



IMS LUXEMBOURG
Inspiring More Sustainability

In partnership with



OVERVIEW

OF **IT SKILLS**
SPONSORSHIP
IN LUXEMBOURG

DECEMBER
2024

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innovative
initiatives
digital luxembourg



DIGITAL SKILLS &
JOB COALITION
LUXEMBOURG



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1/

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

IMS, ACCELERATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LUXEMBOURG

Created in 2007, IMS - Inspiring More Sustainability - has established itself over the years as the leading network of Luxembourg companies committed to sustainable development. The network represents nearly 25% of Luxembourg's workforce. IMS is an independent, apolitical, and non-profit organisation that benefits from the expertise of an agile and creative team. IMS is the leading network in terms of the number of projects, employees, and companies involved. IMS brings new topics, monitors themes that companies need to address and work on for the future. IMS prepares its members for the transition to a sustainable future. IMS explores new solutions and concretely tests sustainable alternatives through working groups and pilot projects with positive impacts. Through these projects, IMS facilitates innovative initiatives by mobilizing all stakeholders (private, public, and associative).

PROJECTS AROUND THREE INTERCONNECTED PILLARS

PEOPLE : inclusion & diversity, well-being at work, civic engagement, youth, business & human rights...

PLANET : fight against climate change, protection of natural resources and biodiversity, transition to zero waste, fight against food waste...

PROSPERITY : responsible production and consumption, new economic approaches, social and solidarity economy, transparency and reporting...

17 GOALS TO STAY ON TRACK

The Sustainable Development Goals provide a roadmap to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace, and justice. The goals are interconnected, and to leave no one behind, it is important to achieve each of them and their targets by 2030.



1 - CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This document aims to study and promote the practice of IT skills sponsorship in Luxembourg.

Skills sponsorship is one of the three types of corporate sponsorship and certainly the least known. Through this channel, companies offer their employees the opportunity to get involved, on a voluntary basis and during their working hours, in organisations of general interest by lending their skills. In the context of IT skills sponsorship, the skills lent are digital.

IT skills sponsorship is a concrete solution made available to associations, meeting their expectations and supporting their innovations. By combining the actions of different worlds, it creates value for the company, its employees, and society as a whole.

Skills sponsorship is a real opportunity for the general interest of our society, in multiple ways:

- **It is a catalyst for local social links between the State, non-profit, and companies.**
- **It positively transforms the paths of civic engagement and strengthens the social mission.**
- **It is an accelerator of social innovation and contributes positively to the transformation of the non-profits.**
- **It enhances the employability of those who engage, reinforces the demand for meaning at the heart of career paths.**

At a time when employees express a need for engagement and meaning in their professional lives, skills sponsorship gives them the means to get involved. It strengthens the sense of belonging, promotes openness to the outside world, and the acquisition of new skills.

The 17th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 17) places multi-stakeholder partnerships as a requirement for the success of the Sustainable Development Goals at global, regional, national and local levels. These partnerships must be inclusive and built on shared principles and values.

The current complex social and environmental challenges require the urgent development of new models for partnerships between stakeholders working in the public interest (local authorities, NGOs, SISs and associations) and traditional companies, in order to have a positive impact on society. It is crucial to emphasise the strategic importance of stakeholders in the Social Solidarity Economy in understanding the challenges and providing expertise on issues such as social inclusion, environmental protection, health, procurement policies, human rights and territorial anchoring.

Partnership implies an equal relationship between several organisations aiming to achieve common goals based on their complementary skills and perspectives.

New forms of cooperation are emerging, focusing on responsible practices, co-construction and societal innovation. IMS has been applying these methodologies through several concrete action support projects since 2011, leading to the creation of around 1,000 impact partnerships.

Accordingly, IMS has developed the Digital Skills Partnership project with the support of the Department for Media, Connectivity and Digital Policy of the Ministry of State and the European Social Fund.

The Digital Skills Partnership (DSP) is a programme designed to foster partnership projects between companies and initiatives around digital issues. All the stakeholders in society need to adapt to the digital transformation; this shift needs to be taken collectively: collaboration and skills sharing are essential to meet this challenge.

The companies involved in the DSP have been able to support local initiatives by implementing their CSR policies, involving their employees and committing to positive-impact projects. In total, over 4 years, more than 110 IT impact partnerships have been set up. Among the partnerships frequently developed is IT skills sponsorship.

Finally, there are many benefits to skills sponsorship, including IT skills sponsorship. This study has revealed that Luxembourg has relatively little experience of skills sponsorship. However, the various stakeholders - companies, employees and social economy organisations - seem ready to develop these practices further.

This study has been published to take stock of current practices, studying the potential for involvement of the various stakeholders and making strategic recommendations to boost these practices in Luxembourg.

LEGAL AND TAX CONTEXT

In Luxembourg, there is currently no legal or tax framework for skills sponsorship, except for, under certain conditions, skills sponsorship for cultural organisations. In France, for example, the law ensures that the accounting aspect of the sponsorship scheme is secure, with companies able to deduct the hours spent by employees working for an association from their taxable income.

In Luxembourg, some donations and gifts are fiscally deductible as special expenses for the contributors. These include cash donations paid to organisations recognised as being of public utility as well as cash and in-kind donations to the National Cultural Fund, within the limits of articles 109 and 112 L.

2 - METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

METHODOLOGY

IMS carried out this research among companies and associations, intending to take stock of the perception and practices of IT skills sponsorship in Luxembourg. IMS Luxembourg worked closely with ProBono Lab and WIDE ANDCO.

The survey was conducted in different phases:

- 1. An exploratory first phase, consisting of interviews conducted by IMS Luxembourg and WIDE ANDCO with 8 companies (HR/CSR managers and operational employees in IT departments) and 15 not-for-profit organisations to help identify hypotheses;
- 2. A quantitative second phase, carried out using a questionnaire drafted by Pro Bono Lab and distributed within the IMS network, in order to confirm the results obtained in the exploratory phase (98 respondents working in the IT sector).
- 3. The third phase involved Pro Bono Lab analysing the responses to the quantitative and qualitative surveys and formulating recommendations to encourage wider deployment of the IT skills sponsorship programme in Luxembourg.

STUDY BIASES:

- 3 companies accounted for 50% of respondents. The other respondents are spread across 34 different companies (between 1 and 2 answers per company).
- The qualitative interviews were conducted and accurately transcribed by IMS Luxembourg and then analysed by the Pro Bono Lab team. Consequently, the following study and its results are based on raw data, and some contextual elements may be missing (non-verbal communication of interviewees, information shared outside the interview time, etc.).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to extend our warmest thanks to all those who contributed to preparing this report.

- *Thank you to the Media, Connectivity and Digital Policy Department of the Ministry of State and the European Social Fund for their invaluable financial support.*
- *We also want to thank our partners WIDE ANDCO and Pro Bono Lab for their expertise and commitment.*
- *Finally, we would also like to extend our sincerest thanks to the many companies and not-for-profit organisations which made time in their busy schedule for the interviews, and to everyone who responded to the online questionnaire.*

You were essential to the success of this survey and to strengthening the understanding and impact of IT skills sponsorship in Luxembourg.

