Vocational education and training system development in 2000-2011

2000
- Law on Higher Education is passed. The Law legitimizes non-university higher education.
- When optimizing the national network of schools, responsibility for vocational agricultural schools is transferred to the Ministry of Education and Science.
- First regional multifunctional vocational training centres are established through mergers of regional vocational schools.
- First sectoral analysis is carried out in retail trade sector.
- Reform of professional colleges is started; first higher non-university education institutions (colleges) are established. The reform was completed in 2004.
- Technological gymnasiums started functioning in VET schools.

2001
- Entrepreneurship module is introduced into all initial vocational training programmes.
- First legal acts regulating recognition of knowledge and skills acquired in non-formal or informal way are adopted.

2002
- Update of VET curriculum on the basis of competences and training objectives is completed.
- Conception for Vocational Teacher/Lecturer Education and Training in Lithuania and Professional Standard for Vocational Teacher/Lecturer are prepared.
- Initial training of vocational teachers is started at Vytautas Magnus University. Vytautas Magnus University Centre for Vocational Education and Research prepares a one-year programme of pedagogical minimum for vocational teachers.

2003
- A new edition of the Law on Education of Republic of Lithuania is passed.
- Provisions of the National Educational Strategy 2003-2012 are approved.
- Vocational Guidance Strategy is approved.
- The establishment of network of colleges is completed.
- Responsibility for the assessment of qualification acquired by VET students graduates is delegated to the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts and the Chamber of Agriculture.
- Reorganisation of state VET schools into self-governing institutions (viešoji įstaiga) is started. The change of status allows a variety of stakeholders (enterprises, regional and municipal government representatives, etc.) to participate in the management and funding of VET providers.

2004
- Single Programming Document of Lithuania for 2004-2006 is approved. First calls to submit applications for European Social Fund assistance are announced.
- Strategy for Assuring Lifelong Learning and its Action plan are approved.
- Action plan for the implementation of Vocational Guidance Strategy is approved.
- Strategy and programme for Information and Communication Technologies Implementation into Lithuanian Education for 2005-2007 are approved.
- Strategy for the Implementation of Information and Communication Technologies in Vocational Education and Training is approved.
- Conception for Teachers Training is approved.
- Vocational schools funding system is reformed. Student's basket approach is introduced.
- 3 sectoral analyses are carried out in (1) hotels and restaurants, (2) mechanics and electronics and (3) information technologies sectors.
- Open Information Counselling and Guidance System (http://www.aikos.smm.lt) got started. The system is accessible for everyone and features information on study/ training programmes, qualifications and education providers.

2005
- Several national projects are launched with the support from the European Social Fund. These are as follows: Creation of a National Qualification System, Development of the System of VET Standards, Development and Implementation of Common Quality Assurance System in VET, Development and Implementation of Vocational Guidance System, Creation and Development of Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System (AIKOS), and Creation and Development of VET Knowledge and Skills Assessment System.
• Description of National Education Monitoring Procedure and a list of indicators for monitoring are approved. Education Management Information System (http://www.svis.smm.lt) gets started. It is designed to provide official information about the state of education.
• Description of Procedure for Initial VET qualification exams is approved.
• Description of Requirements for Vocational Information and Counselling Services is approved.
• Europass website (http://www.europass.lt) got started. The development of Europass certificate supplements is started. Database of Europass certificate supplements for all formal vocational training programmes is available in AIKOS website (http://www.aikos.smm.lt).

2006
• Law on Support for Employment is passed. The Law introduces new employment support measures and changes their funding procedure.
• National Reform Programme for Teachers Initial and Continuing Training is approved.
• Description of Procedure for Integration of VET Module into General Upper-Secondary Education Programme and Recognition of this Module within a Certain Programme is approved. The procedure facilitates bridging academic education and VET.
• Lithuanian Vocational Guidance Council is established.

