

DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE
ESTONIAN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM
2005–2008

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1. INTRODUCTION

The task of the current „Development Plan for the Estonian Vocational Education and Training System 2005–2008“ is to set the aims for the development of vocational education and training (hereafter VET) in Estonia up till year 2008, and to plan the required measures, activities and resources. VET development objectives, set by the Estonian Government, create a common basis for the Ministry of Education and Research, organisations responsible to it, other related ministries and their divisions, and also for the social partners, enterprises, local government bodies and other institutions and partners involved in the field of VET, to plan their activities for the development of VET. The development plan also creates the widest educational policy basis for the development of VET in VET institutions themselves.

Preparation of the development plan was likewise necessary as the „Action Plan for Developing Estonian VET System in 2001–2004“ (adopted by the decision of the Government of the Republic on 12.06.2001) lost its efficacy at the end of 2004. It is hence important to make an interim summary of the outcomes of the previous action plan in parallel to the preparation of the new development plan.

The development plan has been elaborated consistently with the strategic documents “Estonian National Development Plan 2004–2006 for the Implementation of the EU Structural Funds” and “Estonian Success 2014”. In regard to common strategies within the European Union, principles and objectives stated in the Lisbon Strategy, Copenhagen Declaration and Maastricht Communiqué have been taken into consideration when setting objectives and planning activities within this development plan.

In regard to data and analysis, VET statistics collected by the National Observatory, operating within the Foundation Innove (formerly Foundation Estonian Vocational Education and Training Reform), and respective analysis and reports produced by them, have been relied upon. Special notice has to be made of the latest research in VET – “The Organisation of the Network of VET

Institutions on the Basis of Regional Specialisation” (Tallinn, 2003). The research, comprising comprehensive statistics and ensuing analysis and conclusions, was carried out by the Centre for Policy Studies PRAXIS. In the course of preparing the development plan, significant attention was paid also to statements and recommendations concerning VET expressed in an overview of Estonian education policy published by OECD in 2001.

VET in its broadest meaning comprises the entire vocational and higher education as well as professional continuing education and training, and retraining. Only an approach of this extent enables to encompass training for the labour market as a whole. The working group preparing this development plan, however, was empowered to treat VET only as education taking place in general education schools and VET institutions at the level of basic and secondary education, including post-secondary VET. Professional and academic higher education are hence not part of the review, and an integrated picture of VET in its broadest meaning is not provided. At the same time, this development plan addresses professional continuing training and retraining provided by VET institutions in addition to initial VET as a quickly growing and increasingly important part of VET. Lifelong learning is becoming an inescapable reality and a constantly increasing need in the modern world that has to be taken more and more into account when developing training systems.

The society and economy of the 21st century are in their increasing complexity posing serious challenges both to education systems as well as to people participating in them. Setting the goal of establishing a knowledge based economy assumes the labour force to acquire a higher level of education. More efficient and broad general and vocational education creates the basis of coping and further learning and adaptation during the entire lifetime. General trend should hence guide young people towards the acquisition of a better and more efficient general education, and in parallel to it or subsequently to basic or secondary education to the acquisition of vocational skills. However, while the general level of education is rising, the proportion of people with low qualifications, with only basic education or even without it, is increasing in Europe, Estonia included. Opportunities to acquire professional qualifications should be open to these target groups as well, creating the basis of better coping in life. To satisfy the VET needs of most diverse target groups, the provided education has to be flexible enough and promptly responsive to the changing needs. These are characteristics that are to become the features of VET in the 21st century.

This development plan is a framework document that establishes strategic goals, specified by measures and indicators. Proposed initiatives are detailed in the action plan, where measures are expanded into concrete actions. At the same time, the development plan also forms a framework and strategic basis for other documents concerning certain fields of VET that are based on general aims set in the development plan. This pertains to documents like “The Reorganisation Plan for State VET Institutions in 2005–2008” where activities for the arrangement of the school network are described; “VET Standard”, determining different possibilities of VET at the levels of basic and secondary education, and providing basis for the system of curricula; “Coefficients of the Broad Groups of Study in VET” where the establishment of new and more adequate coefficients of curriculum families is outlined; “Organisation of Education in Prison” that lays down the transfer of training arrangements to regional general education and VET institutions. “Lifelong Learning Strategy 2005–2008”, establishing the development trends of the named field for the coming years, has been elaborated in parallel to this development plan. A separate working group will be set up in 2005 to develop a quality assurance system in VET.

VET in Estonia has to be guided by the needs of the Estonian society, economy and labour market, and hence has to turn more towards the social partners, taking at the same time into consideration the interests and needs of learners as well. It was sought that the current development plan be based on a wide consensus basis. The underlying principles have been discussed and agreed with the members of the Estonian VET Enhancement Association. Representatives of the social partners from employers’ and employees’ representative organisations, professional associations, local governments and Riigikogu (the Parliament), schools, ministries and other related government institutions were involved in the process of preparing the development plan. Different audiences at conferences, meetings and other numerous conventions have continuously been informed of the planned developments, and they have given valuable feedback. This in turn should validate the hope that plans will come into reality. Similarly to year 2000, a new joint activity agreement, based on this development plan and stipulating specific commitments and responsibilities, has to be signed between the different representatives of the labour market and relevant ministries.¹

The development plan likewise forms the basis for the up-dating of legislation, laying down specific legal prerequisites necessary for the implementation of changes. The most important aspect of the development plans is the creation of conditions and possibilities for the implementation of these plans.

This development plan was prepared by a working group led by the head of the Vocational and Adult Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Research, Mr Andres Pung. Working group membership included Tiina Annus (Centre for Policy Studies PRAXIS), Heli Aru (Ministry of Education and Research), Mati Ilisson (Estonian Labour Market Board), Aleksander Jakobson (Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions), Janno Järve (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications), Jüri Jürivee (Estonian VET Enhancement Association), Mati Kask (Academy Nord), Tarmo Kriis (Estonian Employers’ Confederation), Tarmo Lige (Estonian Association of Construction Entrepreneurs), Raivo Niidas (Ministry of Education and Research School Network Bureau), Jaan Oruaas (Estonian Information Technology Society), Henn Pärn (Riigikogu), Siim Raie (Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry), Jüri Riives (Federation of Estonian Engineering Industry), Kalle Toom (Ministry of Education and Research), Toivo Tõnson (Association of Municipalities of Estonia), Toomas Undusk (Estonian Hotel and Restaurant Association), Aira Varblane (Ministry of Social Affairs).

¹ Joint activity agreement for the speeding up of the matching of the labour force qualifications with the needs of the labour market in 2001–2004, was signed in 2000 by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Estonian Employers’ Confederation, Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions, and the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

2. BASIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2.1 Overview of the outcomes of the “Action Plan for Developing Estonian VET System in 2001–2004”

The development plan is based upon the outcomes of the “Action Plan for Developing Estonian VET System in 2001–2004”. Two important priorities were set up in the action plan:

- › Ensuring learning opportunities
- › Ensuring quality of education

Objectives established to implement the priorities were up-to-date and set the main development trends that do not need to be radically changed at this time.²

Greatest progress in 2001–2004 was achieved with the following activities:

- › arrangement of the school network;
- › optimising of the number of teachers' positions;
- › teaching entrepreneurship, employment relationships, and the basis of joint activity;
- › implementation of information technology;
- › ensuring learning opportunities for students with special needs;
- › creating opportunities of pre-vocational training for students in upper secondary and basic schools, and young people without basic education.

At the same time, set objectives were not achieved or were only partially achieved in the case of 15 activities. Reasons for failing to achieve many of the appropriately established objectives can be summarised with the following:

- › Although political agreements had been made, reflected by several high level education policy documents (“Conceptual Starting Points of VET – Development Programme of

² See Annex 2 for an overview of the outcomes of the specific 23 objectives established in the action plan.

Education Policy”, adopted by the decision of the Government on 13.01.1998; “Action Plan for Developing Estonian VET System in 2001 – 2004”, adopted by the decision of the Government of the Republic on 12.06.2001), and the agreement between social partners stipulating the priority of developing VET (Joint Activity Agreement for the Speeding Up of the Matching of the Labour Force Qualifications with the Needs of the Labour Market in 2001 – 2004”, signed on 18.12.2000 by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Estonian Employers' Confederation, Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions, and the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry), the implementation of these agreements was not considered necessary. Due to constant structural and staff changes, relevant organisations were not able to implement in full the principles included in these agreements, and secure the sustainability of the developments.

- › Management problems, including within the ministry itself, but also unsuccessful reorganisation of the VET management system and extensive staff changes in 2001, resulted in a considerable fall of administrative capacity in running the field of VET. The management of VET system has been over centralised and multilevel, while decision making and responsibility for end results have been divided between too many management units of the Ministry of Education and Research, there has been a lack of clear-cut and determined co-ordination. The majority of VET institutions are state owned, the participation of social partners in the preparation of decisions and sharing responsibility have not been legally guaranteed. This has caused the counterparties to continuously blame each other.
- › Persistent renewal and development of human resources, which is a high priority development factor, has not taken place: the requirement of a compulsory in-service training for vocational teachers was abandoned, the deadline for upgrading vocational teachers' level of education was postponed, the specifics of VET were not taken into consideration when regulating the qualification requirements of a VET institution head (these were equalised with the qualification requirements of an upper secondary school director), a clear stance concerning vocational teacher initial training is missing, state-commissioned vocational teacher training is very small, there is no supervisor training, qualification requirements and principles of payment for VET directors and teachers are out of date, there is no clear perspective concerning the continuing training of vocational teachers and directors.
- › The National Observatory has somewhat lost its role in analysing the developments of VET. Schools do not therefore know their position within the whole system, generalised information for comparison purposes is lacking.
- › Strong under financing of the VET system in respect to daily studies as well as implementation of innovations (financing was lower by 259.32 million EEK as compared to the forecasts in the action plan, the latter was at the same time not amended despite the financial plan not working out); the lack of mechanisms to ensure an efficient and purposeful use of existing financial and other resources.

2.2 Main indicators in VET

Summary of the main indicators in VET and their dynamics within the past years are based upon the collected statistics and respectively devised trends.³

³ See Annex 3 for complete respective statistics and analysis.

Number of students

The total number of VET students has been slowly decreasing since mid-1990s, and stabilised on a more or less the same level during the past years (29 915 students in 2004). Looking at the proportion of young people acquiring vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education and vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education, a rise of almost 16% can be detected in the case of the former (16 306 respective students in 2002, and 18 886 respective students in 2004). The number of students in vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education has fallen (11 817 respective students in 2000, and 10 762 respective students in 2004). Young people with secondary education are likely to strive towards continuing their studies at a level of higher education and not of vocational education. In 2004, 28.4% of basic school graduates and ca 20% of secondary school graduates continued their studies in a VET institution. The current structure of professions on the labour market would however require a bigger proportion of specialists to be prepared by VET.

Number of VET graduates

The total number of VET graduates was constantly rising till year 2002 (10 911 VET graduates; in 2002 the number of VET graduates was high also due to the first students studying by 3-year curricula at the level of vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education graduated in addition to those studying by the 4-year curricula at the same level), but then started to fall again (8 081 VET graduates in 2003, only 7 049 VET graduates in 2004). One of the reasons of this decrease is the termination of admission into professional secondary courses starting from the school year 1999/00. An increased drop-out rate over the past few years has likewise had its impact.