PRO BONO LAB PRESENTATION

Pro Bono Lab worked with IMS Luxembourg on the survey and the drafting of this report. Pro Bono Lab is a French non-profit organisation that has been promoting, supporting and experimenting with skills-based volunteering in France and internationally since 2011. Pro Bono Lab has specialised in volunteering and skills-based philanthropy since 2011, both in France and in 30 countries around the world via the Global Pro Bono Network. Pro Bono Lab promotes the culture and democratises the practice of 'pro bono' to help shape (another) world that is more united, more inclusive and more sustainable around the 17 SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).

Their public-interest programmes, research and consultancy activities as well as their 'pro bono' advocacy work contribute to the development of a society of engaged citizens.

Pro Bono Lab carried out the following tasks as part of this study:

- Analysing the qualitative interviews
- Drafting the quantitative questionnaire
- Analysing the responses to the questionnaires
- Drafting the report and recommendations.



INTRODUCING WIDE ANDCO

WIDE ANDCO is a Luxembourg-based Société d'Impact Sociétal (S.I.S) offering expertise, training and programmes in the fields of gender equality, digital skills and entrepreneurship.

WIDE ANDCO is also the lead organisation for the Women in Digital Empowerment initiative, which has been active in Luxembourg since 2013 and the Impact Web Studio since 2023. The Impact Web Studio aims to provide solutions and services to new entrepreneurs and those running projects with a societal impact, as well as to support the retraining of women in web development and digital professions in the implementation of projects. WIDE ANDCO carried out the following tasks as part of this study:

- Co-creation of interview guides
- Co-conducting the qualitative interviews
- Proofreading and providing input for the report and recommendations.



2 / INDEX

DEFINITIONS

Patronage

Patronage is the material support given, without any direct counterpart on the part of the beneficiary, to a work or person for the performance of activities of general interest. Patronage therefore involves a company donating cash, in kind or in skills to an organisation of general interest, without expecting any equivalent consideration in return. In fact, patronage authorises contributions in return but requires that there be a 'marked disproportion' between the sums donated and the value of the service provided. In addition, these contributions may not have a direct impact on the sponsor's commercial activities.

Skills sponsorship

'Skills sponsorship' refers to **the commitment of an employee during working hours** to the benefit of a not-for-profit organisation, by **sharing specific professional skills**, such as website development, communication, etc.

Volunteering

'Voluntary work' refers to **the commitment of an employee during working hours** to the benefit of a not-for-profit organisation, **without using professional skills**, i.e. skills linked to the job in question, but calling on personal qualities or talents (e.g. collecting rubbish, painting a room, collecting food, etc.).

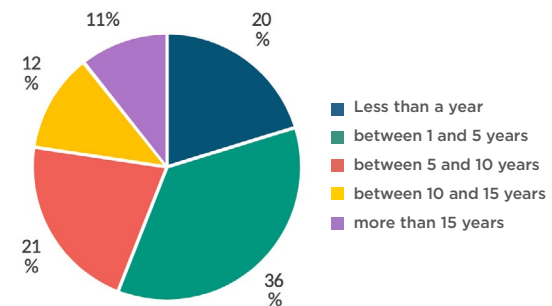
3 / RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

1 / RESPONDENT PROFILES

A MAJORITY OF LUXEMBOURG MEN UNDER 45, MAINLY FROM 3 COMPANIES

Seniority in current position

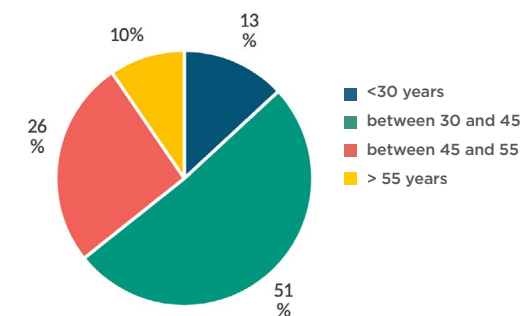
(Based on 84 respondents)



More than half of the respondents have been with their company for less than 5 years.

Age groups

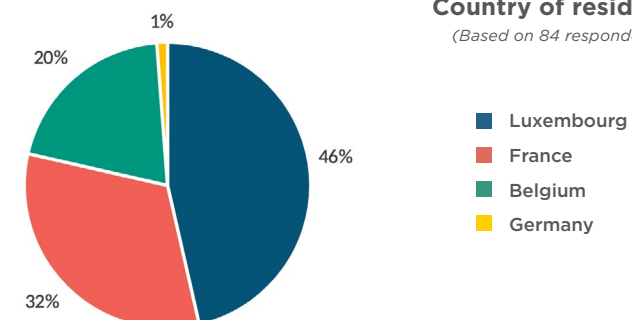
(Based on 84 respondents)



Over 75% of respondents are men. 50% are aged between 30 and 45

Country of residence

(Based on 84 respondents)



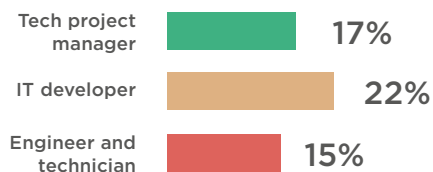
47% of respondents live in Luxembourg. Almost all of them speak English (96%) or French (86%), with less German (18%) or Luxembourgish (11%).

1 / RESPONDENT PROFILES

EXPERIENCED PROFILES, PARTICULARLY IN IT DEVELOPMENT

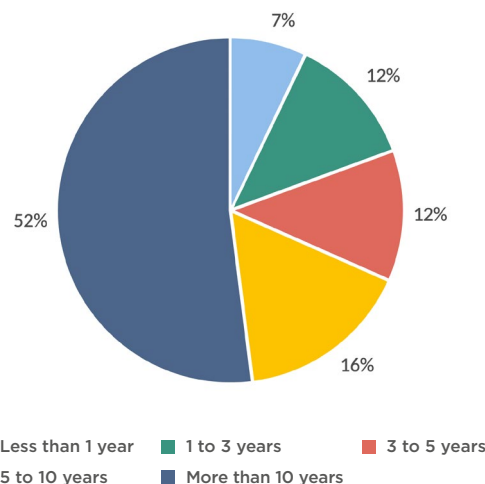
Business sectors

(Based on 97 respondents)



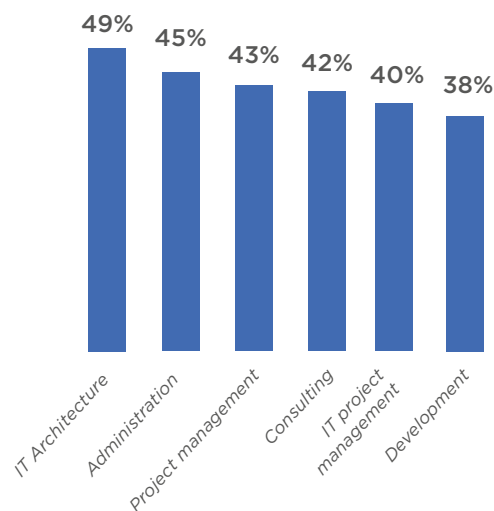
Seniority in the profession

(Based on 97 respondents)



Respondents' skills

(Based on 97 respondents)



The **main professions** represented were **IT developer, IT project manager or engineer and technician**. But respondents also included information systems consultants (9%), IT architects (6%) and administrators (5%).

