PACT FOR SKILLS

European Commission

PACT FOR SKILLS LARGE SCALE AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Guidance handbook: introducing and setting up skills partnerships.

Contents

1. Introduction

The European Commission's Pact for Skills (PfS) aims to mobilise employers, education and training providers, and public bodies to create upskilling and reskilling opportunities necessary for their long-term economic success. Large scale and regional skills partnerships are key pillars of the Pact, which enable employers and organisations to collaborate across economic sectors or geographic regions. Partnerships enable the delivery of shared skills objectives in the context of digital and green transitions. Partnerships can achieve a range of goals including:

- delivery of practical skills that meet the needs of employers, economic sectors and employees;
- enabling strategic and coordinated action to address collective skills challenges across supply chains;
- demonstrating the commitment and contribution of economic sectors and regions on the delivery of skills and economic development agendas;
- developing new relationships between employers and stakeholders, including opportunities to enhance skills intelligence, and identify skills needs and opportunities.
- creating collaborative projects to support the quality of skills, including curricula, programmes and recognitions;
- opportunities to create new networks and collaborations across sectors and regions and to leverage European and national funding opportunities.

To aid their development, the Pact for Skills Support Service can provide direct tailored advice, guidance and technical support to partnership coordinators. This **partnership handbook** is one of numerous resources available to existing and prospective Pact members and partnerships to help guide activities. All partnerships will develop in line with the needs and priorities of the sector, region and member organisations. Nevertheless, the handbook aims to be a useful aid to support the process of developing impactful and sustainable collaborations that enhance upskilling and reskilling opportunities across the European Union (EU).

The handbook is aimed primarily at organisations interested in initiating skills partnerships or organisations that are already engaged in developing a partnership. It provides a high-level summary of **the key elements for setting up an effective partnership** in line with the objectives of the Pact for Skills. Areas that are covered by the handbook include:

- introducing partnerships, the rationale for the approach and the core components;
- developing partnership agreements including approaches to commitments, engaging and convening relevant partners, and stakeholders;
- developing and coordinating work programmes including fostering active collaboration between independent organisations.

Section 2 is of particular interest for organisations considering initiating a skills partnership. This section discusses the aims, objectives principles and core elements of a skills partnership, as well as the role of the coordinating organisations and what to expect from the Pact Support Services. Organisations that are interested in establishing a regional or sectoral partnership should complete an expression of interest form in Annex A outlining the rationale for the partnership and potential approach and submit this via PactforSkillsPartnerships@ecorys.com.

The handbook was developed through a review of the lessons drawn from existing and previous skills partnerships initiatives, including Blueprint Erasmus+ Alliances for sectoral cooperation on skills. This includes appraisal of the key steps, principles and practices that have been taken by Large Scale Partnerships (LSPs) that have already been initiated, including desk top review of relevant documentation and feedback from coordinators as part of support activities.

1.1. Overview of the Pact for Skills

The Pact for Skills is one of the flagship actions of the European Skills Agenda and is firmly anchored in the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Pact aims to support public and private organisations with upskilling and reskilling so they can thrive through the green and digital transitions. Members of the Pact have access to knowledge on upskilling and reskilling needs, advice on relevant funding instruments to boost the skills of adults in their regions and countries, and partnership opportunities within our growing community.

All interested organisations are welcome to join the Pact. These include: national, regional and local authorities; companies; social partners; cross-industry and sectoral organisations; chambers of commerce; education and training providers; and employment services – they can all become members of the Pact for Skills. All members of the Pact can benefit from three dedicated services.

- Through the **Networking Hub**, members can find partners and relevant EU tools (like Europass, Skills Panorama, EURES and the European Network of Public Employment Services). They can also promote their activities.
- The **Knowledge Hub** organises webinars, seminars and peer learning activities for members. It also provides updates on EU policies and instruments, as well as information on projects, tools and best practices.
- In the **Guidance Hub**, members can find information about EU and national funding opportunities, and guidance to partnering with national and regional authorities.

Skills partnerships are a key part of the Pact for Skills. Partnerships encourage collaboration within economic sectors or regions to support the delivery of their shared goals for upskilling and reskilling. Through the Guidance Hub, Large Scale sectoral Partnerships and regional partnerships can secure direct technical support to develop and guide their activities. Further details about partnerships and the support on offer is set out throughout this handbook.

2. What is a skills partnership?

This section provides an overview of skills partnerships in the context of the European Commission's Pact for Skills. Partnerships can bring employers, education and training providers, and public authorities together to enhance upskilling and reskilling opportunities. This approach can enable economic or regional sectors to coordinate their efforts in relation to skills, whilst also demonstrating their commitment and contribution to the Europe-wide skills agenda. Skills partnerships are sector led and aim to address the specific and strategic skills needs that will enable the continued economic success and growth of sectors and regions skills. Ultimately the power of partnerships is rooted in collaborative and inclusive working arrangements that help to create opportunities for collaboration and which serve the priorities of the partnership's members.

2.1. Aims and objectives

Pact for Skills partnerships are shared commitments by multiple private and public organisations to support upskilling and reskilling opportunities for people of working age. With the support of the Pact for Skills Support Service, partnerships can enable collaboration at the level of economic sector and region(s) (see Figure 1 for illustration) across a range of objectives, such as:

- creating the opportunity for member organisations to articulate their commitment to delivering upskilling and reskilling opportunities in line with key sectoral or regional economic or skills needs;
- enabling member organisations to achieve relevant upskilling and reskilling goals, including through pooling of resources and building synergies between respective activities;
- creating communities of practice and networks that can foster new collaborations and partnerships to share practice and create collaboration opportunities;
- tracking and demonstrating the impact of partnerships and member organisations on skills needs and economic growth, and over time as part of a Europe-wide initiative.

A key strength of partnerships is engaging the full range of partners to deliver upskilling and reskilling opportunities and activities across an economic sector or region. This may include employers of all sizes including small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), or different parts of the sector[1], social partners and professional associations, different types of education and training providers as well as research institutions, public bodies and representative groups. The types of organisations that skills partnerships typically engage include:

- private and public companies (large and micro, small, medium enterprises);
- social partners (e.g. trade unions, employers' organisations) or their umbrella organisations and networks relevant to skills;
- public authorities at national, regional and local level;
- training providers or education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions or their umbrella organisations;

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[1] European Commission. (2020h). European Skills Agenda. Brussels: European Commission.
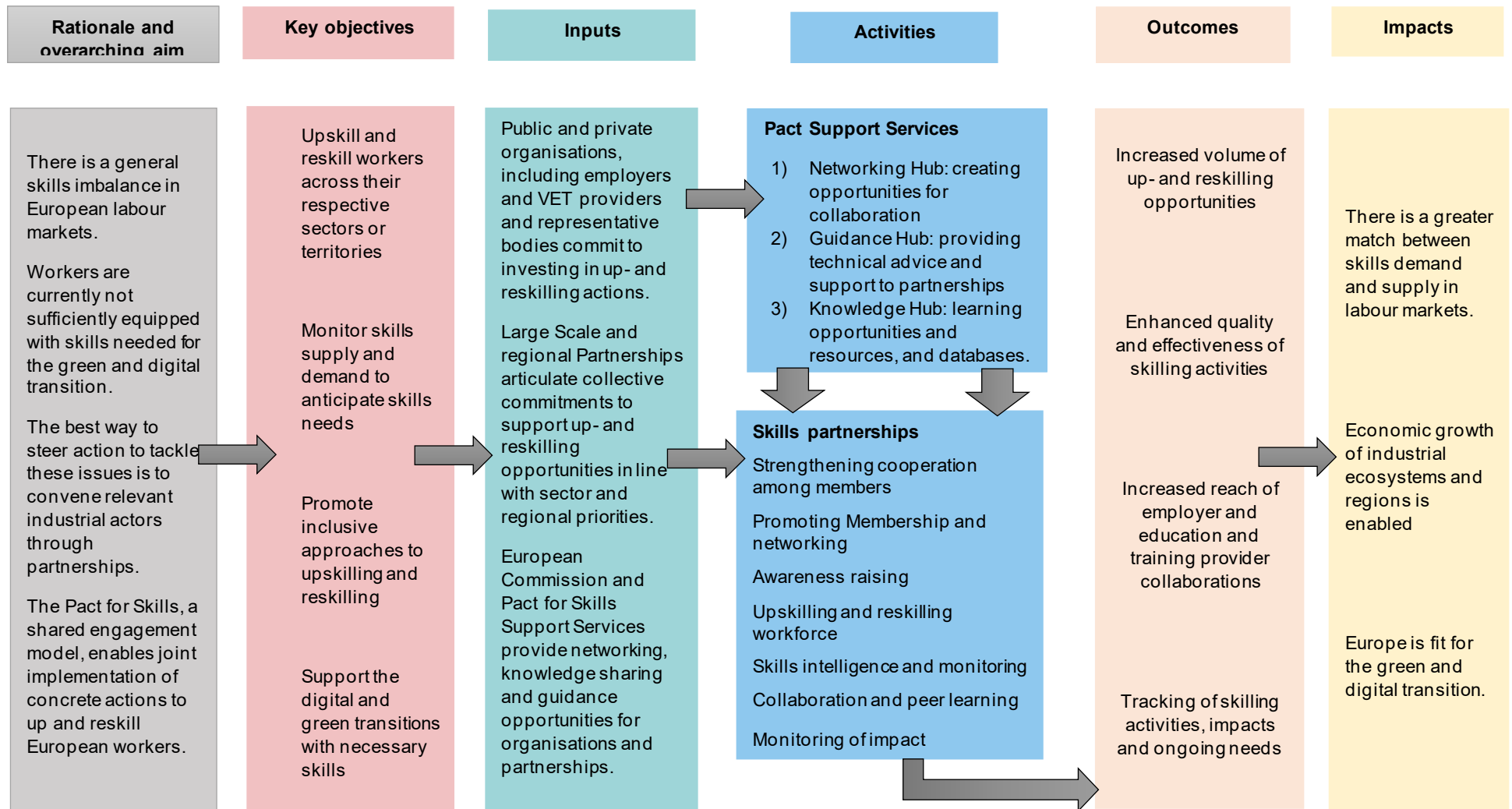
- CVET, adult education institutions and lifelong learning institutions and their umbrella organisations;
- higher education institutions and their umbrella organisations;
- sectoral organisations or their associations;
- business and SMEs' associations;
- chambers of commerce, trade and crafts and other relevant similar organisations;
- industrial and regional clusters or their networks and associations;
- NGOs, CSOs or their networks and associations;
- research institutions (including universities);
- public or private employment services.

To help member organisations realise their collective and individual upskilling and reskilling objectives, partnerships may undertake a range of supporting activities. The precise approach depends on the needs and priorities of the partnership, its members, economic sector, or region. Supporting actions and themes that partnerships may address include:

- raising awareness of sector and regional skills challenges amongst employers and training providers, and relevant stakeholders;
- supporting ongoing skills intelligence, including monitoring skills supply and demand, and creating opportunities to anticipate skills needs;
- disseminating training resources and tools, including curricula, courses, qualification and learning recognition arrangements, and creating practical training opportunities;
- promoting inclusive approaches to upskilling and reskilling, and supporting the digital and green transitions with necessary skills;
- addressing any other specific skills challenges or themes that are relevant to the long-term economic success of the sector, cluster, or region.