Interruption of studies

Interruption of studies is a serious problem in VET (4 953 drop-outs in school year 2003/04, constituting 19% of the total number of learners). In particular, this concerns post-secondary VET (2 335 drop-outs, which is 21.6% of the total number of students in vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education). Unfortunately the drop-out rate has up till now been rising (except the last year). Finding out the exact reasons behind dropping out enables to start the application of measures to slow down this process.

Teachers

The number of teacher positions in VET institutions has decreased considerably over the past four years (in 2000, the number of vocational teachers amounted to 3 902, while the number of general subject teachers and specialised subject teachers was 2 414; in 2004, these numbers were 1 554 and 1 188 respectively). The general decrease of the staff positions in VET institutions has been even more extensive – 30.2%. This has enhanced school cost-effectiveness, and a better student-teacher ratio. The total number of teachers employed in VET institutions has at the same time not fallen considerably (only by 4.3%, from 2 854 to 2 733), which suggests that many teachers are employed part-time. The dropping percentage of teachers with higher qualifications and a significant increase of teachers without a grade among the staff of VET can be considered a negative tendency.

Number of VET institutions by ownership

In fall 2004, the total number of VET institutions in Estonia was 68. Most of them are state schools administered by the Ministry of Education and Research (44). Three VET institutions are within the

administration of other ministries, three are municipal and 18 are private VET institutions. The number of state VET institutions has been reduced extensively over the past years in the course of rearrangements (in 2000, the total number of state VET institutions amounted to 62). It has been the objective to organise the network of VET institutions better, make it operate in a more cost-effective way, and aggregate training in bigger regional centres. The total number of students in private VET institutions in school year 2004/05 was 1 135 (3.8% of the total number of VET students), and in three municipal VET institutions 3 107 (10.4% of the total number of VET students). Considering the proportion of students, these institutions are hence not too significant yet.

Public sector educational expenditure at the level of VET

The financing of VET has risen 2.3 times over the past ten years – from 269 million EEK in 1995, on the basis of preliminary information on the forecasted implementation of the state budget, to 609 million EEK in 2004 (from the public sector budget, except own revenue of VET institutions). Without external funds the rise would have been 2.2 times. At the same time, as a proportion from GDP, the financing of VET has fallen from 0.63% to 0.44%.

In 2003, the financing of general education and VET by the public and private sectors amounted to a total of five billion EEK, i.e. 4.1% of GDP. The average of OECD countries in 2001 amounted to 3.8% of GDP. The share of basic education in Estonia formed 2.8% of GDP, while the average of OECD countries was 2.5% of GDP.

The expenditure on general education (general and vocational secondary education together) in Estonia and in the OECD countries is hence on the same level – 1.3% of GDP. Considering that the proportion of the financing of basic education from GDP was higher in Estonia (ca 10%), it can be concluded that the proportion of the financing of general secondary education from GDP should also be higher. The proportion of the financing of VET from GDP in Estonia is consequently smaller than on the average in the OECD countries. The inadequate financing of VET in EU member states is also referred to in the Maastricht study, commissioned by the European Commission.

While educational expenditure has been rising rather regularly throughout years (except in 2000), the growth of VET expenditure was considerably behind the general rise of expenditure on education (between 1995–2003 educational expenditure rose 2.9 times, VET expenditure 2.2 times). Only in 2004, a certain rise was predicted on the basis of the increase of per capita contribution, of study allowances and particularly of the external aid measures that were to harmonise the growth of VET expenditure as compared to the general rise of educational expenditure in the course of ten years – assuming that external aid measures would be used up in full in 2004. In this case educational expenditure would have risen 3.2 times in total and VET expenditure 3.1 times in 1995 – 2004. External aid measures for 2004 were unfortunately not used up, and the predicted rise has not yet been fully achieved (exact data on the implementation of the 2004 budget was not yet available during the preparation of this development plan. Preliminary data concerning the implementation of the budget showed 608.8 million EEK as VET expenditure. Had the entire budget been implemented, VET expenditure would have been 811 million EEK).

The cost of a student place in general education and VET in Estonia is more or less the same: on the basis of 2003 data the cost of a student place in general education is 20 400 EEK; in VET 20 200 EEK; in higher education (including master's and doctoral study) 34 000 EEK.⁴ In Finland, the respective ratio of general education and VET is 1:1.7 in favour of VET.⁵ In Finland, an average student place in

⁴ See Annex 3.

⁵ The cost of a Finnish student place in an upper secondary school is 4 288 €, in a VET institution 7 406 €, and in professional higher education 6 209 €.

VET is ca 19% more expensive than a student place in professional higher education, while in Estonia this ratio is reversed. All this provides an effective illustration of a strongly under financed VET not only in total but also through the comparison of the types of education and of its different levels.

2.3 European initiatives in the field of VET

Estonian VET institutions have been participating in European Union co-operation programmes (Phare, Leonardo da Vinci etc) for years now. Over the recent years, the Estonian developments in VET have been increasingly impacted also by the common European strategies in this field. In November 2002, Estonia joined the Copenhagen Declaration – the first biggest common VET initiative in Europe at the time. In May 2004, Estonia became a rightful member of the European Union, which means participation in the common economic space and mobility of labour force within the Union (although with a few restraints for the new member states). VET likewise plays an important role in the achievement of the Lisbon strategy that set ambitious aims for Europe in regard to becoming the most competitive and knowledge based economy in the world. During the Dutch presidency, interim reviews were made and significant further developments in VET were proposed, laid down in Maastricht Communiqué (approved by the European ministers of education on 14.12.2004). All these initiatives are to be kept in mind when planning any national developments in VET.

The Copenhagen Declaration stressed the importance of the European dimension and the need to strengthen co-operation in VET, and proposed several joint activities in fields named below.

- › The development of a common Europass network and qualifications framework in order to increase transparency and ensure comparability of qualifications and competences.
- › The development of common principles regarding the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning.
- › The development of a common methodology of quality assurance in VET.
- › The development of the credit transfer system.

In addition, the importance of educational, professional and career guidance; the need to reinforce the upgrading of competences and qualifications at sectoral level (by actively involving social partners); the necessity to pay a lot more attention to the learning needs of teachers and trainers themselves, were stressed in the document.

The Maastricht Communiqué emphasises that in order to achieve the Lisbon objectives within the Copenhagen process, it is important to:

- › continue to set political priorities in order to
 - make European education and training systems a world quality reference;
 - make lifelong learning a concrete reality for all by mobilising investments also in the development of key competences of citizens throughout life (e.g. learning to learn and developing a spirit of enterprise);
- › strengthen VET at European and member state levels through voluntary and bottom up initiatives and co-operation.

The Maastricht Communiqué acknowledges the need to focus reforms and investment particularly on the following aspects:

- › the image and attractiveness of the vocational route in order to increase participation in VET;

- › high levels of quality and innovation in order to benefit all learners and make European VET globally competitive;
- › preparation of a highly skilled workforce responding to the requirements of the knowledge based economy, and the upgrading and competence development of older workers, considering the strong impact of the demographic change;
- › the training needs of low skilled (about 80 million persons aged between 25-64 years in EU) and disadvantaged groups for the purpose of achieving social cohesion and increasing labour market participation.

According to the Maastricht Communiqué, VET should increase considerably at all levels of education, and links between VET and general education, in particular with higher education, need to be strengthened and fostered by innovative strategies and other instruments at national and European levels. This should include designing VET systems for the acquisition of higher qualifications with the aim to attract more students. All in all this means contributing to innovation and competitiveness.

Priorities for member states

- 1) Continuous implementation of initiatives set in the Copenhagen Declaration.
- 2) Improving public and/or private investment in VET, including the implementation of public-private partnerships, tax policies and other benefits that favour learning.
- 3) The extensive use of the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund resources to support the development of VET also during the next programming period of 2007–2013.
- 4) The further development of the VET system, taking into account the training needs of the risk groups (early school leavers, low skilled people, migrants, people with disabilities and the unemployed). This should be based on targeted investment, assessment of prior learning and work, and tailored training and learning provision.
- 5) A very open, flexible and individually tailored approach to learning, supported by appropriate guidance and counselling. Such an approach requires the reduction of barriers between VET and general education, and increased opportunities to progress from initial training to continuing training or higher education. Mobility is to be integrated not only into initial but also continuing training.
- 6) The increased relevance and high quality needs of VET, achievable only through the systematic involvement of all social partners in developments and quality assessment at national, regional and local level. Development of partnerships is a key issue, great emphasis is to be placed on the early identification of relevant and quickly changing skills needs, and the respective planning of training.
- 7) The further development of learning-conducive environments in training institutions and at the workplace. The enhancement of pedagogical approaches and self-organised learning, utilising the potential provided by ICT and e-learning.
- 8) Continuing competence development of teachers, reflecting their specific learning needs and changing role of VET. Teachers have to acquire modern professional knowledge and skills, and thus take upon themselves the innovators' role.

Estonian VET policy has to follow the priorities set to the member states, and the current development plan seeks to achieve this. Special attention needs to be paid to the second and to the two last priorities as the implementation of all other priorities is largely dependant on the achievement of these.

European level priorities on the basis of the Maastricht Communiqué:⁶

- 1) the consolidation of the further implementation of the Copenhagen process;
- 2) the development of the European qualifications framework;
- 3) the development of the European credit transfer system for VET (ECVET);
- 4) the examination of the specific learning needs of vocational teachers, raising the value and attractiveness of their profession;
- 5) the further improvement of VET statistics.

2.4 Values

The following values that link VET to the development of the Estonian society and the entire education system, and enhance the modernisation of VET, were considered as basis when preparing the current development plan.

- › **Quality** – education has to provide people with the foundation that enables them to cope in life and achieve self-realisation, and hence enhance the development of the state.
- › **Accessibility** – good education has to be accessible independently of one's place of residence, material resources or abilities.
- › **Efficiency** – use of resources has to be expedient.
- › **Competitiveness** – education has to ensure one's competitiveness on the labour market, and a sufficient supply of good workers for the enterprises.
- › **Co-operation** between the state, local governments, employers and employees, and other social partners has to function at all levels and within all types of education.
- › **Integrity** – one's educational route has to be integral and lifelong; general, vocational and higher education, formal education and continuing training and retraining are hence to form a coherent whole.
- › **Flexibility** – education system has to provide flexible learning opportunities for students with different needs and abilities, allowing for a tailored approach, if necessary; educational dead ends are to be avoided, everyone must have access to the next level of education and to opportunities of individual development.
- › **Transparency** – education system has to fit into the overall European education context, its content and operation processes have to be transparent.
- › **Purposefulness** – above all, VET has to reflect the needs of the society, economy and the labour market.

⁶ Source: Maastricht Communiqué on the Future Priorities of Enhanced European Co-operation in Vocational Education and Training (VET).

3. OVERALL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Underpinning the preparation of the VET development plan is the vision document “VET 2015”,⁷ elaborated by the working group of this development plan on the principles of lifelong learning. According to the vision –

VET is an integral part of the Estonian education system that is based on the needs of the Estonian society, employer and learner. VET is valued, its accessibility is guaranteed, and leavers find employment compatible to their qualification.