2007
• A new edition of Law on Vocational Education and Training is passed.
• Law on Income Tax of Individuals (2002) is amended. The amendment legitimizes that costs of training according to VET programmes are deducted from taxable income.
• Lithuanian Strategy for the Use of European Union Structural Assistance for 2007-2013 is approved along with operational programmes (for example, Operational Programme for the Development of Human Resources for 2007–2013).
• Conception for the Establishment of the Sectoral Practical Training Centres is approved.
• National Programme for Vocational Guidance within Education System is approved.
• Practical VET Resources Development Programme is approved.
• Description of Procedure for Pre-Vocation Training is approved.
• Description of Procedure for Informal Learning is approved.
• Regulations for Vocational Teachers Qualification Improvement and Description of Teacher Occupation Competence are approved.
• Description of Procedure for the Development of VET Programme Module is approved.
• Strategy for the Information and Communication Technologies Implementation into General Education and Vocational Education and Training for 2008-2012 is approved.
• Colleges, which received a positive evaluation of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, start awarding professional bachelor degree.

2008
• Strategy for Assuring Lifelong Learning and its action plan are approved.
• Integration of IVET and CVET is started.
• Qualifications Authority under the Government of Republic of Lithuania is established.
• Description of Procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning Achievements is approved.
• Programme for the Development of Sectoral Practical Training Centres is approved.
• Conception for the Development of Regional VET Infrastructure for Adults and Youth is approved.
• General requirements for regional VET councils are approved. They establish that objectives of the Councillors are as follows: analysis of VET development regional issues; shaping of regional VET policy, provision of conclusions on VET development and quality improving.
• Lithuanian vocational school students for the first time participated in the European skills competition Euroskills.
• Implementation of national level projects funded under 2004-2006 ESF assistance is finalised:
  - Activities of the project “Creation of the National Qualifications System” are as follows: drafting of a concept of the national qualifications system, development of a model of the national qualifications system, compilation of codes of competences, formation of qualifications structures and formulation of algorithms for the preparation of qualifications standards.
  - The project “Development of the System of VET Standards” resulted in the development of 100 VET standards. In addition, within this project sectors of tourism, construction, sport, agriculture, wood, manufacture of food products and beverages and manufacture of chemical products were researched. The project also resulted in a methodology for identification of future skill needs.
  - During the project “Development and Implementation of Common Quality Assurance System for VET” the following quality assurance instruments were developed and piloted: Quality assurance
concept for both initial VET and continuing training; A set of vocational education and training quality criteria and indicators (Quality standard); methodologies for both self assessment and external quality assessment.

- The project “Development and Implementation of Vocational Guidance System” resulted in the development of the Manual for career guidance, Vocational information standard, Vocational information programme and methodology, Career planning skills development programme and methodology.

- During the project “Creation and Development of Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System (AIKOS)" both, AIKOS system and the network of vocational information points (PITs) were further developed.

- Results of the project “Creation and Development of VET Knowledge and Skills Assessment System” include: methodology for final qualification examination, a software for tests development, on-line register of practical training places in enterprises and data on practical training, a model of regional final examination centre, developed and piloted qualification exam tasks for certain qualifications.

2009

- Implementation of Practical VET Resources Development Programme started. 8 agreements for creation of sectoral practical training centres were signed.
- New edition of Law on Support for Employment is approved. The Amendments to the Law aim at reducing the negative impact of the economic downturn on the growth of the unemployment, creating conditions for retaining jobs and involving more persons into the active labour market policy measures.
- Amendments to the Law on VET are passed following which functions of managing qualifications were readdressed to the Ministry of Education and Science. Qualification Authority under the Government of Republic of Lithuania was closed down and Methodological Centre for VET (since January 2010 - Qualifications and VET Development Centre) was delegated to manage qualifications system.
- The Law on Science and Study was approved to replace the previous version of the Law Science and Study (1991) and the Law on Higher Education (2000). After the adoption of the Law, the higher education funding was reformed.
- Some of the schools piloted technology school leaving (maturity) exam. The exam may be taken by the general education school pupils following the chosen upper secondary education technology programme, as well as by the VET students.
- In 2009 a Description of the Procedure for Ranking the Best Graduates from Upper Secondary Education Programmes was approved. It defines the selection criteria and a procedure for ranking the graduates who apply for higher education and wish their studies to be funded from the State budget. This document provides that applicants for higher education institutions who have graduated a VET programme under the same field of education exceptionally well or have graduated a VET programme under the same field of education and have no less than one year of work experience according to the qualification acquired are awarded additional entrance points.