The aims and objectives of a partnership are articulated in an overarching partnership agreement that describes the skills needs for the sector or region, the commitments of the partnership and supporting actions. Individual members of partnerships are encouraged to support the delivery of the partnership's commitments and activities, including through their own commitments to deliver skills opportunities, whilst collaborating on projects or initiatives that can support these goals. Members of partnerships may implement their activities in different ways such as individually as companies, or public organisations as part of tripartite or social partner initiatives, jointly as local, regional, industrial, cross-sectoral partnerships, or as Large Scale public-private Partnerships (including companies, associations and public authorities).

Figure 1: Pact for Skills framework

Rationale and overarching aim	Key objectives	Inputs	Activities	Outcomes	Impacts
There is a general skills imbalance in European labour markets. Workers are currently not sufficiently equipped with skills needed for the green and digital transition. The best way to steer action to tackle these issues is to convene relevant industrial actors through partnerships. The Pact for Skills, a shared engagement model, enables joint implementation of concrete actions to up and reskill European workers.	Upskill and reskill workers across their respective sectors or territories

Monitor skills supply and demand to anticipate skills needs

Promote inclusive approaches to upskilling and reskilling

Support the digital and green transitions with necessary skills | Public and private organisations, including employers and VET providers and representative bodies commit to investing in up- and reskilling actions.

Large Scale and regional Partnerships articulate collective commitments to support up- and reskilling opportunities in line with sector and regional priorities.

European Commission and Pact for Skills Support Services provide networking, knowledge sharing and guidance opportunities for organisations and partnerships. | **Pact Support Services**

1) Networking Hub: creating opportunities for collaboration
2) Guidance Hub: providing technical advice and support to partnerships
3) Knowledge Hub: learning opportunities and resources, and databases.

Skills partnerships

Strengthening cooperation among members

Promoting Membership and networking

Awareness raising

Upskilling and reskilling workforce

Skills intelligence and monitoring

Collaboration and peer learning

Monitoring of impact | Increased volume of up- and reskilling opportunities

Enhanced quality and effectiveness of skilling activities

Increased reach of employer and education and training provider collaborations

Tracking of skilling activities, impacts and ongoing needs | There is a greater match between skills demand and supply in labour markets.

Economic growth of industrial ecosystems and regions is enabled

Europe is fit for the green and digital transition. |

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2.2. Partnership principles

Partnerships should be developed according to the Pact for Skills Charter and its key principles (see Box 1 below). Key to this is the development of a shared framework that can support collaboration between independent organisations in the delivery of **concrete upskilling and reskilling commitments**.

Box 1: The Pact for Skills Charter

The Pact for Skills Charter

The Pact for Skills charter represents a shared commitment by members of the Pact, including individual organisations and skills partnerships. The Charter outlines the importance of supporting the development of skills in the context of advancing social rights, the digital and green transition and to support industrial growth and SMEs. It outlines the objective of mobilising public and private investment in skills for all working age people and with the commitment to uphold the following principles:

- promoting a culture of learning for all;
- building strong skills partnerships;
- monitoring skills supply and demand and anticipating skills needs;
- working against discrimination and for gender equality and equal opportunities.

When joining the Pact, organisations and partnerships are encouraged to propose commitments to support concrete upskilling and reskilling actions, including relevant enabling activities that can support the core principles. At least one key performance indicator (KPI) to monitor the commitment should be set, for instance the number of people taking part in the upskilling or reskilling action.

Further information on the Pact for Skills charter can be found here.

To achieve their commitments, organisations leading, preparing or running partnerships should consider the following principles in their approach.

- **Member led:** Partnerships should be owned by the participating organisations in line with their needs and priorities. The approach should enable the partnership to address the priority needs and specific characteristics of the sector or region, and their long-term skills needs, across supply chains, sub-sectors, stakeholders, and education and training systems.
- **Collaborative:** Partnerships should be a shared responsibility of its members. Through active participation and collaboration of its members, a partnership can create opportunities for practical action at different levels, from individual organisations and specific groupings, through to the sectoral or regional level.
- **Inclusive:** A core but inclusive group of members may take on responsibility for driving work of the partnership. Partnerships may build on existing networks or cooperation but should also be open to a wider community that shares the goals of the partnership, and which may extend beyond existing networks or groupings.

- **Sustainable:** Partnerships should aim to support the long-term upskilling and reskilling needs of sectors or regions. It is key to have a proportionate approach to coordinating activities that support the objectives of the partnership and its members that build on existing projects and initiatives, whilst supporting new activities and approaches.

2.3. Core components of a partnership

The precise design of partnerships should be guided by the priorities and the needs of the sector or region and member organisations. The Pact for Skills Support Service can work with coordinating organisations to scope the partnership's profile and help establish key elements of a successful partnership. The key elements of a partnership are provided below.

- **A high-level partnership agreement** outlining the strategic view of the skills needs and priorities for the sector/ecosystem or region. The agreement articulates collective commitments to delivering upskilling and reskilling opportunities and acts as a reference point for developing practical objectives and activities for the partnership and tracking their impact. The agreement should be owned and signed by members of the partnership (See Section 4.1).
- **A coordinating and steering group** to provide overall direction to the partnership. Effective coordinating arrangements, including sustainable structures that fit the needs of the partnership is a crucial element to ensure a successful partnership. Whilst a partnership should aim to engage a wide range of member organisations, coordinating activities may be supported by a core engaged group of key stakeholders or partners.
- **An engaged community of members** that gives opportunities for creating collaborations and sharing experiences. It is equally important to both engage the existing members of the partnership in the implementation of the work programme as well as to seek new relationships to expand the partnership. Partnerships should aim to extend the reach of their membership from different parts of the sector or region, and actively create new opportunities for members to identify and develop potential new relationships and collaborations.
- **In-depth skills needs assessment.** Skills intelligence is crucial to identify the skills needs of employers and should inform the overall strategy, commitments and activities of a partnership. Partnerships may be built on prior skills needs assessments, such as part of previous Erasmus+ Blueprint Alliances. In addition, skills partnerships can also support ongoing skills intelligence inform the work of the partnership and its members to guide practical upskilling and reskilling activities.
- **A strong link between sectoral and regional dimensions.** Large Scale Partnerships (LSPs) should seek to have impact on the ground through regional level action and partnerships. Similarly regional partnerships should seek strong links to the regional economic development or skills strategies and to the skills strategies in the sectors/ecosystems they aim to work in.
- **Monitoring of impact.** A crucial pillar of partnership agreements are high-level commitments that outline in practical terms what the partnership aims to achieve in respect to upskilling and reskilling their workforce (See Sections 3.1 and 3.3 for further details). Setting clear commitments and tracking progress enables the partnership and its members

to demonstrate their contribution to upskilling and reskilling, and economic recovery. Partnerships, with the support of the support service, **are encouraged to monitor their progress against clearly defined overall objectives and indicators.**

The core activities of partnerships should be supported by the commitment of member organisations to the objective of enhancing reskilling and upskilling opportunities in a sector or region. Partnerships may also wish to secure **funding for specific projects or activities** that support the delivery of partnership commitments, including European, national and regional funding programmes.

An important value that partnerships can bring are the opportunities for members to exchange and share knowledge on their activities. Partnerships and their members are encouraged to **make use of knowledge sharing activities across the Pact for Skills**. These include networking events, webinars, learning seminars and peer learning activities where different stakeholders will be able to learn and discuss in dedicated forums with a particular focus on the topics of upskilling and reskilling.

2.4. The role of coordinators

The delivery of a partnership's aims and objectives is a collective endeavour of its members. Partnership coordinators play a key role in the success of partnerships. The coordinator is responsible for steering the delivery of the partnership's collective commitments and activities and fostering an inclusive and integrated approach with the partnership members. The precise definition of the role will be dependent on the structure of the partnership and its members. A coordinator may work with a core set of partner organisations to lead the development of the partnership and push key activities forward. The coordinator role typically includes:

- convening and engaging key stakeholders to initiate the partnership and developing ways to engage a wide range of member organisations;
- guiding the strategic direction of the partnership, including the development of a high-level partnership agreement and framework of sectoral or regional commitments;
- helping to shape associated activities and work programmes to support the partnership's aims and objectives, and steer the partnerships progress and impact.

Coordinators may be from a single lead organisation or may be a close partnership between two or three organisations. The coordinator may also be supported by a core working or steering group of committed partner organisations to guide the partnership's activities, as well as through regular engagement with a wider membership. The coordinating role may be shared or transferred to another member of the partnership that has the capacity, competency and authority to undertake the responsibility.

2.5. The role of the Pact for Skills Support Services

The Pact for Skills Support Services underpins the delivery of the Pact. It provides networking opportunities for Pact members alongside knowledge activities such as webinars and online database of funding opportunities, as well as communications activities raising awareness of the Pact. Through the Guidance Hub, the Pact Support Services can provide direct advice, guidance and support to skills partnerships and their coordinators to develop and deliver their partnership's activities (see Box 2). The Pact Support Services can provide direct advice on the steps and activities outlined in this handbook,

whilst also raising awareness of the impact and activities of a partnership and its members. Please see Annex A on how to request this support.

Box 2: Support for developing a skills partnership

The Pact Support Services can provide direct advice and support to partnership coordinators to support the development of Large-Scale Partnerships or regional partnerships. The precise focus of support is dependent on the needs and priorities of the partnership and coordinators. Support may include:

- mapping and convening meetings of prospective partners;
- providing advice and support for the drafting of partnership agreements, including commitments;
- advising on approaches to partnership coordination and working groups;
- support for the development of work plans that align with partnership priorities;
- networking new members and identification of potential funding opportunities;
- delivery of direct technical support on the delivery of work plan tasks or activities;
- facilitating knowledge exchange with other skills partnerships and initiatives;
- providing monitoring and impact reports;
- highlighting the contribution of the partnership and its members.

3. Developing a partnership

This section outlines some of the main elements and steps that underpin the development of a partnership. The section highlights the importance of creating an approach that enables collaboration between members and opportunities to identity and address key skills challenges for a sector/ecosystem or region. Partnerships should be developed through a flexible approach that fits the function and priorities of its members. Key elements can provide the foundation for the development of an impactful and sustainable partnership approach in the context of the Pact for Skills. Typical elements that underpin partnerships include a core partnership agreement, a process of stakeholder engagement, the development of work plans and partnership coordinating arrangements.

3.1. Partnership agreement

A partnership agreement is a statement of intent around which partners in a sector or regions can align their individual and collective training and skills efforts. The overall vision and aims of the agreement, in coherence with the objectives of Pact for Skills, should be owned and supported by the partners and wider members of the partnership. The process of developing an agreement, including securing support of relevant partners, is an important foundation of the skills partnership approach. Key elements for a partnership agreement include the:

- strategic aims of the partnership;
- partnership's commitments and its associated objectives;
- arrangements for coordinating the partnership.