Three strategic aims have been established for the development of VET in 2005–2008.

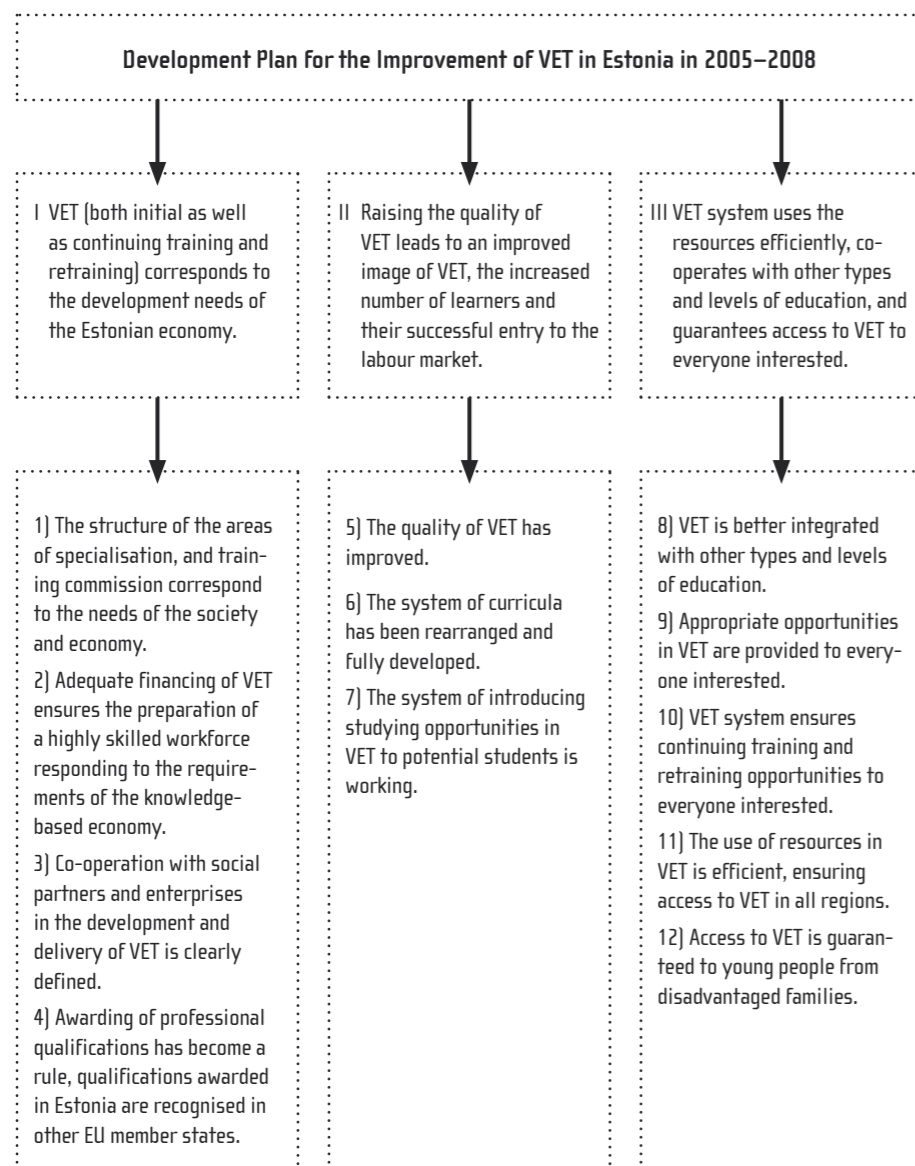
- I VET (both initial as well as continuing training and retraining) corresponds to the development needs of the Estonian economy.
- II Raising the quality of VET leads to an improved image of VET, the increased number of learners and their successful entry to the labour market.
- III VET system uses the resources cost-effectively, co-operates with other types and levels of education, and guarantees access to VET to everyone interested.

In order to achieve the objectives, respective measures and an action plan have been developed for 2005–2008. The action plan states the partners of the Ministry of Education and Research, deadlines of implementation, and the required financial resources. Action plan refers to these financial resources that are required in addition to the current funding agreements. Impact indicators allow monitoring the achievement of the set objectives.

⁷ See Annex 4 for the full text of the vision document “VET 2015”.

Strategic overall aims are specified and detailed by specific objectives; their reciprocal links are illustrated by the following diagram :

Diagram 1. Development Plan for the Improvement of VET in Estonia in 2005–2008.



4. OBJECTIVES, MEASURES, INDICATORS

Objective 1

The structure of the areas of specialisation, and training commission correspond to the needs of the society and economy

Measures

- 1.1 Input to the planning of state commissioned education in formal education will come from the national strategic development plans and long-term forecast of labour force needs, prepared by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, along with relevant studies of the field. State commission is considered on the same basis at the level of both secondary and higher education.
- 1.2 Input to the planning of continuing training and retraining will come from the short-term forecast of labour force needs, prepared on the basis of labour force mobility information provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs (co-ordinator of the process), Estonian Labour Market Board, professional associations, county governments, and local government associations. The effective planning of training allows reacting quickly to the labour market changes.

Indicators

- 80% of the VET graduates are successfully employed on the labour market a year later.
 (At the moment, 74% of the VET graduates pay income tax during the first full year after graduation; others are in compulsory service in defence forces, on parental leave, continuing their studies, or unemployed).

Objective 2

Adequate financing of VET ensures the preparation of a highly skilled workforce responding to the requirements of the knowledge based economy

Measures

- 2.1 The financing of VET will take into consideration the profession specific costs.

2.2 The financing of VET will ensure the ratio of labour force costs and other costs in the budget of VET institutions as 60:40, which in turn will meet the needs of both VET as well as of development activities in VET institutions (at the moment, the ratio is 70:30).

Indicators

- New expenditure coefficients of the curriculum families have been implemented, ensuring the achievement of study requirements above all in the technical, production and technological fields.
- The average cost of a student place in VET has risen 1.5 times as compared to general education by 2008.

Objective 3

Co-operation with social partners and enterprises in the development and delivery of VET is clearly defined

Measures

- 3.1 Social partners will be involved in VET processes, taking into consideration the interests and resources of the parties, and defining the responsibilities of all participants.
- 3.2 Enterprises will be engaged in the study process through the delivery of company-based training and the professional continuing training of vocational teachers.

Indicators

- The satisfaction of the social partners regarding co-operation in the field of VET with the state and the educational institutions, has increased.
- All students are guaranteed an in-service training position and a supervisor in an enterprise.

Objective 4

Awarding of professional qualifications has become a rule, qualifications awarded in Estonia are recognised in other EU member states

Measures

- 4.1 The final examination of the VET institution will be integrated with the professional examination in these occupational fields where it is possible.
- 4.2 A transparent and comparable competency-based qualification system, correlating with other respective systems in Europe, will be developed.

Indicators

- 70% of the VET graduates pass a professional examination upon leaving school (in 2004, 641 VET graduates of the same year, i.e. 8%, participated in professional examinations, 449 of them, i.e. ca 5.6%, passed the examination).
- The Estonian qualification system correlates with the European comparative model of qualifications.

Objective 5

The quality of VET has improved

Measures

- 5.1 Quality assurance system will be developed and quality management principles implemented at national and school level.
- 5.2 Teachers and professional specialists will be motivated to work in VET through flexible qualification requirements and competitive salaries.
- 5.3 Flexible and alternative initial and continuing training opportunities will be created for vocational teachers in order to engage new teachers and raise the qualification level of teachers.
- 5.4 New activating and engaging teaching and learning methods will be implemented.
- 5.5 VET institutions' learning environment will be qualitatively renewed (buildings, equipment, practical training facilities).
- 5.6 Management of VET institutions will be rearranged.

Indicators

- Regular internal and external evaluation has been started, social partners are being engaged.
- The age structure of vocational teachers, who meet the qualification requirements, is in balance.
- Learning environment has been comprehensively renovated and meets the modern requirements in 40% of schools.
- Qualification in the field of teaching has been awarded to 25% of the teachers.
- Vocational teachers have been guaranteed the opportunity of professional in-service training.

Objective 6

The system of curricula has been rearranged and fully developed

Measures

- 6.1 A consistent set of documents (VET standard, professional standards, national curricula) will be developed to support the rearrangement of the system of curricula, and their content upgrading.
- 6.2 National and school curricula will be developed on the principle of modules, on the basis of professional standards. Curricula will ensure the acquisition of the general and basic skills required in the modern world, and will enable various specialisations within the curriculum. The system of credit points will be implemented.

Indicators

- National curricula have been developed and approved.
- School curricula correspond to the national curricula.

Objective 7

The system of introducing studying opportunities in VET to potential students is working

Measures

- 7.1 A coherent career guidance system will be developed and implemented.
- 7.2 Through targeted career counselling all students in grades 7–9 and 11–12 will be guided towards choices that are consistent with their abilities.
- 7.3 A promotional campaign introducing areas of specialisation and labour market opportunities will be prepared and implemented.

Indicators

- › A comprehensive programme introducing occupations, areas of specialisation, and opportunities in VET is being implemented.
- › Active career counselling is being provided to all students in grades 7–9 and 11–12.
- › The proportion of students entering VET after basic school has risen to 38% of all basic school graduates (at the moment that proportion is below 30%).

Objective 8

VET is better integrated with other types and levels of education

Measures

- 8.1 Opportunities of VET will be introduced in general education schools with the aim to diversify choices open to students there, including the opening of VET classes (in co-operation with neighbouring VET institutions).
- 8.2 Graduates of vocational secondary education will be provided with opportunities to continue their studies at the level of professional higher education.
- 8.3 VET students wishing to continue their studies at the level of higher education, including in the academic studies at universities, will be provided with opportunities of additional general education studies.

Indicators

- › VET takes place in at least 30 upper secondary schools (at the moment, in ca 20 upper secondary schools).
- › Opportunities to start one's studies without national examinations at the level of professional higher education have been provided to the students with vocational secondary education.
- › 10% of the students with vocational secondary education have the opportunity to continue their studies at the level of professional higher education.

Objective 9

Appropriate opportunities in VET are provided to everyone interested

Measures

- 9.1 Students with different needs will be provided with flexible opportunities and forms of study (special needs will be taken into consideration and special VET programmes will be developed for young people without basic education).
- 9.2 Young people will be guided to the acquisition of vocational secondary education ensuring better coping in the future.
- 9.3 Collaboration networks will be established in co-operation of local governments, county governments, counselling centres, VET institutions and other partners to evaluate the education requirements of young people (aged 17–25) and adults with different abilities, and provide them with training opportunities corresponding to their needs (including in initial VET).

Indicators

- › VET opportunities for persons over compulsory school attendance age and without basic education are provided in all regions.
- › VET opportunities for students with special needs (whose number in VET amounts to 800 at the moment, on the basis of the respective database) are provided in all regions.
- › Continuing training and retraining opportunities are provided in all VET institutions.
- › Learning assistance opportunities have been established in all VET institutions by 2008.
- › Apprenticeship training has been implemented by 2007.
- › Drop-out rate has fallen to 10% by 2008 (drop-out rate at the level of vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education was ca 18%, and at the level of vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education, ca 21%, in school year 2002/03).
- › The proportion of young people acquiring vocational education without general secondary education does not exceed admission rate to vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education by 15%.

