

Netherlands

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

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Title: Netherlands: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2005

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Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in the Netherlands. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2005. Later editions can be viewed at http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

Netherlands

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS



Netherlands

01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy and has had a bicameral parliamentary system since 1848. Central government is the highest layer of administration. However, a trend towards decentralisation began many years ago and is still under way: tasks and responsibilities are progressively being transferred to lower levels of government, provinces or municipalities. There is no regional administrative structure, but cooperation on a geographical basis is common.

The Netherlands comprises 12 provinces with their own tasks and responsibilities: although minimal in education and training policy. The Netherlands counts 483 municipalities, although a trend continues to restructure government at local level by merging several small towns into bigger municipalities.

Municipalities have more involvement in administering education and training: they are responsible for public schools; for introducing measures to counteract underachievement; and for planning adult education. The distribution of tasks and finances was one of the items in the evaluation of the 1996 Adult and Vocational Education Act (Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs - WEB).

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Number of inhabitants in 2004

NUMBER OF INHABITANTS (IN THOUSANDS)	16 271 373
COUNTRY SIZE	41 526 km ²
AVERAGE NUMBER OF INHABITANTS PER KM²	479

(source: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), Statline, February 2003)

With an average number of inhabitants per km² of 479, the Netherlands is, after Malta, the country with the highest population density in the European Union. The average population density in the European Union is 116 inhabitants per km². (source: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), February 2004).

Demographic trends – (scenario in absolute figures for 2010-2020-2025)

	2003	2010	2020	2025
TOTAL	16 201 839	16 667 122	17 211 923	17 436 141
0-19	3 969 865	4 008 926	3 895 586	3 851 458
20-64	10 007 694	10 170 947	10 126 504	10 080 974
65+	2 224 275	2 487 258	3 189 830	3 503 710

(source: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), Statline, February 2003)

Working population of the Netherlands and the EU, as % of total population, by age group, 2002				
	MEN		WOMEN	
	NL	EU*	NL	EU*
15-24	74.5	51.0	68.0	43.6
25-49	94.4	93.2	75.5	73.4
50-64	70.4	66.0	36.4	40.9
TOTAL WORKING POPULATION	7.444.000			

Source: CBS, Statistisch Jaarboek, 2004;
* source EU data: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

The much higher level of labour market participation of both men and women in the 15-24 age group in the Netherlands is striking.

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

At the turn of the millennium, the unemployment rates in the Netherlands dropped considerably. In the first half of 2003, the Netherlands had the second lowest unemployment rate. (3,6% of the working population). The average rate in the European Union (25) in the same period was 8,2 % for men and 10,0% for women.

Dutch youth unemployment was, in the first half of 2003, the lowest in the European Union (6.8 %). However, the increase (0.9 %) in unemployment in the first half of 2003 was much higher than the EU average.

Table Unemployment and Employment Rates		
YEAR	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	NET. LABOUR PARTICIPATION
1998	4.1%	62%
1999	3.1%	64%
2000	2.6%	65%
2001	2.0%	65%
2002	2.5%	66%

(source: CBS (www.cbs.nl), Statline, 2003)

The expenditure on education and training and the public and private expenditure on educational institutions as percentage of the total government budget has risen more than the average in the European Union during the period 1995-2000. In 2000, the total public and private expenditure on educational institutions amounted to 4,7% of the GDP, and is now more in line with our neighbouring countries. (OECD-Education at a glance, 2003).

After some years of a decreasing public debt, in 2001 the GDP began to rise again, following the general economic recession. The consumer price indices followed this trend.

Dutch per capita GDP is the fifth on the EU ranking list after Luxembourg, Denmark, Ireland and Austria. From 2000 onwards however, GDP growth rate was much lower than the EU average. In the first half of 2003 GDP growth was negative (-0.7 %, EU average 1.0 %).

The GDP per capita in Luxembourg, expressed in terms of purchasing power standards (PPS), was more than twice the EU25 average in 2003, while Ireland was about one third above average, and Denmark, Austria, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom around 20 % above average. Belgium, Sweden and France were about 15 % above average, and Finland, Germany and Italy were around 10 % above the EU25 average (Source: Eurostat 2003/2004).

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

Attainment levels of the Dutch population for Isced levels 3-4 and 5-6 tend to follow the EU average. Problems exist with the high numbers of early school leavers who leave without achieving a basic qualification (Isced 2). The number of those leaving early has risen during recent years; not least due to improved registration procedures, nevertheless reducing them is a key priority of the government.

Educational attainment of the population aged 25-64 by ISCED level, % (2002)

LEVEL OF EDUCATION			
	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
EU-15	35%	43%	22%
NETHERLANDS	32%	43%	25%

ISCED 0-2: Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education
 ISCED 3-4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education
 ISCED 5-6: Tertiary education

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

Percentage of the population, aged 18 to 24 years having left education and training with a low level of education (2000, 2002)

NETHERLANDS		
2000	2002	2003
15.5	18	

Low level of education: pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2 (ISCED 1997)

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey

Other policy aims include stimulating participation in higher levels of education through reducing access obstacles; and to stimulate participation in post-initial training (especially amongst women and older people).

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

NEW POLICY PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING YEARS

VET priorities include giving greater autonomy to schools and reducing the administrative load and the number of approved qualifications. Counteracting the shortage of teachers, particularly through action at regional level is an important issue. In December 2002, the Minister of Education sent a Labour market and personnel policy action plan to the Second Chamber, including proposals for function differentiation, better career perspectives for teachers and attracting people from other sectors. Further priorities will be streamlining the system to make vertical transfers

within VET easier, modernising teaching and learning environments, and emphasising the centrality of the role of the learner.

A new cabinet, which was installed in 2003, added two more priorities for their period in government (2004-07). The first is innovation and strengthening the knowledge infrastructure. An 'innovation platform' was established in 2003, chaired by the prime minister with members from fields such as education, economy, and science. This platform is expected to bring an impetus to the knowledge society and lifelong learning.

The second priority is working towards maximum participation of people in society, in which education, culture and science are to be a binding factor.

In June 2004, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science published a policy document- Koers BVE (Steering a course for VET) which provides an overview of trends, agendas and action plans in Dutch vocational and adult education and training. Regional cooperation is the leading theme and three action areas are considered to be central for VET-policy for the coming years: space for innovation; space for the learner and space for educational institutions.

To measure the new methods of governance that will be introduced, in 2005 the Ministry will introduce a monitor (BVE-barometer) of VET indicators. Monitoring will start on a limited set of (European) indicators. The first results of the monitoring of educational institutions will be published in 2006.

CURRENT ISSUES

COMPETENCE BASED QUALIFICATION STRUCTURE

A new qualification structure is being developed with competences for work, learning and citizenship as central issues to prepare future employees for the requirements of modern society. The switch from thinking in terms of qualifications to thinking in terms of competences is central. This structure gives more freedom to educational institutions to adopt innovative pedagogical and didactical methods.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science asked Colo (the association of national centres of expertise on vocational education and the labour market) to coordinate this renewal of the national qualification structure (Kwalificatiestructuur Beroepsonderwijs – KSB). The expertise centres for vocational education, training and labour market are responsible for defining competences, and educational institutions to translate this to educational concepts. The aim is to introduce, from 2006 on, a well functioning, flexible, clear and transparent qualification structure for senior secondary vocational education, which offers the possibilities of constant renewal and is an effective instrument for both the labour market and education.

SMOOTH TRANSFER WITHIN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

In the Dutch system, a clear division is made between vocational education on the one side and general education on the other. Choice of one stream or the other can occur at different stages of education. The separation between the two streams has become even more obvious in the past few years, since the strengthening of the vocational stream became a main policy objective. Special efforts have been made to coordinate the contents of the courses and develop continuous pathways to ease vertical progression to support pupils to attain the highest level of qualification possible. Furthermore, a new pedagogical-didactical approach for all sectors in vocational education is being developed to create a smooth transfer (De Bruijn, 2003). The career of the student is at the centre of this policy. The prevocational education sector needs extra emphasis and support to improve its quality and image.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

In 2003, a youth agenda has been set up by an interministerial working group to work towards solutions on issues such as reducing youth unemployment, reducing early school leaving, educational or language disadvantages and youth criminality, and stimulating integration.

Although unemployment in the Netherlands is relatively low, it is increasing faster than the average of the European Union, especially amongst youngsters. In view of the overall ageing population, the group of 15-22 year will play an essential role in the (future) labour market. All actors involved agree that school leavers (with or without a basic qualification) should in the coming years keep in shape for the labour market. It is aimed that youth unemployment should not be more than twice the average percentage of unemployment and that long term unemployment amongst youngsters should be prevented. Actions to be taken include:

- (a) 40 000 extra youth jobs, e.g. learning on the job, work-apprenticeship, job with (temporary) contract, should be guaranteed and realised by the end of 2007;
- (b) An extra 10 000 youth jobs should be reported at the centres for work and income by the end of 2004;
- (c) 7 500 youngsters should have actually started in a youth job by the end of 2004. The Taskforce estimates that this aim will already be reached in the beginning of December 2004.

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

In 1999, the action plan early school leaving was launched by the Ministry of Education and Science, stimulating cooperation between the four involved actors: education, youth care, justice and employment. In 2001, the Regional Information and Coordination Act was implemented (*Regionale meld- en coördinatiewet*). Every youngster under 23 years old leaving education without basic qualification is an early school leaver. Educational institutions are obliged by law to inform the municipality of all early school leavers. By registering these names and trying to lead these youngsters back to education, the aim is to reduce the drop out rate.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science published good news on the number of drop outs in November 2004. In 2003, there were 10 % less early school leavers than the year before, this is the first time that a decrease was registered. The number of early school leavers dropped from 70 508 (2002) to 63 849 (2003). The aim is to reduce the number of drop outs in 2006 by 30% (compared to 2002).

Priorities in the coming years are to keep the working and learning career of students in view, to further strengthen cooperation in the regional networks, to give educational institutions more freedom to experiment with tailor-made programmes for these youngsters in line with the youth unemployment action plan, to give better support to students and to increase their responsibility for their own careers.

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

There are mainly three levels of organisation in the Dutch educational system:

- national level (ministries, umbrella organisations, support or advisory organisations, examination institutions and national social partner organisations)
- sectoral level (social partners organisations per sector, national expertise centres for vocational training and the labour market)
- regional/local level (regional training centres, private training centres, municipalities, regionally organised social partner organisations).

NATIONAL LEVEL

The following Ministries play a role in vocational and adult education at central government level:

- the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (*Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, OCW*) is responsible for the total education system, including vocational education and adult education;
- the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Food Quality (*Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Voedselkwaliteit, LNV*) is responsible for education and training in the agricultural sector;
- the Ministry of Economic Affairs (*Ministerie van Economische Zaken, EZ*) is involved in lifelong learning, validation of informal and non-formal learning and employability initiatives;
- the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (*Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, SZW*) is responsible for training job seekers and the unemployed, takes part in interdepartmental initiatives on lifelong learning and new provisions for achieving a balance between work, family and caring responsibilities and leisure time. It is responsible for social inclusion and gender issues. A specific agency reporting to this Ministry is responsible for the management of the Equal and European Structural Funds programmes;
- since 2002, the Ministry of Justice (*Ministerie van Justitie*) is responsible for the integration of alloctones (various generations of immigrants). The Minister of Integration and Immigration, in this Ministry, has taken over the previously-shared (budget) responsibility of the Minister of Welfare and the Minister of Education for the education budgets (see also section 5.1.1);
- financial organisation and control and quality control of the implementation of education policy are executed respectively by *Centrale Financiering Instellingen* - CFI (Financing Services Institute) and the Inspectorate of Education;
- the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has a policy of decentralisation of responsibilities. It finances and monitors publicly funded institutions. VET institutions receive a lump sum for vocational education and training and are then responsible for the overall management of the institution, including personnel policy.

All regional training centres for vocational education and training are represented at national level by the BVE Council (*BVE Raad*). The same type of construction exists in the agriculture sector, where the AOC Council (*AOC Raad*) represents agricultural regional training centres (see below). Private training centres (see below) are represented by the umbrella organisation *Paepon*.

Universities of professional education (education at HBO level, see section 4.6) are represented at national level by the association of universities of professional education (*HBO Raad*) and the universities by *VSNU* (Association of Universities in the Netherlands).

