

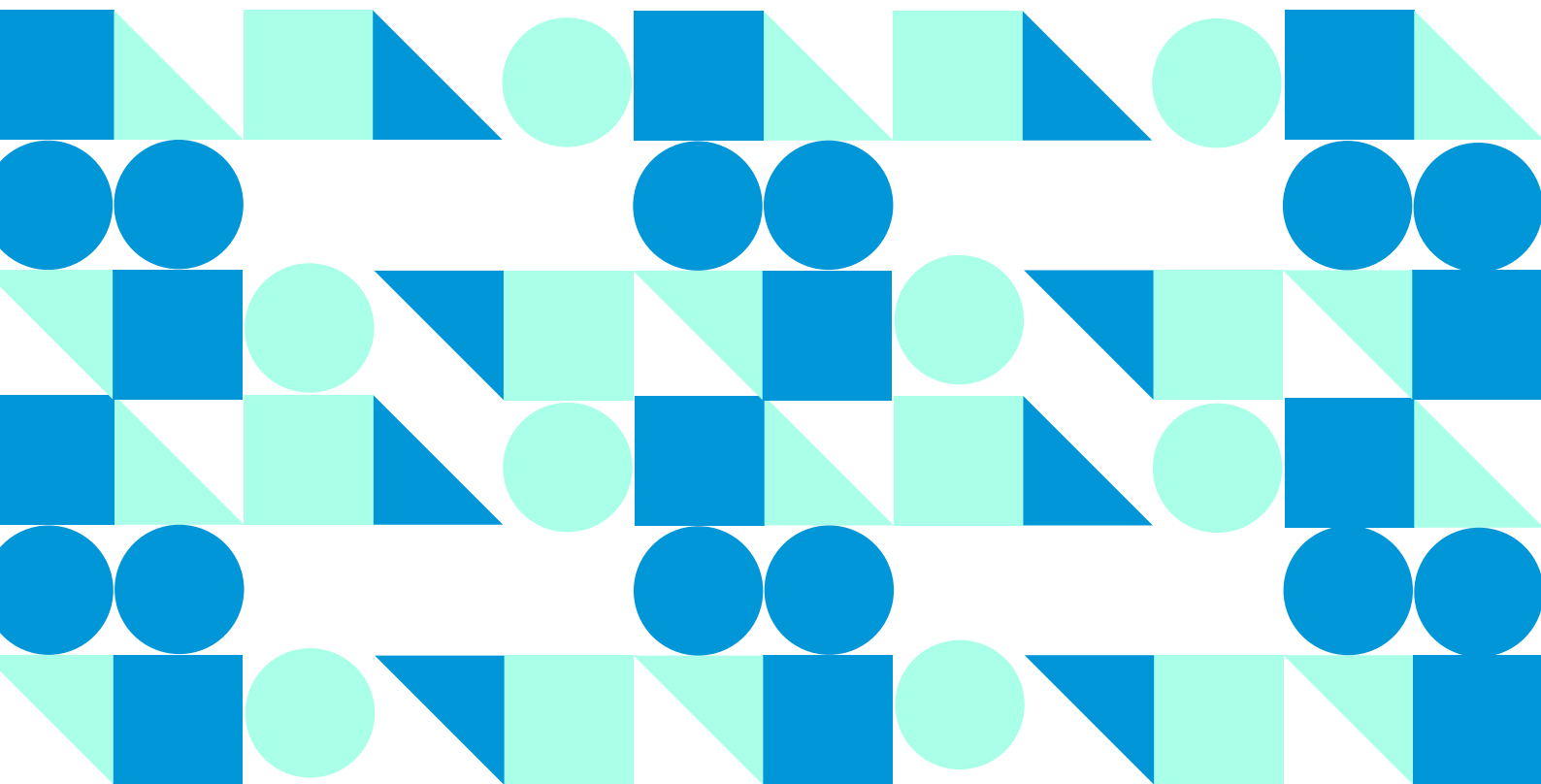


Research paper

The future of vocational education and training in Europe

Volume 4

Delivering lifelong learning: the changing
relationship between IVET and CVET





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Foreword

This report was prepared as part of the Cedefop project *The future of vocational education and training in Europe*. Building on and taking forward the findings of the previous project (2015-18) on the *Changing nature and role of vocational education and training in Europe*, the purpose of the research is to gain an in-depth understanding of future trends in vocational education and training (VET) in the 27 Member States of the EU, as well as in Iceland, Norway and the United Kingdom. The project analysed how VET has changed since the mid-1990s and how this influences future opportunities and challenges. The research is divided into five separate but interlinked themes:

- (a) changing content and profile of VET; epistemological challenges and opportunities;
- (b) delivering IVET; institutional diversification and/or expansion;
- (c) facilitating vocational learning; the influence of assessments;
- (d) delivering lifelong learning; the changing relationship between IVET and CVET;
- (e) European VET; synthesis and trend.

This report responds to the fourth theme listed above and compares the way IVET and CVET subsystems interact to support the learning of adults, so facilitating lifelong and life-wide learning. All the work carried out in the project builds on the multi-perspective approach developed by the *Changing nature and role of VET* project. An in-depth understanding of VET not only requires a focus on the institutions and systems but must also analyse the relationship of VET to the labour market and society. It must also systematically seek to understand how the content of VET is changing.

By comparing the interaction between IVET and CVET subsystems in the countries covered, the study analyses the extent to which IVET systems are opening up to adults, and questions whether national and regional policies and practices support or prevent a closer link between CVET and IVET. The study builds on national case studies, allowing for an in-depth, qualitative comparison and analysis of practices and policies. This offers better understanding of obstacles as well as opportunities in this complex area, directly supporting the stakeholders and policy-makers responsible for taking forward lifelong and life-wide learning in Europe.

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Executive summary

European societies are regularly confronted with crises that affect the supply of and demand for adult learning. It is in this context that, at European level, the need of adult learning is firmly anchored in the European pillar of social rights (European Commission, 2017). The Member States agreed in the *European pillar of social rights action plan* (European Commission, 2021a) to make progress towards the EU-level target of 60% adult participation in training every year by 2030, up from 37% in 2016 as measured by the adult education survey. To strengthen sustainable competitiveness, ensuring social fairness, and building resilience to react to crises, the *European skills agenda* (European Commission, 2020) and subsequent actions aim at ensuring that people have the right skills for jobs and supporting people in their lifelong learning pathways. This requires all those involved in learning by adults to increase their efforts to develop approaches to support better having more adults in learning, be it oriented at acquiring basic or transversal skills or occupation-specific skills and competences. Also, vocational education and training (VET) systems need to adapt and increase their focus on adult learning.

Discussions about what VET systems do for adult learners can take different directions: first, they may cover how many adults (aged over 18 or 25, for instance) are enrolled in IVET programmes; second, how CVET systems accommodate the learning needs of adults; third, how VET systems provide shorter courses or provide second-chance education opportunities. Across these strands, it becomes clear that VET systems play an important role in upskilling and reskilling of adults; providing the skills needed for individuals to maintain employment, improve their employment opportunities, or, more generally, to meet skills-related challenges in life. VET systems both comprise initial VET (IVET) and continuous VET (CVET) sub-systems. Chapter 2 presents in more detail the characteristics of IVET and CVET sub-systems, but the starting point for this study is – instead of relying on established distinctions between systems and subsystems – a broad concept of CVET, operationalised as the learning of adults related to a current or a future occupation after leaving initial education. Therefore, the study looks broadly at the ecosystem provided by VET providers that support the learning of adults, looking specifically at learning that is relevant for the labour market, but also at the acquisition of key competences, or socially relevant adult learning (e.g. basic skills training). These programmes can lead to formal qualifications but may not. From this perspective, we acknowledge that, at country level, in providing the different forms of adult learning, different types of organisations, and different educational

sub-sectors could play a role, including IVET institutions. Further, this role might develop over time.

Taking this more holistic perspective, what is lacking is a clear overview and comparative perspective across Europe on how VET systems facilitate the learning of adults and what specific role they play in the different Member States. This overview and comparative perspective could open up discussions and reflections concerning how Member States traditionally look at the role their VET systems and VET providers play in relation to adult learning. Looking more holistically at how VET systems provide learning to adults does not only serve to improve comparison between countries and across systems; it also sheds important light on developments over time within the VET system as well. Through looking at a more secondary task of VET systems, it becomes clearer how they change to accommodate the learning of target groups that are not the primary focus. It can show, for instance, how VET systems are opening to work with employers, offer more work-based learning and tailored provision, take into account prior experience, and include less traditional/classroom-based pedagogies.

Against this background, this report has the ambition to test a more holistic approach to studying how VET providers in different European Member States support the learning of adults and how national policies support VET providers either to take a larger or a decreasing role in supporting lifelong learning. The main objective of this study is to carry out a systematic comparison, in the countries covered by the study, of the way IVET and CVET sub-systems interact in supporting lifelong and life-wide learning. It aims to understand better how CVET sub-systems work that facilitate relevant learning through life and how these CVET sub-systems relate to IVET provision.

The study focuses on developments between 1995 and 2020. It builds on the previous work (Cedefop, 2019b) on mapping where CVET (mostly) takes place in the countries studied, in which sub-systems and which developments/shifts can be observed over the last 25 years. This report examines in more detail how IVET facilitates the learning of adults and which supporting policies are being pursued to bring IVET and CVET closer together. Finally, the study (in line with the main objective) highlights examples of effective CVET provision and what role IVET plays.

The methodology consists of four activities. The desk research looked at the wealth of existing comparative studies and reports, the survey obtained reflections from 893 respondents from 11 countries, for which the sample is sufficiently large to come to reasonably robust conclusions, and the case studies aimed to understand better how IVET and CVET provision has changed over the years and how specific policy interventions changed the role of IVET providers in adult

learning. Each case study looked at a specific change in the relationship between IVET and CVET as a result of a reform. The studies covered six countries (Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal and Finland) and focused on reviewing programmes for adult learners in two sectors (manufacturing and retail). In the final phase of the study, the material from the desk research and case studies was integrated in this final report.

IVET provider role in different orientations to the learning of adults

In terms of approaching CVET and the learning of adults more generically, the study identified four orientations in which IVET providers could play a role.

- (a) VET leading to acquisition of specific vocation/occupation-specific skills and not leading to a formal qualification (Orientation 1): this relates to vocational courses and programmes not leading to a formally recognised qualification and can include specific courses and training workshops. These aim at the acquisition of specific skills and possibly of a credential that has a value in the professional field. Such VET courses can be linked to formal VET qualifications in the form of specific modules or certificates. They can also include active labour market policies (ALMP) and more liberal adult education provision.
- (b) VET leading to a formal qualification (Orientation 2): this relates to VET programmes at ISCED level 2, 3, and 4 (EQF 2-4). The aim is to obtain a formal education qualification, allowing further learning as well as preparing for labour market re-entry or increasing opportunities for higher level jobs or shifting jobs between sectors. This can also include higher level VET: ISCED 5 (EQF 5) or higher, having the aim to obtain a higher (vocational) education formal qualification, opening further formal learning pathways. This can be organised in an integrated way with IVET or separately for adults, having a distinct qualification structure and distinct structure of delivery.
- (c) Basic skills training (Orientation 3): this relates to basic skills courses aimed at solving a specific deficiency in basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and digital skills. This can include training courses being part of active labour market policies offered by VET providers and personal or social learning courses offered by VET providers.
- (d) General education tracks (academic tracks and second chance) (Orientation 4): this relates to formal qualifications for adult learners that are either regarded as second-chance programmes or programmes aimed at obtaining access to HE.

The mapping of countries found that, in some, IVET providers are dominant in all or most orientations (Ireland and Finland); in others, IVET providers are mostly dominant in relation to formal programmes (both in VET and general tracks (Czechia, Spain, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, and Netherlands). Only in one country are IVET providers a dominant player in non-formal orientations (Greece). There are also some countries where IVET providers do not play a role in any of the orientations (Belgium and Slovakia). The role played by IVET providers does not correlate with the adult participation in education and training in general, or more specifically in VET. Countries where participation is high and the role of IVET providers is limited have set up separate systems to serve adult learners (as in Belgium, Denmark and Germany).

Governance and the status of IVET teachers matter to CVET, but not in straightforward manner: being a self-standing VET organisation, or being fully governed by the State, can both lead to more attention to adults. In education systems where IVET providers have a more independent position, there is more liberty and flexibility for them to offer provision to adults and to access specific training markets, also in competition with private providers (see as key examples, organisations in the Netherlands and the UK-England). In contrast, education systems where IVET providers are operating under national authorities might have the benefit that, once governments decide that IVET providers play a particular role in the learning of adults, this is more holistically rolled out (as can be illustrated by organisations in France and Finland).

Framework for cross-country comparison of IVET-CVET links

To capture the key differences between the ways IVET and CVET are linked across countries, available quantitative indicators on participation in IVET and adult learning have been organised within a framework, focusing on different patterns for IVET organisations also providing formal adult education and non-formal CVET in particular. The results of the framework are used for providing the context of the recent policies and national reforms studied in six countries.

Across countries studied, traditional youth-centeredness had become considerably weakened. IVET at upper secondary or post-secondary includes substantial proportions of young adults (20-24) or adults (25 and older) in all countries. Only in Portugal are more than 60% of reported VET participants younger than 20. In contrast, in Denmark and Finland, more than 60% of VET participants are at least 20 years old, with Germany and Netherlands having a more mixed age structure.

However, where IVET populations are small, even higher proportions of adult participants do not translate into high participation figures in formal adult learning

as such. Adult participation in formal adult education at ISCED level 3 and 4 (which is, for the larger part, vocational) is much higher in Denmark, Netherlands, and Finland than in Germany, Lithuania or Portugal. The proportion of adults in IVET is an important indicator of institutional set up and evolution, but it needs to be interpreted against the backdrop of the size of the IVET population and the proportion of adults participating in IVET.

Overall, adult participation in formal and non-formal CVET is much higher in countries with strong State support for adult learning. Much higher levels of participation in adult learning are mainly to be understood as driven by advanced level of State support funding. The Netherlands differs in that the level of State support for adult learning is comparatively low, but participation in adult learning is considerably high. However, free provision of formal programmes for adults within VET centres is obviously a highly effective way to provide VET on different levels to large groups of adult learners. Low overall participation rates in formal adult education in Germany, and even more in Portugal and Lithuania, reflect an overall lower level of public resources made available. Having said this, public funding plays a pivotal role in recent progress made in adult learning in all three countries.

Highly diverse patterns are observed for organisations providing formal education (schools, universities) that provide non-formal job-related education and training. In Denmark, Lithuania and Finland, providers of formal education play a substantial role in the provision of non-formal, job-related CVET. In contrast, the role of schools and universities in the respective field is rather limited in the Netherlands and Portugal, and particularly so in Germany. Organisations specialised in CVET provision – for-profit and non-profit organisations, and affiliated to business interest organisations or trade unions – play a particularly large role in Germany and the Netherlands, and also in Lithuania and Portugal. They play a limited role in Denmark and only a marginal role in Finland.

Policies and national reforms

The case studies on policies and national reforms show that VET provision and organisation for adults depends on long-term historical developments for which the direction of travel is not easily altered. It is difficult to see radical changes across countries and the reforms largely showcase that the systems alter through incremental changes; reforms generally did not fully deliver on their promises. This is largely due to the short duration of reform implementation (around 5 years): reforms of this scale often need much more time to settle. As a general tendency it can be observed that the distinction between orientations (VET leading to acquisition of specific vocation/occupation-specific skills and not leading to a formal qualification, or VET leading to a formal qualification) is fading. Several

factors contribute: providers increasingly offer both orientations; formal programmes are modularised and award certificates; delivery modes integrate more non-formal learning approaches; and use of validation processes is stimulated. The same direction of travel can be observed in the context of the emergence of microcredentials in HE and VET.

But are IVET systems opening-up to adult learners? Are adult learners better served? Are lifelong learning cultures being established in IVET systems? The case studies are not too positive about this. Both in terms of number of adult learners participating in IVET programmes and in tailoring the provision to adult learners' needs, the reforms reviewed do not yet show clear, positive outcomes. And more needs to be done to open IVET up fully to adults. The role of IVET providers in offering learning to adults can be characterised by using the three [scenario-orientations](#) (pluralistic, distinctive and special purpose VET) as developed in the [changing nature and role of vet](#) project. Pluralistic VET for adults is represented by Ireland and Finland . In these countries IVET providers play a role in the different orientations ranging from vocational courses to basic skills programmes and formal VET programmes. From the case studies, this future orientation can be identified for Denmark and Finland. Distinctive VET for adults is represented by those countries where IVET providers are an important provider of both formal and non-formal VET (such as Czechia, Estonia). Mostly the emphasis is on formal VET programmes; from the case study countries, the Netherlands could serve as example. Special purpose VET for adults is more difficult to find among the countries but could be associated with UK-England further education colleges. It must be stressed that this analysis only looked at the role IVET providers play in providing training to adults.

Conclusions

This study tried to go beyond mere quantitative overviews of participation rates of adults in VET; this approach opened new perspectives on the role of IVET providers in the learning of adults. While the study sees a considerable role for IVET providers in up- and reskilling, it cannot be concluded that IVET providers are a dominant player, or would be a more prominent player under the assumption that the future resembles the past direction of travel. This is without considering the role of HE institutions in offering up- and reskilling opportunities. On the other hand, the study showed that across countries, IVET providers can be involved in different types of adult learning and are not necessarily confined by national traditions. The comparison between countries could offer perspectives to policy-makers and VET stakeholders to see opportunities to open up more to adults, with more, different

and tailored adult learning programmes, even in partnership with other organisations.

When looking at the policies, reforms and developments in more detail, some cross-cutting aspects are noticeable: first, an increased emphasis on modularisation and learning outcome approaches; second, more emphasis on validation processes to shorten and tailor the provision to individual needs; third, setting up guidance structures.