Box 3: Developing partnership agreements

Points to consider when developing a partnership agreement

- What are the principal long-term economic challenges facing the industrial sector/ecosystem or region/s and what role skills play in this long-term picture?
- What skills intelligence has been conducted or would have to be developed to identify the sector or region's skills needs?
- What are the barriers that have hindered prior efforts by employers and stakeholders to deliver necessary up and reskilling opportunities for long-term economic success?
- Are these skills challenges shared across the sector or region/s and how might they vary between different employers (for instance SMEs)?
- How can organisations work together through the partnership to unblock these skills challenges and limitations?
- What role could raising awareness of challenges, developing training capacity and curricula, and guiding investment in training opportunities play in addressing these challenges?
- What would represent a reasonable collective commitment that would make a tangible contribution to the long-term success of the industry or region?
- How can different organisations support these commitments through their own and collaborative efforts?
- How does the partnership agreement align with the principles and potential activities outlined in the Pact for Skills charter?

Coordinators or lead partner organisations may wish to consider the process for developing the agreement with key partners and stakeholders. Steps may include convening a round table or workshop to assess the long-term skills needs for the sector and the key upskilling and reskilling challenges that organisations are facing. The precise approach to developing a shared understanding and agreement is dependent on the relationships and priorities of key stakeholder groups and there are various useful methods that can be used by groups to appraise or map trends and potential actions.

- Scenario exercises can be useful methods for developing strategies by identifying trends, drivers and decision-making points. Scenario exercises, such as the montfleur model, can be used to help establish a long-term strategy, including establishing a shared view of the desired outcome for an economic sector or region, and the challenges and obstacles that are on the way.
- Exercises based on impact logic models, as illustrated in Figure 1, or theory of change models can also provide a structured framework for conceptualising and defining actions in support of an objective. Theory of change models map different direct and indirect actions at different parts of a process of change in complex open economic and social systems.

Box 4: PfS Support for expanding partnerships

The Pact Support Services can help draft the partnership agreement. This could include:

- formulating the strategic aims, objectives and commitments of the partnership based on the stakeholder consultations;

- support in developing partnership arrangements advising on governing structures and member engagement;

- share good practice examples and lessons learnt from other partnerships.

A template for the partnership agreement **for** regional partnerships is presented in Annex B.

3.1.1. Strategic aims

The partnership agreement should set out a shared understanding of the main trends, challenges within the sector and skills needs which need to be prioritised in order to achieve the overarching vision of the partners involved. Common themes addressed in the agreements can include, but are not limited, to the following:

- digital transition
- sustainability
- attractiveness of careers
- inclusion and diversity of workers from different backgrounds
- ageing workforce
- accelerated structural changes across industries.

Partnership agreements should address the specific skills challenges facing an economic sector or region.

- **Description of sector or regional challenges.** In addition to the common challenges, regions or sectors may have specific issues that the partners wish to address.
- **Long-term vision for the sector or region** providing the strategic framework for the partnership and its members to work towards.
- **Priority skills needs** that the partnership aims to address, that is, the set of skills that workers in the sector will need to be effective and adapt to the future needs of the industry.

Box 5: LSP examples

3.1.2. Commitments

Partnership commitments should outline the intent of the partnership, and how this aligns with the overall vision for the sector. For instance, the Automotive LSP states its ambition to upskill 5 % of the workforce each year which would result in 700 000 employees to be upskilled and reskilled along the automotive ecosystem in the coming years. Commitments may also set out further detail about the **objectives for the partnership's activities**.

Objectives may include:

- anticipating and addressing industry skills demands;
- improving the education and training offer;
- enhancing the attractiveness of VET;
- ensuring sustainable growth of the ecosystem;
- establishing a culture of lifelong learning and intensifying efforts for up and reskilling;
- promoting innovation and competitiveness;
- providing equal opportunities to disadvantaged groups;
- setting up EU-wide frameworks for skills and jobs, and sharing experiences and best practices.

Box 6: LSP example

Textiles, Clothing, Leather and Footwear (TCLF) industries LSP aims to promote a culture of lifelong learning for all. To achieve this, the partnership will increase the use and accessibility of mentoring and apprenticeships schemes in EU-27 countries through a dedicated support programme for the TCLF industry (vouchers for upskilling, supporting companies in upskilling of their workers) and development of guidelines and case studies.

The Construction LSP has set an objective of promoting equal access to training opportunities, regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and age.

The Skills Partnership for Offshore Renewable Energy includes an objective of raising awareness of resources developed through previous skills initiatives to the wider sector.

As part of the outline of commitments the agreement may also outline **the activities** of the partnership and the role that member organisations play in supporting these. For instance, commitment to participate in collaborative activities, such as sharing of skills intelligence or disseminating of outputs.

In some cases, these activities are addressed in more detail in partnership work plans (see Sub-section 4.1).

3.1.3. Partnership arrangements

Partnership agreements and supporting documents may outline the practical arrangements for the delivery of the partnership, including **coordinating arrangements** and other activities that will support the work of the partnership. For instance, the agreement might detail a creation of working groups and governance structure, frequency of membership meetings and other administrative procedures. It may also include contributions in kind from core partner organisations, or links to associated projects that may feed aspects of the partnership's work. For example, many Large Scale Partnerships are linked to skills Blueprint projects and represent an opportunity to disseminate the outputs. A partnership agreement may also **include membership agreements** that outline the role(s) for partnership members, including principles for participation, benefits of being involved and advice on formulating commitments.

Box 7: Example of member guidelines from the Skills Partnership for Tourism

Skills Partnership for the Tourism Ecosystem has developed a manual for its members that define the rationale and purpose of the partnership, shared principles for collaboration, as well as practical information on registration and relationship building activities. In addition, the manual establishes the operational scope of the partnership, including:

- size of the national/regional partnership;
- territorial scope;
- formal requirements, such as a signed Memorandum of Understanding;
- an assigned coordinator/representative of the national/regional group;
- strategic objectives and an action plan covering the skills needs within the ecosystem and target sectors;
- clearly defined processes for setting up meetings;
- internal quality control rules;
- defined resources and capabilities that the national/regional partnership owns to carry out its activities.

3.2. Partner engagement

A key element of a partnership is the **process of engaging with existing and prospective partners**. Ensuring support for the aims and objectives of the partnership at the outset is important for ensuring engagement amongst a wider membership of relevant sector or regional stakeholders and employers. The process of developing a partnership agreement is the first step to agreeing the key elements of the partnership including:

- the strategic priorities for the partnership, including skills needs and objectives that the partnership is trying to address;
- partnership collaboration principles and ways of work, including capacity and development of requirements and opportunities;

- scoping of potential 'quick wins' for the partnership, alongside longer-term objectives and processes, including collective and individual commitments.

Box 8: Engaging prospective partners

Points to consider when engaging prospective partners

- What key organisations should be part of the development of a partnership agreement to ensure that it has wide support across a sector or region?
- What value do different types of organisations bring to a partnership, including reach and influence across a sector, such as through membership, capacity and expertise?
- How might the priorities or values of organisations differ and how can they be integrated to support an effective collaborative partnership?
- Are there relationships with different representative groups or industry leaders that can be developed? Or will new relationships need to be established?
- What role might different organisations be willing to play in shaping the partnership agreement and supporting the onward development of the partnership?

Partnerships should aim to engage a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including building on existing relationships and identifying potential gaps or opportunities to create new relationships. Lead organisations may wish to conduct a sectoral or stakeholder mapping exercise to ensure that the process of developing a partnership and associated agreement engages the range of relevant stakeholders in a sector or region. Mapping exercises can be a light touch and can include:

- assessing the composition of a sector or economic region, including the relevant public and private stakeholders and sectors;
- appraising the reach of partnership organisations including the reach of representative groups or industrial networks;
- identifying potential gaps and considering ways of engaging with key interlocutors or representative groups to ensure that partnerships have wide engagement across the sector.

When considering the scope of the partnership, other dimensions that would benefit the partnership's objectives to consider include organisation sizes, competencies and capacities within the sector, and geographic location.

In practice the initial set up of a partnership may be developed through close collaboration of a smaller group of lead organisations (see Section 3.5 on coordinating arrangements). For example, based on the analysis of the 11 LSPs developed by May 2022, the average number of partners in the consortium was 21, gathering organisations from 11 EU countries (overall the number ranged between 8 and 16 countries). Depending on the type of partnership organisations that are engaged in the process of developing an agreement and setting up a partnership typically include (see for example the commitment of the Skills Partnership for the Automotive Ecosystem):

- EU-level representative groups, including employer's federation, industrial associations, trade unions and professional representative groups;

- national-level representative organisations, or regional forums such as chambers of commerce;
- public authorities, or regional development agencies or national public bodies of regional partnerships;
- individual companies and employers, including major European employers or major regional employers;
- VET and higher education providers that may offer training capacity, curriculum development expertise and research expertise.

Partnerships will expand their membership through their activities. However, it is important that lead organisations engage with a sufficient range of stakeholders and partners at the outset to generate support for the approach.

Box 9. PfS Support for expanding partnerships

The Pact Support services can help with the partner engagement through advice on creating engaging meetings and programmes for wider partnership engagement, including potential measures to target specific stakeholder groups.

3.3. Commitments

As noted previously, commitments and supporting monitoring arrangements are a key element of the partnership agreement. Commitments can act as a framework that signals the intent of a partnership and can guide the collective work of the members of a partnership. Setting commitments that are bold but achievable, and which can be supported through the work of individual organisations is the foundation of a successful approach. A clear set of well supported commitments can help to guide the collective efforts of member organisations and demonstrate their impact on skills and economic growth.

Commitments may focus on the impact of the partnership in terms of delivery of training opportunities and supporting outputs, and capacity commitments that underpin the partnership approach and its activities.

- **Impact** commitments may include commitments that address the volume and quality of training activities delivered by the partnership and its members across the sector or region, and supporting actions to enable the delivery of these goals. This includes:

  - delivering **training and development opportunities**,
  - **diversifying the sector workforce** by targeting skill opportunities for underrepresented groups such as women, migrants, people with disabilities or other disadvantaged groups,
  - improving the **quality of trainings** through quality assurance and good practices,

- establishing a **culture of lifelong learning** so that both employers and employees are aware of the benefits of continuous learning,
- sharing **best practices** or **policy recommendations,** which is a way that the partnership can provide benefits beyond their specific sector,
- **recognising work experience and non-formal trainings,** including across Member States to support workers and their mobility;

- **Capacity** commitments may include commitments to activities and actions that will support the delivery of positive impact on skills opportunities such as:

  - contributing to **skills intelligence**, including sharing information on job types, existing skills gaps and emerging skills needs,
  - participating in and contributing to **partnerships and dialogue** across the sector, such as between education, research institutes and industry organisations,
  - supporting **inclusive decision-making processes** that actively engage a wide range of organisations across the sector, including SMEs and stakeholders,
  - delivering activities and events to **increase the reach of membership** through multi-stakeholder events or awareness raising activities that can be established,
  - **committing resources** to support the aims and objectives of the partnership, including its coordination and activities.