The national expertise centres for vocational training and the labour market (see below) are members of, and represented at national level by, their association *Colo* (*Vereniging van kenniscentra beroepsonderwijs bedrijfsleven*).

SECTORAL LEVEL

The national expertise centres for vocational training and the labour market (*Kenniscentrum Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven*) are intermediary organisations organised on a branch or sectoral basis. Each of the 19 has a board consisting of representatives of both employers and employees and (in most cases) education. These institutions are quite unique and do not have exact equivalents in other countries. The association *Colo* was established in 1954, and the Adult and vocational education Act of 1996 refined the tasks and legal framework of the predecessors of the national expertise centres.

As intensive cooperation between the organised labour market and education is central to the concept of vocational education and training in the Netherlands, the expertise centres form the essential link between them. Their main tasks are to develop and maintain the qualifications for senior secondary vocational education (MBO), to recruit a sufficient number of (new) companies offering practical training places and to monitor the quality of these

companies (in senior secondary vocational education, higher professional education and, additionally since 2003, in preparatory senior secondary vocational education).

Employer and employee organisations are organised by sector and/or region. The biggest employer organisations are *VNO-NCW* and *MKB-Nederland*. The national association *VNO-NCW* is the umbrella organisation for the bigger companies. It has five regional departments and around 170 (branch) member organisations in a wide range of economic sectors. *MKB-Nederland* is an umbrella organisation for around 125 branch organisations in the small and medium sized enterprises sector.

The most important employee organisations are *FNV (Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging)*, *CNV (Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond)* and *MHP (Vakcentrale voor Middengroepen en Hoger Personeel)*. A number of economic sectors are represented by specialised departments (construction, government, services, transport, sport, catering and hotel, arts, police, etc.). These departments sometimes also represent their members on regional basis.

REGIONAL/LOCAL LEVEL

In 2003/4, there were 43 regional training centres (*Regionaal Opleidingscentrum, ROC*). The number of trainees in a regional training centre varies from 2 000 to more than 24 000 in the bigger institutions. The average is 10 000.

In 2003/4, there were 12 agricultural regional training centres (*Agrarisch Opleidingscentrum, AOC*), offering preparatory and senior secondary vocational education courses in agriculture. These include nature management, environment and food.

Furthermore, there are 13 professional colleges (*vakschool*) offering courses in specialised branches, such as shipping and transport, graphics, special instruments, creative professions or wood and interior decorations. The average number of participants in a professional college is 1 000.

Other VET institutions include a senior secondary vocational education (MBO) institution merged with a university of professional education (hogeschool) and two MBO institutions for deaf students.

At the level of higher education (*hoger onderwijs, HO*, see section 4.6), there are 47 institutes of professional education (giving training at HBO level), and 13 universities. In addition, the Open University is open to all learners over 18 without any specific qualification requirements.

There is a large number of private training centres. *Paepo*n, the umbrella organisation, represents around 100 of these.

Employer and employee organisations are also structured and organised at regional level to provide support to regional labour markets.

Municipalities are responsible for managing the budget for, and the good quality of, adult education provision.

The task of the regionally and locally structured centres for work and income (*Centrum voor Werk en Inkomen, CWI*) is to match job seeker training to the needs of the regional labour market.

Table: Tasks and responsibilities with respect to vocational education and training				
ORGANISATIONS	INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	ADULT EDUCATION (WITHIN ROCs)	SPECIFIC TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED	TRAINING OF EMPLOYED
Ministries of: - Education, Culture and Science - Agriculture, Nature Management and Food Quality	- Financing of vocational education via annual budgets based on number of students Project financing - Checking of the allocation of funds - Checking of compliance with stipulations - Approval of VET attainment targets	- Establishment of attainment targets - Government grants to municipalities		
Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment			- Financial budget for reintegration of unemployed - Financing of the executive bodies for the reintegration of unemployed	

			- Setting of policy	
Social partners, sectoral organisations and training funds	- Exploration of labour market - Approval of occupational profiles			- Financing and regulation of the system of training for employees
National expertise centres for vocational education and the labour market	- Development of attainment targets / qualification profiles - Monitoring of quality and availability of places for practical training.			- Provider of training for employees on contract basis
Municipalities		- Planning and financing of adult education	- Responsible for reintegration of short term unemployed (via Centres for Work and Income)	
Schools and training institutions	- Design of training courses - Intake policy Accessibility - Use of resources and materials - Quality assurance - Supervision of trainees in practical training - Assessment and award of qualification	- Design of training courses - Intake policy - Accessibility and use of resources and materials on the basis of contracts with municipalities - Quality assurance - Assessment and award of qualification	- Design of training courses - Intake policy - Accessibility and use of resources and materials on the basis of contracts with executive bodies - Quality assurance - Assessment and certification	- Provider of training for employees on contract basis

Source: Moerkamp and Onstenk. *Beroepsonderwijs en scholing in Nederland, (1999)*, Update, CINOP (2004).

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Legislative acts in the Netherlands mainly provide a broad framework outlining the most important elements. In view of the policy of decentralisation, the government challenges the actors involved to use in the best possible way the possibilities provided by law. In Orders in Council (*algemene maatregel van bestuur*), which can be updated more easily, ministers formulate more detailed regulations.

The main legislation which applies to VET is the Act on Vocational and Adult Education (*Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs*, WEB) which was implemented in the Netherlands on 1 January 1996. This Act was the first one to bring together all types of secondary vocational education and adult education and aimed to strengthen and further integrate the system of initial and post-initial vocational education, apart from general education. The formation of a small number of large regional training centres out of numerous smaller schools has had a huge impact on the educational system. Another major achievement of this Act was the implementation of a national qualification structure.

Furthermore, other relevant Acts are those relating to:

- the training for the unemployed: Work and Income (Implementation Structure) Act (*Wet Structuur Uitvoering Werk en Inkomens - SUWI*);
- the reintegration of those benefiting from public assistance to find paid work: the Act on Work and Public Assistance (*Wet Werk en Bijstand, WWB*);
- the prevention of early school leavers at regional level: the Act on Regional Registration and Coordination (*Regionale Meld- en Coördinatiewet, RMC*).

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

The principle of social partner involvement can be characterised by mainly an advisory and representational role. They are involved in various bodies, councils and boards of institutions and are involved in important new developments (for example the newly established Innovation Platform to proceed towards a knowledge society).

The related diagram gives an idea of the place and role of social partners in the education and training field, specifically in the process of defining and adjusting education and training curricula, matching labour market needs (see also 0701).

At national level, the Social Economic Council (Sociaal Economische Raad - SER) is the main advisory body of the Dutch government on national and international social and economic policy. Its position is anchored by law since 1950 when the Industrial Organisation Act came into force. In its advisory capacity the SER represents the interests of trade unions and industry. Being independent from the government and financed by industry, the SER may give advice, solicited or unsolicited, on all major social and economic affairs.

At sectoral level, social partners are represented in the board of Colo, the association of national vocational education bodies. Colo has a tripartite board consisting of representatives from employers, employees and the national vocational education bodies. See the diagram for the responsibilities of the various actors with regard to vocational education and training. Social partners are specifically responsible for defining and updating the occupational profiles, which form the basis of the qualification profiles.

At regional level, most regional training centres (ROC) have a representation of social partners in their supervisory board.

At enterprise or branch level, social partners are involved in negotiations on collective labour agreements. Training measures increasingly form part of these agreements in terms of human resource management and lifelong learning for employees.

The social partners are also involved in sectoral platforms to monitor the quality of examinations in vocational education and training. They are increasingly involved in, or take initiatives at, branch or local level by stimulating cooperation between education and training and trade and industry. The main idea is to improve the relationship between the demand for, and supply of, labour and skilled personnel.

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS	TYPE OF ROLE (ADVISORY/DECISION-MAKING, DIRECT/INDIRECT)
NATIONAL LEVEL	represent interests of trade and industry (by Socio-Economic Council - SER)	Advisory. May give advice, solicited or unsolicited.
REGIONAL LEVEL	social partners are member of the boards of regional training centres	Representation. May also take initiatives to stimulate cooperation
SECTORAL LEVEL	define occupational profiles, monitor quality of examinations	Decision making role. May also take initiatives to stimulate cooperation at sectoral level
ENTERPRISE LEVEL	involved in collective labour agreements	Advisory.

[Diagram: Cooperation between the involved actors](#)

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

See attached file: [The Dutch system of education and training](#)

Education is compulsory in the Netherlands from the age of 5 until the school year in which a pupil becomes 16. (Pupils can enter primary education from the age of 4 years old on).

Full-time compulsory education is followed by partial compulsory education, where students are required to attend school for two days a week until the school year in which they reach the age of 17. Those following the block or day-release pathway (beroepsbegeleidende leerweg – BBL) in senior secondary vocational education (middelbaar beroepsonderwijs – MBO) are allowed to attend school for one day a week.

The system can be divided into two columns:

- general education stream goes from primary education to higher education. At higher level, though, it is partly given a vocationally oriented flavour.
- the vocational education stream goes from preparatory senior secondary vocational education (voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs – VMBO) to vocational and adult education (beroepsonderwijs en volwasseneneducatie – BVE). Senior secondary vocational education (middelbaar beroepsonderwijs – MBO) is the pivot in this column. For some students, it is regarded as the end of initial education, completed with an initial qualification. For others, it is regarded as an alternative route to higher professional education (hoger beroepsonderwijs - HBO). Most students follow the vocational education pathway although general education is viewed as a superior path. Improving parity of esteem between the two routes is a policy priority.

	1999-2000	2001/02	2003/04
PRIMARY EDUCATION	1 638.8	1 652.3	1 653.7
SECONDARY EDUCATION (VMBO, HAVO, VWO)	891.0	904.5	924.9
SENIOR SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (MBO)	434.1	455.5	477.7
HIGHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (HBO)	302.5	320.8	334.5
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION (WO)	163.1	171.9	187.2
TOTAL	3 429.5	3 505.0	3 578.0

Source: Key Figures 1999-2003, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

Secondary education (voortgezet onderwijs – VO) is targeted at students aged between 12 and 16 or 18. It consists of two cycles: lower secondary education and upper secondary education. It is divided into three types of schools, all having a core curriculum for the first two years (basisvorming).

- Pre-university education (voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs – VWO) lasts six years and prepares students for university education (wetenschappelijk onderwijs - WO) or higher professional education (HBO). It is classified as ISCED levels 2 and 3; the last three school years form part of the second cycle of general secondary education (ISCED 3).
- Senior general secondary education (Hoger algemeen voortgezet onderwijs – HAVO) takes five years. Its aim is to prepare students for higher professional education (hoger beroepsonderwijs - HBO). However, many pupils go on to or transfer to the fifth year of VWO. It is classified as ISCED levels 2 and 3; the last two school years form the second cycle of general secondary education (ISCED level 3).
- Preparatory senior secondary vocational education (voorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs –VMBO) lasts 4 years and is intended as a foundation course as regards both the general and the pre-vocational component. VMBO provides the basis for further education (both secondary vocational education - MBO - and senior general secondary education - HAVO) The curriculum consists of general subjects and, in the last two school years, vocationally oriented subjects, which can be followed in various learning pathways. This type of education is classified as ISCED level 2.

Pupils in VMBO choose one of four different types of programmes (learning pathways) and extra help is provided for those who need it. No distinction is made between VMBO pupils and those following other pathways in the initial couple of years; i.e. there are mixed classes of those focusing on vocational pathways with those following general education pathways.

At the end of the second year VMBO pupils choose a sector and a learning pathway. The sector chosen may be fairly wide (e.g. healthcare, retail or business, each comprising a wide range of subjects).

The four learning pathways are:

- theoretical learning pathway. Those qualifying from the theoretical learning pathway can transfer to MBO (short or long course) or continue their education in the fourth year of HAVO;
- mixed learning pathway. This is similar to the theoretical learning pathway but is more vocationally oriented;
- vocationally oriented learning pathway, to prepare for the long MBO course;
- vocationally oriented learning pathway, to prepare for the short MBO course.

In addition, there is a specific practical pathway for low-achievers, which is geared towards preparation for the labour market.

In 1999, the number of pupils entering secondary education rose as compared the 1998, as a result of demographic trends. Nearly 60% of all pupils attend preparatory senior secondary vocational education (VMBO).

