



# Country report

# Lithuania

2016 update to the European inventory  
on validation of non-formal and informal learning

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# 1 Introduction and Evaluation

## 1.1 Abstract

Validation in Lithuania is integrated within broader education and employment policies and it is understood as supporting the development of lifelong learning. The validation regulations differ among the various sectors of education. The results of validation are recognised by the education system and lead to formal qualifications. Qualifications at all levels of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework may be acquired either through formal education programmes or through gaining professional experience or by independent study. There is a link between validation and the credit system in higher education. The maximum threshold for the number of credits that can be obtained through validation is 75 % of the total study programme volume. The modularisation of VET programmes as well as an introduction of credits in VET is currently under development. Unemployed people or employees who have been given a notice of dismissal are provided information and counselling services resulting in an individual plan designed to reach employment. The provision of information, advice and guidance on the benefits, opportunities and procedures of validation is rather poor. Lithuania also lacks a system for the coordination of validation across education, the labour market and the voluntary sector. Greater inter-institutional cooperation is necessary to further validation development.

## 1.2 Main changes since the 2014 update

New developments that have taken place since 2014 include the amendments of the law on non-formal adult education. It states that competences acquired outside formal education can be recognised as part of formal education programmes, in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Minister of Education and Science or as part of a study programme in accordance with the procedure set out by a higher education provider. The competences could also be recognised and legitimised as a qualification at a certain Lithuanian qualifications framework level. The other developments since 2014 are related to the improvement of validation implementation (e.g. simplification of the competences assessment procedure, updating of requirements for non-formal VET programmes that are delivered for the training of unemployed people or employees who have been given a notice of dismissal).

Validation is covered in strategies related to education and training as well as in programmes increasing employment and is seen as supporting the lifelong learning goal. There is no national strategy for validation as a separate comprehensive policy document.

Generally validation is understood as an assessment and recognition of learning outcomes or prior learning. Lithuania does not have a formal definition of validation.

Lithuania uses a decentralised model of validation. Persons willing to formalise their competences can apply to VET or higher education providers depending on the level of qualification to which these competences are related. If applicants wish to continue education according to an appropriate VET or higher education programme, prior learning is recognised as part of that programme. Thus individuals can reduce the time and costs needed to acquire a formal qualification. The maximum credit limit given for recognised prior learning in higher education is 75 % of a total study programme volume.

Jobseekers receive information and counselling services that aim to increase their motivation, to find employment or undergo training, to help choose a profession or to plan their career taking into account personal features and labour market demand. A counsellor develops an individual employment plan together with the jobseeker, which includes steps to reach employment.

Refugees have limited access to options that the existing validation system in Lithuania offers, because usually validation services are provided in the Lithuanian language. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange is going to use modern professional tests, namely ProfileXT which will help to speed up the integration of refugees into the labour market (Lithuanian Labour Exchange, 2016). One of the advantages of this test is that refugees can provide answers in their own language and the results would be available in the Lithuanian language. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange is going to provide these results to Lithuanian companies looking for people with a corresponding profile. Thus the refugees will have an opportunity to commence job search immediately upon arrival in Lithuania, even if they do not speak Lithuanian.

The level of awareness of the potential value of a validation system amongst the general public is rather poor. Learners often do not have the motivation to gain recognition for non-formal experiences. Employers also do not see any need to formally certify employees' competences acquired in non-formal or informal ways.

Validation is taken into account in the main strategic documents related to education and employment. The results of validation are recognised by the education system and lead to formal qualifications. Qualifications at all levels of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework may be acquired either through formal education programmes or through gaining professional experience or by independent study. In addition, Lithuania has implemented a number of international and national projects supporting validation developments. However, there is still room for improvement. The provision of information, advice and guidance on the benefits, opportunities and procedures of validation is rather poor. Lithuania also lacks a system for the coordination of validation across education, the labour market and the voluntary sector. Greater inter-institutional cooperation is needed to achieve the development of validation.

