

# EUROPEAN STRATEGY - REPLAY-VET Strengthening Key Competencies of Low-Skilled People in Vocational Education and Training to Cover Future Replacement Positions

November 2018

## SUMMARY

### Outline of report

This report highlights lessons and recommendations on improving the current and future labour market participation of low-skilled groups of workers across the European Union. These include: reducing barriers to vocational training; improving the attractiveness of jobs, careers and labour conditions associated with the sectors in which low-skilled/low-qualified people work; and advancing professionalisation in these sectors. Understanding changing labour market trends, including replacement demand and new demand for skills, is pivotal to the successful design of vocational education and work and employment policies for low-skilled people across Europe.

The recommendations from the REPLAY-VET project underline:

- the critical importance of reinforcing links between education, training and the changing world of work in promoting effective labour market policies that better include low-skilled, low-qualified or disadvantaged people in the workforce;
- common lessons that may be useful across the EU, based on the project's findings in different national/regional contexts;
- specific opportunities and constraints related to professional training and qualifications for low-skilled groups across the EU and across a range of sectors: construction (England, UK), home care (The Basque Country, Spain), early learning and care (Scotland, UK), logistics (Hesse, Germany), manufacturing (Lombardy, Italy; Czech Republic), and metallurgy and logistics (PACA, France).

### Key Themes

Key themes have emerged from the REPLAY-VET project findings:

✓ **Effective use of labour market information & intelligence**

Greater use of national and regional labour market indicators can help guide to develop targeted EU-wide training programmes as well as domestic and cross-border recruitment efforts.

✓ **Improving the attractiveness of the sectors and rethinking approaches to recruiting and training**

Less attractive sectors with high labour demand and socio-economic potential can benefit from new approaches focused on improving training, work conditions and pay, as well as recruiting new types of workers from outside of the sector.

✓ **Greater collaboration and cooperation**

Collaboration between national and regional public agencies and private or not-for-profit employers can help to develop and re-



brand a sector that is less attractive to recruits and to make lasting changes to working models and labour conditions.

✓ **Clear communication of opportunities for career progression**

National sector-wide recruitment campaigns need support and better communicate the long-term career progression opportunities as well as the short-term working terms and conditions.

✓ **Acknowledging the professional value of the full range of workers' skills, including soft and social skills**

An important step, in differentiating the abilities required for effectively using new technologies and for addressing and satisfying demands for a well-qualified workforce, is the greater recognition of the value of soft skills, human interactions and social intelligence across all sectors and job levels.

✓ **Diversity in the workplace, heterogeneous approaches to selection, recruitment and training**

Employers, educational institutions and trainers need to provide training, and routes into training, that are more tailored and suited to diverse sets of workers with varying skills, living conditions, levels of responsibilities and engagement, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and the low-skilled.

## Key Recommendations

The following observations and lessons from the REPLAY-VET Project can help regional, national and EU-level policy makers develop better qualified workforces across different employment sectors:

**1. Encourage greater use of labour market information and intelligence, exchange best practices at the European level and disseminate information to support the expansion of labour market opportunities for low-skilled people.**

Examples from the project on achieving this include:

- ✓ *The new Heart of the South West LEP Policy report on Construction – incorporating the Labour Market Information identified and captured in this study<sup>1</sup>.*
- ✓ *Strengthen Regional Labour Market and Training Observatories. They are legitimate forums for the production of knowledge, particularly statistics, with strong links with the wider research community.<sup>2</sup>*
- ✓ *Provide career counsellors with a concise handy overview of the most suitable retraining choices to be recommended to their clients in danger of unemployment, with regard to the*

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<sup>1</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide UK, England: 'Policymakers: Supporting the long term unemployed back into work or Skills utilisation and strategic approaches to drive up employer demand for low skilled and disadvantaged groups'  
<http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/construction/>

<sup>2</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide France: 'New competences and new skills brought by the technological change'  
<http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/metallurgy-sector/>



*labour market situation in the given region.*<sup>3</sup>

2. Ensure comprehensive training, high participation and labour market insertion **through better adaptation of training activities and skills development programmes to the diverse needs of low-skilled people.**

Examples from the project on achieving this include:

- ✓ *Establish more efficient paths to qualifications and employment, such as accelerated qualification programmes, recognition of foreign qualifications and programmes designed to support lateral-entry recruitment.*<sup>4</sup>
- ✓ *Increase awareness of available funding and subsidies for training through coordinated promotion by funding agents and training providers.*<sup>5</sup>
- ✓ *Promote work-based learning periods long enough to allow effective knowledge and skills transfer. Support learning providers to establish work-based learning agreements with companies, ideally at least 22 weeks in some sectors.*<sup>6</sup>
- ✓ *Facilitate flexibility on training and professional accreditation, for example through non-formal learning or "Bite size" training*<sup>7</sup>
- ✓ *Promote job-insertion companies to assist with the social and occupational insertion of low-skilled people already, in or at risk of, social exclusion.*<sup>8</sup>
- ✓ *Prioritise the development of transversal and soft skills in training courses and in school programmes to ensure greater employability.*<sup>9</sup>
- ✓ *Address multiple issues that low-skilled people often face by incorporating holistic, complex skills and non-skills related measures*<sup>10</sup>.

3. Support flexible and innovative proposals and pilot projects, involving regional provision and support, **to increase the effectiveness of skills acquisition amongst low-skilled people**

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<sup>3</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide Czech Republic: 'Career Guidance information tool' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/manufacturing-sector/manufacturing-cz/>

<sup>4</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide Germany: 'Strategic approaches to improve employees retention and training in the Logistics Sector' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/logistics-sector/logistics-sector-de/>

<sup>5</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide Germany: 'Strategic approaches to improve employees retention and training in the Logistics Sector' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/logistics-sector/logistics-sector-de/>

<sup>6</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide France: 'New competences and new skills brought by the technological change' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/logistics-sector/logistics-sector-fr/>

<sup>7</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide Basque Country: 'Strategic approaches to adapt the training to the needs of the low-skilled workers' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/social-care-sector/>

<sup>8</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide Basque Country: 'Strategic approaches to adapt the training to the needs of the low-skilled unemployed' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/social-care-sector/>

<sup>9</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide Italy: 'New competences and new skills brought by the technological change or Support low-skilled workers in training to cover the need of the industry' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/manufacturing-sector/manufacturing-sector-it/>

<sup>10</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide Czech Republic 'Complex approach to increase the employability of socially excluded, low skilled people' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/manufacturing-sector/manufacturing-cz/>



#### **entering or already in the sector.**

Examples from the project on achieving this include:

- ✓ *The 'Building Plymouth' construction good practice in Heart of the South West Region (UK)<sup>11</sup>.*
- ✓ *Create a permanent working group with all the key players to establish a strategy to move the sector forward along with specific courses of action for these group profiles.<sup>12</sup>*
- ✓ *Raise the awareness of the importance of digital skills in the changing labour market. This initiative should be addressed to both workers and SMEs, for example through a system of "Bonus Training" that finances participation in training activities, and the implemented on the model of "Bonus Culture" - a system of certification of skills and gamification of training activities.<sup>13</sup>*

#### **4. Improve the attractiveness of sectors with future employment opportunities and develop and communicate clearly the long-term career opportunities and pathways** that they offer, in order to attract high quality, dedicated workers.

Examples from the project on achieving this include:

- ✓ *Developing a multi-partner strategy to attract a more diverse workforce and enhance career opportunities.<sup>14</sup>*
- ✓ *Improving 'Fair work' conditions and professional status of the sector.<sup>15</sup>*
- ✓ *Encourage positive action in sectors with a large gender gap from the start of guidance about training, developing arguments, support material and awareness actions for the career advisors.<sup>16</sup>*

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<sup>11</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide UK, England: 'Policymakers: Supporting the long term unemployed back into work or Skills utilisation and strategic approaches to drive up employer demand for low skilled and disadvantaged groups' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/construction/>

<sup>12</sup> For more information see How-to-guide Spain, Basque Country: 'Strategic approaches to adapt public aid and programmes for a greater participation of the low-skilled people in the sectors' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/social-care-sector/>

<sup>13</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide Italy: 'New competences and new skills brought by the technological change or Support low-skilled workers in training to cover the need of the industry' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/manufacturing-sector/manufacturing-sector-it/>

<sup>14</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide UK, Scotland: 'Developing strategic action plans for skills among low skilled people in the Early Learning and Childcare sector' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/early-learning-and-care-sector/>

<sup>15</sup> For more information see How-to-Guide UK, Scotland: 'Strategic change approaches to overcoming the perceived low status of Early Learning and Care (ELC) sector and increasing its attractiveness to the low-qualified people' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/early-learning-and-care-sector/>

<sup>16</sup> For more information see How-to-guide Spain, Basque Country: 'Strategic approaches to increase the attractiveness of the sector for the low skilled people' <http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/social-care-sector/>