Transfer rates between the types of education are not considerable but do exist. In general, after having completed one type of education pupils move upwards (i.e. from HAVO to VWO to be able to go to university). Transfer to lower types of education exists as well when the requirements are too high.

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

The courses in IVET at upper secondary level (MBO) are offered by the *regionale opleidingscentra* (regional training centres) ROC. A specific stream for agricultural education is offered by the *agrarische opleidingscentra* (agricultural training centres) AOC. They are separately financed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Food Quality. Courses provided at the AOCs resemble the general IVET courses in learning paths and levels.

The age of the participants in senior secondary vocational education ranges from 16 to 64 (including adult vocational education). However, 95 % of the participants in the main pathway (vocational training pathway with theoretical and practical training) are aged under 22.

In general secondary education, the last 2 (in senior general secondary education) or 3 (in pre-university education) years can be counted to ISCED level 3 or upper secondary education. This section mainly focuses on senior secondary vocational education.

Access requirements for senior secondary vocational education are designed to ensure that all people can gain a minimum level of qualification regardless of their previous education and training achievements. For assistant training (level 1) and basic vocational training (level 2) in the qualification structure for MBO (senior secondary vocational education) there are no requirements.

The admission requirements for a course at vocational training (level 3) or middle-management training (level 4) are:

- a certificate of pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO), or:
- proof that the first three years of senior general secondary education (HAVO) or pre-university education (VWO) have been successfully completed.

Senior secondary vocational education (*middelbaar beroepsonderwijs* – MBO) has a structure that corresponds to the different business sectors. Training programmes are offered in four different fields: technology, commerce / administration, services / health-care and agriculture. The training courses are provided at different levels and with varying duration.

The national qualification structure for senior secondary vocational education (MBO) is divided into 4 levels and 2 learning pathways. The diploma for one level serves as access to the next. Level four is not only the highest IVET level for entering the labour market, but it is also the entry level for *hoger beroepsonderwijs* (higher professional education) HBO. The levels are:

- Level I (*assistentenopleiding* – ‘assistant training’) lasts maximum one year. It prepares participants to carry out simple executive tasks (ISCED level 2).
- Level II (*basisberoepsopleiding* – ‘basic vocational training’) lasts two or three years. It prepares people to carry out executive tasks (ISCED level 3).
- Level III (*vakopleiding* – ‘vocational training’) lasts two to four years (two after completion of level II). It prepares people to carry out tasks completely independently (ISCED level 3).
- Level IV (*middenkaderopleiding* – ‘middle-management training’) usually lasts four years. It prepares people to carry out specialised tasks completely independently (ISCED level 3). Those who complete the training can transfer to higher professional education, or to another type of training: the specialist course (ISCED level 4). This course lasts one to two years, and in addition to

the middle management training prepares students to transfer their specialised knowledge to others.

Students in senior secondary vocational education (MBO) choose to pursue a block or day-release pathway (beroepsbegeleidende leerweg – BBL) or the mainly school-based vocational training pathway (beroepsopleidende leerweg – BOL).

BBL is a more practical (alternance) learning pathway where at least 60% of training takes place in a company, and the rest at school. The proportion of participants in the BBL-pathway has increased sharply in recent years and more women are choosing this route. The proportion of students over the age of 20 or even 27 in particular is increasing sharply.

BOL is a more theoretical pathway where the percentage of practical occupational training (beroepspraktijkvorming - BPV) is between 20 and 60.

Alternance training only differs in the way of learning, the exit qualifications and requirements for both learning pathways are the same.

The national qualification structure is now being reformed. There will be less qualifications, and the qualifications will become based on broader competences. The new qualifications are scheduled to start from 2005/06 on.

TRANSFER TO OTHER TYPES OF EDUCATION.

22% of the total number of school-leavers transfer within vocational education, from levels I and II to levels III and IV (with or without certificates at the lower levels). Compared to the number of students who have obtained a diploma at the highest level in the theoretical pathway (BOL), almost 36% of MBO students move on to higher professional education. In practice, hardly any students move on from the block- or day release pathway (BBL) to higher professional education (although experiments try to stimulate this). The majority of the participants leaving vocational education, leave school altogether.

Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation (general / vocational), 2000

NETHERLANDS	
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION TOTAL ENROLMENT	573 315
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (%)	68%
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION GENERAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (%)	32%

Upper secondary education: ISCED 97 level 3
Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Education statistics based on ISCED 97

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Both more school-based and practical oriented IVT programmes within senior secondary vocational education existing in the Netherlands are organised within the same administrative framework. The difference between school-based and apprenticeship based training can be compared to the difference between the two learning pathways along which students can obtain their diploma. Whereas most of the training in the school-based pathway (BOL) obviously takes place within the school (educational institution), practical training periods in companies form part of the curriculum. The main alternating pathway in the education system, however, is the block or day-release pathway (beroepsbegeleidende leerweg – BBL). The main learning place here is the workplace, where a minimum of 60% of the curriculum should be learnt. In practice, it means that students conclude a learning agreement with a company (and with their school) for four days a week, and attend school one day a week.

The school is the linking pin between the school-based training and the practical training. Furthermore, the national expertise centres for vocational education, training and the labour market, are important actors in this field. They check and assure the quality of the companies providing practical training places to facilitate the recognition of these qualifications. In addition, they provide training for practical trainers and support to schools in order to improve the on-the-job elements of their programmes.

Enrolment in the different learning pathways, x 1000 students

	1998/99	2001/02	2002/2003*

MBO – BBL	131.9	155.9	152.0
MBO – BOL (FULL-TIME)	255.0	264.5	281.7
MBO – BOL (PART-TIME)	23.4	25.5	20.5

* (provisional figures)

Source: Key Figures 1999-2003, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

Apprenticeship has always been part of the Dutch vocational education system, but the combination of learning and working is becoming more and more important and its forms more diverse. Learn-and-work trajectories were introduced in all vocational educational sectors (preparatory senior secondary vocational education, senior secondary vocational education and higher professional education). These trajectories aim to strengthen the cooperation with enterprises, and by more and more combining learning and working students are prepared more effectively for the world of work. In addition, these trajectories are used as means to smooth the transfer between the mentioned types of vocational education, because the reference to and experience in the world of work is a harmonising aspect.

The assessment for the practical part of the training takes place within the workplace via a practical examination. The educational institution is responsible for the examination (in all its forms) following the national standards of the Quality Centre for Examinations, but here the practical trainer of the company also plays a role. The method of assessment is regulated in the learning agreement between school, student and company.

Remuneration is not common in all sectors. Health care for example does not provide remuneration to students in this alternating pathway, while sectors as trade and tourism can afford it and pay their students a fee (depending on the organisation). Sometimes, the fees are paid to the regional training centres, and (partly) forwarded to the students.

When entering the labour market, those with BBL qualifications can find work sooner (because of their high level of practical experience), tend to find a permanent job sooner, and earn more than those coming from the more school-based learning pathway (BOL). BBL certificate holders are also much more focused on working and therefore choose to enrol in further education less often than BOL certificate holders.

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Under the Adult and Vocational Education Act, institutions are able to devise learning pathways geared to the needs of educationally disadvantaged students. "High-risk" youngsters in the major cities are being targeted as an extension of local compensatory policy (Gemeentelijk Onderwijs Achterstandenbeleid - which means that at municipality level extra money is supplied for policy measures to better integrate minorities, etc.), in tandem with measures to enhance the social infrastructure as part of urban policy (Grote Steden Beleid - Policy aimed at the major cities). These two measures have to address pupils who are in danger of dropping out of education.

Pupils with mental, sensory or physical disabilities may need special support. Special secondary education (voortgezet speciaal onderwijs) is provided for students aged between 12 and 20. Special secondary schools work together with mainstream secondary schools to offer split places for the pupils. This means that there is the possibility for part of the curriculum to be taught at schools providing preparatory vocational education (VMBO), practical training or learning support, or at adult and vocational education institutions (ROCs).

Pupils who are not capable of obtaining an ordinary preparatory secondary vocational education (VMBO) diploma, may undergo practical training which prepares pupils for jobs in the regional labour market below the level of training to assistant level. This is intended for pupils who need extra help because they are disadvantaged, or face structural problems (no official diploma is awarded).

In 2003, a Taskforce Youth Unemployment has formulated an action plan to fight youth unemployment. This Taskforce has not created any specific programmes or courses, but intends to motivate companies to offer (learning) workplaces to young people, or to redirect students back to existing training courses in educational institutions. The aim is to place unemployed youngsters (15-22 year old age group) in a suitable job, traineeship or workplacement. It is the employer who is responsible for the criteria to accept a young person. When a school leaver (with or without qualification) can return to school, the normal access requirements apply to this person.

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

The most prevalent and most formal form of training at post-secondary non-tertiary level is the specialist training. This is a level which provides further vocational specialisation (at Isced level 4), on top of the highest level of the qualification structure for senior secondary vocational education (MBO) (see 0403).

This type of training usually lasts one to two years.

Specialist training prepares students to carry out tasks completely independently, combined with the ability to perform on a specialist level in a particular field. Admission to a course at specialist level is possible after completion of the advanced vocational education training (level 3 in the qualification structure for MBO). The training at this level is offered by the regional training centres. Sometimes, mixed training courses are offered (i.e. in combination with the highest level of senior secondary vocational education, level 4 middle management training), to prepare students more intensively to the requirements of the labour market. These are mostly school-based with elements of practical training in it.

The existence and specific goal of this type of training has been subject to discussion at national level for quite a time. The extra value of this training would be to deepen the knowledge and skills and to train the skills to transfer this specialist knowledge to others in a workplace setting.

Experimental projects have been set up to promote the transfer of students from specialist training courses in the VET sector to the dual HBO courses (tertiary education).

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL HIGHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (HBO)

There are two types of higher education: university education (*) and higher professional education. The latter is the most vocationally oriented and is outlined in more detail here.

Full-time higher professional education (ISCED level 5) is generally open to those who have obtained a diploma in VWO (pre-university education), HAVO (senior general secondary education) or the long courses of senior secondary vocational education (four year). This type of training in principle lasts four years and is geared towards theoretical and practical preparation for vocational practice, for which a high vocational education level is required. There are 47 government-funded higher professional education institutions. Higher professional education is provided at "hogescholen" (universities of professional education) and is for students aged 17 and over. Hogescholen generally offer courses in one or usually more than one of seven fields of training: agriculture; technology; commerce; health care; personal development; art; training of teachers/trainers.

Higher professional education provides training for occupations which require both theoretical knowledge and specific skills. HBO courses are therefore almost always closely linked to a particular occupation and most courses include a work experience placement. This type of education can also be attended part-time as a part of vocational adult education and in dual learning pathways.

The dual learning concept in higher professional education has been implemented since the 1998/99 year, in a variant for all full-time courses. Dual education is a type of course in which the student is employed by a company in a position which is relevant to the training course he is enrolled in on the basis of an educational labour contract. The figures indicate a clear and increasing need for this type of education (enrolment in dual HBO education was 2000 in 1992/93 and already 6800 in 2000/2001). There is greater emphasis on supervision of the student, by both institution and employer. The programme is determined by the institution in consultation with student and employer.

Where no restrictions on numbers apply, students are free to enrol on whichever course and at whichever institution they wish. For courses subject to a quota or maximum number of first-year students that may be admitted to a particular course ("numerus fixus"), HBO institutions have a central admissions system.

The new bachelor-master system has implications for the titles awarded to graduates. The existing HBO courses are regarded as bachelor's courses and graduates are awarded bachelor's degrees. HBO institutions are also allowed to offer master's courses leading to a master's degree. Degrees will be awarded by the institutions themselves. Official recognition of the courses is granted on the condition that they obtain accreditation from the National Accreditation Institute.

Enrolment in Higher professional education (HBO), number of students, x 1000

	1999-2000	2001/02	2003/04 (PROVISIONAL FIGURES)
FULL-TIME HBO(1)		256.5	269.0
PART-TIME HBO		64.3	65.5
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	302.5	320.8	334.5

Source: Key Figures 1999-2003, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

(1) Numbers including students in agricultural sector

(*) For university education, refer to the Short description of the Dutch education and training system (Cedefop), or the description of the educational system by Eurydice.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND AND MAIN TYPES OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

Geared to people over 18 and aimed at qualifying them for work or prepare for further training, this field is as broad and diverse as individuals are. Roughly, a distinction can be made between general adult education and vocationally oriented continuing training (for unemployed or employed). The largest part is the corporate training for employed, but this is also the hardest sector to define (relatively few figures, research or financial data are known).

