



Flanders
imagination works



Vision Memorandum

Towards a learning and career account
in Flanders

25 March 2022



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1 BACKGROUND

1.1 CONTEXT

The Flemish labour market and society in general will be facing major challenges in the decades ahead. On the demand side there is a growing need for specific competencies and qualified profiles for continuously changing jobs. On the supply side there is a large section of people in longer-lasting careers who have skills that are fast becoming obsolete. Against the background of the *twin transition* to a green and digital economy, the *green* and *digital skills*, as well as transversal skills, which can be used and applied in a variety of contexts, are of increasing importance.¹

In this context, up-skilling and reskilling are of increasing importance, both for society as a whole and for employers and individuals themselves. Not just to respond flexibly to the ever-accelerating changes on the labour market, but also for the social inclusion and resilience of individuals in a society that is changing at an incredible rate of knots. Strengthening competences is a crucial ingredient for sustainable careers and to enable people to participate to the full in the labour market and in society. We must give people the tools for shaping and strengthening their career by reinforcing their skills and pursuing further training.

The Flemish training and career incentives are measures specifically aimed at individual citizens, which focus on removing the financial and time-related obstacles that prevent people from learning. Investigation has shown that the time-related obstacles play a big role in Flanders, certainly among people who are interested in following training but do not get round to doing it.²

The 2019-2024 coalition agreement of the Government of Flanders and the policy memorandum of Work and Social Economy Minister Crevits included the ambition to move towards an individual learning and career account, starting from the rights and incentives that exist today for following training or strengthening an individual's career.

The individual takes centre-stage in a learning and career account and that is also the guiding principle of the European initiative on individual learning accounts which was launched recently. That initiative is a proposal by the European Commission for a non-binding Council recommendation with directives for the development of individual learning accounts in European Member States. With its initiative for the learning and career account, Flanders allies itself with the ambition *“to explore individual learning accounts as a tool to support the up- and re-skilling of working-age adults, complementing other actions targeting employers and education and training providers.”*³

The development of the learning and career account is taking place in parallel with the expansion of a more personalised career platform (My Career) for each citizen by the Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training (VDAB). Pursuant to the VESOC agreement 'All hands on deck' (AHAD in Dutch), the learning and career account (LLR in Dutch) as instrument shall be connected step by step to the career

¹ Transversal skills include matters such as communication, collaboration, planning, problem-solving thinking, organisational skills, etc.

² Van Langenhove, H. et al. (2020). "Monitoringsrapport opleidingsdeelname en de opleidingsinspanningen van werkgevers in Vlaanderen" [Monitoring report on training participation and the training efforts by employers in Flanders], *werk.Rapport*, Vol. 3, <https://www.steunpuntwerk.be/node/4023>. / Van Cauwenberghe, M. et al. (2021). [Customer journey van niet-participerende en participerende burgers aan levenslang leren. Een onderzoek naar de persona's, drempels en hefboomen van burgers met een leernood](#). Brussels.

³ European Commission: (2021). [Proposal for a Council recommendation on individual learning accounts](#). Brussels. *(The exact conditions of this recommendation are currently being drawn up by the Member States in the Council.)*

platform (see: *Personalised career platform VDAB*). We also ensure maximum alignment with the federal initiative regarding an individual training account, in the context of the individual right to 5 training days in the *Workable and Flexible Work Act* (see: *Federal initiative, individual training account*). We also adopt the “no-wrong-door” principle, which means that citizens can have various doorways to the learning and career account.⁴

Box 1: Lifelong learning action plan (Lifelong learning partnership)

For a detailed analysis of the challenges within the wider policy around lifelong learning, we would refer to the environmental analysis of the lifelong learning action plan that details the challenges regarding training participation, transitions and skills needs, training provision and support.⁵

The degree to which we, as a society, will be capable of tackling these challenges will be strongly determined by the way in which we deal with competencies and how we shape the policy around lifelong learning (LLL) in Flanders. The Lifelong learning action plan will further indicate the direction for this LLL policy. The Lifelong Learning Partnership (PLL in Dutch) puts forward actions, ambitions and flag-ships which, in the short to medium term, can contribute to a strong(er) learning culture in Flanders. Flanders has made the commitment - with the horizon set at 2030 - to reach the European target of 60% training participation.

In its focus on the individual, the LLR is also complementary to other initiatives that address the challenge of stimulating skills- and career-thinking and which focus on the various actors who bear responsibility in the eco-system of lifelong learning (organisations, training providers, etc.).

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE VISION MEMORANDUM

The Flemish Coalition Agreement 2019-2024 and the Work and Social Economy policy memorandum 2019-2024 frames the ambition to take the step towards an individual learning and career account. For the implementation of this ambition, this vision memorandum sets out a growth path for the step-by-step elaboration of the learning and career account (LLR) in Flanders. The vision memorandum serves as input for the further elaboration and design of the various stages, in dialogue with stakeholders.

1.3 POLICY BACKGROUND AND PRECEDING PROCESS

The vision memorandum reflects the ambition to develop an individual learning and career account, as stated in the coalition agreement for 2019-2024, in the Work and Social Economy policy memorandum and in the VESCO agreement ‘All hands on deck’ (AHAD) (see: *Annex 2: policy background to LLR*).

This memorandum was preceded by an extensive preparation process. In 2019 and 2020, the Department of Work and Social Economy (DWSE) investigated the following:

⁴ Irrespective of which regional or federal website you use to interact with administration, you will always find the way to the same service provision and information.
⁵ Lifelong Learning Partnership. (2021). Actieplan levenslang leren - Koers zetten naar een lerend Vlaanderen / *Lifelong learning action plan - Setting course towards a learning Flanders*, <https://beslissingenvlaamsereregering.vlaanderen.be/document-view/61B85836364ED9000900107F>.

- the training participation (and training efforts by the employers) in Flanders, which is published in the [Monitoring Report 2020](#) and more recently in an [update for 2021](#).⁶
- the international literature and foreign examples of individual learning accounts, on the basis of which two articles were published on the ODIN knowledge platform.⁷
 - o [Towards a learning and career account in Flanders](#) (lessons from the international literature)
 - o [The individual learning and career account: inspiring examples from the Netherlands and France](#) (2 country cases studied in detail)

Initial lessons were distilled from that investigation and inspiration was gained for the development of the LLR in Flanders. The most important lessons that emerged from the investigation are:

1. A learning account is not a panacea for all challenges concerning lifelong learning.
2. The individual right to training is at the centre of individual learning accounts.
3. A trade-off must be made between a simple generic system (*dead weight loss*) and a focus on target group.
4. A savings account does not work (for everybody) and co-financing can form an obstacle.
5. Guidance is necessary.
6. It is important to monitor the quality and content of training.
7. Good monitoring enables rapid adjustments.

The social partners also set to work with the concept. At the end of 2020, the Social and Economic Council of Flanders (SERV in Dutch) issued an [exploratory opinion](#) on the learning and career account, in which they called for rolling out the LLR in a step-by-step manner.

In 2021, further initiative was taken concerning concept development and first steps towards operationalisation (see: *Developing the LLR*). Between April and October 2021, IDEA Consult performed a [VIONA study](#) into the learning and career account.⁸ That investigation mapped existing training and career incentives and developed several possible scenarios for a LLR in Flanders. The investigation clearly indicated the challenges involved in developing a learning and career account in Flanders and offered clues for setting out a step-by-step pathway in this vision memorandum for the development of the LLR (see: *Box 2: Conclusions from VIONA investigation*).

⁶ Van Langenhove, H. et al. (2020). "Monitoringsrapport opleidingsdeelname en de opleidingsinspanningen van werkgevers in Vlaanderen" [*Monitoring report on training participation and the training efforts by employers in Flanders*], *werk.Rapport*, Vol. 3, <https://www.steunpuntwerk.be/node/4023>. Update of report for 2021: <https://www.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/opleidingsdeelname-en-de-opleidingsinspanningen-van-werkgevers-in-vlaanderen-monitoringsrapport>.

⁷ Van Langenhove, H. (2021). Naar een leer-en loopbaanrekening in Vlaanderen [*Towards a learning and career account in Flanders*], <https://odin.vlaanderen.be/onderzoek-en-beleid/naar-een-leer-en-loopbaanrekening-vlaanderen>.

