

Action Plan
for Developing Estonian VET System
in 2001 – 2004

2001

Current Action Plan was developed in cooperation of the Estonian Ministry of Education, National Observatory and the social partners. The Action Plan was adopted by the decision of the Government of the Republic on 12.06.2001

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Action Plan for developing Estonian VET system in 2001 – 2004

Introduction

Many documents, including the Estonian National Development Plan for 2000 – 2003, the Development Plan of Estonian Economy for 1999 – 2003 and the Employment Action Plan for 2000 IV – 2001, contain priorities to achieve readiness, which is necessary for implementing the European Union employment strategy. Considering the developments on the Estonian and European labour market, the current Action Plan is the practical guide to improve the preparedness of people to be successful in life.

The mission of the Estonian education system is to establish the prerequisites and conditions for a learning society, where people with the acquired knowledge, skills, experience, values and behavioural norms are successful in their personal-, work- and social life.

Considering the above, the Estonian vocational education and training (hereafter VET) system must prepare the young people both socially and vocationally for work life and produce skilled labour force, which is competitive on the Estonian and international labour markets.

The objective of the current Action Plan is to define the main development direction of the VET system for the upcoming years, and to inform and involve the public, educators/trainers and the social partners in the process. The Action Plan presents an overview of the VET system development until today, the short- and long-term objectives and the measures for achieving the objectives.

Considering the objective, the VET system must be:

attractive – the students wish, are interested, it is useful to study;

flexible – adjusts quickly to the changes on the labour market / society;

available /accessible – all target groups have the opportunities to learn;

up-to-date –training is contemporary, the content meets the requirements of the labour market;

effective – the system works effectively and the set objectives are achieved;

quality – the trained labour force is competitive on the labour market; life-long-learning principles are applied.

In the upcoming years it is important increase competitiveness of the young people on the labour market, to ensure their social preparedness and to ease access to VET. Transfer from school to working life will become more flexible with wider variety of choices. For that VET content and quality will be improved. Taken the wishes and expectations of the employers, the young workers will react quicker and more adequately to the changes in the work character and on the labour market at large.

The prerequisites to these developments are:

- healthy economy and well-functioning (“youth friendly”) labour market;
- opportunities for linking initial VET, work life and further education / training;
- networks for supporting the risk groups;
- initial and complementary training opportunities for the adults, respective to the regional labour market needs;
- up-to-date work-related information and counselling must be easily accessible;
- counselling- and labour market institutions, effective process of counselling and continuous analysis of the feedback.

Objectives and results of developing the VET system in 1996 – 2000

1.1 Objectives:

In 1996, when VET system reform started, the objectives were:

- to change the mindset and attitudes of people in respect to work-related education;
- to draw attention of the society to the need to reorganise the VET system;
- to develop cooperation with the social partners;
- to increase effectiveness of the VET schools work using the available resources (teachers/trainers, time, money, buildings, equipment) more effectively and efficiently;
- to enhance innovative activities in improving the training quality.

During the years 1996 – 2000, social agreement was reached on the ways to reorganise VET: a constructive dialogue started between the educators/trainers and the social partners, the legislation was developed, the conditions were created for directing the development according to the changes in the society and on the labour market, for using the available resources more rationally, for developing VET programmes and training the VET schools’ personnel.

1.2 Results:

<i>Legal framework</i>	<p>VET Concept – education policy development plan (adopted by the decision of the Government of the Republic, 13.01.1998), Vocational Education Institutions Act, 1998 (RT I 1998, 64/65, 1007); General Principles of VET National Programme (Regulation of the Government of the Republic)</p>
<p><i>Cooperation</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>national level</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>International level</i></p>	<p>effective cooperation between different stakeholders: employers, professional unions, trade unions, employee unions, higher education institutions, VET experts, etc; 18.12.2000, Agreement on Common Action in preparing labour force with the necessary qualification was signed by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Economics, Estonian Confederation of Employers and Industry, Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Estonian Central Association of Trade Unions</p> <p>cooperation in programme development, teacher/director training, upgrading of the study technical base, student exchange. In the worldwide skills Olympics EuroSkills-98 the hairdressers and construction finishers earned bronze medals</p>
<i>Opportunities/access</i>	<p>number of students increased by ~25% since 1993 (30,872 students in 2000/01 academic year); more learning opportunities for the adults and people with special needs; state support to the private VET institutions</p>
<p><i>Content of VET</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Vocational secondary education</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Vocational higher education</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Modular study</i></p>	<p>VET at different education levels VET component increased in programmes; shorter learning period in the studies after basic education</p> <p>...after basic education (min. 120 weeks; 1 academic year = 40 weeks) VET-related training 50%, general education subjects 50 weeks of the total volume of programme; ...after general secondary education (<i>gümnaasium</i>) (40 – 120 weeks) VET-related training 85%, general education subjects 6 weeks of the total volume of programme;</p> <p>(120 – 160 weeks) VET-related training 75% (incl. 35% for practical training) of the total volume of programme;</p> <p>1996, in the frames of the Phare VET reform project, 13 pilot schools started to develop modular programmes, which give students more choices in specialisation and organisation of studies; objective of modular programmes is to provide broad general knowledge and skills in the vocational field, so that it is possible to quickly specialise in the end of studies and to adapt to the changes on the labour market (go through continuous/complementary or retraining if necessary)</p>

