



DIG.INT PARTNERS' REGIONAL REPORTS

Annexes

BASQUE COUNTRY



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Version	Contributor(s)	Contribution
01.02.2025	Amaia Fernandez as european project coordinators in Meka LHII	V1.0 - initial draft
01.04.2025	Jon Azpiroz & Nerea Arriaga as european project coordinators in Meka LHII	V1.1 - updated and final version

VET INTERNATIONALISATION POLICIES AND EXPERIENCES IN BASQUE COUNTRY REGION

Introducing the local context

Historical Context: Despite its name, the Basque Country is not a country at all. The Basque Country is a cultural region that overlaps the western side of the border between France and Spain where the Basque people have lived for centuries.

Four of the traditional provinces of the Basque region are in Spain and three are in France. As a result, the citizens of this cultural region hold either French or Spanish citizenship. And the current political boundaries of the region are a complex



amalgam of many different parts. In essence, they consist of two regional autonomous communities in Spain, *Euskadi* and *Nafarroa*, and in France, three historic Basque provinces that no longer exist and are part of a larger department, Pyrénées Atlantiques, although Basques still commonly make references to the French Basque provinces. In France, it's referred to as *Pays Basque*.

Politically and officially speaking, we are going to focus on *Euskadi*, or the Basque Autonomous Community, one of 17 regions that make up the Spanish state. It is divided in 3 historic territories: Bizkaia, Araba and Gipuzkoa.

Capital city: Vitoria-Gasteiz (Capital of Bizkaia:

Bilbao, Capital of Gipuzkoa: **Donostia-San Sebastián**, Capital of Araba: **Vitoria-Gasteiz**)

Official Languages: Basque and Spanish

Area: 7.234 km²

Inhabitants: 2.213.993

Density of population: 306,05 inhabitants/km²

Municipalities: 252

GDP: 68.817.000.000 € (2016)

GDP pro capita: 35.300 € (2016)

The Basque Autonomous Community ranks first in Spain in terms of per capita product, it's the most economically productive region of the country with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. Today, the strongest industrial sectors of the Basque Country's economy are the manufacturing sector, present in the valleys of Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa; aeronautics and logistics in Vitoria-Gasteiz; and finance and energy, in Bilbao.

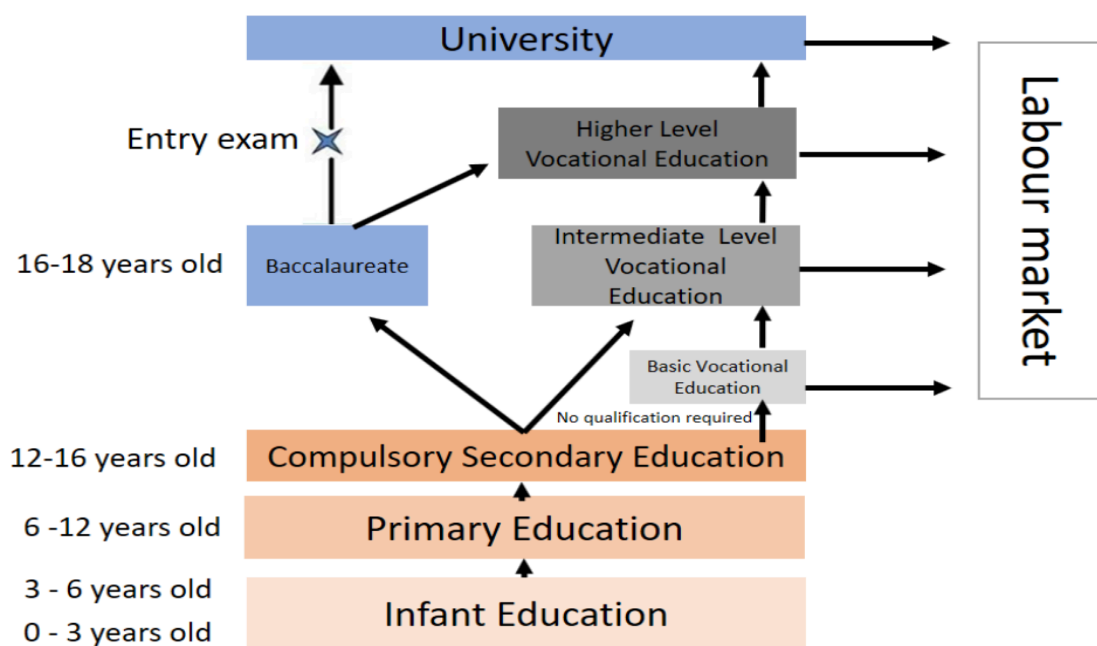
Sources:

