

## **Boost programme**

### Background information and examples for employers

12.04.2021

Studies show that more than 50% of the Swiss workforce will have significant reskilling and upskilling needs by 2022. In addition, only 19% of the Swiss population have recently acquired digital skills (vs. the 39% global average). There is an urgent need for action for Switzerland.<sup>1</sup>

For this reason, digitalswitzerland and the Swiss Employers' Association (SAV) launched the national [#LifelongLearning pledge](#) in autumn 2019. As of April 2021, over 140 organisations with over 550,000 employees have signed the pledge.

At the beginning of the Corona crisis in spring 2020, the #LifelongLearning campaign, with the support of the Hirschmann Foundation and Gebert Rüt Foundation, launched the "Boost programme", which offered Swiss workers co-financing for the acquisition of digital skills, thus activating the Swiss workforce. In 2021 and 2022, we will be able to pursue further development of the programme thanks to the support of UBS.

### **Further development of the Boost programme: a new focus on low-skilled workers and basic digital skills**

According to SERI, low-skilled workers have the greatest need to catch up and become motivated in terms of lifelong learning.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, the Boost programme for 2021 and 2022 aims to complement the existing programme with an added focus on low-skilled workers and provide support in acquiring basic digital skills.

The complementary focus on basic digital skills is appropriate primarily for two reasons:

- 1) Basic digital skills are the foundation and a crucial cornerstone for any professional development in the future. Without basic skills and competences, future opportunities for further development remain unavailable.
- 2) Compared to advanced training courses, basic digital skills can be acquired in a low-threshold and cost-effective manner.

### **Employers as important partners for #LifelongLearning**

Employers prove to be a promising pathway to reach low-skilled workers. HR managers (e.g. HR specialists, members of the executive board or heads of department) are best placed to

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<sup>1</sup> Adecco "Future skilling report 2018"; OECD "Employment Outlook 2019"; SBB, Sozialpartnern, ETH Zürich und PwC "Arbeitswelt SBB der Zukunft" (2019); WEF "Future of Jobs Report" (2018).

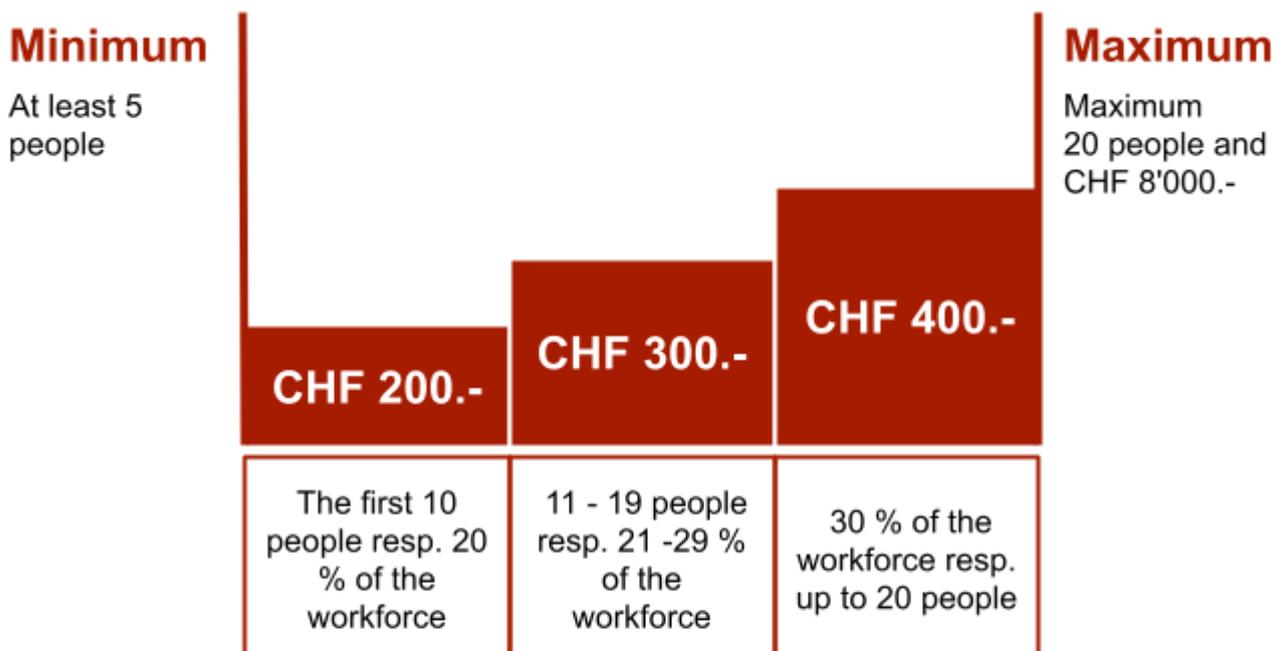
<sup>2</sup> The participation rate in lifelong learning depends strongly on the level of education. While more than 80% of those with a university degree participate in lifelong learning, only about 30% of those with a compulsory school leaving certificate do so. (vgl. BfS 2019, Daten aus 2016 MZB).

