



Introduction

This report has been drafted by the EQAVET National Reference Point of Lithuania and describes the main quality assurance arrangements in vocational education and training.

SECTION A - DESCRIPTION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Initial VET (IVET)

Introduction

IVET is offered at lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary education levels, leading to European qualifications framework (EQF) levels 2 to 4. Learners can acquire a vocational qualification and complete general lower or upper secondary education. Upper secondary-level VET graduates, who have obtained a 'Matura' certificate, may apply to be admitted to higher education.

1.1 Quality assurance arrangements at system level in IVET

- National Framework for quality assurance in initial VET – who is in charge of what?
The VET policy in Lithuania is developed and implemented at national level by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). The Ministry and its authorised institutions monitor the quality of education and oversee the development of formal education programmes as well as ensure complementarities across programmes at different levels.

A special role in developing human resources has been given to the Ministry of Economy. It participates in creating and implementing a human resources development policy, VET policy, and organises research on future skill needs. Other 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 standards and VET programmes.

The Vocational Education and Training Council is an advisory body for the MoES and other governmental institutions for strategic decisions regarding VET. The Council is composed of representatives of state, municipalities and social partners.

The Qualifications and VET Development Centre (QVETDC), under the supervision of MoES, provides methodological support for VET institutions and is also responsible for the preparation of standards and VET curricula, analysis and dissemination of information about VET and human resources development. The QVETDC also supports VET providers in their quality assurance initiatives and performs functions of the Quality Assurance National Reference Point (NRP) for VET and the EQF National Coordination Point (NCP). Central and sectoral professional committees are established as advisory bodies on qualification formation issues to QVETDC.

- **Statutory stakeholder involvement in quality assurance in initial VET systems**
Social partners participate in shaping the content of new qualifications, qualification standards and VET programmes, assessing if VET programmes correspond to labour market needs, and organising practical training. They also take part in organising and implementing final qualification exams at accredited competent assessing institutions.

- **Requirements for evaluation and review**
The requirements for quality assurance in VET education are provided by the Law on Education. The Law stipulates that ensuring the quality of education is the responsibility of the education provider and the owner of the education establishment (either State or private).

According to the Law, to improve the quality of education monitoring, research, self-assessment and external assessment of activities in schools, performance review of school principals and teachers and assessment of learning outcomes must be carried out.

The Law stipulates that areas for self-assessment of school's activities and a method of carrying-out the self-assessment should be chosen by the School Council. The Council should analyse the self-evaluation results and take decisions for the improvement of activities. External assessment of schools should be carried out periodically and initiated by the school owner.

- **Identification of training needs**
At the moment, the preparation of VET programmes is delegated to VET providers. Employer representatives need to be consulted in the development of each new programme. Programmes are developed in accordance with VET standards and general requirements approved by the Minister for Education and Science. A programme may include additional competences to satisfy local needs.

Currently a transition to national modular VET programmes is underway in Lithuania. It is foreseen that QVETDC will organise the preparation of national modular VET programmes. Sectoral qualifications standards or, in case of their absence, VET standards, will be used to develop VET curricula. VET providers and enterprises will have to be able to initiate and design programmes as well.

- **Who can deliver VET and under what conditions – accreditation or other requirements on VET providers**
According to the Law on VET, vocational education and training can be provided by any VET institution, freelance teacher or any other provider (general education school, enterprise, organisation whose main activity is other than VET) that is entitled to develop and implement VET programmes. VET providers may accept

students and start implementing formal VET programmes after receiving a licence from the MoES.

The quality of all new VET programmes is evaluated by QVETDC and upon approval by MoES is entered into the Register of Study and Training Programmes and Qualifications.

A license is issued to the VET provider by MoES to implement the registered programme only when a provider has proved that he/she has the necessary resources (i.e. material and human resources) to implement the VET programme, which is assessed during an expert evaluation QA process. The assessment of training programmes and necessary resources for their provision is organised by QVETDC.

- Certification – assessment and validation of learning (system level)/monitoring, Inspection and use of indicators

The final assessment of competences (i.e. the final qualification exam) is organised and carried out by accredited competent assessing institutions. Social partner organisations, enterprises and employer associations may apply for accreditation and become competent assessing institutions.

