



2004-2007 BASQUE VOCATIONAL TRAINING PLAN

«From Tradition to Innovation»







2004-2007 BASQUE VOCATIONAL TRAINING PLAN

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IN TODAY'S WORLD, VOCATIONAL TRAINING IS BECOMING MORE STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT IN FURTHERING OUR COMPANIES' COMPETITIVENESS AND PROGRESS, AND IN IMPROVING OUR PROFESSIONALS' CAPABILITIES AND KNOWLEDGE.

PRESENT

The prosperity of countries that can successfully compete in international markets, their economies' competitiveness, and their production structures' efficiency depend more than ever on the level of training and qualification of their human resources, and on their continuous updating. This statement acquires still greater significance in the Basque Country, where our human resources are possibly our only and most important natural resource.

Specific Vocational Training fulfils a key function, situated between the education system and the production sectors. The Middle Level Vocational Training Phases, for students who have completed Compulsory Secondary Education, and the Higher Level Vocational Training Phases, for students who have completed their School Leaving Certificate, provide the necessary knowledge and capabilities to be able to access a wide range of employment possibilities.

At present, we have different production sectors that are lacking qualified labour, a problem that is becoming increasingly more urgent, and one whose solution is vital for all. In order to achieve this, it is essential that girls receive the training that up until now either they had not chosen because they did not believe it was suitable for them, or they had been unable to do so because somebody believed that certain training specialities were only for boys.

ATION



ANJELES IZTUETA AZKUE
Minister for Education,
Universities and Research





Basque Vocational Training has been working for a long time to enable our companies to have suitably qualified human resources, and with the necessary training to be able to continue with ongoing learning. Basque vocational training is situated between tradition and innovation, between efficiency and flexibility, with a very high level of quality, but above all, and most importantly, it has placed itself close to companies and society.

We have to continue with these ongoing improvements. Changes are coming about at increasingly greater speed, our companies have ever more greater competence, and the people who are going to take on a job must have better preparation than ever before.

When the Basque Vocational Training Plan was approved in 1997, it meant a determined initiative by the Basque Government towards a training programme that was already conceived as essential and urgent for our economy and our businesses to move forward, for the improvement of employment, and for our society's well-being on the whole. This Vocational Training plan has involved us working around three basic points: quality, innovation and the setting up of an Integrated System of Professional Qualifications. Today, 2 Vocational Training centres have received the Gold Q Award for scoring 500 EFQM points, 19 centres have received the Silver Q Award for scoring 400 EFQM points, 38 Vocational Training centres have obtained the ISO 9002 certification, and another 14 centres have scored 300 EFQM points. This places us at the top of the European list with regard to the number of certified vocational training centres, by number of inhabitants and size. We are also working on innovation; for this purpose, we are introducing the enterprising culture among our students: we have designed business projects with which micro-companies are created in the same Vocational Training centres, or we apply new management models with which we intend to noticeably improve the organisation, running and efficiency of our centres. With the setting up of a Vocational Qualification System, both initial and continual Vocational Training are being projected as something integrated, with common objectives, with one single professional reference point, and where we can identify which professionals are, and will be, necessary in companies, how this professionalism may be achieved, from a new perspective and with a much more flexible model, in which formal, non-formal and informal learning mechanisms are considered and certified, and with which we may motivate and improve people's training, orientate their professional development, improve the quality of Vocational Training even more, and link companies' needs with their workers' capabilities. Our intention is to establish, through consensus, what a person must do and learn, and the quickest and best way to do so —along with business development—, so that very person may be capable of developing at the speed with which the production sectors are progressing.

Taking the above into consideration, the present situation of Basque Vocational Training is the outcome of a profound transformation fuelled by major organisational and economic efforts, that have put Vocational Training on a better footing in the framework of a changing society. This has also provided us with the experience needed to undertake, from a stability position, the task of updating certain objectives and broadening others. Therefore, the 2004-2007 Basque

Vocational Training Plan is conceived as a strategic task of adapting the structures and activities already in place to the new changes detected. This involves reshaping already existing plans and processes to keep up with changes in technology, markets, competitors and values, and trying to penetrate other emerging fields by using new instruments and tools.

The journey initiated twelve years ago in the field of Vocational Training marked a major change based on a new, modern and efficient training concept, which without forgetting its tradition and history, has developed innovative perceptions that have placed our Vocational Training among the best in Europe.



ANJELES IZTUETA AZKUE
Minister for Education,
Universities and Research

The background is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this are several thin, white, straight lines that intersect to form a complex, abstract geometric pattern. The lines vary in orientation and length, creating a sense of depth and movement. The pattern is most dense in the lower right quadrant and becomes sparser towards the top left.

INTR



PRODUCTION





INTRODUCTION

1. VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY. ADAPTATION AND CHANGE: A BASIS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

In today's knowledge society the proper use, constant updating and ongoing review of material and human resources are key factors in achieving adequate levels of competitiveness and employability. To a certain extent, the pressure from continuous social and economic change over the past few decades has led to a new way of conceiving education and training. One of the most outstanding characteristics is a shift from the concept of a results- and success-oriented training and learning process to one based on the acquisition of competences and greater qualifications. Another characteristic is the expansion of a training environment in which non-formal or informal contexts complement, or sometimes replace, formal learning mechanisms.

Not only is Vocational Training susceptible to change, but because of its ever-growing implication in the world of business and the market economy, it must be particularly responsive to emerging forms of management and transfer of knowledge, and to the organizational consequences that derive therefrom.

Vocational Training, with its own specificities and characteristics, is part of the broad field of education and learning, a field in which there has been in recent years an overall tendency to incorporate processes and improvement plans to update their management models, enhance their performance and, in short, adapt their procedures to meet the mounting social and economic demands for answers in a rapidly evolving scenario.

The dimension and intensity of such answers depend fundamentally on the desired objectives of each case. The objectives must also be relevant to the situation in the sector or sphere they aim to affect. In fact, the situation can sometimes deteriorate due to complacency and inertia in the existing state of affairs or to a lack of planning or foresight with regard to the tendencies in the socioeconomic arena. Such situations call for profound changes in concepts, structure, procedures and educational activity content.





In these cases, there is generally a comprehensive overhaul or "reform" of the education system which seeks major changes in the design of training programmes, training contents or teaching methods. Other important practices affecting management, financing, infrastructure and equipment may also be implemented, which make it essential to place Vocational Training in its integrity in an absolutely strategic position.

A second scenario is one in which the current structures and practices are not overhauled, either because an objective of this type is considered unnecessary or because the sector concerned shows signs of efficacy and consolidation in most of its spheres of action. In such cases, making changes whose objectives exceed the appropriate limits would be unnecessary if not detrimental. In this second case, when the sector has a solid position, any changes should centre specifically on fomenting initiatives targeted at processes of improvement and renovation.

In general terms, we can differentiate between reforms or substantial changes and plans or proposals of a more limited and specific nature. Rather than question the positioning of a particular sector, the latter are conceived as mechanisms that seek to support, improve, modify or heighten already established procedures and objectives.

The aims of these plans or proposals are more partial and concrete, trying to address the demands of a rapidly changing reality. They are based on a reflective attitude, which even anticipates responses to foreseeable impacts on the education environment in the more or less immediate future or, in some cases, impacts that have already occurred.

Basque Vocational Training has shown evidence of considerable dynamism over the past five years, which for the most part can be explained by two connected factors. The first is the transformation of regulated Vocational Training resulting from the reform in the education system; and secondly, the implementation of the 1997 Basque Vocational Training Plan drawn up by the Basque Council on Vocational Training, with the active participation from social partners, approved by the Basque Government in April 1997.

With regard to the first factor, the training phases in Specific Vocational Training are now divided into "professional families" through a modular structure linked to units of professional competence. This type of organisation has contributed to better adapting training content to the requirements of today's production system, as well as creating a more professional training profile specifically attuned to the labour market. The incorporation in all of the training phases of a training and guidance module and an internship module (*Formación en Centros de Trabajo*, or FTC) are two illustrative indicators of the objectives put forward.

Coinciding with the transformation of regulated education programmes, the Basque Vocational Training Plan, from a broader, more global perspective, is strategic for the integration of the three Vocational Training subsystems — Specific Vocational Training, Continuing Vocational Training, and Occupational Vocational Training. For this reason, the objectives and contents in the Basque Vocational Training Plan are aimed at promoting Vocational Training and competence for anyone who can benefit from and take part in requalification and learning processes, and to updating their capabilities, knowledge and skills.

In keeping with this focus, the 1997 Basque Vocational Training Plan represented a significant break with the outdated concept of training goals and procedures in the professional sphere. It sought to integrate and link the different training offers in order to meet the diverse qualification needs of our human resources. At the same time, it addressed the need to place priority on the detection of training needs through coordinated action on the part of the different stakeholders involved in the areas of training and production. The plan also stressed the creation of flexible and diversified structures capable of coordinating and integrating the efforts undertaken in different spheres.

Taking the above into consideration, the present situation of Basque Vocational Training is the outcome of a profound transformation fuelled by major organizational and economic efforts that have put Vocational Training on a better footing in the framework of a changing society. This has also provided us with the experience and stability needed to undertake the task of updating certain objectives and broadening others. Therefore,

the 2004-2007 Basque Vocational Training Plan is conceived as a strategic task of adapting the structures and activities already in place to the new changes detected. This involves reshaping already existing plans and processes to keep up with changes in technology, markets, competitors and values, and to try to penetrate other emerging fields by using new instruments and tools. As a strategic approach and in order to maintain a strong relationship between Basque Vocational Training and the labour market, it is important for social partners to play an increasingly active role.

This strategic objective can only start from the current position of Basque Vocational Training and must also take into account the characteristics of the current social realities. These benchmarks are necessary for the development of the 2004-2007 Basque Vocational Training Plan. The priority purpose is to identify and develop the strategic lines which will allow Basque Vocational Training to easily adapt to the changes that take place in the different production sectors.

THE BASQUE VOCATIONAL TRAINING PLAN REPRESENTS
A SIGNIFICANT BREAK WITH THE OUTDATED CONCEPT
OF TRAINING GOALS AND PROCEDURES IN THE
PROFESSIONAL SPHERE



FROM INNOVATION TO PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION

2. THE POSITION OF BASQUE VOCATIONAL TRAINING. CHARACTERISTICS

The position today of Basque Vocational Training is the result of supportive complementary action by social partners, administrations and training centres, whose activities are based primarily on consensus. In any type of activity transformation implies a change in the behaviour of individuals and groups. In an area as complex and wide-ranging as Vocational Training, it is even more important for business, trade unions, training centres and the Government to reach a broad consensus with regard to attitudes and specific objectives in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome for all.

The journey initiated seven years ago in the field of Vocational Training marked a major change. This new concept in Vocational Training called for collaboration with the partners and institution mentioned above. It is important to bear in mind that in the early 1990s Vocational Training did not enjoy a positive social image. Programmes were often associated with high student failure and repetition rates, poor adaptation of studies to market demands, and a lack of coordination between the training offer and the partners involved in the sector, despite the efforts made by instructors and training centres.

The demonstrated capacity for transformation owes itself precisely to the concerted action referred to in the previous paragraphs. The best way to take a closer look at these efforts is to analyse the contributions made by the four social partners that have played the most significant role in the process of change.

Actions taken by the Basque Government

The Basque Vocational Training Plan, drawn up and eventually approved in 1997, was the outcome of a clear decision on the part of the Basque Government and the social partners to strengthen, improve and prioritise Vocational Training. The Basque Vocational Training Plan included a diagnosis of the situation of the three Vocational Training subsystems and of the role that should be undertaken by the different bodies (public institutions, business associations, trade unions, companies, training centres, etc.). Based on this diagnosis a series of general objectives and core actions were established. A set of explicitly stated objectives was then identified, which included educational, organizational and other aspects with a specifically social focus.

Activities developed by the Basque Government have centred primarily on the institution of a series of organs, some of which were created prior to approval of the 1977 Basque Plan. These bodies have contributed greatly to reinforcing the presence of Vocational Training. The most noteworthy of these organs are listed below in chronological order:

1. THE BASQUE COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING, CREATED IN 1994.
2. THE BASQUE FOUNDATION FOR CONTINUING TRAINING, HOBETUZ, ARISING FROM AN INTERPROFESSIONAL TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT MADE IN SEPTEMBER 1995, AND CREATED IN 1996.
3. THE BASQUE VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM OBSERVATORY, CREATED IN 1998.
4. BASQUE INSTITUTE FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING, CREATED IN 1998.
5. THE INTEGRAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE NETWORK, CREATED IN 1998.
6. BASQUE AGENCY FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE AND QUALITY IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING, CREATED IN 2000.
7. VICE-MINISTRY FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING, CREATED IN 2001.



In addition to these specific aspects, the Basque Vocational Training Plan was structured in four programmes which included a set of wide-ranging diversified objectives. An evaluation of the plan conducted in 2002 showed that the compliance of these objectives has enabled the plan to move forward considerably.

Basque Vocational Training has had a keen interest in reducing bureaucracy, while promoting autonomy and flexibility, and orienting methods toward a new model which better meets the needs of both enterprise and people.

In line with the Basque Government's policy on quality, the Vice-Ministry for Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning, which encompasses the Vocational Training Directorate, the Lifelong Learning Directorate, the Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training and the Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training has obtained The Certification on Quality, ISO 9001:2000.

Recognition of quality is of particular relevance. It has helped foment a different type of mentality and rid ourselves of historical influences and sequelae that had been bogging down the activity and social image associated with Vocational Training. It has also helped overcome many limitations which, to a great extent, had kept the system from being able to face change and adapt training to the demands of the economic situation, specifically the business fabric.

Vocational Training centre activities

Another determining factor in the current state of Basque Vocational Training is the extraordinary response from Vocational Training centres, which have taken a firm stand in support for the new concepts put forward in the Basque Vocational Training Plan. In this area there have been notable changes in terms of management structures, requalification of human capital and modernization of equipment. Centres have opted for Continuing Vocational Training and pushed for a rapid transition from old to new curricula in the regulated training offer.

Table 1 shows that in only four academic years the Vocational Training centres have proceeded to modernise their training offer and substitute the Vocational Training model designed by the General Education Act of 1970.

Another relevant indicator is the readiness and initiative on the part of Vocational Training centres to promote practices associated with quality and excellence.

As a result, the following outputs were achieved by early 2004:

- 2 Vocational Training centres have received the EFQM Gold Q Award for achieving a score of 500 points.
- 19 Vocational Training centres have received the EFQM Silver Q Award for achieving a score of 400 points.
- 38 Vocational Training centres have obtained ISO 9000 certification.
- 14 Vocational Training centres have received 300 points for EFQM excellence.
- 1 Vocational Training centre has obtained ISO 14000 certification.
- 10 Vocational Training centres are in the ISO 14000 audit stage.

TABLE 1.
INTERNAL EVOLUTION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES.
PERCENTAGES. 1993/94-2002/03

Year	VT I	VT II	Modules	VT middle-level	VT higher-level
1993/94	31%	65%	4%		
1994/95	29%	65%	6%		
1995/96	29%	62%	9%		
1996/97	28%	59%	11%		2%
1997/98	21%	50%	6%	10%	13%
1998/99	6%	36%	2%	26%	30%
1999/00	2%	14%		34%	50%
2000/01		5%		36%	59%
2001/02				37%	63%
2002/03				37,4%	62,6%

Source: Department of Education, Universities and Research. Own elaboration.



**CONTINUING VOCATIONAL
TRAINING. INTEGRATED
MODULAR CATALOGUE ***

Year	Participants
2001	6.980
2002	8.383
2003	15.399

**CONTINUING VOCATIONAL
TRAINING. UPDATED TRAINING**

Year	Participants
2000	2.621
2001	12.518
2002	9.487
2003	24.235

**OCCUPATIONAL VOCATIONAL
TRAINING**

Year	Participants
2003	1.849

* Training associated with the Basque Vocational Qualification System

The discipline inherent in such achievements has made it necessary for centres to draw up their procedures, modify their objectives, rationalise their services and determine their priorities. All of this has called for important changes in the organizational culture, making the need for change evident and raising the previous levels of competitiveness.

A third element contributing to the current status of Vocational Training in Basque society is the increasing commitment on the part of the centres to furthering Continuing Vocational Training and Occupational Training. This is a key issue in the strategy of the Basque Vocational Training Plan, which encourages the integration of the three Vocational Training subsystems.

**Response from families
and students**

The response of families and students is another key element in the development of the sector. Demand has increased as a result of the changes made, specifically in response to the advantages obtained through the reform in Vocational Training. Several indicators provide eloquent data on the subject. Two of them are included to serve as a summary of demand behaviour.

On the one hand is the clear sustained increase in the number of students who have opted for middle- and higher-level regulated Vocational Training phases. Table 2 shows a notable increase in participants, particularly with regard to higher-level Vocational Training.

TABLE 2.
NUMBER OF VT STUDENTS BY YEAR AND PHASE.
TOTAL NUMBERS. 1997/98-2002/03

Year	VT Middle-level	VT Higher-level	TOTAL
1997/98	3.967	6.654	10.621
1998/99	8.422	10.967	19.389
1999/00	10.569	15.454	26.023
2000/01	10.898	18.091	28.989
2001/02	11.048	18.298	29.344
2002/03	11.203	18.626	29.829

The evolution depicted in table 2 has contributed to increasing the weight of Vocational Training studies in the sphere of regulated education. Thus, in the 2002/03 school year Vocational Training students accounted for just over 47% of all students enrolled in non-compulsory levels of education. This is a 10-point improvement in the relative position of Vocational Training compared to 1996/97. In other words, the implementation of new Vocational Training approaches has been successful in projecting a better image of the content and

professional possibilities linked to this area of education.

Unquestionably associated with the previous factor are the improved academic results of Vocational Training students, a relevant indicator of the level of success and satisfaction. The data shown in table 3 provide an idea of the intense changes in academic achievement between students enrolled in medium- and higher-level training programmes and students of earlier Vocational Training programmes.

TABLE 3.
ACADEMIC RESULTS. SUCCESS RATE. PERCENTAGES. 1995/96-2002/03

Year	VT II	MÓDULOS	FP. Medio	FP. Superior
1995/96	65%	78%		
1996/97	65%	82%		
1997/98	67%	83%		
1998/99			79%	88%
1999/00			80%	87%
2000/01			81%	88%
2001/02			79%	86%
2002/03			81%	86%

Source: Department of Education, Universities and Research. Own elaboration.