## **2 National perspective**

### **2.1 Overarching approach to validation**

Validation is seen as supporting the goal of lifelong learning in Lithuania. It is covered in strategies related to education and training (e.g. the Lifelong Learning Strategy), as well as in programmes supporting employment (e.g. Employment Enhancement Programme 2014-2020, Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 2013). Lithuania's progress strategy for 2030 and the long term education strategy 2013-2022 provide a good background for further validation development in Lithuania. The Lithuanian Qualifications Framework (Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 2010) for example aims to ensure the clarity and accessibility of the processes of definition, acquisition, evaluation and recognition of qualifications; to enable the facilitation of workforce mobility on both a national and international scale; to encourage lifelong learning through the application of all forms and methods of formal, non-formal and informal learning with the purpose of moving between different levels of qualification. Qualifications at all levels may be acquired either through formal education programmes or through gaining professional experience or by independent study. The results of validation are recognised by the education system and lead to formal qualifications.

### **2.2 Validation in education and training**

Lithuania has multiple legal frameworks covering validation.

There is no evidence that validation is used in general education. However, some elements can be identified, for example, the civic education of young people is obligatory in general education. Civic education is integrated into the subjects of the education programme and is also carried out through social practices (e.g. participation in the mutual assistance initiative, help for students with special educational needs, voluntary work in non-governmental organisations and social care institutions). Social practices depend on the choice of students

themselves, teacher advice and the needs of the school and local community. The reflective assessment method is used to evaluate outcomes of social activity. One recommendation (Education Development Centre, 2015) is to develop a so-called Social Activity Portfolio, which shows examples and evidence of skills and experience gained during social practice. Thus students go through several validation phases, namely identification and documentation. Furthermore, these results could be validated when applying to VET or higher education programmes.

According to the Law on VET, a person's non-formal vocational education may be recognised as a qualification of an appropriate level or part thereof in accordance with the procedure for assessing competences acquired (Ministry of Education and Science, 2015). This procedure defines that a person wishing to formalise learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at EQF level I-V shall apply to an appropriate VET provider. The applicant must submit a portfolio, which includes documented evidence of learning outcomes acquired outside formal education. The VET provider assesses the skills and knowledge of the applicant on the basis of VET standards and relevant formal VET programmes. Furthermore, the applicant and VET provider agree on a timetable of additional training if necessary and a final qualification exam. Final assessment of the qualification is the responsibility of specifically-accredited institutions<sup>1</sup>. Individuals who successfully pass the exam are awarded a formal qualification certificate (from 2015 – VET diploma).

Persons willing to formalise learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at EQF level VI-VIII can apply to an appropriate higher education provider. Higher education institutions have internal procedures for recognising candidate's non-formal and informal learning. These are developed in line with the recommendations issued by the Minister of Education and Science in 2010 (Ministry of Education and Science, 2010). The validation process in higher education includes four stages, namely: information, consultation, assessment and decision. Assessment is carried out according to an appropriate formal higher education programme. If the evaluation is positive, the applicant is awarded a transcript of records issued by the higher education institution. If the applicant seeks to acquire a higher education qualification, the non-formal and informal learning is recognised as a part of a relevant study programme and the person is awarded a diploma of higher education after successful completion of this study programme. The maximum credit limit given for recognised prior learning is 75 % of the total study programme volume.

Information on developments in the area of open educational resources (OER) and in particular regarding MOOCs is rather limited. A case study carried out in 2011 (Airina Volungevičienė, 2011) revealed that the use of OER is rather poor in Lithuania. Teachers and trainers lack the skills to accept autonomous and individual decisions, and individual, innovative and creative approaches are lacking. There are no data available on validation of learning undertaken by means of OER.