Smessaert, F. and Van Langenhove, H. (2021). The individual learning and career account: inspiring examples from the Netherlands and France, <https://odin.vlaanderen.be/onderzoek-en-beleid/de-individuele-leer-en-loopbaanrekening-inspirerende-voorbeelden-uit-nederland>.

⁸ De Coen, A., Nackaerts, L. and Desmedt, E. (2021). Towards a learning and career account for Flanders, <https://www.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/naar-een-leer-en-loopbaanrekening-voor-vlaanderen-idea-consult>.



Box 2: Conclusions from VIONA investigation

Towards a learning and career account in Flanders (IDEA Consult, 2021)

The study consisted of two major components:

- mapping existing training and career incentives.
- setting out in detail several clear scenarios for a LLR.

In the concluding report, the researchers described seven scenarios for a learning and career account in Flanders. (The scenarios were used as an instrument for feeding the discussion with stakeholders and for testing the boundaries of the system. They are, in themselves, very theoretical or radical. Using 'pro' and 'con' arguments, the researchers offered clues to combining aspects within the various scenarios and for making adjustments to the modalities.)

- 1 zero scenario (do not implement a LLR)
- 2 "recommended actions" as foundation:
 - Scenario 1: developing a digital overview
 - Scenario 2: harmonising existing rules and procedures of government incentives
- 4 scenarios for a LLR as person-linked development budget:
 - Scenario 3 and 4: transferable right to money (generic [3] or selective for vulnerable groups [4])
 - Scenario 5: transferable right to time (building on the principles of Flemish training leave)
 - Scenario 6: combining a transferable right to time and money, which are mutually interchangeable.

The conclusions formulated by the researchers are:

1. **The idea of a LLR is supported by stakeholders.**

The LLR is considered an instrument with much potential for making training rights more clear cut, transparent and simple. It must, however, be part of a wider policy around lifelong learning (LLL).

2. **There is no ready-made scenario for a LLR.**

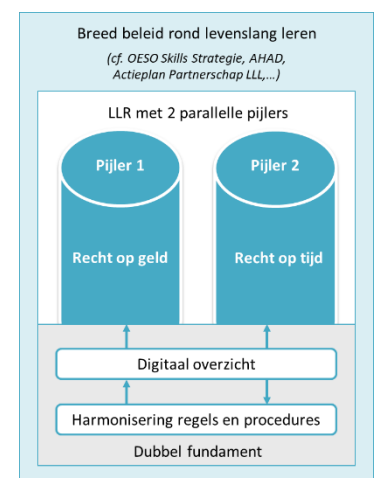
The combination of conditions from the various scenarios into one growth path seems the most appropriate route.

3. **The design of a LLR is a balancing exercise between what is desirable and what is achievable**

The destination stakeholders would like to reach and what could be seen as a desirable scenario is often far removed from what is viewed as feasible or achievable. The researchers explain this using various aspects of the LLR: the target group, the type of training provision, the funding, the unity (time/money), the transferability (about statutes, but also in time) and the take-up of the LLR.

For example: *To make a cultural shift towards a learning society, it is desirable to allow every adult to belong to the target group of the LLR. At the same time, the reservation is made that it is not (financially) feasible to attribute the entire adult population to the target group.*

Figure 1: Proposal foundation LLR (IDEA Consult)



Taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of the various scenarios, IDEA Consult proposes a **learning and career account with two parallel pillars, right to time and right to money, on top of a double foundation, consisting of a digital overview and a harmonisation of rules and procedures.**

2 VISION LEARNING AND CAREER ACCOUNT

2.1 AMBITION AND CONCRETE OBJECTIVES

2.1.1 Ambition

The LLR must give a clear picture of the incentives to which citizens can appeal in order to undertake skills development and/or career orientation. The LLR must also make a contribution to the double ambition of citizens to take the helm of their career and to find their way to training, upskilling and reskilling. If our starting point is that an individual owns his or her career, we must provide people with the tools they can use at their own initiative to prepare for the challenges of the labour market. In this regard, participation in training is not an aim in itself, but strengthening skills is seen as a crucial ingredient for sustainable careers and to allow people to participate to the full in the labour market and in society. It protects individuals and organisations against skills obsolescence and makes them resilient in handling transitions in a proactive way.

The LLR is an essential “*tool in the toolbox*” within the broader incentives that focus on stimulating competence strengthening and career-thinking in Flanders. It is closely aligned with the VDAB initiative - in the context of VDAB’s role as “career director” in Flanders - to focus on the development of a more personalised career platform, where citizens can use Mijn Loopbaan [*My Career*] to grasp their career and manage their career data using tools and digital support around jobs, training and orientation (see: *Personalised career platform VDAB*).

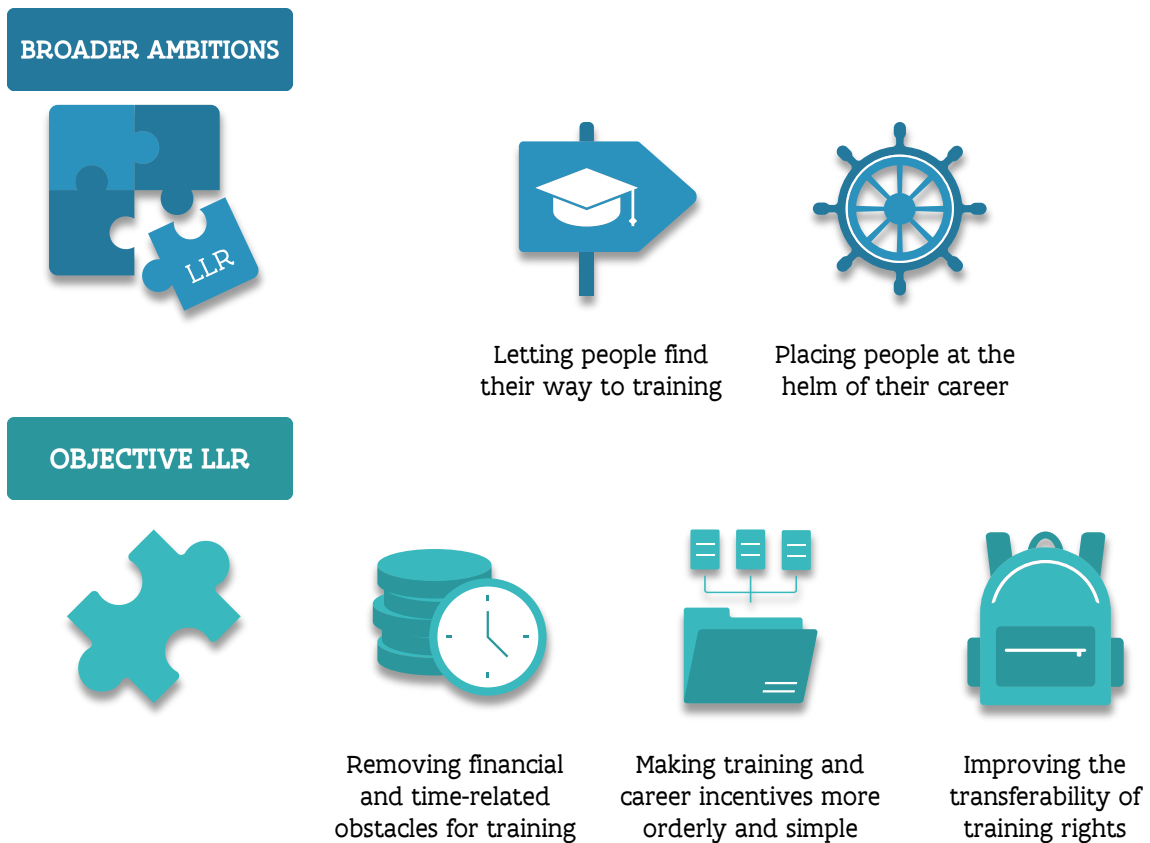
2.1.2 Concrete objectives

By focusing on the financial and time-related obstacles to training participation, the LLR is a necessary piece of the puzzle in the policy on lifelong learning. When we make it easier and more orderly for individuals to know the training incentives to which they are entitled, we can give those who face financial and time-related obstacles an additional impetus to undertake further training and retraining. Clear visualisation of which training and career incentives an individual is entitled to and what they can ‘miss’ if they do not make use of them can prove a stimulation for actual use of those entitlements. We base ourselves on a customer-oriented philosophy that every citizen of an employable age who consults his or her learning and career account, will always receive a personalised proposal that is as complete as possible or be referred to an available range of training, regardless of his or her status.⁹

We do not only want to make this visually more orderly, but also a lot easier for citizens to know which training incentives they are entitled to. In order to give individuals more flexibility and ownership about their rights to training throughout their career, in the context of transitions and dynamic careers, we are additionally investigating how training rights can be better transferable. The ambitions and concrete objectives of the LLR are displayed in Figure 2.