Nearly **70% of respondents are senior** in their position and the main skills they master are IT architecture (development, infrastructure, network, systems, etc.), administration (databases, data centres, networks, systems, etc.), project management (project management officer, project owner, project manager), consulting, IT project management, infrastructure, information systems or development (web, mobile, software, front end, back end, full stack).

2 / RESPONDENTS' COMPANIES

A MAJORITY OF MEDIUM-SIZED INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES

Activity sector

(Based on 97 respondents)

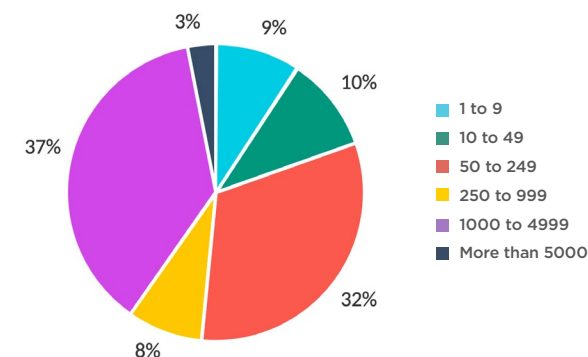


The business activities most represented among the companies are ICT, auditing, consultancy and fiduciary, as well as financial and insurance activities.

The rest represent 16% of responses.

Company size

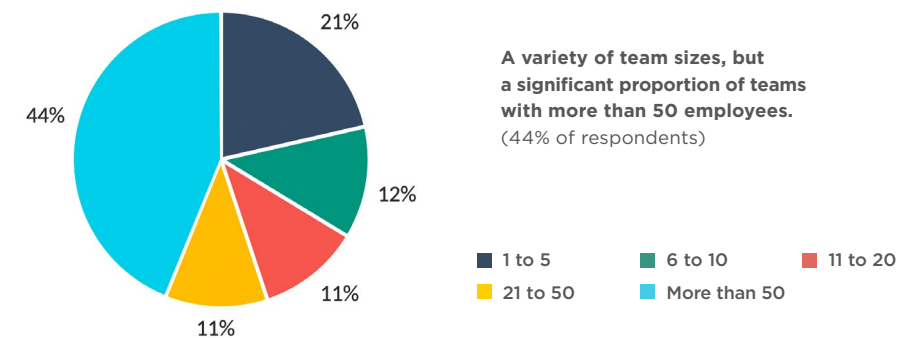
(Based on 97 respondents)



45% of respondents work for medium-sized companies (between 250 and 5,000 employees).

IT team size in the companies interviewed

(Based on 97 respondents)



A variety of team sizes, but a significant proportion of teams with more than 50 employees. (44% of respondents)

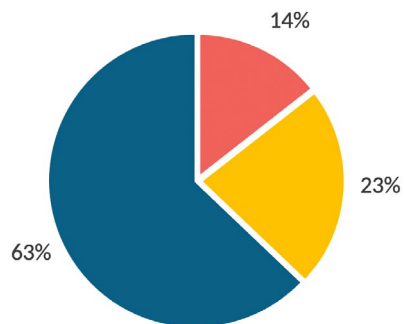
3 / AWARENESS OF SKILLS SPONSORSHIP

LIMITED AWARENESS, BUT EMPLOYEES WOULD LIKE THEIR COMPANY TO GET INVOLVED

Had you already heard of skills sponsorship before this survey?

(Based on 97 respondents)

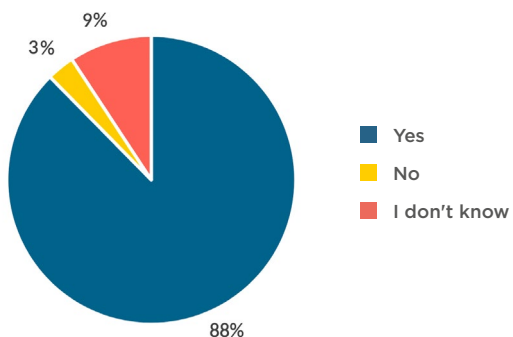
- Yes, I know what it consists of
- Yes, but it remains unclear
- No, never



Skills sponsorship' refers to the **commitment of an employee during working hours** to the benefit of a not-for-profit organisation, by **sharing specific professional skills**, such as website development, communication, etc.

Is it important that your company makes a commitment to societal challenges?

(Based on 97 respondents)



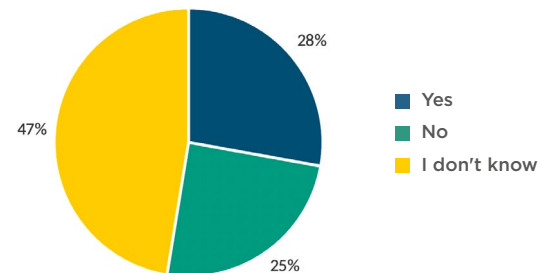
Although few respondents are familiar with the skills sponsorship scheme, almost **90% of them feel that it is essential for their company to get involved in societal challenges** (social, environmental, educational, cultural, etc.) and almost **70% would be interested in a skills sponsorship programme.**

4 / COMPANIES PRACTICING SKILLS SPONSORSHIP

INSUFFICIENT IN-HOUSE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS PRACTICE

Does your company already offer employees the chance to participate in skills sponsorship?

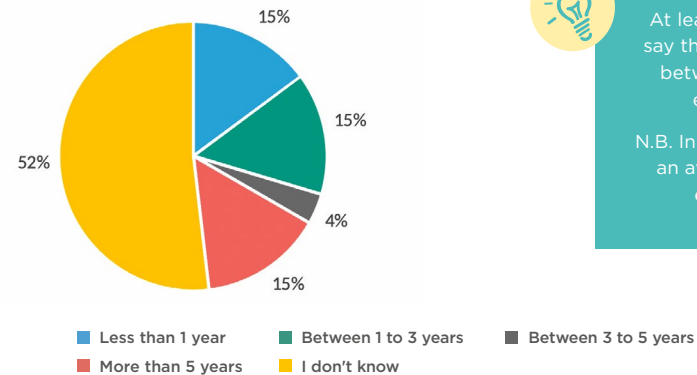
(Based on 97 respondents)



Only 27 out of 97 respondents confirmed that their company offered skills sponsorship (representing 8 different companies). Overall, there is a **lack of awareness of the skills sponsorship programme**, even within those companies that offer it: **less than 1 employee out of 2 can say that their company offers skills sponsorship, even when it does.**

How long has the programme been in place in the company?

(Based on 27 respondents)

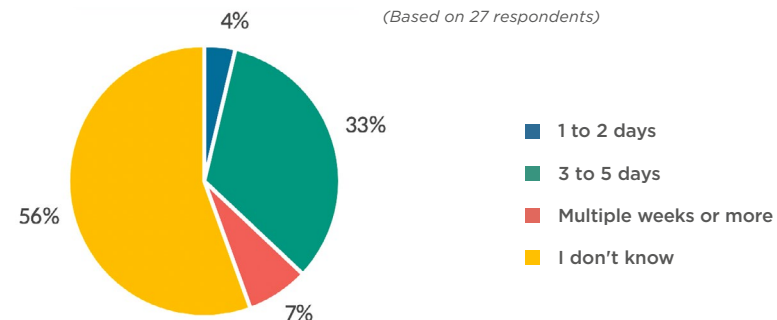


At least 33% of respondents say that their company offers between 3 and 5 days per employee per year.

N.B. In France, companies offer an average of 2-5 days per employee per year (source: Admical).

