to provide comprehensive and consistent information on adult learning opportunities, with particular attention paid to disadvantaged groups.

Strengthening the vertical governance of adult learning

Multiple levels of government have roles and responsibilities in the design and implementation of adult learning policies. Strong vertical governance arrangements are necessary to co-ordinate respective roles and responsibilities across levels of government so that adult learning policies can be implemented effectively across levels of government and equitably across the country.

Opportunity 1: Improving co-operation in adult learning policies across levels of government

There are number of obstacles in Korea that reduce the quality of co-operation on adult learning policies across levels of government. Such obstacles include a lack of clarity about respective roles and responsibilities, conflicting interests, and insufficient dialogue about the design and implementation of adult

learning policies. Co-ordination bodies such as Lifelong Education Promotion Councils and Regional Skills Councils consist of representatives from various government levels and are one of the main mechanisms to support co-operation across levels of government. The effectiveness of these bodies should be raised by introducing a legal mandate that strengthens their vertical co-ordination roles in facilitating knowledge transfer, identifying priorities, informing budget allocations, and fostering consensus and ownership for national adult learning reforms, such as the Lifelong Learning Promotion Basic Plan. Moreover, the effectiveness of the co-ordination bodies should be improved through establishing sectoral working groups on adult learning policies, which can prepare for and follow up on official meetings. If the attendance requirement in the bodies could become more flexible by allowing lower ranking government officials to replace senior government representatives when necessary, it would be possible for the body to convene more frequently and would provide more time for representatives to discuss in-depth adult learning policies and arrive at a consensus about what actions to take. Co-ordination bodies should also be equipped with sufficient human and financial resources, i.e. a permanent secretariat and an annual budget, in order to operate effectively.

Opportunity 2: Supporting subnational governments to effectively implement adult learning policies

There are large socio-economic gaps across regions in Korea, as well as significant adult learning participation and outcome gaps. In order to reduce these regional gaps, all subnational governments need to have sufficient and well-equipped government officials to implement adult learning policies effectively. However, there are significant regional gaps in the number of available government officials per inhabitant, the skill level of government officials, and the share of government officials recognised for their excellent performance. Existing staff mobility schemes should be expanded and adapted to make hard-to-find skills available, particularly for subnational governments with low capacity. Such schemes would provide professional development opportunities for government officials, promote peer-learning and disseminate best practices. Although a variety of general training options for government officials exist, more training options that address the specific and practical challenges of implementing adult learning policies should be provided. Co-operation among subnational governments in implementing adult learning policies should also be increased by raising awareness of the benefits of co-operation and providing greater financial incentives.

Recommendations for strengthening the vertical governance of adult learning

Policy directions	Recommendations
Opportunity 1: Improving co-operation in adult learning policies across levels of government	
Strengthening co-operation between national and subnational governments	2.1 Provide a clear legal framework that guides the roles of bodies responsible for co-ordinating adult learning polices across levels of government. 2.2 Improve the effectiveness of co-ordination bodies through making the attendance requirements of members more flexible and by establishing working groups. 2.3 Equip co-ordination bodies with sufficient human and financial resources to fulfil their functions effectively.
Opportunity 2: Supporting subnational governments to effectively implement adult learning policies	
Increasing the capacity of subnational government officials to implementing adult learning policies	2.4 Improve subnational government staff mobility schemes to ensure the continuity of adult learning policies and provide additional support for subnational governments with low capacity. 2.5 Provide training to subnational officials to raise their capacity for implementing adult learning policies. 2.6 Increase co-operation in adult learning policies among subnational governments by raising awareness of the benefits of co-operation and providing greater financial incentives.

Strengthening stakeholder engagement in adult learning

Effective stakeholder engagement is essential to support Korea's performance in adult learning. The effectiveness of adult learning policies depends on the responses and actions of a wide range of actors, including a wide range of stakeholders. Engaging stakeholders allows for their expertise and knowledge

to inform policies and raises their support for implemented policies (OECD, 2019[5]). Stakeholders should be given the opportunity to play a role throughout the entire policy cycle.

Opportunity 1: Raising the awareness of, and capacity for, effective stakeholder engagement

The awareness and capacity of government to engage stakeholders in adult learning policy making needs to be raised in Korea. A particular challenge for government officials is identifying the relevant stakeholders to engage, as stakeholders in Korea are not as well organised as in other OECD countries. For example, trade union and employer organisation density levels are among the lowest across the OECD. Government officials should conduct a mapping exercise to identify which stakeholders to engage, for what reason they should be engaged, and how they should be engaged. Existing training on stakeholder engagement from the National Institute for Lifelong Education and the Seoul Metropolitan City Government should be expanded and further developed to ensure that it raises the awareness and capacity of government officials to engage disadvantaged stakeholders (e.g. women, older adults, adults with lower levels of education and non-regular workers). Training should also raise the capacity of government officials to develop consistent and transparent indicators that they can use in evaluating stakeholder proposals, so that all proposals, regardless of who is submitting them, can be assessed in the same merit-based manner.

The awareness and capacity of stakeholders to engage with government in adult learning policy making also needs to be raised. Stakeholders often do not sufficiently engage with the government on adult learning due to a low awareness about the importance of adult learning in the long term relative to other topics such as wages and working conditions in the short term. Stakeholder organisations such as unions and employer associations are fragmented and have low coverage across the country, which makes it difficult for these stakeholders to communicate messages to government in one clear voice and reduces their bargaining power. Stakeholders should be provided with training to raise their awareness about the importance of engaging with government on adult learning policies and the processes through which they can engage. The government should consider supporting stakeholder groups, particularly those lacking financial resources and without a formal stakeholder organisation, to organise and represent themselves more effectively. The capacity of stakeholder organisations to participate in evidence-based dialogue with the government should be raised through internal research units in stakeholder organisations.

Opportunity 2: Involving stakeholders effectively in the adult learning policy-making process

Although stakeholders are able to provide input throughout the policy-making process, the extent and quality of engagement should be raised. In a survey of stakeholders, only 23% responded that they had experience of expressing their opinions on the government's policy issues or projects. Among those who expressed their opinions, 74% did so using online platforms. Given that disadvantaged stakeholders are less likely to use online platforms, online engagement efforts should be complemented with offline engagement efforts adapted to the specific needs and profiles of disadvantaged stakeholders to encourage their active participation. Existing stakeholder engagement initiatives, such as civic participatory service design teams, should be made available across the whole country. Besides providing input, partnerships between government and stakeholders in implementing adult learning programmes (e.g. Suwon Lifelong Learning City, Gwangju Job Creation Programme) should be expanded. When evaluating the effectiveness of such partnerships, sufficient time over several years should be allocated to give time for different initiatives to show results in adult learning programmes. When funding such partnerships, the government should also encourage stakeholders to work together through prioritising funding requests and proposals that involve more than one stakeholder. A public-private partnership unit specifically for adult learning policies should support the management of government and stakeholder partnership projects and facilitate the dissemination of best practices.

Formal stakeholder engagement bodies for adult learning should be reviewed to make them more effective. A variety of stakeholder engagement bodies for adult learning currently exist, for example local labour and management committees and sectoral human resources development councils. Given that a common challenge across most of these engagement bodies is the uneven representation of stakeholders, their membership should be revised to ensure the equal representation of stakeholders such as unions and employers. Due to the large number of engagement bodies, there are significant overlaps in terms of mandates and responsibilities across bodies. This duplicates engagement efforts and makes the process of engagement more inefficient, with bodies competing with one another. When engagement bodies cover similar issues on adult learning policies, better co-ordination between them should be supported and required by their respective line ministries. The effectiveness of bodies should be raised through forming working groups specifically on adult learning policies. The bodies should be regularly monitored and evaluated to inform decisions about consolidating or abolishing bodies that are unnecessarily overlapping, ineffective or no longer necessary.

Recommendations for strengthening stakeholder engagement in adult learning

Policy directions	Recommendations
Opportunity 1: Raising the awareness of, and capacity for, effective stakeholder engagement	
Raising awareness and capacity of government to engage stakeholders	3.1 Identify through a mapping exercise the relevant stakeholders in adult learning policy and how they should be engaged. 3.2 Expand training for government officials on how to engage in particular disadvantaged stakeholders in adult learning policies, as well as how to assess stakeholder proposals.
Raising awareness and capacity of stakeholders to engage with government	3.3 Provide stakeholders with training to raise their awareness about the importance and benefits of engaging with government on adult learning policies, and on the processes through which they can engage. 3.4 Strengthen stakeholders' capacity to represent themselves effectively in engagement processes. 3.5 Raise the capacity of internal research units in stakeholder organisations to participate in an evidence-based dialogue with government.
Opportunity 2: Involving stakeholders effectively in the adult learning policy-making process	
Expanding opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the adult learning policy-making process	3.6 Use diverse and inclusive engagement formats to solicit input and feedback from stakeholders, in particular those who are disadvantaged, on the development of adult learning policies. 3.7 Create a dedicated public-private partnership unit to support the management of government and stakeholder partnership projects in the area of adult learning.
Improving the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement bodies	3.8 Improve the composition and co-ordination of, and support for, stakeholder engagement bodies. 3.9 Monitor and evaluate existing engagement bodies to raise their effectiveness in engaging stakeholders in adult learning policy.

Strengthening financing arrangements in adult learning

A strong financing model in adult learning facilitates the effective co-ordination of funding sources and funding distribution. The total available funding for adult learning needs to be adequate to meet the diverse adult learning needs of society, employers and individuals. At the same time, the distribution of funding needs to be equitable to distribute the funds proportionately based on the ability of the beneficiaries to pay (OECD, 2019[19]). Those who can afford to pay more should receive less external funding, while those who are less well-resourced should be more financially supported. Given that the national government has the largest amount of available funds it should play an important role in ensuring the equitable distribution of funds for adult learning.

Opportunity 1: Co-ordinating adult learning financing arrangements across levels of government

Subnational governments vary significantly in their available financial resources for adult learning policies due to varying revenue generating capacities and different transfer amounts received from the national government. The national government needs to play a greater role in particularly supporting subnational governments with fewer resources. Specific programmes by the MoE and MoEL, such as the Lifelong

Learning City Programme and the Local-customised Job Creation Support Programme, support subnational governments to implement adult learning policies. However, since these programmes disproportionately reward subnational governments that already demonstrate high performance (e.g. adult learning participation rates), they may reinforce the gaps between strong and weak performers. In order to provide greater support to governments with fewer resources, additional characteristics regarding the capacity of subnational governments to meet adult learning needs should be taken into account in the funding allocation process. Adult learning funding for subnational governments with fewer resources should be further raised by allowing more flexibility in reallocating funding from general education to adult learning to meet rising demands due to population ageing. The reallocation of funds from general education to adult learning policies could be supported by increasing collaboration between subnational governments, which are mostly responsible for adult learning, and subnational offices of education, which are mostly responsible for general education.

Opportunity 2: Improving financial incentives for individuals to participate in adult learning

The cost of participating in adult learning is a significant barrier for individuals, particularly disadvantaged groups such as adults with lower levels of education, lower levels of income and non-regular workers. Financial incentives such as loans, scholarships and study/training leave, and individual learning schemes (ILS) have been created to help individuals overcome the financial barriers to participating in adult learning. ILS such as the MoE's Lifelong Education Voucher and the MoEL's National Tomorrow Learning Card are considered suitable policy levers to reach the largest number of beneficiaries. ILS do not require repayment (in contrast to loans), demonstration of already high skills (in contrast to scholarships) and employer-support (in contrast to training leave subsidies). However, the existing schemes should be further improved by targeting them more to benefit disadvantaged groups. Complementary financial measures that cover the indirect costs of participation should also be available, especially for when disadvantaged individuals pursue long-term formal education programmes. Comprehensive counselling services on adult learning opportunities and relevant supportive financial incentives should be provided at flexible times and in a variety of formats tailored to the profile and needs of disadvantaged groups. In order to simplify overall access to ILS and reduce administrative burden, the management systems of the MoE and the MoEL schemes could be connected through a single user access account.

Recommendations for strengthening financing arrangements for adult learning

Policy directions	Recommendations
Opportunity 1: Co-ordinating adult learning financing arrangements across levels of government	
Co-ordinating adult learning financing arrangements across levels of government	4.1 Provide additional financial support to subnational governments that have fewer resources to reduce the performance and resource gaps in implementing subnational adult learning programmes. 4.2 Increase collaboration between subnational education offices and subnational governments to support the reallocation of funds from general education to adult learning to meet rising demand in this area.
Opportunity 2: Improving financial incentives for individuals to participate in adult learning	
Improving financial incentives for individuals to participate in adult learning	4.3 Tailor individual learning schemes to meet the specific needs of disadvantaged groups. 4.4 Simplify access to individual learning schemes in Korea through creating a single user access account.

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Annex 1.A. OECD Skills Strategy Dashboard

The objective of the OECD Skills Strategy Dashboard for Korea is to present an overview of the performance of skills systems in OECD countries. It is the starting point for analysis 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 Korean skills systems' 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.

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, expressed 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 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 indicator (e.g. averaging performance of literacy scores and educational attainment). 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.

Annex Table 1.A.1. Indicator overview

Dimension/topic	Indicator	Source
Developing relevant skills		
How skilled are youth?	Reading (PISA[1]), mean score, 2015	OECD (2016[20]),"Reading performance among 15-year-olds", *PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education,* https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-8-en.
	Mathematics (PISA), mean score, 2015	OECD (2016[21]),"Mathematics performance among 15-year-olds", *PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-9-en.
	Science (PISA), mean score, 2015	OECD (2016[22]), "Science performance among 15-year–olds", *PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-6-en.
Are skills of youth improving?	PISA average three-year trend (reading, mathematics, science)[2]	OECD (2016[23]), *PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en.
Are skills of youth being developed inclusively?	PISA economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) parity index, 2015	OECD (2016[24]), "Socio-economic status, student performance and students' attitudes towards science", *PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-10-en.
How many young adults attain tertiary education?	Tertiary education attainment rate, 25-34 year-olds, 2017	OECD (2018), Population with tertiary education (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/0b8f90e9-en.
What is the quality of tertiary education?	Percentage of scientific publications among 10% most cited, 2015	OECD (2017[25]), *Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard 2017*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264268821-en.
	Student-academic staff ratios in tertiary education, 2016	Eurostat (2018[26]), *Ratio of pupils and students to teachers and academic staff by education level and programme orientation*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/educ_uoe_perp04.
How inclusive is tertiary education?	Share of tertiary educated with low-educated parents, 25-59 year-olds, 2011	Eurostat (2011), EU Survey on Income and living conditions, ad-hoc module 2011. online data code: [ilc_igtp01]. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/data/database.
How strong are digital skills of adults?	Share of adults with above basic overall digital skills, 25-64 year-olds, 2017	Eurostat (2018), Survey on ICT usage by households and individuals. online data code: [isoc]. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/data/database.
Is there a strong culture of adult education?	Participation rate in education and training, last four weeks, 2018	Eurostat (2019[27]), *Labour Force Survey microdata 1983-2018, release 2019, version 1*, https://doi.org/10.2907/LFS1983-2018V.1.
	Formal and non-formal adult education participation rate, last 12 months, 2016	Eurostat (2018), Adult Education Survey 2016. online data code: [trng_aes_12m0]. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/data/database.
	Willing to participate in adult education, % of population, 2016	Eurostat (2018), Adult Education Survey 2016. online data code: [trng_aes_12m3]. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/data/database.
	Barriers to participation,% of people wanting to participate who didn't, 2016	Eurostat (2018[28]), *Population by will to participate in education and training*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/trng_aes_175.
Are employees and enterprises involved in continued vocational training?	Share of employees participating in continuing vocational training (CVT) courses, 2015	Eurostat (2018), Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS). online data code: [trng_cvt_02]. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/data/database.
How inclusive is adult education?	Gender (male-female), adult education participation rate difference, 2016	Eurostat (2018[29]), *Participation rate in education and training by gender*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/trng_aes_100.

Dimension/topic	Indicator	Source
	High-low educated, adult education participation rate difference, 2016	Eurostat (2018[30]), *Participation rate in education and training by educational attainment level*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/trng_aes_102.
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/a452d2eb-en.
	Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET), % of 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), diff. employment rate, 2018	OECD (2018), Employment rate (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/1de68a9b-en.
	High-low educated, diff. employment rate, 2017	OECD (2018), Employment by education level (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/26f676c7-en.
How well aligned are skills with labour market?	Labour market imbalances indicator,[3] 2015/2017	OECD (2018), Skills for Jobs Database. https://www.oecdskillsforjobsdatabase.org/index.php#FR/.
Are skills used to support active, engaged citizenship?	Share of adults participating in formal voluntary activities, 2015	Eurostat (2018), Statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC). online data code: [ilc]. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/income-and-living-conditions.
	Share of adults participating in informal voluntary activities, 2015	Eurostat (2018), Statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC). online data code: [ilc]. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/data/database.
	Share of adults with active citizenship, 2015	Eurostat (2018), Statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC). online data code: [ilc]. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/data/database.
Do employees have the skills required for their job?	Share of employees with skills lower than required for job, 2014	Cedefop (2015[31]), *Matching skills and jobs in Europe: Insights from Cedefop's European skills and jobs survey*, https://doi.org/10.2801/159395.
Do firms adopt high-performance workplace practices?	Share of firms with best-performing bundles of workplace practices, 2013	Eurofound (2014[32]), *Third European Company Survey: First Findings*, https://doi.org/10.2806/49843.
Is skills use stimulated by innovation?	Researchers, per 1 000 employed, 2016	OECD (2018), Researchers (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/20ddfb0f-en.
	Triadic patent families, performance index (STI[4] Outlook), 2016	OECD (2018), Triadic patent families (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/6a8d10f4-en.

Notes:
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. Science, Technology and Innovation (STI).

Notes

[1] In Korea, non-regular workers are made up of three at times overlapping groups: 1) non-permanent workers, including those working on a temporary or fixed-term basis; 2) part-time workers, including those with 35 or fewer regular working hours per week; and 3) non-typical workers, including daily workers, contractors (either engaged for a specific task or paid on commission), temporary work agency workers, domestic workers and other such categories of workers with only week ties to the employer (OECD, 2018[4]).

[2] Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, which produces the Survey of Adult Skills.

2 Strengthening the horizontal governance of adult learning in Korea

The governance of adult learning implicates multiple ministries. The effective horizontal co-ordination of these ministries is crucial for increasing policy coherence, making efficient use of resources and providing coherent service delivery to users. This chapter identifies and explores the following opportunities to strengthen the horizontal governance of adult learning in Korea: 1) developing a long-term vision for adult learning and supporting co-ordination across ministries; and 2) improving the dissemination of adult learning information in co-ordination with ministries.

Introduction: The importance of horizontal governance in adult learning

Success in developing skills[1] through adult learning[2] requires strong governance arrangements to support collaboration and co-ordination across the many ministries with responsibilities in this area. Strong horizontal governance arrangements allow ministries to increase policy coherence and enable the efficient use of resources, while at the same time providing consistent service delivery to individuals (OECD, 2019[1]). The COVID-19 crisis, with its wide-ranging effects on the economy and society, has shown that ministries need to work together to support recovery efforts that are coherent, comprehensive and cost efficient.

Adult learning programmes are provided by a multitude of ministries targeting diverse end users. In Korea, the Ministry of Education is responsible for basic skills training, second-chance programmes and university courses, while the Ministry of Employment and Labour is responsible for vocational education and training (VET) for employed and unemployed adults (OECD, 2019[2]). Various other ministries play a role in implementing adult learning policies for specific target groups, and the Ministry of Economy and Finance is responsible for allocating the required financial resources across ministries (OECD, 2020[3]).

This chapter provides an overview of Korea's horizontal governance of adult learning policies and explores two key opportunities for improvement: 1) developing a long-term vision for adult learning and supporting co-ordination across ministries; and 2) improving the dissemination of adult learning information in co-ordination with ministries. For each opportunity, the available data are analysed, relevant national and international policies and practices are discussed, and policy recommendations are provided.

Overview of the horizontal governance of adult learning policies in Korea

This section provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the various ministries that have some responsibility for adult learning. It also describes the various plans each ministry has been developing for adult learning and the extent of collaboration across ministries in adult learning policies.

Overview of current roles and responsibilities for adult learning

Responsibility for adult learning in Korea is shared by a diverse range of ministries and institutions (Table 2.1). Responses to the OECD Skills Strategy Questionnaire for Korea identified a list of relevant ministries involved in adult learning governance in Korea ((Korea, 2019[4])). The Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Employment and Labour (MoEL) play central roles in setting the national agenda and plans for adult learning.

The MoE approaches adult learning from a lifelong education perspective and aims to develop high-quality human resources for sustainable development (Ministry of Education, 2018[5]). The lifelong learning policies of the MoE cover adult learning that takes place in universities and colleges, as well as diverse learning programmes provided through lifelong learning institutes at subnational levels for adults and older citizens.

The MoEL has oversight over employment policies. It develops policies for vocational skills development training provided by public and private vocational training facilities, schools, lifelong education facilities, and lifelong vocational training institutes. It aims to promote and support the vocational skills development of people in all stages of life.

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MoGEF), the Ministry of SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) and Startups, the Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy design adult learning policies targeted at specific groups such as women, employees of SMEs and the workforce in specific industries.

The Ministry of Economy and Finance is responsible for providing financial resources to support adult learning programmes. Some ministries operate implementation agencies that are responsible for the data collection, research and implementation of relevant policies. Such institutions include the National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) operated by the MoE, and the Korea Polytechnic and Korea University of Technology and Education (including affiliated institutions such as the Korean Skills Quality Authority, E-Koreatech and the Competency Development Center) operated by the MoEL (see Chapter 3).

Table 2.1. Roles and responsibilities of relevant ministries in adult learning

Ministry	Formal responsibilities	Legal ground/framework
Ministry of Education (MoE)	Sets the national agenda for lifelong learning, and develops and implements national lifelong learning policies. It is supported by: • The National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE): A national administrative body for lifelong learning established to support the implementation of national lifelong learning policies. • The Lifelong Education Promotion Committee: Established to promote lifelong learning, facilitate lifelong learning policy co-ordination and provide advice on the formulation of lifelong learning policies. • Oversight of policies and systems that relate to nationally recognised qualifications and qualifications by private providers.	Lifelong Education Act; Act on Recognition of Credits; Act on the Acquisition of Academic Degrees through Self-Education; Industrial Education Promotion and Industry-Academia Cooperation Facilitation Act; Framework Act on Qualifications.
Ministry of Employment and Labour (MoEL)	Provides vocational education and training to employed and unemployed people. It uses the Employment Insurance Fund and general accounts for its adult learning programmes, and conducts quality control of vocational training courses. It is supported by: • The Human Resources Development Services of Korea (HRD Korea): Established as an implementation agency for vocational education and training policies. • Public employment services (PES): Created to boost employment by connecting jobseekers, employers and other labour actors in collaboration with subnational governments.	Employment Policy Act; Vocational Education and Training Promotion Act; Employment Insurance Act; Workforce Development and Training Act; Act on the Development of Vocational Skills of Workers; National Technical Qualifications Act; Act on Support for Work and Study Program in Industrial Sites; Act on Human Resources Development Service of Korea.
Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MoGEF)	Co-operates with the MoEL to provide vocational training to women with career gaps or women from multicultural families.	Promotion of Economic Activity for the Women with Career Gaps 2015.
Ministry of SMEs and Startups	Provides vocational education and training to workers in SMEs and the self-employed, and supports work-based learning experiences for university and college students.	SME Human Resources Support Special Act 2003.
Ministry of Science and ICT	Supports the development and utilisation of the workforce in science and technology, provides adult learning courses online and offline, and provides training for technology transfer to SMEs.	Industrial Education Promotion and Industry-Academia Cooperation Facilitation Act; Framework Act on Qualifications; Special Act on Science and Technology Support for Strengthening National Science and Technology Competitiveness.
Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy	Establishes and implements policies for the creation of jobs in various industries, supports industrial workforce training, oversees sectoral human resource development councils, conducts surveys of the industrial workforce, and develops qualifications and the National Competency Standards.	Industrial Education Promotion and Industry-Academia Cooperation Facilitation Act; Industrial Technology Innovation Promotion Act.
Ministry of Economy and Finance	Provides financial support for adult learning programmes and governance, and revises the five-year long-term strategic plan, which includes policies affecting adult learning and education.	n/a

Source: Korea (2019[4]), OECD Skills Strategy for Korea Questionnaire; Ministry of Employment and Labour (2019[6]), *Innovative Measures for Vocational Competency Development in respond to Labour Market Changes*.

Various ministries have issued plans that are relevant to adult learning (Table 2.2). The MoE has developed the Lifelong Learning Promotion Basic Plan (2018-2022), which is a five-year plan for lifelong learning policies, and the MoEL has developed the Vocational Skills Development Basic Plan for

Innovation and Inclusive Growth (2017-2021), which is a five-year policy plan for vocational education and training.

A number of plans have also been developed in collaboration across ministries. Led by the Deputy Prime Minister for Social Affairs, who is also the Minister of Education, six relevant ministries developed the Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan (2019), which promotes enhanced and equitable access to adult learning opportunities, especially for disadvantaged groups (i.e. SME employees, non-regular and self-employed workers). Led by the MoEL, the Jobs Council, which consists of nine different ministries and other stakeholder representatives, developed the Innovative Measures for Vocational Competency Development Plan (2019) and the Five-year Roadmap for Job Policy Plan (2017), which both promote the employability of adults through vocational skills development.

Table 2.2. Government plans relevant to adult learning

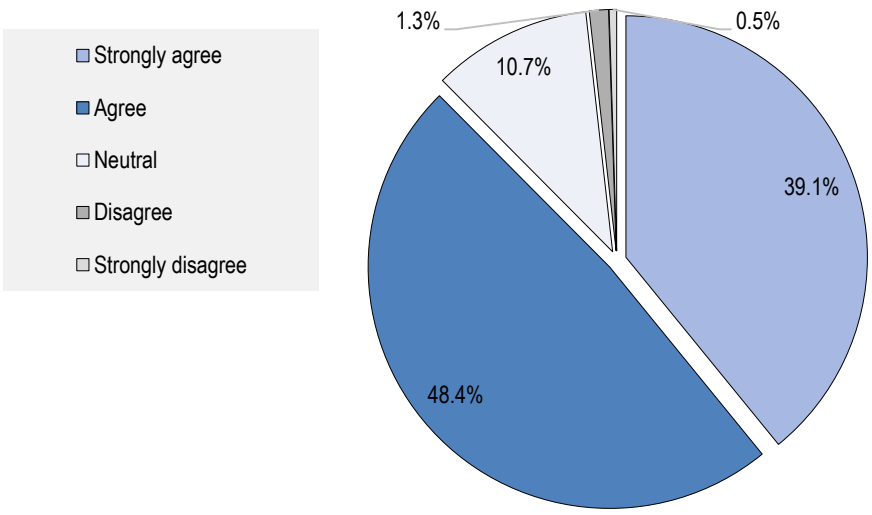
Plan	Responsible ministries/bodies	Objectives
Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan (2019)	MoE, MoEL, Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Ministry of Environment, and Ministry of Gender Equality and Family	Seeks to achieve sustainable development through the co-ordination of social and economic policies. One of the policy objectives is to expand adult learning opportunities to help adult learners develop necessary skills.
The Fourth Lifelong Learning Promotion Basic Plan (2018)	MoE, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, Ministry of National Defense	Aims to build a sustainable lifelong learning society. Includes strategies and initiatives to promote lifelong learning.
The Third Vocational Skills Development Basic Plan for Innovation and Inclusive Growth (2017)	MoEL, MoE, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Science and ICT	Defines the new goals of the vocational education and training system and designs activities necessary to enable individuals to improve their employability and adapt to the changing labour market.
Innovative Measures for Vocational Competency Development Plan (2019)	Jobs Council, MoEL, MoE, Ministry of SMEs and Startups, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, and Public Procurement Service	Introduces the concept of "future lifelong vocational education and training" and co-ordinates the two traditionally separate streams of lifelong learning and vocational education and training.
Five-year Roadmap for Job Policy Plan (2017)	Jobs Council	Aims to create quality jobs and achieve people-centred sustainable development. It features 10 main tasks and covers an education and training system that meets existing and future labour market demands.

Source: Korea (2019[4]), OECD Skills Strategy for Korea Questionnaire.

The multitude of relevant ministries, laws and government plans to promote adult learning in Korea makes horizontal policy co-ordination both necessary and challenging. The Government Civil Servant Survey reveals that most government officials express a need for enhanced inter-ministerial collaboration to improve effectiveness in public administration (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. Views of government officials on the need for inter-ministerial collaboration

Share of government officials expressing views on the need for more inter-ministerial collaboration, 2017



Note: The Government Civil Servant Survey, conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA), polled civil servants working for the central and subnational (regional and local) governments.
Source: OECD elaboration of the Korea Institute of Public Administration (2018[7]), *Government Civil Servant Survey*, https://www.kipa.re.kr/site/eng/main.do.

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Opportunities to strengthen horizontal governance in Korea

This chapter presents two opportunities for improving the horizontal governance of adult learning policies in Korea. Opportunity 1 examines how to strengthen a long-term vision for adult learning and co-ordination across all relevant ministries. Opportunity 2 examines the collaboration required across relevant ministries to disseminate consistent adult learning information to users.

Korea can strengthen horizontal governance by:

1. Developing a long-term vision for adult learning and supporting co-ordination across ministries.
2. Improving the dissemination of adult learning information in co-ordination with ministries.

Opportunity 1: Developing a long-term vision for adult learning and supporting co-ordination across ministries

This section provides an overview of existing efforts to develop a vision for adult learning in Korea and the horizontal co-ordination arrangements for adult learning policies, and examines how these could be strengthened. Relevant country examples and specific recommendations are also presented.

Creating a comprehensive and inclusive long-term vision for adult learning

A comprehensive and long-term vision is essential for setting goals and clarifying the roles of actors involved in adult learning policies. A comprehensive vision shared by all relevant actors across government and society encourages agreement by clarifying concepts, prioritising targets, allocating responsibilities and establishing accountability arrangements.

A long-term vision for adult learning that is shared by all relevant ministries is currently lacking in Korea (Korea, 2019[8]). A common challenge across policy domains, including for adult learning as highlighted during OECD consultations in Korea, is clarity about policy goals and visions (Figure 2.2). While a sizable share (39%) of government officials responding to the Government Civil Servant Survey agree or strongly agree that their organisation has clearly prioritised policy goals, a larger share (49%) is neutral and 12% disagree or strongly disagree. Similarly, while 35% of responding government officials agree or strongly agree with the statement that their supervisors provide a clear policy vision, a very large share (45%) is neutral and about 20% disagree or strongly disagree (Korea Institute of Public Administration, 2018[7]).

Given that frequent changes in the government's policy priorities was the second most important factor hindering the work of government officials, after lack of staff (Korea Institute of Public Administration, 2018[7]), a long-term vision with long-term policy priorities would facilitate the work of government officials and contribute to the successful implementation of policies such as adult learning.

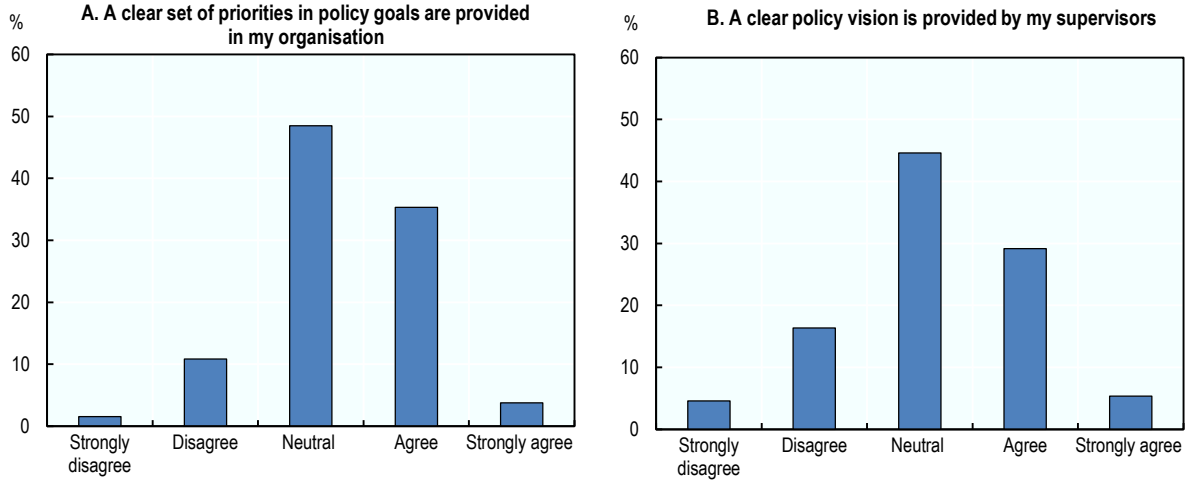
The Korean government introduced the Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan in 2019 (Box 2.1), which is a comprehensive plan consisting of a variety of economic and social policies to promote inclusive development. One of the 22 policy objectives is on adult learning and refers to a number of adult learning policies (e.g. the credit-bank system, Korea massive open online courses [K-MOOC], vocational education and training [VET]). The indicators used to track progress in achieving the goals for adult learning from 2018 to 2022 include participation in lifelong learning (goal of 35.8% to 42.8%), VET for adults (24.7% to 26%) and work-based learning in SMEs (7.9% to 14%). However, Korean stakeholders have expressed concerns about a number of limitations of the plan, such as the lack of details about the responsible actors for the specific adult learning policies, how adult learning policies would be co-ordinated across actors, what funding would be allocated to the adult learning policies, and how the impact of implemented adult learning policies would be measured (e.g. there are no indicators on employment rate or income level after adult learning participation) (Government of Korea, 2019[9]). Stakeholders also mentioned that they did not feel sufficiently engaged in the process of designing the plan (Korea, 2019[8]).

Creating a long-term vision for adult learning is particularly relevant to guide Korea's efforts to address skills needs during and after the COVID-19 crisis as it seeks to move towards economic recovery and growth. Such a vision, developed with all relevant actors, should clearly identify the long-term goals, the actions for each actor, the mechanisms to co-ordinate the contributions of all relevant actors, and how funding is allocated and impact is measured.

Korea should consider the Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy 2017-2021, which is an example of a comprehensive national vision that defines clear roles and responsibilities for relevant actors in the long term. The strategy serves as a binding agreement among all relevant actors in skills and adult learning, such as ministries, subnational governments and stakeholders, to ensure that they work together in achieving the shared policy priorities. The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy was developed as a result of an intensive, open discussion and consultation process with a variety of stakeholders. The strategy has served as the basis for cross-cutting co-operation. The strategic priorities and goals are expressed in concrete financial terms by the Ministry of Education and Research's four-year Medium-term Expenditure Framework. They are also revisited every year and adjusted based on economic forecasts and in discussion with the Ministry of Economy and Finance and parliament (Box 2.2).

Figure 2.2. Views of government officials on the clarity of goals and vision in their organisation

Share of government officials who express their level of agreement, 2018



Note: The Government Civil Servant Survey, conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA), polled civil servants working for the central and subnational (regional and local) governments.

Source: OECD elaboration of the Korea Institute of Public Administration (2018[7]), *Government Civil Servant Survey*, https://www.kipa.re.kr/site/eng/main.do.

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The process of building a comprehensive vision for adult learning policies requires social consensus, and to achieve this the government needs to convene, facilitate, enable and partner with various stakeholders (Lenihan, 2012[10]). In general, the Korean government conducts at least one session of consultation (e.g. seminars or public hearings) to build public consensus ahead of establishing major policies (see Chapter 4). In a typical seminar or public hearing for adult learning policies, the lead ministry gives a presentation, which is followed by discussions among stakeholders (e.g. employers, unions, adult learners, schools, training centres and academia). At the end of the discussions, 50 to 200 participants are invited to ask questions and engage in further discussions (Lee et al., 2019[11]). However, the frequency and form of engagement in the area of adult learning vary among ministries. Some national plans, including the Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan (Box 2.1), reported organising consultations with related ministries and research institutes (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3. Engagement efforts undertaken for selected adult learning plans

Plan	Public hearing	Seminar	Call for proposal	Engagement activities	Task force
Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan (related ministries, 2019)	n/a	Inclusive Social Policy Forum (April-June 2018) Inclusive National Strategy Meeting (September 2018) – presentation on "Inclusive Nation: Vision and Strategy" and declaration of "Innovative Inclusive Nation"	n/a	Interviews with related ministries, government research institutes and academia	Inter-ministerial task force on social affairs (October 2018) established to follow-up on Inclusive National Strategy Meeting
Lifelong Vocational Education and Training Reform Plan (related ministries, July 2018)	Phase 1: Young-nam Phase 2: Ho-nam & Chung-cheong Phase 3: Metropolitan & Gang-won &Jeju	Future Lifelong Vocational Education Forum (August and December 2017) Expert meeting (October 2017) Academic conference on vocational education (October 2017)	Call for idea proposals (November 2017 to February 2018) 44 ideas from the public were registered, 10 were awarded as "best ideas"	Onsite interviews in high schools, vocational colleges, industrial councils, etc.	n/a

Plan	Public hearing	Seminar	Call for proposal	Engagement activities	Task force
Lifelong Education Promotion Basic Plan (2018-2022) (MoE, 2018)	Regional public hearing on the draft basic plan (2018)	Lifelong Education Forum (2017) Social Policy Forum (2018) Panel discussion on the 4th Industrial Revolution and Lifelong Learning	n/a	Interviews of stakeholders and experts	Policy Advice Council established under the MoE

Source: Government of Korea (2019[9]), *Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan*; Korea (2019[8]), *OECD Skills Strategy Missions to Korea*.

Stakeholder engagement could be further strengthened through the more active implementation of existing requirements. The Lifelong Education Act includes an article requiring a consensus-building process in the design of the Lifelong Learning Promotion Basic Plan, but only specifically refers to consultations with other ministries and does not mention stakeholder engagement (Lee, 2019[12]). Reinforcing the legal foundation for stakeholder engagement by making it mandatory in the process of developing long-term adult learning plans, such as the Lifelong Learning Promotion Basic Plan, will make it more inclusive (see Chapter 4). Stakeholder engagement in the development of such plans could be further supported by the recently created Civic Participation Policy Division of the Ministry of Interior and Safety, which was created to design ways to promote stakeholder engagement in national policy design throughout government. The Ministry of Interior and Safety has also supported the launch of DemosX, a platform to engage stakeholders in policy design. The platform can be accessed through a website or a mobile application and allows stakeholders to express their opinions or participate in surveys on selected policy issues. Participants can also submit innovative policy ideas, receive updates on policies of their interest and participate in open discussions (Ministry of Interior and Safety, 2020[13]).

In Korea, efforts to foster social consensus on a vision for adult learning should be strengthened by raising public awareness about the importance of adult learning (Korea, 2019[8]). This will be particularly beneficial in the Korean context, where the participation rate in adult learning is comparatively low, and where there are large participation gaps between different age groups and between those with high and low levels of education (see Chapter 1). While the Korean government is making efforts to raise awareness about the importance of adult learning (Table 2.4) (Korea, 2019[8]), it should do more to reach out to disadvantaged groups (e.g. women, older adults, adults with lower levels of education, non-regular workers) (see Chapter 4).

Table 2.4. Programmes to raise awareness of the importance of adult learning in Korea

Programme	Organisation	Objectives	Actions
Lifelong Learning Festival	• Regional Office of Education	• Raise awareness of the importance of lifelong learning.	• Grants accreditation to selected organisations that have demonstrated high-quality human resource development strategies.
Korea Lifelong Learning Exhibition	• Ministry of Education, National Institute of Lifelong Learning	• Raise awareness of the importance of lifelong learning. • Disseminate good practices of lifelong learning.	• Organises seminars, forums and exhibitions. • Gives awards to institutions with good lifelong learning practices. • Convenes lifelong learning educators and users to learn about available lifelong learning programmes in their region.
Korea Lifelong Learning Award	• Ministry of Education • National Institute of Lifelong Learning	• Identify good practices of lifelong learning. • Encourage a sustainable lifelong learning culture.	• Grants awards of recognition to diverse stakeholders such as public institutions and subnational governments providing exemplary lifelong learning programmes, and individual users who have achieved high learning outcomes through participating in lifelong learning programmes.

Programme	Organisation	Objectives	Actions
Literacy Month	• Ministry of Education • National Institute of Lifelong Learning	• Raise awareness about the need for, and importance of, literacy. • Encourage illiterate adults who have not benefited from education due to social, economic and cultural reasons to participate in learning.	• Provides opportunities to individual users to participate in literacy programmes and promotes everyday literacy (e.g. safety literacy, financial literacy). • Organises award ceremonies and performances (e.g. poem recitals), and appoints an honorary ambassador to promote literacy.
Vocational Skills Month (every September)	• Ministry of Employment and Labour	• Raise awareness and participation in vocational skills training among the general public.	• Promotes the slogan "vocational competency development raises your value".

Source: Lee et al. (2019[11]), *Written input prepared for the Korea governance review on adult learning*.

There is currently a lack of co-ordinated research on adult learning and its benefits in Korea, and strengthening research is crucial to inform the adult learning vision (Korea, 2019[8]). Several government research institutes such as the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET), the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) and the Korea Labour Institute (KLI) conduct research on a variety of policies, including adult learning; however, their research activities tend to be fragmented and not sufficiently co-ordinated, which makes it challenging to compile all the relevant research findings and comprehensively consider them for the development of an adult learning vision. Korea should thus consider establishing or designating a research institute to gather all adult learning relevant data from different institutions and co-ordinate research efforts across government and society to inform the development of the adult learning vision and support the implementation phase of the vision (Korea, 2019[8]). The research institute could be situated under a lead ministry (e.g. MoE or MoEL), with the participation of the Presidential Office, the Office for Government Policy Co-ordination, and other relevant ministries and stakeholders. Currently, a legal framework is being discussed to assign the role of conducting research on adult learning policies to the National Institute for Lifelong Education.

Korea could consider the example of the Skills Norway institute, which is situated under the Ministry of Education and Research and conducts research on adult learning that informs the development of long-term documents such as the Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy. As the secretariat of the Skills Requirement Committee, Skills Norway examines Norway's skills requirements. It is also the Norwegian National Co-ordinator for the Nordic Network for Adult Learning and the European Agenda for Adult Learning, which allows it to share and absorb knowledge and experience at the Nordic, European and international level, and thus get valuable input for Norway's own long-term adult learning vision development (Box 2.2).

Box 2.1. National example of creating a comprehensive and long-term vision for adult learning

Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan

The Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan (2019) is a national strategy developed by six ministries (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Employment and Labour, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, and Ministry of Environment), national research institutions and relevant experts. The plan presents a comprehensive long-term vision of an inclusive and innovative society, where all citizens, including those disadvantaged, are given equitable access to public goods and services. The objectives of the plan are to improve citizens' quality of life and seeks ways to achieve sustainable development through the co-ordination of social and economic policies. It revises the previous plan, 3 Visions and 9 Strategies for an Inclusive Nation, which also covered skills development and workplace innovation. The Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan provides a detailed policy roadmap, with each policy goal accompanied by specific outcome indicators so that policy impacts can be measured and evaluated retrospectively and so that citizens can clearly understand how they can expect their lives to be affected. The plan includes objectives concerning adult learning, most notably to expand opportunities for all adults to develop necessary skills. It aims to increase the participation rate in lifelong learning programmes from 35.8% in 2018 to 42.8% by 2022, and to expand opportunities for employees in SMEs and non-regular workers to receive occupational training/education. The plan stipulates that these goals will be pursued through the operation of a credit bank system, the expansion of K-MOOCs and the provision of career guidance services for older workers.

Source: Government of Korea, (2019[9]), *Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan*.