⁹ This can, for example, also be about the digital training offer at VDAB to which reference is already made from the Wizard Flemish training incentives.

Figure 2: Ambitions and objectives LLR



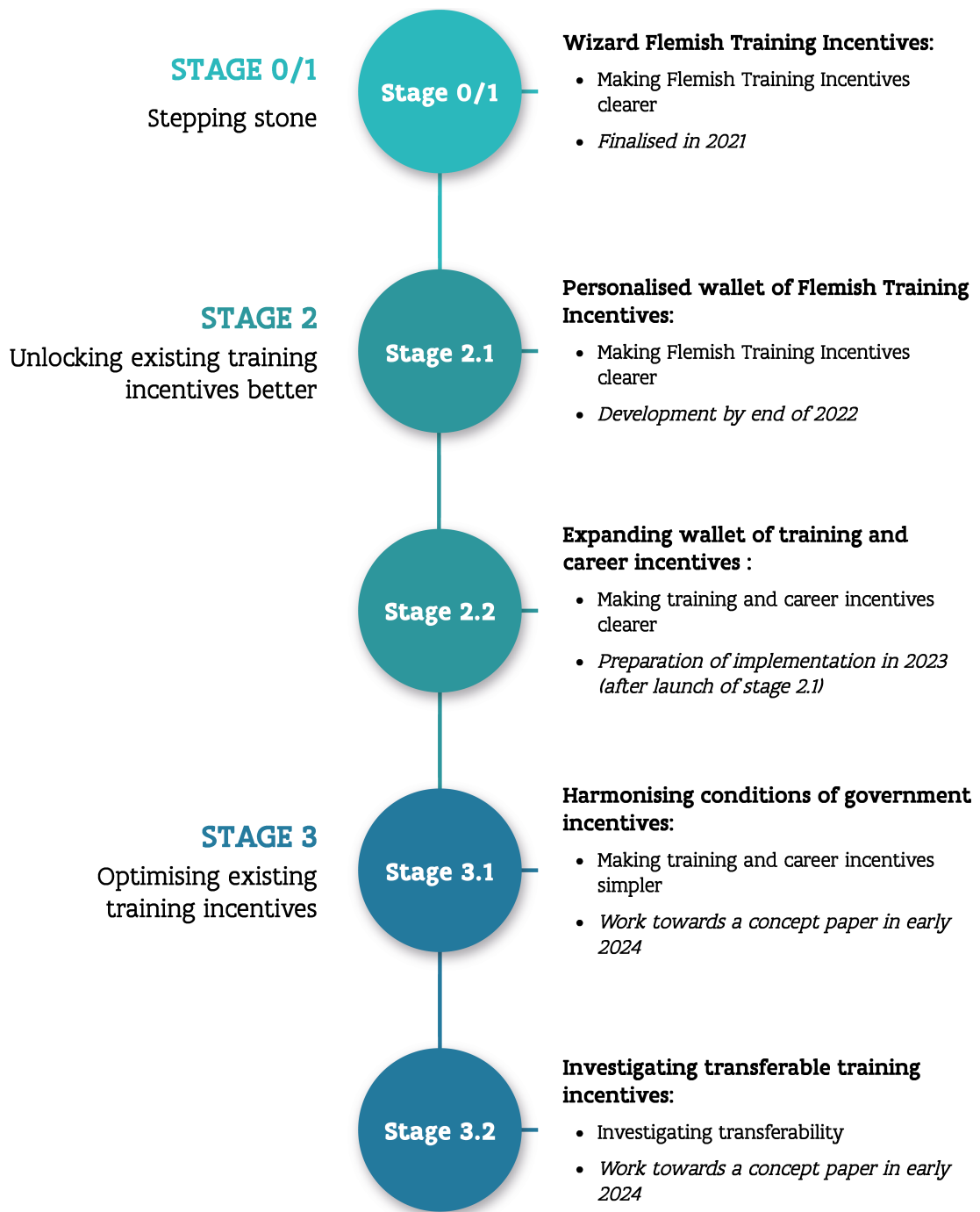
The expectations with regard to the instrument of the learning and career account must be realistic. It is - as also stated in the EU initiative - only one *tool in the toolbox* and it will, by itself, not be sufficient to eliminate the obstacles. Within the broader initiative of stimulating lifelong learning in Flanders, the LLR must also act in tandem with other initiatives that have to contribute to that ambition. An important condition for making the LLR a successful instrument is the wider challenge of the development of a learning culture in Flanders. The direction for this wider policy on LLL and the ambition to develop a learning culture in Flanders will be further indicated by the lifelong learning action plan. The insights from the studies into customer journeys of participating and non-participating adult learners, and the OECD study that is currently being conducted into segmentation of adult learners, can also help obtain a better view on obstacles and levers for stimulating training participation and what role LLR can play in this.¹⁰

2.2 DEVELOPING THE LLR

The LLR will be developed step by step The first stages of operationalisation have already been started, with resources from the European Recovery and Resilience Facility: an online [Wegwijzer \[Wizard\]](#) to the Flemish Training Incentives was launched in August 2021 (stage 0/1) and in 2022, work is under way on a personalised digital overview of the Flemish Training Incentives (stage 2.1).

¹⁰ Van Cauwenberghe, M. et al. (2021). [Customer journey van niet-participerende en participerende burgers aan levenslang leren. Een onderzoek naar de persona's, drempels en hefboomen van burgers met een leernood](#). Brussels.

Figure 3: Growth path LLR



The LLR has as its starting point the rights and the incentives that already exist today for pursuing training and/or career advice. The VIONA study - with a portfolio analysis of 22 incentives for workers - indicated that there is a wide range of incentives in Flanders today, but at the same time that this forms a

complicated patchwork that does not make it at all easy for a citizen to know exactly what he or she is entitled to.¹¹ **To achieve the full potential of a LLR within this complexity of the current landscape of training incentives, DWSE has developed a growth path with medium and long-term perspectives.** The various stages focus on specific interim targets, such as making the training incentives more orderly, simplifying those incentives and investigating the transferability of incentives.

The development of a learning and career account demands a nuanced debate, in which the proper - but not always the easiest - balance must be sought. In this regard, the ambition to place the LLR as a piece of the puzzle within the broader policy around lifelong learning (LLL) must not be ignored, in order to focus on the elimination of financial and time-related obstacles.

¹¹ See: De Coen, A. et al. (2021). Naar een leer- en loopbaanrekening voor Vlaanderen *Towards a learning and career account for Flanders*. appendices, <https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/view-file/47624>.

2.3 PRINCIPLES

Before describing the step-by-step elaboration of the LLR in this memorandum, it is important to define several principles and to explain the basis for the development of the LLR and where the LLR should eventually lead. These principles form the *leitmotif* and the ambitions towards which we shall move, step by step, in the growth pathway.

2.3.1 What a LLR is (and what it isn't)

The LLR is a **personal digital wallet with training and career incentives**. This is the interpretation of the LLR that has the greatest consensus in Flanders, as demonstrated by the VIONA study. It is also in line with the interpretation that is given to it at EU level.¹² The incentives contained in the wallet can come from different areas, whether from governmental bodies (across policy areas and policy levels) or from sectors and employers. Which incentives - existing or new ones - are in this wallet evolves throughout the various stages of the LLR.

The LLR is **not a savings account** in which an individual can - as in a bank account - deposit and save money in order to purchase a training course. There are no successful foreign examples for such an instrument, and important caveats should be made concerning the possible Matthew effect and the limited impact (since the growth depends on one's own financial contribution).¹³ Nor is the LLR a backpack for saving up days of furlough throughout one's career without a specific link to training. So this is **not about career savings**, defined as the possibility of saving days of leave from year to year for use later, linked to federal leave systems.

The LLR must give an overview of the training provision and career incentives available, but it is not the ambition to use the digital wallet for unlocking the training offer directly or to offer an overview of somebody's skills. That is included in the personalised career platform of VDAB, with which the LLR will be connected.