The reforms that changed the link between IVET and CVET, which facilitated the opening of IVET for adults, can be reflected from three, partly overlapping, main perspectives: an epistemological and pedagogical perspective; an education system perspective; and a socioeconomic or labour market perspective (based on the multi-perspective analytical model developed by the *Changing nature and role of VET* project and further elaborated in the current study (Cedefop 2023)). These reforms were studied in the case studies and showcased the following. From an education system perspective, the developments can be seen in relation to changing institutional roles and responsibilities and in changing qualifications and the IVET/CVET programme landscape. From an epistemological and pedagogical perspective, change can be observed in the modes of delivery: same or distinct provision for young and adult learners; the pedagogical approaches (competence-based approaches and modularisation); and the use of validation of prior learning and shortening (IVET) programmes. From a socioeconomic or labour market perspective, changes are reported on related to developing a lifelong learning culture and mindset. More specifically on the epistemological and pedagogical perspective, the cases indicate a general tendency towards more modular approaches and making IVET programmes more based on adult learning principles, also for younger learners, allowing greater flexibility in programme delivery. However, IVET system struggle with making general parts of IVET programmes mandatory for adults. While this has been reintroduced in some countries (Finland) while being better aligned to adult learners needs, it is possible to skip these parts based on validation and recognition of prior learning in other systems (Denmark). Overall, the role of validation of prior learning is regarded as essential in making IVET programmes more accessible for adults and aligned to their needs. The case studies did not highlight significant changes in assessment practices. To conclude, the study shows that opening IVET to adults is a slow and uneven process across countries and across economic sectors.

This study provided an alternative approach to analysing the link between IVET and CVET compared to previous studies on this topic (Cedefop, 2019b); it approached CVET more broadly as the learning of adults. In doing so, the study revealed that IVET systems, and how the learning of adults is organised, is formed

in a complex interplay of historic developments, socioeconomic contexts, perceptions on the public role in offering learning to adults and perceptions on the esteem of VET in general. In this, four distinct, but closely related orientations in the services IVET providers can provide to adults were identified. The approach allowed mapping and comparing in qualitative terms the IVET provider role, also in a wider context in which other organisations are involved (private training providers, separate adult education providers, civic organisations for instance); it showed the direction of travel that explains the status quo. The study showed that countries attribute different roles to IVET providers in supporting the learning of adults and that policies to increase and improve this role vary in their policy intentions and effectiveness.

The analytical framework proved useful in opening comparative perspectives. The framework developed for this study applied the three-perspective model, looking at an epistemological and pedagogical perspective, an education system perspective, and a socioeconomic or labour market perspective on how IVET providers facilitate the learning of adults. The comparative perspective to understand the status quo of the role of IVET providers in supporting the learning of adults, looked holistically at the character of IVET (youth-centred, mixed, or adult-centred) and a detailed (quantitative) account of CVET and what role public entities play. It allowed a focus on the orientations of IVET providers, the legitimisation of the qualifications they offer and the level of autonomy of IVET providers to make decisions. This approach allowed, for all countries, but more specifically for the six case study countries, better understanding of the context in which the reform and developments took place. In the analysis of the case studies however, the analytical framework did not fully support the comparison between cases. The main reason was that the case studies focused on substantially different reforms and operationalised the learning of adults in completely different socioeconomic contexts. Analysis of the reforms and developments tried to cluster the results and developments in line with the three perspectives. However, some important CVET-related indicators (e.g. concerning autonomy of the VET providers, the institutional legitimacy to provide recognised credentials) were challenging to operationalise within countries and to compare across countries, also given the substantially different socioeconomic context of the learning of adults. For future research, the analytical framework offers an interesting approach to map country characteristics.

Aspects that need further research concern:

- (a) identification of what is considered to be an IVET provider: in line with our analysis, classifying providers based on the services (qualifications, certifications) they offer to different target groups (young and/or adult learners)

- could be a way forward instead of looking at the underlying governance model or legal framework by which the institutions are covered ⁽¹⁾;
- (b) further developing the economic sector perspectives and differences in how, at sectoral level, the IVET/CVET link is forged;
 - (c) continuing to pursue this comparative approach, also bringing together the more qualitative and quantitative perspectives and completing the systematic mapping of orientations and the role IVET providers play vis-a-vis other types of providers and their historical background for other countries besides the case studies.

⁽¹⁾ This approach resembles the [Carnegie classification of institutions of higher education](#) in the United States.

CHAPTER 1.

Introduction and study objective

1.1. Adult learning challenge for IVET providers

European societies frequently face crises that affect the supply of and demand for adult learning. The European debt crisis from 2009 until the mid to late 2010s confronted individuals, companies and societies at large with the need to reskill to find work in other sectors. The 2015 migrant crisis and Brexit (2016-20) emphasised the need to invest in citizenship skills, democratic values and media literacy; they also affected the adaptability of education and training systems and recognition of qualifications in the European labour market. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 showed the need to invest in health-related and digital skills, but also rebalanced economic activities and enforced the need for reskilling and upskilling of adults. Use of digital learning tools and the demand for smaller and more flexible learning units became apparent. From being a useful support tool, technology has become a key component of effective education delivery. Above all, global crises such as the climate crisis and the energy crisis (further fuelled by the Ukraine war in 2022 and the ban on Russian energy supplies), demands that societies, companies and individuals considerably change behaviours and refocus on new, greener, skills. In background, demographic ageing makes continued skills developments by adults essential to prevent skills shortages. All these stimuli require more adult learning.

It is in this context that, at European level, the need for adult learning is firmly anchored in the *European pillar of social rights* (European Commission, 2017). The pillar includes the right to 'quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning' (first principle), the right to 'active support to employment' (fourth principle), and the right to training 'regardless of the type and duration of the employment relationship' (fifth principle). In this context the Member States agreed in the *European pillar social rights action plan* (European Commission, 2021a) to make progress towards the EU-level target of 60% adult participation in training every year by 2030, rising from 37% in 2016 as measured by the *Adult education survey*. Further, to strengthen sustainable competitiveness ensuring social fairness and building resilience to react to crises, the European skills agenda (European Commission, 2020) and subsequent actions aim at ensuring that people have the right skills for jobs and supporting people in their lifelong learning pathways.

This requires all those involved in adult learning to increase their efforts to develop approaches to support more adults better in learning, whether oriented at acquiring basic or transversal skills or occupation-specific skills and competences. Also, VET systems need to adapt and increase their focus on adult learning.

1.1.1. Adults in VET: plea for a holistic perspective

Discussions about what VET systems do for adult learners can take different directions. First, they can discuss how many adults (aged over 18 or 25, for instance) are enrolled in IVET programmes; second how CVET systems accommodate adult learning; third, how VET systems provide shorter courses or provide second change education opportunities. In all these discussions, it becomes clear that VET systems play an important role in upskilling and reskilling and generally providing the skills needed for individuals to maintain employment, improve their employment opportunities, or, more generally, to confront better the skills-related challenges in life. VET systems both comprise initial VET (IVET) and continuous VET (CVET) subsystems. While Chapter 2 presents in more detail the characteristics of IVET and CVET subsystems, the starting point for this study is not to make a distinction based on existing education subsystems and sectors, but to apply a broad concept of CVET, operationalised as the learning of adults after leaving initial education. In doing so, this study looks broadly at the ecosystems provided by VET providers that support the learning of adults after leaving initial education, focusing on learning that is relevant for the labour market, but also on the acquisition of key competences, or socially relevant adult learning (e.g. basic skills training). These programmes can lead to formal qualifications or not. From this perspective, we acknowledge that, at country level, in providing the different forms of adult learning, different types of organisations, and different education sub-sectors could play a role, including IVET institutions. Further, this role might develop over time.

Having taken this more holistic perspective, what is lacking is a clear overview and comparative perspective across Europe on how VET systems facilitate the learning of adults and what specific role VET systems play in the different Member States. This overview and comparative perspective could open up discussions and reflections concerning how Member States traditionally look at the role their VET systems and VET providers play in relation to adult learning. There are several reasons why this European-wide mapping and comparative perspective are not yet provided.

- (a) Comparative research focused on understanding VET systems: VET systems differ largely and these differences are embedded in national traditions and historical developments influenced by broad political, economic, and societal

- contexts. Comparing VET systems, focusing on the core task of educating and training young people already comes with significant challenges; focusing on what VET systems do for adults increases the challenge. Major progress is made through the Cedefop projects *The changing nature and role of VET* and the first publication on the *Future of VET*, offering analytical frameworks to compare VET systems and their development (Cedefop, 2017a, 2017b).
- (b) Comparative research focused primarily on systems and less on services: previous studies took as starting point a specific subsystem, such as CVET and tried to build comparative perspectives. While valuable, this approach faced the challenge that CVET is not considered a subsystem in all countries; nor is it clearly demarcated, making it challenging to extract overarching comparative conclusions and lessons learned (Cedefop, 2015, 2019b).
 - (c) Comparative research focused more broadly on adult learning, but did not specifically identify the role played by VET providers: European studies on adult learning (Broek et al., 2010; European Commission and Ecorys, 2019; European Commission; EACEA and Eurydice, 2021) looked at adult learning in general, crossing different education subsystems, but do not spell out what role VET providers play within the whole lifelong learning/adult learning ecosystem.

Nonetheless, studies provide important insights into the development of how VET system support adult learning, as in the Cedefop study (Cedefop, 2019b, pp. 85-86) of the development of CVET from 1995 to 2015.

- (a) The main provider of CVET was and continues to be, in most countries, the employer, though many countries reported increasing diversification of CVET providers. Besides traditional providers, such as adult training centres, the formal education system is increasingly offering CVET.
- (b) The CVET offer is becoming more diversified. CVET is no longer necessarily oriented primarily towards occupation-specific and job-related skills. In many countries it includes training for key competences (literacy, numeracy, ICT, foreign languages) as well as liberal adult education and community training.
- (c) Flexible learning opportunities tailored specifically to adult learner needs are developing in many countries.
- (d) In some countries, the CVET target group is becoming more diversified. Traditionally, CVET was provided to employed individuals over the age of 16 who were no longer in formal education. The target group has now broadened to include different socio-demographic groups.

1.1.2. Focus on adults in VET: lessons on the future of VET

Looking more holistically at how VET systems provide learning to adults does not only serve the purpose of improving comparison between countries and across systems; it also sheds important light on developments over time within the VET system. Observing a more secondary task of VET systems, it becomes clearer how VET systems change to accommodate the learning of target groups that are not the primary focus. It can show, for instance, how VET systems are opening up to work with employers; offer more work-based learning; offer more tailored provision; consider prior experience; and include less traditional/classroom-based pedagogies. Traditionally, adult learning pedagogy and adult learning principles are defined in contrast to how young people learn. Adult learning should be motivational for the learners, rich and reflective, tailor-made, learner-centred and attuned to specific learning needs, respect the background of the adult learner. The knowledge and experience of the adult learner should be used as resource in the learning process, offered in a flexible manner in terms of duration, time, and place; and it should be both relevant for the adult learner and – potentially – other stakeholders (e.g. employers, societal organisations) (Broek and Buiskool, 2013; Cedefop, 2009). While this is true for adult learning, we come to the understanding that these principles apply just as much to the learning of young VET students as well (Epale, 2014). Integrating more adult learning perspectives in VET systems serves younger learners as well.

Against the background of the emerging importance of lifelong learning, the need for comparative perspectives on what role VET systems play in adult learning, and to learn lessons for the whole VET system while focusing on the learning of adults, this report has the ambition to test out a more holistic approach to studying how VET providers in different European Member States support the learning of adults and how national policies support VET providers to take either a larger or a reduced role in supporting lifelong learning.

1.2. Objective and research questions

The main objective of this study is to carry out a systematic comparison, in the countries covered by the study, of the way IVET and CVET subsystems interact to facilitate lifelong and life-wide learning. It aims to understand better how CVET sub-systems work that facilitate relevant learning through life and how these CVET sub-systems relate to IVET provision. Related to this main objective, the following key research questions are proposed in the terms of reference for this study:

- (a) what characterises the link between IVET and CVET and how has this interface evolved over time?

- (b) to what extent and in which form are IVET subsystems being opened up to adults and how does this affect programme content, pedagogies and assessment?
- (c) to what extent and in which form are national and regional policies supporting a closer link between CVET and IVET:
 - (i) as part of overall skills policies?
 - (ii) in terms of balancing and adjusting needs and provisions?
 - (iii) in terms of increasing transparency?
 - (iv) in terms of developing individually oriented policies (guidance, validation etc.)?

The focus is less on quantitative overviews (using statistics to capture how many adults learned), and more on the qualitative aspects of how adult learning in IVET and CVET subsectors is organised. It is on identifying concrete examples of how countries' IVET/CVET systems interact and how VET systems facilitate the learning of adults. Through gathering and studying examples, the study tries to understand the role IVET providers play in offering training to adults in different national contexts, building further on materials such as in previous Cedefop studies (e.g. *The changing nature and role of VET* (Cedefop, 2019b)).

The study focuses on developments between 1995 and 2020. In terms of a country selection, while using the materials gathered for the eight countries selected in a previous report of this project (Czechia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, and UK-England), the materials from the wider set of shorter case studies and existing country-level materials are taken into account to identify relevant developments (if any) in all countries. A further in-depth examination is provided in a selection of countries (case studies).

1.3. Methodological approach

This study builds further on the previous work (Cedefop, 2019b) on mapping where CVET (mostly) takes place in the countries studied, in which subsystems and developments/shifts can be observed over the last 25 years. This report examines in more detail how IVET facilitates the learning of adults and which supporting policies are being pursued to bring IVET and CVET closer together. In line with the main objective, it highlights examples of how CVET is provided effectively and what role IVET plays in this. The methodology consists of four activities.

Desk research: a key part of this study, much is already described in previous studies and overviews. Also, many country-specific reports have appeared that shed some light on the relationship between IVET and CVET. This analysis uses

sources such as country reports in the previous studies of the *Future of VET* project and ReferNet articles, case studies from the *Changing nature and role of VET* study, materials from the ET2020 working group on adult learning. Country reports serving as baseline for the *European level synthesis report on adult learning policy and provision in the Member States of the EU* (European Commission and Ecorys, 2019) and the *Eurydice report on learning opportunities for low qualified or low skilled adults* became available (European Commission; EACEA and Eurydice, 2021), providing rich data on the availability of general and vocational programmes, formal and non-formal for adults up to the (theoretical) ISCED 4 level, with special emphasis given to adult basic education. The report also provides an update on recent policy commitments (2016-20) regarding adult learning. This analysis allows identification of some tendencies and policy developments. National sources are used to understand better national situations, reforms, and developments.

Survey: in the context of the *Future of VET* a survey was launched that also included a section on the IVET/CVET relationship. The purpose of the survey was to obtain information about how the content and means of delivering IVET has changed over the past 10 years. It was carried out between June and October 2021 and addressed VET providers in Europe at upper secondary level, typically providing IVET at EQF levels 3 and 4. Managers and heads of VET institutions, as well as experienced teachers, were the key target group. Although the survey is not representative of the population of providers, we tried to obtain responses from VET providers who are in some ways regarded as typical because they represent a relatively common type of IVET provider in the respective country. The survey was distributed both through international networks and organisations (e.g. Cedefop's ReferNet) as well as via national experts in selected countries. The questionnaire was translated into the national language of the focus countries (English and nine other languages). This report mainly presents results for eleven countries for which the sample is sufficiently large to come to reasonably robust conclusions (n=893): Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and United Kingdom. More details on the survey are provided in a separate report (Cedefop, 2022a).

Case studies: the aim of the case studies was to understand better how IVET and CVET provision has changed over the years and how specific policy interventions changed the role of IVET providers in the learning of adults. Each case study looked at a specific change in the relationship between IVET and CVET as a result of a reform. The analysis focused on two aspects: understanding the change in the epistemological and pedagogical perspective in CVET; and understanding the policy theory (drivers) behind specific reforms (1995-2020)

impacting the role of IVET in offering CVET. The case studies implemented the following research steps: first, to review available evidence related to the specific case; second, to review per sector (Box 1) two related programmes for adult learners, one before the policy developments and one after the policy development; and to conduct expert interviews with experts, national stakeholders and stakeholders within the particular sectors. For each case, two to three interviews are foreseen to draft the concise case study report.

Box 1. Economic sectors and occupations in focus of the case studies

The case studies looked at the interrelationship between IVET and CVET for the following two broad economic sectors:

- industrial manufacturing sector (particularly metals, machine-tool making, automotive), with a share between 10% and 20% of the workforce, representing areas where IVET typically plays a key role and where various institutional arrangements (blue colour career ladders) for linking IVET and CVET are known to exist (e.g. the role of craft masters). The case study focused on learning opportunities for workers responsible for mechatronics (and so for automation) for manufacturing. The interest was mainly in skilled workers responsible for the maintenance of automated systems, trained in mechatronics, equivalent to mechatronics engineer ⁽²⁾.
- retail sector, employing up to 10% of the workforce, with IVET playing a significant role only in some countries; in others, on-the-job training for unskilled workers dominates. Career pathways and the role of CVET are also different from manufacturing, with great variety across countries (Tilly and Carré, 2017). The case study focused on the learning opportunities for shop floor assistants having constant exchange with clients (not looking too much into management ranks). The interest was mainly in shop assistants ⁽³⁾ and the training on upper secondary level (e.g. school based VET, apprenticeship).

Source: Cedefop.

Six countries were selected for the case studies.

- (a) In Denmark, the case study focused on the interplay between the IVET system and the separate system for VET adult learning and new pathway for adults in the IVET system, *EUV, Erhvervsuddannelse for Voksne* (vocational education for adults).
- (b) In Finland, the case study focused on the integration of IVET and CVET systems in the 2015-18 reform process.
- (c) In Germany, the case study focused on how the link between IVET and CVET is essential to maintain the esteem of IVET: allowing (career) progression routes through VET-oriented education and training.

⁽²⁾ [Mechatronics engineer: 2144.1.11](#)

⁽³⁾ [Shop assistant: 5223.6](#)

- (d) In Lithuania, the focus was on the integration of labour market-oriented training in IVET and the establishment of more regional VET centres, playing a larger role in skills development.
- (e) In the Netherlands, the case study looked at attempts to foster a learning culture and to give IVET providers a conducive environment to serve adult learning better through making IVET programmes more flexible and allowing IVET providers to access the training market.
- (f) In Portugal, the case study looked closely at the interplay between IVET providers and the *Qualifica* centres and the role played by validation of prior learning.

Synthesis and analysis: in the final phase of the study, the material from the desk research and case studies was integrated in this final report. To situate the research findings, further desk research was conducted as the analysis found that national contexts for developments and reforms differ so greatly that further conceptual clarification was required to understand how IVET and CVET are connected. In the end, the research findings are used to formulate the conclusions and answers to the posed research questions (Chapter 5).

1.4. [Links to ongoing studies and initiatives](#)

This study was not implemented in a vacuum. It is closely linked to several recent and ongoing studies and initiatives, such as other Cedefop projects (e.g. on microcredentials (Cedefop, 2022), the opinion survey on adult learning and CVET in Europe (Cedefop, 2021b), and its work on validation, guidance, financing adult learning and support to transparency tools (e.g. Cedefop, 2021c)).