Box 11: Specific commitments of member organisations

Individual member organisations play a central role in the delivery of any partnership's commitments and the objectives of the Pact for Skills. By supporting a partnership, member organisations collectively commit to supporting the partnership's aims and commitments. Furthermore, as part of their support for a partnership and membership of the Pact, individual organisations are encouraged to articulate their own specific commitments.

Specific commitments by individual organisations may include commitments to support specific activities or actions that support the priorities of the partnership and to deliver specific training outcomes that are linked to the organisation's specific skills needs. Various commitments may include actions by large companies, SMEs, trade unions, employer organisations, social partners, VET providers and more.

A list of specific examples can be found here: **Non-exhaustive list of actions.pdf**

The Pact Support services can help the partnerships in developing their commitments. During the process, the partnerships will be asked to consider the following questions:

- What would be an ambitious but realistic collective commitment at the sub-sectoral or regional level that would make a tangible contribution to skills and economic development?
- How can this high-level commitment enable partners to collectively demonstrate their contribution to addressing sub-sector or regional skills outcomes?
- What commitments can be formulated in relation to volume of reskilling outcomes and the creation of new opportunities?
- What commitments can be formulated in relation to collaboration and sharing of intelligence and good practice between partners on skills needs and opportunities?
- What commitments can be formulated in relation to the content, quality and recognition of training opportunities?
- How can high level collective partnership commitments be supported by the actions and activities of the members of the partnership?
- How can these commitments be tracked, including setting of achievable and timebound objectives that can enable the partnership to demonstrate impact?

3.4. Key performance indicators (KPIs)

Commitments supported by key performance indicators (KPIs) can enable the partnership to track, understand and demonstrate its contribution to skills. KPIs translate the partnership's commitments into measurable indicators, outcomes or milestones that can be tracked over time. For example, KPIs may aim to track the following dimensions.

- **Partnership activities**: typical KPIs include the composition of the partnership and its activities, including **establishing core functions** of the partnership, including coordinating arrangements, membership management, work plan, the **number of members** included in the partnership, as well as its **geographic and sectoral coverage**. KPIs may include level of participation and engagement in partnership activities, such as events or in online communities of practice. Lastly, indicators on **communications** can be included, such as the reach of communications or number of best practices shared. This data can be collected through administrative coordinating activities.
- **Partnership outputs**: typical KPIs in this category track supporting outputs and activities that have been developed through the partnership to enhance the capability of members to develop and deliver skilling commitments. This includes the **delivery of key elements of the workplan,** such as skills needs analyses, development or dissemination of toolkits and dissemination of training curricula. This data can be collected through ongoing monitoring of partnership activities and outputs against expected workplans and timelines.
- **Skilling and training outputs**: typical KPIs on training will track the delivery of upskilling and reskilling opportunities across the partnership and its members. These types of KPIs

would likely rely on a survey of partnership members and their activities. KPIs may include the **number of trainings offered, number of individuals trained** and the **percentage of the workforce upskilled or reskilled.** Indicators may also be broken down by key demographics where relevant, such as gender, employment status, age and other relevant characteristics. Indicators can refer to the overall trainings as well as to those specific to key areas for the sector, or to green or digital skills. A specific indicator can be included on the blended learning options, such as the number of **apprenticeships or internships offered**. Other indicators can be the increase in **formal training recognition**, and the level of **investment attracted** or **funding raised**. The overall **quality of the trainings**, including the number of existing trainings improved, can also be assessed through KPIs.

- **Impacts**: partnerships may also consider KPIs that track the wider impact of the partnership on the competitiveness of the sector. These types of KPIs would also likely rely on survey of member organisations, including their activities and key HR data. Indicators may include employer perceptions of **skills gap reduction, rates or retention or recruitment, numbers of vacancies**, or **diversity of workforce**.

Box 13 demonstrates an example of a set of commitments and KPIs developed by the Large Scale Partnership for offshore renewable energy.

Box 13: Example of commitments and their respective KPIs

The Skills partnership for Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) has committed to promote collaborative actions and mobilise investments through the following KPIs:

1. The creation of an observatory on training needs and offer in the ORE sector. KPIs include:

   - number of training offers addressing ORE per country,
   - number of skills gaps identified in the sector per country,
   - triannual updates of the future trends about needs and expected impacts to the sector;

2. Promoting life-long learning in ORE for all. KPIs include:

   - number of people trained in VET/university programs split by EQF level and by gender (at least),
   - number of people trained in LLL courses split by EQF level and by gender (at least);

3. Promoting careers in ORE. KPIs include:

   - number of activities and promotional materials addressed to attract young talent and the number of people that engage in the activities and/or use the materials,
   - number of apprentices engaged, mapping them by gender and age,
   - number of job opportunities promoted and number of people hired (characterised by gender);

4. Building durable skills partnerships for the ORE sector. KPIs include:

   - number of new partners involved in the partnership classified by group of stakeholders,
   - number of multi-stakeholder sessions addressing ORE skills,
   - number of regions, countries and sea basins covered.

Source: Terms of Reference (ToR) for the inception of a Skills partnership for Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE)

Box 14: PfS Support for the partnerships

The Pact Support Services can help in developing partnerships' KPIs and associated monitoring framework. **This will include:**

- working with partnerships to clarify their commitments where necessary, including the integration of a set of core KPIs alongside partnership or sector specific indicators in consultation with partnership coordinator;

- the delivery of monitoring activities, including survey of partnership member organisations, and an annual partnership report for each partnership to be delivered by the PfS Support Services and support teams in collaboration with the partnership

3.5. Coordinating arrangements

Coordinating arrangements play an important role in convening diverse members into a coherent and sustainable partnership. Coordinating structures should be guided on the needs of the partnership, including the use of existing arrangements and should aim to create a transparent and sustainable foundation for the partnership. A key factor for coordinating arrangements is ensuring that the partnership has the confidence of members and engage relevant stakeholders.

Box 15: Developing coordinating arrangements

Points to consider when developing coordinating arrangements

- Is there a lead organisation that can support coordinating activities?
- What kind of structure is proportionate and sustainable?
- Are coordinating arrangements inclusive of different perspectives?
- How can responsibility for different activities be shared between partners?
- What role can working groups play to support activities and engage members?

Establishing an effective management and coordination structure in the early stages of the partnership's development is an important foundation. Elements include:

- partnership agreements, including any supporting technical agreements, such as a Memorandum of understanding (MoU), that may underpin the scope and arrangements for the partnership;
- establishing a decision-making and advisory function for the partnership, typically working with core project partners, including the appointment of one or more lead coordinator chairperson, or equivalent to provide leadership for the partnership and working groups;
- considering the contribution of partners, including contributions in kind or financial contributions to support the delivery of the partnership;
- setting up a core coordinating function, including use of secondment and funded posts hosted by partner organisations.

Management and coordination structures of partnerships vary, from light touch to formalised structures, depending on what the partnership members agreed.

Box 16: Skills Partnership for the Tourism Ecosystem semi-formal management structure

> Skills Partnership for the Tourism Ecosystem takes a light touch approach, but still includes clear roles and agreements. This includes agreement for a lead partner to take responsibility for coordinating the work of the partnership with the support of an advisory or steering group. The LSP is structured at an EU and national/regional level, each of them with a series of objectives and KPIs. The practical implementation of the skills partnership takes place where the legal framework for training and skills development is defined and compliance can be monitored, i.e. national/regional level depending on the Member State. These types of approaches are most suitable where there is an established way of working through legacy projects and with good bilateral relationships between relevant European level stakeholders.

In addition to the coordinator and steering group, most partnerships also include **working groups (WGs)** to support the implementation of the work plan, including specific activities or outputs. Working groups provide opportunities to **enable collaboration around specific topics, sectoral issues or geographical collaborations. Some partnerships may appoint** work package leaders to support the overall coordinator.[2] Similarly, the Automotive Skills Alliance has four working groups organised thematically: WG1 - horizontal issues; WG2 - communication & dissemination; WG3 - skills intelligence; and WG4 - regional implementation. WG3 and WG4 are structured in different sub-groups on specific relevant topics such as batteries, hydrogen, digitalisation and so on as per Box 17 below.

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[2] See: https://www.skillsea.eu/index.php/about/project-management

Box 17: Automotive Skills Alliance formalised management structure

The Automotive LSP has a formalised management structure, including an established new legal entity that underpins the partnership from January 2022. Composed of key public and private stakeholders, the LSP is co-led by key representatives of the automotive sector, and education providers. The structure of WGs combines, in principle, a horizontal and vertical approach, as illustrated below. WGs are of a vertical nature and LSP member types groups represent a horizontal perspective. Each WG has clearly defined inputs and outputs to particular LSP member types groups. This structure built on the prior DRIVE and Allbatts projects.

WG3 Structure:

Source: https://automotive-skills-alliance.eu/index.php/about-us/
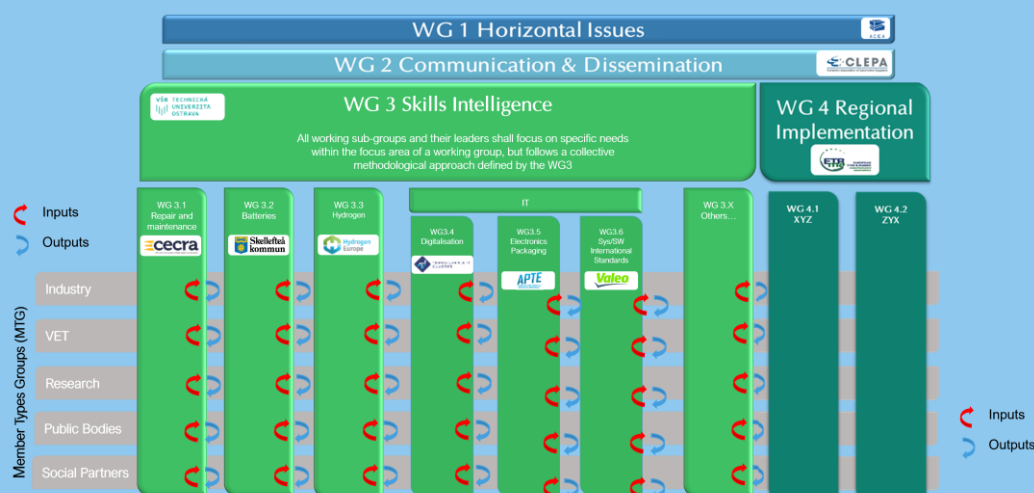
Box 18: PfS Support for the partnerships

The Pact Support Services can help in developing coordinating arrangements. Support options may include independent external advice to define and agree decision-making structures for the partnership that can support the strategic direction and delivery of a coherent and effective work programme.

4. Partnership activities

The activities that partnerships undertake should be informed by the priorities and objectives of the partnership itself. Nevertheless, there are common activities that partnerships may support or deliver, including expanding the reach of membership, creating opportunities for collaboration between members, sharing of practice, disseminating, or raising awareness of relevant training tools or products. Many partnerships may be linked to parallel projects or initiatives, such as Erasmus+ skills Blueprint projects or regional economic or skills strategies and create opportunities for expanding their reach and impact. This section examines potential partnership work plan and explores some areas in more depth that could be relevant for different types of skills partnerships.

