
Lithuania

VET in Europe – Country report

2013

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Author: Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre
with contributions from members of ReferNet Lithuania

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CHAPTER 1.

External factors influencing VET

1.1. Structure of population

Based on data of Statistics Lithuania, the Lithuanian Department of Statistics (Lietuvos statistikos departamentas), at the beginning of 2013, the estimated population amounted to 2 971 905, 1.1% less than at the beginning of 2012. Negative net international migration accounted for 85% and natural decrease accounted for 15% of the decline. From 2001 to 2010 the population decreased by 178 700 due to negative net migration. In 2012, international net migration remained negative as the number of emigrants exceeded that of immigrants by 21 257. However, in 2012, compared to 2010, the number of immigrants increased almost four times (by 14 630). Almost every second emigrant is aged 20 to 29: 40.6% of emigrants in 2012 compared to 30.9% in 2007. This negatively affects composition of the labour force. Besides, more intensive emigration creates shortage of skilled labour which may hinder economic growth in Lithuania in the long term.

Lithuanians account for 84.1% of population, Poles for 6.6%, Russians for 5.8% and other nationalities for 3.5%. Women make up 53.9% of the total population. Almost one third of the population (28.2%) is under 24 years old, while the population aged 25 to 64 accounts for 53.5% and those over 65 account for 18.3% of the total population. The population is ageing. At the beginning of 2013, the population aged 60 and older amounted to 24%, while at the beginning of 2007 this group amounted to 20.4% of the total population. Ageing of society will remain an important concern in the future; based on forecasts of Statistics Lithuania, from 2010 to 2025 the number of persons over 65 will increase by 15%, while those aged 15 to 64 will decrease by 10%. It can be presumed that in the long-term perspective employees will bear a heavier burden to support retirees.

1.2. Education level of the population

The education level of the population is rather high. Based on labour force survey data, in 2012, 93% of 25 to 64 year-olds had attained at least upper secondary education and 34% reached tertiary level. This is one of the highest educational attainment rates in Europe.

The share of the population aged 30 to 34 having completed university education is increasing every year (Table 1). However, due to decreasing birth rates and emigration, the number of students in higher education institutions is decreasing (Section 2.2.2). To retain the share of 30 to 34 year-olds with higher education or equivalent is a priority of the national reform programme (Lithuanian Ministry of Economy, 2012), which summarises the main

structural reforms to eliminate obstacles to economic growth and achieve national targets under the Europe 2020 strategy. The document sets the target to retain this indicator at above 40% by 2020, which is higher than the European Union (EU) target.

Considering the educational attainment level of the population aged 20 to 24, Lithuania has almost reached its 2012 benchmark established by its national education strategy 2003-12, with 90% of population aged 20 to 24 having attained upper secondary education level or above (Table 1).

The benchmark regarding early school-leavers has in principle also been reached (Table 1): in 2012 the share of the population aged 18 to 24 with, at most, lower secondary education and not in further education and training totalled 6.5% and was considerably lower than the EU-27 average (national benchmark for 2012 was 9%; the EU 2020 benchmark is less than 10%). Reducing the number of early school-leavers is one of the main aims of the national reform programme which also targets keeping the share of early school-leavers below 9% in 2020.

At the same time, the lifelong learning rate is rather low compared to other EU countries (Table 1) and behind the EU 2020 benchmark (15%). Besides, a rather large share of the population (26,7% of population aged 25-64 in 2012) has completed general education programmes and does not have a vocational training background. Therefore, adult vocational training and qualification upgrading is one of the biggest challenges for the education and training system.

Table 1. **Education and lifelong learning indicators (%)**

	2010	2011	2012	EU average, 2012	EU 2020 target	National target
Share of the population aged 20-24 having attained upper secondary education or above	87,0	87,7	89,3	80,2	n.a.	2012: 90
Share of the population aged 30-34 having completed university studies (or equivalent)	43,8	45,8	48,7	35,8	40	2020: >40
Share of early leavers from education and training (persons aged 18-24)	8,1	7,2	6,5	12,8	< 10	2012: 9 2020: < 9
Share of the population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey	4,0	5,7	5,2	9,0	15	N/A

NB: n.a. = ; N/A =

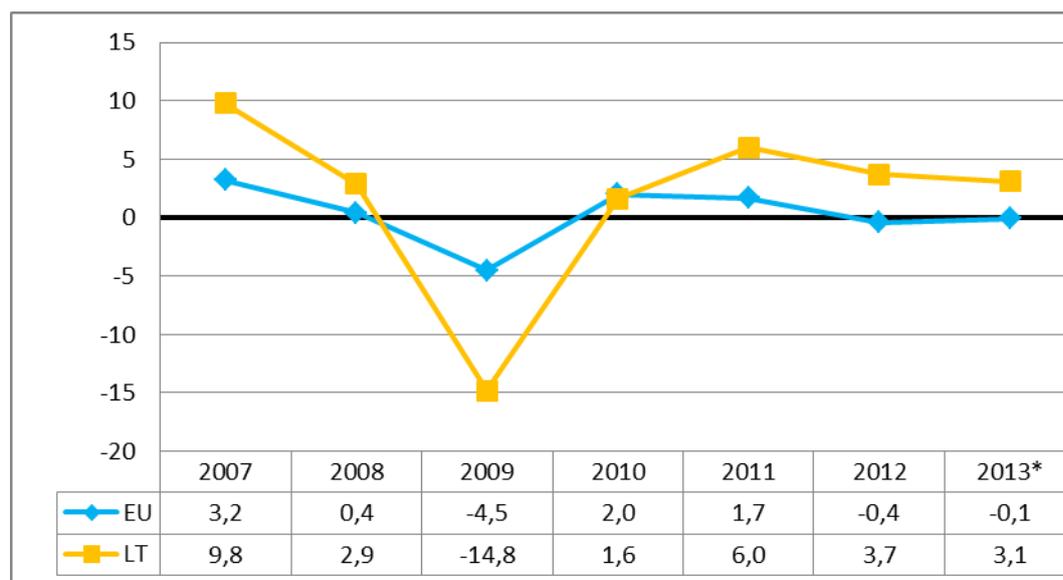
Source: Eurostat and Cedefop database of indicators.

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00186/> and <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/statistics-and-indicators/education-and-training-2020-benchmarks.aspx>.

1.3. Economy and labour market indicators

According to Eurostat, gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 3.7% in 2012 and Lithuania returned to the ranks of the fastest growing economies in the EU after an interval of several years. Despite such strong growth, the economy has not yet recovered to its pre-crisis level (Figure 1).

Figure 1. **GDP and main components, change in %**



* provisional data

Source: Eurostat. Extracted on 22.10.2013.

In 2012, compared to 2011, the largest impact on the development of the economy was made by the increasing value added generated in manufacturing industry (4.3%), agriculture (8.6%) and services (3.7%). The sector, which impeded growth of GDP, was construction with decrease of value added of 2.9% (Ministry of Economy, 2013).