<i>Programme development</i>	<p>by 2000, 14 new VET field programmes, were developed based on the vocational standards and applied in practice in business, construction, health, forestry, catering and personal service fields;</p> <p>2000, all school programmes were modular, 30% of the school programmes met the requirements of the vocational standard;</p> <p>1996 – 1998, complementary training of programme developers in 13 pilot schools; continued in 1999 in 24 satellite schools; 1995 – 1999 cooperation with Irish, Danish and Finnish programme developers;</p> <p>basic VET for the <i>gümnaasium</i> students: in 1995 – 1999 a model was developed in the frames of the Estonian Business Education Programme, Estonian-Danish cooperation</p>
<i>National employee qualification system</i>	<p>end of 1999, 12 vocational councils working at the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry;</p> <p>135 vocational standards confirmed</p>
<i>Qualification requirements of the directors and teachers of the VET schools</i>	<p>1999, the qualification requirements of the directors and teachers of the VET schools were changed: the head of a VET school must have covered leadership training of at least 240h;</p> <p>by 1.09.2003, all the teachers must have speciality or pedagogical higher education;</p> <p>since 1999, the teacher's regular in-service training in an enterprises is compulsory.</p>
<i>Increasing the qualification of the directors</i>	<p>1996 – 2000 25% of the VET school leadership has been replaced (incl. 21 directors);</p> <p>92 school leaders have gone through leadership training (240h)</p>
<i>Personnel development</i>	<p>in addition to the public-legal universities (Tallinn Pedagogical University, Tallinn Technical University, Tartu University), private education institutions (Estonian Business School) and international organisations (European Training Foundation, International Labour Organisation) are participating in teacher/trainer training;</p> <p>the teachers on the vocational higher education level have covered or are covering degree education in the universities or training abroad;</p> <p>over 20 research papers have been defended on the bachelor's and master's level</p>
<i>VET school network</i>	<p>since 1996, number of public VET schools has decreased by 11; in 1997 – 1998 the VET schools were merged in Tallinn and Saaremaa; 1999 in Valga, Võru, Viljandi county and Tallinn; 2000 in Narva (4 schools), Pärnu and Tallinn;</p> <p>12 VET schools under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture were transferred under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education by 1.09.2000. In 1.01.2001 the Ministry of Education had 58 VET schools in its jurisdiction.</p>

Developing the VET system in 2001 – 2004

1.3 Initial situation

The VET system developments in 1996 – 2000 support the further actions towards following more actively the trends which have been proven useful in the developed countries:

- The borders **between different types of education within the education system** are disappearing: the role of VET in general education is increasing, while the basic general education is becoming increasingly more important in VET;
- **initial VET is becoming broader**, narrow specialisation takes place later, during the work life;
- there are more opportunities to continue education on the higher education level after acquiring secondary VET, through **vocational higher education**;
- wider use of **modular VET programmes**, which provide the students with more choices in combining different study lines.

Development of the VET system in 2001 – 2004 will be based on the above mentioned achievements and the accumulated knowledge during 1996 – 2000 – legislation, education system development plans, strategies, political documents, documents on school life, labour market and economic sector development, standpoints and proposals of Vocational Councils, professional unions and employers and employees organisations, experience of foreign countries, and VET research.

In 1996 – 2000 many national and international meetings, conferences, seminars are held on VET content and organisation, labour market developments and employment issues. Estonian Education Forum is discussing annually the problems of the education system, including VET. The standpoints, conclusions and recommendations gathered on these events are valuable information for planning the reorganisation of the VET system.

The materials used for preparing this Action Plan are enlisted in Appendix 2.

1.4 SWOT of the VET system

Strengths:

- long tradition and consistency of VET;
- successfully transformed VET schools, which can be used as models;
- mostly stable pedagogical personnel;
- 30% of study programmes meet the requirements of the vocational standards;
- developing national employee qualification system, which is the basis for developing programmes;
- cooperation with employers and local governments;
- developing international cooperation.

Weaknesses:

- ineffective leadership;
- lack of innovation;
- overstaffed VET schools with too big leadership structures;
- resistance to change, only routine solutions are provided, as the resources are limited, adjustment to the changes is slow;
- not enough change operators;
- VET schools focus too much on the non-core activities, e.g. economic administration;
- inefficiency, e.g. 20% of the resources is spent annually on buildings administration, while $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total area of the school buildings is not used directly in teaching.

Opportunities:

- increasing investments in relation to regional policy, establish conditions for creating new jobs and therefore for developing the new training fields;
- favourable conditions for attracting investment to the VET system and regions;
- informed / aware young people are coming to the labour market;
- increasing reputation of VET;
- young people with high potential start working in the VET system;
- cooperation with the social partners.

Threats:

- tensions between people inhibit development;
- inadequate decisions concerning the use of resources slows down the adjustment to changes on the labour market;
- solving the matters at hand trigger changes only on surface;
- emphasising the negative examples and attributing that negative image to the whole VET system.

1.5 Long-term objectives – year 2004

In order to fulfil the mission of the VET system the priorities for 2001 – 2004 are:

Priority 1: Ensuring learning opportunities:

- 1. ...for the young people up to age 18, providing programmes which meet the interest and abilities of the young, in order to ease transfer from school to working life**

Results:

- opportunity to acquire VET is guaranteed for 50% of the age group of the graduates from the basic school (incl. basic VET in *gümnaasium*), and for 50% of the graduates from the general secondary school – *gümnaasium*; incl. the children with special needs;
- there is a functioning vocational and career counselling system for the young; professionally trained counsellors are working in the VET schools;
- professionally trained practical training supervisors are working in enterprises, the conditions for practical training are regulated by the contract signed between the VET school and enterprise;
- practical training is organised in cooperation with the employers on the specially created work places in the enterprises chosen by the Vocational Councils;
- VET centres provide basic VET for the *gümnaasium* students in cooperation with the *gümnaasium* (appendix 3);
- drop-out rate from the VET schools has decreased to 8% per year;
- VET schools provide basic VET for the young people who have not acquired basic education in cooperation with employers (appendix 4);
- by 2004/05 academic year, the number of students in the VET system has increased by 35%.

- 2. ...for adults by organising continuous/complementary training, enabling them to acquire higher qualification levels**

Results:

- VET centres provide work-related continuous/complementary training for adults in cooperation with employers and the Employment Offices according to the National Employee Qualification System;
- VET schools provide initial and retraining for adults according to the needs on the regional labour market.