Furthermore, the study is closely linked to Eurydice's recent work on adult education and training in Europe: building inclusive pathways to skills and qualifications (European Commission, EACEA and Eurydice, 2021) and the European Commission's research and consultation activities in the framework of developing the Council Recommendations on individual learning accounts (ILA) (European Commission, 2021) and microcredentials (European Commission et al., 2021).

1.5. [Main differences between IVET and CVET](#)

This study focuses on the relationship between IVET and CVET and how IVET and CVET subsystems interact to facilitate lifelong and life-wide learning. To

understand the interplay between IVET and CVET, the two key concepts need clarification.

The Cedefop glossary ⁽⁴⁾ does not provide a definition of initial VET, but refers to *Initial Education and Training*, being: ‘General or vocational education and training carried out in the initial education system, usually before entering working life. Some training undertaken after entry into working life may be considered as initial training (such as retraining). Initial education and training can be carried out at any level in general or vocational education (full-time school-based or alternance training) or apprenticeship pathways.’ (Cedefop and Tissot, 2014, p. 51). IVET and CVET are offered by education and training providers and the same providers can offer both, but this is not necessarily the case. In many countries, the demarcation between IVET and CVET is not always so clear cut. In France, Finland, Ireland and the UK, IVET and CVET tend to offer the same qualifications (for EQF levels 3 to 8). National systems of validation of prior learning, together with qualifications frameworks, have helped to bring together the two subsystems. Elsewhere, the distinction between IVET and CVET may be based on different demarcation lines. For example:

- (a) system and funding-based distinction: e.g. IVET being State-funded, CVET not;
- (b) age-based distinction: e.g. IVET for learners up to 25 years old;
- (c) qualification-based distinction: e.g. IVET offers full qualifications such as diplomas, CVET only partial qualifications such as certificates;
- (d) provider-based distinction: e.g. IVET offered by public schools, CVET by companies or private providers.

To facilitate transitions into further learning, an effective offer of CVET needs to be in place. But what is understood by *CVET* ⁽⁵⁾? The previous project revealed

⁽⁴⁾ An update of Cedefop’s glossary will be published in 2023. It will include definitions of IVET and CVET. Initial vocational education and training (IVET): vocational education and training carried out in the initial VET system, usually before entering working life. It leads to a formal qualification and equips people with skills and/or competences leading to a specific occupation or job. IVET can be carried out at secondary, post-secondary or tertiary level, in vocational education (full-time school-based or alternance training) or in apprenticeship; vocational education and training undertaken after entry into working life may be considered as initial training (such as retraining/reskilling).

⁽⁵⁾ Cedefop’s forthcoming glossary (2023) will contain the following definition of CVET. *Continuing vocational education and training (CVET)*: Vocational education or training carried out after initial education and training – or after entry into working life, aimed at helping a person to: improve or update his/her knowledge and/or skills (upskilling); acquire new skills for a career move (retraining / reskilling); ensure his/her personal or

that there are many dominant conceptions of CVET in European countries and the use of the term is not consistent, sometimes not even within countries (Cedefop, 2019a, p. 80). Internationally, CVET is explained as ‘education or training after initial education or entry into working life, aimed at helping individuals to improve or update their knowledge and/or skills; acquire new skills for a career move or retraining; continue their personal or professional development’ (Cedefop and Tissot, 2014, p. 51). In that sense, CVET is basically a part of adult learning oriented towards professional development. CVET generally aims to update competences needed in the labour market or society. Given this broad aim, CVET can be understood as (Cedefop, 2019b, p. 80):

- (a) job-related/occupation-specific formal education and training for adults;
- (b) job-related/occupation-specific formal and non-formal education and training for adults;
- (c) as (part) of further education and training or lifelong learning for adults.

In most EU Member States CVET is interpreted as vocational education for adults. CVET often refers to education and training that is carried out after initial regular formal education. The target group for CVET comprises persons in the labour market, often defined by age: for example, in Bulgaria, persons over 16 years old, no longer in formal education.

The *Changing nature and role of VET* study also mentions that CVET is increasingly understood as being integrated into the lifelong learning perspective (Cedefop, 2019b, p. 85). In addition to this, with diversification of the levels at which VET can be situated, CVET – as an orientation rather than a system – can be found in higher education (HE) as well. The Cedefop study on VET at higher levels concludes that there has been expansion and diversification of vocationally oriented education and training offered at higher levels in European countries over the last two decades (Cedefop, 2019a, p. 10). It also mentions that there is no clear separation between continuing VET and higher VET. In the Netherlands, for example, the current debates relate to making HE more flexible and accessible for non-traditional students and increasing the role of HE institutions (mainly Universities of applied science) in lifelong learning. This includes experimentation with the part-time HE pathway, flexibility in paying college fees, experimentation in demand-side funding, and applying a more modular approach to HE programmes. Experiments are currently being conducted on all those topics which should inform future policy development (Cedefop, 2019b, p. 109).

professional development. Comment: continuing vocational education and training can be carried out at secondary, post-secondary or tertiary level, in vocational education (full-time school-based or alternance training) or in apprenticeship.

CVET contains a wide diversity of learning activities. It can include short-term activities of 1 or 2 hours as well as much longer ones running over months or even longer. It presents an almost limitless diversity of content, starting with training in health and safety, updates on new products, tutorials for using new machines up to the presentation of cutting-edge research. Also, the settings of provision differ: in the workplace, for on-the-job training, or the classroom or a hotel resort hosting an international conference. Uptake of forms of CVET are determined by completely different social or institutional processes.

CVET needs to be approached both as a specific part of the education system or – to use a term with a more encompassing meaning – skill formation systems (Thelen, 2008) as well as the employment system (Fligstein, 2001; Marsden, 1999). It should be an orientation within other (education) sectors compared to a specific system or subsector. This approach of referring to CVET as an orientation rather than a sector is further informed by the following considerations. First, it is difficult to distinguish strictly between academic/general skills provision, vocational skills provision and/or transversal competence provision. Second, it is assumed that all skills and competences learned later in life will have some value in relation to the objective of CVET ('aimed at helping individuals to improve or update their knowledge and/or skills; acquire new skills for a career move or retraining; continue their personal or professional development' (Cedefop, 2014)).

1.6. IVET providers

Besides clarifying the difference between IVET and CVET and how it operationalises CVET (as different orientations in the learning of adults, rather than a separate system), the study also relies on the conceptualisation of IVET providers. In many countries, outside of apprenticeship systems, IVET is provided by State-funded organisations such as VET colleges and technical colleges. There are also private providers active in IVET, usually operating with State funding as well. Apprenticeship systems are provided through on-the-job training of companies and off-the-job training provided by VET providers or training institutions. The latter could be operated by sectoral organisations or other labour market institutions (Cedefop, 2008). This is usually a public IVET provider but can also be the employer (in apprenticeship systems).

The IVET institutional landscape in Europe has seen significant changes since 1995: a reduction in the number of IVET schools; more flexible provision; more emphasis on work-based learning; and reinforced school autonomy (Cedefop, 2022d, p. 71). As concluded in the same report: 'The evidence from the national case study reports suggests that in nearly all instances vocational schools have

autonomy with respect to pedagogical matters. They also have a degree of choice over what courses to deliver though this is sometimes made in conjunction with regional stakeholders (e.g. as is the case in Finland)' (Cedefop, 2022d, p. 74). The autonomy is related to how IVET schools are governed. IVET providers can broadly be clustered according to the level of autonomy they have. A distinction can be made between countries where IVET providers are positioned directly under the Ministry of Education (or another Ministry) and countries where they have a more independent status, while being supervised by national authorities. There is no comprehensive overview of whether IVET schools are public institutions or independent. Also, the information collected on the autonomy of VET schools in this project is limited. One way of shedding light on this is by looking at the status of teachers and whether they are considered civil servants or not (European Commission, 2017; European Commission, EACEA and Eurydice, 2021). This will be further explored in Chapter 2. Besides IVET providers as self-standing organisations and operating under national authorities, IVET is obviously characterised by the involvement of employers. In apprenticeship and dual learning systems employers and employer training centres play an important role in the provision of IVET. In this study they are not categorised as IVET providers, but it is important to keep in mind what employers do in the training of adults in formal adult apprenticeships.

1.7. CVET conceptualisation

In line with definitions of initial and continuing education and training, this study sees the distinction between IVET and CVET in that IVET is aimed at younger learners and offers them vocationally oriented education and training before they enter working life. CVET is aimed at young adults and older learners and offers them education and training after they entered working life. In this explanation of CVET, a wider perspective is taken towards 'education and training', not being confined solely to 'vocationally oriented education and training'. This because the learning needs of adult learners already in the labour market, in line with the definition of adult education, vary widely, while still being relevant for their labour market position ⁽⁶⁾. They might lack specific basic skills, or a formal (secondary

⁽⁶⁾ It is fully acknowledged that the societal understanding of what being an adult signifies has changed since the 1970s, when today's still used definitions of adult education were coined (Mortimer and Moen, 2016). The phase of youth and young adulthood has been expanded, with some markers of adulthood (e.g. leaving the parents' home, marriage, having a first child) significantly delayed compared to the 1970s, although there are

education qualification) which they need to progress in their work; also, they might lack occupation-specific skills and competences, or an occupation-specific qualification. This study therefore does not make a distinction based on existing education sub-systems and sectors, but applies a broad concept of CVET, operationalised as the learning of adults after leaving initial education. In this, the focus is on job/occupation- (or labour market-) relevant learning, but it does not neglect the acquisition of key competences, or socially relevant adult learning (e.g. basic skills training). The focus is on learning that is in some way organised, irrespective of whether it leads to a formal qualification (formal education) or not (non-formal education). This conceptualisation entails that CVET provision crosses different 'traditional' education sectors, including adult learning sub-systems, HE, general education and IVET, if they provide learning for adults after leaving initial education that is somehow related to job/occupation- (or labour market-) relevant learning.

A specific issue concerns formal CVET, that is CVET meeting the defining criteria of formal adult education in leading to a recognised qualification or an equivalent and involving at least half a year of full-time education. Formal CVET might be provided by organisations responsible for IVET or by other organisations, providers of non-formal CVET in particular. In some countries, it makes a difference whether an adult uses CVET to acquire a qualification equivalent to the set qualifications offered in IVET (e.g. in Germany) or acquire another type of qualification. The former can be called fundamental CVET (compare Chapter 4) and the acquired qualification might be connected to a set of specific rights. Moreover, there might be groups of formal VET qualifications which cannot be acquired in IVET as they require a minimum number of years of relevant work experience. They are supported by a specific subgroup of formal CVET programmes and may be addressed by a specific term in certain languages: in Germany they are called *Aufstiegsfortbildungen* (upgrading CVET). Available distinctions rooted in cross-country comparative surveys, as the distinction between formal and non-formal CVET, are often not sufficient to flesh out the particularities of the interplay of IVET and CVET in the various countries.

important cross-country differences. (Settersten; Ottusch and Schneider, 2015) Today, young adults up to 24 are expected either to pursue education or combine phases of education (including HE) and gainful work, or seen as entitled to return to education in case they have left initial education prematurely (e.g. prior to completing upper secondary education as in the early school leaver (ESL) framework). In many countries, a dedicated system of educational provision targeting young adults (up to 25) has emerged, offering programmes different from initial education but still more attuned to the needs of socialisation than programmes targeting full adult people.

Hence, CVET needs to be regarded both as an umbrella term for rather different forms of educational provision as well as a key part of skill formation and employment systems; the latter is provided mainly by employers and linked to established forms of breaking down work processes in particular jobs, comprising particular tasks and with particular skill profiles. Jobs can be organised mainly according to organisational needs or to established, standardised occupations. CVET is intimately linked to existing workplaces and occupational structures. It allows for the necessary updating of an individual's skill profile to changing socio-technological requirements and for the preparation of individuals to master the demands of new jobs and attaining more demanding, advanced positions.

This CVET orientation can be found in different subsystems and sectors. A key question is how CVET, or the learning of adults, is supported within the different subsystems and sectors, whether these be IVET, general education, HE, employment/PES policies or (liberal) adult education ⁽⁷⁾.

In line with this approach, the learning of adults in this study (i.e., where IVET could play a role) takes place in different settings. There are different typologies that map the learning of adults. For instance the typology of formal adult learning understood as organisational fields, as provided by Hefler and Markowitsch (2013), and the typology provided by Boeren and Whittaker (2018) focusing on low-educated adults ⁽⁸⁾. Another typology, as presented in the European Commission study on adult learning provision (European Commission and Ecorys, 2019), discussed the diversity of adult learning provision in terms of their purpose or function. These typologies provide the basis for a further rationalisation and reclustered of CVET orientations related to the purpose of this study (as the learning of adults after leaving initial education). This reclustered is based on two key questions:

(a) does the CVET orientation result in a formal qualification ⁽⁹⁾?

⁽⁷⁾ The 2019 synthesis report on adult Learning in the EU 28 Member States mapped the following relevant legal frameworks covering adult learning as well as CVET in European countries: Adult education laws; General education laws; VET laws; HE laws; Labour laws / PES; other (e.g. on NQF, specific targeted laws on migrant integration) (Ecorys, 2019, p. 45).

⁽⁸⁾ Building on Hefler and Markowitsch (2013), but also others (Myers et al., 2014; Desjardins, 2017).

⁽⁹⁾ 'The formal outcome (certificate, diploma or title) of an assessment process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards and/or possesses the necessary competence to do a job in a specific area of work. A qualification confers official recognition of the value of learning outcomes in the labour market and in education and training. A qualification can be a legal entitlement to practise a trade (OECD)' (Cedefop and Tissot, 2014, p. 202).

(b) does the CVET orientation have an explicit vocational, or occupation-specific focus?

There are clear reasons to use these two questions to differentiate between different types of provision. On the first (qualifications), whether VET leads to a formal qualification determines how the provision is structurally embedded. For formal qualifications the funding might be differently arranged compared to provision not leading to a formal qualification. Also, quality assurance mechanisms and the type of providers can differ. In the Netherlands, for example VET colleges only receive State funding if the learner is enrolled in a formal qualification-oriented course. Only in this case is the learner eligible for financial support to cover training costs. If the learner would only like to enrol in a short course (not directed to obtaining a qualification), no State support is provided and so individual costs are much higher. Further, the inspectorate only supervises the diploma-oriented programmes, not the short courses separately. Hence, whether the CVET leads to a qualification or not, matters in terms of whether IVET institutions can be involved. On the second (vocational orientation), whether CVET is occupation/vocationally oriented or more oriented to obtaining general knowledge and skills can impact the institutional engagement of companies in the formulation of learning outcomes and the delivery of learning (at the workplace for instance). Whether IVET institutions play a role in providing basic skills or general education-oriented programmes to adults differs per country. In some countries, general education and VET, or VET and HE, are strictly separated; in others they are more integrated.

When relating both questions to each other, as in Figure 1, four broad CVET orientations can be defined. These broad orientations include similar forms of CVET as included in the previously discussed categorisations.

Figure 1. **CVET conceptualisation and clustering (including forms and other names as mentioned in previously discussed categorisations)**

	Has an explicit vocation/occupation-specific focus		
Does not result in formal qualification	<p>Orientation 1. VET leading to acquisition of specific vocation/occupation-specific skills and not leading to a formal qualification</p> <p>Forms / other names:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post-secondary VET (not leading to a qualification) - Training that forms part of active labour market policies (occupation oriented) - Workplace or job-related learning - Continuing professional education governed by professional bodies (not leading to a qualification) 	<p>Orientation 2. VET leading to a formal qualification</p> <p>Forms / other names:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post-secondary VET (leading to a qualification) - Apprenticeships (occupational) (re-)training programmes - Customised vocational and professional programmes for organisations (post-tertiary) continuing HE (oriented to occupational knowledge) - Continuing professional education governed by professional bodies (leading to a qualification) 	Results in qualification
	<p>Orientation 3. Basic skills training</p> <p>Forms / other names:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic skills and basic education - Training that forms part of active labour market policies (basic skills oriented) - Personal or social learning 	<p>Orientation 4. General education tracks (academic tracks and second chance)</p> <p>Forms / other names:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second-chance education at upper secondary levels / Basic skills and remedy programmes - HE programmes accessible to non-traditional (adult) students (post-tertiary) - Continuing HE (oriented to more general knowledge) 	
	Does not have an explicit vocation/occupation-specific focus		

Source: Cedefop.

- The following four broad CVET orientations are identified.
- (a) VET leading to acquisition of specific vocation/occupation-specific skills and not leading to a formal qualification: this relates to vocational courses and programmes not leading to a formally recognised qualification. It can include specific courses, training workshops etc., aimed at the acquisition of specific skills and possibly of a credential that has a value in the professional field. These VET courses can be linked to formal VET qualifications such as specific modules or certificates. It can also include active labour market policies and more liberal adult education provision.
 - (b) VET leading to a formal qualification: this relates to VET programmes at ISCED level 2, 3, and 4 (EQF 2-4). The aim is to obtain a formal education qualification, allowing further learning as well as preparing for labour market re-entry or increasing opportunities for higher level jobs or shifting jobs

- between sectors. This can also include higher level VET, ISCED 5 (EQF 5) or higher, having the aim to obtain a higher (vocational) education formal qualification, opening up further formal learning pathways. This can be organised in an integrated way with IVET or organised separately for adults, having a distinct qualification structure, and distinct structure of delivery.
- (c) Basic skills training: this relates to basic skills courses aimed at solving a skills deficiency in specific basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and digital skills. This can include training courses being part of active labour market policies offered by VET providers and personal or social learning courses offered by VET providers.
 - (d) General education tracks (academic tracks and second chance): this relates to formal qualifications for adult learners that are either regarded as second-chance programmes or programmes that are aimed at obtaining access to HE.

Given these four broad orientations, an IVET institution can offer CVET forms within different orientations: they may offer vocationally oriented CVET (leading to a qualification or not) and also general subjects and basic skills training.

Two additional aspects characterise CVET provision: the funding arrangements and the level of CVET provided. Both aspects need to be considered when comparing the countries and what type of CVET/learning of adults IVET providers are involved in.

1.8. Analytical framework: the three-perspective model applied to the IVET-CVET relationship

The analytical framework to explore the IVET-CVET relationship took as starting point the prior work on developing an analytical framework to analyse VET. Cedefop (2020c) analysed how vocationally oriented education and training has changed in the European Union (and in Iceland and Norway) in the past two decades (1995-2015) and, based on these results, investigated the main challenges and opportunities the VET sector is facing today and may face in the future. The analytical framework, which was further developed in this project and adjusted to fit the IVET-CVET relationship, consisted of three parts.