Box 2.2. International examples of creating a comprehensive and long-term vision for adult learning

Norway: Skills Norway institute

Skills Norway is an institute under the Ministry of Education and Research that conducts research on a variety of skills issues to guide the development of long-term documents, such as the Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy. As the secretariat of the Skills Requirement Committee, Skills Norway examines Norway's skills requirements. Skills Norway raises awareness about the importance of adult learning among policy makers, social partners and the general public. It is the Norwegian National Coordinator for the Nordic Network for Adult Learning and the European Agenda for Adult Learning, which allows it to share and absorb knowledge and experience at the Nordic, European and international level. The institute also develops relevant training programmes with social partners that meet the skills needs of the population. The institute develops the standards, teaching aids and methodologies for such training programmes, and works closely with local governments to combine training programmes with practical work placements. It also conducts skills profiling exercises and provides career guidance to inform individuals' adult learning and career decisions.

Source: Skills Norway (2021[14]), *About Skills Norway: We need to provide a high standard of training*, https://www.kompetansenorge.no/English/About-skills-norway/#Weneedtoprovideahighstandardoftraining_3.

Norway: The Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy 2017-2021

In 2017, Norway adopted the Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy 2017-2021, following on from the recommendations of the 2012-14 OECD Skills Strategy Project. The project advised Norway to develop a comprehensive national vision for skills and lifelong learning that incorporates a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. The Norwegian strategy is a binding agreement among the strategy partners, who are the government, employer associations, trade unions, the voluntary sector and the Sami Parliament. The strategy 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 skills policy, including adult learning, and for ensuring co-ordination across policy sectors and levels of government. Regional and local governments own educational facilities and thus provide numerous services to the end user. Employers provide training in the workplace, often in collaboration with other partners. The Sami Parliament equips Sami people with the necessary linguistic and cultural expertise to develop Sami society and businesses. Volunteer organisations contribute to skills development both within and outside the labour market. The strategy notes the importance of all these partners working together to develop and implement skills related measures, as involving different ministries, subnational governments and stakeholders can help raise awareness of the benefits of skills and lifelong learning. The Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy describes the population's skills as society's most important resource, and the basis for welfare, growth, wealth creation and sustainability.

Source: OECD (2019[11]), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to Shape a Better Future*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en.

Estonia: The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020

The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 defined the educational priorities for the country from 2014 to 2020, and guided the most important developments in the area of education during this period. It provided the basis on which the government made its decisions for educational funding and for the development of programmes that support the achievement of necessary changes. The strategy specifically addressed the most important obstacles identified by Estonia in the area of lifelong learning. Strategic priorities and goals were expressed in concrete financial terms by the Ministry of Education and Research's four-year Medium-term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), and were implemented through 13 programmes. The framework was subject to inter-ministerial discussion and debate before being integrated into the government's overarching MTEF. Every March, the Ministry of Finance used economic forecasts and the government's MTEF to give all line ministries a budget ceiling for the following four years. By April of each year, line ministries had to fit their priorities into these ceilings in accordance with their stated objectives, and adjust their MTEFs accordingly. Negotiations between high-level civil servants resulted in further modifications of each ministry's budget and in September, the government submitted its general budget proposal for the next fiscal year to parliament for debate. Local governments were also required to align their annual budgets with both four-year expenditure plans and longer-term strategic development plans.

Source: Santiago, P. et al. (2016[15]), *OECD Reviews of School Resources: Estonia*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264251731-en.

Recommendations for creating a comprehensive and inclusive long-term vision for adult learning

1.1 Develop a comprehensive long-term vision for adult learning that is based on social consensus and reinforced by awareness-raising activities. The comprehensive and long-term vision for adult learning should identify target groups, allocate responsibilities and establish accountability arrangements for all relevant actors. The process of developing such a comprehensive and long-term vision should involve ministries, subnational governments and stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement efforts in this process could be reinforced by making consultation with them legally mandatory. The vision should contain details of the responsible actors for the specific adult learning policies, how adult learning policies will be co-ordinated across actors, what funding will be allocated to adult learning policies, and how the impact of implemented adult learning policies will be measured. Once the vision has been developed, it should be clearly communicated throughout the government and society. Efforts to raise public awareness about the adult learning vision and why participation in adult learning matters should be further adapted to particularly reach disadvantaged groups such as older individuals, non-regular workers and adults with low levels of education so that their participation can be raised.

1.2 Establish or designate a research institute to co-ordinate research efforts on adult learning and inform the development of the national adult learning vision. The research institute should be dedicated to gathering all adult learning relevant data from different institutions, co-ordinating research efforts across government and society, informing the development of the adult learning vision, and supporting the implementation of the vision. The research institute could be situated under a lead ministry and include staff from the Presidential Office and the Office for Government Policy Co-ordination, as well as other relevant ministries and stakeholders.

Supporting the horizontal co-ordination of adult learning policies

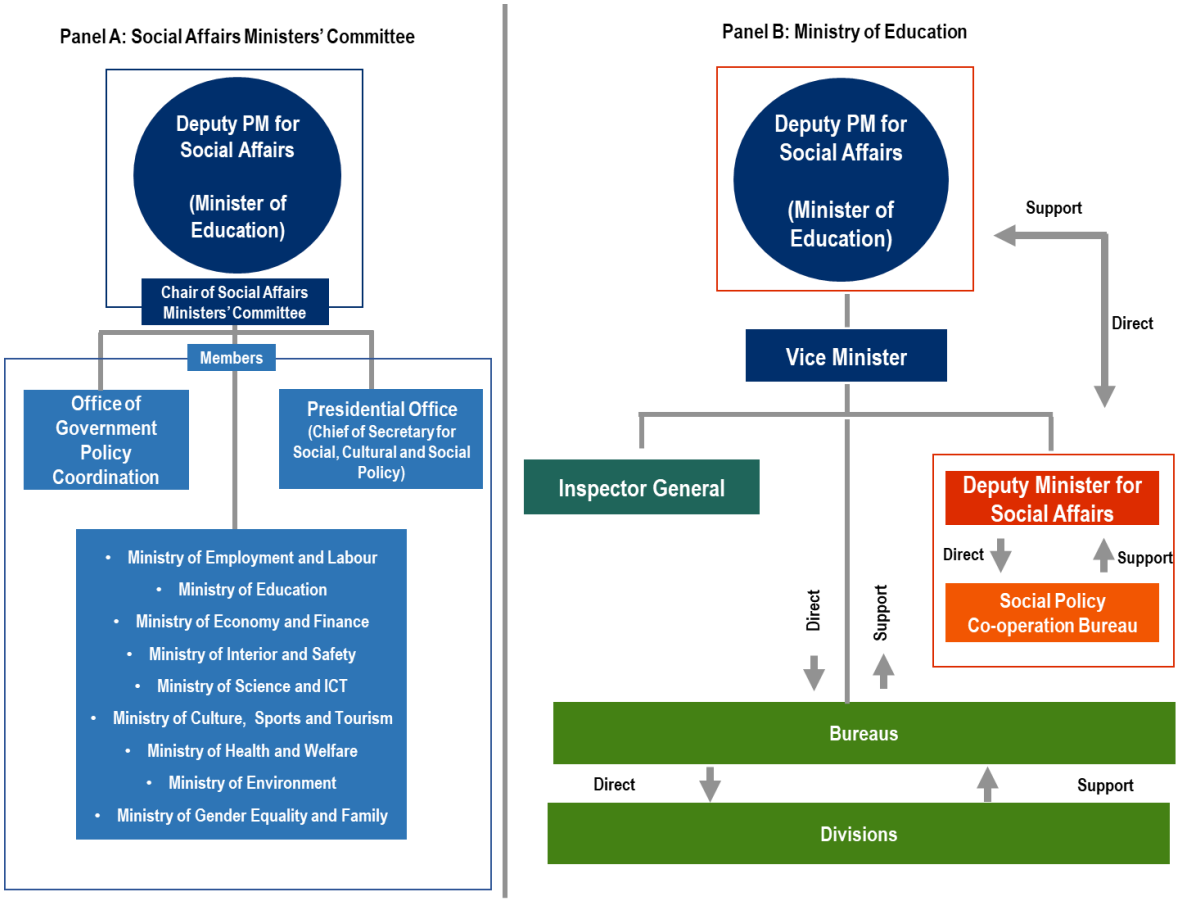
As adult learning policies cut across diverse policy areas, effective policy co-ordination is key to their success. Across OECD countries, successful adult learning policies emerge from inclusive national project teams that involve all relevant ministries. These teams are typically championed by a prime minister or by the minister responsible from the lead ministry, with senior level authority across all participating ministries (OECD, 2019[1]). Such teams are accountable for the results of adult learning and ensure that the process of developing adult learning policies is transparent and open. Successful national project teams are typically led by an effective project co-ordinator who is trusted and respected by participating ministries and stakeholders (OECD, 2019[1]).

In Korea, the Social Affairs Ministers' Committee (SAMC), established in 2015 to lead horizontal co-ordination across nine ministries on a variety of social policies, should play a strong co-ordination role in adult learning (Figure 2.3, Panel A). The committee is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) for Social Affairs, a position that is assumed by the Minister of Education. In order to support the roles of the Minister of Education as the DPM and the chair of the SAMC, the position of Deputy Minister (DM) for Social Affairs was established in the Ministry of Education (Figure 2.3, Panel B). The DM assists the DPM in fostering co-operation across the nine ministries with responsibilities for the social policies covered by the SAMC.

The ministerial meetings of the SAMC are held twice a month to co-ordinate social policies, assess the achievements of each ministry and consider specific policy actions. Participating ministries can propose topics for the agenda to be put to a vote, which takes place two or three times a year. As the SAMC is

mandated to develop, monitor the progress and facilitate the implementation of the Inclusive Nation Social Policy Promotion Plan (2019), which includes adult learning as a key policy area, it is well positioned to advance discussions on adult learning policies. However, its role in policy co-ordination for adult learning has so far been limited due to the broad range of social policy areas covered and a lack of effective decision-making authority (Chae, 2018[16]; Korea, 2019[8]).

Figure 2.3. The Social Affairs Ministers' Committee: Organisational and leadership structure



Source: OECD elaboration on Ministry of Education (2020[17]), *About MoE: Organization*, http://english.moe.go.kr/sub/info.do?m=0105&s=english; National Law Information Center (n.d.[18]), *National Law Information Center homepage*, http://www.law.go.kr/LSW/eng/engMain.do?eventGubun=060124.

Efforts are underway to strengthen the co-ordination role of the SAMC. During its first meeting of 2020 it discussed measures to strengthen its role and functions. Members agreed to give priority to issues that reflect the needs and interests of the public, and to allow the year-round submission of pressing topics for discussion to enable a timely response. In addition, the SAMC will set up task forces headed by the DM dedicated to strengthening its role in monitoring the implementation of decisions and to improve policy results (Ministry of Education, 2020[19]). Examples of adult learning policies that the SAMC has discussed include measures to innovate in the area of open and lifelong education and training, and measures related to adult learning in higher education. According to stakeholders consulted during this project, the expertise of the SAMC to lead adult learning discussions could be further raised, including through the measures suggested below.

Although relevant ministries provide input for SAMC discussions when requested, a working level co-ordination group promoting ongoing discussions among relevant ministries would further support the

role of the SAMC in adult learning. A working level co-ordination group for adult learning policy could be composed of representatives from the MoE and MoEL and other relevant ministries that are members of the SAMC (e.g. Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, and Ministry of Health and Welfare). The existence of such a working level co-ordination group would allow for more in-depth and ongoing discussions and more extensive co-ordination efforts, specifically on adult learning policies. The working level co-ordination group could convene on a more regular basis and, if necessary, prepare adult learning policy input and recommendations for the SAMC to consider, and follow up on SAMC decisions regarding their implementation. Article 10 of the Act on the Social Affairs Ministers' Committee provides legal grounds for working level co-ordination meetings for SAMC agenda items. The working level co-ordination group could also be used as a communication channel with ministries not represented at the SAMC and could be allowed to submit adult learning input and proposals for the working level co-ordination group to consider. For example, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy does not participate in the SAMC, but its database on skills demands could provide useful evidence for adult learning policies.

In Flanders, the Joint Policy Council and the Management Committee play important roles in co-ordinating skills policies across policy domains. The committee is composed of leading government officials from the policy domains of education and training, and work and social economy. The council is a decision-making body composed of the committee and the relevant ministers (Box 2.4).

The pool of expert staff capable of undertaking research and analysis on adult learning policy needs to be increased to support horizontal co-ordination on adult learning policies. Although the SAMC does not have an independent permanent secretariat, the MoE provides a team within its Social Policy Co-operation Bureau of about 18 staff members to support the role of the DPM and the DM in the SAMC (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Interior and Safety, 2019[20]; Ministry of Education, 2020[17]). Participants in the OECD consultations in Korea argued that additional Social Policy Co-operation Bureau staff with adult learning expertise could raise the effectiveness of co-ordinating adult learning policies (Korea, 2019[8]). Such staff could exchange adult learning policy information with relevant experts across relevant ministries, analyse available research findings on adult learning policies, prepare the substantive input for the SAMC and the working level co-ordination group to consider, and follow up on any decisions (Korea, 2019[8]; Lee et al., 2019[11]).

The SAMC could be further supported and informed by the work of two adult learning relevant national co-ordination bodies: the National Lifelong Education Promotion Committee and the Employment Policy Deliberative Council.

The National Lifelong Education Promotion Committee is chaired by the Minister of Education and consists of 20 members including senior representatives of relevant ministries and experts in adult learning. The committee provides feedback to the Ministry of Education on the development of the Lifelong Education Promotion Basic Plan, the evaluation and improvement of lifelong learning policies, and the co-ordination of lifelong learning policies (as described in the Lifelong Education Act, see also Chapter 3).

The Employment Policy Deliberative Council is chaired by the Minister of Employment and Labour and consists of 30 members, including senior representatives of relevant ministries, representatives from unions, employers, and other experts on employment issues. The council provides feedback to the Ministry of Employment and Labour on the development of the Vocational Skills Development Basic Plan for Innovation and Inclusive Growth, the evaluation and improvement of vocational skills development policies, and the co-ordination of vocational skills development policies (as described in the Employment Policy Act) (Box 2.3). The council can also create expert committees to discuss specific topics in depth. Expert committees have already been created on the topics of employment services, social enterprises, active labour market policies and programmes to support employment for people with disabilities. These expert committees have been found to be useful in supporting the work of the council.

Box 2.3. National examples of supporting horizontal co-ordination across ministries

National Lifelong Education Promotion Committee

The National Lifelong Education Promotion Committee is chaired by the Minister of Education and consists of 20 members that include senior representatives of relevant ministries and experts in adult learning. The committee provides feedback to the Ministry of Education on the evaluation and improvement of lifelong learning policies and the co-ordination of lifelong learning policies. The committee also deliberates and provides feedback on the Ministry of Education's Lifelong Education Promotion Basic Plan, which is developed every five years and provides guidance on lifelong learning policies, determines financial allocation to lifelong learning policies, provides a framework for evaluation of policies and supports lifelong learning policies for specific target groups (e.g. disabled people).

Employment Policy Deliberative Council

The Employment Policy Deliberative Council is chaired by the Minister of Employment and Labour and co-ordinates employment relevant policies, such as vocational development and training policies, across ministries and levels of governments. The council also discusses and makes decisions regarding surveys on training demand, training facilities and instructors, financial support for job projects, and evaluation and impact assessments of projects. The council is composed of 30 members and includes senior representatives of relevant ministries, as well as representatives from unions, employers, and other experts on employment issues. Based on Article 10 of the Framework Act on Employment Policy, the council can also create expert committees to discuss specific topics in depth. Expert committees have already been created on the topics of employment service, social enterprises, active measures to improve employment, and programmes to support employment for people with disabilities. These expert committees have been found to be useful in supporting the work of the council. The council deliberates and provides feedback on the Ministry of Employment and Labour's Vocational Skills Development Basic Plan for Innovation and Inclusive Growth, which is developed every five years and provides guidance on vocational skills development policies, the supply of training and training instructors, and the setting of training standards.

Source: National Law Information Center (2021), *National Law Information Center homepage*, https://law.go.kr/.

Box 2.4. International example: Joint Policy Council and Management Committee in Flanders

The Joint Policy Council (including ministers) and the Management Committee (not including ministers) on Education, Training and Work are two joint management committees in the policy domains of education and training and work and social economy. They co-ordinate policies regarding qualifications and the development of competences, and spending for education and training. They also advise the ministers of education and labour on matters that concern both education and labour. The committee is composed of leading government officials from the policy domains of education and training, and work and social economy. The council is a decision-making body composed of the committee and the relevant ministers.

Source: OECD (2019[1]), *OECD Skills Strategy 2019: Skills to Shape a Better Future*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264313835-en.

Recommendations for supporting the horizontal co-ordination of adult learning policies

1.3. Support the Social Affairs Ministers' Committee with a working level group responsible for co-ordinating adult learning policies among relevant ministries. The working level co-ordination group could convene representatives of the various SAMC ministries to discuss adult learning policies in depth, facilitate the preliminary co-ordination of adult learning policies, and provide recommendations on adult learning policies for the SAMC. It could also be used as a communication channel with ministries not currently part of the committee by allowing them to submit proposals for agenda topics. For example, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy does not participate in the SAMC, but its database on skills demands could provide crucial evidence for adult learning policies.

1.4. Support the co-ordination role of the Social Affairs Ministers' Committee with adult learning policy experts. Such experts could exchange adult learning policy information across relevant ministries, gather relevant adult learning policy research findings, prepare substantive input on adult learning for the SAMC and working level co-ordination group to consider, and follow up on any decisions.

Opportunity 2: Improving the dissemination of adult learning information in co-ordination with ministries

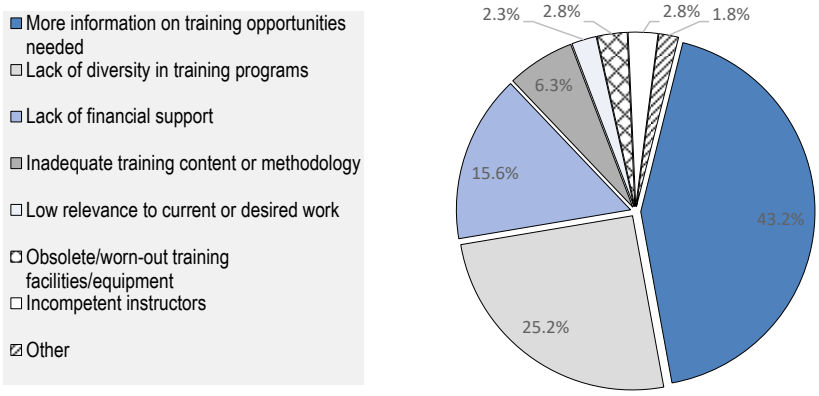
This section provides an overview of the existing channels for disseminating adult learning information and discusses how ministries in Korea should collaborate more to improve the dissemination of this information. Relevant country examples and specific recommendations are also presented.

Improving the dissemination of adult learning information

The largest obstacle to participation in adult learning is a lack of information. According to the Korea Labour and Income Panel Study (KLIPS), about 30% of respondents stated that they are not provided with sufficient information about available training opportunities (Figure 2.4). This is significantly more than other obstacles such as lack of diversity in training programmes (17.6%), lack of financial support (10.8%) and inadequate training content or methodology (4.4%).

Figure 2.4. Obstacles to participating in adult learning

Share of adults, 2013

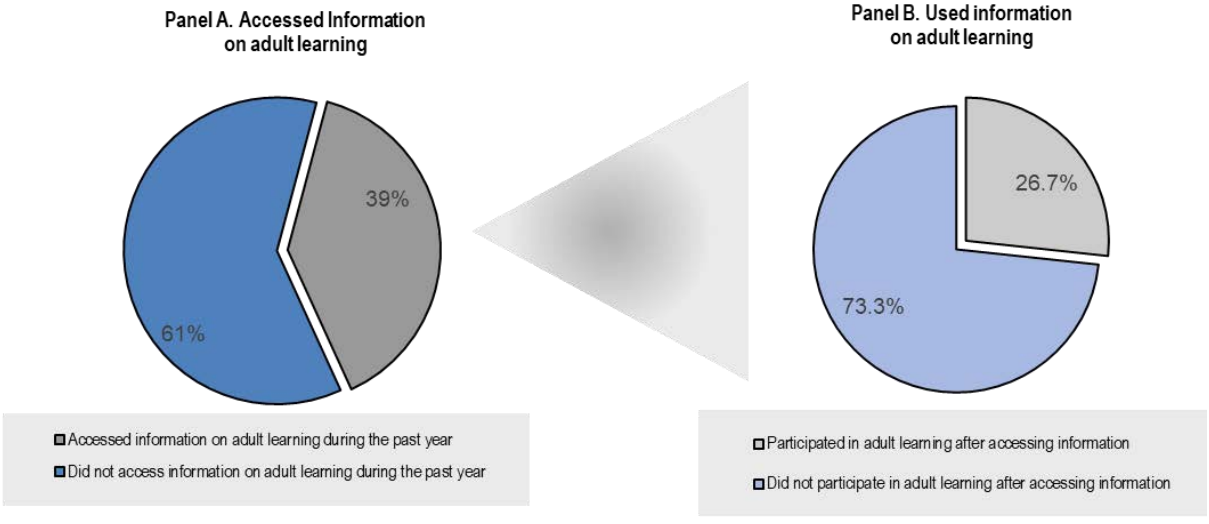


Note: The Korean Labour and Income Panel Study (KLIPS) is a labour-related panel survey that uses a sample representing 5 000 Korean households and all of its members over the age of 15. It is an annual survey that has been conducted since 1998, with the latest available data from 2017. However, the indicator used above was only available from the 2013 study.
Source: OECD elaboration of the Korea Labor Institute (2013[21]), *Korean Labour and Income Panel Study*, https://www.kli.re.kr/klips_eng/index.do.

StatLink https://stat.link/2jmdc3

However, research shows that even after accessing information only a small share of adults participated in adult learning. According to the Lifelong Learning Survey,[3] 26% of adults accessed information on adult learning during the past year (as of 2017), and only 27% of those who accessed information ended up participating in adult learning (Figure 2.5). This highlights the need to provide better information on adult learning and career guidance, as well as guidance to help interpret and act upon this information. This would allow those who access information on adult learning to identify the most relevant opportunities that match their individual needs and career paths, and that are based on the latest labour market trends (see Chapter 5).

Figure 2.5. Participation in adult learning after accessing information



Source: OECD elaboration of the Ministry of Education and KEDI (2019[22]), *Lifelong Learning Survey 2017*, https://www.kedi.re.kr/eng/.

StatLink https://stat.link/x6amyk

There are currently two main online portals on adult learning in Korea: Neulbaeum (MoE) and HRD-net (MoEL). The purpose of these portals is to provide users with information on learning opportunities and allow them to keep track of their learning history. They also generate statistics for analysis and evaluation purposes.

Both ministries are currently working on further integrating adult learning information in their online portals. The MoE plans to establish a National Lifelong Learning Site to provide comprehensive information on lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens by integrating the Neulbaeum portal with the Lifelong Learning Account System Portal, which helps individuals manage their learning records and history. The creation of such a portal will combine the distribution, management and use of adult learning information under a single MoE platform to offer a one-stop portal from 2024. Similarly, the MoEL is working to launch an integrated one-stop portal called Goyong 24 that can provide information on employment relevant services offered by the MoEL. It does this by integrating information from HRD-net with information from Work-net and Q-net (expected in 2023). Work-net provides information on job openings, connects jobseekers and employers, and offers career guidance and aptitude tests. Q-net is a national qualification portal site that provides information on the types of national qualifications available, qualification test schedules and application procedures.

Given that the MoE and MoEL separately administer their portals, users need to create different accounts to seek adult learning information on both portals, making it a time-consuming process to acquire and compare information, and make learning decisions (Chae, 2017[23]).

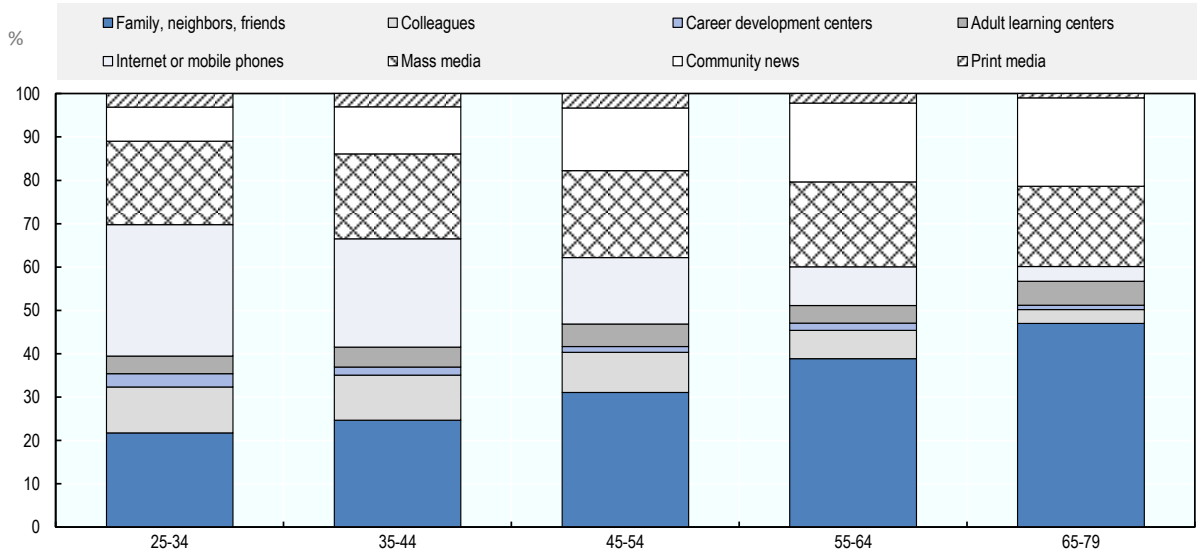
The Korean government plans to gradually link these portals to provide consistent information. The MoE and MoEL are planning to ensure that information on adult learning opportunities can be found on both portals, and are exploring the possibility of fully integrating the portals to offer users a single portal with comprehensive information on adult learning opportunities (Government of Korea, 2020[24]). Korea could also consider how other related portals from the MoEL (e.g. Job-net), KRIVET (e.g. Career-net), subnational governments and other ministries could be linked or integrated with such a portal. Currently, these other portals are operated independently, and overlap to some extent. Job-net provides information on job postings that have been announced through Work-net and private employment services. Career-net provides career guidance to diverse groups including students of all ages, parents and teachers, and adults in general. Stakeholders in Korea have commented that having a one-stop portal that integrates all information related to adult learning would help to increase access for end users (Chae, 2017[23]; Korea, 2019[8]).

Although the main platforms of the MoE and MoEL are not fully integrated and are still operating separately, Korea should consider introducing a single account to access the portals. Having users maintain separate accounts to keep track of their learning history across two portals is cumbersome, inefficient and error-prone. Given that the data on individual adult learning participation is not linked between the portals, it is also more challenging to generate comprehensive adult learning statistics for individuals. A single account would make it easier for users to access, ensure the consistency of user information and allow for the provision of a single record of adult learning participation for each user across all platforms. This would also be beneficial for evaluation purposes, as the learning activities of each user could be analysed more comprehensively across platforms.

Given that the means of accessing information vary significantly across age groups, diverse channels should be used to disseminate adult learning information. The Lifelong Learning Survey shows that the means of accessing adult learning information differ significantly among age groups (Figure 2.6). Younger generations are more likely to access information through digital technology (e.g. Internet, mobile), while older generations are more likely to access information through other people. Therefore, online platforms need to be complemented with other personalised channels, such as guidance and counselling services, to reach all potential users effectively.

Figure 2.6. Means of accessing information on adult learning by age group

Share of adults accessing information on adult learning through various means, 2017



Note: The Lifelong Learning Survey, conducted by the Ministry of Education, polled over 11 000 Korean citizens aged 25 to 79 from 6 469 households (an average of 1.77 persons per household). Respondents were asked to choose multiple answers for this question.
Source: OECD elaboration of the Ministry of Education and KEDI (2019[22]), *Lifelong Learning Survey 2017*, https://www.kedi.re.kr/eng/.

StatLink https://stat.link/vh01lp

Information on adult learning opportunities should be tailored to different user's needs and conveyed consistently across available guidance and counselling services (OECD, 2020[25]). In Korea, guidance and counselling services are a legal right, and they are delivered through a multitude of institutions, including subnational employment centres, subnational lifelong learning centres, university counselling centres and human resources development services (Korea, 2019[8]). For example, the MoEL operates national labour consultation centres, which provide guidance and counselling sessions on a variety of employment related issues, including vocational training to transition to a new job. The MoEL also operates the Employment and Welfare Plus Centre in collaboration with various ministries, including the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (Saeil Centre), local governments (job centres, welfare system), the Financial Services Commission (various financial systems), and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety (related organisations, institutions) to provide comprehensive employment related services, such as guidance, welfare and financial services. The MoE operates CareerNet, which provides guidance and counselling on formal education and career options (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2020[26]; KRIVET, 2020[27]).

There are also a number of services targeted at specific groups. Job hope centres for middle-aged and older people provide specialised guidance and counselling services for middle-aged and older people in need of retraining (OECD, 2018[28]). Similarly, the Seoul Metropolitan Government launched the Seoul 50 Plus Foundation to support jobseeking Seoul residents aged 50-65 with customised career guidance (Box 2.5). The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family launched the New Work for Women initiative to provide women with VET and career guidance services (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2020[29]).

The multiplicity of counselling and guidance services has led to the provision of information that is often inconsistent (KRIVET, 2019[30]; Korea, 2019[8]). This causes unnecessary confusion among users and undermines efforts to inform their adult learning and related career decisions. Further co-ordination efforts between the multitude of actors are necessary to provide consistent information (Korea, 2019[8]).

In the long term, Korea could create a one-stop counselling and guidance service to facilitate access and ensure the consistent provision of counselling and guidance services (OECD, 2020[25]). For example, Denmark provides comprehensive career guidance to adults through a one-stop service called the Education Guide, which allows users to contact counsellors individually to receive customised guidance (Box 2.6). In Korea, a one-stop counselling and guidance service could help to ensure that such services are customised and targeted to the specific needs of different user groups. This could be done through, for example, a career aptitude test (e.g. assessment of skill set, personality, motivation) so that the provision of services could be based on an individual's specific profile (Chae, 2017[23]). Korea should also consider how to reach groups with specific needs, limitations and profiles who have so far been under-served by existing counselling and guidance services, such as disabled individuals and non-regular workers (KRIVET, 2019[30]). Currently, an amendment bill to the Act on the Development of Vocational Skills of Workers has been proposed that includes counselling and guidance services in vocational skills development projects, which would increase access to such services for all Koreans. Counselling and guidance services should also inform users about the various financial incentives that exist to support their adult learning participation (see Chapter 5). Flanders (Belgium) runs an independent one-stop counselling and guidance service called the Learning Shop (*Leerwinkel*) (Box 2.6) that specifically targets and tailors services to disadvantaged groups, such as those with low education levels, immigrants and prisoners.

Box 2.5. National examples of disseminating adult learning information

HRD-NET

HRD-Net was launched in January 2003 and is a flagship adult learning portal providing detailed information on available training courses and institutions. The list of courses is constantly updated, and online course registration can take place through the portal. Since its launch, the portal has achieved an accumulated number of 12 504 000 users (1 764 000 new subscribers in 2020), and an accumulated number of 8 422 000 vocational training courses (643 000 new courses in 2020). In 2020, the portal's average daily number of visitors was 429 000. A service is planned to be launched on HRD-Net that gives collective information on adult learning provided by central and local governments (expected April 2021).

Seoul 50 Plus Foundation

The Seoul 50 Plus Foundation was launched in 2016 to support Korea's baby boomers, or "the 50 plus generation", who are currently 50 to 64 years old. Korea's senior population is drastically increasing – in 2017, the share of people aged 50 years or more reached a record 22% of the population. This generation has started to retire from their main jobs, although the approximate 20-year gap between average retirement age and actual retirement age suggests that many seniors seek new jobs after retirement and continue working. The Seoul Metropolitan City Government started the Seoul 50 Plus initiative to provide a comprehensive and tailored assistance platform to these seniors, bringing together various policy areas such as employment, welfare, education and counselling. The foundation seeks to provide guidance for the older generation through counselling services and courses. It also has its own policy research unit that conducts research on newly retired populations and works to identify related issues. It also supports various activities to build a new 50 plus culture, offering spaces where seniors can gather to build relationships with peers and participate in training sessions. As of 2019, the foundation has three campuses and six centres in Seoul.

Source: Seoul 50 Plus Foundation (n.d.[31]), *Creating Shared Value through Job Creation for the 50+ Generation and Society*, https://50plus.or.kr/org/eng.do#.

Box 2.6. International examples of disseminating adult learning information

Denmark: Comprehensive portal for learning and careers counselling services

Denmark's Education Guide is the national information and guidance portal for adults and young learners. The sub-portal on lifelong education and training provides information on choices for adults from different educational backgrounds. The sub-portal on jobs and careers provides information on the Danish labour market, trades, industries and sectors, as well as current employment opportunities. The Ask a Counsellor sub-portal offers a number of ways to get in contact with someone who can provide customised guidance on education and jobs. The service is available every day, including weekends. Users can choose the communication channel that best suits them, either via email, or in real time via chat or telephone.

Source: OECD (2018[32]), Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Slovenia: Improving the Governance of Adult Learning, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264308459-en.

Flanders: Learning Shop (Leerwinkel)

Leerwinkel (which means learning shop) is one of the programmes included under the Erasmus+ Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners (GOAL) project co-ordinated by the Flemish Government's Department of Education and Training. *Leerwinkel* was designed as a one-stop shop where potential learners in West Flanders could go to learn which educational options and financial incentives are available to them, and to receive impartial assistance in navigating the system. Any adult can go to *Leerwinkel* for help, but the programme specifically targets low-educated persons, prisoners and immigrants. Many participants come through referrals from public employment offices and immigration agencies, with whom *Leerwinkel* has strong partnerships. The value-added of the programme is that it provides independent and impartial advice that is tailored to the clients' needs and not connected to a particular educational institution.

Source: OECD (2019[33]), *OECD Skills Strategy Flanders: Assessment and Recommendations*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264309791-en

Recommendations for improving the dissemination of adult learning information

1.5. Introduce a single account for users to access the main online adult learning portals, and track their adult learning participation history. Having a single account, instead of maintaining account information on multiple websites, makes it easier for users to access adult learning information, ensures the consistency of user information and provides a single track record of adult learning participation for each user across platforms. This would also be beneficial for evaluation purposes as the learning activities of each user could be analysed more comprehensively across platforms. The information provided on the various online platforms should be consistent and complementary. In the long term, the MoE and MoEL should consider integrating the various online adult learning portals into a single platform, which would be less costly to administer and update and easier to access for users.

1.6. Co-ordinate counselling and guidance services to provide comprehensive and consistent information on adult learning opportunities, with particular attention paid to disadvantaged groups. In the long term, consider creating a one-stop career guidance service where users can take a career aptitude test and receive customised and tailored guidance based on the test results. Korea should also consider how to reach disadvantaged groups with specific needs, limitations and profiles who have so far been under-served by existing counselling and guidance services, such as disabled individuals and non-regular workers. Such career guidance services can also provide information on how to benefit from various financial incentives to support adult learning participation.

Summary of policy recommendations

Policy directions	Recommendations
Opportunity 1: Developing a long-term vision for adult learning and supporting co-ordination across ministries	
Creating a comprehensive and inclusive long-term vision for adult learning	1.1. Develop a comprehensive long-term vision for adult learning that is based on social consensus and reinforced by awareness-raising activities. 1.2. Establish or designate a research institute to co-ordinate research efforts on adult learning and inform the development of the national adult learning vision.
Supporting the horizontal co-ordination of adult learning policies	1.3. Support the Social Affairs Ministers' Committee with a working level group responsible for co-ordinating adult learning policies among relevant ministries. 1.4. Support the co-ordination role of the Social Affairs Ministers' Committee with adult learning policy experts.
Opportunity 2: Improving the dissemination of adult learning information in co-ordination with ministries	
Improving the dissemination of adult learning information	1.5. Introduce a single account for users to access the online adult learning portals, and track their adult learning participation history across online portals. 1.6. Co-ordinate counselling and guidance services to provide comprehensive and consistent information on adult learning opportunities, with particular attention paid to disadvantaged groups.

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Annex 2.A. Ministries involved in adult learning governance in Korea

Annex Table 2.A.1. Overview of ministries involved in adult learning governance in Korea

Ministry/National government body	Subordinate agency/body	Responsibilities
Office of the Prime Minister	Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) www.kedi.re.kr	Supports the establishment and implementation of government policies for general education (primary, secondary and "gifted" education). In relation to adult learning, conducts related statistics survey and research.
Office of the Prime Minister	Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET) www.krivet.re.kr	Supports the implementation of various government policies on vocational education and training, notably the vocational training policy; special high school and junior college policy; career education for primary, secondary and college levels; and national and private qualification policy. Also in charge of KEEP (career guidance panel survey for youth) and HCCP (Human Capital Corporate Panel survey).
Office of the Prime Minister	Korea Labour Institute (KLI) www.kli.re.kr	Supports research on the labour market and labour relations, as well as the enforcement of relevant policies. Executes the Korea Labour and Income Panel Survey (KLIPS) and the Employer Panel Survey.
Ministry of Education	National Institute of Lifelong Education (NILE) http://eng.nile.or.kr/index.jsp	Delegated by the MoE as the acting body involved in carrying out the lifelong learning projects set by the ministry, including the lifelong learning city, lifelong learning accounts and lifelong learning vouchers. NILE was established following the 19th Article, 1st clause of the Lifelong Education Act. It roles include the following: provides support and conducts surveys to promote lifelong learning; supports the establishment of a basic plan reviewed by the Lifelong Education Promotion Committee; develops lifelong learning programmes; trains the lifelong learning specialists; constructs an aligning mechanism between lifelong learning institutes; supports city/provincial lifelong learning promotion centres; designs and manages lifelong learning comprehensive information systems; manages any credit or recognition of learning pursued by the Credit Recognition Act and the Acquisition of Degree by Self-study Act; operates integrated management of learning accounts; and oversees literacy programmes.
Ministry of Employment and Labour	Human Resources Development Service of Korea (HRD Korea) http://hrdkorea.or.kr	Established by the 1041st clause of the Industrial Property Authority Act. In 1982, the Korea Vocational Training Management Corporation was established and in 1998 the name was changed to HRD Korea. In 2001, it opened Q-NET (national qualification portal site), in 2004 it initiated foreign worker employment and in 2015 it established the National Competence Standards Centre. Its main projects are to execute the MoEL's VET policy, including development of the NCS; manage and assess the national skills qualification system (including self-study and course evaluation); reimburse employer-led training; vitalise vocational training at the corporate level (national HRD consortium, SME training centres, etc.); support the regional HRD council and sectoral HRD council; and monitor overall quality of vocational training. It is responsible for domestic and international vocational Olympics and managing young adults' overseas employment and foreign workers' employment in Korea.
Ministry of Employment and Labour	Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS) http://www.keis.or.kr	Collects and processes information on MoEL employment and vocational training for users. Manages the Employment Insurance Database (for those enrolled in the insurance), Work-net (database for those seeking employees and employees seeking jobs), and HRD-net (provides information on vocational training institutions, participating corporates and individuals). It provides mid- and long-term human resource supply and demand forecasts, job career information and career guidance.
Ministry of Employment and Labour	Korean Skills Quality Authority (KSQA) http://www.ksqa.or.kr	As an affiliate of the Korea University of Technology and Education, the KSQA manages quality assurance for VET development (except voluntary programmes) within firms. It accredits training institutions and online training institutions, recognises training courses and manages the evaluation of trainees.

Ministry/National government body	Subordinate agency/body	Responsibilities
Ministry of Employment and Labour	Korea Polytechnic University http://www.kopo.ac.kr	Following the Worker's Vocational Ability Development Act, this university offers bachelor of industry (two years) and engineering (one year) degrees. It also manages other short-term programmes targeting adults.
Ministry of Science and ICT	Korea Institute of S&T Evaluation and Planning (KISTEP) https://www.kistep.re.kr	Supports research, enforces national science and technology policies, and allocates the research and development budget. Conducts survey on human resources in science and technology and evaluates training projects.
Ministry of Science and ICT	National Science and Technology Human Resources Development Centre https://www.kird.re.kr	Supports career development through the retraining of the workforce in the science and technology sector.
Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy	Korea Institute for Advancement of Technology https://www.kiat.or.kr	Conducts surveys on industrial engineers with a professional degree from junior college or above. Findings are used for policy implementation affecting the development of industrial human resource development (HRD). Particularly supports HRD with industry-academy co-operation and provides financial support to retrain for those with master's degrees or higher.
Ministry of Gender, Equality and Family	Korea Women's Economic Promotion Agency https://saeil.mogef.go.kr	The Korea Women's Economic Promotion Agency is commissioned by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family to operate the national new work support centres. There are currently 158 centres across the country that manage and carry out retraining programmes for women.

Source: Korea (2019[4]), OECD Skills Strategy for Korea Questionnaire.

Notes

[1] For the definition of "skills" please see Box 1.1. in Chapter 1.

[2] For the definition of "adult learning" please see Box 1.1. in Chapter 1.

[3] The Lifelong Learning Survey, conducted by the Ministry of Education, polled over 11 000 Korean citizens aged 25 to 79 from 6 469 households (an average of 1.77 persons per household).

3 Strengthening the vertical governance of adult learning in Korea

The governance of adult learning implicates various levels of governments, and the vertical co-ordination of these levels is crucial for implementing adult learning policies effectively and equitably in order to raise adult learning outcomes and reduce disparities across subnational areas. This chapter identifies and explores the following opportunities to strengthen vertical governance in Korea: 1) improving co-operation across levels of government in adult learning policies; and 2) supporting subnational governments to effectively implement adult learning policies.

Introduction: The importance of vertical governance in adult learning

Multiple levels of government have roles and responsibilities in the design and implementation of adult learning policies. Strong vertical governance arrangements are necessary to co-ordinate these roles and responsibilities across levels of government, so that adult learning policies can be implemented effectively and equitably.

Co-ordination and co-operation between national and subnational governments on adult learning policies increase the effectiveness of policy implementation by facilitating knowledge transfer, informing budget allocations, and building consensus and ownership for national adult learning reform efforts (OECD, 2013[1]).

Strong vertical governance arrangements are also necessary for equity reasons in order to reduce disparities in adult learning participation and outcomes across subnational areas (OECD, 2013[1]). The impact of the COVID-19 crisis across subnational areas has varied significantly across the country (OECD, 2020[2]). The national government, in co-ordination and co-operation with subnational governments, can support subnational governments that have low capacity to implement adult learning policies and thereby promote national coherence in adult learning policy and overall recovery across the country.

This chapter provides an overview of Korea's vertical governance of adult learning policies and explores two key opportunities for improvement: 1) improving co-operation across levels of government in adult learning policies; and 2) supporting subnational governments to effectively implement adult learning policies. For each opportunity, the available data are analysed, relevant national and international policies and practices are discussed, and policy recommendations are provided.

Overview of the vertical governance of adult learning policies in Korea

The following section provides an overview of the different roles and responsibilities of various government actors in adult learning. Given that strong vertical governance arrangements matter for reducing regional disparities, this section also describes existing disparities across Korea in regards to the socio-economic context, adult learning participation and adult learning outcomes.