assess where the acquisition of basic digital skills will have the greatest effect on both the organisation's success and the employees' opportunities for further development.

HR managers can register with the Boost programme, and easily apply for co-financing for up to 20 employees who meet the profile, in a bundle with one single group application. You can find the application form online at [www.lifelonglearning.ch/boost](http://www.lifelonglearning.ch/boost).

### An incentive scheme in favour of employers

In order to give HR managers an advantage when they support as many employees as possible in acquiring digital skills, the Boost programme is based on an incentive system whereby the share of co-financing by the programme increases with the number of employees supported. The following system is used:



You will find examples of how the incentive system is applied in practice on the following pages.

- If at least five employees are included in the application by the HR officer or the employer, the co-financing is CHF 200 per person.
- From ten people or 20% of the workforce, CHF 300 per person is paid out as co-financing.
- If 30% of the workforce or the absolute maximum of 20 employees is reached, the co-financing increases to CHF 400 per person.

- In any case, the programme sets the limit of co-financing at a maximum of 20 persons with a co-financing amount of CHF 400 each. In other words: no employer can receive more than CHF 8,000 from the Boost programme.

The incentive system consists of an absolute and proportional scale so that there is no discrimination against smaller companies. This is because smaller companies may have greater difficulty identifying up to 20 employees as this volume could represent an unrealistically large proportion of the total workforce.

In case of doubt, the incentive system will be interpreted in favour of the applicants, with the exception that the minimum of 5 people is fixed and the maximum of 20 people at CHF 400.- co-funding per person cannot be exceeded. The maximum limit of 20 people is necessary so that the Boost programme has a certain planning capability and so that the available funds are distributed among several employers.

Should an employer not reach the minimum of 5 people, the organisation can tell its employees to make use of the individual applications, where a maximum of 5 people per employer can apply for co-funding.

### **Three concrete examples of how to apply the incentive system**

Three examples are given below to illustrate the application of the Boost programme incentive system. It is important to emphasise that the Boost programme managers (and not the applicants) must be able to apply the incentive system to any employer query. All this information is provided for information purposes only. It is intended to be simple and straightforward for applicants to submit their applications.

#### Example #1: Micro enterprise with 7 employees

- Applications from individuals are the most worthwhile for the smallest companies, as here up to 5 applicants are supported with co-financing of up to CHF 1,000 or a maximum of 50% of the training costs.

#### Example #2: SME with 50 employees

- The company must register at least 5 people for the programme. This corresponds to the absolute minimum of 5 persons. These 5 people will receive co-financing of CHF 200 each.
- If the company registers up to 10 people, which corresponds to 20% of the workforce, the company receives CHF 200 per person.
- If the company registers 11-14 people, which corresponds to 21-29% of its workforce, it receives CHF 300 per person
- To receive CHF 400 per person, the SME with 50 employees only has to register 15 people. This in fact corresponds to 30% of the workforce that must be registered for this co-financing. However, the SME is free to register 5 more people up to the absolute limit of 20 people and thus receive the full CHF 8,000.

Example #3: Large company with a workforce of 2000

- The company must register at least 5 people to participate in the programme.
- For the large company, the absolute numbers are more advantageous than the proportional measures and therefore the former are applied. This results in the following gradation:
  - From 5 - 10 people: CHF 200.- will be paid out per person.
  - From 11 - 19 people: CHF 300.- will be paid out per person.
  - If the upper limit of 20 people is reached, CHF 400 will be paid out per person.