- (a) Three-perspective model: VET systems can be analysed from three partly overlapping perspectives (Cedefop, 2022a): an epistemological and pedagogical perspective, an education system perspective, and a socioeconomic or labour market perspective. While the three-perspective model has been developed with a focus on initial VET, it does not exclude

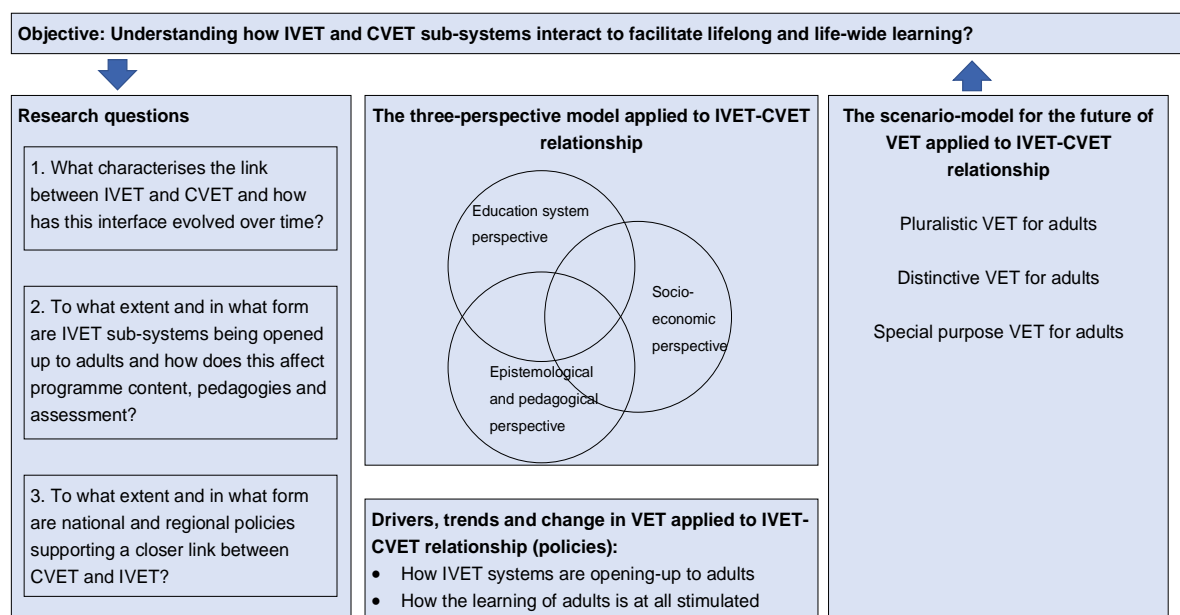
CVET and, within the perspectives, specific dimensions can be further developed that are relevant in analysing the interplay between IVET and CVET. In the education system perspective, first the relationship between IVET and CVET must be identified: in what parts of CVET are IVET providers involved? Where can close relationships between IVET and adult learning be found? In the epistemological and pedagogical perspective, the overlaps in approaches and content between IVET and CVET are examined. What is the character and content of IVET-provided CVET? In what kind of courses are adults enrolled; how are they provided and organised by IVET providers? In the socioeconomic perspective, the focus shifts to factors that explain how the learning of adults is governed and the role IVET providers play in this. This relates to funding of the learning of adults and the policy orientations that support, on the one hand, the opening up of IVET to adults and, on the other hand, stimulate adults to continue learning. The Annex provides a detailed overview of the analytical framework and how the overarching framework was adjusted for the purpose of this study on the relationship between IVET and CVET.

- (b) Drivers, trends and change in VET: for external drivers to change in VET, economic changes and technological developments are mentioned. A distinction can be made 'between broad PESTLE-type drivers on the one hand that exist outside VET (political, environmental, social, technological, legal and economic factors) and the pressures for change or trends that these cause within VET itself. [...] External drivers and the internal changes/trends within VET can be mapped empirically to improve our understanding of VET's response to wider forces (Cedefop 2022d). While this study does not focus on the external and internal drivers directly, it examines policies concerning the IVET-CVET relationship, specifically focusing on reforms that changed how IVET systems support adult learning. When analysing these policies, the drivers are examined in terms of the problem statement, the change process and change markers associated with the introduced policies.
- (c) Scenario model for the future of VET: in line with the *Changing nature and role of VET* scenario model (Cedefop, 2020b), which is also taken as starting point for the Future of VET project, these scenarios are also applied in this study to indicate the direction of travel of IVET systems in relation to opening up to adults. While these scenarios are not a perfect fit when related to the IVET-CVET relationships, they are helpful. The first scenario (pluralistic VET) expresses the idea that there is one skills development system and that distinction between general education, IVET and CVET becomes less relevant. The second scenario (distinctive VET) expresses the idea that there

are strict boundaries between sub-systems, such as general education, IVET and CVET. The third scenario (special purpose VET), expresses the idea that IVET transforms into CVET, finding its specific purpose in solving emerging skills deficits.

Figure 2 provides a summative overview of how the different elements of the analytical framework link to the objective and research questions.

Figure 2. **Summative overview elements of the analytical framework**



Source: Cedefop.

1.9. Structure of the remaining report

The report is further structured into four chapters. Chapter 3 maps the role of IVET providers in the light of the specified orientations to the learning of adults. It will shed light on where IVET providers play a large, significant, limited or no role. Chapter 4 thematises the comparison on IVET-CVET relationships, deepening the analysis of the interplay between IVET and CVET and how IVET systems are opened up to adults. Chapter 5 focuses on the analysis of reforms and developments, indicating the drivers behind developments and the outcomes in terms of how IVET systems are opening up. The final chapter (Chapter 6) presents the conclusions and answers the research questions.

CHAPTER 2.

IVET provider roles in different orientations to the learning of adults

In this chapter, we discuss the role IVET providers play in the different orientations to the learning of adults. First, we focus on their role in VET leading to the acquisition of vocation/occupation-specific skills and not leading to a formal qualification. Second, we review their role in VET leading to a formal qualification; third, we study their role in basic skills provision; and fourth, we review their role as forms of general education tracks. For each Member State we assess whether IVET providers play a large, a limited or no role in these four orientations. Other main providers are discussed per orientation. This chapter is mainly based on desk research, on key resources and country reports drawn up in the Future of VET study; the Changing nature and role of VET study; related ReferNet articles and other overview studies (European Commission and Ecorys, 2019; European Commission, 2018; European Commission, EACEA and Eurydice, 2021).

As the role IVET providers play largely depends on the national context, and particularly the character of the VET system, we further classify Member States according to whether their VET sector is predominantly youth-centred, mixed, or adult-centred. This classification allows us to interpret the research findings on the role IVET providers play in the different orientations of the learning of adults ⁽¹⁰⁾:

- (a) youth-centred systems have more than 60% students younger than 20;
- (b) adult-centred systems have more than 60% of students older than 20;
- (c) mixed systems are between the 60% of students under 20 and the 60% older than 20.

This classification is helpful for raising awareness of the major differences across countries: in a system, where adults already dominate the user group within organisations providing initial VET, the question of whether or how they respond to adult needs is fundamentally different from a situation where only a small number of adults are admitted and most participants are teenagers. However, some caveats apply as there is also the risk that the figures instil the temptation to ignore the complexities involved. To start, the figures may hide compositional effects, with distinct IVET provision for the 15- to 19-year-olds only combined with distinct IVET provision for the 20- to 24-year-olds or older adults. For example, in

⁽¹⁰⁾ The classification is based on the 2019 register based ISCED data (educ_uoe_enrs05 + educ_uoe_enrs08) and is presented in Figure 3.

Germany, apprenticeships in a broad range of occupations are started mainly by teenagers; other occupational fields are practically only for adults who have completed academic general upper secondary education in their adolescence. For youth-centred parts of an IVET system, the question of how to cater for adults remains essential, irrespective of the fact that adults are numerous in the system overall.

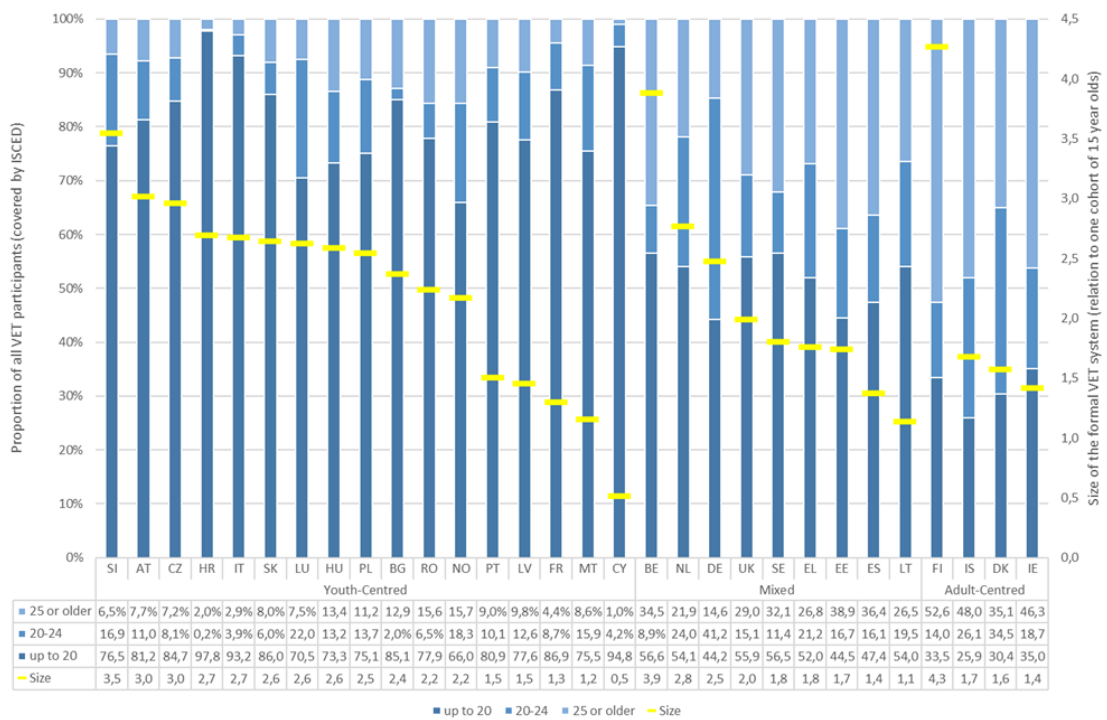
Another key caveat concerns measurement. The statistics refer to the participants within countries' school systems, but the system borders are defined quite differently across countries (sometimes depending on such 'mundane' questions as which types of organisations are obliged to report detailed figures); forms of provision only for adults or perceived as 'second-chance routes' may be included or excluded from the 'school statistics. While this is a long-standing issue, with the missed part of school statistics previously addressed as 'paraformal' education (Chu, 1996), programmes outside regular provision have substantially gained in importance in the past two decades in many countries, particularly with policies aimed at reducing early school leaving and providing the youth guarantee introduced. For example, in Austria, a large part of alternative programmes providing VET for adults are currently not covered by the school statistics reported in Figure 3, so that the UNESCO OECD Eurostat (UOE) figures overstate the youth-centredness of the Austrian VET system (Hefler; Steinheimer and Markowitsch, 2019).

Figure 3 nevertheless underlines that the contributions to adult learning of organisations perceived as belonging to the IVET field are substantial and even outstandingly high in some countries. The latter is even more obvious when not only are participants counted but the duration of VET programmes is taken into consideration as well, with the IVET sector providing mainly long programmes covering hundreds of hours of participation per year. While the contributions of the HE sector to adult learning have already been studied for a long time (Slowey and Schuetze, 2012), the equally important contributions of the VET sector to adult learning need to be considered as they are broadly underestimated and under-researched (Saar; Ure and Holford, 2013). We revisit related issues in Chapter 4.

Figure 3 provides an overview on the youth-centredness/adult-centredness of VET systems in the school year 2019/20. It also includes an indication of the overall size of the VET system, expressed as the ratio of all participants to all 15-year-olds. Both needs to be taken into account. Countries with the largest systems, with a ratio of three or more, include Finland, Belgium, Slovenia, and Austria. In contrast, countries with the smallest formal VET systems, with less than a ratio of 1.5 include Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, France, Spain, Ireland and Latvia.

Countries differ largely with regard to the age composition of their VET systems. Most (considering the EU27 plus NO, IS, UK) have still youth-centred systems by the school year 2019/20. Nine countries have ‘mixed systems’, with between 40 % and 60% of participants being 20 or older: Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Lithuania the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. Four countries show adult-centred systems, with 60% of participants being 20 or older, including Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Ireland.

Figure 3. **Grouping of countries youth-centred, mixed or adult-centred, school year 2019/20: sorted by the relative size of VET systems (ratio of participants to 15-year-olds in 2019)**



NB: Missing values are included in 25 and older (in various countries, only up to 25 is available, however, with nearly no missing values). In some countries, it is confirmed that all missing values are 25+ (e.g. Finland).

Source: ISCED data (educ_uoe_ens05 + educ_uoe_ens08 (Cedefop calculations)).

2.1. Orientation 1: VET leading to vocation/ occupation-specific skills and not to formal qualification

2.1.1. Role of IVET providers in Orientation 1

This orientation (VET leading to acquisition of specific vocation/occupation-specific skills and not leading to a formal qualification) relates to all kind of vocational courses and programmes that do not result in a formally recognised qualification. This can also include specific courses and training workshops. They aim at the acquisition of specific skills and possibly of a credential that has a value in the professional field. These VET courses can be linked to formal VET qualifications in the form of, for instance, specific modules or certificates. They can also include ALMP and more liberal adult education provision. This orientation can also include only providing company-specific skills, relevant for the current employer; such provision can be a significant part of employer-sponsored training. Since some of the non-formal activities lead to certification (e.g. in health and safety or environmental protection), they may include exams; preparing for the exams is an important investment (often requiring considerable amounts of spare time from the employees). General assessment of the role of IVET providers within this orientation shows that the role of IVET providers varies greatly. Some countries have a distinct set of public institutions in place, others make use of IVET providers. However, in almost all countries, private providers, play an important role in offering training that does not lead to a formal qualification. When assessing the country specific information about this orientation, the following overview emerges.

Table 1. **Orientation 1: VET leading to specific vocation/occupation-specific skills and not to a formal qualification**

	IVET providers			
	Limited role	Significant role	Large role	No role
Youth-centred VET system	CZ, IT, NO			AT, BG, CY, FR, HR, HU, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK
Mixed VET system	EE, LT, NL, DE	EL, UK-EN		BE-FL, BE-FR, ES, SE
Adult-centred VET system			FI, IE	DK, IS

Source: Cedefop.

More details about what role IVET providers play in this orientation are provided here below.

IVET providers play a large role: only in Ireland and Finland are IVET providers the main providers of this orientation. In Finland, VET for young people and adults is provided within the same framework with flexible application and admission systems and one coherent funding system for all types of vocational training. This role has remained stable in Finland over the years and even increased as a result of the 2018 reform (Chapter 4).

In Greece and the United Kingdom (England), IVET providers play a significant role in providing VET that does not lead to a formal qualification. In UK-England, this orientation is generally provided by employers themselves or private providers, but the further education (FE) colleges might – if funding is available – also be involved in this type of provision. It very much depends on the FE college, the region and the sector and no overall characterisation can be given. The FE colleges, however, as their core business, provide shorter credit-bearing courses that are also attended by adults. In that sense (blurring orientation 1 and 2), FE colleges play a significant role in orientation 1. In Greece, this orientation is predominantly served by lifelong learning centres (LLCs). In providing programmes, LLCs often cooperate with IVET institutions. For instance, LLCs organise training but the actual training is given by teachers from a vocational school. In both countries, no overall, nation-wide characteristics can be offered since both the FE colleges and the LLCs operate in a decentralised manner. Therefore, some of the FE colleges might contribute more to this orientation than other FE colleges. Similarly, some LLCs cooperate more with IVET institutions than others.

In Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway IVET providers play a limited role in providing VET leading to a non-formal qualification. In most of these countries, there is an interplay between public IVET providers, other State-funded, and private providers in serving this orientation. In Czechia, we see that IVET providers play a role, but this market is mostly served by private providers. In the Netherlands, we observe a shift from employer-provided training to training being provided by both private providers and public IVET providers. In Lithuania, a continuous rebalancing between public VET providers and the private providers is noticeable.

In most countries, IVET providers do not play a role in providing the VET that leads to a non-formal qualification. In all countries studied, private providers are active in this orientation. However, their share of the training market varies greatly. In Austria, Belgium (both FR and FL), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden, IVET providers play no role at all in this orientation. Either the employer (or related labour market stakeholders) or private

providers offer this type of adult learning. These employers might play a role in the IVET system as well through offering apprenticeships, such as in Bulgaria, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria.

2.1.2. Other providers dominant in Orientation 1

In many countries, private training providers play the main role in this orientation. In Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Portugal and Slovakia we see that private providers, including NGOs (non-governmental organisation) and churches, are solely responsible for providing training leading to a non-formal qualification. In other countries, such as Czechia, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway and UK-England, private training providers and IVET providers operate in the same training market. Companies often hire private training businesses to upskill their employees or provide in-house training themselves. Private providers vary greatly in size. For instance, Polish training companies are quite small and offer only specific sectoral training. In contrast, Dutch training companies can be of a significant size and offer training programmes to a great variety of sectors. All these companies have in common that they are often jointly funded by both employer and employee (individual contributions).

As well as public IVET providers and private training providers, there are other public institutions, founded and regulated by the State, that provide VET not leading to a formal qualification. This is the case in Denmark, Cyprus, Latvia, Austria and Slovenia . In Slovenia, a significant part of this orientation-market is provided through publicly funded centres for self-directed learning (CSL), which provide training but free of tuition. They especially target adults that cannot access mainstream education. Programmes from these centres are purely seen as complementary and not held in high esteem by society. In Latvia, non-formal education comes predominantly from private providers, but specific education centres, such as the publicly financed, regional adult education centres, play a large role as well. As well as education leading to a formal qualification, these centres organise programmes that do not lead to formal credentials, but to complete these programmes is seen as valuable in the professional field. Similar, adult education centres operate in Cyprus, making education attractive by offering evening classes with people of the same age. In Austria, non-formal vocational education is predominantly provided by two major networks of organisations, one belonging to the chamber of commerce and one belonging to the chamber of labour. Alongside these social partner affiliated networks, the folk high schools (*Volkshochschulen*), mainly funded at a regional and local level, have assumed a larger responsibility in CVET in the past two decades. The three organisation networks form the three most important members of the conference of adult

education (*KEBÖ*), an organisation mainly used for distributing (overall limited) central State support to organisations providing non-formal adult learning of any kind, general and vocational.