Objective 10

VET system ensures continuing training and retraining opportunities to everyone interested

Measures

- 10.1 The resources of VET institutions will be used more efficiently for the delivery of continuing training and retraining.
- 10.2 A better correlation will be ensured between initial training, and continuing training and retraining in the context of lifelong learning.
- 10.3 Continuing professional training and retraining system will be rearranged to respond flexibly to the needs of employers and entrepreneurs, both partners and the Estonian Labour Market Board will be supplied with required data.

10.4 Labour market services will be linked to the VET system in general.

10.5 The financing system of the continuing professional training and retraining will be developed, based on the revenues of the unemployment insurance premiums.

Indicators

- › 10% of the adult population (aged 24–64) participates in continuing training and retraining within a year in 2008.

(In 2003, this figure was 6.2% in Estonia, 9.0% in EU on average (25 states), and 9.7% in EU on average (15 states)).

Objective 11

The use of resources in VET is efficient, ensuring access to VET in all regions

Measures

11.1 The network of VET institutions will be rearranged, access to VET will be retained in all counties.

11.2 Unjustified overlapping of the areas of specialisation will be avoided within training regions, opportunities to cross-use study basis will be provided.

11.3 VET institutions will start operating as regional or field related development centres where learning is complemented by active entrepreneurial or other kind of development work.

Indicators

- › Access to VET is provided in all counties.

Objective 12

Access to VET is guaranteed to young people from disadvantaged families

Measures

12.1 An allowance system will be developed and implemented to enable disadvantaged students to participate in VET.

Indicators

- › 50% of the education, transportation and other allowances are allocated to cover transportation, student dormitory and subsistence expenses, depending on the needs of the students.

5. ACTION PLAN

No	Activities	Main responsibility and partnership	Time	Expenditure (thousand Estonian EEK)			
				2005	2006	2007	2008
1.1.1	Improvement of the forecast of labour force needs	MEAC	from 2005 onwards				
1.1.2	Overview and amendment of the structure of professions and areas of specialisation	NEQC, MEAC, SNB, VET institutions, QA, social partners	from 2005 onwards				
1.1.3	Development of EHIS to facilitate cross-usage of databases – labour market databases and a common database of adult training	NEQC, MoSA, ELMB	from 2005 onwards				
1.2.1	Establishment of regional co-operation bodies for the annual preparation of training needs	SNB, ELMB, professional associations, county and local governments, social partners	from 2005 onwards				
2.1.1	Raising the basic cost of VET	MoER	2006–2008	0	147 857	173 397	173 397
2.1.2	Implementation of new coefficients	MoER	2006–2008		106 235	106 235	106 235
2.1.3	Extra resources for the salary rise of teachers 12% a year	MoER	2006–2008	0	36 380	81 170	122 791
2.1.4	Consideration of performance in the funding of schools	MoER	2008				
3.1.1	Preparation of legislative amendments that clearly stipulate the roles of social partners in VET	MoER	2005–2008				

No	Activities	Main responsibility and partnership	Time	Expenditure (thousand Estonian EEK)			
				2005	2006	2007	2008
3.1.2	Conclusion of collaboration agreements between social partners and ministries	MoER, social partners, MoSA, MEAC	2005				
3.1.3	Research of social partners' satisfaction level	MoER	2005, 2008	150			150
3.2.1	Further development of the currently existing system of company-based training	MoER, SNB, social partners	2005				
3.2.2	Elaboration of requirements to practical training bases and development of the system of supervisor training	MoER, SNB, Ministry of Agriculture	2006				
3.2.3	Involvement of social partners in the analysis of staff continuing training and retraining needs, preparation of personal development plans, detection of training opportunities	MoER	from 2006 onwards		Project based funding	Project based funding	Project based funding
4.1.1	Integration of professional examinations for VET graduates	MoER, NEQC, QA	2006–2008	9 811	15 918	15 918	15 918
4.2.1	Development of the qualification system, synchronization with respective EU systems	QA, social partners	2005–2006	ESF project	ESF project	4000	4000
4.2.2	Establishment of the national reference point for the comparison of qualifications, and the Europass centre	QA	2005	1200	1200	1200	1200
5.1.1	Development and implementation of the quality assurance system in VET (development in 2005–2006, implementation from 2007)	MoER, NEQC, SNB	2005–2008			1600	1600
5.2.1	Development and application of professional standards and qualification requirements for vocational teachers	QA, MoER, NEQC	2005, 2006				
5.2.2	Equalising minimum salary of vocational teachers to the average salary level in Estonia	MoER	from 2006 onwards			included in 2.1.1, 2.1.3	included in 2.1.1, 2.1.3
5.3.1	Development and implementation of the initial and continuing training system for vocational teachers	NEQC, universities, Innove	2005–2008	ESF project	ESF project	4000	4000
5.4.1	Establishment of a VET methodological centre by the NEQC for curriculum development, continuing training and methodological development activities	NEQC	2005	1000	1500	2000	2000
5.5.1	Application of state investments and ERDF resources for the development of school training bases	SNB, Innove	2005–2008	68 847	120 303	195 000	273 127
6.1.1	Establishment of the VET standard	MoER	2005				
6.1.2	Arrangement of the system of professional standards	QA, social partners	2007				

No	Activities	Main responsibility and partnership	Time	Expenditure (thousand Estonian EEK)			
				2005	2006	2007	2008
6.2.1	Development of the system of curricula	NEQC, QA, VET institutions, social partners	2005–2008				
6.2.2	Development of national curricula	NEQC	from 2005 onwards	ESF project	ESF project	2000	2000
6.2.3	Establishment of the credit point system	MoER, NEQC	2006				
6.2.4	Facilitating the use of entrepreneurship modules of different extent	Innove	2007	Project based funding	Project based funding	Project based funding	Project based funding
7.1.1	Development and implementation of a coherent career guidance system	MoER, MoSA, ELMB	2007	ESF project	ESF project	ESF project	ESF project
7.1.2	Regularly up dated labour market information is provided to career guidance institutions	MoER, MoSA, ELMB	2006				
7.1.3	Better use of the opportunities within the national curriculum of general education for the increase of practical subjects, experiential learning and group work	MoER, NEQC, University of Tartu Curriculum Centre	2006–2008				
7.2.1	Programme promoting VET, and the occupations of mid-level specialists and skilled workers to the public	MoER	2005–2008	500	500	500	500
7.3.1	Changing of the registration procedure of VET graduates as unemployed	MoER, MoSA	2006				
8.1.1	Establishment of vocational classes within upper secondary schools	Schools	On-going				
8.1.2	Facilitation of the use of VET training bases and teachers for the delivery of manual training classes at secondary schools	Schools	On-going				
8.1.3	Extension of pre-vocational training and VET in basic and upper secondary schools	MoER, NEQC, SNB, schools	2005–2008	4600	4600	4600	4600
8.2.1	Development of curricula to ensure correlation between vocational secondary education and professional higher education	NEQC, VET institutions, higher education institutions	On-going				
8.3.1	Additional free of charge general education studies (extra year of general education at an upper secondary school or preparatory courses of higher education institutions for those wishing to continue in academic studies)	MoER	From 2005 onwards		500	500	500
9.1.1	Legislative determination of new types of VET to enable flexible choices	MoER	2005				
9.1.2	Special programme of VET for students beyond compulsory school attendance age and without basic education	MoER, VET institutions	2006	Project based funding	Project based funding	Project based funding	Project based funding

No	Activities	Main responsibility and partnership	Time	Expenditure (thousand Estonian EEK)			
				2005	2006	2007	2008
9.1.3	Involvement of young people within compulsory school attendance age but without basic education in VET related activities	MoER, local governments, VET institutions	2006	Project based funding	Project based funding	Project based funding	Project based funding
9.1.4	Implementation of VET on the basis of basic education but without general education part in these areas of specialisation where it is possible	NEQC, VET institutions	2006				
9.1.5	Implementation of apprenticeship training	MoER, Innove, VET institutions	from 2005 onwards	Phare projekt	4300	5300	6300
9.1.6	Development of a possibility to acquire only VET at a VET institution, complemented by general education acquired at an upper secondary school	MoER	2007				
9.1.7	Development of e-learning in VET institutions through the establishment of an e-VET institution	The Estonian Information Technology Foundation, MoER	2005	1000	1000	1000	1000
9.3.1	Identification of learning needs with the help of the networks of case managers at employment offices	Employment offices					
10.1.1	Planning of training in collaboration with structures and contractors responsible for employment	MoSA, employment offices, VET institutions	2007				
10.2.1	Development and implementation of the system of the recognition of formerly acquired knowledge and competences	MoER	2007				
10.2.2	Development of a new education license system in adult education	MoER	2006				
10.3.1	Application of flexible professional continuing training opportunities (e.g. new specialisation modules, courses that enable to apply for a higher qualification level, contractual training planned and delivered in co-operation of employers and trainers, retraining etc)	VET institutions, entrepreneurs	On-going	Special training fund, also on self-sufficiency principle	Special training fund, also on self-sufficiency principle	Special training fund, also on self-sufficiency principle	Special training fund, also on self-sufficiency principle
10.3.2	Development of an information system of training offers comprising entire adult education	MoER, MoSA, ELMB	2007			1000	
10.3.3	Elaboration of quality assurance criteria for continuing training and retraining	MoER	2006				
10.4.1	Flexible guidance of people without initial training but requiring labour market training to formal training in VET institutions	MoSA, employment offices	On-going				

No	Activities	Main responsibility and partnership	Time	Expenditure (thousand Estonian EEK)			
				2005	2006	2007	2008
10.5.1	Elaboration of the financing system of continuing professional training and retraining	MoER, MoSA, social partners	2005				
11.1.1	Arrangement of the network of VET institutions	SNB	2005–2008				
11.2.1	Development of state commissioned education on the basis of regional needs	MoER, SNB, social partners	2006				
12.1.1	Extension of education allowances to VET students studying on the basis of basic education	MoER	2005	27 721	27 721	27 721	27 721
12.1.2	Ensuring places in student dormitories with proper living conditions for everyone interested	MoER, SNB	2008	ERDF projects	ERDF projects	ERDF projects	ERDF projects
12.1.3	Application of student dormitory allowances for VET students	MoER	2008				12 000
12.1.4	Development of the system of travel fare concessions to meet the needs of the users	MoER	2007			18 300	18 3000
	TOTAL in the current development plan			114 829	468 014	641 441	773 339
	Size of 2005 state budget			953 044			
	Extra needs in addition to 2005 state budget			0	290 972	384 202	436 823

Expenditure referred to in the action plan of the development plan will be specified by annual state budgets.

Abbreviations used:

MEAC – Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications

MoSA – Ministry of Social Affairs

MoER – Ministry of Education and Research

ELMB – Estonian Labour Market Board

NEQC – National Examination and Qualification Centre

EHIS – Estonian Educational Information System

SNB – School Network Bureau

QA – Qualification Authority

6. ADOPTION, ACHIEVEMENT AND CHANGING OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The current development plan will be considered as the basis for the planning of the Estonian VET system development activities in years 2005–2008, following a recorded decision of the Government of the Republic.