Priority 2: Ensuring quality of education

1. ...by developing contemporary initial and complementary VET teacher/ trainer training system

Results:

- cooperation between the VET schools and employers in organising speciality-related in-service training for the VET teachers/trainers and in teacher/trainer attestation;
- the higher education institutions are offering flexible vocational pedagogical training opportunities for experienced/highly qualified people;
- the first young VET experts who have been following continuous/complementary training abroad have returned Estonia, and started working as experts, analysts, teacher/trainer trainers;
- all teachers have acquired the International Computer Training Licence.

2. ... by modernising learning environment and updating the content of programmes so that the teaching quality shall be in accordance with the requirements of the labour market

Results:

- 8 functioning VET centres, which have contemporary, up-to-date study base and programmes, qualified teachers and close cooperation with the social partners:
 - 3 in Tallinn – technology, engineering, business, construction, logistics, communication;
 - Kohtla-Järve, Narva – technology, engineering, environmental protection, services;
 - South-East Estonia – engineering, services, business;
 - Middle-Estonia – construction, services, technology, rural economics;
 - Saaremaa – hotel and accommodation services;
- VET centre system ensures that all students in the VET system have access to the up-to-date study base;
- 30% of the currently public VET schools will be in municipal or private ownership;
- internet-based learning opportunities have been developed and all VET schools have the necessary study base and internet connection;
- broad modular programmes, which meet the requirements of the vocational standards, are used, and the teachers have received the necessary training for teaching;
- teaching volume of the national language (in the groups where instruction language is Russian) and speciality related foreign languages is doubled in programmes;
- all secondary VET programmes contain modules on work relations, entrepreneurship, community cooperation activities, and the teachers have received the necessary training for teaching;

- the teacher position and students ratio is 1:16, in VET programmes after general secondary education, the volume of students auditory work is 25 hours and in the VET programmes after basic education 30 hours a week;
- VET teachers have speciality-related higher education and practical experience, increasingly more young teachers, also experienced practitioners from enterprises are used as visiting lecturers for teaching specific topics or modules;
- the leaders of VET schools are with professional, leadership experience.

3. ...by implementing vocational higher education programmes

Results:

- vocational higher education in engineering and technology field – Tallinn, Tartu, Kohtla-Järve, Jõgeva county, Võru county, Rapla county;
- vocational higher education in the humanities and service field – Tallinn, Tartu, Kohtla-Järve, Lääne-Viru county;
- vocational higher education in the business and service field – Tallinn, Lääne-Viru county, Võru county, Järva county, Viljandi county, Saare county;
- taken the regional needs, vocational higher education will be also provided in the VET centres, where VET programmes after basic education are provided, taking into account that the teaching is in the same vocational field.

4. ...by developing and implementing VET schools' monitoring system – efficiency evaluation, accreditation, self-assessment

Results:

- teaching quality and efficiency is evaluated by the accreditation committees consisting of the representatives of employers, professional unions and other organisations. The evaluation results are the basis for compiling public training order;
- the people who have passed a VET programme have an opportunity to take vocational qualification examination;
- VET schools have implemented the common information system (ISE) for following and analysing the teaching process.

5. ... by increasing effectiveness of the VET system leadership

Results:

- coordinated cooperation between the education system and labour market parties in organising training, the content of training, planning the training needs and resources;
- the structure and activities of the Ministry of Education have been reorganised, enabling the Ministry to concentrate on VET policy and strategy development and on planning the resources and conditions for implementation;

- the VET school development is directed by the broad school councils, consisting of the representatives of employers, employees, local governments and the state;
- the VET schools leadership staff has decreased by 30 %.

6. ... by updating legislation

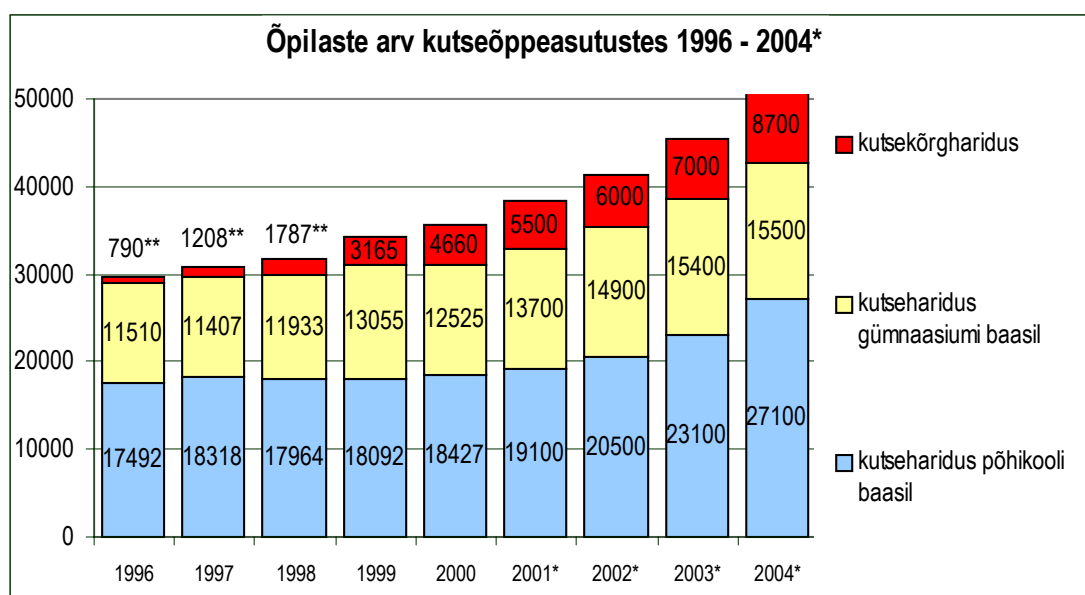
Results:

- a new secondary education act has been ratified, which is also regulating VET;
- all legislative acts related to the organisation/management of a VET school have been renewed according to the new secondary education act;
- National Employee Qualification System is functioning on the basis of the Professions Act, the qualification levels of the graduates from VET schools and employees is assessed regularly.

