



**NORWEGIAN
STRATEGY FOR SKILLS
POLICY
2017-2021**



Contents

Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy 2017-2021	4
Introduction	7
Challenges and Opportunities	11
National objectives and priority areas	15
Effective choices for the individual and for society	15
Promote learning in the workplace and effective use of skills	17
Enhance skills among adults with weak labour market attachment	21
Follow-up of the strategy work	25



Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy 2017-2021

The population's skills are society's most important resource and the basis for welfare, growth, wealth creation and sustainability. Solid skills within the workforce are and will continue to be crucial both for the Norwegian economy's competitiveness and for employment.

Skills policy is the overall policy for development, mobilisation and utilisation of skills in the entire Norwegian society and labour market. Skills policy contributes to innovation, productivity and competitiveness within the labour market, welfare and distribution in society, and development and sense of accomplishment for the individual. Learning takes place in many areas of life, in the workplace, in education, in the voluntary sector and in society at large. Skills policy is aimed at ensuring coherence and transitions between learning arenas. High quality and relevance in all learning is important. This requires coordination between different policy sectors, levels of government, the main labour market organisations and other skills policy actors. This strategy is limited to a few main areas within skills policy. The strategy also address the specific challenges and needs of the Sami population in Norway.

The Norwegian labour market has experienced continuous reorganisation over the last decades. In the coming years technological advances, climate change, globalisation, changes in industrial structures, immigration and aging of the population will affect skills needs in all areas of employment. The rapid changes in technology and the labour market implies an increased need for lifelong learning.

The challenges the Norwegian labour market is facing provide opportunities and create new skills needs. The Norwegian labour market combines a high level of productivity with high employment rates and learning intensity. There is broad agreement to safeguard and strengthen the Norwegian labour market model. A well organised labour market and a compressed wage structure contribute significantly to maintaining high level of skills and welfare.

To help meet these challenges we, the strategy partners, have developed a Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy with a common aim that provides direction for the various strategy partners' work, both jointly and separately: **the Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy aims to ensure that individuals and businesses have the skills that give Norway a competitive business sector, an efficient and sound public sector, and an inclusive labour market.**



The Norwegian cooperative model is a good starting point and a prerequisite for us as strategy partners to commit to a common strategy. To achieve the overall objective of the strategy, the strategy partners have identified three main areas for the skills policy.

The strategy partners have agreed to

- contribute to making informed choices for the individual and society.
- promote better learning opportunities and effective use of skills in the labour market.
- strengthen the skills of adults with poor basic skills, poor Norwegian and/or Sami skills and little formal education.

The strategy includes a number of measures aimed at more coordination at local, regional and national level, including the establishment of a Future Skills Needs Committee. Based on this, the strategy partners agree to further develop cooperation and coordination of the national skills policy. The strategy will be overseen by a Skills Policy Council.

The details of the strategy work, what the main areas imply and what we are committing to is more thoroughly described in the strategy document.

 Prime Minister	 Ministry of Education and Research	 The Sami Parliament	 Akademikerne
 The Employers' Association Spekter	 KS	 LO	 NHO
 Unio	 Virke	 YS	 the Norwegian association for Adult Learning (VOFO)
 Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	 Ministry of Justice and Public Security	 Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation	 Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries



Introduction

The Norwegian labour market combines a high level of productivity with a high employment rate and learning intensity. The Norwegian labour market is experiencing continuous reorganisation. Changes in the labour market present both challenges and opportunities. The population's skills can provide crucial contributions to the necessary development and reorganisation of the labour market. We must also ensure that the population has the skills necessary to meet changes in the labour market and stay in employment. The strategy partners have jointly developed a Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy.

Skills policy is mutually dependent on other policy areas in order to achieve its objectives, such as education policy which lays the foundation for people's skills and parts of industrial policy, labour market policy, regional policy and integration policy. This strategy is limited to a few main areas within skills policy.

WHO ARE THE STRATEGY PARTNERS?

- The Norwegian Government represented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, the Ministry of Education and Research, and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries. In addition the Sami Parliament represents Sami interests.
- The social partners represented by The Employers' Association Spekter, The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) and the Enterprise Federation of Norway (Virke) from the employer side and The Federation of Norwegian Professional Associations (Akademikerne), The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), The Confederation of Unions for Professionals (Unio) and The Confederation of Vocational Unions (YS) from the employee side.
- The voluntary sector and adult learning associations represented by the Norwegian association for Adult Learning (VOFO).

