

SUCCESS CASE 5.2025

PROFESSIONAL APPRENTICESHIP FOR BLUE COLLARS



THE CHALLENGE

The DSO faced a significant challenge due to a strong need for specialized blue-collar workers in electric distribution networks. The demand for skilled technicians and field operators has risen as a result of the energy transition and grid modernization. However, there is a notable shortage of qualified personnel, which made it difficult for the DSO to meet the growing operational needs. The lack of specialized workforce created operational bottlenecks and posed a risk to maintaining service quality and expanding infrastructure in line with the energy transition goals.

THE SOLUTION

To address this challenge, the DSO implemented a 3-year apprenticeship program. This program combines theoretical training and hands-on experience, with the curriculum alternating between theoretical instruction in training centers (approximately 640 hours) and on-the-job mentoring in the field. The program emphasizes safety and environmental considerations in primary substations and MV/LV networks. It also focuses on developing advanced technical skills beyond standard grid installation and maintenance, including specialized training in areas such as smart grids, network automation systems, and IoT technologies.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Increased Workforce Capacity:** The apprenticeship program successfully trained a new generation of specialized workers, bridging the skills gap and meeting the rising demand for technicians and field operators.
- **Enhanced Skill Set:** The participants gained expertise not only in traditional grid operations but also in emerging technologies, such as smart grids and network automation.
- **Improved Safety and Efficiency:** A strong emphasis on safety and environmental aspects helped minimize operational risks and ensured compliance with industry standards.

- **Better Alignment with Energy Transition Goals:** The new workforce is better equipped to support the ongoing energy transition and the modernization of the grid infrastructure.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

- **Strong Training Infrastructure:** The combination of theoretical and practical training ensured that workers gained both foundational knowledge and real-world experience.
- **Continuous Program Adaptation:** The apprenticeship program was continuously revised to keep pace with technological advancements and evolving technical procedures in the electric distribution network.
- **Partnerships and Mentorship:** On-the-job mentoring played a crucial role in developing practical skills and fostering the transfer of knowledge from experienced professionals to the new workforce.
- **Commitment to Safety:** A clear focus on safety and environmental training ensured a reduction in risks and enhanced operational reliability.

WAY FORWARD

- **Scale-up the Program:** The DSO plans to scale up the apprenticeship program to train more technicians and field operators in response to increasing demand.
- **Enhance the Curriculum:** The DSO aims to further develop and refine the training curriculum to incorporate emerging technologies, ensuring that workers are equipped to handle future challenges.
- **Strengthen Recruitment Efforts:** Focus will be placed on attracting more talent into the program to address the ongoing shortage of skilled workers in the sector.
- **Long-term Development:** Continuous monitoring and adaptation of the program to align with technological advancements and market needs will ensure the DSO has a sustainable, skilled workforce for years to come.