4.1. Developing a work plan

The partnership work plan is a crucial tool to guide the activities of the partnership. It enables the partnership to articulate the activities that the partnership will undertake and the opportunities for member organisations to get involved. The precise work package that partnerships will develop is dependent on their priorities and objectives and benefit from being defined in the early stages of the partnership in consultation with core partners and wider members. Potential activities that partnerships may wish to consider as part of their work packages are provided below:

1. **Broadening and extending the partnership's reach:** a key activity of most partnerships are efforts to engage existing members and steps to widen the reach of membership. Packages may include:

    - communication activities, including measures to keep member organisations up to date with partner activities and skills opportunities, including relevant outputs from work strands or member activities,
    - membership recruitment and networking activities, including workshops, events or promotional activities to engage existing or prospective members in the activities of the partnership, including opportunities for collaboration,
    - sharing of good practice, including raising awareness of partnership commitments, and the activities and training opportunities being developed by partnership members in support of the sectoral or regional skills needs,
    - communities of practice that provide partnership members to work together to consider specific skills challenges and potential solutions that can be shared with the wider partnership;

2. **Developing skills intelligence:** an in-depth assessment may be carried-out at the initiation of the partnership. The partnership may develop a work package that provides skills intelligence to support the activities of members. Partnerships may also consider ways of supporting sharing of skills intelligence between members to identify common or emerging skills needs and gaps in the sector or region, and identifying specific challenges that may be addressed through partnership collaborations.

3. **Practical initiatives**. These would be specific initiatives that support the objectives of the partnership and Pact for Skills. Examples include:

- development and dissemination of education, training and VET curricula,
- identification, creation and dissemination of training opportunities,
- skills recognition mechanisms,
- creating specific groups, such as regional partnerships, which can be integrated into the work of a broader partnership;

Box 19: LSP examples

Work package (WP) 7 of the Skills partnership for Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear industries (TCLF) LSP is concerned with defining, implementing and evaluating all necessary actions for designing a VET curricula and developing related training contents in line with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) and European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) to meet the training needs identified.

Working Group 3 of the Automotive Skills Alliance aims to update an EU-wide database of relevant education and training courses, including training opportunities targeted at specific sections of the supply chain.

A key component of WP 9 of the Skills partnership for Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear industries (TCLF) which aims to evaluate and assess the quality of the curricula developed and ensure the certification of the tested curricula by the national recognition authorities (ECVET recognition) for each state member of the project.

The Automotive Skills Alliance supports regional cooperation through their Working Group 4 which facilitates the use of updated curricula based on identified skills needs, delivers training to the regional automotive ecosystem and providers feedback from the project

4. **Monitoring**: the partnership work plan may also include a package to support members to develop their specific commitments that support the overall partnership commitment as well as developing light touch approaches for monitoring KPIs to demonstrate the impact and contribution of the partnership and its members.

5. **Sustainability**: partnerships may consider designing a Sustainability Action Plan which defines the members-led long-term approach for ensuring the benefits and impacts of the partnerships are maintained.

Box 20: PfS Support for expanding partnerships

The Pact Support Service can support skills partnership in developing their work plans to ensure that they include clear objectives and outputs and advice on how these can be developed and improved. As all partnerships should prioritise developing a clear workplan with KPIs and associated monitoring framework, the PfS can also review the proposed activities and their monitoring arrangements.

4.2. Expanding the partnership

The value of the partnership approach is the opportunity to engage a wide range of relevant organisations. For example, partnerships create an opportunity to expand beyond a smaller group of organisations that have previously been engaged in European Blueprint projects or other similar initiatives. Expanding the reach of the partnership can create new opportunities for collaborations, disseminating tools and resources, as well as expanding the breadth of organisations supporting the delivery of partnership commitments.

Box 21: Expanding partnerships

Points to consider when expanding partnerships

- Does the core partnership have an overall view of the desired breadth and reach of the partnership? Is this fully inclusive of the different types of organisations and stakeholders?
- Are there any potential gaps, such as in parts of the economic ecosystem or supply chain or in types of organisations, such as SMEs or VET providers?
- What is the reach of existing representative or membership groups? How engaged are the member organisations and are there opportunities to enhance their direct engagement?
- Are there any specific stakeholders or employers, such as major industry organisations, that may be engaged through the activities of the partnership?
- What is the offer to prospective members that will motivate them to support the partnership and its commitments? Are there flexible opportunities to participate in

Efforts to expand membership may build on the stakeholder engagement work as part of the development of a partnership agreement and may seek to leverage the existing networks to expand the breadth and reach of a partnership. Dimensions of this work may include:

- expanding the core members of the partnership: these activities may aim to directly identify, engage and recruit key stakeholders or in the sector or region to develop commitments and participate in activity that supports the aims and objectives of the partnership;
- recruiting a wider range of employers, including SMEs and major employers, and training providers to extend the reach of a partnership's activities and outputs, and support the development of training opportunities more broadly across the sector;

- engaging with stakeholders and authorities to raise awareness of the partnership and identify relevant synergies with the aims and objectives of national, regional and local skills, and economic development objectives.

Partner engagement strategies can be operationalised by **developing standalone work packages** with the goal of creating strong sector or regional skills alliances. Relevant examples are included in the Box 22 below.

Box 22: Blueprint project examples

> Blueprint for maritime technology (MATES): First work package is 'Mobilisation of Stakeholders Workshop', which entails producing a database of experts, a state-of-the-art report and putting together mobilisation workshops (five held in Greece, Portugal, the Netherlands, the UK and Spain).
>
> Construction Blueprint's WP 6 ('Sector Skills Alliance and deployment of the Blueprint'): The partnership undertakes the project under the concept of Quintuple Helix innovation Model, which is based on the involvement and interaction of main market players (Education/Economic/Political/Environment/Civil Society/Cultural) taking up opportunities to make the best of their talents from a holistic approach.

At the implementation level, there are various ways to engage and attract new partners. Typically, stakeholder engagement is facilitated by:

- creating a social media community;
- offering membership options - most consortia are assisted by associated or affiliated partners (e.g. Next Tourism Generation Alliance (NTG), Blueprint for Earth observation for Geo information (EO4GEO), European Steel Technology Platform (ESTEP)).

Box 23: LSP examples

> Prospective partners can join a LinkedIn group or sign up to a newsletter in the Sectoral Skills Alliance in construction or the Next Tourism Generation Alliance (NTG).
>
> In the case of NTG, associated partners are assimilated to a consortium member, they are a full partner in NTG activities such as generation and exploitation of results and they will be a part of the long-term NTG structure after the end of the project. Affiliated partners will also engage in the development and use of results and will support the dissemination and network of the Next Tourism Generation Alliance.

The Pact Support Service can support skills partnership to identify and broker new relationships and support the incorporation of new members into the partnership. Relevant activities include mapping of stakeholders, management of the Pact membership and networking opportunities. The Support Service can also work with partnerships to appraise potential gaps in partnerships and identify opportunities to expand partnership membership, including:

- assessing the potential contribution of organisations to the partnership in line with the profile of existing members, objectives and work plans;
- facilitating engagement with prospective partners, including advising on

4.3. Skills intelligence

An in-depth sector or regional skills needs assessment is a core foundation of any skills partnership. It is essential for understanding the long-term needs for businesses, including key trends in the economy, issues such as automation and impact on the labour market, as well as the skills needs of key growth sectors/ecosystems. Partnerships may be founded on in-depth skills assessments as part of prior projects or conducted through the process of developing a partnership agreement. Translating these insights and providing ongoing skills intelligence that can inform and guide the work of a partnership and its members is a strand of activity to consider.

Box 25: Developing skills intelligence

Points to consider when developing skills intelligence activities

- What role can the partnership play in identifying emerging skills gaps and opportunities?
- How can skills intelligence be developed through collaboration between members?
- How might potential gaps in the partnership's skills intelligence be overcome?
- Are there specific areas that the partnership should aim to monitor for members?

Skills intelligence activities may include enhancing the ability of members to identify, anticipate and address skills changes employment trends and skills needs in specific regions or sectors, as well as transversal skills such as networking, entrepreneurship, or research skills as well as digital, green and specific skills enabling learners to successfully adapt to change. Examples of activities are provided below.

- **Baseline skills assessments** may include a specific project with dedicated resources that map skills needs, occupational profiles and improving the skills taxonomy in their sector. Resulting reports are often public deliverables. These types of activities have often been delivered through skills Blueprint projects that have informed the development of partnership agreements (as per Box 26).

Box 26: Blueprint project and LSP examples

Skills partnership for Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear industries (TCLF) Blueprint (Skills4Smart TCLF2030): The aim of work package 3 was to detect, analyse and encode the data needed to understand both the education, training and work system, and the skills gaps in the professional profiles to create the conditions to support the development of a 'Company 4.0.' The work included analysis of Skills Council Reports, fieldwork research and an assessment of future skills needed and anticipation of skills shortages in TCLF. As part of the WP, several reports were developed and published on topics such as 'Research methodology to identify occupations and skills needs – Analysis of the outcomes coming from the Skills Council' and 'Future needed skills and trends for the TCLF sectors.'

Maritime technology (MATES) Blueprint: Work package 2 is 'Strategy Baseline – Identification of Present and Future Skills Needs', which consists of three deliverables. Firstly, a baseline report on present skill gaps, this report was the result of extensive desktop research, industry engagement, and a foresight scenario report based on two Delphi consultations that examined long term occupational profiles and skills needs, and training requirements in shipbuilding and maritime renewable energies sectors.

Automotive industry (DRIVES) Blueprint: Work package 2 is 'Sectoral intelligence and road mapping' and aims to 'ensure a constant view on the changing skills needs in the automotive sector, linked to the main drivers (emerging technologies and trends) that are influencing the change.'

Skills partnership for Aerospace and Defence: Project Axes 1 is dedicated to 'Skills Forecasting' with the objective of anticipating all main skills gaps which the partnership will need to address considering industry skills needs and EU demographic forecasts.

- **Research and intelligence activities** typically include activities that may build on baseline assessments and provide ongoing opportunities to identify emerging skills challenges as well as training opportunities. This may include the development of methodologies and tools that can be used by member organisations in their work as well as opportunities to share information, and identify emerging skills challenges and training opportunities.

Box 27: Blueprint project and LSP examples

Next Tourism Generation Alliance (NTG) Blueprint developed a Tourism Sector Skills toolkit. This can be used by organisations to evaluate their skills needs and gaps, and identify and develop curricula and training support options, as well as informing recruitment and development programmes. The toolkit also includes a Skills Assessment Methodology, which can be used at a national or regional level, alongside a Skills Matrix and a Quality Skills Standards Frameworks for Tourism and Curricula report.

Skills partnership for Shipbuilding and Maritime Technology: The partnership is supporting the development of skills analytics based on the methodology developed by USWE Project, which aimed to support industry and workers in the adaptation to the Industry 4.0 technologies, and will rely on data available at EU, national and company levels. The partnership will develop a Methodology for Detecting Skill Needs, fully aligned with the Cedefop guidelines that will be implemented by the partnership through primary and secondary research to identify skills needs.