Table 2. **Employed population (aged 15 and over) by economic activity**

Economic sector (NACE* rev2)	Employed (000)	%
A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	113.6	8.9
B Mining and quarrying	2.4	0.2
C Manufacturing	200.7	15.7
D Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	12.7	1.0
E Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	14.9	1.2
F Construction	89.2	7.0
G Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycle	223.3	17.5
H Transportation and storage	93.5	7.3
I Accommodation and food service activities	32.4	2.5

J Information and communication	28.5	2.2
K Financial and insurance activities	18.4	1.4
L Real estate activities	13.3	1.0
M Professional, scientific and technical activities	50.3	3.9
N Administrative and support service activities	38.7	3.0
O Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	74.1	5.8
P Education	134.6	10.5
Q Human health and social work activities	84.9	6.6
R Arts, entertainment and recreation	22.8	1.8

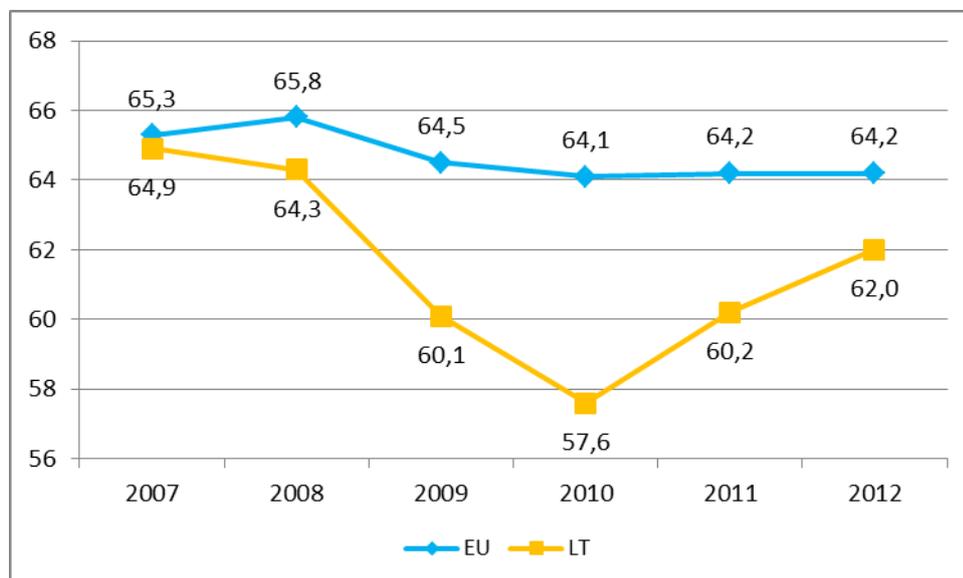
* Classification of economic activities in the European Community.

Source: Labour force survey data. Statistics Lithuania database of indicators.

<http://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?id=1717&status=A>

In 2012, 62% of the population aged 15 to 64 were in employment, an increase of 1.8% compared to the previous year (Figure 2). Due to the economic slowdown, the average employment level decreased by 6.5% to 57.8% in 2010, compared to 64.3% in 2008. The largest share of people is employed in the trade, industry and education sectors (Table 2). During 2012, the largest increase of employees was in manufacturing industry (4.5% increase), transport and storage (4.5% increase), information and communication (15.2% increase), professional, scientific and technical activities (8% increase) and construction (4.2% increase).

Figure 2. **Population in employment**

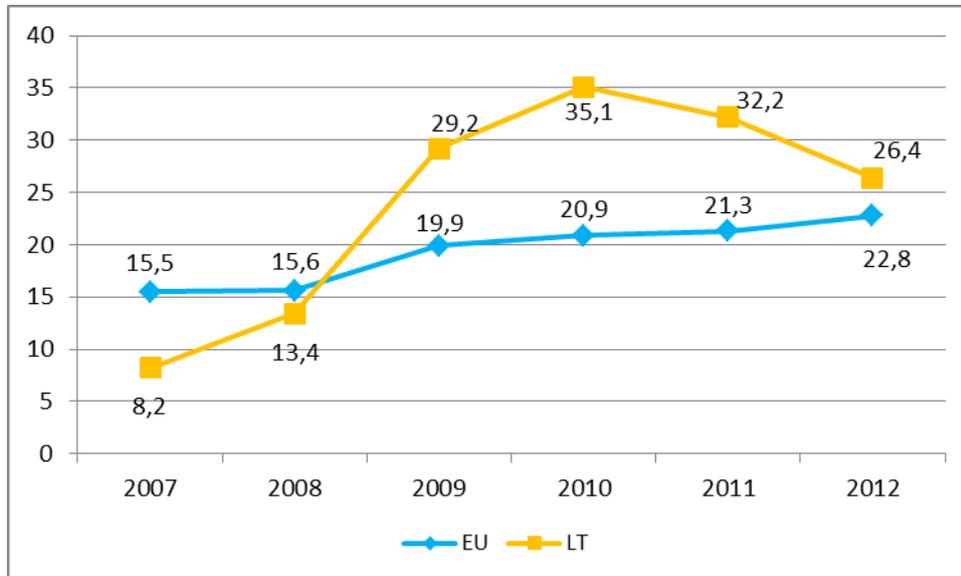


Source: Eurostat. Extracted on 22.10.2013.

In 2012, the unemployment rate stood at 13.2%; down 2.1% from 2011. Every second unemployed (49%) was affected by long-term unemployment (being unemployed for more than a year). This number decreased by 18.8% compared to 2011. Long-term unemployment remains an urgent policy concern.

Tackling high youth (15 to 24 year-olds) unemployment is a national policy priority. The indicator stood at 26.4% in 2012 and decreased by 5.8% compared to previous year (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Youth unemployment



Source: Eurostat. Extracted on 16.4.2013.

To solve youth unemployment problems, the government prepared and approved an action plan in 2012. This plan includes measures to:

- (a) improve the balance between education system supply and labour market demand;
- (b) develop occupational skills of youth in education, through formal and non-formal VET programmes;
- (c) support youth entrepreneurship and self-employment;
- (d) support youth employment.

To implement this action plan the public employment service (PES) (Lietuvos darbo birža) restarted projects for young unemployed persons' training and on-the-job training, and set up a system where a part of young employees' salaries is subsidised. The Ministry of Economy is creating systems to forecast demand for human resources in the medium term and to monitor links between qualifications and jobs. The measures applied have led to positive changes – in 2013 youth unemployment was close to the EU average, having decreased by 5.8% compared to the previous year.

In 2013 the Government of Republic of Lithuania approved the programme for increasing employment for the 2014-2020 period (Užimtumo didinimo 2014–2020 metų programa). The Government is trying to raise the employment rate in the country and seeks that 73 per cent of Lithuania's citizens to have work by 2020. The programme aims at

supporting creation of job places, increasing the correspondence of labour force to the needs of labour market and improving integration of available human resources into the labour market. The programme foresees such measures as to improve quality and accessibility of vocational guidance services, to ensure acquisition of relevant skills in the education and training system, to improve system of competences assessment and recognition as well as better lifelong learning services, to ensure fast and sustainable transition of youth from the education system into the labour market. The programme includes measures for elderly persons and disabled persons to remain in the labour market, including education and measures for unemployed to return to employment. The programme also foresees strengthening of work based learning. Until 2020 it is expected to raise the scope of work based practical VET twice by increasing cooperation with employers.

Lithuania is gradually recovering from the economic crisis, but to support recovery a more active introduction of innovation into all sectors of the economy, including traditional branches, is necessary. To face this challenge, initial and continuing VET (IVET and CVET) should be attractive and of good quality; a need which is increasing and will increase more in the future. The VET system should therefore prepare employees for working with new innovative technologies. For this reason, a network of sectoral practical training centres is being established (Section 2.2.4), and efforts are being made to cooperate more actively with social partners for:

- (a) shaping qualifications and VET curricula (Sections 3.2 and 3.3);
- (b) assessing VET learners competences (Section 3.4);
- (c) VET governance and provision (Sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4);
- (d) updating VET teachers technological competences (Section 2.2.6);
- (e) improving vocational guidance quality and accessibility (Section 4.5).

CHAPTER 2.