Overview of current roles and responsibilities for adult learning

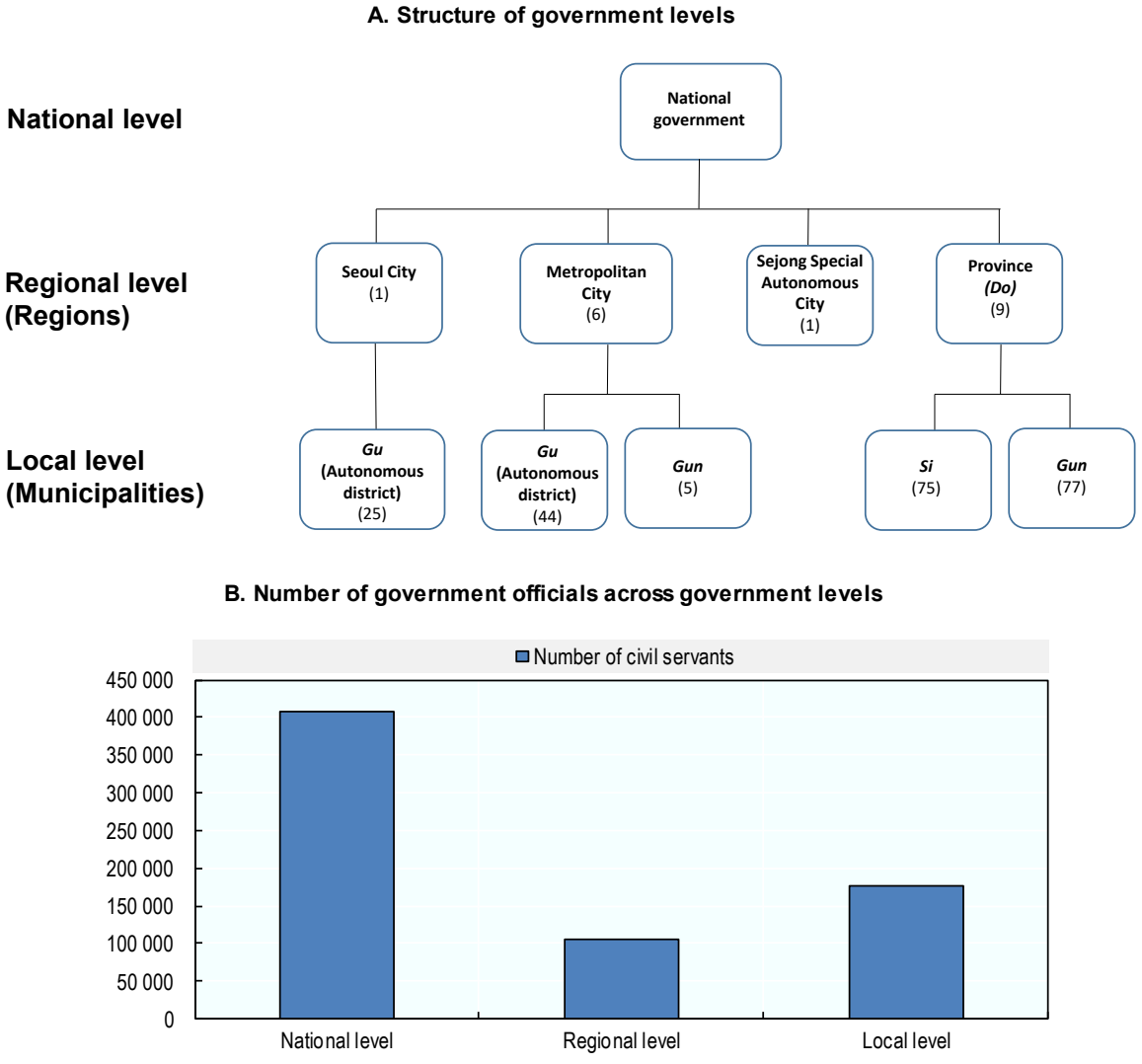
Korea has a nationally planned and subnationally executed system of adult learning governance**.** Decisions are taken at the ministry level and then executed by the implementation agencies of the relevant ministries and regional and local governments. Adult learning policies in Korea are mainly designed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Employment and Labour (MoEL) (see Chapter 2). The MoE provides adult learning opportunities through its lifelong learning programmes that include formal adult education programmes (e.g. degree programmes) and non-formal adult education programmes (e.g. recreational programmes). The MoEL administers adult learning policies through its vocational education and training (VET) programmes, which can be formal and non-formal.

Korea's adult learning system is complex, involving multiple actors at different levels of government. It has a two-tier subnational government system. The regional level consists of nine provinces (*do*) and six metropolitan cities (*Gwangyeoksi*), as well as Sejong Special Autonomous City[1] and Seoul City (*Teukbyeolsi*), which have a special status. The local level includes municipalities, which can be cities (*Si*), counties (*Gun*) or autonomous districts (*Gu*) (Figure 3.1, Panel A) (OECD, 2016[3]). The average population size of a municipality is 233 827 inhabitants, which is significantly higher than the OECD average 9 693 (OECD, 2020[4]). Across government levels, most government officials (59%) work at the national level, with a lower share working at the subnational level (41%) (Figure 3.1, Panel B) (KOSIS, 2020[5]). While the

relative share of subnational government officials has increased over the years in Korea, it is still relatively low compared to other unitary countries,[2] such as Finland, Japan, the Netherlands and Sweden, where the share of subnational government officials is above 70% (Charbit and Michalun, 2009[6]). This indicates that Korea is still relatively less decentralised than these countries.

Figure 3.1. Levels of government in Korea

Government levels and the number of government officials at each level, 2020



Note: Cities (*Si*) have a population of at least 150 000 inhabitants. Counties (*Gun*) have fewer than 150 000 inhabitants. Districts (*Gu*) are part of metropolitan and special cities and can vary in size.
The local level can be further divided into sub-municipal localities: urban division of counties (*eup*), rural division of counties (*myeon*), and areas within cities and districts (*dong*). Due to their relatively small size, they are not included in this report.
Source: OECD elaborations of KOSIS (2020[5]), Korean Statistical Information Service website, http://kosis.kr/.

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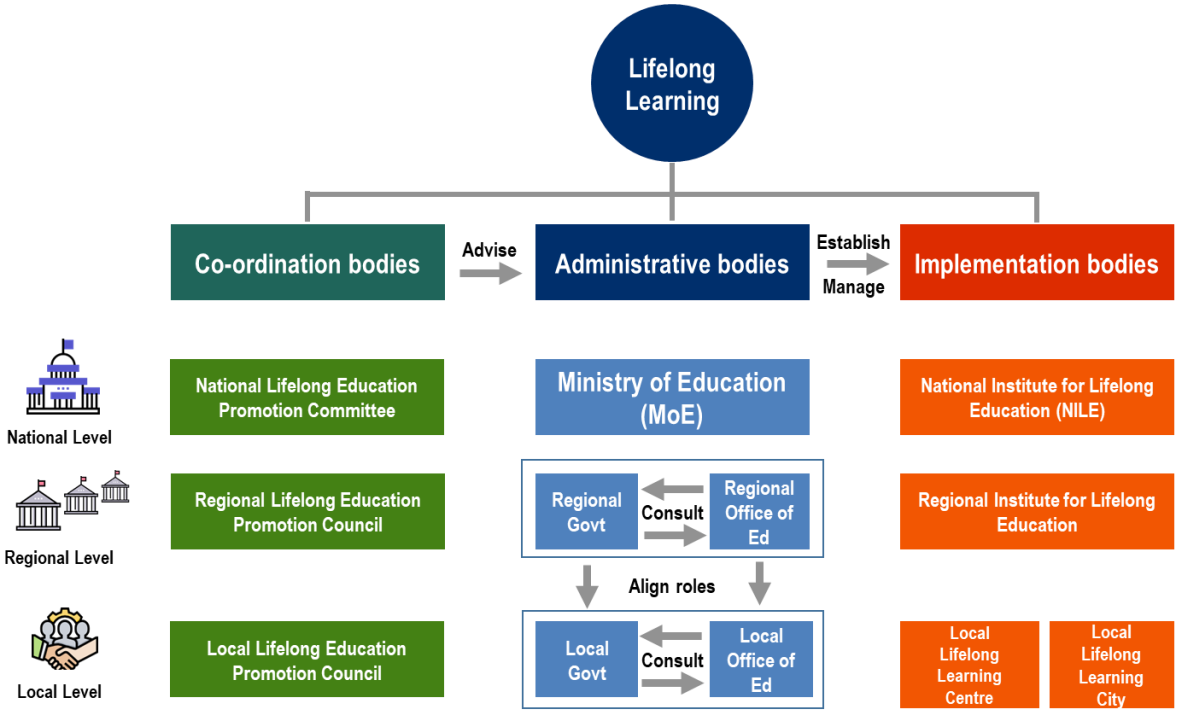
The MoE offers lifelong learning programmes through a vertical governance structure consisting of administrative, implementation and co-ordination bodies at each level of government (Figure 3.2). The MoE works closely with its main administrative bodies, which are the regional and local offices of education, and local governments to oversee lifelong learning policies.

The National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) and the Regional Institutes for Lifelong Education are the main implementation bodies of the MoE for its lifelong learning programmes. They are responsible for managing the programmes, including the local lifelong learning centres and lifelong learning cities.[3] Subnational governments implement lifelong learning policies themselves.

The co-ordination of lifelong learning policies takes place through bodies at each level of government. The National Lifelong Education Promotion Committee is the MoE's main co-ordination body through which it engages relevant actors to regularly review lifelong learning policies. Topics discussed include the National Lifelong Learning Plan, the evaluation and reformation of the policy system promoting lifelong learning, and co-operation in lifelong learning policies. The committee develops ideas on these issues, and its advice should be taken into account by the MoE when drafting its five-year plan for lifelong learning. The committee is headed by the Minister of Education and is composed of vice ministers of relevant ministries and lifelong education experts selected by the minister. Experts on lifelong learning from academia and the head of NILE are also members. The Lifelong Education Act does not specify how often the committee should meet (OECD, 2020[7]).

Subnational governments are in charge of regional and local lifelong education promotion councils, which co-ordinate relevant actors at the subnational level. The regional councils are headed by the governor of the region (chairman) and the deputy superintendent of the regional office of education (vice chairman). Membership includes relevant government officials and lifelong education experts. The local councils are headed by the head of the local government, and membership includes representatives of local governments, local offices of education and lifelong education experts (Jong-Han Kim, 2019[8]; Hee-Soo Lee, 2019[9]).

Figure 3.2. Vertical governance of lifelong learning programmes under the responsibility of Ministry of Education in Korea



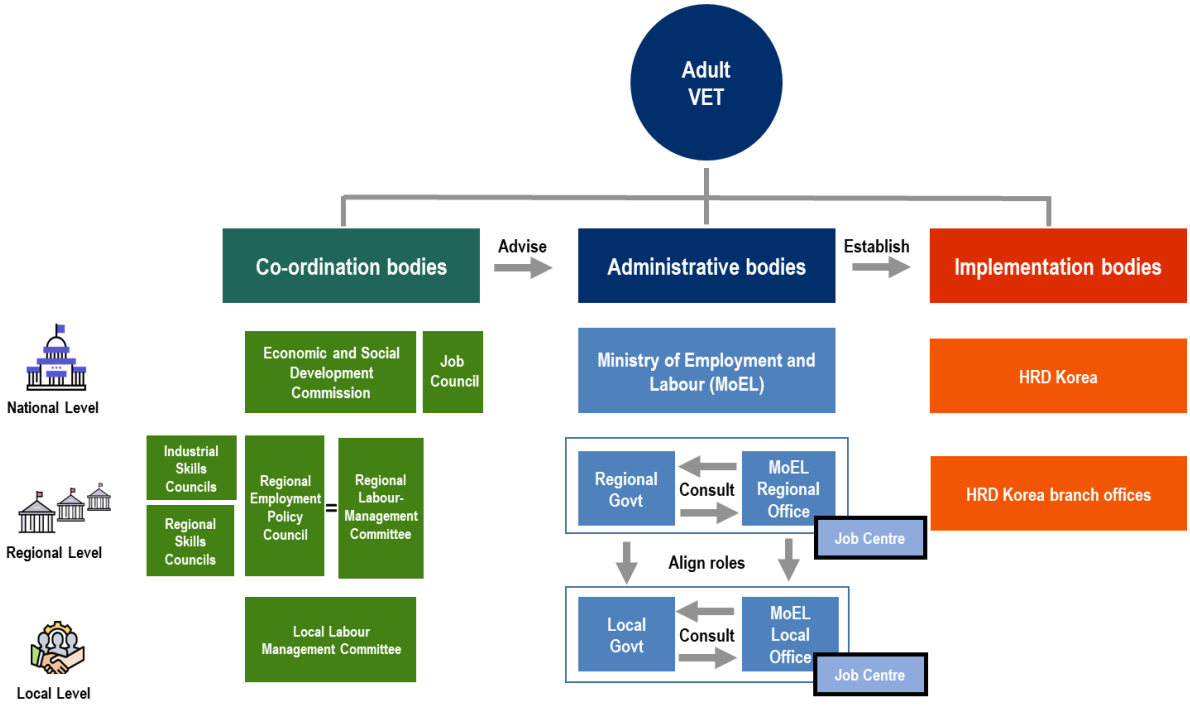
Note: The Regional Institute for Lifelong Education is established by regional governments.
Source: OECD elaborations of Lee et al. (2019[10]), Written input prepared for the Korea governance review on adult learning.

The MoEL provides adult VET through a vertical governance structure consisting of administrative, implementation and co-ordination bodies at each level of government (Figure 3.3). The MoEL through its regional and local offices oversees adult VET policies across levels of government. The subnational offices of the MoEL operate job centres (101 regional job centres as of 2020) that supervise public and private VET providers and distribute funding through the Work-Study Dual System[4] (to employers) and the National Tomorrow Learning Card (to individual beneficiaries) (see Chapter 5 for a description of this financial incentive) (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2019[11]; Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2020[12]; Korea Employment Information Service, 2020[13]). There are also job centers for middle-aged people run by the Korea Labour Foundation (12 regional centres and 1 sectoral center), which provide training programmes for jobseekers and employed people, as well as programmes to support the school-to-job transfer in co-operation with affiliates of the MoEL and relevant local organisations.

The Human Resources Development Services of Korea (HRD Korea) and its regional branch offices implement the MoEL's adult VET programmes. HRD Korea offices are responsible for supporting VET provided by employers through programmes such as the Local Job Creation Target Notice System, the Consortium for HRD Ability Magnified Programme[5] (CHAMP), the Local-customised Job Creation Support Programme[6] and the National Competence Standards (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2017[14]; Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2018[15]). MoEL's Korea Polytechnics, which are vocational schools, operate various specialised adult learning programmes for disadvantaged groups (e.g. women, middle-aged adults), as well as VET programmes in specific technology driven industries. Similarly, the MoEL's Korea University of Technology and Education supports adult learning programmes through its three affiliates: 1) the Online Lifelong Education Institute runs the Smart Training Education Platform (STEP) and supports online adult VET programmes for all citizens; 2) the Human Resources Development Institute provides training courses for VET teachers; and 3) the Korean Skills Quality Authority supervises adult VET institutes and ensures that adult learning programmes are of good quality and aligned with labour market needs.

The co-ordination of adult VET policies takes place through bodies at each level of government. The National Council for Employment Policy and the Job Council are the main co-ordination bodies at the national level that engage relevant actors to regularly review adult VET policies. At the subnational level, regional labour-management committees and local labour and management committees are the main co-ordination bodies. Local labour-management committees consist of representatives from subnational governments, subnational offices of the MoEL, labour unions and other relevant stakeholders. Since 2008, most regions have replaced regional employment councils with regional labour-management committees. Regional skills councils and industrial skills councils are additional engagement bodies established by the MoEL to promote VET based on local needs in collaboration with regional governments, employers' associations, labour unions and experts (see Chapter 4) (Gil-Sang Yoo, 2019[16]).

Figure 3.3. Vertical governance of adult vocational education and training programmes under the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment and Labour in Korea



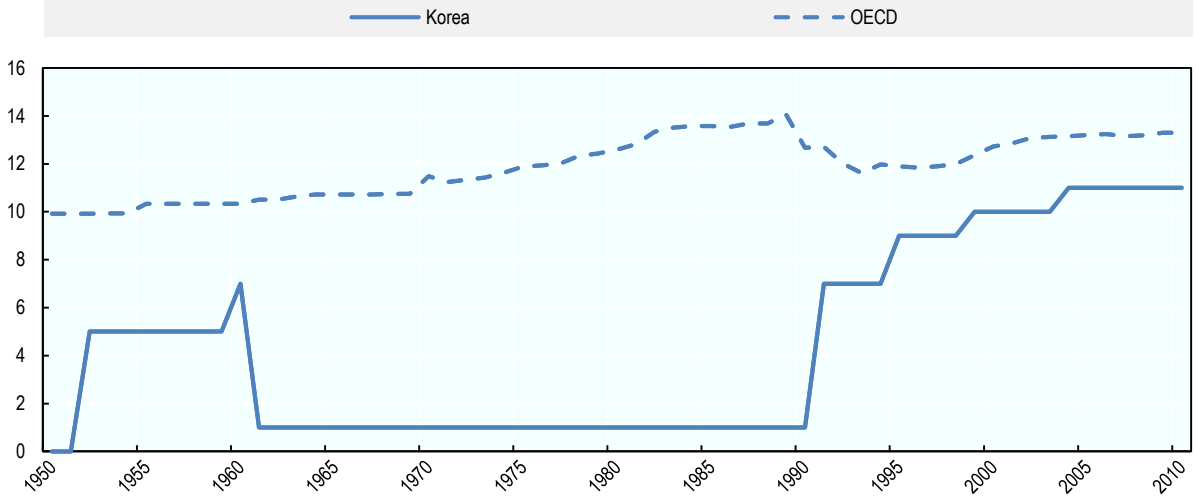
Note: HRD Korea branch offices are established by MoEL.
Source: OECD elaborations of Korea (2019[17]), OECD Skills Strategy Missions to Korea.

Korea has undergone a decentralisation process that has given subnational governments increased responsibility for policies such as adult learning. The decentralisation process in Korea has been relatively recent in comparison to other OECD countries, and was reintroduced in 1987 as Korea transitioned back to a democracy after 26 years of authoritarian rule (Figure 3.4). The Local Autonomy Act and the Local Finance Act (1988) laid the legal foundation for devolving more responsibilities to subnational governments. In 1991, subnational elections for the executive and legislative were introduced, and in 1995, fiscal resources started being transferred to subnational governments.

In the current Moon Jae-In administration, decentralisation is one of the Top “100 national tasks” in order “to promote well-balanced development across every region" (Goal IV), “to promote autonomy and decentralisation to realise grassroots democracy” (Strategy 1), and "to strengthen fiscal decentralisation for financial autonomy" (Task 75). The 100 national tasks programme includes measures to transfer functions of central government to local governments and to increase budgets allocated to local governments (OECD, 2018[18]). The main motivation behind the decentralisation efforts has been to reduce the current economic and social disparities across regions in Korea (see further below). These regional disparities are due to historic concentrated government investment in strategic regions such as Seoul, Incheon and Ulsan to facilitate the accessibility of human resources, material and infrastructure during the rapid economic development phase of the 1960s and 1970s, when regional economic balance was a lower priority (Garcilazo et al., 2019[19]; Lee, 2015[20]).

Figure 3.4. Level of decentralisation over time in Korea and across the OECD

Regional Authority Index, 2016



Note: Regional authority is measured along ten dimensions: institutional depth, policy scope, fiscal autonomy, borrowing autonomy, representation, law making, executive control, fiscal control, borrowing control and constitutional reform.
Source: OECD elaborations of Hooghe et al. (2016[21]), *Measuring regional authority, Volume I: a post-functionalist theory of governance*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198728870.001.0001.

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Although decentralisation or centralisation efforts can be effective or ineffective, depending on the context (Joumard and Kongsrud, 2003[22]), countries with strong local democracies in general have benefited from the decentralisation processes (Charbit and Michalun, 2009[6]). These benefits include tailoring policies to local contexts; making progress in policy innovation due to the wide range of approaches across subnational governments; managing a diverse society by giving groups a degree of self-rule, while maintaining the overall unity of the country; and creating balance by providing a countervailing force to the national government. However, the decentralisation process needs to be carefully managed to avoid risks such as challenges in meeting national macroeconomic goals, incoherent policies across the country, high transaction costs with a large number of government units involved, and not being able to take advantage of economies of scale (Charbit and Michalun, 2009[6]). Moreover, decentralisation can lead to greater disparities across regions, thus reinforcing pre-existing inequalities, if not accompanied with the reallocation of sufficient funds and institutional and technical support to match new responsibilities (Rodríguez-Pose and Gill, 2003[23]; Sánchez-Reaza and Rodríguez-Pose, 2002[24]). Given that further decentralisation is a priority for the Korean government, strong vertical governance arrangements in policies such as adult learning are key to raise benefits, minimise risks and reduce regional disparities.

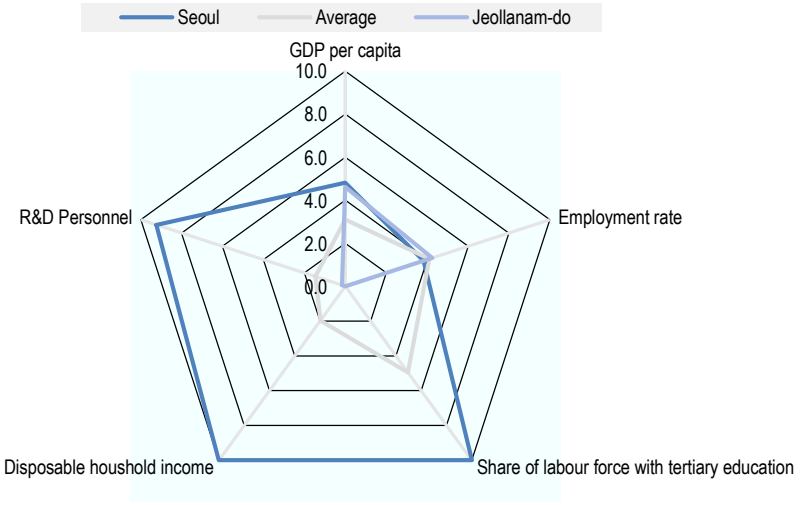
Regional disparities across Korea

Regions across Korea vary substantially in a variety of dimensions. As shown in Figure 3.5 and Table 3.1, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita varies greatly, with Daegu having a GDP per capita of USD 25 789, while Ulsan has a GDP per capita almost three times larger at USD 73 038. Overall, population and GDP are highly concentrated, as Seoul and its immediate surrounding area is inhabited by almost half of Korea's population and accounts for around 40% of the national GDP (OECD, 2020[4]). Employment rates also vary across regions, between 63% in Busan and 73% in Jeju-do. The share of the labour force with a tertiary education varies greatly across regions, ranging between 28% in Jeollanam-do

and 55% in Seoul, which reflects the concentration of universities and labour market opportunities for highly educated graduates in Seoul.

The level of disposable household income also differs across regions, from USD 18 424 in Jeollanam-do to USD 23 502 in Seoul. This variation has implications regarding the extent to which individual households can afford additional private expenditure on services such as adult learning. The number of research and development (R&D) personnel, which is often used as a proxy indicator to measure the demand of high level skills, varies across regions and is highest in Gyeonggi-do, which is the region surrounding Seoul that has a significant number of research institutes (OECD, 2020[4]). Vertical governance arrangements need to take into account these regional disparities so that policies such as those related to adult learning do not inadvertently reinforce these differences and benefit more advantaged regions.

Figure 3.5. Regional differences across Korea



Note: The normalised scores indicate the relative performance across regions in Korea: the further away from the core of the chart, the better the performance.
Source: OECD (2020[25]), *OECD Regional Statistics*, https://stats.oecd.org/.

StatLink https://stat.link/su3kca

Table 3.1. Comparison of example regions in Korea in 2020

Indicators	Lowest	Average	Highest
GDP per capita	USD 25 789 (Daegu)	USD 40 542	USD 73 038 (Ulsan)
Employment rate	63% (Busan)	67%	73% (Jeju-do)
Share of labour force with tertiary education	28% (Jeollanam-do)	42%	55% (Seoul)
Disposable household income	USD 18 424 (Jeollanam-do)	USD 19 499	USD 23 502 (Seoul)
R&D personnel	3 986 (Jeju-do)	31 258	145 922 (Gyeonggi-do)

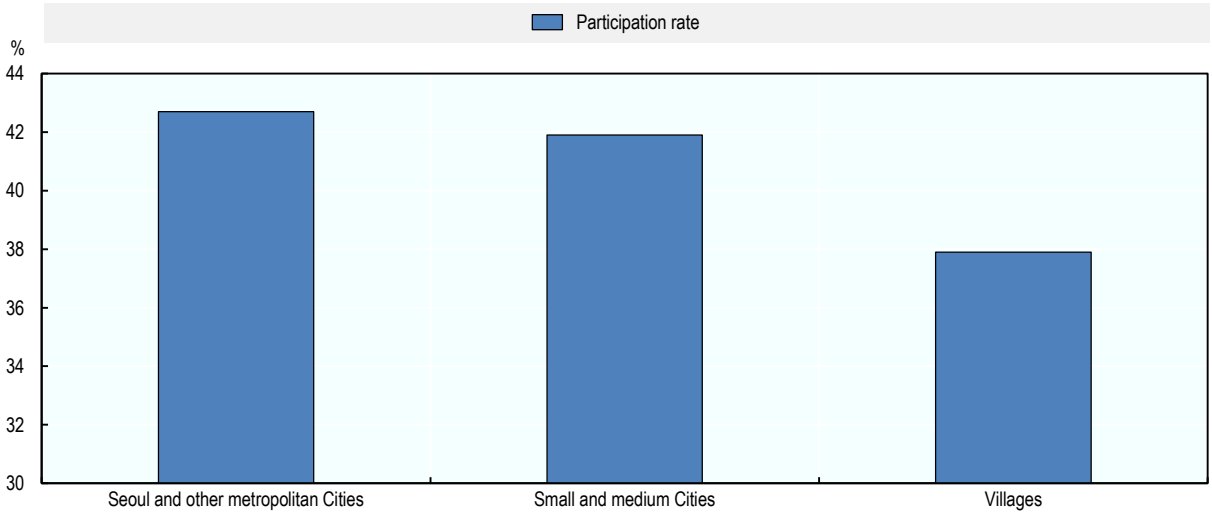
Source: OECD (2020[25]), *OECD Regional Statistics*, https://stats.oecd.org/.

Adult learning participation varies significantly across Korea (Figure 3.6). Based on the latest data from the Lifelong Learning Survey, the participation rate in Seoul and the other six metropolitan cities (43%) is similar to the participation rate in small and medium cities (42%), but significantly higher than the participation rate in villages (38%) (KOSIS, 2020[5]). Given that Korea's urban population is unevenly concentred in a few major cities[7] and unevenly scattered in a few regions, adult learning participation rates vary significantly across regions (OECD, 2012[26]). Improving governance arrangements across levels of

government plays an important role in fostering equity in the access and outcomes of adult learning across the country, so that all adults, regardless of their location, have similar opportunities to access and benefit from adult learning.

Figure 3.6. Differences in adult learning participation, by location

Adult learning participation rate across locations, 2019



Note: The provinces (*Do)* are composed of small and medium cities (*Si*) and counties (*Gun*). Cities (*Si*) have a population of at least 150 000 inhabitants. Counties (*Gun*) have fewer than 150 000 inhabitants.
Source: OECD elaborations of Ministry of Education and KEDI (2019[27]), *Lifelong Learning Survey*, http://kosis.kr/.

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Opportunities to strengthen vertical governance in adult learning

This chapter presents two opportunities for improving the vertical governance of adult learning policies in Korea. Opportunity 1 examines how to strengthen co-operation in adult learning policies across levels of government and among subnational actors so that such policies are implemented effectively. Opportunity 2 examines how to support subnational governments, in particular those with low capacity, so that adult learning policies are implemented equitably across Korea.

Korea can strengthen vertical governance by:

1. Improving co-operation in adult learning policies across levels of government.
2. Supporting subnational governments to effectively implement adult learning policies.

Opportunity 1: Improving co-operation in adult learning policies across levels of government

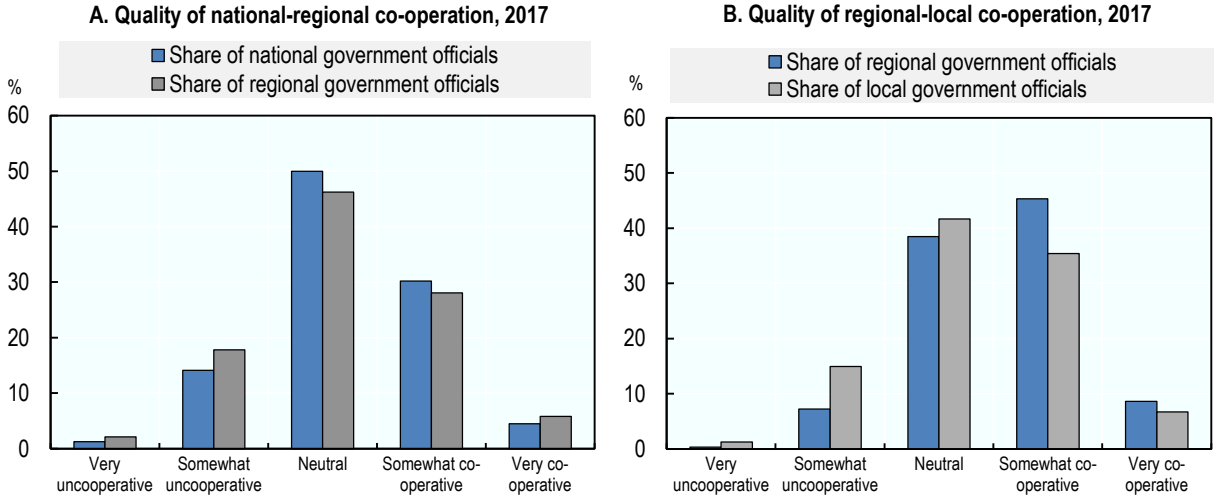
This section provides an overview of the national and subnational actors in Korea, examines the co-operation mechanisms between them, and explores how co-operation could be improved, in particular through relevant co-ordination bodies. Relevant country examples and specific recommendations are also presented.

Strengthening co-operation between national and subnational governments

Strong co-operation across levels of governments in adult learning matters to improve participation, outcomes and cost-effectiveness (OECD, 2003[28]). Co-operation between the national government and subnational governments, which include 17 regional governments and 226 local governments, allows Korea to more effectively achieve national goals for adult learning and tailor adult learning policies to the subnational context (NILE, 2011[29]). Strengthening co-operation across levels of government is a priority for the current administration in order to foster inclusive growth (Kwon, 2019[30]; NILE, 2011[29]). In the context of COVID-19, stronger co-operation across levels of government is also critical to implement a co-ordinated and coherent approach to addressing the economic and social ramifications of the pandemic across subnational areas (OECD, 2020[2]).

The quality of co-operation across levels of government on a range of policies varies in Korea. According to the Inter-governmental Relationship Survey, fewer than 50% of government officials across national and regional levels think that the relationship across their two levels is either “very co-operative” or “somewhat co-operative" (Figure 3.7, Panel A). Similarly, fewer than 35% of civils servants across national and local levels think that the relationship across their two levels is either “very co-operative” or “somewhat co-operative" (Figure 3.7, Panel B). In both instances, regional and local government officials are less likely than national government officials to perceive the level of co-operation positively (Korea Institute of Public Administration, 2017[31]). During OECD missions to Korea, representatives confirmed these findings and expressed concerns that co-operation in policy making in the domain of adult learning is relatively low and needs to be improved (Korea, 2019[17]).

Figure 3.7. Views of Korean government officials on the quality of vertical co-operation



Note: The Inter-governmental Relationship Survey, conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA), polled government officials working for the national government and subnational (regional and local) governments.
Source: OECD elaborations of the Korea Institute of Public Administration (2017[31]), *Inter-governmental Relationship Survey*, https://www.kipa.re.kr/site/eng/main.do.

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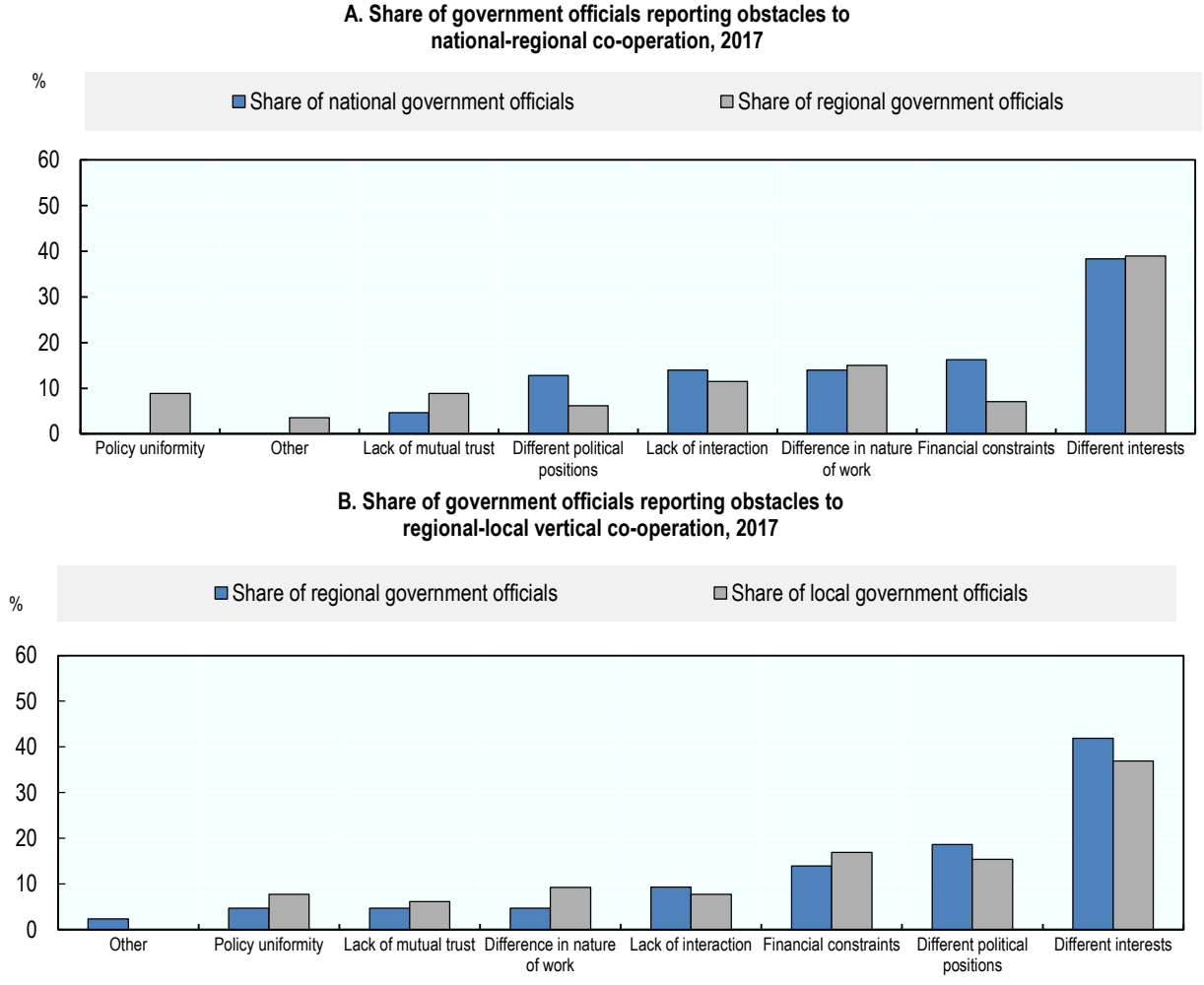
There are obstacles hindering vertical co-operation. Figure 3.8 features the perceived barriers to vertical co-operation across the different levels of government. Different interests across levels of government, lack of interaction, different political positions and financial constraints were perceived to be the main issues preventing effective national-regional and regional-local co-operation. During the OECD mission,

experts in Korea expressed concerns that vertical co-operation in adult learning policies was hampered by different levels of government having diverging interests and priorities for adult learning policies. Other concerns included insufficient communication and dialogue about how adult learning policies should be designed and implemented to take local contexts into account and also be coherent with national objectives, a lack of clarity about respective roles and responsibilities in adult learning policies, and different perspectives on the necessary financial contributions from each level of government for adult learning policies (NILE, 2011[29]; Korea, 2019[17]). Such challenges in vertical governance can lead to the provision of adult learning programmes that do not satisfy the needs of the end users, an overlap in programmes provided by different actors, and the lack of financial resources for programmes that can benefit those in need (Korea, 2019[17]; NILE, 2011[29]).

Figure 3.8. Views of Korean government officials on the barriers to vertical co-operation



Note: The Inter-governmental Relationship Survey, conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA), polled government officials working for the national government and subnational (regional and local) governments.
Source: OECD elaborations of the Korea Institute of Public Administration (2017[31]), *Inter-governmental Relationship Survey*, https://www.kipa.re.kr/site/eng/main.do.

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Several mechanisms support co-operation between national and subnational governments. These mechanisms include co-ordinating bodies, legal mechanisms, performance measurement, contracts and (quasi-)integration mechanisms (Table 3.2) (Charbit and Michalun, 2009[6]). In Korea, these mechanisms exist to varying degrees in adult learning policies. However, more could be done to ensure that they are designed and used to effectively align interests, clarify respective roles and responsibilities, promote meaningful dialogue and communication, and foster transparency and trust across levels of government (Korea, 2019[17]; Charbit and Michalun, 2009[6]). In the following section, co-ordinating bodies and related legal mechanisms are discussed in greater detail, as performance measurements (Chapter 5), contracts, agreements and pacts (Chapter 2), and (quasi-) integration mechanisms (Opportunity 2 in this chapter) are discussed in other parts of this report.

Table 3.2. Mechanisms to support co-operation in adult learning policies between national and subnational governments

Name of mechanism	Description of mechanism	Korean examples	Other country examples
Co-ordinating bodies	Such bodies promote dialogue, co-operation and collaboration; build capacity; align interests and timing; and share good practice. They are relatively straightforward to establish and can facilitate locally tailored adult learning policy design.	Regional Lifelong Education Council (MoE); regional employment policy councils/labour-management committees/regional skills councils (MoEL)	Regional Skills Council (Ireland), Skills Council (Norway)
Legal mechanisms	Legal mechanisms (legislation, regulation, constitutional change) can ensure clear responsibilities and the allocation of necessary resources. Standard setting is less binding than legislation, but defines the inputs, outputs and/or outcomes required for an activity.	Lifelong Learning Act (MoE); Employer Policy Act/Workers' Skills Development Act/Employment Insurance Act (MoEL)	Subnational Employment Law (Japan)
Performance measurement	Performance measurement uses indicators to monitor and evaluate performance in adult learning policies at the subnational level. It can promote learning across levels of government, stimulate co-ordinated efforts in critical areas, improve transparency and accountability, and help reinforce other governance mechanisms.	Lifelong learning city re-accreditation process (MoE); Korean Skills Quality Authority performance measurement (MoEL)	Accreditation and quality assurance for adult VET (Hong Kong, China)
Contracts, agreements and pacts	Contracts, agreements and pacts allow parties to commit either to take action or to follow guidelines that transfer decision-making rights between them. They are based on mutual agreement, do not require legislative change, and are public and transparent. They can be costly to negotiate, implement and enforce, especially if the parties are reluctant to give up their prerogatives or priorities.	Gwangju Job Creation Programme (MoEL), which is an agreement between the MoEL and Gwangju province	Agreements between federal and provincial governments to support adult learning programmes (Canada)
(Quasi-) integration mechanisms	Integrating a particular function of institutions at subnational levels (i.e. human resource management or e-government) and placing it under the auspices of a single institution at a higher government level to build critical mass for better public policy results.	Employment Crisis Pre-emptive Response Package (MoEL)	Joint municipal body of hospitals responsible for managing hospitals at a regional level (Finland)

Source: Charbit and Michalun (2009[6]), "Mind the Gaps: Managing Mutual Dependence in Relations among Levels of Government", *OECD Working Papers on Public Governance*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/221253707200.

Co-ordination bodies can play an important role in facilitating co-operation between national and subnational governments through facilitating knowledge transfer, identifying priorities, informing budget allocations and fostering consensus and ownership for national adult learning reforms. Such co-ordination bodies can also allow the national government to promote national coherence in adult learning policy, while taking into account specific subnational needs and encouraging innovative subnational initiatives (OECD, 2020[7]; Charbit and Michalun, 2009[6]). Across the OECD, co-ordinating bodies are the most frequently used instrument for co-ordinating policies across different levels of government (OECD, 2013[1]). Countries with well-developed co-ordination bodies, such as inter-governmental committees and regular formal

meetings, have a comparative advantage for the introduction and implementation of future reforms (OECD, 2013[1]).

In Korea, there are co-ordination bodies between national and subnational governments in adult learning that come under the responsibility of both the MoE and MoEL (Table 3.3). While these bodies typically play a dual role in co-ordinating horizontally at the government level and vertically across levels of government, their horizontal co-ordination role is more well developed, and their vertical co-ordination role still needs to be strengthened.

On the MoE side, regional and local lifelong education promotion councils are the co-ordinating bodies that facilitate co-operation between national and subnational governments. They consist of up to 20 members, with government representatives and stakeholders tasked with reviewing the design and execution of subnational lifelong education promotion implementation plans at regional and local levels (National Law Information Center, 2020[32]). The specific roles and responsibilities of the regional and local councils are governed by subnational government ordinances and can therefore vary across subnational area.

On the MoEL side, the main co-ordination body between the national and subnational government are the 17 regional skills councils (RSCs). The co-chairs of each RSC are the representatives of the regional industrial communities and the deputy heads of the regional governments. RSC members include about 30 stakeholders from unions and employers' associations, regional offices of education, universities, and experts on employment and human resource development issues. Each RSC also has a plenary committee and various autonomously operated sub-committees and working-level committees that discuss detailed matters at the project level for the region. Each of these committees also has its own staff who conduct skills supply and demand surveys, establish regional human resources development plans, devise training programmes that meet regional demands, and provide feedback to the national government. Other co-ordination bodies include the Job Council and its subnational offices and the labour-management committees that are involved in adult learning policy co-ordination across levels of government.

Table 3.3. Main co-ordination bodies between national and subnational governments

	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Employment and Labour
Name	Regional/local lifelong education promotion councils.	Regional skills councils.
Description	Established by regional/local governments, these councils are chaired by the heads of subnational governments and co-chaired by deputy superintendents of subnational offices of education. Membership includes relevant government staff and lifelong education experts.	Established in each of the 17 regions. Each council is co-chaired by representatives of the regional industrial communities and the deputy heads of the regional governments. Members consist of about 30 stakeholders from unions and employers' organisations, regional offices of education, universities, and employment/human resource development experts.
Responsibilities	Review the design and execution of regional lifelong education promotion implementation plans.	Oversee regional training policy, conduct skills supply and demand surveys, establish regional human resources development plans, and devise training programmes.

Source: National Law Information Centre (2020[32]), National Law Information Centre website, www.law.go.kr.

The existence of co-ordination bodies by itself, however, does not guarantee effective vertical co-operation in adult learning policies. Three factors in particular determine the effectiveness of co-ordination bodies: 1) a legal mandate that clarifies and strengthens their role; 2) the active participation of members; and 3) sufficient financial and human resources to allow them to fulfil their functions. Each of these three factors need be further strengthened in Korea to raise the effectiveness of its co-ordination bodies (Hee-Soo Lee, 2019[9]; Jong-Han Kim, 2019[8]; Korea, 2019[17]).

A legal mandate should clarify and strengthen the role of co-ordination bodies. While the current law elaborates on the roles and responsibilities for horizontal co-ordination, it does not sufficiently clarify the roles and responsibilities for vertical co-ordination.

This means that, in practice, the communication between national and subnational co-ordination bodies is limited. For example, the National Lifelong Education Promotion Committee and subnational lifelong education councils mostly work only at their own government level (Hee-Soo Lee, 2019[9]). Furthermore, the National Lifelong Education Promotion Committee is not legally required to solicit input from subnational lifelong education promotion councils when reviewing the National Lifelong Education Promotion Framework Plan (National Law Information Center, 2020[32]). This is a significant shortcoming, as the five-year National Lifelong Education Promotion Framework Plan is the most important national adult learning policy document given that it outlines the overall vision for adult learning, as well as the mid- and long-term policy objectives, strategy, budget, infrastructure needs, policy evaluation approach, and specific target groups. Without effective co-ordination between national and subnational levels through these bodies, the design and implementation of the national plan does not benefit from input on the diverse contexts, challenges and policy lessons learned at the subnational level. The ensuing risk is that the national plan does not sufficiently address regional disparities in adult learning participation and outcomes.