## SPECIFIC SKILL PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COUNTRY/REGION

REPLAY-VET partners focused on sectors of particular economic importance within their national or regional contexts. These sectors demonstrate high technological and innovation potential, changing skill profiles, opportunities for low skilled workers with further professionalisation or opportunities for social integration.

| PARTNER  | SUMMARY & KEY RECOMMENDATIONS  |
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|  <p><b>Sector &amp; target group:</b></p> <p>LOGISTICS, Hesse,<br/>Germany</p> <p><b>SKILL &amp; SECTOR-SPECIFIC PROBLEM:</b></p>   | <p>Despite a growing number of vacancies for both low-skilled and skilled positions, employers in the <i>logistics sector</i> in Hessen struggle to attract, retain and, when necessary, up-skill employees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demanding labour conditions, such as shift work and physically strenuous tasks, contribute to high fluctuation among the workforce. It can be particularly challenging to attract and retain women and older workers.</li> <li>• Training approaches tend to differ based on occupation and company. Large companies are often better able to offer and encourage formal training and qualification opportunities. Smaller employers are typically less aware of subsidised training programmes at the regional, federal or EU-levels. When they do provide training, it is more likely to be informal and therefore less likely to be recognised by other employers.</li> </ul> <p><b>The following recommendations are suggested:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Develop local stakeholder recruitment networks.</i><br/>By organising stakeholders into local recruitment networks, information can be more effectively communicated and coordinated to activate job seekers with particular hurdles to employment or under-representation in the sector. Local networks can work together to identify the most attractive aspects of the sector to help re-brand and consider collective solutions to sector-wide challenges related to labour conditions.</li> <li>2. <i>Increase awareness of available funding and subsidies for training.</i><br/>Through better publicity and promotion, funding agents and training providers can raise awareness among employers and employees of the benefits associated with and the opportunities available for training. Publicly funded programmes can help low-skilled people obtain sought-after qualifications, such as truck driver licenses or forklift operator licenses, regardless of the size and resources of their company.</li> <li>3. <i>Establish more efficient paths to qualification and employment.</i><br/>Accelerated and streamlined qualification programs quickly integrate new employees into the work force and help meet employment</li> </ol> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Low attractiveness of the sector due to demanding labour conditions</b></li> <li>• <b>High turnover rate aggravates under-representation of women and older workers</b></li> <li>• <b>Increasing skilled vacancies in the sector require further training and qualifying of low-skilled workers in order to meet employer demands</b></li> </ul> |  |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discrepancy in training provision based on the size and capability of organisations as well as worker motivation-levels</b></li> </ul>  | <p>demands. They also help motivate lateral-entry recruits to consider entering the logistics sector from other sectors. Likewise, programs that help recognise foreign qualifications and assist immigrants and refugees can help grow the pool of qualified workers in a region.</p> <p><a href="http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/logistics-sector/logistics-sector-de/">http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/logistics-sector/logistics-sector-de/</a></p>    |
|  <p><b>Sector &amp; target group:</b><br/>MANUFACTURING,<br/>Czech Republic</p> <p><b>SKILL &amp; SECTOR-SPECIFIC PROBLEM:</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Manufacturing</i> is a technology and innovation-driven sector of the economy, and a significant attractor of foreign capital and provider of job opportunities. However, a high degree of integration of foreign trade makes it sensitive to external influences and global challenges.</li> <li>• There are increasing skills gaps and mismatches related to digital and high-tech technologies. EU active employment policies can help to strengthen the national effort focused on addressing the skills gaps amongst the low-qualified groups (e.g. elementary skills and VET, financial literacy). Addressing the increasing number of young NEETs (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) is a further issue.</li> <li>• A number of policy issues need to be considered including: providing a financial contribution for completing basic education which is precondition of retraining paid by the Labour Office; making elementary schools responsible for monitoring the pupils' work and employment pathways; ensuring that local employment office, school, local authorities, career centres, local community, local business, parents and pupils have a more meaningful platforms for engagement together and all can part take in helping low-skill young people acquire skills that are applicable to the labour market; employers should cooperate more with the Labour Office and be more open in hiring the low-skilled employees, simplifying job application procedures and providing career guidance; and employers should co-operate more with schools of all levels and provide trainee programmes, internships and bridges into work.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack of opportunities and support to finish basic education as precondition of retraining</b></li> <li>• <b>Lack of financial literacy</b></li> <li>• <b>Increasing number of under 18 NEET</b></li> <li>• <b>Lack of long-term orientation in up-skilling in the quick recruit and release cycles</b></li> </ul> | <p><b>The following recommended examples are suggested:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Address multiple issues that low-skilled people often face by creating holistic, complex skills and non-skills related measures.</i> There is a need for support programmes to not only deal with people's skills or work-related problems, but to address all important issues of their lives that prevent them from participating effectively in the society. Examples from the project on achieving this include: identifying the basic needs of the low-skilled people and providing them with e.g. financial literacy training, debt management, health consultancy, psychological guidance and coaching to improve self-confidence, etc.; providing free</li> </ol>  |



