
Lithuania

VET in Europe – Country report

2014

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CHAPTER 1.

External factors influencing VET

1.1. Demographics

Lithuania has a population of 2 943 472 inhabitants (Statistics Lithuania, 2014). This is 1% less than at the beginning of 2013 and 12% less than in 2005. The main reasons for the population decrease are emigration and natural decrease.

High emigration creates a shortage of skilled labour and hinders future economic growth. At the same time, the share of immigrants increased and reached 0.6% of the total population in 2013. Many emigrants (38.2%) are between 20 and 29 years old and this negatively affects the composition of the labour force. This share was 30.9% in 2007.

Lithuanians account for 86.3% of population, Poles for 5.6%, Russians for 5% and other nationalities for 3.1%. There are more women (53.9%) than men. Almost one third of the population (27.9%) is younger than 24 years, while 53.7% of the population are aged 25-64.

In 2014, 24.3% of people were older than 60 years (20.4% in 2007). Ageing will remain an important concern for the future. According to Statistics Lithuania, in 2015-30 the number of people over 65 will increase by 10%. The number of those aged 15-64 will decrease by 35%. It is likely that in the future, employees will have to bear a heavier burden to support retirees.

1.2. Education level of the population

The education level of the population is high. Based on labour force survey data, in 2013, 93% of 25 to 64 year-olds had attained at least upper secondary education and 35% reached tertiary level. This is one of the highest educational attainment rates in Europe.

The share of the population aged 30-34 having completed university education is increasing every year (Table 1). However, due to decreasing birth rates and emigration, the number of students in higher education institutions is decreasing (Section 2.2.2). Retaining the share of 30 to 34 year-olds with higher education or equivalent is a priority of the national reform programme (Lithuanian Ministry of Economy, 2014) and the national education strategy 2013-22 (Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, 2013). The latter document sets the target to retain this indicator at above 48% by 2022, which is higher than the 2020 European Union (EU) target.

Considering the educational attainment level of the population aged 20 to 24, Lithuania has almost reached its 2012 benchmark established by its national education strategy 2003-12, with 90% of population aged 20 to 24 having attained upper secondary education level or above (Table 1). The same benchmark is set in the national education strategy 2013-22.

The benchmark regarding early leavers from education and training has also been reached (Table 1): in 2013 the share of the population aged 18 to 24 with, at most, lower

secondary education and not in further education and training was lower (6.3%) than the EU28 average (national benchmark for 2012 was 9%; the EU 2020 benchmark is less than 10%). Keeping the share of early leavers below 8% is one of the main objectives of the national education strategy 2013-22.

At the same time, participation in lifelong learning is lower than in other EU countries (Table 1) and below the EU 2020 benchmark (15%). Besides, a large share of the adult population aged 25-64 (26.3% in 2013) has only completed general education programmes and does not have a vocational training background. Therefore, increasing access to lifelong learning and vocational training for adults and increasing their qualification level is a challenging task for the education and training system.

Table 1. **Education and lifelong learning indicators (%)**

	2011	2012	2013	EU average, 2013	EU 2020 target	National target
Share of the population aged 20-24 having attained upper secondary education or above	87.7	89.3	90.0	81.0	n.a.	2022: 90
Share of the population aged 30-34 having completed university studies (or equivalent)	45.7	48.6	51.3	36.9	40	2020: >40
Share of early leavers from education and training (persons aged 18-24)	7.4	6.5	6.3	12.0	< 10	2012: 9 2022: < 8
Share of the population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey	5.7	5.2	5.7	10.5	15	2022: 12

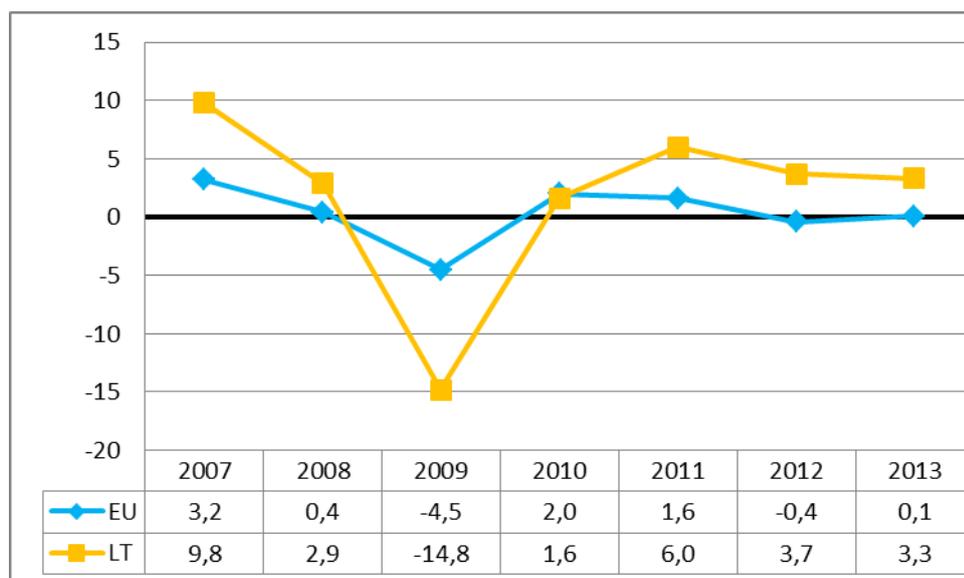
Source: Eurostat. Europe 2020 indicators tables.

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/europe_2020_indicators/headline_indicators/data [accessed 02.12.2014].

1.3. **Economy and labour market indicators**

According to Eurostat, gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 3.3% in 2013, down from 3.7% in 2012. Although Lithuania has been in the ranks of the fastest growing economies in the EU for the past several years, the economy has not yet recovered to its pre-crisis level. In addition, the chart below shows that GDP growth has levelled off (Figure 1).

Figure 1. **GDP growth rate in %**



Source: Eurostat. Extracted on 02.12.2014.

In 2013, the recovering construction sector, manufacturing industry and domestic consumption made the largest impact on GDP growth. Compared to 2012, manufacturing industry production and turnover of retail trade sector increased by 4.5% in 2013, whereas the contribution of the construction sector to GDP has increased by 7.2% (Ministry of Economy, 2014).

Table 2. **Employed population (aged 15 and over) by economic activity**

Economic sector (NACE* rev2)	(000)	%
A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	108.9	8.4
B Mining and quarrying	3.7	0.3
C Manufacturing	199.5	15.4
D Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	11.1	0.9
E Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	16.4	1.3
F Construction	99.3	7.7
G Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycle	227.5	17.6
H Transportation and storage	94.3	7.3
I Accommodation and food service activities	33.5	2.6
J Information and communication	24.8	1.9
K Financial and insurance activities	17.7	1.4
L Real estate activities	15.8	1.2
M Professional, scientific and technical activities	52.9	4.1
N Administrative and support service activities	41	3.2
O Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	79.7	6.2
P Education	125.8	9.7
Q Human health and social work activities	84.8	6.6
R Arts, entertainment and recreation	25.5	2.0
S Other service activities	28.3	2.2

Economic sector (NACE* rev2)	(000)	%
T Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use	2.2	0.2
U Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies	0.1	0.0

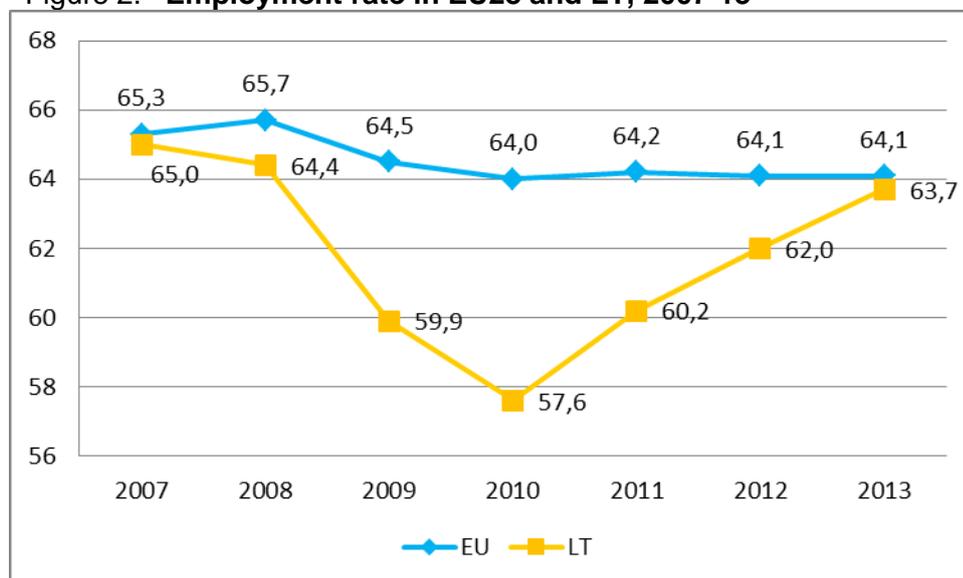
* Classification of economic activities in the European Community.

