



DIG.INT PARTNERS' REGIONAL REPORTS

Annexes

**AUVERGNE - RHÔNE
ALPES**

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VET INTERNATIONALISATION POLICIES AND EXPERIENCES IN AUVERGNE - RHÔNE ALPES

Introduction to the Local Context

On 1st 2025, the population of France was 68.6 million, 0.25% more than a year earlier ([INSEE](#)).

France

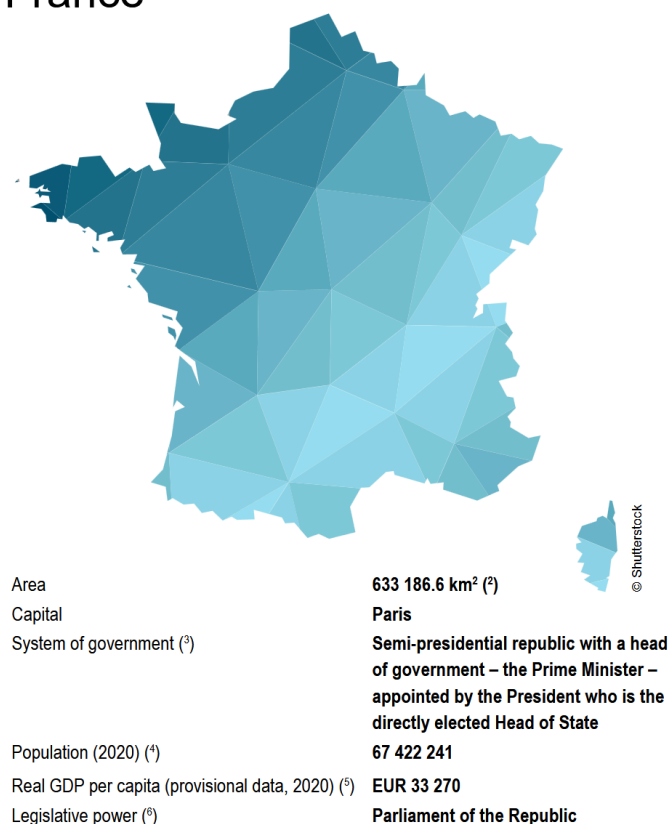


Figure 1: Map of France [1]

In France, lifelong learning aims to secure access to training, skills for jobs and social advancement. A main feature is that state-issued vocational qualifications can be acquired in initial education but also in apprenticeship and through continuing training that makes it easier to progress at an individual pace.

Upskilling low-qualified young people and the unemployed is a policy priority. There is a national obligation to provide education and training within or outside formal education to allow them to qualify and access employment. A significant number of young learners leave the school system with low or no qualifications and face difficulties accessing employment in their transition from education to working life. To support young people most at risk of leaving education and training early and

without qualifications, the 2019 Law for a school of trust (26) brings a training guarantee (obligation de formation) to age 18 and extends the definition of training (formation) beyond vocational education and training to other forms of training: employment, civic service and support schemes for social and professional integration.

Vocational training in France is a matter of shared responsibilities among the state, the regions and representatives of the business world. Initial VET and continuing vocational training are managed by different ministries that develop nationally valid vocational qualifications and certificates.