Mostly, continuing vocational education and training (CVET) in the Netherlands means not returning to initial education type programmes, but training with a limited scope, focused on profession related issues.

This is in line with a distinguishing feature of the Dutch CVET arena, which is the collective character of the greater percentage of training. Employer organizations and employees, through Central Labour Agreements (CAOs), have

partly taken responsibility for the provision and funding of continuing training for employees on a relatively large scale and on a voluntary basis. The government is involved, though mostly in an indirect way.

However, the government is responsible for another part of CVET: the general adult education part (which comes under the WEB Act) and the training for the unemployed. The Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and of Social Affairs and Employment are the most important actors.

In this section, the following classification for continuing (vocational) education and training is used:

- the education which comes under the 1996 Adult and Vocational Education Act (Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs - WEB) and is provided at the regional training centres: basic adult education and general secondary education for adults. Participants in general secondary education for adults must have completed compulsory education to be admitted. Additional requirements may possibly be imposed, depending on the type of education. For basic adult education, there are no specific requirements.;
- training for the unemployed;
- part-time vocational education and training for the employed (corporate training and privately funded training).

AD 1. ADULT EDUCATION UNDER THE WEB ACT

Adult education has a separate qualification structure (Kwalificatiestructuur Educatie – KSE) distinguishing six levels:

- self-reliance level (redzaamheidsniveau)
- threshold level (drempelniveau)
- basic level (basisniveau)
- initial 1 level (start-1-niveau)
- initial 2 level (start-2-niveau)
- advanced level (voortgezet niveau)

In basic adult education courses are provided at the levels 1 – 3 aiming at:

- furthering self-reliance
- providing a broad basic education and social skills
- Dutch as second language (DSL) at 5 different levels (not forming part of the qualification structure for education). An example of DSL is the educational component of the (compulsory) integration programmes for newly arrived immigrants.

In general secondary adult education, courses are provided at the initial levels 1 and 2 and the advanced level, through which participants can obtain a MAVO (now part of VMBO-preparatory senior secondary vocational education), HAVO (senior general secondary education) or VWO (pre-university education) qualification.

The distribution of tasks and finance of adult education under the WEB Act has been reviewed in the framework of the evaluation of the Act in 2001. The results of the evaluation were not very positive: the co-operation among city councils and between city councils and regional training centres is insufficient. The difference between the financing of adult education and of vocational education is an obstacle for the realisation of combined pathways and a good link-up of the two sectors. The adult education sector is not accessible enough for certain target groups.

TRANSFER TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (CORRESPONDING TO THE LEVELS OF THE QUALIFICATION STRUCTURE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING).

Different levels in adult education provide access to different training courses and qualification levels in vocational education (following the national qualification structure). The 'threshold qualification' provides access to 'assistant training' (level 1). The 'basic qualification' provides access to 'basic trade practitioner training' (level 2). 'Initial 1' qualifications provide access to 'training for trade professionals' and 'middle-management professional training' (levels 3 and 4). The 'initial 2' qualifications provide access to higher professional education. The 'advanced qualification' provides access to university education.

AD 2. TRAINING FOR THE UNEMPLOYED.

The training of unemployed adults, financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, does not have any national structure for recognition and examination. The focus is on recognition by the regional business community. The main purpose of the specific training (specifieke scholing), which comes under the Manpower Services Act (Wet op de arbeidsvoorziening) from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, is to strengthen the position of disadvantaged groups on the labour market.

AD 3. PART-TIME VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR THE EMPLOYED

The most significant forms of part-time vocational education subsidised by the government are part-time MBO and part-time HBO. The participants generally attend these alongside their work.

Corporate training in enterprises, taking up the biggest part of continuing vocational education and training, is not organised in any consistent way. The learning routes are highly heterogeneous and recognised by enterprises (not nationally). A distinguishing feature of the Dutch continuing vocational training (CVET) arena is the collective character of the greater percentage of training. Employer organizations and employees, through Collective Labour Agreements (CAOs), have partly taken responsibility for the provision and funding of continuing training for employees on a relatively large scale and on a voluntary basis. The government is involved, though mostly in an indirect way. The provision of CVET in the Netherlands is to a large extent privately organized and funded.

0502 - PLANNING AND ORGANISATION OF LEARNING ADULT EDUCATION UNDER THE WEB ACT

Since 1996, the legal framework for adult education is the Vocational and Adult Education Act (WEB – Wet Educatie en Beroepsonderwijs). The Act relates to the following areas of VET: (initial) secondary vocational education (both the school-based and the apprenticeship track), (publicly funded) CVT, and general adult education. The Act is meant to create a more integrated and transparent supply of learning facilities. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible.

There is a trend, established some time ago, towards higher participation in the lower levels of the adult education system. The priorities established by the municipal authorities account for the emphasis on participation by individuals requiring courses at the lower levels. With regard to the (compulsory) integration of newcomers, the emphasis is also on training courses at these levels.

In October 2003, 156 000 adults participated in adult education courses (see section 5.1.1 for the types of courses). The majority followed courses in Dutch as a second language (65 % mainly at the lower levels), which is a part of the integration courses for immigrants. A further trend visible for a few years now is that the number of participants from ethnic minorities is increasing steadily.

The number of participants in general secondary adult education is decreasing slowly and in 2003 was only 10 % of the total.

TRAINING FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

THE FRAMEWORK ACT FOR CARRYING OUT WORK AND INCOME (WET STRUCTUUR UITVOERING WERK EN INKOMEN - SUWI).

The Work and Income (Implementation Structure) Act (Wet Structuur Uitvoering Werk en Inkomen, SUWI) provides for training for the unemployed. One of the main characteristics of this Act is a stronger emphasis on work above income. With the SUWI Act a different organisation of the executive bodies was introduced. The centres for work and income (Centra voor Werk en Inkomen - CWI) and the Executive Body for Employee Assurances (Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen - UWV) were introduced in 1999 as new executive bodies of respectively the local authorities and the Ministry of Social Affairs. The local authorities have become responsible for reintegrating the unemployed. The CWIs provide the central desk for registration and advise the local authorities on steps to be undertaken for the reintegration, part of which can be training.

The UWVs are responsible by law (see section 0302) for the long-term unemployed and the disabled. The reintegration of these groups is put out to tender and carried out by private reintegration companies (recognised by government). In theory regional training centres (ROCs) could also tender for reintegration, but in practice up to 2000 only one ROC made the effort of seeking accreditation.

TRAINING FOR THE EMPLOYED

The training for the employed is characterised by the collective labour agreements. Financial arrangements for CVET are made through funds reserved for training and/or research and development (training and development funds - O&O funds). These sectoral or branch funds are filled by employers who pay a levy of the personnel costs to the fund, and can benefit from refunds for the training of their personnel. Increasing the employability of people, stimulate life long learning and maintain the knowledge for the sector are elements that stood at the basis of the creation of these funds (see also 1003 for details on the funding mechanism of the O&O funds).

Another measure to stimulate training of employees is the individual learning account (see also 0504 and 1003).

0503 - DELIVERY MECHANISMS AND PROVIDERS

The regional training centres (ROC) supply training for basic adult education and Dutch as second language. These training programmes are publicly financed and managed by the municipalities as formal administrative responsible actor. More and more other (private) training providers enter the market for basic adult education and Dutch as second language.

Most of the ROC's have also a private training institute or department through which they provide all sorts of continuing training programmes.

Training for the unemployed (within the framework of the SUWI Act from the Ministry of Social Affairs) is available to those who are registered with the Employment Service (Centre for Work and Income- CWI). This type of training is provided by vocational training centres (centra voor vakopleiding – CV), women's vocational schools (vrouwenvak scholen) and private training institutions. The government is adopting a policy of deregulation and encourages the private sector to become involved in this type of training provision by putting the training activities for the unemployed to tender.

A lot of private training providers are active in this market of continuing vocational training for working people or employees, of which 200 are formally recognised training institutes (among these institutions are also commercial departments of the regional training centres). They have the right to provide training programmes that fit the requirements of the national qualification structure and participants therefore can obtain a nationally recognised diploma. Furthermore, companies can also provide in-company training (given by own employees or by hiring private training providers).

A main form of funding of corporate training is through the sectoral training and development funds (see also 1003 for the funding mechanism). This type of training is often provided by sector specific training institutions and linked to an accreditation system for training institutes.

See for more information on the providers and their roles the administrative framework in 0301.

0504 - ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND PROGRAMMES

The greater percentage of training is enterprise based. A distinguishing feature of the Dutch continuing vocational training (CVET) arena is the collective character (responsibilities of both employers and employees organisations). Thus, it is not surprising that these actors have partly taken responsibility for the provision and funding of continuing training for employees on a relatively large scale and on a voluntary basis, laid down in the collective labour agreements. These labour agreements can contain measures for educational leave, training (sector or enterprise specific or broader) or other secondary working conditions.

Some of these sector arrangements might contain extra provisions to accommodate specific regional demands or circumstances. Financial arrangements in Collective Labour Agreements (CAO's) especially applying to CVT are made through funds reserved for training and/or research and development. The most prominent of these funds are the Training and Development funds (Opleidings- en Ontwikkelingsfondsen).

In 2001, the government has started experiments with the individual learning account (ILA). An ILA is an account on the name of an individual for which the government subsidises 450 EURO per person, employers also pay a contribution (between 150 EURO to 450 EURO) directly to this account. Aim is to stimulate individuals to take up training to develop his or her employability, which can be paid with the money on the individual learning account. The employee can decide (mostly jointly with the employer) on the basis of a personal development plan, which training will be chosen. Especially when the employer contributes to the account he wishes to have a say in the choice of training.

After initial hesitation, enthusiasm to participate in the ILA-experiments has grown. Within the 8 experiments about one hundred enterprises (SME and LE) in different branches (metal, chemistry, care & health, electrical, retail) were participating. Almost all the 1200 learning accounts that were foreseen have been allocated. Also in some branches it is already decided to make ILA part of the collective labour agreement. It has to be taken into account that within the experiments different models are being developed, to investigate which model or combination of models is most effective and efficient.

In the Netherlands an important issue of discussion is the ownership of the ILA. Employers prefer a joint ownership of employer and employee resulting in joint decisions of the training to be followed. Government (and partly unions) stress also the responsibility of the employee for his own employability and accordingly the ILA-ownership of the employee. Joint ownership may lead to more function-related training, whereas ownership of the employee may lead to broader training (intersectoral, key-competences, change of profession) sustaining his own employability. One thing and another depends of course on the contributions to the ILA of the different parties (government, employer, employee).

The ILA experiments were only temporary and ended in 2004. The results and experiences with the ILA will be taken into account in the discussion on the development of a more general model for learning accounts (Personal Development Accounts) or the development of broader personal plans which support the course of life (levensloopregeling).

Distance education is not very widespread in the Netherlands. The main provider is the Open University, managing programmes open to all adults wishing to follow training programmes of all kinds. Another important private provider of distance education is LOI (Leidse Onderwijs Instelling). This institution provides more than 350 training courses at senior secondary vocational education level, higher education level, and various function related or free time courses by using the i-study (interactive) method.

0505 - BRIDGING INITIAL AND POST INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Adults over 18 years old can continue general secondary education in the adult education sector, to obtain a diploma or partial qualifications for the theoretical learning pathway in preparatory senior secondary vocational education (VMBO), for senior general secondary (HAVO) or for pre-university education (VWO). With these diplomas, further education can be undertaken at respectively senior secondary vocational education level, higher professional education level or university level. This kind of training is provided by regional training centres (ROCs) and by private training institutes.

Re-entering the labour market for those who have been unemployed, or voluntarily out of work for a certain period, has become an important aspect in the life long learning agenda. The Centres for Work and Income (CWI) can play an intermediary role in leading people back to work or to education. If necessary, training measures can be proposed by the CWIs.

0506 - RE-EDUCATION AND RE-TRAINING NEEDS DUE TO LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENTS AND MOBILITY

There are various options for reintegration at different levels. At national level, policy measures are taken by means of laws or strategy plans. At regional level or sector level, an analysis of labour market needs and retraining needs is undertaken by the Regional Department Employment Strategies, the national expertise centres for vocational training and labour market.