As well as State-funded regulated institutions providing this orientation, there are other (publicly funded) providers that offer liberal non-formal VET according to the idea of public enlightenment. Public enlightenment is characteristic for Northern Europe but plays a role in other parts of Europe as well. Although in most countries these liberal institutes do not often offer specific vocational courses, there are some countries in which vocational programmes form part of the curriculum. In Denmark, in addition to the adult education centres, public enlightenment (*folkeoplysning*) is a value often preached. There is no standard way of participating in *folkeoplysning*, as it takes on different forms and shapes. It is, for instance, offered through voluntary associations, evening schools and online courses. Topics are of a general nature but vocational courses are also on offer. A similar, less widespread phenomenon are the study circles organised in Slovenia. These often consist of only ten people and one trainer and are very active and popular. The range of different types and content of provision offered through various programmes is wide, including vocational training. In Bulgaria, community centres (*chitalishta*) organise VET programmes for adults. *Chitalishta*, are comparable to the liberal folk schools of Northern Europe and Slovenia. Although they mainly focus on liberal education, they also provide some vocational courses.

2.1.3. Conclusion on Orientation 1

Set against the general character of VET systems (youth-centred, mixed, or adult-centred), where IVET providers play a large role in this orientation (e.g. FI), this is reflected in the percentage of adult learners, even though this percentage is based on enrolment in formal programmes (and does not cover the programmes of Orientation 1). The role played by IVET providers very much depends on their character and their position in a skills development system in a country. Several aspects can be mentioned that relate to an increasing role of IVET providers within this orientation. Both in the Netherlands and Lithuania (Tütlys and Vaitkutė, 2021), a push towards modularisation of formal (IVET) qualifications open possibilities for a higher engagement of IVET providers in serving this training market. While still dominated by private providers, public IVET providers are increasingly encouraged to participate. Current discussions in Norway concern the criticism that the VET system, offering only full qualifications, is less attractive to adult learning. This tendency towards modularisation also means that Orientation 1 and Orientation 2 become increasingly connected as is already the case in Finland and UK-England. In other countries however, Orientation 1 is strictly separated from the formal IVET

qualifications. Examples of this can be found in Czechia where company and privately funded training is clearly separated from that leading to a formal IVET qualification as included in the NSK.

The market perspective in adult learning is most visible in this orientation: here IVET providers operate in the same market as private training companies. Where the legitimacy of programmes and certificates from IVET providers is often based on the institutional status of the institutes, the legitimacy of the programmes and certificates offered by private training providers depends greatly on the status of the provider in the professional and occupational field. There are also different quality assurance frameworks and registries that contribute to legitimising those private training providers and their programmes and certificates ⁽¹¹⁾. In other countries, IVET providers do not play a role because this type of provision is offered by a separate type of adult learning organisation, hence they lack the mandate to operate in this orientation.

In many countries there is strict separation of the private training market and the VET system, making it nearly impossible for IVET providers to operate on the private training market. In countries where this separation is not so strict, such as the Netherlands, how IVET providers that receive public funding can operate on the private training market (and compete with training providers not receiving public funding) comes with careful assessment of whether public resources are not used in the competition with private providers. Ensuring an equal level playing field forces many IVET providers to set up a separate (private) training organisation that operates in the private market. Partnership approaches with private providers may

⁽¹¹⁾ Country examples from Croatia, the Netherlands and Portugal. Croatia has an approval system for non-formal education providers. This means that different programmes have been approved by individual ministries but are not subject to approval or quality monitoring procedures as is the case with formal adult education programmes; they may not award officially recognised certificates (*javna isprava*). This approval process is not mandatory. However, many Croatian private providers undergo the approval process since it increases the esteem of the programme. In Portugal, a similar attempt to streamline non-formal education is being implemented through the integrated system of information and management of the education and training programmes (*sistema integrado de informação e gestão da oferta educativa e formativa*, SIGO). Providers, which are often private, can register issued certificates at SIGO. Again, this has no formal value but companies that register their awarded certifications are said to deliver better education. In the Netherlands, there are various quality seals for private training providers offering non-regulated qualifications such as the [NRTQ Quality label](#) (OECD, 2019, pp. 19–20); and the [Netherlands qualifications framework \(NLQF\)](#) (OECD, 2019, p. 13) all improving the esteem of the privately provided training.

be sought to provide training in specific sectors ⁽¹²⁾ (Ministerie van Onderwijs, 2021b).

2.2. Orientation 2: VET leading to a formal qualification

2.2.1. Role of IVET providers in Orientation 2

This orientation relates to VET programmes at ISCED level 2, 3, and 4 (EQF 2-4). The aim is to obtain a formal education qualification, allowing further learning as well as preparing for labour market re-entry or increasing opportunities for higher level jobs or shifting jobs between sectors. This can also include higher level VET: ISCED 5 (EQF 5) or higher, aiming to obtain a higher (vocational) education formal qualification, opening up further formal learning pathways. Programmes can be organised in an integrated way with IVET or organised separately for adults, having a distinct qualification and delivery structure. Some of the ISCED 5 qualifications build directly on a specific IVET programme on ISCED 3 level. However, they require several years of professional experience as an admission requirement. When assessing the provision of VET leading to a formal qualification, the following overview emerges:

Table 2. Orientation 2: VET leading to a formal qualification

	IVET providers			
	Limited role	Significant role	Large role	No role
Youth-centred VET system	LV	AT, FR, HR, HU, NO, PL, RO	BG, CZ, LU, MT, PT, SI	CY, IT, SK
Mixed VET system	SE	DE, ES, LT, NL	EE, UK-EN	BE-FL, EL
Adult-centred VET system	DK		IE, FI, IS	

Source: Cedefop.

Before discussing the role of IVET providers in this orientation, in many countries IVET is generally open to adult learning (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia,

⁽¹²⁾ See for instance VET institution Aventus working together with a private provider Litop in the manufacturing sector (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2021b).

Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and UK-England). IVET being accessible to adults in these countries does not necessarily mean that it is offered in an attractive way and that there are (financial) support structures in place for adults to enrol in regular IVET programmes. In many countries, such as Germany, CVET is typically regarded as a private investment decision for individuals and employers rather than the State. In contrast, Estonia offers free continuous education and France has set up a system of individual learning accounts. Further details about the role IVET providers play in offering VET leading to a formal qualification follow below.

IVET providers play a large role in Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and UK-England. Most of those countries, albeit with a great deal of variety, offer classes tailored to the needs of adults e.g. by offering evening classes or offering the possibility to follow a programme part-time. In Finland for instance, the 2018 reform deliberately intended that young learners and adults will learn together. Luxembourg tries to stimulate learning by organising evening classes and has different admission criteria for adults than for young learners, making it easier for them to access further learning possibilities. Luxembourg set up the national school for adults (*Ecole national pour adultes, ENAD*) in 2011. As well as dropouts, ENAD also targets adults wishing for a more tailored educational approach. The pedagogical approach is altered to the needs of adults, such as education organised in small groups and including social, general and practical skills. In Ireland, this orientation is usually offered by the ETBs (education and training boards), which are IVET providers. Also, ETBs offer PLC (post-leaving) courses, specifically designed for school leavers and adults. Within PLC courses, learners are sometimes exempted from modules or specific parts of the programme when they can prove that they have already mastered the associated skills during their working life career. In contrast to offering special programmes, there are also countries in which the offer is not adapted to the needs of adults. Bulgarian IVET is completely open to adults, but – excluding some local initiatives – programmes are not tailored to their needs. Providing programmes designed for adults is left to the private market.

An example of a VET system that is primarily adult-centred is the UK-England. Here, further education is oriented to the learning of adults. The distinction between IVET and CVET in this regard is difficult to make and the development of this whole sector needs to be placed in a historical perspective (Box 2).

Box 2. Historical perspective on IVET/CVET in UK-England

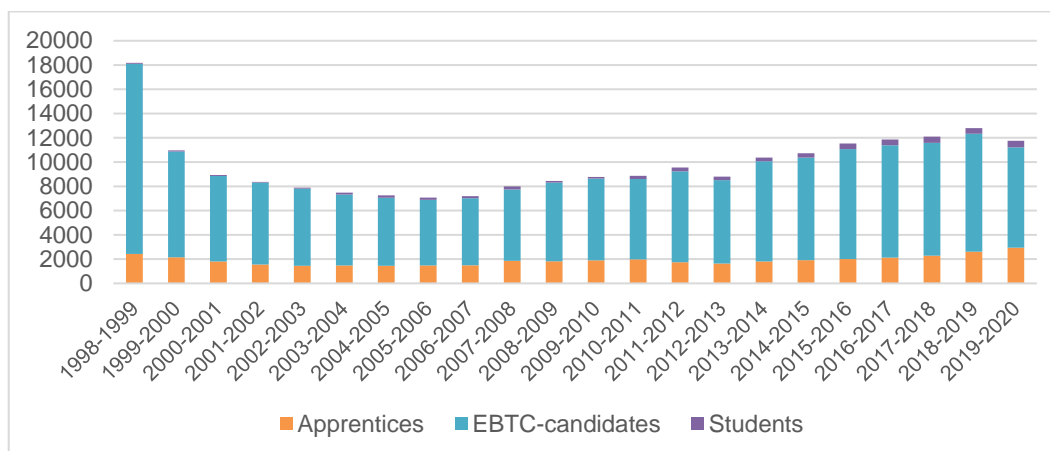
Historically, training – both IVET and CVET – were funded and organised by industry (Gambin, 2017). From the 1970s onwards, government took more of an interest in the development of training with, among other things, the creation of an external training market for the delivery of skills. This stemmed from concerns that country's system of skills supply was underdeveloped compared with better performing economies. To stimulate skill supply required IVET and CVET to be wrested from industry's control, achieved by developing an external training market. Rather than employers delivering training, training was provided by further education colleges and private providers which were publicly funded to deliver programmes leading to nationally recognised vocational qualifications.

Source: WA2 country report UK-England.

IVET providers play a significant role in providing this orientation in Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania and Spain. In these countries, IVET providers offer a significant number of qualifications and train a significant number of adults in such programmes, but many adults also obtain a VET qualification through different routes and providers. In the Netherlands, in 2020 a total of 1.7 million adults (aged 25 to 65) participated in lifelong learning (covering all kinds of learning) (Cbs, 2021). Of these, nearly 700 000 are enrolled in formal programmes, a large share in general education or HE programmes, often not State-supported. Around 150 000 of these learn in public formal IVET and private formal IVET provision. The total number of 25+ students in public formal IVET programmes was 65 000 in 2019-20 (Cbs, 2020), the other 85 000 learn in private training institutions. Formal adult education in Croatia is regulated by the adult education act and covers programmes leading to qualifications up to level EQF 5 for learners older than 15. Formal adult education is provided by public and private State-recognised and regulated providers. Officially recognised providers are subject to inspection of the Education Ministry. There are over 600 adult education providers registered in Croatia ⁽¹³⁾. One third are IVET schools, others are institutions founded by the State, regional/local governments and other legal entities. In Norway, besides regular IVET qualifications open to adults, a separate stream is managed by employers themselves (the experience-based trade certification). Figure 4 demonstrates the number of candidates (25 and older) obtaining the trade certificate, illustrating its importance.

⁽¹³⁾ Andragogical general data registry (*Andragoški zajednički upisnik podataka, AZUP*), data from October 2019.

Figure 4. Norway: craft or journeyman's certificates



Source: Statistics Norway, Statistikkbanken.

In all these countries, IVET providers play a significant role in Orientation 2. They, and a wide range of other providers, serve this orientation themselves, or institutions, set up to educate adults, work in close cooperation with them. In both ways, knowledge available from IVET providers is used to educate adults. Education is tailored to the needs of adults in various ways, also making use of validation of prior learning.

In Denmark, Latvia and Sweden, IVET providers play a limited role in serving Orientation 2. Although Danish mainstream IVET is open to adults, there exists a parallel system set up for them: VET for adults (EUV) is a separate pathway offering the low-skilled a goal-oriented route to becoming a skilled worker. EUV mirrors the mainstream education system that includes three types of programmes at upper secondary level. Adults with at least 2 years of work experience can be exempted from the basic programme and internship (see Chapter 5 for an detailed description). In Latvia, formal vocational adult education is provided by evening schools, adult education centres, lifelong learning centres and vocational schools that also offer IVET. Although it is possible to follow education at a vocational school, most adults opt for one of the other three options, presumably because they tailor their education to the needs of adults (Daija, 2016). In Sweden, every municipality is responsible for providing Orientation 2, resulting in a multitude of providers that sometimes work together with IVET providers, sharing locations and with teachers working at both institutions.

There are countries where IVET providers do not play a role in delivering CVET. This is the case in Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Slovakia. Here, separate systems are set up to serve the (re-) qualification of adults.

2.2.2. Other providers dominant in Orientation 2

In countries where IVET providers play a significant, a limited, or no role, other providers play a role in the (re-) qualification of adults. These can be formal structures outside the IVET sector, mandated by the government, or private training providers that offer formal qualifications.

Besides allowing adults to access the mainstream system of vocational training or leaving this part of education to private providers, various countries have set up separate systems aimed at catering for the needs of adults. Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Latvia, Poland and Romania have separate, public, training institutes responsible for providing public adult education. This does not mean that adults do not have access to mainstream IVET: they often coexist. Denmark's adult education system is the most exclusively designed to cater for the needs of adults, which results in the highest participation rate in adult and continuing training in Europe. Similar, less extensive, initiatives have been set up in other countries. In Greece, evening vocational lyceums have been set up to cater for the needs of adults, including exemption from courses when a student shows proven competence. In Belgian Wallonia, there is a system of social advancement training with 162 training centres (*établissements d'enseignement de promotion sociale*). Their courses are often linked to specific professional profiles but lead to qualifications officially recognised in the education system. Several universities also offer programmes in flexible modes accessible for adults offering programmes *à horaire décalé*, mainly referring to classes taking place during the evening. Practical training centres have been founded in Poland offering courses intended to cater for the needs of adults. Adults can also obtain formal qualifications by completing e-learning courses overseen by the Ministry of Education.

In several countries, formal VET qualifications are obtained by adults through private training providers. In Cyprus, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Spain, private providers play an essential role in offering vocational training. In all these countries, private providers are monitored/assessed by the public services to guarantee quality of education. There are funding arrangements in place to cover (part of) the costs of employers and individuals.

2.2.3. Conclusion on Orientation 2

IVET programmes are open to adults in most countries, but this does not mean that adults are explicitly targeted, that programmes are designed for adult learners, nor that adult participation is financially supported. IVET providers play an important role in offering formal VET programmes and qualifications, but not in all

countries. There is a clear difference between the countries that have a youth-centred or an adult-centred VET system. In countries such as Finland, Ireland and UK-England, which have an adult-centred system, the role of IVET providers is also large. In countries where IVET providers play no role or a limited role (despite being adult-centred such as Denmark), the provision of VET for adults is mandated to other (public) organisation such as a separate system of adult education providers. There are also countries where IVET providers play a large role, despite the VET system being more youth-centred (Bulgaria, Czechia, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal and Slovenia). Here, the participation of adults in formal VET programmes is limited but those that are enrolled are in programmes from IVET providers. The legitimacy of the VET qualifications offered is clearly linked to the formal task IVET providers are given within the initial education system.

One development that is noticeable is the blurring of boundaries between Orientation 1 and Orientation 2, where it becomes more difficult to make a distinction between formal VET qualifications and vocational courses and programmes not leading to a formally recognised qualification. Training programmes which were provided outside of the formal system (i.e. provided by private providers; non-formal programmes) are increasingly integrated into national qualifications frameworks (NQF) and through this receive more formal recognition. Examples of opening towards non-regulated/private qualifications can be found in Denmark, France, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, and Sweden (Cedefop, 2022b). In some countries separate sectors are merged into one (for instance in Lithuania, where the PES offer was integrated into the CVET offer). Formal VET programmes are increasingly modularised and broken down in smaller units that can also be taken independently. The latter can also be seen in the emergence of microcredentials.

An important aspect in this orientation is the use of validation of prior learning in obtaining a qualification. The Norwegian experience-based trade certification (EBTC) (*praksiskandidatordningen*) is a clear example, allowing people who can document long, varied and relevant work experience (equalling 25% longer practice than for a regular apprentice, normally 5 years) to register for the vocational trade examination, usually after taking a shorter theoretical course (Reegård and Rogstad, 2018). Candidates do not need to pass general subjects, like Norwegian and history, but they must have passed an exam pertaining to their own vocational field before taking a craft- or journeyman's exam (*fag- eller svenneprøve*). In Czechia, linked to the National register of vocational qualifications (NSK), validation of non-formal and informal learning processes is offered to adults to obtain their vocational qualification. Portugal is a particularly

interesting case considering the validation of prior learning (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed description).

2.3. Orientation 3: basic skills training

This relates to courses aimed at solving a deficiency in specific basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and digital skills. This can include training courses being part of active labour market policies offered by VET providers and personal or social learning courses offered by VET providers. The basic skills component of IVET programmes is often hidden and difficult to observe, but many programmes preparing for the acquisition of IVET qualifications at ISCED 2 or 3, include substantial parts of targeted adult base skills training; major gaps in such skills can undermine the chances of passing final examinations and earning the relevant qualifications. At the same time, in adult basic education there is a trend to work towards a blend of general and vocational skills, as participants are often more motivated to stay with the programmes if they can immediately apply some of their learning to their day-to-day work ⁽¹⁴⁾. When assessing the country-specific information about this orientation, the following overview emerges.

Table 3. Orientation 3: basic skills training

IVET providers				
	Limited role	Significant role	Large role	No role
Youth-centred VET system	FR, IT, LU, MT, NO, PT			AT, BG, CY, CZ, HR, HU, LV, PL, RO, SI, SK
Mixed VET system	ES, EL, NL, UK-EN			BE-FL, BE-FR, DE, EE, LT, SE
Adult-centred VET system	DK, FI			IE, IS

Source: Cedefop.

The provision of basic skills is not often associated with VET. In many countries such skills are provided by secondary schools active in general education or specific adult learning centres or institutions. However, there are some exceptions.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Examples include dedicated programmes in Germany [Arbeitsplatzorientierte Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung Erwachsener – Projektübersicht zum Förderschwerpunkt \(vhs-rlp.de\)](#) or Switzerland's [Besser Jetzt](#).