Business sector

Lastly, as part of the series of linking factors that explain the current position of Basque Vocational Training, the behaviour of the

business sector relative to the new model of Vocational Training and to the guidelines laid down in the Basque Vocational Training Plan is what reasserts and gives meaning to the efforts made by the different partners



mentioned earlier. The best way to analyse the behaviour of Basque enterprise is to look at job placement levels among Vocational Training certificate holders, the level of satisfaction with these employees, and willingness on the part of companies to reinforce requalification processes leading to greater employee knowledge skill level.

Table 4 shows the employment rates over a period of four years among different graduating classes successfully completing Vocational Training programmes. The rate of incorporation is particularly high, with over half of the areas of specialisation included here reaching 80%. This means that eight out of ten certificate holders

TABLE 4.
VOCATIONAL TRAINING EMPLOYMENT RATE. GRADUATING CLASSES 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 AND 2002. PERCENTAGES.
TOTAL BASQUE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY. SURVEY OF 100% OF STUDENTS GRADUATING EACH YEAR

ACADEMIC AREA	Employment rate				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Metal	92%	93%	95%	92%	88%
Automotive	84%	94%	91%	90%	88%
Electricity and Electronics	88%	86%	90%	88%	81%
Drafting	86%	80%	88%	87%	-
Wood	90%	83%	87%	83%	84%
Construction	96%	100%	87%	87%	88%
Computing	-	81%	84%	82%	72%
Catering and Tourism	86%	76%	81%	83%	86%
Textiles	-	67%	80%	69%	73%
Agriculture	64%	88%	75%	77%	63%
Hairdressing and Beauty	80%	82%	73%	79%	85%
Community Service	63%	79%	73%	75%	81%
Sports and Physical Activity	71%	-	72%	85%	90%
Administration and Business	70%	70%	71%	75%	77%
Sound and Image	42%	66%	71%	74%	64%
Health	62%	57%	66%	71%	69%
Chemistry	77%	67%	66%	70%	75%
Graphic Arts	64%	69%	65%	75%	71%
TOTAL GRADUATING CLASS	78%	79%	81%	83%	81%

enter the labour market and do not continue with their studies. The data is very reliable, since 100% of the students who completed their studies were surveyed each of the years included in the study.

If the results in table 4 do not speak eloquently enough for themselves, the survey on company satisfaction with Vocational Training certificate holders, conducted in 2002 by the Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training, also provides relevant data on satisfaction among the different Vocational Training business sectors. The survey, which included a total of 861 companies in the Basque Country, shows not only the amount of Vocational Training certificate holders hired by these different firms (average of 97%), but also the generally high level of satisfaction with these employees (an average score of

7.5). Perhaps the most revealing piece of data, however, refers to the readiness on the part of business owners to hire Vocational Training certificate holders in the future. In this regard, over 96% of the employers surveyed were in favour of hiring professionals of this type in the future.

In summary, the current position of Basque Vocational Training is the result of strategic planning and the creation of a priority instrument: the Basque Training Plan. This plan defined a series of connected actions geared toward building an Integrated System of Vocational Training. The various indicators that have been included in this introduction point to a favourable response by the different sectors involved in the area of Vocational Training. Thus, the results achieved are considered positive and can be used as a jumping off point for further actions.

OVER 96% OF THE EMPLOYERS SURVEYED WERE IN FAVOUR OF HIRING PROFESSIONALS OF THIS TYPE IN THE FUTURE

3. THE REALITIES OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING TODAY: CHANGES IN THE SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AND THE CHALLENGES OF TRAINING PROCESSES

Trying to characterise today's realities of Vocational Training not only calls for methodical reflection on our environment, but being aware of the tendencies that are having recognizable effects on our reality, on our ways of teaching,

organising, managing and thinking about Vocational Training.

The four tendencies most specifically affecting Vocational Training are described below.

THE FLEXIBLE
COMBINATIONS OF
WORKERS WITH
DIFFERENT COMPETENCES
WILL BECOME
MORE AND MORE
COMMON

**The contemporary relationship
between knowledge, training
and the market**

Now more than ever before, the world of Vocational Training is tied to business activity, and is affected to a great extent by the laws of the market. In fact, not only has the present model for development of Basque Vocational Training promoted greater participation by social and economic partners in the management, regulation and determination of activities. It has also tended to reinforce the decentralization processes that favour the development of each Vocational Training centre as a management unit connected to its environment and capable of developing a specific educational and professional project. In a short period of time the two factors above have made it possible for terms such as innovation, competitiveness, assurance on quality and constant improvement, among others, to become part of our regular Vocational Training lexicon.

Along with the undeniable attention to the market and its demands, in all cases, it is important to be aware of the fact that the respective sectors are undergoing internal changes which call for flexible specialization, high-level skills, the ability to react quickly to changes in the market and reliable service, innovation and marketing.

As a result, flexible combinations of workers with different competences will become more common; fluid communication with stakeholders will take on increasing importance; long-term definitions for employee positions and duties will become less frequent.

The type of knowledge and training demanded in a setting like the one described here must be attuned to the different demands and needs of people and companies.

**The training centre as
a strategic nucleus**

The tendency of Vocational Training centres is to become crucial units of management, organization, dissemination and, in short, autonomous training development. Each Vocational Training centre is an organization with floating borders, continuously redefined objectives and permanently reconstructed relationships; it can no longer be reduced to the across-the-board bureaucratic formula it was once dominated by. A new model of relationship between training centres and public administration has therefore prevailed, which allows for greater quantity and quality of the training offer and seeks to overcome the structural difficulties inherent in excessively rigid organizational models.

Each centre will progressively concentrate on a specific specialised training offer, while at the

same time taking part in networks that complement other training spheres. The type of alliances deriving from these networks will tend to go beyond the immediate spatial environment and gradually become more international. This will mean that the demand can choose between a much wider international training offer and that the stakeholders will have the opportunity to participate in different cooperation programmes. Thus, the Vocational Training centres will become increasingly more involved in external projects, calling for additional efforts people about the different services offered and how they can be accessed.

Toward permanent updating of knowledge

The shift from a finalistic limited concept of training to having it seen as an ongoing activity with unlimited capacities brings about the need to permanently update and revise knowledge and individual and group skills. This is associated with the impact of the technological revolution and the requirements of the knowledge society. This has made it necessary to widen the boundaries of the concept of "training" and establish mechanisms that facilitate the more or less constant revision of knowledge. In this sense, human resources management is a fundamental objective; it is also essential to promote the permanent updating of knowledge among personnel, and encourage innovation in specific areas.

Instructors should specialise. Part of the teaching staff should concentrate on managing the process of learning and the other part should concentrate on innovation. The presence of external experts will become more common and in general practical



experience in supraeducational fields will become increasingly more important in cultivating the teaching profession.

Education and training subsystems should provide all of society in general with integral possibilities. In this context diplomas, certificates, qualifications and degrees shall be an important benchmark, not only for the people themselves, but also for training centres and companies.

The work will be carried out in a much more individualised manner. It will be less dependent on a fixed place, pre-set times, or a single group or institution. Individual activity will be more connected to networks and therefore workers will be more autonomous and will need to develop new self-regulation abilities.

Innovation and technology

The influx of new communication and training possibilities is a consequence of what is known today as the "network society". This influx makes it possible to use new technologies for educational purposes while also warning us of the presence of new instructors, or "informal trainers", who are



firm competitors of formal education. In other words, the classical methods of "formal education" should be revised, particularly in the world of Vocational Training. Organisational structures can also be updated by using new technologies, taking advantage of resources that promote broad and diverse relationships between Vocational Training centres and the local surroundings.

New technologies are going to have a considerable effect on learning methods and processes. Based on these new technologies, the interplay between text, image and sound is now a reality. The changes implied by are rather unpredictable and require a great amount of foresight. Many of the learning experiences will be carried out in an indirect or virtual manner. Individuals will be able to use many different kinds of contexts and this will require instructors to have a high level of communication skills.

THE TRAINING AND LEARNING SYSTEMS MUST BE ADAPTED TO A NEW SCENARIO TO PROVIDE A GREATER ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

Conclusion

In congruence with the diverse aspects discussed here, training and learning systems must be adapted to provide greater access to knowledge and to include all types of people interested in acquiring knowledge and skills. Educators and instructors will increasingly take on the role of learning guides, mediators and consultants. Their role will be to support stakeholders so that they can develop their own process of learning. In addition to acquiring motivation and cultivating a critical mind, active learning should also include being familiar with different learning possibilities.

People will seek out training centres for their level of organisation and specialisation; but demand will also be contingent on their ability to become part of wider networks through which they can orient people on how their needs can best be met. Services must be accessible and must meet the required standards of quality.

Lastly, Vocational Training centres must be firmly rooted in the community and linked with the local environment. They must also create, maintain and promote connections with other learning communities. Local relationships will promote trust, and participation in larger networks is essential for orienting activities and knowledge for both individuals and groups.

4. UPDATING AND IMPROVING THE BASQUE VOCATIONAL TRAINING PLAN. STRATEGIC LINES

The need to permanently update the training offer, thus guaranteeing its quality and efficacy, coupled with the need to revise the strategic objectives that have served as a guideline for the development of Basque Vocational Training in recent years, calls for adapting and updating the objectives and content of the Basque Vocational Training Plan. There are also new spheres which require new objectives, content, activities and assessment criteria. All updating processes are based on the evaluation and review of the work carried out to date.

The actions planned for 2004-2007 will therefore mean continuing with some of the strategic objectives defined in the 1997 Basque Vocational Training Plan, bolstering improvement and updating policies in areas already defined as being of particular interest in Vocational Training. But based on this model other actions should be taken in fields or areas in which periodic renovation calls for new management methods, systems for

accessing knowledge and, most importantly, ways of making full use of the possibilities offered by new technologies.

Therefore, updating the Basque Vocational Training Plan will revolve around the four Strategic Lines described below.

Update and improve the Integrated System of Qualifications and Vocational Training

Based on specific competence standards, major efforts have been made to define the qualifications associated with different production sectors. The Basque Vocational Training Catalogue is the outcome of these efforts. The project focused specifically on the task of defining competences and establishing assessment systems for individuals interested in attaining competences. As a result of both





actions a mechanism has been designed for the recognition and assessment of vocational competence. The implementation of this mechanism has been an extremely important strategic objective in the development of the Integrated Vocational Training System, and is therefore one of the areas that should be updated through specific action programmes.

Increase activities and objectives that foment and guarantee quality

Not only have the numerous experiences centring on quality in the area of Vocational Training led to different quality certifications. They have also encouraged collective reflection, reinforced improvement and fomented the very culture of quality. Many of the proposals for improvement deriving from assurance processes have made it possible to define a series of actions aimed at correcting the weak points detected. It is also important to acknowledge and publicise the many positive aspects that have also been identified and validated, in this way reinforcing and strengthening them.

Learning from early experiences in the vast field of quality, we can see the need to increase activities and objectives aimed at enhancing this area. In fact, more accessible, less complex methodologies have been implemented, thus promoting greater and more diverse use of these processes. Therefore, the updated Basque Vocational Training Plan should consider quality as one of its key areas, with a particular focus on monitoring improvement plans, applying new innovative models and promoting objectives that are permanently updated and adapted to changing needs.

Stimulate a culture of innovation

In order to permanently update Vocational Training activities, innovation must be seen not only as a set of specific finalistic actions. It must also be construed as a process which seeks to bring Vocational Training in line with the pace set by economic and productive change and, to a certain extent, act as its motor.

The term innovation affects very different stakeholders and areas, and includes the implementation of organisational and training strategies. It also implies a change in the disposition and attitudes of different stakeholders, which is made patent in the rational and verifiable use of available resources. In short, it is identified by many types of actions in which technology may not be an exclusive characteristic, but is indeed a fundamental factor.

Promote and diversify the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

New technologies should be seen as instruments that provide potential for applications in learning, organisational and management processes. They can also be very useful in terms of training, coordinating and linking human capital, in general, and instructors in particular, and also in improving the quality of relations between training centres and society in general.

In all cases, none of the above is possible without a framework plan which lays down objectives, adapts new technologies to meet the objectives, and lays the groundwork for developing the skills needed to make

satisfactory use of what are nothing more than instruments.

In consideration of the four strategic lines described above, the new 2004-2007 Basque Vocational Training Plan is organised into different programmes, strategic lines and objectives, and covers the three-year period of 2004-2007. Preferably these programmes will be connected to each one of the specified strategic lines and will promote cooperation between the different partners active in the world of Vocational Training.

The purpose of organising the process of updating the Basque Vocational Training Plan

into programmes is to arrange each coherent set of actions under an identifying name. This creates perfectly defined groups of activity, each of which concentrates the activities of the different partners involved in the area of Vocational Training.

The idea of this set of programmes is to update the objectives of the Basque Vocational Training Plan, making sure they are easily identifiable, have a clear time-frame and can be evaluated. The different programmes will be included in each of the previously defined strategic lines and will be accompanied by a economic report showing the estimated cost of each programme.

The top-left corner of the image features a series of thin, white, intersecting lines that form a complex, abstract geometric pattern. These lines create various triangular and quadrilateral shapes, some of which are elongated and narrow, while others are more compact. The lines appear to be part of a larger, unseen grid or structure.

STRATE

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I.

GIC LINE 1



STRATEGIC LINE 1

1. UPDATE AND IMPROVE THE INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF QUALIFICATIONS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Basque Council on Qualifications and Vocational Training

The development of the Integrated System of Qualifications and Vocational Training of the Basque Country and the new tasks brought about by a better-qualified workforce and lifelong learning calls for a certain amount of co-responsibility in terms of decision making on the part of institutions, enterprise, trade unions and training centres, which can no longer be done through today's institutions and bodies.

Therefore, we need to create a new model of Basque Council on Qualifications and Vocational Training which is public and has the authority to establish and design training policies. The new model should contribute to determining the Basque Government policy on Qualification and Vocational Training, and see to it that policies are linked to the qualification and training needs defined by the production and employment needs.

In the same way, there are functions of the Basque Qualifications and Vocational Training System which now require institutional co-responsibility by social partners to ensure the system's development. This is the case with sectorial and regional channelling of the proposals and demands for training and qualification in the different production sectors, and with identifying and formulating the vocational competence standards that should be part of the Basque vocational qualifications.

Developing qualifications and Vocational Training, and meeting the needs of vocational qualification, training and counselling, calls for an instrument which disseminates the objectives, goals and outcomes put forward in Basque Vocational Training and which includes Basque society as a whole.





Planning vocational qualification levels for the working population and meeting training and vocational guidance needs also requires a series of previously collected, complete, systematic data, which is not available at the present time.

Lastly, in order for political and social institutions to follow-up and monitor the progress of the Basque Vocational Training Plan and to provide the public with information on the basic aspects of the training and qualification offer and services, there needs to be systematic publication of information and data, which are not currently available.

The Basque Vocational Training System Observatory

The tasks of the Vocational Training Observatory have centred primarily on providing information, mainly quantitative, on the professions and occupations most in demand in the market and on conducting specific studies on training needs.

However, if we want to implement active employment policies and train young professionals to better meet production and labour market requirements, the observation and studies carried out by the Vocational Training Observatory must be more strategic. On the one hand, they must include the observation, predominantly qualitative, of market behaviour based on a set of typical professional figures and, on the other, the study of aspects pertaining to the production sectors that are most decisively involved in the shaping of vocational qualifications.

Lastly, observation should also include processes of vocational incorporation of

young people to see how well the qualifications attained during initial training (regulated and non-regulated) are adapted to the mentioned requirements.

The Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training

The Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training, in collaboration with social partners, and in accordance with the 1998-2002 Basque Vocational Training Plan, has drawn up the Basque Vocational Qualifications and associated training catalogue, in a set of significant sectors in the Basque economy.

The method for elaborating the qualifications has been consolidated, based on the identification/determination of competence standards by experts in production. Now it is time to consider a more strategic line of research which allows us to determine the progress of production methods in companies and, as a result, the vectors of change of vocational qualifications. Together with the current method, this R+D+I should make it possible to determine the lines of evolution of the qualifications. In this way they can, to a certain extent, anticipate changes and be more effective in time. They can also systematically incorporate aspects of professionalism that today are very hard to take in with the current elaboration method.

The Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training will have the support of the Vocational Training Observatory in determining the qualitative variations of the qualifications required by the market (which together with changes in production methods is the other component in the evolution of

the qualifications). The Observatory will also work to better adapt initial training (regulated and non-regulated) to the requirements of enterprise and employment.

The Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training

The Basque Vocational Training Plan conferred the Agency with three areas of work associated with quality of Vocational Training, recognition and assessment of competence, and certification of competence.

The three areas have been working on different tasks and have implemented, in some cases, or prepared, in others, various actions, mechanisms and projects which consolidate the quality of all of the Vocational Training processes and set into motion one of the most important projects put forward in the most advanced countries in Europe: a mechanism for the recognition, evaluation and certification of non-formal and informal learning.

Setting this mechanism into motion in the Basque Country is one of the priorities for this period. Flexibility and proximity with regard to training, and the importance of formal and informal learning will be essential in meeting a fundamental objective —reconciling work, learning, family life and leisure— one of the main pillars defined by the European commission for strengthening the role of people in the new knowledge society. This strategic objective and its relationship with Vocational Training in the world of work call for significant participation and collaboration with social partners.



Integral Vocational Training centres

The positive experience that has characterised the operation of the integral centres suggests that more and better centres of this type be opened. Their main function —to offer all Vocational Training option streams through a single training structure— effectively contributes to ensuring the objective of permeability, coordination and maximum integration of the different Vocational Training subsystems; this objective is even further supported by the perspective establishment of a unified training system associated with qualifications. In this regard, it should be pointed out that one of the principal effects of integrating the diverse training offers is the privileged concentration of human, educational and technological resources at centres of this type. Therefore, these centres suitable for implementing other indisputably important functions in the Basque Qualifications and Vocational Training System.