At local level, the Centres for Work and Income are the first (public) intake points for unemployed or job seekers. These centres carry out reintegration programmes or buy training programmes from private reintegration centres to develop the skills of the unemployed and job seekers. These private reintegration centres can also be hired independently of the public sector provision.

There are no structural specific retraining mechanisms for branches or certain trades. Initiatives can be taken by social partners, depending on the needs of the labour market.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - GENERAL BACKGROUND

Every five years, the government formulates capability requirements for all teachers and, where possible, other education staff. These requirements are the basis for the training and continuing training programmes for teachers and other personnel. The inspectorate controls the training of teaching staff.

POLICY PROPOSALS

The training of teaching staff and the shortage of teachers is a main policy priority these years. The shortage of teaching personnel is mainly in primary and secondary education a huge problem, and to a lesser extent in senior secondary vocational education and adult education. In this sector, a number of 2500 to 3500 extra teachers are needed yearly, who should partly be recruited from the regular teacher training courses.

Partly, teachers should also be recruited from outside the training branche. This is already common practice in the vocational education sector, but to a lesser extent in primary and secondary education. The Ministry of Education has formulated an 'Act on the stimulation of recruitment of teaching staff from outside the teaching branche'. The aim is to open up the recruitment 'market' for teachers by formulating in the law clear capability requirements. Thus, it will also be possible to attain the necessary requirements via accreditation of prior learning or other ways than the regular teacher training courses. Other than in secondary education, the vocational education institutions have much freedom in appointing their own personnel (big autonomy for regional training centres). Rather than only having the right diplomas, teachers can also be appointed on the basis of their proven abilities and competencies as teacher.

Regional agreements are necessary to cope with the shortage of personnel, especially in the big cities. In April 2002, the social partners in the educational sector, united in the SBO (Sectorbestuur Onderwijsarbeidsmarkt – Sectoral Board for the labour market in the educational sector), have taken the initiative to start a process to reduce shortages of skilled personnel and to revitalise the sector so as to be able to reach the ambitious (European) aims. Action should be undertaken on the following points:

- focus on the professionalism of trainers and teachers
- the entrepreneurial school,
- professional management,
- strengthening of human resource management policy,
- training of teachers and other personnel in education,
- competitive conditions of employment,
- attractive working environment and
- developing links with other sectors to attract teachers.

A new structure for education professions is needed to respond to the changed needs of competences of teachers and other educational staff. This structure should also help to reduce the shortage of teaching personnel, in both the short and long term. In 2003, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science proposed a new comprehensive structure with basic quality conditions for the various occupations (teachers, teaching assistant, teacher support, etc.). Furthermore, training inside the school will become a more structural element of the (re)training of teachers and of a modern staff development policy. Schools can under certain conditions, be reimbursed for the extra costs when training in the workplace forms a substantial part of the training of (future) teachers.

ACTIONS ALREADY TAKEN

A national information point has been opened for those wanting to work in the educational sector (in various functions), and a website is available as well www.leraar.nl

For people wanting to work in the educational sector as teacher or in another function, special dual training projects have been started as a cooperation between VET institutions and teacher training institutions. The aim is to provide a shortened two-year training course to teach the specific skills needed for working in various functions (assistant teacher, teacher or support staff) to enable a maximum of interested people to work in the educational sector. There are also specific projects financed by the sectoral social partners in the educational sector (SBO-Sectorbestuur onderwijsarbeidsmarkt) aimed at specific target groups such as ethnic minorities (www.sboinfo.nl).

Within the framework of the decentralisation of responsibilities from government level to the educational institutions, more importance is attached to the management skills of the often very large regional training centres and educational institutions. A great number of in-service training of short term courses are provided by various private training providers. These courses are paid for from the lump sum budgets of these institutions.

0602 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS/TRAINERS IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Teacher training for various fields of education forms part of higher education and falls under the higher education and scientific research act (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en het wetenschappelijk onderzoek* – WHW).

The following types of teacher training can be distinguished for secondary education:

- teacher training in general subjects for second-grade and first-grade entitlement in secondary education. Second-grade teachers (duration of training: 4 years full-time; also possible on a part-time basis) are allowed to teach in the first three years of HAVO and VWO and all years of VMBO and MBO. First-grade teachers (duration of training: 3 years part-time on top of second-grade entitlement) are allowed to teach throughout secondary education;
- teacher training in technical subjects for a second-grade entitlement at one of the establishments of the Netherlands Fontys technical teacher training college

(Fontys Pedagogische technische hogeschool Nederland) (duration of training: 4 years full-time or 4 to 6 years part-time);

- teacher training in green (agricultural) subjects at the STOAS agricultural teacher training college (STOAS hogeschool)
- teacher training at university level for first-grade entitlement in one of the HAVO/VWO examination subjects (duration of training: 1 year). This type of training is offered at 9 universities (3 technical universities and 6 general universities).

A second-grade certificate is required for teachers in vocational education at secondary level. In this respect, vocational education differs from general education at upper secondary level, for which first-grade entitlement is required. However, in practical training, teachers with different levels of training are found, including teachers who have obtained first-grade qualifications. Teachers for the general subjects of vocational education such as languages or social studies are trained in the same way as teachers for general education. Vocationally oriented subjects are generally taught by teachers who have followed specific training for this purpose.

THE CONCEPT OF DUAL LEARNING

Special dual training projects involving cooperation between VET institutions (as the workplace for learning the teaching profession) and teacher training institutions have been established for people wanting to work in education as teachers or in another function. The basis for this project initiated by 13 regional training centres (ROCs) was threefold:

- ROCs wanted teacher training institutions to take into account the function differentiation in the teaching profession. Before this, teacher training colleges educated their students as second grade teachers and there was no possibility of anticipating new functions;
- ROCs fear a large exodus of their teaching staff in the coming 10 years, mainly due to (early) retirement;
- The educational innovation planned by the ROCs will be made more effective and more motivating by teaching the new standards in groups, rather than letting new teachers try to innovate educational methods at ROCs individually.

The aim of the dual approach is to develop a new, demand-based training and teaching system, with the design of a four year route that takes account of (sub)competences corresponding with the job profiles of the different functions in the ROCs (educational assistants, trainers, coaches and teachers). This provision is competence-based, instead of curriculum oriented, with a central role for learning at the workplace. The student can develop his/her competences in a dual way of learning, coached by the coach from the institute for teacher training as well as by the coach at the workplace (the ROC).

Students in this dual system are a 'new' target group. In the traditional system, students who start in the educational assistant, trainer or coach course would probably not have the opportunity to enter teacher training, because their level of preliminary training is not sufficient. Dual training however provides the opportunity for a student to move, for example, from educational assistant to teacher. In most cases the students have a broad vocational experience and also some training or tutorial experience in the workplace.

0603 - TRAINING OF TRAINERS/TEACHERS AT THE WORKPLACE (APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING AND CVET IN ENTERPRISES)

The expertise centres for vocational education and the labour market (see 0301) are intermediary bodies between the labour market and the educational sector. Their role implies that the (training) needs of the labour market, laid down in occupational profiles, are translated to the educational practice. Relating to practical training (training at the workplace) as part of the vocational training courses, these institutions have formulated criteria for the accreditation of companies providing practical training. One of these criteria is that the practical trainers, who are responsible for guidance and training of the students in the company, should have didactical skills and knowing how to instruct, guide, motivate and assess the students. Updating the skills of the teachers and trainers (see below for type of courses) is thus one of the criteria for accreditation of the company.

Almost all expertise centres for vocational education and the labour market provide (commercial) courses regularly to train these practical trainers in the various branches. These courses include elements such as role and responsibility of practical trainer, method of teaching/instructing trainees, available training materials, criteria for learning environment, effective communication, and assessment of practical training periods. For some sectors (i.e. security branche) further criteria related to the skills and qualification of the practical trainer are formulated, such as minimum level of training attained, or the obligation to have followed a practical trainer course.

0604 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (OUTSIDE ENTERPRISES)

There are no major training pathways for learning facilitators in informal settings or continuing education and training for adults, other than the teacher training courses for formal education (see chapter 6.2).

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

ROA, the Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market, is the institute in the Netherlands specialised in labour market forecasting and skills anticipation. The forecasts aim to increase transparency of the match between education and the labour market, in order to refine the opportunities and risks resulting from future labour supply and demand developments signalled. Two approaches can be distinguished: top down and bottom-up. In the top-

down approach, a general forecasting model for the whole labour market and data from national sources are combined to serve two main functions: policy and information (Van Eijs, 1994, Manpower forecasting in the western world: the current state of the art, ROA). ROA publishes biennially the report 'The labour market by education and occupation in 200x' which includes analyses of expected labour market developments in the light of particular policy issues. The information function is primarily intended to assist with vocational and educational guidance.

In the bottom-up approach, partial models of labour market forecasting are used, for example for just a selection of sectors or occupational classes, with input from specific (ad hoc) data sources. This can be complementary to the top-down approach.

Social partners and educational institutions can both take the initiative to introduce new occupations or qualifications or renew existing qualifications. Furthermore, social partners have an explicit task to take the initiative to incorporate new occupations or qualifications into the national qualification structure.

In the new examination system they are primarily responsible for creating new vocational qualifications and also for detecting new competencies on national level (Advice examination mbo 2001).

The association of expertise centres for vocational education, training and the labour market (Colo) (see chapter 3) works together with ROA to make better use of the available data. Their cooperation has been signalled in a four year contract. The respective expertise centres for vocational education, training and the labour market publish 'education and labour market research' for their own sector, making use of ROA information. These documents contain information on the labour market by sector or branch (the expertise centres are branch-oriented), such as expected demand for qualified personnel and the expected availability of places in companies for practical training (as part of vocational education courses). The educational institutions are subsequently responsible for attuning their provision of education at regional and national level with other providers. The regional training centres sometimes carry out their own market research to get insight into expected needs for qualified employees at regional level.

The centres for work and income (*Centrum voor Werk en Inkomen* - CWI) are also involved in the cooperation between the ROA and *Colo* to match the information on demand and supply in the labour market, at sectoral and regional level.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

One of the main policy objectives is to smooth the transfer between the various vocational education sectors (from preparatory secondary vocational education, to senior secondary vocational education and on to higher professional education) (see also chapter 2). Methods and concepts such as accreditation of prior learning and competence based learning are applied to smooth this transfer to stimulate tailor made education.

The switch of thinking from qualifications to competences can be found in all aspects of vocational education and training. The development of a new qualifications structure based on competences relates to the following issues:

- (a) promotion of the transparency of the qualifications structure;
- (b) promotion of flexibility in the qualifications structure;
- (c) innovations and changes in the labour market and in society require continuous adaptation of the qualifications structure;
- (d) strengthening partnership between national expertise centres and educational institutions;
- (e) strengthening dialogue between social partners and educational institutions within the national expertise centres.

A major reform programme is being implemented by CINOP (Centre for Innovation of Education and Training) to develop competence-based learning and training and new teaching methods in senior secondary vocational education, based on two key messages:

- competence-based education is explicitly aimed at the key issues or problems in professions and careers and prepares the learner to deal with them;
- the accent is put on an optimal competence development of the learners, tailored to their personal wishes and capacities.

Experience has shown that this development touches upon all the different aspects of educational organisation and the relationship between school and company. Therefore, the integral approach is adopted. Projects are being carried out together with regional training centres, institutions in the vocational education and training field, companies offering on the job training and other partners. The aim is to develop 'practice-theory' examples of approaches to the design of competence-based (vocational) education, such as ICT, guidance, portfolios, role of teachers, etc.

Besides the educational scope to the modes of delivery, an ongoing concern is the structural relationship between educational institutions and enterprises or industry. Many initiatives have been taken by government, social partners and educational institutions at national, regional or local level to improve this cooperation structurally. In May 2003, an agreement has been signed between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Platform Vocational education and training (Platform Beroepsonderwijs), social partners and the Labour Foundation (Stichting van de Arbeid). In this agreement, all parties commit themselves to give a joint injection of 25 million euro to vocational education, by stimulating innovative co-operation projects between education and enterprises. These projects will be judged on the innovative character by an independent committee. Selected projects will be awarded a maximum of 1 million euro.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES IN RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

See the [diagram attached](#) for the division of responsibilities in curricula development of social partners, national expertise centres for vocational education and labour market, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the educational institutions. The arrows show the steps in the process, the chronology is marked by the numbers from one to seven.