Time offered per year and per employee for skills sponsorship

(Based on 27 respondents)

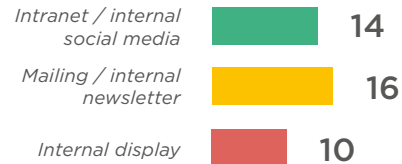


4 / COMPANIES PRACTICING SKILLS SPONSORSHIP

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AS A WAY OF MOBILISING STAFF

The 3 most visible information channels

(Based on 27 respondents)



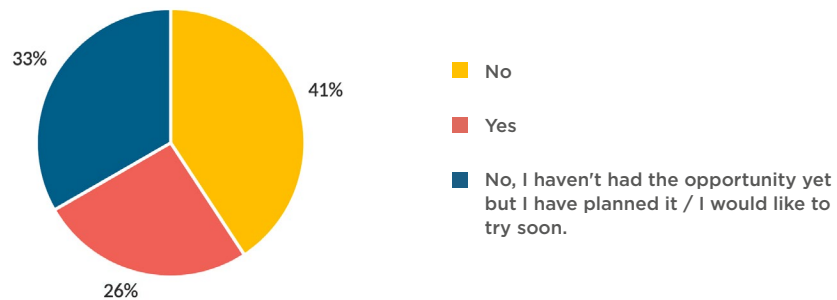
Respondents are mainly aware of skills sponsorship opportunities via internal mailings, the intranet or internal notices.

Other information sources are: **word of mouth** between colleagues (5 answers), **external social networks** (LinkedIn, Facebook) (3 answers), IMS Luxembourg communication (2), or events (1).

LACK OF TIME AS THE MAIN BARRIER

Have you already taken part in a skills sponsorship programme?

(Based on 27 respondents)



Why have you never taken part in a skills sponsorship programme within your company?

(Based on 11 respondents)



Nearly **60% of respondents** have taken part in or are planning to **participate in a skills sponsorship programme**. Almost all those who answered 'no' mentioned **lack of time as the main barrier** (10 out of 11).

4 / COMPANIES PRACTICING SKILLS SPONSORSHIP

FEELING USEFUL AND SKILL-SHARING AS SOURCES OF MOTIVATION

The 5 skills respondents most want to share

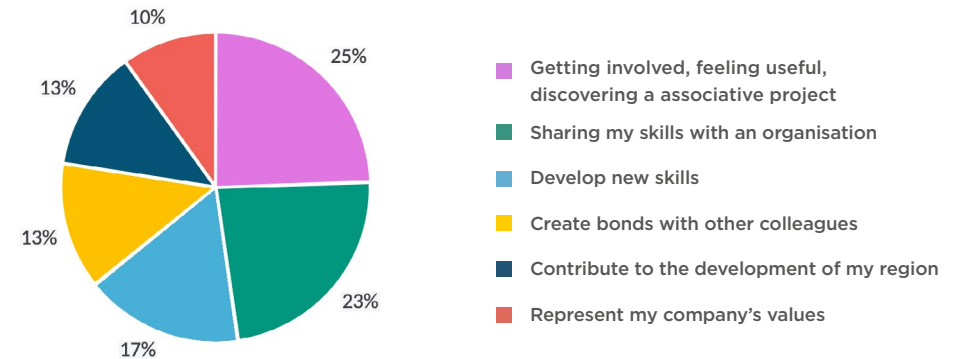
(Based on 58 respondents)



Employees are willing to share their professional (technical) skills, at the same or almost the same level as the desire to share soft skills, ranked first.

Motivations for getting involved in skills sponsorship

(Based on 58 respondents)



Commitment is mainly driven by the desire to be useful and share skills with an association.

4 / COMPANIES PRACTICING SKILLS SPONSORSHIP

EMPLOYEES WILLING TO COMMIT SEVERAL DAYS A YEAR, MAINLY TO PROMOTE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

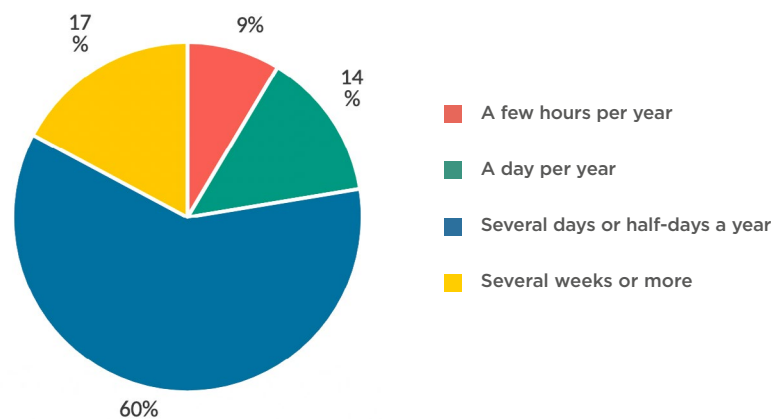
Top 3 associative fields that respondents are interested in

(Based on 58 respondents)



Ideal amount of time dedicated to skills sponsorship

(Based on 58 respondents)



The three most attractive fields for respondents are education, the environment and the circular economy, followed by social and professional integration (45%), health (42%), social action (22%), sport (17%) and culture (16%). 60% would like to be able to dedicate several days or half-days a year to skills sponsorship.

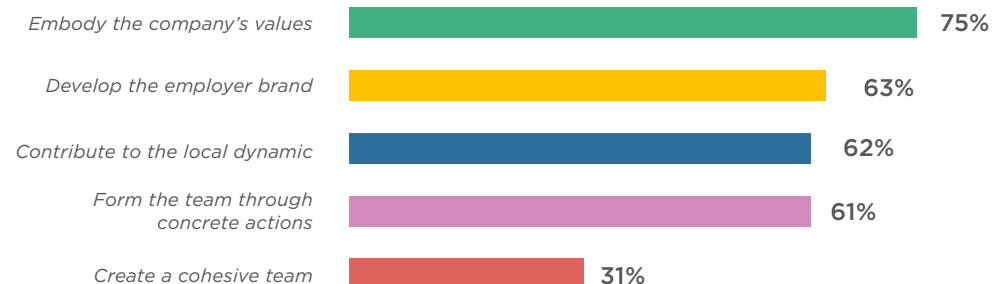
53% would like to be involved in choosing the not-for-profit organisations they work with, while 35% are indifferent. Out of the 8 people who gave details of their ideal commitment, 6 mentioned the desire to support various groups in digitalisation (not-for-profit organisations, senior citizens, young people, etc.).

4 / COMPANIES PRACTICING SKILLS SPONSORSHIP

EMBODYING THE COMPANY'S VALUES AS A KEY ARGUMENT

The perceived benefits of skills sponsorship

(Based on 58 respondents)



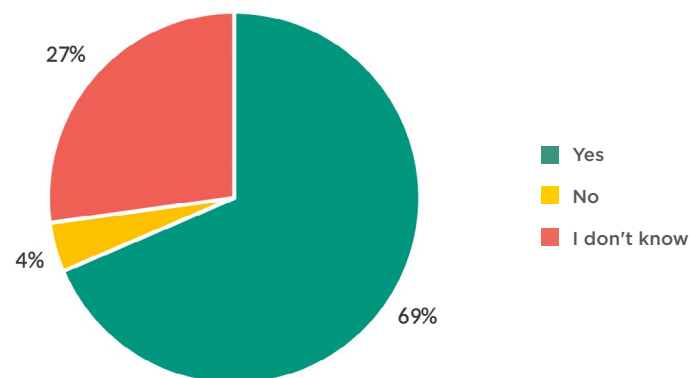
The respondents believe that skills sponsorship enables companies to **embody their values** by supporting the project of a not-for-profit organisation, **develop their employer brand** (building loyalty among their employees, **making them proud of the company, developing their brand image** to attract new talent) and contribute to the **local dynamic** and develop their local roots.

