European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 update

COUNTRY REPORT: LITHUANIA

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1 Introduction

Validation in Lithuania is an integral part of the lifelong learning system and is covered by national strategies and programmes. Qualifications at all levels of the national qualifications framework may be acquired either through formal education programmes or through gaining professional experience or by independent study (Lithuanian Government 2010). Lithuania has multiple legal frameworks covering validation. In vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE) any learning or working experience may be assessed and recognised. There is no evidence that validation is used in general education.

The main changes since 2016 can be grouped into two categories:

1. Amendments in legislation. The main ones are as follows:
   - the amended law on employment (the Lithuanian Parliament 2016) for the first time introduced validation of non-formal and informal learning as one of the measures supporting learning¹;
   - the amended law on VET introduced validation of non-formal and informal learning as one of the key aims of the VET system (Lithuanian Parliament 2017);
   - the amendment of the procedure for recognition of prior learning attainments (Ministry of Education and Science 2018).

2. The implementation of different projects, mainly Erasmus+, aiming at creation of online validation instruments (e.g. open digital badge systems), raising awareness on validation, supporting validation practitioners.

Since 2012 significant progress has been achieved in validation of non-formal and informal learning. Lithuania has put in place validation arrangements which make it possible to assess non-formal or informal learning in VET and HE. The skills and competences acquired outside formal education are assessed against standards or programmes used in formal education. The results of validation are recognised by the education system and lead to formal qualifications which are linked to the national qualifications framework. Persons wishing to formalise their non-formal and informal learning must apply to an appropriate VET or HE provider. Each of them has an internal quality system which also applies to the assessment of learning outcomes. The arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning in VET and HE include all elements (i.e. identification, documentation, assessment and certification) as specified in the Council recommendation².

However, there is still room for improvement. The validation arrangements do not cover all sectors of the education system. Although the level of awareness about the validation of non-formal and informal learning amongst the public is rather poor, it is not currently among strategic priorities and lacks necessary funding. The information about validation users is not monitored. There is also a lack of validation reference material, methodologies and tools. The provision for the development of the professional competences of staff involved in the validation process is missing. The quality of VET students’ competences assessment, which also covers validation of non-formal and informal learning, is insufficient (KPMPC 2017). Further developments of the validation system include the introduction of a new cumulative assessment approach (that shall cover learning outcomes acquired outside formal education) into general education (Lithuanian Government 2017). It is also planned to create a digital

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¹ Learning is defined as one of the Employment Supporting Measures (Lithuanian Parliament 2016).
tool, which will provide information about the possibilities to validate non-formal and informal learning and would also direct an applicant to a certain validation provider. This tool also allows initial testing and monitoring of applicants' competences³.

2 National perspective

2.1 Overarching approach to validation

Validation in Lithuania is an integral part of the lifelong learning system and is covered by several national strategies and programmes.

The national progress strategy ‘Lithuania 2030’ (Lithuanian Parliament, 2012) seeks to ensure the development, application and recognition of individual skills. The key initiatives for change in the area of Smart Society⁴ include the development of a competence assessment and self-assessment framework as well as reorganization of the examination system to become a system of accumulation and recognition of various learning achievements.

The long-term education strategy 2013-2022 (Lithuanian Parliament, 2013) foresees the creation and implementation of a system for validating non-formal and informal learning.

Both the Employment Enhancement Programme 2014-2020 (Lithuanian Government, 2013) and the national progress programme⁵ for the period of 2104-2020 (Lithuanian Government, 2014) provide for the development of a system for competences (acquired in different ways including non-formal and informal learning) assessment and recognition. The non-formal adult education and continuing training development programme for 2016-2023 (Lithuanian Government, 2016) also aims to create and implement a system for validation of competences acquired through all forms of learning.

The plan⁶ implementing Government programme (Lithuanian Government, 2017) includes development and introduction of a new cumulative assessment approach (that shall also cover learning outcomes acquired outside formal education) into general education.