An amendment to the Lifelong Education Act governing the National Lifelong Education Promotion Committee and the subnational ordinances governing the subnational lifelong education councils should clarify and legally require these bodies to co-ordinate with one another, in particular on the development of the National Lifelong Education Promotion Framework Plan. Korea could consider the example of the State-Regions Conference in Italy, where the co-ordination body between national and subnational governments is legally required to review any laws and legislative decrees or government regulations that have implications for various levels of government (Box 3.2) (State-Regions Conference, 2020[33]).

The participation of co-ordination body members also needs to improve through more flexible meeting arrangements. The active participation of members is essential for co-ordination bodies to deliberate and make decisions together on adult learning policy issues. The main constraint of the active participation of members is a lack of time and availability to meet. This constraint is often more pronounced when the co-ordination body requires the presence of senior government officials in order to convene.

For example, the chairman of the regional lifelong education promotion council is by law the head of the regional government. However, given their busy schedule it often becomes difficult to find the time to convene the council, and even when convened the time for discussion and making decisions is often limited. This means that the council in most regions only convenes once a year, that discussions are often rushed or limited, and that important decisions are sometimes delayed or not taken. This inhibits the ability of the councils to function effectively and to fulfil their co-ordination role (NILE, 2011[29]).

A possible solution to this issue would be to either have the head of the regional government represented by a lower ranking official (e.g. deputy head) or to give the vice-chairman, who is a representative of the regional MoE office, more authority to convene the council and make decisions. This could make it possible to convene more frequently, discuss more comprehensively and make relevant decisions (NILE, 2011[29]).

Co-ordination body members could also form smaller working groups on specific policy issues. Such working groups could meet more frequently, discuss relevant policy issues in advance, prepare the substantive input for the main council meetings, and follow up on specific decisions. Smaller working groups on specific issues already exist in the RSCs, where stakeholders can also participate and share their perspectives. The creation of working groups at the regional level for regional and local lifelong education promotion councils would require revising the regional ordinances that govern the operation of the regional councils. Currently, only in three regions (Seoul, Geyongnam and Jeju) do ordinances permit the establishment of sectoral working groups when needed (National Law Information Center, 2020[32]). Korea could consider the example of the Council of Australian Government Skills Council, which is the main vertical co-ordination body on skills in Australia. The Skills Council allows its members to have varying degrees of seniority, participate virtually, and form working groups to meet more frequently as needed (Box 3.2).

Co-ordination bodies require sufficient human and financial resources to fulfil their functions effectively. In contrast to co-ordination bodies at the national level, most co-ordination bodies at the subnational level (e.g. lifelong education promotion councils) lack sufficient human resources due to not having a permanent secretariat. This is makes it difficult for them to meet more than once a year (Korea, 2019[17]), as preparing, managing and following-up on meetings require staff who can fulfil all related tasks. The lack of dedicated staff in engagement bodies restricts the capacity required to play an effective co-ordination role (NILE, 2011[29]; Jong-Han Kim, 2019[8]). It also limits the input that subnational co-ordination bodies, such as the subnational lifelong education promotion councils, can provide to inform important national adult learning policy documents (e.g. the National Lifelong Education Promotion Framework Plan).

The lack of sufficient financial resources is another obstacle for co-ordination bodies to function effectively. Convening members, preparing meeting documents, booking meeting venues, following up on and implementing decisions made during meetings require funding. Due to limited financial resources, council members are not always compensated for their participation in meetings. For example, the regional ordinances of some provinces, such as Daegu and Daejeon, do not yet allow regional lifelong education promotion councils to provide financial compensation to members for participating in meetings. Having to cover the cost of participating in a meeting personally can be an obstacle for the regular participation of members, and thus inhibits the effective functioning of the co-ordination body.

During the OECD mission to Korea, representatives highlighted the existing good practice of a well-resourced and well-functioning co-ordination body, the regional skills council in Busan (Korea, 2019[17]). Busan's RSC has a permanent secretariat of 12 full-time staff and an annual budget of USD 1.2 million. With these resources it has been able to play an active role in co-ordinating adult learning policies through the in-depth preparation and follow-up of meetings, and the continuous engagement of regional actors (Jong-Han Kim, 2019[8]) (Box 3.1). Across all RSCs there are over 10 staff members on average who are divided into two to three teams to work on different different tasks.

Equipping co-ordination bodies, especially at subnational levels, with sufficient human and financial resources will be important to raise their effectiveness in co-ordinating across governments. Given that co-ordination bodies at the subnational level are typically established and funded by the relevant subnational government, the vast differences in the overall available resources of subnational governments for adult learning (see Chapter 5) should be considered. The national government should provide additional resources to support subnational co-ordination bodies, which receive few resources from their subnational governments. Another cost-effective approach would be for other relevant adult learning government institutions, such as NILE and the Regional Institutes for Lifelong Education, to host the secretariats of the co-ordination bodies (Korea, 2019[17]). This would mean that staff members from NILE and the Regional Institutes for Lifelong Education could fulfil the functions of the secretariat of the co-ordination bodies in preparing documents, inviting members, booking venues, etc. The office meeting rooms belonging to NILE and the Regional Institutes for Lifelong Education could also be used as venues for co-ordination body meetings. Besides the cost savings, this approach would facilitate collaboration and information flow between NILE, the Regional Institutes for Lifelong Education and co-ordination bodies (NARS, 2018[34]).

In Germany, the Kultusministerkonferenz is a co-ordination body between the national and subnational governments on education and cultural issues. It includes representatives responsible for education and cultural policies from the federal and state governments. The body convenes about four times year to exchange information, network and agree upon common policies. The body receives around EUR 50 million annual funding from participating members. A permanent secretariat of around 200 staff members supports the various committees and commissions of the body and is responsible for implementing and evaluating the decisions taken by the body (Box 3.2).

Box 3.1. National example of improving co-operation through a co-ordination body

Regional skills council in Busan

The regional skills council in Busan was launched in 2013 to support regional skills development. The council is composed of representatives from government, employers, unions and civil society organisations. It conducts a skills demand survey of employers, organises discussions between various regional actors, identifies relevant training providers, and prepares a plan for skills development to meet the specific skills needs in Busan. The council also contributes to the development of the National Competency Standards, which classifies competencies. The council has a permanent secretariat of 12 full-time staff and an annual budget of USD 1.2 million. With these resources it has been able to play an active role in co-ordinating adult learning policies through the in-depth preparation and follow-up of meetings and the continuous engagement of regional actors.

Source: Busan HRD (2021[35]), Regional skills council Busan website, http://www.busanhrd.or.kr/.

Box 3.2. International examples of improving co-operation through a co-ordination body

Italy: State Regions Conference

In Italy the main co-ordination body between the national and subnational government is the State-Regions Conference, which convenes representatives from national and subnational governments to discuss policies of common concern, form agreements and exchange information. The body has a number of committees and working groups that cover specific policy issues, such as education and skills. It is mandatory to consult the body on any laws and legislative decrees or government regulations that have implications for various levels of government.

Source: State-Regions Conference (2020[33]), *Permanent Conference for relations between the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano*, http://www.statoregioni.it/it/presentazione/attivita/conferenza-stato-regioni/.

Australia: Council of Australian Government Skills Council

The Council of Australian Government (COAG) is the most important vertical co-ordination body in Australia. There are number of different COAG councils for specific policy issues. In the COAG Skills Council, representatives from all member jurisdictions (federal and state) participate. Seniority may vary, but members must be in a position to represent their jurisdiction/agency at meetings, and ensure that objectives are met and that implementation is followed through. In order to make the most of the meetings, each council can establish working groups that can meet more frequently as needed. Meetings can also be held virtually, providing greater flexibility. The Skills Council has a legal mandate to advise on skills priorities and reforms requiring national and subnational collaboration, and thus provides subnational governments a platform to communicate their priorities for national skills policies and agree upon partnerships across levels of government.

Source: Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020[36]), *Skills Commonwealth-State Relations webpage*, https://www.employment.gov.au/council-australian-governments-skills-council-COAG.

Germany: Kultusministerkonferenz

The Kultusministerkonferenz is a co-ordination body between national and subnational governments on education and cultural issues. It includes representatives responsible for education and cultural policies from the federal and state governments. The body convenes about four times a year to exchange information, network and agree upon common policies. It receives around EUR 50 million in annual funding from participating members. A standing secretariat of around 200 staff members supports the various committees and commissions of the body, and is responsible for implementing and evaluating the decisions taken.

Source: KMK (2020[37]), *The Overview of the Standing Conference*, https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/kmk_Infografik.pdf.

Opportunity 2: Supporting subnational governments to effectively implement adult learning policies

This section provides an overview of the capacity of subnational government officials to implement adult learning policies. It then examines how the capacity of subnational government officials could be raised by improving staff mobility policies, increasing training provision and supporting co-operation across subnational governments. Relevant country examples and specific recommendations are also presented.

Increasing the capacity of subnational government officials to implement adult learning policies

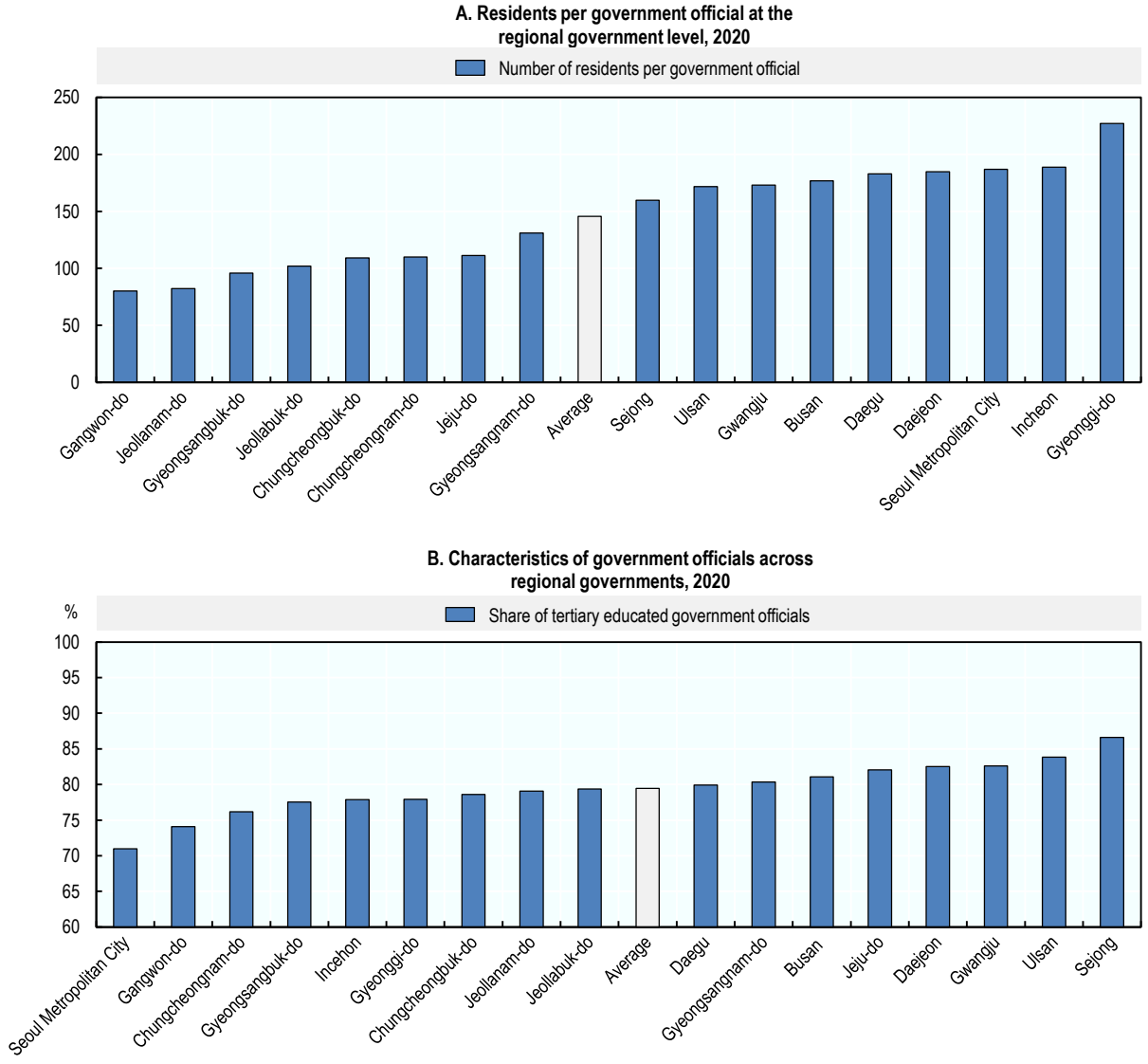
The capacity of subnational government officials matters for implementing adult learning policies. Capacity refers to the ability of subnational government officials to carry out their responsibilities. This includes the human and financial resources to carry out strategic planning and project and budget management, as well as the design and implementation of projects tailored to local needs (OECD, 2009[38]).

Ensuring capacity across subnational government officials is important for equity reasons so that policies are implemented effectively and efficiently across regions (Charbit and Michalun, 2009[6]). As Korea aims to become more decentralised and reduce regional imbalances (OECD, 2018[18]) it will be essential to consider how to raise the capacity of government officials at the subnational level and across regions. The financial resources of subnational governments are extensively discussed in Chapter 5, so this section covers the issue of human resources.

Sufficient human resources in subnational governments are necessary to effectively implement policies at the subnational level, as government officials play a critical role in designing, implementing and evaluating adult learning policies. However, the availability of human resources differs vastly across regional and local governments. The higher the workload a government official faces, the more challenging it becomes to effectively carry out their responsibilities. At the regional level, the average number of residents per government official ranges between 80 (Gangwon-do) and 227 (Gyeonggi-do) (Figure 3.9, Panel A). At the local level, the gap is even wider, ranging between 105 (Jeollanam-do) and 353 (Daejeon) (KOSIS, 2020[5]). The workload of government officials in regions and municipalities with a higher resident per government official ratio, all other factors being equal, is likely to be higher.

The characteristics of available government officials also matters. Education level, as a proxy for skill level, can indicate whether overall skill levels among government officials vary significantly across regions. In Korea, the share of government officials with a tertiary education degree does vary significantly across regions, from 71% in Seoul to 87% in Sejong (Figure 3.9, Panel B). Government officials with sufficiently high skills (e.g. the skills to develop policies, engage stakeholders, manage networks, and commission and contract services) are necessary for effective policy implementation (OECD, 2017[39]). Moreover, the quality of government officials' work, measured by the number of awards given in recognition of their performance, varies across regions, ranging from 8% of officials in Jeju-do to 23% in Gangwon-do (KOSIS, 2020[5]).

Figure 3.9. Number of government officials and their characteristics, by region



Source: OECD elaborations of Ministry of Interior and Safety (2019[40]), *Local Finance Integrated Open System*, http://lofin.mois.go.kr/; KOSIS (2020[5]), Korean Statistical Information Service website, https://kosis.kr/eng/.

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In Korea, human resource constraints are often mentioned as the main obstacle for government officials to effectively implement policies, such as adult learning. The capacity of subnational governments should therefore be raised, particularly in regions and municipalities with lower capacities.

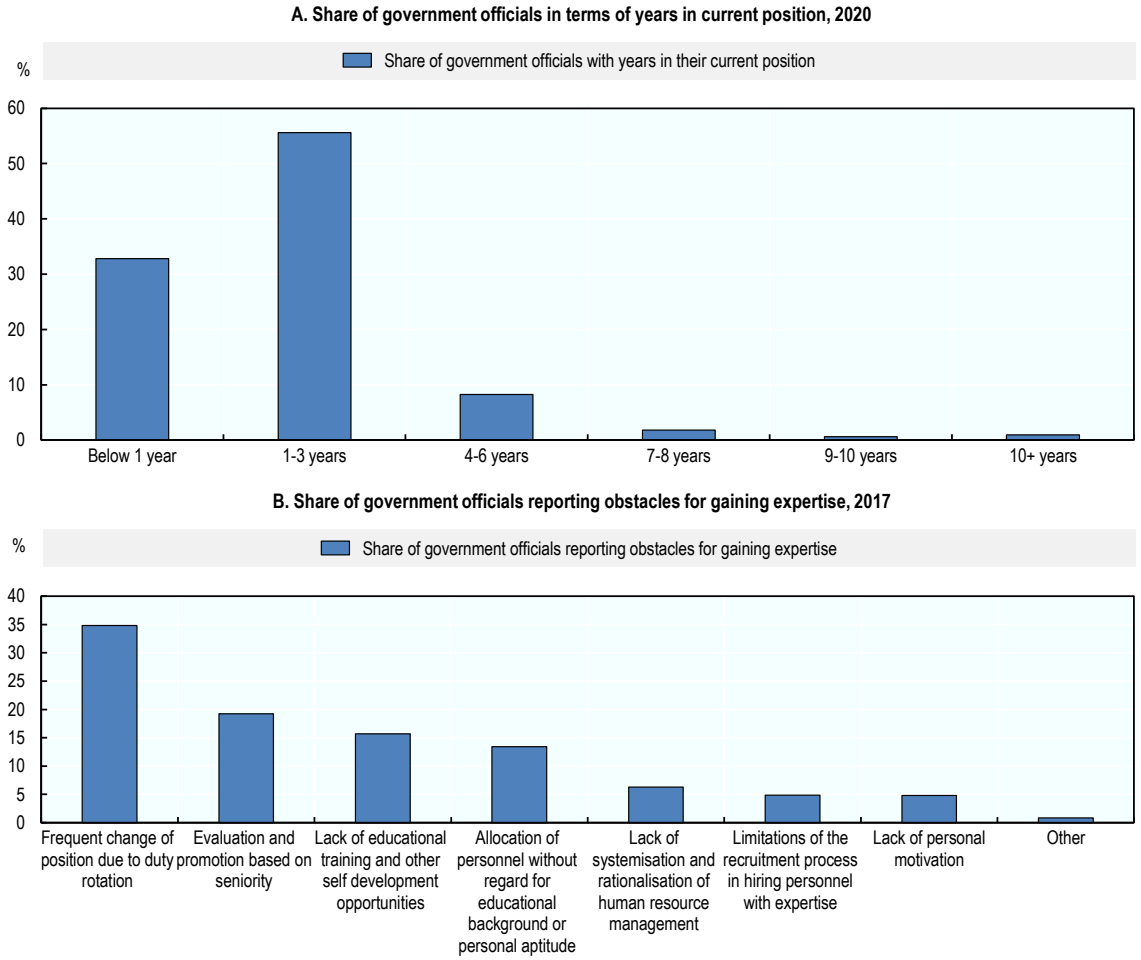
The three main factors affecting the capacity of subnational government officials to implement adult learning policies examined in this chapter are: 1) internal and external staff mobility policies; 2) staff training opportunities; and 3) co-operation arrangements across subnational governments. Each of these factors will be discussed in detail. The absolute number of available staff, especially in low capacity subnational governments, is also an important factor, but as this is largely determined by available financial resources it is discussed in Chapter 5.

Internal and external staff mobility policies could be improved

Government officials are required to participate in mandatory internal mobility schemes. These are on a rotation basis and the tenure in one post lasts on average two to three years. This means that at any given moment, an average of 88% of government officials have been in their current position less than three years (Figure 3.10, Panel A). For subnational government officials this short tenure negatively impacts the continuity of projects and the capacity to implement adult learning policies, as progress made under one official might be halted when their successor takes over (Gil-Sang Yoo, 2019[16]). A newly arriving government official may also lack the relevant substantive knowledge about the policy domain to which they have been assigned. By the time they familiarise themselves sufficiently with the new policy domain and have established relationships with local actors, they may already need to prepare for transfer to another post.

In a survey of government officials, the main obstacle (35%) to gaining expertise in a particular field was reported as the frequency of duty rotation (Figure 3.10, Panel B). Other related obstacles reported were the allocation of personnel without regard for educational background or aptitude (13%), the lack of systematisation and rationalisation of human resource management (6%), and limitations of the recruitment process in hiring personnel with expertise (5%).

Figure 3.10. Government officials' time in current position and obstacles to gaining expertise



Note: Data shown for government officials across levels of government.
Source: OECD elaborations of the KOSIS (2020[5]), Korean Statistical Information Service website, https://kosis.kr/eng/; Korea Institute of Public Administration, *Inter-governmental Relationships Survey*, https://www.kipa.re.kr/site/eng/main.do.

StatLink https://stat.link/30mheu

Government officials' expertise could be enhanced through expanded tenure in positions. During the OECD mission to Korea it was highlighted that rotation practices, insofar as possible, are implemented in such a way as to prevent everyone in one team leaving at the same time, with at least one person in the team remaining longer to assist the next person. These efforts can support policy continuity. However, in practice effective transitions often do not happen. The level of responsibility and the skills between the person leaving and the person arriving as replacement are often quite different. While a general orientation is given to new arrivals to brief them on their responsibilities and the relevant policies, specific guidance on the replacement's role and concrete tasks, as well as on the specific assigned policy domain, is frequently lacking (Korea, 2019[17]).

To mitigate this issue, it may be worthwhile enforcing at least some overlap of staff at the same level with a longer retention period, so that the incoming government official is supported during the transition period. This would be particularly relevant for subnational governments with low capacity, where there are already significant human resource constraints and where it is important to provide the necessary support for incoming government officials to be able to effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities as quickly as possible.

Based on OECD experience, effective posting periods for government officials are between three to five years, which helps to minimise the potential instability caused by frequent rotations and maximises the benefits of providing enough time for gaining expertise (OECD, 2011[41]). Korea should thus consider increasing the number of years for which public servants are posted in a given position. Government officials reported in a survey that having a longer tenure in a position was the second most important measure, after training, for raising their expertise (Figure 3.12).

External mobility schemes should also be improved. Existing external mobility schemes include staff exchanges and secondments vertically across levels of government and horizontally at the same government level (i.e. national, regional, local). In OECD countries, staff exchanges and secondments have proven to be an effective tool to make hard-to-find skills available and to address skills gaps, even if temporarily, across the whole government, and to provide government officials with professional development and mobility opportunities to raise their expertise (OECD, 2017[39]).

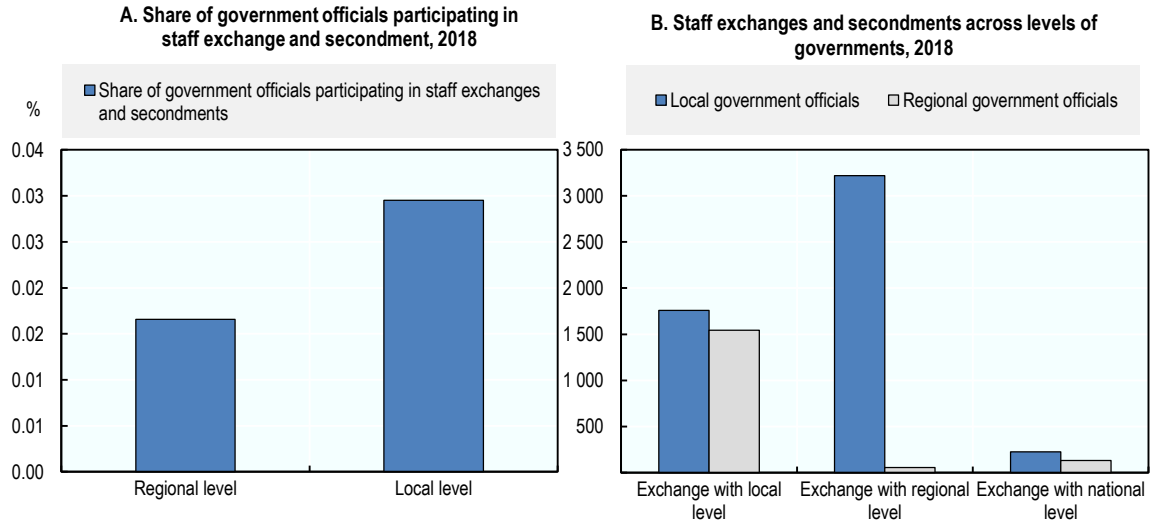
In Korea, staff exchanges and secondments occur outside the official's home institution and are on a voluntary basis (Ministry of Personnel Management, 2020[42]), in contrast to the internal mobility schemes. It is therefore possible for participating individuals to apply for external positions that allow them to build up their expertise, rather than be posted to a position of low interest or relevance. Staff exchanges and secondments also require the mutual agreement of sending and receiving institutions in terms of the timing, duration and participating staff profile, which makes it possible to arrange it to benefit all parties and avoids causing significant human resource gaps that jeopardise policy implementation (Ministry of Personnel Management, 2020[42]).

In the context of adult learning policies, staff exchanges and secondments would allow participants to understand how adult learning policies are designed and co-ordinated at different levels of government or in other government institutions at their own level. Participating individuals are offered incentives to participate in such an exchange, for example by guaranteeing their return to their position in their home institution, by giving them preferential treatment for a desired position or promotion upon return, by considering their participation as a positive factor in job performance evaluation, and by providing them with an allowance payment and housing subsidies (Ministry of Personnel Management, 2020[42]).

However, despite the numerous benefits of such external mobility schemes, the total number of staff participating is still relatively low for both regional and local government officials, and has not significantly changed in the past 20 years (Figure 3.11, Panel A). Only a small share of government officials at the regional (2%) and local level (3%) participated in 2018 (KOSIS, 2020[5]). For regional government officials, most join local governments, while a smaller number join regional and national governments. Most

local government officials join the regional government, while others join other local governments and very few join the national government.

Figure 3.11. Staff exchanges and secondments across levels of government



Source: OECD elaborations of KOSIS (2020[5]), Korean Statistical Information Service website, https://kosis.kr/eng/.

StatLink https://stat.link/18lrni

In a recent survey of government officials across levels of governments, 95% of regional government officials and 92% of local government officials responded that staff exchanges and secondments across regional and local governments should be expanded (Korea Institute of Public Administration, 2017[31]). Given the disparities in the number and quality of staff across subnational governments, staff exchanges and secondments should be further expanded to particularly support subnational governments with low capacities.

Across OECD countries, staff exchanges are commonly organised to ensure that the civil service effectively reallocates human resources to emerging needs, and most OECD countries are planning to increase mobility schemes. Common policy levers to increase participation in mobility schemes include providing incentives and promoting the recognition of mobility benefits (OECD, 2017[39]).

One of the challenges of expanding such external mobility schemes in Korea has been finding a match between the supply and demand of institutions and staff members. Matching processes could be enhanced through online platforms. For example, in Flanders the mobility of government officials across the whole government has been increased through Radar, an online platform that facilitates the supply and demand matching process. Canada has a similar platform called Jobs Marketplace, which connects government officials across government for work placement opportunities (OECD, 2017[39]) (Box 3.4).

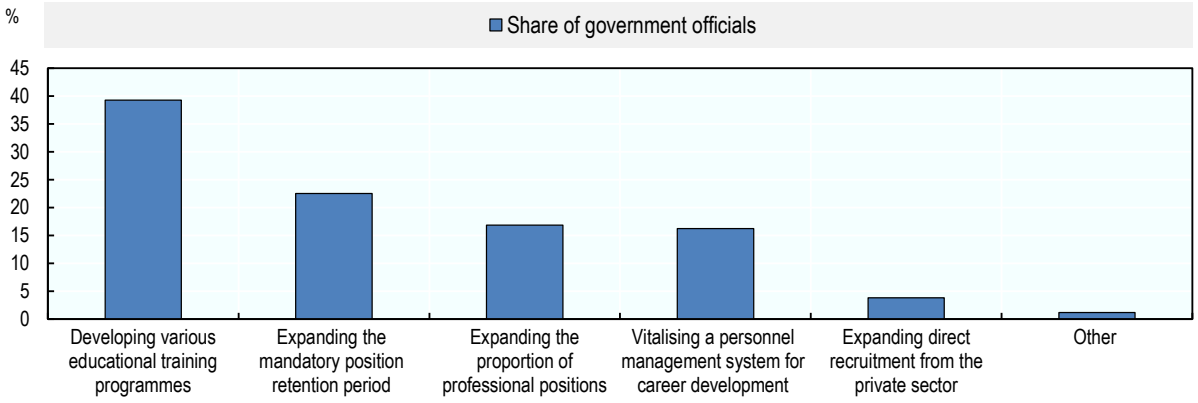
Training opportunities for subnational government officials could be improved

Training for subnational government officials could increase their expertise in implementing adult learning policies. An adequate level of expertise for implementing adult learning policies among subnational government officials is crucial as they are the main actors executing adult learning policies. A lack of expertise at subnational levels makes the successful implementation of national adult learning policies more difficult. Around 39% of government officials perceive training to be the most important way of

strengthening their expertise (Figure 3.12). Training could raise the expertise of subnational officials to design, propose, implement, monitor and evaluate subnational adult learning policies. Expertise in effectively applying for national grant funding (see Chapter 5) and using available national and subnational funding sources for adult learning policies could also be raised through training.

Figure 3.12. Policies for raising the expertise of government officials

Share of government officials expressing views about effective policy measures to enhance their expertise, 2017



Source: OECD elaborations of the Korea Institute of Public Administration (2017[31]), *Inter-governmental Relationship Survey*, https://www.kipa.re.kr/site/eng/main.do.

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There are various training opportunities for government officials. The Ministry of Personnel Management is responsible for overseeing training opportunities across the government and develops the overarching human resource development (HRD) strategy, while each ministry develops its own organisational training plan based on research and surveys on HRD needs. Each ministry allows all government officials to draft an annual self-development plan based on the organisational training plan. Individuals set up annual development objectives that are harmonised with individual career goals and organisational targets and priorities. Government officials can participate in offline or online programmes from diverse training institutes, obtain degrees or certificates, join academic or professional seminars, organise or join study groups, and read work-related books. The ministry monitors each individuals' training twice a year, and performance is reflected in promotion (OECD, 2017[39]). Each government official from grades 9 (lower ranking) to 4 (higher ranking) is required to participate in at least 100 hours of training per year. Overseas long-term training (six months to two years) or short-term training (two to three months) is also sometimes possible (Ministry of Personnel Management, n.d.[43])

The MoEL provides training programmes for government officials in subnational governments through the Regional Employment Academy (Box 3.3) and the Korea Employment and Labour Training Institute. The Academy provides training on using statistics for policy, accessing government online systems, and implementing policies, such as those related to adult VET. (Job Council, 2019[44]). The Institute provides training on employment and labour policies, labour-management relations, adult VET provision, monitoring and evaluation, and the general capacities required for government officials.

Korea should consider improving training for subnational government officials by expanding the adult learning relevant training options and making them accessible across the whole country. It should also improve the modalities of training to make it more practical for participants and to allow participants to apply their learning to specific adult learning projects. Korea could consider the example in Germany, where the federal government provides government officials in local districts and municipalities training on managing and monitoring adult learning programmes through the *Lernen vor Ort* programme (Box 3.4).

The Seoul Metropolitan Institute for Lifelong Education (SMILE) has developed a quality assurance manual for lifelong learning programmes. This manual is used by consultants, consisting of professors and education experts, who meet with local government officials and other actors to provide consulting services and jointly identify local needs, analyse socio-economic conditions in each local area (e.g. demographic trends, industries), and provide guidance on possible lifelong learning (Seoul Metropolitan Institute for Lifelong Education, 2018[45]). SMILE also offers a follow-up service one year after training completion to monitor progress and provide further recommendations. As of 2018, 44 local governments and public lifelong education centres had participated in the project (Seoul Metropolitan Institute for Lifelong Education, 2018[45]) (Box 3.3). While this is a good example of raising the expertise of subnational government officials, many local governments are not yet able to benefit from such a service. It would be worthwhile to either broaden this service to serve more local governments or replicate it in other parts of Korea. This could be a complementary measure to expanding adult learning relevant training options for subnational government officials, and would require increasing co-operation agreements across local governments (see next section) and providing sufficient funding (see Chapter 5), which both are constraining factors.

Co-operation across subnational actors could be strengthened

Given that there are significant human resource constraints across subnational governments, co-operation arrangements could help raise their collective capacity to implement adult learning policies. Experience across the OECD shows a number of benefits to subnational co-operation. When subnational governments co-operate they benefit from economies of scale, which reduces the administrative cost and inefficiencies of implementing policies. In the context of constrained human resources, this makes it possible to implement policies that otherwise would not have been feasible or that would have been of lower quality. Co-operation across subnational governments allows them to exchange best practices and learn from each other (Charbit and Michalun, 2009[6]; OECD, 2020[7]), which can raise the capacity of government staff (similar to the mobility schemes discussed above) and improve policy implementation. During periods of tight public budgets due to increased expenditure on policies addressing the immediate and longer-term impacts of COVID-19, greater co-operation across subnational governments is necessary to minimise competition for resources, foster joint efforts and promote a coherent approach (OECD, 2020[2]).

At the same time, co-operation processes need to be managed carefully so that co-operation arrangements between two or more subnational governments do not unnecessarily limit the flexibility and responsiveness of implemented policies to changing conditions, which may differ across local levels (OECD, 2009[38]; Ministry of Interior and Safety, 2020[46]).

In Korea, there are a number of co-operation initiatives across subnational governments**.** The Ministry of Interior and Safety (MoIS) is actively promoting co-operation among subnational governments to improve service delivery. This has been undertaken through four formal mechanisms: 1) a memorandum of understanding that allows subnational governments to implement co-operation projects and settle disagreements with one another; 2) financial incentives for transferring administrative functions from low capacity subnational governments to high capacity subnational governments in specific policy areas[8]; 3) administrative councils to support consultation between subnational governments; and 4) subnational government associations to undertake large-scale and long-term projects between subnational governments (Table 3.4) (Ministry of Interior and Safety, 2020[46]).

Table 3.4. Co-operation mechanisms across local governments in Korea

Mechanisms of co-operation across local governments, 2016

Mechanism	Description	Example areas	Number
Memorandum of understanding	Local governments engage in a co-operation project usually based on a memorandum-of-understanding agreement.	Local tourism, employment information provision, transportation across neighbouring local areas.	59
Transfer of administrative functions	Some administrative functions are transferred to another local government.	Food waste disposal, construction.	4
Administrative council	Local governments establish an administrative council to consult with one another.	Regional development, transportation, water management.	99
Local government association	Local governments form an association to undertake large-scale and long-term common projects.	Busan-Jinhae Free Economic Zone Authority, Gwangyang Bay free Economic Zone Authority, Jirisan Tourism Development Association.	6

Source: Ministry of Interior and Safety (2017[47]), *Press release: Promoting the development of subnational governments through enhanced collaboration*, https://mois.go.kr/frt/bbs/type010/commonSelectBoardArticle.do?bbsId=BBSMSTR_000000000008&nttId=58349.

In comparison to other policy domains, co-operation between subnational governments in the area of adult learning has been limited. While policies in domains such as transportation, waste disposal and water management cannot be easily undertaken in isolation due to the need to share infrastructure and costs across neighbouring local governments, this is less the case in the area of adult learning. It is possible for a subnational government to implement adult learning policies without such co-operation, but the cost of independent action can be smaller scale programmes. There have been some promising MoE and MoEL initiatives to foster co-operation between subnational governments in adult learning policies.

The MoE supports the Korean Association of Lifelong Learning Cities, which is a network of local governments that have officially been designated lifelong learning cities based on their efforts in adult learning policies (OECD, 2020[7]). Through this network, member cities can exchange their experience and acknowledge and award best practices. The association also provides financial incentives to selected local governments to award their efforts to provide customised lifelong learning opportunities. While this network makes an important contribution to facilitating information sharing among local governments, only cities designated as lifelong learning cities participate, and the network does not involve the joint implementation of adult learning policies between subnational governments.

The MoEL introduced the Employment Crisis Pre-emptive Response Package, which financially supports regional-local consortiums of governments to implement policies that raise employment (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2020[12]). The package gives autonomy to subnational governments in designing their own programmes and choosing their target groups and delivery system. Financial incentives (approximately USD 2-16 million) are granted for five years to selected consortiums who have successfully designed mid- to long-term measures to promote employment. The incentives can be used to provide technical consulting, VET and career counselling, improve working conditions, and provide entrepreneurial support. The main criteria for selection is proposing well-designed mid- to long-term measures to support employment corresponding to local needs. As of 2020, five regional-local consortiums have been selected (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2020[12]). Other MoEL programmes for supporting subnational governments include the Regional/Industrial Specific Human Resource Development Project, which provides funding to selected subnational governments to implement programmes on VET, job placement and business support; and the Regional Innovation Project, which supports regional job creation programmes that especially target disadvantaged groups.

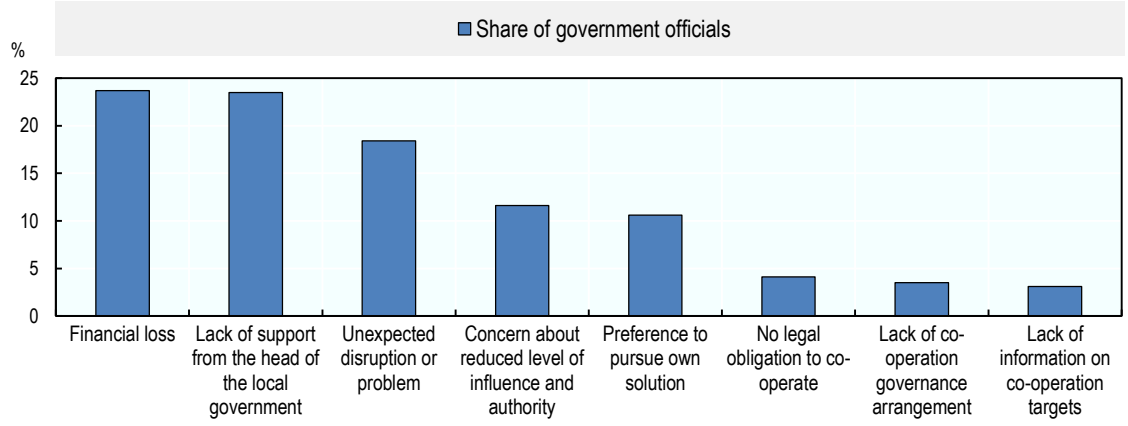
There have been some common challenges in establishing and expanding co-operation arrangements between subnational governments across a variety of policies: 1) insufficient financial co-operation incentives, which are considered too short term and project-based rather than long term and sustainable;

2) a lack of awareness of the benefits of co-operation among subnational government heads and officials, who are concerned about giving up control and not being able to take sole credit for policies implemented with other subnational governments; and 3) stakeholders being engaged too late and not being provided with enough information about the rationale and details of the proposed co-operation, and thus not supporting the co-operation arrangement (KALGS, 2008[48]; Korea, 2019[17]).

Even successfully established co-operation arrangements often fail, for reasons such as financial loss (i.e. the co-operation arrangement does not fully cover the cost of implemented policy), lack of support from the head of the local government, unexpected disruption or problem, concern about reduced level of influence and authority, and a preference to pursue own solution (Figure 3.13) (KALGS, 2008[48]).

Figure 3.13. Main reasons for co-operation arrangements between subnational governments failing

Share of regional and local government officials expressing reasons for co-operation arrangements between subnational governments failing, 2008



Note: The Korean Association for Local Government Studies (KALGS) surveyed 226 subnational government officials from 15 regional governments and 104 local governments whose responsibilities included co-operation with other subnational governments.
Source: OECD elaborations of KALGS (2008[48]), *Institutionalising promotion of inter-regional co-operation programmes*.

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To further support co-operation in adult learning across subnational governments, the national government should raise financial incentives and particularly favour co-operation agreements that are long term and sustainable (for more on funding, see Chapter 5). The amount should be high enough to allow subnational governments to implement the proposed policy without incurring financial losses, and the duration should be sufficient to allow subnational governments to find more sustainable funding sources, such as stakeholders. Stakeholders should be engaged early on in the co-operation negotiations to secure their support in the policy implementation and to contribute their expertise and funding.

Awareness of the importance and benefits of subnational co-operation among subnational government heads and across subnational governments should be raised. Existing networks such as the Korean Association of Lifelong Learning Cities can play an awareness-raising role, but the outreach should be widened to also raise awareness in cities not yet officially designated as lifelong learning cities.

Korea could consider the *Lernen vor Ort* programme in Germany, where the federal government financially supports regional networks with the objective that regions will find their own sustainable funding solutions with stakeholders. In France, a new category of agencies (*Établissements publics de coopération intercommunale*) was created to help strengthen inter-municipal co-operation. A commission made up of representatives from government and stakeholders was also established to oversee co-operation projects from beginning to end (Box 3.4).

Box 3.3. National examples of supporting subnational governments to effectively implement adult learning policies

Regional Employment Academy

The Regional Employment Academy provides subnational government officials with training to raise their capacity in implementing employment relevant policies, such as adult VET. The training covers a variety of topics including using statistics for policy, accessing government online systems, developing project plans, participating in evaluation processes, and raising awareness about new national government strategies and guidelines. The Academy also promotes peer learning among participants and learning from best practices across different regions. Participants can solicit feedback from their peers about specific project plans and discuss specific case studies.

Seoul Metropolitan Institute for Lifelong Education

The Seoul Metropolitan Institute for Lifelong Education (SMILE) provides consulting services to local governments and public lifelong education centres in Seoul. The objective is to increase the expertise of local actors in designing and implementing lifelong learning programmes that take local needs into account. Based on a quality assurance manual for lifelong learning programmes developed by the institute, consultants consisting of professors and education experts meet with local government officials and other actors to provide consulting services and jointly identify local needs, analyse socio-economic conditions in each local area (e.g. demographic trends, industries), and provide guidance on possible lifelong learning. SMILE also offers a follow-up service one year after training completion to monitor progress and provide further recommendations. As of 2018, 44 local governments and public lifelong education centres have participated in the project.

Source: Job Council (2019[44]), *Subnational Employment Policy Improvement Plan*; Seoul Metropolitan Institute for Lifelong Education (2018[45]), *Seoul Lifelong Education Consulting Storybook*.

Box 3.4. International examples of supporting subnational governments to effectively implement adult learning policies

Canada: Jobs Marketplace

Jobs Marketplace is a public forum that allows government officials to network professionally across departments. It enables labour mobility among staff across different positions including indeterminate and term deployments, secondments, and assignments and micro-mission opportunities. The forum also gives improved access for managers to a pool of employees who are motivated to transition to different tasks. Jobs Marketplace operates through an automated matching tool called the Career ConneXions Opportunities Platform. This mechanism matches employees with possible employment opportunities at their level, as well as with professional development opportunities (i.e. mentoring and job shadowing). Jobs Marketplace has recently undergone further enhancement to serve as a one-stop shop for managers and employees to manage public service staffing and development opportunities.

Source: GCconnex (2017[49]), *What is the Jobs Marketplace?*, https://gcconnex.gctools-outilsgc.ca/en/support/solutions/articles/2100027176-what-is-the-jobs-marketplace-.

Germany: Lernen vor Ort programme

This federal programme supported districts and municipalities in building sustainable networks between local administrations and civil society actors. It 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 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 Programme (*Transferinitiative Kommunales Bildungsmanagement*). These transfer agencies provide advice to local authorities, support their education management and spread best practice. 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, P. et al. (2017[50]), *OECD Reviews of School Resources: Chile 2017*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264285637-en.

France: Inter-municipal co-operation

The purpose of inter-municipal co-operation, which is implemented within public inter-municipal co-operation establishments (EPCI: *Établissements publics de coopération intercommunale*), is to jointly manage public facilities or services or foster economic development projects that go beyond the scale of a single municipality. This practice was initially conceived as a way to collectively manage basic services, but has developed into inter-municipal co-operation for diverse projects. Although EPCIs are groups of local authorities, they remain public establishments and are thus governed by a general principle of specialty, which gives them competence only for the areas and matters assigned to them by law or delegated by the member municipalities. In 1999, the law to facilitate the implementation of inter-municipal co-operation was passed prescribing the establishment of a departmental commission for inter-municipal co-operation in municipalities (CDCI: *Commission départementale de la coopération intercommunale*). According to the law, the CDCIs consist of members of the municipalities of the departments, EPCIs, unions, departmental councils and regional councils in the department constituencies. Recently, efforts have been made to extend the scope of inter-municipal co-operation, while also increasing the necessary competences of inter-municipal authorities.