The process starts on the left side: the social partners have the responsibility to identify new occupations, changed profiles or new requirements in professions. These are laid down in (updated) occupational profiles. The intermediaries between labour market and education (expertise centres for vocational education and labour market) have subsequently the responsibility to translate these changes or new requirements to qualification profiles, as a standard for education and training. The Ministry of Education has to decide whether these qualifications are effectively needed, do not overlap with other qualifications and takes the decision to adopt the qualification. The educational institutions are free to translate these qualifications to effective and efficient training courses.

NEW TRAINING CONCEPTS

For these training courses, new learning environments and new concepts are proposed and implemented (in pilot phases), such as PGO (Probleem gestuurd onderwijs - Problem oriented education) and Beroepstaak gestuurd Leren (occupational task oriented learning).

A recent new didactical design concerns a pilot with occupational task oriented learning for the lower education levels in the technical sector. This concept has been designed to solve motivation problems of these students, reduce the drop-out rate, improve the image of working in the technical sector and attract more students and to adjust the educational courses more to the demands from the professional practice.

The starting points of this concept are:

- Learning is an active process
- One can learn from experiences
- Knowledge already existent is activated
- Learning is dependent from the context in which one learns
- The motivation of the learner is essential

This didactical concept is aimed to gain and develop competences, and puts the learner at the centre. The occupational tasks form the basis of the course, and can be realised either at school or in a company. These tasks form a coherent and consistent framework of occupational actions derived from practice. All different subjects are integrated in the occupational tasks, and students have to learn to work together, just like in the professional practice.

The pilot which is taking place in spring 2003 in the technical sector concerns three regional training centres.

FOCUS ON KEY COMPETENCES

In the development of the renewal of the qualification structure based on competences, a reduction of the number of qualifications is foreseen from more than 600 to 300. The qualifications will focus more on transversal skills or key competences. These include citizenship competences, learning competences (including the ability to work together, solve problems etc.) and specific professional competences (depending on the job profile these include digital skills, social skills and language skills).

The implementation of the new qualification structure is scheduled for August 2006.

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance is a central priority in education policy, since the government is leaving more and more responsibilities to the institutions in the field. VET institutions have a great deal of autonomy to design their own quality assurance system. Self-evaluation by institutions is the starting point for external quality assurance under the responsibility of the Inspectorate of Education. Supervision and monitoring by the Inspectorate takes place through yearly visits and is proportional to the self-evaluation; institutions with a well developed quality system are monitored less intensively. The [Education report 2003](#) (Inspectorate of Education) shows that quality assurance in VET institutions is insufficiently developed. The self-correcting function of this system needs improvement. Regional training centres make insufficient use of public accountability to determine their quality. This is seen as an issue requiring action in the overall context of VET policy.

The quality of examinations in the VET sector was not sufficient, according to the Inspectorate, and this threatened the value of diplomas. In August 2002, a national *Kwaliteitscentrum examinering* (KCE, Quality Centre for Examinations) was established for this purpose by *BVE-raad*, *Colo* and *Paepo*n. In it, education institutions and the labour market cooperate to control the quality of examinations in secondary vocational education. The aim is to improve the quality of the examinations of accredited courses and all related aspects. The tasks of the KCE include:

- defining and maintaining the quality standards for examination;
- external validation of the quality of examinations.

Appointed by law, the KCE is the only institution to control the quality of VET examinations. The role of the Inspectorate for Education will be limited to supervising the KCE.

Standards have been formulated in five domains:
 (a) examination management and organisation;
 (b) professionalism, purchasing and putting out to contract;
 (c) examination examination process;

- (d) examination
- (e) analysis and evaluation.

products;

These standards apply to all examination elements, including practical training in the workplace, dual learning, or other learning methods. The same standards apply for accreditation of prior learning (APL), but implementation might be adjusted to the APL procedures.

SECTORAL STANDARDS

At sectoral level, the KCE works with sectoral examination platforms to guarantee best use of existing knowledge in the field. These platforms are composed of experts from educational institutions and the social partners and follow the division into sectors used by *Colo* and the expertise centres for vocational education, training and the labour market.

Branches and sectors can, where necessary, make specific arrangements concerning examinations with institutions providing education. If these arrangements are made official, KCE takes these measures into account when controlling the quality.

FACILITATING RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications and competences acquired at the workplace are an increasingly important part of education and training programmes. Practical activity is an obligatory part of training (see chapter 4 for the different pathways), and new learn-work trajectories and other methodologies are also being implemented (see section 7.2). To facilitate the recognition of these qualifications, the quality of the companies providing practical training places is checked and assured by the national expertise centres for vocational education, training and the labour market. They have set up a scheme for accrediting companies providing practical training places. In addition, they provide training for practical trainers and support to schools in order to improve the on-the-job elements of their programmes.

Regarding the international validation of diplomas of unemployed or employed persons (whether working in regulated professions or not) a national helpdesk has been established (www.idw.nl). For the VET sector, the department IDW of the association of national expertise centres for vocational education and labour market (Colo) carries out the evaluation of the diplomas. The Centres for Work and Income function as intake points for those wishing to have their (international) diplomas validated.

For a listing of the sectoral platforms of the Quality Centre for Examinations, see <http://www.kce.nl>

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

VALIDATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

In the National Action Plan for Employment (and the Lisbon goals), one of the objectives is to raise the level of education of the population. One of the means to achieve this, is by recognising previously acquired competences outside the formal education and training framework (Accreditation of Prior Learning - APL or EVC in Dutch).

From 1999 onwards, a great deal of attention was given to increasing the opportunities for APL. This entails awarding diplomas or certificates, or granting exemptions for parts of a regular vocational training course. Procedures and instruments have been adopted for a wide range of occupations and training to support the testing of proficiency, portfolio and result assessment.

The purpose of APL can be seen in various perspectives:

- In relation to life long learning: motivating persons to continue training on the basis of their already acquired competences.
- In relation to the educational field: taking into account the starting point of all learners (via APL), and creating a tailor made training course for every learner.
- In relation to immigrants: by accrediting the competences of (especially highly trained) immigrants, the entry into the labour market can be made much easier. The combination of (cultural) integration in the Netherlands, and APL can shorten the way to work.
- In relation to human resource development in companies: the APL method can be applied to systematically define, assess and recognise 'hidden' competences.

The perspective of the implementation of APL has shifted in recent years from the certifying and qualifying function to the function of career development and strengthening of personal qualities of the learner (empowerment).

An APL procedure can be implemented in a variety of ways, but the following steps can always be distinguished:

- mapping competences – recognition, by means of collecting proofs of competences in a portfolio.
- assessing competences – acknowledgement. An assessment of the skills and competences can be done, comparing the competences of the participant with a standard describing what someone should know. This results in allocation of one or more certificates or a full diploma. Often, the national qualification structure for vocational training acts as the standard. When the standard is determined by a company, company-related certificates can be issued.

- determining the potential of competences – development. The last step of the procedure often entails a training recommendation or career advice in the form of a personal development plan.

Recognition of skills and qualifications can be based on the qualification structures of sectors and branches, or on internal (company) standards. In the first case, the capacity for adjusting the standards will be an important prerequisite for acceptance of the standard. In order to utilise the feedback function, agreements must be made between assessors and the bodies responsible for developing the national qualification standards.

Agreements at branch level about prior learning assessment could be set down in collective labour agreements in terms of spending of available training budgets. Another possibility to finance the system is to offer a tax facility for implementing assessments for careers guidance. The award of exemptions or credits can be an important incentive for 'lifelong learning in work'.

In 2000, the EVC Knowledge Centre was established, financed by the Ministries of Economic Affairs; Education, Culture & Science and Social Affairs & Employment for a period of four years (2001-2004). The initiative also enjoys the support of the social partners and educational umbrella organisations. The Advisory Council of the knowledge centre comprises representatives of employers' and employees' organisations, the government, employment mediation agencies and the educational sector.

The EVC Knowledge Centre studies, accumulates and distributes information on every imaginable aspect of APL, such as national and international information pertaining to APL projects, procedures, instruments, financing, yield and legislation. Incidental bottlenecks in the sphere of legislation and regulations are surveyed and discussed with the responsible authorities.

Examples of APL good practices are known in various sectors: drop-out prevention in building and construction industry, outplacement of employees in the Dutch army, the Dutch police, Human Resource Management in the process industry, quality requirements in the nursing sector and upgrading the transfer of employees in the wood and furniture industry.

The implementation of APL in the Netherlands started in a small number of sectors and settings, but its application is broadening quickly. The demand from companies is increasing. The implementation of APL and the introduction of competence-based education and training and broader qualifications fit together very well and will produce more and more synergy. Now, emphasis is on the roles of the various actors in the APL process and creating good conditions for a broad introduction. The road towards a central place for competences, more demand-based education and training, and an individual learning route throughout the learning and working career (lifelong learning), has opened.

The main challenge for the coming years is to change the character of APL from a process found mainly in projects with a limited time span to a lasting one firmly embedded in the relevant institutions. Other challenges include raising APL accessibility and improving assessor quality.

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The organisation of career guidance in the Netherlands is decentralised. Facilities are available at national level depending on the demand of local bodies and institutions. The national institutions do not receive any financial contribution from the authorities for support on a more regular basis, but can apply for direct financing for a number of innovative strategies.

Career guidance is divided into three parts in the Netherlands:

1. integrated in the educational sector,
2. as part of the services provided for unemployed job seekers,
3. a commercial part for employed.

Ad 1. Career guidance is an integral part of schools and training centres in secondary education and senior secondary vocational education. It is a special task for teachers who are known in this context as student counsellors. In addition, there are advice centres for employment and training (Arbeid en opleidingsbureaus - AOB) where schools and clients can get advice for a fee.

Ad 2. Unemployed persons and job seekers can consult the Centre for Work and Income, (Centrum voor werk en inkomen – CWI), for career planning and guidance where specialised advisors help them find new work. For special target groups, such as the disabled, it is possible to call on companies with private reintegration schemes.

Ad 3. The last sector is career guidance and orientation for employed persons. These are mainly private advice centres active in this field with outplacement and guidance of employed persons as their speciality.

There are a number of institutions active in the field of educational research and advice. The most specialised body with specific expertise in the field of career guidance is the specialised centre for career matters (LDC). It has a wide overview of training possibilities in the Netherlands which, in certain cases, it makes available via the internet and CD Roms for career guidance in the Netherlands. In addition, it produces written material for career guidance advisors to guide their clients in their choice of career.

Free access is given to the database of www.schoolweb.nl. A database which cannot be consulted directly by the general public, can be accessed on request. Questions have to be put by telephone or via the e-mail.

Other institutions are the educational and training advice centres KPC, CPS and APS. CINOP, the Centre for innovation and training, is active in the field of vocational training. In addition, there is the knowledge centre for accreditation of prior learning, (Kenniscentrum EVC) specialised in encouraging the recognition of skills and competence gained by a participant outside the educational context (for more information, see chapter 8).

At European level, like many other European countries, there is the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance, the NRCVG in the Netherlands. This is a partnership project of the association of national bodies for vocational education and training (COLO), LDC and CINOP. The secretariat is located at CINOP (nrcvg@cinop.nl).

The NRCVG is in turn part of the European euroguidance network. For further information, see www.euroguidance.org.uk. The aim of the NRCVG is to increase the European dimension within the career guidance context in the Netherlands.

For training possibilities throughout Europe, the Ploteus database is open to all European citizens. For all career opportunities and additional information, please consult www.ploteus.org.

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

The largest target group for guidance services in an educational context are pupils in secondary education and senior secondary vocational education. In this case, career guidance is an integral part of the learning process. AOBs [advice centres for training and employment] can be contacted by schools or individuals for (paid) advice and for specialised purposes.

Special reintegration programmes and career planning and guidance are offered for special target groups such as the disabled and the unemployed by the Centres for Work and Income – CWIs. Part of these programmes can be that they are directed towards private reintegration companies.

The most popular method (in commercial context) is individual counselling. In addition, more modern methods of career guidance and orientation are being developed. For example, in schools and industry more emphasis is put on the use of the portfolio for the mapping of competences (the use of portfolio is widespread in connection to the APL procedure, see 0802). In addition, much attention is also paid to the recognition of prior learning and competences to make full use of the possibilities offered by job seekers on the labour market.