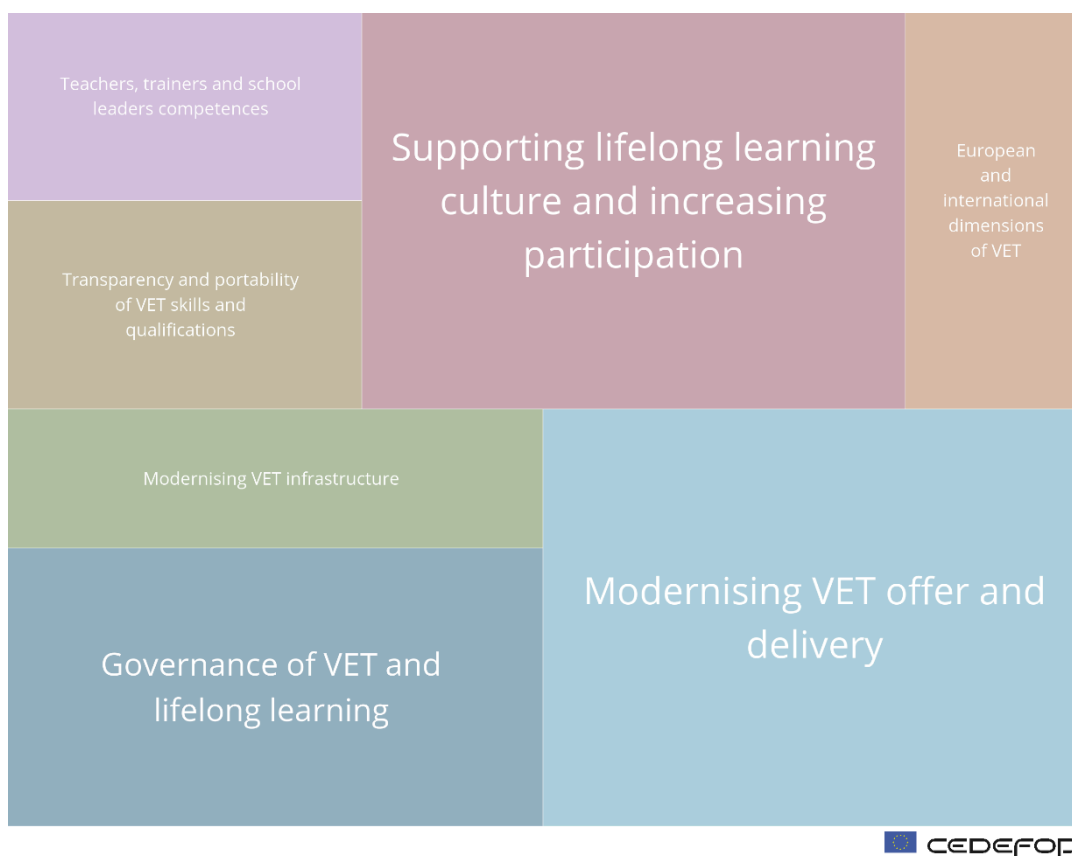


Figure 2: Thematic categories by number of policy developments

At regional level, coordination of this training guarantee for unemployed 16 to 18 year-olds is ensured by the network of *missions locales*, guidance and orientation services of the public employment service, cooperating with education institutions (including second-chance schools and schools for early leaver reintegration) and information and guidance centers to provide adequate support and training offer to young people aged 16 to 25

Initial education and continuing training in France operate as a continuum in the national system of lifelong learning. They aim to help citizens acquire skills relevant for personal and professional development and ensure social integration of young people and adults. Around one third of learners in upper secondary schools follow the vocational path that builds on personalised support, reinforced career guidance for successful transition to further studies or the labour market and

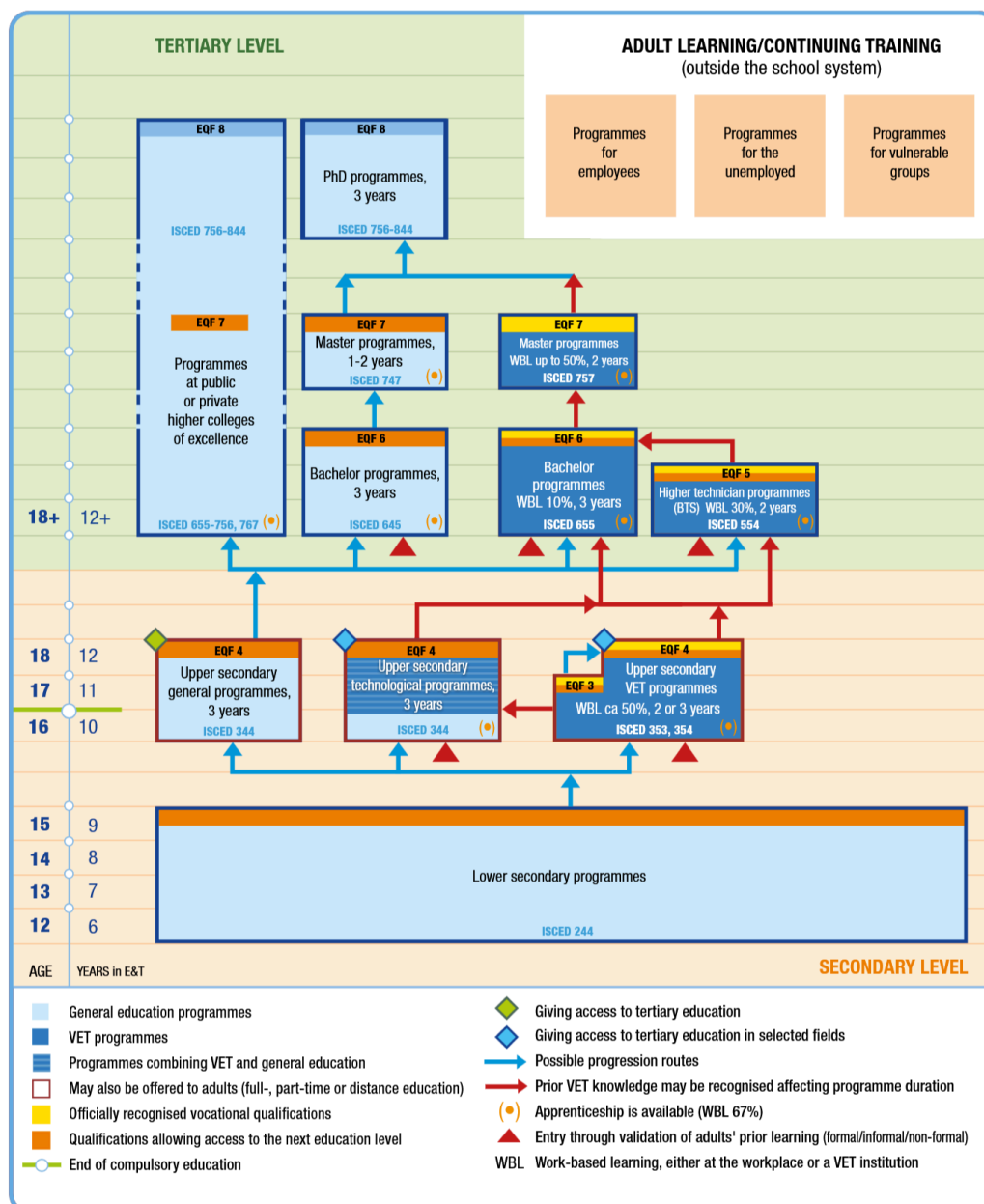
diversification of the learning offer. More than 400 VET diploma specialisations are offered in different sectors of the economy. France ranks among the top ten EU-27 countries for participation in lifelong learning (13% by 2020).