### 2.3 Validation and the labour market

According to the law on support for employment jobseekers shall receive information, counselling and employment intermediation services. These services are to be provided by local labour exchange offices. Information services aim to help jobseekers to find a job or acquire a qualification or competence(s) that are required in labour market. These services consist of information on employment support measures, labour market services and vocational information. Information is provided individually, in groups, either directly (face-to

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Law on VET, Institutions for assessment of competences means a social partner, any other legal person of the Republic of Lithuania, a legal person of any other Member State or an organisation which does not have the status of legal person, or their branch, accredited in the manner prescribed by legal acts, who are granted the right to assess the competences acquired by a person. The list of accredited institutions is available at <http://www.kpmc.lt/kpmc/profesinis-mokymas-3/kompetenciju-vertinimo-instituciju-akreditavimas/>. Currently this list includes joint-stock companies, associations, chambers of commerce, industry and crafts and agriculture.

face) or remotely (by phone, e-mail, internet). The counselling services include general, vocational and psychological consultation. General consultation helps jobseekers to identify their individual needs and professional opportunities in the labour market and choose active labour market policy measures and services. Vocational consultation aims to help jobseekers to assess their skills and personal qualities. Jobseekers are also motivated to undergo education, to work and participate in social and vocational rehabilitation programmes. The aim of psychological consultations is to help individuals to solve their emotional, communication and other issues that could hamper their employment. Information and counselling services support the development of an individual employment plan, which, depending on the jobseeker's profile, contains such measures as intermediate employment, training, requalification, motivation.

The law on support for employment indicates that unemployed persons or employees who have been given a notice of dismissal could be offered training according to formal or non-formal VET programmes if it is necessary for employment. A jobseeker is free to select a VET provider, which is obliged to report on a monthly basis to the labour exchange about the training progress of the applicant. If needed, the VET provider carries out validation of applicant's non-formal and informal learning (please see section 2.2 for more detail).

The Lithuanian Labour Exchange has responsibility to lay down the requirements for non-formal VET programmes that are delivered for the training of unemployed people or employees who have been given a notice of dismissal. It is required that the programme, among other things, shall indicate competences the learner shall acquire, which qualification or part (module) contains these competences, and which accredited competence assessment institution (see Section 5) can assess these competences (Lithuanian Labour Exchange, 2016). The presented requirements facilitate and support the process of validation of non-formal learning.

### **2.3.1 Skills audits**

The information and counselling services provided to jobseekers cover issues related to employment and to increase their motivation, to find employment or undergo training, to help choose a profession or to plan their career taking into account personal features and demand from the labour market. Together with the jobseeker, the counsellor develops an individual employment plan which includes steps to reach employment (see section 2.3).

## **2.4 Validation and the third sector**

Regarding the initiatives of recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning in the third sector, some discussions at the national level in Lithuania were initiated by the Symposium on Recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning (The European Youth Centre, 2013). However no credible solutions or initiatives taken by or involving youth organisations and voluntary organisations have been undertaken. The exception is a national project which among other activities aimed to develop and implement a competence assessment mechanism for youth workers including those working in the third sector.

## **3 Links to national qualification systems**

The Lithuanian Qualifications Framework (LTQF) was approved by the government in 2010. The Description of the LTQF sets out the system of levels of qualifications established in Lithuania on the basis of competences required for personal activities. Among other things, the LTQF aims to ensure the clarity and accessibility of the processes of definition, acquisition, evaluation and recognition of qualifications; to enable the facilitation of workforce mobility on the national and international scale; to encourage lifelong learning through the application of all the forms and methods of formal, non-formal and informal learning with the

purpose of moving between different levels of qualification. The LTQF consists of 8 levels that are arranged hierarchically in accordance with the criteria<sup>2</sup> defining these levels. The LTQF includes qualifications for working and learning<sup>3</sup>. Qualifications of levels I-IV shall be acquired by completing VET and/or general education programmes, level V – by completing training programmes intended for persons with a professional qualification as well as fixed-duration professional experience and higher education programmes not leading to a degree, levels VI-VIII – by completing higher education programmes. In addition, qualifications at all levels may be acquired through gaining professional experience or by independent study. The provisions of the description of LTQF shall apply to such areas as the development and approval of sectoral qualifications and VET standards, the development and implementation of formal VET or higher education programmes, the evaluation of the abilities acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning, etc. LTQF levels directly correspond to the levels of European Qualifications Framework (EQF)<sup>4</sup>.