Source: Labour force survey data. Statistics Lithuania database of indicators.

<http://osp.stat.gov.lt/en/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?portletFormName=visualization&hash=dd6a133b-f31e-4051-b1bf-44e99ebaef81>
[accessed 02.12.2014].

In 2013, 63.7% of the population aged 15 to 64 were in employment, an increase of 1.7 percentage points compared to the previous year (Figure 2). The largest share of people is employed in the trade, industry and education sectors (Table 2). During 2013, the largest increase of employees was observed in construction and real estate sectors (11% and 19% increase respectively).

Figure 2. **Employment rate in EU28 and LT, 2007-13**

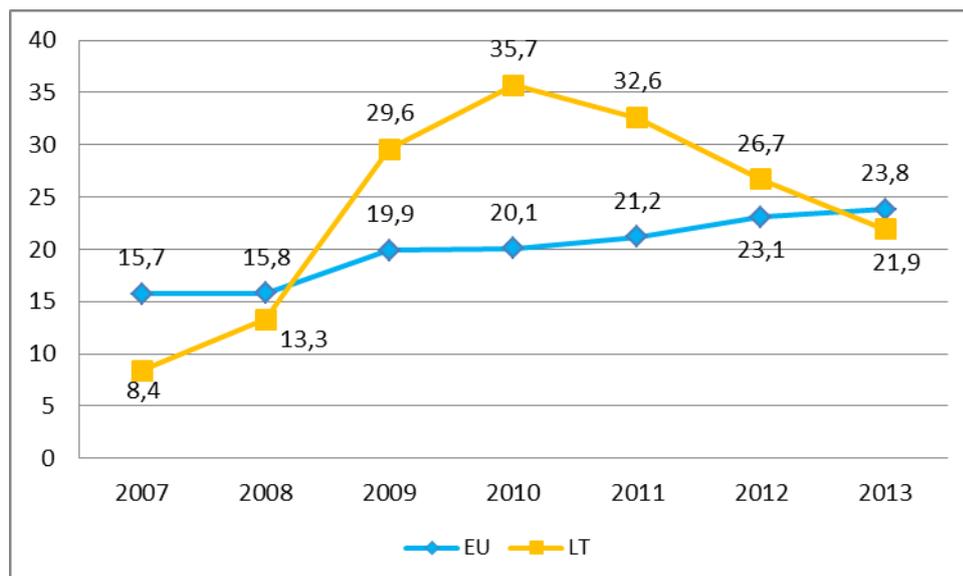


Source: Eurostat. Extracted on 02.12.2014.

In 2013, the unemployment rate stood at 11.8%; down 1.6 percentage points from 2012. Every second unemployed (43%) was affected by long-term unemployment (being unemployed for more than a year). This number has decreased by 23% compared to 2012. Long-term unemployment remains an urgent policy concern. One third of the unemployed are those with vocational education background (37%). The unemployed with higher education and upper secondary general education attainment make up 24% each and those with lower secondary education level – 15% of the unemployed (Lithuanian Labour Exchange, 2015).

Tackling high youth (15 to 24 year-olds) unemployment is a national policy priority. The indicator stood at 21.9% in 2013 and decreased by 4.8 percentage points compared to previous year (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Youth unemployment rate, 2007-13



Source: Eurostat. Extracted on 02.12.2014.

To address youth unemployment, the government prepared and approved an action plan in 2012. This plan includes measures to:

- improve the balance between education system supply and labour market demand;
- develop occupational skills of youth in education, through formal and non-formal VET programmes;
- support youth entrepreneurship and self-employment;
- support youth employment.

To implement this action plan the public employment service (PES) (*Lietuvos darbo birža*) restarted projects for young unemployed persons' training and on-the-job training, and set up a system where a part of young employees' salaries is subsidised. The Ministry of Economy is creating systems to forecast demand for human resources in the medium term and to monitor links between qualifications and jobs. The measures applied have led to positive changes – in 2013 youth unemployment was already below the EU average, having decreased by 13.8 percentage points compared to 2010.

In 2013 the Government of Republic of Lithuania approved the programme for increasing employment for the 2014-20 period (Lithuanian Government, 2013). The Government is trying to raise the employment rate in the country and aims to have 73% of Lithuania's citizens in employment by 2020. The programme aims at supporting creation of job places, increasing the correspondence of labour force to the needs of labour market and improving integration of available human resources into the labour market. The programme foresees such measures as to improve quality and accessibility of vocational guidance services, to ensure acquisition of relevant skills in the education and training system, to improve system of competences assessment and recognition as well as better lifelong learning services, to ensure fast and sustainable transition of youth from the education system into the labour market. The programme includes measures for elderly persons and disabled persons to remain in the labour market, including education and measures for

unemployed to return to employment. The programme also foresees strengthening work based learning. Until 2020 it is expected to raise the scope of work-based practical VET twice by increasing cooperation with employers.

The youth guarantee initiative implementation plan (Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2013) sets out various measures for improving youth employability and their integration into the labour market for years 2014-20. Examples of measures include:

- improving vocational guidance services quality and accessibility;
- creating system for identification of inactive youth not in employment, education or training;
- entrepreneurship support;
- providing more work based learning opportunities.

It is planned that until 2020, 45 000 young persons aged 15-29 will participate in measures under the youth guarantee initiative.

Lithuania is gradually recovering from the economic crisis, but to support recovery a more active introduction of innovation into all sectors of the economy, including traditional branches, is necessary. To face this challenge, initial and continuing VET (IVET and CVET) should be attractive and of good quality; a need which is increasing and will increase more in the future. The VET system should therefore prepare employees for working with new innovative technologies. For this reason, a network of sectoral practical training centres is being established (Section 2.2.4), and efforts are being made to cooperate more actively with social partners for:

- shaping qualifications and VET curricula (Sections 3.2 and 3.3);
- assessing VET learners competences (Section 3.4);
- VET governance and provision (Sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4);
- updating VET teachers technological competences (Section 2.2.6);
- improving vocational guidance quality and accessibility (Section 4.5).

1.4. Professional regulation

In Lithuania relatively few professions require a specific qualification. Examples of such professions are pilots, teachers, social workers and their assistants, social pedagogues, architects, theatre, museum and library managers, health system workers. A usual requirement is to have a higher education degree and a qualification. In some cases legislation defines alternative qualifications that may be recognised for a specific profession. Legislation may also set a required duration of professional experience (especially for management positions). There are also a few professions that require VET training (for example, masseur, first healthcare professionals – paramedics, drivers).

Health care sector specialists (doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, odontologists and others) are required to have a licence for their professional activity. A list of licenced specialists is published on the website of State Health Care Accreditation Agency under the Ministry of Health (<http://www.vaspvt.gov.lt>). In several professions (for example, social

workers, teachers), employed persons have a possibility to go through a process of certification (*atestacija*). During certification, skills, knowledge and competence are assessed against set criteria after which a corresponding qualification is awarded. A higher level qualification is linked to a higher remuneration. Persons requesting certification for a higher level qualification must provide evidence of in-service training. Legislation may also define the required duration of in-service training (for example, for teachers, health care specialists, public servants).

CHAPTER 2.

