

# Lithuania National strategy Erasmus+ paper

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## Introduction

The objective of the paper is to state the way that particular country can elaborate/adjust their national strategy. The strategy should be based on the outcomes of the project, and of national conferences on QA policy in VNFIL to debate the value of Peer Reviews with the national networks.

The national strategy papers should be drawn up between December 2017 and May 2018 in all partner countries. It will take up from the Synthesis report (O 1) and all the experiences and outputs of the project.

The national coordinators are responsible for writing them, the Lithuanian Education Trade Union (P 10) will guide the process, analyse country papers and compile a synthesis for the whole project.

### 1. Lessons learned / experiences from the project on the institutional and national level (max. 0,5 – 1 page)

(For example, you can use outcomes of Synthesis report, PR reports and Meta evaluations, meetings, etc.)

Lithuania does not have a national strategy for validation as a separate comprehensive policy document. The project implementation had a potential impact on several regulations which were amended last year to pave the way for validation of non-formal and informal learning on a more mainstream basis, both at national and sectoral levels.

At national level it has demonstrated how VNFIL could be better integrated into education and labour market policies.

National VNFIL policymakers got an opportunity to review an effective VNFIL strategy, supported by activities developed by the project partners, and consequently contributed to improvement of the socio-economic situation of their citizens by providing them better and easier access to VNFIL.

It is highly expected that the project outcomes will further contribute positively to the implementation of VNFIL policies at local, regional and national levels, ensure the principles of quality education services, as well as, support to better employment and social inclusion.

At institutional level VNFIL professionals (teachers, trainers and guidance counsellors) have benefited from professionally implemented training activities and piloting PR, which helped them to initiate a sustainable change in the area of the services they provide, improve their competences and contribute to the professionalization of VNFIL. Together with students, they had an opportunity to improve their skills in using evaluation methods in VNFIL.

## 2. Added-value of Peer Review (national and transnational) for VNFIL providers in the country (max. 0,5 – 1 page)

Lithuanian VNFIL providers are at the moment developing or improving their VNFIL systems and the partners' institutions and organizations had an opportunity to positively contribute to this process. With a proper strategy, developed Programme for training for teachers, with piloting PR in VNFIL, which could be easily adapted and adopted, the project results would be of the great help for positive developments at local/regional and national level.

It is estimated that the actions taken by both the participants and the institutions/organisations involved, using the results of the project, in the long term will have a positive impact on the changing attitudes of local communities, as well as, facilitate active involvement in quality VNFIL.

Participants and their organizations through the collaborative partnership have increased the knowledge of how quality VNFIL systems work and help will help to implement the developed Strategy Papers. The transnational partnership helped to ensure that the project results are substantial in terms of quality and functionality, which could not be achieved by a single institution because it should be tested by different providers, in different countries and levels.

European Level: E-portfolio is only a tool, and unless practitioners have well-integrated understandings of the importance to have harmonized instrument at EU level, individuals will not benefit from the use of such tools. We are ready to provide necessary information about the usefulness of E-portfolio which could be applied by all VNFIL providers in EU. E-self-evaluation tools are not widespread throughout Europe and this e-Portfolio will bring a valuable contribution to policymakers and practitioners who want to adopt new tools and further improve validation methods.

At European level, the project will also contribute to the promotion of EU values connected with the improvement of the VNFIL, including through strengthening of cooperation between organizations from the different EU Member States and ensure that all citizens have equal support for their efforts to validate competencies.

(You can use outcomes of the meetings with stakeholders, national conferences, etc.)

### 3. Potential and challenges for implementing Peer Review as a formative external evaluation for VNFIL into the QA system for VNFIL in the country (max. 1 – 2 pages) :

Peer review in Lithuanian VET school during the implementation of the VNFIL project identified few potential areas of improvement (institutional and system level):

There is a need for professionalization & formalisation of the process:

1. Introducing a professional VNFIL counsellor per school – such a person could in addition provide the career guidance. Counsellors can more actively help the candidate to smoothly pass the whole VNFIL process.
2. Development of a more efficient and professional way of working and clear distribution of working hours/tasks for all staff involved.
3. Development of standards for VNFIL portfolio / assessment / guidance / counselling:

There is a need of development of a self-evaluation document for candidates and an online tool, aiming to prepare a self-evaluation report (e-portfolio). The candidate can use his portfolio to prove that he has the demanded skills to proceed with validation process. Such a tool can be developed / recommended by the Ministry of Education for all VNFIL providers;

4. Advocate in society and policy:

Connection with social partners, "projecting" potential candidates:

- a. analysing the need for VNFIL per sector;
  - b. selection of VNFIL providers per sector;
  - c. defining VNFIL pathways per sector;
  - d. allocation of sector funds for VNFIL;
  - e. information and advertising.
- b. training for all professionals involved (integrate in teachers' competences) in VNFIL.

### 3.1. Basic validation features

Lithuania does not have a national strategy for validation as a separate comprehensive policy document with basic validation features; however several laws were amended in recent years to pave the way for validation of non-formal

and informal learning on a more mainstream basis, both at national and sectoral levels.