IVET providers play a limited role in serving this orientation in Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Finland, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and UK-England. In most of these countries IVET institutions support this orientation through separate institutes that deliver this training. For instance, in Portugal, basic skills training is offered through the *qualifica* centres and these centres can be housed in IVET providers (see Box 3 for more detailed information on Portugal). In Luxembourg, basic skills training is organised at various locations, including vocational schools. In Italy, IVET institutions also provide locations for basic skills training. Provincial centres for adult education (*Centro provinciale per l'istruzione degli adulti* CPIA) offer language and ICT courses and also offer evening classes in secondary State schools. The largest provider of Maltese basic skills training is the Directorate for lifelong learning in the Ministry of Education and Employment (MEDE), sometimes cooperating with MCAST, one of the IVET providers on the islands ⁽¹⁵⁾. Courses are organised in local councils, community centres or in MCAST institutions and include numeracy, literacy, ICT, other forms of basic digital training and a wide array of languages. Although the role of MCAST is marginal, it is one example of an IVET provider contributing to basic skills training (Mayo, 2017).

Box 3. Basic skills training in Portugal

Basic skills training (*competências de base*), can be offered at vocational schools in combination with vocational training with a focus on adults with low-level qualifications. Adults are trained in literacy, numeracy and digital competences. Portuguese language courses are provided by public schools, (*Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional*, IEFP) vocational training centres and *Qualifica* centres. The idea is to offer adults the necessary competences to enter an EFA (*cursos de educação e formação para adultos*) programme or start a RVCC process.

Following basic skills training, learners are encouraged to follow an EFA programme, aiming to contribute to the development of adult personal, social, scientific and cultural competences. Various modules with various possibilities of obtaining a basic skills certificate can be followed. For instance, those attending the module learning with autonomy (*aprender com autonomia*) can obtain a basic education certification. In practice, we see that many adults who completed basic skills training continue to follow an EFA programme, so such training can almost be seen as integral to EFA, or EFA can be seen as a logic continuation of learning (*Vocational education and training in Portugal*, 2021).

Source: Case study reports.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Directorate for lifelong learning in the Ministry of Education and Employment

In Sweden and the Netherlands, municipalities are responsible for providing basic skills training. Since the 1990s, Swedish municipalities have had the option to put adult education (including basic skills training) out to tender and contract different providers, or provide adult education themselves. In some municipalities, basic skills training is provided by IVET providers. A similar process towards a competitive market is taking place in the Netherlands. Until 2015, Dutch municipalities were obliged to provide adult education through VET institutions. After a law change in 2015, municipalities gained more freedom in offering different types of adult education. Sweden and the Netherlands are the countries in which basic skills training is put out to tender, resulting in a wide range of providers, including IVET providers.

There are examples of IVET providers playing a role in providing Orientation 3. However, in most countries, this is dealt with either by general secondary schools or by institutions set up to improve literacy or other basic skills. Private providers exist, but do not play a major role. A few examples are provided below.

- (a) In Latvia, adult (evening) schools are the main providers of basic skills education and mainly offer courses on basic literacy and numeracy. More popular are non-formal ICT courses, often provided by private companies or through programmes that are internationally funded (Maslo and Golubeva, 2017).
- (b) In Bulgaria, basic skills training is provided by general education schools and *Chitalishta*, cultural centres comparable with the folkschools of Northern Europe and Slovenia. The evening courses provided by *Chitalishta* are not intended to prepare adults for further (vocational) education; the aim is to provide participants with knowledge that helps with everyday life.
- (c) In Malta, besides what is offered by the Ministry (also through MCAST), there are several NGOs, often operating at a parish level, which provide basic skills training. The catholic church is the most important provider, sometimes combining education with theological instruction.
- (d) In Norway, study associations and Skills Norway (*Kompetence Norge*) play a key role in providing this orientation by offering evening courses to people from all ages and with a special focus on language training for immigrants. In Oslo and other large cities, upper secondary vocational schools can be involved in delivering training to immigrants.

Denmark's parallel adult education system is responsible for providing basic skills training. Preparatory adult education (*Forbedredende Volkseundervisnin, FVU*) targets adults in need of extra training in literacy and numeracy skills. FVU is offered via three types of courses:

- (a) FVU-start, aimed at immigrants that wish to improve their Danish;

- (b) FVU-reading;
- (c) FVU-mathematics.

Courses are free and teaching is performed in small groups varying from two to six persons. Adult education centres are the main providers of these courses, but they may be offered by other educational institutions as well (Rasmussen, 2017).

When comparing the role of IVET providers in this orientation and the general character of VET systems (youth-centred, mixed, or adult-centred), it is clear that these two do not correlate. The only countries where IVET providers play some role in basic skills training (Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain) can be found in youth-centres, mixed, and adult-centred systems. Geographic distribution, or a distribution linked to social welfare State regimes, is observed in which Southern European and Nordic countries are overrepresented compared to Anglo-Saxon, central European and Eastern European Member States. The legitimacy in this orientation is also related to the association with the initial education system and the social, public task of VET providers to train the low-skilled and those in need of further skills development at lower levels. It can be concluded that IVET providers play only a limited role in offering Orientation 3, often only working together by providing a location for education. Sometimes, cooperation goes further; in the Portugal case this involves prompting students to start a validation of prior learning/experience process. Many countries have separate institutes that are responsible for Orientation 3.

2.4. **Orientation 4: general education tracks (academic tracks and second chance)**

This orientation relates to formal qualifications for adult learners that are either second-chance programmes or programmes that are aimed at obtaining access to HE. When assessing the country specific information about this orientation, the following overview emerges.

Table 4. **Orientation 4: General education tracks**

IVET providers				
	Limited role	Significant role	Large role	No role
Youth-centred VET system		CY, HU, MT	CZ, HR, LV	AT, FR, IT, LU, PT, RO, NO, SI, SK
Mixed VET system	DE		EE, ES, NL, UK-EN	BE-FL, BE-FR, EL, LT, SE
Adult-centred VET system	FI			DK, IE, IS

Source: Cedefop.

The overview shows that only in a few countries are IVET providers involved in offering general education tracks and second-chance education.

IVET providers play a large role in providing this orientation in Czechia, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Netherlands and UK-England. In the Netherlands, second-chance education for adults is provided through the VAVO (*Voortgezet algemeen volwassenonderwijs*). VAVO is connected to the ROCs which also function as IVET providers. Education is tailored to the needs of the learners: examination is spread out over the year, classes take place in the evening and weekends. In Czechia, publicly funded courses for adults to attain basic skills at lower secondary education level are open to persons who dropped out of compulsory attendance at a basic school (*základní škola*) before completing it. Both primary schools and upper (vocational) secondary schools (*střední školy*) can organise courses aimed at acquiring elementary education with a focus on basic skills. To provide these courses, the upper secondary school in question must be authorised by the regional authority. In UK-England, IVET providers offer more academic second-chance education for adults. In further education colleges adults can obtain certificates in general subjects that together qualify as a general upper secondary level qualification. Also, private providers can offer this type of adult learning. Croatian second-chance education is conducted based on a regular education programme with some adaptations to the needs of adults. The forms of classes most used are consultation-tutoring and correspondence-consultation classes. Education is offered by vocational schools to encourage students to continue (vocational) education after completing the second-chance programme (*Vocational education and training in Croatia: short description, 2020*).

In Cyprus, Hungary and Malta, IVET providers play a significant role in providing this orientation. In Cyprus, the evening technical schools (ETS), supervised by the Department of Secondary Technical Education, offer second-chance vocational education to adults. There are two ETS on the island and they often work together with IVET institutions. They operate in urban areas and offer full-time educational programmes with the aim of integrating early school leavers

into society and the labour market. IVET providers play a significant role in contributing to this orientation since teachers may work at different institutes, including the evening technical schools, so similar education is taught at different institutions (Korelli, Y., 2016). In Malta, there are at least five institutions that provide full-time second-chance education: MCAST, the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS), the Foundation for Educational Services (FES), the Directorate of Lifelong Learning (DLL) and the Higher Secondary School at Naxxar. MCAST is also an IVET provider and provides the second-chance programme with some vocational hands-on components. MCAST organises full-time and part-time programmes, tailored to the needs of adults (*Vocational education and training in Malta: short description*, 2017). In Hungary, there is a similar combination of vocational hands-on components with general education tracks. This orientation is served by primary, general secondary and vocational schools. It is available as full-time, part-time or distance education. The aim is to lead to the same formal certificate or qualification as regular school programmes. By combining vocational elements with general education tracks, second-chance education becomes more attractive to adults since it is more relatable to working-life experience.

In Germany and Finland, IVET providers play a limited role in offering second-chance education. In Germany, there are various pathways for those who did not manage to obtain a basic qualification. For instance, school-based VET and dual apprenticeships are possible. These pathways are particularly aimed at those who did not manage to enter an upper-secondary education general or vocational track. The school-leaving certificate for adults (second-chance programmes) is provided by adult education centres or private providers. IVET schools can be contracted at regional level to be involved.

Comparing the role of IVET providers in this orientation and the general character of VET systems (youth-centred, mixed, or adult-centred) shows that it is mainly in countries that have a youth-centred VET system where IVET providers play a role in offering general secondary education (second-chance) programmes to adults (Czechia, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary and Malta). In adult-centred systems, the focus is more on VET programmes; second-chance programmes are offered by general education schools. The legitimacy in this orientation is also related to the association with the initial education system and the social, public task the VET providers have been given to provide second-chance programmes. In most countries, IVET providers do not play a role in providing this orientation, which, instead, is served by separate centres set up for this need or second-chance education is taught at general schools. This is the case for Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Sweden.

2.5. Summary overview

The above mapping of the different orientations in the learning of adults and the role of IVET providers offers an overview of patterns across European Member States. In some countries the IVET providers are dominant in all or most orientations (Ireland and Finland), in others they are mostly dominant in formal programmes (VET and general tracks (Czechia, Spain, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Hungary and Malta). Only in Greece are IVET providers a dominant player in non-formal orientations. There are also some countries where IVET providers do not play a role in any of the orientations (Belgium and Slovakia). The role played by IVET providers does not correlate with adult participation in education and training in general, or more specifically in VET. Countries where participation is high and the role of IVET providers is limited, have set up separate systems to serve adult learners (e.g. Belgium, Denmark, Germany).

Figure 5. **Synthetic overview of European Member States and four orientations in the learning of adults associated with IVET providers**

EU MS		Participation statistics	Orientation (0= no role, 3= large role of IVET providers)				Totals		
		Participation in VET % 20+	1 (non-formal VET)	2 (formal VET)	3 (non-formal basic skills)	4 (formal general ed.)	Total non-formal	Total formal	Total
Youth-Centred	HR	2,2	0	2	0	3	0	5	5
	CY	5,2	0	0	0	2	0	2	2
	IT	6,8	1	0	1	0	2	0	2
	FR	13,1	0	2	1	0	1	2	3
	SK	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	BG	14,9	0	3	0	0	0	3	3
	CZ	15,3	1	3	0	3	1	6	7
	AT	18,8	0	2	0	0	0	2	2
	PT	19,1	0	3	1	0	1	3	4
	RO	22,1	0	2	0	0	0	2	2
	LV	22,4	0	1	0	3	0	4	4
	SI	23,3	0	3	0	0	0	3	3
	MT	24,5	0	3	1	2	1	5	6
	PL	24,9	0	2	0	0	0	2	2
Mixed	HU	26,7	0	2	0	2	0	4	4
	LU	29,5	0	3	1	0	1	3	4
	NO	34	1	2	1	1	2	2	4
	BE	43,4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	SE	43,5	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
	UK	44,1	2	3	1	3	3	6	9
	NL	45,9	1	2	1	3	2	5	7
	LT	46	1	2	0	0	1	2	3
	EL	48	2	0	1	0	3	0	3
	ES	52,6	0	2	1	3	1	5	6
Adult-centred	EE	55,5	1	3	0	3	1	6	7
	DE	55,8	1	2	0	1	1	3	4
	IE	65	3	3	0	0	3	3	6
	FI	66,5	3	3	1	1	4	4	8
	DK	69,6	0	1	1	0	1	1	2
IS	74,1	0	3	0	0	0	3	3	

Source: Cedefop, based on WA2 country studies and additional sources (Eurostat: TRNG_LFSE_01; ISCED data (educ_uoe_enrs05 + educ_uoe_enrs08 (Cedefop calculations)).

Governance can affect whether IVET providers are open to adults. As indicated in a European Commission study (European, 2017, 47), IVET teachers are considered civil servants in many countries (Belgium, Germany, Greece, France, Cyprus), with rights agreed between the (regional) State and the teachers'

unions. Analysis based on additional sources ⁽¹⁶⁾ shows that in around half of the education systems IVET teachers are civil servants or public employees, employed by national authorities. In those education systems, IVET providers also operate to a large degree under national authorities. In the other half of the education systems, teachers are not civil servants and teaching staff is hired by individual IVET providers (usually under collective agreements made between the VET providers and the teachers' unions), implying that these IVET providers have more organisational autonomy.

The governance and status of the IVET teachers matter to engaging in CVET. However this is not straightforward: being an independent VET organisation, or being fully governed by the State, can both lead to more attention to adults as can be seen in the table above. In education systems where IVET providers have a more independent position, there is more liberty and flexibility for them to offer provision to adults and to access specific training markets, also in competition with private providers (see as key examples, organisations in the Netherlands and UK-England). In contrast, education systems where IVET providers operate under national authorities might have the benefit that, once governments decide that IVET providers play a particular role in the learning of adults, this is more holistically rolled-out. In France, for instance, IVET teachers have the status of civil servant and, given that IVET providers have been given a mandate to offer learning to adults, it seems to favour the involvement of IVET providers. In Greece, however, while teachers are also civil servants, this seems to hamper the involvement of IVET providers in adult learning. Overall, in countries where IVET teachers are not civil servants, the role of IVET providers in providing learning to adults in all four orientations, seems to be larger. This can be illustrated by Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands and UK-England.

⁽¹⁶⁾ There is no comprehensive overview of what the employment status of teachers in VET in Europe is. Some information can be found in *European Commission study on teachers and trainers in work-based learning* (European Commission, 2017); *Cedefop 2015 thematic overview of teachers and trainers in IVET* (Cedefop, 2015); and *Cedefop 2019 database on vocational education and training in Europe* (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2019).

CHAPTER 3.

Framework of a cross-country comparison of the IVET-CVET link

This chapter aims at providing a summary of the available information on IVET and CVET and how they are linked by organisations being active in both fields, across the six countries selected for the case studies. This sets a backdrop against which the selected policy reforms studied in Chapter 5 can be studied. Section 4.2 provides the framework applied for the comparison, followed by the accounts for the six countries selected. Section 4.3 discusses the commonalities and differences between the countries studied.

3.1. Comparative approach

In the following section, the (changing) interplay of IVET and CVET is compared in six selected countries: Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal and Finland. The interpenetrating organisation of IVET/CVET, as well as their embeddedness within the employment system, differ markedly across the countries compared. Therefore, a key task relates to identifying and capturing the relevant differences in play across countries, thereby – by the ‘comparison of the non-comparable’ (Maurice, 2000) – becoming aware of the often unique constellations present in the countries studied, with this aspect remaining unidentified outside of a comparative approach.

IVET and CVET alike show an exceptionally high level of variety across the EU27. By contrast, for primary, general lower and upper secondary education, countries’ education systems in Europe – and beyond – share fundamental structural commonalities, significant differences notwithstanding (Baker and LeTendre, 2005; Benavot; Braslavsky and Truong, 2006; Schofer and Meyer, 2005). How to capture the variety of European IVET systems, including the role of work-based learning or apprenticeship programmes, forms a key task both of Cedefop’s prior work on the changing nature and role of vocational education and training (VET) (Cedefop, 2020c) and the current *Future of VET* project. The ways in which CVET is organised and understood feature in the differences between IVET systems as well as in their own right. IVET and CVET represent not only elements of the education and adult learning systems, they also interact with a country’s wider employment and skill formation systems, with different systems of organising work and governing industrial relations. In short, IVET and CVET

systems are shaping and are shaped by their wider institutional environment, posing the questions about their mutual dependencies captured by terms as 'institutional complementarity' (Hall and Soskice, 2001) or path dependency (Pierson, 2004). To sum up, for studying the interplay of IVET and CVET across countries, a framework capable of capturing at least a broader selection of key differences within countries' 'institutional packages' (Mills et al., 2008) across countries is indispensable.

While the countries selected represent a wide range of different cases, at least for some key dimensions, there are also similarities observed (e.g. regarding the importance of apprenticeships, welfare State arrangements). The remainder of the section introduces a framework for analysing selected key differences in the IVET-CVET link across countries.

3.1.1. Capturing national differences in the ways IVET is linked to CVET

In the following, a framework for comparing the IVET-CVET link is outlined. The following key dimensions are captured by the framework.

Relative importance of IVET (particularly apprenticeships) within upper secondary education: countries differ greatly regarding whether upper secondary education is dominated by general (academic) or by vocational programmes, as well as whether the latter are seen as subordinate to the former. The quantitative relationship between general and vocational tracks at upper secondary level had been subject to change due to the trend towards universal (or even mandatory) participation within upper secondary education. It is of key importance whether general or vocational programmes take in students who would have dropped out of schooling at an earlier moment in the development of the education system.

The normative expectation of education policy-making that practically no one should drop out of schooling and stay low-qualified, that is not completing upper secondary education as expressed by the early school leaver concept. For 2030, the EU has set the target of only 9% of early school leavers (European Council, 2021). The indicator reflects – as the deviation from the expected – both the proportion of young adults having completed upper secondary education on time within initial education and the proportion of young adults currently in an alternative form of upper education; this includes many IVET programmes designed for young people not succeeding in mainstream provision (also as part of programmes of the youth guarantee). Thus, the proportion of early school leavers (18-24) can be observed as a supporting indicator, as it expresses the proportion of young adults who could not succeed within the systems of upper secondary education, general or vocational, and are currently not included in any form of alternative education, preparing for acquiring an upper secondary education at any later stage.

Youth-centredness of IVET and the role of (young) adults in VET: countries may organise IVET mainly as an alternative to general tracks of upper secondary education for 15 to 19-year-olds, or may foresee IVET mainly after the completion of upper secondary education and as an alternative to HE, implying also that IVET is not burdened with tasks related to the socialisation of adolescents. Fundamental programmes of IVET for adults, providing an equivalent to IVET programmes for adolescents (15-19) or young adults (20-24) can be provided at any point of the life course. IVET for adults can support escaping a position of disadvantage (dropout), making a transition from one sector to another (e.g. from an occupational field with surplus workers to a field experiencing a shortage of skilled labour) or preparing for demanding occupational roles. For migrants, these programmes might provide access to skilled work. Adults in fundamental programmes form a specific segment within formal CVET. Where IVET is mainly an alternative to HE (after general secondary education), access numbers in HE need to be taken into consideration as well for achieving a full picture.