Education and VET system

(This paragraph is taken in its entirety from [1])

In France, initial education and training covers general, technological and vocational programmes, including apprenticeships. It is part of the overarching lifelong learning system and comprises (Figure 2). Compulsory education comprises pre-primary education, 5 years of primary education and 4 years of lower secondary general education (ages 6 to 16). Learners with special education needs generally attend ordinary schools (in dedicated sections in place from primary to upper secondary (sections d'enseignement général et professionnel adapté (SEGPA), établissements régionaux d'enseignement adapté (EREA), unités localisées pour l'inclusion scolaire (ULIS)).

In the last year of lower secondary (collège), learners take an exam to acquire the end of lower secondary education certificate (diplôme national du brevet). Since 2019, interested pupils in the last year of lower secondary can opt for a career orientation scheme (troisième prépa-métiers) to discover several trades and be guided in their decision to continue in upper secondary VET studies or prepare for a vocational qualification in an apprenticeship training centre. In upper secondary, all three pathways (general, technological and vocational) lead to a final exam to acquire the nationally recognised upper secondary school leaving baccalaureate diploma.



NB: ISCED-P 2011. The French qualifications framework is not linked to European qualifications framework level 1; vocational qualifications have not been established at level 2.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet France, 2021.

Figure 3: VET in the French education and training system in 2021/22

The general education baccalaureate gives access to higher education academic and technological studies. Technological baccalaureate holders usually move on to tertiary undergraduate or professional bachelor programmes.

In the vocational pathway, it is possible to acquire a first qualification in 2 years and enter the labour market or to complete a 3-year programme that awards the vocational baccalaureate, opening up tertiary-level studies to acquire the undergraduate technician certificate. Integrated studies in technology institutes (Instituts Universitaires de Technologie, IUTs) lead to a University Bachelor of Technology in 3 years, with the possibility to acquire an undergraduate certificate of technology in

the second year. Professional bachelor (European qualifications framework (EQF) 6) and master (EQF 7) programmes are offered in parallel to higher education academic studies (EQF levels 6 to 8). Figure 3 presents an overview of upper secondary vocational paths and qualifications. Horizontal and vertical progression between VET paths, as well as with the general and technological upper secondary paths, is possible.