Also online career guidance systems are being developed.

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

It was only in the last few years that special training courses have become available for career advisors. Currently, courses are available at ISCED level 5 at the Fontys academy in Tilburg, the Saxion College in Deventer, the Hogeschool Windesheim in Zwolle and at the Christelijke hogeschool Noord Nederland [Christian institute for advanced education] in Leeuwarden. These training courses are part-time training modules for people working in the area of career guidance and counselling. No special qualifications or competences are formulated to start the course. The course is tailor made and has a dual character (working and learning at the same time).

In the secondary education or senior secondary vocational education sector, these career guiders and counsellors are mainly teachers who have been given extra training specifically for this purpose.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

In addition to the trend of decentralisation taking place since the early 80s, a large number of mainly executive branches of government have been privatised (these services are now being run by private sector operators) or corporatised (that is that public sector training services have been encouraged to run according to private sector type rules). At the same time as the moves towards the privatisation/corporatisation of traditionally public sector institutions and decentralisation from central government, significant cuts in public spending have been achieved.

As further decentralisation is the general policy of the ministries in the coming years, the division of responsibilities and accountability will continue to shift. On the one hand, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will reduce the numbers of rules, regulations and registration measures. On the other hand, greater responsibility for education institutions means that more importance will be attached to results and outcomes, accompanied by sharper monitoring of the quality and emphasis on maintaining the rules.

With regard to continuing vocational training for the employed, the private sector has the dominant role, although the government continues to take some responsibility, through financially stimulating training in enterprises. At the central government level, it is not only the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science which contributes to the funding of continuing training but also the departments of Agriculture (Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Voedselkwaliteit), of Economic Affairs (Ministerie van Economische Zaken) and of Welfare and Health (Ministerie van Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Cultuur) for specific training areas.

While the private sector has a dominant role in the financing of continuing vocational training for employed people, there are numerous arrangements between the private and the public sector, leading to varying shades of mixed (private and public) involvement. This mixed involvement has led to a number of developments including the creation of training networks, special funds and mechanisms for monitoring training demand and supply. There are many examples of such co-operation in continuing vocational training between the private (employers and employees, labour unions and sectoral organisations, training providers etc.) and public (national and local authorities, providers, monitoring institutes etc.) sectors. The shared responsibility for training and the process of seeking consensus on any controversial issues between parties that have conflicting interests (such as employers and employees), is a typical feature of Dutch society.

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Both forms of IVT (school-based and apprenticeship/alternance) are highly related and organised within the same administrative structures. There are only slight differences according to the sources of funding. Therefore the apprenticeship and the school-based form of IVT will be discussed together.

The Financing Services Institute (Centrale Financiering Instellingen - CFI) within the Ministry for Education, Culture and Science plays a key role in the administration and financing of IVT. There is a complex but direct financing relationship between the CFI and the ROCs (the Regional Training Centres where IVT and CVT courses are provided).

Firstly, the macro budget for all ROCs is annually determined by the central government. Amounts can differ according to the current policy. In 2002 2 billion Euros were spend. Then a percentage of the macro budget is attributed to each of the ROC's.

The attribution of funds to ROCs happens in a lumpsum way; the total amount per ROC is compounded out of four factors: the input budget, the output budget, the VOA budget (Voorbereidende en Ondersteunende Activiteiten – budget for deficiencies of pupils and prevention of early school leaving) and premises budget. The input budget weights 80% of the total budget of a ROC. The number of pupils is calculated by weighting school-based IVT against apprenticeship IVT (the apprenticeship IVT is given a lower weighting) and by attributing a certain value to the different courses. For example economical courses are given lower weighting than technical courses because of higher costs for educational materials. The output budget is calculated out of the number of diplomas weighted according to course and kind of IVT (apprenticeship or school based). The VOA budget is related to the amount of pupils in the lower educational levels.

As a result of the decentralisation, the training institutions have a greater (financial) responsibility. In addition, the principles that govern the way in which budgets are appropriated have changed. Providers of IVT are funded partly according to the number of pupils that actually have gained a qualification/diploma (it might also become dependent on the relevance of the education and training provided for the labour market).

The apprenticeship-based form of IVT has a hybrid structure of funding.

The school-based part of apprenticeship training is funded directly with public funds by the CFI within the Ministry for Education, Culture and Science. The work-based part is also funded, in part, by central government (Ministry of Finance) through fiscal measures introduced in 1996; i.e. enterprise tax can be reduced for employers hiring apprentices. In addition, there are contributions from employers in the form of salary or pocket money for students engaged in apprenticeship activities.

Students older than 16 years have to pay course fees. The level of the fee is annually adjusted and depends on the type of education (full-time or part-time, or adult education). However, students (and their parents) receive money. Until their child is 18 years old, parents receive child benefit. From 18 years on, students receive individual study grants. Additional grants can be obtained depending on the income of the parents of the student.

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

The following structure of CVET is used:

- publicly funded CVET
- enterprise-based funding

In 1984, the Wagner Commission (and other commissions following it) made a general recommendation for the structure and financing of continuing vocational training (CVT), which also applied to IVT. The aim was to establish a joint involvement of state and the business community in the financing and administration of training and education in order to strengthen the link between training and the labour market. The level of involvement of each of these parties differs, however, depending on the target-group of the CVT. For example, training for employed persons is primarily the responsibility of the private sector. Public funding in this area of CVT is less significant and is mostly indirect through, for example, tax relief.

There are two major types of publicly funded CVT: (a) part-time CVT and (b) adult education. These two types of CVT are discussed here as well as the [related administrative framework funding sources](#).

- Part-time CVT: People who wish to improve their position on the labour market and those who prematurely discontinued their education during the initial phase but wish to obtain a diploma mainly take part-time CVT. Available courses and qualifications are identical to the full-time IVT-courses (i.e. technical education, agricultural education, services/health care education and economic-administrative education). The same two different learning routes are available as in IVT, the school-based and apprenticeship based CVT. Apprenticeship-based part-time CVT is popular among students over 27 years of age who are no longer eligible for student grants.
- Adult education: Within the framework of the WEB legislation, adult education is expected to serve two purposes (see also section 5001). In first place it should fulfil the role of linking vocational education and secondary education. Secondly, it is to foster personal development of adults following adult education courses. In accordance with these targets, the following types of adult education are distinguished:
 - general secondary adult education (Voortgezet Algemeen Vormend Onderwijs);
 - Training directed towards general social skills (including courses for immigrants from non-European countries);
 - Dutch as a second language

School-based types of CVT (part-time CVT and adult education) are within the public domain and are therefore predominantly publicly funded. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and city councils are the main responsible actors in this respect, following the outline of the legal framework of the WEB Act. Local authorities receive money from central government to finance adult education courses and integration measures, which are mostly provided by regional training centres (ROCs). The distribution of tasks and finance of adult education under

the WEB Act has been reviewed in the framework of the evaluation of the Act in 2001. The results of the evaluation were not very positive: the co-operation among city councils and between city councils and regional training centres is insufficient. The difference between the financing of adult education and of vocational education is an obstacle for the realisation of combined pathways and a good link-up of the two sectors. The adult education sector is not accessible enough for certain target groups.

As a consequence, the flow of funding for integration measures will probably be changed from 2005 onwards, when EUR 75 million will be transferred from the budget for adult education of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to the Ministry of Justice for courses at the lower levels of Dutch as a second language (levels 1 to 3). The remaining budget in this area from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will only be used for Dutch as a second language courses at the higher levels.

The most common form of enterprise based CVT for employed in the Netherlands is corporate training. A classification can be found in section 5001. A distinction can be made between the national level, branch or enterprise level and the individual level.

NATIONAL LEVEL

The private sector has the dominant role in continuing vocational training (CVT) for the employed. The government takes some responsibility, through financially stimulating training in enterprises, but no specific law of legal framework is governing this type of training. Some of the fiscal measures for employers, however, (such as tax deductions for training employees) have been abolished recently. Companies can still benefit from tax deductions when providing vocational training to their employees and when hiring apprentices for apprenticeship-based CVT (students following the block- or day-release pathway BBL, see section 0403).

At central government level, it is not only the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science which contributes to the funding of continuing training but also the Ministries of Agriculture, of Economic Affairs and of Welfare and Health for specific training areas.

BRANCH OR ENTERPRISE LEVEL

Enterprise-based arrangements for training are often made within the context of Collective Labour Agreements (Collectieve Arbeidsovereenkomst - CAOs). These agreements are made within each sector of industry and are preceded by negotiations between employers and employees and last for a specified period of time (usually two years). Some of these sectoral arrangements might contain extra provisions to accommodate specific regional demands or circumstances. Financial arrangements in Collective Labour Agreements (CAOs) specifically pertaining to CVT are made through funds reserved for training and/or research and development. The most prominent of these funds are the Training and Development funds (Onderzoek en Ontwikkelingsfondsen, O&O fondsen). The funds were established as a means to create a more solid foundation for training and to ensure that training became embedded within the various sectors of our economy (and the individual companies within these sectors). However, implementing sectoral training agreements is often difficult, in particular for smaller firms (SMEs). Although it seemed in 1999 that training initiatives from the sectoral level reached these firms more often (Waterreus 2002).

About 40 % of the Dutch enterprises are associated with one of the Training and Development (O&O) funds. Especially the sectors of agriculture, industry and catering industry are associated to these funds. About two thirds of these enterprises gained subsidy from these funds. In some sectors, special agreements are made for the benefit of specific target groups, such as women, employees with a low level of education and migrants.

Companies in the financial and business consultancy sectors form an exception in the use of Training and Development funds. Instead the companies arrange their own enterprise-based training, on which they are estimated to spend EUR 1.2 million per annum.

Cost of CVT courses as % of total labour cost (all enterprises), by type of cost (1999)

	TOTAL COSTS	DIRECT COSTS	LABOUR COSTS OF PARTICIPANTS
EU-15	2.3	1.4	0.8
NETHERLANDS	2.8	1.7	1.1

Total costs: sum of direct costs, staff time costs and balance of contributions to national or regional training funds and receipts from national or other funding arrangements

Direct costs: costs of CVT courses

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, 2nd continuing vocational training survey in enterprises (CVTS)

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Private training is, by definition, privately funded, through the contributions of the individual participants.

A public funding programme (funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) that is targeted at individuals to support employability and non-job related training is the Individual Learning Accounts (ILA) subsidy programme. The pilot project lasted from 2000-04, with a budget of nearly EUR 1.2 million. The idea is that employees use their own funds for (further) education, with the Ministry making EUR 450 available for each account. In this programme 59 % of the training followed was directly related to the learner's profession, while the remaining funds were spent on aspects such as computer or language courses. The pilot project was positively evaluated by both individuals and companies.

The pilot organisations in the projects were responsible for appointing account holders for the ILAs. A total of 2 500 accounts were opened in two phases by employees or job seekers, with participation by 223 firms in diverse sectors and branches.

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Local authorities and the Ministry of Social Affairs share the responsibility for the unemployed and other groups that are excluded from the labour market. The *Uitvoering Werknemersverzekeringen* (UWVs - Employee Insurance Scheme Implementing Body) are executive bodies of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the *Centra voor Werk en Inkomen* (CWI-Centres for Work and Income) are executive bodies for the local authorities. Both the CWIs and the UWVs are responsible for the (re-) integration of the unemployed.

The funding of the reintegration of the two groups of unemployed (in essence long-term unemployed as well as disabled and short-term unemployed) is regulated by two acts: the Framework Act for Carrying out Work and Income (SUWI) and the Act of Involvement of the unemployed (WIWI). The first one regulates the funding of the reintegration initiated by the UWVs; the latter regulates the funding of reintegration activities of local authorities and CWIs. The Ministry of Social Affairs funds both kinds of activities. Part of these reintegration activities can be education and training activities. There is no overview of how much money is actually spent on education and training in this perspective.

The UWVs deal with the social security assurance for long-term unemployed and the disabled. The reintegration of these groups is put out to tender and carried out by private reintegration firms. These are private enterprises that have to be recognized by the government. In theory also ROCs could tender for reintegration, in practice only one ROC took the effort of accreditation up to 2000.

In the framework of combating unemployment, the government has also introduced new fiscal measures for employers, especially for hiring employees without a starting qualification.