Providing vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective

2.1. The national education and training system

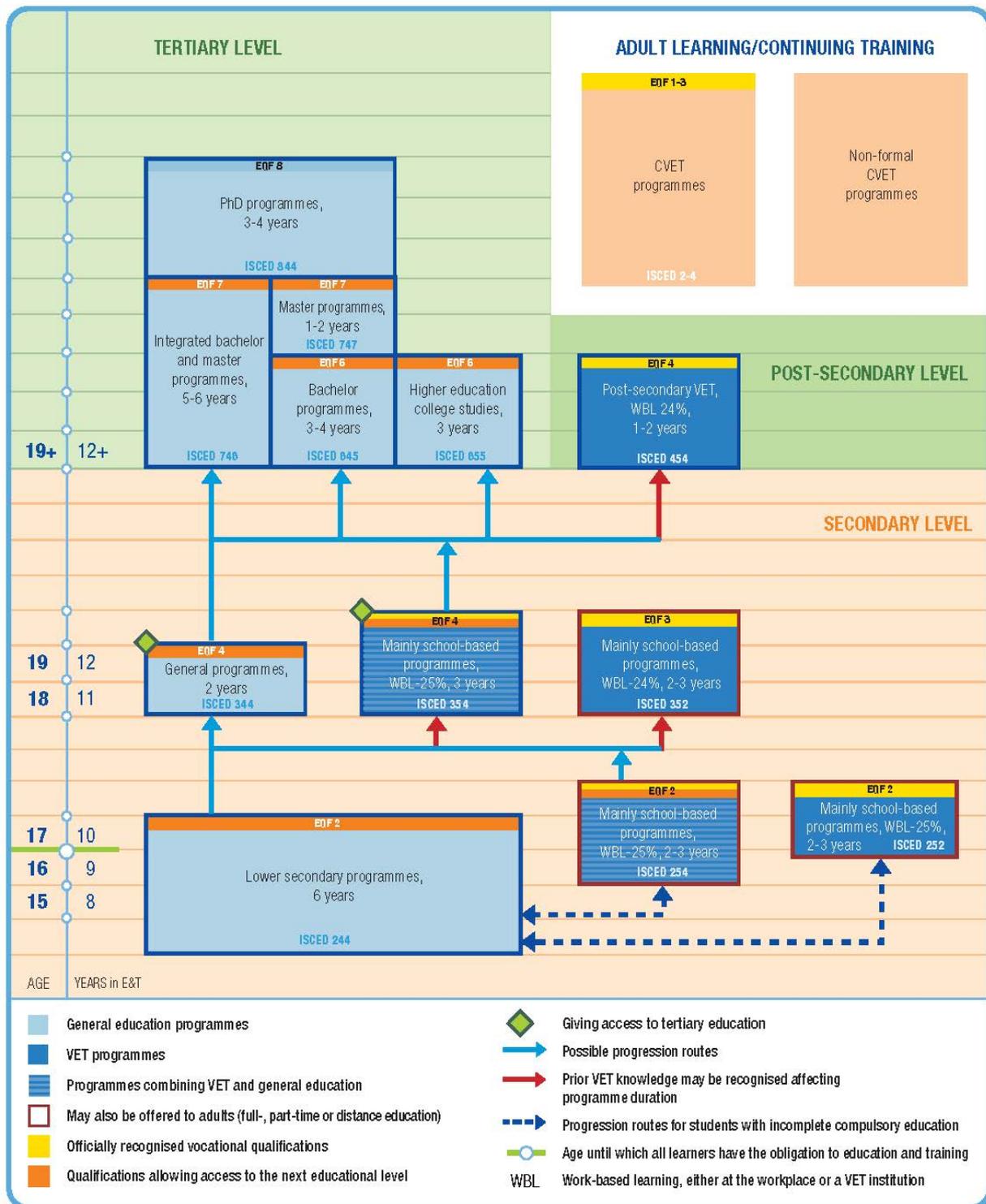
The Lithuanian education system consists of general education (pre-school, pre-primary, primary, lower and upper secondary education), initial VET (IVET) at lower, upper and post-secondary levels, continuing VET (CVET) and higher education (college and university studies).

In 2010, the government approved the national qualifications framework (LTQF) which has eight levels and covers all education sectors (Section 3.1). At the same time, referencing of the LTQF to the European qualifications framework (EQF) was started. During this process a direct correspondence between the eight LTQF and EQF levels was established. Referencing LTQF and EQF levels in this report is based on theoretical comparison of learning outcomes in training programmes with LTQF and EQF level descriptors.

As stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (1992), education is compulsory until age 16. Compulsory education is completion of lower secondary education (ISCED level 2) and receiving a basic school certificate (*pagrindinio išsilavinimo pažymėjimas*) at EQF level 2, after which learners can choose upper secondary general education or VET programmes at ISCED level 3 (leading to an EQF level 3 vocational qualification) or to an EQF level 4 vocational qualification and an upper secondary leaving certificate, also known as *matura*, which allows higher education access (*brandos atestatas*).

Those who fail to graduate from lower secondary education may enter VET programmes or youth schools at ISCED level 2 leading to EQF level 2 qualifications. Graduates of upper secondary programmes leading to a *matura* certificate (either vocational or general education-oriented) may enter either post-secondary vocational training (ISCED level 4) leading to EQF level 4 or higher education (ISCED level 5) programmes leading to EQF level 6. The education and training system is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4. VET in Lithuania's education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Lithuania.

2.2. Government-regulated VET provision

2.2.1. Key characteristics

VET programmes are designed for learners of different ages and educational backgrounds. In IVET, learners have an opportunity to acquire a first vocational qualification and complete general lower or upper secondary education. CVET enables a person to improve an existing qualification, acquire a new qualification or gain a competence needed to perform a specific job (function) as regulated by legislation.

Since 2002, VET curricula are competence-based, with clearly-defined training objectives. IVET programmes are developed by VET providers in cooperation with employers' representatives. When developing programmes, providers follow VET standards and general requirements approved by the Minister for Education and Science. Formal CVET is implemented according to national programmes.

Most IVET in Lithuania is school-based; however, practical training and training in enterprises constitute a major part of the programme. For example, in IVET practical training comprises 60% to 70% of the total time allocated to teaching vocational subjects, of which eight to 15 weeks is organised in a company or school-based workshop simulating working conditions. Apprenticeship is implemented on a very small scale and mainly through projects financed by the EU funds (Section 2.2.5).

Social partners participate in shaping content of new qualifications, qualification standards and VET programmes, assessing that VET programmes correspond to labour market needs, and organising practical training. They also take part in organising and implementing competence assessment.

2.2.2. Levels of VET programmes

In IVET, VET programmes included in the study and training programmes and qualifications register (*Studijų, mokymo programų ir kvalifikacijų registras*) are provided at:

- lower secondary education level not leading to a basic education certificate;
- lower secondary education level leading to a basic education certificate;
- upper secondary education level for learners having completed basic education, not leading to upper secondary general education;
- upper secondary education level leading to upper secondary general education;
- post-secondary education level for learners having completed upper secondary general education.

Average study duration, qualification certificates and further learning and career opportunities are summarised in Table 3. Information about VET programmes and qualifications is available in Open information, counselling and guidance system (AIKOS) web portal.

Table 3. **Formal IVET and CVET programmes**

	ISCED-P 2011 level	Average duration	Certificates awarded	EQF level	Further learning and career opportunities
Programmes at lower secondary education level	252	2-3 years*	Vocational qualification certificate	2	Access to labour market
Programmes at lower secondary education level	254	3 years	Vocational qualification certificate; basic school certificate	2	Further training in VET institution or general education school; Access to labour market
Programmes at upper secondary education level	352	2-3 years*	Vocational qualification certificate	3	Access to labour market
Programmes at upper secondary education level	354	3 years	Vocational qualification certificate; <i>matura</i> certificate	4	Access to higher education/college or university study programmes; Access to labour market
Programmes at post-secondary education level	454	1-2 years	Vocational qualification certificate	4	Access to higher education/college or university study programmes; Access to labour market
CVET programmes	2-4	Up to 1 year	Vocational qualification certificate	1-3	Access to labour market

NB. (*): Programme duration depends on whether or not the programme is targeted at learners with special needs.