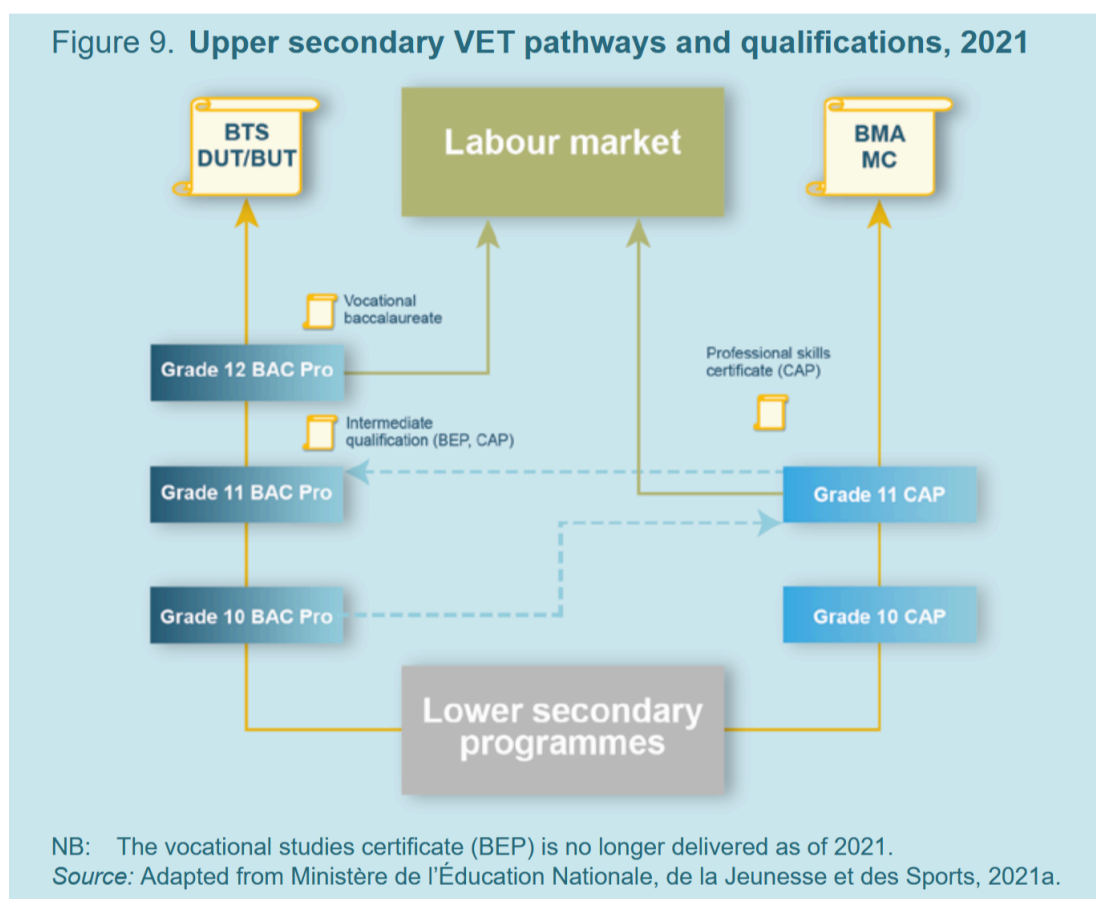


Figure 4: Upper secondary VET pathways and qualifications, 2021

Economic sectors: Industry 4.0 & VET

France has historically invested heavily in skills anticipation, which is characterized by strong stakeholder and social partner engagement. Skills anticipation in France is, however, quite fragmented, with several initiatives undertaken by different actors (public authorities, chambers of commerce, social partners, and sector organizations) in parallel. Many studies have been conducted at regional, sectoral, and local levels using different methodologies. The complexity of skills anticipation and high number of agencies engaged may prevent users (including students, workers, and unemployed people) to find the skills intelligence they require ([Skills anticipation in France](#)). The government and social partners entrusted [France Strategy](#) with the task of streamlining and improving the coordination of the skills anticipation system.

France Stratégie has published an online working paper analysing various reindustrialization scenarios up to 2035 and assessing their impact in terms of the resources required to achieve them,

as well as the possible effects on CO2 emissions and on certain key macroeconomic variables. In its report, produced by [Dares](#), *France Stratégie* anticipates developments and needs by sector and potential imbalances between job supply and demand, and sheds light on the medium-term impact on the employment dynamics of sectors of activity and occupations (Figure 4).

Les métiers en plus forte expansion entre 2019 et 2030

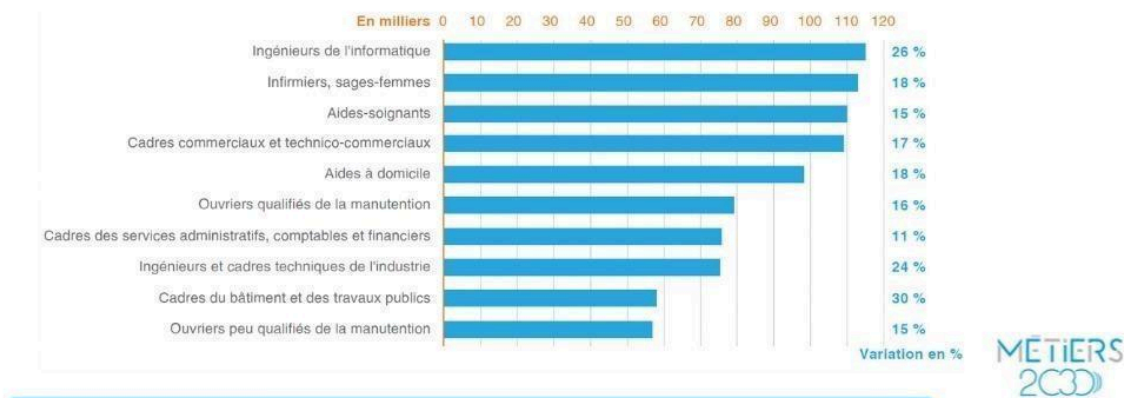
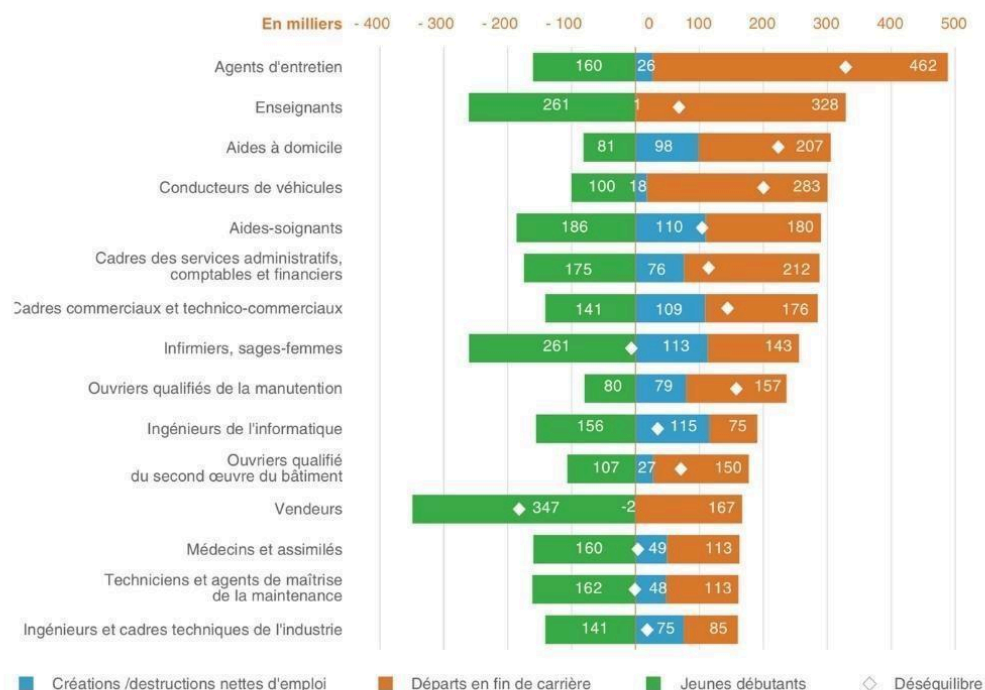