Source: Vie Publique (2020[51]), *Coopération intercommunale et EPCI*, https://www.vie-publique.fr/fiches/20118-la-cooperation-intercommunale-et-les-epci.

Summary of policy recommendations

Policy directions	Recommendations
Opportunity 1: Improving co-operation in adult learning policies across levels of government	
Strengthening co-operation between national and subnational governments	2.1. Provide a clear legal framework that guides the roles of bodies responsible for co-ordinating adult learning polices across levels of government. 2.2. Improve the effectiveness of co-ordination bodies through making the attendance requirements of members more flexible and by establishing working groups. 2.3. Equip co-ordination bodies with sufficient human and financial resources to fulfil their functions effectively.
Opportunity 2: Supporting subnational governments to effectively implement adult learning policies	
Increasing the capacity of subnational government officials to implement adult learning policies	2.4. Improve subnational government staff mobility schemes to ensure the continuity of adult learning policies and provide additional support for subnational governments with low capacity. 2.5. Provide training to subnational officials to raise their capacity for implementing adult learning policies. 2.6. Increase co-operation in adult learning policies among subnational governments by raising awareness of the benefits of co-operation and providing greater financial incentives.

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Notes

[1] Sejong Special Autonomous City was founded as Korea's new administrative city, with a goal to achieve more balanced national development by moving administrative functions out of Seoul (OECD, 2018[18]).

[2] A unitary country, such as Korea, is a country governed as a single power in which the national government is supreme and sovereignty is not shared. This is in contrast with a federal country, where sovereignty is shared between the federal government and self-governing regional entities, which often have their own constitution, parliament and government (OECD, 2019[52]).

[3] NILE is designated by the MoE as the acting body in carrying out the lifelong learning projects set by the ministry, including the Lifelong Learning City programme, lifelong learning accounts and lifelong learning vouchers.

[4] Work-Study Dual System (MoEL) provides on-site vocational training through partnerships between academia and industries.

[5] The Consortium for HRD Ability Magnified Programme (CHAMP) consists of small and medium-sized enterprises that provide vocational training to their employees through joint training centres. They can receive financial support from the government (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2017[14]).

[6] The Local-customised Job Creation Support Programme grants national government funding to selected subnationally designed projects facilitate employment, job creation, job quality improvement and human resource development reflecting local industrial needs.

[7] Seoul, Incheon, Daejeon, Daegu and Busan represent 72% of the urban population and 62% of Korea's total population. In addition, the cities of Ulsan, Gwangju, Cheonan, Cheongju, Pohang, Jeonju and Changwon represent 14% of the urban population and 12% of the total population in Korea (OECD, 2012[26]).

[8] Between 1995 and 2015 there have been 32 instances of transferring administrative functions across subnational governments. When two subnational governments agree upon a transfer of administrative functions (e.g. food waste disposal, sewage system), then the subnational government that transfers the functions partially covers the cost for the other subnational government to implement the administrative functions.

4 Strengthening stakeholder engagement in adult learning in Korea

Effective stakeholder engagement is essential to support Korea's performance in adult learning. Effective adult learning policies require the engagement of a wide variety of stakeholders so that governments can benefit from the expertise and knowledge of stakeholders, enhance the political legitimacy of policy making, and improve the effectiveness of policy implementation. This chapter explores the following opportunities to strengthen stakeholder engagement in Korea: 1) raising the awareness of, and capacity for, effective stakeholder engagement; and 2) involving stakeholders effectively in the adult learning policy-making process.

Introduction: The importance of stakeholder engagement in adult learning

Effective stakeholder engagement is essential to support Korea's performance in adult learning. Policy makers dealing with complex policy choices in adult learning need and benefit from the expertise and knowledge of stakeholders. Engaging stakeholders enhances the political legitimacy of policy making in adult learning, which is important as complex policy decisions often involve a number of trade-offs and political costs. This is especially the case for adult learning policy, which is more complex than many other policy areas as it is located at the intersection of education, labour market, industrial and other policy domains (OECD, 2019[1]). Given that disadvantaged groups in particular have been adversely affected by the social and economic ramifications of COVID-19, targeted stakeholder engagement efforts are needed to ensure that recovery policies, such as those dealing with adult learning, are sufficiently tailored to the specific needs of such disadvantaged groups (OECD, 2020[2]).

Stakeholders are defined in this report as "parties that have an interest or stake in adult learning". They include all individuals, groups and organisations participating in, directly influenced by or with an interest in adult learning policy making (OECD, 2015[3]). Stakeholder engagement is defined as the "practice of involving members of the public in the process of policy making" (OECD, 2015[3]). Stakeholders should be given the opportunity to play a role throughout the entire policy cycle, which requires sufficient resources such as funding, venues and staff. Undertaking stakeholder engagement continuously and sustainably builds mutual trust and allows all parties involved to achieve a common goal (OECD, 2019[1]).

This chapter provides an overview of Korea's current arrangements and explores two key opportunities for improving stakeholder engagement in adult learning: 1) raising awareness of, and capacity for, effective stakeholder engagement; and 2) involving stakeholders effectively in the adult learning policy-making process. For each opportunity, the available data are analysed, relevant national and international policies and practices are discussed, and policy recommendations are provided.

Overview of stakeholder engagement in Korea

The following section provides an overview of Korea's stakeholder engagement, the main adult learning stakeholder groups, including those represented by formal organisations and those not well represented (e.g. disadvantaged groups), as well as the main stakeholder engagement bodies.

Overview of stakeholder engagement in Korea in comparison with other countries

In Korea's policy-making process, the government has historically played a dominant role, while stakeholders have had more limited roles. From 1962 to 1987, the authoritarian government in Korea exerted control over policies to achieve rapid economic growth. Without much input from stakeholders, the government set the goals and policies for economic development, determined the allocation of resources, and fostered the growth of business conglomerates (*chaebols*) that still dominate Korea's economic structure. In order to provide cheap and strike-free labour to fuel this growth, the government controlled unions and prohibited collective action and strikes, while employers unilaterally set wages and conditions (Lee, 2011[4]). As the government was in control of labour relations, employers' associations were not needed to participate in collective bargaining processes and played only a passive representational role. This undermined the role of key stakeholders, such as unions and employers, and minimised their influence in the policy-making process (Jun and Sheldon, 2006[5]).

Since the transition to a democracy in 1987, the government granted autonomy to unions and, with the unions' increased role in determining workplace management issues, employers' associations also mobilised and became more active. The membership and density of unions and employers' associations then grew quickly and have increasingly participated in the newly created stakeholder engagement bodies

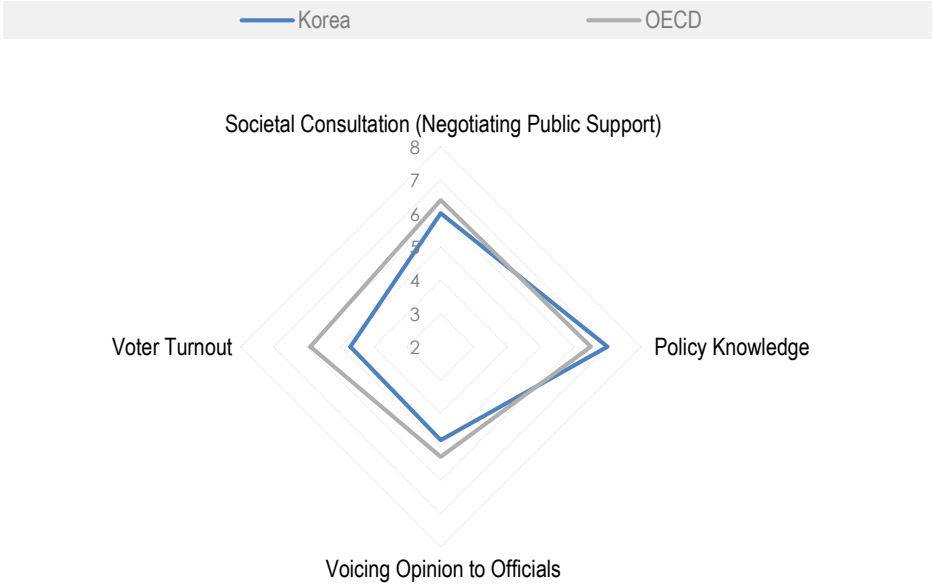
(see further below), which have led to some significant agreements between the government and stakeholders on issues such as labour reform (e.g. the Social Pact in 1998) (Lee, 2019[6]).

However, significant challenges in stakeholder engagement remain. Due to the difficulties of resolving disagreements and deadlocks in existing stakeholder engagement bodies, a large number of strikes continue to occur in Korea (in 2019, there were 141 strikes in Korea compared to 119 on average across the OECD) (ILO, 2020[7]). Some stakeholder organisations have been frustrated and disillusioned with the engagement process, which remains dominated by the government, and have decided to either not join or to temporarily withdraw from formal engagement bodies, which undermines their effectiveness (Lee, 2019[6]). This has been the case with the Korean Employers' Federation in the Korea Tripartite Commission and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions in the Economic, Social and Labour Council. Union and employer organisation density levels still remain among the lowest across the OECD, which means that a significant share of workers and employers are not well represented by these organisations (OECD, 2020[8]).

In comparison to other OECD countries, Korea falls below the OECD average in stakeholder engagement. According to the Bertelsmann Foundation's 2018 Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI), Korea is below the OECD average on the dimensions of societal consultation, voicing opinion to officials and voter turnout (Figure 4.1) (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018[9]). The one dimension where Korea performs above the OECD average is policy knowledge. While this dimension is an important aspect for effective stakeholder engagement, it needs to be complemented by the other three dimensions in order for effective stakeholder engagement to occur.

Figure 4.1. Stakeholder engagement in Korea in comparison to other selected OECD countries

Stakeholder engagement indicators, 2018



Note: For interpretation, please note that the higher value indicates a higher ranking.
Source: Bertelsmann Stiftung (2018[9]), *Sustainable Governance Indicators*, http://www.sgi-network.org/2018/.

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Korea's approach to stakeholder engagement is closest to a state corporatism approach (Table 4.1), which is similar to other East Asian countries. In such an approach, the government has the leading role in the design and implementation of most policies, and mobilises stakeholders to a large extent to support these

policies. A limited number of stakeholder groups represented by formal stakeholder organisations (e.g. unions, employers' associations) are invited to participate in formal engagement bodies, through which the government collects feedback on policies (OECD/ILO, 2017[10]). The advantage of this approach in Korea is that the government has been pursue the quick implementation of policy priorities. The challenges have been designing policies that sufficiently address the unique circumstances of local skills needs and securing enough support from stakeholders to effectively implement policies.

In other OECD countries, stakeholders play a more active role in the policy-making process. For example, in Germanic and Scandinavian countries, a social corporatist approach is common, whereby stakeholders are involved throughout the policy cycle, which generates commitment for implementation. These countries have a long history of formal engagement bodies convening a broad range of stakeholders, ensuring that all stakeholders are able to participate on a level playing field, and making joint policy decisions. Another common approach among Anglo-Saxon countries is the pluralism approach, whereby the government allows stakeholders to freely compete with each other for influence in the policy-making process, which means that the stakeholders with the largest support and legitimacy exert the most influence in the policy-making process (OECD, 2020[11]).

Table 4.1. Approaches to stakeholder engagement

	State corporatism	Social corporatism	Pluralism
Description	The state plays the dominant role in policy making, recognises officially only a limited number of stakeholder organisations, and mobilises them in support for government policies. The state has influence over the leadership, role and participation of stakeholders.	Mitigates and neutralises real or perceived imbalances of power between stakeholders by setting up decision-making bodies that put the representatives of opposing interests on a level playing field, to some extent independent of the previous real distribution of power and influence among these representatives.	Diversity of interests in society is best represented by associations when the state refrains from intervening in the free competition of associations for members and influence. Competition between associations and interest groups will eventually ensure that the groups enjoying the largest degree of support and legitimacy among the citizenry prevail.
Advantages	Allows the state to pursue the quick implementation of policy priorities.	Stakeholder involvement throughout the different stages of the policy cycle enhances the commitment of non-state actors to joint decisions, which facilitates the implementation of policy decisions later on.	A more distant "at arms' length" relationship between the state and interest groups may help to prevent the state from tilting the scales in favour of one particular interest group.
Disadvantages	May lead to the marginalisation of specific stakeholder groups (e.g. unions) that do not agree with government policy priorities.	Higher risk of an "insider-outsider cleavage" as newly emerging interests have a harder time getting access to decision making compared to established stakeholders.	Free competition between interest groups may de facto lead to power asymmetries and inequalities, as some types of interest are easier to mobilise and organise than others.
Country examples	Japan, Hong Kong (China), Korea, Macau (China), Chinese Taipei.	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Scandinavian countries.	Anglo-Saxon countries.

Source: OECD (2020[11]), *Strengthening the Governance of Skills Systems: Lessons from Six OECD Countries*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/3a4bb6ea-en; You, J. & Park, Y. (2017[12]), The Legacies of State Corporatism in Korea", *Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 17/1, pp. 95-118, http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/jea.2016.32.

Overview of stakeholder groups

Some stakeholder groups in Korea are well represented in policy making for adult learning through formal stakeholder organisations, while others are less well represented formally.

The most significant formal stakeholder organisations are employers' associations and unions. The Federation of Korean Industries represents large conglomerates, such as Samsung and Hyundai. The Korean Employers' Federation represents large and small employers. Small and medium-sized employers are also represented by the Korean Federation of Small and Medium-sized Businesses. The Korea International Trade Association represents employers engaging in international trade.

The Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry represents employers of all sizes and sectors. The most important trade unions are the Federation of Korean Trade Unions and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (Lee, 2019[6]).

Another group of stakeholders are adult learning provider organisations, which can be further broken down into not-for-profit or for-profit formal education institutions, and not-for-profit or for-profit non-formal education institutions (Table 4.2). Given that many of these adult learning provider organisations are directly under the control of, or accountable to, the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Employment and Labour, their interests are typically represented by the government.

Table 4.2. Adult learning stakeholder groups in Korea

Stakeholder group	Sub-group	Description
Employers	Large	Generally have in-house human resource personnel who can organise and provide training opportunities, supported by government.
	Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)	Despite government financial incentives (e.g. subsidies, loans), they are often unable to provide adult learning opportunities for their employees due to the lack of resources and capacity.
Labour	Unionised	Federation of Korean Trade Unions and Korean Confederation of Trade Unions have national networks with low level of coverage – around 10% of employed workers. They face challenges in terms of their internal co-ordination among union members within individual firms, across firms and across sectors.
	Not unionised	Include non-regular workers such as platform workers, women, youth.
Adult learning providers	Formal education institutions (not-for-profit)	Include universities, colleges, schools and cyber lifelong institutions that issue recognised certificates. In particular, 30 universities and colleges are part of the LiFE network, which develops education systems tailored to adult learners.
	Formal education institutions (for-profit)	Private universities and private vocational education and training (VET) institutions.
	Non-formal education institutions (not-for-profit)	Include non-governmental organisations (NGOs), employers' associations, regional skills councils (e.g. consortium).
	Non-formal education institutions (for-profit)	There are around 7 000 private training providers that receive subsidies from the Ministry of Employment and Labour. Regional skills councils and industrial skills councils work with them to offer training.

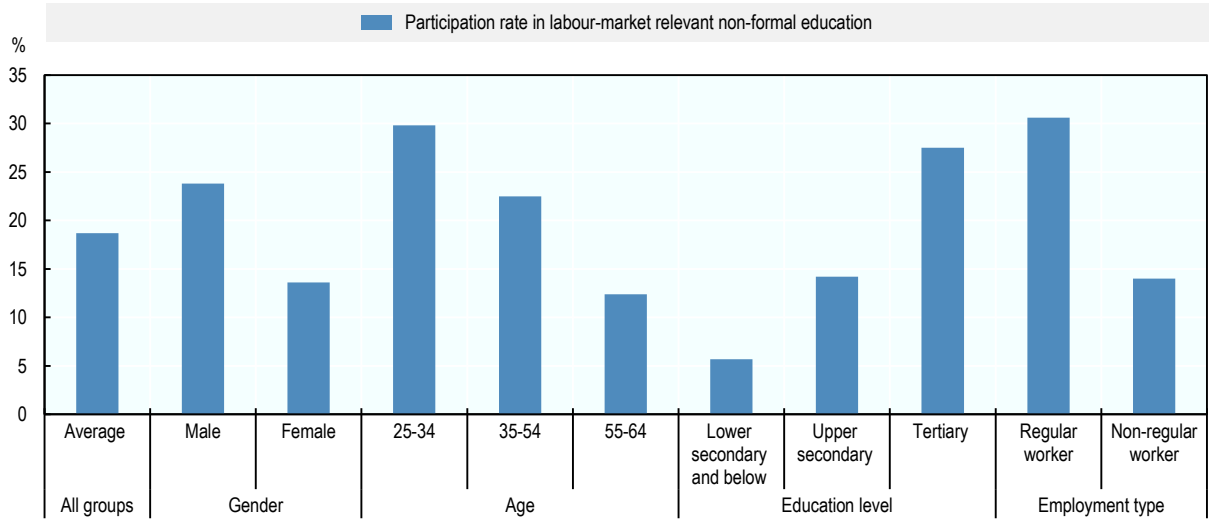
Source: Korea (2019[13]), OECD Skills Strategy for Korea Questionnaire.

Other stakeholder groups exist that are not well represented by any of the abovementioned formal organisations, and which are among the most disadvantaged in terms of their participation in adult learning. In particular, women, older adults, adults with lower levels of education and non-regular workers have lower levels of participation in adult learning, such as labour market relevant non-formal education (Figure 4.2). In the current COVID-19 crisis, women in general, and mothers in particular, have had relatively less time to acquire new skills for, and effectively participate in, remote working due to their additional care responsibilities. Similarly, older adults and adults with lower levels of education, many of whom are working in small businesses, have struggled to acquire the necessary digital skills to effectively use online platforms and other digital tools to telework (OECD, 2020[2]).

Many women, older adults and adults with lower levels of education are also non-regular workers. In the current COVID-19 context, non-regular workers have been more likely to lose their job than regular workers, and have less access to adult learning opportunities to support their transition to other jobs (OECD, 2020[2]). Not being able to effectively engage non-regular workers through a formal stakeholder organisation has been a particular concern for policy makers, as they represent a significant share (around 34%) of the workforce (KOSIS, 2020[14]).

Figure 4.2. Participation in adult learning across groups

Share of adults participating in labour market relevant non-formal education, 2019



Source: Ministry of Education and KEDI (2019[15]), *Lifelong Learning Survey 2019*.

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In Korea, non-regular workers are made up of three groups, which sometimes overlap: 1) non-permanent workers, including those working on a temporary or fixed-term basis; 2) part-time workers, including those with 35 or fewer regular working hours per week; and 3) non-typical workers, including daily workers, contractors (either engaged for a specific task or paid on commission), temporary work agency workers, domestic workers, and other such categories of workers with only weak ties to their employer (OECD, 2018[16]). These people frequently work in industries engaged in office support services, cleaning services, tourism, domestic service, agriculture and fishing, among others (KOSIS, 2020[14]).

There have been a number of challenges that have made it difficult for non-regular workers to represent themselves in formal organisations. Existing unions have mostly represented the interests of regular workers, while non-regular workers have historically either been excluded or have chosen not to join these unions due to conflicting interests and priorities over issues such as wages, working conditions and job stability. Non-regular workers have thus created their own unions in specific sectors (e.g. education, railway, healthcare, construction, entertainment) and for specific subgroups (e.g. the Korean Women's Trade Union, the Senior Hope Union) (Lee, 2019[6]). These unions are often small, have limited financial resources and have been reluctant to join larger union organisations (such as the Federation of Korean Trade Unions and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions) as they fear that their voices will not be sufficiently represented. Given that only the largest organisations are participating in most stakeholder engagement bodies, the interests of smaller and less well-organised stakeholder groups, such as those for non-regular workers, have not been well represented.

Overview of stakeholder engagement bodies

In Korea, there are a number of formal bodies through which the government engages stakeholders in adult learning. These include the Economic, Social and Labour Council, industrial skills councils, regional skills council, sectoral human development councils, and local labour and management committees (Table 4.3), all of which fulfil different roles and face different challenges, which are further discussed in Opportunity 2 in this chapter. These stakeholder engagement bodies typically engage the more established large stakeholder organisations (e.g. union federations and employer associations).

Table 4.3. Overview of stakeholder engagement bodies relevant to adult learning in Korea

	Description	Stakeholder involvement	Challenges
Economic, Social and Labour Council (ESLC)	Discusses issues such as the creation of high-quality jobs, reducing job polarisation, protecting basic labour rights, minimum wage, and adult learning.	Representatives of labour (FKTU), management (KEF, KCCI), disadvantaged groups (non-regular workers, youth, women) and the government (e.g. MoEL) participate in the council.	• Maintaining continuous buy-in from the unions. • Funded by the government. • Identifying formal organisations to represent each disadvantaged group has been difficult. Representatives of disadvantaged groups were not able to join subcommittees of the council due to issues such as flexible work time.
Industrial skills councils (ISC)	Present in 17 industries, divided into 456 sector associations and financed by the MoEL. The original purpose of the ISC was to develop the National Competence Standards (NCS) and to suggest corresponding training options. They are also responsible for the work-study dual system.	Each ISC consists of 20 representatives drawn from employer associations, unions, the MoEL and other experts. The proportion of unions compared to other stakeholders is relatively low.	• Varying emphasis of adult learning across ISCs. • Differences in the funding amount of each ISC depends on the NCS items they cover. • ISCs may not fully cover all the industry sectors they were assigned to, and thus lack representativeness, depending on the employers' association under which they are located. • Low level of participation from employers (especially large ones) and unions. • ISCs face challenges in having sufficient expertise in human resource development.
Regional skills councils (RSC)	Cover industries in specific regions to oversee regional training policy. Supported with government funding from the MoEL. The secretariat of the council is located in a regional employers' association. Through a regional labour market survey, the councils identify training needs. Based on these needs, the KCCI and other private training institutions can apply to the RSC to become designated training providers.	Each council is headed by the mayor or governor of the region. Its approximately 20 members include employers' associations, unions, chambers of commerce and other stakeholders from the region.	• Better communication is needed between the secretariats of the two council subgroups (1. job creation; 2. industry tailored training) so that training efforts meet the requirements for current and new jobs. • More could be done to foster collaboration between the various RSCs and ISCs, as the type of training programmes they offer are similar.
Sectoral human resource development councils (SC)	Responsible for single industries and overseen by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy. They conduct labour market forecasting analysis and have a corresponding annual publication. SCs play an important role in initial vocational education and training and outplacement services.	Each council consists of representatives from industry, employers, academics and other experts. Together they develop, co-ordinate and implement programmes in human resource development by industry.	• Unions are not actively involved. • The SC under the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy and the ISC under the MoEL require better co-ordination with each other as they often deal with similar issues and are sometimes active in overlapping industries.
Local labour and management committees	Discuss issues around local employment, human resource development and regional economic development.	Each committee consists of local unions, employers' associations, local government and other representatives of the local community.	• Most local labour and management committees only meet once or twice a year, which limits the amount of impact they can have on local policies. • Having sustainable funding is challenging, as this committee is competing directly with funding from the SCs.

Note: FKTU = Federation of Korean Trade Unions; KEF = Korean Employers' Federation; KCCI = Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry; MoEL = Ministry of Employment and Labour.
Source: Korea (2019[13]), OECD Skills Strategy for Korea Questionnaire.

The current administration in Korea has placed great emphasis on stakeholder engagement. One significant initiative in 2018 was to reform the Economic, Social and Labour Council, which has been one of the most important tripartite bodies since 1997, and enlarge the membership to also include representatives of disadvantaged groups (e.g. non-regular workers and women). However, due to the fragmented and large number of small organisations representing disadvantaged groups, as well the limited number of membership places in the council, it has been challenging to identify the main organisations that would most effectively represent the collective interests of a disadvantaged group (see Opportunity 1). The organisations that ended up representing the interests of disadvantaged groups in the council did not enjoy a strong base of support from the groups they were supposed to represent, and thus had lower levels of legitimacy and reduced bargaining power relative to the other stakeholder organisations (Korea, 2019[17]). This underscores the need to support disadvantaged groups to organise and represent themselves better so that they can more effectively participate in formal stakeholder engagement processes.

Opportunities to strengthen stakeholder engagement in Korea

This chapter presents two opportunities for strengthening stakeholder engagement. Opportunity 1 examines how awareness of the importance of engagement and the capacity for engaging could be raised for both government officials and stakeholders. Opportunity 2 explores how to involve stakeholders effectively in the adult learning policy-making process through expanding opportunities for stakeholders to provide input (e.g. participatory budget processes, formal partnerships), as well as improving the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement bodies.

Korea can strengthen stakeholder engagement by:

1. Raising the awareness of, and capacity for, effective stakeholder engagement.
2. Involving stakeholders effectively in the adult learning policy making process.

Opportunity 1: Raising the awareness of, and capacity for, effective stakeholder engagement

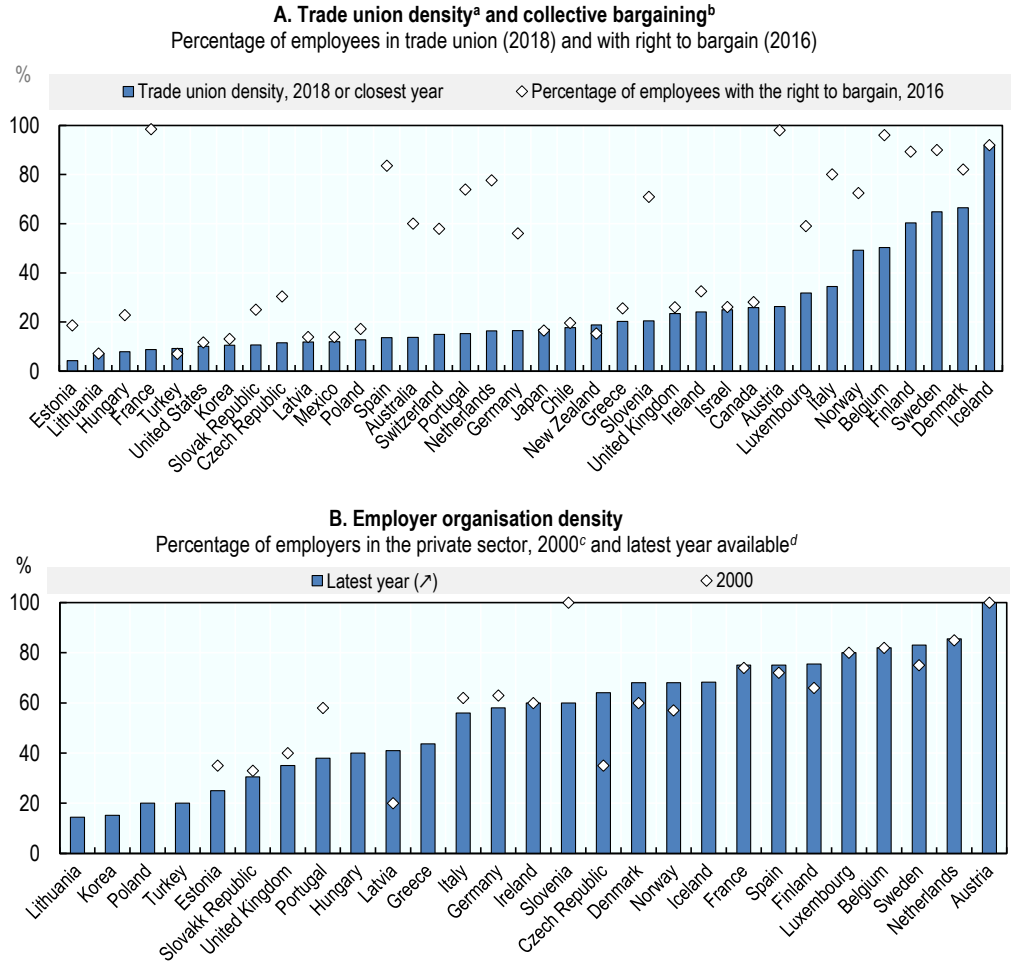
This section provides an overview of engagement arrangements between government and stakeholders, and examines how such engagement could be made more effective by raising awareness of, and building capacity for, engagement among government officials and stakeholders. Relevant country examples and specific recommendations are also presented.

Raising the awareness and capacity of government to engage stakeholders

It is critical to raise awareness among government officials about the importance of stakeholder engagement and which stakeholders to engage. Discussions with government representatives in Korea emphasised that awareness of the importance of engaging stakeholders in adult learning policies needs to be raised (Korea, 2019[17]). While responsible government officials may understand the general benefits of stakeholder engagement, such as accountability, responsiveness and legitimacy, they are hesitant to engage in such activities due to the potential risks, such as delays in policy implementation and higher administrative burdens (OECD, 2009[18]). Some may also wish to avoid conflicts, in particular when stakeholders do not share a common goal and when the debate is about distributional issues affecting resources (“who gets what from whom?”). When stakeholder engagement does not take place, this adversely affects policy implementation, with stakeholders not supporting government decisions (OECD, 2020[11]). Raising awareness among government officials of the need to engage stakeholders and how to engage them early in the policy design process increases the likelihood of adult learning policies being successfully implemented.

A particular challenge for government officials in Korea is identifying the relevant stakeholders to engage. Stakeholders in Korea are not as well organised as those in other OECD countries. For example, trade union and employer organisation density levels are among the lowest across the OECD (Figure 4.3). A low density level means that the share of employees or employers represented by these organisations is low. Thus, while the Korean government does engage with the official unions and employer organisations, there are still many employees and employers who are not members of these organisations and whose voices are therefore not represented in formal engagement bodies. In addition, other disadvantaged stakeholders are not well represented generally in formal organisations, such as women, older individuals, individuals with lower levels of education and non-regular workers (see also Chapter 5). This makes it challenging for the government to identify how and with whom to engage.

Figure 4.3. Trade union and employer organisation density



Note:
a) 2016 for Chile, Greece, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia; 2017 for Austria, Belgium, Canada, Israel, Korea, Switzerland.
b) 2011 for New Zealand; 2012 for Israel; 2014 for France, Hungary, Ireland, Norway; 2015 for Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Poland.
c) 2000 for Austria, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden; 2002 for Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Spain and the United Kingdom.
d) 2005 for Turkey; 2008 in Greece, Hungary, Spain and the United Kingdom; 2009 for Korea; 2010 for Denmark; 2011 for Estonia, Germany, Ireland and Portugal; 2012 for Belgium, France, Italy, Lithuania and Luxembourg; 2013 for Iceland, Latvia, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia; 2014 for Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden; and 2015 for the Netherlands.
Source: Panel A: OECD (2020[8]), *OECD Statistics (database)*, https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryId=90648. Panel B: OECD (2017[19]), *OECD Employment Outlook 2017*, https://doi.org/10.1787/empl_outlook-2017-en.

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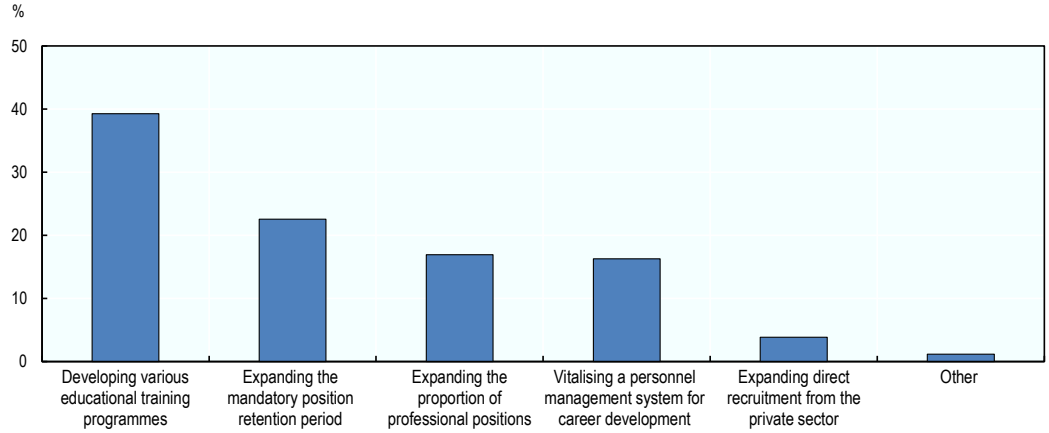
A thorough stakeholder mapping exercise could help to identify key stakeholders. Through such a process, Korea can identify stakeholders who have not been sufficiently engaged, but should be based on attributes such as extent of concern for a specific policy, how much they have at stake, and how much influence they would have in the success of the policy (Bryson, 1995[20]; Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997[21]; Jeston and Nelis, 2008[22]). In the mapping process it is important to pay particular attention to disadvantaged stakeholders who are crucial for the success of a policy. This mapping exercise can prioritise which key stakeholders to engage based on their attributes (mentioned above) and an assessment of how to target engagement efforts in the most effective way. Some examples are featured in Annex 2.A. The mapping exercise can also analyse the relationships between stakeholders and identify potential areas of disagreement between the government and stakeholders, as well as between stakeholders themselves, so that government officials can anticipate and prepare for such challenges by, for example, analysing the different positions actors are likely to take, examining the relationships between the different actors, and identifying options for a compromise (Moura and Teixeira, 2010[23]). The mapping exercise should also identify the roles of stakeholders during different stages of the policy cycle, such as policy design, implementation and evaluation. The Australian government's toolkit for stakeholder engagement starts with a mapping exercise to identify the right groups to engage at a particular stage of the policy cycle, as well as the composition of target groups. It also delineates the risk of not including these groups (Box 4.2).

Another challenge for government stakeholder engagement efforts is the lack of sufficient and relevant training to strengthen the engagement capacities of government officials. Specific capacities for effective stakeholder engagement include negotiation skills, communication and presentation skills, and monitoring and evaluation skills (OECD, 2016[24]). In a survey of government officials, the policy measure identified as most important for raising the capacities of government officials was the development and provision of educational training programmes (Figure 4.4). While all Korean government officials receive initial training when they first start in their positions, this training typically covers their general responsibilities and is not sufficiently tailored to equip them with the skills necessary to effectively fulfil their broader roles and responsibilities, such as the engagement of stakeholders in the development and implementation of adult learning policies (see also Chapter 3). During the OECD mission, representatives in Korea emphasised the specific need for educational training programmes to teach government officials how to reach out to stakeholders, in particular those who are disadvantaged.

Figure 4.4. Policy measures identified by Korean government officials as important for raising their capacity and expertise

Share of government officials reporting specific policy measures to enhance public service expertise, 2018



Note: The Government Civil Servant Survey, conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA), polled civil servants in central government ministries and regional governments.
Source: OECD elaboration of the Korea Institute of Public Administration (2018[25]), *Government Civil Servant Survey*, https://www.kipa.re.kr/site/eng/main.do.

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Some national good practices do exist regarding the training of government officials in stakeholder engagement, which may be worth expanding further. For example, within the National Institute for Lifelong Education, government officials receive training specifically on reaching out to stakeholders in addition to their initial training. The Seoul Metropolitan City Government also provides training on stakeholder engagement through its "Collaborative Governance School", and publishes relevant textbooks (Box 4.1). Courses provided by the school cover topics such as understanding the concept of collaborative governance, communication skills and conflict management. They aim to provide information on other good examples of collective governance and to develop the necessary skills for developing and managing public-private partnerships.

While such training offers are promising, more specialised training and support is needed to engage disadvantaged stakeholder groups that currently have low levels of representation, such as non-regular workers (see Chapter 5), women and youth. Such specialised training should cover, for example, how to tailor the language and format (e.g. print material, online material, social media) of communications to the specific profile and needs of disadvantaged stakeholder groups. Government officials should also be trained in how to effectively facilitate face-to-face meetings such as workshops, town hall meetings and advisory groups in an inclusive way to support the participation of disadvantaged stakeholders. In Finland, the government has taken steps to improve dialogue between the government and stakeholders through the training of government officials to communicate effectively with stakeholders, including those disadvantaged, by using plain language and visualisations, describing clear government structures and processes, and making official information easy to find (Box 4.2).

Government officials also need training to review and assess stakeholder proposals. During the OECD mission, representatives in Korea highlighted that the training government officials receive should raise their capacities to evaluate stakeholder proposals based on available evidence. Otherwise, there is a risk that government officials, especially when they are new to a position and policy domain, adopt proposals submitted by the most vocal stakeholders, without an evidence-based evaluation of the proposal's merits. This process could thus be at risk of being unduly influenced by special interest groups (OECD, 2009[18]). In Korea, this risk is particularly prominent due to the large group of disadvantaged stakeholders not represented by existing formal stakeholder organisations (i.e. trade unions, employers' associations).

Government officials, therefore, need to be trained to develop and use consistent and transparent indicators when evaluating stakeholders' proposals so that all proposals can be assessed in the same merit-based manner. The indicators used for such evaluations should be publicly available. Government officials should be trained in how to use the indicators and what information to collect from stakeholders to assess their proposals.

In Korea, some promising examples of developing and using indicators for reviewing stakeholder proposals exist. For example, in the Seoul Metropolitan City policy forum, citizens made 55 project proposals to the mayor (Box 4.1). The city government officials then reviewed and selected 35 projects in collaboration with stakeholders, using 5 transparent indicators of feasibility, responsibility, effectiveness, the extent of public-private partnership and a cost-benefit evaluation. The budget for implementing the 35 projects amounted to approximately USD 7.4 million and included two adult learning programmes (Seoul City, 2017[26]). Government officials responsible for assessing stakeholder proposals should be trained to develop indicators to use for assessments so that a merit-based selection process gives all stakeholders, including those disadvantaged, the same opportunities to have their proposals considered. Given that disadvantaged stakeholders are likely to have limited ability to submit well-developed policy proposals, their capacity in this regard should be raised (see next section).

Box 4.1. National example of raising the capacity of government to engage with stakeholders

Seoul Metropolitan City's initiative to establish a collaborative governance structure

Seoul Metropolitan City enacted "The Basic Ordinance for Promoting Public-Private Collaborative Governance" in 2016 to set a foundation for sustainable stakeholder engagement in the policy-making process. The ordinance defined the rights and responsibilities of citizens and the responsibility of the mayor, setting the basis for establishing a dedicated committee and building a plan to promote stakeholder engagement. Following up on the ordinance, in 2017, Seoul City strengthened the participatory budgeting system, and designed and implemented 35 projects in collaboration with stakeholders, including adult learning projects. To build the capacity of government officials and stakeholders, Seoul City provides training on collaborative governance and publishes textbooks. The courses aim to help actors understand the concept of stakeholder engagement and develop the necessary skills for policy implementation in public-private partnerships.

Source: Seoul City (2017[26]), *White paper on collaborative governance 2017.*

Box 4.2. International examples of raising government capacity to engage with stakeholders

Australia: A government toolkit to engage stakeholders in policy design and delivery

The government of Australia has produced a toolkit to help the public sector engage stakeholders in different policy domains, including skills policies. The toolkit identifies the key elements of effective engagement:

- Involve the right people: To identify the right stakeholders, it should be clear why there is a need to engage them and what the scope of the engagement will be. Who needs to know? Who has an interest? The answers will ultimately determine the composition of the target group of stakeholders. The risks of not engaging particular stakeholders should also be considered.
- Use a fit-for-purpose approach: There is no one-size-fits-all approach to engaging stakeholders – each interaction should be tailored. Stakeholders have different expertise, objectives and capacity to engage with government. Do not assume that what worked for one situation will work for another. Often a mix of approaches will be needed and policy makers may need the flexibility to adjust their approach quickly.
- Manage expectations: Stakeholders should have a clear understanding of how their contributions will be used, and the degree of influence their input will have as approaches to policy design and implementation are formulated. When stakeholders' expectations cannot be met, anger, frustration or cynicism may result, which will affect the current and future relationship with the government. The purpose of the engagement and the role of participants, including how their input will be used, need to be clear from the beginning.
- Use the information: Engagement is not just about collecting information, it should involve a process of responding to the gathered information to shape and improve the quality of the initiative. Information from stakeholders may also indicate whether the engagement approach itself needs to change. Greater organisational benefits will flow if lessons learned from engagement are shared across the agency, particularly when the agency regularly engages with the same set of stakeholders on a variety of issues.

The toolkit also assesses common challenges to stakeholder engagement. These include: 1) the purpose of the engagement may not be clear; 2) stakeholders may have limited capacities and resources (time, people and money) to engage with the government; 3) government may have limited experience and skills to implement effective stakeholder engagement; 4) unfocussed dialogue may cause stakeholders to highlight a range of issues that are important to them but not related to the government initiative that is the object of the engagement; and 5) failure to review and evaluate may negatively affect the capacity to assess the results of the approach. The engagement plan should include review points throughout the policy design and implementation, with the flexibility to adjust the approach if needed.

Source: Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2013[27]), *Cabinet Implementation Unit Toolkit: 3. Engaging Stakeholders*.

Finland: Enhancing dialogue skills for civil servants

Effective communication is important to further strengthen the relationship between government and citizens. Finland has acknowledged the significance of sound dialogue skills for civil servants and included commitments to further improving these skills in its first Open Government Partnership (OGP) Action Plan (2013-14). The following six concrete aims were formulated: 1) standard language titles and resumes will be drafted for government proposals; 2) visualisation of decisions on expenditures of the state budget will be created; 3) training will be organised for civil servants on use of clear language and plain language including committing to use of terms already known; 4) the comprehensibility of the texts produced by public administration will be tested with citizens and service users; 5) the terms and concepts used in public administration and service production will be standardised and clarified; and 6) the comprehensibility of customer letters and decisions will be enhanced, especially when using standard texts.

These commitments were taken up again in the second OGP Action Plan, which also includes a commitment to “clear administration”. The main objectives that contribute to a more tangible and understandable bureaucracy are: clear structures and processes, as well as customer orientation, are targeted in major reforms; structures and processes are described so that citizens know which authority should be contacted for different issues; official language is correct, clear and easy to understand; information on issues under preparation is available and can easily be found; and the administration takes feedback into account when developing its ways of working.

This example of Finland provides good practice on facilitating communication, engagement and collaboration between citizens and civil servants, which has the potential to positively influence the perception of the entire government. Open government, if understood as a culture of governance, requires an emphasis on civil servants now and in the future acknowledging the more active role of citizens throughout the entire policy cycle, through approaches such as those in Finland.

Sources: Open Government Partnership (2013[28]), *Finland Open Government Action Plan 2013-2014*, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/20130314-OGP-Action-Plan-Finland.pdf; Open Government Partnership (2015[29]), *Finland Open Government Action Plan 2015-2017*, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/OGP_Action_Plan_Finland-2015_2017.pdf; OECD (2016[30]), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en.

Recommendations for raising the awareness and capacity of government to engage with stakeholders

3.1. Identify through a mapping exercise the relevant stakeholders in adult learning policy and how they should be engaged. Government officials should conduct a mapping exercise to raise their awareness about which stakeholders to engage, for what reason they should be engaged and how they should be engaged. In such a mapping exercise, government officials should consider the extent of stakeholders' concerns for a specific policy, how much stakeholders have at stake, and how much influence stakeholders have in the success of the policy. The mapping exercise should also consider the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders during the different stages of the policy cycle, from policy design to implementation to evaluation. Particular attention should be given to engaging disadvantaged groups, such as women, youth and non-regular workers, who have often not been sufficiently engaged. The mapping exercise should also identify the relationships among stakeholders and where potential disagreements could lie so that government officials can anticipate and prepare for such challenges and manage them more effectively. A toolkit could be developed explaining how to undertake an effective mapping exercise. This could be shared across the whole of government.

