

Educational and training opportunities in raw-materials and waste Management



EBP has examined existing educational and training opportunities in the raw-materials and waste-management sector, as well as current demand for such opportunities so as to ascertain any need for action.

Switzerland's revised Ordinance on the Avoidance and Disposal of Waste (VVEA) enjoins the Swiss Federal Council to join forces with cantonal authorities and industry representatives to ensure proper communication of the latest technological developments through training programs for those working in the raw-materials and waste-management sector. In order to facilitate the achievement of this goal, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) commissioned the drafting of an overview of existing educational and training opportunities and providers, as well as the specific needs and challenges of the relevant market segments.

In order to arrive at an appropriate overview, we examined the market and carried out 20 interviews with providers and industry representatives.

Developing market with many newcomers

The waste-management market encompasses a wide variety of services and capacities that have developed in response to a wide range of materials and substances in need of proper disposal. While many people who work in the sector have no background in waste management, they do have access to training programs that are either provided by their own companies or by independent organizations. Many of these individuals are college graduates or skilled technicians. Many

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others qualify as unskilled. The independent providers of educational and training programs include academic institutions such as universities, as well as nonprofit organizations, special interest groups and industry associations. The latter of these providers are regarded as especially practice oriented.

Summary and need for action

Both the providers of educational and training programs and industry representatives have an essentially favorable opinion of the available programs. However, there are certain gaps and challenges. These include a need for more options for skilled and unskilled workers with different educational backgrounds; an improved overview of the available opportunities; and an enhanced coordination and integration of highly specialized provision in order to cover a full range of existing demands. In general, it is important to integrate new fields and skills, for instance, relating to digitization and changing legal frameworks. Finally, federal and cantonal authorities are called upon to develop non-bureaucratic means of ensuring industry compliance with the VVEA ordinance by integrating the latest technological developments in the raw-materials and waste-management sector.