### 3.2. Conditions for developing and implementing validation

Lithuania has developed an action plan for non-formal adult education and continuing training for 2016-2023. The Law has a special chapter on VNFIL and provides 3 cases of validation: competences can be recognised as a part of finalised formal education programme, as a competence to perform a regulated job or function and as a qualification, corresponding to a certain Lithuanian Qualifications Framework level. In higher education sector procedures for VNFIL are established by higher education institution, in other sectors – by the Minister of Education and Science.

### 3.3. Validation contexts

Programme for increasing employment for 2014-2020 (2013) includes an objective for the development of the system for competences assessment and recognition. To implement this objective it is foreseen to restructure and develop the system for the recognition of qualifications and competences, so as to allow persons to quickly gain the desired education or to acquire the proof of qualification for a faster integration into the labour market.

However, the VNFIL system remains fragmented and the society in general is little aware about validation possibilities and benefits. There is a lack of available analysis about the acceptance of the outcomes of the VNFIL procedure with the relevant stakeholders.

A stimulus to boost bottom-up initiatives of validation in the third sector is yet to be identified. However this remains a priority mainly because non-governmental organisations are in need of this type of intervention. In many cases, these organisations have developed their own internal procedures to facilitate

recognition validation within their own areas of work, although they may have limited knowledge in terms of the implementation of validation in practical terms.

### 3.4. Plans for further use of Peer Review for VNFIL in the country

The LETU is applied to run a international project, which will further promote PR for VNFIL by improving the existing tools and the competencies of professionals.

Objectives, aims:

Ensure the professionalization and well-functioning system of VNFIL

1. Development of self-evaluation and self-analysis tools for candidates
2. Professionalization of the VNFIL process – training programme for trainers and for guidance counsellors
3. Advocating in society and establishing strategy for VNFIL

Target groups: VNFIL providers and candidates in VET sector, professionals (trainers, guidance counsellors), stakeholders, policy advisors

Intellectual outputs:

To support VNFIL candidates:

1. Compendium (catalogue) of existing validation tools

Mapping of the existing evaluation tools for VNFIL

What comes out and could be adjusted would be reflected in national strategy

2. E-portfolio

E-platform - an online tool, aiming to prepare a self-evaluation

Activities:

Desk research on methodologies used for self-evaluation of the candidates,

Desk research on existing legal requirements for evaluation

Designing the flexible and easy adjustable portfolio for VNFIL candidates self-evaluation

Designing E-portfolio

Piloting

To support providers:

### 3. Training programme for trainers /assessors, guidance counsellors

The training programme for trainers /assessors will contain useful tips how to organise training for all professionals involved (integrate in teachers' competences) in VNFIL to increase their knowledge and skills to develop and implement a range of activities and services to improve access to VNFIL.

The programme for guidance counsellors will aim to increase guidance counsellors' capacity to provide high quality advice and information to VNFIL candidates.

Desk research on existing training programmes for all professionals involved in VNFIL

Setting the competence profile and role of the counsellor

Setting the competence profile and role of the trainer/assessor

Designing the training programme for trainers /assessors

Designing the training programme for guidance counsellors

Piloting

### 3.5. Potential and challenges of building up a Peer Review Network in VNFIL on the European level.

PR network could introduce some measures to improve awareness of validation amongst guidance practitioners, so that they can direct individuals to validation systems as appropriate.

It could provide specific information, advice and guidance networks/institutions involved in delivering/developing validation. A systematic approach towards the issue should be further developed.

Further harmonisation at EU level is needed. Though modularisation of curricula in vocational education and in labour market training is ongoing, the modules are not harmonized and do not allow for a flexible implementation of PR. There is very little mobility between labour market training and vocational education. The same situation is observed through all levels of education.

The sustainability of validation approaches and systems should be insured. A significant part of the activity related to validation has been taken forward through projects and limited duration programs. While this approach provides a good opportunity for testing and experimentation, it has caused problems in terms of developing permanent systems and approaches to validation.

#### 4. Further dissemination of Peer Review in the country (including concrete activities and target groups) (max. 0,5 – 1 page)

There should be no obstacles what regards peer review in HE institutions, however VET providers may be reluctant to participate in peer review, since they are less involved in these processes. The Ministry of Education and Science, which could encourage them, therefore plays here a crucial role.

The National stakeholders committee established via project: Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre, Ministry of Education and Science, The Education Exchanges Support Foundation, Lithuanian Education Trade Union, Lithuanian Association of Adult Education, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, VET providers will continue to promote PR.

Among the aims of the Action plan to develop non-formal adult education are some measures directed to VNFIL:

- to increase the proportion of public VET institutions which evaluate and recognise competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning;
- to increase the proportion of public higher education institutions that have implemented systems for recognising and validating competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning and implement the systems for recognition and validation of skills and competencies acquired through non-formal or informal learning.

By involving European social partners (ETUC, ETUCE, BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME and CEEP) into dissemination activities, the project partners aim to ensure the proper participation of all interested parts in the insuring quality of VNFIL, which should be supported by strong social dialogue.

VNFIL along with the Peer Review was and will promoted on several events, where the topic of assessment and validation of non-formal and informal learning resonated.

(Outcomes of Conferences on QA policy in VNFIL to debate the value of Peer Reviews with the national networks, stakeholders meetings, etc.)