



European
Commission



Up- and re- skilling

in micro and small enterprises

*Guidance Pack
for companies*

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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.

Drawing on the results of the study, this guidance pack presents the information, recommendations and additional resources on up- and re-skilling of employees in micro and small companies.

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

KEY STEPS TO PROMOTE UP- AND RE-SKILLING IN YOUR COMPANY

1 ASSESS THE SKILLS NEEDS AND HUMAN CAPITAL POTENTIAL OF YOUR COMPANY

- ✓ Regularly survey and meet your employees to better identify their skills, needs and interests in refreshing skills or learning new ones
- ✓ Assess the labour market and business needs of your company to ensure that investment in up- and re-skilling is a win-win for both your company and employees
- ✓ Talk to your suppliers and customers – they are often the first to notice which skills your employees need
- ✓ Use digital tools to assess and record skills so that they are more visible to you and your employees

1



2 MAKE THE MOST OF HUMAN RELATIONS WITHIN YOUR COMPANY

- ✓ Encourage collaboration between supervisors and/or peers through pair or teamwork to spread knowledge and build on the skills within your company
- ✓ Set clear learning objectives when organising pair and teamwork to ensure these activities match your employees' skills development and allow clear assessment of the results
- ✓ Organise and offer internal training sessions and digital learning resources for a continuous exchange of knowledge and skills among your employees
- ✓ Make time in your schedule for training on how to motivate your employees to take up learning activities and on how to organise and maximise these opportunities for both them and your business

2

3 DEVELOP LEARNING-CENTRED BUSINESS RELATIONS

- ✓ If internal knowledge and competence sources are exhausted, identify suppliers, clients and other business partners in the value chain and/or within your sector from whom your employees can learn while collaborating
- ✓ Envisage and define learning opportunities in business agreements and contracts to make sure that your employees develop skills with the support of business partners while working with them
- ✓ Organise learning activities and on-site visits to your business partners so that your employees have the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills relevant to your business

3





4 IDENTIFY AND MAXIMISE UP- AND RE-SKILLING OPPORTUNITIES IN DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS OPERATIONS

- ✓ Assign tasks to your employees to develop skills that match both your business strategy and their career aspirations
- ✓ Link your business projects to skills learning objectives for your employees skills relevant to your business



5 RECOGNISE AND VALUE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN YOUR COMPANY

- ✓ Make visible the progress in skills acquisition, possibly through digital tools for skills tracking and monitoring to motivate and encourage your employees to up- and re-skill
- ✓ Include skills development in performance assessment so that your employees understand the value your company gives to it
- ✓ Establish clear mechanisms to reward positive results in skills development, especially for low-qualified employees, even if these results are achieved simply through on-the-job learning



6 CONTACT EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND JOIN EXISTING NETWORKS OF COMPANIES

- ✓ You don't need to do all of this alone: identify organisations that can support you such as social partners, education and training providers or public bodies
- ✓ Ask these organisations for help to gather information about: the available public support for up- and re-skilling, the supply of training courses, ways to access public funds and organise up- and re-skilling activities
- ✓ Join networks of companies with similar needs and interests at the sectoral or regional/local level relevant for the development of the value chain and pool with them resources on up- and re-skilling



STOP**LEAFLET**

The leaflet “**What you need to know – Survey results**” present the results of the survey carried out during the study of micro and small companies in seven EU countries. It shows why up- and re-skilling is crucial for companies like yours and highlights the challenges, opportunities and preferred policy approaches of the companies involved.



This is a good way for your company to raise awareness about training and to see how you compare among the range of practices observed in EU companies.

The leaflet is available here <https://europa.eu/!UG48kw>



The “**Good practices**” booklet includes a set of measure, which if applied could support the up- and re-skilling activities in your company. It features practices that 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 and benefited from, 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 your company can choose which practice best matches your up- and re-skilling capacity.

The booklet is available at <https://europa.eu/!cD99NJ>

STOP**GOOD PRACTICES****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/!hh98hc>



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