A number of Lithuanian laws recognise the rights of individuals to access validation initiatives. The main of them are as follows:

- the Law on Education⁷ defines that a competence acquired through non-formal education may be recognised as a part of the formal education programme⁸ or as part of a study programme⁹. The same idea is repeated in the Law on

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³ The national project ‘Further development of the system for evaluation and recognition of competences acquired in different ways’, which started in June 2018.
⁴ According to the ‘Lithuania 2030’ changes will take place in three areas: smart society, smart economy and smart governance. The Smart Society is a happy society, which seeks greater personal and economic security and dynamism, as well as fairer income distribution, cleaner environment, better social and political inclusion, better access to education and training, skills improvement and good public health.
⁵ This programme implements national strategy ‘Lithuania 2030’. The programme was amended in 2016.
⁶ Amended in 2018.
⁷ The new version was approved in 2011
⁸ In accordance with the procedure laid down by the Minister of Education and Science (except study programmes).
⁹ In accordance with the procedure laid down by a higher education institution.
Higher Education and Research\(^{10}\) as well as in the Law on Non-formal Adult Education and Continuing training\(^{11}\);

- the Law on Vocational Education and Training was amended at the end of 2017 (Lithuanian Parliament, 2017). The law establishes that the creation of conditions for validating non-formal and informal learning is one of the key aims of the vocational education and training system. It also states that the competence acquired outside formal education may be recognised as a qualification of an appropriate NQF level or part thereof in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Minister of Education and Science and the Minister of Economy\(^{12}\). The law recognises the right of a student to receive recognition of non-formal and informal learning. According to the law the assessment and recognition of competences and qualifications\(^{13}\) shall be funded from state budget.

A new Law on Employment (Lithuanian Parliament, 2016) for the first time introduced validation of non-formal and informal learning as one of the measures supporting learning. The law establishes that the unemployed person is free to choose a validation service provider\(^{14}\) and that the budget shall not exceed 0.6 of the minimum monthly pay\(^{15}\) approved by the Lithuanian Government. The law also states that the number of validation services should be limited to three per year for one unemployed person; and that the labour exchange shall organise assessment and recognition of competences acquired outside formal education for unemployed people. In accordance with the procedure for implementation of employment support measures (Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2017) it is stated that the labour exchange shall organise validation of non-formal and informal learning if it is necessary for unemployed people to fill a vacancy or start their own business\(^{16}\).

### 2.2 Validation in education and training

Lithuania has multiple legal frameworks covering validation. In VET and HE any learning or working experience may be assessed and recognised.

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. It is also recommended that a so-called Social Activity Portfolio be developed, which shows examples and evidence of skills and experience gained during social practice (Education Development Centre, 2015). Thus, students go through several validation phases, namely

\(^{10}\) The new version was approved in 2016.

\(^{11}\) The new version was approved in 2014.

\(^{12}\) The procedure is currently under development.

\(^{13}\) Competences and qualifications acquired in different ways, i.e. through formal, non-formal and informal.

\(^{14}\) The service provider shall be authorised to carry out the assessment and recognition of learning outcomes.

\(^{15}\) Since 1 January 2018 the minimum monthly pay in Lithuania is EUR 400.

\(^{16}\) According to the data of the labour exchange, since the introduction (2017) of this measure 60 unemployed people participated in the validation of non-formal and informal learning and 30 of them received qualification recognition.
identification and documentation. Furthermore, these results could be validated when applying to VET or HE programmes.

In vocational education, the procedure for competences assessment (Ministry of Education and Science, 2015) 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 based on 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. 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 HE provider. HE institutions have internal procedures for recognising candidate’s non-formal and informal learning. In 2017 the Ministry of Education and Science issued general principles for validation of non-formal and informal learning (Ministry of Education and Science, 2017). These are as follows: accessibility, flexibility, transparency and objectivity, comparability and volunteerism. It is stated that the validation process in HE shall include four stages, namely: information, consultation, assessment and decision. Assessment is carried out according to an appropriate formal HE programme. If the evaluation is positive, the applicant is awarded a transcript of records issued by the HE institution. If the applicant seeks to acquire a HE 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 HE 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 open educational resources (OER) and 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 employment (Lithuanian Parliament, 2016) 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 the labour market. Information services consist of information about employment support measures and labour market services and vocational information. Jobseekers can receive information at local labour exchange offices, youth job centres, open information terminals and information boards.