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|  | <p>services for people at risk of social exclusion to prevent them dropping from programmes/training/jobs such as babysitting, transport, assistance and accompanying them at meetings with authorities, etc.</p> <p>2. <i>Provide career counsellors with a concise, handy overview of the most suitable retraining choices</i> to be recommended to their clients who are in danger of unemployment, with regard to the labour market situation in the given region. Examples from the project on achieving this include: creation of specific information tools dedicated to occupations that are identified with the help of Labour Market statistics or expert opinions as having bleak prospects of future employability. Based on future Labour Market needs, suggesting the best alternative career paths for these groups with inadequate qualification to find suitable long-term opportunities.</p> <p><a href="http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/manufacturing-sector/manufacturing-cz/">http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/manufacturing-sector/manufacturing-cz/</a></p>   |
|  <p><b>Sector &amp; target group:</b></p> <p>MANUFACTURING,<br/>Lombardy, Italy</p> <p><b>SKILL &amp; SECTOR-SPECIFIC PROBLEM:</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <i>manufacturing sector</i> traditionally represents the engine of the Italian economy and employment. In Lombardy, in particular, almost 80,000 manufacturing companies operate, 1/5 of the national total, while Lombard employees account for more than 25% of Italian manufacturing workers. Moreover, Lombardy is first in Italy for turnover in the manufacturing sector, with around 250 billion euros, and for added value, with over 60 billion, the latter growing in recent years by about 5%. The sector accounts for 10% of employees and 25% of Lombard companies. 42% of manufacturing workers in Lombardy have only a lower secondary school diploma. 96% of employees in the sector in Lombardy have a permanent contract.</li> <li>In the years since the financial crisis, manufacturing companies have undergone a process of renewal which has led to an adjustment of the employment base and a transformation of internal skills. This change has led companies to orient themselves towards a more qualified human capital basis, while traditionally the workers in the sector were largely low-skilled.</li> </ul> <p><b>The following recommended examples are suggested</b> (specifically for policymakers at regional and local authority levels):</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The workers in the sector are largely low-skilled</b></li> <li>• <b>Inadequate model of VET education and training provisions (lacking emphasis on practical skills-based training)</b></li> <li>• <b>Poor links between training and the world of work</b></li> <li>• <b>The personalised 'Dowry System'</b></li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Transformation of the educational curriculum to reflect a growing market need for skills development, which can be assessed and certified.</i> Such approaches are particularly welcome by the world of work. Thus a move is required towards more flexible educational and training paths, better tailored to the needs of learners and businesses, is required to prevent school dropouts and improve employability. The training companies need to provide training of consistently high quality. Their reputation and credibility is important for attracting the potential candidates for apprenticeships, which are important in the process of strengthening the practical vocational education and a more effective alliance with the businesses and the wider world of work.</li> <li>2. <i>Better financing of training courses based on a personalised 'Dowry System'</i> is also required, in which resources are used according to models of 'dowry schools' with a 'dowry' that can be spent in a plurality of accredited facilities and recognized paths. The Dowry System is a set of resources and services intended for the person, provided by the Lombardy Region. The system provides for different areas of intervention: School Dowry, Youth Guarantee and Unique Labour Dowry. The Unique Labour Dowry is a support for job insertion or reintegration and professional qualification or retraining. It meets the needs of people at different stages of their professional life through an integrated and personalized service offer. The School Dowry accompanies the educational path of children aged 6 to 18 years. It is intended for students of public and private schools of all levels and for those attending the three-year vocational training courses.</li> </ol>  <p><a href="http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/manufacturing-sector/manufacturing-sector-it/">http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/manufacturing-sector/manufacturing-sector-it/</a></p> |
|  <p><b>Sector &amp; target group:</b><br/>HOME-BASED CARE,<br/>Basque Country, Spain</p> <p><b>SKILL &amp; SECTOR-SPECIFIC PROBLEM:</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>Home-based care sector</i> offers many employment opportunities at present and in the future and is an opportunity sector for the low-skilled unemployed people. However, low wages together with the precarious nature of work and employment (including the black economy) and training barriers affecting especially low-skilled groups are key challenges.</li> <li>• Better national and EU-wide work and employment strategies are needed to attract potential low-skilled employees and up-skill those already employed in the sector. It is advisable to create a network (a permanent working group) with all the sectorial key players.</li> </ul>  |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Highly feminised sector with polarised levels of skills with many without elementary education</b></li> <li>• <b>Lack of professionalization and appropriate regulation (low status of workers and professions; lack of demand for accreditation)</b></li> <li>• <b>Low participation of low-skilled people in training due to inflexibility of delivery and a lack of specific training approaches adapted to the personal/social conditions of low-skilled groups</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Common Policy instruments could be used to: improve the status of the sector; encourage a greater engagement of professional care assistants in training and development, for example, through obtaining appropriate qualifications; give significant tax incentives (e.g. reductions in employers' social security contributions or tax deductions); and promote and support entrepreneurial training with business skills.</li> </ul> <p><b>The following recommended examples are suggested:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>For an effective labour market engagement</i>, it is crucial that training resources and methodologies are used to up-skill or raise qualifications of low-skilled groups; and these have to be customised and adapted to the characteristics of people with low training profiles and insertion difficulties, even offering non-formal training or bite size training. Learning on the job programmes are also very important.</li> <li>2. <i>All national, regional and European stakeholders in the area of workforce development need to lead a coordinated effort to establish a strategy</i> to move sectors beyond the stated limitations through concrete action points (such as awareness campaigns, on-going support and guidance delivered by multi-partners, appropriate access to and content of training and skills development, job insertion of unemployed people already in or at risk of social exclusion).</li> </ol> <p>   <a href="http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/social-care-sector/">http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/social-care-sector/</a> </p> |
|  <p><b>Sector &amp; target group:</b></p> <p>METALLURGY AND LOGISTICS, PACA Region France</p> <p><b>SKILL &amp; SECTOR-SPECIFIC PROBLEM:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Logistics employers do not prioritise long-term development of skills (sector is a</b></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>Metallurgy sector</i> suffers of a lack of attractiveness but it offers good pay conditions and good career development perspectives; it also allows job rotation, skills gain, and a substantial mobility of workers within the sector. It has a bad societal image as its occupations are perceived as dangerous and physically demanding, with high risks of workplace restructuring, closure or delocalization. The historically recruited low skilled workers but nowadays it's hiring policies are shifting towards higher entry qualification levels. Appropriate strategies to equip workers for such demands are required.</li> <li>• The <i>Logistics sector</i> operates largely on short-terms flexible contracts often supplied by private interim companies. Logistics workers are generally low-qualified and exposed to high turnover rates and seasonal demand and volatility of employment (although a long sequence of interim contracts tend to lead to longer contracts). Despite these insecurities the sector is one of the main providers of employment opportunities for low-skilled workers.</li> </ul>  |