In short:
= overview of training entitlements and support, incentives for strengthening one's career
≠ savings account
≠ overview of training provision
≠ overview of competencies / competency wallet

2.3.2 Two pillars: money and time

Within the digital wallet of the LLR, we **distinguish between 2 pillars**:

- **allowances in terms of money** (financial allowances for training costs), for example training vouchers.
- **allowances in terms of time** (furlough arrangements/allowances for freeing up time for training), for example Flemish training leave.

¹² See the EU initiative for a Council Recommendation around individual learning accounts: [Questions and answers: Individual learning accounts and micro-credentials](#), Dec 2021. (*The text of the recommendation is, at the time of publication of this vision memorandum, still being negotiated by the European Member States.*)

¹³ Examples of this are the 'Learn\$ave' from Canada and 'Lifelong Learning Accounts' (LiLAs) in the United States, pilot projects that ultimately were not operationalised.

This distinction is important because incentives within both dimensions have their own added value and are important for tackling the existing obstacles for training.¹⁴ The VIONA study showed that parallel systems for time and money were appropriate for the LLR, because scenarios from the study that only focused on accounts with 'money' or 'time' were felt to be inadequate.

2.3.3 Medium

My Citizen profile: digital wallet

The medium on which a citizen can consult that wallet is a **digital overview on the existing My Citizen profile platform**. On this central citizen portal of the Government of Flanders, a citizen will be given the possibility of accessing (via e-ID) their personal learning and career account and so to receive an overview of incentives to which he/she is entitled.

This will not mean that this is the only possible place where one can gain insight into the support to which one is entitled. Our starting point is an instrument that is developed and administered by DWSE,¹⁵ but we adopt the **'no wrong door' principle**. That means that citizens may possibly have **various entrances** from which they can find the way to the wallet overview on My Citizen profile.¹⁶ We are initially thinking here specifically about two other initiatives: the **personalised career platform of VDAB** and the **federal initiative to develop a training account**.

Personalised career platform VDAB

The LLR is linked in its ambition with the personalised career platform. VDAB is developing a more personalised career platform for every citizen (My Career) and a digital training platform that gathers the training offer of VDAB and partners. The career platform offers citizens a dynamic instrument for managing their career data by means of tools and digital support for jobs, training and orientation on the labour market and using concrete questions to set to work on their career.¹⁷ Stimulating that career action and reflection can provide citizens with insight into their learning needs and can thus form a trigger to follow training.

As a personalised overview on training incentives, the LLR fits like a piece in a puzzle in that career platform. For this, it can contribute as an instrument to the career needs regarding training, more specifically by showing citizens which financial and time-related incentives they have at their disposal for strengthening their skills.

The LLR will thus be connected in an appropriate way with the career platform of VDAB. When someone logs onto the career platform and, eventually, receives personalised information about skills, identified skills gaps and training suggestions, ideally they should eventually also receive personalised information from the linked LLR about available training incentives. The better integration of that information is thus an ambition we shall be working towards in the long term.

¹⁴ The distinction between the money and the time pillars is not in what you receive, which generally comes down to a financial allowance (e.g. a voucher, a premium, you continue to receive your salary, etc.), but in what you can do with it (free up time to follow a training course versus paying your training expenses). The pillars are largely conceptual, in order to make a distinction between funding for leave schemes (= time) or funding for training expenses (= money). They also build further on the division made in the [VESOC-akkoord 11/07/2017 over de hervorming van de opleidingsincentives](#) [VESOC agreement 11/07/2017 on the reform of the training incentives].

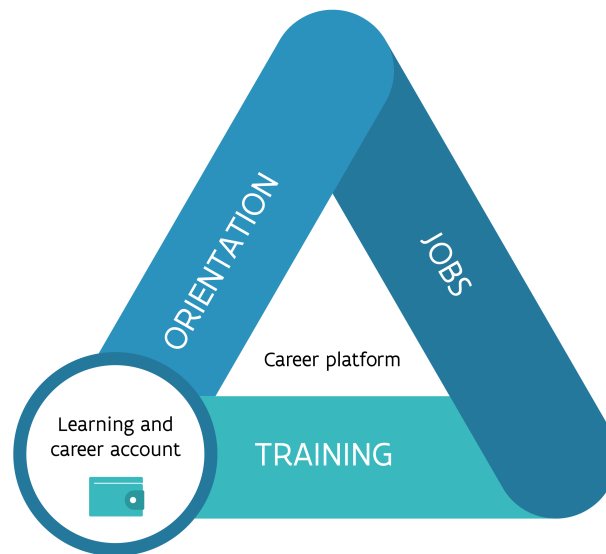
¹⁵ DWSE is doing this in partnership with the Digital Flanders Agency that administers the My Citizen profile online platform.

¹⁶ Whether you interact with the government via a local, regional or federal website, portal or counter, you receive the same service provision and information (not via one large platform, but via an eco-system of building blocks). (also frequently called "no single-door")

¹⁷ Via the combination of factual information, personal additions and offering appropriate tools and tips in the personalised career platform.



Figure 4: LLR and career platform VDAB



Possibilities for giving a concrete form to this ambition are displaying the personalised information from the LLR in the personal profile on the career platform, by showing the available training incentives for training courses in the “Find a Training Course” training database (on the career platform) and a personalised addition about available training incentives when somebody receives a training suggestion within the career platform. These connections contain the necessary technical complexity, so that this implies a step-by-step integration. The platform is currently under full development and there is a close working relationship between the Department of Work and Social Economy and VDAB, in order to allow both IT projects to connect with each other as well as possible.

Federal initiative, individual training account

Work is taking place at federal level on an individual training account in the context of the proposal to give employees the right to an average of five training days per year, as stated in the federal coalition agreement. With regard to the federal initiative concerning the individual training account (ILA), we shall ensure the best possible alignment with the federal administration, so that both initiatives can reinforce each other. We are seeking collaboration and complementarity between the policy instruments and powers. We in Flanders are aiming for the use of a ‘no wrong door’ principle. We are transparent about the Flemish initiatives that show overlap with the ILA, and strongly argue from the federal ILA that it primarily focuses on federal training rights - such as the mandatory training days in the context of the Workable and Flexible Work Act. People can further be referred to regional initiatives for matters such as (career) orientation or training provision , such as the LLR and the personalised career platform of VDAB.

2.3.4 Target Groups

With the LLR, we eventually want to reach all citizens of Flanders of working age who wish to learn and continue learning. As far as unlocking personalised information in the LLR, we are taking a **step by step**

approach.¹⁸ In the first stages of the roll-out (stage 2.1), personalised info will be unlocked regarding training support from the Department of Work and Social Economy for Flemish employees (the Flemish Training Incentives). If someone is not entitled to this support, we want to help them further by referring them to information about other appropriate support for his or her status or to an available training offer.¹⁹ In this way, we aim to help all professionally active citizens to get ahead, not just employees.

Within the career perspective of the learning and career account it is logical that the rights that are brought together in the LLR should start when someone enters the labour market or stops (or pauses) when they (temporarily) leave the labour market. In this way, we also respect the distinction between lifelong learning and initial education; generation students will not yet be able to make use of the learning and career account for their education.

The LLR must eventually become an instrument with a wide reach. This does not however mean that the rights themselves, brought together in the digital wallet, must be the same for everybody. We are aiming for a **universal but differentiated approach** where, in addition to a general offer for each citizen, additional support is available for vulnerable groups or groups for which financial obstacles could have the most impact.²⁰ The LLR must avoid creating a Matthew effect. Flemish employees must obtain a view on a clear and simple basic package, with additional support for vulnerable employees. We always want to refer other groups to other available (and often more extensive) support, for example the support provided by VDAB for jobseekers.

2.3.5 Training

A clear framework for trainings that may or may not give a right to the use of the rights in a LLR is important to guarantee the quality of training courses and the user-friendliness and transparency of the instrument. In Flanders we have found a balance in the recent reform of the training incentives in the **'labour market-oriented** criterion.²¹ We give this criterion a central position for the training courses in the LLR, supplemented with the individual possibility of career-oriented training (training courses that are recommended in the personal development plan while following career guidance). In this way, **we build further on existing policy**, which is becoming integrated in the training field and about which an agreement exists between employers' and employee organisations.

What is meant by labour market focus is, incidentally, a dynamic and future-oriented story, that **evolves along with the Flemish labour market and society** and whereby new emphases can be placed where necessary in the future. We start from the current framework, that is, using assessment and monitoring, reviewed and revised by the Government of Flanders, in consultation with social partners in the Flemish Training Committee.