<https://euskalkazeta.com/what-is-the-basque-country/>

<https://www.ehu.eus/en/web/basque-culture/about-the-basque-country>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basque_Country_\(autonomous_community\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basque_Country_(autonomous_community))

Education and VET system



Source:

https://www.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/sistema_educativo_vasco/es_def/adjuntos/Informacion_familias_ingles.pdf

The Basque educational system follows the general structure of the Spanish educational system but with significant autonomy and distinctive features tailored to its regional context.

Decentralisation: educational competences are shared between the General State Administration (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training) and the authorities of the autonomous communities (Departments for Education):

- **the central education administration** executes the general guidelines of the Government on education policy and regulates the basic elements or aspects of the system;
- **regional education authorities** develop the State regulations and have executive and administrative competences for managing the education system in their own territory.

Schools have pedagogical, organisational and managerial **autonomy** for their resources.

Participation of the education community in the schools' organisation, governance, running and evaluation.

VET SYSTEM

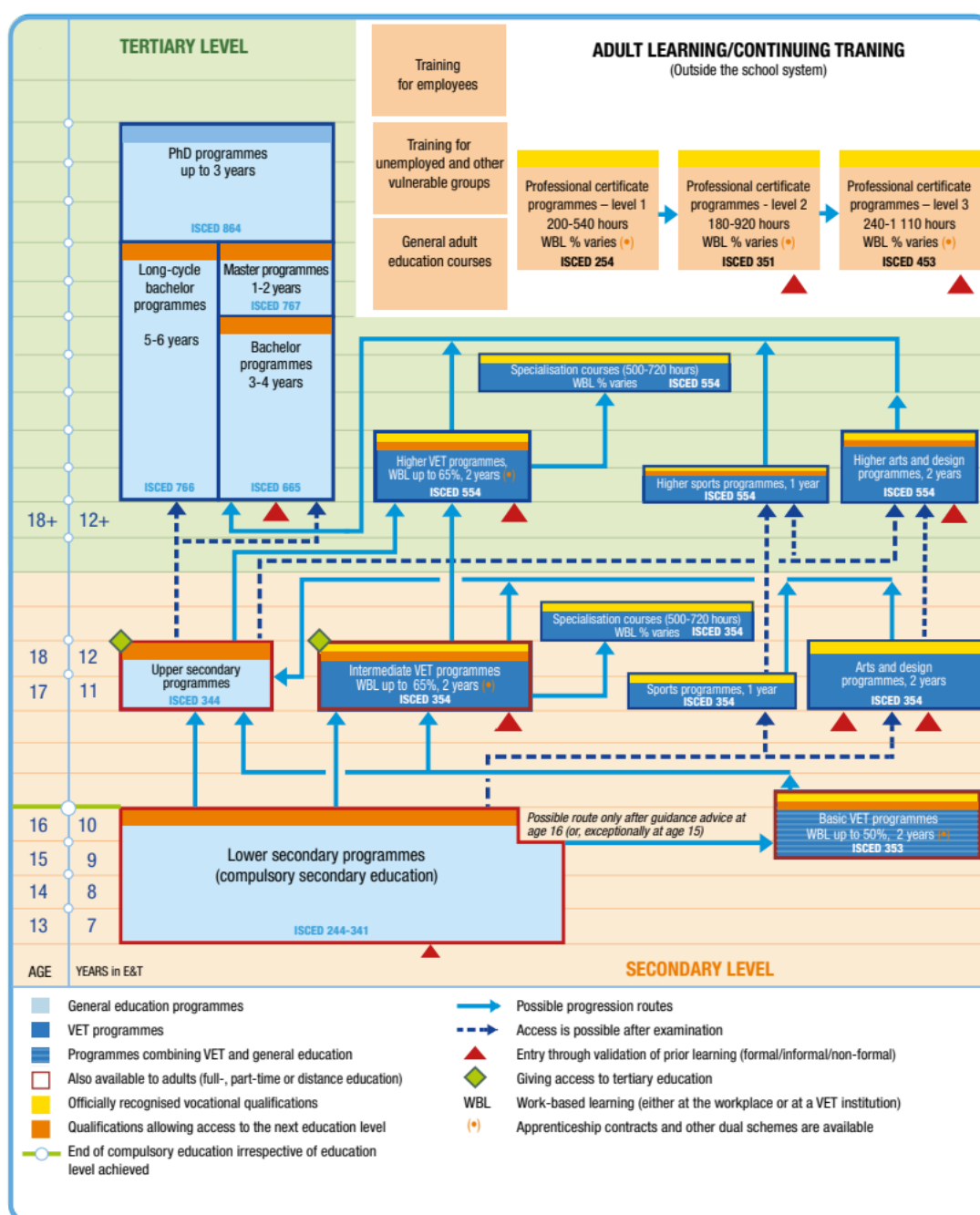
- **basic level training cycles** (ISCED 353), which are offered in secondary education high schools between the ages of 15 and 17. Students who complete these courses receive a diploma as Graduate in Compulsory Secondary Education and the qualification of Basic Technician in the corresponding specialisation. (equivalent to EQFL3)
- **intermediate vocational training** (vocational option) ISCED 354. The latter is also offered in high schools of vocational training, integrated vocational training centers and national reference centers. Once these studies are completed, students receive the title of Vocational Training Technician. Those graduates who wish to do so can continue their studies with intermediate vocational training specialization courses, in those professional families where this option exists. (equivalent to EQFL4)
- **advanced vocational training** (ISCED 554) is taught in the same centers as intermediate vocational training. Once these studies are completed, the student receives the title of Higher Technician in Vocational Training. Those graduates who wish to do so can continue their studies with higher-level vocational training specialization courses, in those professional families where this option exists. (equivalent to EQFL5)