3.2. Expand training for government officials on how to engage in particular disadvantaged stakeholders in adult learning policies, as well as how to assess stakeholder proposals. Existing training on stakeholder engagement from the National Institute for Lifelong Education and the Seoul Metropolitan City Government should be expanded and further developed to ensure that it raises the capacity of government officials to engage disadvantaged stakeholder groups. For example, it should raise capacity to tailor the language and format (e.g. print material, online material, social media) of communications to the specific profile and needs of disadvantaged stakeholder groups. Government officials should also be trained in how to effectively facilitate face-to-face meetings such as workshops, town hall meetings and advisory groups with stakeholders in an inclusive way to support the participation of disadvantaged stakeholders and ensure that their voices are heard. Training should also raise the capacity of government officials to develop consistent and transparent indicators that they can use in evaluating stakeholder proposals, so that all proposals can be assessed in the same merit-based manner. The indicators used for such evaluations should be publicly available. Government officials should be trained in how to use the indicators and what information to collect from stakeholders to assess their proposals.

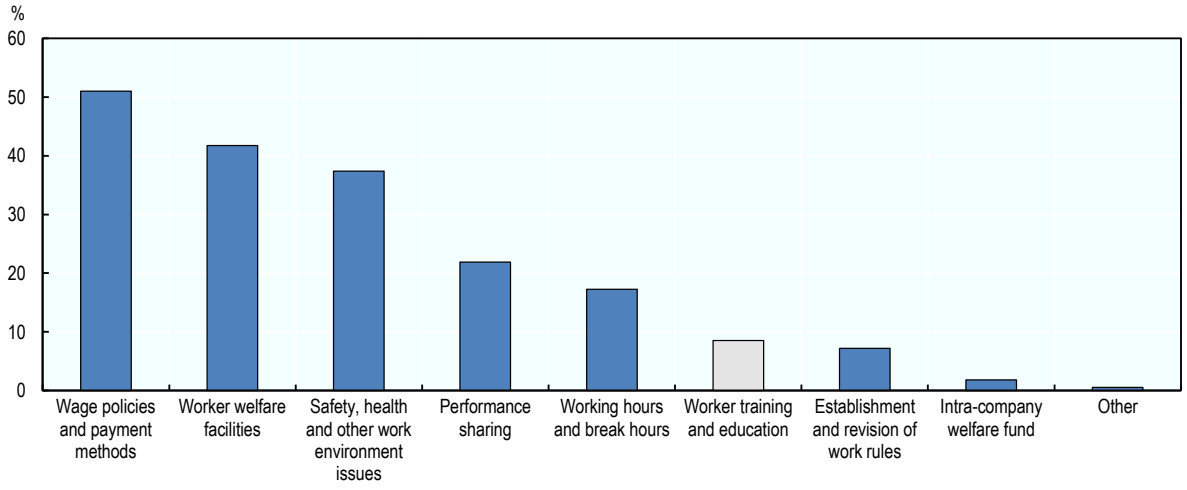
Raising the awareness and capacity of stakeholders to engage with government

More needs to be done to raise awareness among stakeholders about the importance of their participation in the development and implementation of adult learning policies. For trade unions such as the Federation of Korean Trade Unions and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, the topic of adult learning has a relatively low priority compared to issues such as wage and working conditions. Some experts argue that this phenomenon is due to Korea having a relatively small safety net and a relatively large share of workers for whom the minimum wage is binding, in comparison with other OECD countries (ESLC, 2018[31]). Similarly, for many employers in Korea, especially SMEs, adult learning for their employees is often considered an expense, not an investment, regardless of the significant benefits. Employers are concerned that employees might move to another company for higher wages after acquiring new skills (KRIVET, 2018[32]). Due to this situation, in the labour-management council meetings, which bring together representatives from labour and employers to discuss a variety of issues within the firm, the topic of worker training and education is relatively low on the agenda (Figure 4.5). Awareness-raising efforts are needed to help stakeholders understand the benefits of adult learning for both employees and employers, and how

this can lead to better outcomes (e.g. higher productivity, work satisfaction). At the same time, stakeholders need to be made aware that their participation in the process of developing and implementing adult learning polices is important.

Figure 4.5. Topics frequently discussed in labour-management council meetings

Share of employers that report discussing specific topics in the labour-management council, 2013



Note: The Workplace Panel Survey, conducted by the Korea Labor Institute (KLI), polled 3 916 corporations and 359 public institutions across Korea.
Source: OECD elaboration of the Korea Labor Institute (2013[33]), *Workplace Panel Survey*, https://www.kli.re.kr/kli_eng/index.do.

StatLink https://stat.link/ipbo4j

Stakeholders' interest in participating in the adult learning policy-making process is low, partly due to a lack of awareness about how to engage with government. Based on discussions with Korean representatives during the OECD mission, stakeholders in adult learning face barriers or lack expertise in how to engage effectively with government. A lack of understanding of the nature and importance of adult learning policy making and how to participate effectively in the process is common (OECD, 2015[3]). Besides lobbyists, few stakeholders know all the details of how the government works, how the adult learning policy-making process is organised, and how and where to get involved. In adult learning in Korea, the government landscape is particularly complex (see Chapters 2 and 3). Stakeholder groups that are not well organised (Table 4.2), such as those representing women, youth and non-regular workers, face particular hurdles in knowing how to participate in the political process. This highlights the need to raise awareness about how to engage and how to enhance their capacity to engage (OECD, 2009[18]). Training could allow stakeholders to better understand the nature and importance of adult learning policy making (and policy making more generally), and how to participate effectively in the process. Such training could cover details of how the government works, how the adult learning policy-making process is organised and how to get involved.

Unions need to increase their coverage to engage effectively with government. In Korea, the majority of unions are still enterprise based and bargain at the firm level, instead of bargaining on behalf of all employees across enterprises (Lee, 2011[4]). The unions of large companies are often reluctant to participate in political processes and prefer to represent mostly internal company issues during negotiations. The organisation of unions differs across sectors, with relatively strong levels of union organisation in the textile sector, followed by the chemical, metal and other heavy industries. In the case of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, some internal affiliates have an even stronger voice than the umbrella organisation and take the lead in decision-making processes, which hampers the ability of

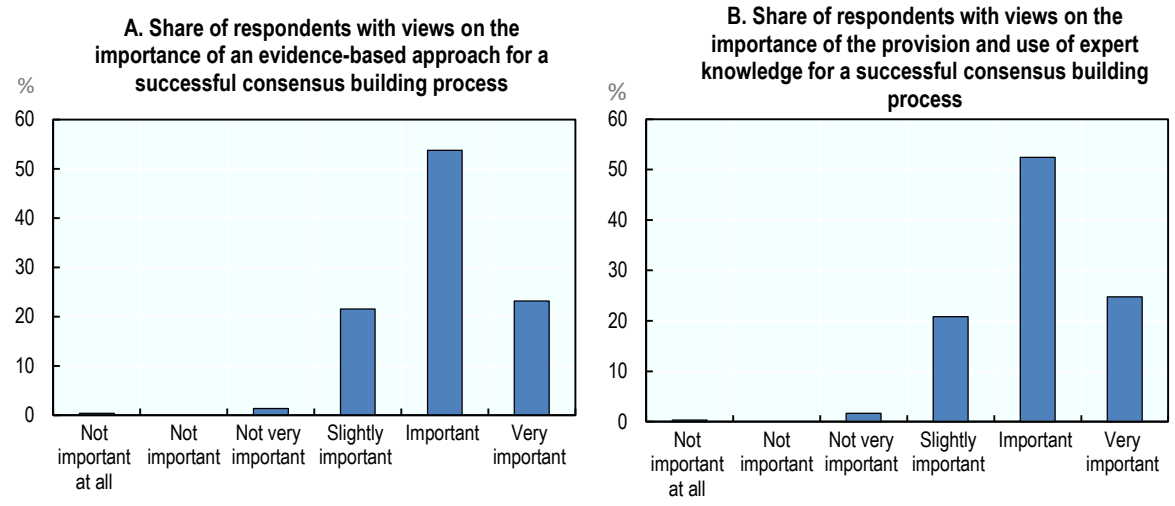
the national leadership to co-ordinate with, and effectively meet the needs of, all of their affiliates (Korea Labor Institute, 2013[34]). These issues reduce the unions' bargaining power, leverage and credibility in negotiations with government and other stakeholders. In addition, disadvantaged workers, such as those in non-regular work arrangements, often do not have a formal organisation that effectively represents their views, and are reluctant to join existing unions as they do not see them as sufficiently addressing their interests.

The decreasing membership of unions is a common challenge across the OECD, as more employees are choosing not to join a union and are working in more non-regular forms of employment. Due to these challenges, some unions have merged or applied new recruitment and internal organisation strategies. In Austria (Box 4.4), some unions have combined and introduced representational groups (e.g. employees in micro companies, self-employed) to raise their overall numbers and increase their influence. In the United Kingdom, the government provided funding to unions to enhance their capacity and help them adapt to the changing labour market and new forms of employment (Box 4.4).

Employers' associations need to co-ordinate better internally and with one another to engage more effectively with government. In Korea, there are several national employers' associations. The Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the oldest and largest association with numerous regional chambers and represents companies of all sizes and sectors. The Federation of Korean Industries represents the large conglomerates (*chaebols*). The Korean Employers' Federation is the main employer association dealing with labour employment and industrial relations and represents large and small companies (Cooke and Jiang, 2017[35]). Other smaller employers' associations include the Korea International Trade Association and the Korean Federation of Small and Medium-sized Businesses. A common challenge for all these employers' associations is the ability to co-ordinate internally and position themselves with one clear voice. For example, while the national representation may take one position, the affiliate companies at the sectoral and regional levels may take other positions and adopt different industrial relations strategies (Baccaro and Lee, 2003[36]). This weakens the overall legitimacy and bargaining power of the national representation.

The capacity of stakeholders to participate in evidence-based dialogue with government needs to be raised. In a survey of stakeholders in Korea, most responders highlighted the importance of having sufficient expertise and expert knowledge among stakeholders to participate constructively in an evidence-based dialogue with government (Figure 4.6). During the OECD missions to Korea, many participants mentioned that a common challenge of engaging stakeholders was the fact that they tend to propose adult learning policy ideas that reflect only their special interests and that they are not sufficiently informed by the available evidence about the challenges and efficacy of proposed solutions (Korea, 2019[17]). Without a common understanding between the government and stakeholders about how to interpret the available evidence, a dialogue between the two parties about the policy challenges and potential solutions becomes more difficult. Stakeholders expressed that discussions can become very political, and that it is easier for the most vocal and powerful participants to dominate the discussions and decision-making process, even if the policy solutions they present are not evidence based (Korea, 2019[17]).

Figure 4.6. Stakeholder views on the importance of evidence-based dialogue



Note: The Stakeholder Engagement Survey, conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA), primarily polled citizens to understand their engagement with government.
Source: OECD elaboration of the Korea Institute of Public Administration (2018[25]), *Government Civil Servant Survey*, https://www.kipa.re.kr/site/eng/main.do.

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The capacity of stakeholders to participate effectively in engagement processes could be raised by internal research units. While most unions and employers' associations have research units (Table 4.4), they are relatively small in scale, heavily reliant on government funding, and are often driven by the political views of their leadership (Korea Labor Institute, 2013[34]). Having a better resourced and independent research unit within stakeholder organisations would allow stakeholders to participate in policy negotiations with more evidence-based ideas (Korea, 2019[17]). While government organisations such as the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET), the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) and other research institutes responsible to the prime minister play a mediating role between the government and stakeholders, as well as provide research to inform discussions between the government and stakeholders, their role could be complemented by the stronger research capacity of individual stakeholder organisations. Research units in such organisations could collect data from the constituencies they represent and analyse and disseminate these data. Such units could consider the implications of long-term challenges and identify policy options (Box 4.3). The research units will need access to relevant skills data to undertake such tasks. Data from various ministries should be linked (Chapter 2) to enable stakeholders to properly analyse the changing skills needs in the local context and use the information as a base for their proposals. Given that the Employment Insurance Fund is co-funded by employees and employers and used to finance a variety of adult learning programmes (OECD, 2018[37]) (see also Chapter 5), it could potentially also be used to financially support internal research units in unions and employers' associations, and thus enable them to more effectively inform adult learning policies.

In some OECD countries, such as France, stakeholders including employers' organisations, unions and political parties have their own well-resourced and independent research units (sometimes called occupations and skills observatories) that analyse data and regularly publish reports (Box 4.4). The majority of observatories are embedded in and financially supported by either employers' associations or government bodies that manage employer training levies. The observatories allow stakeholders to participate in public debates with evidence-based arguments and provide a constructive framework to engage with proposals.

Table 4.4. Research units in stakeholder organisations

	Names	Research unit
Unions	Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU)	FKTU Research Centre
	Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU)	KCTU Research Centre
Employers' association	Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Two research divisions: economic and industrial
	Federation of Korean Industries	Korea Economic Research Institute
	Korea International Trade Association	Institute for International Trade
	Korean Federation of Small and Medium-sized Businesses	In the process of being established
	Korean Employers Federation	Institute for Labour and Economy

Source: Korea, (2019[13]), OECD Skills Strategy for Korea Questionnaire.

Box 4.3. National example of raising capacity among stakeholders to engage with government

Federation of Korean Trade Unions Research Centre

The Federation of Korean Trade Unions is one of the largest trade unions in Korea, with a national network of 1 million union members as of 2018. It established a research centre in 1994 to set out a direction for the labour movement in Korea and to develop policies aimed at improving the quality of workers' lives. This centre undertakes research on labour policies including working hours, wages, welfare and industrial safety. It also publishes an annual guide instructing the unions on how to engage with employers in terms of labour issues, including vocational education and training. The guide is distributed to approximately 3 000 regional unions under the Federation of Korean Trade Unions.

Source: Federation of Korean Trade Unions, (n.d.[38]), "Vision", Fedseration of Korean Trade Unions Research Centre, http://inochong.org/vision.

Box 4.4. International examples of raising capacity among stakeholders to engage with government

Austria: Internal reorganisation of unions

One of the main responses of the Austrian social partners to new challenges such as financial pressures is a process of integration and concentration. In 2006, three major trade unions (the railway workers' union; the union representing workers in hotels, restaurants and personal services; and the union for transport, traffic and commerce workers) created Vida, a new trade union representing nearly 140 000 members. In 2009, the metal, textile and food workers union merged with the chemical workers union to form the Union of Production Workers (PRO-GE), with a total membership of more than 230 000 workers. The white-collar workers' union, Gewerkschaft der Privatangestellten (GPA), expanded its membership base through a merger with the journalists and printing industry union to become GPA-djp, and now has more than 275 000 members. The municipal workers' union joined forces with the trade union for workers in the art, media and sports industry to represent more than 150 000 members. On the employer side there is only one major representative – the Chamber of the Economy – and therefore no need to merge organisations. However, within the Chamber of the Economy there are various subsections representing different sectors (*Fachverbände*). As part of the reform process, some of the subsections have been merged to decrease in number from 128 to 95.

The social partners have also introduced new platforms to attract new members and to respond to the specific needs of a changing membership structure. This includes the creation of special interest groups by the trade unions, and new fora for small and very small companies (one-person companies) formed by the Chamber of the Economy. The trade unions also campaign or organise workers to attract new members. As membership in the Chamber of the Economy is mandatory, there is no need for it to engage in any such strategies.

Source: Voss and Biletta (2016[39]), *New topics, new tools and innovative practices adopted by the social partners*, https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1619en.pdf.

United Kingdom: Funding to strengthen the internal organisation of unions

The Employment Relations Act 2004 established a Union Modernisation Fund to provide financial assistance to independent trade unions and their federations in the United Kingdom, on the condition that they strengthen their internal organisational capacity. The fund sought to financially incentivise "innovative projects which speed unions' adaptation to a changing labour market and new ways of working", enhancing their ability to proactively contribute towards constructive employment relations and the British economy as a whole.

Source: Voss and Biletta (2016[39]), *New topics, new tools and innovative practices adopted by the social partners*, https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1619en.pdf.

France: Occupation and skills observatories

French occupation and skills observatories (*observatoires prospectifs des métiers et des qualifications*, OPMQ) tend to be jointly managed by employers' organisations and trade unions. This allows for flexibility with respect to their legal status and composition, depending on sectoral needs. The majority of observatories are embedded in and financially supported either by employers' associations or government bodies managing employers' training levies. The observatories' outputs and activities are similar across skills councils, such as mapping or listing occupations; conducting surveys and analyses on skills management, training and recruitment needs; and creating certification schemes. Their outputs lead to recommendations and the development of actions and tools for use by firms and workers.

Source: OECD (2019[40]), *Getting Skills Right: Making adult learning work in social partnership,* http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/adult-learning-work-in-social-partnership-2019.pdf.

Recommendations for raising the awareness and capacity of stakeholders to engage with government

3.3. Provide stakeholders with training to raise their awareness about the importance and benefits of engaging with government on adult learning policies, and on the processes through which they can engage. The training should raise stakeholders' awareness about how engagement with the government can benefit stakeholders in terms of desirable outcomes (e.g. higher productivity, work satisfaction) and therefore about their need to participate in the process for developing and implementing adult learning polices. The training should help stakeholders understand how the government works, how the adult learning policy making process is organised, and how and where to get involved. It should in particular target stakeholder groups that are not well organised, such as women, youth and non-regular workers, so that they can also actively participate in the political process.

3.4. Strengthen stakeholders' capacity to represent themselves effectively in engagement processes. The government should consider financially supporting some stakeholder organisations that are lacking financial resources (e.g. non-regular workers) to organise and represent themselves effectively. In addition, some stakeholder organisations, in particular those that are relatively small, should consider merging with other similar organisations or adopting new strategies to attract more members through the creation of new representational groups to recruit and represent the needs of new members (e.g. non-regular workers).

3.5. Raise the capacity of internal research units in stakeholder organisations to participate in an evidence-based dialogue with government. Existing internal research units should be strengthened through additional financial resources (e.g. from the Employment Insurance Fund) to enable them to collect data from their constituencies, analyse these data, consider the implications of long-term challenges, identify relevant policy options and more effectively inform adult learning policies. These internal research units should have easy access to relevant skills data from government by, for example, making it possible to link data sources from various ministries. Strengthen knowledge partnerships between these internal research units and independent government research organisations, such as KRIVET, KEDI and other research institutes under the prime minister.

Opportunity 2: Involving stakeholders effectively in the adult learning policy-making process

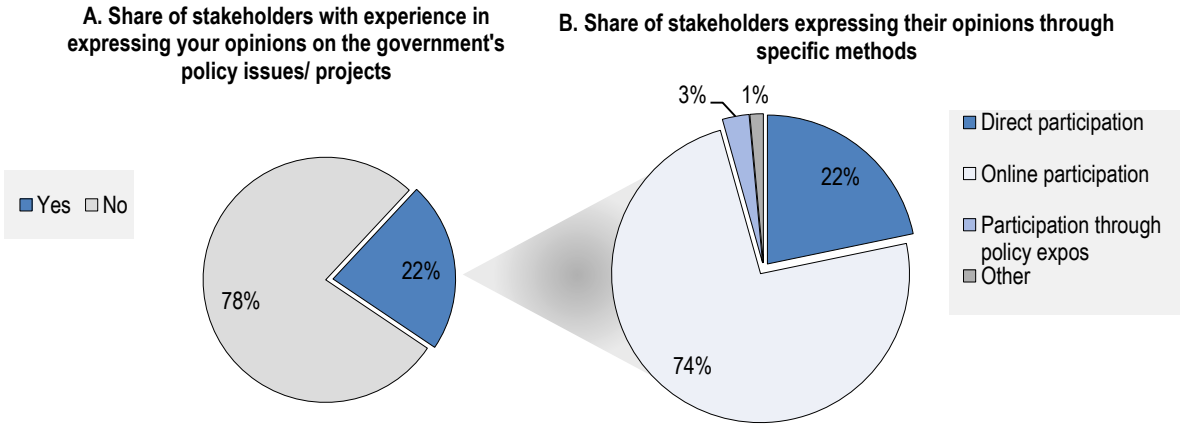
This section provides an overview of how stakeholders participate in the adult learning policy-making process, and how such involvement could become more effective by expanding opportunities for stakeholders to provide input into policy making, as well as by improving the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement bodies. Relevant country examples and specific recommendations are also presented.

Expanding opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the adult learning policy-making process

The government needs to expand opportunities for stakeholders to provide input into policy making, particularly at the subnational level. The relatively centralised decision-making process for adult learning policy in Korea has often struggled to effectively meet subnational needs (Korea, 2019[17]). Adult learning needs differ significantly across regions and municipalities (see Chapter 3). Encouraging subnational stakeholders to constructively contribute to the design and implementation of adult learning helps to cultivate trust at the subnational level, resulting in better outcomes.

The government should solicit stakeholder feedback and input throughout the entire policy-making process. In a survey of Korean stakeholders, respondents were asked whether they had experience in expressing their opinions on government policy issues or projects. Only 23% of respondents said that they had such experience, which was usually through online participation (74%) followed by other forms of in person participation such as citizen panels, forums and open meetings (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7. Stakeholder views on opportunities to provide feedback and input on government policies



Note: The Stakeholder Engagement Survey, conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA), primarily polled citizens to understand their engagement with government.
Source: OECD elaboration of the Korea Institute of Public Administration (2017[41]), *Stakeholder Engagement Survey*, https://www.kipa.re.kr/site/eng/main.do.

StatLink https://stat.link/7h89ap

The Korean government has experience of engaging stakeholders through a variety of initiatives. For example, since 2013 a community participation mobile application (app) called "mVoting" has allowed citizens in Seoul to propose policy solutions at any time, once they have downloaded the app. Efforts are currently underway to use this app for actual policy decisions. The app has been downloaded at least 100 000 times on Google Play and approximately 280 000 times on the App Store. As of June 2016, more than 1.1 million users had voted in the app. At least 4 400 proposals and voting agendas have been posted – 88% of which came from citizens and 12% from officials. At least 181 proposals have turned into actual Seoul City policies. The government has also established civic participatory service design teams composed of stakeholders, government officials and experts. Each team consists of about 8 to 15 members who work together for about three to four months conducting field studies, literature reviews, and research and brainstorming to propose policy solutions. National, regional and local governments have organised more than 200 teams, which have submitted policy proposals in diverse areas such as education, social welfare, public health, transport, industry, housing and finance (OECD, 2016[42]) .These different initiatives are promising and should be expanded to make them more readily available across the country.

Stakeholder engagement mechanisms such as these should ensure that disadvantaged stakeholders, who are less vocal and more passive, are heard as much as more outspoken and active stakeholders. Disadvantaged stakeholders often do not use these online platforms or participate in other types of engagement activities. They may be more passive and lack of awareness of these engagement forms, and may not have sufficient capacity to participate.

In order to involve stakeholders more in the policy-making process, including those who are disadvantaged, Korea could consider the example of the Citizens Forum in Belgium. This forum brings together stakeholders representing different perspectives to deliberate on a particular policy issue, learn from each other and develop innovative policy solutions. To ensure the broad participation of stakeholders, the forum organises a G1 000 summit that convenes 1 000 randomly selected residents of Belgium, who then form smaller groups of 32 to discuss and propose a number of specific policy recommendations (Box 4.6). In Germany, the government of Berlin's Lichtenberg borough engages stakeholders through regular online and face-to-face activities to make and evaluate suggestions of how to spend the annual EUR 31 million discretionary budget. In order to ensure the broad participation of all stakeholders, including

disadvantaged groups, 25 000 residents are randomly selected and surveyed to receive their input. The government invests considerable resources in raising awareness among stakeholders of the participatory budgeting project through posters and leaflets, information stands at local festivals and events, and information in the local media (Box 4.6).

The government in Korea should foster more government and stakeholder partnerships at the local level. However, some relevant experiences do exist. For example, since 2000, the Ministry of Education has run the "Lifelong Learning City" project, which promotes government and stakeholder partnerships in lifelong learning at the city level. In 2019, 160 Korean cities were designated as official Lifelong Learning Cities, representing 70% of all Korean cities. In each lifelong learning city there is an ordinance or law to support governance structures that involve residents, experts and local social partners in a decision-making process that develops mid- and long-term goals. The amount of funding the Ministry of Education provides depends on the size of the city and its project plan. This national funding is complemented with funding from the city and stakeholders. While the performance of lifelong learning cities varies significantly (Ministry of Education, 2019[43]), a good practice case study of Suwon City can be found in Box 4.5.

Along similar lines, in 2006 the Ministry of Employment and Labour created the "Local-based Job Creation Support Programme" which works with local NGOs, academic institutions, unions and employer associations, regional skills councils, and subnational governments to develop innovative job creation projects, relevant training programmes and career counselling services. In 2018, the government provided around USD 95 million to fund 455 selected local projects. A relevant case study of Gwangju, which has been highlighted by stakeholders in Korea as an example of good practice, can be found in Box 4.5.

When evaluating such stakeholder initiatives, sufficient time should be given to show results, as investments in adult learning programmes take time to bear fruit. Otherwise, any experimentation and the development of new initiatives may be discouraged. Currently, most of these programmes are evaluated annually, which does not provide sufficient time to significantly improve and demonstrate adult learning outcomes. The government should thus also consider medium- and long-term outcomes (e.g. more than one year) when evaluating how funding for local initiatives is spent. This would allow stakeholders more time and flexibility to try different approaches to identify those that best fit the local context.

The management of government and stakeholder partnerships, such as the Lifelong Learning City project and the Local-based Job Creation Support Programme, could be improved. Discussions with participants as part of this project reveal that in these partnerships, stakeholders are often competing for funding from the government, which reduces incentives for them to work together. When stakeholders do not collaborate in adult learning programmes there can be the unnecessary duplication of efforts and an inefficient use of financial resources (OECD, 2020[11]). Stakeholders who are also better organised and represented (as discussed in the previous opportunity) are also better positioned to submit well-developed proposals than disadvantaged stakeholder groups (e.g. non-regular workers, women and youth) and may thus have a higher chance of being selected.

In order to address these issues, the government should encourage stakeholders to submit joint proposals and give priority to proposals that specifically involve disadvantaged stakeholder groups. This would encourage both well-represented and disadvantaged stakeholders to build government and stakeholder partnerships, as well as foster networks among stakeholders to help them collaborate in the delivery of adult learning programmes.

Suwon City is an exemplary case of a Lifelong Learning City that has been able to successfully foster networks among stakeholders, including over 600 local adult learning providers such as community centres, libraries, child and youth centres, and cultural and art centres. The network is supported by an Urban Policy Citizens' Planning Team, which consists of representatives from the 43 neighbourhoods in Suwon. The team organises regular roundtables that invite stakeholders to explore how to better collaborate among themselves and form partnerships with the government to implement adult learning programmes. Stakeholders can present their ideas, discuss possible adult learning policy options and

apply together for public funding to support their adult learning programmes. The team's governance structure ensures that stakeholders collaborate with each another and that the voices and adult learning project proposals of all types of stakeholders, including those who are disadvantaged, are heard and considered. This governance structure could be worthwhile expanding across other cities in Korea (OECD, 2020[11]).

Across OECD countries, dedicated public-private partnership units facilitate partnerships between the government and stakeholders. They are often established in the ministry of finance or other line ministries (Table 4.5). The advantage of such units is that they can co-ordinate public-private partnership efforts across the whole of government, and promote peer learning of how to manage such partnerships effectively. This could be useful for the successful dissemination of best practices of partnerships between government and stakeholders.

Table 4.5. Dedicated public-private partnership units in OECD countries

Within the departmental structure of the ministry of finance	As a separate agency answering to the ministry of finance	Within the departmental structure of a line ministry	As a separate agency answering to a line ministry	Other unit
Germany, Ireland, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal, the Slovak Republic	France, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Korea, the United Kingdom	Australia, Chile, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, the Slovak Republic	Germany, Ireland	Italy, Switzerland

Note: Data for Belgium, Canada, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Poland and the United States are not available. No such unit in Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey. Data for Korea comes from Kim et al (2018[44]), "Public–Private Partnership Systems in the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, and Indonesia", https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/458626/ewp-561-ppp-korea-philippines-indonesia.pdf.
Sources: OECD (2018[45]), *OECD Survey of Capital Budgeting and Infrastructure Governance*, Question 59; Kim et al. (2018[44]), *Public–Private Partnership Systems in the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, and Indonesia*, https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/458626/ewp-561-ppp-korea-philippines-indonesia.pdf.

Korea has a public-private partnership unit called the Public and Private Infrastructure Investment Management Centre (PIMAC), which is housed in the Korea Development Institute (KDI) and reports to the Ministry of Finance (Delmon, 2017[46]). PIMAC co-ordinates public and private partnerships that have an infrastructure component. For example, the building of school facilities can be co-financed by stakeholders, which gives them the right to receive financial returns (e.g. rent) for a specific period. PIMAC reviews applications for public-private partnership projects, conducts feasibility studies and related research, as well as provides capacity building in the management of public-private partnerships.

A public-private partnership unit specifically for adult learning could be established in Korea. This unit would provide guidelines on how to support such partnerships, identify common issues and problems, provide capacity training for government officials managing such partnerships, and disseminate good practices across the whole of government for fostering horizontal (see Chapter 2) and vertical (see Chapter 3) co-operation. Such a unit for adult learning could also consider partnerships that go beyond infrastructure investments, as contributions from stakeholders in adult learning could include the provision of trainers, materials, curriculum development, and participation in monitoring and evaluation.

Box 4.5. National examples of expanding stakeholder opportunities to participate in policy making

Community participation mobile application

Since 2013, a community participation mobile application (app) called "mVoting" has allowed citizens in Seoul to propose policy solutions at any time, once the app is downloaded. Efforts are currently underway to use this app for actual policy decisions. The app has been downloaded at least 100 000 times on Google Play and approximately 280 000 times on the App Store. As of June 2016, more than 1.1 million users had voted in the app. At least 4 400 proposals and voting agendas have been posted – 88% coming from citizens and 12% from officials. At least 181 proposals have turned into actual Seoul City policies. The mVoting app is accessible to anyone who is able to confirm their identity with a Korean phone number or social media account. Phone number authentication is used to avoid duplicate votes and prevent disproportionate participation. Although this method of authentication does exclude those who do not own mobile phones, or specifically an Android or iPhone, there is also the option for citizens to vote online on their computers, with PC mVoting developed for this specific purpose. The closed intermediate voting results means that voting results cannot be seen before participating. This is to prevent biased influence by particular groups based on intermediate results. The app also has a social network service (SNS) sharing function that can be freely activated and inactivated to avoid conflict between groups on votes regarding sensitive matters. These settings are made available to encourage strong participation among all types of groups and to protect the private and personal information of citizens.

Source: Seoul City (2020[47]), *Community participation mobile application "mVoting"*, https://participedia.net/case/5554.

Civic participatory service design teams

The government has launched civic participatory service design teams, composed of members of the general public, to help citizens participate in the design process for certain public policies or services. These teams are composed of citizens (as customers), civil servants (as service providers) and experts. They play a role in the design of a new government policy or public service, and improve existing policies or services. For each policy task, conducted either by a central government agency or local government, about 8-15 members assemble to form one team and work for about three to four months in various forms such as field studies, literature reviews and brainstorming sessions. The civic participatory service design teams also use service design methodologies to conduct research. Before such service design methodologies were adopted, the government struggled to understand what citizens actually needed. Rounds of interviews, surveys and discussions only ended up with fragmentary and superficial results. Unlike other methodologies, service design involves closely observing customer experience, behaviour, psychology and even surrounding environments to discover the hidden needs of customers. In 2014, 19 central government agencies and 12 municipal or provincial governments piloted the civic participatory service design teams, which produced satisfactory policy proposals that met the needs of the people. This pilot programme was significant in that citizens themselves served as active participants, rather than passive customers, in designing public policy. This new model for policy establishment engaged citizens in the policy decision-making process as partners, thus innovating the ways of working in the public sector. Thanks to the success of the pilot programme, civic participatory service design teams were launched on a larger scale at various levels of government in 2015. To date, over 200 teams have been formed to work on policy proposals in nearly every area, including education, safety, public health, culture, social welfare, industry, energy, environment, transport, housing and finance.

Source: OECD (2016[42]), *The Governance of Inclusive Growth*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264265189-en.

Box 4.6. International examples of expanding stakeholder opportunities to participate in policy making

Belgium: Citizen forums

Belgium's G1000 programme organised citizen forums in which individuals representing different perspectives come together to deliberate on a particular policy issue. This approach supports peer learning and the development of innovative solutions, as well as helps to bridge gaps between citizens and policy makers by creating space for discussions between experts and stakeholders. The G1 000 programme consists of three phases that collectively function like a funnel. The process started with a broad online survey that aimed to detect relevant policy areas and topics of discussion. The G1 000 citizens' summit, which brought together 1 000 randomly selected residents of Belgium, was held during the second phase, followed by the organisation of a citizens' panel of 32 people who undertook a process of focused deliberation to draw up a number of specific policy recommendations. The citizens' panel has full autonomy to determine the topic to discuss. For example, in 2012 the panel chose to discuss unemployment and labour issues in Belgium.

Source: OECD (2015[3]), *Regulatory Policy in Perspective: A Reader's Companion to the OECD Regulatory Policy Outlook 2015*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264241800-en; G1 000 (n.d.[48]), *Idea of the G1 000,* http://www.g1000.org/en/introduction.php.

Germany: Participatory budgeting

In Germany, the government of Berlin's Lichtenberg borough engages stakeholders through regular online and face-to-face activities to make and evaluate suggestions of how to spend the annual EUR 31 million discretionary budget. The government invests considerable resources in raising awareness of the participatory budgeting project among residents through posters and leaflets, information stands at local festivals and events, and information in the local media. There are several options for citizen participation. An online platform, which operates for several weeks, allows citizens to post online their suggestions and comments, and at the end of the discussion period vote for the best ideas. The online platform includes a detailed information section, moderated discussion forum, budget calculator, proposal wikis, preference polling, newsletter, and editor interviews with politicians. The government conducts thirteen citizen assemblies (one in each of the borough's districts) where citizens can discuss the general budget and the budgetary implications for their specific district with representatives and public officials. All budgetary suggestions are evaluated at the end of the meeting and each participant can cast a vote. The top five suggestions from each district assembly and the top ten suggestions from the online discussion are then gathered into a single list (a total of up to 75 suggestions). The government also carries out a large survey of 25 000 randomly selected residents (nearly 10% of the borough population) to evaluate the best suggestions raised online and face to face. The list of winning citizen suggestions based on the general borough survey is brought to the city's central assembly of representatives, which is supposed to consider and include the "realisable and fundable" ideas in the budget. A tracking number is allocated to all suggestions – either online or face to face – so that citizens can follow the status of their idea up to the discussion and decision making at the city's central assembly of representatives. The assembly has to report which proposals have been accepted and provide reasons as to why other suggestions were rejected. Upon the conclusion of the yearly participatory budget, Lichtenberg publishes a detailed brochure listing the outcomes of the participatory process.

Source: Berlin-Lichtenberg (2020[49]), *Participatory Budgeting in Berlin-Lichtenberg*, https://participedia.net/case/12.

Recommendations for expanding stakeholder opportunities to participate in policy making

3.6. Use diverse and inclusive engagement formats to solicit input and feedback from stakeholders, in particular those who are disadvantaged, on the development of adult learning policies. Existing initiatives for soliciting feedback and input from stakeholders, such as the community participation mobile application and the civic participatory service design teams, should be expanded. More attention should be directed in particular at engaging disadvantaged stakeholders and ensuring that they are heard as much as the most outspoken and active stakeholders. This could be achieved through various awareness-raising efforts (e.g. online, print media, events) and through a variety of online and offline formats that are inclusive (e.g. surveys and interviews of randomly selected participants).

3.7. Create a dedicated public-private partnership unit to support the management of government and stakeholder partnership projects in the area of adult learning. Such a unit should provide guidelines on how to support public-private partnerships and provide capacity training for the government officials involved in their management. The unit could review existing partnerships (e.g. Suwon Lifelong Learning City Initiative, Gwangju Job Creation Programme) that are working well, analyse the success factors and disseminate good practices across the whole of government. The unit should promote the idea that funding for government and stakeholder partnerships should be prioritised for projects that involve more than one stakeholder in order to support a variety of stakeholders to work together with government.

Improving the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement bodies

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to stakeholder engagement. While some engagement activities are informal, others are formal and institutionalised in law. The form of stakeholder engagement depends on the purpose of the engagement. Engaging all stakeholders equally and with the same intensity is neither effective nor practical given time and resource constraints (OECD, 2020[11]). As discussed in Opportunity 1, it is important to tailor the level of engagement according to the profile of the stakeholder group. Broadly speaking there are three levels of engagement (Table 4.6), each with an increasing effort requirement: 1) "informing" refers to the dissemination of information to stakeholders; 2) "consulting" refers to the collection of data from stakeholders; and 3) "engaging" refers to holding discussions with stakeholders. Based on the relative importance of the stakeholders (see Opportunity 1), a large number of stakeholders could be informed, a smaller number of stakeholders could be regularly consulted and only the key stakeholders could be continuously engaged through formal engagement bodies.

Table 4.6. Levels of stakeholder engagement

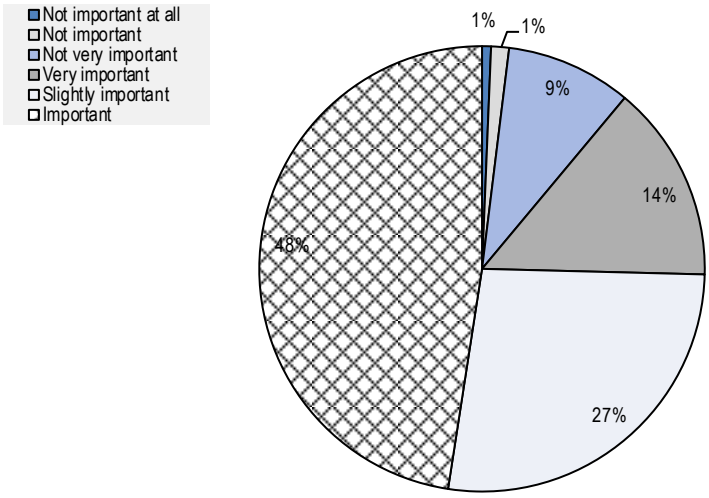
Level of engagement	Description
Informing	Disseminating information to inform the public about a process or a decision. Information is needed to abate concerns or prepare for higher levels of public involvement. This can encourage stakeholders to relate to the issue and take action.
Consulting	Collecting data, identifying specific individuals and groups, formulating policies and preparing decisions in accordance with preferences and preparing for higher levels of public involvement.
Engaging	Giving opportunities to discuss and propose details of policy implementation. There is commitment to frame issues and debate options together, and to respect recommendations. Time and resources are available to discuss complex issues. Institutions are ready to empower stakeholders to co-develop solutions. There is a formal/informal agreement to implement solutions generated with stakeholders.

Source: OECD (2016[30]), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en.

For stakeholders, engagement tends to be more meaningful when they have formally defined roles in governance and decision-making bodies. In a stakeholder survey in Korea, most participants stated that they viewed the existence of an independent institution or council as important or very important for a successful consensus-building process (Figure 4.8). Such an institution or body can guide policy making in adult learning by involving key stakeholders and making it mandatory for the body to discuss and provide feedback on proposals before passing the policy. Such a process is more credible and effective than one characterised by ad hoc and/or informal engagement (OECD, 2020[11]).

Figure 4.8. Stakeholder views on the importance of an independent institution or council for a successful consensus-building process

Share of stakeholders, 2017



Note: The Stakeholder Engagement Survey, conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA), primarily polled citizens to understand their engagement with government.
Source: OECD elaboration of the Korea Institute of Public Administration (2017[41]), *Stakeholder Engagement Survey*, https://www.kipa.re.kr/site/eng/main.do.

StatLink https://stat.link/y8stwn

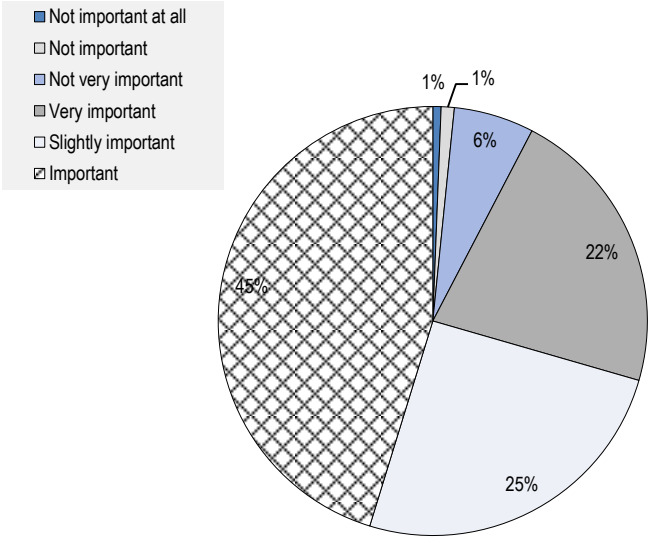
One common challenge across existing engagement bodies is the level of representation of specific stakeholders. While stakeholders report that the representativeness of participating groups in a consensus-building process matters for their success (Figure 4.9), some stakeholders are under-represented. For example, unions are under-represented in bodies such as regional skills councils (RSCs) and industrial skills councils (ISCs). In RSCs, unions represented only 5.3% of participants, while business associations (39.6%), employers (4.5%), local and central government (17.8%), universities and research institutes (32.9%) made up the rest. Similarly, in ISCs, unions represented 6.2% of participants, while business associations (36.5%), employers (39%), professional organisations (8.1%), and universities and research institutions (10.2%) made up the rest (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2019[50]). In sectoral human resource development councils, union involvement is also relatively low. In some cases, while a group of stakeholders overall seems well represented, a certain subgroup may not be. For example, employers are well represented generally in ISCs, but large employers are not represented. Overall, further efforts are needed to balance the level of representation across stakeholders in Korea's engagement bodies.

When the participation of a given stakeholder group is low relative to others, it becomes more challenging for that group to have their voices heard. Achieving a more balanced proportion is thus advisable. The government is aware of the imbalance in the participation of stakeholder groups in engagement

bodies, and aims to raise the proportion of union representation to 10% in the abovementioned councils, which is heading in the right direction but still low compared to other countries. For example, in the Netherlands and Flanders (Belgium), the social and economic councils are equally composed of 10 employer representatives and 10 union representatives, which ensures that their voices have equal weight in the policy discussions (Box 4.8).

Figure 4.9. Stakeholder views on the importance of the representativeness of participating groups in the consensus-building process

Share of stakeholders, 2017



Note: The Stakeholder Engagement Survey, conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA), primarily polled citizens to understand their engagement with government.
Source: OECD elaboration of the Korea Institute of Public Administration (2017[41]), *Stakeholder Engagement Survey* https://www.kipa.re.kr/site/eng/main.do.

StatLink https://stat.link/0a51db

Another common challenge is the significant overlap in terms of mandate and responsibilities across bodies. The same stakeholder representatives are often invited to participate in multiple bodies as they sometimes cover similar issues on the topic of adult learning. The large number of such bodies is partly due to the lack of co-ordination and co-operation among the different institutions and ministries, which often created these bodies for their own specific purposes. These bodies thus tend to make decisions in favour of their respective overseeing ministries (Korea, 2019[17]). However, from a practical standpoint this duplicates engagement efforts and makes the process of engagement more inefficient as a whole, with certain bodies competing with each other. This underlines the importance of better co-ordination across these bodies. Better co-ordination between sectoral human resource development councils and ISCs is being planned, including through the alignment of their roles and responsibilities (Lee et al., 2019[51]) (Box 4.7).

Engagement bodies should be reviewed and, when appropriate, consolidated. Not all engagement bodies are equally effective. During the OECD mission to Korea, participants reported that there are vast differences even within the same type of engagement body. For example, while the Busan Regional Skills Council (see Box 3.1. in Chapter 3) was often mentioned as a good practice example, this would not apply to all regional skills councils. Systematic and regular review and monitoring efforts would be helpful to determine which engagement bodies are operating well and which are not, and the determining factors in

terms of performance. Given that in some cases there are significant overlaps in functions across engagement bodies, the Korean government may also consider consolidating some of these bodies, and thus reduce the overall number. The Ministry of Interior and Safety (MoIS) conducts an annual monitoring of activities undertaken by councils, which involves recording the number of meetings convened, attendance, agenda, actions taken and budget allocated. However, the decision-making authority to consolidate or abolish councils resides with the parent ministries, and there are currently no set standards on which to base such decisions (Lee et al., 2019[51]). A legally binding framework with clear standards and a co-ordinating mechanism among the relevant line ministries of bodies should support the process of making decisions about consolidating or abolishing committees and councils.