7. ... by establishing a VET innovation centre, which main emphasis is on research, programme development and dissemination of information to the education system and its social partners

Results:

- the VET system is oriented on labour market forecasting, continuously reorganising training according to the trends on the labour market;
- the VET system supports the national interests by preparing labour force which is mobile in the European Union, neighbouring countries and elsewhere in- and outside Estonia;
- regular research on the relations between the VET system and the labour market and methodical counselling of VET teachers.



*Estonian Ministry of Education, Information and statistics division,
Estonian National Observatory, 2001

1.6 The main activities in 2001

The state's and society's responsibility is to ensure that the young people are socially and vocationally prepared for entering the labour market. As the number of basic school graduates is increasing in Estonia, it is necessary to create more learning places in the VET system. In average, 70% of the basic school graduates continue their studies in the general secondary education institutions (*gümnaasium*). The VET system must ensure learning places for the remaining 30%.

1. *Ensuring social fairness and access to VET*

Results:

- at the **secondary VET** level, there is 6,400 learning places for the graduates from the **basic school**, i.e. for up to 30% (incl. 6,200 places in the VET schools in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education);
- at the **secondary VET** level, there is 7,200 learning places for the students who have acquired **general secondary education**, i.e. *gümnaasium* graduates (incl. 5,900 places in the VET schools in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education);
- at the **vocational higher education** level, there is 2,000 learning places for the students who have acquired **secondary education** (incl. 1,800 places in the VET schools in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education);
- there are necessary conditions – trained teachers, modified study programmes, adjusted learning environment – for admitting at least **350 students with special needs**;
- VET school network is reorganised in Jõgeva and Lääne-Viru county;
- basic VET for the *gümnaasium* students is provided in Võru county, Viljandi county, Pärnu and Kohtla-Järve;
- basic VET for the young people who have not acquired basic education is provided in cooperation with employers.

2. *Broadening learning opportunities on the vocational higher education level*

Results:

- vocational higher education programmes are coordinated with the Vocational Councils;
- broadening the learning opportunities in the following regions and fields: Tallinn – business, information technology, social, engineering and technology; Lääne-Viru county – business, social; Ida-Viru county – environmental protection, engineering and technology, information technology; Võru county – wood processing technology, business;

3. Updating VET content and increasing efficiency of provision

Results:

- 1.Sept 2001, is implemented at least **6 new secondary VET programmes**, developed in cooperation with the Vocational Councils, in the engineering and technology, agriculture and personal service fields;
- in 2001/02 academic year, the higher education institutions will double (compared to 2000/01 level) the admission of people with special higher education and practical experience, who wish to acquire vocational pedagogical preparation in scope of 40 credit points;
- the VET schools which have developed new programmes in 2000, will organise qualification raising courses for the pedagogues of other VET school, which are teaching the same specialities;
- active cooperation with the higher education institutions in increasing the national language skills of the VET teachers in Ida-Viru county, whose mother tongue is Russian and the national language skills are poor;
- in 2001/02 academic year will be implemented the new VET teachers' attestation system, the teachers compulsory speciality-related in-service training is organised at enterprises since 2000/01 academic year;
- 1.Sept 2001, efficiency criteria will be included to the salary calculations of the VET teachers;
- the employers at the VET school council also represent the professional unions.

4. More efficient use of resources

Results:

- the teachers potential will be used more efficiently – at the secondary VET level, the number of students will be increasing in average 8% per annum (i.e. by 35 % by 2004/05 academic year), while the number of teachers' positions will be kept at the current level;
- the volume of teachers' auditory work will decrease as the students' independent work will increase;
- up-to-date study bases (e.g. in VET centres) are open for use for the students following the same programmes in other VET schools;
- VET school will give up the infrastructure which is not being used in the teaching process.

1.7 Reorganisation of the VET schools network in 2001 – 2004

The reason to reorganise the VET schools network is the need to improve training quality and efficiency. In the situation of limited resources, it is necessary to concentrate the key actions, which speed up the development of the system – to create the conditions for more efficient use of human and financial resources, to decrease the administrative expenditures and to improve management of VET schools.

The basis for VET schools network reorganisation is economic, social and labour market analysis, on the national and regional level. Part of the analysis has been forecasting the volume and regional set-up of training provision. In cooperation with employers, employees, local municipalities and the state, further assessments will be made on training opportunities, teachers potential and the study base condition and suitability for the study programmes, based on the regional development needs. VET centres will be developed in Estonia with an objective to provide higher quality training with less resources – duplication in training provision within a region will be avoided, the teachers and up-to-date study base will be developed in the main teaching field.

The stages of VET schools network reorganisation:

I – 2001 Tartu (3 VET schools municipalisation), Lääne-Viru county; preparations for vocational higher education provision in the whole VET system.

II – 2002 – 2004 Middle-Estonia, Tallinn

VET schools network reorganisation will lead to two types of VET schools:

1. VET centre – a VET school or a combination of VET schools, a teaching and development centre, which is providing the following:

- initial training – secondary VET after basic and/or general secondary education (*gümnaasium*), and vocational higher education;
- adult education and training;
- training for the people with special needs;
- vocational counselling services;
- training the teachers and students of other VET schools, which are teaching the same field, incl. the opportunity to use the study base;
- programme development and analysis of the regional labour market;
- leading the work of programme development for other VET schools, which are teaching similar programmes;
- counselling the small enterprises in the region.

Taken the regional needs and administrative-territorial reform, a VET centre can also be a combination of schools on the secondary education level, providing vocational and general secondary education programmes. In the rural areas, the VET centres can become entrepreneurship incubation centres for the small enterprises.

2. Specialised VET schools – independent VET schools, where training is organised in one (or two) fields.

VET schools can be public, municipal or private.

By 2004, VET centres will be fully functioning in the following regions with the regionally important training fields:

- North-Estonia engineering and technology, business, logistics, communication;
- North-East Estonia engineering and technology, environmental protection services, services;
- South-East Estonia engineering and technology, business;
- Middle-Estonia construction, technology, rural economics, services;
- West-Estonia hotel and accommodation services.

1.8 The measures for achieving the objectives*

* The year-by-year objectives will be specified and fixed by the beginning of each year depending on the results achieved. The financial resources will be specified in the process of developing the state budget. The financial resources are planned according to the recommendations of experts.