Profile of IVET: the composition of IVET, from less demanding and distinctive programmes, can differ a lot, with countries where IVET programmes with a distinctive core and high learning demands are quantitatively dominating, as opposed to countries where most VET programmes are not very demanding and have no distinctive profile. In the latter case, IVET might be dominated by programmes for students, who have not been accepted for, or who have dropped out of, general programmes, so that IVET provision is mainly seen as a second chance and not equal to general programmes. Countries may also develop fine-grained, pluralistic IVET systems with programmes ranging from elementary, rather unspecific ones to highly demanding and distinctive ones.

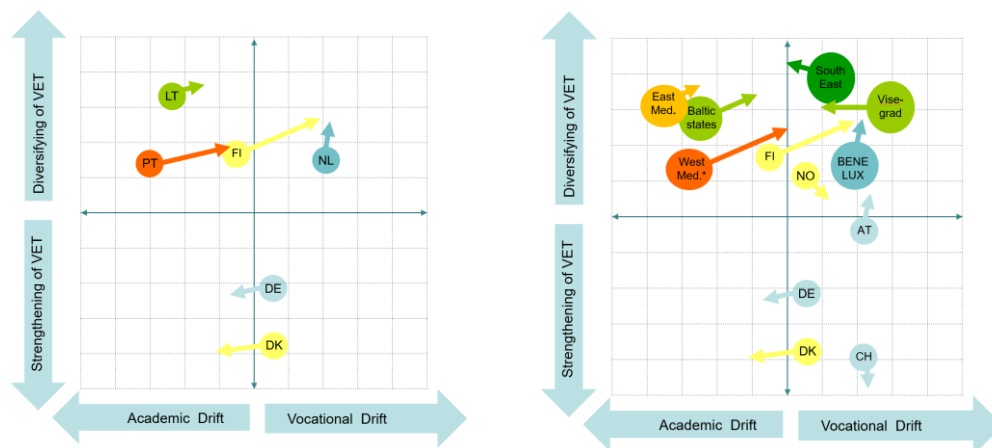
Level of activity and composition of CVET: countries differ fundamentally regarding the level of participation of their population in CVET; the role of formal and non-formal CVET also differ. Although data limitations do not permit thorough investigation, the roles of different types of providers of non-formal CVET, including the participants' employers, differ. The role of institutions active in formal education within CVET is also fundamentally different.

It is further required to consider the recent trajectories of the countries' VET systems, as these might have changed significantly in the past two decades. For addressing these changes, the outcomes of Cedefop (2020b) are considered (Figure 6). Systems have become either more distinctive or more pluralistic, demonstrating, respectively, an academic or a vocational drift. These directions of change are relevant for understanding the changing IVET-CVET link. While changes in educational structures are typically incremental only, some countries

might experience a radical change in their systems within a comparatively short time, which has no equivalent in any of the other countries. For example, the opening up of the Portuguese education system in the past 20 years has provoked a change in the population participating in upper secondary education unmatched in size by any of the other five countries compared (Figure 7).

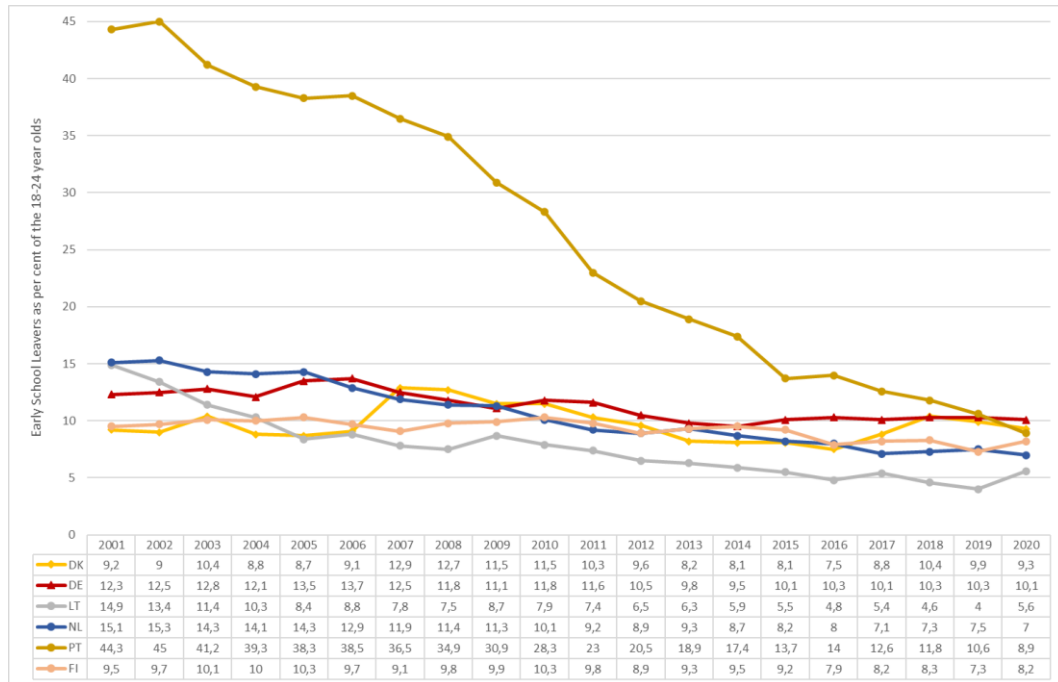
Structural changes of the education system are also responding to demographic changes, including changes due to migration flows. When the number of potential students is strongly rising or dropping within a comparable short period of time (e.g. within one decade), the patterns of education are typically not left unchanged. For example, while the most prestigious education tracks may keep some of their selectivity even in a phase of shrinking birth cohorts, a drop in demand for less preferred tracks might imply a threat to their organisational survival, provoking changes in policies, including reaching out to novel groups of participants.

Figure 6. **Direction of change of VET (1995-2015): DK, DE, NL, FI, LT, PT in context**



Source: Adapted from Cedefop (2020b).

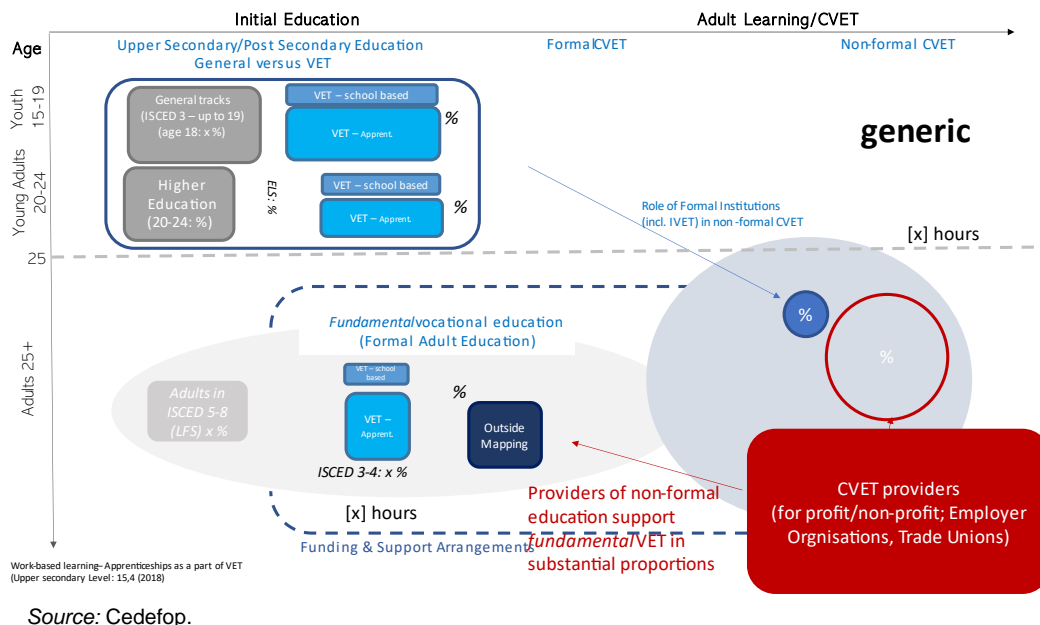
Figure 7. Proportion of early school leavers (ESL) – 18-24-year-olds: 2001-20



Source: Eurostat edat_lfse_14.

Figure 8 organises key indicators capturing IVET, the role of fundamental vocational training or IVET for adults, as well as CVET, broken down into formal and non-formal CVET and the proxy-indicators available for the relative role of various types of organisations for providing non-formal CVET. The narrative scheme discusses the provision of formal IVET programmes for learners belonging to three age ranges: youths (age up to 19), young adulthood (age 20-24) and adulthood (age 25 or older). IVET provision is compared to the frequency of provision of general upper secondary or, for young adults, higher education. Overall, the expectation is displayed that everyone will complete either general or vocational upper secondary education with the indicator on early school leavers (20- to 24-year-olds) displaying the degree by which this norm is met.

Figure 8. Framework for displaying differences in the IVET-CVET Link



Indicators displayed in the framework are discussed in the section below. For displaying upper-secondary/post-secondary education (including the weight of VET on these levels of education) the following are provided:

- proportion of up to 19-year-olds in general upper secondary programmes; the proportion of 18-year-olds in general programmes is also provided (data for school year 2019/20);
- proportion of up to 19-year-olds in IVET, with an indicative breakdown for school-based and work-based programmes/apprenticeship programmes;
- proportion of 20 to 24-year-olds in HE (data for school year 2019/20);
- proportion of 20 to 24-year-olds in IVET, with breakdowns for the indicative proportion of IVET with a work-based component;
- distribution of IVET participants across the age groups 15-19, 20-24 and 25 and older;
- proportion of 20 to 24-year-old early school leavers (ESL).

The participation of adults aged 25 and older in formal IVET is also captured by the measurement of formal adult education, using the *Adult education survey* (AES; 2016). It is also acknowledged that countries may differ regarding the inclusion or non-inclusion of IVET for adults within their official mapping of the education system (ISCED mapping). At least in some countries, there are important programmes for adults representing a fundamental (formal) vocational education (including the award of a qualification), which are nevertheless not

counted as formal, so their participant data are absent from the cross-country comparative data sets, yet, can be (partly) reconstructed from national sources.

For displaying the formal and non-formal adult learning, including CVET:

- (a) the volume of learning hours per capita (25 to 64-year-olds) are displayed, for formal adult education as an oval and for non-formal adult education as a cycle, the latter including not only job-related CVET, but also hours in not-job related learning activities ⁽¹⁷⁾;
- (b) formal IVET reported for adults should be covered by the formal adult education. However, figures are strongly influenced by the frequency of adults in HE.

For displaying available proxies for the role of formal education institutions (including VET and HE) in providing job-related CVET, the proportion of hours in job-related CVET provided by these institutions as a proportion of all hours of CVET is provided. To ascertain the interplay of the contributions by different providers to CVET, the contributions of a set of providers to CVET are used.

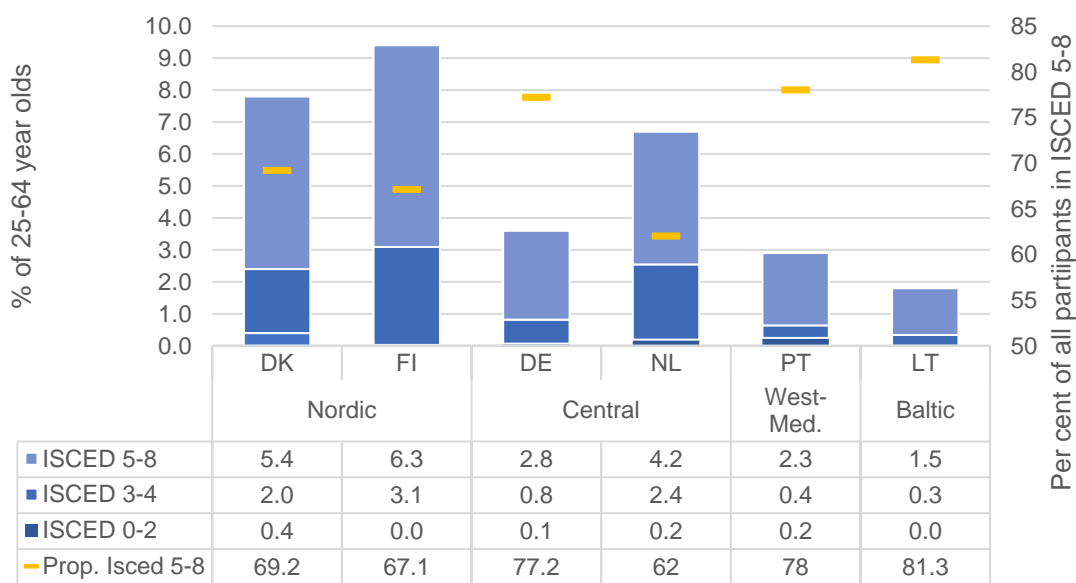
CVET for adults, formal and non-formal, compete with the options in place to enter HE in adulthood, the latter shaped by the access rights (who lacks HE entrance permission and how can the latter be earned in adulthood), tuition fees and available support for meeting the living costs. While adult access to HE is not a key topic in the current framework, it is clearly of importance for understanding adults' decisions for or against specific forms of CVET.

As a proxy (Figure 9) for the relative importance of HE (as a form of formal adult education) and formal programmes on intermediate level (ISCED Level 3 and 4) the proportion of adults participating at these levels of formal adult education is inserted, using estimates calculated from the *European labour force survey* (the only survey with a sufficiently large sample for this type of analysis). Data are based on a special data extraction from the LSF for 2016. Participation in formal programmes within the last four weeks prior to the survey is given. Even a tenth of a percentage point in this analysis represents a large group of adults: in Germany, 0.8% participation rate at ISCED 3-4 equals about 340 000 adults; 2.4% in the Netherlands equals about 210 000 adults. Overall, the figures help to visualise major differences in the level of provision (much higher levels of provision in Denmark, Netherlands and Finland than in Germany), but also whether substantial provision of formal education on ISECD Level 3 and 4 exists at all (mainly in Denmark, Netherlands and Finland). There is a drawback, however, in that higher

⁽¹⁷⁾ As for formal adult education, no distinction is available for job-related and non job-related training. For non-formal adult learning any type of learning is considered, though job-related learning activities comprise most of the hours recorded.

VET (ISCED level 5) cannot be made visible and not all level 3 and 4 programmes are vocational, since some concern preparation for entering HE (the acquisition of a HE entrance permission).

Figure 9. **Adults 25-64 participating in formal adult education within 4 weeks prior to the survey (2016): breakdown for ISCED levels of programmes attended**



Source: European labour force survey (2016), Eurostat, special extraction for the European Commission, Cedefop calculations; NB: low reliability for FI (ISCED 0-2); LT (ISCED 0-2; 3-4); Second axis (Prop. ISCED 5-8), proportion of participants on Level 5-8 out of participants in formal adult education).

The size and the patterns of CVET provision, formal and non-formal, are largely determined by the available funding and support arrangements (for the term see Cedefop, 2023). It is of key importance to what extent collective funding arrangements are in place, complementing or even replacing – in analogy to an atomistic, allegedly perfect market – purely atomistic arrangements, where single customers (individuals, enterprises) buy products (courses, trainer days) from providers in a competitive market setting. Collective funding arrangements include the presence of supply-side (funding goes to providers) or demand-side (funding goes to participants/their employers) joint funding instruments based on general taxation or para-taxes, as the contributions to the social security system (unemployment insurance in particular) or specific training levies financing the activities of training funds. Beyond funding costs for provision, the (non-)availability and generosity of subsidies for living costs or wage replacement payments matters greatly, with the arrangements for training leave as a point of specific relevance. The accessibility of high-quality provision of lifelong guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning are two further key dimensions of the overall level

of support made available by an adult learning system; this is reflected in skill ecosystems in one region and/or sector. Funding and support arrangements are naturally informed by the wider institutional environments, the employment system (including economic coordination) and the welfare State arrangements (see below).

Beyond the general relationship of IVET and CVET, specific forms of formal CVET or higher VET are of particular interest, where formal CVET programmes allow – often after a (mandatory) number of years of professional experience – for continuation of a specific form of VET at a higher level. These specific forms of formal CVET, building on a defined fundamental IVET and a defined minimum of relevant professional experience, play a key role in some countries (e.g. Germany), but hardly exist in others. Where forms of formal CVET exist, they may be provided in different forms, for example, by a formal VET programme at a higher ISCED level (e.g. level 4) or as short programmes positioned within the HE sector. While programmes of these types should be classified as formal adult education with the adult education survey, as they typically lead to a formal qualification (mapped within the ISCED system or the NQF) and involve typically a work load of more than half a year of full-time education, this might not always be the case. Overall, cross-country comparative information on this type of programme is scarce, with national sources providing the only alternative, at least in countries, where these types of programmes play a comparatively large role. In the overviews on the situation in the countries compared, the information on formal CVET based on a specific fundamental IVET programme is inserted where data exist.

3.1.2. Broader institutional environment of the IVET-CVET link

Comparing the IVET-CVET link across countries requires consideration of the broader institutional environment. In this chapter, only two key dimensions are considered: the dominating form of work organisation (the type of employment system) and the overall welfare State tradition.

Predominating forms for organising work and forms of IVET systems evoke institutional complementarities, meaning that specific forms of work organisation build on specific arrangements in IVET and vice versa (Saar and Ure, 2013).

Following one seminal analysis (Maurice; Sellier and Silvestre, 1986), work organisation can build on broad (including demanding content), standardised qualifications acquired in IVET, with skilled workers organised in teams enjoying a high level of job discretion: this is characterised by smaller numbers of technicians supervised by a small number of members of management. Unskilled workers comprise smaller proportions of the workforce and are typically not seen as part of the permanent staff, nor supported by CVET. Such a form of work organisation,

dominated by the occupational principle, typically requires a strong role for employers in providing apprenticeship places (or equivalents as, for example, in the Japanese system of training for employees enjoying lifelong tenure); employers also need a say, via their business interest organisations, in IVET governance. Germany is the key example of an employment system dominated by the occupational principle, with its corresponding system of apprenticeship dominating IVET. In such a system, employers not only rely on the IVET, they depend on the constant availability of workers trained in closely circumscribed occupations, and the availability of well-prepared, motivated candidates competing for the apprenticeship places. In consequence, a shortage of specifically trained skilled workers – expressed in German by the term *Fachkräftelücke* (skilled labour gap) (Rahner, 2018) – is understood as a key impediment to economic prosperity. It is also necessary in establishing employment systems rooted in the occupational principles, to have strong economic coordination within the employer group and across the economy, so differences in industrial relation systems play a part.