2010

- The description of Lithuanian Qualifications Framework was approved.
- The referencing of the national qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework was started.
- Procedure regarding the establishment and funding of central and sectoral professional committees and their objectives and functions was adopted.
- After adopting a year 2010 Description of the Procedure for Ranking the Best Graduates from Upper Secondary Education Programmes, it was established that those who are candidates for state-funded study places instead of the three Matura exams may have passed two Matura exams and a final qualification exam.
- Technology school leaving (maturity) exam is implemented in overall all country for the first time.
- The procedure for developing and legitimating formal VET programmes was approved.
- The procedure for developing, amending and complementing qualification standard was approved.
- Study and Training Programmes Register was reorganised into the Register of Study and Training Programmes and Qualifications.
- The Programme for the Establishment of the Sectoral Practical Training Centres was amended and the list of sectoral practical training centres to be established was renewed. The projects for establishing 8 sectoral practical training centres were started.
- When implementing the Practical VET Resources Development Programme, national level projects for the development and implementation of the system for the improvement of VET teachers'
technological competences, qualifications formation and modular VET programmes development were started.

- When implementing the National Programme for Vocational Guidance within Education System, national level project for career education and monitoring models development in general education and VET (I stage) was started.

- The preparation for implementation of internal quality management tools in VET institutions and for external VET quality assessment was started.

- While optimising network of VET providers, 9 labour market training centres were transferred for the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science.

2011

- Government of the Republic of Lithuania has approved amendments to the LTQF Description, draft national report on referencing the LTQF to the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area was prepared and the findings of the referencing process were discussed in 10 public regional consultation events, the draft National referencing report was presented to the EQF Advisory group chaired by European Commission.

- Following the adoption of amendments to the Law on Vocational Education and Training, the Ministry of Economy has taken over responsibilities related to human resource development and VET that previously belonged to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

- Amendments to the Law on Support for Employment were adopted that enabled unemployed to choose a training provider. The training may be organised both at training institution and in the workplace and the training costs are covered by territorial employment offices. The amendments come into force from January 1, 2012.

- Central professional committee (CPC) was established for coordination of strategic qualifications system formation issues. CPC is comprised of 18 members representing state, municipal institutions and social partners representatives.

- Formation of sectoral professional committees that would coordinate qualifications issues in concrete sectors of economy was started. It is foreseen that SPCs will be comprised of more than 9 members representing employers, employees and education providers of concrete sector.

- 13 VET methodical commissions were established. The VET methodical commission is a group of 9-15 VET teachers the areas of activity of which cover VET resources, VET teachers qualification and tasks for assessment of competences. The activity of one commission focuses on one or more educational areas.

- When implementing the Practical VET Resources Development Programme, a national level project for external assessment of VET quality was started. The duration of the project is 36 months and it aims at the assessment of quality of VET programmes implementation.

- When implementing the Practical VET Resources Development Programme, projects for internal quality assurance systems in VET institutions were started. Projects are implemented in 10 regions by consortia comprising IVET and CVET providers.

- When implementing the Practical VET Resources Development Programme, agreements for creation of 32 sectoral practical training centres were signed.

- When implementing the Practical VET Resources Development Programme, the ideas for projects for the development of training resources and piloting of modular VET curricula were evaluated and 15 applications were selected.

- When continuing VET providers network optimisation, Vabalninkas agricultural school and Biržai polytechnics school were joined into Biržai technology and business training centre, Kaunas trade and business school and Kaunas food industry school were joined into Kaunas food industry and trade training centre, Šeduva technology and business school and Lithuanian rehabilitation VET centre were joined into Radviliškis technology and business training centre.