

Funding Possibilities for Vocational Education and Training Providers

D4.1 Overview of Relevant National and EU Financial Instruments



Project: 101143988 — VOLTAGE — ERASMUS-EDU-2023-PEX-COVE

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1. Introduction

This report has been developed within the framework of Work Package 4 of the Voltage – Vocational Training for Optimal Learning and Growth in the European Battery Industry project, co-funded by European Union. Work Package 4 focuses on governance and funding structures essential to advancing the objectives of the project. In particular, it aims to facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange among project partners, enhance alignment with EU VET policy frameworks, and support innovation and excellence within the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

The purpose of this mapping of relevant national and EU financial instruments report is to identify and present available funding opportunities that can be leveraged to strengthen VET capacities at the regional, national, and European levels. These opportunities include instruments such as Erasmus+, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), and other thematic or innovation-driven financial mechanisms that align with smart specialization strategies (S3) of partner regions.

In doing so, this deliverable contributes to the broader objectives of the project by offering strategic insights into how VET providers can access and benefit from relevant regional, national or international funding sources. It will also serve as a tool to support action planning and future applications for funding, while reinforcing synergies between regional development priorities and the skills needs of the emerging European battery industry. The findings of this mapping exercise will be shared with stakeholders and presented in an online seminar to encourage dialogue, knowledge exchange, and coordinated action across the partnership.

This report is prepared to identify and map funding possibilities for further strengthening the VET sector capacities on both European, national, and regional levels. The report aims to increase the access of VET providers around Europe to regional funding mechanisms.

The report includes funding opportunities available for VET providers in the regions and countries (Finland, Germany, Sweden, Portugal and Türkiye) where the project partners are located, as well as international funding opportunities available to VET providers across Europe.

When listing potential funding opportunities, it is important to clarify that certain funding sources cannot always be categorized solely based on their geographic or organizational scope. In some cases, for example, EU funding may need to be defined as a national funding opportunity or regional funding opportunity, since the application is handled at the regional or national level, with regional or national priorities and distributed through regional or national agencies.

In other words, the administrative or geographic level at which the application takes place is more important than the origin of the funding. Defining funding sources in this way provides clarity on the level and origin of the funding, which in turn facilitates both planning and reporting in project development.

Definitions

Regional funding opportunities:

Funding that originates from and is managed at the regional level, often tailored to address specific local or regional needs. This may include regional development funds or initiatives administered by regional authorities or councils, and could potentially also include EU-funds.

National funding opportunities:

Funding that is financed by national governments or agencies, or is managed at the national level. These funds are often tailored to address national needs and could also include EU-funds.

International funding opportunities:

Funding that originates from international bodies or collaborations, such as the European Union, United Nations, or other transnational programs. These funds are managed at a centralized level, for example by a DG at the Commission or by an executive agency and they often presuppose a transnational partnership.

2. Funding Programs

2.1 Regional Funding Opportunities

2.1.1 Support for Regional Development Projects (Västra Götalandsregionens Projektstöd inom regional utveckling)

Country: Sweden

Funding Authority: Västra Götalandsregionen (VGR) offers several regional grants that focus on skills development and innovation, especially in industries like manufacturing, energy, and technology. VGR is responsible for regional development in terms of healthcare, transport, and growth, including funding initiatives that support regional industrial sectors and skills development.

Funding Period: Ongoing, with periodic calls throughout the year, usually reviewed annually.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: VGR provides funding for projects that address skills shortages in key industrial sectors through partnerships between education providers and businesses.

Who Can Apply: Educational institutions, municipalities, and companies in Västra Götaland that are involved in skills development projects, particularly those focused on industrial technology.

Link: <https://www.vgregion.se/regional-utveckling/soka-stod/projektstod/>

2.1.2 The European Regional Development Fund (Europeiska Regionala Utvecklingsfonden)

Country: Sweden

Funding Authority: The managing authority for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in Sweden is Tillväxtverket, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth. The ERDF is one of the main financial instruments of the European Union aimed at strengthening economic and social cohesion by correcting imbalances between its regions. It supports regional development through investments in innovation, the digital economy, sustainable growth, and the improvement of workforce skills across EU member states.

Funding Period: The ERDF operates within the EU's multiannual financial framework, with funding periods typically spanning seven years. The current programming period is 2021–2027, with ongoing calls for projects throughout this timeframe.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: ERDF funding is allocated to projects that contribute to smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. This includes investments in research and innovation, SME competitiveness, skills development, and the transition to a low-carbon economy. Funds are often managed in partnership with national or regional authorities to ensure alignment with local and regional development strategies.

Who Can Apply: Eligible applicants include public authorities, educational institutions, research organizations, SMEs, and other entities involved in regional development initiatives within the EU.

Link:

<https://tillvaxtverket.se/tillvaxtverket/omtillvaxtverket/eufonder/regionalfonden/vastsverige.1744.html>

2.1.3 European Social Fund (Europeiska Socialfonden)

POA1 – Skills development for the employed

POA2 – Initiatives targeting individuals outside the labor market

Country: Sweden

Funding Authority: The Swedish ESF Council is the managing authority for the European Social Fund (ESF) in Sweden. ESF is a key instrument for promoting employment and social inclusion in the European Union, especially through improving workforce skills. ESF is focused on improving employment opportunities, including skills development initiatives aligned with industry needs.

Funding Period: The ESF operates on a seven-year cycle, with the current one running from 2021 to 2027.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: ESF provides funding for vocational training and education programs that aim to reduce skills gaps in the workforce. This is often done through partnerships between businesses and educational institutions. Priority Area A is decided at both national and regional levels.

Who Can Apply: Public institutions, educational providers, and businesses involved in creating job opportunities or enhancing skills in strategic industrial sectors

Link: <https://www.esf.se/utlysningar/?Fond=ESF%2B>

2.1.4 Weiterentwicklung Überbetrieblicher Berufsbildungsstätten (Further Development of Inter-Company Vocational Training Centres)

Country: Germany

Funding Authority: Federal Institute for Vocational Training and Education (BIBB): The Institute's mandated tasks include conducting research on vocational education and

training, developing vocational education and training, serving in an advisory capacity and providing services.

Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labor and Tourism: The ministry is responsible for shaping the region's economic policy, fostering innovation, and supporting businesses to ensure sustainable growth. It also promotes employment, vocational training, and tourism development, making the state an attractive location for both industry and visitors.

Funding Period: Application opportunities depend on the specific funding calls and the availability of budget, which are announced on the ministry's website. It is a continuously open funding scheme; applications can be submitted on a rolling basis without fixed call deadlines.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Lead projects and pilot projects carried out by an inter-company vocational training center from Baden-Württemberg in accordance with the principles for the further development of inter-company vocational training centers into competence centers issued by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training on 15 September 2005 and/or the Federal Office of Economics and Export Control in July 2003 are funded.

