

The Equal start initiative: development of the lifelong learning support system

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN

 LITHUANIA

Timeline

2022 Implementation

2023 Implementation

2024 Completed

ID number 42002

Background

The 2021-24 agenda for lifelong learning (the Equal start initiative) continues the implementation of objectives set out in previous strategic documents: the National education strategy for 2013-22, the Lithuanian progress strategy 'Lietuva 2030', which sets out a vision for a smart Lithuania, and the national lifelong learning action plan 2017-20.

Objectives

The aim of the initiative is to develop a lifelong learning support system providing equal training opportunities for all individuals and enabling synergies between all key components of the system:

- (a) comprehensive career guidance system for all;
- (b) integrated management of the lifelong learning system with clear division of responsibilities and functions between key players;
- (c) a coherent support system for both learners facing challenges and difficulties and adults seeking to upskill and/or have their non-formal learning recognised, in line with needs in the labour market.

Description

Under the Equal start initiative, the following developments are foreseen:

- (a) development of a network of regional career centres that would ensure provision of career guidance services starting from early years pupils and accessible to all age groups;
- (b) creation of a centralised system for the recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning, facilitating transition from one level of education to another;
- (c) creation of a model for a joint lifelong learning system, including the principles of governance, setting priority groups and programmes, embedding elements of a quality assurance and funding system and the legal regulation of the model in the Law on non-formal adult education and continuing education;
- (d) provide support for the development of professional and general competences related to priority sectors of the economy, enabling higher education institutions to offer more programmes and training modules for adult education;

- (e) new measures and increased support for the inclusion of formal and non-formal learning in groups with lower levels of learning (third-age universities and seniors, the low-skilled, low-income earners);
- (f) review and upgrade government commission to coordinate national monitoring of human resources and start implementing the National skills strategy.

2022 Implementation

In 2022, a reform of the vocational guidance system was initiated, aiming to ensure equal opportunities for all residents of Lithuania to receive vocational guidance services. To promote this reform and to collect feedback from the society, a public consultation-discussion was organised online on 26 January 2022.

Since September 2022, vocational information, counselling and career development support for students has been available in all VET institutions, primarily by establishing career guidance specialist positions in education institutions (secondary education schools, gymnasiums and vocational training institutions). Career development specialists have assumed the responsibility to help students to decide on further education, study choice and career plan. Since the school year 2022/23, the vocational guidance programme is introduced in schools from the first grade. Vocational guidance is provided by a career specialist at the school, and additional classes are organised by the class teacher for primary school pupils.

An order for vocational guidance and counselling was issued by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. This legal act describes the planning and coordination, organisation and administration of vocational guidance, the distribution of guidance specialists in general education, vocational training and other educational institutions.

2023 Implementation

The project 'Learn all your lifetime!' was launched in 2023 to promote lifelong learning for adults by creating a unified lifelong learning information system and expanding learning opportunities. It targets individuals between the ages of 18 and 65 who are participating in lifelong learning. The project is implemented by the European Social Fund Agency in cooperation with the Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre, the Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions for Centralised Admissions, and the National Education Agency.

According to the project plan, a dedicated lifelong learning information system (individual learning accounts system *kursuok*), based on individual learning accounts, will be developed and operated to support all lifelong learning and individual learning accounts-related activities.

The project expects to enable over 25 000 adults (aged 18–65, including older workers and employees (55 – 64 years old) and low-skilled/qualified persons) to complete quality-assured non-formal education training, with at least 40% of participants improving their digital competences through *kursuok*. It is foreseen that at least 40% of participants will improve digital competences).

The project runs from 11 May 2023 to 30 April 2026, with a total funding of EUR 18 432 699.37. It is funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility plan 'Next Generation Lithuania', with additional support from the budget of the Republic of Lithuania.

2024 Completed

In 2024, the project 'Learn for a lifetime!' is ongoing, driving significant reforms in the adult education system. A key initiative is the development of a one-stop platform, *kursuok*, based on the Individual Learning Accounts Model (ILA model).

The ILA model became operational in 2024, allowing individuals who meet the State's funding priorities to access state-funded training opportunities. Individuals who agree to fund their education independently can also benefit from training courses offered by

various training providers included in the Lifelong Learning information system.

The kursuok platform, providing access to individual learning accounts, has been developed and is now fully operational.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Young people (15-29 years old)

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers

Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)

Low-skilled/qualified persons

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Permeability between IVET and CVET and general and vocational pathways, academic and professional higher education

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Lifelong guidance

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[2021-24 agenda for Lifelong learning Equal start \(only in Lithuanian\)](#)

[The Lithuanian progress strategy Lietuva 2030](#)

[Order for vocational guidance and counseling \(only in Lithuanian\)](#)

The national lifelong learning platform for Individual learning accounts: www.KURSUOK.lt

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Individual learning account system

The platform development project is carried out by three ministries: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Ministry of Economy and Innovation, and Ministry of Social Security and Labour. It is expected that the unified system will be operational by the end of 2022.

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

2021 Completed

The 2017-20 action plan for lifelong learning

A 2017-20 action plan for lifelong learning was adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science in June 2017, and was later amended in December 2017. The plan replaced the former 2014-16 action plan for VET development and, in part, the 2014-16 action plan for non-formal adult education.

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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