

VET internationalisation and Baltic collaboration

POLICY DEVELOPMENT	PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE	 LATVIA
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Timeline

2015 Approved/Agreed	2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation	2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation
2021 Implementation	2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation
2024 Implementation	2025 Implementation	

ID number 28382

Background

Internationalisation of VET is a priority set in the Guidelines for Education Development 2021-27, including collaboration between the Baltic States. One of the aspects in Baltic collaboration is apprenticeship type schemes. Since 2013, Latvia has been in the process of reform to increase the attractiveness of initial vocational education and training (IVET) and involve companies more in providing practical training placements. By 2015, attempts had been made to set up incentives for companies to provide apprenticeship opportunities. An apprenticeship scheme – nationally called ‘work-based learning’ (WBL) – was piloted as of 2013.

In 2014, the Erasmus+ project National authorities for apprenticeships: Implementing work-based learning in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (WBL-Balt) was launched, led by the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science. The project partners were: the Ministry of Education and Science (Latvia), Employers’ Confederation of Latvia, National Centre for Education (Latvia), Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia, Ministry of Education and Science (Lithuania), Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre (Lithuania), Foundation Innove (Estonia). This project laid the basis for further Baltic collaboration in VET and WBL and the establishment of the Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships (BAfA) in 2015. Since then, BAfA is serving as a collaboration framework and platform for joint Baltic VET developments.

Objectives

The overall aim of the activity is to raise the overall competitiveness of Latvian VET system and VET providers, with a particular emphasis on Baltic collaboration. Internationalisation has been set as a priority in individual development strategies 2021-27 of VET institutions. BAfA aims to share experience in implementing vocational education reforms in the Baltics, with the focus on introducing work-based learning and apprenticeships, and to promote examples of good practice.

Description

In 2014, the Erasmus+ project National authorities for apprenticeships: Implementing work-based learning in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (WBL-Balt)' was launched, led by the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science. The project partners were: the Ministry of Education and Science (Latvia), Employers' Confederation of Latvia, National Centre for Education (Latvia), Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia, Ministry of Education and Science (Lithuania), Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre (Lithuania), Foundation Innove (Estonia). Within the project, a Baltic alliance for apprenticeships (BAfA) was launched in June 2015 as a common framework for joint cooperation between the three Baltic countries.

The Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships (BAfA) was founded on 22 June 2015 within the framework of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and with the support of Erasmus+ funding. It is a platform for the implementation of various Baltic cooperation projects, involving the Ministries of Education and Science of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Since 2015, within the framework of two Erasmus+ programme projects (DVB-Balt and TTT4WBL), there has been regular cooperation between vocational education providers in the Baltic States in promoting vocational education and work-based learning (DVB).

In January 2017, the Erasmus+ project DVB-Balt was completed (2014-17). At the end of it, an international conference, Baltic apprenticeship alliance for innovative vocational education, and a Baltic seminar, Development of the Baltic apprenticeship alliance, took place. Representatives of public administration, education institutions / associations, social partners and entrepreneurs from the three Baltic States took part in the events. During the conference, the representatives of the Ministries of Education of the Baltic States agreed to continue cooperation at all levels, emphasising cooperation between associations of Baltic vocational education institutions, industry associations and entrepreneurs and their organisations. The main activities included negotiations and activities for the development of joint programmes and qualifications; strengthening cooperation between Baltic companies for the implementation of DVB training; and promotion of the Baltic region as an excellent learning and working environment.

In May 2017, the funding for the Erasmus+ project Testing new approaches to training VET and workplace tutors for work-based learning – TTT4WBL (2017-20) was approved. The project aims at supporting the implementation of apprenticeships by putting emphasis on training in-company trainers tutors and vocational education teachers by the 'tandem training' methodology. Learning takes place in tandem, by bringing together business representatives and teachers from vocational education institutions to explore together the various aspects that would improve the work-based learning experience procedures and delivery of WBL programmes. Since the start of the project, the following activities have already been completed:

- (a) development of a 16-hour training programme approved by the MoES. The programme may be taught as a separate module or part of a 32- or 72-hour competence development programme; in Latvia it is compulsory for a company WBL tutor to have pedagogical competence which can be obtained by following a tutor training programme of at least 32 hours;
- (b) a study visit on WBL tutor training in Finland, organised by Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences in May 2017 for 18 participants from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia;
- (c) development of methodological materials and training programmes for joint/tandem training;
- (d) training of lead trainers in Latvia (4), Lithuania (6) and Estonia (4);
- (e) development of an experimental methodology to identify the impact of joint learning on school-business cooperation.