Providing vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective

2.1. The national education and training system

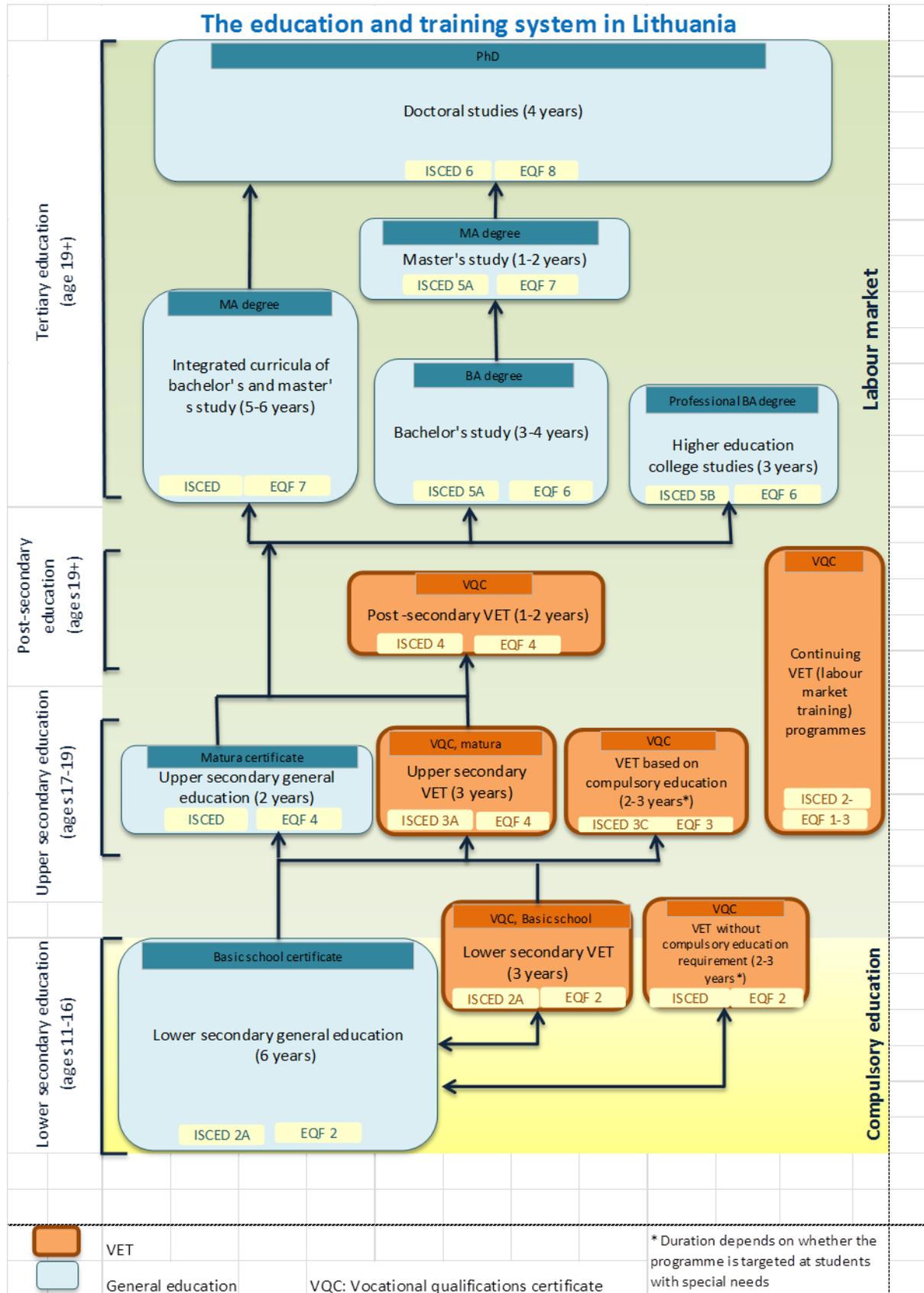
The Lithuanian education system consists of general education (pre-school, pre-primary, primary, lower and upper secondary education), initial VET (IVET) at lower, upper and post-secondary levels, continuing VET (CVET) and higher education (college and university studies).

In 2010, the government approved the national qualifications framework (LTQF) which has eight levels and covers all education sectors (Section 3.1). At the same time, relating the LTQF to the European qualifications framework (EQF) was started. During this process a direct correspondence between the eight LTQF and EQF levels was established. Referencing LTQF and EQF levels in this report is based on theoretical comparison of learning outcomes in training programmes with LTQF and EQF level descriptors.

As stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (1992), education is compulsory until age 16. Compulsory education is completion of lower secondary education (ISCED level 2) and receiving a basic school certificate (pagrindinio išsilavinimo pažymėjimas) at EQF level 2, after which learners can choose upper secondary general education or VET programmes at ISCED level 3 (leading to an EQF level 3 vocational qualification) or to an EQF level 4 vocational qualification and an upper secondary leaving certificate, also known as matura, which allows higher education access (brandos atestatas).

Those who fail to graduate from lower secondary education may enter VET programmes or youth schools at ISCED level 2 leading to EQF level 2 qualifications. Graduates of upper secondary programmes leading to a matura certificate (either vocational or general education-oriented) may enter either post-secondary vocational training (ISCED level 4) leading to EQF level 4 or higher education (ISCED level 5) programmes leading to EQF level 6. The education and training system is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 4. Lithuanian education and training system



Source: Cedefop in cooperation with ReferNet Lithuania.

2.2. Government-regulated VET provision

2.2.1. Key characteristics

As stipulated in the Law on Vocational Education and Training (1997, amended in 2007), the VET system covers IVET, CVET and vocational guidance (see Section 4 for more information on vocational guidance). VET programmes are designed for learners of different ages and educational backgrounds. In IVET, learners have an opportunity to acquire a first vocational qualification and complete general lower or upper secondary education.

CVET enables a person to improve an existing qualification, acquire a new qualification or gain a competence needed to perform a specific job (function) as regulated by legislation.

Since 2002, VET curricula have been competence-based, with clearly-defined training objectives. IVET programmes are developed by VET providers in cooperation with employers' representatives. When developing programmes, providers follow VET standards and general requirements approved by the Minister for Education and Science. Formal CVET is implemented according to national programmes.

Most IVET in Lithuania is school-based; however, practical training and training in enterprises constitute a major part of the programme. For example, in IVET practical training comprises 60 to 70% of the total time allocated to teaching vocational subjects, of which eight to 15 weeks is organised in a company or school-based workshop simulating working conditions.

An amendment to the Law on VET provides a legal base for apprenticeship. A pilot project to develop apprenticeship was started in 2013. It is funded from national and European structural funds.

Social partners participate in shaping content of new qualifications, qualification standards and VET programmes, assessing that VET programmes correspond to labour market needs, and organising practical training. They also take part in organising and implementing competence assessment.

2.2.2. Level of VET programmes

In IVET, the following VET programmes included in the study and training programmes and qualifications register (Studijų, mokymo programų ir kvalifikacijų registras) are provided at:

- (a) lower secondary education level not leading to a basic education certificate;
- (b) lower secondary education level leading to a basic education certificate;
- (c) upper secondary education level for learners having completed basic education, not leading to upper secondary general education;
- (d) upper secondary education level leading to upper secondary general education;

(e) post-secondary education level for learners having completed upper secondary general education.

Average study duration, qualification certificates and further learning and career opportunities are summarised in Table 3. Information about VET programmes and qualifications is available in Open information, counselling and guidance system (AIKOS) web portal.