Box 28: PfS Support for the partnerships

The Pact Support Service can support skills partnerships in their research and intelligence activities by providing timely information on the latest research through the thematic experts and PfS online library.

4.4. Knowledge sharing

Partnerships can also create opportunities for members to share practice and experiences in relation to upskilling and reskilling. This includes sharing of experiences between different organisations within the sector such as VET providers and SMEs to illustrate potential approaches, or the dissemination of specific products, such as training curricula or tools. Partnerships may include dedicated activities to support knowledge sharing between members as well as with other stakeholders and audiences, including disseminating reports and case studies, and peer learning workshops. An example of the range of activities being developed by the automotive partnership is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Examples of knowledge sharing activities in the automotive sector

Level	Title of result(s) (output(s) or outcome(s))	Type
Overall automotive sector	Intelligence workshop (Automotive Intelligence First workshop)	Report
	Results from the survey on skills demand (Intelligence and Forecasting data)	Report
	Analysis of the survey on skills demand (Forecasting dissemination Report)	Report

	Analysis of the survey on skills offer – with gap analysis	Tool and online forum
Apprenticeship in automotive sector	Understanding the Marketplace – Issue 2021 Understanding the Marketplace – Issue 2020 Key Issues Report – Issue 2020	Report
	Event Report and Hiring an Apprentice Guide	Report
	Apprenticeship Comparison Tool (Future demand and Industry 4.0)	Tool

Partnerships are an important opportunity to embed **training tools and curricula** across industrial sectors or regions. Many skills Blueprint projects, funded by Erasmus+ have developed tools and curricula for different sectors (see Box 29).

Box 29. Blueprint project examples

The Blueprint for Earth observation for Geo information (EO4GEO) developed a Training Material Catalogue and organised several Training Actions. The Construction Blueprint offers free online courses on energy efficiency, circular economy and digitalisation on their e-learning platform.

The automotive sector, established an 'integrated Online Campus' and 'European Certificates.'[1] WP5, led by Semta, 'will explore the step required to create an effective apprenticeship market place to match oversupply of high quality candidates with smaller, or less well known, employers' needs.'

In the Skills partnership for Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear industries (TCLF) Blueprint, work package 2 is 'Mapping of education and maximization of best practices' and work package 7 is 'Design VET Curricula for TCLF profiles.'

Box 30: Developing knowledge sharing activities

Points to consider when developing knowledge sharing and translation activities

- What are the knowledge gaps and challenges facing the partnership's members?
- How can relevant curricula and training tools be developed and disseminated to target audiences?
- How can lessons from practical implementation of activities and training opportunities be shared?
- How can exchange and knowledge sharing activities enable different members, including SMEs, to participate?
- Are there any specific knowledge relationships that your partnership can facilitate?

Partnerships can also support **awareness raising and dissemination activities** that can help to ensure that members are kept up to date on relevant initiatives and opportunities. This may include specific policy frameworks that are relevant for the sector, or funding programmes that can support activities. In addition, partnerships may host **online resources** such as reports, articles and tools to share best practice examples (see Box 31)**.**

Box 31. Blueprint project examples

The Next Tourism Generation (NTG) Blueprint has a 'Skills Resources Hub' that provides academic articles, best practices, course content, modules and training, reports, studies and research results, strategy and policy documents. The Skillsea Blueprint planned a structural cooperation among maritime education and training centres (METs) whereby they can draw in their clusters and industry connections for sharing knowledge and best practices.

These activities may also support in the creation of a community amongst partnership members within sectors, further explained in Section 4.5 below.

Box 32: PfS Support for the partnerships

The Pact Support Service can provide dissemination of good practices, knowledge-sharing activities, funding and guidance. It can include:

- support to national, regional or local skills partnerships with timely information on funding opportunities;

- source relevant technical or thematic expertise on upskilling, reskilling and anticipation of skills needs.

4.5. Creating a community

Partnerships can facilitate new relationships and collaborations between organisations with relevant interests and capabilities. Community building activities are linked to knowledge sharing activities. Communication activities such as newsletters can play an important part in creating collaboration and exchange. Other potential community building activities include:

- developing communities of practice around particular topics to exchange information, learning and solutions to common challenges;
- creating opportunities for organisations to identify potential collaboration opportunities with organisations with complementary capacities or interests.

Communities of practice and bilateral relationships can be created through online forums, working groups and events. Networking sessions, workshops and other events, as well as disseminating learning can create a community of interested partners. Partnerships and related projects have also developed their own targeted community build activities that engage their members.

Box 33: Blueprint project example

The Earth Observation for Geoinformation (EO4GEO) Blueprint which organised workshops and a dynamic collaborative platform with associated open tools and crafted a body of knowledge (BoK) relying on a network of experts.

Community building activities are typically linked to knowledge sharing activities (see Box 34).

Box 34: Blueprint project example

The Skills partnership for Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear industries (TCLF) Blueprint has a 'Community' section on its webpage where it provides a **database of formal and informal educational offer for the TCLF employees.** Their WP 2 entails 'maximisation of best practices' through the use of charting and mobilising of VET stakeholders to enable cooperation, exchange of experiences and learning across a broad field of VET stakeholders.[1] The results of this WP include a Database of VET and higher education providers in Europe, which will provide a comprehensive map of who offers what training services in different European regions, and to start the necessary communication process with all relevant stakeholders (R1). R2 consists in a report with existing TCLF education programmes and courses in the EU and R3 in a report on project results in TCLF at EU, national and regional level. The final result of the WP consists of a roadmap with a step-by-step plan for the involvement of stakeholders and companies in the next phases of the project.

Box 35: PfS Support for the partnerships

The Pact Support Service is supported by networking, knowledge and communication activities, including a webpage, social media presence including a LinkedIn group for members, and high-level hybrid and networking events with key stakeholders.

4.6. Regional dimension

Practical action on upskilling and reskilling at the regional and local level is key to achieving the objectives of the Pact in the context of a fair and resilient recovery and the long-term economic success of Europe. Action at these levels can deliver upskilling and reskilling opportunities that address different social and economic needs different for each territory, whilst fostering innovation in the context of the green and digital transition.

The regional dimension of the Pact for Skills is essential to the success of the initiative. Regional partnerships may be linked to a specific economic sector, or may address a range of sectors in line with a region's economic profile and skills needs.

Box 36: Developing regional partnerships

Points to consider when setting up a regional partnership

- It is critical to have a variety of partners on board including key employers, VET providers, representative forums or public bodies.

- Partnerships should aim to identify and address specific regional skills needs, such as developing regional training capacity and relevant curricula.

- Process can be helpful to embed a collaborative approach between organisations, but the aim should be to identify and address practical skills through flexible and responsive approaches.

- A key challenge is motivating key stakeholders, including employers or VET providers, to support partnership efforts, particularly where there are competing priorities and less history of collaboration.

- It is important to consider how a regional partnership can support or leverage regional, national or European skills or economic development strategies, including the work of Large Scale Skills Partnerships (LSP) and outputs from skills Blueprints.

- Establishing clear partnership commitments, and associated monitoring KPIs can play an important role in tracking and understanding evolving regional skills needs and highlighting the impact of the partnership and its members.

- Connecting to European networks can also help the regional partnership extend the reach of its members and inspire more interest amongst stakeholders.

The Skills Partnership for the Tourism Ecosystem (Box 37), has made progress in engaging with regional stakeholders and developing regional partnerships. It has also disseminated a dedicated survey to seek interest in developing regional partnerships to its stakeholders. The Pact for Skills partnership for tourism currently consists of 20 European or national-level associations and companies, 3 European level trade union federations, 20 vocational and higher education providers and 18 regional and local authorities. Integrating regional activities into the work of the Tourism Large Scale Partnership creates opportunities to align activities between the European and regional level and to enhance collaboration between regions.

Box 37: Tourism regional partnerships in Italy, Bulgaria and the Netherlands

In Bulgaria, a National Skills Group of Tourism consists of 18 members representing tourism business and education community across the country. The Group agreed on a set of commitments for 2022 including state involvement in the tourism sector, what is a qualified student/employee and how to better involve the business community to education activities.

The National Skills Group in Italy 'NSG Italia' has developed their collaboration of social partners on already existing structures. The key stakeholders have signed a memorandum of understanding and agreed on an action plan to improve the tourism system. The Group has also received interest from regions to join the partnership.

In the Netherlands, the National skills Group has started their collaboration from the problem definition and skills needs assessment. After identifying the challenges (e.g. attracting and retaining staff, COVID slow-down, dropping student intake in hospitality education), they developed a plan with a list of actions for different governance levels with the objective of ensuring a sustainable workforce in the tourism sector.

Box 38: PfS Support for the partnerships

The Pact Support Service can support the regional partnerships by:

- raising awareness of the regional dimension of skills development;
- supporting members with knowledge and tools to develop regional dimensions in their activities;
- widening the reach of PfS amongst prospective members with a regional interest.

5. Capacity building

PfS members have a range of resources at their disposal to ensure that all stakeholders have the capability to capitalise on PfS support and partnerships as the Pact develops. The Pact for Skills Support Services Guidance Hub can work with partnerships to help maximise the value of these tools and resources. A short description of various capacity building activities and resources are included below.

5.1. Online library of tools and resources

Pact for Skills members have at their disposal an online library providing a European one-stop shop for relevant tools and resources concerning upskilling and reskilling. This database of resources including online tools, policy reports and research papers can help Pact members as well as other relevant stakeholders to develop a better understanding of upskilling and reskilling. The tools and resources included in the online library are developed by relevant stakeholders at the international, EU and national level, as well as Pact members.

The online library was launched in September 2022 as part of the Pact for Skills website (see Box 39 for further information). It can be found under the 'Community resources' section of the website.

Box 39. Features of the Pact for Skills website

Pact for Skills website addresses the needs of the members and future members of the Pact.

The stakeholders can benefit from the following pages:

- Homepage
- About the Pact for Skills
- News
- Events
- Contact form
- Community resources landing page
- Guidance Hub landing page
- Networking Hub landing page
- Publications and Documents
- Stakeholders and business page
  - Funding opportunities
  - FAQ page
- Workers and learners page
- Press and multipliers page

The simple interface of the online library allows searching for resources and materials by applying a set of filters. These include:

- **Industrial ecosystem**: All 14 industrial ecosystems included in the European Industrial Strategy are listed in this filter.
- **Geographical scope:** All EU Member States are included in this filter. In addition, a 'non-EU' category has been added as resources at times include references to upskilling and reskilling policies and practices outside of the EU.

- **Type of resource:** This filter includes a broad range of resources, from publications to academic research, policy papers, legislative and non-legislative instruments, handbooks and online tools, to ensure that users can have access to a variety of materials.
- **Thematic area:** This filter broadly groups resources and materials under 'upskilling', 'skills anticipation' and 'reskilling.'
- **Target audience:** This filter includes a broad range of stakeholder groups, from businesses to civil society organisations and public authorities.