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| <p>victim of seasonal turnover)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both sectors have outdated reputations unattractive for new entrants in logistics</li> <li>Unclear career progression pathways</li> <li>A raise of minimum required levels of skills in the metallurgy sector due to recruiters' underestimation of basic know-how and maturity of the youngest workers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both the Metallurgy and Logistics sectors require new strategic approaches aiming to promote jobs in the sector and opportunities for long-term career progression and development. New opportunities especially related to technical developments in digitalization, big data, virtual and augmented reality, robotics and mechanization, etc. They also require a more accurate screening process for soft, and not only technical skills, for successful professional and personal development within the industry.</li> </ul> <p><b>The following recommended examples are suggested:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Strengthening exchanges between training institutions and companies, and sharing innovative production platforms aimed to train young newcomers and adult workers in a coordinated manner.</i> Promote inter-sector mobility in order to attract new entrants from other sectors, enabling easier competences transfers. Develop a “skills blocks” based qualifications system in order to enable workers to acquire rapidly only the necessary skills blocks for shifting from a sector to another. Identifying transferable skills is important especially for disadvantaged job seekers.</li> <li><i>French national policy aims to develop and implement Plan Investment Competences (PIC), a national-regional Skills investment strategy, and develop skills specifically those low-qualified workers.</i> PIC is focused on training a great number of low-qualified youngsters and long-term job-seekers and essentially strives to transform the national VET system, through thorough analysis of competences needed and a use of new pedagogical design and methods to achieve a high success rate.</li> <li><i>There is a willingness to develop synergies and cooperation among different stakeholders</i> (such as regional and national local authorities, trade organisations and skills councils, public employment services, local educational authorities) to share the responsibility for supporting the development of citizenship through employment and other social goals.</li> </ol> <p><a href="http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/metallurgy-sector/">http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/metallurgy-sector/</a><br/> <a href="http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/logistics-sector/logistics-sector-fr/">http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/logistics-sector/logistics-sector-fr/</a></p>  |
|  <p><b>Sector &amp; target group:</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <i>Construction sector</i>, while expanding, also has a rapidly ageing workforce. There is a clear and pressing need to recruit new staff. However, the sector is often dominated by small businesses that struggle to recruit apprentices (the government’s preferred vocational route). There is limited flexibility within education and skills provision and social inclusion policies at regional and local levels. While national</li> </ul>  |