The basis for the strategy is the strategy partners' common understanding that there is a great potential in improving the development and utilisation of the population's skills.

The strategy aims to ensure that individuals and businesses have skills that provide Norway with a competitive business environment, an efficient and sound public sector and an inclusive labour market.

A common strategy with mutual objectives and improved coordination gives direction to the various strategy partners' work, both jointly and separately.

In order to succeed a joint effort is required, in which various government actors and administrative levels, the social partners, businesses and NGOs are actively

involved and coordinate their efforts. In the report “Skills Strategy Action Report Norway” the OECD pointed out the challenges with lack of coordination between stakeholders in the education, labour market, business and regional policy sectors, both nationally and regionally, as well as between the various administrative levels. The OECD advised Norway to set up a skills strategy incorporating a whole-of-government approach and strong stakeholder involvement.

The strategy's target groups

The strategy's target group is the entire adult population. Although different parts of the population have different challenges, the need for skills development is important regardless of level of education and connection to the labour market. To ensure a stable and lasting attachment to the labour market most people must acquire new skills throughout their lifetime, and everybody needs to use their skills in order to maintain them.

People of all educational levels are faced with new skills demands and changes in the labour market. However, people without completed upper secondary education, poor basic skills or lacking skills in Norwegian or Sami language are particularly vulnerable in a labour market with rapid technological development and high demands for flexibility.

During some stages of life, it is crucial to acquire new skills, adapt or seek new learning opportunities. The transition between education and work is a critical stage for many, and not everyone acquires a job which corresponds to their education. For contractors and freelancers it can be difficult to arrange for continuing education and training. Most people will change jobs several times during their lives, and many will need continuing education and training and good learning conditions in order to continue to work and meet new demands in the labour market.

Skills policy stakeholders

Skills policy requires cooperation between stakeholders across sectors and levels of government. The strategy partners in the skills policy strategy must work together to develop and implement measures and commit themselves to following up the measures.

The Government is, in cooperation with the social partners, responsible for developing the skills policy and ensuring a comprehensive approach that helps individuals and businesses meet their skills needs. The Government is responsible for implementing the policy in the various skills policy sectors, as well as ensuring coordination across policy sectors and levels of government.

The labour market is essential to the skills strategy as both a provider and demander of skills. Learning in the workplace occurs directly through job performance, through informal learning and by training at the workplace, often in collaboration with many different partners. Legislation and agreements within the various tariff areas regulate the employer's responsibility for skills development in line with the individual business' needs in the short and long term.



The municipal sector, including local and regional authorities, has a role within skills policy as the provider of a variety of services, as well as being school owners and as the largest public employer. At the regional level county municipalities play a central role in the development of the skills policy in Norway. The county municipalities have been given an important role in planning and developing the skills policy, including the responsibility for coordination in and development of their own region. The regional skills strategies are designed to improve the match between the supply and demand of skills in the regional labour markets. Ensuring the successful implementation of the skills policy requires coordination between national and regional policies.

Through the ILO Convention and the UN Declaration of Indigenous Peoples' Rights, Norway is obligated to pursue policies that strengthen and preserve Sami culture and language. The Sami Parliament shall ensure that the authorities enable the Sami people to have the necessary linguistic and cultural expertise to develop Sami societies and businesses. The Sami Parliament stipulates curricula in Sami languages in primary and secondary education and Sami subjects in upper secondary education, along with Sami topics in the national curriculum.

The voluntary sector contributes to skills development both within and outside of the labour market. NGOs offer organised training through adult education associations, however learning also happens through participation in ordinary activities within the organisations. Adult education associations can reach people who normally do not seek public education and/or are outside of employment.



Challenges and Opportunities

The changes in the labour market present new challenges and opportunities for both businesses and individuals.