The national system for qualifications and vocational training is the umbrella for VET programmes in and outside the education system, leading to qualifications awarded by the education authorities. VET and professional certificate programmes take as reference the occupational standards of the national catalogue (*Catálogo Nacional de Cualificaciones Profesionales, CNCP*), allowing mutual recognition of some parts of the training (modules). VET programmes are modularised, allowing partial certification and re-engagement from a lifelong learning perspective, and include compulsory workplace learning at the end of, or during, studies. Learners need to pass all modules to obtain the relevant qualification. VET programmes using online or virtual learning environments and platforms are increasing to ease access to VET. Adults may have their skills recognised or acquire a formal qualification through training. There are common regulations for validating skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning and work experience. These procedures empower citizens to engage in further learning and acquire full qualifications. Regional authorities can initiate public calls for validation of non-formal and informal learning depending on company needs, social partner

requests or minimum qualification requirements from sectoral regulatory bodies. Key competences tests have been developed for higher VET programmes and professional certificate access.

Sources:

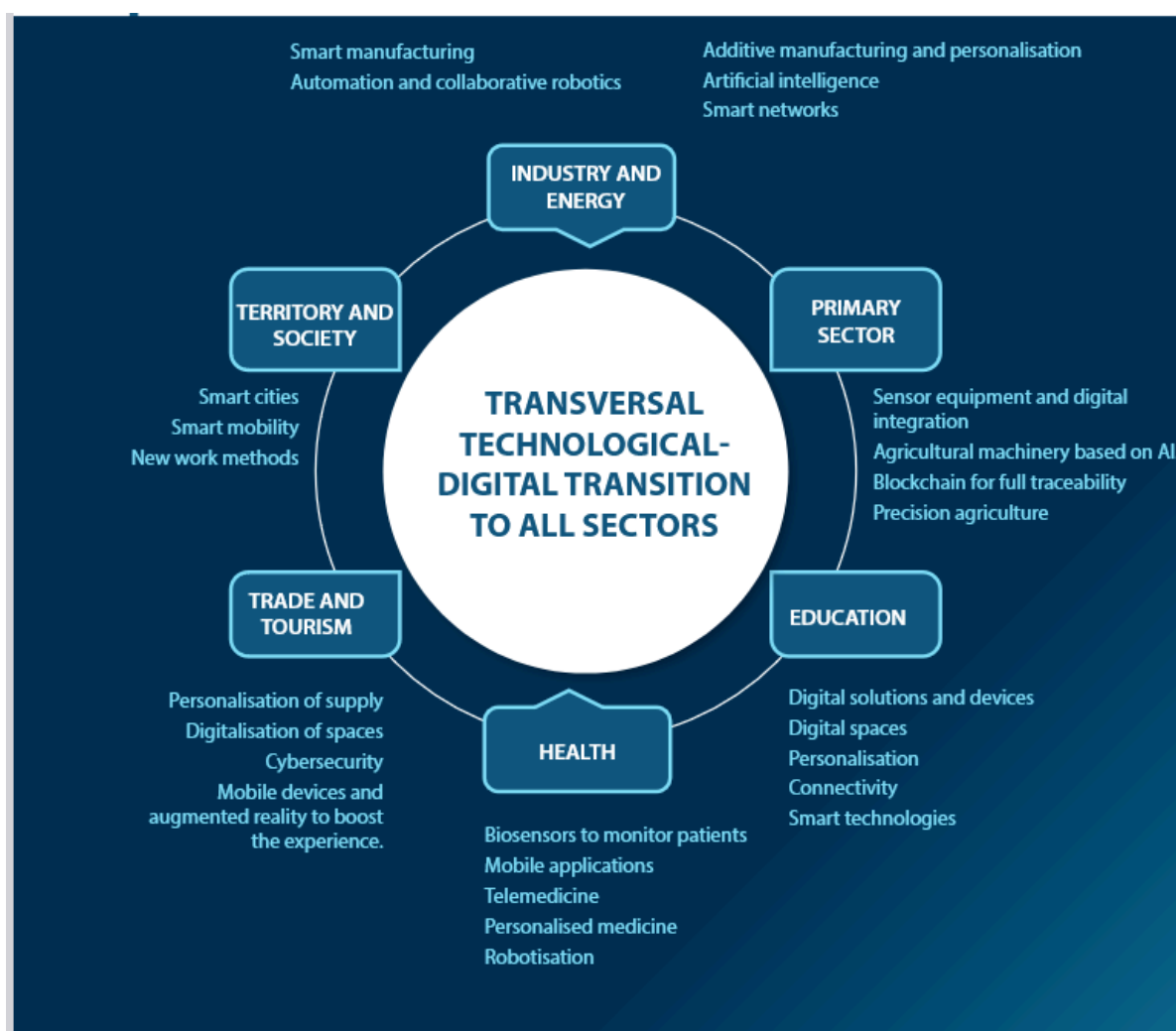
[Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe](https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/spain/overview)
<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/spain/overview>



NB: ISCED-P 2011. The Spanish education system is not referenced to EQF levels.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Spain, 2020.

Economic sectors – Strategic Approaches and Intervention Areas/ Companies internationalisation policy