17 seminars were organised during which more than 800 WBL trainers over the three countries were trained (more than 300 in Latvia, of which 131 were from vocational schools and 169 from enterprises).

The Baltic ministries responsible for VET have also supported two Erasmus+ VET policy related projects, several parallel and subsequent activities and projects that have been implemented as part of the VET internationalisation process.

Ongoing and completed Baltic projects:

- (a) Individual Approach and Individual Learning Plan in WBL: Training for WBL Tutors (ILP4WBL) (Latvia, Lithuania, Finland)
- (b) Skills for the Baltic Wood industry – European Quality in Vocational Education and Training, co-ordinated by the German – Baltic Chamber of Commerce (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Germany)
- (c) Industry 4.0 CHALLENGE: Empowering Metalworkers for Smart Factories of the Future (Baltic associations of metalworks, VET institutions – working with smart technologies, joint upgraded standards, assessment tools)
- (d) FinLat-Logic - Aligning work-based learning curricula in VET programmes of logistics through cross-border WBL in Latvia and Finland
- (e) 3LoE-3LoE - Three-level Centers of Professional Excellence: Qualification, Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the Green Economy, Nr: 620870-EPP-1-2020-1-DE-EPPKA3-VET-COVE; (partners from Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain)
- (f) Dig4VET: Digital Tools for Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Validation in VET and WBL
- (g) ECVET-Enterprise: about competence-based approach in assessment and validation of internships and WBL
- (h) ExcellWBL: Baltic examples of excellence in WBL (sharing and promoting excellence)
- (i) EST-LAT WBL: cross-border WBL, developing long-term partnerships between employers in one country and VET in another country
- (j) e-VET: enabling VET teachers to be creators of digital education
- (k) Baltic Green Leadership: VET Students as Agents of Change (cooperation of VET and industries to promote VET initiatives in green, esp. circular, economy)

Parallel to collaboration in WBL an increasing number of Baltic collaboration projects is related to Latvian and EU VET priorities – greening and digitalisation. Another emerging trait is the sharing and promotion of Latvian VET best practice among other EU states and beyond, both by education ministry and individual VET institutions or their associations.

2015 Approved/Agreed
2016 Implementation
2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation
2019 Implementation
2020 Implementation <p>The TT4WBL project was completed in February 2020. Any further discussions on the Baltic co-operation in WBL are to take place within the platform of BAfA, since this platform involves the Baltic national level public authorities: the ministries of education.</p> <p>The following projects have been implemented with the involvement of Baltic stakeholders.</p> <p>ERASMUS+ Project Industry 4.0 Challenge: Empowering metalworkers for smart factories of the future - 4CHANGE.</p> <p>The project was implemented by 12 partners from Estonia, Germany, Latvia, and Lithuania with expertise in the development of VET curricula, vocational training, support to VET policy reforms and CNC software programming. The project aimed at tackling skill gaps among metalworkers and raising their abilities to a 4.0 level, improving the responsiveness of VET systems to the manufacturing sector-specific labour market needs, and the demand for new digital and entrepreneurial skills.</p>

The main outputs were developed model qualification standard for three Baltic countries (LV, EE, LT), revised national qualification standards and VET programmes in the metalworking sector (computer numerical control (CNC) metalworking machine setter; computer numerical control (CNC) metalworking machine operator); developed and piloted training material for trainers, VET teachers and learners, an e-learning platform with multimedia, and a new CNC simulation software. Project duration: 01 December 2016 to 29 February 2020.

The continuing Baltic project Skills for the Baltic wood industry – European Quality in Vocational Education and Training coordinated by the German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce (Germany, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania).

The modular programme in the wood industry at EQF level 5 consists of 10 modules. The modules are to be translated into English. Project Duration: 01 November 2018 to 31 October 2021.

