

REGIONAL REPORT

COMORELP 2024. Małopolska

Self-assessment of regional lifelong learning policy

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Project: Development of a system for coordinating and monitoring regional activities in vocational education, higher education, and lifelong learning including adult learning.

List of contents

REGIONAL REPORT COMORELP 2024. MAŁOPOLSKA.....	5
SELF-ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING POLICY.....	5
MAŁOPOLSKA REGION.....	8
STRUCTURE OF LIFELONG LEARNING ORGANIZATION.....	10
SWOT ANALYSIS.....	14
STRENGTHS.....	14
WEAKNESSES.....	15
OPPORTUNITIES.....	16
THREATS.....	16
RESULTS OF THE REGIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING POLICY SELF-ASSESSMENT COMORELP 2024. MAŁOPOLSKA.....	17
Area 1: PLANNING AND STRATEGIC MANAGMENT.....	18
I. LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.....	18
SUMMARY:.....	20
II. COORDINATION AND INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION WITHIN THE REGIONAL LLL POLICY.....	21
SUMMARY:.....	22
III. CREATING, SUPPORTING, AND MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS.....	23
SUMMARY:.....	25
Area 2: IMPLEMENTATION.....	26
IV. INFORMATION AND CAREER COUNSELING.....	26
SUMMARY:.....	30
V. IDENTIFICATION OF LEARNERS' NEEDS AND MONITORING PARTICIPATION.....	31
SUMMARY:.....	32
VI. PROFESSIONALIZAION AND DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATORS AND LLL STAFF.....	33
SUMMARY:.....	34

VII. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR LIFELONG LEARNING	35
SUMMARY:	36
VIII. ECOLOGICAL AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION – IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE	37
SUMMARY:	38
IX. VALIDATION	39
SUMMARY:	39
Area 3: EVALUATION	40
X. EVALUATION OF REGIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING POLICY	40
SUMMARY:	41
COLLECTED ANSWERS	
AREA 1: PLANNING AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	42
I. THE PLACING OF LLL IN A REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	42
II. INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF LLL POLICIES	42
III. MANAGING AND SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS	43
Area 2: IMPLEMENTATION	43
IV. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE	43
V. IDENTIFICATION OF LEARNERS' NEEDS AND MONITORING OF PARTICIPATION	44
VI. PROFESSIONALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LLL EDUCATOR AND PERSONNEL	44
VII. FINANCIAL SUPPORTING FOR LIFELONG LEARNING	45
VIII. ECOLOGICAL AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IMPLEMENTATION INTO PRACTICE	45
IX. VALIDATION	46
Area 3: EVALUATION	46
X. REGIONAL POLICY EVALUATION IN THE AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING	46



REGIONAL REPORT COMORELP 2024. MAŁOPOLSKA

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING POLICY

This year's report is part of the implementation of a project: **Development of a system for coordinating and monitoring regional activities in vocational education, higher education, and lifelong learning, including adult learning**, conducted within the framework of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Component A: "Resilience and Competitiveness of the Economy," Investment A3.1.1).

The self-assessment of the regional lifelong learning (LLL) policy was conducted using a standardized tool consisting of 35 questions grouped into 10 dimensions. The Regional Round Table included 27 experts and stakeholders from the lifelong learning sector, representing all economic sectors: public, private, and non-governmental. Each answer provided was thoroughly discussed and justified. The motto of the first expert meeting was as follows: "attempting to answer the posed questions was a learning experience in itself. It allowed participants to look at specific problems and issues related to lifelong learning from a new perspective, often extending beyond the view of the institutions or organizations they represent."



ATTEMPTING TO ANSWER THE POSED QUESTIONS WAS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN ITSELF. IT ALLOWED PARTICIPANTS TO LOOK AT SPECIFIC PROBLEMS AND ISSUES RELATED TO LIFELONG LEARNING FROM A NEW PERSPECTIVE, OFTEN EXTENDING BEYOND THE VIEW OF THE INSTITUTIONS OR ORGANIZATIONS THEY REPRESENT.

The report traditionally consists of several parts. The first part provides a brief description of the region along with a SWOT analysis reflecting the potential of the region in relation to lifelong learning. The next section includes a general characterization of the lifelong learning process in Poland. The final, most comprehensive part of the document presents the results of the self-assessment of lifelong learning policy in Małopolska, analyzed across ten aspects of this policy. The report is supplemented by an annex, which presents the synthetic results of the evaluation.



We extend our sincere gratitude to the experts who accepted the invitation of the Director of the Voivodeship Labour Office in Kraków, Mr. Arkadiusz Psica, and participated in the meeting.

EXPERTS OF THE REGIONAL ROUND TABLE COMORELP 2024

7

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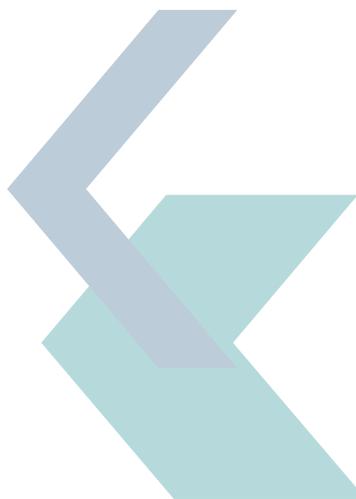
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Małopolska, in terms of area (ranking 12th with 15,200 km²), is one of the smallest regions in Poland. At the same time, it is one of the largest regions in terms of population (ranking 4th with 3.4 million inhabitants) and has the second highest population density (224 people per km²) after the Silesian Voivodeship. The region is located in the southeastern part of Poland, bordering the Silesian Voivodeship to the west, the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship to the north, and the Podkarpacie Voivodeship to the east. To the south, it shares a border with the Slovak Republic. The capital of the region is Kraków, the second-largest city in Poland (771,000 inhabitants), which is an important scientific, cultural, and economic center. The percentage of residents in Małopolska engaged in formal and non-formal learning (i.e., in schools and courses) according to Eurostat¹ data from 2022 is 12.7%

- which exceeds the European Union average (11.9%)
- and is greater than the national average in Poland (7.6% in 2022).

Figure 1: Regions in Poland and the Małopolska Region



In Małopolska, the awareness of the importance of lifelong learning has a long-standing tradition in regional policy. After 2004, both in Europe and Poland, there was a growing recognition of the need to support adult learning in response to labor market demands and the country's socio-economic development. Such goals were set by the then-current Strategy and Program „Education and Training 2010.”

1 The Eurostat indicator does not include the most popular form of adult learning, which is informal education (learning that occurs during professional work and interactions with others). At the time of preparing the report, data for the year 2023 were not yet available.

The region's prioritization of lifelong learning is evidenced by the initiation of collaboration between institutions operating in this field. As a result, in 2008, a group of 55 institutions, with full support from local authorities, established the Małopolska Partnership for Lifelong Learning, addressing the challenges of the "knowledge-based economy."

This unique initiative at the national level allowed institutions working in the field of adult education to better know each other and collaborate in promoting an attitude of openness to learning among the region's residents. At the same time, it helped create better conditions for comprehensive development and the provision of qualified workers for Małopolska's competitive and innovative economy.