We need to include more people in a learning-intensive labour market

Norway is one of the countries with the highest employment rate and a high level of productivity per capita. Norwegian workers have solid basic skills in reading, numeracy and ICT compared to many other OECD countries.¹ Norwegian workers also have high participation in skills development compared to workers in other countries.² According to The Norwegian Productivity Commission, however, countries that have invested heavily in education and lifelong learning in recent years are now catching up and Norway is no longer in the lead.³

During the past decade, the rate of employment of the population has decreased. The decline has been most pronounced among young men and for those with little formal education. In the highly productive Norwegian labour market there are high skills requirements for entering into and remaining in employment. Many people with disabilities may also have incomplete qualifications, adding to the challenge of getting into the labour market. Being on the outside of the labour market also contributes to lower participation in learning activities.

The reorganisation of the labour market affects all sectors and occupations. In particular manual tasks are being replaced by technology. In the long term it is expected that more advanced tasks also will be replaced by new technology. Changes in the labour market also affect highly educated people. It is important to facilitate learning conditions for the entire population through continuing education and training. The education system must provide a solid foundation and broad, multidisciplinary expertise of high quality that can be used in various fields.

Safeguarding the Norwegian labour market model which promotes learning and productivity

Norwegian companies distinguish themselves by involving all employees in their development. A relatively flat structure at work promotes trust, cooperation and knowledge sharing. This represents strengths within the Norwegian labour market. However, the model is challenged by increased low-wage competition and a decrease in the level of unionisation, where looser labour force attachment can amplify challenges further.

The Norwegian labour market model provides ample conditions for learning at the workplace. Important elements of the Norwegian labour market model are cooperation between the social partners and the government, high degree of

unionisation, and highly coordinated wage bargaining. The model has contributed to relatively small wage disparities compared to other countries. This contributes to ensuring that businesses invest more in training for those with little formal education than in other countries, and that simple routine tasks disappear due to rationalisation and/or automation.⁴

Immigrants' skills must be put to better use

The skills level and the need for training vary greatly among immigrants in Norway. We must recognise and utilise immigrants' skills, and provide opportunities for education. Many immigrants with high skills find it challenging to obtain recognition or complete their education in Norway. Other groups of immigrants have little formal education, little work experience and do not meet the requirements of the labour market in Norway. For these groups, it is important to receive training in basic skills and/or education. Common for most immigrants is that they will need Norwegian language training.

Exploiting opportunities arising from global competition and technological development

Knowledge, technology and global markets are changing at an increasingly faster pace. Technological development is crucial in the private and public service industry which covers 80 percent of the Norwegian labour market. Technological development creates opportunities for better and more efficient service production, both in the public and private sectors. In the public sector interaction between social innovation and technological innovation can contribute to developing better education and welfare services for the population. Technological advances offer opportunities for stimulating jobs. Fast technological developments can simultaneously increase the risk of more people being unable to take part in the labour market. Ensuring solid skills in the entire workforce will become more important. Both technological and social skills will be important in the future.

Technological developments provide opportunities for increased efficiency and innovation. It also contributes to labour costs being less important as a location factor, which is important for Norway as a high-cost country. We have manufacturing companies that are world leaders in their fields and companies which are the cornerstones in their communities, along with many high-tech small and medium sized businesses. Technological developments give these companies high growth potential, because digitalisation and automation facilitate decentralised and flexible production with lower capital costs than previously. This provides opportunities for industrial development in Norway based on our expertise, our industrial culture and our resources.

Securing the skills needed to develop future solutions

Society's skills needs are affected by a number of developments. There is no comprehensive overview of future skills needs. Projections of skills needs show a likely future labour shortage in several sectors, including a shortage of labour with vocational education and training (VET). The skills policy must enable us to meet the full breadth of skills needs in society and the labour market – including unknown future skills needs.



Developments like climate and environmental challenges, technological development and internationalisation affect skills needs. Climate and environmental challenges require new solutions based on the natural sciences, as well as areas such as economics, humanities and social sciences. Digitalisation and new advanced production methods create a need for updated knowledge at all levels. It is also necessary to ensure expertise in order to develop and maintain critical infrastructure such as postal, railway and ICT infrastructure. Internationalisation creates new opportunities as new markets open, and require new skills when an increasing numbers of employees work in environments with different cultures and languages.