Task	Current state	Result 2001	Result 2004	Resources
ENSURING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES				
1. Increase of number of students, 8% per year (in public and private VET schools)	26% of the graduates of the basic school 27% of the graduates of the general secondary school (<i>gümnaasium</i>)	secondary VET: for up to 30% of the age group of the basic school graduates, 6,400 (incl. MoE* 6,200) places for the young with secondary education 7,200 (incl. MoE 5,900) places; vocational higher education: 2,000 (incl MoE 1,800) places	50% of the age group of the basic school graduates (incl. basic vocational training); 50% graduates of the general secondary school	2001: 353,755,600 2002: 400,000,000 2003: 463,000,000 2004: 527,000,000
Number of students in 2002: 30,872 (students 2000/01õa) – 9,345 (graduates 2001) + 13,435 (admission 2001) – 12,450 (graduates 2002) + 15,000 (admission 2002) – 11% (drop-out) = 33,400. Cost of a student learning place – 10,604 kroons. Additionally has been calculated resources for the VET schools in prisons, privates schools, stipendiums and travel expenses compensation and for increasing gradually the cost of student learning places on the vocational higher education level.				
2. Ensuring learning opportunities for the students with special needs	250 places	At least 350 places	for all eligible applicants	
3. Basic VET for the young who have not acquired basic education	1 group	4 group	10 group	2001: 2002: 90,000 2003: 120,000 2004: 150,000

Task	Current state	Result 2001	Result 2004	Resources
4. Basic VET for the <i>gümnaasium</i> students	1 group	6 group	100 group	2001: 2002: 500,000 2003: 1,000,000 2004: 1,500,000
5. Administration of public assets	14 m ² per student	Public assets administration office will be established	11 m ² per student	2001: 72,122,820 2002: 72,000,000 2003: 72,000,000 2004: 72,000,000
6. Adult education and training	Adult education and training is irregular	Amendment of the Adult Education Act, broadening the learning opportunities	Coordinated cooperation with the labour market parties in the whole system	2001: 21,700,000 2002: 22,000,000 2003: 24,000,000 2004: 26,000,000
TOTAL I				2001: 447,577,000 2002: 494,590,000 2003: 560,120,000 2004: 626,650,000

II FOR SPEEDING UP THE REORGANISATION

FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

7. Creation of the vocational and career counselling system	Planning the system, preparation of the training programme for the counsellors	Training of the counsellors starts	Counsellors, who have covered professional training are working at schools	2001: 2002: 700,000 2003: 700,000 2004: 700,000
8. Organisation of the in-service practice in enterprises	Is taking place; preparation of the training programme for practice supervisors in enterprises	Training of the practice supervisors in enterprises starts	practice supervisors, who have covered professional training are working in enterprises	2001: 2002: 400,000 2003: 500,000 2004: 700,000
9. Programme development	30% of the programmes meet the requirements of the vocational standards	10 field programmes are adopted	All programmes are new (42 fields)	2001: 590,000 2002: 600,000 2003: 600,000 2004: 600,000
10. Teaching basics of entrepreneurship, work relations, community work	Preparations – development of the programmes	Teaching is started	The elements are in all programmes, active teaching	
11. Computers and internet	Computer classrooms and internet connection is available in all schools	The principles of internet based teaching are developed, teaching is started	VET schools have the necessary material teaching base and internet connection, active teaching	2001: 500,000 2002: 8,000,000 2003: 8,000,000 2004: 8,000,000
12. Increasing volume of national and speciality-related foreign language teaching	Preparation of teachers and programmes	Teaching is started in VET centres	The volume is doubled in all programmes, active teaching	2001: 379,000 2002: 500,000 2003: 600,000 2004: 700,000
13. Reorganisation of the VET school network	8 merged VET schools	Development of VET centres: Narva, Kohtla-Järve, Viljandi, Väimela, Tallinn, Saaremaa	30% of the public VET schools have been municipalised/privatised	2001: 49,610,000 2002: 53,000,000 2003: 65,000,000 2004: 70,000,000
14. Updating the learning environment	Planning investments, identifying priorities	Preferential development of the VET centres, direction of investment into VET centres	All students have access to the up-to-date study base	
15. Assessing efficiency	The Professions Act adopted, preparations for amending the Vocational Education Institutions Act	National vocational examinations replaced by the vocational qualification examinations	Vocational qualification examinations for the graduates	2001: 2002: 400,000 2003: 600,000 2004: 900,000

Task	Current state	Result 2001	Result 2004	Resources
16. Decreasing drop-out	13% per year	12%	8%	-
17. Creation of the innovation centre	Foundation VET Reform in Estonia is managing the EU programmes	MoE structure is changed, the functions of the Foundation become broader	The VET innovation centre is functioning	2001: 6,770,000 2002: 7,000,000 2003: 8,000,000 2004: 8,000,000
18. Optimal number of teaching positions	Teacher position / student ratio is 1:12	1:13	1:16	-
19. Decreasing the volume of student auditory work	35 hours per week	decreasing	After basic education 30 hours, after secondary education 25 hours per week	The released resources are used for increasing the motivation
20. Increasing the teachers education level	75% with higher education	Vocational pedagogical training for people who have special higher education, 40 credit points	All pedagogues have higher education and practical work experience	2001: 500,000 2002: 500,000 2003: 500,000 2004: 500,000
21. Professional in-service training in enterprises for vocational teachers	Is currently spontaneous	conditions established in cooperation with the employers	Active in the whole system, 2 months in 3 years	
22. Increasing the school leaders education level	1/3 of the school leaders have been replaced, active complementary training	New leaders in the merged VET schools, active complementary training	school leaders have covered leadership training, active periodical complementary training	2001: 300,000 2002: 300,000 2003: 300,000 2004: 300,000
23. Training of the young VET experts in other countries	Selection of people, preparation of agreements	Sending to training to abroad in cooperation with the higher education institutions	Have started working as researchers or teacher/trainer trainers	2001: 900,000 2002: 900,000 2003: 900,000 2004: 900,000
TOTAL II				2001: 58,649,000 2002: 72,300,000 2003: 85,700,000 2004: 91,300,000
TOTAL I & II				2001: 506,226,000 2002: 566,890,000 2003: 645,820,000 2004: 717,950,000

*MoE – Ministry of Education

resources planned from the national budget: 2001.a. 506,226,000
2002.a 566,890,000
2003.a 645,820,000
2004.a 717,950,000

incl. for adult education and training (pt 6) from the VET schools own income:
2001.a 19,000,000
2002.a 20,000,000
2003.a 22,000,000
2004.a 24,000,000

For increasing the volume of teaching the national language and additional foreign languages (pt.12) the funding is applied from the integration funds.