Once the filters are applied, stakeholders are directed to a results page, where they can access the following key information for each resource: title; author (i.e. publishing organisation); year of publication; and summary of content. This information is further complemented by a link to directly access the resource. Furthermore, a keyword search bar is included in the online library to allow users to further refine their search. The online library is being updated regularly every two months with the latest EU and international level, as well as sectoral resources.

If you require further information on the online library or you would like to propose your materials to be included in the library, do not hesitate to contact:

PactforSkillsEnquiries@ecorys.com

5.2. Policy initiatives

In order to build stronger partnerships, the Pact for Skills Support Services collects information on major ongoing initiatives on upskilling and reskilling on the national, regional and European levels. Initiatives that were mapped engage in the following activities (list not exhaustive):

a. joint training initiatives (e.g. aimed at setting up intercompany training centres between SMEs, large companies and public authorities; SME upskilling and reskilling networks);

b. initiatives carrying out knowledge-sharing initiatives (e.g. concerning HR and upskilling and reskilling practices among large firms and SMEs);

c. initiatives that conduct information initiatives concerning training opportunities, offered by trade unions (targeted at employees) and employer associations (targeted at employers);

d. initiatives increasing business engagement in active labour market policies (e.g. programmes offered by the respective Public Employment Services (PES), like employment mobility programmes, temporary work/job rotation programmes and guidance services);

e. initiatives developing new training programmes by educational providers and employer associations (e.g. in Centres of Vocational Excellence);

f. initiatives assessing skills needs within companies and across companies (e.g. by improving HR management practices);

g. initiatives fostering sectoral cooperation (e.g. sector-specific partnerships/alliances/skills strategies in order to resolve skills gaps).

The database currently includes 562 initiatives, 371 of which are not yet part of the Pact for Skills. The database will be updated regularly.

Categorising the initiatives

In the mapping, information on the initiatives was gathered via a mapping tool designed to gather information on several dimensions, including (but not limited to) a short description of the initiative, its goals, geographic location, sectoral or regional focus, type of stakeholder involvement and estimate of the number of stakeholders involved. Initiatives were also categorised according to their goals and types of skills they address (e.g. overcoming low levels of skills, securing a supply of skilled workers with intermediate/advanced levels of skills, expanding the academic skills base, and developing cutting edge research and innovation-based skills). The mapped initiatives are categorised in two groups.

- **Upskilling and reskilling initiatives already affiliated to the Pact:** An upskilling and reskilling initiative part of the Pact for Skills is defined as one or more stakeholders that have signed the Pact for Skills with a concrete commitment (pledge). Adding these initiatives to the mapping tool enables the support services to target initiatives in order to facilitate contacts and exchanges between them, match them to other potential partners, establish synergies between them and avoid duplication of efforts.
- **Upskilling and reskilling initiatives that are *potential* members of the Pact for Skills:** Mapped initiatives that are not yet part of the Pact for Skills, but can be seen as *potential* members of the Pact for Skills can be invited to join the Pact, sign the charter, make specific commitments and join a partnership/let other stakeholders join their initiative. Here, the 'stakeholder involvement' was considered as a main criterion to determine whether an initiative should be mapped or not as the Pact for Skills focuses on joint upskilling and reskilling efforts of public and private stakeholders. Private or public initiatives that involved at least one or more of the following stakeholders were mapped: employers (public or private); business associations; employee organisations/trade unions; NGOs; education/training providers (public or private); research institutions (public/private); and other private actors.

Contacting stakeholders

LSP coordinators can request access to the database to identify any relevant initiatives. If LSPs are interested in contacting a respective initiative, they can contact their LSP support teams which will facilitate the contact. According to the support plans, the LSP support leads and assistants can also identify, among the mapped initiatives, a selection of those most relevant to their respective ecosystem and facilitate contact with the LSP coordinators.

Proactively, all initiatives that were not already part of the Pact for Skills during the mapping were contacted **centrally** by the PfS Support Services. They received information on how to join the Pact and relevant LSPs, regional partnerships, as well as information on the upcoming networking events and social media. If the organisations reach out expressing interest towards specific LSPs or

establishing regional partnerships, the **LSP support assistants** will put these initiatives in contact with the LSPs in question. This process is continuously repeated during each update of the database.

5.3. Funding opportunities

EU funding can play an essential role in supporting Pact members to foster skills development, resilience, cooperation and innovative approaches to upskilling and reskilling at national and regional level. This is why the Pact for Skills website includes a database and search tool for funding opportunities, where stakeholders can find key information on open and forthcoming funding calls under EU funding programmes specific to skills development, upskilling and reskilling.

Scope of the Pact for Skills funding tool

The funding tool is set to include relevant funding opportunities at **EU, national and regional level**. The online tool already includes calls under EU funding programmes that are directly managed by the European Commission (e.g. Horizon Europe, Creative Europe, Erasmus+, etc.), and will be integrated with information on opportunities under programmes managed at national and regional level with a focus on the following programmes, as they are the most relevant for upskilling and reskilling: European Social Fund Plus (ESF+); European Regional Development Fund (ERDF); Just Transition Fund (JTF); and Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). Table 1 below includes the type of information per funding tool.

Table 2. Type of information provided per funding tool

Level	Type of information provided
EU-level funding opportunities	The funding tool includes individual calls for funding and provides information on the following elements: • Opening and closing dates • Available budget • Overall objectives and expected outcomes of the call, as well as types of actions to be funded • Overview of eligibility requirements for applicants and award criteria for proposals to receive funding support • Overview of the application procedure. This information is complemented by a direct link to the funding opportunities where additional details can be found.

National and regional level funding opportunities	As approaches to the implementation of EU funding programmes at the national and regional level tend to vary in each Member State, the funding tool provides the following information: • Name of and link to the relevant public authority responsible for managing the fund at the national/regional level; • The geographical area and fund each public authority is responsible for (i.e. the name of the relevant region, both in English and its original language); • Title and content summary of the relevant national/regional Operational Programme, where the main funding priorities are set out, with a focus on those relevant for upskilling and reskilling; • Links to relevant websites where individual calls are published by these public authorities.

How to use the funding tool

The funding database, which can be found under the 'Stakeholders and businesses' section of the Pact for Skills website, is structured around a simple interface and includes a number of filters, allowing users to search and select criteria to find the funding opportunities most relevant to their work and needs.[3] These include:

- **Industrial ecosystem:** All 14 industrial ecosystems included in the European Industrial Strategy are listed in this filter, allowing users to select the ecosystem(s) they would like to find funding opportunities for.
- **Geographical scope:** All EU Member States are included in this filter, allowing users to look for funding opportunities in one or more countries.
- **Type of funding**: This filter allows users to search for grants, procurement and/or loan opportunities.
- **Level of funding**: This filter allows users to search funding opportunities at EU, national and/or regional level.
- **Area of intervention**: This filter broadly groups funded interventions under 'upskilling' and 'reskilling', allowing users to look up funding opportunities relevant for either or both.
- **Type of beneficiary:** This filter allows users to search for funding opportunities depending on the type of organisations that can benefit from the financial support offered. The list of beneficiaries included in this filter mirrors the stakeholder categories included in the Pact for Skills membership application. In addition, an 'other' category has been added to ensure other types of beneficiaries are included, where necessary.

Furthermore, a **keyword search bar** is included in the funding tool to allow users to further refine their search (e.g. by typing the name of the region they are interested in finding funding opportunities for).

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[3] N.B. It is possible for users to apply as many filters as relevant and select more than one option within the same filter.

Once the filters are applied, users are directed to a results page, providing an overview of the different titles of relevant funding calls, one sentence summaries of these opportunities and selected key parameters (e.g. level of funding, relevant funding programme, deadline). Users can then click on each item in the results list and have access to a short summary outlining key information on each individual funding opportunity.

The Pact for Skills funding tool will be regularly updated with new EU level opportunities being added at the end of every month, as well as information on national/regional level funding set to be included by the end of 2022 and checked every year for potential updates.

Beyond the Pact for Skills website, the topic of EU funding has been a key focus of knowledge sharing activities under the Pact. The Knowledge Webinar on '*Key funding opportunities for upskilling and reskilling at EU level*', organised in July 2022, brought together experts from the European Commission and Pact members to discuss how to make use of funding support to implement upskilling and reskilling measures. The video-recording can be found here and the meeting report can be accessed via the Pact for Skills online library.

If you require further information on the funding tool or you would like to share information about projects and initiatives you have implemented with the support of EU funding, do not hesitate to contact:

PactforSkillsEnquiries@ecorys.com

5.4. Knowledge sharing activities

The Pact for Skills Support Services regularly organise online 'Knowledge Events' to provide a dedicated space to Pact for Skills members and other stakeholders to discuss relevant topics in the area of upskilling and reskilling.

These knowledge sharing activities are implemented according to the following formats:

- **Webinars**: One-hour long presentations on a specific topic of interest, moderated by the Pact for Skills Support Services, aiming to provide participants with up-to-date information and to contribute to facilitating the delivery of their commitment under the Pact.
- **Peer-learning activities (PLA)**: Half-day workshops aiming to provide a space for Pact members to discuss challenges and opportunities, and share good practices related to topics of interest.
- **Thematic seminars**: Half-day events dedicated to a specific issue that is of high relevance for Pact for Skills members, with panel discussions moderated by thematic experts with the participation of high-level speakers.

Ahead of each PLA and thematic seminar, a background paper is shared with the participating Pact members to provide further information on the theme of the knowledge sharing activity and foster

meaningful exchanges. A follow up report is also produced and disseminated through the Pact for Skills newsletter and online library. Examples of these reports include the following:

- *'The role of the Pact for Skills in supporting the integration of persons fleeing the war in Ukraine'* [meeting report](#);
- '*Key funding opportunities for upskilling and reskilling at EU level'* [meeting report](#);
- *'Developing regional partnerships: good practices from CoVEs, Cluster Platforms, and 3s regions' meeting report.*[4]

Upcoming Knowledge events will focus on the following topics, which may be expanded and further refined according to the needs of Pact members:[5]

- Strengthening skills partnerships and building synergies with existing EU level initiatives (December 2022);
- Defining and monitoring commitments for upskilling and reskilling (February 2023);
- Key funding opportunities for upskilling and reskilling at EU level (April 2023);
- Involving SMEs in upskilling and reskilling, and the role of Public Employment Services in strengthening networks of support for upskilling and reskilling (June 2023);
- The use of validation of non-formal and informal learning, and other smart specialisation strategies for upskilling and reskilling (September 2023);
- Ensuring gender balance in upskilling and reskilling measures (October 2023);
- Use of skills intelligence tools to define upskilling and reskilling actions (December 2023).

Finally, the Pact for Skills Support Services will develop Summary Reports focusing on key issues related to upskilling and reskilling. These reports will provide an overview of the main policy developments related to the topic, as well as examples of good practices and key resources. Priority topics include: skills ecosystems; skills anticipation; skills to support regional development strategies; skills for green and digital transition; entrepreneurship; life skills; innovative approaches to teaching and learning, including technology enhanced and distance learning; sectoral and regional multi-stakeholder partnerships and cooperation including public-private partnerships; and governance. The Pact for Skills Summary Reports will be developed on a quarterly basis and published on the Pact for Skills online library.