As a rule, the state subsidizes up to 25 percent of the eligible costs (land acquisition, new construction of educational centers, initial equipment, structural modernization of education centers, modernization of equipment), funding from the federal government is also often possible.

Who Can Apply: Business organizations (e.g. chambers of crafts, chambers of industry and commerce, guilds, trade associations) as well as other organizations of the economy (e.g. non-profit limited liability companies, registered associations). VET providers can apply if they are a legal entity under public law or operate on a non-profit basis. Purely commercial VET providers without a non-profit status are not eligible.

Link: <https://wm.baden-wuerttemberg.de/de/service/foerderprogramme-und-aufrufe/liste-foerderprogramme/weiterentwicklung-ueberbetrieblicher-berufsbildungsstaetten>

2.1.5 Überbetriebliche Berufsausbildungslehrgänge (ÜBA) (Inter-Company Vocational Training Programs)

Country: Germany

Funding Authority: Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labor and Tourism: The ministry is responsible for shaping the region's economic policy, fostering innovation, and supporting businesses to ensure sustainable growth. It also promotes employment, vocational training, and tourism development, making the state an attractive location for both industry and visitors.

Funding Period: Continuously open funding scheme, applications can be submitted on a rolling basis without fixed call deadlines.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Funding is provided for inter-company vocational training courses that are held at around 100 education and technology centers run by business organizations in the country. The courses are a complementary component of the in-company training and guarantee a high level of training. The trainees learn the training content here that the respective training company cannot teach due to its size or specialization. In addition to the costs of the training courses, the costs of boarding school accommodation can also be subsidized.

- 1st-4th year of training in all sectors of the economy including welding courses (except construction trades and courses subsidized by the federal government): up to 50 euros per participant per week of training
- 1st to 3rd year of training in skilled trades and industrial construction occupations with social insurance: up to 35 euros per participant and week of training
- 2nd-4th year of training in the skilled trades (courses subsidized by the federal government, except for courses in the building trades): up to 95 percent of the subsidy from the Federal Ministry of Economics
- Boarding school costs between 27 euros and 42 euros per week

Who Can Apply:

- Chambers of Crafts
- State guild associations
- District craft associations and craft guilds
- Chambers of industry and commerce
- Other business organizations

Link: <https://wm.baden-wuerttemberg.de/de/service/foerderprogramme-und-aufrufe/liste-foerderprogramme/ueberbetriebliche-berufsausbildungslehrgaenge>

2.1.6 BEBKA Technical Support Program

Country: Türkiye

Funding Authority: BEBKA (Bursa Eskişehir Bilecik Kalkınma Ajansı) is a public institution that directs development in the provinces of Bursa, Eskişehir and Bilecik by enhancing coordination and cooperation among public sector, private sector and non-governmental organizations; offering local-oriented solutions for local problems and promoting sustainable development by means of proper and effective use of sources.

Funding Period: Ongoing, with periodic calls throughout the year, usually reviewed annually.

Period	Deadline for Submission
March-April	30 April
May-June	30 June

July-August	31 August
September-October	31 October

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Bursa Eskişehir Bilecik Development Agency has launched the Technical Support Program in order to improve institutional capacity in areas that are important for regional development. Technical Support Program aims to provide expert/consultant support to meet the training and consultancy needs of the institutions/organizations in the region.

Who Can Apply:

- Local Governmental Organizations
- Public Institutions and Organizations
 - Governorships
 - Provincial Directorates
 - Regional Directorates
 - District Governorships
 - District Directorates
- Professional Organizations in the Nature of Public Institutions

Link: <https://bebka.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/2026-Yili-Teknik-Destek-Basvuru-Rehberi.pdf>

2.1.7 Feasibility Support Programme

Country: Türkiye

Funding Authority: BEBKA (Bursa Eskişehir Bilecik Kalkınma Ajansı) is a public institution that directs development in the provinces of Bursa, Eskişehir and Bilecik by enhancing coordination and cooperation among public sector, private sector and non-governmental organizations; offering local-oriented solutions for local problems and promoting sustainable development by means of proper and effective use of sources.

Funding Period: Ongoing, with a periodic call every year, usually reviewed yearly.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The program aims to support feasibility studies for projects that enhance innovation and entrepreneurship capacity in the TR41 Region (Bursa, Eskişehir and Bilecik), helping to leverage key development opportunities and mitigate economic threats. These studies are aligned with the strategic, results-oriented programs of the regional development agency.

Feasibility studies promoting R&D-driven, competitive production and service processes, and efficient resource use and feasibility studies for urgent and high-impact local development projects considered critical to the region are supported.

Who Can Apply: Universities, other public institutions and organizations and non-governmental organizations operating as VET provider are among the eligible applicants.

Link: https://bebka.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/BEBKA_2025-Yili-FZD-Basvuru-Rehberi-Ilan.pdf

2.1.8 The Social Development Support Program (SOGEP)

Country: Türkiye

Funding Authority: BEBKA (Bursa Eskişehir Bilecik Kalkınma Ajansı) is a public institution that directs development in the provinces of Bursa, Eskişehir and Bilecik by enhancing coordination and cooperation among public sector, private sector and non-governmental organizations; offering local-oriented solutions for local problems and promoting sustainable development by means of proper and effective use of sources.

Funding Period: Ongoing, with a periodic call every year, usually reviewed yearly.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The Social Development Support Program (SOGEP) is a grant program coordinated by the Ministry of Industry and Technology and implemented by 26 regional development agencies across all 81 provinces of Türkiye, by BEBKA at Bursa, Eskişehir, Bilecik region. It aims to address social challenges related to poverty, migration, and urbanization by activating local resources. The program supports projects that enhance social inclusion, entrepreneurship, innovation, and employability, particularly among disadvantaged groups.

Funding is provided in two phases:

Project Proposal Concept Note (Idea Collection) Phase: Applicants submit a “Preliminary Project Information Form” outlining their concept by a specified deadline.

Project Development Phase: Based on initial evaluations, selected project ideas are developed into full proposals, assessed for alignment with program goals, expected impact, and sustainability.

Grants are provided in an amount between 50% and 90% of the costs of the projects that are found eligible in the evaluation.

Who Can Apply: Eligible applicants include:

- Public institutions and municipalities
- Chambers and professional bodies with public institution status
- Cooperatives
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Organized Industrial Zones
- Technology Transfer Offices
- Technopark (Technology Development Zone) management companies
- Private sector companies (for corporate social responsibility projects)
- Universities, other public institutions and organizations and non-governmental

organizations operating as VET provider are among the eligible applicants.

