

Making room for the region: qualifications with regional specialisation

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 NETHERLANDS

Timeline

2018 **Approved/Agreed** 2019 **Approved/Agreed** 2020 **Pilot** 2021 **Pilot**
2022 **Pilot** 2023 **Pilot** 2024 **Pilot** 2025 **Pilot**

ID number 28441

Objectives

The aim of the experiment (pilot) is to investigate whether vocational education based on qualifications with national and regional components:

- (a) improves the link between education and the regional labour market;
- (b) strengthens teacher and employer ownership of programme development;
- (c) strengthens the quality and innovation of education.

Description

The Making room for the region initiative, approved in 2018, will allow VET colleges (MBO schools) to draw up regional elements in national qualifications in cooperation with the (regional) business community. The new qualifications would be based on national qualifications (60% of the teaching time should be based on the national qualification) providing substantial room for addressing regional needs. A secondary aim of the initiative is to strengthen teacher ownership of programme development, giving them the opportunity to share education programme design with labour market experts. The experiment (pilot) ,Making room for the region, is related to the Responsive cross-over qualifications initiative; they both have similar goals and challenges.

2018 Approved/Agreed

2019 Approved/Agreed

2020 Pilot

The pilot for 20 qualifications started in August 2020 and will end in July 2026.

The Minister for Education reported on the experiences within the Making room for the region and the Responsive cross-over qualifications experiments, which are closely related as they have similar goals and challenges. The experiment Making room for the region shows that having influence over the content of qualifications increases the commitment and ownership of VET teachers and the business community. However, schools are not used to developing qualifications. Developing qualifications requires expertise from the SBB. In a letter to parliament, the Minister for Education announced

that this will require a working method in which SBB and the education and business sectors work together to formulate new qualification requirements in the future.

2021 Pilot

In 2021, a preliminary study was initiated on ways to increase the flexibility of the qualifications framework and how to respond to the needs of students, adult learners and employers.

2022 Pilot

The experiment 'Room for the region' is still running.

2023 Pilot

In the policy letter titled 'Developments in the qualification structure in VET', the initiative 'Room for the Region, (*Ruimte voor de Regio*) is highlighted as one of the ongoing experiments aimed at enhancing the alignment between vocational education and training (VET) and regional labour market demands.

The experiment (pilot) enables VET institutions to develop new approaches for adapting educational content to reflect regional economic developments, student preferences, and sector-specific requirements. It also promotes the strengthening of involvement and ownership of schools and the business community in designing study programmes.

2024 Pilot

The bill 'To improve the connection between vocational education and the labour market' introduces several legal changes intended to make Dutch VET more flexible, responsive and better aligned with labour-market needs. It proposes the decoupling of elective modules (keuzedelen) from fixed qualifications, giving VET colleges greater freedom to update their offer in line with regional labour-market developments and to provide students with a wider range of options. The bill also relaxes the statutory teaching-hours standard, clarifies the legal basis for offering shortened training pathways, and revises the rules governing non-publicly funded VET and the delivery of partial qualifications. In addition, it creates a legal basis for Statistics Netherlands (CBS) to publish institution-level labour-market information to support better alignment between education programmes and labour-market demand.

The bill amends the Adult and vocational education act (WEB) and related legislation. Following an internet consultation in late 2023 and agreement by the Council of Ministers in April 2024, the Council of State issued its advisory opinion in July 2024. The bill was submitted to the House of Representatives in December 2024.

2025 Pilot

In February 2025, the parliamentary report on the bill was published, followed in October 2025 by a note in response to the report and a letter of amendment; the act will enter into force by Royal Decree once the legislative process is completed. The Bill has not passed the First Chamber of Parliament.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
- Cooperation organisation for VET and the labour market (SBB)
- Council for upper secondary VET schools (MBO Raad)

Target group

Entities providing VET

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Aligning VET qualifications with regional needs](#)

[Draft decision about the experiment focusing on qualifications with regional specialisation](#)

[Decree on the experiment focusing on qualifications with regional specialisation](#)

[Monitoring of the pilot Making room for the region \(zero measurement\)](#)

[Letter to parliament on future perspectives on the qualifications framework](#)

[Policy letter of the ministry of education , 24 April 2023](#)

[Bill to improve the connections between VET and the labour market](#)

Related policy developments

2025 **Completed**

Responsive cross-over qualifications

Cross-over qualifications combine elements of several qualifications from different domains to create innovative training programmes. The first application period for the experiment (pilot) in cross-over qualifications in MBOs lasted until 15 September 2016.

 NETHERLANDS

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28441>