Currently, the Partnership includes over 100 members, and its goals remain relevant. The technological changes and events triggered by the pandemic present Małopolska and the Partnership with entirely new challenges. Selected challenges in the Małopolska 2030 Regional Development Strategy include:

Education

- Improvement of the quality of education at all levels, and better preparation of graduates to meet the labor market's needs and the changes within it, moving towards Industry 4.0, especially through the development of vocational schools educating for "future professions," better cooperation between schools and employers, strengthening the system for teacher professional development, and the development of educational and career counseling.
- Moving away from viewing education as a closed phase of preparation for life and work—promoting lifelong learning and expanding the offer of continuous education, along with increasing adult participation in education.

Labor Market

- Activation of the workforce from among those who are inactive or long-term unemployed.
- Support for employed individuals amid changes in the labor market.
- Support for employers in the development, implementation, and growth of modern employee management practices (e.g., knowledge management, age management, health prevention, and work-life balance strategies).

Małopolska Voivodeship is recognized as a leader in developing adult education solutions both in Poland and internationally. This is confirmed by its invitation to collaborate in planning systemic solutions and policies in adult education.

STRUCTURE OF LIFELONG LEARNING ORGANIZATION

Public institutions and authorities involved in organizing and managing, including financing, lifelong learning policies operate at both the national and regional/local levels.

NATIONAL LEVEL

As of January 1, 2024, the Ministry of Education and Science was split into two separate ministries: the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Ministry of National Education

- Responsible for the state's policy in the area of education and upbringing²
- It includes matters such as:
 - Education, teaching, upbringing, and physical culture for children and youth, excluding matters reserved for other public administration bodies.
 - Organization of children's and youth organizations, including the state funding system for tasks carried out by these organizations.
 - Providing material assistance to children and youth.
 - International cooperation of children and youth.
- The minister responsible for education and upbringing also serves as the coordinator of the Integrated Qualifications System.

Ministry of Science and Higher Education

- Responsible for the state policy in the area of science and higher education³
- It includes:
 - Oversight and financing of higher education institutions.
 - Scientific activities.
- The minister responsible for higher education and science:
 - Coordinates the recognition of qualifications in regulated professions and activities.
 - Undertakes actions aimed at providing information about the recognition of these qualifications.

2 ACT of September 4, 1997 on the departments of government administration, Journal of Laws (Dziennik Ustaw) 1997 No. 141, item 943, download: 12.04.2024.

3 as above

Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy, which is responsible for managing the implementation of European Funds, including regional development, programming, and coordination of development policy.

Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy, its mission is to create the foundation for improving quality of life in terms of family, labor, and social security matters. Its tasks include:

- Employment and unemployment prevention, labor relations, and conditions of work.
- Salaries and employee benefits.
- Collective labor relations and labor disputes.
- Trade unions and employer organizations.

Tasks related to the promotion of employment, alleviation of the effects of unemployment, and professional activation are carried out by district and regional labor offices, which are subordinate to the district governors and regional marshals, with their activities coordinated by the minister. The ministry oversees the work related to the budget of the Labor Fund and the Guaranteed Employee Benefits Fund. It collaborates with the relevant ministries and institutions in utilizing the funds from both funds. One of the sources of funding for vocational and lifelong learning costs is the Labor Fund, a state-specific fund under the administration of the minister responsible for labor. Funds from the Labor Fund are used based on the annual financial plan for the Fund. The plan is an annex to the budget law and includes forecasted revenues and expenditures that can be implemented in the given year. Annual limits on the use of Labor Fund resources for tasks carried out by districts, using funds allocated for a specific voivodeship, are determined by the minister responsible for labor. The regional government boards distribute the allocated funds based on criteria established by the regional assemblies, and the relevant district governor selects the forms of activation for the unemployed and other eligible individuals within the available funding limit, making decisions in accordance with the law. This is done after consulting the district labor market council. Regulations regarding the division of FP funds are included in the Act of April 20, 2004, on Employment Promotion and Labor Market Institutions (Journal of Laws from 2022, item 690, as amended).

Ministry of Culture and National Heritage which is responsible for the field of culture and the protection of national heritage, which includes the development and care of both material and immaterial national heritage, as well as cultural activities. Specifically, this includes: cultural education programs.

In 2020, the former Ministry of Education and Science published two parts of the **Integrated Skills Strategy 2030**, both general and detailed. These documents, developed in cooperation with the OECD, identified six priority areas necessary for creating opportunities and

conditions for the development of skills essential for strengthening social capital, economic growth, and achieving a high quality of life.

The management of these areas is under the responsibility of four previously mentioned ministries: the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy, and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

As of the writing of this report, the legal framework under which central, regional, and local institutions operate does not specify the responsibilities and decision-making authority for these complementary areas: education, children and youth, higher education, labor, and culture. This leaves the area of lifelong learning—crucial for the country’s and regions’ economic development—without clearly defined responsibilities and coordination mechanisms.

Jednocześnie warto zwrócić uwagę, iż jedna z rekomendacji badania oceny wpływu interwencji realizowanych w ramach UP 2014- 2020 w obszarze kształcenia i szkolenia na poprawę jakości kapitału ludzkiego i zwiększenia dostępu do wysokiej jakości usług edukacyjnych, zrealizowanego na zamówienie Ministerstwa Funduszy i Polityki Regionalnej, dotyczy obszaru uczenia dorosłych:

One of the recommendations from an evaluation study on the impact of interventions implemented as part of the 2014-2020 OP (Operational Program) for education and training was that: A coordinator/leader for adult learning development in Poland should be appointed, and a participatory model of coordination should be developed, along with solutions that ensure the greater usefulness of the Integrated Qualifications System (ZSK) and the Regional Qualifications Register (ZRK)⁴.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

The tasks of local government units include both their own tasks defined by law and tasks commissioned by public administration.

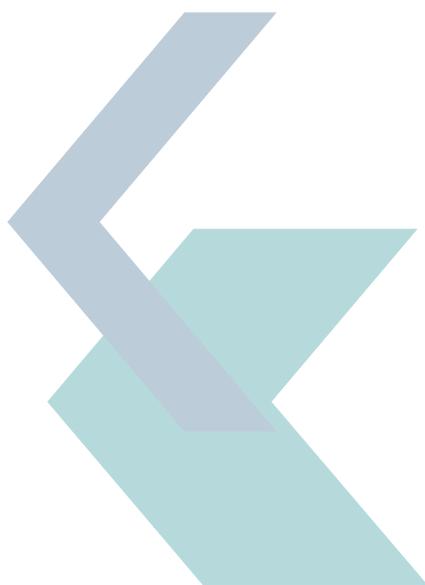
In the area of broadly understood education and lifelong learning, according to the law, the following tasks are assigned:

- at municipal level, they include matters related to public education (kindergartens and primary schools), culture (libraries, monuments), sports and tourism (sports fields, recreational areas, and sports facilities), as well as social assistance and family support;

4 Final Report: Impact of Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 on the Education and Training System; download 17.042024.

- at a district level, they include tasks of a supra-municipal nature, such as matters that municipalities cannot carry out alone. These include education-related matters (secondary schools, special schools, and sports schools), family support and family policy (e.g., nursing homes, care and education facilities), supporting persons with disabilities, preventing unemployment, and activating the local labor market (with district labor offices implementing tasks commissioned by the government);
- voivodeship level, they include public tasks of a regional nature that are not reserved by law for government authorities. Just as in the case of municipalities and districts, specific tasks are defined by law. For example, at the regional level, it includes the establishment of specialized high schools. The regional authorities are also responsible for the general development of the region.