Link: <https://bebka.org.tr/sogep/>

2.1.9 Guided Project Support

Country: Türkiye

Funding Authority: BEBKA (Bursa Eskişehir Bilecik Development Agency).

Funding Period: Ongoing (Projects are developed through continuous dialogue and negotiation between the Agency and relevant stakeholders rather than a fixed call deadline).

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Guided projects are special-purpose initiatives initiated and developed by the Development Agency to address specific strategic needs of the region. Unlike standard grant calls, these projects focus on high-impact investments that:

- **Accelerate Regional Development:** Strengthening the business environment and production infrastructure.
- **Support Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** Establishing centers of excellence, specialized labs, or competence centers.
- **Enhance Human Capital:** Developing large-scale vocational training and employment facilities that align with industrial transformation.

Funding typically covers up to 75% of the total project cost, with the remaining balance co-funded by the project partners.

Who Can Apply:

- Public Institutions and Local Governments.
- Universities and Research Centers.
- Professional Organizations (Chambers of Commerce, Commodity Exchanges).
- Organized Industrial Zones (OSB) and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Link: <https://bebka.org.tr/gudumlu-proje/>

Note:

The last 3 funding mechanisms mentioned above under the heading of Regional Funding Mechanisms are also provided by all 26 regional development agencies operating across Turkey and VET providers in different regions of Turkey can also access these funds by following the relevant regional development agency operating in their region. Due to this nature, this funding mechanism can also be considered as a national fund. In this section, only the funding mechanisms in the regions where the project partners in Turkey are located are presented in the report as examples.

2.2 National Funding Opportunities

2.2.1 CEVHER Grant Program

Country: Türkiye

Funding Authority: Bursa Coşkunöz Education Foundation (CEF) has been running educational programs and social projects to help young people to reach their full potential and grow into versatile, educated and productive people since 1988. In addition to providing thousands of scholarships, the Foundation supports academic studies and employment programs. As a public benefit foundation, CEF continues to provide grants to the projects of vocational high schools and universities in different regions of Turkey, support incubation programmes in the biggest universities and builds schools and dormitories; training trainers, university students, vocational school students, unemployed young people and professionals.

Funding Period: Once a year, on call basis

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: CEVHER is the funding program of Coşkunöz Education Foundation. Cevher Grant Program aims to contribute to Turkey's economic and social development by supporting vocational education and projects for the professions of the future. This program is developed to strengthen and expand vocational education. By providing financial support to vocational education projects, it encourages innovative projects for the professions of the future.

CEF announces a call for project proposals every year and evaluates the applications in line with the objectives and priorities of the programme and provides 100% grant support to successful projects.

Who Can Apply:

- Technical and vocational education and training providers (only public institutions)
- Vocational and technical high schools,
- Vocational colleges,
- Universities provide technical education.

(eligible applicants may change at each call period)

Link: <https://www.coskunozegitimvakfi.org/en/cevher>

2.2.2 Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance-IPA

Country: Türkiye

Funding Authority: European Commission (Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations – DG NEAR)

Funding Period: During the 2021-2027 programme period (IPA III), calls are periodically announced with varying durations depending on national priorities.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The European Union provides financial assistance to countries in the process of joining the EU through pre-accession funds, supporting their political, institutional, social, and economic reforms. Initially delivered through various EU programs and instruments, this support was unified in 2007 under a single framework called the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

Since then, IPA has become the main financial and technical tool to help candidate and potential candidate countries align their laws, institutions, and standards with those of the EU. It also aims to strengthen their capacity to implement reforms and prepare for the rights and responsibilities of full EU membership.

Funding is delivered through sector-based and multi-annual programs, supporting alignment with EU legislation, capacity building, and socio-economic development. Funds are allocated based on country needs, progress, and performance.

The overall coordination of the implementation of the IPA in Turkey is entrusted to the Directorate for EU Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has been designated as the National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC). This responsibility covers all relevant processes from the preparation of the programme to its closure. The task of financial management is carried out by accredited Turkish institutions that meet all the requirements of the EU regulations for the implementation of the EU budget.

Who Can Apply: Public institutions, local authorities, universities, civil society organizations (CSOs/NGOs), private sector entities, and international organizations from candidate and potential candidate countries.

Link: <https://ipa.gov.tr/>

2.2.3 Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket)

Country: Sweden

Funding Authority: Tillväxtverket is a Swedish government agency that works to strengthen the competitiveness of Swedish businesses by promoting sustainable growth, regional development, and innovation. The Agency offers national and regional funding to support industrial growth and skills development in Sweden.

Funding Period: Various funding periods, depending on the specific programme. Tillväxtverket launches calls for proposals several times a year.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Tillväxtverket finances projects that improve the skills and knowledge of workers in industrial sectors. This includes creating new educational programs or partnerships between companies and educational institutions. The Agency support different funding initiatives aiming at strengthening competitiveness of Swedish businesses, within for example one of the areas listed below.

- Strengthened Production Competence in Companies
- Promote the Development of Business Advisory Services for New Enterprises

- Pilot Initiatives for International Competence
- Regional Investment Support
- Support for Service Development
- Sustainable Urban Development

Who Can Apply: Regional authorities, educational institutions, and companies, especially those engaged in industry-focused projects.

Link: <https://tillvaxtverket.se/tillvaxtverket/sokfinansiering/utlysningar.1139.html>

2.2.4 Sweden's Innovation Agency (Vinnova)

Country: Sweden

Funding Authority: Vinnova is Sweden's Innovation Agency responsible for promoting innovation across different sectors of society, primarily through research and development funding. Vinnova supports innovation-driven skills development across various sectors, including industrial technology and manufacturing.

Funding Period: Call for proposals are published several times a year, with the possibility of multi-year funding depending on the project's scale and impact.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Vinnova offers funding for innovative solutions to skills shortages in key sectors like the battery industry and other high-tech fields. Grants are awarded based on competitive calls for proposals, often in collaboration with industry partners. The Agency support different funding initiatives aiming at strengthening innovation across different sectors, within for example one of the areas listed below.

- Business models and solutions for the sustainable use of batteries
- Impact Innovation: Implementation Projects for a Reformed Public Sector
- Strategic Innovation Programmes in different areas

Who Can Apply: Educational institutions, SMEs, large companies, and research institutes working on innovation and skills development in industrial sectors.