VET and higher education programmes are based on learning outcomes. Persons willing to formalise learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at EQF levels I-V shall apply to an appropriate VET provider and at EQF VI-VII to an appropriate higher education provider. The results of validation are recognised by the education system and lead to formal qualifications. If applicants wish to continue education according to an appropriate formal VET or higher education programme, prior learning is recognised as part of that programme.

It must be noted that it was comparatively recently that the introduction of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) began. According to this system, credits are granted not only in view of the amount of study time but also learning outcomes. One year of studies represents 60 ECTS credits. There is a link between validation and the credit system in higher education. As mentioned previously, a maximum threshold for the number of credits that can be obtained via validation is 75 % of the total study programme volume (Ministry of Education and Science, 2010).

The modularisation of VET programmes as well as the introduction of credits in VET is only just starting in Lithuania. The concept of the modular VET system (Qualifications and VET Development Centre, 2012) beside other documents is in line with the “European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)” adopted in 2009. It defines that “credit for learning as a unit of learning volume, which is used to measure learning outcomes and the period of learning. One year of continuous learning corresponds to 60 credits”. VET programmes shall be developed on the basis of sectoral qualifications of VET standard (see Section 4) and consist of modules. Each module is based on learning outcomes and is assigned a certain number of credits. According to the existing procedure (Ministry of Education and Science, 2015) the volume of modular VET programmes have to be defined in credits, where one credit equals 27 hours. The volume of one module should not exceed 10 credits. Sixty modular programmes have been developed during the period 2010-2015. Currently they are piloted by VET providers.

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<sup>2</sup> **Complexity** - describes the character of activities, variety of tasks and the degree of responsibility, **autonomy** - describes changes in the activity organisation and nature of subordination and **variability** - describes activities in terms of changing technological and organisational environment

<sup>3</sup> The main purpose of learning qualifications is to prepare a person for further learning. These qualifications are acquired upon completion of general lower or upper secondary education programmes.

<sup>4</sup> The correspondence between LTQF and EQF was established during the referencing process which has been completed in 2012. Referencing is based on theoretical comparison of learning outcomes in training programmes with LTQF and EQF level descriptors. The referencing report is published on the website:

[https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/documentation#documentation\\_73](https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/documentation#documentation_73)

## 4 Standards

In Lithuania the same standards are used for both validation and qualifications in formal education. The developed VET standards<sup>5</sup>, Sectoral Qualifications Standards<sup>6</sup> and Descriptions of Study fields<sup>7</sup> aim at improving the correspondence of education to labour market needs. Formal VET programmes shall be developed in accordance with the corresponding Sectoral Qualifications Standard or VET standard (Ministry of Education and Science, 2015). The basis for the development of higher education programmes are Descriptions of Study fields. A VET or higher education provider assesses the non-formal and informal learning of the applicant on the basis of the relevant formal education programme. The VET provider is required to use assessment methods which are specified in that programme. If applicants wish to continue education according to an appropriate VET or higher education programme, prior learning is recognised as part of that programme. Please also see Section 9.3.

## 5 Organisations and institutions involved in validation arrangements and its coordination

The **Ministry of Education and Science (MES)** implements the national system of formal and non-formal education which encourages social attitudes in favour of education and creates conditions for lifelong learning in a changing democratic society including validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The Ministry of Education and Science accredits the following, upon the approval of the Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre:

- institutions that seek to gain the right to assess individual competences, refuse accreditation, suspend accreditation validity, revoke accreditation suspension and withdraw accreditation in accordance with the laws.

This Ministry also supervises the final assessment of qualifications.

The **Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre** – an overall objective of the Centre is to ensure a development of the lifelong learning system which corresponds to the needs of the national economy within the global context. Among its core activities are: the development of sectoral qualifications standards and VET standards, organisation of the development of modular programmes, the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, development of the VET credits system; quality assurance, and to act as the National Coordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework. The Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre submits the candidacy of an institution that seeks the right to become a competence assessment centre to the Ministry of Education and Science for approval.

