

Up- and re- skilling

in micro and small enterprises

*Guidance pack for intermediary
bodies and social partners*

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The study

In 2019, the European Commission – Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, in collaboration with a group of researchers led by CEPS (Centre for European Policy Studies), conducted a study on mapping opportunities and challenges for micro and small enterprises in offering their employees up- and re-skilling opportunities.

Up- and re-skilling are necessary to face changes in the labour market, led by important transformations such as digitalisation, ageing population and climate change. In addition, the recent COVID-19 crisis has reinforced some of the existing trends transforming the labour market, like digitalisation, and made the need for continuous up- and re-skilling even more evident. Given the importance of micro and small enterprises for the EU economy and employment, the study provides insights into the main challenges faced by these enterprises, potential opportunities stemming from up-skilling and re-skilling activities and policy options to facilitate the provision of future-proof up-skilling and re-skilling services.

This guidance pack draws on the results of the study and presents information, recommendations and additional resources for intermediary organisations such as chambers of commerce or education and training providers, and social partners to support micro and small companies in up- and re-skilling.

The full report of the study is available at <https://europa.eu/!KB34px>



Key steps

TO SUPPORT UP- AND RE-SKILLING IN MICRO AND SMALL COMPANIES

Social partners, education and training providers and other intermediary organisations, can ACTIVELY CONTACT MICRO AND SMALL COMPANIES. Actions for this include:

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- ✓ Invest funds and time in campaigns to raise companies' awareness about policies and public and private opportunities to support up- and re-skilling
- ✓ Talk to micro and small companies and their employees about their needs for up- and re-skilling and develop an adequate offer as a consequence
- ✓ Address the owners and managers of the company, to involve them in training to think strategically about up- and re-skilling in their company
- ✓ Support micro and small companies to assess skills gaps among their employees, to ensure their engagement in relevant up- and re-skilling
- ✓ Approach individual employees and support them, to assess their skills and development for their individual growth and that of their company and to encourage their proactive stance in up- and re-skilling within the company
- ✓ In particular, engage with low-qualified employees, to assess their skills developed outside formal channels and to respond to their needs through tailored-made courses and learning activities



Education and training providers can also DEVELOP ADEQUATE PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING THOSE THAT FACILITATE FLEXIBLE ON-THE-JOB LEARNING. Actions for this include:

2

- ✓ Provide training programmes that include guidance, support and structure to maximise on-the-job informal learning in micro and small companies
- ✓ Develop quality digital learning opportunities that can be tailored and broken down into modules for micro and small companies and provide high flexibility at low cost
- ✓ Monitor and evaluate the results of different education and training courses, especially the more experimental ones, and select best practices





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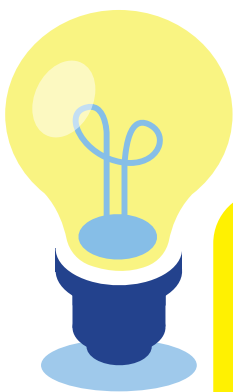
Intermediary organisations, including education and training providers, and social partners, can ACT AS LEADERS OF NETWORKS OF COMPANIES FOCUSED ON UP- AND RE-SKILLING. Actions for this include:

- ✓ Organise companies into networks that share common needs for up- and re-skilling, at local or regional level, across sectors, or along strategic value chains
- ✓ Provide up- and re-skilling to these networks, leveraging on economy of scale and addressing common needs to reach a critical mass to activate education and training courses
- ✓ Lead and support companies' access to public funds, building on the knowledge of their needs and relieving administrative burdens of application and administration of such funds

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Education and training providers and social partners can make it easier to validate new skills and MAKE THE RESULTS OF UP- AND RE-SKILLING MORE VISIBLE. Actions for this include:

- ✓ Develop mechanisms for the validation and recognition of skills acquired outside formal education and training system
- ✓ Ensure that skills acquired through informal learning are recognised, especially for the low-qualified employees



To strengthen synergies, education and training providers can align their programmes with national/regional/local policies and their industrial and socio-economic priorities. Social partners can join the conversation with education and training providers and policymakers to represent both companies' and workers' viewpoints on such priorities and modalities to deliver on policy objectives. In this way, public funds for up- and re-skilling can be channelled into connecting with public and private investment in other policy areas.

STOP

Leaflet



The **leaflet “What you need to know – Survey results”** presents an overview of the study into with micro and small companies in seven EU countries.

It explains why up- and re-skilling is crucial for micro and small companies and identifies the challenges, opportunities and preferred policy approaches of the companies surveyed. This is a good way for intermediary organisations to understand micro and small companies’ views and needs.

The leaflet is available at <https://europa.eu/!GG83qU>



The **“Good practices” booklet** can support the up- and re-skilling activities in your company.

These practices have been identified through interviews with micro and small companies. They aim to take the key features of companies like yours to leverage them as points of strength.

The booklet features 20 different methods and actions that successful micro and small firms in up- and re-skilling have tried out, even with limited financial and time investment.

The easy-to-follow good practices are set out in four groups, according to the key characteristics of micro and small companies to build on. The four different types of good practices rely on a company’s ability to build on internal relational capital; to leverage on external linkages; to promote up- and re-skilling while staying focused on business; and to adapt to digitalisation.

The challenges that each good practice addresses are also highlighted so that companies can choose which practice best matches their up- and re-skilling capacity.

The booklet is available at <https://europa.eu/!bm67Um>

STOP

Good practices



STOP

Good examples of policies



This “Good examples of policies” booklet showcases policies that can support up- and re-skilling in micro and small companies, especially for low-qualified employees. It offers ten policy examples, identified during the study across the different countries and selected for their appropriateness to respond to the specific challenges of micro and small companies.

These policies aim to support employers and employees to undertake education and training, lower the information costs of accessing up- and re-skilling opportunities, and remove supply constraints on skills development opportunities.

The booklet is available at <https://europa.eu/!fk79jg>



STOP

Repository



The online **Repository of existing resources** aims to provide further in-depth knowledge on up- and re-skilling and offers access to studies, reports, initiatives, policy documents, data and practical resources on up- and re-skilling. Resources are organised in user-friendly sections that can be browsed using key words or the search function.

The repository is available at <https://europa.eu/!PK39QU>

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