5 / COMPANIES NOT INVOLVED IN SKILLS SPONSORSHIP

A STRONG INTEREST IN THE PROGRAMME, BUT LIMITED BY A PERCEIVED LACK OF TIME

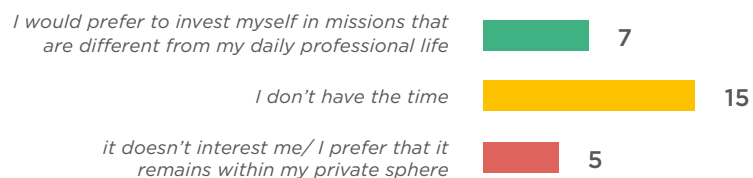
Would you be interested in your company offering skills sponsorship?

(Based on 70 respondents)



What are the reasons holding back your interest in skills sponsorship?

(Based on 21 respondents)



Among the respondents whose companies do not (to their knowledge) engage in skills sponsorship, **almost 70% are interested in the concept.**

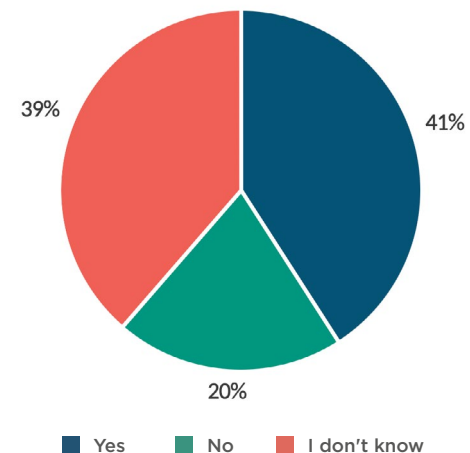
The 21 people who indicated a lack of interest in the concept mainly explained it by a **lack of time**. Only 3 people said they were not interested, while 19 others did not give their opinion. We can assume that they would **need further information on the commitment procedures** (duration, format, frequency, skills to be mobilised, etc.) before deciding.

6 / VOLUNTEERING PRACTICES

SOLIDARITY DAYS AND RACES ARE STILL LITTLE-KNOWN INITIATIVES

Corporate volunteering

(Based on 88 respondents)

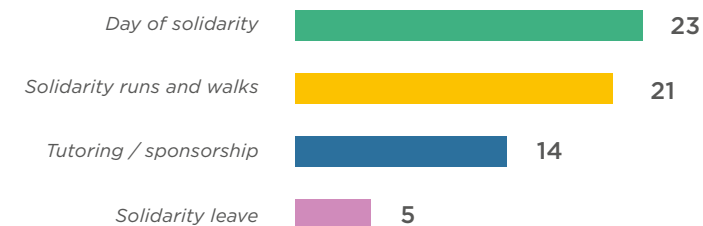


Voluntary work' refers to the **commitment of an employee during working hours** to the benefit of a not-for-profit organisation, **without using professional skills**, i.e. skills linked to the job in question, but calling on personal qualities or talents (e.g. collecting rubbish, painting a room, collecting food, etc.).

More than **40% of respondents** were able to say that their company offers **voluntary work**, mainly **solidarity days** (preparing packed lunches, team fund-raising challenges, etc.) and **solidarity races or walks** (e.g. mobilising against a disease).

Voluntary actions put in place by the company

(Based on 33 respondents)

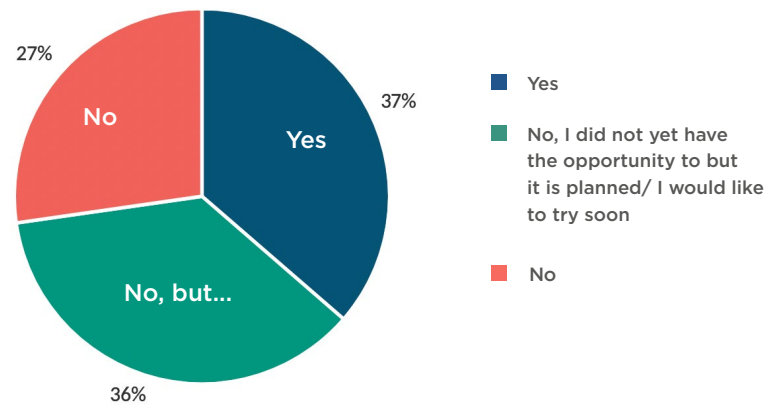


6 / VOLUNTEERING PRACTICES

A FORMAT THAT ATTRACTS INTEREST

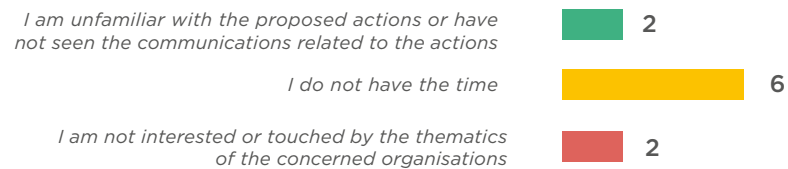
Have you ever personally participated in a volunteering action?

(Based on 33 respondents)



Why have you never taken part in a voluntary action?

(Based on 9 respondents)



37% of respondents from companies offering voluntary work **have already taken** part in the suggested actions, and almost **as many would like to do so shortly**.

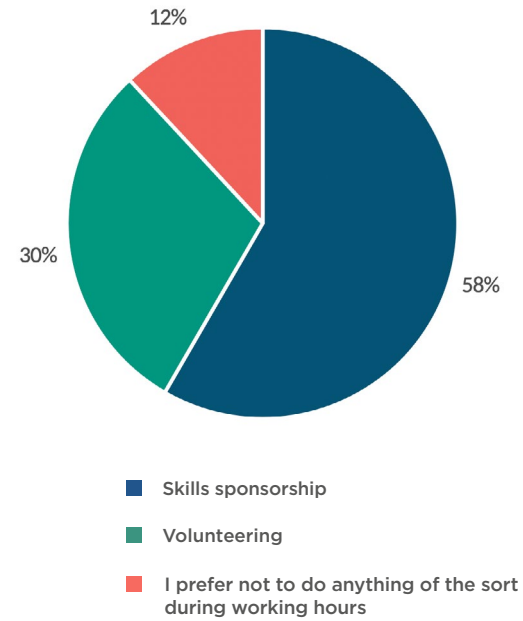
Respondents indicating that they had never done any voluntary work mentioned **lack of time**, lack of information or lack of interest in the missions, and to a lesser extent, the inadequate formats offered (1 answer).

7 / COMMITMENT WITHIN THE COMPANY

SKILLS SPONSORSHIP FAVOURED OVER VOLUNTARY WORK

If you had to choose, would have a preference:

(Based on 84 respondents)



The majority of **respondents** (58%) expressed a **preference for skills sponsorship**.