Table 3. **Formal IVET and CVET programmes**

	ISCED level	Average duration	Certificates awarded	EQF level	Further learning and career opportunities
Programmes at lower secondary education level	2C	2-3 years*	Vocational qualification certificate	2	Access to labour market
Programmes at lower secondary education level	2A	3 years	Vocational qualification certificate; basic school certificate	2	Further training in VET institution or general education school; Access to labour market
Programmes at upper secondary education level	3C	2-3 years*	Vocational qualification certificate	3	Access to labour market
Programmes at upper secondary education level	3A	3 years	Vocational qualification certificate; matura certificate	4	Access to higher education/college or university study programmes; Access to labour market
Programmes at post-secondary education level	4	1-2 years	Vocational qualification certificate	4	Access to higher education/college or university study programmes; Access to labour market
CVET programmes	2,3,4	Up to 1 year	Vocational qualification certificate	1,2,3	Access to labour market

* Programme duration depends on whether or not the programme is targeted at learners with special needs.

Source: ReferNet Lithuania.

Learners without general lower or upper secondary education have an opportunity to acquire it together with a vocational qualification. Thus VET programmes help to bring early school-leavers back to education and training. After completing general upper secondary education and having acquired a vocational qualification, VET learners may continue their studies in higher education. In recent years, conditions to access higher education have been improved for successful VET graduates (Section 4.2.2).

2.2.2.1. Admission to IVET programmes

Vocational training programmes are designed for learners over 14 years of age. Entrants may choose programmes and providers from all over the country.

Each VET provider enrolls students in State-funded VET programmes based on local labour market needs and submits the plan to the Minister for Education and Science. The total student enrolment plan is discussed in the VET Council (Section 2.2.3) and then approved by the Minister for Education and Science.

2.2.2.2. Participation in IVET

It should be noted that VET programmes' popularity is increasing slightly. Due to the decreasing birth rate and emigration, learners in general education decreased by 10% and students in higher education decreased by 14% between 2010 and 2012. At the same time, as evident from the data in Table 4, the number of VET learners has decreased by 9.7%.

Most VET learners participate in ISCED level 3 VET programmes, carried out together with the general upper secondary programme, which lead to a vocational qualification at EQF level 4 and the upper secondary leaving exam which allows access to higher education. The least popular programmes are those at ISCED 2 that only offer a vocational qualification at EQF level 2. Around 500 to 600 students participate in these programmes annually. Popularity of post-secondary non-tertiary programmes (ISCED level 4) leading to EQF level 4 is increasing, especially among adults who enter VET with education or work experience. Detailed information about participation in VET programmes is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. **Participation in IVET**

		2010	2011	2012
Programmes at lower secondary education level	Total number of students (000)	4.9	4.2	4.3
	Share of students, compared to GE orientation students, %	2.2	1.9	2.1
Programmes at upper secondary education level	Total number of students (000)	30.1	28.2	25.1
	Share of students, compared to GE orientation students	28.4	28.7	27.7
Programmes at post-secondary education level	Total number of students (000)	13.7	14.2	15.4

Source: Learners by education level. Statistics Lithuania database of indicators.
<http://www.osp.stat.gov.lt/web/guest/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?id=1249&status=A>

Formal CVET covers programmes with various educational attainment levels for learners who are older than 18 (Table 3). They may be required to have a certain vocational qualification or work experience. Duration of programmes is shorter than one year but depends on the target group and complexity of the qualifications. These programmes' objectives are to acquire:

- (a) a vocational qualification;
- (b) an additional vocational qualification;
- (c) a competence to perform jobs or functions regulated by law.

Graduation from these programmes leads to LTQF/EQF levels 1-3 qualifications (Table 3). Practical training comprises 60 to 80% of the programme. It is recommended that half the time allocated for practical training should be spent in a real work environment.

2.2.2.3. *VET for people with special needs*

IVET and CVET for people with special needs is organised according to individual learning plans with other VET students or according to specially tailored VET programmes at ISCED levels 2 to 4 which lead to EQF levels 1 to 4. According to data from Statistics Lithuania, there are around 1 000 learners with disabilities in IVET (1 052 in 2012, 994 in 2011, 1 116 in 2010). Most are in ISCED level 2 programmes.

More than 40 CVET programmes for learners with special needs are listed in the study and training programmes and qualifications register. These programmes are offered in VET institutions and other institutions licensed to provide them.

2.2.2.4. *VET programmes for the unemployed*

Training the unemployed and those having been notified of dismissal is organised via formal CVET programmes listed in the study and training programmes and qualifications register. The local PES (*teritorinės darbo biržos*) is responsible for training the unemployed. In 2012, a new procedure approved by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour for training the unemployed came into force. The unemployed and those notified of dismissal are referred to training providers which they have chosen from the list published on the PES website. Training takes the specific needs of employers into account. Most unemployed follow programmes agreed with employers, who, after training, are obliged to hire the unemployed persons for a period not shorter than 12 months. In case of agreement with the employer, practical training is organised at the workplace (Section 2.4 for funding).

2.2.3. **VET governance**

Legislation delegates responsibility for shaping and implementing VET policy to the Ministry of Education and Science (SMM). The main SMM functions include approval of: the annual plan for VET programmes and procedure for formal VET; students' enrolment in State-funded VET programmes; and the procedure for developing and licensing formal VET programmes. They also issue licences for provision of formal VET and accredit competence assessment institutions.

A special role in developing human resources has been given to the Ministry of Economy. It participates in creating and implementing human resources development policy, VET policy, and organises research on future skill needs and disseminates its results through vocational guidance. Other ministries can also participate in development and

implementation of education and training policy by submitting proposals for legal acts on education and training, and participating in working groups that draft legal acts. Some ministries (such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Ministry of Agriculture) contribute to developing and implementing initial as well as continuing education and training programmes.

The Qualifications and VET Development Centre (Kvalifikacijų ir profesinio mokymo plėtros centras, KPMPC; until 2010 known as the Methodological Centre for VET) organises development of VET and qualifications standards. KPMPC also collects and analyses information on VET, designs methodologies for developing VET and assesses and develops VET quality. It also acts as the national quality assurance reference point for VET and the EQF national coordination point.

Advisory institutions also play an important role in design and implementation of the VET and qualifications system's development policy. The most important advisory institutions are:

- (a) the Vocational Education and Training Council (Profesinio mokymo taryba), a collegial institution that advises national education authorities on solving strategic VET issues. It consists in equal parts of representatives of State governance and municipal institutions and organisations representing employers' and employees' interests;
- (b) the Central Professional Committee (Centrinis profesinis komitetas), a collegial, cooperation-based advisory body that coordinates strategic issues pertaining to development of the qualifications system. Its main roles are to: initiate legislation, necessary for development and maintenance of the qualifications system; initiate revision of the LTQF; establish priority sectors for the qualifications system; discuss and suggest decisions regarding the qualifications system's structure; advise the KPMPC on ensuring correspondence between qualifications and labour market needs; accredit competence assessment institutions; link national qualifications with the EQF and other issues. The committee consists of 18 members. The Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministries of Economy and Agriculture, the Association of Local Authorities, the KPMPC and the Centre for Quality Assurance in Higher Education delegate one representative each; three are delegated by the Universities Rectors' Conference, the Colleges Directors' Conference and the VET Institutions Association; nine are delegated by social partners.