The effectiveness of individual bodies should be strengthened through policy specific working groups. As these bodies often have the mandate to cover a range of policy issues that include, but also go beyond, adult learning, this issue is often not given much space on their agendas. To improve the effectiveness of dealing with specific policy issues such as adult learning, it would be useful to have separate working groups under each body that are responsible for specific policy issues (see also Chapter 3). Such working groups can meet more frequently than the plenary sessions and be composed of relevant experts in the policy area. In order to select members with relevant policy expertise to participate in such working groups, greater autonomy should be given to the working groups for the member selection process, without too much influence from the overseeing ministries (Korea, 2019[17]). For example, in the Economic and Social Council (SER) of the Netherlands, an executive committee conducts the day-to-day work, while a specialised sub-committee or working group prepares recommendations on specific policy issues. This allows the SER to cover a wide range of policy domains, including adult learning, while also being able to consider each in depth (Box 4.8).

Box 4.7. National example of supporting stakeholder engagement mechanisms

Co-ordination between sectoral human resource development councils (SCs) and industrial skills councils (ISCs)

SCs were initiated by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy in 2004 to co-ordinate and implement human resource programmes in single industries. Their main objectives are to conduct labour market forecasting analyses and produce corresponding annual publications, playing a major role in initial vocational education and training and outplacement services. ISCs were established in 2015 under the Ministry of Employment and Labour to encourage industry-led skills development. ISCs are present in 17 industries and consist of 456 sector associations involved in developing National Competency Standards and qualifications frameworks. SCs and ISCs often engage in similar issues and in overlapping industries, which calls for better co-ordination between them. In recent years, consultations between the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy and the Ministry of Employment and Labour have taken place to provide an integrated approach to some ISCs and SCs with overlapping industries. There are currently efforts underway to jointly use the expertise of the two types of council and to reduce overlap in their work.

Source: Lee et al. (2019[51]), "*Written input prepared for the Korea governance review on adult learning*"; Korea (2019[13]), OECD Skills Strategy for Korea Questionnaire.

Box 4.8. International examples of supporting stakeholder engagement mechanisms

Flanders: Social-Economic Council of Flanders (SERV)

The Social-Economic Council of Flanders (SERV, Sociaal- Economische Raad van Vlaanderen) is the main advisory body to the Flemish government on Flemish socio-economic policy. Trade unions and employer associations each have 10 representatives on the council. In SERV, the social partners consult, negotiate and conclude agreements with each other, such as the agreement and action plan on workable work. SERV has a research department, the Stichting Innovatie & Arbeid, which carries out research on the labour market, innovation, careers and workable work at the request of the social partners. It also organises the secretariat of Vlaamse Economisch en Sociaal Overlegcomité (VESOC - high-level dialogue body between social partners and the Flemish government) and the VESOC working group. It provides an ongoing forum for policy debate between social partners and the government and can result in official agreements, such as the recent agreement on the reform of training incentives.

Source: OECD (2019[52]), *OECD Skills Strategy Flanders: Assessment and Recommendations*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264309791-en; SERV (2016[53]), *SERV-Platformtekst, Vlaanderen 2030: Een uitgestoken hand [SERV Platform text, Flanders 2030: An outstretched hand]*, http://www.serv.be/sites/default/files/documenten/SERV_20160208_platformtekst2030_DOC.pdf.

Netherlands: Social-Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER)

The Social-Economic Council of the Netherlands is the main advisory body to the Dutch government and parliament on key points of social and economic policy. It also undertakes activities arising from governance tasks and self-regulatory matters, and functions as a platform for discussions on social and economic issues. The council consists of independent Crown appointed members, employers and employees. It was established in law by the Social and Economic Council Act (*Wet op de Sociaal-Economische Raad*). The SER is financed by industry and is wholly independent of the government. It represents the interests of trade unions and industry and advises the government (upon request or on its own initiative) on all major social and economic issues. The SER also has an administrative role, and helps the government enforce the Works Councils Act (*Wet op de ondernemingsraden*). The SER has an executive committee to prepare and carry out its day-to-day work. In principle, the full SER meets on the third Friday of each month. The main items on the agenda are the discussion and finalisation of opinions to be submitted to the government or parliament. Each opinion is prepared in detail by a committee or a working party. If all points are not agreed unanimously, the different views are set out in the opinion. The plenary meetings of the SER are open to the public. The SER has set up a large number of committees and working parties to prepare and carry out its work. These committees are made up of three groups: representatives of employers' organisations, representatives of trade unions and independent experts. Committees are chaired in principle by a Crown member.

Source: Social and Economic Council (n.d.[54]), *What does the SER do?*, https://www.ser.nl/en/SER/About-the-SER/What-does-the-SER-do; OECD (2017[55]), *OECD Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report: The Netherlands 2017*, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264287655-en.

Recommendations for improving the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement bodies

3.8. Improve the composition and co-ordination of, and support for, stakeholder engagement bodies. Attention should be directed at improving the balance of participation across different stakeholder groups (e.g. employers, unions) in existing engagement bodies. The responsible line ministries of stakeholder engagement bodies should encourage, support and require more co-ordination between similar bodies. Given that engagement bodies typically have a wide range of policy topics, consideration could be given to establishing separate working groups for topics such as adult learning. These working groups could meet more frequently and should have sufficient flexibility to recruit relevant experts as members.

3.9. Monitor and evaluate existing engagement bodies to raise their effectiveness in engaging stakeholders in adult learning policy. Engagement bodies should be regularly monitored to assess whether they have overlapping or complementary mandates, how effectively they are engaging stakeholders generally, and how effectively they are engaging stakeholders that are typically less well represented. The critical success factors of engagement bodies should be identified and disseminated. The Ministry of Interior and Safety (MoIS), which is in charge of evaluating the performance of committees and councils, should develop clear standards upon which decisions can be made on consolidating or abolishing councils that are either unnecessarily overlapping or no longer necessary. The MoIS should support co-ordination between the relevant line ministries of bodies so that decisions regarding consolidation or abolishment can be made in agreement.

Summary of policy recommendations

Policy directions	Recommendations
Opportunity 1: Raising the awareness of, and capacity for, effective stakeholder engagement	
Raising awareness and capacity of government to engage stakeholders	3.1. Identify through a mapping exercise the relevant stakeholders in adult learning policy and how they should be engaged. 3.2. Expand training for government officials on how to engage in particular disadvantaged stakeholders in adult learning policies, as well as how to assess stakeholder proposals.
Raising awareness and capacity of stakeholders to engage with government	3.3. Provide stakeholders with training to raise their awareness about the importance and benefits of engaging with government on adult learning policies, and on the processes through which they can engage. 3.4. Strengthen stakeholders' capacity to represent themselves effectively in engagement processes. 3.5. Raise the capacity of internal research units in stakeholder organisations to participate in an evidence-based dialogue with government.
Opportunity 2: Involving stakeholders effectively in the adult learning policy-making process	
Expanding opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the adult learning policy-making process	3.6. Use diverse and inclusive engagement formats to solicit input and feedback from stakeholders, in particular those who are disadvantaged, on the development of adult learning policies. 3.7. Create a dedicated public-private partnership unit to support the management of government and stakeholder partnership projects in the area of adult learning.
Improving the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement bodies	3.8. Improve the composition and co-ordination of, and support for, stakeholder engagement bodies. 3.9. Monitor and evaluate existing engagement bodies to raise their effectiveness in engaging stakeholders in adult learning policy.

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Annex 4.A. Approaches to stakeholder mapping

Annex Table 4.A.1. Approaches to stakeholder mapping

Model	Description	Source
Basic analysis	Each stakeholder group is characterised with a simple traffic light colour to indicate their views about aspects of current adult learning policies: red (poor), orange (fair), green (good). Then, quick-wins and what would be long-term approaches to address their concerns are distinguished.	(Bryson, 1995[20])
Power-interest	Stakeholders are mapped in a quadrant depending on their interest and power. Interest is defined as the extent of their concern for a specific policy, while power is how much influence they have in the success of the policy. Stakeholders with high power and high interest are key players and should be managed closely. Stakeholders with high power but low interest should be kept satisfied, but not be involved in all the details and on a frequent basis. Stakeholders with low power but high interest should be kept informed about progress and changes. Stakeholders with low power and low interest should be monitored and require only minimal efforts.	(Bryson, 1995[20])
Salience	Stakeholders are mapped in a Venn-diagram with three main categories: power, legitimacy and urgency. Power refers to how much influence they have in the success of the policy due to physical (coercive), material, and normative (prestige, social pressure) means. Legitimacy is about how much claim they have at stake in terms of what is at risk for them and any other legal, contractual, moral or financial claims. Urgency refers to the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention, taking into account not just time sensitivity but also how critical the relationship is. The more a stakeholder has these attributes the higher their salience. This leads to seven classes of stakeholders.	(Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997[21])
Business process management	Stakeholders are individually characterised by their power both in the present and after implementation in terms of the source of power and relative strength, and the ability to influence the project and other stakeholders. The view of the project in terms of their interest and the benefits for the stakeholder are also recorded.	(Jeston and Nelis, 2008[22])

Source: Bryson (1995[20]), *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement*, Jossey- Bass, San Francisco; Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997[21]), "Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts", *The Academy of Management Review*, https://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0363-7425%28199710%2922%3A4%3C853%3ATATOSI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-0; Jeston and Nelis (2008[22]), *Business Project Management*.

5 Strengthening financing arrangements for adult learning in Korea

A strong financing model for adult learning facilitates the effective co-ordination of funding sources and the efficient distribution of funding to meet the diverse and changing learning needs of society, employers and individuals. This chapter explores two opportunities for Korea in terms of financing for adult learning: 1) co-ordinating adult learning financing arrangements across levels of government; and 2) improving financial incentives for individuals to invest in adult learning.

Introduction: The importance of financing arrangements in adult learning

A strong financing model for adult learning facilitates the effective co-ordination of funding sources and efficient funding distribution. The main sources for adult learning funding are national and subnational governments, employers and individuals (OECD, 2017[1]; OECD, 2020[2]). The total available funding for adult learning needs to be adequate to meet the diverse learning needs of society, employers and individuals. While the need for adult learning is growing due to megatrends such as globalisation, technological change and demographic changes, the available funding for adult learning compared with other levels of education is still relatively small in Korea.

The distribution of funding also needs to be equitable, which means that it is distributed proportionately based on the ability of the beneficiaries to pay (OECD, 2019[3]). Beneficiaries of adult learning include individuals, employers and the government. Those that can afford to pay more should pay more, while those less well-resourced should be more financially supported. Due to the social and economic ramifications of COVID-19, many individuals, employers and governments have seen their income decrease, while expenses have risen. Targeted financial efforts are therefore necessary to ensure that funding is distributed to those in greatest need (OECD, 2020[4]).

This chapter provides an overview of Korea's adult learning financing arrangements and explores two key opportunities for improvement: 1) co-ordinating adult learning financing roles across levels of government; and 2) improving financial incentives for individuals to invest in adult learning. For each opportunity, the available data are analysed, relevant national and international policies and practices are explored, and policy recommendations are provided.

Financing arrangements for adult learning in Korea

The following section provides an overview of public and private funding sources for adult learning. Public adult learning funding comes from the national and subnational governments, while private funding comes from employers and individuals.

Public funding for adult learning

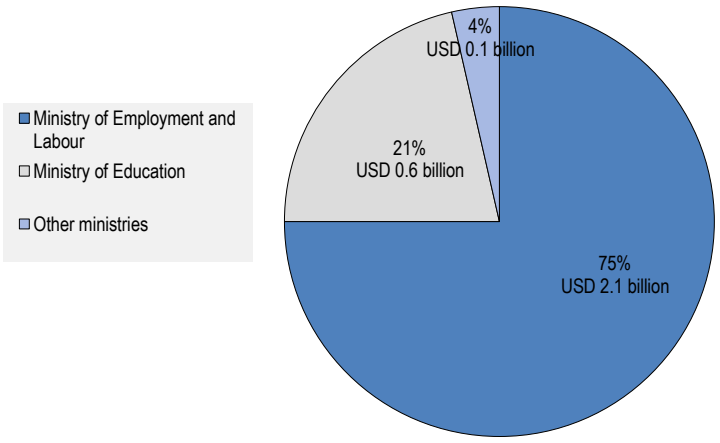
At the national level, funding for adult learning comes from a variety of ministries**.** The largest contributing ministry is the Ministry of Employment and Labour (MoEL), followed by the Ministry of Education (MoE).

Among national ministries, the MoEL makes the largest financial contribution to learning (Figure 5.1), with a budget of around USD 2.1 billion (year 2020). It manages public training institutions, evaluates training institutions, certifies training courses, operates training facilities and subsidises training costs, among other responsibilities. The funding of the MoEL is distributed through MoEL's implementation agency (Human Resources Development Korea [HRD Korea] and its regional branches), subnational job centres (101 centres as of 2020) and subnational governments (Employment Insurance, 2020[5]).

Under the auspices of the MoEL, HRD Korea is in charge of distributing funds to support a variety of adult learning programmes. These include the Work-Study Dual Programme, employee vocational training provided by employers, and the universities under the auspices of the MoEL, such as the Korea University of Technology and Education. Job centres transfer funding for adult learning from the MoEL to employers or individual beneficiaries (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2020[6]; Employment Insurance, 2020[5]), and provide financial incentives to employers to offer adult learning opportunities and to support training facilities. They also operate the National Tomorrow Learning Card programme and provide financial suport to those unemployed and employed to upgrade their skills (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2019[7]). Subnational governments are in charge of distributing MoEL funding through the Local-customised Job Creation Support Programme, which is a matching fund supporting subnational job creation efforts and the provision of vocational training for adults.

Figure 5.1. Public funding spent on adult learning policies at the national level

Share of public funding across various ministries, 2020



Note: The reported values have been converted from Korean Won (KRW) to US Dollars (USD) using the exchange rate 1 KRW = USD 0.00084, as on 15 August 2020.
"Other ministries" includes the Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technology, Ministry of SMEs and Start-ups, and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family.
Source: OECD elaborations of KDI (2018[8]), *Creating a Lifelong Learning Governance to Prepare for the Future*.

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The MoE is the second largest funder of adult learning, with a budget of around USD 600 million (2020). It allocates funding to subnational governments (e.g. lifelong learning cities), individuals (e.g. lifelong education vouchers) and education institutions (e.g. universities and colleges implementing lifelong learning) (Ministry of Education, 2020[9]).

The MoE allocates funding to subnational governments mainly through the Lifelong Learning Cities programme, which provides 100% matching funds to either newly designated lifelong learning cities or existing lifelong learning cities with a good performance (Ministry of Education, 2020[10]). The MoE distributes funding to individuals through the Lifelong Education Voucher Programme, which provides up to USD 290 annually to individuals to cover the costs of participating in lifelong education courses recognised by the MoE. Every four years, the MoE selects 30 universities and colleges and provides annual support to their adult learning programmes (Ministry of Education, 2020[9]). For most adult learning programmes, with the exception of vouchers, the MoE transfers funding to subnational governments and agencies to implement the adult learning programmes themselves, and subnational governments provide additional funds to supplement this funding.

Other ministries also provide funding for adult learning. The Ministry of Science and ICT (USD 49 million) provides funding for adult learning in specific skill domains (e.g. science, engineering, information and communication technology [ICT]), which is distributed through the Korea Industrial Technology Association and/or the National Research Foundation of Korea to enterprises, research institutes and unemployed individuals with a science and engineering background (Ministry of Science and ICT, 2019[11]). The Ministry of SMEs and Start-ups (USD 33 million) provides funding to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and SME workers for programmes such as training organised in co-operation between industry and universities. It distributes the funds through its implementation body, the Korea SMEs and Start-up Agency (Ministry of SMEs and Startups, 2019[12]). The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (USD 18 million) provides funding for adult learning targeting women with career gaps, and distributes the funding through subnational governments (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2020[13]).

At the subnational level, regional and local governments also fund adult learning policies (Table 5.1). Examples of regionally funded adult learning policies include regional lifelong education promotion councils and regional lifelong education information portals. Local governments also fund specific adult learning policies, which typically address specific local contexts and needs and therefore vary significantly in their purpose and level of funding across local governments (see Opportunity 1). In some cases, the national government provides full or partial funds to regional and local governments to support specific subnational adult learning policies (e.g. regional lifelong education promotion support, lifelong learning cities). Some regional governments also provide adult learning funds to local governments within their region. The total adult learning funding available for subnational governments varies significantly across subnational areas. For example, the amount spent on adult learning on a per resident basis at the subnational level (i.e. combining the funding sources from national, regional and local governments for adult learning policies implemented at the subnational level) ranges between USD 5 (Sejong) to USD 33 a year (Jeollanam-do) (Ministry of Education, 2020[14]). These funding differences are due to varying revenue generating capacities and different amounts of transfer from the national government (see Opportunity 1).

Table 5.1. Adult learning policies and programmes funded and implemented at the subnational level

Description and budget of subnational adult learning policies and programmes in 2020

Funding source	Example subnational adult learning policies and programmes	Budget amount for individual example policies and programmes
Regional government	• **Regional lifelong education councils.** Regional governments can set up regional lifelong education promotion councils to review their regional lifelong education promotion implementation plans in consultation with the regional education authorities and relevant experts.	• USD 2.5 million (Chungcheongnam-do)
	• **Regional lifelong education information portals**. Regional governments operate lifelong education information portals to provide information about available online and offline lifelong learning opportunities within the region.	• USD 568 680 (Seoul)
	• **Local-customised Job Creation Support Programme.** The MoEL provides matching funds (with rates of 10% to 40% depending on subnational government revenue) to selected projects designed at the subnational level to facilitate employment, job creation, job quality improvement, and human resource development that responds to local industrial needs. Participating subnational governments need to form partnerships with relevant subnational stakeholders.	• USD 68 000 (Gyeongsangnam-do)
Local government	• **English experience programme.** Local education offices can establish an English experience centre to provide English language courses and diverse activities to local citizens, including youth and adults. The aim is to assist language training and stimulate global citizenship.	• USD 112 560 for municipality (Daegu)
	• **Lifelong learning festivals.** Regional education offices can organise lifelong learning festivals to give awards to technicians that have achieved a high level of skills and grant accreditation to selected organisations that have demonstrated high-quality human resource development strategies.	• USD 104 160 for municipality (Gyeonggi-do)
	• **Local lifelong education promotion support.** For selected governments, the MoE provides financial support to build lifelong learning networks, or to design lifelong learning cities and operate lifelong learning centres.	• USD 1.2 million/year granted across five new lifelong learning cities
	• **Local Job Creation Target Notice System**. The MoEL provides matching funds (with rates of 10% to 40% depending on local government revenue) to selected local governments to support their efforts to achieve local targets for job creation, including through adult vocational education and training (VET).	• USD 0.6 million/year granted across 58 subnational governments

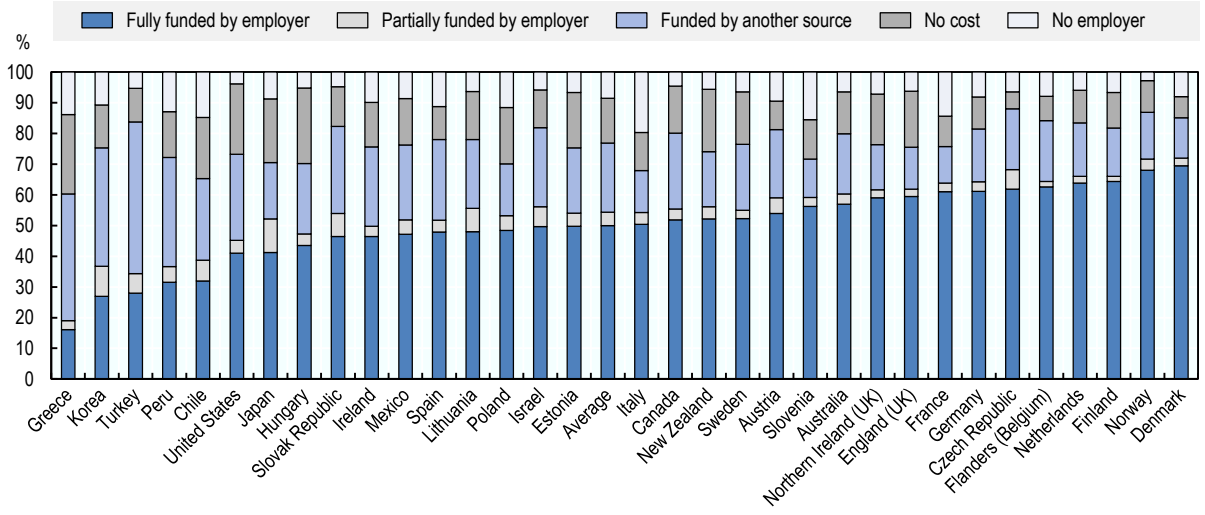
Source: Ministry of Employment and Labour (2020[6]), *Budget and Funds Operation Plan and Programme Description*, www.moel.go.kr; Seoul Metropolitan Government (2020[15]), *Seoul Metropolitan Government Lifelong Learning Portal*, www.sll.seoul.go.kr; Daegu Gyeongbuk English Village (2020[16]), *About DGEV*, www.dgev.ac.kr; Gyeonggido Office of Education (2020[17]), *Press release*, www.goe.go.kr; Ministry of Education (2020[18]), *Subnational Lifelong Education Promotion Support*, www.moe.go.kr; Ministry of Education (2020[6]), *Budget and Funds Operation Plan and Programme Description*; Namwon English Experience Center (2020[19]), *Introduction to tshe Centre*, http://nec.jbnwe.kr.

Private funding for adult learning

Employers provide an important funding source for adult learning in Korea, although the share of employer-sponsored adult learning is still relatively small compared to other OECD countries (Figure 5.2). Around 37% of adults in Korea reported that they were fully or partially funded by their employer to participate in job-related training. This is significantly lower than the OECD average (50%) and the rates of other countries such as Finland (66%), Norway (72%) and Denmark (72%). Most adults in Korea (around 39%) reported using another funding source, which could include, for example, the government or individuals themselves. Only Greece (41%) and Turkey (49%) had a higher share of adults reporting this source of funding.

Figure 5.2. Employer funding for adult learning

Share of financial sources used by individuals to participate in adult learning, 2012/2015/2019



Note: The United Kingdom (UK).
Source: OECD elaborations of OECD (2020[20]), *Survey of Adults Skills (PIAAC) (2012, 2015, 2019)* (database), http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/.

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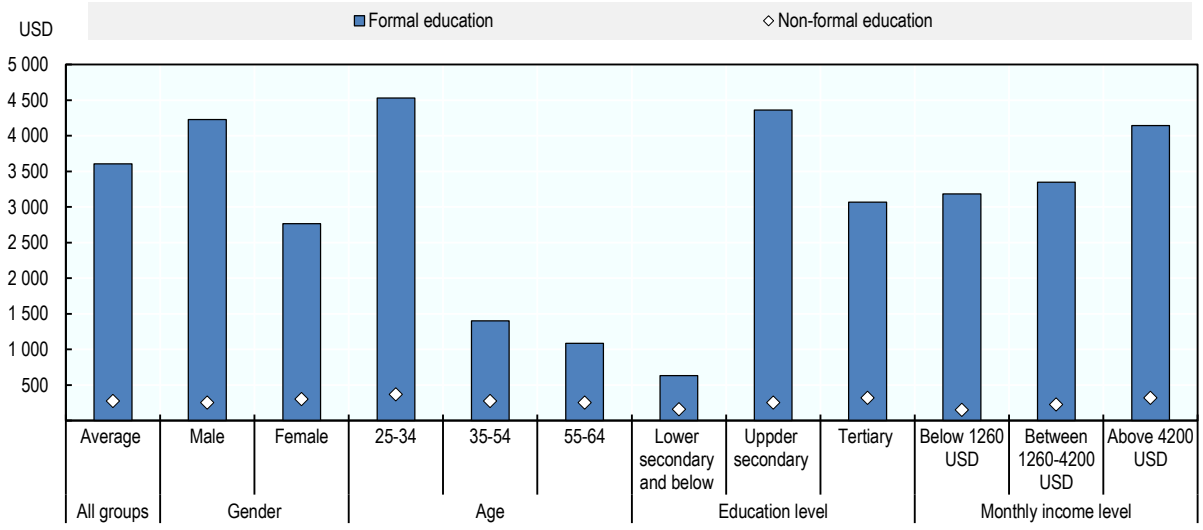
Employers in Korea provide adult learning funding through their contributions to the Employment Insurance (EI) Fund, which is a levy-grant system that requires employers[1] to contribute a variable insurance premium rate of between 0.25-0.85% (as of 2020), depending on their workforce size. The purpose of the EI Fund is to increase job security and support skills development programmes. In Korea, contributing employers are entitled to get a rebate of training levies to recover the training costs of their workers. All employers are legally obliged to join the EI, but as micro businesses, which employ fewer than five workers and make up the majority of businesses in Korea, suffer financial difficulties due to low profit margins, some do not join. In response, the government encourages employers to participate in the EI by subsidising insurance costs through the DuruNuri Social Insurance Support Programme. This programme is a premium subsidy scheme introduced in 2012 to provide financial assistance to low-wage salaried workers (and employers) at workplaces of up to ten employees, and thus increase the number of workers registered in the EI. For those self-employed, who account for about a quarter of the total workforce, participation in the EI is optional. Overall, around 90% of workers employed in firms are covered by the EI, and 53% of all employed (including self-employed) participate. Employers can also directly fund adult

learning programmes. According to the Human Capital Corporate Panel[2] (HCCP) survey, 71% of responding firms provided in-house vocational training, 35% provided outsourced vocational training, and 6% supported both in-house and outsourced training for employees (KRIVET, 2017[21]).

Individual spending on adult learning in Korea varies significantly based on personal characteristics. Although the share of adults participating in formal education is relatively small (1.5%), when adults do participate they spend a significant amount, averaging USD 3 600 per year (Figure 5.3). This includes tuition costs and other related expenses from attending university education, vocational education and other types of formal education institutions. In contrast, around 40.9% of adults participate in non-formal education for job-related or personal reasons, and spend on average USD 277 per year. Most of this is spent on private tutoring services, courses in lifelong learning centres, religious education activities and private courses associated with workplaces, among others (Ministry of Education and KEDI, 2019[22]). However, individual adult learning funding amounts vary significantly and are particularly low for women, older adults, adults with lower levels of education and adults with lower monthly income levels (Figure 5.3). While individuals can benefit from a number of financial incentives (e.g. individual learning schemes, loans, tax incentives, education or training leave), they could be better tailored to benefit disadvantaged groups, who are more likely to report not being able to participate due to higher costs (see Opportunity 2).

Figure 5.3. Amount of individual funding spent on adult learning, by background

Annual amount spent by individuals on adult learning activities in USD, 2019



Note: The reported values have been converted from Korean Won (KRW) to US Dollars (USD) using the exchange rate 1 KRW = USD 0.00084, as on 15 August 2020.
Source: OECD elaborations of Ministry of Education and KEDI (2019[22]), *Lifelong Learning Survey 2019*.

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Opportunities to improve financing arrangements in adult learning

This chapter presents two opportunities to improve the funding arrangements for adult learning in Korea. Opportunity 1 examines the challenges of co-ordinating public funding across levels of government. As Korea seeks to become more decentralised, as noted in Chapter 3, it is imperative that funding for adult learning is distributed equitably at the subnational level so that individuals, regardless of where they live, can access and benefit from adult learning opportunities. Given that Chapter 2 explores how relevant

ministries need to co-ordinate with one another, including on the financing of adult learning, the co-ordination of funding across ministries is not examined further in this chapter. Opportunity 2 examines how to improve the financial incentives for individuals to participate in adult learning, and tailor these to disadvantaged groups. As other recent OECD publications (OECD, 2018[23]; OECD, 2020[24]) have discussed extensively the government financial incentives given to employers for adult learning provision, this topic will not be further elaborated in this chapter.

Korea can improve financial co-ordination and alignment in adult learning by:

1. Co-ordinating adult learning financing arrangements across levels of government.
2. Improving financial incentives for individuals to participate in adult learning.

Opportunity 1: Co-ordinating adult learning financing arrangements across levels of government

This section first provides an overview of the funding arrangements across levels of government in Korea, and then examines the distribution of adult learning funding across subnational governments, how the national government could support subnational governments with fewer resources to finance adult learning programme provision, and how to raise adult learning funding in subnational governments. Relevant country examples and specific recommendations are also presented.

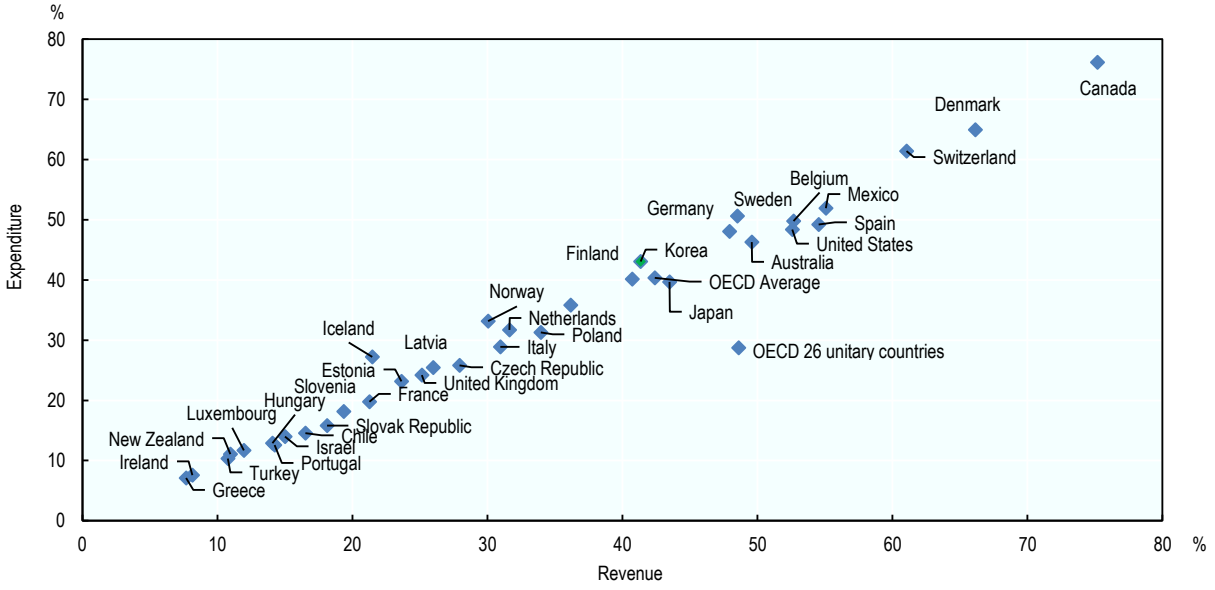
The subnational government share in general government revenue and expenditure has risen over the years in Korea: around 40% of general government revenue and expenditure now occurs at the subnational level (Figure 5.4). This is similar to the OECD average and reflects the decentralisation process that has taken place in Korea since the 1980s. This process was implemented through the Local Autonomy Act and the Local Finance Act in 1988 to better address the local needs of citizens and to promote more balanced regional development (OECD, 2005[25]) (see also Chapter 3). However, the benefits of decentralisation are still not fully realised.

Financial independence, the degree to which subnational governments have their own funding sources, varies significantly at the regional and local government levels. While the share of own-source revenue in regional government revenue, as measured by the financial independence ratio (see note in Figure 5.5), is 76% in the Seoul region, for the average region it is only 42%, and is even as low as 25% for regions such as Jeollanamdo and Jeollabukdo. Variation is also significant at the local government level, where up to 66% of revenue comes from own sources in some local governments, while others only have a share of 8% (Ministry of Interior and Safety, 2020[26]). Overall, most subnational governments rely heavily on large grant and subsidy transfers from the national government to compensate for their lack of revenue generating ability.

Subnational governments rely heavily on national government transfers in the form of grants and subsidies. Around 58% of subnational governments' revenue in Korea comes from national government grants and subsidies, which is higher than the OECD average (37%) (Figure 5.6). At the same time, own-revenue generating mechanisms such as tariffs and fees, property income, social contributions, and taxes make up a lower share of the total revenue in subnational governments in Korea than in subnational governments across the OECD. Most national government transfers are earmarked, which effectively means that the national government retains control over a wide range of local policies (OECD, 2005[27]). Grants are conditional on subnational governments complying with specific operational standards, which restricts the flexibility of how they can be used. Subnational governments are also not allowed to transfer funds between grants, even though the amounts are often small and for similar purposes, which reduces their ability to respond to local conditions (OECD, 2005[27]).

Figure 5.4. Subnational government share in general government revenue and expenditure

Revenue and expenditure in percent, 2016



Note: Fiscally unitary countries are those with low autonomous tax share, little or no tax sharing, and a high level of transfers, which can give more control to the national government. This is in contrast to fiscally federal countries, where subnational governments raise their funding with their own taxes and are free to determine their own tax rate.
Source: OECD (2020[28]), *OECD Statistics (database)*, https://stats.oecd.org.

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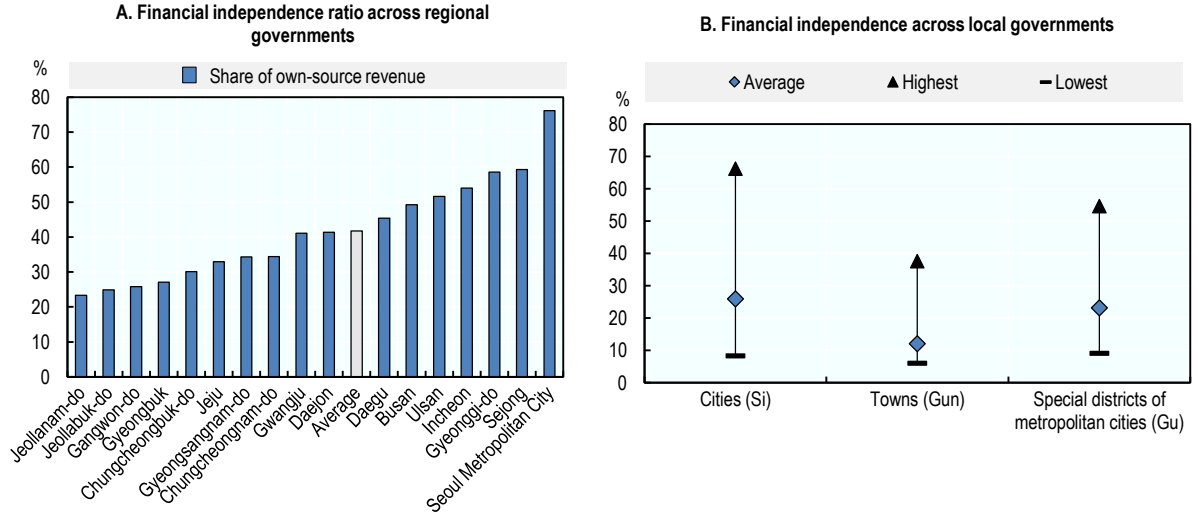
Figure 5.5. The financial independence of subnational governments



Note: Financial independence ratio = Subnational revenue [subnational tax revenue + non-tax revenue] / general account revenue * 100.
Source: OECD elaborations of KOSIS (2020[29]), *Subnational financial independence ratio*, http://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1YL20921&conn_path=I3.

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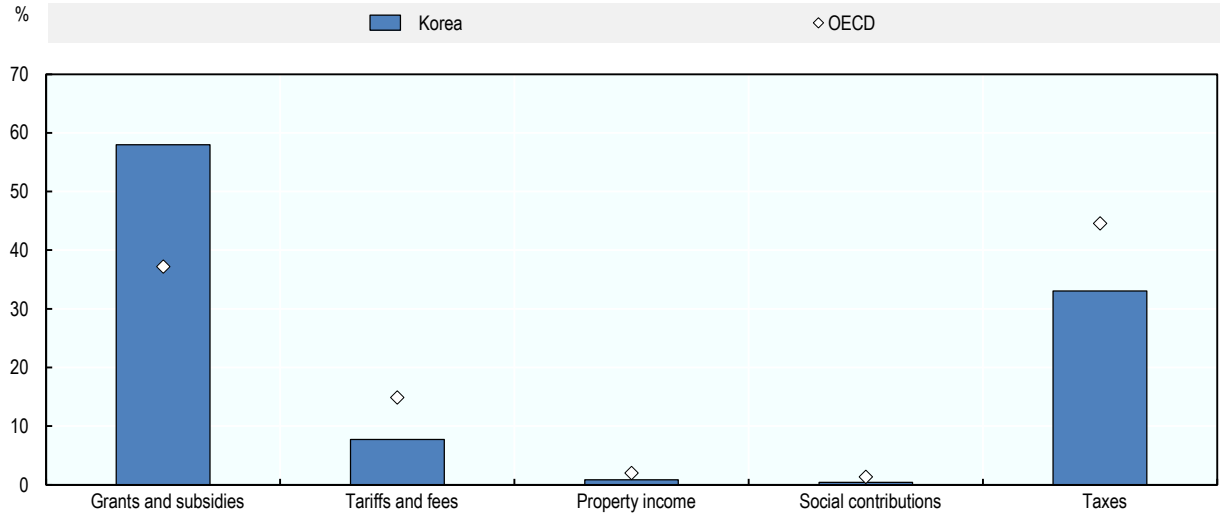
Figure 5.6. The revenue sources of subnational governments

Share of subnational government revenue, by source, 2019



Note: Grants and subsidies: Investment grants and subsidies in cash or kind made by subnational governments to other institutional units.
Tariffs and fees: Revenue from local public service charges such as land or user fees for immobile resources.
Property income: Revenue generated from sale and operation of physical and financial assets.
Social contributions: Payments paid to government, such as unemployment insurance benefits and supplements, accident, injury and sickness benefits, old-age, disability and survivors' pensions, family allowances, reimbursements for medical and hospital expenses or provision of hospital or medical services.
Taxes: Subnational taxes on production, imports, income, wealth and capital, including both own-source tax revenue and tax revenue shared between national and subnational governments.
Source: OECD (2020[28]), *OECD Statistics database*, https://stats.oecd.org.

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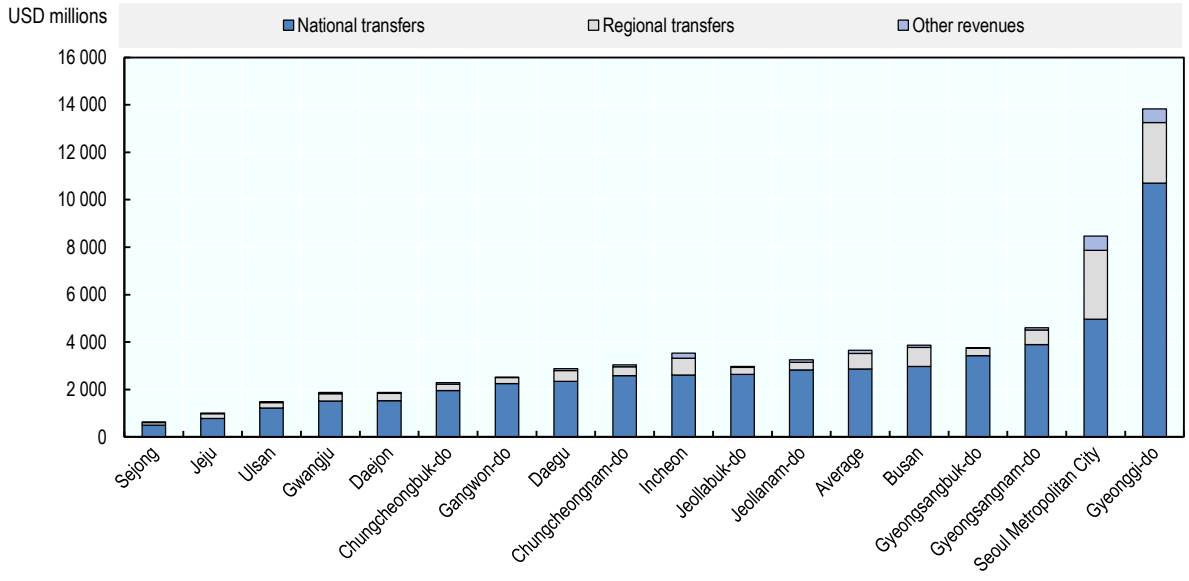
As noted in Chapter 3, most of the responsibility for general education (not including adult education) is devolved from the Ministry of Education to its subnational education offices at the regional and local level. These offices are independent from general subnational governments. This is in contrast to most OECD countries, where subnational governments are primarily responsible for implementing education policies (OECD, 2005[27]). Similar to the financing priorities of the Ministry of Education, which allocates only 1% of its total budget to adult learning, subnational education offices spend on average only 0.23% of their budget on adult learning. Most of the budget is allocated towards general education, which includes early childhood education and care, primary and secondary education.

In comparison to subnational governments, subnational offices of education are even more reliant on transfers from the national government, which on average account for 78% of their revenue (Figure 5.7). The remaining budget of subnational offices of education is covered by regional governments, which contribute on average 18%, and the final 4% is covered by offices' own revenue sources, such as admission fees, tuition and local bonds (Ministry of Education, 2020[14]). Subnational education offices are expected to formulate their own budget, but their reliance on national government funding limits in practice how they can use the funding.

Figure 5.7. Revenue of subnational offices of education, by funding source

Revenue in millions of US dollars, 2020



Source: OECD elaborations of Ministry of Education (2020[14]), *Subnational Education Finance Information*, http://www.eduinfo.go.kr/portal/main.do#anchor4.

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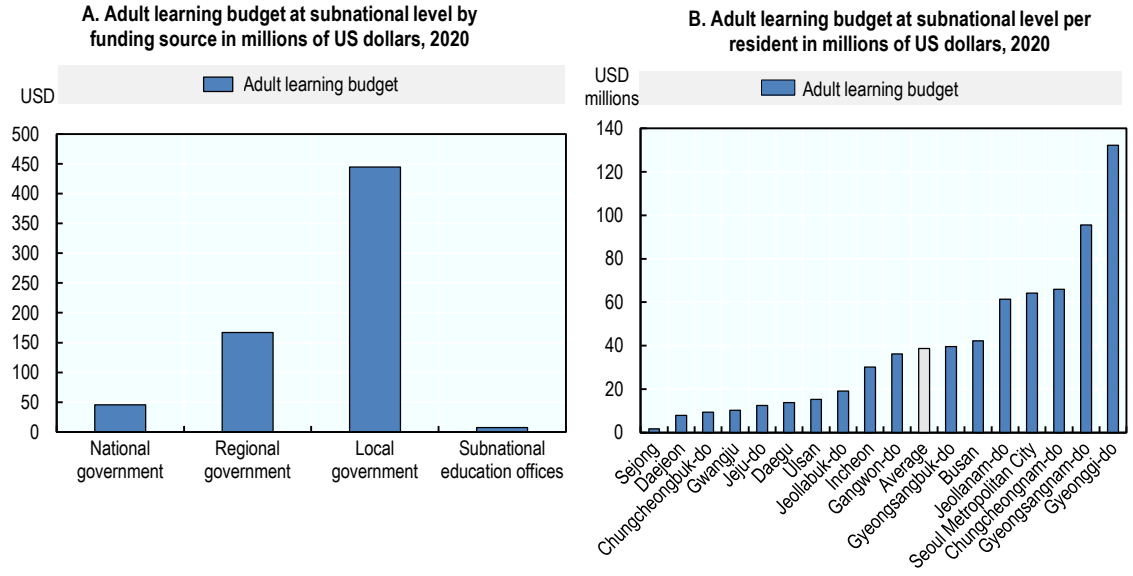
Financing for adult learning is mostly dependent on subnational governments, although available resources among subnational governments vary widely. Regional governments (25%) and local governments (67%) cover most of the costs of subnational adult learning policies, while the national government (7%) and subnational education offices (1%) play only a minor financing role (Figure 5.8). Part of the reason why spending on adult learning by subnational offices of education is limited is that the Lifelong Education Act confers responsibility for adult learning to the subnational governments instead of the subnational offices of education. Subnational governments mostly fund adult learning programmes at the subnational level from their own resources. However, the additional responsibilities for adult learning policies for subnational governments has not come with additional financial resources. Given the vast variations in available financial resources across subnational governments, this has had ramifications for how much funding is available for adult learning policies at the subnational level across subnational areas. The annual budget for adult learning varies across subnational areas between USD 1 million and USD 130 million, which when adjusted by number of residents varies between USD 5 to USD 33 per resident (Ministry of Education, 2020[14]; Statistics Korea, 2020[30]).