All parts of the country must have access to skills

The supply of labour varies between regions, sectors and industries. Without access to a relevant and skilled workforce, and with limited mobility among workers, the opportunities for development in all parts of the country will be reduced. According to a survey by the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), businesses in Northern Norway have particular difficulties meeting skills demands.⁵ The long distance to educational institutions makes access to new candidates a challenge. In smaller towns, industrial environments and labour markets are generally small and relatively vulnerable. This is a challenge in many districts, including in the labour market in Sami areas which is characterised by many small businesses with weak ties to the labour market organisations. For such smaller businesses it can be challenging to find relevant skills supply.



National objectives and priority areas

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE STRATEGY'S OVERALL OBJECTIVE, THE STRATEGY PARTNERS HAVE IDENTIFIED THREE PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE SKILLS POLICY:

- Contribute to making informed choices for the individual and for society
- Promote learning in the workplace and effective use of skills
- Enhance skills among adults with weak labour market attachment

In addition, the strategy partners agree to work broadly to strengthen and preserve the Norwegian labour market model. High degree of unionisation, coordinated wage bargaining and a culture for full-time work are important factors contributing to the development of learning-intensive jobs and to investment in employee's skills at all levels in the businesses.

The strategy partners agree to focus on skills development in order to create a more inclusive labour market. Focusing on skills rather than a low-payment track can also counteract social dumping, illegal business activity and a development towards a two-tier labour market. Active use of the tripartite cooperation is essential to safeguard the Norwegian labour market model and to develop an effective skills policy.

Informed choices for the individual and for society

A well-functioning labour market requires balance between demand and supply of skills. Informed choices for the individual mean making choices that lead to employment, and that provide ample opportunities for developing one's skills throughout life. Informed choices for society facilitate the effective management of human resources, including enabling businesses in the public and private sectors to recruit people with relevant skills.

Better understanding of skills needs

Making informed choices requires knowledge and information about skills needs. There are various research and analyses of skills needs in Norway, but they are only to a small extent seen in relation to one another. The contents are not conveyed to individuals, businesses, governments and other decision makers in a simple and useful way. A common understanding of labour market developments and skills needs, both regionally and nationally, requires that the various sources of knowledge are seen in relation to one another. Such insight is a prerequisite for better coordinated national and regional policy development and planning. Knowledge about future skills needs must also be put to use in career guidance services and must be made available to people who are about to make choices relating to education and employment.

Skills and regional development must be better coordinated

The Norwegian county municipalities have been given an important role in planning and development activities in their own region. Regional planning and regional skills policy strategies developed in partnership with other skills policy actors, are important as tools and framework for coordination. The supply of relevant skills in the labour market will be strengthened through a more systematic cooperation between the county municipalities and skills actors such as the industrial sector, municipalities, social partners, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), adult education associations, vocational colleges, universities and university colleges. The regional partnerships must be further mobilised in efforts to meet skills challenges.

In order to create a stronger regional cooperation on skills policy, national authorities must, through dialogue with subordinate agencies and institutions, provide a larger regional scope of action allowing for more dedicated participation in regional processes. With proposals for a new regional reform, the Government aims to strengthen the regional elected level's role as a regional developer, including a more pronounced state participation in and contribution to regional processes and towards regional objectives.⁶

Career guidance services must be further developed

Career guidance is aimed at strengthening the individual's ability and opportunity to make informed choices. Career guidance early in the educational pathway may prevent and reduce dropout rates and poor choices in secondary education and later studies, as well as counteract traditional gender choices. Career guidance may help seniors meet changing skills demands in the labour market in a better way. It can promote their mobility so they can remain longer in employment. Targeted and rapid mapping of skills and guidance for immigrants can help to improve labour market attachment.

The Sami community has some special skills needs that differ from the general needs of Norwegian society. The labour market in Sami areas is for instance dominated by traditional industries such as reindeer husbandry, farming, fishing and outfield farming, which also affects the need for career guidance in Sami areas.

Access to career guidance may promote faster transition to work for the unemployed, or contribute to keeping people in employment. Supporting effective choices may be of significant socio-economic benefit in situations of unemployment and reorganisation, but also when choosing education or profession. It is necessary to build up a coherent system for career guidance in all regions in order to meet these requirements.