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the achievement of the development plan. Achievement will be monitored and supervised by the VET Advisory Committee (where most members are representatives of social partners), operating by the minister of education and research. This committee will draw a report on the achievement of the development plan once a year, and will plan the activities for the following year. If necessary, the development plan will be revised. Results concerning the achievement of the development plan will be introduced to the social partners at a forum organised every year.

If more extensive amendments are required, the development plan will be re-submitted to the Government of the Republic for approval.

ANNEX 1. TERMINOLOGY USED IN THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Expression	Explanation
Access to education:	possibility to satisfy one's demand for education; access to education has two aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ opportunity to study a desirable or useful profession or trade; ➤ opportunity to study as close as possible to home or elsewhere (in the case of the latter, available student dormitory places and other social benefits to compensate for the extra costs, are required).
Accreditation:	evaluation of a VET institution by a committee comprising representatives of social partners and experts to assess the compatibility of VET with the quality assurance system.
Career counselling, vocational counselling:	a set of activities that help people make decisions concerning education, school and vocation both before and after entering the labour market.
Company-based training, practical training:	work within the curriculum and with specific learning outcomes performed under supervision in a work environment (enterprise, organisation).
Continuing training and retraining:	training aimed at the improvement of skills, labour market training for the unemployed, training for groups with special needs (e.g. disabled, women on long-term parental leave), and training on personal initiative; a certificate on the completion of training is issued upon graduation.
Cost of a student place:	cost of a state funded student place, consisting of a basic cost (13 600 Estonian EEK in 2004) and the corrective coefficient of the cost of a curriculum family.
Curriculum:	VET source document in an educational institution; describes aims, content, learning outcomes and assessment principles of generic skills modules, basic skills modules and elective modules.
Drop-out rate:	the proportion of students who have interrupted their studies (uncompleted curriculum) during one school year in relation to the number who started the school year.
Formal education:	formal education from primary education to higher education, including VET; graduates receive a nationally recognised graduation certificate or a diploma.

Expression	Explanation
Initial training, initial vocational education and training (VET):	VET for persons beyond compulsory school attendance age without basic education; VET on the basis of basic education; vocational secondary education; VET on the basis of secondary education; VET in basic and upper secondary schools.
Integrated educational institution:	educational institution where studying is possible within different types and/or on different levels of education.
Learning environment:	environment where educational institution applies the curriculum – students, teachers, teaching aids, training base, network of practical training companies, organisations and other co-operation partners.
Module:	comprehensive content unit of a curriculum that is oriented at learning outcomes, aimed at the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes that correspond to the qualification requirements; comprises one or several subjects or topics, extent depends on the aim and content of the module.
Network of VET institutions, school network:	a systematic location of VET institutions across the territory of Estonia that ensures access to VET in line with the needs of the society, guarantees quality, motivates participants in VET, and meets their interests and abilities flexibly.
Overlapping of the areas of specialisation:	application of similar curricula of professions or areas of specialisation in educational institutions within the same region.
Pre-vocational training:	short introduction of occupations and areas of specialisation as vocational guidance within the elective courses of the national curriculum of basic and upper secondary schools.
Professional higher education:	study based on practical training centred curricula at the first level of higher education, whereby knowledge and skills required for the entry to the labour market are developed mainly on the basis of practical needs; in addition to professional training, a level of knowledge and skills allowing the continuing of studies at a master's level, are obtained.
Qualification system:	model, methodology and organisation for the development and implementation of the professional competency assessment of employees.
Rearrangement:	in the context of the current development plan, this includes the establishment and merging of educational institutions, termination of activity, and change of ownership.
Region, area:	an integrated part or area of the state territory, defined for administrative, state policy or analytical reasons on the basis of internal correlation or similar aspects (on the basis of the regional development strategy of Estonia).
Resource:	financial, material and non-material means required for the achievement of learning outcomes.
Social partners:	partners of a training institution, participating in vocational or professional training: employer organisations, employee unions, professional associations.
Specialised educational institution:	specialised VET institution where study is provided in one or two similar fields or families of curricula.
State commissioned education:	student places financed by the state; financing of the VET institution study costs on the basis of the basic cost of a student place, coefficient of the cost of a curriculum family, and the number of students.
Student place:	place (not in the context of premises) in an educational institution for one student.
Study contract:	contract concluded by the student, enterprise/organisation and educational institution for the application of work-linked VET (apprenticeship training).

Expression	Explanation
Training base:	material-technical basis required for the achievement of learning outcomes stipulated in the curriculum.
Training unit:	structural unit of a VET institution located within the same area.
VET area:	an integrated part of the state territory, defined for educational policy or analytical reasons on the basis of internal correlation or similar aspects.
VET in basic and upper secondary schools:	delivery of training in basic and upper secondary schools on the basis of VET curricula aimed at the provision of initial vocational knowledge and skills.
VET institution:	educational institution with a task to provide learners with opportunities of vocational or professional study, and obtain knowledge, skills and ethical principles required for living and working; for the acquisition of education at levels 3B and 4B, in exceptional cases also at level 5B (professional higher education) according to ISCED 97. A VET institution provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › initial VET; › adult training; › training of people with special needs; › vocational and career counselling; › development work in the areas of taught disciplines and areas of specialisation; › methodological development activities and participation in the organisation of continuing training for teachers.
VET standard:	a set of uniform requirements to vocational and professional study on the basis of basic and secondary education, for persons beyond compulsory school attendance age without basic education, and to VET within basic and upper secondary schools.
Vision:	a document "VET 2015", approved by the working group of the current development plan, that includes main long-term aims of VET.
Vocational education and training (VET):	system of knowledge, skills, experiences, values and behavioural norms required for employment in a certain field, acquiring a certain vocation, applying for or retaining a certain position; attainment and development of this system contributes towards an effective professional activity.
Vocational secondary education:	in addition to vocational studies includes general subjects, required for obtaining vocational secondary education (equal to general secondary education).
Vocational training centre:	VET institution where several different fields of study have been aggregated and that serves a certain region by providing all opportunities of VET (initial VET, labour market training, continuing training and retraining, hobby education, informal education, VET in basic and upper secondary schools, counselling).

ANNEX 2. ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES SET IN THE ACTION PLAN FOR DEVELOPING ESTONIAN VET SYSTEM IN 2001–2004⁸

I ENSURING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES			
Task	Situation in 2001	Expected results in 2004	Reality in 2004
1. Increase of the number of students by 8% per year (in public and private VET institutions).	26% of basic school graduates, 27% of secondary school graduates.	50% of the age group (incl. pre-vocational training); 50% of secondary school graduates.	29.5% of basic school graduates continue their studies in VET institutions. <i>Assessment: objective not achieved.</i>
2. Ensuring learning opportunities for students with special needs.	250 student places.	For everyone interested.	Ca 900 student places (schools within the administration of MoER and MoSA); problems with learning opportunities for students with moderate or severe learning disabilities. <i>Assessment: objective for the most part achieved.</i>
3. Initial VET for young people without basic education.	1 group.	10 groups.	In 2003/04, state financed the studies of 161 learners beyond compulsory school attendance age without basic education, and 45 learners within compulsory school attendance age without basic education; hence ca 10 groups; no legislative basis. <i>Assessment: objective achieved.</i>

⁸ Prepared in collaboration of the School Network Bureau, National Examination and Qualification Centre, and the Vocational and Adult Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Research, on 12.04.2004.

Task	Situation in 2001	Expected results in 2004	Reality in 2004
4. Pre-vocational training for upper secondary school students.	1 group.	100 groups.	In 2003/04, state funded pre-vocational training for 175 upper secondary school students; hence ca 11 groups were state funded and 2-3 groups were not state funded. <i>Assessment: objective not achieved.</i>
5. Management of public property.	14 m ² per student (calculations made in April 2004 by SNB show that in 2001 this figure was 20 m ² per student).	11 m ² per student.	Starting from 01.01.2004, MoER does not finance schools on the basis of m ² any more; per capita contribution, that took effect in 01.01.2004, includes 11 m ² per student. New financing system should stimulate disposing of excess premises (See Annex 1). <i>Assessment: in such wording objective not achieved.</i>
6. Adult training.	Adult training is irregular.	Co-ordinated co-operation with social partners within the entire system.	No co-ordinated co-operation with social partners. <i>Assessment: objective not achieved.</i>

II ACCELERATION OF REARRANGEMENTS TO RAISE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION			
Task	Situation in 2001	Expected results in 2004	Reality in 2004
7. Establishment of the vocational and career counselling system.	Planning of the system, preparation of the counsellor training programme.	Professionally trained counsellors are employed at schools.	System has not been developed on the basis of VET institutions but through regional information and counselling centres; situation varies by schools and depends on their own initiative. <i>Assessment: objective in this wording is for the most part achieved, yet a coherent system of vocational and career counselling is missing. Hence, the objective is for the most part not achieved.</i>
8. Organisation of company-based training.	Takes place; preparation of supervisor training programmes.	Professionally trained mentors are employed in enterprises.	Training/preparation of supervisors has not been systematic and varies by schools and fields; practical training issues are addressed at discipline based round tables. <i>Assessment: objective for the most part not achieved.</i>
9. Development of curricula.	30% of curricula correspond to the requirements of professional standards.	All curricula are new (42 disciplines).	No new national curricula have been approved. Schools, at the same time, have up-graded the curricula to correspond to the professional standards. <i>Assessment: objective for the most part not achieved.</i>

Task	Situation in 2001	Expected results in 2004	Reality in 2004
9. Development of curricula.	30% of curricula correspond to the requirements of professional standards.	All curricula are new (42 disciplines).	No new national curricula have been approved. Schools, at the same time, have up-graded the curricula to correspond to the professional standards. <i>Assessment: objective for the most part not achieved.</i>
10. Teaching of entrepreneurship, employment relationships, and basis of joint activity.	Preparation of curricula.	Included in all curricula, respective tuition is provided.	Teaching of entrepreneurship, employment relationships, and basis of joint activity are reflected in curricula; generic skills module (see Annex 2) has likewise been integrated in curricula. A broad scale module on entrepreneurship is missing, however. <i>Assessment: objective for the most part achieved.</i>
11. Computers and Internet.	All schools have computer classes and Internet.	VET institutions have the required training base and Internet connection, respective tuition is provided.	All VET institutions have Internet connection (except special VET institutions, i.e. prison schools); one computer per 10 students (in total 2 384 computers at the disposal of students). <i>Assessment: objective achieved.</i>
12. Increased teaching of the national language and field-related foreign languages.	Preparation of teachers and curricula.	Extent has been increased twice in all curricula, respective tuition is provided.	Extent of teaching foreign languages has been increased. A possibility to somewhat prolong the period of study to learn the national language (particularly for students studying in the field of services). <i>Assessment: objective partly achieved.</i>
13. Arrangement of the school network.	8 merged educational institutions.	30% of the state owned VET institutions municipalized or privatised.	Aims have in the meanwhile been reevaluated. Focus is not as much on the change of ownership but rather on the optimum school network (see Annex 3). <i>Assessment: in such wording objective not achieved; rearrangement results are nevertheless good.</i>
14. Modernisation of the learning environment.	Planning investments, identifying priorities.	All students have access to modern training base.	Investments: 2001 – 34 110 thousand EEK 2002 – 17 144 thousand EEK 2003 – 26 783 thousand EEK 2004 – 25 683 thousand EEK (see Annex 2). <i>Assessment: objective not achieved.</i>
15. Performance assessment.	Professions Act adopted, preparations for the changing of the Vocational Educational Institutions Act.	Qualification examinations for those who have passed the training.	The system of qualification examinations for VET graduates is about to be launched; pilot examinations took place in 2003, examination system was launched more extensively in 2004, passing the examinations has so far been voluntary. <i>Assessment: objective for the most part not achieved.</i>