The VET innovation centre is financed from the national budget in scope of the tasks presented by the Ministry of Education, and from other sources for international and other projects.

Financing the VET system – budgeting strategy

The task of the Ministry of Education is to avoid shortsightedness in budgetary policy and to ensure consistent and continuous development of the education and training system. VET budgeting strategy in 2001 – 2004 concentrates on saving – the available resources will be used more rationally and efficiently. In order to fulfil education policy objectives, most of the resources are allocated according to the established priorities. In the upcoming years, allocation of financial resources to the VET system will be influenced by the following factors:

1. Increasing **number of** students. All young people must have an opportunity to acquire initial VET, in order to be socially mature, competitive on the labour market and prepared for further studies. This is ensured by relevant, up-to-date and high quality training. Investments are planned for increasing the pedagogues' and leaders' qualification through complementary and initial training, for continuous development of programmes and study bases;
2. **VET centres** will be having crucial role in the economic and social development of the region. Many investments are planned for improving and updating the learning environment, increasing the pedagogues' qualification, forecasting labour market developments and undertaking VET-related research.

For speeding up the reorganisation, preferential financing of the VET centres is planned. The funding will be allocated on updating the study bases, procurement of information and communication technology and contemporary technical teaching materials, the newest professional information materials for the schools' libraries, participation in the international and the EU programmes, and programme development.

The Foundation VET Reform in Estonia, National Examination and Qualification Centre and the employers representatives cooperate with the VET centres. The school councils promote cooperation with the labour market parties. In addition to teaching, the VET centres will also support other VET schools development.

3. The Estonian VET system is mostly public, as majority of the schools belong to the state. Considering the cost of contemporary VET, its local importance and quick changes on the labour market, some VET schools will change ownership through municipalisation/privatisation and the third sector will be involved more tightly in solving the VET-related questions. Administrative performance of the system will be improved with changes in leadership and administration.

In 2000, 468,913 m² learning space is financed by state, which forms 78% of the total space (total space 602,460 m²). Learning space is the space, which is directly used for teaching/learning activities. The financed space will be reduced by merging schools, which allows to empty some buildings, foremost the ones which are not used directly for learning (technical infrastructure etc.) Also the number of school buildings will be reduced. The resources freed will be used for updating the education content, improving the learning environment and logistical reorganisation of teaching. Also the schools' own

additional income from offering services will be directed to developing the training content.

Public assets management will be improved during 2001 – 2004, so that in 2004, there will be 14m² of total space and 11m² of learning space per student – reduction of 25 – 30% compared to 2000, allowing to teach more students per one space unit. Increasing current repairs expenditure is taken into account.

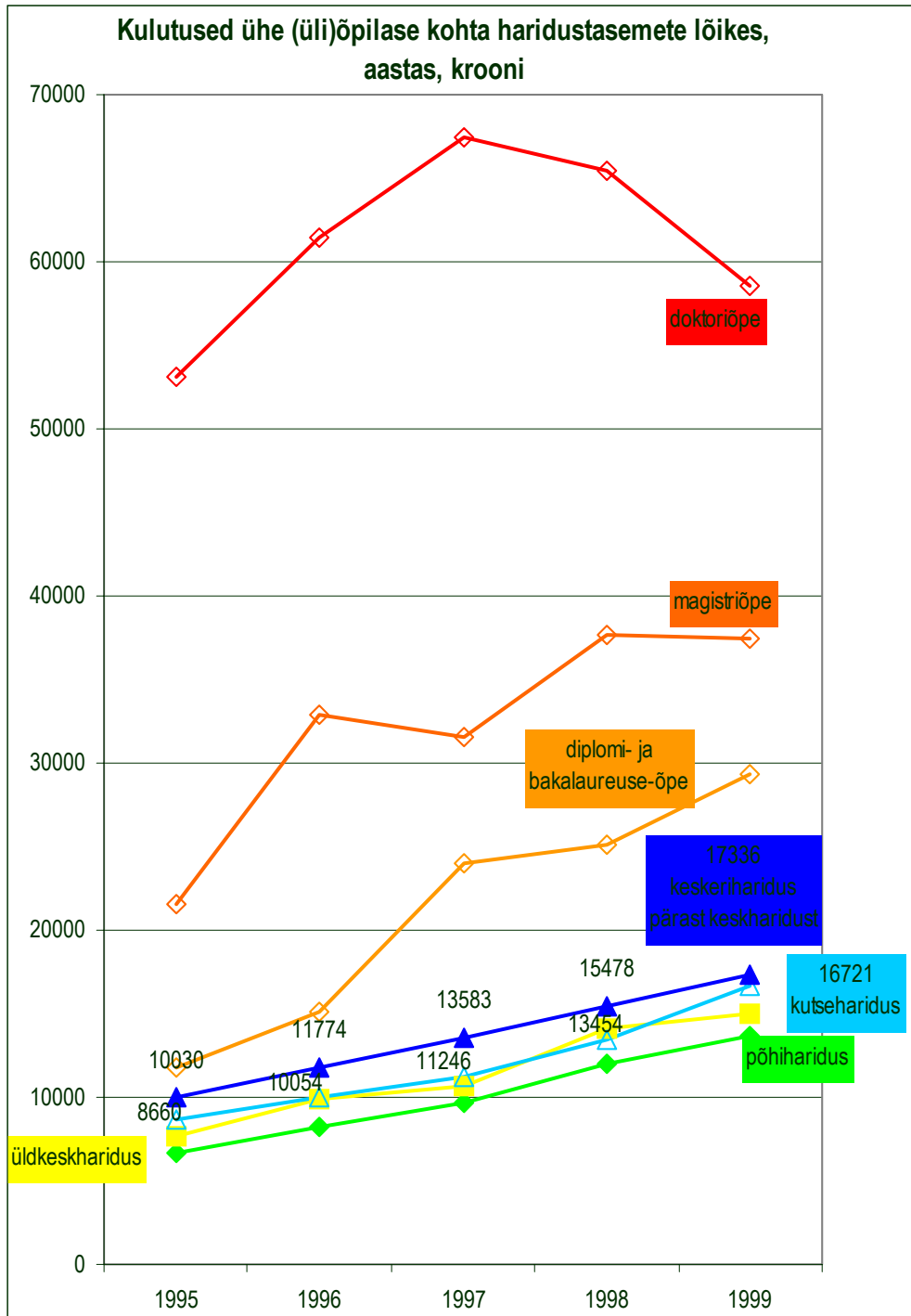
4. 30% of admission on secondary VET level comprise of the Russian language groups. These groups will be provided with additional national language studies. In 2001, additional classes will be provided for 25% of the admitted students and in 2004, for all students studying in Russian. The costs are calculated according to the cost of the student learning place – the pedagogues' salary and social tax, economic and teaching material expenses for a 6-month module.