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<sup>5</sup> VET Standard is designed for one specific qualification and is comprised of three interrelated components: parameters characterising occupational activities, training objectives and assessment parameters. The first VET standards were developed in 1998. Currently there are 77 standards that regulate VET qualifications.

<sup>6</sup> Seeking to improve the qualification development system, sectoral qualifications standards were given a legal basis in 2007. They are being developed for a specific sector of the economy and describe the most important qualifications in this sector at all levels of the National Qualifications Framework. Currently standards in 10 sectors of the economy have been developed.

<sup>7</sup> Descriptions of study fields are benchmark statements for different discipline areas (for example informatics, technologies, engineering). They have to be developed by a working group comprising representatives from both higher education institutions and employers. Descriptions should serve as guiding documents for study programmes development, implementation and evaluation. Thus it is expected that study programmes will better correspond to labour market needs. 53 drafts have been developed during the period 2012-2014; the majority of them came into force in 2015

The **Lithuanian Ministry of Economy** participates in shaping human resources development policy, takes part in developing and implementing VET policy, shapes national policy in recognition of regulated professions, and takes part in preparing legal acts in the area of competences assessment. Together with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Economy defines the structure of qualification and VET standards and the procedure for their development, and approves them. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour remains responsible for social affairs, including training issues for unemployed people.

The **Lithuanian Labour Exchange and local labour exchange offices** implement employment support policy. They provide information, counselling and employment intermediation services to unemployed people or employees who have been given a notice of dismissal.

The **stakeholders (employers and trade unions)** initiate and support the development of new qualifications, occupational standards, education and training programmes.

The **higher education institutions** provide validation services of competences relevant to qualifications at EQF level VI-VIII and acquired in non-formal and informal adult education system.

The **VET institutions** provide validation services of competences relevant to qualifications at EQF level I-V and acquired in the non-formal and informal adult education system. The final assessment of knowledge and skills that are needed to acquire formal education is the responsibility of **accredited competence assessment institutions**. Any social partner or another legal entity of the Republic of Lithuania or other member state of the EU, or an organisation / its unit not holding the status of a legal person could undertake the accreditation. An accredited competence assessment institution has the right to assess the competences acquired in formal and non-formal education programmes, employment activities or informally and is obliged to assure the quality of assessment process. The list of accredited institutions is published on the website of the Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre<sup>8</sup>. VET providers have the right to choose (through a public procurement process) an accredited competence assessment institution that shall carry out the final assessment of a qualification. A VET provider awards a qualification diploma to the applicant if the results of the final assessment are positive.

## 6 Information, advice and guidance

### 6.1 Awareness-raising and recruitment

Generally awareness-raising and recruitment is the responsibility of formal VET and higher education providers. However the publicly available information on validation options is rather poor. In case of higher education the procedures for the validation of non-formal and informal learning are placed on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science. In addition, individuals can find this information on the websites of higher education providers. Concerning VET providers, there is almost no publicly available information with regard to the validation process. In general, awareness-raising and recruitment in this area is weak in Lithuania.

### 6.2 Information, advice and guidance

Usually information, advice and guidance are delivered to validation users after they apply to a VET or higher education provider. The VET or HE provider informs the applicant about the validation process.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.kpmc.lt/kpmc/?page\\_id=1488](http://www.kpmc.lt/kpmc/?page_id=1488)

The validation process in higher education includes four stages, namely: information, consultation, assessment and decision (Ministry of Education and Science, 2010). The first stage is intended to familiarise the applicants with the validation principles, procedures, possible assessment results, and studies according to individual needs. Information is free of charge. If the applicant further decides to undertake validation, then the consultation stage starts. The higher education institution appoints a consultant who helps the applicant to prepare for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The cost of consultation is included in the fee for validation.

### **6.3 Measures to enhance the awareness of validation initiatives and practices amongst guidance practitioners**

There is no information available about the measures to improve awareness of validation amongst guidance practitioners or human resources managers.