Social partners¹ are involved in VET policy development through the VET Council and the Central Professional Committee; they have the right to initiate development of new

¹ According the Law on Vocational Education and Training, Social partners means institutions of employers (the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists, the Lithuanian Business Employers' Confederation), institutions of business self-government (the Lithuanian Chambers of Commerce,

qualifications, qualifications standards and VET programmes. Representatives of social partners participate in devising content of VET curricula and assessing VET programmes with regard to their correspondence to labour market needs, organising learners' practical training and in assessing the competences acquired. Since 2003, social partners have been responsible for organising final assessments of qualifications. Since 2012, accredited competence assessment institutions (*kompeticijų vertinimo institucijos*) have been organising assessment of competences acquired by learners in formal VET programmes (see Section 3.4 for more information).

2.2.4. Formal VET providers

The Law on VET stipulates that a VET provider may be any VET institution, a freelance teacher or any other provider (general education school, enterprise, organisation whose main activity is other than VET) entitled to develop and implement VET programmes. VET providers may accept learners and provide formal VET programmes after receiving a licence from the Ministry of Education and Science. VET institutions may have licences for both IVET and CVET.

According to Statistics Lithuania, in 2012, there were 75 IVET providers; 73 were public. In addition, 286 institutions, whose main activity is other than VET, have licences for CVET (data of October, 2013).

To use training funds and resources more efficiently, the IVET and CVET providers' network is being reformed. Priorities include transfer of VET institutions with low numbers of learners to municipalities' control, developing larger regional VET institutions, and institutions where sectoral practical training centres will be created, merging IVET and CVET institutions and changing State-run VET institutions' into self-governing ones.

A sectoral practical training centre is a type of VET institution equipped with modern facilities from one or several fields. The main aim of these centres is to assure that learners, using the latest technologies and equipment, gain practical skills that match labour market needs. These centres are open to learners from VET, higher education, employees in enterprises, vocational teachers, etc. By the end of 2014, 42 centres are planned to be opened.

Industry and Crafts, the Chamber of Agriculture of Lithuania) and organisations representing the interests of employees (Lithuanian Confederation of Trade Unions, the Lithuania Trade Union Solidarumas, the Lithuanian Labour Federation) as well as other institutions of employers, business self-government, organisations representing the interests of employees, approved by the Government, which, together with the public administration institutions, perform the functions established by this Law.

Decentralisation of VET governance started in 2003 through reorganisation of State VET institutions into self-governing institutions (*viešoji įstaiga*). This change enables different stakeholders (enterprises, social partners, regional and municipal government, etc.) to participate in governance of VET providers. Their new status also increases their financial independence. In 2013, 20 IVET providers were self-governing and in the future reorganisation is planned to be continued.

2.2.5. Quality assurance mechanisms

A concept (2008) set out provisions for the VET quality assurance. This concept took into account experience of Lithuania and other European countries as well as the common quality assurance framework for VET in Europe and EQAVET, and the European quality assurance reference framework for VET. When implementing the concept and measures of the VET resources development programme (Section 4.1), VET providers are encouraged to introduce internal quality assurance systems (related projects are being implemented from 2011 to 2013). External assessment of implementation of VET programmes started recently (implementation period from 2012 to 2014).

Until a quality assurance system based on self-assessment and external assessment is in place, the following measures are applied to assure VET quality at State level:

- (a) design and approval of standards. VET standards are the basis of VET programmes and assessment of learner achievements (for more information see Section 3.2);
- (b) design and registration of training programmes, issuing licences. A new programme is coordinated with an institution representing the employers (such as chambers of industry, commerce and crafts), then experts (vocational teachers and employers) evaluate the programme's quality and, if positive, the programme is included in the study and training programmes and qualifications register. A licence to carry out a registered programme is issued to a VET provider, if its resources are sufficient for implementing the programme, and vocational teachers or candidates for vocational teachers meet the requirements prescribed in VET programmes and laws;
- (c) supervision of programme implementation. Relevant divisions of the SMM supervise the teaching process and activities, and audit activities, while the State Audit Office performs random checks of educational institutions, during which the rationale of their activities is also analysed;
- (d) independent assessment of knowledge, skills and competences to acquire a qualification. Since 2003, assessment has been detached from training programmes. Until 2012, this was the social partners' function (such as chambers of commerce, industry and crafts and chambers of agriculture). Since 2012, assessment of formal VET

learners' competences has been organised by accredited competence assessment institutions (for more information see Section 3.4).

2.2.6. Vocational teachers and trainers

There are two types of teachers in Lithuanian IVET institutions: general education subject teachers (*bendrojo ugdymo dalykų mokytojai*) and vocational teachers (*profesijos mokytojai*). On average, vocational teachers represent more than half of teaching personnel (Table 5).

Table 5. Teaching personnel in IVET institutions

School year	Teaching personnel, total*	Of which, vocational teachers	
		Total	%
2010/11	3 962	2194	55.4
2011/12	3 897	2120	54.4
2012/13	3 693	2073	56.1

* Teaching personnel covers general education subject teachers, vocational teachers, class teachers, school principals and deputy principals.

Source: Statistics Lithuania, database of indicators. <http://db1.stat.gov.lt/statbank/default.asp?w=1280> [accessed 22.10.2013].

In CVET, theoretical and/or practical VET is provided by vocational teachers. Institutions that focus on training employed and unemployed people (such as labour market training centres) may introduce additional positions for trainers, for example, practical training managers (instructors).

2.2.6.1. VET teacher training and professional development

VET teachers must have a vocational and a pedagogical qualification or have participated in a course on pedagogy and psychology principles. VET teacher training follows a consecutive model whereby a vocational qualification is studied first, followed by studies on pedagogy. Teachers without a pedagogical qualification, irrespective of their educational attainment level, are offered a 120-hour course on pedagogy and psychology principles. These courses are organised by accredited institutions and companies. Additionally, universities provide programmes for vocational teachers' pedagogical education.

The priority area for professional development of VET teachers is updating their technological competences. In 2010, a relevant project started (*Profesijos mokytojų ir dėstytojų technologinių kompetencijų tobulinimo sistemos sukūrimas ir įdiegimas*) in line with the VET resources development programme (Section 4.1), based on experience of pilot projects. In cooperation with employers and their organisations around 100 training programmes in 12 sectors of the economy are foreseen to educate 650 VET teachers and college lecturers with state-of-the-art technological equipment.

2.3. Other forms of training

In addition to formal VET leading to State-recognised qualifications described in Section 2.2, non-formal VET is conducted. The Law on VET states that the requirements for non-formal VET programmes and their implementation may be set by the organisation that orders training under this programme or finances any such training. Objectives of VET programmes, admission criteria and duration are different and mostly depend on the target group. Decisions on tuition fees are made by providers. Non-formal adult education may be offered by any education provider, schools, freelance teachers, and agencies, companies or organisations that do not have education as their main activity but are entitled to provide education.

Non-formal VET is widely applied in continuing vocational training and is designed for acquisition of a vocational qualification or individual competences. It is carried out in various forms: learning at the workplace, attending non-formal training courses, distance learning, etc. In most cases, the following three forms are used for organising CVET:

- (a) non-formal training/learning of employees and self-employed persons initiated by the employer. It is organised in various settings, using forms and programmes chosen by the employer. Some companies have their own qualification frameworks or apply internationally-recognised sectoral qualifications and programmes. Such training/learning is funded by a company or agency or a learner. When relevant, tax incentives are used (Section 4.4);
- (b) training employees funded by the State budget (such as training civil servants and employees in certain economic sectors: healthcare, agriculture, etc.);
- (c) training the unemployed and people notified of dismissal funded through a voucher system introduced in 2012 (Section 2.4) to finance training in formal and non-formal education programmes.