Cooperation between education and the labour market for improved quality and relevance

Close contact between educational institutions and the labour market regarding contents, scope and work placement in educational programs, may increase relevance and motivation, and make students better prepared for the labour market.

Some programs already have close cooperation between the labour market and the education. This mainly applies to vocational colleges and education for the professions with significant elements of work placement during the period of study.

In the higher education sector cooperation with the labour market has been institutionalised through the councils for cooperation with the social partners (RSA) among others, but the extent and scope of collaboration vary. There are also a number of cooperation agreements in various disciplines and departments. To increase the relevance of education, it is important to build on established partnerships and promote cooperation between the labour market and educational institutions, both regionally and nationally.

The strategy partners agree on the following objectives: Contribute to making informed choices for the individual and society

THE STRATEGY PARTNERS AGREE TO:

1. Establish a Future Skills Needs Committee consisting of researchers, analysts and representatives of all the main social partners and ministries. The Committee shall compile and analyse sources of knowledge about Norway's skills needs, both nationally and regionally.
2. Strengthen the regional elected level's skills policy responsibility and coordinating role, and improve conditions for regional cooperation between different skills actors.
3. Provide access to career guidance and a coherent system for career guidance with particular emphasis on the regional career centres. Strengthen the expertise of guidance counsellors, including knowledge of the labour market, labour market skills needs, the senior perspective, the integration perspective and Sami culture and business.
4. Further develop cooperation between education and training providers and the social partners, to make education relevant and to provide better access to qualified labour in all regions.

Promote learning in the workplace and effective use of skills

The need for new skills in the labour market cannot be covered only by the new graduates. More senior workers, rapid changes in the labour market and the need for people to keep working longer mean that lifelong learning will be of great importance in the future. Technological developments will also affect all sectors and occupations and create a need for new skills throughout the workforce.

Better knowledge of learning in the workplace

Norwegian companies invest more in skills development than companies in most other OECD countries.⁷ While there is much research on the return of education, there is less knowledge about the value of learning in the workplace, both for the business, the employees and the community. There is a need for more knowledge about how businesses can facilitate targeted learning, the importance of the cooperation between employer organisations and trade unions and which

skills developments provide the best return on investment. Better knowledge of learning in the workplace will be important in the development of skills policy and for the individual businesses.

Strengthen and develop vocational education and career opportunities

The labour market is dependent on sufficient access to skilled workers. In order to recruit enough skilled workers it is crucial that more students complete upper secondary education with a craft certificate or journeyman's certificate. This requires increased access to apprenticeships.

It is also necessary to further develop and establish alternative training paths towards craft or journeyman's certificate and strengthen continuing education and training opportunities. Effective transitions between VET at upper secondary level and the master craftsman's certificate scheme, vocational college education and university and university college education will also make vocational education more attractive and contribute to meeting the labour market's need for interdisciplinary expertise. The master craftsman's certificate scheme can also be a tool for countering social dumping and illegal business activity. A more developed master craftsman's scheme and investment in vocational schools can strengthen continuing education opportunities for vocational education.

Flexible programs for continuing education and training with high quality and relevance

The market for continuing education and training is dependent on both the supply and demand sides working well. Development of continuing education and training is an important task for vocational colleges, universities and university colleges. Cooperation between educational institutions and different fields and sectors in the labour market should be strengthened and linked to regional skills strategies and regional partnerships.

Many businesses have limited means of defining their skills needs and working systematically to develop the skills of their employees. There is development potential in establishing or strengthening cooperation on skills development across companies, for example in clusters and other business environments. Businesses can also benefit from assistance with identifying skills needs and facilitating relevant continuing education and training and skills transferral. The aim is to strengthen cooperation between clusters and other businesses and vocational colleges, universities and university colleges for development of solid continuing education and training and mutual learning.

Technological developments also create opportunities for flexible and online education and training courses, which can be better utilised. Access to flexible and online services can make it easier to combine work and education, and will be important for the self-employed.

National measures for reskilling

With large and rapid changes in the labour market workers of all educational levels will experience not having sufficient expertise. Employers have a responsibility



to secure expertise in line with their business needs. At the same time public interest requires that opportunities for reskilling and continuing education and training is organised by central authorities even before the employees fall out of employment. The NAV support system should have ample opportunities to make discretionary assessments and for flexibility in order to prevent people from falling out of employment in cases where the employer fails to adapt work for employees.