Source: ReferNet Lithuania.

Learners without general lower or upper secondary education have an opportunity to acquire it together with a vocational qualification. Thus VET programmes help to bring early leavers back to education or training. After completing general upper secondary education and having acquired a vocational qualification, VET learners may continue their studies in higher education. In recent years, conditions to access higher education have been improved for successful VET graduates (Section 4.2.2).

2.2.2.1. Admission to IVET programmes

Vocational training programmes are designed for learners over 14 years of age. Entrants may choose programmes and providers from all over the country.

Before the beginning of a new school year each VET provider plans the number of VET students to be enrolled in State-funded VET programmes based on local labour market needs. The enrolment plan is submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science. The national student enrolment plan is discussed in the VET Council (Section 2.2.3) and then approved by the Minister for Education and Science.

2.2.2.2. Participation in IVET

It should be noted that VET programmes' popularity is increasing slightly. Due to the decreasing birth rate and emigration, the share of learners in general education decreased by 14 % and those in higher education by 20.5% between 2010 and 2013. At the same time, the number of VET learners has decreased by 7.4% (see Table 4).

Most VET learners participate in ISCED level 3 VET programmes, carried out together with the general upper secondary programme which lead to a vocational qualification at EQF level 4 and the upper secondary leaving exam which allows access to higher education. The least popular programmes are those at ISCED 2 that only offer a vocational qualification at EQF level 2. Around 500 to 600 students participate in these programmes annually. Popularity of post-secondary non-tertiary programmes (ISCED level 4) leading to EQF level 4 is increasing, especially among adults who enter VET with education or work experience. Detailed information about participation in VET programmes is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Participation in IVET

		2010	2011	2012	2013
Total number of students in IVET (000)		48.7	46.6	44.6	45.1
Programmes at lower secondary education level	Total number of students (000)	4.9	4.2	4.1	4.4
	Share of students, compared to GE orientation students, %	2	2	2.1	2.3
Programmes at upper secondary education level	Total number of students (000)	30.1	28.2	25.1	23.0
	Share of students, compared to GE orientation students	28.4	28.7	27.7	26.8
Programmes at post-secondary education level	Total number of students (000)	13.7	14.2	15.4	17.7

Source: Education 2013. Statistics Lithuania

Formal CVET covers programmes with various educational attainment levels for learners who are older than 18 (Table 3). They may be required to have a certain vocational qualification or work experience. Duration of programmes is shorter than one year but depends on the target group and complexity of the qualifications. These programmes' objectives are to acquire:

- a vocational qualification;
- an additional vocational qualification;
- a competence to perform jobs or functions regulated by law.

Graduation from these programmes leads to LTQF/EQF levels 1-3 qualifications. Practical training comprises 60% to 80% of the programme. It is recommended that half the time allocated for practical training should be spent in a real work environment.

2.2.2.3. VET for people with special needs

IVET and CVET for people with special needs is organised according to individual learning plans with other VET students or according to specially tailored VET programmes at ISCED levels 2 to 4 which lead to EQF levels 1 to 4. According to data from Statistics Lithuania,

there are around 1 000 learners with disabilities in IVET (1 150 in 2013, 1 052 in 2012, 994 in 2011, 1 116 in 2010). Most are in ISCED level 2 programmes.

More than 40 CVET programmes for learners with special needs are listed in the study and training programmes and qualifications register. These programmes are offered in VET institutions and other institutions licensed to provide them.

2.2.2.4. *VET programmes for the unemployed*

Training the unemployed and those having been notified of dismissal is organised via formal CVET programmes listed in the study and training programmes and qualifications register. The local public employment service (PES, *teritorinés darbo biržos*) is responsible for training the unemployed. In 2012, a new procedure approved by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour for training the unemployed came into force. The unemployed and those notified of dismissal are referred to training providers which they have chosen from the list published on the PES website. Training takes the specific needs of employers into account. Most unemployed follow programmes agreed with employers, who, after training, are obliged to hire the unemployed persons for a period not shorter than 6 months. In case of agreement with the employer, practical training is organised at the workplace (Section 2.4 for funding).

2.2.3. **VET governance**

Legislation delegates responsibility for shaping and implementing VET policy to the Ministry of Education and Science (SMM). The main SMM functions include approval of:

- the annual plan for VET programmes and procedure for implementing formal VET programmes;
- students' enrolment in State-funded VET programmes;
- the procedure for developing and licensing formal VET programmes.

SMM also issues licences for providing formal VET and accredits competence assessment institutions.

A special role in developing human resources has been given to the Ministry of Economy. It participates in creating and implementing human resources development policy, VET policy, and organises research on future skill needs and disseminates its results through vocational guidance. Other ministries can also participate in developing and implementing education and training policy by submitting proposals for legal acts on education and training, and participating in working groups that draft legal acts. Some ministries (such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Ministry of Agriculture) contribute to developing and implementing initial as well as continuing education and training programmes.

The Qualifications and VET Development Centre (*Kvalifikacijų ir profesinio mokymo plėtros centras*, KPMPK; until 2010 known as the Methodological Centre for VET) organises development of VET and qualifications standards. KPMPK also collects and analyses information on VET, designs methodologies for developing VET and assesses and develops

VET quality. It also acts as the national quality assurance reference point for VET and the national EQF coordination point.

Advisory institutions also play an important role in designing and implementing the VET development policy. The most important advisory institutions are:

- the Vocational Education and Training Council (Profesinio mokymo taryba), a collegial institution that advises national education authorities on solving strategic VET issues. It consists in equal parts of representatives of State governance and municipal institutions and organisations representing employers' and employees' interests;
- the Central Professional Committee (Centrinis profesinis komitetas), a collegial, cooperation-based advisory body that coordinates strategic issues pertaining to development of the qualifications system. Its main roles are to: initiate legislation, necessary for development and maintenance of the qualifications system; initiate revision of the LTQF; establish priority sectors for the qualifications system; discuss and suggest decisions regarding the qualifications system's structure; advise the KPMPC on ensuring correspondence between qualifications and labour market needs; accredit competence assessment institutions; link national qualifications with the EQF and other issues. The committee consists of 18 members. The Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministries of Economy and Agriculture, the Association of Local Authorities, the KPMPC and the Centre for Quality Assurance in Higher Education delegate one representative each; three are delegated by the Universities Rectors' Conference, the Colleges Directors' Conference and the VET Institutions Association; nine are delegated by social partners.

Social partner organisations ⁽¹⁾ are involved in VET policy development through the VET Council and the Central Professional Committee; they have the right to initiate development of new qualifications, qualifications standards and VET programmes. Social partner representatives participate in devising content of VET curricula and assessing VET programmes with regard to their correspondence to labour market needs, organising learners' practical training and in assessing the competences acquired. Since 2003, social partners have been responsible for organising final assessments of acquired competences for obtaining qualifications. Since 2012, accredited competence assessment institutions (*kompetencijų vertinimo institucijos*) have been organising assessment of competences acquired by learners in formal VET programmes (see Section 3.4 for more information).

⁽¹⁾ The Law on Vocational Education and Training (Parliament, 1997) identifies social partner organisations as institutions of employers (the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists, the Lithuanian Business Employers' Confederation), institutions of business self-government (the Lithuanian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, the Chamber of Agriculture of Lithuania) and organisations representing the interests of employees (Lithuanian Confederation of Trade Unions, the Lithuania Trade Union Solidarumas, the Lithuanian Labour Federation). The law stipulates that other institutions can be approved by the Government to act as social partners.

2.2.4. Formal VET providers

The Law on VET (Parliament, 1997) stipulates that a VET provider may be any VET institution, a freelance teacher or any other provider (general education school, enterprise, organisation whose main activity is other than VET) authorised to develop and implement VET programmes. VET providers may accept learners and provide formal VET programmes after receiving a licence from the Ministry of Education and Science. VET providers may have licences for both IVET and CVET.