Figure 5:

For each profession, the report compares employers' recruitment needs in 2030 with the potential pool of young people starting out in that profession, to highlight any imbalances. To overcome these potential imbalances, it will be necessary to make these professions more attractive to young people, but also to professionals already in employment, by facilitating career transitions, training the unemployed and encouraging inactive people to enter the labour market (Figure 5).

Les déséquilibres potentiels des métiers ayant les besoins de recrutement les plus élevés



MÉTIER
2030

Figure 6:

The report *Les Métiers en 2030* illustrates in great detail the importance of public policies, particularly in the areas of initial and continuing training and support for the unemployed, in guiding the workforce towards the occupations of the future.

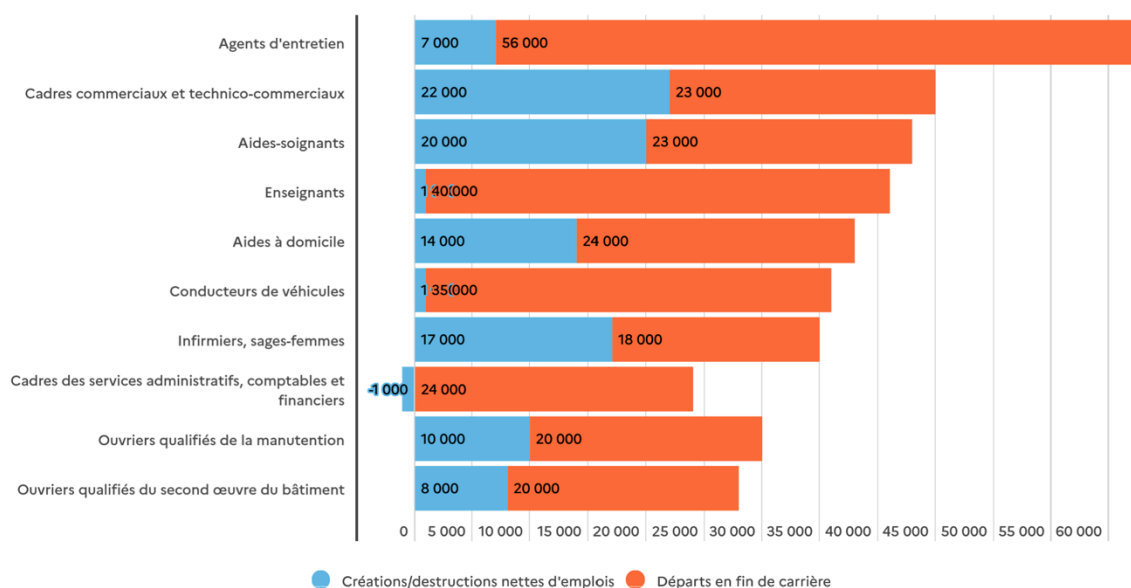
For this purpose, there are several target groups for the [skills anticipation](#) outputs. Policymakers involved in steering vocational education and training (VET) provision are an important audience, but efforts are being made to provide intelligence to students, workers and unemployed people, to help them make investments in skills. In the context of Industry 4.0, upskilling the least qualified remains a major national priority, materialised through several programmes: the 2018-22 Investments in skills plan, aligning training to company and emerging needs, such as digitalisation and distance learning; the 2020 Youth plan, providing short-term backing in response to the pandemic; and the National resilience and recovery programme, offering long-term investments for social and economic prosperity.

The continuing training and apprenticeship system assigns a central place to the online personal training account (compte personnel de formation, CPF) scheme, an individual right to training

offering personalised access depending on the beneficiary's learning profile. End-users use their learning credits to enrol in training actions to acquire skills for jobs and nationally recognised qualification [1]. Apprenticeship training centres offer an alternative route to school-based education for young people up to age 29 to combine learning with work and gain a qualification and/or employment; private bodies and businesses may set up their own apprenticeship centre and offer training for skills in demand in their sector.

Public bodies produce quantitative and qualitative studies on employment and training: [FranceStratégie](#), the Centre for studies and research on qualifications ([Céreq](#)), the Centre for employment and labour research ([Ceet](#)), the national institute for statistics and economic research ([INSEE](#)) and the research and statistics management department ([Dares](#)). Results support public debate; they are used by public authorities and VET stakeholders developing and implementing VET policies at national and regional level, and by ministries and social and economic actors determining (new) labour market needs, IVET (including technological) policies and CVET training needs and policies.