By observing both the national and regional structures, it can be seen that there are clear parallel structures for managing both formal education processes and the labor market. This organization seems to be in opposition to the nature of lifelong learning, in which formal, non-formal, and informal education, as well as professional and personal development, seem to overlap. Additionally, it is worth noting that the main sources of funding for these processes are at the central level, leaving regions with only European funds or funds dedicated to specific tasks, such as the Labor Fund and the National Training Fund.



STRENGTHS

- **Experience in developing lifelong learning (LLL)** in the region and Poland; introducing and implementing innovative solutions (e.g., subject-based financing, Career Balance, MSUES).
- **Experience in collaboration with international partners** and the exchange of knowledge.
- **Strong cooperation between institutions and organizations** working in the field of LLL.
- **A large number of educational and training institutions** with diverse potential and capabilities.
- **Adaptability and flexibility** of institutions working in the field of adult learning.
- **Wide educational offerings** and the ability to reach **diverse resident groups**.
- **High educational potential: Kraków as a major academic center**, with good secondary schools as well.
- **Human capital** (educators and staff in the learning process).
- **Educational ambitions** of all resident groups.
- The establishment of the Regional Lifelong Learning Coordination Team (WZK) within the framework of a project financed by the National Reconstruction Plan.

WEAKNESSES

- **Lack of a cohesive lifelong learning policy:** siloed system vs. the comprehensive nature of the LLL process.
- **Low priority given to adult learning in regional policies,** including education policies at various levels.
- **Insufficient engagement of decision-makers** in creating the foundations for LLL policy.
- **Financing of LLL mostly based on EU funds,** with insufficient national funding.
- **Actions carried out through projects,** resulting in a **lack of continuity.**
- **Absence of formal legislative frameworks** for lifelong learning.
- Low flexibility on the part of educational service providers (schools, universities), and **poor alignment with the needs of learners.**
- **Dominance of formal education,** with insufficient attention to non-formal and informal learning (across various stakeholders).
- **Weak cooperation between the education system and business,** particularly inadequate cooperation with vocational schools.
- **Insufficient school counseling services.**
- Lack of interest in vocational education, **low prestige of vocational schools.**
- **Shortage of staff in vocational education, and deficits in formal education staff,** aging of the workforce.
- **Mismatch between the educational model and the challenges of a changing society, market, and technologies** (key competencies, relational education vs. transmissive education).
- **Insufficient shaping of attitudes and motivation for lifelong learning and responsibility for personal development.**

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Innovation in Małopolska** – regional development, technological changes driving the need for skills development, **creating demand for new qualifications and competencies.**
- Recognition and potential of **Małopolska as an open region for lifelong learning** (good reputation).
- The next **EU funding period, providing resources for continuing initiatives.**
- **Demographic factors:** an aging population, migration trends, including the influx of war refugees.
- **Increasing accessibility to adult learning through remote learning formats.**
- **Acceleration in the labor market** driven by technological advances, artificial intelligence, and easier access to new solutions.
- **Increasing social participation, with stakeholders becoming more engaged in actions related to the development of LLL.**

THREATS

- Fragmentation of decision-making centers and overlapping competencies of various institutions.
- **Centralization of management and funding** for LLL policies.
- Geopolitical instability, creating uncertainty.
- **Potential loss of trust from partners and collaborating institutions** due to societal polarization and the risk of politicization.
- **Economic slowdown, leading to reduced budgets for development activities** in the public, non-governmental, and private sectors.
- **Increasing financial burdens** on local government units for maintaining educational and developmental facilities.
- **Prevalence of micro-enterprises**, which face greater difficulty investing in employee skill development and lack incentives for competency growth.
- **Weak management of age and skills diversity within companies**, and insufficient solutions for managing workforce diversity.
- **Abandonment of developmental initiatives due to the impoverishment of society.**



**RESULTS OF THE REGIONAL
LIFELONG LEARNING POLICY
SELF-ASSESSMENT COMORELP 2024.
MAŁOPOLSKA**

Area 1: PLANNING AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

I. LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

18

1. Is there a regional policy for lifelong learning?	PARTIALLY NO
2. Is lifelong learning a significant element of the regional development plan or regional strategy?	YES
3. Does the regional policy for lifelong learning cover the following sectors?	
a. Formal education (including university, college, etc.)	NO
b. Non-formal education	NO
c. informal learning?	NO
d. All age groups?	NO
e. Vocational education and training	NO

The question regarding the existence of a lifelong learning (LLL) policy at the regional level was preceded, as it was two years ago, by a heated discussion. Voices from various environments were heard, including representatives from economic sectors, age groups, formal and non-formal education organizers, and employers. Ultimately, the agreed-upon response was softer than two years ago – “the regional LLL policy rather does not exist” compared to the firm “no” in the previous self-assessment.

Arguments supporting a positive response included the initiation of a pilot national program in the Małopolska region. This program was launched by the Ministry of National Education⁵ as part of the initiative “Development of a system for coordinating and monitoring regional activities in vocational education, higher education, and lifelong learning, including adult learning”, implemented under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan - Component A: “Resilience and Competitiveness of the Economy,” Investment A3.1.1. The goal of this investment is not only to provide project-based support for monitoring and coordinating the LLL system in the region but also to develop permanent mechanisms for its implementation, which will be reflected in the legal framework, granting regional authorities the competence

⁵ Ministry of Education and Science during the process of developing the project assumptions.

to undertake actions in shaping and implementing lifelong learning policies. For this reason, the Małopolska region also signed a declaration with the Ministry of National Education, expressing its willingness to actively participate in these preparations. This year's self-assessment was conducted as part of these activities.

It was almost unanimously acknowledged that lifelong learning is an important element of the regional development plan or strategy. Experts upheld the positive response agreed upon two years ago, justifying it with, among other things, the unchanged status of the key document, the “Małopolska 2030 Regional Development Strategy” (SRWM), adopted on December 17, 2020. Notably, two main directions under the Education (6) strategic goal focus on: promoting high-quality educational and career counseling at every stage of life (6.7.3), promoting lifelong learning and the development of continuous education, including validating professional competencies within the Integrated Qualifications System (ZSK) (6.7.4).

Additionally, the “Labor Market and Education Development Program – Competent Małopolska”, adopted by the Board of the Małopolska Region on November 21, 2023, was mentioned. Its main goal is to create a Małopolska workforce that is both professionally and educationally active. The program provides direction and identifies areas of action to enhance the educational and professional activity of Małopolska residents.

At the same time, it was noted that despite public consultations and a well-developed team working on the document, representatives from the cultural sector—largely responsible for non-formal and informal education in the region—were absent.

Another example of the cultural sector being overlooked in the broader discussion about lifelong learning was its omission in a comprehensive view of workforce development. During consultations for the PARP (Polish Agency for Enterprise Development) sector councils list (summer 2023), the cultural sector was initially excluded and later included partly due to recommendations from the Małopolska Partnership for Lifelong Learning.

Concerns were also raised from the business sector regarding a lack of familiarity with regional strategic documents, with some perceiving these documents as theoretical constructs with little impact on workforce development initiatives.

Arguments for the negative response concerning the existence of a regional LLL policy included centralized management of formal education and the lack of systemic efforts around key competencies as outlined in European Parliament recommendations⁶.

While acknowledging the significant financial resources allocated by the region over the past decade to adult education, it was noted that the main funding sources were external to the region, primarily European funds (EU funds) and national funds (KFS). Despite the

⁶ Recommendation of the European Parliament, download 17.04.2024.

substantial work done in Małopolska in the field of LLL, both domestically and in Europe, the actions were noted to have a project-based character.