According to Statistics Lithuania, in 2014, there were 75 IVET providers; 73 were public. In addition, 290 institutions, whose main activity is other than VET, have licences for CVET (SMM data of October, 2014). From 2011, after merging several institutions, the number of VET providers has remained stable.

To use training funds and resources more efficiently, the IVET and CVET providers' network is being reformed. Priorities include transfer of VET institutions with low numbers of learners to municipalities' control, developing larger regional VET institutions, and institutions where sectoral practical training centres will be created, merging IVET and CVET institutions and changing State-run VET institutions' into self-governing ones.

A sectoral practical training centre is a type of VET institution equipped with modern facilities from one or several fields. The main aim of these centres is to assure that learners, using the latest technologies and equipment, gain practical skills that match labour market needs. These centres are open to learners from VET, higher education, employees in enterprises, vocational teachers, etc. By the middle of 2015, 41 centres are planned to be opened.

Decentralisation of VET governance started in 2003 through reorganisation of State VET institutions into self-governing ones (*viešoji įstaiga*). This change enables different stakeholders (enterprises, social partners, regional and municipal government, etc.) to participate in governing VET providers. Their new status also increases their financial independence. In 2014, 20 IVET providers were self-governing and in the future reorganisation is planned to be continued.

2.2.5. Apprenticeship training

VET legislation (Parliament, 1997 and Lithuanian SMM, 2012) provides a legal basis for apprenticeship. However, apprenticeship has still not gained its position as a clear VET pathway and receives little attention from VET providers and companies. The reasons for this are the lack of apprenticeship traditions in the country, labour market features (SME (small- and medium-sized enterprises) prevalence, limited availability of economically strong enterprises, economic decline and shrinking employment), and upturns and downturns of economic development and their impact on investments in VET. Another important obstacle for apprenticeship is the absence of support mechanisms (both financial and non-financial) for companies employing apprentices or offering other forms of work-based learning.

In IVET, currently only some schools implement small scale apprenticeship-type programmes for carpenters, roofers, confectioners, cooks, locomotive drivers and java

programmers. In CVET, a large ESF project has been implemented by the Vilnius Jerusalem Labour Market Training Centre and by four labour market training centres (the implementation period: 2013-15). This pilot project aims to train 900 apprentices in health care, accounting, landscaping, mechanics, logistics and services sectors and to prepare policy recommendations based on participants' experience in the project.

Recently, there has been a substantial shift in political support for the apprenticeship system in Lithuania. Measures for apprenticeship system development have been included in all major VET and employment policy documents: the national strategy on education 2013-22, the national programme for the increase of employment 2014-20, the youth guarantee initiative implementation plan and the VET development action plan 2014-16. An inter-ministerial group initiated by the Prime Minister worked in 2014 to develop amendments to legal acts necessary for the implementation of apprenticeship. In 2014 Lithuania participated in thematic country review on apprenticeships launched by Cedefop aimed at proposing a roadmap for quality apprenticeships. The review draws on the outcomes of a wide consultation with stakeholders, provides a detailed country-specific analysis of factors facilitating apprenticeship and challenges, and suggests which actions could be undertaken in the future.

2.2.6. Quality assurance mechanisms

The national approach for improving VET quality assurance is set out in the VET quality assurance system concept (2008). This concept took into account experience of Lithuania and other European countries as well as the common quality assurance framework for VET in Europe and EQAVET, the European quality assurance reference framework for VET. The Concept laid down how quality in VET is to be assured and outlined the institutions involved, their responsibilities and foreseen activities. When implementing the concept and measures of the VET resources development programme (Section 4.1), VET providers have introduced internal quality assurance systems and external assessment of VET programmes was implemented providing recommendations for national, sectoral and schools levels. Aligning the VET quality assurance system with EQAVET is ensured through activities for developing a quality culture for VET providers, promoting PDCA (plan-do-check-adjust), known as the 'quality circle' nationally, encouraging and supporting VET providers' regular self-assessment. PDCA is embedded into VET provision and is regarded as the backbone of VET quality assurance.

Other measures to assure VET quality at State level are:

- design and approval of standards. VET standards are the basis of VET programmes and assessment of learner achievements (for more information see Section 3.2);
- design and registration of training programmes, issuing licences. A new programme is coordinated with an institution representing the employers (such as chambers of industry, commerce and crafts), then experts (vocational teachers and employers) evaluate the programme's quality and, if positive, the programme is included in the study and training programmes and qualifications register. A licence to carry out a

registered programme is issued to a VET provider, if its resources are sufficient for implementing the programme, and vocational teachers or candidates for vocational teachers meet the requirements prescribed in VET programmes and laws;

- supervision of programme implementation. Relevant divisions of the SMM supervise the teaching process and activities, and audit activities, while the State Audit Office performs random checks of educational institutions, during which the rationale of their activities is also analysed;
- independent assessment of knowledge, skills and competences to acquire a qualification. Since 2003, assessment has been detached from training programmes. Until 2012, this was the social partners' function (such as chambers of commerce, industry and crafts and chambers of agriculture). Since 2012, assessment of formal VET learners' competences has been organised by accredited competence assessment institutions (for more information see Section 3.4).

2.2.7. Vocational teachers and trainers

There are two types of teachers in IVET institutions: general education subject teachers (*bendrojo ugdymo dalykų mokytojai*) and vocational teachers (*profesijos mokytojai*). On average, vocational teachers represent more than half of teaching personnel (Table 5).

Table 5. Teaching personnel in IVET institutions

School year	Teaching personnel, total*	Of which, vocational teachers	
		Total	%
2010/11	3 962	2 194	55.4
2011/12	3 897	2 120	54.4
2012/13	3 693	2 073	56.1
2013/14	3 633	2 082	57.3

* Teaching personnel covers general education subject teachers, vocational teachers, class teachers, school principals and deputy principals.

Source: Statistics Lithuania, database of indicators.

<http://db1.stat.gov.lt/statbank/default.asp?w=1280> [accessed 02.12.2014].

In CVET, theoretical and/or practical VET is provided by vocational teachers. Institutions that focus on training employed and unemployed people (such as labour market training centres) may introduce additional positions for trainers, for example, practical training managers (instructors).

2.2.7.1. VET teacher training and professional development

VET teachers must have a vocational and a pedagogical qualification or have participated in a basic course on pedagogy and psychology. VET teacher training follows a consecutive model whereby a vocational qualification is studied first, followed by studies on pedagogy. Teachers without a pedagogical qualification, irrespective of their educational attainment level, are offered a 120-hour course on pedagogy and psychology. These courses are

organised by accredited institutions and companies. Additionally, universities provide programmes for vocational teachers' pedagogical education.

The priority area for professional development of VET teachers is updating their technological competences. In 2010, a relevant project started (*Profesijos mokytojų ir dėstytojų technologinių kompetencijų tobulinimo sistemos sukūrimas ir įdiegimas*) in line with the VET resources development programme (Section 4.1). In cooperation with employers and their organisations around 100 training programmes in 12 sectors of the economy were implemented, whereby around 700 VET teachers and college lecturers were trained to work with state-of-the-art technological equipment.

2.3. Other forms of training

In addition to formal VET leading to State-recognised qualifications described in Section 2.2, non-formal VET is conducted. According to legislation the requirements for non-formal VET programmes and their implementation may be set by the organisation that orders training under this programme or finances any such training. Objectives of VET programmes, admission criteria and duration are different and mostly depend on the target group. Decisions on tuition fees are made by providers. Non-formal adult education may be offered by any education provider, schools, freelance teachers, and agencies, companies or organisations that do not have education as their main activity but are authorised to provide education.

Non-formal VET is widely applied in continuing vocational training and is designed for acquisition of a vocational qualification or individual competences. It is carried out in various forms: learning at the workplace, attending non-formal training courses, distance learning, etc. In most cases, the following three forms are used for organising CVET:

- non-formal training/learning of employees and self-employed persons initiated by the employer. It is organised in various settings, using forms and programmes chosen by the employer. Some companies have their own qualification frameworks or apply internationally-recognised sectoral qualifications and programmes. Such training/learning is funded by a company or agency or a learner. When relevant, tax incentives are used (Section 4.4);
- training employees funded by the State budget (such as training civil servants and employees in certain economic sectors: healthcare, agriculture, etc.);
- training the unemployed and people notified of dismissal funded through a voucher system introduced in 2012 (Section 2.4) to finance training in formal and non-formal education programmes.