The VIONA study suggested that a number of stakeholders would, in the long term, be in favour of any form of training ('life-wide learning') for the LLR, but this is considered difficult to attain. The study

¹⁸ The VIONA study argues for an LLR for the working and unemployed population at a professionally active age, because it is not (financially) feasible to include the entire adult population in the target group. See: De Coen, A. et al. (2021).

¹⁹ For example, free online training offer at VDAB.

²⁰ Within the current Flemish training incentives, the emphasis is placed on the short and medium educated. The VIONA study indicates that eventually investments can additionally be made in other vulnerable groups on the labour market (e.g. persons who are active in jobs or sectors that are faced with an important transformation, citizens that run the risk of their qualifications becoming out of date, etc.). Highly educated people also run the risk of their qualifications becoming out of date in our rapidly changing society. The fleshing out and assessing of objective parameters to identify those target groups for incentives must take place in consultation with the social partners (as happens, for example, for the 'labour market focus'). That exercise for identifying vulnerable groups on the labour market can be performed with investigation such as the OECD segmentation of adult learners and the customer journeys of (non-)participating citizens, but also by the macro-competence prognosis (still to be developed) included in the LLL action plan.

²¹ MD dated. 08/02/2019 to the specification of competences and determining an assessment system.

proposes career-oriented training as framework *“because of the fact that labour-market-focused training courses are often linked to specific tasks or professions, and career -focussed training courses also encompass the development of 21st century skills, career skills, digital skills, green skills... that also have a social added value and are important for expanding sustainable careers”*. In many cases, however, the current framework of labour market-oriented training also contains those skills that the researchers have ranked under “career-oriented”. The VIONA study concluded that if, eventually, the aim was to include every form of learning in the LLR (‘life-wide learning’), this would require a LLR that is integrated in the funding mix for lifelong learning across policy areas and competence levels.

2.3.6 Transferability

The Coalition Agreement included a commitment to design the individual learning and career account as a person-linked development budget. In addition, the VESOC agreement ‘All hands on deck’ states that we shall investigate further how we can make the existing training incentives more transferable. That target forms the focus of stage 3, where the added value of **making the training incentives transferable** is explored in its various dimensions.

Transferability has various aspects, whereby it is important to make a distinction between 2 major dimensions:

- Transferability of rights across labour market **status** (= portability)
- Transferability of rights in **time** (= accumulative)

Portability across labour market statuses has various facets, such as transferability of rights across working statuses (employee in private-public sector, self-employed) and non-working (jobseeker, inactive) statuses. Starting in *Stage 3.1: Harmonising conditions of government incentives*, it will be analysed step-by-step how to achieve a better transferability of rights across working statuses. In *Stage 3.2: Investigating transferability of training incentives* we take a deeper look at the pathway of a - capped - accumulation of rights in time, which can, for example, offer greater **flexibility** compared to the current “moment-linked” incentives, or offer more support for transitions or longer retraining programmes. The design and boundaries of such a system are subjects for social dialogue.

2.3.7 Ownership LLR

The individual LLR must contribute to stimulating citizens to take up ownership of their career. The rights in the digital wallet are **in the hands of the individual**. The take-up of those rights must take place in dialogue with employers, to ensure that the absence can be absorbed in organisations and the operation of businesses is not threatened.

That we place the citizens at the helm of their career does not, however, mean that those citizens need not be supported, by governments and employers, to find learning opportunities and training possibilities that can strengthen their career. With regard to the **shared responsibility**, we also refer to the compass of the lifelong learning action plan, where the learner is given central place in relationship to his environment, but also, alongside the individual, other actors in the eco-system of lifelong learning are taught to take responsibility (multi-actor perspective).²² A flanking policy of guidance and support is essential so that vulnerable individuals are not left behind.

²² Lifelong Learning Partnership. (2021).

Research shows that employers play an important awareness-raising role in stimulating their employees to brush up their skills or to learn future-oriented skills.²³ Employers and sectors also offer a lot of training support to employees (e.g. via sector funds). It is, after all, crucial for innovative businesses that employees also stay up to date, in order to respond in time to new transitions and challenges, to guarantee their competitive position and to retain (the quality of) employment.²⁴

When, however, the training needs of individual employees exceed the organisation or sector, the employees must, in the context of labour market mobility, also have access themselves to individual training support in the LLR, which can be deployed within their own career perspective.

2.3.8 Monitoring and assessment

Monitoring and assessment of the LLR are important to enable targeted adjustment in the course of a step-by-step pathway. Successful reforms of individual learning schemes took place in countries where, thanks to close monitoring, gaps were detected in the system.²⁵ We are working step-by-step and incrementally, so it is also important to define operational objectives and relevant result indicators when operationalising each stage. Customisation will be appropriate here. This exercise to identify result indicators for the first operational stages of the LLR is being further investigated by the Department of Work and Social Economy in parallel with the development of stage 2.1 in 2022. Use of the Wizard Flemish Training Incentives is also monitored (stage 0/1) and optimised where necessary.

²³ Van Cauwenberghe, M. et al. (2021).

²⁴ Flanders Social and Economic Council (2021). Opinion: Innovation and knowledge diffusions <https://www.serv.be/serv/publicatie/advies-innovatie-en-kennisdiffusie>.

²⁵ The French Compte Personnel de Formation (CPF), the only international example of a universal virtual accumulating learning account, underwent important reforms that increased the accessibility of the instruments and also the reach of vulnerable groups.

2.4 GROWTH PATH

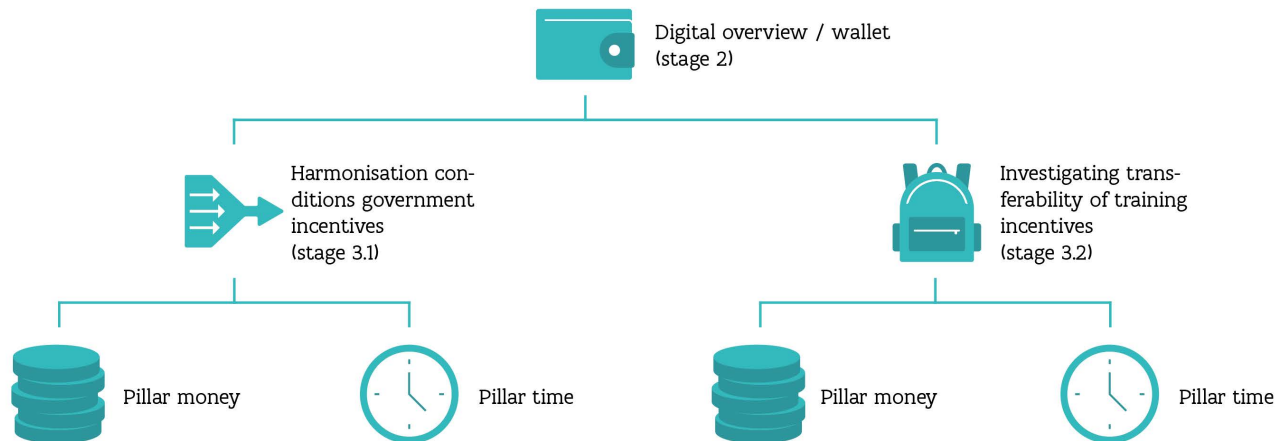
The VIONA study into the LLR suggests that a LLR as a personal digital wallet with training and career incentives is a widely supported idea among stakeholders in Flanders. The study also shows that there is no ready-made scenario for the precise design of that personal digital wallet and that this is also a balancing exercise between what is desirable and what is achievable. (See: *Box 2: Conclusions from VIONA investigation*).

To achieve the high level of ambition and the potential of a LLR within this complexity of the current landscape of training and career incentives, a growth path was developed with medium and long-term perspective (see: *Figure 3: Growth path LLR*). The scenarios developed by IDEA Consult acted as inspiration for this growth pathway.²⁶

An important distinction between stage 1-2 and stage 3, is that this vision memorandum proposes a **concretisation of the implementation with regard to the first two stages**, while with regard to the **third stage it offers a vision which we want to head towards with the further concept development** of the instrument in the long term.