The integral Vocational Training centres are also the ideal setting for important exchanges of experiences associated with Vocational Training. On offering Vocational Training option streams geared toward different populations with different time frames and training needs, the centres must work together on different Vocational Training actions. In this regard, the integral Vocational Training centres are conducive to the

TO OFFER ALL VOCATIONAL TRAINING OPTION STREAMS THROUGH A SINGLE TRAINING STRUCTURE EFFECTIVELY CONTRIBUTES TO ENSURING THE OBJECTIVE OF PERMEABILITY, COORDINATION AND MAXIMUM INTEGRATION OF THE DIFFERENT VOCATIONAL TRAINING SUBSYSTEMS

THE INTEGRAL VOCATIONAL
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R+D+I

PROJECTS ON THE TEACHING-
LEARNING PROCESSES,
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IMPLEMENTATION OF
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OR ADVANCED
MANUFACTURING

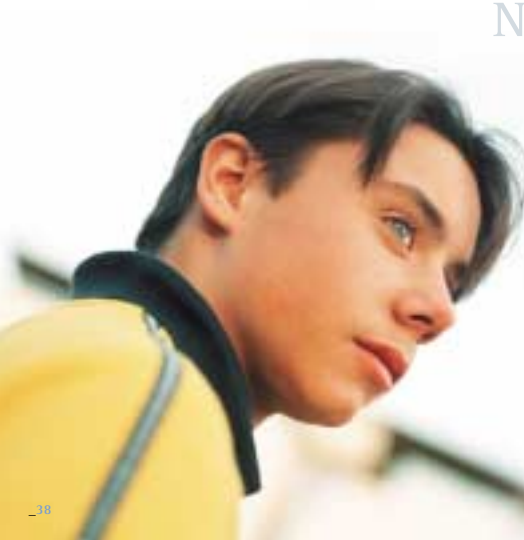
development of R+D+I projects on processes including teaching-learning, management models, application of new technologies and advanced manufacturing.

Moreover, as pointed out in the previous plan, the integral Vocational Training centres are the mainstay for the establishment of stable training and qualification structures for Vocational Training instructors; this requires an Integrated System of Qualifications and Vocational Training. The development of this vital function should be preferentially ascribed to the integral Vocational Training centres, selected as centres of reference for each "vocational family".

It is fitting to allude to the function of these centres, as centres of reference, in the relationships the training centres should maintain with enterprises and work centres in their corresponding areas of specialisation.

Similarly, in light of the development and progress being made in Vocational Training, and the needs already determined, it is necessary to create the appropriate framework so that the centres can organise themselves and operate consistent with current and future requirements. This calls for the urgent need to create regulations which guarantee proper operation, flexible and effective organisation and management, and adequate financing in order to carry out the strategic objectives defined.

It is also essential that regulations clearly state the importance of transparency in integral training centre operations. Therefore, it is also essential to create a participatory body which includes the social partners and allows them to work jointly with the centres in the development, application, monitoring and evaluation of the different strategic plans established for each centre.



Vocational Training centres

The advancement of Vocational Training in the Basque Country calls for establishing channels which will ensure a wide-ranging, varied, flexible training offer. Vocational training must at all times be attuned to the needs of our production sectors with regard to competitiveness and must satisfy the needs of the public with regard to employability.

This means there can be Vocational Training centres attached to the education system, but are not part of the integral Vocational Training centre network. It is important to promote close ties between these centres and the integral centres in each district. This will ensure a wide-ranging offer and adequate planning in each area, as well as proper use of resources so that larger centres can help smaller ones in different aspects. This relationship will also facilitate improvements in internal and external operations. Therefore the resources needed to meet the various challenges involved in Vocational Training must be guaranteed.

Developing the Vocational Training Catalogue

The Basque Vocational Qualifications System was established in the 1997-2003 Basque Vocational Training Plan. Since then, the Basque Institute for Qualifications, in collaboration with social partners, has drawn up the vocational qualifications for the different production sectors. With the vocational qualifications already defined and accepted by society, it is time to develop the Qualifications Catalogue in the framework of the new 2004-2007 Basque Vocational Training Plan, using past experience to incorporate certain improvements.

In the first place, development of the system means expanding the benefits of the Basque Vocational Qualifications System enjoyed by people and the production system to include the rest of the sectors associated with production and economy in the Basque Country which do not yet have the corresponding vocational qualifications. It is also important to keep very closely in mind the need to move forward in the development of level 1 qualifications and the training associated with that level. This would give access to a significant number of people who wish to earn their semi-qualified technician certificate, as well as improving their level of competence and vocational qualification. It would also address the needs of people with special needs.

Secondly, as we know, the ability to extend competence to diverse production contexts and the need to update competence more and more often in order to keep up with changes in production processes make it increasingly important to be able to learn continuously and to possess basic knowledge and skills. Accordingly, it is essential to add the Units of Competence that specify such preparation to Basque Vocational Qualifications.

Integrated Modular Training Catalogue

To orient the work involved in establishing the training leading to the vocational competences specified in the Basque Vocational Qualifications, and to improve coordination of the training offer in the framework of the different Vocational Training subsystems, the Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training is drawing up the Integrated Modular Training Catalogue associated with the Qualifications System.



Much like the Vocational Qualifications System, based on the experience of elaborating the modules that are now part of the Modular Training Catalogue, in the current framework of the 2004-2007 Basque Vocational Training Plan it is essential to develop the catalogue by first incorporating the training associated with the qualifications that will be added to the system.

In line with the new transversal Units of Competence which will be included in the Basque Vocational Qualifications System, the Modular Catalogue training content must be extended to cover new areas of knowledge; today this calls for constant changes in production methods and embracing the concept of lifelong learning.

Assessment and recognition of competence

The establishment of vocational qualifications based on the needs of production and employment and the recognition of workers' competence measured by qualification-based competence units can contribute decisively to increasing the transparency of the labour market and to increasing the information enterprises have on their human resource potential.



Probably the clearest justification for promoting recognition and assessment of competence among the working population, and awarding Qualifications System certificates, is the fact the population becomes better qualified as the process is implemented. By recognising and accrediting skills already acquired by the work force, and by certifying the vocational competence people acquire through formal and non-formal training processes that lead to the corresponding degree or certificate, in terms of vocational qualifications valued in the market, we attain most crucial factor in enhancing qualification: motivation among the working population to acquire more and higher levels of professional preparation.

It is essential to implement a plan of recognition, evaluation and certification of vocational competence among the working population of the Basque Country if we want to achieve major improvements with regard to qualifying the work force, attuning the offer and demand to the needs of the labour market, improving human resources management in companies and, most importantly, satisfying the long held aspirations of the work force.

Mechanism for the Recognition and Assessment of Competence

The recognition and assessment of competence of the workforce is currently limited to degrees or certificates issued to workers by schools or work-related institutions, or by certificates granted in recent years for the successful completion of courses associated with the Modular Training Catalogue of the Basque Vocational Qualifications System. Consequentially, today there are still no proper procedures for the

working population to gain official recognition, in the framework of the Basque Vocational Qualifications System, of competences acquired in the workplace and/or via any other learning and training process.

However, the problems brought about by a lack of transparency in the labour market, with its unbalanced labour supply and demand, and the need for planning and improvement goals for the qualification of the workforce, call for the recognition and assessment of competence attained through all types of education, whether formal, non-formal or informal.

Monitoring and Assessment of the Integrated System

Improving the quality of an Integrated System of Qualification, Training and Vocational Guidance calls for the implementation of evaluation plans for all of the system's components: the Vocational Training System, the Qualifications System and the Vocational Information and Guidance System. The Vocational Training centres are currently engaged in a process of continuous improvement, gradually implementing total quality management systems based on ISO and EFQM standards. Therefore, both self-assessment and external monitoring mechanisms are being carried out in a satisfactory manner, thus ensuring that the quality factors associated with the teaching and learning processes and with the operation and management thereof are appropriate.

It is also important to know exactly what quality factors are involved in the Qualifications System (identification and

formulation of the Qualifications Catalogue, elaboration of the Modular Training Catalogue, etc.); thus, evaluation of all of these factors is vital. The same thing goes for the quality factors associated with the Vocational Information and Guidance System.

In summary, the Integrated System of Qualifications and Vocational Training of the Basque Country has reached a level of development such that an evaluation process needs to be conducted on the factors that reveal the levels of quality. The evaluation process will be carried out over the course of three years, without prejudice to any actions that may be established by the Government, and will be led by the Basque Council on Qualifications and Vocational Training.

Teacher training

In order to effectively meet the educational needs of Vocational Training instructors and, in particular, to attend to the indisputable need for updating teacher training by means of ongoing training, the training and qualifications system for Vocational Training instructors (initial and continuing training) is based on consolidated training structures. In this regard, it seems reasonable for teacher training structures or centres to be developed to a certain degree of specialisation and organised by "professional families". They should also ensure permanent relationships and collaboration with cutting-edge technology firms in the respective production sectors and with the universities and technology institutes connected with the particular specialisation.

Owing to the progress and rapid evolution of the production sectors, and the growing need for highly qualified human resources, the structure, form and content of Vocational

IMPROVING
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FOR ALL
THE SYSTEM'S
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ALL THIS REQUIRES
CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT
AND UPDATING
WITH REGARD TO
THE KNOWLEDGE
AND CAPABILITIES OF
THE TEACHING STAFF

Training will vary. All of this requires continuous improvement and updating with regard to the knowledge and capabilities of teaching staff, thus requiring different types of training approaches adapted to their needs and expectations, thus guaranteeing enhanced competence among instructors.

In the framework of establishing and developing a qualifications-based training system, with training obviously offered through various means via the different Vocational Training subsystems, it is logical to combine and integrate the training resources available; this includes resources connected with initial training and lifelong learning, in order to optimise performance and efficacy.

Apart from that, the traditional attention given to initial training, rounded out by other training activities, make the training and qualification of Vocational Training instructors a stable and permanent objective, which reaches beyond the demands of mere initial training. This stability is yet another characteristic, and not the least important, of the integral Vocational Training and qualifications system for Vocational Training instructors.

Therefore, the integral Vocational Training and qualifications system for instructors must be more than a consolidated network of training structures. Updating and lifelong learning does not appear to be something that can be made compulsory or come by imposition. In order to be effective, it calls for encouragement and motivation. To this end, it is important for the system to have a set of incentives which procure and facilitate the incorporation of Vocational Training instructors into the process of lifelong learning. As much as possible, teacher training should not place an extra burden on instructors; therefore rationalisation

mechanisms should be established to allow teaching staff to combine work and training activities.

Lifelong learning

The European Union has set out the objective for the entire working population to take part in lifelong learning; this inevitably means that we must take into consideration all of the necessary training resources. In this regard, even in the event of a substantial increase in the available resources, it is practically impossible to meet the potential training demands associated with lifelong learning using traditional classroom-based or face-to-face training methods.

In addition, the unstoppable advance of innovations in information and communication technologies, coupled with the ever increasing penetration in broader sectors of society, facilitate the development of distance-learning methodologies and instruments which make the objective of lifelong learning viable.

Today, however, except in the case of distance universities, the development of training offers and programmes supported by "distance-based" teaching methods is still very scarce, and in most cases such offers are still in the experimental stage. This is the case with training in general, and much more so with regard to Vocational Training in particular.

Although it may be arguable that distance learning is the best setting for the development of teaching and learning processes, its availability and the characteristics of a large part of the workforce make it one of the most viable. Today distance learning has earned sufficient validity

and has proven its effectiveness as a teaching method in virtually all training areas, including Vocational Training. It is probably in the area of regulated Vocational Training that rigor and flexibility are most compatible, by means of reduced training modules that can be taken by the working population; these modules must be based on quality distance learning.

Therefore, a deliberate impetus on the part of institutions is essential in order to develop and elaborate teaching methods, materials and equipment that make it possible to implement and extend regulated, distance-learning Vocational Training, drawing from well-designed e-Learning materials designed to meet real training needs and which guarantee innovative quality training.



2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objective 1.1.

IMPLEMENT A MECHANISM FOR THE RECOGNITION AND ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE OF THE WORKFORCE

Objectives

1. Increase the transparency in the labour market and better match the labour supply and demand.
2. Contribute to gaining a better understanding of the vocational competence potential of human resources in companies.
3. Facilitate the knowledge and planning of qualification levels of the workforce.
4. Recognise and evaluate the vocational competence of the workforce in the Basque Country acquired through any type of formal, non-formal or informal learning process leading to a degree or certificate.
5. Achieve a valid and reliable process for the recognition and assessment of competence of the workforce.
6. Adopt the mechanism in all ways possible so that disabled persons are able take part without difficulties.

Measures

1. The Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training shall be responsible for drawing up a White Paper on the Basque Competence Recognition and Assessment System. The document (a draft proposal) will serve as a background paper for discussion on the definition and implementation of this system conducted by the Basque Council on Qualifications and Vocational Training; as a minimum, the paper shall include:
 - a) The basic principles of the process and of the competence recognition and assessment system (nature and essential features of the process, methods for obtaining and determining competences, etc.).
 - b) The requirements and constituent elements of the Basque Competence Recognition and Assessment System.
 - c) The infrastructure and human resources of the recognition and assessment mechanism.
 - d) The process of accreditation and the procedures for certification of recognition and assessment centres.
 - e) The key actions and a description of the process for selecting, training and accrediting the human resources that will form part of the mechanism.
 - f) The role of social partners and training providers in the mechanism.
 - g) Financing the Basque Competence Recognition and Assessment System.

2. Design and implement a training and accreditation programme for vocational competence assessment and verification practitioners; the programme shall include:
 - a) Defining the Units of Competence for assessors and internal verification practitioners (in other words, the vocational competence standards needed in order to be authorised to perform assessment and verification of competence of the workforce).
 - b) The number and assignment of authorised assessors and verification practitioners.
 - c) Drawing up, by the Agency, a training plan for assessors and verification practitioners.
 - d) Setting the training plan into motion by the Agency.

3. Design a procedure for authorising competence recognition and assessment centres; the procedure shall:
 - a) Define the requirements for centres in charge of the recognition and assessment of competence of the workforce.
 - b) The number and types of centres to be included in this mechanism.

4. Elaborate and implement the documents expected to be essential for the recognition and assessment of competence; such documents shall include at least:
 - a) Elaboration of an Internal Assessor and Verification Practitioner Manual.
 - b) Elaboration of a guide for the assessment of competence acquired by the workforce via any type of learning or training process (the previous achievements by candidates for Qualifications System certification).
 - c) Elaboration of a Unit of Competence to help workers put together their "competence portfolio".
 - d) Elaboration of all support documents for competence assessment (model tests, system for documenting assessment, etc).

Strategic Objective 1.2.

RECOGNISE AND ASSESS THE COMPETENCE OF THE WORKFORCE

Objectives

1. Increase motivation among the workforce to attain higher levels of vocational qualification.
2. Improve vocational qualification among the workforce.
3. Increase the transparency in the labour market and better match the labour supply and demand.
4. Contribute to gaining a better understanding of the vocational competence potential of human resources in companies.
5. Evaluate and recognise the vocational competence of the workforce.
6. Promote and substantiate acceptance of the competence recognition and assessment mechanism among Basque society.

Measures

1. Design and set into motion actions aimed at the recognition and assessment of competence of the workforce.
2. Select and classify the working population that will take part in this process. Selection criteria (long-term unemployed, unemployed youth, employed population from strategic sectors of the economy, etc.) will be established with participation from social partners.
3. Assign a tutor/guidance counsellor to each candidate.
4. Tutors/guidance counsellors will develop counselling activities, and actions which encourage candidates to garner further qualifications continue with lifelong learning.
5. The Department of Justice, Employment and Social Security will participate in establishing the criteria for selecting candidates among the unemployed population and in developing the actions envisaged in this section.
6. With help from tutors/guidance counsellors, candidates will put together the documentation needed to accredit their vocational competence.
7. Assessors authorised by the Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training will evaluate competence portfolios, and, where applicable, conduct the appropriate competence assessment tests at the authorised evaluation centres stipulated in the vocational competence recognition and assessment mechanism.
8. Tutors/guidance counsellors will design a training plan for each individual candidate which enables him or her to achieve the desired and attainable vocational accreditation objectives.
9. Centres authorised by the Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training will evaluate and, where applicable, certify the competences attained with the training plan.

Strategic Objective 1.3.

REINFORCE INSTITUTIONAL BODIES OF COOPERATION. BASQUE COUNCIL ON QUALIFICATIONS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Objectives

1. Provide the Basque Council on Qualifications and Vocational Training with the capacity to determine and design qualification and Vocational Training policies and objectives which will ensure adequate coverage of qualification and Vocational Training needs for people, the production system and the labour market.
2. Provide the Basque Council on Qualifications and Vocational Training with the technical capacity to perform its functions.
3. Guarantee the contribution of social partners and training centres in determining qualification and Vocational Training policy, and make sure the policy is attuned to the qualification needs brought about by the development of production processes and employment.
4. Ensure the contribution of social partners in drawing up future versions of the Basque Vocational Training Plan and in following up on the implementation thereof.
5. Reinforce co-responsibility by social partners in the development of the Integrated System of Qualification, Training and Vocational Guidance of the Basque Country to establish a better-qualified workforce based on lifelong learning.
6. In an integrated fashion, achieve co-responsibility by social partners in the development of all Vocational Training options, and particularly in the development of the continuing Vocational Training subsystem and in the implementation of lifelong learning.
7. Ensure co-responsibility by social partners in the promotion of qualification among the workforce, in the recognition of competence and in Vocational Training and guidance in the various sectors and territories of production in the Basque Country, in accordance with the regulations in force at any given time.
8. Promote and/or ensure the identification of qualification needs associated with the development of production methods and the evolution of employment.

Measures

1. Create the new Basque Council on Qualifications and Vocational Training by virtue of the corresponding regulation.
2. Create Sectorial Committees for Qualifications and Vocational Training, answerable to the Basque Council, in the most important sectors of production in the Basque economy, as a body for channelling proposals and demands associated with training and vocational qualification; and execute the Council's policy in the corresponding sector.
3. Create Vocational Training Standards Committees in each sector of Basque production, as bodies entrusted with identifying and drawing up the competence standards that will form part of vocational qualifications; operationally, the committees will be answerable to the Sectorial Committees for Qualifications and Vocational Training, and technically, to the Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training.

Strategic Objective 1.4.