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17 Information is provided individually, in groups, either directly (face-to face) or remotely (by phone, e-mail, internet).
18 To support youth employment, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange has established branches – Youth Job Centres. The main task of these centres is to prompt young people’s integration into the labour market, to assist them in getting better understanding about the social environment and the labour market, and to solve their employment. The services are free of charge, and registration is optional.
The counselling services aim at motivating jobseekers to enter employment or to learn, helping them to choose a profession or plan a career. The consultation services consist of vocational counselling, vocational career planning and psychological consultation. Vocational counselling helps jobseekers to assess their skills as well as personal qualities and to make better career choices. Vocational career planning equips jobseekers with career management skills and knowledge. 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 counselling service could be provided individually or in groups.

In addition, a new law on employment (Lithuanian Parliament, 2016) introduced the validation of non-formal and informal learning as one of the measures supporting learning. The unemployed person is free to choose a validation service provider\(^\text{19}\) and the budget cannot exceed 0.6 of the minimum monthly pay\(^\text{20}\) approved by the Lithuanian Government. The number of validation services is limited to three per year for one unemployed person. The labour exchange should organise assessment and recognition of competences acquired outside formal education for unemployed people. In accordance with the procedure for the implementation of employment support measures (Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2017) the labour exchange should organise validation of non-formal and informal learning if it is necessary for the unemployed person to fill in the vacancy or start their own business\(^\text{21}\). Validation should be implemented in accordance with the procedure for competences assessment in VET that was described in section 2.2.

The implementation of a new project (TAPK - Creating Your Future Prospects and Take the Opportunity), targeting long-term unemployed, unskilled and unemployed people over 54 years old and people with disabilities was launched in December 2017. Project partners include 10 local labour exchange offices. Validation of non-formal and informal learning is one of the project activities. The number of participants in validation activity by 2020 should reach 1,350 unemployed. The project is funded from European Social Fund.

There is no information available on how and to what extent enterprises use validation.

### 2.3.1 Skills audits

There is no official definition of a skills audit in Lithuania and no specific information is available.

### 2.4 Validation and the third sector

The Lithuanian Association of Non-formal Education (LANE)\(^\text{22}\) in cooperation with partners in 2015-2017 implemented a strategic partnership project ‘Trusted Badge

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\(^{19}\) The service provider shall be authorised to carry out the assessment and recognition of learning outcomes.

\(^{20}\) Since 1 January 2018 the minimum monthly pay in Lithuania is EUR 400.

\(^{21}\) According to the data of the labour exchange, since the introduction (2017) of this measure 60 unemployed people participated in the validation of non-formal and informal learning and 30 of them received qualification recognition.

\(^{22}\) The Lithuanian Association of Non-formal Education unites people who apply non-formal education principles into their practice and seek recognition of non-formal education. This Association creates
The project aimed at strengthening cooperation between non-governmental organisations and companies and ensuring better recognition of competences acquired in a non-formal setting through the technological standard of open badges. Open digital badge is a digital certificate that encrypts information related to the learning process, achievements or competences of the badge owner. It is a digital tool to recognise learning and skills that are often too difficult to measure within the programme/process of non-formal education (soft skills, acquired attitudes, participation, personal hobbies, etc.) Digital Open Badges serve as a bridge between various stakeholders and actors to communicate the value and meaning of youth work programmes and their outcomes.

Based on the open badges standard, the LANE developed a specialised online system, so called achievement programme 'Discover Yourself'. The achievement programme is aligned to the eight key competences for lifelong learning: learning to learn, digital competence, civic competence, cultural awareness, entrepreneurship, mathematical competence, science and technology, mother tongue and foreign languages. Each competence has three-level badges and a mandatory number of tasks to complete. Badge earners can manage their achievements using a Badge Wallet application. They are free to choose which achievements to share and where (e.g. on Facebook, LinkedIn). The achievement programme is open to 'Discover Yourself' participants who are involved in the Youth Voluntary Service, i.e. a young person must first participate in the project and then commit to volunteering at one of the host organisations for at least one month. The impact research revealed that the achievement programme is seen as a way for volunteers to take initiative, stay active and curious and get to know each other. It also showed that there is a considerable lack of knowledge and wider awareness about the usefulness of Open Badges. Thus, the role of mentors is essential in informing young people about the role and benefits of Open Badges. The benefits of the programme include: the trusted badge systems can be accessed and used by any youth work organisation or institution; now already volunteers can get 0.25 points (out of 10) during admission process to the University; this programme is endorsed by the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists and the Lithuanian Labour Exchange.