In January 2020, a Baltic seminar and international conference took place in Riga. During the seminar the three Baltic countries agreed on a common Baltic competence profile for WBL tutors. This development will serve as a basis for improved mobility of WBL students and tutors in the Baltics.

2021 Implementation

The following projects were completed with the involvement of the Baltic states:

- (a) Individual approach and individual learning plan in WBL: Training for WBL tutors (ILP4WBL) (Latvia, Lithuania, Finland);
- (b) Skills for the Baltic wood industry: European quality in vocational education and training, coordinated by the German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Germany).

Several joint projects continued in 2021:

- (a) FinLat-Logic: Aligning work-based learning curricula in VET programmes of logistics through cross-border WBL in Latvia and Finland;
- (b) Dig4VET: Digital tools for teaching, learning, assessment and validation in VET and WBL;
- (c) ExcellWBL: Baltic examples of excellence in work-based Learning: Companies, tutors, networks' (2019-22).

2022 Implementation

In February 2022, the results of the Baltic collaboration were presented at the Education Committee meeting of the Baltic Assembly in Vilnius.

Sharing and promotion of Latvian VET best practice among other EU states and beyond has been implemented by the education ministry and individual VET institutions and their associations.

In April 2022, Ogre vocational school hosted a peer-learning event on WBL in Latvia for VET and employers' representatives from Armenia, Albania, Kazakhstan, Moldova and North Macedonia.

In September 2022, the Latvian VET and WBL developments were presented by the education ministry to the Skillman association.

In October 2022, the education ministry presented Latvian VET green approaches in the meeting of VET Directors General DGVT in Prague.

In November 2022, the education ministry presented Latvian WBL approaches in a bench learning seminar in Athens.

In November 2022, the Latvian WBL approaches were presented by Ogre vocational school at the annual Skillman International Forum (SIF2022) in Cagliari, Italy.

In November 2022, the education ministry presented Latvian WBL qualification development approaches to Central Asia platform countries in Kazakhstan.

2023 Implementation

In February 2023, the education ministry presented the Latvian best practice examples of green transition to the VET working group of the European Commission.

In September 2023, as part of the European year of skills, the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science in collaboration with Skillman International and the European Training Foundation and the Ogre Technical School organised an international vocational education forum 'The Planet of Skills. Renewed perspective on Networking Potential'. More than 700 experts and practitioners from 72 countries participated sharing their experiences and vision on the latest trends in skills development. The Forum was hosted by the Ogre Technical School, with site visits to four other VET institutions. With the participation of international partners and organisations, the forum contributed to the broadening of the vision of VET policy makers and practitioners regarding international education and employment trends, as well as to creating new collaboration networks for the improvement of the VET quality, excellence and innovation. It also contributed to raising the awareness on the achievements of Latvian VET and introduced a wider international audience to Latvia as a country with an education export potential.

In September 2023, the memorandum on collaboration in VET was signed between Latvia and Germany. The memorandum envisages policy and practice exchange on VET, including peer learning activities, joint project implementation and exchange visits. Initial discussions started on the development of a German government supported project for piloting new developments in the Latvian VET system, with the focus on capacity building of the sector expert councils and exchange of expertise between the Latvian and German counterparts.

2024 Implementation

In March 2024, the VET policy developments of Latvia were presented at an international research conference in Crete, Greece.

In April 2024, the policy developments for VET excellence in Latvia were presented at DGVT/ ACVT webinar organised by the DG EMPL of the European Commission.

In May 2024, the education ministry hosted the visit of the delegation from the five Central Asia countries, as part of the EU funded DARYA project implemented by the European Training Foundation and supported by the Latvian foreign affairs ministry.

In March 2024, the education ministry hosted a visit of the delegation by the French Employment Agency AfPA and two major European VET associations EVTA, EVBBv. During the visit future collaboration plans were discussed and site visits implemented to three VET institutions. A follow up visit took place in September 2024, with representatives from AfPA and EVBB, visiting a VET institution and the Riga Technical University. Joint project ideas were discussed regarding VET developments in skills formation and VET internationalisation.