ASSIGN DIFFERENT MEANS OF TRANSMITTING INFORMATION ON QUALIFICATIONS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Objectives

1. Motivate all stakeholders in the Qualifications and Vocational Training System to achieve the necessary goals, and encourage participation by the whole of Basque society in achieving a better-qualified workforce based on lifelong learning.
2. Have an instrument available that affords information for planning training and vocational qualification.
3. Lay the foundations for the coordinated development, planning and consideration of all of the needs related to qualifications and Vocational Training, according to technological, economic and social requirements.
4. In planning qualification and training, as defined in the Vocational Training Objectives, take particular care to ensure that the following aspects are addressed:
 - a) Vocational qualification levels of the workforce are attuned, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to meeting the economic and social development goals of the Basque Country.
 - b) The number, size and location of public and officially approved private centres, and the training and vocational guidance offer in general, are adequate to meet qualification needs and social demand.
 - c) Assessment and vocational competence certification demands made by the working population are met.
 - d) Qualifications and Vocational Training are kept attuned to technological, economic and social needs.

Measures

1. Elaboration and publication of the "Biannual Report on Qualifications and Vocational Training".
2. Elaboration and publication of "Biannual Statistics on Qualifications and Vocational Training".

Data collection and processing will be conducted so that the information and data collected can be utilised for planning, organising and orienting qualifications and Vocational Training, according to the established guidelines and responsibilities.

Information and statistics on qualifications, training and vocational guidance shall necessarily include:

 - a) Data and information on the Qualifications System.
 - b) Data and information on the nature and evolution of qualifications.
 - c) Data and information on Vocational Training in all of its forms.
 - d) Data and information on vocational guidance.
 - e) Data and information on the relationship between training and employment.

Strategic Objective 1.5.

ESTABLISH AN INTEGRAL SYSTEM OF QUALIFICATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTRUCTORS

Objectives

1. Establish a stable system of initial and continuing preparation and qualification of Vocational Training instructors based on formally determining the training requirements needed to obtain qualification and on the creation of adequate training structures.
2. Guarantee, through relationships with cutting-edge technology firms, a continual process of updating training structures for Vocational Training instructors.
3. Integrate and optimise, according to vocational families, the resources available for the training and qualification of Vocational Training instructors.
4. Improve and update teaching staff competences so that they can pass adequate knowledge on to their students about the activities of the different production sectors.
5. Gradually establish a competence-based management system which helps orient vocational profiles and the design and management of teacher training.

Measures

1. Foment the regular presence of Vocational Training instructors at companies.
2. Establish a quota of instructors per year who carry out their refresher training in companies related to their professional profile.
3. Accredite and assess practice in companies and grant the corresponding certification by the Department of Education, Universities and Research.
4. Formally establish (by defining the corresponding Units of Competence) the constituent requirements for initial preparation of Vocational Training instructors.
5. For each of the vocational families with significant presence in the Basque Country, select one integral centre per province to become a centre of reference for teacher training and qualification for the respective vocational family.
6. Provide the centres with sufficient resources to properly conduct training and updating training activities geared toward Vocational Training instructors.
7. Create an inventory of cutting-edge technology firms, accredited and authorised to collaborate with training centres, and secure cooperation agreements between the two.
8. Define the necessary competences to serve as a reference for the different teacher profiles, and for the design and management of the training plans themselves.

Strategic Objective 1.6.

DEVELOP THE INTEGRAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES

Objectives

1. Increase permeability between the different Vocational Training subsystems and further the process of integration.
2. Serve the diverse demands for Vocational Training, based on a single training offer structure.
3. Create a participatory body which includes the social partners and which allow them to work with the integral centres in the development, application, follow-up and assessment of the different strategic plans established at each centre.
4. Improve the quality of Vocational Training teaching and learning processes through the exchange of experiences, and promote the development of R+D+I projects in the area of Vocational Training.
5. Where applicable, provide the consistent stable support required by the system to the training and qualification structures aimed at Vocational Training instructors.
6. Further the development of relationships between training and production systems by means of mutual cooperation with companies active in the respective production sectors.
7. Link these centres to others in the same region that offer similar types of Vocational Training families.
8. Motivate the entire Vocational Training system to attain levels of excellence in all areas of training, organisation and operation.

Measures

1. Establish the regulation needed to governing the organisation and operation of integral training centres.
2. Increase the number of integral training centres in the vocational families lacking these training structures.
3. Create new integral centres in the vocational families with significant presence in the Basque Country.
4. Update the regulation governing the development of the integral training centres.
5. Provide these centres with the sufficient human and material resources to perform their ascribed functions (diverse Vocational Training options, instructor training structure, R+D+I in Vocational Training, reference for relations with companies, and the corresponding production sector in general, etc.).

Strategic Objective 1.7.

STRENGTHEN THE BASQUE INSTITUTE FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Objectives

1. Provide the Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training with the capacity to undertake R+D+I projects on the evolution of production processes and company work content, thus allowing qualifications to be adapted to the evolving production methods.
2. Provide the Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training with the capacity to undertake R+D+I projects on the variations in the content of professionalism (expressed by data on occupational variation provided by the Vocational Training Observatory) that take place in work supply and demand exchanges, thus allowing qualifications to be adapted to the evolving labour market.
3. Heighten collaboration and coordination between the Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training and the Vocational Training Observatory in the area of qualifications and Vocational Training.

Measures

1. Provide the Institute with the human and material resources needed to perform the R+D+I tasks it is entrusted with.
2. With collaboration from the Vocational Training Observatory, the Institute shall draw up an annual activity plan which specifies the resources required and the exact time frame for undertaking the new tasks.
3. The Institute shall draw up and remit to the Basque Council on Qualifications and Vocational Training reports that allow for follow-up and monitoring of the R+D+I activities it is entrusted with.
4. Conduct a minimum of four information and coordination meetings per year between the Basque Council on Qualifications and Vocational Training and the Vocational Training Observatory.

Strategic Objective 1.8.

STRENGTHEN THE BASQUE VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM OBSERVATORY

Objectives

1. Provide the Vocational Training Observatory with the R+D+I capacity it needs for the observation of production sectors, labour, employment and vocational incorporation; and, in particular, provide it with the capacity to obtain data and information on:
 - a) Production processes and development strategies in productive sectors, with particular emphasis on the introduction of new technologies and the presence of subsectors and emerging occupations.
 - b) Market behaviour in terms of typical professional figures that make it possible to detect the evolution of professionalism.
 - c) Incorporation of young adults in the workforce.
2. Provide the Vocational Training Observatory with the capacity to study the relationships between qualification, training and employment in order to ensure that initial training is regularly adapted to the needs of enterprise and the requirements of the labour market.
3. Heighten collaboration and coordination between the Vocational Training Observatory and the Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training in the area of qualifications and Vocational Training.

Measures

1. Provide the Vocational Training Observatory with the human and material resources needed to perform the R+D+I tasks it is entrusted with.
2. With collaboration from the Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training, the Vocational Training Observatory shall draw up an activity plan which specifies the resources required and the exact time frame for undertaking the new tasks.
3. The Observatory shall draw up and remit to the Basque Council on Qualifications and Vocational Training the reports that allow for follow-up and monitoring of the R+D+I activities it is entrusted with.
4. Conduct a minimum of four information and coordination meetings per year between the Vocational Training Observatory and the Basque Council on Qualifications and Vocational Training.

Strategic Objective 1.9.

REINFORCE THE BASQUE AGENCY FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE AND QUALITY IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Objectives

Provide the Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training with the ability to manage and supervise:

1. Assessment of the entire Integrated System of Qualification, Training and Vocational Guidance.
2. The process of competence recognition and assessment of the workforce.

Measures

1. Provide the Agency with the human and material resources needed to manage and supervise the Integrated System assessment tasks it is entrusted with.
2. Provide the Agency with the human and material resources needed to manage and supervise the recognition and assessment tasks it is entrusted with.
3. The Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training shall prepare a programme of activities which specifies the resources required and the exact time frame for undertaking the new tasks.
4. The Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training shall draw up and remit to the Basque Council on Qualifications and Vocational Training the reports that allow for follow-up and monitoring of the activities it is entrusted with.

Strategic Objective 1.10.

FURTHER THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BASQUE QUALIFICATIONS CATALOGUE

Objectives

1. Promote the competitiveness of Basque companies and the economy of the Basque Country.
2. Improve employability and opportunities for professional mobility among workers active in vocational fields linked to the Vocational Qualifications.
3. Better prepare workers to face changes in production methods and to embrace lifelong learning.

Measures

1. Draw up vocational Qualifications for specific production sectors.
2. Design the following Units of Competence:
 - a) *How to manage the learning and training process.*
 - b) *Cooperation and teamwork.*
 - c) *Developing initiative, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a spirit of creativity.*

These Units of Competence will be specified for the different levels of qualification and will be incorporated into all of Vocational Qualifications included in the Basque Vocational Qualifications System.

Strategic Objective 1.11.

FURTHER THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING ASSOCIATED WITH THE BASQUE VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM

Objectives

1. Better adapt the training offer to meet the needs of the working population.
2. Increase (by way of incorporating the new vocational qualifications into the Modular Training Catalogue) permeability between the different Vocational Training subsystems and further correspondence and accreditation of training in the framework of the subsystems.
3. Furnish training providers with guidelines on quality for the design of all training programmes aimed at attaining Qualifications System certification.
4. Promote integration of the different types of training offered through the Vocational Training subsystems.

Measures

1. Design the Modular Training Catalogue modules corresponding to specific vocational qualifications.
2. Design the Modular Training Catalogue training modules associated with the following Units of Competence:
 - a) *How to manage the learning and training process.*
 - b) *Cooperation and teamwork.*
 - c) *Developing initiative, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a spirit of creativity.*

These modules will be specified for the different levels of qualification and will be incorporated into the training programmes aimed at attaining the corresponding Units of Competence; accordingly, they will be also incorporated into programmes geared toward attaining certification of a complete vocational qualification of the Basque Vocational Qualifications System.

Strategic Objective 1.12.

ESTABLISH SPECIFIC VOCATIONAL TRAINING ADAPTED TO TODAY'S NEEDS

Objectives

1. Increase the possible training resources made available to meet the growing demand for training among the workforce.
2. Encourage the workforce to demand Specific Vocational Training modules based on a training offer adapted to individual pace, availability and real learning capacity.
3. Facilitate access to Specific Vocational Training by people with disabilities.
4. Develop and expand teaching materials utilised in the training phases connected with the most significant vocational families in the Basque Country to be used in distance learning.
5. Guarantee high levels of quality in the implementation of regulated Vocational Training programmes aimed at distance learning.
6. Seek the necessary adaptations to enable people with disabilities to participate.

Measures

1. Design and implement an experimental Specific Vocational Training programme based on distance learning, consisting of the following measures:
 - a) Selection of a limited number of Middle-level training phases characterised by their potential demand and suitability to distance-learning programmes.
 - b) Design and create teaching materials for teaching these phases through distance-learning programmes.
 - c) Design the academic and training format aimed at characterising Specific Vocational Training based on the distance-learning teaching method: establish the specific modules for the training phase based on distance learning.
 - d) Design and pass the regulation governing the implementation of this teaching method in the Basque Country.
 - e) Select a limited number of integral training centres with the human and material resources to sustain the experimental plan.
 - f) Provide specific training for the human resources in charge of implementing the programme.
2. Evaluate the experimental plan.
3. Extend, where applicable, the distance-learning-based Specific Vocational Training programme to other training phases and centres.



The image features a solid blue background. On the left side, there is a complex network of thin white lines that intersect to form various geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons. A single, thicker orange horizontal line is positioned below the word 'STRATE', extending from the left edge of the frame towards the start of the word.

— STRATE



II.

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STRATEGIC LINE 2

1. QUALITY IN BASQUE VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Introduction

The Basque Vocational Training Plan approved in 1997 adopted three levels for the evaluation of quality: evaluation of the Vocational Training System, evaluation of the training centres, and evaluation of the training itself. The Plan defined three agents entrusted with the evaluation process: the training centres themselves, the Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training, and external entities.

- Vocational Training centres perform internal evaluations of their own management quality by measuring the results of courses and processes, performing internal training and quality system audits, and conducting EFQM Excellence Model self-assessments.
- The Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training has served as the system's internal evaluation agent; its responsibilities include defining assessment models, objectives and criteria for the three levels of evaluation: training, management of training centres, and the evaluation of the Basque Vocational Training System.
- The evaluating process for training courses offered at the centres has been based on an audit plan designed for courses associated with the Basque Vocational Qualifications System.
- The quality of training centre management has been evaluated by external audit firms (AENOR, EUSKALIT); the first Basque Vocational Training Plan clearly stressed the need to adopt approaches to quality similar to those traditionally used by the industries and services with which it works closely.





Quality in Basque Vocational Training

The purpose of the Vocational Qualifications System is, among others, to integrate the Vocational Training subsystems (initial training, occupational Vocational Training and continuing training) in a system which allows candidates to equally attain and accredit vocational competence achieved through any of the subsystems or through non-formal means such as work experience.

It is therefore necessary to adopt an overall perspective when it comes to assessing the system's suitability and quality, rather than evaluating each of the subsystems separately.

The training offer, the identification and evolution of vocational qualifications, the elaboration of the Modular Catalogue, the structure of the competence recognition and assessment mechanism, the methods used for competence recognition, and the information and vocational guidance systems are all factors that play an important part in determining the quality of the Basque Vocational Training System.

However, the Integrated System of Qualification, Training and Vocational Guidance of the Basque Country is yet to be a fully consolidated reality. The project is moving forward; however, some of its most relevant components still require further development.

For this reason, in addition to using results benchmarks to evaluate the Vocational Training System, a periodic qualitative assessment based on the overall perspective of the Vocational Training System is necessary.

In the same way that the training centres need to have a quality management model,

the Basque Vocational Training System (from the Vice-Ministry for Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning, the Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning Directorates, the Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training, and the Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training) also needs to use a standardised system based on the ISO 9001:2000 standard, and use the EFQM Excellence Model as a reference for System management.

Quality in Vocational Training centres

Until now the focus of the Basque Vocational Training Plan with regard to quality has centred mainly on improving the quality of management in the training centres, fundamentally those belonging to the Integral Vocational Training Centre Network. The centres have made a formidable effort to implement these quality models and results have been satisfactory.

One of the references being applied in a significant amount of Vocational Training centres has been the ISO 9001 standard. The Vice-Ministry for Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning had oriented and encouraged centres to set into motion quality systems and become certified by an authorised ISO certifying organization.

In addition, as laid down in the 1997 Basque Vocational Training Plan, the common reference for assessing management quality in the centres is the EFQM Excellence Model. The ISO certified centres and the other Vocational Training centres use this model as a common reference for self-assessment processes and for the overall improvement of their organisations. The Basque Foundation

for Quality, Euskalit, is an external assessment service which uses the EFQM Excellence Model Quality. The organisation, created in 1992 under the auspices of the Basque Government, is dedicated to promoting total quality in all spheres of Basque society. The organisation's ultimate purpose is to contribute to the development, competitiveness and welfare of the Basque Autonomous Community. Euskalit's assessment service manages and administers the awards granted to organisations by the Basque Government: The Gold Q Award for Quality Management (>companies scoring over 500 points for EFQM excellence) and the Silver Q Award (>over 400 EFQM points).

The Basque Vocational Training Plan has adopted an integrated approach to quality, while managing to steer clear of preconceived ideas and disparagement for the contributions made by Quality Control, Quality Assurance and Total Quality theories, the three major waves or approaches to quality that have determined its historical development.

Accordingly, some of the principles of Quality Control have been adopted by the quality systems implemented at the centres. This is the case, for example, with service and process specifications control, and with the process variation theory, which have been applied in course programming and teaching, in student qualification and in instructor calibration.

Certifying centres according to ISO 9000 standards has been a particularly useful and suitable approach to identifying key processes and applying standardised systems to process management. The standards have created a coherent system for the design and development of training services and for ensuring that the services offered conform

THE EFQM EXCELLENCE MODEL HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR CENTRES TO ADOPT INTEGRAL AND COHERENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES, BASED ON CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

with the required levels of quality. Needless to say, using the standard to institutionalise processes means that it must be applied extensively to the entire training offer, particularly regulated training.

The revised ISO 9000 standard, now ISO 9001:2000, is associated with much more stringent requirements, thus calling for new adaptation efforts on the part of centres compliant with the previous standard.

The EFQM Excellence Model has made it possible for centres to adopt integral and coherent management strategies, based on continual improvement, integrating the outcome and efficiency of the approaches adopted in the management of strategies and plans, processes, people, resources and leadership. The application of the EFQM Excellence Model as a reference for the integral management and assessment of centres is an approach that was already adopted by the previous plan and one which should be maintained. The goal now is to reach an adequate level of management excellence and once this level is reached, maintain and improve it through self-assessment methods, designing and managing improvement plans and performing internal and external audits on such plans.

The decided quality-oriented approach embraced by the previous plan, and specifically the application of such standards as the ISO 9000 and the EFQM Excellence



IN 1997
AUDITS
WERE CONDUCTED
ON COURSES
ASSOCIATED TO
THE BASQUE
VOCATIONAL
QUALIFICATION
SYSTEM

Model, have yielded excellent results in training centre management. As a result, in the 2004-2007 Basque Vocational Training Plan, the approach to the strategy of quality is to continue and further the work already carried out.

**Quality as a reference
for innovation and
continuous improvement
in Vocational Training**

One of the strategic focal points in the current Basque Vocational Training Plan is innovation; and a fundamental line of work as part of this strategy is precisely to innovate the courses in terms of their design, the teaching methods involved and the resources made available to students. This means that one of the most important services of the Basque Vocational Training System is the type of training offered —the actual courses taught— whether initial, occupational or continuing training. The satisfaction of students receiving these training services is contingent to a large extent upon the added

value attached to training. Such additional benefits can be expressed in terms of the actual acquisition of competences required by employers, and of students' and instructors' perception of the efficacy and efficiency of training processes in training centre classrooms and workshops.

The way in which teaching and learning processes are developed, the quality of the activities pursued by students, the competence earned as a result, and the knowledge students acquire are all fundamental. These aspects should be managed by the centres, the corresponding government departments and the instructors themselves, not only from an individual perspective but based on teamwork. The design of programmes, classroom activities and teaching methods, and the method by which knowledge and competence acquisition are assessed, are elements that clearly determine the Vocational Training System's outcome. All of these factors need to be evaluated and monitored in order to implement methods of improvement; but most importantly, they must be open to innovation so that we can engage new ideas and processes that pave the way for continuous improvement in Vocational Training.