The non-governmental organization ‘Social Action’ and the LANE developed European Voluntary Service (EVS) mentoring badges. The system consists of 23 training and development opportunities for those working with young people and contributes to the development of non-formal education quality. http://www.neformaliai.lt/apie-mus/

23https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8TgWdLuv6eTeUlaQlFxQ2MwSVE/view
24 Each badge has information built in on the achievement: name, description, criteria, the issuing body, evidence, the date of issuing and other additional information.
25 6 badge systems were created and tested during the project. All badge systems are free and publicly available for use at badge library within the badge management platform www.badgecraft.eu.
26 From September 2015, the Youth Volunteer Service is a part of the youth guarantee initiative’s project “Discover Yourself” in Lithuania. The project is coordinated by the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and the Lithuanian Labour Exchange. Voluntary service is open to any young person who is between the ages of 15 and 29 and not in education, employment or training. The duration of voluntary service in the ‘Discover Yourself’ project is from 1 to 4 months. Young people undertake to volunteer from 4 to 8 hours per day, up to 25 hours per week and up to 100 hours per month.
27 Young people mentioned that Open Badges were a helpful tool in dealing with the uncertainty of starting something new and a way of integrating into a new group of people.
28 http://www.savanoriai.org/lt/apie-mus/#top
29 https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8TgWdLuv6eTeUlaQlFxQ2MwSVE/view
professional development badges\textsuperscript{30} and 15 systemic work badges\textsuperscript{31}. By using this system both organization and mentors can easily display EVS mentor’s achievements.

3 \textbf{Links to national qualification systems}

The Lithuanian Qualifications Framework (LTQF) was approved by the government in 2010 (Lithuanian Government, 2010). It is referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)\textsuperscript{32}. 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 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 provisions of the LTQF shall apply to the development and approval of sectoral qualifications (please see section 4), the development and implementation of formal VET or HE programmes\textsuperscript{33}, the evaluation of the knowledge and skills acquired in different ways.

According to the law on VET (Lithuanian Parliament, 2017) the results of validation should be recognised as a part or a whole formal qualification. The general principles for assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning in HE (Ministry of Education and Science, 2017) define that if an applicant wishes to acquire an HE qualification, prior learning is recognised as part of the chosen programme. If not, then the HE institution issues a certificate indicating the number of acquired study credits.

The modularisation of VET programmes as well as the introduction of credits in VET is currently under development in Lithuania.

The validation of non-formal and informal learning of unemployed people is linked to the LTQF as it should be implemented in accordance with the procedure for competences assessment in VET (please see section 2.2 and the information above). According to the information available the validation initiatives in the third sector are not linked to the LTQF.

4 \textbf{Standards}

In Lithuania the same standards are used for both development of qualifications in formal education and validation of non-formal and informal learning. The developed

\textsuperscript{30} The badges related to the development of EVS mentors within five competence areas: (1) Methodological, (2) Intercultural, (3) Educational relationship, (4) Facilitation of learning to learn, (5) Communication and cooperation competences.

\textsuperscript{31} These badges are related to 4 functions of a mentor: (1) Cooperation and reflection of mentorship practices with EVS coordinator; (2) Ongoing support and contact with the EVS volunteer; (3) Ongoing cooperation, learning and supporting in cooperation with other mentors, and (4) Cooperation with the hosting organization(s).

\textsuperscript{32} The LTQF levels directly correspond to EQF levels.

\textsuperscript{33} VET and higher education programmes are based on learning outcomes.
VET standards\textsuperscript{34}, Sectoral Qualifications Standards\textsuperscript{35} and Descriptions of Study fields\textsuperscript{36} aim at improving the correspondence of education to labour market needs and they are linked to the LTQF.

Formal VET programmes shall be developed in accordance with the corresponding Sectoral Qualifications Standard or VET standard (Ministry of Education and Science, 2015a).