2.4. Funding VET

2.4.1. Funding IVET

Funding for formal IVET is allocated from the State budget. Training costs are calculated per student as approved by the government in 2008. This methodology determines the level of direct funding needed for training per learner enrolled in a formal training programme for one VET academic hour. The unit costs (the so-called 'student basket') include allocations for staff salaries and social insurance, in-service training of teachers and funding for acquisition of various training resources, including practical training. The latter category is calculated using a coefficient that varies depending on the programme area. Funding is allocated to the VET provider based on the actual number of learners multiplied by the number of hours for implementing the programme and costs of a training hour. Unit costs for learners with special needs are defined separately.

Among sources of funding (Table 6), the contribution from the national budget to VET comprises around 76% of total funding. The increasing share of funding comes from international organisations and abroad. Besides, VET providers under the approved government investment programme for a respective year may receive funding from the State budget for construction, updating training facilities, etc. Such developments could also be supported from other funds, including the European structural funds. VET providers may receive income from physical and legal entities for services provided (such as training courses, rent of premises). This income is used for education and training purposes.

Table 6. **Funding for IVET institutions by source (%)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Funding from the State budget	84.4	83.3	76.2	72.4
Funding from private sources (physical and legal entities)	7.0	8.2	6.5	6.8
Funding from international organisations	8.6	8.5	17.3	20.8

Source: Statistics Lithuania, 2014.

2.4.2. Funding CVET for training employees

Continuing training of employees is funded by the enterprise or learner. According to national legislation in certain cases training can be sponsored by the State.

To finance training of employees, EU and enterprise funds from the 2007-13 human resources development operational programme (ŽIPVP) can be used. For example, the measure 'improvement of human resources in enterprises' aims to improve qualifications, knowledge and skills of company employees and managers and develop employees' ability to adapt to changing needs in companies and on the labour market. The measure supports training employees and managers and organising training at workplaces. It is planned that 63 000 people will take part in training under this measure by 2015. In 2008 and 2012 two calls were published by Ministry of Social Security and Labour and European Social Fund (ESF) Agency to fund employee training. The overall value of 240 projects that received

support is around EUR 78 million, of which ESF support amounts to EUR 54 million. Companies' contributions were necessary for implementing the projects (small enterprises had to provide 20%, medium enterprises 30% and large enterprises 40% of the total training cost). A similar measure was implemented for public sector employees.

2.4.3. Funding CVET for training the unemployed

Unemployed training costs are mainly covered from ESF support. Starting in 2012 a voucher system was introduced by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour for funding training for the unemployed. A training voucher is a document issued by the public employment service (PES) to an unemployed person. The local PES commits to paying a selected provider – within limits of the voucher value – for training services under an agreed VET programme. The unemployed choose training providers from the list published on the PES website.

To organise training for the unemployed two types of contracts are signed:

- a bipartite VET contract between an unemployed person and the local PES; or
- a tripartite VET and employment contract (between the unemployed person, local PES and employer).

If a tripartite contract is signed, a training programme and its provider are agreed with the employer. After training, the employer undertakes to employ the unemployed person for at least six months. If the actual costs of training exceed the limits established by the government, the difference is covered by the learner or employer. The same procedure is applied to training persons notified of dismissal.

CHAPTER 3.

Shaping VET qualifications

3.1. VET qualifications in the Lithuanian qualifications framework

The Lithuanian qualifications framework (LTQF) was developed based on a system of allocating learning outcomes to levels, which already existed in the Lithuanian education system: three education levels in the general education sector, four VET attainment levels in the VET sector and three study cycles in higher education. Levels of qualifications are arranged hierarchically, in accordance with the criteria defining qualifications' levels: complexity, autonomy and a range of activities which a person with certain qualifications can be expected to carry out. The LTQF includes qualifications for working and learning, the main purpose of which is to prepare a person for further learning. Such qualifications are acquired upon completion of general lower or upper secondary education programmes.

VET qualifications are attributed to the first five levels of the LTQF in the Lithuanian qualifications system. Qualifications at levels 1-4 are acquired by completing vocational education and/or general education programmes.

The two lowest levels are intended for people unlikely to acquire a higher-level qualification for some reason or another, for example, due to disability or poor basic education. Even a relatively low-level qualification makes people's integration into the labour market easier and reduces their exclusion. The most popular LTQF levels on the labour market are levels 3 and 4 since acquisition of these qualifications allows individuals to work independently. The main difference between these two levels is that, at level 3, the qualification is intended for activities in narrow areas (such as cashier, sewing machine operator, painter) and at level 4 it is intended for relatively broad areas of activity (such as sales person, tailor, decorator). In addition, those who acquire a qualification at LTQF level 3 usually work under guidance from an employee with a higher qualification and are subject to external performance quality control, while those who acquire a qualification at LTQF level 4 are capable of assuming responsibility for quality of procedures and outcomes in performance of their activities.

Level 6 qualifications are acquired by completing cycle one of university or college studies and, in cases and according to the procedure specified in legislation, by completing study or requalification programmes not leading to a degree. Level 7 qualifications are acquired by completing cycle two of university studies or integrated study programmes, in cases and according to the procedure specified in legislation, by completing study or requalification programmes not leading to a degree. Level 8 qualifications are acquired by completing doctoral studies. In addition, qualifications at all levels may be acquired by gaining professional experience or by independent study.

Most discussions revolve around level 5 qualifications. Employers emphasise the necessity of qualifications at this level. This level is special because it is on the boundary between VET and higher education. Second, no qualifications at this level are currently awarded in Lithuania. The LTQF states that 'level 5 qualifications are acquired by completing training programmes intended for people with a vocational qualification as well as professional experience, higher education programmes not leading to a degree (except for medical studies), and/or through professional experience and independent study'. In addition, the level 5 qualification highlights the employee's ability to supervise activities of lower-qualified staff, plan and assign tasks, oversee performance of tasks, provide consultation, and verify performance quality. Thus, the LTQF provides two types of VET qualifications at this level:

- experienced, highly-skilled low-level managers or foremen;
- highly-skilled workers/technicians, whose activity requires large-scale theoretical training.

3.2. Standards defining content of qualifications

3.2.1. VET standards

VET standards (*profesinio rengimo standartai*) comprise three main interrelated components:

- activities and competences describing occupational activities ;
- training objectives defining the knowledge and skills necessary to perform occupational activities;
- vocational competences' assessment parameters.

The first comprehensive VET standards were developed in 1998. Presently, 77 standards have been approved for the VET sector. These VET standards were prepared centrally coordinated by the KPMPC. To assure social dialogue in designing them, 14 sectoral expert groups (*Ūkio šakų ekspertų grupės*) were formed, comprising employers, trade unions and VET institutions.

The standards were specified by the sectoral expert groups. Skills needs research was considered when taking decisions on new qualifications and standards (such as sectoral research, labour market forecasts, the PES employment opportunities barometer). Standards were drafted by a working group of vocational teachers and professionals in the relevant fields. The working group analysed legal documents and VET institutions' experience related to qualifications and carried out research on qualifications in companies. The information was then used for the content of the standard. Draft standards were widely discussed and improved according to comments received, and only after that were the standards endorsed by the respective sectoral expert groups. Final versions of standards were approved by the Minister for Education and Science and the Minister for Social Security and Labour. After official approval, VET standards were used as a basis to develop VET programmes and

assess learner achievement. The approved VET standards are available on the KPMPC website at <http://www.kpmpc.lt/Standartai/iteisinti.html>.

3.2.2. Sectoral qualifications standards

When applying VET standards for regulating VET content in curricula, the following problems arise:

- each standard was designed for one specific qualification and developed for only one qualification level corresponding to LTQF level 4;
- since only the VET standard was nationally validated and preparation of programmes was delegated to VET providers, various curricula appeared. Such variety seriously impedes transfer of learning outcomes and thus reduces mobility between training institutions.