For the gradual implementation of the LLR we start from the foundation of a digital wallet overview (stage 2), from where we look further towards a harmonisation and simplification of conditions of government incentives (stage 3.1) within the two pillars “rights to money” and “rights to time”, and at the same time analyse how training incentives might possibly be transferable (stage 3.2). The stages are not strictly separated from each other, but rather overlap with each other. The stages are discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Figure 5: Schematic presentation for the development of the LLR




²⁶ See: De Coen, A. et al. (2021). Naar een leer- en loopbaanrekening voor Vlaanderen [Towards a learning and career account for Flanders], <https://www.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/naar-een-leer-en-loopbaanrekening-voor-vlaanderen-idea-consult>.

2.4.1 Stage 0/1: Wizard Flemish Training Incentives



In August 2021, the [Wegwijzer Vlaamse opleidingsincentives](#) [*Wizard Flemish Training Incentives*] was launched as the first stage of - and primarily as a step up to - the LLR. The guide is a first step towards making the Flemish Training Incentives clearer, one of the objectives of the LLR. By getting citizens to run through several questions, the information relevant for them is provided about available incentives that can support them in following training.²⁷ The guide focuses on four training incentives for employees, administered by DWSE. Brief information is also given about and/or referral is made to support for jobseekers, temporarily unemployed, self-employed, etc. This is based on the principle that we want to inform the target group that finds the wizard, but cannot make use of any of the Flemish Training Incentives, further about other support. The link to the wizard is also made from the career platform of VDAB via a targeted info-page on the website. Furthermore, there is already an indication for VDAB training in the VDAB training database of which training courses are eligible for training incentives and there is a referral to the guide. The wizard is monitored in 2022 and optimised if necessary.

Stage 0/1	Wizard Flemish training incentives
What	Online simulator with questions
When	2021 (already launched)
Objective	Making Flemish training incentives clearer
Focus	 <p>MONEY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flemish training incentives (training vouchers)  <p>TIME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flemish training incentives (Flemish training leave, Flemish training credit), supplemented with Flemish care credit with motive training
Medium	Website www.vlaanderen.be

2.4.2 Stage 2: Personalised wallet of training and career incentives (filled step by step)



Stage 2.1: Personalised wallet Flemish training initiatives



In the course of 2022, we will work towards a digital wallet with training incentives, as a 2nd stage of the LLR. With this, people will, at a single glance, receive clear and personalised information about the Flemish Training Incentives to which they are entitled. That digital wallet can be accessed on My Citizen profile, the central Flemish citizen portal, where, by means of e-ID, someone can consult his or her balance / remaining entitlements for a specific period.

²⁷ In the first place this is targeted info about the training incentives that are offered by DWSE, aimed at training for employees (training vouchers, Flemish training leave, Flemish training credit and Flemish care credit motive training).

Following the same philosophy as the wizard (stage 1), the digital wallet will, in addition to unlocking somebody's personal entitlements, also refer people to information about other support, so that when someone consults their LLR via the Citizen profile, they will also receive the necessary information about other support available. For this, a customer-focused approach is used, which ensures that the wallet is designed in a clear and orderly way, taking into account the needs of users. In addition, this personalised overview on training incentives and financial support will also be connected in an appropriate way to the personalised career platform of VDAB, where digital tools for career advice and career orientation are offered (see: *Personalised career platform VDAB*).

Stage 2.1		Personalised wallet Flemish training initiatives	
What		Digital overview of remaining rights to Flemish training incentives	
When		End of 2022	
Objective		Making Flemish training incentives clearer	
Focus	 	MONEY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flemish training incentives (training vouchers) TIME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flemish training incentives (Flemish training leave, Flemish training credit), supplemented with Flemish care credit with motive training 	
Medium		My Citizen profile Interoperability with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personalised career platform (VDAB) 	

Stage 2.2: Expanding the personalised training and career incentives wallet



We expand the personalised overview of the Flemish Training Incentives step by step. This stage can be considered a continuation of stage 2.1, whereby we supplement the digital wallet with other support that can help citizens when following training or career guidance. The intention here is that somebody consulting their supplemented LLR on My Citizen profile is shown what he or she is entitled to at that moment (in his or her specific situation) from various perspectives, other than that of the Department of Work and Social Economy. We will actively search for organisations that could prove an added value for the citizen if they were to add their training incentives to the personalised overview.

The VIONA study into the learning and career account - and in particular the portfolio analysis of existing incentives - showed that a lot of support is available, but it is not always clear for citizens how they can identify which incentives they are eligible for.

We are thinking at this stage about, for example, career vouchers. In the European proposal regarding Individual Learning Accounts, career guidance is considered a crucial component of the *enabling framework* for ILAs. VDAB is currently investigating improved access of the career vouchers on the



personalised career platform, so that they can be better displayed in other places, such as within the learning and career account. Training support from other policy areas (such as Education and Training) and support from sectors could find a place here. We will look at this in consultation with Flemish partners, and also with the federal project of the training account (ILA), in order to find the proper form of collaboration for making federal and sectoral incentives known.

This stage manifests itself as an IT-driven growth project in its own right. In this way, the overview of training incentives can grow further, so that citizens can view their rights and incentives from inside and outside the Government of Flanders in one central wallet. This is based on a customer-driven philosophy that every citizen of working age and after their initial education who consults his or her LLR on the Flemish citizen profile (or whether referred to from his or her career platform) can view as complete an offer of support as possible, regardless of his or her labour market status.

Stage 2.2		Personalised wallet supplemented with other training and career incentives	
What	Supplemented overview of rights to training and career incentives		
When	Operational preparation in 2023 (after launch of stage 2.1)		
Objective	Making training and career incentives clearer		
Focus		MONEY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flemish training incentives (training vouchers) • Career vouchers • Incentives for training from other policy areas / policy levels • Incentives for training or career guidance from sectors 	
		TIME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flemish training incentives (Flemish training leave, Flemish training credit), supplemented with Flemish care credit with motive training • Incentives for training from other policy areas / policy levels • Incentives for training from sectors 	
Medium	My Citizen profile Interoperability with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalised career platform (VDAB) • My Career / federal learning account (ILA) 		

2.4.3 Stage 3: Harmonising conditions and investigating transferability of training incentives

The LLR does not only have the objective of making training and career rights visually more accessible. We also want to make it much simpler for citizens to know to which training incentives they are entitled, and investigate how rights can be made better transferable. This is in order to give citizens greater flexibility and ownership regarding their rights to training throughout their career.



The LLR is not limited to creating a digital wallet. We also look at the government incentives that are brought together in that wallet, in order to ensure that they form a logical, transparent and clear package of support for citizens throughout their career, whether this concerns orientation, upskilling or reskilling needs. For the implementation of stage 3, we are working towards a concept paper in the spring of 2024. A conceptual distinction is made between stages 3.1 and 3.2 because of their differing focus, but in practice the development of those stages is taking place together.

The outlines on which stage 3 should eventually focus are explained in the following paragraph. In the further development of these stages, investigation into adequate support for reskilling and upskilling, based on the needs of citizens (as studied in the customer journey studies) and insights from the coming investigation into screening of lifelong learning legislation, which will be conducted in 2022 at the request of the Lifelong Learning Partnership, will provide direction here.

Stage 3.1: Harmonising conditions of government incentives



If we not only want to make it visually more transparent, but actually simpler as well for individuals to know to which training incentives they are entitled - one of the three central objectives of the LLR - this requires initially a harmonisation/simplification in the conditions, rules and procedures of government incentives.

The **portfolio analysis of existing incentives** for training across competence levels and statuses (listed in detail in appendix to the VIONA report)²⁸ showed **how complex this landscape is in Flanders**. The most important conclusions that researchers, despite the VESOC agreement of 11 July 2017 (on the reform of the training incentives for employees), formulated in that context are:

- There is **no overarching framework** from which the objectives of the various incentives can be described across statuses and policy levels;
- There is a **lack of overview** due to the complex landscape of incentives that has historically developed;
- **Complex criteria** to see whether people can make use of an incentive or not;
- There is **no clarity about the extent of the (financial) support** people receive
- **No customisation is possible** for removing obstacles to the specific needs of individual citizens.

“The analysis of the incentives available show that there are still too many equivalent incentives for persons in different labour market statuses, and there is still too little clarity in the conditions, for example with regard to the award conditions. Once the personal situation changes (by moving home, changing job or status, etc.) people must check for which incentives they are eligible.”

The objective of this stage is to make things easier for individuals to know to which incentives they are entitled, based on several clear criteria. In the digital LLR wallet on My Citizen profile, it must then prove easier to discover in one glance to what you are entitled and what you can use those entitlements for.