The basis for the development of HE programmes are Descriptions of Study fields. A VET or HE provider assesses the non-formal and informal learning of the applicant based on 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 HE programme, prior learning is recognised as part of that programme.

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. This 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 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 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 qualification standards, organisation of the development of modular programmes, the implementation of the LTQF, 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

\textsuperscript{34} 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. According to an amendment of Law on VET (2017), VET standards are abolished from January 2019.

\textsuperscript{35} 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 and a further 14 are currently being developed.

\textsuperscript{36} 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.
become a competence assessment centre to the Ministry of Education and Science for approval.

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 participates in the preparation of 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 (from October 2018 – Public Employment Service) 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 HE 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. 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

There is no specific awareness raising campaigns in Lithuania. Generally, awareness-raising and recruitment is the responsibility of formal VET and HE providers. However, the publicly available information on validation options is rather poor. In the case of HE, 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

37 http://www.kpmpc.lt/kpmpc/?page_id=1488
find this information on the websites of HE providers. Concerning VET providers, there is almost no publicly available information with regard to the validation process. Some efforts to raise awareness on validation matters could be observed only at project level. For example, under the Erasmus+ project, Lifestyle Entrepreneurship (2015-2017). Lithuania together with partners from United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Poland and Cyprus developed training material and ICT tools for adult educators-practitioners including the module ‘Creating awareness on validation of the acquired competences’.

To conclude, 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 HE provider. The VET or HE provider informs the applicant about the validation process.

The validation process in HE includes four stages, namely: information, consultation, assessment and decision (Ministry of Education and Science, 2017). 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 HE 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.

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, 2018). In the case of final qualification assessment, the accredited competence assessment institutions are responsible for the selection of practitioners and VET teachers who carry out the assessment. According to interviews carried out for this country report, these institutions provide consultations and training for assessors.

An HE institution carries out validation of non-formal and informal learning in accordance with its own procedures and general principals laid down by the Ministry of Education and Science (Ministry of Education and Science, 2017). Usually validators are HE lecturers. The final decision on validation is made by validator or validation commission (Ministry of Education and Science, 2017).

38 According to the data available, 33 (out of 43) HE institutions provide validation of non-formal and informal learning: http://www.smm.lt/web/lt/smm-svietimas/suaugusiujusvietimas/neformaliubudugyitu-kompetenciju-formalizavimas

39 The module reviews the development of validation processes in EU countries; analyses the methods, measures, procedures and benefits of validation of informal and non-formal learning; creates awareness on the possibility to validate learner’s competences to become a lifestyle entrepreneur: http://www.ace-erasmusplus.eu/index.html
7.2 Qualification requirements
There is no mandatory requirement for assessors to undertake training. There is also no requirement for VET or HE 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 should 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 HE most validation initiatives have been developed as part of an ESF funded project, which usually included such activities as the development of methodology for the non-formal and informal learning assessment, consultation and training of assessors, etc.

The other example of an initiative supporting validation practitioners is the Erasmus+ strategic partnership project ReOPEN – Recognition of Valid and Open Learning (2016-2018). The results generated by this project include training material on the recognition of non-formal open learning results in a formal curricular. The training material consists of theory and practical tasks. It provides good practice examples in the areas of successful integration of open learning offers into formal curricula, as well as of existing recognition procedures already applied in Europe. It also includes guidelines and checklists that support open learning providers in designing their offers.40

8 Quality assurance
Persons wishing to formalise their non-formal and informal learning must apply to an appropriate VET or HE 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.

A recent overview of VET status (KPMPC, 2017) revealed that the validation know-how varies greatly between VET providers. There is a lack of validation reference material, methodologies and tools. The VET providers lack motivation to deliver validation services. Based on the overview results, the implementation of validation of non-formal and informal learning lacks completeness and is fragmented; the information about individuals participating in validation is not collected.

40 The project countries are Lithuania, Spain, Germany, Croatia and United Kingdom: http://reopen.eu/training-material/
9 Inputs, outputs and outcomes

9.1 Funding

Usually, applicants are required to pay a certain fee for the validation process. The education provider (VET or HE) decides on how much to charge for the validation. According to the overview on VET status (KPMPC 2017) VET providers have difficulties in the taxation of validation services. The conversation with VET providers reveals that validators do not receive any additional money for the validation process.