Better systems for documenting skills acquired in the workplace

In order to make better use of skills acquired in a learning-intensive labour market, it is important to further develop and improve the system for documentation of skills. The social partners are key actors in this work.

Many employees may have long work experience, but little documentation of the skills they have acquired. In pursuing a new education or continuing education, it is now possible to get prior learning recognised and validated for admission to an education, or recognition of a part of a degree, leading to faster educational progress. For employees recognition of the skills acquired while working can be valuable when changing jobs or having to perform new work tasks.

For businesses, a method for documenting skills may make it easier to obtain an overview of a company's skills profile, development potential and thereby improve service production or productivity. Within the Sami population, there is a lot of traditional knowledge which would be desirable to formalise or document.

Making better use of skills from abroad

It is necessary for society to make better use of the skills immigrants possess upon arrival. The Norwegian labour market has a long tradition of employing people with skills from abroad, but it can be challenging to deal with the wide



range of skills that are not well known or previously documented. Important instruments include recognition schemes for foreign qualifications and vocational qualifications, and qualified skills assessment against skills standards created in the labour market. Specific courses tailored to cover topics required to achieve recognition of foreign education in Norway may also be essential for ensuring that individuals can make use of their skills.

Such courses and effective recognition and assessment schemes can help businesses get better access to labour with relevant skills. This particularly applies to industries where there is a shortage of labour with relevant skills, but it also applies more generally where businesses are seeking assessment of skills acquired outside of Norway.

The strategy partners agree on the following objective: To promote learning opportunities and efficient use of skills in the labour market.

THE STRATEGY PARTNERS AGREE TO:

1. Strengthen and develop digital skills across the workforce to utilise new technology and ensure the successful implementation of new division of labour.
2. Strengthen the knowledge base on learning at work and especially knowledge about the value of investing in skills development for society, the business and the individual

3. Collaborate on highlighting and developing career opportunities in vocational education and professions.
4. Work more systematically to link skills needs in businesses and various clusters and business environments with education and training providers in order to develop relevant continuing education and training.
5. Make it easier to document skills acquired at work, so that they can be utilised more efficiently. Develop a method and model for evaluating skills acquired in the workplace as part of this work.
6. Simplify and improve systems and the supply of recognition and assessment of foreign qualifications, professional qualifications and supplementary education.

Enhance skills among adults with weak labour market attachment

A main objective is to ensure that as many adults as possible participate in the labour market, but for various reasons many are left outside of the workforce. One reason is little formal education, poor basic skills and/or poor Norwegian skills. The basic skills include reading, writing, numeracy, digital skills and being able to express oneself orally.

Coordinated programs for adults with poor basic skills and low formal qualifications

Basic skills are the basis for acquiring more skills. There is a clear correlation between the level of basic skills, and participation in the labour market. In a society where more and more services are digitised, it is also important that the entire adult population acquires digital skills.

Completing upper secondary education provides a greater chance of stable employment. Having completed upper secondary education has become increasingly important as an entry ticket into employment. It is therefore important that all stakeholders cooperate to prevent dropout in upper secondary education and to facilitate the completion of upper secondary education for unskilled adults.

Central authorities must organise training and qualification for adults through flexible schemes, and facilitate rapid transition to work or further training. It will often be necessary to combine services from different parts of the public system and from private providers and NGOs. Many people with little formal education and/or poor basic skills also have health problems. It is often necessary that service providers cooperate with each other to give comprehensive support to this group. Lack of livelihood support is a challenge for many adults who need primary, secondary or upper secondary education. A committee of experts is set to investigate solutions for livelihood support for this group of adults.

Targeted and effective training for immigrants

The aim is that immigrants quickly can enter into training, education or employment so that they can participate and contribute in Norwegian society. Both the labour market and communities need the labour that immigrants can provide.



Many immigrants lack the education and Norwegian skills necessary to successfully participate in the labour market. They need access to Norwegian courses and other training and education adapted to their level of education and Norwegian skills. Targeted skills acquisition and early preparation for work is essential to strengthen immigrants' opportunities to participate in the labour market and society. Many immigrants will also need more education. People who are out of employment due to lack of skills, may need training from NAV.