Les dix métiers avec les plus forts besoins de recrutement entre 2019 et 2030 en Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes



Sources : projections France Stratégie/Dares

The Auvergne- Rhône Alpes region is one of the country's most dynamic economic and industrialized hubs. It is the second-largest regional economy in France after Île-de-France (Paris region). Its strength relies on mechanical engineering, metallurgy, chemicals, and plastics. Specializations include automotive (Renault Trucks, Michelin HQ in Clermont-Ferrand); aerospace and precision engineering and chemicals (especially around Lyon – France's "chemical valley").

It is also a major hub for biotech, pharmaceuticals, and medical technologies. Indeed, it is a leading European city in veterinary sciences, oncology, and infectious diseases. It hosts research institutions and major players like Sanofi Pasteur, bioMérieux.

Technology and Innovation are also very well-represented as digital tech, software, and AI have rapidly grown as clusters like Digital League can show. Grenoble and Lyon are key tech centers with strong R&D activity.

The region includes the Alps and Massif Central, making it a huge destination for ski tourism (e.g., Chamonix, Les Trois Vallées) as well as hiking, cycling, and thermal spas. Tourism and outdoor sports are a major revenue source, especially in winter and summer seasons.

Another important economic sector of the region is agriculture and agrifood. There is a diverse agriculture: vineyards (Beaujolais, Côtes-du-Rhône), dairy (cheese like Saint-Nectaire, Bleu d'Auvergne), and livestock. Wine, cheese, and meat products are key to the local business environment and strong agrifood industry with a focus on local specialties and exports serves as a display of the regional cultural identity.

Furthermore, Lyon is at a strategic location at the crossroads of Europe, hence the region can benefit from major transport corridors linking northern Europe to the Mediterranean. Lyon is a logistics hub, with access to road, rail, and the Rhône River.

As a result, education and research play a key role in feeding apprentices and graduates to these flourishing industries. Renowned universities and Grandes Ecoles in Lyon, Grenoble, and Clermont-Ferrand. Represent a strong public and private R&D investment, especially in science and engineering fields.

To summarize, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes is an economic powerhouse with a strong industrial base, high levels of innovation, a vibrant tech and life sciences ecosystem, and a active and ever-developing tourism sector. Its central location in Europe further boosts its attractiveness for logistics and trade.

VET Internationalization policy

Internationalization plays a crucial role in France's Vocational Education and Training (VET) system (Figure 7).

European and international dimensions of VET by subcategory and number of policy developments

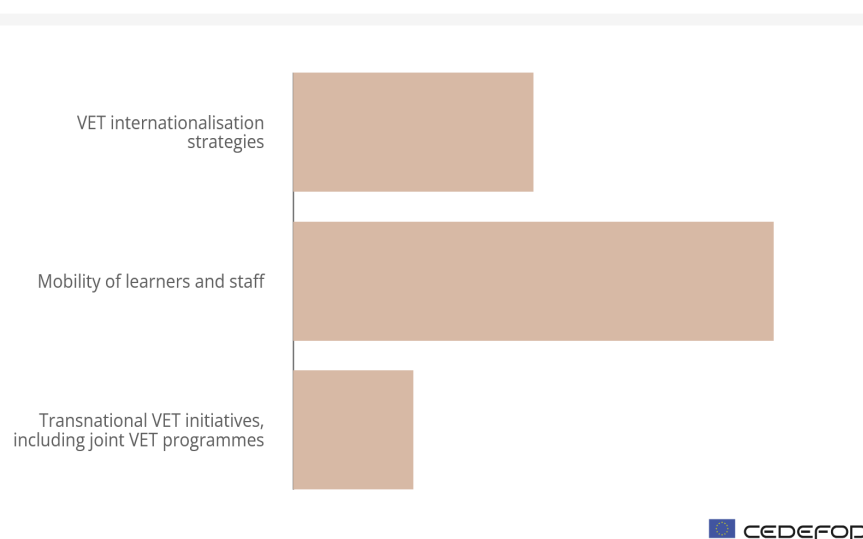


Figure 7: International VET in France

Several initiatives have been taken:

- An optional transnational mobility period available within the work placement module of the **vocational baccalaureate (EuroMobipro certificate)** has been replaced by a new scheme (MobilitéPro) for international mobility and extended to the CAP programme and BMA programmes (Cedefop and ReferNet France, 2020b). The COVID-19 crisis had a negative impact on its implementation in 2020 and 2021. International mobility has been offered as part of the **vocational baccalaureate** since 2014 (7,000 applicants in 2018). Currently it is promoted in IVET, in both school-based and apprenticeship programmes:
 - New legislation (30 August 2019) re-establishes the terms of the optional mobility unit in the vocational baccalaureate (BAC-pro), and extends its offer to other professional diplomas: the professional certificate (Brevet professionnel); the trades certificate (Brevet des métiers d'art) and the professional skills certificate (CAP, Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle);
 - A reference curriculum defines the assessment criteria in terms of skills and cultural and professional knowledge.
 - The optional mobility unit can be assessed either as part of the compulsory units of the vocational training programme curriculum or be assessed separately and recognized (mobility certificate). The evaluation takes place abroad in the host institution (company or training organization) and the second part when the learner returns to France (home institution);
 - The procedures for implementing placements for apprentices are specified by the decree of 24 October 2019 (and orders of 22 January 2020). The maximum time to be spent abroad is one year, with at least six months spent in France. During the period abroad, alternating work-study training is no longer obligatory. For placements lasting more than four weeks, the employment contract is put on hold; the host organization is responsible for the conditions of the contract. Placements not exceeding four weeks may be undertaken in the form of an apprenticeship.