In order to ensure free movement of trained labour force in Europe, it is necessary to increase the volume of teaching foreign languages on the secondary VET level. In 2001, the volume of foreign languages will be doubled for 25% of the admitted students (currently, in VET programmes after basic school, it is 6 study weeks). In 2004, it will cover all students in all programmes.

5. The labour market research and employers claim that the labour market needs 30 thousand skilled information and communication technology (ICT) workers, i.e. people, who have at least the support specialist qualification or more knowledge and skills on ICT. According to the expert assessments, demand for specialists with higher education is low (IT union standpoint in 2000), while there is need for ca 20,000 masters, skilled workers and technicians. Therefore, many specialists with higher education have to perform “blue collar” work instead of “white collar” work. Additional demand arises from the labour market growth of 18 – 20% per year (EITO 2000). The structural and volume demand must for new labour force be added as the sector is constantly growing. Taken the above, additional expenditure has been planned for training in the sector and for maintaining the ICT study bases on high technical level. Cost of one computer work space is 2,000 kroons, which is one computer in a 15-place classroom with local network and software. In 2001, the expenditure of 2.4 million kroons was planned and to be increase by 10 – 15% annually.
6. In 2001 – 2004, VET schools financing through the cost of a student learning place will be continued, which is the basis for calculating education expenditure by education levels –secondary VET after basic education, secondary VET after general secondary education (*gümnaasium*) and vocational higher education.

The cost of a student learning place will not increase in 2001. Compared to 1999, the cost of a student learning place decreased in 2000 by 11%, i.e. from 11,500 kroons to 10,196 kroons. Increase of the cost of a student learning place is planned in 2002 by 475 kroons (4%) in relation to the need to increase the expenditure on teaching materials, as the number of students is increasing. The teachers' qualification requirements are different between the vocational secondary and vocational higher education levels. It is necessary to increase complementary training volume of teachers, incl. the practice supervisors in enterprises. In 2003, the cost of a student learning place will increase by 500 kroons (5%), in relation to the need to increase the teaching materials and economic expenditure per

student. The increase of the number of students is planned in 2003 about 30% compared to the level of 2000. As the student's independent work is increasing and the auditory work is decreasing, it is necessary to train the teachers.



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Basic VET for *gümnaasium* students

1. Initial situation

In order to ensure social preparedness for entering the labour market, it is important to provide access to training. It is planned to guarantee learning places for up to 50% of the age group of the graduates of the basic school in VET system. Choices within the education system are free, while counselling services support decision making process.

People have different abilities, wishes and preparation for life, for continuing studies and for competing on the labour market. As the choices of the graduates from the basic school are often incidental, their interests and wishes are changing during the following years. 50% of the *gümnaasium* graduates enter the labour market, although their social and vocational preparation is not sufficient to ensure success. The VET Concept (adopted by the Government of the Republic on 13.01.1998) stipulates that the general secondary education – *gümnaasium* – students can acquire basic VET in cooperation with the VET schools.

Taken the above, it is important to provide basic VET for the *gümnaasium* students. In order to provide high quality training, there must be appropriate learning environment. The VET schools have the necessary learning places, vocational teachers and the teaching base, incl. the dormitories, which can be used also for teaching the *gümnaasium* students. Creating an equal or similar potential at the *gümnaasium* would be too expensive and time consuming, therefore not economically justified.

The above mentioned solution motivates young people to continue studies after *gümnaasium* as they can cover the following programme in shorter time. There is gain for the education system and the society, as the available resources (the buildings, study base, teachers, time, money) are used more efficiently and more young people get professionally trained. Also, as VET will be based on stronger general education background, it will enable to prepare more highly qualified labour force. Labour force with broader general education knowledge and skills is, when necessary, able to quickly adapt to the changes on the labour market, through short continuing training.

Provision of basic VET requires very close cooperation between the VET schools and *gümnaasiums*. The cooperation contributes to breaking down the barriers between different education types, which is useful for the student and for the society. Aside to this, more vocational counselling services will be offered.