To counteract the trend towards a two-tiered labour market it is desirable to support immigrants with a refugee background by helping them obtain skills they need to gain entry into the labour market, instead of lowering the wages for the lowest paid groups. There is broad agreement that qualification should be the key to get more immigrants into the workforce.

The workplace as a learning environment for people who are at risk of exclusion

For some adults, the workplace is the most suitable place for learning. *Skills plus work* is a scheme in which businesses can apply for grants for training in basic skills, including basic Norwegian skills, for their employees. For unskilled employees participating in training in basic skills that in the longer term is aimed at a craft or journeyman's certificate may be a motivating factor.

In companies with many employees with little education, it may be helpful to have people in the workplace who act as a driving force to encourage training. Even for those who are out of work the workplace can be a useful environment for learning, for example through various forms of work-related measures with regular companies as a learning arena.

Sami businesses may have special challenges with utilising the schemes for learning at work, and there may be a need for targeting training especially to Sami areas. The apprenticeship scheme for reindeer husbandry is an important factor in the continuation of traditional knowledge in the labour market in Sami areas and for recruitment to the trade.

NGOs as learning arenas

In Norway, many adults have an association with NGOs, and for many, this represents an important learning arena. The organisations, including adult education associations, offer a wide range of courses and training opportunities. Some courses are directed towards specific skills that are in demand in the labour market, while others contribute to acquiring basic qualifications such as language, interpersonal skills and learning ability.

The scheme called *Skills plus for the voluntary sector* provides adults with poor skills in reading, writing, numeracy or ICT an opportunity to learn in a familiar and safe environment in their own organisation. For adults who are left outside of employment, such a scheme is a good alternative to the corresponding scheme for employment (*Skills plus work*).

The strategy partners agree on the following objectives: to strengthen skills among adults with poor basic skills, poor Norwegian skills and without completed upper secondary education

THE STRATEGY PARTNERS AGREE TO:

1. Provide flexible training, with the aim of faster transition to work or further training and provide as many adults as possible with the opportunity to complete upper secondary education.
2. Stimulate the use of the *Skills plus schemes*, including projects in Sami areas. *Skills plus work* and *Skills plus for the voluntary sector* will be further developed in dialogue with the social partners, and with the voluntary sector, including The Norwegian Association for Adult learning (VOFO). Trials where *Skills plus work* can be linked to vocational training are being established.
3. Utilise training and skills initiatives more actively in labour market and integration policies, and use workplaces more actively as a learning environment.
4. Target and streamline training in Norwegian, the introduction program and other qualification measures for immigrants. Strengthen cooperation between the authorities and the stakeholders in this field.
5. Strengthen and adapt NAV's training for jobseekers who need qualifications to obtain a job, through increased emphasis on courses in basic skills, Norwegian language training and the development of a two-year vocational training scheme.
6. Stimulate more people to find learning motivation and build their learning ability through training in the voluntary sector.



Follow-up of the strategy work

The strategy will be operative in the period 2017-2021. The strategy will be revised after two years, and in 2021 the strategy partners will consider whether the strategy should be renewed. At the national level, cooperation between the strategy partners will continue through the establishment of a Skills Policy Council that will meet regularly during the strategy period. The council will follow up on the strategy, and discuss deliveries from the Future Skills Needs Committee, as well as other relevant issues.

The strategy partners have different roles and responsibilities in the follow-up and will contribute with the measures they have at their disposal. The strategy partners will report on their follow-up activities to the Skills Policy Council. Based on the reporting by strategy partners, a comprehensive overview that describes what the various strategy partners have done and plan to do to will be compiled.

The strategy includes a number of organisational changes that will contribute to more coordination at the local, regional and national level, including the Future Skills Needs Committee and several points concerning cooperation between different policy areas, levels of government and between work and education. Based on this, the strategy partners agree to further develop cooperation and coordination of skills policy.