The discussion returned to the definition of regional policy and the distinction between integrated actions under a policy and the promotion of the idea of lifelong learning. A question arose: Is a policy more of a document, or is it awareness and responsibility?

It was noted that many significant initiatives are often conducted in isolation. While many of them have systemic elements, they are implemented as temporary projects. Experts emphasized that for something to be considered a policy, it must involve permanent and comprehensive actions, both demographically and geographically, to ensure opportunities for not only residents of major cities or those with at least secondary or higher education. This comprehensive approach, according to participants in the self-assessment, is lacking in the region. *aniem osób uczestniczących w samoocenie, w Regionie brakuje.*

An appeal was also made to decision-makers in the region to adopt a broader perspective on LLL policy, beyond just their institutions. It was highlighted that having a policy is not an end in itself. **Lifelong learning policy should provide a continuous offering for the region's residents and businesses, enhancing the region's competitiveness both nationally and in Europe.**

SUMMARY:

The current legal framework inadequately supports the implementation of regional lifelong learning (LLL) policies. Both the policies and tools in this area are defined at the central level, which limits the scope of regional action.

Support for building lifelong learning competencies takes the form of individual projects rather than systemic actions.

Lifelong learning policy should ensure a consistent offering for residents and businesses of the region to enhance its competitiveness, both nationally and in Europe, while securing stable funding sources for these activities.

II. COORDINATION AND INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION WITHIN THE REGIONAL LLL POLICY

4. Do stakeholders, students, and teachers participate in the governance system of lifelong learning?	YES
5. To what extent is there collaboration and coordination between the central and regional levels? If so, which areas do these cover:	
a. Financial?	PARTIALLY YES
b. Administrative?	PARTIALLY YES
c. Other?	PARTIALLY YES

The discussion around coordination and inter-institutional cooperation in the framework of LLL policy revealed a lack of consensus among experts representing various institutions. However, the final responses to the questions in this dimension were positive.

The topic of coordination within the policy, or the lack thereof, resurfaced. Experts noted that the question pertains to the management system, which can be either integrated or decentralized. Considering the volume of activities undertaken by various institutions in the region, the system can be described as decentralized. It was agreed that this system could function regardless of whether a formal LLL policy exists.

It was emphasized that the testing and large-scale implementation of a subject-based training financing system in the region allowed for partial delegation of decision-making power to LLL stakeholders, both individual and business. However, it was noted that this decision-making power has its limitations, such as the growing yet restricted range of the Development Services Base (BUR).

When agreeing on a positive response to the question about stakeholder participation in the management system of lifelong learning, experts observed that the participation process is occurring. However, it is difficult to determine the extent of this participation's influence on the final shape of the policy. The effectiveness of this participation has not been confirmed.

In response to the question about collaboration and coordination, it was noted that in many areas, the region lacks autonomy in creating its own actions. A distinction was made between competing for funds allocated for specific objectives and making decisions on which activities to finance, for example, using revenue from taxes.

A step forward is represented by a new project under the National Recovery Plan (KPO), for which the region independently planned the actions it wanted to implement. While acknowledging the importance of the Ministry of National Education's initiative, experts emphasized the numerous elements of lifelong learning coordination that the region has developed over the last 20 years. These elements can provide a competitive advantage for the region but, if left underutilized, could become a risk, as it is often more challenging to restructure and modify existing mechanisms than to create them from scratch.

Experts also noted that most legal acts governing educational policy, including the new project under the National Recovery Plan, are created by the Ministry of National Education, which is primarily responsible for formal education for children and youth. This presents a significant risk of neglecting the importance and understanding of non-formal and informal education and the needs of adults and employers.

Attention was also drawn to the differences between the mechanisms of cooperation and coordination in formal education, which are fully coordinated at the central level and only implemented locally, and the mechanisms of cooperation and coordination functioning in non-formal education and informal learning.

Experts further highlighted the differences between various levels of education—primary, secondary, and higher education—pointing out areas where coordination and cooperation remain insufficient, as evidenced by examples discussed later in the conversation.

Lastly, attention was drawn to the fact that the current era is one of significant change, with new groups requiring support, such as foreigners, which necessitates additional actions.

SUMMARY:

The elements of lifelong learning coordination developed in the region over the past 20 years present an opportunity to build a competitive advantage for the region.

The functioning of the Małopolska Partnership for Lifelong Learning (MPKU⁷) and the establishment of the Regional Lifelong Learning Coordination Team (WZK⁸) require the creation of a coordination model that leverages the potential of the MPKU.

There is a need to increase awareness and engagement among regional decision-makers in developing lifelong learning as an area critical to the region's economic and social development.

The stakeholder participation process in the LLL management system exists; however, it is difficult to determine the extent of this participation's influence on the final shape of the policy.

7 Małopolska Partnership for Continuing Education, operating in Małopolska since 2008.

8 The Regional Coordination Team established as part of the project Building a system for coordinating and monitoring regional activities in vocational education, higher education, and lifelong learning, including adult learning.

III. CREATING, SUPPORTING, AND MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

6. Is there collaboration between the region and the stakeholders from the following areas regarding lifelong learning?	
a. Abroad / international?	YES
b. Other regions in the country?	YES
7. Is the region affiliated with any international associations or networks that focus on lifelong learning or specific educational sectors?	NO
8. Are there lifelong learning partnerships within the region?	YES
9. To what extent do the regional authorities support partnerships for lifelong learning?	TO A LIMITED EXTENT
10. Do the members of these lifelong learning partnerships represent a wide range of sectors and/or organizations?	YES

The response to the questions regarding the creation, support, and maintenance of partnerships restored unanimity among the experts of the Regional Round Table.

The position from 2022 was maintained, noting that there is a clearly defined formal path, which requires the region to become a member of an international organization. Such an action requires approval at the level of the Regional Assembly. At the same time, individual institutions in the region can participate in international networks, with formal approval for such activities required at a lower level, i.e., at the level of the Małopolska Regional Board.

It was agreed that while the region is not currently a member of an international association or network focused on LLL, its institutions already belong to such networks, for example, the Małopolska Institute of Culture. Additionally, Małopolska has been an active member of FREREF (Foundation of European Regions for Research in Education and Training) for many years, collaborated with LLLP (Lifelong Learning Platform) within the LLL HUB project, and has significant experience in international cooperation in the field of lifelong learning. As a result of this cooperation, international partnership projects have been realized.

Furthermore, since 2008, the Małopolska Partnership for Lifelong Learning (MPKU) has been operating in the region, with its work coordinated by the Regional Labor Office in Kraków from the start. The partnership brings together public and private institutions, including schools, practical training centers, lifelong learning centers, universities, training companies, employer associations, foundations, associations, libraries, cultural centers, psychological and pedagogical counseling centers, and district labor offices. The establishment of the partnership was a strategic decision.

MPKU continues to enable cooperation among a broad range of stakeholders in the field of adult learning. Its actions started with an analysis of the situation and the identification of needs, which are reviewed and redefined annually. The structure of MPKU allows all partners to “see” each other and set directions for important actions in adult learning in the region.

The main form of the partnership’s work is through working meetings, such as thematic workshops, where solutions are developed and topics from the annual work plan are discussed.