Figure 5.8. Adult learning budget at the subnational level by funding source, and adult learning budget per resident at the subnational level



Note: Panel B. includes national, regional and local government, as well as subnational education offices' allocated budget for adult learning at the subnational level.
Source: OECD elaborations of Ministry of Interior and Safety (2020[26]), *Subnational Governments Integrated Finance Overview 2020*.

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Given the vast disparities across subnational governments, the national government can play an important role in supporting the subnational governments that have fewer resources**.** This applies to both funding from the MoE and the MoEL to subnational governments for adult learning.

The MoE mainly supports subnational governments in lifelong learning through the Lifelong Learning City Programme targeted at local governments. The total available national budget is USD 1.2 million (2020) annually, which is then divided across five newly selected lifelong learning cities (each receiving USD 76 000), ten already designated lifelong learning cities with specific proposals (each receiving USD 42 000), and five lifelong learning cities with high performance (USD 25 000). While the MoE plans to increase the funding to USD 3 million by 2023 and expand the number of beneficiaries, the individual amount that each local government can receive will remain the same (Ministry of Education, 2020[31]). The purpose of this national fund is to provide seed funding for local governments to take a more proactive role in adult learning. The national funding has to be 100% matched by the local government and the expectation is that the local government would continue to invest in adult learning in the subsequent years. Currently, 175 out of 226 local governments have already been designated as lifelong learning cities (National Institute of Special Education, 2020[32]).

The selection process for the Lifelong Learning City Programme is based on an aggregate score from the preliminary evaluation by the regional government (30%) and the main evaluation (70%) by the National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) under the MoE. Criteria for the preliminary evaluation is determined by each regional government and can vary across regions. The main evaluation focuses largely on lifelong learning infrastructure and regional lifelong learning development plans. Indicators for lifelong learning infrastructure include available human resources, lifelong learning policies and programmes, performance of the regional lifelong education promotion council, and financial resources secured for lifelong education

(Ministry of Education, 2016[33]). The share of cities accredited as lifelong learning cities is unevenly distributed among regions (Ministry of Education, 2020[34]).

The MoEL also financially supports the provision of adult learning by subnational governments. For instance, through the Local-customised Job Creation Support Programme (2006), the MoEL annually distributes approximately USD 28 million[3] across selected subnational governments that have designed programmes aimed at promoting VET, supporting entrepreneurship and providing employment services. Participating subnational governments need to form partnerships with relevant subnational actors, including subnational MoEL offices and co-ordination bodies, to develop local, context-specific adult learning programmes. The national funding needs to be matched with funding from subnational governments. The matching amount ranges from 60% to 90% of the total budget based on the financial independence ratio[4] of each participating government. The matching amount is further raised by 5 percentage points for joint programmes co-designed by two or more subnational governments (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2018[35]; 2020[6]).

MoE and MoEL programmes that support subnational governments could target their funding more at subnational governments with fewer resources. Existing programmes disproportionately reward local areas that already demonstrate high performance (e.g. high adult learning participation rates), which may reinforce the gaps between strong and weak performers. In the funding allocation process to subnational governments, the MoE and the MoEL should consider more the characteristics of the subnational governments applying to ensure that the performance and resource gap across regions and localities is not further widened. The funding allocation process should consider relevant differences in local characteristics that determine the need for adult learning. These differences include the demographic context (e.g. proportion of school-aged, adult and older population) and the economic context (e.g. unemployment rate, industrial base).

Given that the resources and capacity of subnational governments (e.g. administrative capacity for policy implementation, tax revenue) vary vastly across subnational governments, the required matched funding from subnational governments should be adapted accordingly. Subnational governments with fewer resources and capacities should be required to provide a lower amount of matched funding. This is relevant for the MoE's Lifelong Learning City Programme in particular, as the matched funding requirement is the same for all subnational governments regardless of available funding sources. The funding allocation process should consider these characteristics as complementary considerations to the level of performance. This would allow local governments that need the most help – i.e. those that do not have the highest performance levels and those facing a relatively more challenging local context – to receive greater funding.

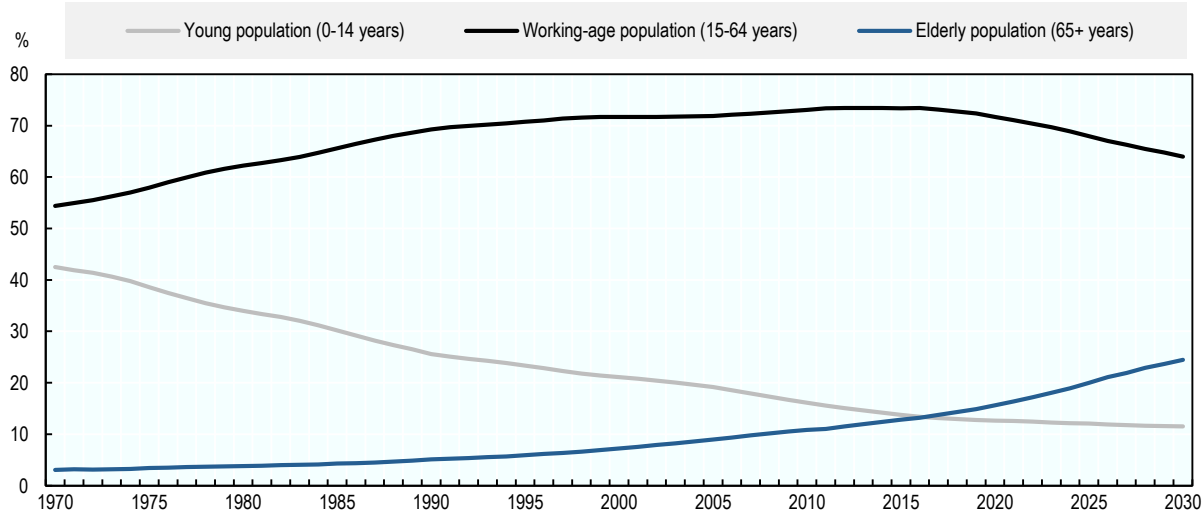
Examples of funding allocation approaches that consider local contexts can be found in a number of OECD countries. For example, in Denmark the national government funds labour market policies for unemployed people, taking into account the varying rates of unemployment across regions so that areas with a higher number of unemployed people are given additional support (UNCDF, 2010[36]). Germany's Learning Regions Promotion of Networks Programme has supported adult learning activities in over 70 regions, and takes into account local context and learning needs, with particular attention paid to vulnerable groups (Box 5.2) (Reghenzani-Kearns and Kearns, 2012[37]).

The overall funding distribution between national and subnational governments should also be revised. Programme-based funding support, such as the Lifelong Learning City Programme mentioned above, are relatively limited and unlikely to significantly reduce the funding disparities across subnational governments alone. Korea could thus consider providing subnational governments with greater flexibility to reallocate funding from general education to adult learning. This could be particularly helpful for subnational governments with low levels of adult learning funding, and those experiencing increasing pressures on their adult learning systems due to population ageing, urbanisation and internal migration trends.

Across Korea, the number of students in early childhood education and care, primary and secondary education has declined over past decades and is projected to further decline in the coming years, which will reduce the funding pressure on these levels of education. At the same time, the need for adult learning is increasing, largely due to an ageing population (Jo, 2019[38]). Korea's population is ageing more rapidly than any other OECD country. The share of young people (0-14 years) has steadily declined since 1970, from 13.7 million to 6.7 million in 2018, and is projected to drop further to 6.1 million by 2030. At the same time, the share of the adult population (15+) has risen from 18.5 million in 1970 to 44.9 million in 2018, and is projected to reach 46.8 million in 2030 (OECD, 2020[28]). This trend is driven largely by Korea having one of the lowest fertility rates in the world (0.98 in 2018), and one of the highest life expectancy at birth (6th among 183 countries) (OECD, 2020[28]). The elderly population (+65) made up 14% of the total population in 2018 and is projected to make up 25% of the population by 2030 (Figure 5.9). Statistics Korea estimates that Korea will become the most aged society in the world by 2067, with the elderly population making up 46.5% of the population (Maeil Business News Korea, 2020[39]).

Figure 5.9. Korea's ageing population

Historical data (1970-2018) and projections (2019-2030) as a percentage of the population



Source: OECD (2020[28]), *OECD Statistics (database)*, https://stats.oecd.org.

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Population ageing is occurring at different speeds across Korean regions due to urbanisation and internal migration trends. Rural and remote regions and municipalities are experiencing a faster rate of population ageing, largely due to the net emigration of young people who study and seek work in more urban areas. Recent estimates calculate that the share of population above 65 varied across Korean regions between 10% and 34% in 2020 (Kim and Kim, 2020[40]). Regions and municipalities with more rural areas tend to also be more financially constrained than regions and municipalities with more urban areas.

Given that general education at the subnational level is financed mostly through grants from the national government, the national government should explore with regions and municipalities, in particular those undergoing rapid population ageing and where funding for adult learning is relatively low, whether funding for general education could be increasingly used for adult learning. As adult learning funding at the subnational level is on average 100 times lower than general education funding, it could be significantly increased even by just a modest reallocation of funds from general education to adult learning (Ministry of Education, 2020[41]; Ministry of Interior and Safety, 2020[42]).

In order to make the reallocation of funds possible, the Subnational Education Grant Act would have to be amended, which reserves national grants for general education. There are recent movements to amend this act to increase its efficiency and sustainability, but the proposed changes do not yet involve adjusting its usage (Ministry of Education, 2020[43]; 2020[31]).

In order to facilitate the reallocation of funds from general education to adult learning, Korea could improve collaboration between subnational education offices (mostly responsible for general education) and subnational governments (mostly responsible for adult learning) (Ministry of Education, 2020[31]; 2020[41]). The Seoul Metropolitan Government and the Seoul Office of Education have taken an initial step towards collaboration by partially combining their overlapping education programmes (e.g. adult literacy programmes) and the related budgets for these programmes (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2014[44]) (Box 5.1).

In the long term, Korea could also consider making subnational education offices part of subnational governments, as discussed in previous OECD reports (OECD, 2005[45]; 2005[25]). Making subnational education offices part of subnational governments, which is how most OECD countries devolve education responsibilities to lower levels of government (OECD, 2005[45]), would not only give subnational governments in Korea greater influence over how the general education budget is being spent, but would also allow subnational governments to reallocate more funding from general education to adult learning, if deemed necessary. Subnational governments could then determine themselves whether to prioritise funding for adult learning relative to other education spending, for example based on how quickly the population ageing process is proceeding in their location and how the need for adult learning is evolving. This would be particularly beneficial for subnational governments with fewer resources, as they are more affected by population ageing.

Box 5.1. National example of co-ordinating funding among subnational governments

Seoul Metropolitan Government and Seoul Office of Education collaboration

The Seoul Metropolitan Government and the Seoul Office of Education introduced an innovative governance model of collaboration in 2014 to jointly deliver education programmes. Both actors work together to plan, implement, finance and evaluate specific education projects, such as establishing institutions that support adult literacy programmes. Between 2015 and 2018 their joint work had a total budget of around USD 59 million, with USD 23 million coming from the Seoul Metropolitan Government and USD 36 million coming from the Seoul Office of Education. This collaborative approach has been innovative as the regional government and regional offices of education have historically implemented their education programmes autonomously.

Source: Seoul Metropolitan Government (2014[46]), *Establishment of the first governance model in the nation between Seoul City and the Office of Education of Seoul*, https://opengov.seoul.go.kr/press/3255323.

Box 5.2. International examples of co-ordinating funding among subnational governments

France: Pactes Régionaux d'Investissement dans les compétences (PRIC)

The national government of France invests in subnational skills development programmes through individual regional pacts for investment in skills (*Pactes Régionaux d'Investissement dans les compétences*, PRIC) signed between the national and respective subnational governments. A majority of the 13 subnational governments in mainland France have either signed or are about to sign a regional pact with the national government. These contracts are based on diagnoses of regional skills and training needs involving regional actors, and funding should be channelled to programmes that support new training programmes using up-to-date content. Programmes supported by the pact should also take into account current and future needs of the labour market. The PRIC favours programmes that guarantee access to qualification paths for the most vulnerable groups by consolidating key competences.

Source: Cedefop (2020[47]), *France: Investing in upskilling and sustainable employment for the young and the unemployed*, https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/france-investing-upskilling-and-sustainable-employment-young-and-unemployed-0.

Germany: Lifelong learning cities and regions

Germany provides two examples of adult learning funding mechanisms for subnational governments using the bottom-up approach with top-down government support to foster adult learning.

The Learning Regions Promotion of Networks Programme (2001-2008) supported over 70 regions with a total of EUR 118 million provided by the European Social Fund (ESF). To apply for the programme, cities and counties formed networks for lifelong learning with various stakeholders from formal education, enterprises, unions, employment and career guidance services, and educators and learners. The chosen networks were granted funds for the initial two years and encouraged to develop plans to increase co-contribution (up to at least 40% as a goal) while the funding phased out. Success factors of this programme included taking into account the local context and the learning needs of communities, with particular attention paid to disadvantaged groups.

In 2009, the Learning on Place Programme was initiated to support good educational management at subnational levels based on public/private partnerships. The purpose of the programme was to systematically address issues such as demographic change with an ageing population, the under-education of migrants, and skill shortages through co-ordinated learning arrangements designed by cities and counties. EUR 60 million was invested by the Federal Government and the ESF to benefit 40 projects across cities and counties. Chosen projects received funding over a three-year period, with the option of a two-year extension.

Source: Reghenzani-Kearns and Kearns (2012[37]), *Lifelong learning in German learning cities/regions*, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1000173.pdf.

Opportunity 2: Improving financial incentives for individuals to participate in adult learning

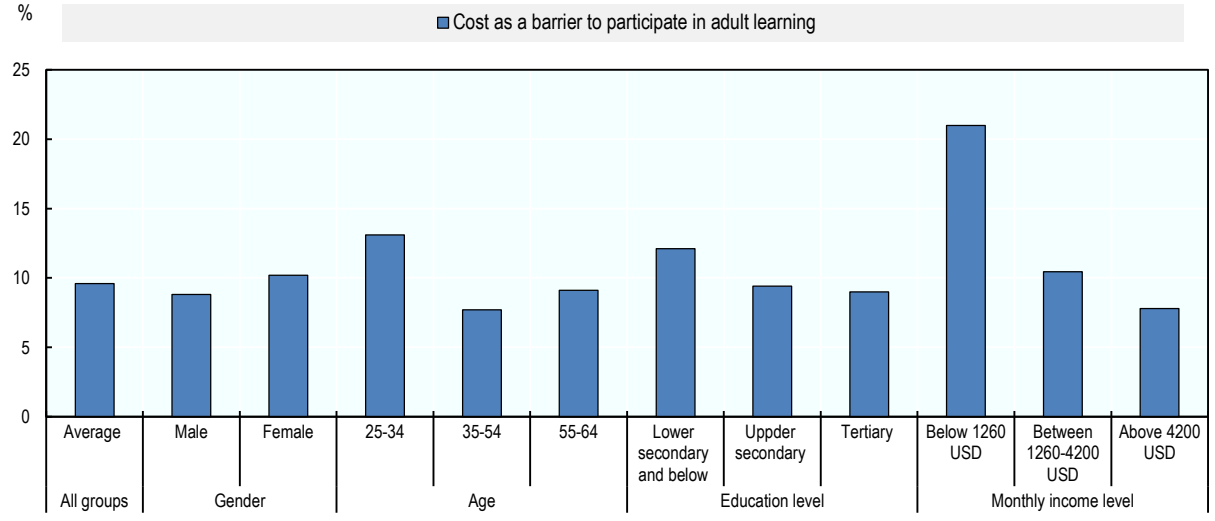
This section provides an overview of the financial barriers to individuals' participation in adult learning. It then explores the existing financial incentives for individuals, how financial incentives could be better managed to target disadvantaged groups, and how financial incentives could be more effectively implemented. Relevant country examples and specific recommendations are also presented.

The cost of adult learning is a significant barrier for disadvantaged groups. According to the Lifelong Learning Survey 2019 (Figure 5.10), women were more likely to report cost as a barrier to adult learning than men. Younger and older adults were also more likely to report cost as a barrier to adult learning than middle-aged adults. Although individuals with lower levels of education could benefit from significant returns to pursuing further adult learning, they were more likely to report cost as a barrier for participating in adult learning than individuals with higher levels of education. Those with lower income levels were also more likely to cite cost as an obstacle in comparison to adults with higher income levels. Non-regular workers, many of whom are women, older adults, adults with lower levels of education and adults with lower income levels, were three times more likely to report cost as a barrier to participating in adult learning than regular workers (Ministry of Education and KEDI, 2019[22]).

The COVID-19 crisis has adversely affected disadvantaged groups as they have been more likely to lose their jobs, and thus have even less disposable income to cover the cost of adult learning (OECD, 2020[48]). These disadvantaged groups require targeted funding support to reduce inequalities and ensure that all individuals, regardless of ability to pay, are able to develop and maintain the skills required to adapt in a changing working environment, as well as succeed in a dynamic society (OECD, 2020[49]).

Figure 5.10. Cost as a barrier to participating in adult learning, by individual characteristic

Share of individuals that reported cost as a barrier to participate in adult learning activities, 2019



Source: OECD elaborations of Ministry of Education and KEDI (2019[22]), *2019 Lifelong Learning Survey*.

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In Korea, there are various incentives to help individuals participate in adult learning. Financial incentives include loans, scholarships and study/training leave, and individual learning schemes (Table 5.2). Incentives vary in terms of target, purpose and implementing institution. Loans and scholarships target a relatively narrow range of beneficiaries. Loans are beneficial for individuals in a position to be able to pay back the loan eventually. Although there are loans that target unemployed and non-regular workers, the prospect of having to eventually repay the borrowed amount with interest may act as deterrent for these individuals to participate, as such groups have uncertain future income streams. Scholarships are only available to those already enrolled in adult learning institutions and favour high performers and those already employed. Study/training leave benefits are also only available to individuals who are currently employed. Individual learning schemes such as the National Tomorrow Learning Cards (MoEL) and the Lifelong Education Voucher (MoE) provide significant amounts of funding for adult learners and also have a wide coverage of beneficiaries.

Table 5.2. Overview of financial incentives for individuals in Korea

Type	Name	Description	Amount	Responsible institution
Loans	Vocational training and living expense loans	Loan programme targeting unemployed and non-typical workers to cover their living costs while on training.	USD 1 700 (KRW 2 million) per month, with the annual interest rate of 1%.	MoEL
Scholarships	Lifelong learner scholarship	Partial scholarship offered to selected individuals who have left initial education and then return. Applicants need to meet the criteria set by respective higher education institutions (e.g. grade point average, number of courses taken, income level, employees of affiliated firms, adults aged 65 years or older, disabled citizens).	10% to 80% of the tuition fee for a single semester.	Universities (e.g. Myongji Suwon, Dankook, Kookmin, Bucheon, Gacheon universities)
Grants	Grant for Enhancement of Employees' job skills	Financial allowance paid to non-regular workers and workers of SMEs to finance their participation in vocational training recognised by the MoEL.	USD 840 (KRW 1 million) per year, USD 2 520 (KRW 3 million) within five years.	MoEL
Study/training leave	Subsidy for paid training leave	Financial allowance paid to employers who grant their workers time off work to receive training.	100% (150% for SMEs) of the minimum wage of employees who participate in training for at least 20 hours with at least 5 days of paid leave.	MoEL
Individual learning schemes	Lifelong Education Voucher	Financial incentive to participate in adult learning targeting low-income adults over 19 years and below the 65th percentile in the income bracket.	USD 290 (KRW 350 000) per year.	MoE National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE)
	National Tomorrow Learning Card	Financial incentive to employed and unemployed individuals participating in training for employment reasons.	USD 2 520 to 4 200 (KRW 3-5 million) per year.	MoEL Subnational job centres

Source: OECD (2020[24]), *Enhancing Training Opportunities in SMEs in Korea*, https://doi.org/10.1787/7aa1c1db-en; Myongji University (2020[50]), *In-campus Scholarship Information*, https://www.mju.ac.kr; Dankook University (2020[51]), *Scholarship Information for Continuing Education Centre*, http://ccec.dankook.ac.kr/2019/entran/entran06.php.

Among these various financial incentives, individual learning schemes (ILS) are seen as a potential solution to support the participation of disadvantaged groups in adult learning. ILS can be designed so that they are accessible irrespective of employment or unemployment status, and thus offer greater coverage, which is particularly relevant for non-regular workers. ILS can raise the capacity of individuals to progress in their career and make professional transitions as they do not have to rely on an employer to support their adult learning and are able to think beyond their current job and employer for their adult learning needs. This enables them to participate in adult learning that their employer may otherwise have been reluctant to support due to fear of poaching or leaving (OECD, 2019[52]). ILS also do not require repayment (in contrast to loans), demonstration of already high skills (in contrast to scholarships), and employer support (in contrast to training leave subsidies), and are therefore particularly relevant for disadvantaged groups.

Defined broadly, ILS give individuals the rights and finances to participate in adult learning. The individual, the government and in some cases the employer can contribute to ILS accounts. If the finances are accumulated over time, the ILS are considered individual learning accounts. Otherwise, they are individual saving accounts for training or voucher schemes (Table 5.3). ILS can attach the finances for adult learning to the individual, rather than the job, and therefore make it possible for the individual to use this fund irrespective of their labour market status (OECD, 2019[52]). The financial incentives provided by the MoE and the MoEL in Korea are closest to the voucher schemes as they are funded by the government, paid directly to the individual and do not allow individuals to accumulate finances over time.

Table 5.3. Overview of individual learning schemes

	Individual saving accounts for training	Individual learning accounts	Voucher schemes
Funding source	• Funded by individual • Possibly co-funded by employers • Incentivised by government (tax incentives, direct subsidies, associated subsidised loans)	• Funded by government through mandatory training levy on firms	• Funded by government, paid directly to individual • Co-funded by individual
Accumulation of funding	• Funding can be accumulated over time	• Funding can be accumulated over time	• Funding can not be accumulated over time
Management of funding	• Funding is the property of the individual and may, depending on the scheme, be used for other purposes (e.g. retirement)	• Funding is only mobilised if adult learning participation has taken place	• Funding is only mobilised if adult learning participation has taken place
International examples	• Canada: Learn$ave • United States: Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLA)	• France: *Comte Personnel de Formation*	• Germany: *Bildungsprämie* • Flanders (Belgium): *Opleidingscheques* • Singapore: SkillsFuture Credit

Source: OECD (2019[52]), *Individual Learning Accounts: Panacea or Pandora's Box?*, https://doi.org/10.1787/203b21a8-en.

The MoEL's main individual learning scheme is the recently introduced National Tomorrow Learning Card (NTLC) (Table 5.4), which integrates the previously distinct financial incentive programmes for the employed and the unemployed and aims to provide financial support to individuals (irrespective of employment status) participating in training for employment reasons (KRIVET, 2019[53]). Around USD 2 520 to 4 200[2] (KRW 3-5 million) is typically available over five years, which can cover between 40% to 100% of the training fees.[5]

The system caters to both employees and jobseekers. Beneficiaries among employees are: 1) employees of large firms who are 45 years or older and have received a monthly average income of less than USD 2 525 (KRW 3 million) in the last three months; 2) non-regular workers; 3) self-employed workers; and 4) employees on unpaid leave (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2017[54]). Beneficiaries among jobseekers are: 1) unemployed individuals who have registered themselves as jobseekers on Work-net[6]; 2) students in the last year of secondary or tertiary education who are ready to work; 3) self-employed individuals with an annual revenue below approximately USD 126 100 (KRW 150 million); and 4) workers in agriculture and fisheries willing to transition to other industries (Ministry of Employment and Labour, 2017[54]). Individuals can apply to benefit from the NTLC through the MoEL's Vocational Skills Development Account, and are selected based on whether they fit the beneficiary categories described above, their need for training and their level of motivation. Once selected they can enrol in MoEL approved training programmes by using the allowance and paying the designated co-payment amount for each course.

The MoE's main individual learning scheme is the Lifelong Education Voucher (Table 5.4), which aims to increase participation in adult learning for low-income adults over 19 years of age and below the 65th percentile in the income bracket (Ministry of Education, 2019[55]). Due to funding limitations, there were only about 10 374 recipients in 2020, but in 2021 support will be expanded to 15 000 recipients. Around 40% of recipients also receive the national basic livelihood guarantee subsidy. The value of a lifelong education voucher is around USD 290 (KRW 350 000) annually. It can be used to pay for fees and/or learning materials for approximately 6 439 courses at 610 institutions designated by the MoE and listed on the Lifelong Education Voucher website (NILE, 2020[56]). Individuals can benefit from the voucher through the MoE's Lifelong Learning Account.

Table 5.4. Individual learning schemes in Korea

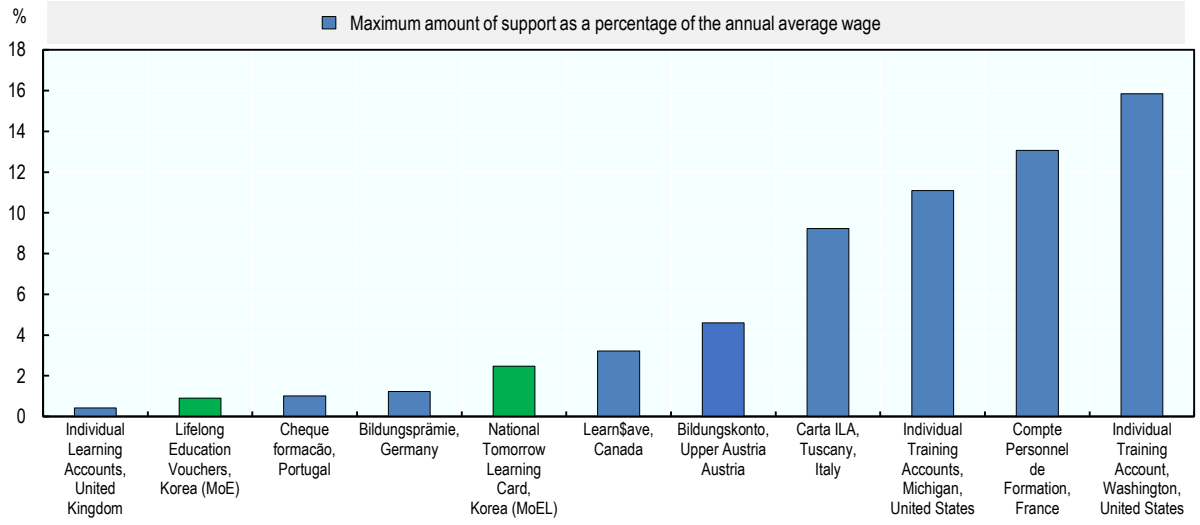
	National Tomorrow Learning Card	Lifelong Education Voucher
Responsible ministry	Ministry of Employment and Labour	Ministry of Education
Eligible beneficiaries	Employed and jobseekers	Individuals over 19 years of age and below the 65th percentile in the income bracket
Eligible adult learning options	MoEL approved institutions	MoE approved institutions
Amount	USD 2 520 to 4 200 (KRW 3-5 million) over five years	USD 290 (KRW 350 000) annually
Cost covered	Training fees (40-100%)	Training fees, learning materials
Number of participants (2020)	847 394	10 374

Source: KRIVET (2019[53]), *Research on Integration of My Work Learning Card*.

In comparison to other countries, Korea provides higher levels of funding in the case of the MoEL's NTLC, and lower levels in the case of the MoE's Lifelong Education Voucher (Figure 5.11).

Figure 5.11. Support provided by individual learning schemes as a percentage of the average wage

Maximum amount of support as a percentage of the annual average wage, 2018



Note: The Korean Average Annual Wage for 2018 was approximately USD 30 547. The percentages expressed here consider the standard case under each scheme. Since the available amount of Korea's NTLC is available over five years, it was adjusted to an annual basis.
Source: OECD elaborations of OECD (2019[52]), *Individual Learning Accounts: Panacea or Pandora's Box?*, https://doi.org/10.1787/203b21a8-en.

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The two main challenges influencing the effectiveness of ILS examined in this section are: 1) support for disadvantaged groups; and 2) connection of the two ILS.

ILS need to support disadvantaged groups more to meet their specific needs

The ILS of the MoE and the MoEL need to be reformed to better support the needs of disadvantaged groups, such as those with lower levels of education and lower levels of income. Support could include

improving the targeting of ILS to disadvantaged groups, providing complementary financial support to cover indirect costs, and raising awareness and access for disadvantaged groups.

Greater targeting of the ILS to disadvantaged groups is necessary. Among the beneficiaries of the MoEL's NTLC, individuals with lower education levels at the primary (2%) and lower secondary level (4%) benefited significantly less from the card than those with higher education levels at the upper secondary (37%), polytechnic university (22%) and university (33%) level (KRIVET, 2019[53])s. Given that individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to have pursued adult learning in the absence of NTLC financial support, this is an inefficient use of financial resources (OECD, 2019[52]).

Although the Lifelong Education Voucher programme (MoE) specifically targets low-income individuals (adults below the 65th percentile in the income bracket), 21% of the lowest income group (monthly income below USD 1 260) still cite cost as a barrier to participating in adult learning. This is in contrast with higher income groups, where only 12% (monthly income USD 1 260-2 520), 9% (monthly income USD 2 520-4 200) and 8% (monthly income USD 4 200 and higher) cite cost as a barrier (Ministry of Education and KEDI, 2019[22]). In addition to covering direct costs through the ILS, it would also be necessary to consider complementary financial support mechanisms to cover the indirect costs for low-income individuals. This is particularly relevant when low-income individuals with lower levels of education want to pursue long-term formal adult learning programmes that lead to an increase in educational qualification level. In France it is possible to combine the ILS with the *Congé Individuel de Formation*, which allows employees and jobseekers with past social contribution records to undertake training while receiving replacement income for up to one year (Box 5.4).

In order for disadvantaged groups to benefit from ILS they need to be informed about them and guided to use them. Sufficient information through guidance and counselling services is particularly relevant for ILS as, in contrast to employer-led financial incentives, they rely more on individuals to take initiative and decide for themselves which adult learning to choose from among the various options (KRIVET, 2019[53]). Given that adult learning providers compete to enrol participants, they heavily market their courses to individuals. Without sufficient counselling, individuals may thus take courses that are well marketed, without necessarily being the most relevant for their needs. Comprehensive guidance and counselling services for all adults, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, need to assess their skills, develop an individual career development plan and identify relevant adult learning opportunities. Participation in counselling services is not yet mandatory for individuals to benefit from the MoE's ILS.

Some initiatives provide guidance and counselling services to disadvantaged groups. For example, in cities such as Goyang, Asan and Bucheon, non-regular worker support centres provide non-regular workers with aptitude assessments and free individual and group counselling sessions (Box 5.3). However, these initiatives are still relatively small-scale, especially considering the large and growing number of non-regular workers (see Chapter 4). Common challenges with existing counselling services include the limited availability of face-to-face guidance and counselling sessions due to a shortage of staff (KRIVET, 2019[53]). Guidance and counselling services are also not yet available in the evenings and weekends, which would expand access for disadvantaged groups (KRIVET, 2019[53]).

Korea could consider the example of career guidance centres (*BerufsInfoZentren, BIZ*) in Austria, where public employment services offer career guidance in 72 of its 100 regional units. Through these centres, all people living in Austria are eligible to receive, and can easily access, guidance and counselling services, regardless of whether they are employed, self-employed, unemployed or inactive. The Estonian public employment service provides career counselling as a mandatory requirement to participate in the Work and Study programme, which is designed for employed individuals who need support in changing job or staying employed (OECD, 2020[57]).

Connecting the two individual learning schemes with a single access account would reduce administrative burden and simplify access for users

Currently, the two ILS provided by the MoE and the MoEL are managed completely separately. This means that individuals who are eligible for both ILS are required to apply for them separately, which is administratively burdensome to manage and cumbersome to access. There have been discussions to co-ordinate and connect the two ILS in the long term to simplify administration, better track how individuals are using the two ILS, and simplify access for users, (Ministry of Education et al., 2018[58]; Job Council, 2017[59]). Simplicity of access is particularly important for disadvantaged groups who are otherwise less likely to benefit from the ILS (OECD, 2019[52]).

Korea could consider connecting the management systems of the two ILS (the MoE's Lifelong Learning Account and the MoEL's Vocational Skills Development Account) through a single user access account called the Lifelong Vocational Skills Development Account (Ministry of Education et al., 2018[58]; Job Council, 2017[59]). ILS funding would still be dispersed separately through the MoE's Lifelong Education Voucher and the MoEL's National Tomorrow Learning Card, but the administrative benefit would be to have a more simplified and unified way of managing, documenting and analysing an individual's participation in ILS. It would also reduce the administration costs of running two separate management systems. Access for users would be simplified as they could access the funds through a single application. Simplicity is particularly important for widening access for low skilled individuals who tend to be in non-regular work arrangements, self-employed and economically inactive, and may find it more challenging to understand and deal with the administrative burden of multiple financial incentive platforms.

Korea could consider the example of the Singaporean ILS, SkillsFuture Credit System, where employed, self-employed, jobseekers and economically inactive individuals can access a single financial incentive system. The financial incentives can be used for a variety of programmes, which may be relevant for the labour market or for personal reasons. The aim is to foster innovation through supporting personal interests and potential, which may not always be in line with current labour market demands. The SkillsFuture Credit System is co-managed by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Manpower (equivalent of Korea's MoEL) through the SkillsFuture Council (Box 5.4) (OECD, 2019[52]). In France, the Individual Learning Accounts (*Compte Individuel de Formation*, CPF) are funded exclusively by a training levy (like the Employment Insurance Fund in Korea), and the same platform is accessible to employed, self-employed and unemployed individuals through a mobile application for further ease of access. The CPF also groups both training funds and paid training leave into one unified account. (Box 5.4) (OECD, 2019[52]). Flanders is also moving towards a comprehensive Individual Learning Account from 2020, which involves grouping all training incentives into a single account, while reaching out to vulnerable groups with information and guidance to increase their participation (Box 5.4).

Box 5.3. National example of providing career guidance and counselling

Non-regular worker support centre in Goyang City

Goyang City provides non-regular workers with a variety of career guidance and counselling services. These include counselling about training opportunities, aptitude tests, legal advice about their work status and rights, and guidance in case of work accidents, discrimination and abuse. The centre can be accessed in person, via phone or online, and is available on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The centre also conducts various outreach campaigns and events to reach and raise awareness among non-regular workers (e.g. youth, women) about the centre's services. Within the centre, there are a number of social networking activities to support a community for non-regular workers.

Source: Goyang City (2021[60]), *Non-regular worker support centre*, http://www.gyiwc.or.kr/.

Box 5.4. International examples of comprehensive individual learning schemes

France: Compte Personnel de Formation, CPF (Individual Training Accounts)

The French CPF is exclusively funded through a training levy on all French firms (firms with up to ten employees pay a smaller amount). A training levy collected by sectoral training funds to finance workplace-related training had been in place for a long time in France, and part of it was redirected towards the CPF when it was created in 2015, so that employers are only indirectly involved. The French CPF is the only example of a scheme funded out of a dedicated/earmarked social contribution. The rationale for the CPF is to bridge the gaps in training participation rates among contractual employees. The French scheme is the only system that used to provide credits in hours (rather than money) to account for the fact that training costs can vary significantly by training programme (e.g. more technical programmes tend to cost more). The scheme also allowed training funds to provide more training support for the skills most needed in each sector. However, the motivation of greater clarity for users and better transparency for regulators has pushed the system towards providing accounts credited in monetary terms. The CPF used to be able to be redeemed with the *Congé Individuel de Formation* (CIF), which was a right to financed training leave for upskilling or reskilling. The CIF was replaced by the transitional CPF (*CPF de transition*) in 2019 as a professional retraining tool for employees, which is managed by a newly created regional body, the *Commissions Paritaires Interprofessionnelles Régionales* (CPIR). When an employee wishes to change jobs, they are able to mobilise their CPF to finance the necessary training, while benefitting from specific paid leave. Unlike the CIF, the transitional CPF leave is not capped and depends on the training time. The new CPF from 2020 will also try to simplify the administrative process, making it much easier for individuals to access training. Moreover, jobseekers can now individually access their CPF, without going through their counsellors at the local employment offices (*pôle emplois*). A newly developed CPF mobile application launched by the Ministry of Labour facilitates direct access by individuals to their account and easy registration for training sessions.

Source: OECD (2019[52]), *Individual Learning Accounts: Panacea or Pandora's Box?,* https://doi.org/10.1787/203b21a8-en.

Singapore: SkillsFuture

In Singapore, SkillsFuture Credits have been introduced to depart from the traditional employer-centric approach to training and provide individuals with some autonomy in choosing and customising their training paths. Contrary to the French CPF, this system is funded through general taxes. Every citizen aged 25 and above is eligible for this programme, where the government allocates around USD 366 (Sinagporean Dollars 500) in the form of lifetime vouchers which are periodically topped up. The government agency running the scheme needs to approve the training programme. The SkillsFuture Credit can be used, in principle, in combination with other generous training schemes, in particular the Workforce Skills Qualifications scheme, which is accessible to all workers and subsidises 50% to 90% of course fees and provides an absentee payroll compensation to the employer. The SkillsFuture Credit in practice is more of a voucher scheme as there is no formal accumulation of rights over time. Focusing more on the lifelong learning aspect than job market relevance, there are no strict requirements for the courses to be relevant to the labour market. SkillsFuture Credit aims to foster innovation through pursuing personal interests and developing personal potential, which may not always coincide with current labour market demand. The Ministry of Education, which is the responsible authority for this programme, also takes care of its management. Besides the actual delivery of the programme, considerable ancillary support is provided in terms of awareness workshops, hotline assistance, career counselling, etc. The participation rates are relatively high compared to other countries and regions with similar schemes.

Source: OECD (2019[52]), *Individual Learning Accounts: Panacea or Pandora's Box?,* https://doi.org/10.1787/203b21a8-en.

Flanders: Opleidingscheques (voucher scheme)

Opleidingscheques in Flanders operates as a voucher scheme that supports training through direct governmental payments to individuals. Citizens are provided with USD 148 for training fees in the standard case. The training covered by the voucher must be vocationally oriented, and participants can receive career counselling services to make their choices post-training. The scheme explicitly excludes individuals undertaking training during working time or training that is financed by employers, to avoid substituting one for the other. While most individual learning schemes only cover tuition fees, the *Opleidingscheques* also finance skills assessment services. Since 2015, only low- and medium-educated workers can access the *Opleidingscheques*, as before this restriction was introduced almost half of the participants were highly educated employees. The scheme targets priority groups by modulating the amount of support provided – active individuals with less than upper secondary education benefit from a higher rate of support of USD 296. An additional allowance of an unspecified amount is available for those with less than tertiary education undertaking tertiary education training. Low-skilled foreigners, persons over 50 years of age, and disabled individuals are also eligible for up to USD 296 for training fees. To further minimise financial barriers to training, the *Opleidingscheque* can be combined with paid educational leave. Learners can undertake up to 125 hours of training per year for programmes linked to occupations with labour shortages. During this period, the employee will continue to receive their wage up to a ceiling, while their employer can be compensated by the regional government, the responsible implementation authority for the programme.

Source: OECD (2019[52]), *Individual Learning Accounts: Panacea or Pandora's Box?,* https://doi.org/10.1787/203b21a8-en.

Recommendations for improving adult learning financial incentives for individuals

4.3. Tailor individual learning schemes to meet the specific needs of disadvantaged groups. The funding support that disadvantaged groups are eligible to receive should be increased to provide them with greater adult learning options, such as longer courses that lead to an increase in educational qualification. Beyond covering the direct cost of adult learning (i.e. tuition), complementary financial measures should be considered to also cover the indirect costs of adult learning participation (i.e. loss of income during adult learning programme) for disadvantaged groups, particularly when pursuing long-term formal adult education programmes. Disadvantaged groups should also be informed about how to benefit from ILS through comprehensive guidance and counselling services that include a skills assessment, the development of an individual career development plan, and the identification of relevant adult learning opportunities and financial incentives.

4.4. Simplify access to individual learning schemes in Korea through creating a single user access account. The management systems of the two ILS (the MoE's Lifelong Learning Account and the MoEL's Vocational Skills Development Account) could be connected through a single user access account called the Lifelong Vocational Skills Development Account. ILS funding would still be dispersed separately through the MoE's Lifelong Education Voucher and the MoEL's National Tomorrow Learning Card, but the administrative benefit would be to have a more simplified and unified way of managing, documenting and analysing an individual's participation in ILS. This would also simplify access for users who could access the funds through a single application, regardless of whether for employment purposes or personal reasons.

Summary of policy recommendations

Policy directions	Recommendations
Opportunity 1: Co-ordinating adult learning financing arrangements across levels of government	
Co-ordinating adult learning financing arrangements across levels of government	4.1 Provide additional financial support to subnational governments that have fewer resources to reduce the performance and resource gaps in implementing subnational adult learning programmes. 4.2 Increase collaboration between subnational education offices and subnational governments to support the reallocation of funds from general education to adult learning to meet rising demand in this area.
Opportunity 2: Improving financial incentives for individuals to participate in adult learning	
Improving financial incentives for individuals to participate in adult learning	4.3 Tailor individual learning schemes to meet the specific needs of disadvantaged groups. 4.4 Simplify access to individual learning schemes in Korea through creating a single user access account.

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Notes

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[2] The Human Capital Corporate Panel (HCCP) is an annual survey conducted by the KRIVET targeting enterprises in order to produce quantitative and qualitative data on Korea's human resources.

[3] 33.4 billion Korean Won as of 2020.

[4] The financial independence ratio is calculated by determining the share of the subnational government budget that comes from its own revenue sources apart from the national government.

[5] The NTLC covers 100% of the costs without any co-payment requirements when individuals are: 1) low-income individuals whose contribution to the National Medical Insurance is below a designated amount; 2) disadvantaged groups including beneficiaries of the National Basic Livelihood Guarantees, individuals with disabilities, youth not in employment, education or training (NEET), etc.; 3) self-employed with annual sales of USD 126 000 or below; and 4) non-regular workers with a monthly salary of USD 2 100 and below.

[6] A platform created by the Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS) in 1999 to improve employment stability by connecting jobseekers with prospective employers.

OECD Skills Studies

OECD Skills Strategy Implementation Guidance for Korea

STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNANCE OF ADULT LEARNING

A well-coordinated adult learning system is essential to support the achievement of Korea's long-term goals. The transformational effects of demographic change, digitalisation, globalisation, and most recently COVID-19 on life at work and outside of it amplify the importance of getting adults' skills right.

OECD research shows that individuals, employers and society benefit from adults having higher levels of skills. Korea is a global leader in student performance and tertiary attainment. Yet today, many adults in Korea have skill levels below the OECD average. A significant share of adults face barriers to participate in adult learning. Against the backdrop of a growing awareness about the importance of skills, Korea's government and stakeholders have a unique opportunity to improve how they share responsibility and work together in the adult learning system.

This report outlines how Korea can increase participation in adult learning by strengthening horizontal co-ordination across ministries, vertical co-ordination across levels of government, engagement of stakeholders and financing arrangements. The report provides examples of national and international good practices as well as a series of concrete recommendations to help Korea improve the governance of adult learning and in turn enhance economic growth and social cohesion.

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