2.4. Funding VET

2.4.1. Funding IVET

Funding for formal IVET is allocated from the State budget. Training costs are calculated per student as approved by the government in 2008. This methodology determines the level of direct funding needed for training per learner enrolled in a formal training programme for one VET academic hour. The unit costs (the so-called 'student's basket') include allocations for staff salaries and social insurance, in-service training of teachers and funding for acquisition of various training resources, including practical training. The latter category is calculated using a coefficient that varies depending on the programme area. Funding is allocated to the

VET provider based on the actual number of learners multiplied by the number of hours for implementing the programme and costs of a training hour. Unit costs for learners with special needs are defined separately.

Based on data from Statistics Lithuania for 2012, around EUR 1 970 (LTL 6 800) from the State and municipal budgets were allocated per VET student. In 2010-12 this amount increased by 11%. In comparison, this amount was EUR 1 820 (LTL 6 300) in general education (at all levels) and EUR 1 740 (LTL 6 000) in higher education.

Among sources of funding (Table 6), the contribution from the national budget to VET comprises around 76% of total funding. The increasing share of funding comes from international organisations and abroad. Besides, VET providers under the approved government investment programme for a respective year may receive funding from the State budget for construction, updating training facilities, etc. Such developments could also be supported from other funds, including the European structural Funds and others. VET providers may receive income from physical and legal entities for services provided (such as training courses, rent of premises). This income is used for education and training purposes.

Table 6. **Sources of funding for IVET institutions and their contribution share, (%)**

	2010	2011	2012
Funding from the State budget	84.4	83.3	76.2
Funding from private sources (physical and legal entities)	7	8.2	6.5
Funding from international organisations	8.6	8.5	17.3

Source: Education 2012. Statistics Lithuania, 2013.

2.4.2. Funding CVET for training employees

Continuing training of employees is funded by the enterprise or learner. According to national legislation in certain cases training can be sponsored by the State.

To finance training of employees, EU and enterprise funds from the 2007-13 human resources development operational programme (ŽIPVP) can be used. For example, the measure ‘improvement of human resources in enterprises’ aims to improve qualifications, knowledge and skills of company employees and managers and develop employees’ ability to adapt to changing needs in companies and on the labour market. The measure supports training employees and managers and organisation of training at workplaces. It is planned that 63 000 people will take part in training under this measure by 2015. Some EUR 50 million (LTL 172.7 million) has been allocated to implement the measure. Companies’ contributions are necessary for implementing projects (for small enterprises 20%, medium enterprises 30%, large enterprises 40%).

2.4.3. Funding CVET for training the unemployed

Starting in 2012 a voucher system was introduced by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour for funding training for the unemployed. A training voucher is a document issued by the public employment service (PES) to an unemployed person. The local PES commits to paying a selected provider – within limits of the voucher value – for training services under an agreed VET programme. The unemployed choose training providers from the list published on the PES website.

To organise training for the unemployed three types of contracts are signed:

- (a) a bipartite VET contract between an unemployed person and the local PES; or
- (b) a bipartite VET and self-employment contract with the local PES; or
- (c) a tripartite VET and employment contract (between the unemployed person, local PES and employer).

Based on PES data, in 2012 most unemployed (63%) participated in training with tripartite contracts. If a tripartite contract is signed, a training programme and its provider are agreed with the employer. After training, the employer undertakes to employ the unemployed person for at least 12 months. If the actual costs of training exceed the limits established by the government, the difference is covered by the learner or employer. The same procedure is applied to training persons notified of dismissal.

CHAPTER 3.

Shaping VET qualifications

3.1. VET qualifications in the Lithuanian qualifications framework

The Lithuanian qualifications framework (LTQF) was developed based on a system of allocating learning outcomes to levels, which already existed in the Lithuanian education system: three education levels in the general education sector, four VET attainment levels in the VET sector and three study cycles in higher education. Levels of qualifications are arranged hierarchically, in accordance with the criteria defining qualifications' levels: complexity, autonomy and a range of activities which a person with certain qualifications can be expected to carry out. The LTQF includes qualifications for working and learning, the main purpose of which is to prepare a person for further learning. Such qualifications are acquired upon completion of general lower or upper secondary education programmes.

VET qualifications are attributed to the first five levels of the LTQF in the Lithuanian qualifications system. Qualifications at levels 1-4 are acquired by completing vocational education and/or general education programmes.

The two lowest levels are intended for people unlikely to acquire a higher-level qualification for some reason or another, for example, due to disability or poor basic education. Even a relatively low-level qualification makes people's integration into the labour market easier and reduces their exclusion. The most popular LTQF levels on the labour market are levels 3 and 4 since acquisition of these qualifications allows individuals to work independently. The main difference between these two levels is that, at level 3, the qualification is intended for activities in narrow areas (such as cashier, sewing machine operator, painter) and at level 4 it is intended for relatively broad areas of activity (such as sales person, tailor, decorator). In addition, those who acquire a qualification at LTQF level 3 usually work under guidance from an employee with a higher qualification and are subject to external performance quality control, while those who acquire a qualification at LTQF level 4 are capable of assuming responsibility for quality of procedures and outcomes in performance of their activities.

Level 6 qualifications are acquired by completing cycle one of university or college studies and, in cases and according to the procedure specified in legislation, by completing study or requalification programmes not leading to a degree. Level 7 qualifications are acquired by completing cycle two of university studies or integrated study programmes, in cases and according to the procedure specified in legislation, by completing study or

requalification programmes not leading to a degree. Level 8 qualifications are acquired by completing doctoral studies. In addition, qualifications at all levels may be acquired by gaining professional experience or by independent study.

Most discussions revolve around level 5 qualifications. Employers emphasise the necessity of qualifications at this level. This level is special because it is on the boundary between VET and higher education. Second, no qualifications at this level are currently awarded in Lithuania. The LTQF states that 'level 5 qualifications are acquired by completing training programmes intended for people with a vocational qualification as well as professional experience, higher education programmes not leading to a degree (except for medical studies), and/or through professional experience and independent study'. In addition, the level 5 qualification highlights the employee's ability to supervise activities of lower-qualified staff, plan and assign tasks, oversee performance of tasks, provide consultation, and verify performance quality. Thus the LTQF provides two types of VET qualifications at this level:

- (a) experienced, highly-skilled low-level managers or foremen;
- (b) highly-skilled workers/technicians, whose activity requires large-scale theoretical training.

3.2. Standards defining content of qualifications

3.2.1. VET standards

VET standards (profesinio rengimo standartai) comprise three main interrelated components:

- (a) parameters characterising occupational activities described by defining areas of activities, competences, and limits of these competences;
- (b) training objectives that define the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve certain competences;
- (c) assessment parameters of vocational competences.

The first component describing functions of planned occupational activities and vocational competences required for performing these activities is often referred to as the occupational standard and the remaining two components are referred to as the VET standard.

The first VET standards were developed in 1998. Presently, 77 standards have been approved for the VET sector. VET standards were prepared centrally coordinated by the KPMPC. To assure social dialogue in designing VET standards, 14 sectoral expert groups (Ūkio šakų ekspertų grupės) were formed, comprising employers, trade unions and VET institutions.

The standards were specified by the sectoral expert groups. Skills needs research was considered when taking decisions on new qualifications and standards (such as sectoral research, labour market forecasts, the PES employment opportunities barometer). Standards were drafted by a working group of vocational teachers and professionals in the relevant fields. The working group analysed legal documents and VET institutions' experience related to qualifications and carried out research on qualifications in companies. The information was then used for content of the standard. Draft standards were widely discussed and improved according to comments received, and only after that were the standards endorsed by the respective sectoral expert groups. Final versions of standards were approved by the Minister for Education and Science and the Minister for Social Security and Labour. After official approval, VET standards were used as a basis to develop VET programmes and assess learner achievement. The approved VET standards are available on the KPMPC website at <http://www.kpmpc.lt/Standartai/iteisinti.html>.