Products developed within the MPKU partnership, in addition to events such as Małopolska Day of Learning or Educational Municipality of Małopolska, include the Małopolska Standards for Educational and Training Services (MSUES), awarded by the Małopolska Region - Regional Labor Office in Kraków under the Quality Assurance Center for Education (CZJK). The Małopolska Vocational Festival, a Małopolska Region event, has also been supported by members of the Małopolska Partnership for many years.

A more active discussion was sparked by the question of whether the region supports the existing partnerships.

It was noted that the partnerships still functioning are financed through temporary projects, mainly funded by European sources. Experts raised the question of whether the regional administration is mature enough to fund partnerships created to solve significant problems with public funds, outside of project-based financing. This question remains unanswered. However, while acknowledging the good will of the authorities, it was pointed out that most partnerships are funded through project funds rather than regional funds.

An example was cited regarding the Partnership for Young People, whose funding ended with the conclusion of the Knowledge, Education, and Development Operational Program, and a new initiative by the Regional Labor Office in Kraków aimed at establishing the Małopolska Partnership for Integration and Multiculturalism. This new partnership addresses the region’s needs as defined in the “Małopolska Open” Immigrant Integration Program, but it arises within the framework of a project.

An exception in this area is the good practice from the cultural sector. A representative of the Małopolska Institute of Culture referred to a partnership that has been running for 8 years (currently with 24 partners) to raise the competencies of sector employees, which receives funding from the region’s Department of Culture.

Representatives of the Education Department of the Małopolska Regional Office emphasized the role and involvement of the regional authorities in building partnerships and supporting lifelong learning in the region. The creation and functioning of these partnerships (regardless of the funding sources) result from the involvement of regional authorities in LLL policy. The department emphasized that the cited partnerships do not function independently of the region and its authorities, but rather serve as an instrument through which regional authorities influence the development of LLL policy. Furthermore, as noted in the report, Małopolska is a leader in promoting and implementing LLL initiatives, which is also a result of the regional authorities' engagement and understanding of the need to invest in building partnerships for LLL. The very functioning of these partnerships involves administrative, logistical, and financial support from the regional government.

The conclusion, expressed at the end of this discussion, was that the engagement of regional authorities is uneven across all sectors.

SUMMARY:

The region has good partnership practices, but the main source of financing for these activities remains European funds, which threatens the sustainability of long-term cooperation.

Małopolska is not currently a member of an international association or network focused on LLL, but it has many years of experience in international cooperation and implements projects with partners from other countries.

There is a lack of a synthetic map of the region's international activities.

IV. INFORMATION AND CAREER COUNSELING

26

11. Is career guidance readily accessible to all individuals in lifelong learning? Are the following stakeholders' specific needs being considered:	
a. Pupils/students?	YES
b. Adults?	PARTIALLY YES
12. And are stakeholders specific needs considered?	PARTIALLY YES
13. Are there any awareness and promotion campaigns in place to support lifelong learning uptake?	YES
14. Does the promotion of lifelong learning cover each of the following age groups:	
a. Children?	YES
b. Youth?	YES
c. Adults?	YES
d. Senior citizens?	YES

The discussion around the responses to questions regarding information and career counseling concluded with mostly positive answers. Experts pointed to a significant gap between formal solutions and the actual delivery of services, as well as their adaptation to the needs of recipients and the challenges of a changing labor market.

In the area of career counseling at the stage of compulsory formal education, the rules for implementing career guidance, its content, and the number of hours are regulated by specific

legal acts⁹. These regulations, among other things, state that career counseling is available as early as kindergarten and the early grades of primary school. In this period, the focus should be on stimulating and developing interests, as well as shaping attitudes toward work and education. In the final grades of primary school, a minimum of 10 hours of career counseling is conducted in the form of educational activities in general education.

In secondary education, regardless of whether the education lasts for 3, 4, or 5 years, the number of hours is the same and amounts to 10 hours for the entire period. Experts noted that this number of hours makes it impossible to provide individual support to each student. There are also reported shortages of psychologists and special education teachers in schools.

At the same time, participants in the discussion pointed out that young people perceive career counseling as unattractive and disconnected from the current job market offers.

These expert opinions are confirmed by qualitative research conducted within the framework of the Małopolska Partnership for Young People¹⁰. Young people report a lack of individual counseling in schools, a lack of practical knowledge (e.g., advice on preparing a CV or how to behave during an interview). Instead, they take personality tests available online. The research also confirms that when choosing a secondary school, young people rely on opinions from parents, friends, and information on the Internet. Often these choices are arbitrary and based on the proximity to their place of residence rather than individual aptitudes.

This contrasts with the opinion of experts who emphasized that the only chance for active professional life in adulthood, in today's rapidly changing labor market, is to build a career and develop personal competencies based on individual strengths¹¹.

9 The program content in the field of career counseling, the method of implementing career counseling and the tasks of a career counselor are specified in the regulation of the Minister of National Education of February 12, 2019. on career counseling (Journal of Laws, item 325).

General rules (where) art. 26a – ustawy z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. Prawo oświatowe (Dz. U. z 2023 r. poz. 900, 1672, 1718 i 2005).

Number of consulting hours: Regulation of the Minister of National Education of April 3, 2019 on framework teaching plans for public schools (Dz. U. z 2024 r. poz. 80).

10 A study in the form of 3 focus groups was conducted among students of upper secondary schools from Skawina, Krzeszowice, and Nowy Sącz. Individuals aged 17-18 answered questions about their assessment of preparation for job searching, their perceptions, expectations, and experiences related to internships, apprenticeships, or their first summer jobs. The study was carried out by the Research, Analysis, and Labor Market Programming Team at the Provincial Labor Office in Kraków.

11 Own study based on statements from an Expert from the Maspex Group.

A new nationwide initiative originating from Małopolska was highlighted, promoting Local Knowledge and Education Centers (LOWE¹²) as a model for a modern school. The Małopolska Chamber of Local Government, through the LOWE model, has tried to make schools centers that are crucial for strengthening the potential, identity, community, and integration of local communities through adult learning. Activities within LOWE stimulate and integrate pro-educational actions for adults and are carried out in the social, institutional, and environmental surroundings of schools.

It was suggested that the private sector should be viewed not just as a client but as a partner in planned lifelong learning activities, in line with one of the recommendations made to the European Commission in the COMORELP project's LLL Platform report¹³.

Experts from the business sector cited good practices, such as employing both students and pupils from local schools, emphasizing that this requires a partnership between schools and businesses within the local community.

Regarding the dynamics of labor market changes, they clearly outlined the expectations of employers concerning career counseling in schools. Young people need to understand that throughout their careers, they will likely undergo re-skilling multiple times. Instead of advising them on a future job, career counselors should focus on identifying the young person's current strengths and potential, while preparing them for the fact that in five years they may be working in a completely different profession.

It was emphasized that currently, employers invest in employees not to keep them in the same position for 30-40 years, doing the same tasks. Employers invest so that employees can quickly unlearn outdated skills and learn new ones. Unlearning and relearning will be the competencies of the future¹⁴.

Experts also raised the issue of career counseling for seniors and people with disabilities.

It was noted that despite formal career counseling being provided, 75.4% of people with disabilities in the region remain inactive in the labor market. This rate is higher in Małopolska than the national average (75.4% vs. 69.9% for 2022¹⁵).