Link: <https://www.vinnova.se/sok-finansiering/hitta-finansiering/>

2.2.5 European Social Fund (Europeiska Socialfonden)

Country: Sweden

Funding Authority: The Swedish ESF Council is the managing authority for the European Social Fund (ESF) in Sweden. ESF is a key instrument for promoting employment and social inclusion in the European Union, especially through improving workforce skills. ESF is focused on improving employment opportunities, including skills development initiatives aligned with industry needs.

Funding Period: The ESF operates on a seven-year cycle, with the current one running

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from 2021 to 2027.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: ESF provides funding for vocational training and education programmes that aim to reduce skills gaps in the workforce. This is often done through partnerships between businesses and educational institutions. Priority Area A is decided at both national and regional levels.

POA1 – Skills development for the employed

POA2 – Initiatives targeting individuals outside the labour market

Who Can Apply: Public institutions, educational providers, and businesses involved in creating job opportunities or enhancing skills in strategic industrial sectors.

Link: <https://www.esf.se/min-region/vastsverige/>

2.2.6 Government Grant from the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan)

Country: Sweden

Funding Authority: The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (MYH) provides state grants to organize national vocational education and training (VET) programs. Their funding is focused on increasing access to qualified personnel in industries facing workforce shortages.

Funding Period: Annual calls for proposals, with specific deadlines outlined on the MYH website.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: MYH allocates funding based on standardized levels to cover tuition and other costs for education providers.

Who Can Apply: Authorized educational providers and municipalities seeking to establish or expand vocational education offerings that meet labor market needs.

Link: <https://www.myh.se/pilotverksamhet-nationell-yrkesutbildning/ansok-om-att-bedriva-utbildning/statsbidrag-och-schablonnivaer>

2.2.7 The Swedish Energy Agency (Energimyndigheten)

Country: Sweden

Funding Authority: The Swedish Energy Agency provides funding for projects aimed at energy efficiency, renewable energy innovation, and strategic energy planning.

Funding Period: Ongoing calls with specific deadlines for project proposals published on the agency's website.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Funding is allocated for project proposals that address national and regional energy challenges, promote sustainable energy solutions, and

advance energy system transformation.

The Agency support different funding initiatives aiming at sustainable energy solutions, within for example one of the areas listed below.

- Regional Electrification Pilots for Heavy Transport
- Business Development
- Sustainable and Resilient Transport System – From Research to Applicable Solutions
- Research Support
- Impact Innovation: Geographic Transition Labs – Developing Attractive and Accessible Living Environments of the Future
- Impact Innovation: Participate in Transition Labs for the Attractive and Accessible Living Environments of the Future
- Energy Communities and Energy Sharing

Who Can Apply: Municipalities, companies, and organizations working on energy-related projects.

Link: <https://www.energimyndigheten.se/utlysningar/>

2.2.8 The Climate Leap (Klimatklivet)

Country: Sweden

Funding Authority: The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency provides grants for climate initiatives, including the “Klimatklivet” program, which funds projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Funding Period: Regular calls throughout the year; deadlines and application requirements vary.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Klimatklivet offers financial support for projects with measurable climate benefits, focusing on innovation, implementation, and scalability.

Who Can Apply: Municipalities, businesses, and organizations engaged in climate mitigation projects.

Link: <https://www.naturvardsverket.se/bidrag/klimatklivet/>

2.2.9 The Adjustment Fund (Omställningsfonden)

Country: Sweden

Funding Authority: Omställningsfonden supports workers affected by restructuring, focusing on re-skilling and career transition initiatives.

Funding Period: Continuous support for eligible individuals and organizations.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Funding is provided for tailored support measures, including training programs, career guidance, and employment services.

Who Can Apply: Public sector employers and employees facing redundancy or seeking skills adaptation.

Link: <https://www.omstallningsfonden.se/>

2.2.10 Implementation Projects of Economic and Social Partner Organizations in The Context of International Vocational Education and Training Cooperation

(Implementierungsprojekte von Organisationen der Wirtschafts- Und Sozialpartner Im Rahmen der Internationalen Berufsbildungszusammenarbeit (Wisovet))

Country: Germany

Funding Authority: Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is responsible for shaping national policy on education, science, and research. It promotes innovation and sustainable development by funding research, supporting educational programs, and fostering collaboration between academia, industry, and society.

Funding Period: The programme is open/active until at least 31 December 2029.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) supports measures to implement elements of country strategies and work programs for existing bilateral VET cooperation that require the implementation expertise of chamber and employee organizations.

The assessment basis for grants is the eligible project-related expenditure, which can be individually funded up to 100 per cent.

Who Can Apply: Chamber organizations and their institutions as well as other institutions supported by the German economy whose purpose is geared towards vocational education and training, among other things,

- DGB districts and regions, member trade unions of the DGB as well as the educational organizations of the trade unions that operate on a non-profit basis and whose purpose is geared towards vocational education and training, among other things,
- Commercial training providers as implementation partners in the planned project networks.

Link:

<https://www.foerderdatenbank.de/FDB/Content/DE/Foerderprogramm/Bund/BMBF/richtlinie-zur-foerderung-von-implementierungsproj.html>

2.2.11 Inter-Company Vocational Training in The Skilled Trades (Inter-Company Apprenticeship Training)

(Überbetriebliche berufliche Bildung im Handwerk (Überbetriebliche Lehrlingsunterweisung – ÜLU))

Country: Germany

Funding Authority: Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Protection (BMWK) is responsible for shaping and implementing policies related to economic growth, energy, and climate protection. The BMWK also supports innovation, digital transformation, and international trade to maintain Germany's economic strength.

Funding Period: Yearly between 01 January 2025 – 31 December 2028.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The federal government supports the provider of inter-company apprenticeship training programs (ÜLU). The grantee receives a subsidy for the courses that it organizes for apprentices in the specialist level (from the 2nd to 4th year of training).

The grants were given as a fixed amount per trainee and course or week of training. This allows grantee to finance up to a third of the course costs and up to half of the necessary accommodation costs.

Who Can Apply:

- Chambers of Crafts
- Trade associations of the skilled crafts sector
- District craft associations
- Craft guilds
- Vocational training institutions recognized by the chambers of skilled crafts

Link:

<https://www.foerderdatenbank.de/FDB/Content/DE/Foerderprogramm/Bund/BMWi/uelu-862413.html>

2.2.12 International Vocational Training Cooperation Projects (Projekte der internationalen Berufsbildungszusammenarbeit (CooperationVET))

Country: Germany

Funding Authority: Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is responsible for shaping national policy on education, science, and research. It promotes innovation and sustainable development by funding research, supporting educational programs, and fostering collaboration between academia, industry, and society.

Funding Period: Designed as a long-term (ongoing) funding instrument.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) supports individual and joint projects within the framework of international vocational education and training cooperation (iBBZ).