## **7 Validation practitioners**

### **7.1 Profile of validation practitioners**

As mentioned earlier, a person wishing to formalise learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at EQF level I-V can apply to an appropriate VET provider. The director of this institution appoints VET teachers who assess the applicant's non-formal and informal learning. If necessary there could be consultations arranged with employers or employees from companies acting in the field of activity related to an appropriate VET programme (Ministry of Education and Science, 2008). In case of final qualification assessment, the accredited competence assessment institutions are responsible for the selection of practitioners and VET teachers who shall carry out the assessment. According to interviews carried out for this country report, these institutions provide consultations and training for assessors.

In higher education an evaluation board is created to carry out the validation process (Ministry of Education and Science, 2010). This board is usually comprised of higher education lecturers. It also could include the dean and head of the relevant department<sup>9</sup>.

### **7.2 Qualification requirements**

There is no mandatory requirement for assessors to undertake training. There is also no requirement for VET or higher education teachers, who are appointed to assess non-formal and informal learning, to have a certain level of qualification. However, for a final qualification (at EQF level I-V) assessment, the assessors are required to have either a minimum of five years of practical work or four years of VET and learning outcomes assessment experience. Those who prepare tasks for the final assessment are required to have no less than two years of task preparation experience. In addition the qualification level of both assessors and those who prepare tasks, shall not be lower than the level of qualification which is to be awarded to the applicant (Ministry of Education and Science, 2012).

### **7.3 Provision of training and support to validation practitioners**

The training for assessment practitioners is not compulsory. Generally, non-formal training is offered to assessors. For instance, in higher education the majority of all validation initiatives have been developed as part of an ESF funded project, which usually included such

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<sup>9</sup> The descriptions of procedures for recognising person's non-formal and informal learning in higher education institutions: <http://www.smm.lt/web/lt/smm-svietimas/suaugusiuju-svietimas>

activities as the development of methodology for the non-formal and informal learning assessment, consultation and training of assessors, etc.

## 8 Quality assurance

Persons wishing to formalise their non-formal and informal learning have to apply to an appropriate VET or higher education provider. According to the Law on Education the quality of education is the responsibility of education providers. They are encouraged to periodically carry out self-evaluation. An external quality evaluation according to the existing legislation is carried out periodically as well. All education providers have internal quality assurance systems (including the quality of the assessment of learning outcomes) in place. There are no special quality assurance frameworks for the evaluation of the validation process.

In VET, final qualification assessment is separated from education, i.e. the assessment of knowledge, skills and competences to acquire a qualification is independent and is carried out by an accredited competence assessment institution. A description of the procedure for the assessment of competences (Ministry of Education and Science, 2010) lays down detailed rules for: application of candidates, preparation of the assessment tasks, requirements for applicants, composition of the qualification evaluation board, organisation of the assessment process and the implementation of competences assessment. According to this document, if the accredited competence assessment institution is a VET provider, it is not allowed to assess competences of students from that school. The accredited competences institution has to set up a qualification evaluation board. The evaluation board must be composed of representatives of employers and employees and VET teachers. The representative of employers takes the role of chair of the evaluation board. The accredited competences institution assures the quality and transparency of the competence assessment (Ministry of Education and Science, 2012). The Ministry of Education and Science has the responsibility to supervise the final assessment of competences. Please also see Section 7.1.

## 9 Inputs, outputs and outcomes

### 9.1 Funding

Usually, applicants are required to pay a certain fee for the validation process. The education provider decides on how much to charge for the validation. If the person decides to continue learning according to a chosen VET programme, prior learning (including non-formal and informal learning) is recognised as part of their training programme. In this case validation is financed from funds that are allocated for the VET programme implementation (Ministry of Education and Science, 2015).