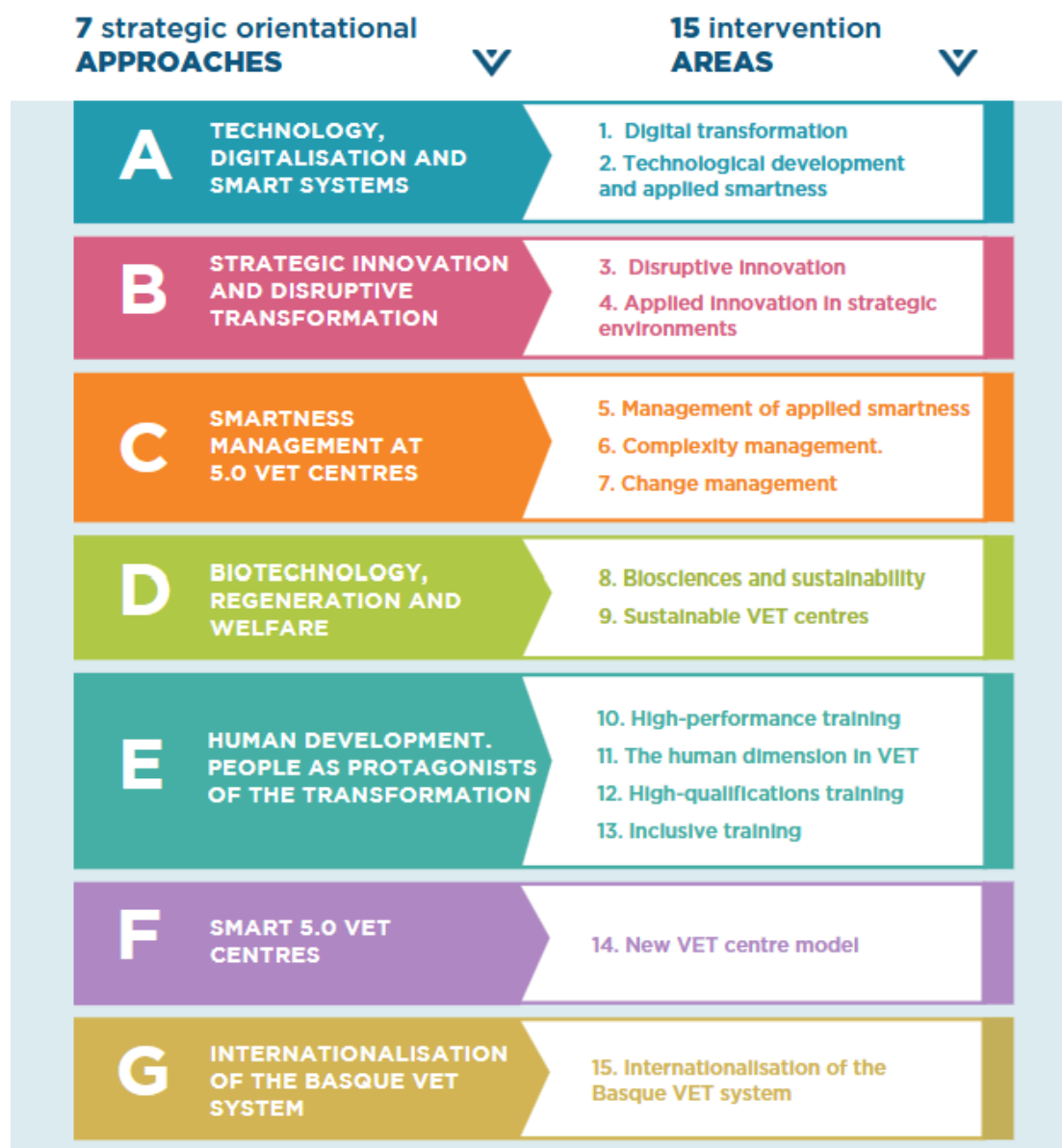
According to the current 6th Basque and Vocational Education and Training Plan, the Basque VET has a wide range of professional families to respond to the needs of businesses and society. The technological-digital transition affects all of them.



The Basque VET must remain at the forefront of technology and consolidate its immersion in smart environments, using 5.0 solutions to enable students to experiment in cutting-edge technology environments.

Likewise, VET must develop its systems, spaces and structures, moving in on the opportunities furnished by technology and focusing on a smart centre model that will deploy collaborative projects and integrate polyvalent teams, boosting innovation and the know-how of people as their chief value, in a fully digital environment.

7 strategic orientational approaches have been defined, with 15 action areas:



The 2025 Euskadi Basque Country International Framework Strategy offers a programme framework reflecting the international commitments in the Government Programme. Internationalisation is a crossing-cutting element to the government action and commitment number 18 is the Internationalisation of Basque companies.

The Basque Country has implemented a comprehensive internationalisation policy to enhance the global presence and competitiveness of its companies. This strategy is primarily executed through Basque Trade & Investment, the Basque Internationalisation Agency, which offers a range of services to support businesses in expanding their international reach.

Services provided include:

- +** **Strategic and Operational Advice**
- +** **Funding Tools**
- +** **Talent**
- +** **Competitive Intelligence**
- +** **Cooperation and Partnerships**
- +** **International Tenders**
- +** **International Promotion Events**

Source:

https://basquetrade.spri.eus/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BTI_servicios_2020_en.pdf

VET Internationalisation policy & practices

Education is a fundamental right and the basis for progress of any country. The Basque Government is firmly committed to consolidating and strengthening the public education services to thus contribute to the sustainable human development of the Basque society, by means of an educational system aimed at inclusion, equity and innovation that advances towards excellence.

At all the educational stages, impetus will continue to be given to the student and teacher cooperation and mobility projects within the EU's Erasmus programme in order to provide them with

the necessary skills to operate in the current and future Europe educational framework, and thus also continue to reinforcing the European dimension in all our centres.