3.2.2. Sectoral qualifications standards

When applying VET standards for regulating VET content in curricula, the following problems arise:

- (a) each standard was designed for one specific qualification and the standards have been developed for only one qualification level corresponding to LTQF level 4;
- (b) since only the VET standard was nationally validated and preparation of programmes was delegated to VET providers, various curricula have appeared. Such variety seriously impedes transfer of learning outcomes and thus reduces mobility between training institutions.

To improve the qualification development system, in 2007, sectoral qualifications standards (profesiniai standartai) were given a legal basis by the Law on VET. Unlike the VET standard, sectoral qualifications standards will be developed by describing the most important qualifications in specific sectors of the economy at different LTQF levels. For each qualification the standard will describe competences that will be grouped into units. Within the project that focuses on qualifications design and development of modularised VET (Kvalifikacijų formavimas ir modulinio profesinio mokymo sistemos kūrimas) 5 sectoral qualifications standards are being designed (project implementation period: 2010-14).

Sectoral qualifications standards will be used to design VET content and assess whether a person's learning outcomes meet the requirements for a qualification. Identifying requirements for all levels of qualifications at the same time should improve permeability between different educational levels and make qualifications development and improvement more flexible.

Many different stakeholders are involved in developing qualifications standards. At national level, the main responsibility for development and implementation of qualifications system policy is delegated to the SMM. The latter is assisted by the Ministry of Economy that organises research on future skill needs and coordinates recognition of regulated professions. SMM with the Ministry of Economy define qualifications standards' structure, the procedure for standards development, amendments and supplements, and approve the standards. When relevant, other ministries and governmental institutions participate in developing qualifications standards.

SMM delegated development of qualifications standards to the KPMPC (see Section 2.2.3). To ensure effective social dialogue, the central professional committee and 17 sectoral professional committees (Sektoriniai profesiniai komitetai) were established at the KPMPC. The central professional committee coordinates strategic issues pertaining to development of the qualifications system (Section 2.2.3), while sectoral professional committees are responsible for designing qualifications in specific sectors of the economy. The main roles of these sectoral committees are to: advise the KPMPC on sectoral qualifications and competences needed to acquire them; set priorities for developing qualifications standards; endorse standards and analyse consistency of training programmes with the requirements prescribed in the standards.

3.3. VET curricula design

Since 2000, VET programmes have been developed by providers, in cooperation with representatives of employers. When developing programmes, providers follow VET standards and general requirements approved by the Minister for Education and Science. A programme may include additional competences to satisfy local needs. VET programme development is also informed by research on skilled labour force needs at local level. A newly-drafted VET programme is subject to approval by a competent employer organisation (such as a chamber of commerce, industry and crafts).

In 2010, legislation on designing and approving formal VET programmes was amended (Lithuanian SMM, 2010a). One of the changes is transition to national modular VET programmes, based on which programmes at school level will be designed. KPMPC will organise preparation or amendment of national modular training programmes. Qualification standards or, in their absence, VET standards, will be used for developing curricula. VET providers and enterprises will also have the possibility to initiate and design programmes. Within the project "Formation of qualifications and development of modular VET system" (Kvalifikacijų formavimas ir modulinio profesinio mokymo sistemos kūrimas) 40 national modular programmes are being designed (project implementation period: 2010-14).

Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists and separate sectoral associations of employers are involved in this process.

3.4. Evaluating competences and awarding qualifications

A qualification is awarded to a person who has obtained all the competences required as defined in the respective VET standard or sectoral qualifications standard; or, in the absence of these, in a VET programme included in the study, training programmes and qualifications register.

Evaluation of the competences acquired by IVET graduates is detached from the training process. From 2003 to 2012, organisation of the final assessment was delegated to social partners (such as chambers of commerce, industry and crafts or agriculture). In 2012, a new regulation delegated assessment of competences acquired through formal, non-formal, work-based or informal learning to specifically-accredited institutions. These include social partners. By the middle of 2013, 17 institutions were accredited.

Qualifications are awarded by VET providers once they have obtained the assessment results. Graduates whose competences are considered sufficient to receive a qualification are issued with vocational qualification certificates showing the respective LTQF/EQF levels.

Learners who complete lower secondary general education together with a VET programme, are awarded a vocational qualification and a basic education certificate; VET learners who complete upper secondary general education and pass school-leaving examinations are awarded a vocational qualification and a matura certificate, which allows access to higher education. Those who fail to complete the general education programme or pass the school-leaving examination are awarded a certificate of learning outcomes.

3.5. Assessment and recognition of non-formal or informal learning

According to the existing procedure, individuals with at least one year work experience and those over 18 can apply to VET institutions for the recognition of their competences. The level of skills and knowledge of an applicant is defined on the basis of VET standards and relevant VET programmes. Further, the applicant and the school agree on a timetable of courses as necessary and a final qualification exam. Individuals who successfully pass the exam are awarded a qualification certificate (more information in Section 3.4). For those who continue learning according to a chosen VET programme prior learning is recognised as part of their training programme.

3.6. Quality assurance

Qualifications development is an important process that helps to prepare highly-skilled workers for the economy and increase competitiveness of the country. The following measures are foreseen to assure quality:

- (a) involving all stakeholders and social partners in particular in qualifications development. The central and sectoral professional committees system should promote this;
- (b) adhering to main principles of transparency at all stages of developing and awarding qualifications: constantly inform society about activities, provide opportunities for sharing opinions, publicise outcomes;
- (c) opening the qualifications system to change. It is foreseen that social partners, VET providers, and other natural and legal persons will be able to initiate new qualifications;
- (d) encouraging society to become aware of the knowledge and skills gained through non-formal, informal learning and professional experience and create conditions to get them recognised;
- (e) promoting further development of internal quality assurance systems in VET institutions and implementing external assessment of VET programme delivery (Section 2.2.5);
- (f) implementing the LTQF and participating in EQF implementation.

CHAPTER 4.

Promoting participation in VET

VET development aims to reach a situation in which citizens would consider it an attractive option in the overall lifelong learning system. This chapter focuses on the main measures to reach this aim: incentives for promoting participation in VET and vocational guidance services. For other measures that also help increase VET attractiveness, see Sections 2.2.4, 2.2.5 and 3.2 to 3.4.

4.1. VET resources development programme to improve VET quality and attractiveness

To improve VET quality, its attractiveness and responsiveness to labour market needs, the VET resources development programme (Praktinio profesinio mokymo išteklių plėtros programa) was approved in 2007. The programme outlines activities until 2014. Some EUR 168 million (LTL 580 million) have been allocated from the national budget and European structural Funds. Actions are implemented by the KPMPC, other SMM institutions and VET providers. In addition, there are special aims to:

- (a) increase flexibility of VET;
- (b) improve quality of VET;
- (c) improve readiness of learners for the world of work;
- (d) create conditions for VET teachers to update regularly and develop further their skills;
- (e) improve accessibility of VET;
- (f) create conditions for learners to improve their interpersonal skills.

Implementing the programme entails developing national qualifications (Sections 2.1, 3.1, 3.2); creating a modular VET model and relevant programmes in 25 educational fields (Section 3.3); setting up the infrastructure of 42 sectoral practical training centres (Section 2.2.4); updating VET teachers' technological competences (Section 2.2.6); developing an adult education system; introducing internal quality assurance systems at all IVET and some CVET providers and carrying out external assessment (Section 2.2.5).