In June 2024, the kick-off conference of the joint German-Latvian project on sector expert council capacity building was implemented. The project is funded by the German government, implemented by the German-Baltic chamber of Commerce (AHK) with German counterparts from the sectors, supervised by the Latvian and German education ministries.

In October 2024, the education ministry organised and hosted a study visit of the delegation from Azerbaijan (AZ), with participants from the AZ National Centre for Education, VET institutions management and the AZ UNDP representation. The visit was co-organised by the Ogre technical School, with site visits to three Latvian VET institutions. Plans for future collaboration were discussed.

In October 2024, the education ministry organised and hosted a study visit of the delegation from the United Kingdom, representing VET colleges and VET researchers. Study visits to three Latvian VET institutions were implemented, with a final discussion at the education ministry on potential future cooperation in VET.

In October 2024, Latvian VET and WBL approaches were presented at European Training Foundation partner countries seminar in Tirana, Albania.

In October 2024, the repeated accreditation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) in career education programme took place in the Ogre Technical School. The programme is an important contribution to VET excellence and internationalisation. Ogre Technical School was the only one implementing this IB programme in the Baltics in 2024. Invited renown international professionals from the academia as visiting lecturers contributed to the quality of the IB programme implementation.

2025 Implementation

In May 2025, the European Training Foundation organised a study visit to Latvia and Estonia for representatives from the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) to explore approaches to school network optimisation. The study visit was carried out with the support of the Latvian and Estonian education ministries.

In Latvia, the participants were introduced to systemic national and regional-level approaches to school network optimisation, accompanied by visits to general and vocational training institutions, such as the Riga State Technical School and the Ogre Technical School.

To ensure a comprehensive approach to school network optimisation, Ogre Regional Municipality, in collaboration with the regional education board, presented to the Eastern Partnership visitors the regional education ecosystem as an integrated approach to the strategic planning and implementation of educational services in the region.

At the request of the Danish Embassy in Latvia, the Education Ministry hosted a delegation of parliamentarians from the Faroe Islands. The aim of the visit was to familiarise themselves with the implementation of vocational education and training (VET) in Latvia. The delegation met education ministry officials to discuss national-level systemic approaches and visited the Riga State Technical School to see how VET is implemented in practice.

In September 2025, as part of the German-Latvian Memorandum on cooperation in VET, a study visit of the Latvian delegation to Germany took place. The Latvian delegation had representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science, professional associations, and sector expert councils in agriculture, machinery, and metalworking. The visit was hosted by the South Thuringia Chamber of Crafts in collaboration with the German Ministry of Education and the German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce. Alongside the study visit, a meeting was held between the German and Latvian ministries to discuss project progress, evaluate the first year's results and review the second year's tasks.

It was decided that in 2026 experts from Germany will visit Latvia to establish direct contact with relevant stakeholders and experts.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Science
- The Association of Mechanical Engineering and Metalworking Industries of Latvia
- German Baltic Chamber of Commerce
- Ogre Vocational School
- State Education Development Agency (VIAA)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Education professionals

Trainers

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

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

European and international dimensions of VET

VET internationalisation strategies

Mobility of learners and staff

European priorities in VET

Osnabrück Declaration

European Education and Training Area and international VET

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Cedefop ReferNet Latvia \(2018\). Baltic cooperation for developing work-based learning](#)

[Erasmus+ project National authorities for apprenticeships: Implementing work-based learning in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia \(WBL-Balt\)](#)

[Skills for the Baltic wood industry - European Quality in Vocational Education and Training project web page](#)

[Project 'FinLat-Logic - Aligning work-based learning curricula in VET programmes of logistics through cross-border WBL in Latvia and Finland'](#)

[Project '3LoE-3LoE - Three-level Centers of Professional Excellence: Qualification,](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Implementing provisions for apprenticeships / work-based learning

Work-based learning approaches have been developed and implemented through a complex of interventions financed by the State budget, European Social fund, Erasmus+ and other EU programmes.

 LATVIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Strengthening the role of sectoral expert councils

Social partners (employer and employee organisations) have been actively involved in the design of the implementing regulations of apprenticeship through participation in the sectoral expert councils.

 LATVIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

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