

INCEPTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT
INDIVIDUAL LEARNING ACCOUNTS (ILAs)

Ceemet views

Inception impact assessment

Ceemet agrees with the Commission on the barriers to undertake training amongst which, the cost of training, time constraints, lack of motivation to take training etc. Nevertheless, Ceemet considers that there are others reasons for adults not to undertake training than the ones¹ mentioned on the consultation document.

Ceemet generally agrees with the objectives about increasing the motivation and incentives of individuals to seek training. Also, on the fact that it is important to encourage adults to participate in training in order to up-skill and re-skill as a way to reduce the skills gaps and labour market shortages.

Ceemet, would add amongst the objectives, the need to support SMEs in the identification of their skills needs and the development of right skilling initiatives. These two axes are crucial when addressing the skills gap and the need to continuous up-skilling and re-skilling, in particular since employees in SMEs tend to participate less in training.

Regarding the *likely economic impact*, Ceemet regrets that the Commission only mentions increased costs for companies and/or public authorities but does not refer specifically to the limited resources (finance, lack of time, human resources etc) of SMEs.

Concerning likely social impacts, Ceemet understands re-skilling as a labour market measure, for example for unemployed workers for which Member States and public authorities have the main responsibility.

For certain categories of workers who are less represented in training it is important to explore different ways in which these workers could access training in order to upskill and re-skill in line with national practices.

ILAs – a solution?

Ceemet doesn't believe that Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) might offer the adequate solution to address the objectives and barriers mentioned in the consultation document, including addressing the skills gap and in particular the lack of motivation of employees to undertake training. Indeed, the Commission should take into account the OECD outcomes that point out that individual learning schemes have a poor track record as far as participation of the low-skilled workers is concerned. To the contrary, higher-skilled individuals tend to be over-represented in the take-up of these schemes. Thus, ILAs do not seem to be the solution to address the lack of motivation of employees to participate in training, especially for low skilled employees.

¹ The reasons why adults' positive general attitudes towards learning often do not translate into action include a lack of transparency about available support and training offers, uncertainty about their quality and recognition in the labour market, and insufficient tailoring of training offers to individual needs.

Before launching any initiative, the Commission should also take into account the reasons for which different ILAs put in place in different regions/countries in the 90s (Sweden, UK, Scotland, Vasque Region etc.) seemed not to have been successful.

Ceemet also considers that the “financing aspect” could be challenging and wonders how the Commission intends to ensure that ILAs receive the adequate financing when set-up.

SMEs represent the vast majority of companies in Europe, as is the case of the MET industries. With regards to training, SMEs would benefit from SME-specific guidance and support as they often do not have enough resources (human resources, time, financial resources) to train their employees. Therefore, Ceemet asks the Commission to consider the specific situation of SMEs when launching an initiative on ILAs or related schemes, as according to the Commission itself employees in SMEs tend to have less access to employer-sponsored training.

Further, Ceemet is interested to learn how ILAs can address the challenge of assuring the quality and transparency of training and its link to the labour market and the skills needs of companies. It is important that the training offer can really support employees in their up-skilling and re-skilling and in employability throughout life. The focus of potential ILAs should also “be labour market relevant” and linked to the skills needs (digital skills, AI, soft skills etc.) of the rapidly changing world of work

Other aspects to be taken into account in order address the lack of motivation of employees

Ceemet is of the opinion that vocational training is a shared responsibility between employers and employees. Indeed, training is for the benefit of all and a win-win situation for both employers and employees.

Motivation of employees to train is a big challenge when considering re-skilling and upskilling. Making employees aware of the added value of training in order to enhance their skills development is thus crucial. Social partners’ involvement at different levels, according to national practice, in this field is key.

Life-long learning (LLL) and Continuing Education and Training (CET) are more than ever a key instrument for maintaining one’s individual employability in a rapidly changing (digitalised) world of work. Therefore, awareness raising campaigns/initiatives about the importance of CET should be put in place to promote a culture of LLL and change of mindset and as part of the pathway to tackle the lack of motivation of employees to undertake training.

Counselling and career guidance/advice of employees, in particular of the low skilled, on the type of training they should undertake is important. Social partners have a critical role to play here.

New online tools can make available training offers more visible and more easily accessible. These new online tools can facilitate customised learning (e.g. online training) adapted to the employee’s needs and empower workers to up/reskill. However, the amount of online training offers is massive, and sometimes it might be challenging to choose the right quality one. Again, social partners should play a role here.

The use of MOOCS (massive open online courses) especially in the field of basic digital skills should also be promoted, as they are an affordable and flexible way of acquiring news skills and thus of up-skilling and re-skilling.

As said before, support for SMEs to identify their skills needs/skills mismatches is important. Targeted EU-funds for SMEs to develop right skilling initiatives and training schemes is part of the solution to boost the participation of employees in SMEs in training.

Social partner, a key actor within EU/national initiatives in the area of skills

Ceemet would like to emphasize, once more, the important role that social partners play in the skills policy area and in particular in the employment context. Well designed, user-friendly ILAs can only be successful with the adequate involvement of social partners at all levels. Therefore, in order to tackle the challenges mentioned on the incept impact assessment around the potential development of ILAs it is critical to **involve social partners**:

- in awareness raising of the importance/value of the training (both for employees and SMEs)- Social partners can play a key role in the provision of information and awareness raising on the training and its importance, on what type of training exist, on how to access the training etc,
- in counselling and guidance to employees, specially targeting low skilled workers etc.
- (and industry/employers) in educational and career guidance/counselling/advice of employees and students;
- (and industry/employers) in the discussions on the anticipation of skills, skills needs and skills forecast;
- in discussions around validation of non-formal and informal learning, taking into account that much of the “training” is done by learning-on-the-job
- in the discussions around the quality and transparency assurance of training offer
- in the exchange of good practice on successful up-skilling and re-skilling programmes
- and industry in the discussions around the issue of portability of training entitlements’ across jobs

It is also necessary to:

- Boost the cooperation between social partners (and industry/employers) and training providers – for an up-to date training adapted to the skills needs of the company/sector
- Support easier access to EU-funded projects for right-skilling initiative with social partner involvement;

Final remarks

- Ceemet would like to refer to its position papers on [VET](#), [European Education Area](#) and [comments](#) to the 2020 New Skills Agenda
- Ceemet is actively involved in the Pact for skills for the automotive sector and aerospace & defence sectors
- Ceemet would continue to provide its input on the different stages of the consultation procedure