Lastly, and as a country that wishes to have a more prominent role internationally, emphasis will continue to be given to students being multilingual, at the same time that the teaching staff will continue to be encourage to train internationally as the main player of educational change and improvement.

The Basque Country's vocational training model is acclaimed in Europe and internationally. The ground-breaking nature of the Basque model and of its centres as a key tool to foster growth, innovation and economic competitiveness has aroused the interest of quite a few international institutions and governments.

Therefore, the role of Tknika will be strengthened as an international centre of reference, both in the working groups of the UNESCO's UNEVOC network, as a leading educational institutions in the development of research and innovation applied in vocational training, and in the European Network of Centres of Excellence created by the European Commission, and where Tknika leads a platform of excellence in advanced manufacturing.

The Basque Government will seek to participate and contribute its approach in the review and updating of the European Skills Agenda, in keeping with the strategic areas of the European Commission, and with a special emphasis on the skills required by the digitalisation environments and the digital ecosystem. As regards Europe, the Erasmus grants and other exchange programmes will also be boosted in order to improve the skills and experience of the students. English will be progressively included as the reference language.

Furthermore, impetus will also be given to the internationalisation system of the vocational training combined model, so that the emphasis will be on general training in internationalisation and awareness-raising aimed at the centres, making efforts to lead the management of international networks, mobility projects for students and academics promoted, working on designing and implementing projects funded by the EU, along with attending and organising courses, seminars, international congresses and conferences, and intensifying agreements with different institutions.

On the other hand, work will be carried out on setting up the Basque International Campus for Smart Specialisation in VT. An initiative based on the cooperation among the training centres, companies and Basque institutions, in order to help boost employment, competitiveness and attracting talent, by means of providing advanced training.

Source:

INTERNATIONALISATION FRAMEWORK STRATEGY – EUSKADI BASQUE COUNTRY 2025 EXTERNAL ACTION PLAN

Practice: Talent attraction

There is no regional law for talent attraction in the Basque Country, but over the years different initiatives and programmes have been developed in order to attract and retain talent in the VET sector.

Attraction of talent is mentioned numerously through the 6th Basque and Vocational Education and Training Plan, and emphasizes the importance of developing talent. That is why one of the three lines of actions for a High-performance training, that will later create talented professionals, is to enrich the development of talent through entrepreneurial competence as a part of the entire learning process.

The Basque Institute for Talent in Vocational Training, iTlent, was created in February 2023 with the intention of evolving the concept of learning, transforming competence-based training into talent-based training. Organically attached to the Vice-Ministry, it takes the baton from Tknika's Learning and High Performance Area, and is committed to advanced learning models that allow students to develop their talent, reinforce their 4.0 values and anticipate emerging needs, consolidating the STEAM culture in learning and fostering an entrepreneurial culture.

One of its main achievements has been the creation of the ETHAZI model, a collaborative learning model based on challenges, which has shown its effectiveness in the development of students' professional and personal skills and has been recognised as a reference model at international level. Based on this model and firmly committed to the development of talent, iTlent works in the areas of research in learning methodologies, implementation of advanced learning, and transfer and collaborative networks.



LHko Talentuaren Euskal Institutua
 Instituto Vasco del Talento en la FP Euskadi
 Basque Institute of Talent in VET

<https://www.itlent.eus/en>

SWOT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Important funds for vocational training, as education and innovation are rewarded.	Level of English of students is sometimes low.
High-quality VET system recognised around Europe.	When hosting students, many companies are not proficient in English which adds difficulty when finding a hosting company for

<p>Participation in Erasmus+ and other European mobility programs strengthens partnerships with international institutions.</p> <p>Innovation networks: TKNIKA</p> <p>Hosting international students.</p> <p>Close collaboration between VET institutions and companies.</p>	<p>international students.</p> <p>Basque language adds an extra difficulty for international students, as it is institutionally compulsory in many companies.</p> <p>Less-resourceful institutions may face unequal access to internationalisation opportunities, especially in rural areas.</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Growing interest in mobilities among students. More and more every year.</p> <p>Opportunities to expand Erasmus+ and to foster collaboration with more international partners.</p> <p>International visibility thanks to the success of TKNIKA and VET centres.</p>	<p>THREATS</p> <p>Not as appealing as other parts of Spain or other countries in Europe.</p> <p>Budget cuts in education.</p>