For monitoring of education policy measures, the website of the state education monitoring system is www.svis.smm.lt

A list of 49 State education monitoring indicators is constructed, where indicators are grouped into the following sections: education context, input, processes and output.

- How is the quality assurance implementation monitored?

The implementation of VET programmes is supervised by the relevant divisions of the MoES. The State Audit Office performs random checks of the management of education institutions. QVETDC in 2013-2014 performed a pilot external assessment of VET provision in the majority of IVET institutions.

1.2 Quality assurance arrangements at provider level in IVET

- Planning at VET provider level (including identification of training needs)
VET institutions in their activities follow a strategic school plan and annual school plan that are coordinated with key stakeholders. All IVET providers have introduced internal quality management systems (e.g. ISO).

Each school has a Teachers' Council and a School Council jointly addressing self-governance issues, including school activities, funding issues and school management. The School Council unites teachers, representatives of school administration, stakeholders, pupils, parents and the head of the school. The Teachers' Council consists of the school management, all teachers and other school personnel.

Before the beginning of a new school year each VET provider plans the number of VET students to be enrolled in State-funded VET programmes based on local labour market needs. The enrolment plan is submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science. The national student enrolment plan is discussed in the VET Council and then approved by the Minister for Education and Science.

- Requirements for monitoring and review (self-assessment)
As stipulated in the Law on Education, VET providers should carry out self-assessment. Areas for self-assessments of school activities and a method of carrying-out of the self-assessment are chosen by the School Council. The Council analyses the self-evaluation results and takes decisions for the improvement of activities. According to the law, external assessment of schools should be carried out periodically and initiated by the owner of the school. QVETDC in 2013-2014 performed a pilot external assessment of VET provision in the majority of IVET institutions.
- Certification, assessment and validation of learners
A qualification is awarded to a person who has obtained all the competences required for the qualification as set out in the relevant standards and VET programmes.

The evaluation of the competences acquired by IVET graduates is separate from the training process and is organised by accredited competent assessing institutions. Qualifications are awarded by the VET provider when the results of the evaluation of competences have been received. Graduates are issued a VET diploma.

VET institutions may evaluate and recognise learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning. According to the existing procedure, individuals with work experience of at least one year and those over 18 can apply to VET institutions for recognition for their competences. The final qualification exam would be organised by accredited competent assessing institutions.

- Stakeholder involvement
Social partners participate in shaping the content of new qualifications, qualification standards and VET programmes. They are also involved in organising training and take part in organising and implementing a final qualification exam. They may participate in the management of VET institutions and become their shareholders. Currently, social partners, enterprises and municipal authorities participate directly in managing self-governing IVET providers, which comprise a quarter of all VET institutions.

2. Continuous VET (CVET)

Introduction

Formal CVET is designed for people with different education attainment levels, from primary to post-secondary; in some cases, a vocational qualification or work experience is a prerequisite. CVET programmes last no longer than one year and lead to a vocational qualification at EQF Levels 1-3, recognised by the State. Non-formal CVET for the self-employed and training for employees, initiated by employers, is organised in various settings.

Where the founder (shareholder) of a CVET institution is the Ministry of Education and Science, the same quality assurance arrangements as for IVET institutions are applied. In other cases, the quality assurance principles are decided by the institution

implementing CVET. No specific requirements have been identified for non-formal CVET programmes.

2.1 Quality assurance arrangements at system level in CVET

- National Framework for quality assurance in CVET – who is in charge of what?

The VET policy in Lithuania is developed and implemented at national level by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). The Ministry and its authorised institutions monitor the quality of education and oversee the development of formal education programmes as well as ensuring complementarities across programmes of different levels.

A special role in developing human resources has been given to the Ministry of Economy. It participates in creating and implementing the human resources development policy, VET policy, and organises research on future skill needs. Other 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 standards and VET programmes.

The Vocational Education and Training Council is an advisory body for the MoES and other governmental institutions in strategic decisions regarding VET. The Council is composed of representatives of state, municipalities and social partners.

The Qualifications and VET Development Centre (QVETDC), under the supervision of MoES, provides methodological support for VET institutions and is also responsible for the preparation of standards and VET curricula, analysis and dissemination of information about VET and human resources development. The QVETDC also supports VET providers in their quality assurance initiatives and performs the functions of the Quality Assurance National Reference Point (NRP) for VET and the EQF National Coordination Point (NCP). Central and sectoral professional committees are established as advisory bodies on qualification formation issues to QVETDC.