To illustrate: within the development of the digital wallet (stage 2.1), the different application areas and criteria of the four training incentives of the policy area of Work (DWSE) imply that the calculation of somebody's rights is each time based on a different set of parameters (based on status, place of employment, place of residence, sector, education level, etc.). This legislative and administrative complexity illustrates the need for simplification of training and career incentives, in order to make it not only visually clearer but also conceptually easier and more transparent to know to which government support they are entitled.

²⁸ De Coen, A. et al. (2021).

The VIONA study made the recommendation for harmonisation. The patchwork of incentives with divergent conditions, that is based on different contexts, does not make it easy for a user to understand his or her rights. Advantages of such a harmonisation are:

- More **simplicity and transparency** in the conditions of training incentives can **lower the threshold** for citizens (who want to follow training and are looking for support) to actually apply for incentives.
- A harmonisation in the conditions, rules and procedures of training incentives also stimulates **administrative simplification** on the side of the providers and administrators or the incentives.
- A harmonisation of rules and procedures in conditions allows to keep the **rationale** behind existing incentives (which are intended to guarantee certain rights for certain target groups).

That simplification of the complicated landscape of government incentives demands an intensive balancing exercise that is fed by existing and future research, such as the customer journeys of non-participating citizens, the OECD study into segmentation of adult learners and the study into screening of the legislation, which will be performed in 2022 at the request of the Lifelong Learning Partnership.²⁹ In addition, insights from the policy evaluation of the Flemish Training Incentives in 2022 could also feed this exercise.³⁰

In order to arrive at a transparent system for support for upskilling and reskilling, regardless of the sector in which one works, an assessment must be made of whether the application areas of the incentives involved must eventually be brought into line with each other, in order to work towards a **more unambiguous system for workers in the public and private sector**.



Within the **time pillar** of the LLR, attention should mainly be given to how existing incentives can better anticipate the needs of citizens, so that citizens experience as few obstacles as possible for reskilling or upskilling. This demands a detailed analysis of existing incentives that focus on the 'time' obstacle across policy levels. And this in relationship to the needs of the citizen, the obstacles he or she experiences and the degree to which the current incentives do or do not address this. Specifically, the following time incentives fall into the scope:

- ⇒ The Flemish training leave (VOV) (*in this, employers continue to pay the salary of the learner, for which they receive a fixed compensation from the Government of Flanders*)
- ⇒ The federal time credit with motive 'training' (*in this, the learner falls back on social security and receives a replacement income for the interruption of the career*), which can be supplemented with...
- ⇒ ... the Flemish training credit (VOK) (*a supplementary encouragement benefit on the interruption payment in the context of time credit with motive 'training'*)
- ⇒ The Flemish care credit (VZK) with motive training (*the time credit for employees and civil servants in the Flemish public sector*)

Although the various time systems envisage different types of training and training pathways and have been developed from a different logic,³¹ it is not clear for users to know the various possibilities. **Here Flanders, together with the actors involved at federal level, wants to review the furlough systems for training and bring them better into line with each other.**

²⁹ This research assignment must contribute to better cohesion and complementarity between policy areas through an analysis of the legislation with regard to lifelong learning at Flemish, regional and community levels. The central question of this research assignment is: Which bottlenecks, obstacles, contradictions, gaps and levers with regard to lifelong learning can, based on an inventory of the legislation, be identified in the legislation?

³⁰ In 2022 the annual report on Flemish training incentives will, for the first time, be supplemented with a policy assessment of the first three work years after the reform.

³¹ In this way, the VOV can be used more flexibly for reskilling and upskilling, where the time credit and VOK are intended for longer training pathways.

The VIONA study already indicated the complexity of that exercise in harmonisation:

- The synchronisation of the various incentives and their conditions demands a thorough screening and adjustment of the **legislation** and synchronisation **across the various administrations levels** (with possible impact on policy competences).
- The rationalisation of the sum of conditions and a better synchronisation of the incentives have an **impact on existing rights**.

We consider, however, that rationalisation necessary for achieving a clear, simple and fair system, that is also achievable in budget terms. We would like to mention here that it is important the greatest support goes to those with the greatest need for it, for the benefit of strengthening his/her position on the labour market. That reasoning can be pursued in this exercise. For this exercise in harmonisation, the Work policy area is working towards a concept paper in the spring of 2024, which also contains the outlines for stage 3.2.

Stage 3.2: Investigating transferability of training incentives



The Coalition agreement contains the commitment to eventually shape the individual learning and career account as a person-linked development budget and the VESOC agreement 'All hands on deck' states that we must investigate further how the existing training incentives can be made transferable. The Lifelong Learning Partnership also has included this ambition in the LLL action plan within flagship 3 'Investigate a person-linked deployment of Flemish LLL incentives'.³²

With regard to the current incentives, an important added value of the learning and career account could be found in the **transferability** of rights. Transferability covers various aspects, whereby it is important to make a distinction between 2 broad dimensions:

- Transferability of rights across labour market **status** (= portability)
- Transferability of rights in **time** (= accumulative)

It is pertinent to focus on both dimensions of transferability within the context of the increasing demand for **labour mobility and transitions on the labour market**. A better transferability of rights across working statuses in public and private sectors is part of the exercise into harmonisation of conditions of government incentives. By also including other **statuses** in this stage, it is also possible to see how one wallet can function as a central instrument for training support of the Flemish working population . Considering evolutions in the area of making careers more dynamic and transitions, this is of increasing importance.

By way of illustration: The growing number of new or atypical work forms, such as the growth of the platform economy, or the rising number of freelancers in Flanders (37% more in five years, according to recent data from UNIZO),³³ means that a ever-larger group of Flemish workers are no longer in a classic employer-employee relationship whereby an appeal can be made for support for training from the employer or incentives from the department of Work.

In comparison with the existing training incentives, an important added value of this further development of the LLR could also be in the - capped - accumulation of rights across **time**, to offer the users greater

³² Lifelong Learning Partnership. (2021), Lifelong learning action plan - Setting course towards a learning Flanders, <https://beslissingenvlaamseregering.vlaanderen.be/document-view/61B85836364ED9000900107F>.

³³ UNIZO (2021). *Freelancer Focus 2021*. Brussels: UNIZO https://www.unizo.be/sites/default/files/freelancer_focus_2021_4.pdf

flexibility compared to the current “moment-linked” incentives, or in order to offer more support for longer reskilling pathways or larger career transitions.

To illustrate: From the use of the Flemish Training Incentives, it appears that the current training incentives are currently insufficient for real reskilling or transition.³⁴ According to the research into customer journeys of learners, these remain reserved for “either an economically entitled group, or jobseekers, or for people who are faced with redundancy”.³⁵



Within the **money pillar**, a transferable training budget in the LLR could be a game-changer for stimulating individuals to own their career and strengthen skills, including in the context of incentivising more profound career transitions. In that context, co-funding between public authorities, individuals and employers can act as a lever for providing a sufficiently substantial contribution and to make clear the shared responsibility between those three actors.

The LLR can become a place for pooling resources for training, with the starting point that a good system must be clear, simple and fair. Each person of working age in Flanders should be entitled to basic support, with an increase of rights for those target groups requiring this. It must of course be ensured that existing resources for vulnerable groups continue to go to these groups and are not ‘smeared out’ over the broad working population.³⁶ Dead weight loss and a Matthew effect must be avoided here. For this, a flanking policy is of crucial importance (see: *Flanking policy*). In this regard, the training incentives from the Work policy area can be assessed, and it can be analysed whether these must be expanded or reoriented in order to be able to reach the most vulnerable groups on the labour market (e.g. employees in jobs or sectors in transition, with risk of automation, employees with the risk of obsolescent skills, etc.). Possibly the current focus on people with a short and medium education is insufficient.



With the **time pillar**, the challenge is largely to evaluate existing incentives in order to come to a simpler and clearer system (see *Stage 3.1: Harmonising conditions of government incentives*). This does not only relate to Flemish Training Incentives; federal leave systems are also within the scope here. It shall be investigated how we can focus on broader time support for reskilling and large career transitions (for which support today is limited). A lack of time remains the greatest obstacle for people who want to pursue training, as is shown in various studies in Flanders.³⁷ Accumulation - as long as there is a certain limit - of rights to time for training can possibly facilitate this and is something which can be studied here as well. Thought must, however, be given to how employers can be supported in making up for employees in lengthy training courses.