The VET provider has to calculate the qualification assessment funds requirement on an annual basis, using a cost calculation methodology (Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 2012) and the number of persons seeking to assess their competences (Ministry of Education and Science, 2012a). According to this methodology the costs of validation that need to be covered depend on the wage, social insurance, and expenditure for goods and services that are necessary for the competence assessment process and the number of persons seeking to assess their competences. This methodology could be applied to calculate funds from national and municipal budgets, the Employment fund, and other funds. The funding required for the assessment of competences are allocated to the VET provider according to the calculated funds requirement by the appropriation manager. These funds are usually used for the final qualification assessment covering both persons willing to formalise learning outcomes acquired outside formal education and those, who graduate from a formal VET programme<sup>10</sup>. The cost of the competence assessment per person which is set for 2016 is approximately EUR 7 (Ministry of Education and Science, 2015).

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<sup>10</sup> A person willing to formalise learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at EQF level I-V shall apply to an appropriate VET provider. VET provider assesses the knowledge and skills of the applicant and agree on

Higher education providers are recommended to calculate the cost of validation taking into account the cost of analysing the application, consultation and preparation for the validation (this cost could not exceed the value of one basic social benefit) and the cost of the competences assessment which depends on the volume of correspondence between the individual's competences and study results (the cost for one credit cannot exceed 0.6 of basic social benefit) (Ministry of Education and Science, 2010). Currently basic social benefit is EUR 38<sup>11</sup>.

There are no data available to assess the overall budget for validation initiatives.

## 9.2 Distribution of costs

There is no common fee for validation in Lithuania. Please also see section 9.1.

## 9.3 Evidence of benefits to individuals

One of the main benefits is that the results of validation are recognised by the education system and lead to formal qualifications. If applicants wish to continue education according to an appropriate VET or higher education programme, prior learning is recognised as part of that programme. Thus individuals undergoing validation can reduce the time and costs needed to acquire a formal qualification.

## 9.4 Beneficiaries and users of validation processes

### 9.4.1 Validation trends

A validation indicator is set in the national education strategy (Valstybinė švietimo 2013-2022 metų strategija). It is foreseen that the number of recognised qualifications per 10 000 population shall be 5 % by 2017 and 10 % by 2022. However there is no evidence about the achievements of set targets.

### 9.4.2 Validation users

There are no data available on validation users.

### 9.4.3 Validation and migrants / refugees and other disadvantaged groups

Lithuania is among the countries with the lowest rate of registered first time applicants during the second quarter 2015 (i.e. 21 first time applicants per million inhabitants). They mainly come from the Ukraine, Georgia and India<sup>12</sup>. Lithuania is committed to resettle 1 105 refugees (1 035 of them from Italy, Greece and Hungary, the remaining 70 from third countries) during the period 2016-2017<sup>13</sup>. The Lithuanian Migration Policy Guidelines<sup>14</sup> indicate that administrative capacities for the implementation of the migration policy are insufficient. According to the UN Refugee Agency report (2014) the refugees also raise an issue of the recognition of their educational background in Lithuania (e.g. their diplomas were not recognised by Lithuanian employers). One of the proposed recommendations for Lithuania is "to develop a system and methodology for the validation of academic,

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additional training if necessary and a final qualification exam, which is taken together with those who graduate formal programme.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.sodra.lt/lt/situacijos/statistika/pagrindiniai-socialiniai-rodikliai>

<sup>12</sup> EUROSTAT, Over 210 000 first time asylum seekers in the EU in the second quarter of 2015, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-press-releases/-/3-18092015-BP>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ivilnius.lt/naujienos/svietimo-naujienos/socialiniu-reikalu-ir-darbo-komitetas-aptare-pasirengima-perkelti-i-lietuva-pabegelius/69643d33323538>

<sup>14</sup> [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=481119](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=481119)

professional and vocational diplomas, certificates and degrees, using good practice and expertise from European countries” (UN Refugee Agency, 2014). Refugees have limited access to the opportunities that the existing validation system in Lithuania offers, because usually validation services are provided in Lithuanian.