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| <p>CONSTRUCTION,<br/>England, UK</p>  | <p>policy prioritises apprenticeships, these are unlikely to tackle the persistent levels of low-skilled young people without the added use of pre-training and other provision.</p>  |
| <p><b>SKILL &amp; SECTOR-SPECIFIC PROBLEM:</b></p>  | <p><b>The following recommendations are suggested:</b></p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ageing workforce</b></li> <li>• <b>Small businesses dominate employment and most do not hire apprentices</b></li> <li>• <b>Uncertainty related to the post-Brexit access to construction workforce</b></li> <li>• <b>Lack of diversity in VET training and career guidance for young people and adults</b></li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Establishing a mapping exercise and subsequent ‘Needs Analysis’ to identify gaps in training provision, and integrate schemes with alternative routes into the training and vocational qualification gain to prevent cyclical movement in and out of employment of low-skilled workers, and to tackle both replacement demand and social exclusion. The Skills Escalator Model is a potential guide here.</i></li> <li>2. <i>A new approach to the agenda of boosting innovation and productivity is required to transform opportunities within sectors by lifting levels of quality and improving the status of existing jobs and the terms and conditions of employment.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Ensuring up-to-date training for entrants and those already in the sector is available regionally will future-proof the workforce and ensure they can access the emerging new jobs in the sector.</i></li> <li>4. <i>Dealing with Brexit uncertainties.</i> While the availability of workers in the construction sector after Brexit is questioned, seeking to ensure an increase in recruitment at all levels into the sector should also be a priority given the ageing nature of the workforce. This requires investing in career guidance for school leavers and adults, more flexible approaches in delivering skills and employment innovations within the sector at the level of local authorities, and strong leadership to increase demand for skilled workers via industrial and economic policies.</li> </ol> <p><a href="http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/construction/">http://www.replayvet.eu/en/sectors/construction/</a></p>  |
|  <p><b>UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) is a key strategic sector currently undergoing a significant expansion; with an estimated 20,000 new employees required over the next few years to deliver the increased service provision promised by the Scottish government. However, the sector faces some problems: its workforce is overrepresented by women and lacks diversity, has low level of qualifications and has inconsistent employment conditions and pay. Relatively low pay, but high responsibilities, and being commonly perceived as having a low professional status, reduces its attractiveness as a career choice.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Sector &amp; target group:</b></p>  |   |
| <p>EARLY LEARNING AND<br/>CHILDCARE, Scotland, UK</p>   |   |
| <p><b>SKILL &amp; SECTOR-SPECIFIC PROBLEM:</b></p>  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recruitment challenge due to</b></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some differences exist in training and up-skilling between public and private sector workers, with public workers having better opportunities. Child-minders, who run their own businesses from their homes, also face challenges in accessing training during their working</li> </ul>  |