If the applicant 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 final validation is financed from funds that are allocated for the implementation of the VET programme41.

According to the law on employment (Lithuanian Parliament 2016), an unemployed person is free to choose a validation service provider42 and the budget should not exceed 0.6 of the minimum monthly pay43 approved by the Lithuanian Government. The number of validation services should be limited to three per year for one unemployed person. The labour exchange organises assessment and recognition of competences acquired outside formal education for unemployed people.

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 they lead to formal qualifications. If applicants wish to continue education through an appropriate VET or HE 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.

The benefits to individuals at project level include creation of online validation instruments (e.g. open digital badge systems; section 2.4), raising awareness on validation (section 6.1), and supporting validation practitioners (section 7.3).

Information about the benefits of validation is both poorly recorded and reported in Lithuania.

9.4 Beneficiaries and users of validation processes

9.4.1 Validation trends

A validation indicator is set by the national education strategy (Lithuanian Parliament, 2013). 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 the set targets.

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41 In this case, the applicant studies according to a chosen programme as a student (not applicant) and takes the final qualification exam (please also see section 2.2.)

42 The service provider is authorised to carry out the assessment and recognition of learning outcomes.

43 Since 1 January 2018 the minimum monthly pay in Lithuania is EUR 400.
The data on validation users is fragmented\textsuperscript{44} and currently is not collected on a national level.

Some available information suggests that one VET provider delivers validation services for at most 3-4 individuals per year. Most often these are the persons aged between 25-40 years old, and have HE qualifications and working experience abroad (e.g. waiters).

Since 2017 according to the data from the labour exchange, 60 unemployed people participated in the validation of non-formal and informal learning and 30 of them received qualification recognition.

9.4.2 Validation users
Please see section 9.4.1.

9.4.3 Validation and disadvantaged groups
Please see section 9.4.1.

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, 2015; Ministry of Education and Science, 2018) a person wishing to formalise learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at EQF level I-V should 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. Usually these methods include tests, individual tasks, demonstration etc. VET providers report that they also use the structured interview method. After the assessment of skills and knowledge of the applicants, the VET provider fills in the conclusion on recognition of competences acquired through non-formal education or informally. The template of this document was approved as an annex of amended Description of the Procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning Attainments (Ministry of Education and Science, 2018). 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 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.

\textsuperscript{44} Labour Exchange collects information about validation of unemployed persons' non-formal and informal learning since 2017. Some information is collected by VET and HE education providers but usually it is not publicly available.
Persons wishing to formalise learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at EQF level VI-VIII apply to an appropriate HE provider. The majority (33 out of 43) of HE institutions have internal procedures for recognising a person’s non-formal and informal learning. These are developed in line with the general principles issued by the Minister of Education and Science in 2017 (Ministry of Education and Science, 2017), according to which HE providers could apply various methods for the assessment of non-formal and informal learning. Analysis of the documents reveals that the most popular is the portfolio method. In addition, institutions use other methods such as interview, demonstration, exams etc. Where the evaluation is positive, the applicant is awarded a transcript of records issued by the HE institution. If the applicant seeks to acquire an HE qualification, the non-formal and informal learning is recognised as a part of the study programme and the person is awarded a diploma of HE after successful completion of an appropriate study programme.

11 The position of validation in society: visibility and trust

There are no data available to estimate what is the extent of validation availability, visibility and trust in society.

Interviews reveal that the public knows very little about the validation initiative and the results and benefits are actually not made public. There is no validation monitoring system in place. It was also stated that there are no funds allocated to improving awareness.

12: References

12.1 References


Ministry of Education and Science, (2012). Reikalingų kompetencijų vertinimo institucijoms ir jų akreditavimo tvarkos aprašas (Description of the Procedure for the Requirements and Accreditation of the...
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<th>Institutions</th>
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### 12.2 Sources

- Ministry of Education and Science
- Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre
- Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre
- Vilnius Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts (An accredited competence assessment institution)
- Vilnius Vocational Training Centre for Service Business Specialists
- Education Development Centre
- Lithuanian Labour Exchange
- Lithuanian Education Trade Union