As mentioned earlier, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange is going to use modern professional tests, namely ProfileXT, to speed up the integration of refugees into the labour market (Lithuanian Labour Exchange, 2016a). These tests are to be provided free of charge by a private service company which provides talent management tools and services. ProfileXT assessment provides detailed and objective information about a person’s thinking abilities, personality traits, professional interests and suitability for a particular job. One of the advantages of this test is that refugees can provide answers in their own language and the results would be available in the Lithuanian language. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange is going to provide these results to Lithuanian companies looking for people with a corresponding profile. Thus the refugees will have an opportunity to start a job search immediately upon arrival in Lithuania even if they do not speak Lithuanian.

## 10 Validation methods

The most common methods for documentation, assessment and certification that are usually used in Lithuania include the portfolio method, interview, tests and examination.

According to the existing procedure (Ministry of Education and Science, 2015a) a person wishing to formalise learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at EQF level I-V shall apply to an appropriate VET provider. The applicant must submit a portfolio, which includes documented evidence of learning outcomes acquired outside formal education. The VET provider assesses skills and knowledge of the applicant on the basis of VET standards and relevant VET programmes. The VET provider must use the assessment methods which are specified in the relevant VET programmes<sup>15</sup>. Usually these methods include tests, individual tasks, demonstration etc. VET providers report they also use the structured interview method. Furthermore the applicant and VET provider agree on a timetable of additional training if necessary and a final qualification exam. As mentioned previously, final assessment of the qualification is detached from the training process and is the responsibility of specifically-accredited institutions. VET providers may select through a public procurement process an accredited competence assessment institution which best suits their needs. Furthermore they inform the applicant about the options available in this institution with regard to the assessment of theoretical knowledge. Among other methods this could include tests available electronically. Individuals who successfully pass the exam are awarded a qualification certificate (from 2015 – VET diploma) showing the respective LTQF/EQF levels.

Persons wishing to formalise learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at EQF level VI-VIII shall apply to an appropriate higher education provider. The majority (35 out of 45<sup>16</sup>) of higher education institutions have internal procedures for recognising person's non-formal and informal learning. These are developed in line with the recommendations issued by the Minister of Education and Science in 2010 (Ministry of Education and Science, 2010), according to which higher education providers could apply various methods for the assessment of non-formal and informal learning. Analysis of the documents<sup>17</sup> reveals that the most popular is the portfolio method. In addition institutions use other methods such as interview, demonstration, exams etc. In case the evaluation is positive the applicant is awarded a transcript of records issued by the higher education institution. If the applicant seeks to acquire a higher education qualification the non-formal and informal learning is recognised as a part<sup>18</sup> of the study programme and the person is awarded a diploma of higher education after successful completion of an appropriate study programme.

<sup>15</sup> VET programmes: [http://www.kpmc.lt/kpmc/?page\\_id=1505](http://www.kpmc.lt/kpmc/?page_id=1505)

<sup>16</sup> Currently there are 45 higher education institutions in Lithuania: <https://www.aikos.smm.lt/layouts/15/Asw.Aikos.Reports/ViewReport.aspx?report=%2fStatistin%C4%97s+ataskaitos%2fSMIR+statistin%C4%97s+ataskaitos%2fSMIRInstitucijosPagalGrupesPriklausomybeTipus>

<sup>17</sup> The descriptions of procedures for recognising person's non-formal and informal learning in higher education institutions: <http://www.smm.lt/web/lt/smm-svietimas/suaugusiuju-svietimas>

<sup>18</sup> This part could not exceed 75% of total study programme volume.

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## Country report Lithuania

2016 update to the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning

The 2012 Council recommendation on validation encourages Member States to put in place national arrangements for validation by 2018. These arrangements will enable individuals to increase the visibility and value of their knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education and training: at work, at home or in voluntary activities.

This country report is one of 36 that, together with a synthesis report and thematic reports, constitute the European Inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning. The inventory is a regularly updated overview of validation practices and arrangements in all Member States, EFTA countries and Turkey. It is a reference point for information on validation in Europe. It is organised around the principles defined in the 2012 Council Recommendation that were further elaborated in the European guidelines for validation. This is its sixth update (2004, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2014 and 2016).



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