It is worth comparing the results with another study by the Vendredi platform, which showed that no preference was identified for whether or not employees used their skills when getting involved.

4 / RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

1 / COMPANIES

10 interviews in companies

OVERVIEW OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS: BENEFITS AND KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

BENEFITS

Enhancing the employer brand (9)

- Pride of belonging and team cohesion, working around shared values, matching corporate and personal values (5)
- Recruitment advantage, particularly for young people (2)
- Retaining teams (1)
- Possibility of involving employees between contracts (1)

Professional and personal development (7)

- Using and leveraging existing skills, developing new ones (soft skills) (5)
- Strengthen employees' sense of purpose (2)

Corporate image (4)

- Communicating on the projects supported in terms of skills

Territorial anchoring (3)

- Contribute to the development of local organisations by providing strategic skills specific to the Digital Services Company/Consulting sector.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Using an intermediary (7)

- Use an intermediary such as IMS to benefit from its network of organisations, to facilitate the identification and selection of not-for-profit organisations, and to save time in coordinating the project.

An incentive-based legislative framework (6)

- State support for tax exemption would help (4)
- A secure legal framework on which to base ourselves, with a standard agreement, and why not an imposed number of days of commitment (2)

Involving employees in the process (5)

- Involve employees in the selection of organisations, for example through mentoring initiatives (3)
- Clearly identify the people in charge of the project internally and the ambassadors to facilitate engagement (2)

Involving the main departments concerned (3)

- The engagement strategy must be designed and deployed in collaboration with each department: HR, Communications, General Management CSR etc.

Using an engagement platform (2)

- Making it easier for all employees to get involved, and offering a larger pool of skills to organisations.

1 / COMPANIES

OVERVIEW OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS: BARRIERS AND RISKS IDENTIFIED

RISKS

A lack of guidance on the needs of associations (4)

- Need to provide the right skills, at the right time, and then build on the results. Questions about the relevance of IT skills for the non-profit sector

Lack of support for the initiative (3)

- A vision of engagement that takes place more on personal time (private life) than on working time (2)
- An overly restrictive engagement policy that is not based on voluntary action (1)

Little or no impact measurement (2)

- Both internally and externally: little or no follow-up of associative projects after the assignment, and therefore no recognition of their value

An exclusion of operational roles from the approach (1)

- The skills used are those of office workers (strategic skills)

BARRIERS

Lack of time (7)

- Limited availability of employees, particularly in IT where the workload is very heavy, a sector that is not affected by seasonal fluctuations
- Difficulty in planning commitments with organisations

Difficulty mobilising staff (6)

- Raise interest, convince people that the initiative is useful and provide a clear internal framework for forwarding requests (3)
- Border workers: difficulty in mobilising and language barrier (2)
- In IT, some employees work 100% from home (1)

Lack of knowledge of the non-profit sector (3)

- It is sometimes difficult to predict what tasks can be carried out within associations, and there are preconceived ideas about the professionalisation of associations

Population size of Luxembourg (3)

- Few associations are present on commitment platforms, and there is a small pool of IT skills. The question of the cost-effectiveness of a platform versus its cost of use

Removing managerial obstacles (3)

- A 'fear of losing control' among managers and HRMs: the issue of understaffing and fear of people leaving (2)
- A very ROI-oriented view of top management (1)

2 / ASSOCIATIONS

15 interviews with associations

OVERVIEW OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS: BENEFITS AND KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

BENEFITS

Easy, free access to new skills (15)

- Particularly in IT topics requiring considerable expertise and time (13)
- Get an outside view of the association's project as a whole (2)

Building lasting relationships with partner companies and expand your network (5)

- Multiply the impact of support by combining financial and skills support (3)
- Expanding the association's network of volunteers (2)

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Using an intermediary (12)

- Request human support to prioritise and frame skills requirements, facilitate meetings and coordinate the project

Establish recurring meetings with companies (7)

- Organise face-to-face meetings with the people in charge of sponsorship at the companies in its network

Framing the commitment mission (3)

- Define the human and financial resources allocated to the assignment, its duration and terms and conditions (2)
- Identify needs with teams on site (1)

Offer benefits to build a long-term partnership (1)

- Following the involvement of employees in an organisation: for example, an awareness-raising workshop for employees on the social purpose of the association supported

2 / ASSOCIATIONS

OVERVIEW OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS: BARRIERS AND RISKS IDENTIFIED

RISKS

A lack of direction for the mission (11)

- Limited IT knowledge within the organisations, which makes it difficult to identify a need in this field (8)
- Strategic recommendations that were sometimes not very relevant due to inadequate scoping of the mission (3)

Support too limited to meet the expressed needs (10)

- Multiple needs within the same association, which ideally involve mobilising staff around several issues (5)
- Specific IT topics require occasional but recurring support (3)
- Structuring missions for the association that require long-term commitment (more than 3 months) (2)

A lack of commitment from certain employees (4)

- A lack of understanding of the voluntary sector, which can be combined with a lack of appreciation of the issues involved

The neglected role of the sponsor (2)

- Little or poor planning when joining the team, due to the special status of the skills sponsor

BARRIERS

Lack of time (14)

- To identify the need, precisely define the mission and welcome the sponsor(s) (7)
- Lack of human resources, skills and time to implement the recommendations made by sponsors (4)
- The search for funding remains the main reason for contact with associations, ahead of the need for skills (3)

Poor understanding of the programme (4)

- Some associations are unaware of the legal formalities involved in skills sponsorship and its application

Highly selective projects supported by companies (4)

- Lack of appeal for certain societal causes which also require training (e.g. mental health, homelessness) (3)
- Companies that focus more on the event aspect of the commitment (punctual and convivial) rather than on providing professional skills (1)

Lack of visibility for smaller associations (3)

- Low awareness (2)
- Geographical distance from sponsor companies (1)

Data privacy (3)

- The processing of health-related data in certain associations requires strict privacy (RGPD)

5 / KEY POINTS FROM THE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE STUDIES

1 / KEY POINTS FROM THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

OVERVIEW OF THE CHALLENGES RAISED

- 1. A lack of awareness** of the programme among companies offering skills sponsorship to their employees. This reflects internal communication difficulties (information and promotion of the initiative). The best channels are those that are most visible to employees: mailings, posters, internal social networks.
- 2. Lack of time is the main barrier** to engagement. It is essential to reassure teams, provide a reliable framework, offer time-saving formats (ready-made solutions) and promote commitment to convince the most reluctant.
- 3. Skills sponsorship is preferred to voluntary work:** an opportunity for companies wishing to take advantage of the initiative to incorporate it into a skills development plan, and more broadly into their employer brand strategy (talent retention in particular). A word of caution: most respondents are experienced employees in their jobs. More junior profiles might perceive commitment differently.

2 / KEY POINTS FROM THE QUALITATIVE STUDY - COMPANIES

CONVERGING TOWARDS SHORT, FLEXIBLE FORMATS

Among the companies interviewed, those that are already engaged in skills sponsorship and those that would like to implement it agree on a relatively short commitment period, which responds to the **lack of time expressed by HR managers and the schedule constraints of employees**, particularly IT teams who are particularly busy throughout the year.

The majority of the companies surveyed are willing to design a skills sponsorship programme or to extend it more widely where it already exists.