As already emphasised for stage 3.1, this demands a careful balancing exercise, and also a more general assessment of the way in which training is stimulated and funded. In its LLL action plan, the **Lifelong Learning Partnership** also has included as ambition to study “*the possible interpretation and effects of a person-linked deployment of LLL incentives*”.³⁸ Such a person-linked deployment demands a shared vision concerning lifelong learning which indicates the direction Flanders wants to take. This does not only

³⁴ Department of Work and Social Economy *Annual report on Flemish training incentives. School year 2020-2021* <https://www.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/jaarrapport-vlaamse-opleidingsincentives>.

³⁵ Van Cauwenberghe, M. et al. (2021). *Customer journey van niet-participerende en participerende burgers aan levenslang leren. Een onderzoek naar de persona's, drempels en hefboomen van burgers met een leernood*. Brussels.

³⁶ This is, for example, about support such as exemption from registration fees for adult education (CVO and CBE) for low-skilled, jobseekers and other vulnerable groups.

³⁷ Among others: Van Langenhove, H. et al. (2020), Van Cauwenberghe, M. et al. (2021).

³⁸ Lifelong Learning Partnership. (2021). *Lifelong learning action plan - Setting course towards a learning Flanders*. <https://beslissingenvlaamse-regering.vlaanderen.be/document-view/61B85836364ED9000900107F>.

traverse various Flemish policy areas (Work, Education, Economy, etc.), but also various competence levels, considering the close links with federal labour law and leave systems.

From the Work policy area, we want, in harmony with social partners and other policy areas, to work towards a **concept paper** about the transferability of rights in the LLR, taking as starting point the outlines that were explained in the previous paragraphs.

2.4.4 Flanking policy

A clear and simple overview of incentives in a learning and career account is only part of the story. The LLR is one piece in the puzzle of initiatives that must contribute to a Flemish learning culture. The necessary change in mentality, which must increase support for more career thinking and the thirst for learning, will not be accomplished solely by the LLR.

Our starting point for the LLR is the principle of ownership by the individual, who is the central character in the LLR and who has available an individual wallet with training incentives. The proper guidance in various areas will, however, be necessary, in order to support certain target groups in actually making use of their digital wallet. In addition, citizens must also be supported in the proactive reception of learning questions and finding training opportunities.³⁹

Communication and outreach

Activating communication is crucial for making (new) policy measures visible. This also applies to the LLR. In order to actually achieve a higher uptake of rights in the LLR, we must first make them known to their target audience. At the roll-out of the LLR, the necessary attention shall also be given to suitable and targeted communication about the instrument. Various service providers can also play a role in outreaching work and in guiding their target audience towards the LLR. We are thinking here of career coaches, work shops, learning shops, etc. We also see in this an important awareness-raising role for the employers and employee organisations. The results and recommendations from the customer journeys and the results of the OECD study on the segmentation of adult learners can also be used for the targeted deployment of communication and support towards certain target groups. We could also make use of insights concerning the current awareness on the Flemish Training Incentives.

Support

Effective support in the use of the LLR can take place at various levels: from a telephone hotline or *chatbots* on the online platform to *face-to-face* support for specific vulnerable target groups. Appropriate support is needed here, certainly for people with limited digital skills. Adults with a risk of lagging behind in digital skills (including short-educated, illiterate, elderly, people living in poverty, etc.) are already in a vulnerable position on the labour market. A LLR as a digital wallet risks widening the gap, so that the necessary support for vulnerable groups is crucial. With a view to e-inclusion, the Government of Flanders is working on the support of e-learning (via the e-learning action plan), and also on the expansion of *digibanks* (within partnerships that can be sustainably extended), to support people lagging behind in digital skills with the lending of laptops, pursuing digital training and receiving guidance in the use of online service provision.

³⁹ Dekocker, V., & Demely, J. (2021). The individual learning account must be much more than a ledger. *Over.Werk. Tijdschrift van het Steunpunt Werk*, 3(2), 76-83. <https://www.steunpuntwerk.be/node/4218>

Guidance

In addition to support with (the use of) the LLR itself, more generally individual guidance and support and coaching around lifelong learning is needed: to acknowledge and understand one's own training needs , to find a suitable training course, to successfully follow a training pathway, etc. Here the LLR touches on other crucial initiatives - either existing or yet to be extended - going from digital instruments such as the personalised career platform of VDAB or the competence checks, to personal guidance in the context of career guidance and/or learning shops.

The lifelong learning action plan gives direction for this broader policy around guidance and support in lifelong learning. The Partnership puts forward actions, ambitions and flagships which, in the short to medium term, can contribute to a strong(er) learning culture in Flanders, both for individuals and for organisations. That too is an important success factor for the LLR. Below, synergies can be sought with actions set up by various actors in the context of flagship 4 of the LLL action plan: "*On the way to one Flemish strategic competence programme*", and particularly flagship 5: "*Guidance and support with LLL: developing enabling policy*".

3 FOLLOW-UP MEASURES

From the Work policy area, two streams will be developed further. At the **operational** level, we are working in the course of 2022 on the development of the digital wallet of Flemish Training Incentives (stage 2.1). We are doing this in agreement with VDAB in order to provide connectivity with the personalised career platform. For the expansion of this personalised overview (stage 2.2) from 2023, we shall also be tuning with the federal level in the context of the initiative regarding the training account, so that both initiatives can strengthen each other. We are also consulting other policy areas, social partners and sectors, to assess how a partnership can be shaped in order to allow government or sectoral training support to be better known to citizens via the digital wallet.

From the Work policy area, we want to work towards a concept paper on the harmonisation of government incentives and the transferability of rights in the LLR for the further **conceptual development** of stage 3, in harmony with other policy areas and competence levels, social partners and the Lifelong Learning Partnership. The outlines on which the policy area of Work will eventually focus in these stages has been explained in the previous paragraphs.



4 ATTACHMENTS

4.1 ANNEX 1: ABBREVIATIONS

AHAD	VESCO agreement 'All hands on deck'.
DWSE	Department of Work and Social Economy
ILA	Individual Learning Account
LLL	Lifelong learning
LLR	Learning and career account
PLL	Lifelong learning partnership
SERV	Social and Economic Council of Flanders
VDAB	Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training
VLAIO	Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship Agency
VOV	Flemish training leave
VOK	Encouragement benefit Flemish training credit

4.2 ANNEX 2: POLICY BACKGROUND TO LLR

Coalition Agreement 2019-2024

"We provide an individual learning and career account as a person-linked development budget. By means of a personal wallet, we stimulate people to make use of their rights, and we make the existing training incentives simpler, (more) orderly and transferable."⁴⁰

Policy memorandum 2019-2024. Work and social economy

"In order to encourage (individual) learning culture, to remove obstacles for training and by means of skills strengthening to protect people better against obsolescent qualifications, we are going for an individual learning and career account, designed as a person-linked development budget. Our starting point in this is the rights and incentives that already exist today for pursuing training.

Towards an individual learning and career account

We shall provide an individual learning and career account, designed as a person-linked development budget. By means of a personal wallet, we stimulate people to make use of their rights, and we make the existing training incentives simpler, (more) orderly and transferable.

We explore the outlines and conditions of this exercise, taking into account academic insights and experiences abroad and we involve the social partners and training and education providers in this."⁴¹

VESCO agreement 'All hands on deck' (December 2020)

⁴⁰ Government of Flanders (2019). Coalition Agreement of the Flemish Government 2019-2024 <https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/view-file/31741>

⁴¹ Hilde Crevits, vice minister-president of the Government of Flanders and Flemish minister of Economy, Innovation, Work, Social economy and Agriculture (2019). Policy memorandum 2019-2024. Work and Social Economy, <https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/view-file/32261>.

“Spearhead 8: We make an individual learning and career account and integrate it step-by-step in a personalised digital career platform.

The learning and career account will be worked out in stages, together with the social partners. In the first stage, we shall identify which measures people can use to support, orientate and strengthen their careers (such as the career vouchers, the training vouchers, the Flemish training leave and the Flemish training credit). In this way we stimulate people to make use of their rights, and we make the existing training and career incentives simpler and (more) orderly. We will examine further how we can make the existing training incentives transferable.”⁴²

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⁴² VESOC (2020). All hands on deck - For a resilient and inclusive labour market, <https://www.serv.be/serv/publicatie/vesoc-akkoord-alle-hens-dek>.

