Vocational Education and Training 2030: Launching projects

Vocational and professional education and training is shaped by developments on the labour market and in society. In order to cope with constant change and to better align the VPET system with the requirements of tomorrow, the Confederation, the cantons and the organisations of the world of work have adopted the **Mission Statement for Vocational and Professional Education and Training 2030** [1] in 2018. This is intended as an orientation framework for the further development of Swiss VPET system in the coming years.

Since the start of the implementation phase in summer 2018, the steering committee has been launching concrete projects on an ongoing basis. In the second half of 2019, for example, the following projects were approved: Orientation aid for the digital transformation in basic VET, free potential analysis and career guidance for adults over 40, tools for career choice and preparation for the choice of a vocation or strengthening intercantonal cooperation in VPET. A complete list of ongoing projects and further information can be found on the website **Berufsbildung 2030** [2] [Vocational and Professional Education and Training 2030].

2018

Digital transformation in vocational and professional education and training

In December 2018, representatives of the Confederation, cantons and professional organisations reaffirmed their joint commitment to the implementation of the mission statement on vocational and professional education and training, **Berufsbildung 2030** [3] [VPET 2030], and launched the funding priority digitalinform.swiss on digital transformation. With the funding priority, the Confederation is creating framework conditions enabling an active transfer of know-how between projects in the field of digitisation. For the years 2019 and 2020, financial resources of up to CHF 15 million per year are being set aside for this within the existing budget. The funding for the years 2021-2024 will be determined within the framework of the Dispatch on Education, Research and Innovation (ERI) for the years 2021-2024. The aim is to shed light on what is already available, and to improve networking between stakeholders. The web portal **digitalinform.swiss** [4] is the central communication and networking tool to this end.

A key role in the implementation of digitisation projects is also played by teachers at VET schools, in particular. They are responsible for imparting the new digital skills through teaching at VET schools. In June 2018, the Federal Council has therefore made CHF 3 million available annually to the Swiss
Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET) for the years 2019 and 2020. The aim is to familiarise school administrations and teachers at VET schools with new learning technologies.

**Mission Statement on vocational and professional education and training, “VPET 2030”**

In January 2018, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), together with the cantons and the professional organisations, adopted the mission statement on vocational and professional education and training, *Berufsbildung 2030* [3] [VPET 2030]. The mission statement focuses on continuous development of vocational and professional education and training. This is to be the key programme offering the qualification of employees for the labour market even in 2030. To achieve this, VET provision is to be made more flexible, the agility of the system increased, and the processes structured more efficiently. Increasing professional mobility is to be taken into account through individual learning and career paths. Based on the mission statement, the Confederation, cantons and professional organisations have adopted a programme with strategic approaches and set corresponding priorities for the next few years. These will have to be implemented in the coming years through concrete projects.

### 2017

**Direct federal contributions for tertiary-level professional education**

Graduates of courses preparing for a federal examination for tertiary-level professional education will receive direct financial support from the Confederation from January 2018 onwards. The contributions for tertiary-level professional education will also be significantly increased. The Federal Council has adopted the necessary amendment of the Vocational and Professional Education and Training Ordinance, *Berufsbildungsverordnung* [5] [VPETO]. The introduction of direct federal contributions balances the financial burden on students at the tertiary level, creates uniform support throughout Switzerland for graduates of preparatory courses, and makes an important contribution to covering the demand for skilled labour (skilled labour initiative). It is one of the central elements of the package of measures to strengthen tertiary-level professional education which was approved by the Federal Council in 2014. With the new subject-oriented funding system, the *Bundesbeiträge* [6] [federal contributions] are paid directly to individuals who have completed a preparatory course for a federal diploma of higher education or an advanced federal diploma of higher education and subsequently pass a federal examination.

**Promotion of the professional qualification for adults**

To raise awareness of the professional qualification for adults, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) is launching an ongoing communications offensive until the end of 2019. The main objective of the communications offensive is to make employers and adults without a professional qualification relevant to the labour market aware that adults, too, can obtain a Federal VET Diploma or a Federal VET Certificate. In Switzerland, the search for skilled labour is presenting a challenge to various industries. At the same time, a considerable number of employees do not have a professional qualification giving them access to the labour market. In light of this, the acquisition of a professional qualification by adults is a win-win situation: the industries involved secure a larger pool of qualified professionals while adults willing to acquire new qualifications open up diverse career opportunities.
prospects. To raise awareness among adults, employers and counselling services about the possibilities and advantages of the professional qualification for adults, a wide range of information is available at Berufbildungplus.ch.

Promoting basic skills at the workplace

With the Förderschwerpunkt Grundkompetenzen am Arbeitsplatz [8] [Funding priority: Basic skills at the workplace] in November 2017, the Federal Council adopted a measure developed as part of the skilled labour initiative. The aim of the funding priority is to provide employees with key basic skills that allow them to keep up with the ever-changing demands of the working environment. In courses tailored to the specific requirements at the workplace, employees may acquire basic skills in information and communications technologies (ICT), languages or everyday arithmetic, for instance.

The funding priority is addressed to companies that want to better qualify their employees for future workplace challenges. It provides for fixed contributions to fund courses tailored to the specific requirements at the workplace. The funding priority is being implemented by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), and will run for a fixed period of 3 years. For the years 2018-2020, federal contributions are expected to total around CHF 13 million.

Action Plan on Digitalisation

In July 2017 the Federal Council adopted the Action Plan on Digitalisation in education, research and innovation [9] for the years 2019 and 2020. The required funding will be decided in autumn 2017. In the education sector the Action Plan provides for more support in mathematics, information technology, natural sciences and technology (MINT). Another focus is making vocational and professional education and training more flexible, so that education programmes can be adapted more rapidly to new developments. In continuing professional development (CPD), the aim is to ensure that employees can cope with the digital demands of the workplace. The Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research [10] (EAER) will, moreover, be examining the additional need for support for CPD programmes for the low-skilled, for older workers in particular. Another key focus is coordination by the Confederation and the cantons across all levels of education and training, directed at the system as a whole.

Continuing professional development (CPD) in basic skills

In April 2017 the Federal Council instructed the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research [10] (EAER) to develop, by November 2017, a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) for workers in the area of basic skills on the basis of the Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (VPETA). Given increasing digitalisation, these measures are intended to help low-skilled and older workers to remain in the workforce.

The background to these measures is the 2011 skilled worker initiative [11], which aims to widen the pool of skilled workers within Switzerland. Since 2015, moreover, the challenges of digitalisation and associated changes in the workplace have come to the fore.

Strengthening tertiary level professional education
The Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) has drawn up a package of measures to strengthen tertiary level professional education (see below). This includes, inter alia, greater financial support for graduates of preparatory courses for the Federal Diploma of Higher Education and Advanced Federal Diploma of Higher Education. The Parliament adopted the necessary amendment of the Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (VPETA) in December 2016. The consultation on the amendment of the Ordinance on Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPETO) to lay down the implementing rules continued until May 2017. The Federal Council will take a final vote on the package in autumn 2017. The new financing is to be introduced on 1 January 2018.

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