In accordance with the directives laid down in the 1997 Plan, audits were conducted on courses associated with the Basque Vocational Qualifications System. To that end, the Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training specified the requirements that should be considered for quality management of courses and which would serve as a reference for conducting audits. The audit process, which has been active since 2002, makes it possible for training centres to employ a policy of continuous improvement by implementing corrective actions when nonconformities are detected.

This auditing system must also be extended to include all types of training activities and to gauge the quality of learning activities. It will also be essential to initiate a system for detecting good practices in the design and development of courses and services with an eye to promoting new types of offers that encourage both initial and lifelong learning.

A focus on quality management in Vocational Training

One of the primary focuses of the 1997 Basque Vocational Training Plan was quality. This is reflected in Chapter 7, which expresses the need for a comprehensive assessment of the quality of the Basque Vocational Training System to ensure its compliance with the general objectives set forth (adapting the system to the requirements of production and employment, and attuning the system to the training and qualification needs of society). It also pointed out the importance of integrating an evaluation of each of the centres when assessing the quality of the Vocational Training System. This way the centres would be responsible for improving their own management systems and address the external demand.

Vocational Training has adopted a quality management focus based on an interpretation of the main quality models developed by industry and service companies in the Basque Country.

The effort of interpreting and implementing quality models in Basque Vocational Training began in the mid-1990s, laying the foundations for a generalised process throughout the Integral Vocational Training Centre Network. The process has had marked success as a result of three fundamental factors:

- The clear quality improvement strategy set forth in the 1997 Basque Vocational Training Plan and the resources made available for the development thereof.
- The interest shown by training centre management in the methodologies and practical applications developed by pioneer centres.
- The collaboration and mutual support by centres and management in the implementation and improvement of quality plans.

In the 1997 Basque Vocational Training Plan the EFQM Excellence Model and the ISO 9001:2000 standard were used as references for improving the management and self-assessment of centres and to develop a standardised quality system which could be applied to process management.

The results of the work carried out over the past five years have been significant. Regarding this subject, and in the development of quality systems, we can safely say that the Basque Vocational Training is the most advanced system in Spain and first-rate among Vocational Training programmes in the European context.

In May 2004 the situation of quality management in Basque Vocational Training was as follows:

- The Vice-Ministry for Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning, which encompasses the Vocational Training Directorate, the Lifelong Learning Directorate, the Basque Qualifications Institute and the Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training, was ISO 9001:2000 certified.



- 2 Vocational Training centres had been awarded the EFQM Gold Q, with a score of over 500 points.
- 19 Vocational Training centres had been awarded the EFQM Silver Q, with a score of over 400 points.
- A total of 38 Vocational Training centres had obtained ISO 9000 certification.
- 14 Vocational Training centres had received 300 EFQM excellence points.
- 1 Vocational Training centres had obtained ISO 14000 certification.
- 10 Vocational Training centres were in the ISO 14000 audit stage.

Moreover, the quality model developed in the Basque Country is being adopted by centres in other regions in Spain. All of these factors serve as a stimulus for Vocational Training stakeholders, and indicate the need to build upon the progress already made. At the same time, special emphasis should be placed on networking between training centres and on the cooperative spirit at the heart of the successful quality strategy of Basque Vocational Training.

With the 2004-2007 Basque Vocational Training Plan, one of the cornerstones to improving Vocational Training is to continue and intensify the orientation to quality.

To do this, the following will be fundamental:

- Maintain and improve Vocational Training final results.
- Improve the quality of services offered by Basque Vocational Training.
- Assess the results of the Basque Vocational Training System and the performance of its programmes, actions and plans.
- Promote programmes and actions to develop the areas for improvement detected through assessment and auditing processes.

- Invest in qualifying the people active in the Vocational Training System.
- Maintain the quality leadership position enjoyed by the Integral Vocational Training Centre Network and extend it to include support services.
- Develop benchmarks for the Basque Vocational Training Plan.
- Develop working teams to design and develop new services and to extend good practices to include the areas for improvement detected in the Basque Vocational Training System.
- Implement an international standard for competence assessment and human resources management.
- Draw up descriptive reports on training centre management using the EFQM model, and adapt the their systems to meet the requirements of the ISO 9001:2000 standard.

One of the most effective aspects in implementing quality management in the Vocational Training centres, and the one that has brought about the best results, has been the networking activities carried out between the centres.

The networks have taken the shape of working groups, which in general have operated using teamwork methodology and discipline, according to the strategic projects laid down.

Assessing results as an essential reference

Assessment of the Basque Vocational Training System should not only include final results, but also the System's efficiency, since in addition to seeking continuous improvement of results, the goal is also to work toward the continuous improvement of processes; in other words, what should be assessed is the

improvement in the performance of tools, resources, investments and, in general, the projects and processes made available to the Basque Vocational Training System.

Therefore, the RADAR can be used as the scoring matrix for the EFQM Excellence Model as a reference for the management of Basque Vocational Training. In short, the task would involve:

- Establishing the approaches (projects and/or processes) that should be adopted after determining and detailing the outcomes to be attained and improved (benchmarks).
- Deciding on the actions required to:
 - deploy the projects, e.g. determine the resources to be made available, people's involvement and/or contribution, and the necessary services and processes; and
 - improve project performance and efficacy, thus calling for performance assessment indicators to be determined.
- Assessing, revising and updating the projects adopted as a result of measurements and indicators, our own experience, and best practices that can be applied.

One of the areas of assessment envisaged in the 1997 Vasco Vocational Training Plan was specifically to evaluate significant aspects of the Basque Vocational Training System. The evaluation conducted in 2002 on companies' perception of Vocational Training degree-holders is an example of this type of assessment; the survey-based evaluation produced very positive results.

Decree 62/2001, creating the Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training, stated that one

of the Agency's duties was to evaluate the progress of the Basque Vocational Training System. This evaluation process, in keeping with the EFQM Excellence Model, is based on a set of performance and results benchmarks.

The benchmarks will be used to assess the outcomes pursued by the Basque Vocational Training System in accordance with its mission. The indicators should also be used to assess the performance of ongoing programmes and projects, processes designed, resources and personnel made available to the System, management, and in general, all of the factors critical to the long-term success of the Basque Vocational Training System.

The Agency must begin working on designing the benchmarks, first identifying the factors it considers critical to the long-term success of the Basque Vocational Training System. Secondly, it should design the quality indicators that make it possible to assess the progress in relation to these factors. In view of the outcomes, the Basque Vocational Training System should then establish its own objectives and set out the levels of quality it wishes to attain.

Assessment should be performed on the outcomes attained with regard to the System's services geared toward users —training courses, the competence recognition and assessment mechanism, the certification and registration system— and on internal services and processes with strategic relevance for the development of Vocational Training.

At certain times or in certain circumstances, this Plan provides for the analysis and assessment of significant matters or aspects which have a bearing on the development or improvement of the Basque Vocational Training System.

2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objective 2.1.

ASSESS OUTCOMES AS A BENCHMARK FOR QUALITY IN THE BASQUE VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM

Objectives

1. Evaluate the quality of the Basque Vocational Training System, based on the results and performance of its programmes.
2. Improve the processes, stressing the identification and management of indicators and objectives.
3. Have available a verified system approved by social partners for the assessment of the Basque Vocational Training System.

Measures

1. Identify the critical factors for Vocational Training success, and, accordingly, select the optimum indicators for assessing the development thereof.
2. Draw up the medium-term objectives of Basque Vocational Training.
3. Prepare a biennial report on the results of Basque Vocational Training.
4. Prepare a triennial report on the performance of programmes and projects of Basque Vocational Training
5. Prepare a specific yearly report on the programmes or aspects most relevant to the System.
6. Compare, as much as possible, with indicators from different European Union countries and regions.

Strategic Objective 2.2.

EVALUATE THE BASQUE VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM

Objectives

1. Improve the overall quality of the System of Vocational Qualifications, Training and Vocational Guidance.
2. Have available a regular qualitative integrated evaluation of the System.
3. Perform self-assessment on the management of the System based on the EFQM model.

Measures

1. Conduct a triennial qualitative assessment of the Basque Vocational Qualifications System.
2. Conduct an annual assessment of the Vocational Training associated with the Basque Vocational Qualifications System.
3. Carry out comparisons, to the greatest possible extent, with indicators from different European Union countries and regions.

Strategic Objective 2.3.

FURTHER PROMOTE QUALITY MANAGEMENT AT THE CENTRES AND ORGANISATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SYSTEM

Objectives

1. Achieve high levels of excellence acknowledged by internationally prestigious awards such as the European Quality Award; in addition to promoting internal improvement, recognition of this type helps identify the Basque Vocational Training System with excellence.
2. Use ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 14000 quality management systems as reference an instrument for improving process management, and which also help meet the objectives of the EFQM model.
3. Achieve a score of 400 EFQM points at all centres belonging to the Integral Vocational Training Centre Network.
4. Extend the EFQM model to the programmes and projects of the Vice-Ministry for Vocational Training.

Measures

1. Support the implementation of quality systems in all centres.
2. Adapt the centres' quality systems to meet the requirements of the ISO 9001:2000 standard; certify all of the centres and the training programmes offered, and successfully satisfy all of the follow-up audit requirements.
3. Provide financial and human resources for the development of quality programmes.
4. Ensure the proper recognition of quality system managers as an essential part of the management team.
5. Adopt the EFQM model as a reference for the management and assessment of the Basque Vocational Training System.
6. Draw descriptive reports on the management of centres according to the EFQM model.
7. Conduct an external assessment at least once every three years in order to ensure the development and advancement of the projects conceived.

Strategic Objective 2.4.

IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COURSES

Objectives

1. Establish and update the requirements for the management of initial, continuing and occupational training courses.
2. Design new training models for classroom activities based on competence acquisition.
3. Assess the quality of the design and management of training actions.
4. Conduct audits on training courses and learning processes.

Measures

1. Conduct audits on training courses and classroom learning processes.
2. Prepare a unit of competence for instructors the designing, developing and evaluating the performance of classroom activities and teaching units based on competence acquisition.
3. Design and develop the training associated with the unit of competence.

Strategic Objective 2.5.

IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Objectives

1. Promote process management and self-management in keeping with the Basque model of business transformation (mini-businesses).
2. Implement internationally recognised standards in the framework of human resources management based on two areas: communication within organisations and training the people making up the organisations.
3. Acknowledge the contribution people and development teams make to the Basque Vocational Training System.
4. Improve the staff recruitment system of Vocational Training centres.

Measures

1. Explore new Vocational Training centre management models so that the operations of the different centres are better adapted to meet today's needs.
2. Develop an experience that will lead to accreditation under the international IIP (*Investors in People*).
3. Design and develop a system for recognising the contributions of people and working teams active in the improvement of Vocational Training.
4. Revise and improve the system currently utilised for filling staff vacancies in Vocational Training.



Strategic Objective 2.6.

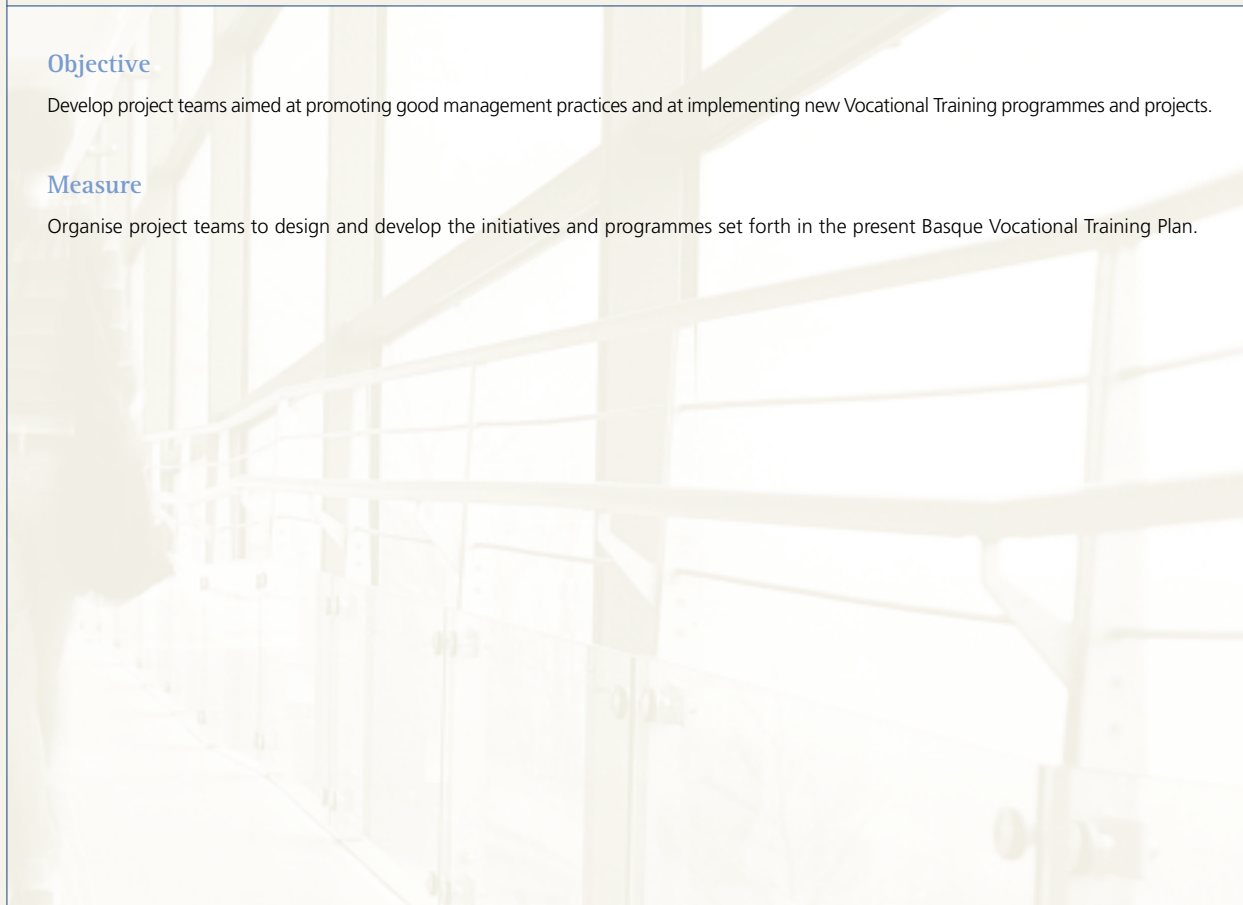
PROMOTE AND MANAGE PROJECT TEAMS

Objective

Develop project teams aimed at promoting good management practices and at implementing new Vocational Training programmes and projects.

Measure

Organise project teams to design and develop the initiatives and programmes set forth in the present Basque Vocational Training Plan.



Strategic Objective 2.7.

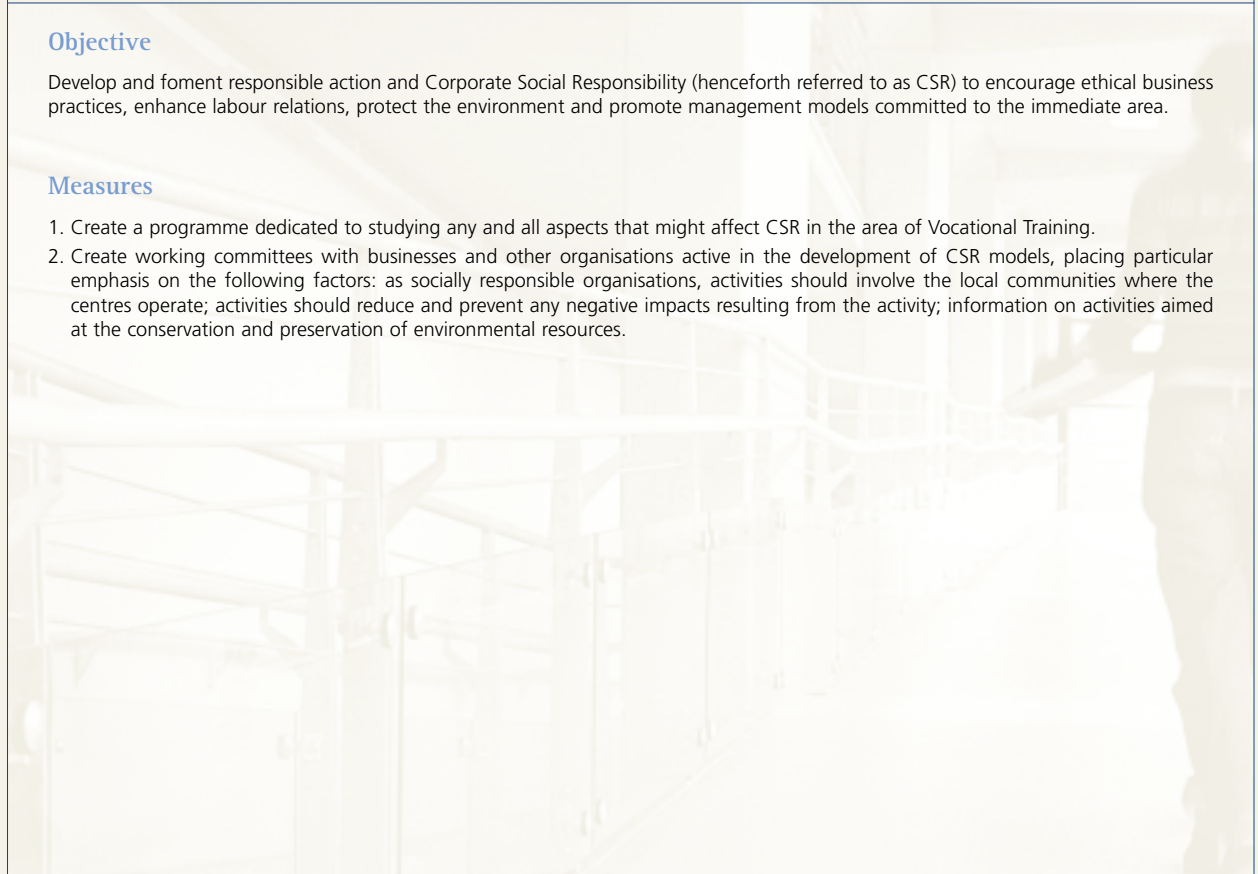
EXPAND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN EFQM STANDARD NO. 8.

Objective

Develop and foment responsible action and Corporate Social Responsibility (henceforth referred to as CSR) to encourage ethical business practices, enhance labour relations, protect the environment and promote management models committed to the immediate area.