An initiative by the Regional Labor Office in Kraków was cited as a response to the demographic changes of an aging society and the lack of natural generational turnover in the labor market, which results in an increasing need to retain older workers. The project, "Employees – the Best Investment for a Company," supports Małopolska employers in managing work-

12 Fundacja Małopolska Izba Samorządowa.

13_Report LLL Platform dla Komisji Europejskiej w projekcie COMORELP.

14 Own study based on statements from an Expert from the Maspex Group.

15 Study of the Economic Activity of the Population aged 15-89 according to BAEL (mid-year data), downloaded: 11.04.2024.

force diversity, improving collaboration in multigenerational teams. It offers small and medium-sized companies in the region comprehensive support in developing and implementing solutions that facilitate effective management of employees, regardless of age, experience, and competencies, as well as creating more inclusive workplaces¹⁶.

Another good practice cited by experts dedicated to seniors is an initiative by the City of Kraków under the Social Activity and Integration Program for Seniors for the years 2021-2025¹⁷. The goal is to improve the quality of life for this group by promoting their activity, health care, education, and intergenerational integration. As part of the program, Senior Activity Centers (CAS) are being created, which is an example of good cooperation between the city and non-governmental organizations, in line with the Public Benefit and Volunteering Act. CAS centers, as places of comprehensive education for seniors, invite those who wish to learn new things, improve their mental and physical health, and contribute to the common good.

Experts, recognizing the value of this good practice, pointed out its potential and the possibility of implementing it in other local communities in the region.

The issue raised two years ago about the limitations of the adult career counseling system in addressing the growing awareness of its importance in lifelong learning returned. Experts noted that, at present, career counseling services for adults are largely provided through EU-funded projects. This development raises the risk that public employment services will not be able to meet the growing demand due to a potential reduction in EU funds. The question of funding sources for career counseling as part of the lifelong learning process was raised again.

All participants in the debate agreed that campaigns to raise awareness about lifelong learning are being carried out in the region and promote such actions. Examples include recurring events organized by various institutions, such as:

- **Małopolska Day of Learning (MDU)**, held in June, established by the Małopolska Regional Board resolution on May 27, 2010. The aim is to promote personal development and effective time management among Małopolska residents. MDU traditionally includes free events organized for the residents by the Małopolska Partnership for Lifelong Learning. Each year, MDU is organized under a different theme and attracts numerous educational event organizers from across the region.
- **The Małopolska Vocational Festival** is a three-day event aimed primarily at students finishing primary school (formerly middle school). It is an educational fair (advice, consultations, and exciting demonstrations).
- **Educational Municipality of Małopolska** is a competition initiated by MPKU in 2009.

16 Project „Pracownicy – najlepsza inwestycja dla firmy”.

17 Resolution No. LII/1454/21 of the City Council of Kraków dated January 27, 2021.

Its goal is to promote the idea of lifelong learning at the local level. The competition identifies and promotes the most active municipalities in supporting the personal and professional development of their residents. A key element of the competition is local cooperation – at the level of municipalities and rural districts. Meetings are organized for these groups, promoting the idea of lifelong learning.

Despite the many job fairs, regional and local, there was a strong call for intensifying promotional efforts, especially for non-formal education and informal learning. It was also noted that most promotional and awareness-raising activities for children and youth are carried out by the Department of Education of the Małopolska Regional Office, while activities for adults are the domain of the Regional Labor Office. Cultural institutions bridge both areas, creating communication for all age groups with an emphasis on non-formal education and informal learning.

SUMMARY:

Despite the presence of career counseling in schools, individual counseling is still lacking, and it does not adequately prepare youth for the dynamic changes in the labor market.

The connection between career counseling in schools and labor market counseling is still insufficient, leaving young people underprepared for the challenges of a changing labor market.

The school education system is focused on memorization rather than shaping attitudes, building experiences, and supporting motivation.

The growing demand for career counseling for adults is largely met through EU funds.

Awareness-raising and promotional activities for lifelong learning, despite their intensity, do not always reach all groups and require thoughtful continuation.

The future competency will be the ability to unlearn and relearn.

V. IDENTIFICATION OF LEARNERS' NEEDS AND MONITORING PARTICIPATION

15. Is the participation rate in lifelong learning monitored?	YES
16. If so, how often is the monitoring of participation conducted?	ONCE A YEAR
17. Is the region monitoring emerging needs from the learners' perspectives?	YES
18. Is the region monitoring skill demands from the employers' perspectives?	NO

Comparing the situation in Małopolska with the rest of the country and the European Union is possible based on various data sources, but each has its limitations:

- Indicator calculated based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS), showing the percentage of people aged 25-64 who have been engaged in formal education (in schools) or non-formal education (training/courses) in the past 4 weeks. However, it does not include the most common form of adult learning, which is informal learning (during professional work and interactions with others). This data is published regularly by Eurostat once a year.
- Indicator from the Adult Education Survey (AES), which covers people aged 18-69 participating in formal and non-formal education and informal learning over the last 12 months. Published by the Central Statistical Office (GUS) every 6 years, so it does not allow for current monitoring of the situation¹⁸.
- Indicators from the Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego (BKL), covering all forms of learning both in the past 4 weeks and 12 months. However, due to small sample sizes, it does not allow for regional analyses. This data is published by PARP and Jagiellonian University according to the survey schedule¹⁹.

Considering the latest AES results, it is evident that the opinions of experts are confirmed – Polish adults most often learn informally, during their work or through interactions with others (48.3%), and rarely (9.2%) engage in formal learning (in schools or universities). The percentage of adults participating in non-formal learning, such as courses or training, is at 19.8%.

¹⁸ At the time of preparing the report, regional data from the survey conducted in 2023 were not available.

¹⁹ Source: Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego, downloaded: 11.04.2024.

Experts observed that the region reacts to macroeconomic or geopolitical factors when monitoring learning needs, for example, addressing the needs of incoming foreigners for language skills. However, it was recognized that, as a rule, the region lacks a database that would indicate new learning needs. Experts' opinions on this matter were divided, with a significant number abstaining from voting.

Experts pointed to the tasks of district labor offices, which support monitoring employers' demand for workers. However, it was noted that, at present, there is no tool in Poland that allows monitoring the demand for skills that are not tied to specific professions.

Therefore, in the project "Building a system for coordinating and monitoring regional activities in vocational education, higher education, and lifelong learning, including adult learning" for Małopolska, funded by the National Recovery Plan, a concept will be developed and then implemented for a competency/skills demand survey. This task is coordinated by the Małopolska Regional Development Observatory, operating within the Regional Development Department of the Małopolska Regional Office, in cooperation with the Regional Labor Office in Kraków. The goal is to develop a solution that would allow for cyclical implementation of this survey in the coming years.

SUMMARY:

Adult Poles most commonly learn informally, at work and through interactions with others.

We do not have a tool for monitoring skills demand from the perspective of employers.

The region is conducting a survey on occupational demand and is in the process of developing a methodology for assessing demand for competencies/skills.

VI. PROFESSIONALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATORS AND LLL STAFF

19. Does the regional authority support the continuing professional development of:	
a. Managerial staff in educational institutions?	YES
b. Teachers, trainers, and support staff	YES
c. Trainers/educators in informal education?	PARTIALLY NO

Educational law and several related legal acts regulate the operation of public accredited teacher training institutions in each region of Poland. In Małopolska, this is the Małopolska Teacher Development Center (MCDN). The mission of MCDN is to support the development of the regional education system, focusing on the well-being of future generations in a knowledge-based society built on universal values.