To improve the qualification development system, sectoral qualifications standards (*profesiniai standartai*) were given a legal basis by legislation in 2007. Unlike the VET standard, a sectoral qualifications standard is developed for a particular economic sector by describing the most important qualifications in the specific sector at different LTQF levels. For each qualification the standard describes competences that are grouped into units. Within the project “Formation of qualifications and development of modular VET system” (*Kvalifikacijų formavimas ir modulinio profesinio mokymo sistemos kūrimas*) ten sectoral qualifications standards are being designed (project implementation period: 2010-15).

Sectoral qualifications standards will be used to design VET content and assess whether a person’s learning outcomes meet the requirements for a qualification. Identifying requirements for all levels of qualifications at the same time should improve permeability between different educational levels and make qualifications development and improvement more flexible.

Many different stakeholders are involved in developing qualification standards. At national level, the main responsibility for development and implementation of qualifications system policy is delegated to the Ministry of Education and Science (SMM). The latter is assisted by the Ministry of Economy. SMM with the Ministry of Economy define qualifications standards’ structure, the procedure for standards’ development, amendments and supplements, and approve the standards. When relevant, other ministries and governmental institutions participate in developing qualifications standards.

SMM has delegated sectoral qualification standards’ development to the KPMPC (see Section 2.2.3). To ensure effective social dialogue, the central professional committee and 17 sectoral professional committees (*sektoriniai profesiniai komitetai*) were established at the KPMPC. The central professional committee coordinates strategic issues pertaining to development of the qualifications system (Section 2.2.3), while sectoral professional committees are responsible for designing qualification standards in specific sectors of the economy. The main roles of these sectoral committees are to: advise the KPMPC on sectoral qualifications and competences needed to acquire them; set priorities for developing

qualifications standards; endorse standards and analyse consistency of training programmes with the requirements prescribed in the standards.

3.3. VET curricula design

Since 2000, VET programmes have been developed by providers, in cooperation with employer representatives. When developing programmes, providers follow VET standards and general requirements approved by the Minister for education and science. A programme may include additional competences to satisfy local needs. VET programme development is also informed by research on skilled labour force needs at local level. A newly-drafted VET programme is subject to approval by a competent employer organisation (such as a chamber of commerce, industry and crafts).

In 2010, legislation on designing and approving formal VET programmes was amended (Lithuanian SMM, 2010a). One of the changes is transition to national modular VET programmes, based on which programmes at school level will be designed. KPMPC will organise preparation or amendment of national modular training programmes. Qualification standards or, in their absence, VET standards, will be used for developing curricula. VET providers and enterprises will also have the possibility to initiate and design programmes. Within the project “Formation of qualifications and development of modular VET system” (*Kvalifikacijų formavimas ir modulinio profesinio mokymo sistemos kūrimas*) 60 national modular programmes are being designed (project implementation period: 2010-15). Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists and separate sectoral associations of employers are involved in this process.

3.4. Evaluating competences and awarding qualifications

A qualification is awarded to a person who has obtained all the competences required as defined in the respective VET standard or sectoral qualifications standard; or, in the absence of these, in a VET programme included in the study, training programmes and qualifications register.

Evaluation of the competences acquired by IVET graduates is detached from the training process. From 2003 to 2012, organisation of the final assessment was delegated to chambers of commerce, industry and crafts and agriculture. In 2012, a new regulation delegated assessment of competences acquired through formal, non-formal, work-based or informal learning to specifically-accredited institutions. These include social partners. By the middle of 2014, 23 institutions were accredited.

Qualifications are awarded by VET providers once they have obtained the assessment results. Graduates whose competences are considered sufficient to receive a qualification are issued with vocational qualification certificates (from 2015 – VET diploma) showing the respective LTQF/EQF levels.

Learners who complete lower secondary general education together with a VET programme, are awarded a vocational qualification and a basic education certificate; VET learners who complete upper secondary general education and pass school-leaving examinations are awarded a vocational qualification and a *matura* certificate, which allows access to higher education. Those who fail to complete the general education programme or pass the school-leaving examination are awarded a certificate of learning outcomes.

3.5. Assessment and recognition of non-formal or informal learning

According to the existing procedure, individuals with at least one year work experience and those over 18 can apply to VET institutions for the recognition of their competences. The level of skills and knowledge of an applicant is defined on the basis of VET standards and relevant VET programmes. Further the applicant and the school agree on a timetable of courses as necessary and a final qualification exam. Individuals who successfully pass the exam are awarded a qualification certificate (more information in Section 3.4). For those who continue learning according to a chosen VET programme prior learning is recognised as part of their training programme.

The majority of higher education institutions have internal procedures for recognising their students' non-formal and informal learning. The descriptions of procedures are published on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science: <http://www.smm.lt/web/lt/smm-svietimas/suaugusiuju-svietimas>. The recognition schemes are applicable for higher education institutions students and adults willing to receive certification of their knowledge, skills and competence. Some institutions set a maximum credits limit given for recognised prior learning (usually, 75% of total study programme volume).

3.6. Quality assurance

Qualifications development is an important process that helps to prepare highly-skilled workers for the economy and increase competitiveness of the country. The following measures are foreseen to assure quality:

- involving all stakeholders and social partners in particular in qualifications development. The central and sectoral professional committees system should promote this;
- adhering to main principles of transparency at all stages of developing and awarding qualifications: constantly inform society about activities, provide opportunities for sharing opinions, publicise outcomes;
- opening the qualifications system to change. It is foreseen that social partners, VET providers, and other natural and legal persons will be able to initiate new qualifications;

- encouraging society to become aware of the knowledge and skills gained through non-formal, informal learning and professional experience and create conditions to get them recognised;
- implementing the EQAVET by promoting further development of internal quality assurance systems in VET institutions, implementing external assessment of VET programme delivery, applying PDCA (nationally referred to as 'quality circle') in qualifications formation process (Section 2.2.5);
- implementing the LTQF and participating in EQF implementation.

CHAPTER 4.

Promoting participation in VET

VET development aims to reach a situation in which citizens would consider it an attractive option in the overall lifelong learning system. This chapter focuses on the main measures to reach this aim: incentives for promoting participation in VET and vocational guidance services. For other measures that also help increase VET attractiveness, see Sections 2.2.4, 2.2.5 and 3.2 to 3.4.

4.1. Strategic documents to improve VET quality and attractiveness

To improve VET quality, its attractiveness and responsiveness to labour market needs, the VET resources development programme (Lithuanian SMM, 2008) was approved in 2007. The programme outlines activities until 2015. Some EUR 168 million (LTL 580 million) have been allocated from the national budget and European structural Funds. Actions are implemented by the KPMPC, other SMM institutions and VET providers. In addition, there are special aims to:

- increase flexibility of VET;
- improve quality of VET;
- improve readiness of learners for the world of work;
- create conditions for VET teachers to update regularly and develop further their skills;
- improve accessibility of VET;
- create conditions for learners to improve their interpersonal skills.

Implementing the programme entails developing national qualifications (Sections 2.1, 3.1, 3.2); creating a modular VET model and relevant programmes in 25 educational fields (Section 3.3); setting up the infrastructure of 41 sectoral practical training centres (Section 2.2.4); updating VET teachers' technological competences (Section 2.2.6); developing an adult education system; introducing internal quality assurance systems at all IVET and some CVET providers and carrying out external assessment (Section 2.2.5).

In 2014 the action plan for the development of vocational training for 2014–2016 (Lithuanian SMM, 2014c) was approved to identify areas for VET development and propose a preliminary list of projects of strategic importance for VET development. The following measures are foreseen in the action plan that will be implemented through projects supported by EU funds and national budget:

- optimisation of VET institutions' network and effective use of infrastructure;
- optimisation of VET programmes' supply and improvement of the quality and relevance of these programmes;
- improvement of the system for the assessment and recognition of competences;

- improvement of training the teachers working in VET institutions;
- increasing the attractiveness of VET;
- improvement of management and training quality in VET;
- provision of vocational guidance services.

