Lifelong learning is a part of Norwegian Governments policy, inspired from the European Commission, OECD and other international organizations. Lifelong learning is an important principle in Norwegian education policy. The goal is that all Norwegians should have the possibility of getting education and developing their skills throughout their whole life. Lifelong learning is considered as a way of increasing the individuals’ life quality, and providing for a greater economic growth and flexibility at the work place.

Norway is facing many challenges. Growing global collaboration and competition, environmental and poverty problems around the world and national welfare issues require an updated evidence base in order to be properly addressed and solved. Norway’s economy is to a large extent based on industries that require highly skilled labour, and this will continue to be the case in the future. The ability to learn and the availability of appropriate forms of formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities are key make to the labour force respond to the needs of the labour market and society more generally.

Factors which today lead to social disparities, lack of motivation and dropping out of the education system must be rectified in order to succeed in offering everyone an education and, consequently, to secure a platform for their future life. Education is also important in order to meet society's future needs for skills. Dropout rates and social disparities currently constitute a problem at all levels in the education system.

Data from the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) from 2013 shows that on average, adults in Norway are more proficient in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments than the average across all participating countries. However, a relatively large share of the adult population in Norway has poor foundation skills. Young people, older people and immigrants are overrepresented among adults with poor foundation skills.

In 2015, the government presented a white paper on lifelong learning and exclusion focusing on low-skilled adults. The aim of the white paper was to develop a coordinated and whole of government approach to policies for adults with low education, poor foundation skills and immigrants struggling to have their skills recognised.

The field of adult education is fragmented, and the OECD Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report for Norway highlighted the potential problem of institutional complexity. In the report from the study, OECD gave recommendations and pointed specially at three priority areas:

- Improving the effectiveness of Norways skills system
- Tackling skills imbalances
- Strengthening education and training for low-skilled adults

In order to improve these three areas in a better way, five key actions were suggested:
I. Set up a “Skills Strategy for Norway” incorporating a whole-of-government approach

II. Establish an action plan for continuous education and training

III. Strengthen the link between skills development and economic growth

IV. Build a comprehensive career guidance system

V. Strengthen incentives for people to move into shortage occupation

These recommendations have, among others, resulted in a Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy, a green paper on further education and training, public career guidance centres in all countries in Norway and a skills reform (see chapter 14).

The field of adult education and training is divided between several public actors:

- Primary and secondary education fall under the remit of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate of Education: Secondary education is administered by the county council, and primary and lower-secondary education are administered by the municipality
- Re-skilling and employment activation training falls under the remit of the Ministry of Labour and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)
- Norwegian language training for migrants falls within the remit of the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and the Directorate for Integration and Diversity
- The Directorate for Lifelong Learning (Skills Norway) has the administrative responsibility for the programme SkillsPlus. The directorate also coordinates career guidance and is in charge of curricular and pedagogical issues relating to the teaching of Norwegian and socio-cultural orientation to adult immigrants.

In the field of adult learning there are several actors in addition to the ones mentioned above, such as - here mentioning some of them - The social partners, The Adult Learning Associations (NGOs), the Folk High Schools, Flexible Education Norway (organises 40 Norwegian providers of flexible education, FuN) and universities and university colleges offering continuing education to adults. In Norway there is a strong tradition for cooperation in this field, as the tripartite cooperation and between public and private actors.

The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research has developed a monitor for measuring LLL called “Learning conditions monitor”. This monitor is a yearly measurement of policy for learning and training among adults, with special focus on the work environment and it is now conducted by Statistics Norway (SSB).