MCDN is not the only institution in Małopolska focused on teacher development. Teachers also use services from district-level and nationwide institutions, non-public institutions, and training companies that also educate other professional groups. The changing realities, including the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and artificial intelligence, have led to new training topics and generated potential clients eager to acquire knowledge in areas such as educational law, career advancement, and ICT, where changes occur particularly frequently.

In the 2022/23 school year, MCDN provided 31,345 services, most frequently utilized by primary school teachers.

Referring to the presented systemic solutions, participants agreed that both teachers and management staff receive support for professional development.

The response to the question regarding the professional development of educators in non-formal education was varied. Experts representing regional public institutions cited examples of numerous initiatives supporting this form of education, especially in sports and culture. However, it was noted that some of these local government initiatives are not visible. Experts pointed to the rapid socio-technological development as a reason for this situation, which tends to overshadow the needs for non-formal education. It was emphasized that the profession of a non-formal educator requires specific predispositions, and supporting the professional development of this group is neither easy nor obvious.

An initiative by the Małopolska Institute of Culture was mentioned, which started working on defining qualifications for a new profession: cultural educator.

In the long term, this initiative has the potential to better assess the need for such services and define the competency profile for this profession. It was emphasized that this is another initiative from the region with the potential for nationwide scalability.

Ultimately, it was agreed that regional authorities do not actively support the professional development of educators in non-formal education, although it was pointed out that they do have access to available forms of support for adults.

SUMMARY:

The support system for the development of non-formal education trainers and educators, particularly those operating outside public institutions, is underdeveloped.

The available data does not allow for monitoring the educational activity of formal education staff.

VII. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

20. Does the regional or public funding support the training of job-related skills?	YES
21. Does the regional or public funding support education and training programs that are not specifically related to job skills?	YES
22. Are there programs or initiatives in place to support:	
a. Learners with special needs (e.g., disabilities, mental health problems)?	YES
b. Recent immigrants and refugees marginalized groups?	YES
c. individuals from socially excluded groups?	YES
d. Those unemployed long-term unemployed teens?	YES
e. Unemployed youth?	YES
f. Unemployed women?	YES
g. Senior citizens?	YES
h. Other categories?	YES

In Małopolska, a well-functioning support system is in place, funded by both national and European resources. The National Training Fund (KFS), with funds distributed regionally, is a labor market instrument that allocates part of the employer's contribution to the Labor Fund to support adult learning initiated by or with the consent of the employer. From 2014 to 2020, the regional KFS budget amounted to 91.2 million PLN, with 20 million PLN in 2021, 17.6 million PLN in 2022, and 20.3 million PLN in 2023.

At the same time, a number of initiatives funded by the European Social Fund are being implemented, through which both residents and entrepreneurs from Małopolska can receive financial support. These initiatives primarily target adults but do not exclude any groups with special needs.

In the European Funds for Małopolska Program 2021-2027 (FEM 2021-2027), over 300 million Euros have been allocated to support lifelong learning. Projects aimed at supporting the education system in the region and developing the competencies and qualifications of Małopolska residents will be eligible for funding.

In the previous financial period, the Regional Labor Office in Kraków (WUP) tested and then implemented a subject-based financing system (PSF) in the form of training vouchers, which facilitated access to funding for both entrepreneurs and individuals, providing pre-financing for the public portion while leaving only the obligation of a personal contribution for the beneficiaries. As a result, Małopolska became a leader in adult education in Poland. Over 57,000 residents of Małopolska benefited from career counseling in the form of the Career Balance²⁰. Over 26,000 people participated in the Career Direction project, and more than 24,000 people in the Professional Career Direction project.

Currently, other regions, utilizing Małopolska's experience, are implementing subject-based financing systems for development services.

Experts unanimously gave positive responses to all questions regarding the financial support for lifelong learning.

However, it was noted that for the senior group, the support is primarily care-focused. There is still insufficient support for the educational and professional activities of seniors.

SUMMARY:

All groups of Małopolska residents have access to financial support enabling them to develop their competencies and qualification

Solutions developed in the region are now being scaled and implemented in other regions of the country

Solutions developed in the region are now being scaled and implemented in other regions of the country

²⁰ Source: Bilansowanie kompetencji, downloaded 11.04.2024.

VIII. ECOLOGICAL AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION – IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE

23. Is access to online learning opportunities part of the regional LLL policy?	YES
24. Are there quality standards in place to monitor distance learning?	YES
25. Are there regional resources to help people access distance learning? If so, are they targeted for:	
a. All age groups?	YES
b. People with specific learning needs?	YES
26. Does the regional strategy include the support of lifelong learning as part of its green transformation?	YES
27. Does the region monitor current and future green skills?	NO
28. Does the region monitor green jobs demand and supply?	NO RESPONSE
29. Do the regional authorities promote education that focuses on environmental sustainability?	TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT

In agreeing on the response to the question regarding access to remote learning, experts pointed to two key regional documents important for regional policy and digital inclusion in the region: the Regional Development Strategy “Małopolska 2030” and the Małopolska Regional Innovation Strategy 2030, where digitalization is identified as one of the most important factors for the socio-economic development of the region. Additionally, real-time remote learning is one of the forms of non-formal education for which residents of Małopolska can receive funding from public sources. The quality of remote services is ensured by national solutions (Remote Learning Services Standards / SUZ).

The future Polska Cyfrowa²¹ (Digital Poland) program was also highlighted, one of whose goals is to establish a network of Digital Clubs for local communities.

It was also noted that people with special needs can benefit from the full range of training services dedicated to adults and are in no way excluded from them.

²¹Program Polska Cyfrowa, downloaded: 11.04.2024.

Thus, the questions related to digital transformation in the region received positive, almost unanimous responses.

Moving on to questions regarding the green transformation and green competencies, experts pointed out the ambiguity in their definitions, leaving considerable flexibility not only at the national or regional level but even at the institutional level.

It was also noted that environmental education, alongside climate change mitigation, water management, and biodiversity and landscape, constitutes a main development direction for the region under the specific goal: High environmental quality and striving for climate neutrality in the “Małopolska 2030” Regional Development Strategy²². This is of utmost importance, especially in light of the results of the Be.Eco ecological awareness study conducted by the Digital University Foundation and the Deloitte Foundation²³.

The study involved 1,350 participants, including teachers and students from grades 6-8 of primary schools and high schools. The results indicate that both teachers and students are aware of their key role in combating climate change, with 55% of teachers, 36% of high school students, and 31% of primary school students believing that local ecological actions in small communities are the most effective.

In response to the question about the region’s monitoring of the development of green competencies, experts agreed that the region does not currently engage in this.

Additionally, referring to the lack of a clear definition of green jobs, they unanimously agreed not to answer the question regarding the supply and demand for these jobs.

SUMMARY:

The region supports real-time remote learning.

Sustainable development and environmental care are important aspects of the region’s development.

²² Strategia Rozwoju Województwa „Małopolska 2030”, downloaded: 11.04.2024.

²³ Badanie świadomości ekologicznej uczniów i nauczycieli Be.Eco, downloaded: 11.04.2024.

IX. VALIDATION

30. Is there a validation system in place for informal learning?	YES
31. Has a system such as micro-credentials been implemented for the region?	NO

The learning outcomes validation system is being created at the national level by the Educational Research Institute (IBE) in Warsaw as the Integrated Qualifications System (ZSK).