Funding is provided for model, innovative action concepts for vocational education and training in 2 modules. Projects must be aligned with the interests and reform concerns of the BMBF partner countries and, as far as possible, the needs of German companies operating there in terms of recruiting and securing skilled labour must be taken into account. The funds are provided as grant.

Who Can Apply:

- Companies in the commercial sector,
- Commercial and non-commercial training providers,
- Universities,
- Research institutions,
- Institutions active in the field of vocational training, for example chamber organisations, trade unions, the network of German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHKs),
- State institutions, for example state academies, state institutes, vocational school providers.

Link:

<https://www.foerderdatenbank.de/FDB/Content/DE/Foerderprogramm/Bund/BMBF/cooperationvet.html>

2.2.13 Promotion of Transformation Projects as Part of The "Sustainable at Work - Future-Oriented Training" Program

(Förderung von Transformationsprojekten im Rahmen des Programms "Nachhaltig im Beruf - zukunftsorientiert ausbilden")

Country: Germany

Funding Authority: Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is responsible for shaping national policy on education, science, and research. It promotes innovation and sustainable development by funding research, supporting educational programs, and fostering collaboration between academia, industry, and society.

Funding Period: The funding period for transformation projects is up to 36 months.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The Sustainable at Work - Future-Oriented Training (NIB) programme has now published a second funding guideline. This provides funding for projects that promote the socio-ecological transformation in companies through innovative qualification measures. Thematically, the focus is on the energy transition and the circular economy. A scientific meta-project is also being funded.

The grant is awarded by way of project funding in the form of a non-repayable grant from

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the ESF Plus and national co-financing by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

Who Can Apply:

- Chambers
- Associations
- Educational institutions
- Universities
- Research institutions
- Companies

Link:

https://www.foerderdatenbank.de/FDB/Content/DE/Foerderprogramm/Bund/BMBF/nachhaltig_im_beruf.html

2.2.14 Promotion of Inter-Company Vocational Training Centers (ÜBS) and Their Further Development into Competence Centers

(Förderung überbetrieblicher Berufsbildungsstätten (ÜBS) und ihrer Weiterentwicklung zu Kompetenzzentren)

Country: Germany

Funding Authority: Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is responsible for shaping national policy on education, science, and research. It promotes innovation and sustainable development by funding research, supporting educational programs, and fostering collaboration between academia, industry, and society.

Funding Period: Continuously open funding scheme, applications can be submitted on a rolling basis without fixed call deadlines.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Aims modernization or restructuring of inter-company vocational training center (ÜBS) as well as the further development of ÜBS into a competence center for vocational education and training.

- Up to 45 percent of eligible expenditure in the case of restructuring or modernisation of an existing training centre, and up to 60 percent in structurally weak regions;
- For a competence centre up to 50 percent, in structurally weak regions up to 65 percent of eligible expenditure is funded

Who Can Apply:

- Legal entities under public law and non-profit legal entities under private law that are responsible for vocational training centres
- State guild associations and trade associations that organise inter-company

vocational training for their members

Link:

<https://www.foerderdatenbank.de/FDB/Content/DE/Foerderprogramm/Bund/BMBF/ueberbetriebliche-berufsbildungsstaetten-bmbf-bibb.html>

2.2.15 AusbildungWeltweit (Training Worldwide)

Country: Germany

Funding Authority: Funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF); implemented by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)

Funding Period: Annual application rounds; (Application deadline for latest round: 24 February 2026)

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: AusbildungWeltweit is a federal mobility funding programme that supports practice-oriented international learning experiences in initial vocational education and training (IVET). The scheme provides financial support for projects enabling apprentices and company-based training staff to gain professional experience abroad. Funding covers travel and subsistence costs.

The programme focuses on workplace-based learning stays. Apprentices are expected to be integrated into real work processes in host companies abroad. Purely school-based stays or course participation are not eligible. Learning stays for training staff must demonstrate added value and competence development relevant to their training activities in Germany.

Funded activities include:

- Apprentice mobility: 3 weeks to 3 months (19–90 days)
- Mobility of in-company training staff: 2 days to 2 weeks
- Preparatory visits to organise partnerships: 2–5 days

Who Can Apply: Eligible applicants are organisations involved in vocational education and training, including:

- Training companies
- Vocational schools
- Chambers
- Other VET institutions
- Individual apprentices cannot apply directly.

Link:

<https://www.ausbildung-weltweit.de/de/aktuelles/antragsrunde-Februar-2026.html>

2.2.16 Technological Specialization Courses (CET)

Country: Portugal

Funding Authority: CET is funded by Portuguese Government Budget and the European Social Funding Plus and it is part of Portugal 2030 programme.

Funding Period: 24 months with applications from 2024-11-04 till 2025-01-02;

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The Technological Specialization Courses (CET) intends to promote lifelong learning, in particular through flexible upskilling and reskilling opportunities for all, taking into account entrepreneurial and digital skills, better anticipate change and new skills requirements based on labour market needs, facilitate career transitions and foster professional mobility. This call is address at:

- a) Public, private or cooperative educational establishments;
- b) The network of professional training centers of Portugal;
- c) Technological schools created under the joint orders of the Ministers of Industry and Energy and Education;
- d) Training entities certified for employment and labor relations (DGERT).
- e) CET is funded by the European Social Fund (85 %), with the remaining 15 % paid out by public funds that are part of the state budget.

Who Can Apply: Public, private and cooperative educational and professional training providers;

Link:

https://pessoas2030.gov.pt/wp-json/avisos/download?container=siag-prod-container&path=avisos%2F2024%2F12%2F493ed7e5-b084-44cb-b488-2be224cf0103%2F8f579934-b24e-4c02-8491-6caa452fefc7&filename=CET+AVISO+PESSOAS_2024_31_Republicacao.pdf

2.2.17 Eurydice

Country: Portugal

Funding Authority: Adult education and training provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MECI) and the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security (MTSSS) are funded by both the state budget and the Portuguese Human Capital Operational Programme (HCOP) (Programa Operacional do Capital Humano- PO CH), which is part of the Portugal 2030 programme.

Funding Period: Running until 2030

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The HCOP is funded by the European Social Fund (85 %), with the remaining 15 % paid out by public funds that are part of the state budget. One of the investment line from this program is dedicated to Lifelong Learning, Qualification and Improved Employability.