However, as they are still immature on the topic, they logically favour a strategy of small steps to validate the benefits of the programme with volunteers and middle managers (for example, an annual half-day of commitment mobilising a team in a project approach).

5 out of 8 respondents report an actual or desired duration of commitment between **1 and 3 days** per year/employee.



*The involvement of consultants on **inter-contracts** (in specialised Digital Services Companies (ESN) and in consultancies with a broader range of skills) on short assignments, as a skills sponsorship, can help to meet the needs of local associations in the digital field.*

IT professions also have an inherently collaborative work culture (e.g. open-source knowledge sharing), which is an effective way of sharing skills.

A STRONG INTEREST IN INTERMEDIATION

The participants were unanimously in favour of co-constructing their engagement strategy with intermediaries such as IMS Luxembourg, to support them on the operational side and project coordination.

The main reasons for this, are:

1. **A dense network of associations** with which to engage, an important factor given that the companies surveyed often have limited knowledge of the country's associative landscape. In addition, a third-party partner can help with the association selection process to ensure that the associations meet the CSR challenges of the sponsoring companies. This link with voluntary organisations can reassure some HR and CSR managers who feel personally isolated from the voluntary sector.
2. **Saving time** coordinating projects: between identifying and selecting associations, raising awareness of skills sponsorship within companies and among beneficiaries, defining the needs of associations, etc., skills sponsorship is a programme that requires time that is not always available to decision-makers in companies.



However, it is important to reassure HR Directors and CSR Managers, who may fear that the project might get too complex with an intermediary, and to remind them that they can maintain a direct connection with the associations.

3 / KEY POINTS FROM THE QUALITATIVE STUDY - ASSOCIATIONS

IT REQUIREMENTS MANAGEMENT

The respondent not-for-profit organisations are all active on social networks and have a website.

Most of the respondent not-for-profit organisations do not have an IT manager on staff (11):

- Some use external services at standard market rates (5)
- Others have no IT skills whatsoever and do not seek outside help (4)
- A minority rely on dedicated volunteers (2)

4 respondents have one or more IT managers

The IT needs most frequently mentioned in the interviews:

- Website management: design, content, SEO, etc.
- Help with setting up RGPD-compliant software
- Development of a communications strategy and plan
- Computer maintenance
- Helping beneficiaries with their computers

A STRONG INTEREST IN INTERMEDIARIES

13 not-for-profit organisations agree on the **usefulness** - and sometimes the necessity - of using an **intermediary**, such as IMS Luxembourg, in order to:

- Support in identifying their needs
- Have access to standardised assignment sheets
- Guarantee a match between skills and the availability of companies
- Be visible to companies
- Have access to easy networking
- Ensuring that companies are aware of the specific characteristics of the voluntary sector
- The majority of organisations felt that monitoring and coordination throughout the project was important. However, according to 3 associations, the intermediary's role can stop once the meeting is over.

The biggest associations see no point in intermediaries, as they already receive numerous proposals for skills sponsorship, due to their high profile.

In addition, many associations stress the impact of informal meetings with companies in creating partnerships. **An intermediary can therefore act as an organiser of events between companies and associations.**

8 associations feel that engagement platforms are not suitable. Posting assignments on these platforms is **time-consuming**, and employees make little or no use of them. According to the associations, these platforms do not always guarantee complete organisation of the assignment and **human connection** of the relationship between the two concerned partners.

3 / KEY POINTS FROM THE QUALITATIVE STUDY - ASSOCIATIONS

VALUING SKILLS SPONSORSHIP

9 organisations mentioned their communications related to IT skills sponsorship:

4 stated that they **communicated (or would like to communicate)** on this topic via their social networks and website in order to promote the work of the sponsors.

3 added that the logos of skills sponsors appeared on their websites.

1 organisation explains that their corporate sponsors can write an article in their newsletter or even in their activity report if they wish.

2 organisations, however, explain that **they do little communication** because corporate sponsors do not ask for it. In fact, companies are afraid of being over-solicited if skills sponsorship is given too much exposure.

" We systematically offer companies the opportunity to communicate. We know that some are in demand, but some also prefer to keep a low profile. Some companies have already said to me: 'No, we're just communicating internally, we don't want to show ourselves off, otherwise we'll be in too much demand'. "

- Large Luxembourg association

AN OCCASIONALLY CRITICAL VIEW OF COMPANIES' MOTIVATIONS

7 organisations, when reflecting on the motivations of companies to set up skills sponsorship, see it as a way of acting **philanthropically** for a specific cause, by helping beyond simple financial support. 2 organisations mentioned that they pay attention to corporate communications and the values that companies display.

7 are aware of the underlying interests of companies about their CSR strategy and the use of skills sponsorship as a means of team building or developing their employer brand. In their opinion, the company benefits in terms of its image, both internally, by making the most of its employees' skills, and externally, by involving their know-how and showing that they are helping through their communications and those of the associations.

5 associations interviewed even mentioned the 'need to rebuild the image' of these companies, which can fall into the trap of **'social washing'**: communicating in this way without really helping the organisations in question.

4 / CROSS-ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

RESPONDENTS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND HR/CSE DECISION-MAKERS

BROADLY ON THE SAME PAGE

1. **Alignment of the vision** between HR/CSR managers and employees responding to the questionnaire on the main benefit of skills sponsorship: the embodiment of the company's values. A solid basis for developing a commitment strategy based on a vision that is shared and understood by all.
2. **Lack of time** is unanimously identified as a major obstacle to commitment, particularly in the IT sector where constraints are strong all year round.
3. The employees questioned in the qualitative interviews had no clear-cut opinion as to the skills that could be leveraged (professional skills or voluntary action). Employees who responded to the quantitative survey were more **strongly in favour of skills sponsorship**.



6/

BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BEST PRACTICES RELATED TO THE ISSUES RAISED IN THE INTERVIEWS

1/

Building a shared vision of commitment, consistent with the company's strategic challenges

To be effective and sustainable, the skills sponsorship approach must involve all its stakeholders, not just the CSR department or the company's communications department. Sometimes, as in one of the companies we interviewed, CSR is carried out by a volunteer in addition to his or her usual duties.

The approach must be **supported by General Management, HR, CSR and Communications** department. In addition, a volunteer employee can take on the role of internal ambassador to pass on their colleagues' requests and arouse their interest. ([more information in Appendix 2](#)).

2/

Carrying out an analysis of engagement capacity

To answer questions about the skills to be mobilised and the time slots to be allocated to skills sponsorship, we advise companies wishing to develop their commitment policy to launch the process with a **quantitative questionnaire** to be sent to all employees. This will enable them to design a form of commitment that is in line with employees' expectations and skills.

3/

Defining the needs of associations

Most associations have multiple needs, both strategic and operational, so it can be complex for them to prioritise their requirements.

The scope of the mission must be clearly defined, and company volunteers must be able to work on an **important but non-urgent project**. By ensuring that the association has the resources to allocate to the volunteers and that the skills provided are really useful, the mission can be effective (for the association and for the employees).

Not all voluntary associations have the time or expertise to define an involvement assignment, design an involvement form and publish it on involvement platforms. In this case, it is preferable to **call on an intermediary** to provide a framework for the mission, and to provide a clear answer to the question of what skills are useful to the associations.