Task	Situation in 2001	Expected results in 2004	Reality in 2004
16. Establishment of the innovation centre.	Foundation VET Reform operates EU programmes.	VET innovation centre is operational.	Innovation centre is missing. <i>Assessment: objective not achieved.</i>
17. Optimising the number of teacher positions.	Teacher position/student ratio is 1:12.	1:16.	Teacher position/student ratio is 1:16. <i>Assessment: objective achieved.</i>
18. Decreasing the proportion of classroom instruction.	35 hours per week.	On the basis of secondary education 25 hours; on the basis of basic education 30 hours per week.	At the moment, students have on average 35 hours of classroom instruction, and 5 hours of independent work. <i>Assessment: objective not achieved.</i>
19. Reduction of the drop-out rate.	13% per year.	8 %.	Drop-out rate in school year 2002/03 was 19%; vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education – 18%; vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education – 21%. <i>Assessment: objective not achieved.</i>
20. Up-grading teachers' level of education.	75% with higher education.	All teachers have higher education and practical work experience in the field.	Not all teachers meet the qualification requirements at the moment. <i>Assessment: objective partly achieved.</i>
21. Practical in-service training of vocational teachers in enterprises.	Takes place on own initiative.	Takes place within the entire system: 2 months within 3 years.	Framework requirements of teacher training stipulate the requirement of professional continuing training (2 months within 3 years) for vocational teachers – it is not clear that this means professional in-service training in an enterprise; in-service training is irregular, takes place on own initiative, system is not operational. <i>Assessment: objective not achieved.</i>
22. Upgrading VET directors' level of education.	1/3 of the VET directors have been changed, continuing training takes place.	All directors have a training background in management, periodical continuing training takes place.	Last centralised training for directors took place in 2001, following continuing training courses have taken place on the initiative of directors themselves. <i>Assessment: objective partly achieved.</i>
23 International continuing training of young VET experts.	Choosing of people, preparation of agreements.	Young VET experts have started to work as researchers and/or trainers of the trainers.	Initial and continuing training of vocational teachers abroad has not been co-ordinated; respective statistics is missing; a register of teachers should bring a solution as far as the teachers are concerned. <i>Assessment: objective for the most part not achieved.</i>

Objective achieved or for the most part achieved in 5 cases.

Objective partly achieved in 3 cases.

Objective not achieved or for the most part not achieved in 15 cases.

Summary of finances expended in 2001–2004

Task	2001	2002	2003	2004
I Management of public property				
total area of public property (m ²)	681 883			620 737
students as of 01.10	33 697			30 888
area per student (m ²)	20			20
II State budget measures (thousand EEK)				
State budget (not external aid and own revenue) for state-owned, private and municipal VET institutions (study costs, scholarships, travel fare concessions, education allowances) except investments	430 617	485 582	549 026	608 621
Investments	34 110	17 144	26 783	25 683
TOTAL	464 727	502 726	575 809	634 304
Funds planned in action plan	506 226	566 890	645 820	717 950
TOTAL I & II				

Rearrangement of the school network in 2001–2004

2001

- › Mõdriku Agricultural Technical School (*Mõdriku Põllumajandustehnikum*) and Rakvere School of Pedagogy (*Rakvere Pedagoogikakool*) were merged into Lääne-Viru County Higher Vocational School (*Lääne-Virumaa Kutsekõrgkool*).
- › Three Tartu VET institutions were municipalized – Tartu School of Industry (*Tartu Tööstuskool*), Tartu School of Construction and Light Industry (*Tartu Ehitus- ja Kergetööstuskool*) and Tartu Service School (*Tartu Teeninduskool*). The city of Tartu merged them in 2002 and together with Tartu Training Centre (*Tartu Õppekeskus*) founded the Tartu Vocational Education Centre (*Tartu Kutsehariduskeskus*).

2002

No rearrangements within the network of state owned VET institutions.

2003

- › Estonian Mining Education Centre (*Eesti Mäehariduskeskus*) and Jõhvi Vocational Secondary School (*Jõhvi Kutsekeskkool*) were merged (school continues under the name of Jõhvi Vocational School, in Estonian *Jõhvi Ametikool*).
- › Tallinn Construction School (*Tallinna Ehituskool*) and Tallinn Kopli Construction School (*Tallinna Kopli Ehituskool*) were merged (activities continue under the name of Tallinn Construction School, in Estonian *Tallinna Ehituskool*).

- › Tallinn Industrial Education Centre (*Tallinna Tööstushariduskeskus*) and Tallinn Kristiine Service School (*Tallinna Kristiine Teeninduskool*) were merged (activities continue under the name of Tallinn Industrial Education Centre, in Estonian *Tallinna Tööstushariduskeskus*).
- › Pärnu Vocational Education Centre (*Pärnu Kutseõppekeskus*), Sindi School of Light Industry (*Sindi Kergetööstuskool*) and Tihemetsa Agricultural Technical School (*Tihemetsa Põllumajandustehnikum*) were merged (activities continue under the name of the Vocational Centre of Pärnu County, in Estonian *Pärnumaa Kutsehariduskeskus*).

2004

- › Activities of Kallaste Vocational School (*Kallaste Kutsekool*) were terminated. Students and curricula were taken over by Tartu Vocational Education Centre (*Tartu Kutsehariduskeskus*).
- › Kose Service School (*Kose Teeninduskool*) was merged with Tallinn Lasnamäe Mechanical School (*Tallinna Lasnamäe Mehaanikakool*).
- › Kuremaa Agricultural Technical School (*Kuremaa Põllumajandustehnikum*) was merged with Luua Forestry School (*Luua Metsanduskool*).
- › Tallinn School of Communication (*Tallinna Sidekool*) was merged with Tallinn Polytechnic School (*Tallinna Polütehnikum*).
- › Väike-Maarja Training Centre (*Väike-Maarja Õppekeskus*) was municipalized.
- › Part of teaching (secretaries) at Tallinn School of Light Industry (*Tallinna Kergetööstuskool*) was transferred to Tallinn Economic School (*Tallinna Majanduskool*) and rooms on Lauteri street were released. Since 1 September 2004 Tallinn School of Light Industry (*Tallinna Kergetööstuskool*) has been located in the rooms of Tallinn Industrial Education Centre (*Tallinna Tööstushariduskeskus*) on Sõpruse pst 184 (not a typical rearrangement of schools).

ANNEX 3. MAIN INDICATORS IN VET⁹

Number of students at different levels in VET

Level of study	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Vocational education after basic education [3-1]	654	30				
Vocational and secondary education requiring basic education [3-2]	8 982	5 678	2 589			
Vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education (in Estonian KKPb)	6305	10 618	15 052	16 306	17 130	18 886
Vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education (in Estonian KKKb)	9 016	11 817	11 442	11 551	10 787	10 762
Vocational education with non-defined basic education (prison schools) [3-9]	82	196	191	155	264	267
Professional secondary courses/ technical education after basic education [4-1]	2 069	1 192	300	82	2	
Professional secondary courses / technical education after secondary education [4-2]	4 039	1 341	239	1		
TOTAL	31 147	30 872	29 813	28 095	28 183	29 915

The total number of VET students has been gradually decreasing since 1996 (ca 31 500 students), stabilised on a more or less the same level during the past few years, and has even risen by more than 6% in 2004 as compared to the previous year. As to students at different levels of study then only the levels of vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education (KKPB), and vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education (KKKB) have been retained, complemented by a small number of prison school students. Admission to other levels has been

⁹ Prepared by the analysis and planning division of the Planning Department of the Ministry of Education and Research, on the basis of data collected by the National Observatory operating within the Foundation Innove.

terminated. Observing the proportions of KKPb and KKKb, a certain rise in the number of KKPb students can be detected as compared to the number of KKKb students, which was also an aim set in the VET development plan for 2001 – 2004. The number of students in VET is regulated by levels, schools and disciplines above all through the commission of state funded student places. At the same time, this is not the only or sufficient method that influences students to choose the vocational route after basic school: only the mechanical increase of student places does not bring school graduates to VET, other important factors are likewise of impact here.

Distribution of students by fields of study in school year 2004/05

Name of the field of study	Students	Proportion
Architecture and construction	3 424	11,4%
Computer sciences	1 679	5,6%
Humanities	12	0,0%
Personal services	5 322	17,8%
Environment protection	199	0,7%
Arts	1 026	3,4%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1 687	5,6%
Social services	267	0,9%
Technical fields	7 371	24,6%
Health	475	1,6%
Production and manufacturing	3 524	11,8%
Transportation services	601	2,0%
Security	586	2,0%
Business and administration	3 742	12,5%
TOTAL	29 915	100%

VET graduates

Level of study	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Vocational education after basic education [3-1]	737	623	105			
Vocational and secondary education requiring basic education [3-2]	2 397	2 572	2 634	2 215		
Vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education (KKPB)				3 396	3 526	3 026
Vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education (KKKB)	1 989	2 901	4 501	4 629	4 360	3 775
Vocational education with non-defined basic education (prison schools) [3-9]	623	212	235	230	152	248
Professional secondary courses/ technical education after basic education [4-1]	683	563	642	279	43	
Professional secondary courses/ technical education after secondary education [4-2]	2 076	1 695	836	162		
TOTAL	8 542	8 566	8 953	10 911	8 081	7 049

Number of VET graduates was rising till 2002, then it started to go down again. The main reason is the termination of admission into professional secondary courses after secondary education starting from the school year 1999/00. This type of education was replaced by vocational and professional higher education. In 2002, first KKPb level students graduated as well. An increased drop-out rate over the past few years has likewise had its impact on the number of VET graduates.

Interruption of studies in VET

Level of study	2001/02			2002/03			2003/04		
	No of students	No of drop-outs	%	No of students	No of drop-outs	%	No of students	No of drop-outs	%
Vocational and secondary education requiring basic education (3-2)	2 589	161	6%						
Vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education (KKPB)	191	74	39%	155	34	22%	264	119	45%
Vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education (KKKB)	11 442	2 436	21%	11 551	2 461	21%	10 787	2 335	22%
Vocational education with non-defined basic education (prison schools) (3-9)	15 052	2 354	16%	16 306	2 860	18%	17 130	2 499	15%
Professional secondary courses/ technical education after basic education (4-1)	292	37	13%	82	12	15%	2	0	0%
Professional secondary courses/ technical education after secondary education (4-2)	239	64	27%	1		0%			
TOTAL	29 813	5 126	17%	28 095	5 367	19%	28 183	4 953	18%

Interruption of studies is a serious problem in VET, particularly in the case of post-secondary VET. Unfortunately the drop-out rate is rising, although in school year 2003/04 it somewhat decreased – 17.6% of the total number of students. One of the main reasons of dropping out from VET after basic school is its inflexibility and firm connection to the acquisition of the general education component in all areas of specialisation (within the extent of 50 study weeks). The drop-out rate from post-secondary VET is strongly impacted by those students who enrol in VET studies only as they were not admitted to a higher education institution; a year later they nevertheless continue in higher education.