If you require further information on the Knowledge Events do not hesitate to contact: PactforSkillsEvents@ecorys.com

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[4] Available in the online library from early December 2022.
[5] Please note that the list of topics and dates is provisional and may change.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

This section outlines the steps LSPs can take to review their progress in the implementation of their commitments. This includes developing a monitoring framework as well as conducting a monitoring exercise and adapting LSP activities.

6.1. Developing a monitoring framework

Establishing a framework for monitoring can be valuable in showing the contributions and impact of LSPs both within their sectoral ecosystem and across the EU. Monitoring frameworks and progress reporting can support partnerships in:

- tracking partnership progress, impact and contribution to skills development;
- showcasing the activities of the partnership and its member organisations;
- guiding the direction of future work.

Monitoring exercises provide an opportunity to take stock of achievements and good practices, as well as gain feedback and recommendations from partnership members. Having access to data that demonstrates progress made can also strengthen funding applications and public awareness campaigns. The Pact for Skills Support Services supports LSPs in this effort by conducting an annual monitoring exercise, including a survey, desk review and tailored report for each LSP that covers the LSP's activities, feedback and progress made.

The design of the monitoring framework should be tailored to the needs and context of individual partnerships. Each partnership will have different priorities based on the needs of their sector, the resources they have available and the level of maturity of their partnership. These varying priorities also lead to the development of unique commitments and KPIs (for more information on developing commitments and KPIs, see Sections 3.3 and 3.4). Thus, any monitoring activities should be designed with these factors in mind.

To aid in these efforts, the Pact for Skills Support Services has worked with existing LSPs to develop a core monitoring framework that covers the outputs and impacts most related to the Pact for Skills, while still providing room for the individual partnerships to add additional indicators, as needed. Box 40 below provides examples of indicators that have been included to monitor LSP activities and results. LSP activities relate to the core functions of the partnership, whereas LSP results relate to the activities delivered collectively that are typically related to the work programme of the LSP.

LSP activities:

- Number of partnership members
- Geographic and sectoral coverage of the partnership members
- Reach of communications
- Number of meetings held by the LSP
- Average number of participants in LSP meetings

LSP outputs and results:

- Whether key elements of work programme have been delivered
  - For example, skills need analyses, training accreditation, etc.
- Whether any outputs have been developed
  - For example, training curricula, toolkits, materials, etc.
- Share of partnership members who report they are satisfied with the quality and focus of LSP activities
- Share of partnership members who report using partnership outputs and tools

See Box 13 in Section 3.4 on developing KPIs to find further examples of a monitoring framework that can be used to track the progress of individual members towards either the specific commitments of their organisation or the overall partnership-level commitments of the LSP.

6.2. Conducting a monitoring exercise

There are a number of ways in which monitoring data can be collected by an LSP. The most efficient method will depend on the type of data needed. A few of these methods are presented below.

- **Collection of ongoing monitoring data:** Record-keeping of partnership members and partnership activities can enable tracking of information about the reach and activities of the partnership and its members on an ongoing basis.
- **Desk research:** This can be particularly relevant for identifying important sectoral developments, such as changes in skills needs as well as keeping track of broader contextual factors, such as relevant policy or economic trends.
- **Survey of partnership members:** A survey of the partnership members allows for the collection of qualitative and quantitative data on partnership member activities and outputs.
- **Direct engagement with key members or partnership forums:** This is an option that can be pursued, if desired by the partnership coordinators to gain additional feedback on the partnership's progress and activities with members that are keen to be engaged.

Monitoring activities are beneficial practices and can be designed in a way to avoid significant burden on LSP coordinators and members. For example, by collecting ongoing monitoring data, this limits the

number of questions that would need to be asked in a membership survey and the frequency in which the exercise would need to be done.

A survey of the partnership members is an opportunity to gain an understanding of the insights and perspectives of the members, while also gaining information on individual activities and progress made. The annual monitoring survey led by the Pact for Skills Support Services includes questions on progress against individual and partnership-level commitments and KPIs, potential challenges faced by members, feedback on LSP outputs and activities, and examples of good practices.

In order to take full advantage of a partnership-wide survey, LSP's are encouraged to add additional questions that will provide insights important to their priorities and objectives. This can include skills anticipation, feedback on specific LSP activities, or how upskilling and reskilling can align with the organisation's other activities. One example is presented in Box 41.

Box 41: Example of LSP-Specific Topic Added to Annual Survey[6]

> The **Skills partnership for the Proximity & Social Economy Ecosystem** has conducted a desk review of the existing skills gap within the sector. In order to complement this desk research, the LSP coordinator will add additional questions to the upcoming annual survey on what skills needs the partnership members face. By understanding what skills needs are most crucial to address, the LSP can target their activities towards lessening this gap.

A key output for monitoring activities will be a report that provides an analysis of the information collected that can be used to inform future LSP activities and measure the progress that has been made. This analysis should consider the specific context of the LSP and be compared against the partnership's own KPIs and work programme.

For further information about the monitoring exercise and framework please contact your Guidance Hub support team.

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[6] Pending confirmation with the LSP prior to final publication.

Annex A: Expression of interest form

Practical action on up and reskilling at the regional level is key to achieving a fair and resilient recovery and the long-term economic success of Europe. Action at the regional level can deliver upskilling and reskilling opportunities that address different social and economic needs, whilst fostering innovation in the context of the green and digital transition.

Through the Pact for Skills, the European Commission is ready to support the development of regional skills partnerships. Skills partnerships are multi-stakeholder collaborations that work to create the upskilling and reskilling opportunities for people of working age in a region or across an industrial ecosystem.

Existing and prospective members of Pact for Skills, including Large Scale Partnerships (LSP) that would like to establish a regional skills partnership are invited to express their interest in working with the Pact Support Services. The Pact Support Services can provide direct support to existing or potential regional skills partnerships to develop their activities, engage stakeholders and raise awareness of the regional partnership and its impact.

Developing regional skills partnerships under the Pact is an opportunity to get support for these activities and highlight their impact through a European-wide initiative.

Support available for regional partnerships

The Pact Support Services can offer direct support to regional partnerships. Support would be offered in line with the needs of the partnership and its members and can include the following activities:

- setting up a kick-off meeting of the interested organisations
- ensuring regular meetings of the regional partnerships' coordinators to facilitate mutual learning of coordinating organisations and share experiences of developing skills partnerships, supporting partnership activities and the actions of member organisations
- advising on developing a common statement of commitments as part of the Pact for Skills
- supporting running of the partnership with a Partnership Handbook, tools and templates.
- identifying opportunities and synergies between initiatives and funding schemes with a European or regional dimension.
- engaging with a range of new or prospective Pact members in their territorial remit.
- highlighting the impact of the regional partnership and member organisations on skills and economic development to European skills networks and stakeholders.

How to express your interest

Support can be offered either to existing regional groupings or initiatives, including formal or informal groupings, or yet to be established partnerships. Partnerships may either be linked to the work of existing Large Scale sectoral Partnerships, or may be initiated separately from specific sectoral or regional initiatives. More specifically, the support services can support partnerships that wish to:

- articulate shared commitments to the delivery of upskilling and reskilling opportunities in line with local and regional skills and economic needs;

- bring together relevant stakeholders at regional or local level, including employers (both large and small), education and training providers, social partners, chambers of commerce, public bodies and agencies, regional representative forums as well as other relevant organisations;
- create opportunities for member organisations to maximise their impact by building synergies and collaborative up and reskilling efforts.

In the context of this call, regional partnerships are defined as multi-stakeholder skills partnerships that have a sub-European geographical dimension. Potential regions may include:

- macro regions that include collaborations between regions in multiple EU Member States that have a shared geographical or economic proximity or relationship;
- EU Member state regions, including Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) level 1 or 2 regions also including skills partnerships at local level.

Existing or prospective Pact members that have a particular regional or geographic focus or who are already engaged in regional activity or dialogue are also invited to express their interest. Joint approaches from groups of regions across Member States united by common skills challenges may also be considered.

Interested organisations should send basic information about their regional partnership or proposed regional partnership objectives and potential support needs using the application form below. The Pact Support Services will then assess interest and set up a follow-up meeting with interested regional partnership coordinators to examine potential support options.

Partnership information

Partnership name	*(Please include the name of your regional partnership if decided, otherwise, propose a functional identification, for instance, 'Skills partnership in X region' or 'Y sectoral cluster in Z region')*
Country(ies)	*(Please include the EU country/countries in which your partnership operates)*

Contact person

Title and full name	
Organisation	
Email address	

Description of the existing or proposed regional partnership

1000 characters maximum

Current partners (if applicable)

Partner name	Role in the partnership
[Add rows as necessary]	

Describe the objectives of the skills partnership, including the nature of collaboration and role of partners

1000 characters maximum

Support needed to establish the regional partnership

1000 characters maximum

Current activities of the partnership (in case it already exists)

1000 characters maximum

Annex B: Regional partnership agreement template (draft)

The EU Pact for Skills – Regional Skills partnership for the [Name of Region(s)]

Date

The challenge

Please include a description of the regional and/or local skills gaps or challenges. These may include:

- tackling the impact of the COVID-19 crisis;
- structural changes brought by the green and digital transition impacting the workforce;
- shift from place-based industries (coal mining, ship-building, car production, etc.) towards supply-side issues of enterprise, innovation, skills and knowledge;
- low employment rates and high levels of unemployment if specific to (part of) the region(s);
- low skills levels in the population and ageing workforce;
- persistent skills shortages faced by employers;
- other challenges related to skills.

The ambition

In this sub-section you can provide the long-term vision for the region, setting out the ideal future that the partnership will work to support. A long-term vision provides the strategic framework for the partnership and its members.

The proposal

The commitments should be designed in line with the priorities and ambitions set out by the regional partners. These may include strategic commitments to deliver training and skills development opportunities, working in partnership to enhance training capacity and quality, and contributing to skills intelligence on skill needs and opportunities.

Activities

The precise activities that the partnership will undertake is dependent on their priorities and objectives. Potential activities the partnership may wish to consider include the following (see main text of the handbook for more examples):

- extending the partnership's reach and impact through communication activities, networking and sharing good practice;
- specific collaboration projects on skills intelligence, development and dissemination of education and training opportunities, skills recognition mechanisms, etc.

Tracking our impact

To help track the impact of the partnership, commitments may also be supported by key performance indicators (KPIs). KPIs may translate commitments into practical measures, outcomes or milestones that can be tracked over time.

Please also specify a timeline for the implementation of the proposed activities and some indicators and objectives that the partnership aims to meet. To this purpose, the specific KPIs may include:

- number of members included in the partnership;
- level of participation and engagement in partnership activities (e.g. number of events held, or online communities of practice developed);
- number of trainings offered;
- number of training opportunities delivered;
- level of investment attracted, or funding opportunities secured;
- established forums with VET providers;
- percentage of workforce upskilled or reskilling within a specific part of the region.

Partnership arrangements

To help the partnership achieve its goals…

Supported by

Please include the logos of key regional and/or local partners as well as supporters of the regional partnership.

Contact and more information

Email:

Frequently asked questions