4/

Measuring the impact of actions carried out

This is an essential point, yet one that is rarely mentioned (only 2 participants mentioned it in the qualitative interviews). As soon as the involvement strategy is put in place, it is important to think about the most relevant impact indicators for valuing involvement and adjusting the strategy if necessary.

The approach must also be based on the notion of ROI, which in this context must be the impact of the company on the organisations, then the impact on employees and the image of the company. ([more information in appendix 3](#)).



POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT AND PENDING QUESTIONS

THE SKILLS AVAILABLE TO ASSOCIATIONS

Is it better to focus on business expertise, or should we give priority to developing other skills?

The skills linked to business expertise, particularly in IT, are quite varied: digitisation of office tools, creation of web tools, RGPD policy, cybersecurity, network infrastructure, development, office software training.

"We have all the IT skills in-house for use by associations"
(international consultancy based in Luxembourg).

- Support for the sharing of technical skills related to IT employees' jobs: the argument that these skills and the **employee's skills are valued** (particularly from the point of view of HR managers). In addition, some employees may feel reassured to share skills that they already have.
- However, some particularly specialised employees, as in the IT sector, are more likely to want to **break away from their day-to-day work** and discover a new working environment, by making use of skills that they do not normally use or use very little (soft-skills in particular).

*Another option mentioned by one of the companies interviewed for mobilising technical skills is to offer longer commitment times, in team project format. In this case, the **service** could be provided as a skills sponsorship, as distinct from the provision of manpower. (see appendix 1)*

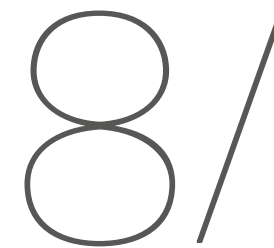
AVAILABILITY DURING WORKING HOURS

Should association involvement take place during working hours, or should it be restricted to the private sphere?

Some of the HR and CSR managers and employees interviewed felt that a committed company should allow its employees to get involved with local organisations during their working hours.

In contrast, other decision-makers agree that volunteering commitment falls within the private sphere, and the dilemma may be the same for employees depending on their expectations.

However, it is important to be careful not to link employees' voluntary work (personal time) to the company's values, as this could undermine the sincerity of the approach.



LUXEMBOURG-FRANCE COMPARATIVE TABLE

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF SKILLS SPONSORSHIP PRACTICES

	LUXEMBOURG*	FRANCE
Number of companies involved in skills sponsorship	Unknown	15% of corporate sponsors offer this service (2022, Admical Barometer)
Average length of commitment	1 to 3 days per year per employee	1 to 3 days per year per employee
Main barriers identified	Lack of knowledge of the programme and perceived time involved.	Lack of knowledge of the programme and perceived time involved.
Main motivation	Embodying the company's values.	Strengthen local roots (2022, Admical Barometer)
Legislative framework	Currently not very favourable.	Favourable: tax exemption (60%), extension of the programme to SMEs (2024), extension of the maximum duration of the assignment to 3 years (2024).
Ecosystem	A broad ecosystem of positive-impact organisations.	A broad ecosystem consisting of intermediary service providers, private commitment platforms, citizen initiatives and associations to commit employees.

* Based on the data from this study of engagement potential



9/

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

- ▶ Employees in the IT sector in Luxembourg are willing to get involved, particularly during their working hours and by mobilising their professional skills (and therefore particularly interesting for the development of not-for-profit organisations).
- ▶ A real potential for commitment, especially as the slightly more favourable economic context in Luxembourg (compared to other EU countries) should put less pressure on companies.
- ▶ However, the legislative framework has not been simplified, and until the law is updated, the use of an intermediary seems to be an effective solution for reassuring the various stakeholders and facilitating the gradual implementation of the initiative.

10/ APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SERVICE PROVISION

FOCUS ON SKILLS SPONSORSHIP SERVICES

Service provision: a reminder

- The company offers to carry out a **specific task**
- Under the **direction and control of the company**
- Obligation of resources and **results**
- The company retains its administrative, legal and tax obligations
- The employee remains part of the company's workforce

EXAMPLE OF MISSIONS:

- **Creating a website for an organisation**
- **Design a CRM tool in line with an organisation's activities**

Please note: it is important to clarify the message internally, emphasising that this service is provided for the benefit of an association ("it's not the same job as every day").

The service is usually provided as part of a group, although individual projects may be possible.

The service can be provided over a short period, ranging from a few hours to several days, on a full-time or part-time basis.

APPENDIX 2: STAKEHOLDER ROLES

INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME AND ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS

- **General management:** **responsible for the framework and the vision**, with the aim of promoting the approach internally (letting employees know that they can commit), approving projects and a **dedicated budget**. Delegate operations to avoid influencing employees' choices.

Providing a framework: a common framework is needed to ensure overall consistency, but each company must be able to have its own vision (inter-subsidary coordination is not a priori necessary) .

- **CSR:** **designing the company's CSR policy**, and the **actions** and associative **themes** to be addressed.
- **HR Department:** **rolling out** the CSR policy to employees and **supporting** this policy. Role as 'distribution belt', explaining the approach to managers, and promoting solidarity commitments (in association with the Communications department).
- **Communication:** an **intermediary** role to **support** the process, and **promote** it internally (mobilise employees, importance of communication to kick-start the process) and externally. Importance of giving visibility to current and future actions.

It would be a good idea to set up an in-house '**Solidarity Commitment Committee**' to supplement the departments that manage the skills sponsorship approach: centralising resources and requests from employees, exchanging ideas with the Communications Department, identifying ambassadors within the various departments, and helping to create events to raise awareness of community involvement.

APPENDIX 3: IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EFFECTIVELY MANAGING THE COMMITMENT PROCESS

In order to evaluate the actions and commitment programme as a whole and in terms of flow, it is necessary to carry out:

- an **immediate** evaluation (at the end of each action)
- an **annual evaluation** (for your reporting on the overall programme)
- **Retrospectives** evaluations to measure the medium/long-term impact (3 months and then 1 year later) of both the actions and the programme as a whole.

It is recommended that a **maximum of 15%*** of a project's budget should be allocated to social impact assessment. Generally speaking, an initial evaluation is carried out over a period of **1 to 2 years***.

As part of an evaluation process with a monitoring purpose (producing information on the expected results of the project), **quantitative indicators** are to be preferred. Qualitative indicators are intended to provide contextual information and explain the change.

* Source: *Évaluer son impact social, Avise, June 2022*



- The approach must be sincere = the primary objective must be the company's ecological and social contribution.
- Social ROI = impact on organisations: **number of supported organisations**

APPENDIX 4: CSRD AND SKILLS SPONSORSHIP

FOCUS ON SKILLS SPONSORSHIP

The CSRD does not specifically address skills-based sponsorship, but it encourages companies to communicate about their social contributions, including sponsorship initiatives.

SOCIAL IMPACTS

Evaluation of the impacts of the company's activities on local communities and society in general (S1).

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Data on employee volunteering, including hours dedicated to skills-based sponsorship initiatives (S2).

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Information on partnerships with non-profit organisations or community projects supported by the company (S1).

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Details on training programmes offered to communities or external beneficiaries (S2).

FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Reporting on monetary and in-kind contributions (time or skills) to social initiatives (S1).

KPMG study for Pro Bono Lab, 2024



IMS LUXEMBOURG
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OVERVIEW

OF **IT SKILLS**
SPONSORSHIP
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