Measures

1. Create a programme dedicated to studying any and all aspects that might affect CSR in the area of Vocational Training.
2. Create working committees with businesses and other organisations active in the development of CSR models, placing particular emphasis on the following factors: as socially responsible organisations, activities should involve the local communities where the centres operate; activities should reduce and prevent any negative impacts resulting from the activity; information on activities aimed at the conservation and preservation of environmental resources.



Strategic Objective 2.8.

IMPLEMENT OTHER TYPES OF CERTIFICATION THAT IMPROVE MANAGEMENT QUALITY IN OTHER SPHERES ASSOCIATED WITH VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Objective

Develop, in collaboration with other institutions, actions aimed at improving environmental management quality at the Vocational Training centres.

Measure

Create the working committees needed in to design a suitable model for Vocational Training centres which enable them to attain ISO 14000 certification through the EKOSCAN standard.

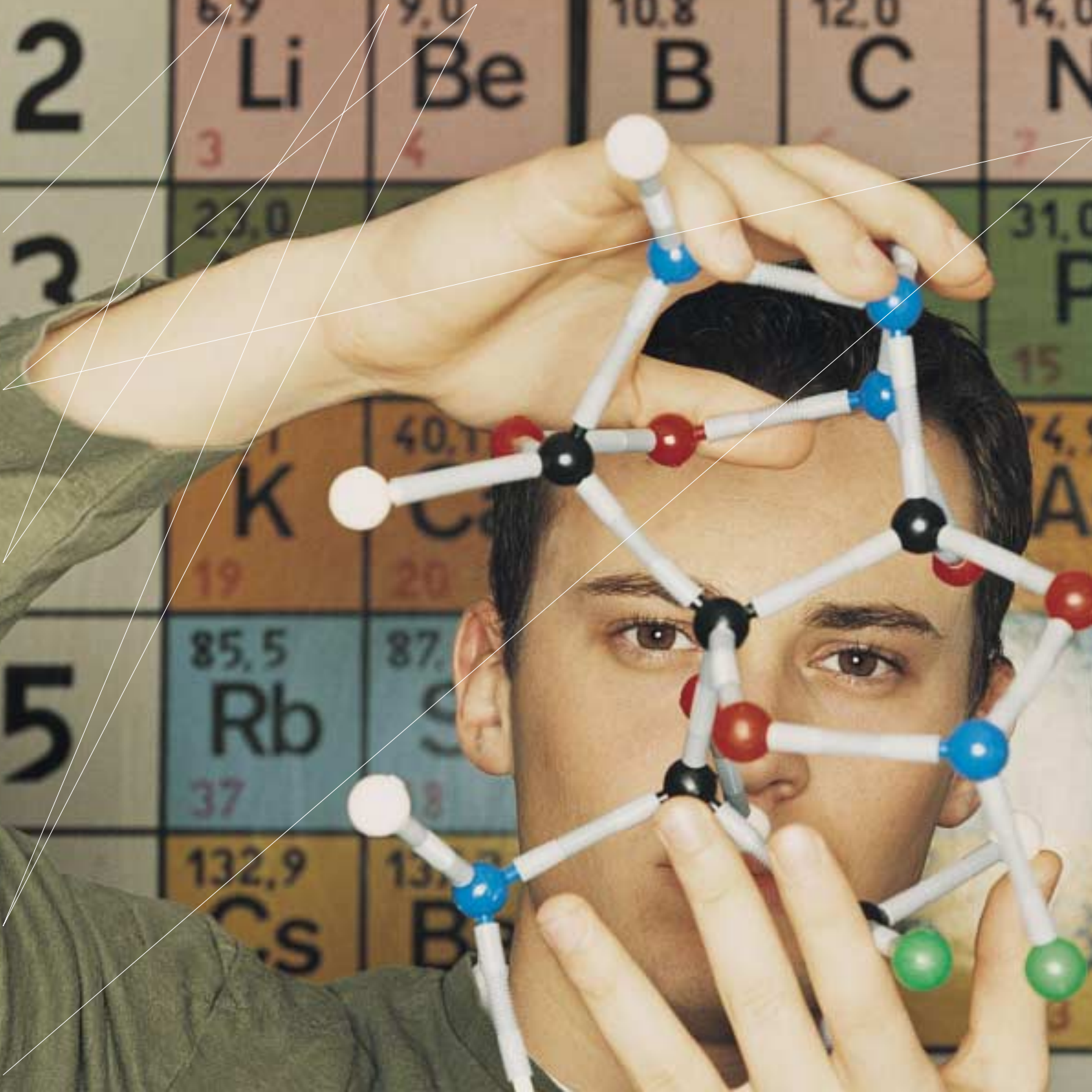
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— STRATE



III.

GIC LINE 3



STRATEGIC LINE 3

1. STIMULATE INNOVATION IN BASQUE VOCATIONAL TRAINING AS A PROCESS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Technological innovation in training processes

Technological innovation has in the last two decades proved a decisive factor in the modification of frameworks —economic and production frameworks, trained-workforce frameworks and socio-cultural frameworks. The world of education, although traditionally more reluctant to accept this influence, has nevertheless been unable to avoid it.

In this sense, instead of assuming a defensive posture in the face of the unknown consequences of technological innovation, one should consider adopting the opposite attitude: taking advantage, for the benefit of teaching and learning processes, of these new tools, tools that promote the development and application of yet newer teaching methodologies that facilitate a better implementation of these processes.

By its very nature Vocational Training is directly involved in and committed to awareness of technological innovations of the teaching content and their effects on vocational qualifications. There is nothing better for properly accomplishing tasks and achieving objectives than to incorporate the culture of technological innovation in training activities that is, in the processes of teaching and learning.

The possibilities that technological innovation offers in the field of teaching Vocational Training are still not sufficiently explored and, even less so, applied to training centres. Therefore, it is necessary to promote a number of measures with the object of giving incentive to innovation in technological teaching, based on the development of information and communication technologies and their



THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES AND BUSINESSES IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY IS A PRACTICE THAT ALREADY CAN BOAST SOLID FOUNDATIONS AND TRADITION

general application to Vocational Training centres in the Basque Country.

Collaboration between training centres and companies

As is well known, the collaboration between Vocational Training centres and businesses in the Basque Country is a practice that already can boast solid foundations and tradition. This collaboration has taken place basically in the way of students being trained at production centres and by the exchange of certain services. In some cases the training centres have provided services to companies,



particularly SMEs, and in others, companies have provided equipment.

Today this collaboration must grow in order to take advantage of all of the synergies available, as much for the training centres as for the companies. The better training of human resources in Vocational Training centres and the notable improvement of management and quality levels that have been achieved in all centres, as well as the growing need for knowledge management as a part of business competitiveness, make progress possible toward more ambitious and more effective goals of collaboration between training centres and private companies. These goals must advance the dimension of genuine cooperation in the exploitation, transmission and management of knowledge shared by both organisations.

A knowledge network in Vocational Training centres

In recent years the level of knowledge of human resources in Vocational Training centres has progressed significantly and methods to improve the quality of management have been introduced. Nevertheless, the increase of knowledge acquired by the human resources in each centre must be made available to all members of the centre, and to the other centres in the Vocational Training centre network.

At the same time, within today's context of the need for lifelong learning and continuous improvement of quality in which all organizations must operate, a process for knowledge management in the Vocational Training centre network is necessary.

Put more concretely, we need a process that will:

- Stimulate the acquisition of new knowledge that would increase the intellectual capital of the organisation.
- Foment the behaviours and mechanisms needed to promote lifelong learning at all levels.
- Grasp newly acquired knowledge, experiences and teaching methods, whether through the interrelationships between the teaching staff, individual or group learning processes of the organisation, or through new information and communication systems.
- Formalise, systematise and transform individual knowledge into information available for use by everyone, converting it into an asset for all the centres as a kind of institutional patrimony.
- Propagate this knowledge to the rest of the network.

All of that in order to achieve the increased value and quality in the services provided by the Vocational Training centres.

To accomplish these goals, it is necessary:

- That human resources of Vocational Training centres —e.g., the entire organization— be able to learn continually, as much from positive experiences as negative, anticipating and adapting to change.
- To effect the identification, codification and storage of new intellectual materials acquired by each person and each centre.
- To provide access, on the part of the entire Vocational Training network, to information and collective knowledge.
- That new knowledge and experiences be interpreted and approved in order to increase the value and quality of services provided by the entire organisation.

All of this must be backed up by technical support and an organisation that will permit



the integration and transfer of all these aspects, including the utilisation of innovation groups or communities.

The concept of the teacher in the new knowledge society

All specialists agree in affirming that the new millennium has ushered in a profound change in our society, shifting from an era of industry to an era of knowledge. With the inrush of the knowledge society, information is available and accessible on a massive scale, and is practically instantaneous. But in order for this information to be of use, it must be interpreted, which in turn calls for knowledge. The new millennium represents a change of paradigm in the concept of teacher, a paradigm centred on knowledge. We are now experiencing a process in which the model is shifting from a teacher who has knowledge to a knowledge teacher.

Furthermore, with the emergence of the knowledge society, the future calls for a very creative kind of teacher. For that reason, it is no longer enough for teachers to merely possess profiles for teaching the stipulated

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material and conforming to standardised, pre-established procedures in order to apply their knowledge.

With the emergence of the knowledge society, the future calls for a type of teacher who delivers his or her knowledge not only for purposes of application but also and above uses knowledge for creative endeavours. The fundamental change in the new millennium consists in using our new knowledge more for responding to new challenges than for doing what is previously expected.

Until now, knowledge has been applied to technology, the emphasis on technology. Today, the essence of technology is knowledge itself. Thus the change of paradigm is to look upon an instructor as somebody who is capable of utilising knowledge and experience in a creative way, a person who can learn from his or her work and from collaborating with colleagues, and someone who is capable of innovating the process of learning and management for the purpose of improving results.

The fundamental difference is moving from dependency to initiative. This shift implies

favouring team management autonomy (delegating, ceding decision-making powers), placing the management of work in the hands of the principal players, and confiding in the ability, creativity and disposition of the knowledge instructor.

At the same time, it is important to experiment with a new model of competence management, with the objective of improving the qualifications of the teaching staff. To that end, the design and development of the training plans is accomplished by first identifying the competences that the centre needs in accordance with its strategic plan; secondly, the personnel should conduct a self-assessment in order to determine any differences that exist; and, finally, the existing gap must be analysed and the training plans designed.

The management of teaching personnel will be the cornerstone of development for the new stage that we wish to initiate in Basque Vocational Training. Staff recruitment systems for the centres, lifelong learning, the assumption of responsibilities, dialogue and collaboration, and recognition of the accomplishments and efforts of people will all constitute key elements for the improvement

in personnel management throughout the Basque Vocational Training System.

To that end, this Basque Vocational Training Plan proposes to develop an experimental model by implementing the international standard IiP (Investors in People) as a reference point for the evaluation and improvement in the sphere of personnel and its management within the framework of the organisations. This can be assayed because the standard has been widely developed and tested in the United Kingdom, yielding very good results.

A competence-based management system for teaching staff

At present one of the objectives that is taking on great importance is to identify and establish the levels, scope and characteristics of the vocational competence that must be achieved in the diverse vocational fields of production activity. The training phases that make up Specific Vocational Training were designed according to those requirements, with qualification and vocational competence the direct targets for the development of the different professional profiles included in the degrees awarded for each level of teaching.

But obviously the professional profile of the instructor has evolved as well. Today it is necessary to propose new ways and methods that allow us to define the required competences among the different professional profiles. At the same time they must facilitate, in a flexible and effective manner, the design and management of different teaching plans that would prepare these profiles for competence-based teaching, as Vocational Training is taking shape at the present time.

Innovate course options

As is known, improving the qualification levels of any professional generally requires the previous acquisition of greater levels of basic training. Therefore, more specialised vocational competences must be designed to meet the new levels. This is the reason that the step from level 3 qualification (which corresponds to recipients of higher-level Vocational Training diplomas) to level 4 qualification (which corresponds to the technical engineering and diploma programmes) must be built over a solid foundation of basic training. The same thing can be said of the step from level 4 to level 5 qualification (which corresponds to upper-level engineering and undergraduate degrees).

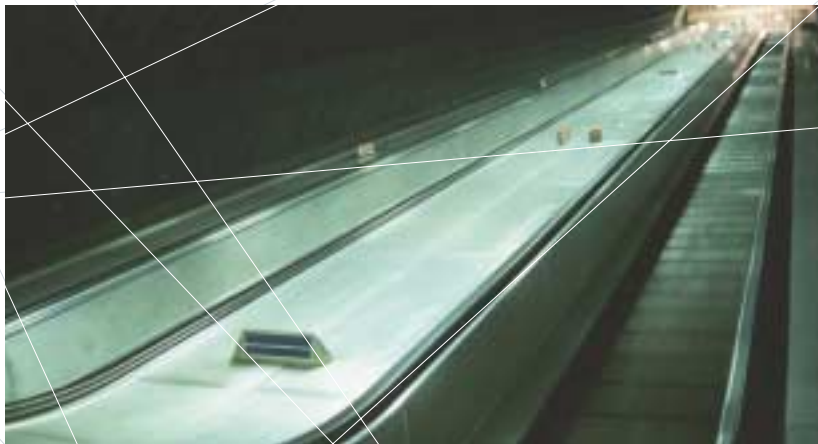
At the same time, it is also acknowledged that the vocational competences and work activities of the various qualification levels overlap to a certain extent. The field of work of level 4 (in whatever production organization) in many cases includes competences and work activities corresponding to level 3. In accord with this fact —verifiable in any company or production organization)— the curriculum leading to the corresponding vocational certifications also tends to include specific common subject matter.

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Applying these general principles to the progress between qualification levels 3 and 4, although higher-level Vocational Training degree holders have taken the basic training needed to acquire the vocational competence corresponding to technical engineering and the diploma levels, it is equally true that certain areas included in these study programmes have already been studied. They have probably been acquired by means of training in work centres and in the study programs of the higher-level Vocational Training. Therefore, holders of Vocational Training degrees are required to restudy what they already know and, most importantly, what they know how to apply.

As a result, today there is a need to find a new path of course options, or training itinerary, that could adapt curriculum and facilitate the connection between higher-level Vocational Training and the diploma and technical engineering levels.

Innovate learning systems

The advance of the new knowledge society in which we are already immersed presents us with a series of changes that in many cases have become transcendental. They are changing the way we do things, the way we are, our concepts and our perceptions; but the way we go about teaching and learning is evolving at an excessively slow pace.

The new technologies are an extraordinary tool, with which we will improve and advance toward new objectives. But not only must we think about designing and implementing distance learning programmes—which in some cases might take the place of classroom learning and in this way

facilitate people's access to learning— we must also develop new areas that improve in a clear and concise manner the very process of teaching and learning.

Therefore, it is imperative to create dynamic systems that thrive in changing environments and which assure us that such a teaching and learning process would evolve in a way that could provide global and coherent answers to the environments that we must continue to create for the new learning systems.

Anticipating change

The current method for designing the Basque Vocational Qualifications enables us to identify the competence standards required by production processes at the time the qualifications are designed. But it does not permit us to anticipate the evolution of the Qualifications caused by the more strategic changes in methods of production and in employment. To put it another way, we would need to keep abreast of the changes in companies' qualification requirements and the variations in the content professionalism demanded in the job market. All this is geared toward obtaining useful and pertinent information on the combinations of professionalism that should form part of the qualifications.

Creating a Centre for Research, Development and Innovation in the area of Vocational Training

The continual advance of our society in the area of NICTs, the urgent need to reinforce creativity and innovation in different areas, the strategic importance that Vocational Training has acquired in the Basque Country, and the essential coordination required by the centres in these areas call for the creation of a special centre. The duties of the centre would be to promote innovation, conduct research, coordinate and energise activities, and serve as a reference to the Vocational Training centres in order that they can develop new projects that would give impetus to Vocational Training in new fields of advanced development.



2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objective 3.1.

INNOVATE MANAGEMENT IN INTEGRAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES

Objectives

1. Improve the efficacy of the centres in their use of resources and in their capacity to respond (agility) to changes in the services they provide.
2. Improve the efficacy of the management of Vocational Training centres and, as a consequence, the efficacy of the Basque Vocational Training System.
3. Promote and stimulate *entrepreneurial* culture in Vocational Training centres.
4. Increase the management autonomy and responsibility of the Vocational Training centres.
5. Provide the system with qualified resources to perform quality management in the Vocational Training centres.

Measures

1. Implement in a group of centres belonging to the network an organisational model characterized by the establishment of management units and by *programme-based* operations; implement a Vocational Training centre management system which increases their autonomy and decision-making capacity.
2. Determine the Units of Competence that make up the competence required for managerial duties in the effective quality management of the Vocational Training centres.
3. Implement training programs oriented to qualifying directors and/or managers of Vocational Training centres.
4. Implement a management system that makes it possible to define the competences required for the development of the centre's strategy; to establish the centre's personnel profiles; to conduct a self-evaluation of the personnel so that they can address those profiles; and to design and manage a training plan with the object of meeting the established profiles.
5. Evaluate the results of the implementation of the plan, and apply them to the other centres in the integral Vocational Training centre network.

Strategic Objective 3.2.

INNOVATE TECHNOLOGIES APPLIED TO TRAINING

Objectives

1. Improve Vocational Training teaching and learning processes by means of innovating methods of learning produced by information and communications technologies.
2. Incorporate the innovations of information and communications technologies into Vocational Training.
3. Familiarise the general student body and instructors with Vocational Training teaching and learning processes by using and taking advantage of NICTs.
4. Contribute, through the interrelation and intercommunication of the diverse teaching centres, to the cohesion and integration of the Vocational Training system.
5. Establish an experimental system for the management of instructor competences in some of the Vocational Training centres to improve professional profiles and of teacher training.
6. Define the concepts, procedures and principles of a new system that would improve the processes of teaching and learning in Vocational Training.
7. Describe the contents, pedagogical scenarios and media models, as well as the knowledge-sharing structures that renew and modernise learning systems.