The optional mobility unit increases the attractiveness of the vocational baccalaureate by strengthening its openness to the world. Originally implemented on an experimental basis, it is now mainstreamed, and its international scope emphasized.

From 2022, this policy development has been part of the national implementation plan (NIP): 'Reinforcing the individualization of training paths and the fluidity of lifelong learning' and 'strengthening the individualizations of initial vocational education'.

5,951 candidates registered in the 2022-exam session of the optional mobility test. This significant improvement was undoubtedly linked to the changes in travel conditions (vaccination and PCR tests). The eligible area for mobility was also extended to the whole world. This mobility unit is available to all young people, whether they are students or apprentices; it is also available for adults in CVET.

- Concerning the vocational diplomas delivered by the ministry, it should also be underlined that learners can have a training mobility period abroad (in a company for example), and the competences, skills and knowledge acquired can be recognized for their exam back home. A certificate is delivered by the head of the regional education authority (recteur) to all learners that pass the mobility Unit (attestation MobilitéPro).
- A guide was elaborated, jointly by the ministry of Education and the Erasmus + Education and Training Agency to explain this scheme and the mobility optional unit.
 - Vocational high school students can benefit from reinforced modern foreign language teaching within the framework of so-called “European classes” through a non-linguistic subject (DNL) taught in a foreign language. Most of the time, this DNL applies to vocational teaching areas. The aim is to strengthen language skills and develop cultural knowledge. “European classes” in vocational high schools also rely on periods of training in a professional environment abroad to organize activities that combine a professional approach and a cultural approach. These classes contribute to the European and international opening of vocational high schools. Students have the indication ‘European class’ on their professional baccalaureate diploma.
 - Also, the law 2022-217 of 21 February 2022 on regional differentiation, decentralization, and devolution, including various measures to simplify the functioning of local government, introduced a legal framework for cross-border apprenticeships. This system is conditioned to bilateral agreements with the respective bordering countries. Order 2022-1607 of 22 December 2022 on cross-border apprenticeships lays down the applicable regulations.
- Programs such as Erasmus+ facilitate cross-border internships and student exchanges, ensuring that learners gain international experience. As part of the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme, the Erasmus+ France Education and Training agency is responsible for coordinating a network of vocational education and training experts. Under the supervision of two ministries - the Ministry of National Education and Youth and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Integration - this team of experts provides support to VET bodies on raising awareness about and recognition of the educational benefits of international mobility. This team has produced a guide for the promotion of mobility in initial and vocational training and runs information webinars. The published report (*'A territorial atlas of European and international mobility'*) provides an overview of exchange programmes for students, researchers, higher education staff and vocational training students across the French regions.
 - The Erasmus+ France Education and Training agency publishes a yearly activity report and the results of the previous year’s call for proposals, giving an overview of the impact of the Erasmus+ programme in the VET sector for France. The budget dedicated to VET mobility grew by 23% between 2018 and 2019. Among the exchanges for apprentices funded in 2019, 1,986 were long Erasmus professional exchanges.
 - The *Refernet* network has published a thematic study on the development of long-term mobility for apprentices.

Regional internationalization strategy

The region's international approach is anchored in its Schéma Régional de Développement Économique, d'Innovation et d'Internationalisation (SRDEII), integrated with the regional plans for higher education, research, innovation, and professional training (SRESRI, CPRDFOP) into a unified 2022–2028 plan¹. This plan prioritizes industrial relocalization, innovation, and a stronger international footprint.

The region has identified three international zones as strategic targets: Europe and border areas (notably through the “4 Motors for Europe” network, i.e. Auvergne–Rhône–Alpes; Baden-Württemberg, Germany; Catalonia, Spain; Lombardy, Italy), Francophone countries (Québec, Maghreb, Côte d'Ivoire), and “Grand Export” markets (North America, China, India, Southeast Asia, etc.)

The Auvergne-Rhône Alpes region aims at supporting internationalization by facilitating the establishment or relocation or expansion projects of international companies in the area. A dedicated team provides services such as:

- Assistance in organizing visits and appointments
- Contact with local ecosystems and future partners
- Real estate research and short-lists
- Economic and sector specific information
- An overview of the financial support available
- Support to open and manage companies
- Human resources support and recruitment assistance

This last point is crucial to align degrees with companies' future needs. In order to do so, VET and the interactions between professors, companies, students and governance bodies are great levers. However, VET relying mostly on national laws, it may prove difficult to have them match.