- Statutory stakeholder involvement in quality assurance in CVET systems

Social partners participate in shaping the content of new qualifications, qualification standards and VET programmes, assessing whether VET programmes correspond to labour market needs, and organising practical training. They also take part in organising and implementing final qualification exam as accredited competent assessing institutions.

- Requirements for evaluation and review

The requirements for quality assurance in VET education are provided by the Law on Education. The Law stipulates that ensuring the quality of education is the responsibility of the education provider and the owner of the education establishment (either State or private).

According to the Law, to improve the quality of education monitoring, research, self-assessment and external assessment of activities in schools, performance reviews of school principals and teachers and assessment of learning outcomes must be carried out.

There are no specific requirements for CVET providers and they decide the method of self-assessment.

- Identification of training needs

At the moment, the preparation of VET programmes is delegated to VET providers. Employer representatives need to be consulted in the development of each new programme. Programmes are developed in accordance with VET standards and general requirements approved by the Minister for Education and Science. A programme may include additional competences to satisfy local needs.

- Who can deliver VET and under what conditions – accreditation or other requirements on CVET providers

According to the Law on VET, vocational education and training can be provided by any VET institution, freelance teacher or any other provider (general education school, enterprise, organisation whose main activity is other than VET) that is entitled to develop and implement VET programmes. VET providers may accept students and start implementing formal VET programmes after receiving a licence from the MoES.

The quality of all new VET programmes is evaluated by QVETDC and upon approval by MoES, entered into the Register of Study and Training Programmes and Qualifications.

A license is issued to the VET provider by MoES to implement the registered programme only when a provider has proved that he/she has the necessary resources (i.e. material and human resources) to implement the VET programme, which is assessed during expert evaluation QA process. The assessment of training programmes and necessary resources for their provision is organised by QVETDC.

- Certification – assessment and validation of learning (system level)

The final assessment of competences (i.e. the final qualification exam) is organised and carried out by accredited competent assessing institutions. Social partners organisations, enterprises and employer associations may apply for accreditation and become competent assessing institutions.

- Monitoring, inspection and use of indicators

No specific indicators are identified for CVET system and CVET providers.

2.2 Quality assurance arrangements at provider level in CVET

- Planning at CVET provider level (including identification of training needs)

VET institutions in their activities follow a strategic school plan and annual school plan that are coordinated with key stakeholders.

- Requirements for monitoring and review (self-assessment)

Methods of monitoring and review are chosen by CVET providers.

Certification, assessment and validation of learners

In the case of formal CVET programmes, the final assessment of competences (i.e. the final qualification exam) is organised and carried out by accredited competent assessing institutions. Social partners organisations, enterprises, and

employer associations may apply for accreditation and become competent assessing institutions.

- Stakeholder involvement

Social partners participate in shaping the content of new qualifications, qualification standards and VET programmes. They are also involved in organising training and take part in organising and implementing a final qualification exam. They may participate in the management of CVET institutions and become their shareholders.

SECTION B - INTERACTION BETWEEN NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EQAVET

- National Reference Point – Introduction

The Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre (QVETDC) operates as the National Reference Point (NRP) in Lithuania. The Centre has been involved in EQAVET- related activities since 2007 and since December 2009 a new Regulation has formally delegated the role of the NRP to it. The Unit of VET Quality is responsible for quality assurance measures and initiatives.

- National approach to enhance quality assurance

The national approach to improving VET quality assurance is set out in the VET quality assurance system concept (2008) that is in line with the EQAVET Recommendation, the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET. The concept has defined the following VET quality assurance pillars: internal quality assessment, national regulation, support to providers, external quality assessment, encouraging development of quality, VET monitoring, licensing and supervision and national coordination.

- Influence of EQAVET on national developments of quality assurance

Quality of VET is a priority in Lithuania (as signalled via a number of national projects and investments into the quality of VET). The alignment of the Lithuanian VET quality assurance system with EQAVET is ensured through activities for the development of a quality culture among VET providers, promoting a quality assurance cycle, encouraging and supporting VET providers to perform regular self-assessment and peer review. A quality circle is embedded in VET provision and is regarded as the backbone of VET quality assurance arrangements.