Measures

1. Incorporate on a broad scale computer programming in Vocational Training classrooms:
 - a) Make use of the computer as a standard means of communication and interaction among teachers and students.
 - b) Increase and, where applicable, renovate computer equipment in Vocational Training classroom-workshops, until achieving in the centres the standard of one computer per student.
 - c) Create, through the innovation communities and best practices in Vocational Training, programs and other software tools as tools to aid in the process of teaching and learning.
2. Significantly increase the incorporation of telecommunications technology in Vocational Training classrooms:
 - a) Provide interconnection of all Basque Vocational Training centres by means of a high-performance network.
 - b) Make common use of videoconferencing for educational purposes.
 - c) Design and develop telecommunications projects within the classroom, developed and executed by the students.
 - d) Incorporate new digital interactive classrooms in the Vocational Training centre network.
3. Introduce a specific teacher training program focusing on the application of NICTs in the teaching of Vocational Training.
4. Implement on an experimental basis a competence management system for instructors which would later be applied system-wide. Such a system would lead to improving the professional profile of the teaching staff and in this way make it possible to design training plans that could be tailored to each situation.
5. Innovate learning systems, using a flexible methodology that would enable the students to be the focus, utilising the necessary teaching devices that would work toward this objective.
6. Fulfil the needs of disabled persons in this area.

Strategic Objective 3.3.

INNOVATE TECHNOLOGY AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER IN TRAINING CENTRES AND COMPANIES

Objectives

1. Increase collaboration between training centres and private companies, achieving effective cooperation that would take advantage of all the possibilities in the transfer of technology and exchange of knowledge between the two organisations.
2. Improve the preparation of human resources of both private companies and training centres.
3. Improve the teaching and learning processes of training centres and the processes used by companies for training employees.
4. Increase collaboration between learning centres and private companies towards the improvement of production processes.
5. Take advantage of all the potential opportunities of cooperation between private companies and training centres in an exchange of services.
6. Improve the adaptation of professional qualification, to which the educational programs of Vocational Training aspire, to the specific needs of the work roles and situations of the production process.

Measures

1. Identify and provide, by way of company specialists, a host of modules belonging to the training phases of regulated Vocational Training. Determine the suitable requisites of the company experts and implement the conditions (organisationally and financially) in which the implementation can be attained
2. Implement a plan in which Vocational Training centre instructors would take part in in-company training (see teacher training plan).
3. Implement a training plan aimed at human resources directors and managers of private companies; the plan would be designed by a specially qualified team of Vocational Training centre instructors and would focus on training and learning processes based on vocational competence.
4. Implement in training centres specific *post-graduate* courses for company technicians with qualification levels 2 and 3 (qualified technician and middle-level manager).
5. Put into operation a centre for innovation in Vocational Training and lifelong learning.
6. Implement a plan for technology transfer and exchanging knowledge-based services, which shall include the following aspects:
 - a) Collaboration between training centres and companies to improve processes. This collaboration will involve the development of certain phases and/or *fine-tuning* operations for production processes in a group of training centres, adequately equipped for this purpose, and with participation from company experts.
 - b) The training centres will provide high-intensity services, such as three-dimensional metrology, high-speed machining, advanced CAD services, and others.
 - c) the private companies will furnish advice in the identification of new emerging components of professionalism and concerning necessary changes in methods and equipment of the teaching and learning processes.
 - d) The possibility of in-company training for students throughout their training phase.
7. Create steady work groups (made up of teachers and company technicians) to identify and stimulate new dimensions of cooperation.

Strategic Objective 3.4.

IMPLEMENT A KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE NETWORK

Objectives

1. Increase the value and quality of services provided by Vocational Training centres.
2. Achieve an organisation capable of learning continuously.
 - a) Collect and systematise, in an ongoing process, individual acquired knowledge and convert it into valuable information for the entire Vocational Training centre network.
 - b) Ensure a constant flow of new knowledge to all Vocational Training centres, and transmit the precise knowledge and abilities to whomever needs them at the time they are most needed.
3. Engourage a process of continuous improvement of intellectual capital in the Vocational Training centre network, stimulating individual and collective processes of knowledge acquisition.
4. Improve the tools that make possible the harnessing, dissemination and fostering of knowledge of the Vocational Training centre network.

Measures

1. Determine the management knowledge model and strategies that will be applied in the Vocational Training centre network.
2. Manage network knowledge, which includes:
 - a) Promote the creation of Vocational Training innovation and best practices communities, and make sure they are prepared and motivated to perform their work.
 - b) Determine work guidelines and objectives of the Vocational Training innovation and best practices communities; and, in particular, define which knowledge and best practices ought to form part of the institutional patrimony of the Vocational Training centre network.
 - c) Promote and approve the work programmes for the innovation and best practices communities, and maintain proper relations with them.
 - d) Determine and implement the methodology to disseminate knowledge produced by the Vocational Training innovation and best practices communities.
 - e) Define and implement the technological support necessary to apply and improve knowledge management.
 - f) Create and manage a database and information system to make sure that the entire Vocational Training centre network utilises the new knowledge and best practices that are significant.
 - g) Promote the diffusion of new knowledge and best practices between all of the Vocational Training centres.
3. Create a Vocational Training innovation and best practices community at each Vocational Training centre; also create an inter-centre network of all of these communities with the incentives and appropriate resources for the development of its work. The functions of the communities will be to:
 - a) Produce useful new knowledge for the network by the environment of the Vocational Training centre.
 - b) To tap new the knowledge acquired by the human resources of the centres, by means of individual or collective learning processes, the education process, shared experiences and relationships with private companies.
 - c) To publish the new knowledge, in the appropriate format, and download it into a central database.
4. Draw up and implement the work plans of the innovation and best practices communities.
5. Implement and/or improve the technological support necessary to set in motion the knowledge management system and, in particular, to interconnect the entire Vocational Training centre network, and the individual centres with technology centres.

Strategic Objective 3.5.

ESTABLISH COOPERATION BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN ORDER TO DETERMINE ITINERARIES FOR PROGRESSING FROM QUALIFICATION LEVEL 3 TO LEVEL 4

Objectives

1. Promote vocational progress of graduates of higher Vocational Training toward level 4 qualification (technical engineering and diploma programmes).
2. Define coherent training itineraries to progress from qualification level 3 to 4 so that graduates of higher Vocational Training are not required to retake material associated with the vocational competence that they already possess; such itineraries shall not be to the detriment of the basic Vocational Training.
3. Eliminate unnecessary barriers to academic progress for the graduates of higher-level Vocational Training.
4. Increase the coherence of university education and Vocational Training systems, while implementing strategies to increase the professionalism.

Measures

1. Identify a group of medium-level degree courses especially suitable for the professional advancement of graduates of higher-level Vocational Training.
2. Create a group of experts, composed of members of the Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training, members of university departments and Vocational Training centres, all of them belonging to vocational fields and university degree courses that have been identified for the professional advancement of graduates of higher-level Vocational Training.
3. Determine the equivalences that define the training itineraries for graduates of higher-level Vocational Training to ensure, on the one hand, the acquisition of the vocational competence attained through university degree courses and, on the other hand, to avoid the repetition of material and contents associated with the vocational competence that the higher-level Vocational Training graduate already possesses.
4. Follow up on the academic performance of higher-level Vocational Training graduates, to check whether they have fulfilled the training itineraries designed in the experimental phase.
5. Draw up the legal and administrative provisions that lay down the academic itineraries required for higher-level Vocational Training graduates to access university degree courses.
6. Extend the training itineraries for higher-level Vocational Training graduates so that they can have access all of the middle-level university degree courses in similar areas.

Strategic Objective 3.6.

R+D+I IN BASQUE VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Objectives

1. Determine, with collaboration from the Vocational Training Observatory, the evolution and transformation in Vocational Qualifications that allow us to anticipate change and keep qualifications attune to the changes production methods and the job market.
2. Based on the data and information provided by the Vocational Training Observatory, determine the characteristics of Vocational Qualifications with regard to entry in the job market and the vocational path taken by young people, in order to better adapt the initial training offer to the labour market.

Measures

1. Based on an analysis of the evolution of production methods in a series of companies selected as models, the Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training shall draw up an of R+D+I activity plan, the purpose of which is to learn about the key combinations of professionalism emerging from the companies (new functions, new techniques, etc.) and in this way be able to anticipate the evolution and transformation of vocational qualifications.
2. With collaboration from the Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training, the Vocational Training Observatory shall draw up an R+D+I activity plan aimed at learning about the variations in professionalism required in the labour market.

The findings from all of the research described above will include all essential aspects and shall be expressed suitably so that any necessary modifications to the Basque Vocational Qualifications can be made.

Strategic Objective 3.7.

ENCOURAGE FORUMS FOR RESEARCH, COOPERATION AND THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES

Objectives

1. Seek diverse ways of promoting and making known different activities and experiences associated with Vocational Training, especially in the area of innovation.
2. Provide incentive and the proper conditions for innovation and improvement among Vocational Training students.

Measures

1. Create a week in summer dedicated to Vocational Training, promoting activities geared toward innovation, international exchange of experiences and basic and advanced training.
2. Create the Lanbide Prize for Vocational Training, awarded once every two years to higher-level Vocational Training students for innovation projects that can be applied to the teaching processes in Vocational Training centres.

Strategic Objective 3.8.

DEVELOP RESEARCH PROJECTS APPLICABLE TO THE FIELD OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Objectives

1. Apply Vocational Training research to the areas of greatest priority.
2. Involve the teaching staff in the research processes put forward.

Measures

1. Promote research projects in the field of Vocational Training in the following areas: teaching innovation; improvement of management processes; inter-institutional cooperation; innovation in the design of teaching and learning infrastructures.
2. Establish a series of year-long research work-leaves, one for each area included in the previous programme; the work-leaves would release Vocational Training teachers from different areas of specialty and vocational families from their regular duties to conduct research.

Strategic Objective 3.9.

PURSUE THE PROGRESSIVE ACCREDITATION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES AS RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AGENCIES WITHIN THE BASQUE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION NETWORK

Objectives

1. Promote technological development in Vocational Training centres.
2. Incorporate the Vocational Training centres into the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network.

Measures

1. Promote the integration of Vocational Training centres into the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network.
2. Accredit 15 Vocational Training centres as Research, Development and Technological Innovation agency.

Strategic Objective 3.10.

CREATE A CENTRE FOR RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION WITHIN THE SCOPE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Objectives

1. Advance and improve the application of NICTs in Vocational Training.
2. Investigate and work on innovation in teaching and learning processes.
3. Coordinate work between Vocational Training centres and companies in different vocational families in advanced manufacturing in a way that would allow us to anticipate the training needs of our human resources and the installation of new equipment.
4. Develop new e-learning materials that, together with NICTs, would serve to reinforce learning and make it more flexible.
5. Boost networking in the Vocational Training centres.

Measure

Create a centre for Vocational Training innovation that would support Vocational Training centres and companies in the areas of NICTs, teaching, management and technological innovation.

Strategic Objective 3.11.

PROMOTE NEW WAYS OF LEARNING IN INNOVATIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Objectives

1. Apply new ways of learning, with the support of NICTs, in industrial sectors.
2. Work on the improving risk prevention in the workplace in the use of machinery utilised in Vocational Training.
3. Attend to the possible needs and requirements of disabled persons.

Measures

1. Introduce three-dimensional online Vocational Training
2. Develop the necessary programs and the software.
3. Make this objective a priority in vocational families where more complex machinery is used.

Strategic Objective 3.12.

PROMOTE ACTIONS THAT LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASPECTS THAT CORRESPOND TO THE PERSONAL PROFILES DEMANDED BY SOCIETY AND BY COMPANIES

Objectives

1. Identify and define aspects related to the required profile in relation to the key competences.
2. Develop linguistic and communication competences in at least three languages.
3. Develop capabilities and skills in students appropriate to the requirements of society and the production environment.

Measures

1. Create a forum for debate among diverse stakeholders to further explore various aspects related to the profiles of the people wishing to be trained.
2. Establish a trilingual model in the training phases.
3. Incorporate methodologies that permit the development of the capabilities and skills in demand.

The background features a solid blue color with several thin, white, intersecting lines that create a complex, abstract geometric pattern. These lines form various triangles and polygons, some of which are elongated and point towards the corners of the frame.

— STRATE



VI.

GIC LINE 4

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STRATEGIC LINE 4

1. NEW INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN BASQUE VOCATIONAL TRAINING

E-learning

One of the most striking characteristics of our times in terms of education and training is that with the advent of online and distance training processes, we no longer have to be in the classroom to acquire new knowledge and skills. However, even with the ever-increasing diversification of educational activities, many training processes still follow the same routines, thus making it difficult for them to adapt to the demands of the Information Society.

For this reason it is important to bear in mind that the shift from traditional to non-classroom-based approaches will not come about spontaneously. The transition will more likely be result of a change in culture; this change will require a certain amount of convincing, but for those who opt for a more dynamic training system, the advantages and benefits will speak for themselves.

Clearly the current scenario is much more conducive to using a combination of services rather than limiting educational options to a single type of training method. Therefore, in general terms, a logical approach would be to combine non-classroom methods with activities that require face-to-face interaction. The offer should include a wide variety of activities ranging from what we might call e-learning at its purist —with virtually no face-to-face activity— to the use of a Vocational Training support portal, to traditional classroom methods. The exact choice to make in terms of the combination of resources can only be determined by studying each student's situation on a case to case basis.

With regard to e-learning, its capacity for development is characterised by the following attributes:



THE e-learning

SYSTEM MUST BE HIGHLY AGILE
SO THAT IT DOES NOT
PRESENT PROBLEMS
FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



— First and foremost, the actual content. The quality of training content is measured by how well the material is presented and organised, and the degree of motivation it offers. In this sense, it is wrong to think that traditional training institutions can simply include e-learning systems to solve the problem of adapting their teaching methods. Among other reasons is that the written language of the Internet calls for specially adapted techniques. Unlike books, in which the channel of communication is unidirectional, the Internet provides the opportunity for constant feedback.

— Secondly, usability. The e-learning system must be highly agile. It should not present problems for people with disabilities, should always provide information in the appropriate section or part of the web site, and, all in all, should be convenient and easy to use. The right combination of this feature and the previous one (good content) is what some now refer to as "learnability".

— In third place, we should not set out with the unrealistic assumption that machines are capable of kindling the same level of motivation as flesh and blood teachers. Therefore, the fact that part of the student-teacher training relationships are machine-based should in no way undermine the need for students' activities to be clearly recorded and logged, and for instructors to provide the appropriate reinforcement activities.

With respect to the availability of an interactive portal that operates much like an encyclopaedia, it is important to keep in mind that the material available through the portal should be presented in a different fashion, since e-learning material should be reusable.

For this reason, in addition to supplying contents, Internet style libraries also provide links to guide users to other sources of information. Although we are referring here to the portal in its exclusive function as a support for training processes, its applications are many and extendible to other activities related to training. By way of a simplified list, the following types of content are underscored: access to the training offer, sector information and news, description of training centres, forum for discussion, etc., in addition to the matter of training materials already addressed.

A third instrument for reinforcing non-classroom-based training is personalised attention provided by telephone or online. This allows students enrolled in either online, combination online-classroom, or traditional face-to-face courses to communicate with tutors who can resolve their doubts. Tutors address students' concerns through the e-learning web site or portal. It is important for tutors not only to answer specific questions posed by students; they must also be able to provide students with the adequate orientation based on any information they might have on a particular student (i.e. content logged in an e-learning system file).

Training and the use of NICTs

It is essential to encourage Vocational Training instructors to learn about, use and keep abreast of new technologies; if not, the application of such new tools is impossible. One of the objectives of this plan is to serve as a guideline for the training, updating and accreditation of Vocational Training instructors in the area of Information and Communication Technologies, as well as the acquisition of cognitive learning associated with NICTs. It is



therefore the necessary framework for the penetration and extension of IT Cs in the Vocational Training centres.

In addition, videoconferencing provides great opportunities, as it is centres mainly on bringing in outside resources and incorporating them into the internal dissemination system. It therefore makes it possible to improve external relations and different internal applications in the areas of management and learning, and in the essential transfer of knowledge.

Videoconferencing is also a way of expanding the boundaries of the classroom. It enables students to transcend the classroom and gain insight from new teachers. It also promotes relationships between students and instructors from different centres, and between centres and companies.

From the education perspective, NICTs enable students to take classes even when they have no direct relationship with the training centre. Such technology also allows guest instructors and experts in their fields to share their experience and knowledge in specific subjects.

THE IDEA IS TO IMPLEMENT SECURE AND EFFECTIVE SOFTWARE WHICH USES OPEN STANDARDS AND REQUIRES LOW MAINTENANCE

As far as management is concerned, NICTs promote and facilitate relations between training centres and between centres and companies, bringing about benefits in terms of problem-solving and the implementation of initiatives.

Software adapted to present-day society

Software policy should meet different requirements, depending on whether we are dealing with teaching how to use software or the software that is used to support Vocational Training.

With regard to teaching about the use of software, it is essential for students to know about the software products available on the market today, since the idea is for Vocational Training graduates to know how handle such tools, regardless of whether certain programs are the most appropriate or not. However, long-term planning is also important, as is predicting new market trends, so the Vocational Training System can adapt to change.

The requirements are different for the software utilised within the Vocational Training System. In this case, the idea is not to keep abreast of the software currently used in businesses. The idea is to implement secure, flexible and effective software which uses open standards and requires low maintenance. Accordingly, in keeping with the recommendations coming from the European Commission, open source technology seems to be appropriate. Moreover, by using open source technology software maintenance can be carried out internally or by the Basque software industry, thus generating a significant "tractor effect".

Rapid and efficient information

The processes used today to add new information are generally very slow at all levels, making it difficult to make decisions quickly based on data. At present any information needed to make decisions (including some very simple ones such as adding data) passes through several filters, thus delaying it from getting it to the people who need it.

As far as the training offer is concerned, NICTs enable instructors to provide appropriate, detailed updated information on the subjects they teach, and the centres themselves can immediately access such information as students' registration status. Therefore, an action that would be advisable to set into motion is a system for online registration which would better link the training centres and the Vice-Ministry for Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning. It would also enable resources to be transferred and downloaded by and between different centres and the three provinces of the Basque Country; resources could also be



allocated for other autonomous communities and EU member states.

Studying the matter from the perspective of demand, students would be able to find out about registration options in a transparent manner. They would have access to the clearest description possible of the content of each subject offered at the various training centres. The idea is to provide prospective students with a detailed and updated online description of the content, methodology, required level, prerequisites and future job possibilities of the courses they wish to take. The ultimate goal is for students to be able to make their own decisions based on as much information as possible.