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| <p><b>sector's low professional status, under-representation of men and disadvantaged groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discrepancies in pay, work conditions and limited information on skills and career pathways among low-qualified people</b></li> <li>• <b>Need for a strategic approach to promote careers in the sector as viable, developmental and long-term, supported by fair work conditions and effective workforce development programmes</b></li> </ul> | <p>hours, as this often means losing income and potentially clients who rely on the child-minders' flexibility. A reduction in child-minders may affect childcare supply for low-income workers. While the sector has a relatively high demand for qualified workers, these challenges, if unaddressed, are likely to lead to recruitment problems and skills shortages.</p> <p><b>The following recommendations are suggested:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Develop a multi-partner strategy to attract a more diverse workforce and enhance career opportunities by:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ identifying better ways of attracting and training traditional and non-traditional (e.g. men) types of recruits and up-skilling those already employed in the sector;</li> <li>✓ developing a wider range of skill and enhancing career opportunities throughout the working lives.</li> </ul> <p>A strategic action plan, including sectors-specific Skills Plans can provide a strong training framework and help improve the level of skills in the sector.</p> </li> <li>2. <i>Uplift the status of the ELC sector, and its attractiveness as a career choice by:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Improving 'Fair work' conditions and professional status of the sector (i.e. offering decent pay, other contractual improvements, flexible work patterns and access to training throughout the career and through multiple flexible pathways).</li> <li>✓ Challenging the perceived low-qualification level in the sector and promoting the role of workers as "educators" and not solely as carers.</li> </ul> <p>Making this type of work more pay-attractive will, firstly, help to meet the recruitment challenge; and secondly, potentially widen and diversify the workforce by attracting under-represented groups such as males and others currently working in other sectors etc.</p> </li> <li>3. <i>Increasing multiple flexible pathways for skills development by:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ An on-going investment in skills development and training throughout people's career,</li> <li>✓ Devising strategies and incorporating solutions focused simultaneously on multiple and flexible pathways to training.</li> </ul> <p>The on-going investment in training could transform the workforce and reduce the currently high turnover of staff across the sector.</p> </li> <li>4. <i>Reduce barriers to career changers and those entering the sector by:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Maintaining or increasing levels of funding for skills development among those seeking to work in the expanded sector, especially increasing employers' support and contributions towards training.</li> </ul> <p>There should be a concerted effort to remove financial barriers for</p> </li> </ol> |
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**2. Training programmes must be adapted to the different circumstances of the low-skilled people**

including those related to the emergence of irregular situations and the underground economy. On the other hand, it is necessary to improve the dissemination and information tools in each sector. The opportunities, the conditions, and the requirements, all need to reach the target audience through the implementation of bite size training, a more accessible language, new channels and sources and more adequate information.

- Greater use of labour market information and sector intelligence is also required to guide planned actions and to give a greater emphasis on removing barriers to pan-EU employment migration. National skills policies of EU states continue to evolve while new national strategic frameworks for skills development and training inform specific action plans. Each time new policy is being implemented in a EU state, valuable lessons are being gathered, which may be especially useful to consider by policy/practice worlds in other countries or regions. However, as many initiatives are already taking place, a more effective Europe-wide mechanism for sharing and archiving projects and programmes is needed.

Technological developments offer opportunities for storing, sharing and retrieving such information way beyond lifetime of these projects. The EU, and the Skills Panorama, should consider how best to implement the need for sharing lessons and good practices in the skills and employment field, without overwhelming load associated with the exchange of information amongst the EU nations. There is also a need for sharing best practices on effective communication from findings of regional, national and European projects to all relevant stakeholders, including the target groups and career/jobs centres, for the benefit of the people concerned.

This project identified many barriers to participation of low-skilled in VET programmes and initiatives, e.g. lack of motivation and confidence, lack of basic skills, distance to training centres, finances, inflexible pattern of working hours. It is clear that heterogeneous approaches to training and skills development are needed to successfully engage trainees and employees. Training programmes must be flexible and adapted to the different circumstances of the low-skilled people. A comprehensive customised training delivery is recommended for a greater participation in learning activities, and thus better employment-related outcomes.

For example, greater flexibility could mean training delivered at weekends, in holiday seasons, or fitting irregular shift patterns. The development of training materials for self-learning activities are also recommended for use in conjunction with other formal training activities, as well as a modular digitally delivered qualifications/training models (online training for a better



**3. Public support needs innovative proposals and pilot projects with embedded flexibilities in regional provision and regional support.**

family/study balance, etc.) or bringing study facilities to certain locations if they are based in other towns.

- Comprehensive customised training/insertion pathways can be considered. These pathways are usually overseen by social organisations which take account of the specific features required to boost access for low-skilled people, most of whom risk social exclusion. Such approaches adapt teaching methodologies and materials to users and take account of the specific situation of each user. A model of personal tutoring strengthens motivation of learners and makes learning more effective. EU policies could encourage such solutions, and in particular offer incentives for employers, educational institutions and training providers to enable more customised delivery of training that responds to the need of workers in 24-hrs economy.
  
- Many of the recommendations for a greater participation of low-skilled people on upskilling training activities, require innovation in training and professional accreditation activities. The vocational competences accreditation and certification processes should be flexible to enable innovation or specific benefits that adapt to different need or, circumstances. It would be advisable to issue a call for proposals from social organisations to spearhead innovative processes and share experiences and good practices (knowledge management) among professionals operating in the sector. Assistance to implement pilot projects and specific mechanisms allowing experimentation in response to different situations and needs, along with the standardisation of good practices once these have been identified.
  