ZSK describes, organizes, and gathers various qualifications in a single, publicly available register – the Integrated Qualifications Register (ZRK). The goal is to facilitate the validation of skills acquired in various ways for individuals. Małopolska actively participates in the creation of these solutions.

Experts noted that despite the existence of a systemic solution for validating skills, actual services for validating informal learning outcomes are not functioning in the market, not only regionally but also nationally. It was pointed out that the created solution primarily serves the validation of competencies and qualifications acquired through formal education and partially non-formal education, while there are still no solutions for validating skills acquired through informal learning.

It is also worth noting that the previously mentioned report on the Impact of the Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 on the education and training system signals a potential risk of the system not meeting the needs of end users, particularly employers²⁴.

Upon analyzing the available regional market solutions, experts concluded that the micro-certification system is not functioning in the region.

SUMMARY:

The existing learning outcomes validation system under the ZSK is primarily used for validating outcomes from formal education and partially non-formal education.

The learning outcomes validation system is being developed at the national level and promoted in regions by employees of the Educational Research Institute.

The system could be complemented by validation based on the potential of employers in various industries, but at the moment, there is no clear plan for how to organize this or incentives for employers

²⁴ Final report. Wpływ polityki spójności 2014-2020 na system kształcenia i szkolenia, downloaded 17.042024.

X. EVALUATION OF REGIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING POLICY

40

32. Are formal evaluation practices for lifelong learning policies in place for the region??	NO
33. How frequently are the evaluation activities typically conducted?	NO RESPONSE
34. Are evaluation reports made available to the public?	NO
35. Are evaluations being actively used to inform and improve the lifelong learning policies	NO

The position from two years ago was maintained, stating that the lack of a regional policy in the area of lifelong learning prevents its evaluation. However, the actions carried out within numerous LLL-related projects in the region are subject to evaluation.

Given that LLL activities are largely financed by the European Social Fund, it was suggested to introduce evaluation mechanisms for LLL activities within the tasks of the Monitoring Committee for the regional program (in the current financial perspective FEM 2021-27 / European Funds for Małopolska 2021-27). Due to formal reasons, this is not possible, but it is worth considering paying particular attention to LLL aspects when monitoring and evaluating the regional program FEM 2021-2027.

It is also important to note that the evaluation conducted on behalf of the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy regarding the impact of the cohesion policy 2014-2020 on the education and training system highlights the risk of the sustainability of adult learning interventions after the completion of projects. It points out that many actions are at serious risk of not being carried out without EU funding, and at best, they will be significantly limited. The intervention carried out under the cohesion policy from 2014 to 2020 in the field of adult learning was crucial for revitalizing activities that would likely not have been implemented without EU funds²⁵.

The possibility of meeting and discussing within the Regional Round Table was also appreciated, although it was noted that self-assessment is not an evaluation.

²⁵ as above.

SUMMARY:

Currently, the Region lacks systemic mechanisms for evaluating actions related to the implementation of lifelong learning policies.

There is a call for incorporating planning and coordination of evaluation activities in the Region into the tasks of the Monitoring Committee of the European Funds Programme for Małopolska 2021-2027.

COLLECTED ANSWERS

AREA 1: PLANNING AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

42

I. THE PLACING OF LLL IN A REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

1. Is there a regional policy for lifelong learning?

PARTIALLY NO

2. Is lifelong learning a significant element of the regional development plan or regional strategy?

YES

3. Does the regional policy for lifelong learning cover the following sectors?:

a. Formal education (including university, college, etc.)?

NO

b. Non-formal education?

NO

c. Informal education?

NO

d. All age groups?

NO

e. Vocational education and training?

NO

II. INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF LLL POLICIES

4. Do stakeholders, students, and teachers participate in the governance system of lifelong learning?

YES

5. To what extent is there collaboration and coordination between the central and regional levels? If so, which areas do these cover:

a. Financial?

PARTIALLY YES

b. Administrative?

PARTIALLY YES

c. Other?

PARTIALLY YES

III. MANAGING AND SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

6. Is there collaboration between the region and the stakeholders from the following areas regarding lifelong learning?

43

a. Abroad/international?

YES

b. Other regions in the country?

YES

7. Is the region affiliated with any international associations or networks that focus on lifelong learning or specific educational sectors?

NO

8. Are there lifelong learning partnerships within the region?

YES

9. To what extent do the regional authorities support partnerships for lifelong learning?

TO A SMALL EXTENT

10. Do the members of these lifelong learning partnerships represent a wide range of sectors and/or organizations?

YES

Area 2: IMPLEMENTATION

IV. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

11. Is career guidance readily accessible to all individuals in lifelong learning? Are the following stakeholders' specific needs being considered:

a. Pupils/students?

YES

b. Adults?

PARTIALLY YES

12. And are stakeholders' specific needs considered?

PARTIALLY YES

13. Are there any awareness and promotion campaigns in place to support lifelong learning uptake?

YES

14. Does the promotion of lifelong learning cover each of the following age groups:

a. Children?

YES

b. Youth?

YES

c. Adults?

YES

d. Senior citizens?

YES

V. IDENTIFICATION OF LEARNERS' NEEDS AND MONITORING OF PARTICIPATION

15. Is the participation rate in lifelong learning monitored?

YES

16. If so, how often is the monitoring of participation conducted?

ONCE A YEAR

17. Is the region monitoring emerging needs from the learners' perspectives?

YES

18. Is the region monitoring skill demands from the employers' perspectives?

NO

VI. PROFESSIONALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LLL EDUCATOR AND PERSONNEL

19. Does the regional authority support the continuing professional development of:

a. Managerial staff in educational institutions?

YES

b. kadry nauczycielskiej?

YES

c. edukatorów w edukacji pozaformalnej?

PARTIALLY NO

VII. FINANCIAL SUPPORTING FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

20. Does the regional or public funding support the training of job-related skills?
YES
21. Does the regional or public funding support education and training programs that are not specifically related to job skills?
YES
22. Are there programs or initiatives in place to support:
- a. Learners with special needs (e.g., disabilities, mental health problems)?
YES
 - b. Recent immigrants and refugees marginalized groups?
YES
 - c. individuals from socially excluded groups?
YES
 - d. Those unemployed long-term unemployed teens?
YES
 - e. Unemployed youth?
YES
 - f. Unemployed women?
YES
 - g. Senior citizens?
YES
 - h. Other categories?
YES

VIII. ECOLOGICAL AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IMPLEMENTATION INTO PRACTICE

23. Is access to online learning opportunities part of the regional LLL policy?
YES
24. Are there quality standards in place to monitor distance learning?
YES
25. Are there regional resources to help people access distance learning? If so, are they targeted for:
- a. All age groups?
YES
 - b. People with specific learning needs?
YES

26. Does the regional strategy include the support of lifelong learning as part of its green transformation?

YES

27. Does the region monitor current and future green skills?

NO

28. Does the region monitor green jobs demand and supply?

NO RESPONSE

29. Do the regional authorities promote education that focuses on environmental sustainability?

TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT

IX. VALIDATION

30. Is there a validation system in place for informal learning?

YES

31. Has a system such as micro-credentials been implemented for the region?

NO

Area 3: EVALUATION

X. REGIONAL POLICY EVALUATION IN THE AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

32. Are formal evaluation practices for lifelong learning policies in place for the region?

NO

33. How frequently are the evaluation activities typically conducted?

NO RESPONSE

34. Are evaluation reports made available to the public?

NO

35. Are evaluations being actively used to inform and improve the lifelong learning policies?

NO