Interruption by the fields of study in school year 2003/04

Field of study	Number of drop-outs	Proportion in the field of study	Proportion from drop-outs
Architecture and construction	471	15,3 %	9,5 %
Computer sciences	410	20,3 %	8,3 %
Humanities	3	33,3 %	0,1 %
Personal services	702	15,2 %	14,2 %
Environment protection	24	15,1 %	0,5 %
Arts	172	18,1 %	3,5 %
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	177	12,7 %	3,6 %
Social services	31	14,1 %	0,6 %
Technical fields	1 266	19,1 %	25,6 %
Health	59	16,0 %	1,2 %
Production and manufacturing	688	18,6 %	13,9 %
Transportation services	100	14,6 %	2,0 %
Security	28	5,9 %	0,6 %
Business and administration	822	21,1 %	16,6 %
TOTAL	4 953	17,6 %	100,0 %

Teacher positions in VET institutions¹⁰

Position	2000/01	2004/05*
Director (head)	67	48
Deputy director (head)	99	45
Special education teacher	3	1
Hobby leader	20	2
Tutor	63	19
School psychologist	5	6
Vocational teacher	3 902	1 554
Speech therapist	1	1
Head of department	177	81
Librarian	69	21
Hobby group leader	0	17
Group leader	0	5
Teacher	2 414 ¹¹	1 188
Student dormitory supervisor	0	1
Head of study department	0	20
TOTAL	4 278	2 989

* as of fall 2004

The staff of VET institutions (number of positions) has decreased considerably over the past four years. This has enhanced cost-effectiveness, reflected by the certain decrease of staff costs in school budgets (which in turn has allowed to raise the salaries of employees), and a better balance of the student-teacher ratio.

Distribution of teachers by grade

Grade	2000/01	2004/05	Vocational teachers*	Teachers*
Without grade	68	327	165	162
Junior teacher	441	326	215	111
Teacher	1 665	1 529	827	702
Senior teacher	538	455	270	185
Teacher-methodologist	142	96	73	23
TOTAL	2 854	2 733	1 550	1 183

* as of fall 2004

While the number of teacher positions has decreased, the same cannot be said about the total number of teachers employed in VET institutions. This suggests that many teachers are employed only part-time. The dropping percentage of teachers with higher qualifications and a significant increase of teachers without a grade among the staff of VET can be considered a negative tendency.

¹⁰ There is a gap in teacher statistics as the collection of data stopped after school year 2000/01; new data is available from 2004 after the register of teachers was launched.

¹¹ Including persons with a second job.

Distribution of teachers by age in 2000 and 2004

		Below 25	25–29	30–39	40–49	50–55	Above 55	Total
School year	men	30	65	109	202	175	303	884
	women	48	117	354	575	317	444	1 855
2004/05		TOTAL	182	463	777	492	747	2 739
School year	men	21	41	117	215	268 ¹²	192 ¹³	854
	women	19	119	366	641	273	584	2 002
2000/01		TOTAL	160	483	856	541	776	2 856

Number of VET institutions by ownership

Form of ownership	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
State owned VET institutions (within the administration of MoER)	58	59	55	54	49	44
State owned VET institutions (within the administration of other ministries)	9	3	3	3	4	3
Municipal VET institutions	2		3	1	1	3
Private VET institutions	16	17	23	26	19	18
TOTAL	85	79	84	84	73	68

In fall 2004, the total number of VET institutions in Estonia was 68. Most of them are state schools administered by the Ministry of Education and Research, in addition there are three VET institutions under the administration of other ministries, three municipal and 18 private VET institutions. In order to organise the network of VET institutions in a more optimum and efficient way, and to aggregate training in bigger regional centres, the number of state owned VET institutions has been reduced extensively over the past years. At the same time, two new municipal VET institutions have been established (in Tallinn and Väike-Maarja). The number of private VET institutions has changed more over the years as the respective educational landscape is likewise still in the rearrangement process. The total number of students in private VET institutions in school year 2004/05 was 1 135, and in three municipal VET institutions 3 107, constituting 3.8% and 10.4% of the total number of VET students respectively. Considering the proportion of students, these institutions are hence not too significant yet.

Public educational expenditure on VET (million EEK and as a proportion from GDP)

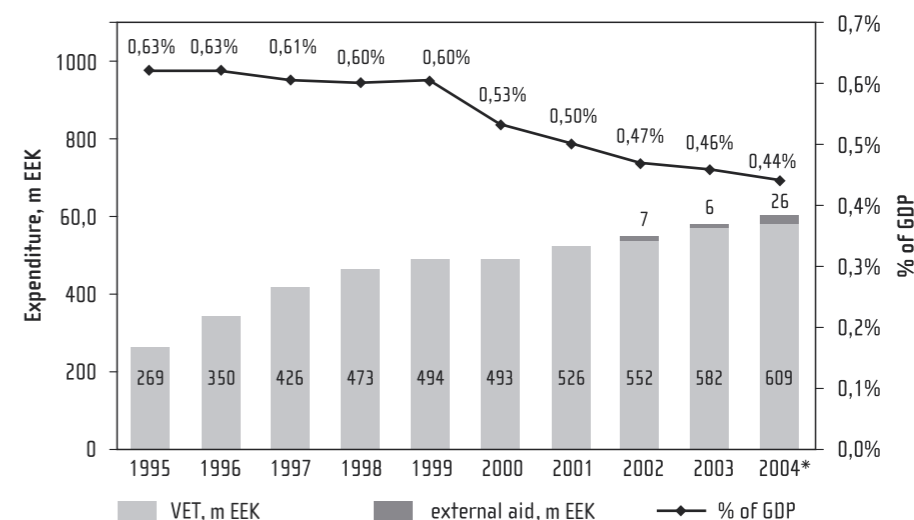
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004*
VET, m EEK	269	350	416	473	494	493	526	552	582	609
including external aid								7	6	26
% from GDP	0,63%	0,63%	0,61%	0,60%	0,60%	0,53%	0,50%	0,47%	0,46%	0,44%

* preliminary data on the basis of the implementation of the budget

¹² Aged 50–60.

¹³ Aged above 60.

Diagram 2. Total public expenditure on VET in 1995–2004.



The financing of VET has risen 2.3 times over the past ten years – from 269 million EEK in 1995 to 609 million EEK in 2004 (preliminary data; from the public sector budget, except own revenue of VET institutions). Without external funds the rise would have been 2.2 times. As a proportion from GDP, the financing of VET has fallen from 0.63% to 0.44% which is the lowest level throughout years.

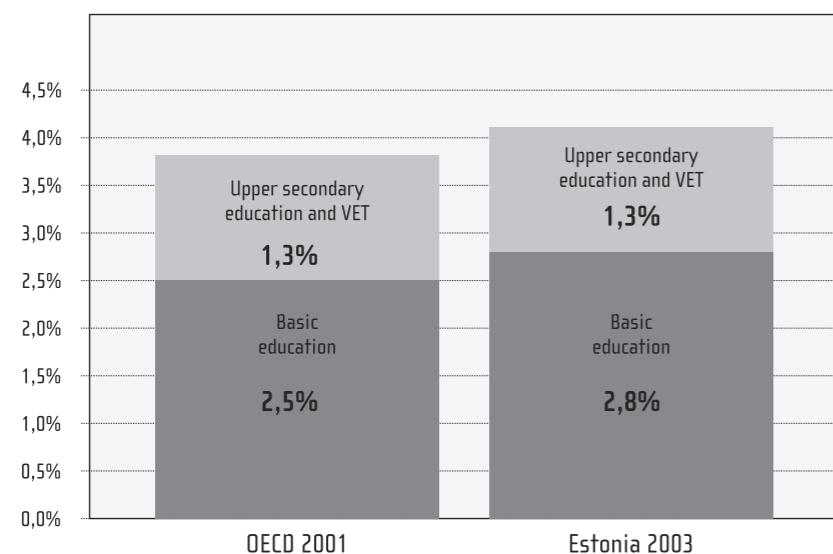
The public sector financing of VET is **very difficult to compare to other countries** as types of education are regarded differently. In the case of OECD countries, for example, general education and VET cannot be differentiated in the same way as in Estonia. Data exists **about the financing of general education and VET** (sum allocated to educational institutions) from **public and private funds** together. Same data exists at the level of basic education (grades 1 – 9). Comparisons can hence be drawn about the financing of upper secondary education and VET from the public and private funds together, not separately.

Although no statistical information is available on private sector educational expenditure in Estonia, an estimated extent of funds can nevertheless be provided.¹⁴ To find a respective Estonian indicator to that of the OECD statistics then in 2003, the financing of **general education and VET** by the public and private sectors amounted to a total of five billion EEK, i.e. **4.1% of GDP**. The average of OECD countries in 2001 amounted to **3.8% of GDP**. Comparable data exists also in respect to basic education where the Estonian indicator was 2.8% of GDP, and the average of OECD countries was 2.5% of GDP.

The expenditure on general education (general and vocational secondary education together) in Estonia and in the OECD countries is hence on the same level – **1.3% of GDP**. Considering that the proportion of the financing of basic education from GDP was higher in Estonia (ca 10%), it can be concluded that the proportion of the financing of general secondary education from GDP should also be higher. The proportion of the financing of VET from GDP in Estonia is consequently smaller than on the average in the OECD countries.

¹⁴ Following data were used to devise the total amount. At the level of general education, total amount of tuition fees was taken into account. In school year 2002/03, 3 811 students studied in private schools with an average tuition fee of ca 10 000 EEK. At the level of VET, state owned VET institutions' revenues from service provision, and income from tuition fees in private VET institutions (ca 900 students with the tuition fee of 15 000 EEK per year) were taken into account.

Diagram 3. Total public and private expenditure on educational institutions as % of GDP.