Who Can Apply: Public and private VET providers

Link: <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurydia/portugal/adult-education-and-training-funding>

2.2.18 JOTPA

Country: Finland

Funding authority: JOTPA – SECLE- The Service Center of Continuous Learning and Employment

Funding Period: Various funding periods depending on skills needs within different sectors

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The Service Centre for Continuous Learning (JOTPA) supports the development of skills and the availability of a competent workforce in society. JOTPA enhances opportunities for working-age individuals to improve their skills by funding short training programs tailored to the evolving needs of the job market. It utilizes forecasting and situational data to determine which training programs to support. All funded training includes guidance for participants and other necessary support services.

Who Can Apply: VET Schools, Higher education establishments

Link: <https://www.jotpa.fi/>

2.2.19 Renewable and Competent Finland 2021–2027 Programme

Country: Finland

Funding authority: Österbottens förbund, Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres)

Funding period: 2021-2027

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The Innovation and Skills in Finland 2021–2027 program supports business, energy, climate, innovation, education and employment policies, as well as activities against exclusion and poverty. It includes the measures of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the Just Transition Fund (JTF).

Who can apply: Educational institutions, various organisations, research institutes, municipalities, companies and other communities with legal capacity

Links:

- <https://tem.fi/en/innovation-and-skills-in-finland-2021-2027>
- <https://www.obotnia.fi/fi/aluekehitys-ja-rahoitus/hankerahoitus/muu-eu-rahoitus/>
- <https://www.ely-keskus.fi/ely-pohjanmaa>

2.3 International Funding Opportunities

European funding programs refer to various initiatives and schemes established by the European Union (EU) to provide financial support for projects and activities that align with the EU's policy objectives and priorities. These programs cover a wide range of areas, including research and innovation, education and training, regional development, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, digitalization, and many others.

European funding programs aim to promote economic growth, social cohesion, and environmental protection across the EU member states and beyond. They offer grants, and other forms of financial assistance to individuals, organizations, businesses, public authorities, VET providers and other stakeholders engaged in eligible projects and activities.

The specific funding periods and project durations may be subject to the guidelines provided in the annual Calls for Proposals issued by the European Commission.

European funding programs are often managed at a centralized level, for example by a DG at the Commission or by an executive agency and they often presuppose a transnational partnership.

2.3.1 Erasmus+ Programme

Erasmus+ is the European Union's flagship programme to support education, training, youth, and sport for the 2021–2027 period in Europe. With a strong emphasis on inclusivity, the program encourages broader range of individuals and organisations to develop digital and green skills, gain knowledge in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and participate in international projects to increase the cooperation. The program equips individuals with the skills needed for active citizenship, intercultural understanding, and successful entry into the labour market. It supports priorities and activities set out in the European Education Area, Digital Education Action Plan and the European Skills Agenda.

The program also supports the European Pillar of Social Rights, implements the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and develops the European dimension in sport.

In order to achieve its objectives, the Erasmus+ Programme outlines the implementation of the following Key Actions for the 2021–2027 period:

- Key Action 1 – Mobility of Individuals
- Key Action 2 – Cooperation Among Organisations and Institutions

Calls within the Erasmus+ KA2

- Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE:s)
- Capacity Building In the Field of Vocational Education and Training (VET)
- Alliances for Innovation (Alliances for Education and Enterprises)
- European Partnerships for School Development
- Small-scale partnerships

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- Key Action 3 – Support to Policy Development and Cooperation
- Jean Monnet Actions.

2.3.1.1 Erasmus+ Key Action 1 – Mobility for Learners and Staff in Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Funding authority: Managed by National Agencies for Erasmus+ in each participating country, under the European Commission.

Funding period: 2021–2027, with annual calls for proposals and nationally determined application deadlines.

Explanation of funding mechanism: The action supports international mobility to strengthen skills, employability and quality in vocational education and training. Funding is provided as lump sums and unit costs covering mobility activities such as learning mobility for VET learners, job shadowing, teaching or training assignments for staff, and preparatory visits. Grants typically cover travel, subsistence, organisational support and inclusion support where relevant.

Who can apply: VET providers, school authorities, training centres and other organisations active in vocational education and training. Applications are submitted by a single organisation or a national consortium acting as coordinator.

Links:

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-1/introduction>

2.3.1.2 Erasmus+ Key Action 2 – Small-scale Partnerships in Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Funding authority: Managed by National Agencies for Erasmus+ in each participating country, under the European Commission.

Funding period: 2021–2027, with annual calls for proposals and nationally set deadlines.

Explanation of funding mechanism: The action aims to broaden access to Erasmus+ by supporting smaller organisations and less experienced actors in international cooperation. Funding is provided as lump sums and unit costs covering mobility activities such as learning mobility for VET learners, job shadowing, teaching or training assignments for staff, and preparatory visits. Grants typically cover travel, subsistence, organisational support and inclusion support where relevant.

Who can apply: VET providers, public authorities, municipalities, NGOs, companies and other organisations active in vocational education and training. Partnerships must include at least two organisations from two different EU Member States or associated countries.

Links:

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2/small-scale-partnerships>

2.3.1.3 Erasmus+ Key Action 2 – Cooperation Partnerships in Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Funding authority: Managed by National Agencies for Erasmus+ in each participating country, under the European Commission.

Funding period: 2021–2027, with annual calls for proposals and nationally determined application deadlines.

Explanation of funding mechanism: The action supports transnational cooperation aimed at developing, transferring and implementing innovative practices in vocational education and training. Funding is provided as simplified lump sums of EUR 125,000, EUR 250,000 or EUR 400,000. Projects are larger in scope and ambition than small-scale partnerships and typically focus on systemic development, innovation, capacity building and long-term cooperation within VET.

Who can apply: VET providers, public authorities, municipalities, NGOs, companies, social partners, research institutions and other organisations active in vocational education and training. Partnerships must include at least three organisations from three different EU Member States or associated countries.

Links:

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2/cooperation-partnerships>

2.3.1.4 Erasmus+ Key Action 2 – European Partnerships for School Development

Funding authority: Managed by National Agencies for Erasmus+ in each participating country, under the European Commission.

Funding period: 2021–2027, with annual calls for proposals and nationally determined application deadlines.

Explanation of funding mechanism: The objective of this action is to encourage better cross-border cooperation and mobility between schools across Europe.

European Partnerships for School Development action aims to:

- improve the quality of learning and teaching at schools through European cooperation,
- strengthen the institutional capacity and structures needed to extend learning mobility opportunities in school education,
- trigger innovation in school education practices, procedures and policies by applying results and best practices from successful transnational projects, expanding their impact beyond the project partner organisations.

Who can apply: The applicant organisation (coordinator) must be a local or regional school authority, or a school coordination body established in an EU Member State or a third country associated to the Programme. Local and regional public authorities responsible for school education, teacher training institutions and research centers and non-profit organizations and SMEs active in the education sector can be partners.