4.2. Increasing VET attractiveness by strengthening its links with other education sectors

4.2.1. Bringing general education and VET closer together

4.2.1.1. *The conditions to obtain general education in VET institutions*

As explained earlier, learners have possibilities to acquire lower and upper secondary education together with vocational qualifications (Section 2.2). Also, from 2000, through accreditation of upper secondary general education programmes, upper secondary general education departments have been set up at IVET institutions.

4.2.1.2. *Technology subjects and VET modules in general upper-secondary curricula*

Learners in general education can deepen their knowledge on technologies in certain fields and develop their practical skills to acquire at least partially, the necessary skills for a vocational qualification. In 11th and 12th grades they may choose among the following fields: textile and clothing; applied art, crafts and design; tourism and nutrition technologies; construction and wood processing; business, management and retail trade; mechanics and repair. Also, some general upper secondary curricula include VET programme modules. When learners continue their studies in VET, the above-mentioned fields and VET modules are recognised as part of their VET programmes.

4.2.1.3. *Technology as part of the matura exams*

Since 2010, a technology subject has become part of the *matura* exams at the end of upper secondary general education. The exam in a technology field may be taken by learners in general education and by those in VET and it can replace an exam in a general education subject field.

4.2.2. Measures to improve mobility between VET and higher education

4.2.2.1. *Improved conditions for VET graduates to enter higher education*

Selection criteria and procedures for ranking upper secondary graduates who apply for higher education are defined annually in a specific regulation (Lithuanian SMM, 2014a). This regulation awards additional points for graduates from VET in the same field of studies who performed exceptionally, or who have at least one year of work experience in this field. These additional points increase their chances of being admitted to a State-funded study place in colleges.

4.2.2.2. *Interinstitutional cooperation*

Several IVET institutions cooperate with higher education institutions (colleges, universities) when drafting study programmes that ensure continuity of VET programmes at tertiary level. They also have agreements regarding VET graduates' further studies in higher education institutions.

4.3. Incentives for youth

VET to acquire a first qualification is free of charge. IVET learners may receive a student grant and other material support. Based on data from Statistics Lithuania, around 63% of IVET learners received such a student grant in 2013. Socially disadvantaged learners who do not receive the grant are provided free meals and other material support.

Learners who live far from the learning institution are provided with hostel accommodation. Based on data from the Centre for Information Technologies in Education, around 99% of those who need hostel accommodation receive it (Centre for Information Technologies in Education, 2014).

4.4. Incentives for employers and employees

The main financial incentives and instruments for increasing participation in CVET are tax incentives, grant schemes, paid and unpaid training leave and payback clauses.

Tax incentives for individuals for both formal and non-formal VET were introduced in 2008. Persons paying income tax may claim these expenses in their annual tax return. Up to 25% of training expenditure can be deducted. When a studying resident of Lithuania is not an income tax payer or has no possibility to exercise the right to deduct expenditure for vocational training or studies from their own income, such expenses may be deducted from their parents' or other family members' income.

Tax incentives for legal entities have been in place since 2005. The Law on Corporate Income Tax (Parliament, 2001) allows deductions for continuing training courses of employees that are linked to their present occupation.

The Labour Code (Parliament, 2002) sets out training leave conditions for employees participating in a VET programme, to prepare and take exams and tests, for consultations, etc. All employees who participate in formal education programmes are entitled to paid educational leave retaining their average salary. Starting from 2015, according to the Labour Code, employees may be granted training leave for up to 5 working days per year to participate in non-formal adult education.

To finance VET, enterprises and organisations may use the grant scheme under the human resources development operational programme (*ŽIPVP*) (Section 2.5). A similar measure exists for civil servants. In addition, from 2008 to 2012, the Ministry of Agriculture implemented a project to reorient the workforce in rural areas from agriculture to other activities. People were offered an opportunity to change their field of activity and qualification

and participate in formal or non-formal VET not related to agriculture. The project value was EUR 8.8 million (LTL 30.3 million).

Payback clauses for individuals and future employers were both introduced in 2005. The Labour Code provides general conditions allowing employers to claim compensation from an employee for the costs of training over the past year if they quit the job earlier than the predetermined period.

4.5. Vocational guidance and counselling

4.5.1. Main institutions

As defined by the Vocational Guidance Act (Lithuanian SMM and Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2012) the main educational institutions that provide guidance services (career education, information and counselling) to their learners are general education schools and VET institutions. Municipalities are responsible for organising and coordinating guidance services within their territory.

Nationwide vocational guidance is coordinated by the Lithuanian Students' Non-Formal Education Centre (*Lietuvos mokinių neformaliojo švietimo centras*). The centre is responsible for methodological assistance and advice to schools and educational support agencies and is involved in training career guidance staff. It ensures accessibility to modern guidance and counselling tools, and participates in nationwide monitoring of guidance services for learners.

With the Centre for Information Technologies in Education, the Lithuanian Students' Non-Formal Education Centre is responsible for providing quality information on learning opportunities and career planning on the main national web portal on learning opportunities, *AIKOS (Atvira informavimo, konsultavimo ir orientavimo sistema, <http://www.aikos/smm.lt>)*. It is an open information, guidance and counselling system, which addresses students, employees as well as guidance and counselling personnel. It informs on education and training programmes, providers, qualifications, occupations, admission rules, classifications, education and employment statistics and gives other information. Other education institutions (pedagogical and psychological services, education support agencies, etc.) are involved in providing guidance services to the extent this is related to their functions and actual guidance needs of learners.

The Education Exchange Support Foundation administers the Euroguidance project and disseminates information on good practice examples in Lithuania and other European countries, new methods, creates various guidance and counselling tools and organises training seminars for guidance practitioners.

Local PES also provide vocational information and counselling services for job-seekers in addition to employment mediation.

4.5.2. Organisation and funding

General education and VET institutions are responsible for organising and providing guidance services to their learners. They have to appoint a coordinator who manages

guidance-related activities of career guidance staff, class or group tutors, teachers/vocational teachers, social pedagogues, psychologists, and other support staff.

In 2014, a career education programme (*ugdymo karjerai programa*) was approved by the Minister for education and science for implementation in general education and VET institutions starting from September, 2014 (Lithuanian SMM, 2014b). The programme aims to help learners develop career management skills. It can be integrated into primary, general lower and upper secondary and VET curricula and can take the form of optional subjects or extracurricular activities.

Learners can acquire career-related information on learning and job opportunities through information systems and various other activities such as study visits, excursions, meetings with representatives of educational institutions, employers and other people and other events. Vocational activation (*profesinis veiklinimas*), during which visits to enterprises and lectures are organised, is regarded as one of the most important aspects, as learners are encouraged to experience and learn about different types of work, employment areas, specific characteristics of occupations and career paths and develop the motivation necessary for future employment and lifelong learning, and plan their future careers. Vocational counselling services identify and discuss individual needs and preferences, and advise on issues related to career planning, choice of training or studies, employment and job search.

Vocational guidance is funded from the 'student basket' (Chapter 2.4.1) and other national and local budgets, sponsors, etc. EU structural Funds support development of models for career education and monitoring in general education and VET (2010-15). This project, which is implemented by the Students' Non-Formal Education Centre, finances training of more than 750 career guidance staff, development of programmes and tools for guidance, and provision and monitoring of vocational guidance services.

List of abbreviations

CVET	continuing vocational education and training
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training
EQF	European qualifications framework
GDP	gross domestic product
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
KPMPC	Kvalifikacijų ir profesinio mokymo plėtros centras [Qualifications and VET Development Centre]
LTL	Lithuanian Litas, the former currency of Lithuania
LTQF	Lithuanian qualifications framework
PDCA	‘Plan–do–check–act’ or ‘plan–do–check–adjust’, referred to as ‘quality circle’ nationally
PES	Public Employment Service [Lietuvos darbo birža]
Local PES	local public employment service [teritorinės darbo biržos]
SMM	Švietimo ir mokslo ministerija [Ministry of Education and Science]
SME	Small- and medium-sized enterprises
Statistics Lithuania	Lithuanian Department of Statistics [Lietuvos statistikos departamentas]
VET	vocational education and training
ŽIPVP	Žmogiškųjų išteklių plėtros veikslių programa [2007-13 human resources development operational programme]

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