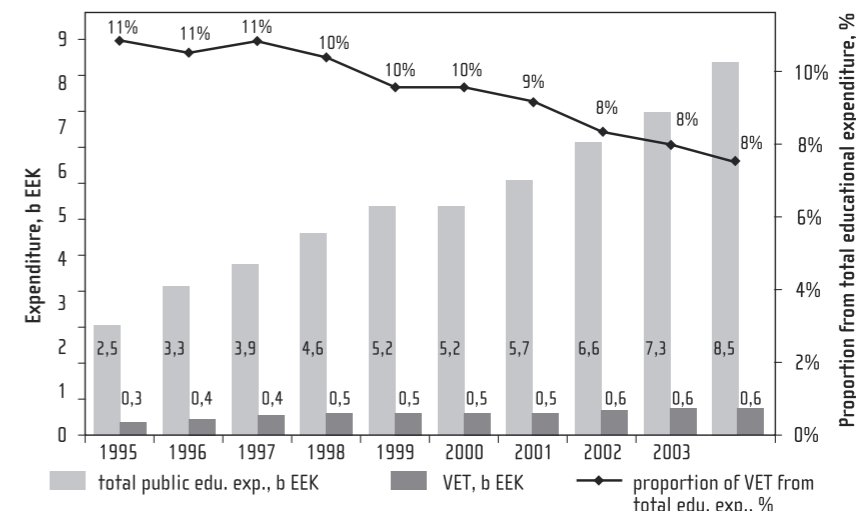
Proportion of VET educational expenditure from total public educational expenditure

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Educational exp., m EEK	2 489	3 338	3 859	4 570	5 192	5 170	5 745	6 649	7 308
VET, m EEK	269	350	416	473	494	493	526	552	582
Proportion of VET from total educational exp.	10,8%	10,5%	10,8%	10,4%	9,5%	9,5%	9,2%	8,3%	8,0%

While educational expenditure has been rising rather regularly throughout years (except in 2000), the growth of VET expenditure was considerably behind the general rise of expenditure on education (between 1995–2003 educational expenditure rose 2.9 times, VET expenditure 2.2 times). Only in 2004, a certain rise was predicted on the basis of the increase of per capita contribution, of study allowances and particularly of the external aid measures that were to harmonise the growth of VET expenditure as compared to the general rise of educational expenditure in the course of ten years – assuming that external aid measures would be used up in full in 2004. In this case educational expenditure would have risen 3.2 times in total and VET expenditure 3.1 times in 1995–2004. External aid measures for 2004 were unfortunately not used up, and the predicted rise has not yet been fully achieved (exact data on the implementation of the 2004 budget was not yet available during the preparation of this development plan. Preliminary data concerning the implementation of the budget showed 608.8 million EEK as VET expenditure. Had the entire budget been implemented, VET expenditure would have been 811 million EEK). As the named funds are transferable to year 2005, it is nevertheless possible that external aid measures will be implemented during the current and following years.

VET is the type of education with the smallest proportion of financing – it forms only 10% of the total public educational expenditure. The financing of higher education is twice as big as that of VET – 19% (the number of students on state commissioned basis is at the same time only 1.12 times bigger than in VET), and general education constitutes more than a half of the total educational expenditure, i.e. 61%.

Diagram 4. Proportion of VET educational expenditure from total public educational expenditure.



Average public sector statistical expenditure per student in VET¹⁵

Public financing of VET institutions and related educational organisations (including Leonardo da Vinci programme) in 2003 amounted to the total of 550.1 million¹⁶ EEK. In school year 2003/04, the total number of 27 194¹⁷ students studied on state or local government funded student places in initial VET. In 2003, public sector expenditure per student in initial VET was 20 200 EEK per year.

Regarding the financing of general education on the same basis as the financing of VET, then in 2003, the public sector (state + local governments) spent the total amount of 4 073.5 million¹⁸ EEK on general education schools and related educational organisations. In 2003, public sector expenditure per student in general education was 20 400 EEK per year.

Public sector financing of institutions and related educational organisations at the level of higher education in 2003 amounted to the total of 1 068.1 million¹⁹ EEK. In 2003, the number of students studying on state commissioned higher education student places was 31 374 (incl. students at master's and doctoral levels). Expenditure per student at the level of higher education (including master's and doctoral study) was 34 000 EEK per year. While calculating the expenditure per student, the costs of the Estonian National Defence College (*Kaitseväe Ühendatud Õppeasutused*) were not included.

¹⁵ All levels of education have been brought to comparable basis. Data does not include benefits to students (travel fare concessions, study loans, education allowances, scholarships etc). Data includes investments and external aid measures.

¹⁶ This sum does not include: 1) Own revenue of VET institutions as this is not considered as part of public sector funded educational expenditure; 2) training in VET institutions at the level of professional higher education as this is regarded as part of higher education; 3) public sector benefits to students, e.g. study loans, scholarships, travel fare concessions and education allowances; 4) Jämeda Training and Guidance Centre.

¹⁷ As of 1.10.2003; including 299 students in private VET institutions at the level of vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education (KKPB), teaching related costs of such a student place were covered by the state. Ca 1 000 students studying at paid student places in private VET institutions at the level of vocational secondary education on the basis of secondary education (KKKB) have not been taken into account here.

¹⁸ This sum does not include continuing training of kindergarten teachers, own revenue of schools, travel fare concessions, school allowances, hobby schools and hobby centres. This sum does include the costs of the school lunch and school milk programme (without these the expenditure per student would be 19 900 EEK per year).

¹⁹ This sum does not include own revenue of higher education institutions, costs of the Tartu University Hospital and residency, and benefits to students (education allowances, study loans, travel fare concessions).

ANNEX 4. VISION DOCUMENT “VET 2015”

VET is an integral part of the Estonian education system that is based on the needs of the Estonian society, employer and learner. VET is valued, its accessibility is guaranteed, and leavers find employment compatible to their qualification.

The structure of taught disciplines and areas of specialisation

The structure of taught disciplines and areas of specialisation is anticipatory and directive in its nature in respect to the needs of the Estonian economy and labour market, and is established on the basis of the development forecasts and economic trends. The planning of the training commission, anticipatory of economic trends, and common to higher and vocational education, and upper secondary school studies, relies on trustworthy statistics, wide-ranging analysis, forecasts and researches.

Co-operation with entrepreneurs and other social partners

Co-operation with entrepreneurs and other social partners, as well as with local governments, has become a daily unavoidable activity. The representatives of entrepreneurs and professional associations are involved in the management of schools; they participate in the formulation of the training commission, curriculum development and the assessment of studies. Along with the trainer, an entrepreneur is an active participant in the planning process of the training – this is the only way to achieve results in training a highly skilled specialist who meets the requirements of the labour market. Enterprises likewise play an active role in the provision of company-based training opportunities, and qualified supervisors. Highly qualified specialists in enterprises are being motivated to participate even more actively in the delivery of studies in VET institutions.

VET institutions as development institutions

VET institutions have changed into development institutions. The introduction of new know-how in local enterprises often takes place through them, along with the implementation of new technologies

and other innovations in the local region. Local business incubators usually function by the vocational training centres as well. Entrepreneurial development work is being additionally funded through the measures of entrepreneurship grants. VET has become the factor that generates innovation.

Network of VET institutions

VET institutions have been consolidated into regional or field related centres or consortiums (which does not exclude the delivery of training at different locations), accompanied by specialised educational institutions. Outside Tallinn, there is at least one regional vocational training centre (regional college, unfortunately not all counties are able to supply the critical bulk) in every county, that fulfils two or three important functions in the delivery of training:

- › provides initial VET to all target groups;
- › provides higher education;
- › provides continuing training and retraining.

Opportunities of VET have been created in some general education schools, which ensure better accessibility of VET. In addition, VET institutions offer general education schools in the neighbourhood an opportunity to deliver their manual training classes in properly equipped workshops, which in turn can be considered as part of guidance.

This kind of multifunctional use facilitates an economic establishment, and effective exploitation and renovation of a contemporary infrastructure, along with the employment of the existing human resource.

Students

VET students are motivated students who have made an informed decision in favour of VET. They have been supported in their decision making process by a guidance system that is personal, accessible and well developed, and that helps to determine and open up the abilities of all clients. It also takes into consideration the needs of adult clients. Places at student dormitories and the system of education allowances open the opportunities of VET to everyone interested.

Multitude and flexibility of learning opportunities

VET is as flexible as possible, accessibility is guaranteed to different target groups. A student with special needs, a learner without basic education as well as a student pursuing professional higher education all must have a possibility to study in a VET institution. Learning opportunities and forms of study are also flexible, varying from daily study to e-learning and work-linked training. Compulsory acquisition of secondary education has disappeared; instead, there are opportunities to acquire general education in different volume and depth, while the passing of national examinations and enrolling at a university is guaranteed to all. Continuing one's educational route in professional higher education becomes natural and accessible. Acquisition of VET in an upper secondary school will be an option.

Curricula

The system of curricula is well arranged due to the implementation of broad, mostly discipline based national curricula. Curricula are flexible, their structure has become simple and transparent,

facilitating quick changes. All learners acquire a module of generic skills essential to everyone. Curricula enable various specialisations that are obtained after the acquisition of the general skills of the broader occupational field. Curricula are constructed on the principle that enables students to obtain partial qualifications before passing the entire study programme. Everything accumulates in modules and credit points, educational route can be continued at any time and in different educational institutions. Entrepreneurship constitutes one part of the generic skills module, in addition it can be acquired as a more in-depth further module.

Vocational teachers

Outstanding specialists of the field, with wide ranging backgrounds, work as teachers in VET institutions. They have retained a connection with the practical and functional aspect of their area of specialisation, and are capable of field related development work. They are able to teach both teenage and adult students. A very flexible system of teacher training, offering alternative opportunities, has emerged. Continuing training of teachers is regular and co-ordinated, focused on both professional development and practical training as well as on the acquisition of competences in pedagogy and adult training. Teachers are aware of the innovations in their area, and communicate them flexibly to students. Teachers are sufficiently motivated, their salary level is equal or surpasses that of the specialists with similar qualifications working in the practical sphere.

VET methodological centre

A VET methodological centre has been established, with the task to co-ordinate the development and production of textbooks and methodological materials, to provide methodological guidance, develop curricula, co-ordinate initial and continuing training of teachers, and plan studies and research required in the field of VET.

Quality assurance in VET

A composite quality assurance system of VET has been established, based on an integrated methodology, and both self-evaluation and external evaluation by international experts and local employers.

Qualification system

Qualification system has been fully developed and covers the entire range of qualifications, including educational qualifications in higher education. Awarding of professional qualifications, including the validation of partial qualifications is on the one hand logically related to the education processes while at the same time allowing the validation and recognition of informally and non-formally acquired knowledge and competences (in Estonian VÕTA – a flexible competence based system of The Recognition of Formerly Acquired Knowledge and Competences).

Continuing training and retraining

Continuing training and retraining have become an inseparable part of VET. Teaching everything and at once is not an objective in the schools of the quickly changing world any more, initial

training is supplemented by a flexible and well functioning continuing training and retraining system.

Professional continuing training and retraining are developed in four main directions:

- the provision of new specialised modules;
- courses for the enhancement of acquired competences and knowledge, the passing of which allows to apply for a higher level qualification;
- study contract based learning that allows to train an employee with the specific skills required by the employer. In this case, the study programme is both prepared and delivered in collaboration of the trainer and the employer;
- retraining that reflects formerly acquired competences.

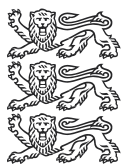
A separate system will be developed for the financing of continuing training and retraining through the use of revenues of the unemployment insurance premiums, based on the principle of preventative unemployment insurance. The planning of training takes place in close collaboration with structures responsible for employment.

International dimension

Estonian VET has been integrated with VET in Europe and other countries. Common EU initiatives like the comparability of qualification systems, credit transfer system, common quality assurance framework system, instruments supporting mobility etc, have been implemented. Co-operation with the rest of EU is active, exchanges of teachers and students along with the VET-related international specialisations and work distribution take place. The export of Estonian VET has become a reality. Many students are able to study in foreign languages while schools are in turn capable of teaching students from different cultural backgrounds.

Resources

The vision described above can be achieved only in the case of sufficient resources. The average cost of a student place in VET is at least double as compared to general education and at least equal to the cost of a student place in professional higher education. The state has fully developed an infrastructure of all VET institutions that meets modern-day needs.



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