Links:

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2/school-development>

2.3.1.5 Erasmus+ Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) (KA2)

Funding authority: Program is managed by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) under the European Commission.

Funding period: 2021–2027, with annual calls for proposals. Each call includes specific deadlines and eligibility criteria.

Explanation of funding mechanism: The initiative supports the development of transnational platforms for vocational education and training (VET) excellence, aligning skills development with regional and sectoral innovation strategies.

This call aims to create interconnected Centres of Vocational Excellence at national and international levels, fostering collaboration between educational institutions, training providers, and industry partners. The initiative focuses on developing high-quality skills and competencies to enhance employability and support continuous professional development throughout individuals' careers.

Funding is provided as action grants. CoVEs receive support for up to 80% of total eligible costs. Projects are expected to be large-scale, transnational, and involve a minimum of 8 partners from at least 4 EU Member States or associated countries. Each partner country must include at least one industry representative organisation, and at least one vocational education and training provider.

Who can apply:

Participating organisations can be:

- VET providers
- VET provider representative organisations
- Companies, industry, other employers or sector representative organisations
- National/regional qualification authorities
- Research institutes
- Innovation agencies
- Regional development authorities
- International organisations active in the VET field.

Applications must be submitted by a consortium with a wide representation of stakeholders from multiple countries.

Link: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2/centres-vocational-excellence>

2.3.1.6 Erasmus+ Capacity building in the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET) (KA2)

Funding authority: European Commission (through the European Education and Culture Executive Agency - EACEA)

Funding period: 2021–2027, with annual calls for proposals. Each call includes specific deadlines and eligibility criteria.

Explanation of funding mechanism: This call focuses on fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders to enhance VET management and drive innovation, to strengthen partnerships between VET providers and private sector and associations to identify employment opportunities and co-create responsive training solutions.

Capacity Building projects in VET are international cooperation initiatives and aim to strengthen the institutional capacity of VET providers—particularly in management, governance, inclusion, quality assurance, and innovation; to enhance the relevance, accessibility, and adaptability of VET systems in non-associated third countries, to position VET as a key driver of sustainable socio-economic development. Also these projects aim to foster closer ties between VET institutions and the private sector to improve employability and develop demand-driven training solutions.

Projects are funded through lump-sum grants. The lump sum is calculated based on the estimated project budget and is intended to cover all eligible activities, with payment linked to the achievement of project outcomes.

Who can apply:

- VET providers
- Companies, industry, other employers or sector representative organisations
- National/regional qualification authorities
- Employment services
- Research institutes
- Innovation agencies
- Regional development authorities
- International organisations

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least 4 applicants from minimum 3 eligible countries and the consortium must include at least 1 VET provider at non-tertiary education level.

Link: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2/capacity-building-vet>

2.3.1.7 Erasmus+ Alliances for Innovation (Alliances for Education and Enterprises) (KA2)

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Funding authority: European Commission (through the European Education and Culture Executive Agency – EACEA)

Funding period: 2021–2027, with annual calls for proposals. Each call includes specific deadlines and eligibility criteria.

Explanation of funding mechanism: Alliances for Innovation aims to enhance Europe’s innovation capacity by fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among higher education institutions, vocational education and training (VET) providers, enterprises, and the wider socio-economic environment, including research sectors. By promoting joint efforts in designing and implementing new curricula, these alliances address skills mismatches and support the development of entrepreneurial mindsets and initiative. The *Alliances for Education and Enterprises* call specifically focuses on advancing talent and skills development—particularly in digital, green, and deep tech fields—through strengthened cooperation between education and business sectors.

These alliances aim to:

- Innovate teaching and learning practices;
- Boost deep tech and green skills;
- Promote entrepreneurship and social responsibility;
- Align education with labour market needs;
- Facilitate knowledge exchange between education, business, and research.

Projects are funded through lump-sum grants. The budget is determined based on the estimated cost of planned activities and results. Payments are made in tranches based on progress and final results.

Who can apply: Public or private organisations from EU Member States or third countries associated with the Program can apply. At least 8 full partners from 4 different programme countries are required. The consortium must include at least 3 labour market actors and at least 3 education and training providers as applicants. There should be at least one Higher Education institution and one VET provider involved as applicants in each proposal.

Link: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2/alliances-innovation>

2.3.2 Interreg Europe

Funding Authority: Interreg Europe is funded by the European Regional Development Fund and focuses on improving regional development policies through cooperation between EU regions. Interreg Europe promotes collaboration across European regions to enhance skills development in strategic industries, including industrial technologies.

Funding Period: Current funding period is 2021–2027, aligned with the broader ERDF cycle

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Interreg Europe provides funding for collaborative projects between regions, focusing on transferring best practices and policies in areas such as skills development for the industrial sector. The funding typically covers 85% of project costs, with the remainder co-funded by the applicants.

Who Can Apply: Regional and local authorities, research institutions, educational bodies, and companies involved in interregional projects.

Link: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/>

2.3.3 Horizon Europe

Funding Authority: The European Union's Horizon Europe program funds research and innovation projects addressing global challenges and boosting Europe's competitiveness.

Funding Period: Multi-annual program (2021–2027), with periodic calls for proposals.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Offers competitive grants to collaborative international projects across sectors. This includes support for initiatives in battery technology, electrification, and related industrial sectors. Projects should focus on advancing workforce skills to meet demands in sustainable energy systems and the growing battery industry.

Who Can Apply: Researchers, institutions, and businesses from EU member states and associated countries. A VET provider can apply, especially if they are involved in innovative projects that align with the EIC's objectives. One way is to partner with startups, SMEs and researcher institutions to create i.e. innovative training methods

Link: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

2.3.4 EU Innovation Fund

Funding Authority: The European Commission manages the Innovation Fund, one of the world's largest funding programs for the demonstration of innovative low-carbon technologies.

Funding Period: Ongoing, with regular calls for large-scale and small-scale projects throughout the year. Specific deadlines are set for each call.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The fund focuses on industrial innovation in renewable energy, energy storage, carbon capture and storage, and other green technologies. The Innovation Fund provides direct funding to projects based on a competitive selection process. Projects receive grants covering up to 60% of the additional costs of implementing low-carbon technologies. The funding is awarded in stages, with milestones linked to project progress.

Who Can Apply: Businesses, industries, and consortia developing innovative technologies in sectors like energy, transport, and heavy industry. Both large-scale and small-scale projects are eligible. NGOs and Academic institutions are also eligible in

principle but they can apply only as part of consortia led by businesses and SMEs.

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/eu-action/funding-climate-action/innovation-fund_en

2.3.5 Digital Europe Programme

Funding Authority: The European Commission oversees the Digital Europe Programme, which supports the deployment of digital technologies across Europe.