- It is important to allow the embedding of flexibilities in regional provision and regional support to promote the use of schemes that encourage major employers to sign up to the local recruitment and inclusion programmes. National control mechanisms are required to oversee apprenticeships and other entry to professional pathways to ensure quality and increase effectiveness of the programmes. Matching demand with supply is one of the activities that must be performed regularly to avoid unintentional problems and encourage continuous generation of innovations in work and training policies and VET programmes in the EU countries and under the pan-European initiatives.
  
- Many EU countries are modernising the public employment services (PES) encouraging them to work directly with employers to place low-skilled workers. Providing public employment services with such regional freedom's to work with employers and low-skilled workers can better support the development of new training and employment opportunities that are fit for purpose and utilised for the mutual benefits of all stakeholders.

**4. Improving the attractiveness of the sectors and communicating clearly the long-term career opportunities to attract high quality, dedicated workers**

- The overall poor perception of some economic sectors is a pressing concern as it often represents an out-dated image. Especially problematic are real and perceived lack of gender diversity, e.g. male/female overrepresentation in historically one-gender dominant sectors such as education and care (women) or manufacturing and construction (men), which further lowers attractiveness of the sectors to respective genders. This needs to be challenged by appropriate communication and recruitment campaigns. Sector-specific and national sector-wide recruitment campaigns should be coherently led. These campaigns should strive to present realistic opportunities to school leavers and workers in other sectors and non-traditional employees. They need to be designed to communicate the benefits and opportunities that the specific sectors, rather than individual employers, offer in terms of work and career for individuals considering such a vocational choice at present and in the future. Removing potential barriers and effectively promoting the many routes into the profession (Vocational Qualifications, FE/college training, Higher Education, employer-based etc.), and multiple and flexible training options (such as part-time, evening/weekend courses) need to be considered. Care must be taken through a systematic approach not to potentially undermine other parts of the sector, e.g. workers in other institutional or organisational contexts.
- A holistic view is needed when considering best approaches for attracting and training new entrants and the existing workforce in expanding sectors. For example, the attractiveness of the sector to potential new entrants is likely to be assessed through a multiple factors, such as decent and fair terms and conditions, quality training and up-skilling opportunities, the workforce, diversity and career progression routes. Opportunities for EU wide promotion and support of relevant training and diversity-orientated recruitment should be considered. There is a need to provide up-to-date careers guidance within schools – supported via online platforms. This should incorporate local flexibilities that allow employers to promote the sector within schools. Schools should be assessed on their Careers Guidance to encourage provision of valid information.
- Action is also needed to recruit and retain a high quality, diversified and committed workforce to meet current and projected needs of the sector should be skills-driven. They can include activities such as the promotion of those sectors not necessarily considered as the most attractive career options due to persisting gender imbalances, pay and promotion inequalities, overall low sector attractiveness and other employment and recruitment barriers. Of particular importance in sectors such as caring, is gender equality and attracting significant numbers of men into frontline working in the sector and learning from practices in other EU member states. A consistent EU strategy is needed to focus on ensuring a decent work conditions and pay, and



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|  | <p>reshape the narrative around sectors which utilise labour of carers. A deliberate and coordinated effort at the pan-European level can help uplift the status of workers in caring and similar roles by: firstly, acknowledging the multiple responsibilities and complex skillset required to work in such contexts (in particular, social relatedness and emotional intelligence, skills increasing required in the future); and secondly, by helping employers buyers to reconsidering the value of those jobs.</p> |
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### About the Project

REPLAY-VET is a 2-year seven partners-project led by Prospektiker (Spain) funded by the Erasmus + Programme. It responds to Europe’s pressing need to tackle replacement demand caused by an ageing workforce and a persistently low level of skilled workers affecting many economic sectors. The project has used a network of expert labour market analysts to explore what new policy and practices will need to exist if Europe is to tackle replacement demand priority new and in the future. The project focused on groups with low skill/qualification levels, those economically inactive and often outside of the employment.

The work has resulted in a series of workshops and stakeholders’ exchange events (with involvement of Employment and Training and other Social Policy-Makers, Education and Training Providers, Career Guidance Professionals, Employers, Public Authorities and Agencies, Workers and Trade Unions) and written output such as national and sectorial reports, ‘How To’ guides and a toolkit. For more information on the project visit: [http://www.regionallabourmarketmonitoring.net/replayvet\\_project.htm](http://www.regionallabourmarketmonitoring.net/replayvet_project.htm)

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