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

One main aspect of the educational policy is working towards a transparent educational market. In order to reach this goal the Dutch government will have to choose whether it adopts a more facilitating or an initiating role. A facilitating role should help to promote the individualization of training and the flexibility of investments by the government. The latter role (initiating) is more suitable for taking care of those groups that are not able to take part in the working society right now (OcenW, 2001).

Improving the effectiveness of the Dutch VET system (i.e. assuring sufficient or improved quality of training with reduced costs) has been, and still is, the main driving force behind the shaping of the funding system and the changes that have been made. The trend can be characterized by the delegation of parts of the responsibilities to non-governmental organizations (such as ROCs) and municipal governments by central government.

With regard to initial vocational training (IVT), two major changes have taken place. The first is that larger training centres have been formed from a myriad of small and highly diverse institutes of (initial) vocational training. As a result, the ROCs and Agricultural Training Centres (AOCs) were created.

Secondly, the administrative relationship between the government and institutes providing vocational training has changed profoundly. Funds are distributed using a system in which performance targets are set for training schools. Those offering better quality (for example low dropout rates, the creation of a high level of added value for its pupils) are rewarded: they receive more funds than schools that do not perform as well. The new system is currently under intense scrutiny and is debated by the parties involved as the old system is kept in place as a transitional measure.

With these changing administrative relationship between government and training structures the issue of the accountability for investment in human resources is becoming increasingly important. Regardless of the level of autonomy that is being granted to training institutes, especially for IVT and training for the unemployed, it is still public money that is being spent. The training institutes as well as the national ministries remain in the Dutch public domain as to whether the expenditure is being targeted in a way that meets social demands (for example, ensuring equal opportunities, guaranteeing equality of access for the disadvantaged, as well as providing training which is relevant to the needs of the labour market). For these reasons, a target system for a minimum level of qualification, which should be achieved by everyone, is currently in place in the Netherlands.

A distinctive feature of continuing training for the employed (CVT) is that the system in essence is voluntary, i.e. there is no specific law regulating the provision of this type of training. Within each sector of the business community, funds are made available specifically for the training of employees. These Training and development funds are based within Collective Labour Agreements between employer and employee organizations. The existence of these funds, especially in large firms, assures that continued attention is given to the training and retraining of employees.

In the area of CVT, another trend can be seen, i.e. towards individual responsibility of training and lifelong learning. The pilot experiments with individual learning accounts are an example of this trend. A political agreement has been reached on a new measure which enables employees to save time or money for educational leave, a sabbatical period or a period to dedicate to the care of others (levensloopregeling: measures to support the course of life). The precise conditions still need to be detailed.

The important question is whether the funding systems, discussed above, are realizing their aims and the objectives of policy makers. Some broad comments are outlined below.

With specific reference to VET, this policy was translated into the notion - first formulated by the Wagner commission in 1984 - that the training of students is effective when it is relevant to the needs of the labour market. New funding mechanisms are being introduced such as performance related funding, depending on the progress of individual students in achieving their qualifications while ensuring at the same time that these are relevant for the labour market.

Furthermore, the funding system for CVT for the employed was, among other things, designed to combat the problem of under-investment. Employers' investments into CVT have been too low as evidenced by the fact that the Training and Development funds are carrying surpluses. The under-investment may be due to the fear that training personnel can be to the benefit of competitors, on the one hand, and the loss of trained personnel to other

companies before the company, which has supported the training, had benefits of the investment, on the other hand. From the figures outlined within the part CVT for the employed, the surpluses that still exist in these funds seem to indicate that under-investment in training still exists.

The involvement of social partners and employers to mobilise extra resources for training proves to be the right way to achieve commitment, although it remains a continuous process of cooperation.

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

In the framework of more European cooperation in vocational education, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science supports the initiatives on international benchmarking, the aims of Lisbon, the development of a European area for lifelong learning and a European framework for the accreditation of qualifications.

In the European benchmark comparisons, the Netherlands occupy the fifth place for participation in post initial training. However, strong impulses are continuously needed.

Specific obstacles on the labour market are:

- Too many persons have left education without basic qualification;
- The threat of a structural shortage of high trained professionals (especially in the technical sector);
- Low percentage of participation in work and training of older employees and women;
- Increasing youth unemployment.

The national strategy on life long learning focuses on the aim to maintain and raise the knowledge level of our population. Life long learning is seen as an important key to raise productivity and social cohesion in society.

In 2004, an Action Plan Life Long Learning has been drafted, with specific actions to produce measurable results and strengthen the conditions for life long learning. Furthermore, a lifelong learning Taskforce will be established; its tasks and aims are currently being negotiated.

A survey by Cedefop, based on a lifelong learning module in the Eurobarometer, shows an overall response pattern which may suggest the Dutch have a realistic approach to both the potential and limitations of lifelong learning. They see it as an important way to adapt to the challenges of current economic and social change but do not expect it to solve all the problems individuals, societies and economies face (Chisholm, 2004). To a greater extent than in much of the EU, the Netherlands is the home of well educated active learning citizens who move more flexibly between employment, education and training, and civic and family activities.

Actions launched to support the implementation of lifelong learning include:

- (a) the steering committee on 'impulse' vocational education and training, initiated by the social partners in 2000, continues its activities;
- (b) innovatory initiatives at regional or sectoral level by education and industry to reduce the drop-out rate, and enhance cooperation between the various actors. The government invested EUR 10 million in 2003;
- (c) further implementation of accreditation of prior learning (APL). The Kenniscentrum EVC (Knowledge Centre APL) has been set up to support this (see 0802);
- (d) combinations of learning and working for difficult target groups. The aim is to guide these groups to obtain a basic qualification. Support can be used from ESF 3 measures;
- (e) individual learning account experiments (see 1003);
- (f) the Youth Unemployment Action Plan, aimed at the realisation of 40 000 extra youth jobs and practical training places for unemployed youngsters (see 0201).

Other actions include raising of the number of adults with basic qualification and the number of high trained professionals, the stimulation of informal and non-formal learning, continuing implementation of accreditation of prior learning, promote dual learning. Overall aim is to invest more and more effectively in life long learning.

With regard to internationalisation policy, a policy paper Education for world citizens (Onderwijs voor wereldburgers) was published in January 2002.

Three main goals are identified for the education policy in international perspective:

- stimulate the possibilities for international orientation of learners;
- enhance the international profile of Dutch educational institutions at the international education and training market;
- to learn from and cooperate with each other at central level in an international framework.

Bilateral agreements include long term cooperation with Flanders, in the framework of the GENT agreements. Currently, the GENT 5 agreement is being realised.

With Germany, a common agreement for intensive cooperation in the area of education and science has been renewed in September 2001. With two 'Bundesländer' Nordrhein-Westphalen and Niedersachsen, bilateral agreements have been signed as well. In 2002, Germany and the Netherlands took the initiative within the

nationwide common agreement for a conference on mobility in vocational education and training with the participation of Flanders, Denmark and Austria. This conference took place in Aachen, Germany, and can be characterised as an excellent example of a bottom-up multilateral initiative for increased cooperation between Member States, as agreed in the Brugge process or Copenhagen agreement.

The neighbouring countries are prioritised, but cooperation at government level will also be sought with the pre-accession countries joining the EU in May 2004, and with countries such as Morocco, Turkey and Suriname because many (parents from) students in VET have their cultural origins in these regions. In this respect, the combination of interculturalisation and internationalisation will be stimulated.

Major stakeholders are: the representation councils in the VET sector the Dutch Council for Vocational Education and Training (BVE-Raad), Association of agricultural training centres (AOC-Raad), the Association of national expertise centres on vocational education and the labour market (Colo) and intermediary organisation CINOP (Centre for Innovation of Education and Training). Social partners are involved in the National Leonardo Commission and they engage in various activities related to international policy or mobility.

For the VET sector, specific targets are to cooperate actively and bring forward European cooperation, to develop an international key competence, to attune initiatives on recognition of qualifications and diploma's or accreditation of prior learning at European level and to further develop the Europass framework in this respect. An overall goal is to stimulate and enlarge international mobility for all students in the VET sector.

European initiatives such as the Europass, European computer driving licence and the European format for curriculum vitae are implemented in the Netherlands. In 2001, the language portfolio has been adapted to the national situation (including the VET sector) and recognised by the Council of Europe as one of the first national portfolios.

At branch level, some instruments are developed to increase transparency of qualifications in international perspective (i.e. euro-certificates, modules implemented in different countries). One example in the metal sector is the creation of the EMU Berufspass. This initiative is taken by the employers' organisation Metaalunie (Metal Union), and is recognised in the metal sector in a number of European countries. The personal Berufspass contains information on the level of competences and skills of the employee and can be updated throughout his or her entire working life.

A few initiatives have been or are being taken in the border region with Germany to develop bilateral modules for which the students receive two national diplomas (bi-diplomering). For example, a regional training centre in the south developed a bilateral module in the laboratory technic branche and agreed with the Industrie- und Handelskammer zu Aachen that the students received both a Dutch and German certificate. A small number of students has benefited from this initiative and it has not been taken further to this date. Other initiatives are being developed in the euegios at the moment, but are in the first stages of development.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

While the current qualification structure is being redesigned, taking key competences as a basis, initiatives are undertaken to stimulate the inclusion of international dimensions in qualifications. These international dimensions include for example intercultural competences, language competences and social skills. There is also a lively discussion going on about inclusion of entrepreneurial skills in VET.

In some courses (mainly in the sector Economy/Trade/Tourism, to a lesser extent in the welfare and technical sectors), preparatory modules are developed and included in curricula to prepare students for international mobility. These modules are aimed at international vocational orientation or specific modules per profession or country of destination.

Transnational mobility (learning or gaining work experience abroad) is implemented in nearly all regional training centres. The didactical impact is mainly seen as enhancing the personal development, social skills and language skills, but not primarily the professional skills of the learners.

In a research (December 2002) on mobility among 29 regional training centres, the main aims for transnational mobility for students and teachers are described as follows:

- enhance transparency of courses at European level (40% agreed with this statement);
- compare training courses/systems (58 % agreed);
- recognition of skills and qualifications (30 % agreed);
- enlarge the European awareness of students/institution (82% agreed).

An instrument to improve and stimulate language learning in VET is the European language portfolio. This instrument has been adapted to the Dutch situation in vocational education and training by SLO and CINOP and introduced in 2001. Related to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (developed by the Council of Europe) the instrument consists of a language passport, a biography of the languages learned and a dossier with relevant material (www.taalportfolio.nl).

Another impact of internationalisation, is the existence of a few bilingual vocational training courses in the VET sector. Mostly applied in sectors with an international working field (i.e. transport, business or trade), these courses are mostly in English and aim to prepare the students for an international working environment. These courses are open to foreigners, and sometimes the percentage foreigners is even higher than the percentage national students.

List of sources and references

Theme 01: General policy context

CBS (*Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek*) www.cbs.nl

Monograph *Beroepsonderwijssysteem in Nederland* (Onstenk)

Short description Dutch vocational education and training system (Maes, 2003)

Eurostat

Theme 02: Policy development

WEB Act

National Action Plan for Employment

Budget 2003. Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Zoetermeer, November 2002.

Budget 2004. Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Zoetermeer, October 2003.

www.minocw.nl (dossier on budget)

Theme 03: Institutional framework

For further information on actors:

www.minocw.nl

www.minlnv.nl

www.minszw.nl

www.minpectorate.nl

www.colo.nl (including list of all expertise centres)

www.bveraad.nl (including a list of all regional training centres)

[Main social partner organisations:](#)

www.vno-ncw.nl

www.mkb.nl

www.fnv.nl

www.cnv.nl

Theme 08: Accumulating, transferring and validating learning

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (1996). *Wet educatie en Beroepsonderwijs. De wet in hoofdlijnen*. (Adult and vocational education Act. Main outline.). ISBN 903463358 6. Zoetermeer.

Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (yearly). www.minocw.nl (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) - Inspectorate of Education.

www.minszw.nl (Ministry of Social Affairs)

www.kce.nl (Quality Centrumevc.nl)

www.kenniscentrumevc.nl (Knowledge centre EVC)

Theme 09: Guidance and counselling

For learning and training opportunities:

www.euroguidance.org.uk

www.schoolweb.nl

www.ploteus.org

Supporting organisations:

<http://www.kps.nl>

www.aps.nl

www.cps.nl

www.hbo-raad.nl (for websites of *hogescholen*).