Funding Period: 2021–2027, with multiple calls launched on a rolling basis. Each call has specific timelines and deadlines.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Digital Europe Programme aims to boost Europe's digital sovereignty and competitiveness by investing in areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital skills, high-performance computing, and digital innovation hubs.

Funding is provided through grants and procurement contracts. Grants typically cover up to 50–100% of eligible project costs, depending on the nature of the activity (e.g., infrastructure, capacity building, or deployment). Funding is awarded through competitive calls and is milestone-based, with progress tracking.

Who Can Apply: Public and private organizations, including SMEs, research institutions, NGOs, and governmental bodies from EU Member States and associated countries are eligible. Collaborative, cross-border consortia are often encouraged. Consortia of higher education institutions, research organisations and businesses and other stakeholders design and deliver education programmes and self-standing modules in the area of advanced digital skills for developers and users of advanced digital technologies.

Participation of alliances involving VET institutions such as COVEs is also encouraged.

Link: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme>

2.3.6 Interreg Öresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak (ÖKS)

Funding Authority: The programme is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and managed by the Interreg Öresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak Joint Secretariat, in cooperation with the participating countries: Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. The aim is to strengthen cross-border cooperation to promote innovation, green transition, and labour market integration.

Funding Period: 2021–2027, with several calls for project proposals throughout the period. Each call includes specific deadlines and thematic focuses.

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The aim of programme is to strengthen cross-border cooperation to promote innovation, green transition, and labour market integration. Funding is provided in the form of grants covering up to 60% of eligible project costs (depending on country and project type). Projects must involve partners from at least two different countries in the programme area. Funding is allocated based on a competitive application process, with emphasis on cross-border cooperation and measurable results.

Who Can Apply: Public and private organisations, municipalities, regions, universities, research institutions, NGOs, and SMEs based in the Öresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak programme area. Partnerships must include at least two organisations from different participating countries.

Links: <https://interreg-oks.eu/>

2.3.7 Horizon Europe - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

Funding Authority: European Commission, specifically managed by the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation.

Funding Period: 2021-2027

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA): Supports the mobility, training, and career development of researchers. A VET provider could benefit by hosting a researcher, an expert from an industry or participate in training networks

Who can apply: Different organizations, universities and private businesses can apply as part of a consortium

Links: <https://marie-skłodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/>

2.3.8 The LIFE Programme

Funding authority: European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)

Funding Period: 2021-2027

Explanation of Funding mechanism: The LIFE Programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action. VET providers can apply when they are involved in environmental issues. I.e. if they want to develop training programs focused on environmental protection, sustainability etc. or if they want to implement sustainable practices within the organization. They can also partner with local environmental NGOs or businesses to build projects that will contribute to the environmental targets of the program

Who can apply: a public or private legal entity registered in the EU or an overseas country or territory linked to it; third country associated to the LIFE programme; or a legal entity created under Union law or any international organization.

Link: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en

2.3.9 EIT – European Institute of Innovation and Technology and Knowledge and Innovation Communities

Funding Authority: The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

Funding Period: Annual calls for proposals; specific deadlines and durations vary

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according to each Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC).

Explanation of Funding Mechanism: The EIT is an EU body that supports innovation through thematic Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), which bring together industry, education, and research actors. This financial instrument focuses on strengthening innovation ecosystems by funding projects that address skills gaps and support the green and digital transitions. Relevant thematic areas for VET providers include:

EIT Manufacturing (Education Segment): Focuses on manufacturing priorities linked to the green transition, digitalization, and resilience. It supports upskilling and reskilling programs for industrial and VET-related audiences, specifically in areas like automation, battery-related production, and maintenance. Applications are open of consortia containing industry, training providers (VET as well as higher education institutions), and network organisations. Involvement of organisations representing at least two regions is required.

EIT HEI Initiative (Cross-KIC): A cross-community program designed to build innovation and entrepreneurship capacity. It supports stronger links between education providers (including VET) and innovation ecosystems. Consortia are expected to include collaboration with businesses, university and VET, SMEs and other organisations. Proposals require an innovation capacity plan as a core element. A VET provider can join a consortium led by a university or university of applied sciences, and the project focus is education innovation, entrepreneurship, and ecosystem building.

EIT Urban Mobility: Focuses on the electrification of transport and alternative fuels. Topics can include areas such as urban logistics, electrification of transport and alternative fuels, and public transport, depending on the year and call type. Electrification related topics can connect to battery and charging skills, especially where VET providers collaborate with cities, mobility actors, or employers.

Education calls may appear under academy or RIS education tracks in some years

Who Can Apply: Consortia typically consisting of:

- Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
- Industrial partners, companies, and SMEs.
- Research and Technology Organizations (RTOs) and network organizations.
- Public authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Note: Involvement of organizations representing at least two regions is often required, and consortia must demonstrate industry relevance and partner commitment. Eligibility rules, co-funding rates, and call topics change annually and differ between communities, so VET providers should use the official call pages as the starting point and decide based on fit with target group, consortium readiness, and delivery capacity.

Link: <https://www.eit.europa.eu/our-activities/opportunities>

3. Conclusion

This report has provided a comprehensive overview of the regional, national, and international funding mechanisms available to support vocational education and training (VET) providers in Finland, Germany, Sweden, Portugal, and Türkiye (partner countries of Voltage CoVE project) and across Europe. The findings underline the diversity and potential of financial mechanisms to contribute to improve the capacity of VET systems, stimulate innovation and enhance the alignment of skills development provided by VET Providers with the evolving demands of the European battery industry.

While this report shows the diversity of funding mechanisms that VET Providers can access, also at regional and national level, it also places a special emphasis on international mechanisms, in particular to highlight the benefit of international mechanisms for strategic alignment and inter-institutional cooperation. Report demonstrates the critical role of cross-border cooperation and joint learning in the complex funding environment. By synthesizing information across multiple contexts, the report supports the development of targeted action plans and funding strategies tailored to the needs of VET providers.

The information provided through this mapping report, will not only inform VET providers about funding opportunities, but will also serve as a strategic resource for wider stakeholder engagement. The planned dissemination activities, including the online seminar, will further promote knowledge exchange and capacity building among VET providers in Europe.

Finally, this deliverable contributes to the Voltage project's goal: to empower VET providers to play a leading role in equipping the workforce with the skills required for a competitive European battery industry.

Importantly, the European Union continues to offer additional national and international opportunities for VET providers through various programs and initiatives. To stay informed about upcoming calls and funding possibilities, regularly review of the European Commission's **Funding & Tenders Portal** is strongly recommended.