4.2. Increasing VET attractiveness by strengthening its links with other education sectors

4.2.1. Bringing general education and VET closer together

4.2.1.1. *The conditions to obtain general education in VET institutions*

As explained earlier, learners have possibilities to acquire lower and upper secondary education together with vocational qualifications (Section 2.2). Also, from 2000, through accreditation of upper secondary general education programmes, upper secondary general education departments have been set up at IVET institutions.

4.2.1.2. *Technology subjects and VET modules in general upper-secondary curricula*

Learners in general education can deepen their knowledge on technologies in certain fields and develop their practical skills to acquire at least partially, the necessary skills for a vocational qualification. In 11th and 12th grades they may choose among the following fields: textile and clothing; applied art, crafts and design; tourism and nutrition technologies; construction and wood processing; business, management and retail trade; mechanics and repair. Also, some general upper secondary curricula include VET programme modules. When learners continue their studies in VET, the above-mentioned fields and VET modules are recognised as part of their VET programme.

4.2.1.3. *Technology as part of the matura exams*

Since 2010, a technology subject has become part of the matura exams at the end of upper secondary general education. The exam in a technology field may be taken by learners in general education and by those in VET and it can replace an exam in a general education subject field.

4.2.2. Measures to improve mobility between VET and higher education

4.2.2.1. *Improved conditions for VET graduates to enter higher education*

Selection criteria and procedures for ranking upper secondary graduates who apply for higher education are defined in a specific regulation of 2009 (Lithuanian SMM, 2010b). This regulation introduced additional points for graduates from VET in the same field of studies who performed exceptionally, or who have at least one year of work experience in this field. These additional points also increase their chances of being admitted to a State-funded study place.

4.2.2.2. *Interinstitutional cooperation*

Several IVET institutions cooperate with higher education institutions (colleges, universities) when drafting study programmes that ensure continuity of VET programmes at tertiary level.

4.3. Incentives for youth

VET to acquire a first qualification is free of charge. IVET learners may receive a student grant and other material support. Based on data of the Education Information Technologies Centre, around 61% of IVET learners received such a student grant in 2012. Socially disadvantaged learners who do not receive the grant are provided free meals and other material support.

Learners who live outside the learning institution are provided with hostel accommodation. Based on data of the Education Information Technologies Centre around 99% of those who need hostel accommodation receive it.

4.4. Incentives for employers

The main financial incentives and instruments for increasing participation in CVET are tax incentives, grant schemes, paid and unpaid training leave and payback clauses.

Tax incentives for individuals for both formal and non-formal VET were introduced in 2008. Persons paying income tax may claim these expenses in their annual tax return. Up to 25% of training expenditure can be deducted. Where a studying resident of Lithuania is not an income tax payer or has no possibility to exercise the right to deduct payments for vocational training or studies from their own income, such expenses may be deducted from their parents' income or other family members.

Tax incentives for legal entities have been in place since 2005. The Law on Corporate Income Tax allows deductions for continuing training courses of employees that are linked to their present occupation.

The Labour Code sets out training leave conditions for employees who participate in a VET programme. They may be determined in collective agreements or by agreement of the parties.

To finance VET, enterprises and organisations may use the grant scheme under the human resources development operational programme (*ŽIPVP*) (Section 2.5). A similar measure exists for civil servants. In addition, from 2008 to 2012, the Ministry of Agriculture implemented a project to reorient the workforce in rural areas from agriculture to other activities. People were offered an opportunity to change their field of activity and qualification

and participate in formal or non-formal VET not related to agriculture. The project value was EUR 8.8 million (LTL 30.3 million).

Payback clauses for individuals and future employers were both introduced in 2005. The Labour Code provides general conditions allowing employers to claim compensation from an employee for the costs of training over the past year if they quit the job earlier than the predetermined period.

4.5. Vocational guidance and counselling

4.5.1. Main institutions

As defined by the Vocational Guidance Act (Profesinio orientavimo vykdymo tvarkos aprašas, 2012) the main educational institutions that provide guidance services (career education, information and counselling) to their learners are general education schools and VET institutions. Municipalities are responsible for organisation and coordination of guidance services at schools at municipal level.

Nationwide vocational guidance is coordinated by the Lithuanian Students' Non-Formal Education Centre (Lietuvos mokinių neformaliojo švietimo centras). The centre is responsible for methodological assistance and advice to schools and educational support agencies and is involved in training career guidance staff. It ensures accessibility to modern guidance and counselling tools, and participates in nationwide monitoring of guidance services for learners.

With the Centre of Information Technologies in Education, the Lithuanian Students' Non-Formal Education Centre is responsible for providing quality information on learning opportunities and career planning on the main national web portal on learning opportunities, *AIKOS* (Atvira informavimo, konsultavimo ir orientavimo sistema, <http://www.aikos.lt>). It is an open information, guidance and counselling system, which addresses students, employees as well as guidance and counselling personnel. It informs on education and training programmes, providers, qualifications, occupations, admission rules, classifications, education and employment statistics and gives other information. Other education institutions (pedagogical and psychological services, education support agencies, etc.) are involved in providing guidance services to the extent this is related to their functions and actual guidance needs of learners.

The Education Exchange Support Foundation administers the Euroguidance project and disseminates information on good practice examples in Lithuania and other European countries, new methods, creates various guidance and counselling tools and organises training seminars for guidance practitioners.

Local PES also provide vocational information and counselling services for job-seekers in addition to employment mediation.

4.5.2. Organisation and funding

General education and VET institutions are responsible for organisation and provision of guidance services to their learners. They have to appoint a coordinator who manages guidance-related activities of career guidance staff, class or group tutors, teachers/vocational teachers, social pedagogues, psychologists, and other support staff.

In 2012, a career education programme (ugdymo karjerai programa) was developed, which is to be implemented in general education and VET institutions from 2013 onwards. The programme aims to help learners develop career management skills. It can be integrated into primary, general lower and upper secondary and VET curricula and can take the form of optional subjects or extracurricular activities.

Learners can acquire career-related information on learning and job opportunities through information systems and various other activities such as study visits, excursions, meetings with representatives of educational institutions, employers and other people and other events. Vocational activation (profesinis veiklinimas), during which visits to enterprises and lectures are organised, is regarded as one of the most important aspects, as learners are encouraged to experience and learn about different types of work, employment areas, specific characteristics of occupations and career paths and develop the motivation necessary for future employment and lifelong learning, and plan their future careers. Vocational counselling services identify and discuss individual needs and preferences, and advise on issues related to career planning, choice of training or studies, employment and job search.

Vocational guidance is funded from the 'student basket' and other national and local budgets, sponsors, etc. EU structural Funds support development of models for career education and monitoring in general education and VET (2010-14). This project, which is implemented by the Students' Non-Formal Education Centre, finances training of more than 750 career guidance staff, development of programmes and tools for guidance, and provision and monitoring of vocational guidance services.

List of abbreviations

CVET	continuing vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
GDP	gross domestic product
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
KPMPC	Qualifications and VET Development Centre (Kvalifikacijų ir profesinio mokymo plėtros centras)
LTL	Lithuanian Litas, the currency of Lithuania
LTQF	Lithuanian qualifications framework
PES	Public Employment Service (Lietuvos darbo birža)
Local PES	local public employment service (teritorinės darbo biržos)
SMM	Ministry of Education and Science (Švietimo ir mokslo ministerija)
Statistics Lithuania	Lithuanian Department of Statistics (Lietuvos statistikos departamentas)
VET	vocational education and training
ŽIPVP	2007-13 human resources development operational programme (Žmogiškųjų išteklių plėtros veikslių programa)

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