

SKILLS-FIRST: POLICY AND IMPACT

► Skills-First is not Skills-Only: Advancing flexible recognition while leveraging the value of formal qualifications

A skills-first approach does not imply abandoning formal qualifications. It involves expanding recognition systems so that skills and qualifications work together.

Initiatives:

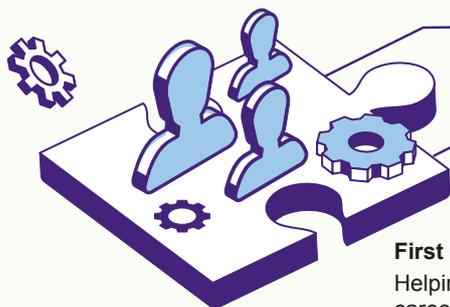
- 💡 **Micro-credentials and shorter modular learning pathways (UK and EU)** to enable incremental upskilling alongside or beyond full-length qualifications
- 💡 **European Individual Learning Accounts and digital credentials** to give individuals agency over upskilling
- 💡 **Singapore's Careers & Skills Passport** to help employers assess validated skills beyond traditional CV signals

► Strengthening skills policy through integrated and coordinated policy design

- Policy fragmentation constrains effective skills policy
- Government's integrator role is critical to align industrial, labour and skills policies over the long term
- Job quality and labour market institutions shape whether skills-first practices deliver inclusive and sustainable outcomes

► Balancing skills supply and demand to enable a more dynamic and mobile labour market

Gaps remain at both ends of the skills-to-jobs journey



First mile (Navigation)

Helping individuals understand emerging skill demands, career pathways and vadjacent opportunities

Middle (Training)

Institutions, funding mechanisms and course provision to expand skills supply

Last mile (Utilisation and matching)

Ensuring acquired skills are recognised and effectively deployed into roles that utilise capabilities

Initiatives that embed skills development within enterprise strategy and industrial transformation:

- 💡 SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit and Queen Bee industry-led training model (Singapore)
- 💡 Pact for Skills (EU)

Advancing skills-first requires not only expanding training provision, but strengthening navigation, improving utilisation, and strengthening how skills are signalled, validated and recognised in the labour market.



System-level transformation

- Shift from static qualifications to dynamic skills portfolios that require continuous renewal
- Co-design industrial, labour and skills strategies through deliberate, long-term institutional alignment



Adjustment within current practices

- Strengthen the credibility of skills signals so they complement, not replace qualifications
- Position skills utilisation as a performance driver, not a compliance exercise



Policy levers to mobilise adoption

- Move from tracking training participation to measuring real labour market outcomes
- Institutionalise coordination through mandated integrator roles, stable funding, and shared data systems



◀ Scan to view the full roundtable insights

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