Important terms

- **Skills policy** is the overall policy for development, mobilisation and utilisation of skills in the entire Norwegian society and labour market.
- **Formal education:** All publicly approved education leading to formal qualifications.
- **Non-formal education:** Courses, seminars and conferences where education is the main purpose of participation, as well as private lessons and lectures/talks that are not part of a formal education.
- **Informal learning:** Learning which is not organised, but which can be characterised as everyday learning from the different situations a person participates in at home, at school, in the workplace and through community participation.
- **Non-formal qualifications:** All skills that are acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning.
- **Skills validation:** Through skills validation a person's skills is measured against set criteria, such as a competence goal in a curriculum/syllabus or a qualification criteria in an employment contract. Assessment of formal education means evaluating the individual's qualifications against the criteria set out in the current curriculum/syllabus. Skills validation may provide a basis for admission to or reduction of studies. Within the formal education system, competence assessment is conducted by municipalities, counties, technical colleges, universities and colleges.
- **Learning outcome:** A description of what a person knows, and is able to do as a result of a learning process. Learning outcome descriptions describe knowledge, skills and general expertise dedicated to the relevant level and academic depth.
- **A qualification** is a formal learning outcome at a certain level, which is approved by a competent authority and which can be documented.
- **Competence Standards** are used to describe the requirements for performing various job tasks
- On the basis of the formal education system, Norway has drawn up a **national qualifications framework (NQF)**, based on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), describing qualifications at the various education levels
- **Recognition of professional qualifications** or education concerns approval of either completed formal education or professional qualifications, and is handled by NOKUT, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, and a variety of competent authorities.
- **Basic skills:** Basic skills are essential tools for learning and development in education, the labour market and social life. The following skills are generally considered as basic skills: reading, writing, numeracy, digital skills and oral skills.
- **Career guidance** aims to improve the individual's ability to make conscious educational and career choices. Career guidance can involve various forms of guidance and activities both individually and in groups.

Notes

- 1 Bjørkeng, B. (red.) (2013) Ferdigheter i voksenbefolkningen. Resultater fra den internasjonale undersøkelsen om lese- og tallforståelse (PIAAC). Rapporten 2013/42. Statistisk sentralbyrå.
- 2 Bjørkeng, B. (red.) (2013) Ferdigheter i voksenbefolkningen. Resultater fra den internasjonale undersøkelsen om lese- og tallforståelse (PIAAC). Rapporten 2013/42. Statistisk sentralbyrå.
- 3 NOU 2016: 3 Ved et vendepunkt: Fra ressursøkonomi til kunnskapsøkonomi
- 4 Samfunnsøkonomisk analyse (2016) Rammefaktorer og utviklingstrekk som fremmer eller hemmer læring i arbeidslivet, Oslo 2016
- 5 NAVs bedriftsundersøkelse 2016
- 6 Meld. St. 22 (2015-2016) Nye folkevalgte regioner – rolle, struktur og oppgaver.
- 7 Squicciarini, M., Marcolin, L. & Horvát, P. (2015): *Estimating Cross-Country Investment in Training: An Experimental Methodology Using PIAAC Data*. OECD STI Working Papers, 2015/09, OECD Publishing

Photo: p.1,2,3,4,5 Fotolia. p.6 Johan Behrentz, Sunnmørsposten. p.9 Scanpix. p.10 Frode Hansen/VG. p.13 Fotolia. p.14 Sveinung Bråthen. p.19 Science Photo library. p.20 Kompetanse Norge. p.22 Kompetanse Norge. p.24 Fotolia.



Norwegian Ministry
of Labour and Social Affairs



Norwegian Ministry
of Justice and Public Security



Norwegian Ministry
of Local Government and Modernisation



Norwegian Ministry
of Education and Research



Norwegian Ministry of Trade,
Industry and Fisheries



Report published by the Ministry of Education and Research in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, the Sami Parliament, the main social partners (The Employers' Association Spekter, The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO), the Enterprise Federation of Norway (Virke), The Federation of Norwegian Professional Associations (Akademikerne), The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), The Confederation of Unions for Professionals (Unio), The Confederation of Vocational Unions (YS) and the Norwegian association for Adult Learning (VOFO).

The report can be downloaded at : www.regjeringen.no/nks
 Publication number: F-4432 E
 Design: Melkeveien designkontor as
 Print: Norwegian Government Security and Service Organisation
 05/201X – Impression 150