Mobility and flexibility with NICTs

When referring to mobility, flexibility and access to information in a corporate network, specifically in the Basque Vocational Training network, priorities must be set to ensure that Vocational Training instructors can carry out their work effectively in these areas.

Personal Digital Assistants, or PDAs are small handheld computers able to store and process an enormous amount of data. They make it possible to reduce the amount of paperwork and bureaucracy, allowing the information collected to be used in a systematic and uniform fashion. One advantage of using PDAs is their ability to easily synchronize data with other types of computers and facilitate the integration of content into an intranet.

They can also be utilised as simulators and as a means of teaching support. With information supplied by instructors, PDAs applications included educational games,

process simulators, e-books, homework and exams. And of course, one of the obvious uses for teaching staff is as personal organisers. They can be used to keep timetables, student files —with space for notes— parent/tutor contact information (telephone, address), student progress reports, photographs, marks and attendance records. Other uses include security codes, determining library book loan status and accessing the library catalogue. Teachers can use PDAs for their lesson plans, and for viewing, editing and projecting Power Point presentations, in addition to storing information of all types (a PDA has space for up to 500,000 pages of text) and taking advantage of the calculation tools included in the device. Obviously a good part of the information that instructors have can be downloaded to the system and processed.

Another one of the very useful applications for Vocational Training centres is to promote the "quality" or processes, since the devices make it possible to reduce red tape and paperwork.

2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objective 4.1.

ESTABLISH A REGULATED MECHANISM FOR TRAINING, UPDATING AND ACCREDITATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Objectives

1. Provide for and guarantee teacher training in the area of NICTs so that instructors can develop and pursue their work in an innovative setting.
2. Certify instructor competences in NICTs.

Measures

1. Establish certificate levels 1, 2 and 3 for NICTs.
2. Determine the material that must be covered to obtain the different certificates, and identify the modules and number of hours required for each.
3. Put into effect a combination offer with participation by different stakeholders and authorised organisations to allow the programme to be developed.
4. Update the content of the programme once every two years.

Strategic Objective 4.2.

CREATE A PROGRAMME AIMED AT OUTFITTING CENTRES WITH SYSTEMS FOR SUPPORTING VIDEOCONFERENCING

Objective

Attain the connectivity and equipment needed for Vocational Training centres to set into place high-quality internal and external communications.

Measures

1. Based on the infrastructure already in place, provide a total of 50 Vocational Training centres with the necessary equipment, subsidised through a multiannual programme.
2. Increase the number of digital interactive classrooms.
3. Create three mobile videoconferencing units, one in each of the three provinces in the Basque Country.
4. Optimise videoconferencing, making use of this communication tool for training purposes.

Strategic Objective 4.3.

UTILISE THE NECESSARY RESOURCES, AND PLAN THEM ACCORDINGLY SO AS NOT TO DUPLICATE EFFORTS WITHIN THE SYSTEM

Objective

Make good use of specialised materials within the same vocational family. Utilise videoconferencing as a system to enable external experts (university, enterprise, consultants) to speak to groups of students in different locations interactively.

Measures

1. Designate one person for each vocational family to organise and oversee collaboration from experts (university, enterprise, consultants) in such activities including: presentation and demonstration of equipment and technologies; demonstration of manufacturing processes, etc.
2. Implement the protocols for carrying out the activities described above.
3. Create a media library (or set of multimedia material) for each vocational family that allow the existing material to be classified, reutilised and made available to training centres.

Strategic Objective 4.4.

FOMENT COLLABORATION AND JOINT PROJECTS BETWEEN DIFFERENT CENTRES AND CLASSROOMS

Objective

Promote cooperative activities and joint projects, embracing as many vocational families as possible.

Measures

1. Create a programme that opens the door to cooperation between training centres, establishing a system aimed at collaboration and problem-solving with regard to technological compatibility, and collaboration in work methods.
2. Draw up joint teacher training plans aimed at using videoconferencing as a tool for communications. Training aspects include the use of graphic materials and electronic blackboards, positioning of speakers and camera, etc.

Strategic Objective 4.5.

ADAPT SOFTWARE USED FOR INSTRUCTION TO THE USES MADE IN BUSINESS TODAY, AND IDENTIFY EMERGING SYSTEMS

Objective

Detect the needs and use of NICTs in enterprise, particularly equipment and different programs, so that Vocational Training students are provide with the appropriate knowledge and skills.

Measures

1. Create a software and equipment observatory to study their application in businesses and define the emerging uses thereof.
2. Develop an assessment of the relation between Vocational Training centres and businesses with regard to software and equipment.
3. Adapt curriculum to new findings.

Strategic Objective 4.6.

SUBSTITUTE, WHEN POSSIBLE, PROPRIETARY SOFTWARE FOR OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE TO OPTIMISE COSTS AND ENSURE SYSTEM WIDE EXPANSION

Objective

Reduce the cost of licensing, based on the premise that customising in-house software and learning how to use it properly leads to better performance.

Measures

1. Conduct a study of the alternatives to proprietary software being used today to design a policy geared toward gradually replacing it with open source software.
2. Create a programme aimed at developing and customising in-house software.

Strategic Objective 4.7.

BE ABLE TO PERFORM OUR OWN SOFTWARE MAINTENANCE

Objectives

1. With proprietary software the user does not have access to the source code and therefore only the manufacturer can copy, modify and study the software.
2. Implement open source software to the greatest extent possible; this type of software is released with a license that permits others to modify it, allowing for any inevitable modifications and maintenance to be outsourced to a private firm, based on a controlled outsourcing agreement, or performed by a government agency.

Measure

Create a software group which combines controlled outsourcing and in-house work.

Strategic Objective 4.8.

ESTABLISH OPEN STANDARDS

Objective

Establish open standards whereby, even if the interior of the program is hidden, the files and communication protocols are based on known standards or ones provided by the manufacturer. The content of an e-learning program must be in a standard format so that if the program is changed it is easy to switch the content to another platform.

Measure

Study, define and implement the standards that will be required to respect by any program put to use.



Strategic Objective 4.9.

CREATE A CERTIFIED OUTSOURCING TEAM

Objective

Combine open and open source standards to prevent dependencies on companies that use a specific type of proprietary system. By certifying open source companies the work is guaranteed to be performed by trustworthy firms while at the same time promoting competition and breaking down technology barriers.

Measure

Create and set into motion an open source company certification system.

Strategic Objective 4.10.

NOTABLY IMPROVE INFORMATION AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES, AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITY IN GENERAL OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES

Objective

Expedite communications between Vocational Training centres and the Vice-Ministry for Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning. In addition, make it possible for the centres to update their information and immediately include it in the system.

Measure

Properly adapt and put to use the intranet for the purpose of linking all of the Vocational Training centres and the services provided by the Vice-Ministry for Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning, developing the necessary programs.

Strategic Objective 4.11.

FOMENT THE USE OF PDAs AMONG TEACHING STAFF, PLACING PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION PROCESSES AND ON THE REQUIREMENTS OF QUALITY PROCESSES

Objective

Enable teaching staff to access and manage the data and information they need in a flexible, mobile and speedy manner with regard to teaching and learning process and the quality processes established at the centres.

Measures

1. Gradually provide instructors and training centre administrative services with PDAs.
2. Draw up a PDA user training plan.
3. Design PDA programs for use by teaching staff.
4. Set up the computer network so that it is capable of capturing, assimilating and making use of all of this information.
5. Connect the information to the intranet.

Strategic Objective 4.12.

PROVIDE PERSONALISED ONLINE SUPPORT FOR TRAINING PROCESSES

Objective

Provide personalised attention to students taking Vocational Training courses via on e-learning processes, and to classroom students in self-study phases. In this sense, it is important to keep in mind that continuing education students set aside a significant amount of time to study during holidays, thus making this objective particularly important.

Measures

1. Create a communications and personalised attention distribution centre so that the instructors entrusted with the task can be in different places, either at the centres themselves or in rooms specifically designated for this purpose, or even their own homes.
2. Implement the system. Invest in hardware, software, etc.
3. Begin with a pilot programme and then spread it to the entire system.
4. Create appropriate content. The teaching staff involved in the project must have the right materials available to provide orientation and advice. Materials would obviously include those already designed in traditional format as well as materials developed as a result of e-learning processes.
5. Create a database which systematically records all incoming questions and queries. Questions which have already been addressed and are posed again by someone else are included in the database as templates. The cycle ends by posting the most frequently asked questions and their responses on the website.
6. System for assessing this service. Since this is a new service it is difficult to determine all of the parameters that should be used. It is clear that new systems need to be conceived to evaluate the number of incoming queries, the time dedicated to each, the times with the most traffic, the areas of specialisation most highly in demand, and so forth. However, it is also important to objectively evaluate the impact on the level of instruction and training and the level of satisfaction of the people who use the system.
7. Facilitate opening the service to include other institutions and even other autonomous communities. Given the fact that the service has no specific physical location, it can be extended to other places with no significant additional cost.



V.

LINE 5



LINE 5

FINANCING

The economic assessment was performed taking into account the planned objectives and based on a global assessment of all of the objectives included in each strategic line. It is important to point out that even a reasonably approximate estimate cannot be attached to some of the objectives, as they affect an indefinite number of people. In some cases the objectives are connected to different actions associated with newly created areas or with highly innovative projects which require more running time before a closer cost assessment can be made. Therefore, we will know the cost involved in applying some of the strategic objectives as the elements of this plan are implemented.

Moreover, the active policies on employment, and on occupational Vocational Training in particular, have not yet been transferred from the central to the Basque government level.

In the same sense, continuing Vocational Training is going through times of uncertainty with regard to the new model put forward by the Central Government. Thus, today it is impossible to perform an economic assessment of the repercussions the model might have on this plan, even if the Basque Government appropriated funding for the proper implementation of a quality, effective continuing Vocational Training model.

In this section on financing, a global assessment has been made of the various strategic lines. The economic figures for each has been broken down by year.

In creating a budget for the plan for 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007, a number of important factors were considered. These factors can be grouped into the following categories:





- Institutions.
- Operational costs of the different organisations.
- Investments in equipment.
- Amortization costs.
- Personnel costs.
- Training actions.
- Support actions.
- Innovation projects.

- Quality projects.
- NICT projects.
- Mechanisms to be implemented.

Although the exact budgetary allocation cannot be predicted, the total cost of the strategic objectives will not exceed 2.5% of the annual budget of the 2004-2007 Basque Vocational Training Plan.

A GLOBAL ASSESSMENT
HAS BEEN MADE
OF THE VARIOUS
STRATEGIC LINES

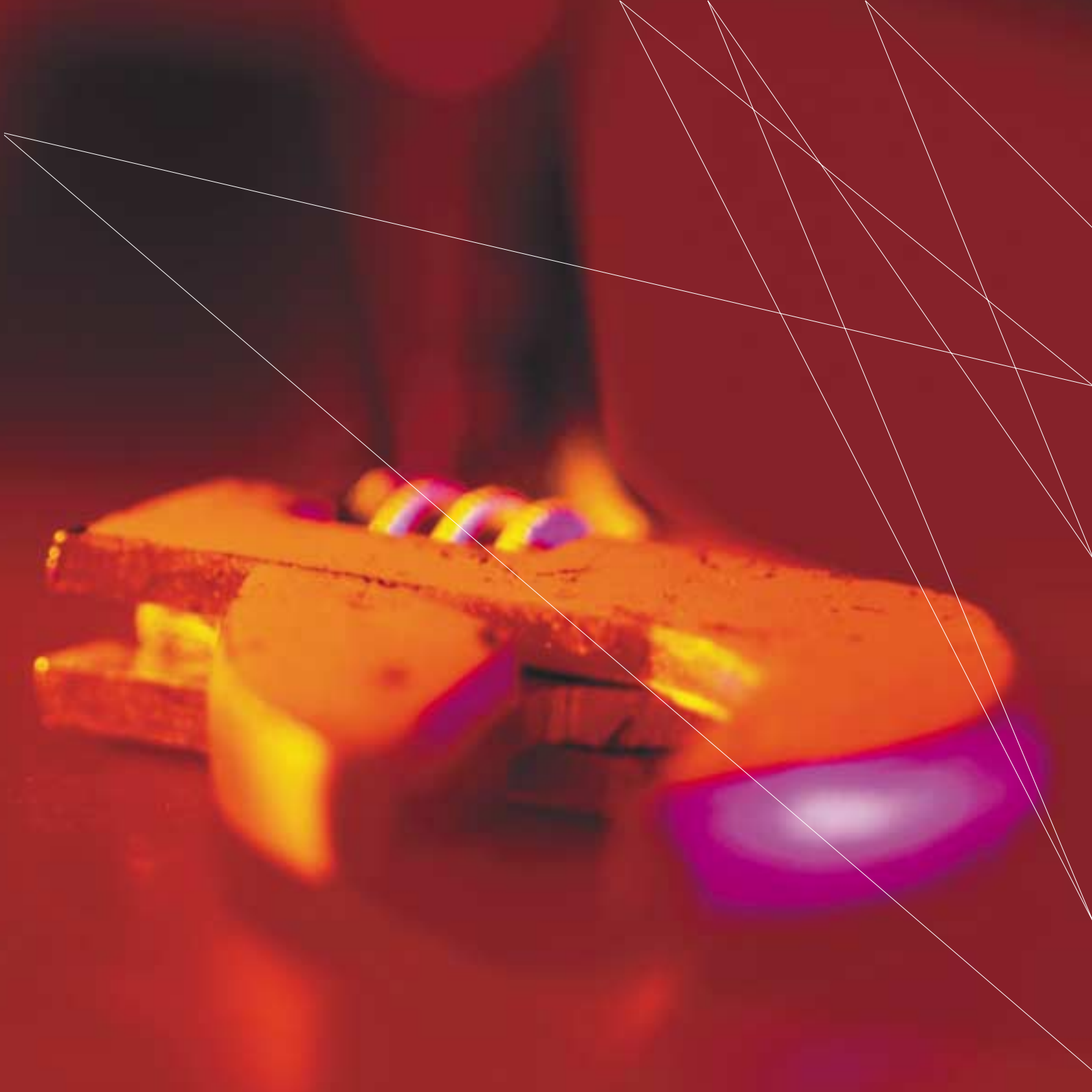
TABLE 5.
2004-2007 BASQUE VOCATIONAL TRAINING PLAN BUDGET

	2004	2005	2006	2007	TOTAL
Strategic line 1 Updating and improving the Integrated System of Qualifications and Vocational Training	88.686.416	101.112.695	106.138.330	111.445.247	407.382.688
Strategic line 2 Quality in Basque Vocational Training	27.182.758	31.892.588	33.487.218	35.161.579	127.724.143
Strategic line 3 Innovation in Basque Vocational Training as a process of continuous improvement	27.182.758	32.742.588	34.379.718	36.098.704	130.403.768
Strategic line 4 New information and communication technologies in Basque Vocational Training	28.579.180	35.742.588	37.529.718	39.406.204	141.257.690
TOTAL	171.631.112	201.490.459	211.534.984	222.111.734	806.768.289

A blurred background image of a hand holding a pen, overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The word "ANNEX" is centered in a light blue serif font. A small orange horizontal line is positioned below the letter "A".

ANNEX





ANNEX

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

State

- ORGANIC LAW 5/2002 of 19 June on Qualifications and Vocational Training (Official State Gazette, 20 June 2002).
- R.D. 942/2003 of 18 July, which lays down the basic conditions for qualification as Specific Vocational Training Technician and Higher-level Technician (Official State Gazette, 31 July 2003).
- R.D. 1128/2003 of 5 September, which regulates the National Catalogue of Vocational Qualifications (Official State Gazette, 17 September 2003).
- R.D. 295/2004 of 20 February, establishing a series of vocational qualifications included in the National Catalogue of Vocational Qualifications, along with the corresponding training modules incorporated in the Modular Vocational Training Catalogue (Official State Gazette, 9 March 2004).
- R.D. 362/2004 of 5 March, establishing the general regulations for Specific Vocational Education (Official State Gazette, 26 March 2004).



Basque Country

- DECREE 34/1998 of 3 March, creating the Basque Vocational Training System Observatory (Official Gazette of the Basque Country, 18 March 1998).
- DECREE 74/1998 of 21 April, creating the Specific Institutes of Higher-level Vocational Training (Official Gazette of the Basque Country, 30 April 1998).
- DECREE 119/1998 of 23 July, creating the Basque Institute for Qualifications and Vocational Training (Official Gazette of the Basque Country, 13 July 1998).
- MINISTERIAL ORDER of 19 October 1998, which makes public the list of centres forming part of the Integral Vocational Training Centre Network laid down in the Basque Vocational Training Plan (Official Gazette of the Basque Country, 18 November 1998).
- Ministry of Education, Universities and Research ORDER of 9 December 1998, regulating the functions of the centres forming part of the Integral Vocational Training Centre Network laid down in the Basque Vocational Training Plan (Official Gazette of the Basque Country, 3 February 1999).
- DECREE 62/2001 of 3 April, creating the Basque Agency for the Assessment of Competence and Quality in Vocational Training (Official Gazette of the Basque Country, 29 April 2001).
- Ministry of Education, Universities and Research ORDER of 5 July 2001, which qualifies certain centres as research and experimentation centres for developing the research project on new forms of organization and operation among regulated and non-regulated Vocational Training centres (Official Gazette of the Basque Country, 23 July 2001).
- MINISTERIAL ORDER of 5 December 2002, regulating the phases of vocational training included in the partial offer mode (Official Gazette of the Basque Country, 27 December 2002).
- Education, Universities and Research ORDER of 10 December 2002, regulating the authorisation of educational centres in the Basque Autonomous Community to teach Vocational Training phases in the partial offer mode; and establishing the financing thereof (Official Gazette of the Basque Country, 27 December 2002).
- DECREE 156/2003 of 8 July, regulating the internship Module (FTC) in Vocational Training phases (Official Gazette of the Basque Country, 24 July 2003).



- Education, Universities and Research ORDER of 15 July 2003, regulating the examination process for independent study students in the different Vocational Training phases (Official Gazette of the Basque Country, 19 September 2003).
- DECREE 70/2004 of 27 April, regulating the examinations for qualification as Specific Vocational Training Technician and Higher-level Technician (Official Gazette of the Basque Country, 5 May 2004).

In the process of publication:

- DECREE which creates and regulates the figure of integrated Vocational Training centre.
- MINISTERIAL ORDER establishing the conditions and procedures for qualifying as an integrated Vocational Training centre.





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