2. The principles

The objective of a **secondary education level programme** is to prepare the student for life and for continuing studies, for being successful in personal and career life. Therefore, the secondary education level programmes must be differentiated, taking into account the individual characteristics of students and providing more choices (e.g. programmes with an emphasis on sciences, humanities, engineering and technology, etc.);

Provision of **basic VET** for the *gümnaasium* students is based on the national programme for basic school and gymnasium, where the VET courses are provided in the **scope of the elective subjects**;

Teaching is organised in cycles and can take place both in *gümnaasium* or VET school; the general and vocational programmes must **fit in teaching organisation**. The length of study cycles in the VET programmes is 5 study weeks, which fits with the academic year of 35 study weeks and 40 study weeks in *gümnaasium* (5 courses) and VET school (1 module). The study cycles change at the same time in the whole country. Basic VET programmes start the academic year on the last Monday of August;

Practical training takes place in VET school and it may be organised as the last cycle in the end of the academic year. Theoretical studies can be organised in *gümnaasium* or in VET school, taken the content of the programme and the study base. Professionally qualified vocational teachers are providing both theoretical and practical VET courses;

The programme is developed by the pilot school (VET school). The programme must be ready and approved one year before teaching is consumed. The preliminary year is used for training the teachers;

Financing is based on the Basic schools and gymnasiums act, according to the number of students. Application of coefficients should be considered, according to the cost of different programmes. Practical training will be covered by the VET schools resources.

3. SWOT – the VET schools preparedness to provide basic VET

Strengths:

- available legislative base for providing basic VET;
- effective cooperation with the social partners (employers, local municipalities);
- Vocational Councils are preparing vocational standards;
- effective cooperation with the *gümnaasius* on the local municipality level;
- effective international cooperation;
- school network reorganisation is underway, the VET centres are being developed.

Weaknesses:

- the attitudes of the leaders of both the VET schools and the *gümnaasium* are too institution-centred;
- use of resources is based on the interests of the school, not the student;
- the choices of the young are random;
- the secondary level study programmes lack cohesion;
- VET has negative reputation in the society and therefore under pressure;
- on county level, cooperation between the VET and general education system is weak.

Opportunities:

- access to VET will improve;
- flexible programmes and work organisation gives the students more choices, to become socially mature, successful in life, continue studies;

- on secondary VET level, more students with stronger general education background pass VET courses, which enables to shorten the study period and to provide higher quality training with the available resources;
- VET becomes attractive and more highly motivated students enter the system;
- the resources are used more efficiently, which enables to speed up the improvement of training quality;
- barriers between different education types within the education system disappear.

Threats:

- tensions between people;
- the social agreement on the ways, opportunities and time frame of the reorganisation is not achieved, the changes will focus only on taking care of the short-term problems currently at hand;
- teaching content in *gümnaasiums* remains abstract, focusing on the basics of science without providing ties to the practical life;
- on the secondary VET level the students entering the system are mostly socially excluded, who are not interested in training or working, therefore the resources for basic VET are not used effectively.

4. Result

Those who have passed the programme have the general knowledge and skills in the chosen VET field, which enables them to cover the VET programme after *gümnaasium* in shorter time.

5. Activities

- in 1995, basic VET programme in business was implemented in the frames of the Estonian Business Education Programme and now it is actively used in 8 *gümnaasiums* in Estonia;
- in 2000/2001, basic VET programme in wood processing technology will be started in Võru county;
- in 2001/2002, basic VET programmes will be implemented in Viljandi, Rakvere, Paide, Antsla and Tallinn;
- in five years, the basic VET programmes will account for one third of the *gümnaasium* programmes;
- in preparation of the basic VET programme, the national VET programme in this field will be the base document (if it does not exist, the programme developed in the piloting VET school). The objective of basic VET is that the students acquire the general knowledge and skills established by the respective vocational standard. This is the same as the compulsory part of the broad-based secondary VET national programme.

Basic VET for young people who have not acquired basic education

1. Problem

The adopted vocational standards state that the lowest education level of the qualified labour force is basic education.

During the last 10 years, the number of young people, who have not graduated from the basic school, has stayed on an unacceptably high level. As a result, there is more than 20 thousand young people in the age group of 17 – 25 years who have not acquired basic education.

Not having basic, compulsory, education limits the choices of the young person, both for studying and for work, becoming part of the increasing number of unqualified labour force. The labour market research indicates that the number of people with only primary or basic education has been increasing among the unemployed, bringing along increasing social tension. The need for financial resources for social welfare is increasing, while it does not solve the problems of the young unemployed and under-qualified labour force. The criminal aspect intensifies and it becomes even more difficult to win control over the situation while more resources are necessary.

2. Actions

Everybody must have acquired basic education, as it enables people to find work on the labour market, i.e. to be successful in life. The people who have not acquired basic education can be divided into two groups:

- the young people in the age of compulsory education (17 years);
- the young people older than the age of compulsory education.

2.1 The main emphasis will be on anticipation.

2.2 The underage people must acquire basic education. Education legislation stipulates, that the young people in the age of compulsory education must attend diurnal studies, because the young do not have the independent learning skills, abilities and experience. It is unrealistic to make the underage people to fulfil two tasks at a time – to acquire both basic education and VET.

There is full legal framework to ensure that all young people acquire compulsory education, including the opportunities to apply administrative influencing methods. Currently it is necessary to concentrate on implementation, to eliminate the reasons and not to focus on dealing with the consequences.

2.4 in order to provide the opportunity to acquire basic work skills (**basic VET**) for the young people who have not acquired basic education, the first and the most important task is to

provide them with the opportunity to acquire basic education. It can be organised at the adult education institutions in the evening or distant study form, in combined classes. Basic VET is organised at the VET schools, parallel to acquiring the basic education.

Simplified programmes enable to acquire VET skills for working at the support worker level. The objective of basic VET, in addition to providing work-related skills, is to develop attitudes towards further studies, which is the key to success in life. The local municipalities in cooperation with the Employment Offices provide information on the training opportunities, direct and control. Work-related training is financed by the one who orders it. The one ordering training can be the local municipality, the state through the Employment Offices, employers, individual. After passing the courses, the local municipality in cooperation with the Employment Offices help the graduates to find a job. The state can create subsidised work places for the young people who have passed the courses. Work-related training includes aspects on finding a job, on planning one's life, on communicating with the surrounding environment, etc. necessary for being successful in life. The youth organisations are organising social support for the young people in the risk group and involve them in the community actions.