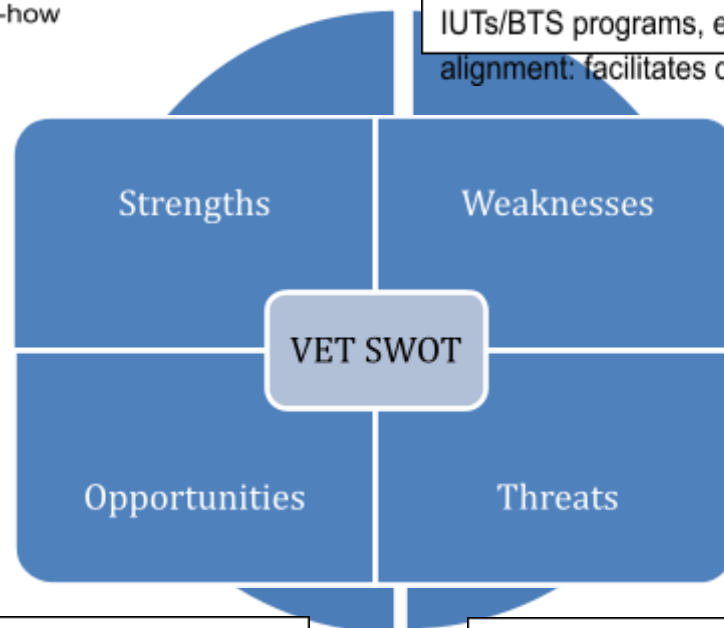
Internationalization Strategy of French VET Institutions

Following is a SWOT analysis to highlight the challenges of the VET internationalization strategy faced by VET institutions and international companies looking at a more open and competitive job-market and workforce.

¹Plan d'Auvergne- Rhône Alpes 2022-28, 01/07/2022
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- State support through Erasmus+ and Campus France: Funding, mobility frameworks, and partnerships.
- Robust VET ecosystem: IUTs, BTS, CFA, and Grandes Écoles provide short, job-ready degrees.
- Work-based learning model is attractive to international partners.
- European Qualification Framework alignment: facilitates diploma recognition.
- Strong sectoral know-how

- Language barrier: Most programs are still in French, limiting accessibility.
- Limited global branding compared to Germany or the Netherlands in VET.
- Fragmentation of initiatives: Internationalization is not always centralized or strategic at the institutional level.
- Weak international marketing by many IUTs/BTS programs, especially outside Europe



- Global demand for short-cycle, skill-based training: Many countries seek French expertise in apprenticeship and dual education.
- Franco-African and Francophone cooperation: Growing demand from Sub-Saharan Africa, Maghreb, and Southeast Asia.
- Post-Brexit mobility shifts: France is better positioned to attract EU and UK students.
- Digital learning and blended mobility allow new hybrid partnerships and COILs (Collaborative Online International Learning).
- Strong sectoral know-how in hospitality, engineering, transport/logistics, agriculture, and healthcare.

- Competition from German, Dutch, Nordic, and Anglophone VET models: better-known, often more English-based.
- Geopolitical risks: Visa restrictions, conflicts, or diplomatic tensions (e.g., Maghreb) may limit mobility.
- Institutional overload: Smaller VET institutions often lack the staff/time to sustain partnerships long-term.
- Limited pathways to higher studies can deter some international applicants.

Turning reflection into action

Here is a suggestion of levers that can be activate to overcome weaknesses and threats to French VET internationalization plans

- **Developing more English-taught and bilingual programs**
To attract more international students, French VET institutions can introduce more courses taught in English or in a bilingual format. This would make their programs more accessible to non-French speakers and enhance their global competitiveness, especially in technical fields such as logistics, tourism, business, and engineering.
- **Creating dedicated international relations teams**
Many vocational institutions lack the human resources and expertise needed to sustain international activities. Establishing dedicated internationalization units or staff can help them develop and manage strategic partnerships more effectively, particularly in IUTs, CFA centers, and BTS programs.
- **Strengthening visibility through international branding**
French VET institutions should improve their visibility abroad by investing in international branding efforts. This includes translating websites and brochures, promoting the French apprenticeship model, participating in education fairs, and engaging with international alumni networks and digital platforms like Campus France.
- **Building long-term international partnerships**
Rather than relying on ad hoc or short-term exchanges, institutions should aim to form structured, long-term partnerships with international counterparts. These partnerships can involve joint diplomas, longer and coordinated (studies/work-based) mobility programs, and shared vocational projects, particularly in target regions such as Francophone Africa, Southeast Asia, and Europe.
- **Collaborating with internationally active companies**
To enhance job prospects for students and ensure alignment with global workforce needs, French VET institutions should develop closer ties with multinational companies that have a strong presence in France. These companies can provide apprenticeship opportunities with an international dimension and help co-design programs that reflect real-world industry needs.
- **Expanding virtual and hybrid mobility programs**
Since not all students can afford to study abroad physically, institutions can expand opportunities for international experience through virtual exchanges, collaborative online projects (COIL), and remote internships. These flexible formats make global learning more inclusive and accessible.
- **Clarifying academic progression pathways**
To reassure international students about their future prospects, institutions should clearly communicate how vocational diplomas (like BTS and BUT) can lead to further study, such as

professional licenses or access to university degrees. This transparency will make VET pathways more attractive to globally mobile learners.

- Improving intercultural and student support services
Institutions can improve the experience of international students by offering better integration services, such as intercultural training for staff, buddy programs, and multilingual support. These efforts contribute to a more welcoming environment and higher retention of international learners. Many universities have already started the process of quality certification (Label Bienvenue en France).
- Mobilizing national and European funding
To address financial constraints, VET institutions should actively seek national and EU-level funding to support internationalization efforts. Programs like Erasmus+, France 2030, and European structural funds can provide crucial resources for mobility projects, infrastructure upgrades, and partnership development.