By contrast, enterprises may follow almost exclusively idiosyncratic patterns for breaking down tasks into jobs, relying on large numbers of unskilled and semi-skilled workers; these are often positioned within well-designed blue collar job ladders, where workers move from less demanding to more demanding jobs in short-paced sequences. More demanding tasks are performed by technicians and various groups of specialists and the overall work process is supervised by different layers of management. Technicians, specialists, and managers are trained in technical or commercial upper secondary schools or in HE, while the educational prerequisites of unskilled and semi-skilled workers are not defined in any specific way. Applicants holding higher levels of qualifications, however, not chosen for specialist roles, might start in unskilled or semi-skilled positions, yet, move more quickly up the internal job ladders or grow into specialist roles, when these become available. Beyond professional or managerial roles, more education may be taken as a sign of applicants' innate qualities and future trainability, though not as a bundle of skills ready to be applied. Internal job ladders are typically underpinned by corporate training plans, foreseeing frequent adaptative training spells (e.g. 1 or 2 days per year) and longer stretches of training (e.g. 3 months) after substantial upwards moves (Hefler and Markowitsch, 2012;). Where the organisational principle dominates work organisation, the link between IVET and jobs is less developed, and employers typically have a less significant role in funding and governance of IVET. Specific IVET programmes are less frequently linked to relevant forms of formal CVET. HE graduates are more frequently employed, with continuing higher and professional education, offered by HE institutions, forming an important component of CVET.

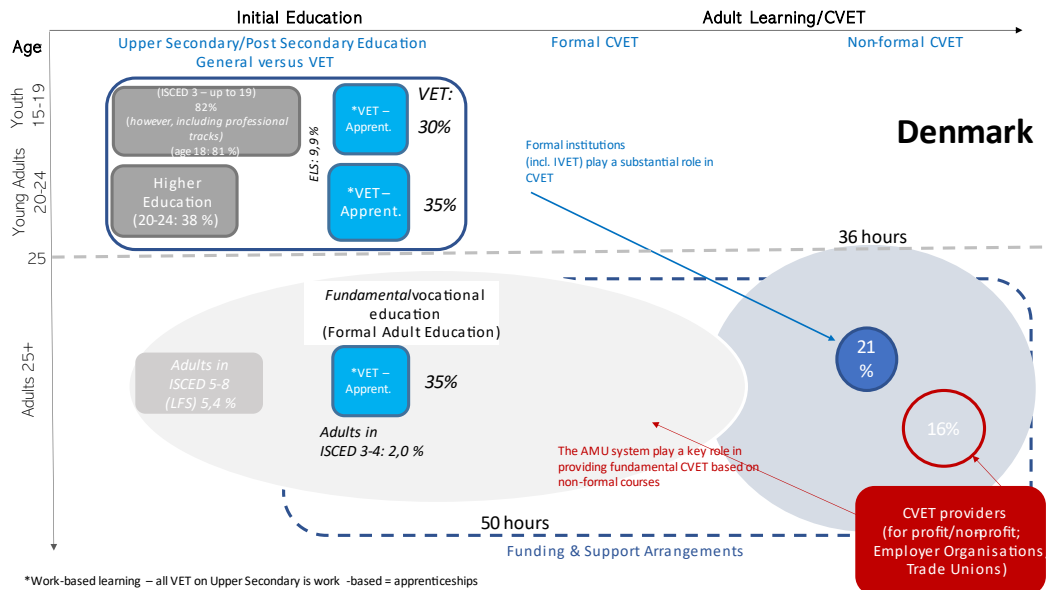
Diverging European welfare State traditions had been accepted as decisive in explaining differences in initial education and adult learning (Blossfeld, 2016; Desjardins and Rubenson, 2013; OECD, 2018; Rubenson and Desjardins, 2009). Such traditions made an impact on CVET, particularly the IVET-CVET link, in two ways. First, the traditions themselves are mirrored in the ways CVET and adult learning is supported: by the existing supply-side funding arrangements (leading up to free provision/provision at low fees) and by the non-provision of demand-side joint funding instruments and their level of generosity (see the discussion in the previous section). Second, the orientation and level of generosity of welfare State provision provide more or less supportive conditions for participation in CVET, particular for groups of adults with low income from gainful work (due to low wage levels, part-time work, on-and-off employment patterns and so on). An example is overall net replacement rates during spells of unemployment, whether access to free medical care is universal, whether or not free or low-cost childcare is available, or access to social housing is provided; all of these may have an important impact on adults' opportunities to pursue adult learning, including CVET.

3.2. Interplay of IVET and CVET in six countries

3.2.1. Denmark: the changing interplay of IVET and CVET

Denmark can be considered a collective skill formation system that is shaped by a strong vocational education sector with a strong role of apprenticeships. The adult learning system of Denmark is considered one among the most developed worldwide. Adult education includes preparatory adult education (FVU, e.g. basic skills, English, IT), lower secondary-level general adult education (*Almen Voksenuddannelse*, AVU), upper secondary-level general adult education (HF, GS), initial vocational education for adults (now called EUV, formerly GVU), (part-time) HE (e.g. advanced adult education VVU), and liberal/popular adult education (Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2019). Shorter and extended continuing vocational training programmes are offered within the so-called AMU system (*Arbejdsmarkedsuddannelser*), which is among the key factors explaining Denmark's high level of participation in formal and non-formal, and job-related non-formal education and training.

Figure 10. Schematic overview of the IVET-CVET link in Denmark



Source: Cedefop.

IVET is of high importance *vis-à-vis* general education at secondary-level, but this largely concerns adults. Of those aged 15 to 19, 70% chose general education, though these schools often also combine an academic and vocational (commercial or technical) curriculum but are still considered general education⁽¹⁸⁾, thereby partially skewing the indicators. At upper secondary level, only apprenticeships are considered as vocational education. These are mostly selected later in life. The share of early school leavers is 9.9%, which is lower than in Portugal but still higher than Lithuania, the Netherlands or Finland.

Within the apprenticeship system, only 30% of individuals are aged 15 to 19, 35% are aged between 20 and 24 and 35% are aged 25 and above. Denmark's VET system is thereby an adult-centred system, with more than 60% of individuals in VET being 20 years and older. However, for young adults aged 20 to 24, academic drift can be increasingly observed, as the HE sector is growing (38% of those aged 20 to 24). Recent reforms aimed at making the VET system more attractive not only for the young but also adults, with new pathways for adults in IVET being introduced (EUV, see above). EUV programmes for adults are fundamentally identical to the programmes for young people, but the duration of the programme may vary depending on potential students' existing qualifications and labour market experience.

⁽¹⁸⁾ https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/upper-secondary-and-post-secondary-non-tertiary-education-8_en

The orientation of Danish VET to adults is also reflected in indicators on adult learning. Denmark has a particularly strong tradition of adult learning, and participation in formal adult education and non-formal education is high. In 2016, 86 hours of learning activities per capita for 25- to 64-year-olds were estimated, with 50 hours spent in formal adult education, and 36 hours spent in non-formal adult education. Within formal adult education, the share of adults in ISCED 5-8 accounts for 5.4%, and participation in formal programmes preparing for qualifications at ISECD levels 3-4 accounts for 2.0%.

Organisations active in formal education – including IVET institutions – play a substantial role in providing CVET, with around 21% of all hours in non-formal adult learning. In contrast, 38% of all hours in non-formal adult learning are provided by dedicated CVET providers (for-profit/non-profit, employer organisations, trade unions), which play no significant role in providing basic VET. In Denmark, there is a strong public commitment to supply-side funding arrangements resulting in broad provision of VET for adults at no or low fees, both for formal and non-formal adult education.

3.2.2. Finland: the changing interplay of IVET and CVET

Occupations play an important role in organising Finland's employment system, but in a less marked way than in Denmark or Germany. Finland participates in the Nordic social-democratic patterns of the welfare states with an orientation towards redistribution and guaranteeing individual access to social services. While the level of welfare State provision used to be lower than in Denmark or Sweden, and recent welfare State reforms deviated from the Nordic trajectories (Kantola and Kananen, 2013), at least in the provision of adult learning, the impact of a Nordic tradition is clearly visible (OECD, 2020; Rubenson, 2006).

In Finland, VET on upper secondary level has gained substantially in importance since 1995 (vocational drift), taking in both more young people as well as more (young) adults. VET for young people is mainly school-based, allowing for moving towards HE, with the apprenticeship route mainly taken by adults.

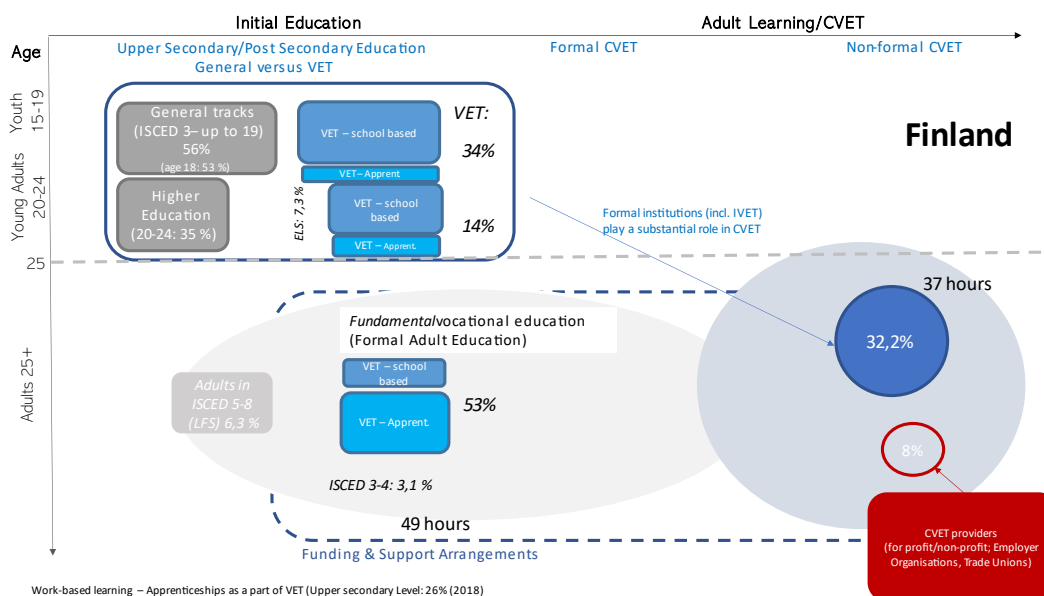
The proportion of young adults not succeeding in gaining an upper secondary degree is low and shrinking (7.3% of early school leavers in 2019). Preparatory education providing basic skills is typically seen as being outside the VET system and an area where more initiatives are required, as too many (young) adults are found struggling with the demands of regular VET programmes.

VET, however, does not play a key role as an alternative to HE. While 35% of the young adults (20-24) participate in HE, only a much smaller fraction of the age group is involved in VET (around one in eight).

In contrast, a large proportion of students working towards a vocational qualification are adults 25 or older, about 53% of VET participants covered by ISCED. Adults are mainly involved in apprenticeship programmes (with four out of five apprentices being older than 25). Overall, the participation of adults in programmes at ISCED level 3-4, including VET programmes, is the highest among the six countries compared, close to Denmark and the Netherlands, but four to ten times higher than in Germany, Lithuania or Portugal.

The provision of formal adult education as such is high in Finland (about 49 hours a year/capita 25-64) and matched only by Denmark or Sweden. Beyond VET, adults attending HE add to this broad provision of formal learning to adults (with 6.3% of adults attending a general or vocational programmes at level 5-8, the highest value among the six countries compared).

Figure 11. Schematic overview of the IVET-CVET link in Finland



Source: Cedefop.

Provision of non-formal education is also high, by comparison, and equal to 37 hours per year/capita. Institutions of formal education (VET, HE) provide a substantial share of non-formal hours of adult learning as well. In contrast, the roles of for-profit or non-profit CVET providers and the social partners as providers are highly limited (about 8% of hours provided).

Overall, public support for adult learning, including CVET, is mainly provided via supply-side funding schemes. Demand-side funding schemes focus on providing contributions to living costs, with the adult education allowance as the main instrument. Adults can also receive support for living costs during higher

education. There are further instruments, e.g. covering the (overall low) fees in liberal adult education or rewarding the successful completion of vocational programmes (one time EUR 400). While some instruments target employers, the provision of learning opportunities free of charge is also the key mechanism of supporting enterprises including SMEs. The high level of participation in formal and non-formal education can be clearly linked to the level of public support available for adult learning.

3.2.3. Germany: the changing interplay of IVET and CVET

Germany's IVET system had been portrayed as an exceptional case, adding much to the competitive edge of the country's manufacturing industries (Culpepper and Finegold, 1999; Maurice; Sellier and Silvestre, 1986). Despite the continuous transformation towards a service-dominated economy, German's approach of promoting distinctive IVET, mainly in the form of dual education (apprenticeships) has been sustained and reinforced in the past decade, after a period of chronic shortage of available apprenticeship places in the first decade of the 21st century.

Despite growing participation in general tracks, IVET and apprenticeships have remained the most frequent type of upper secondary education. Equally important, a considerable part of the growing numbers of graduates of general upper secondary education choose an apprenticeship after gaining their HE entrance qualification (*Abitur*) instead of moving on to university. Pursuing dual education for on average 3.5 years, based on an apprenticeship contract, with productive contributions rewarded by an apprenticeship wage increasing with each year completed, remains the route most often taken in preparing for the world of work. Young adult participation in HE is comparatively low (32%). Participation in HE is partly postponed to a later stage, though the proportion of adults returning to HE is also low compared to countries with high levels of participation in formal adult education.

Overall, the proportion of young adults not entering upper secondary education is low; young adults perceived as unfit for entering a regular apprenticeship or simply not able to find a proper place with an employer are channelled to a preparatory system (*Übergangsbereich (BIBB – Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, 2021)*) not considered as a part of VET. However, the proportion of young adults dropping out of their programmes (including apprenticeships) or failing to pass their final examinations is high, with little change in the proportion of early school leavers (18 to 24-year-olds: 10.3 % in 2019) over time.

Overall, 42% of all apprentices are older than 20, making Germany's VET a mixed system, the participation of adults 25+ and older in regular IVET is considerably low (about 15% of participants covered by the ISCED mapping).

However, adults may acquire a basic vocational qualification (equal to the qualifications available in IVET) by a form of external examination, with relevant occupational experience as a conditions and non-formal preparatory coursework as a voluntary, but in practice necessary, form of preparation. This non-formal route has roughly the same number of participants as the formal route.

Moving from initial education to adult learning, participation in formal adult education and non-formal education, needs to be considered as moderately high, with levels of activity well below the Scandinavian countries.

In 2016, per capita (25- to 64-year-olds), 65 hours of learning activities were estimated, with 31 hours spent in formal adult education, and 34 hours spent in non-formal adult education.

Within formal adult education, adult participation in HE is responsible for the largest share of hours. Participation in formal programmes preparing for qualifications at ISECD levels 3-4 is low, though, once more, a larger share of relevant activities is reported as forms of non-formal adult education.

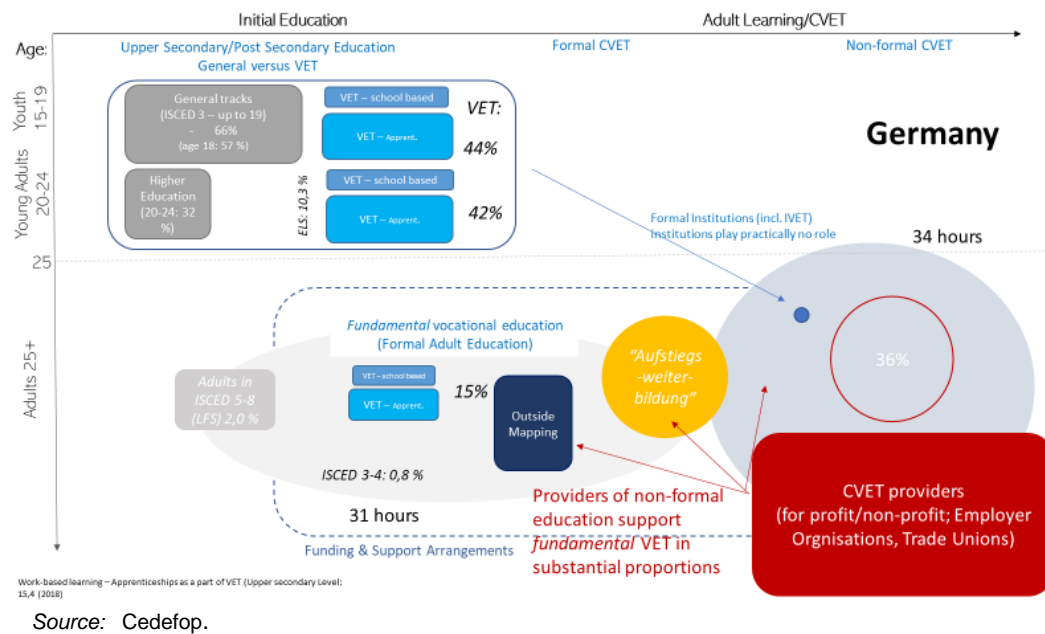
Organisations active in formal education – including IVET institutions – play only a marginal role in providing CVET (only about 3% of all hours in non-formal adult learning). This should be seen as an expression of a lasting institutional divide between State-led initial education and mainly non-public adult learning, including CVET, which is overcome only in very specific ways, such as, in the cooperation between the State and the employers in providing dual education or in active labour market policies helping adults to gain a qualification. IVET organisations are rarely active in the provision of non-formal CVET for adults and have only a limited role in the provision of formal programmes for adults. However, VET schools are not the bottleneck for adults in apprenticeship (as they are open for participants of all ages); but it is employers, who are mainly reluctant to accept adults as apprentices after age 35.

Beyond that of employers for their own employees, CVET provision is dominated by non-profit organisations providing adult learning, often connected to business interest organisations (to a lesser extent to trade unions); there are also private for-profit providers who contribute about 36% of all hours in non-formal education. The very same organisations also provide non-formal preparation courses preparing for sitting external exams for acquiring a vocational qualification (with the business interest organisations taking charge of the exams as well).

A unique German institution refers to a set of regulated (therefore formal) CVET qualifications, which can be acquired only based on a specific vocational qualification and an appropriate amount of relevant professional experience. These so-called *Aufstiegsweiterbildungen* represent the centre of the German CVET system. Graduates of the apprenticeship system rely on these types of

formal CVET – programmes, running for several month to about 2 years, with demanding learning requirements and substantial costs, to be covered mainly by the participant – for preparing their career advancement, opening up well-paid positions in middle management or giving them the right to start their own enterprise. It is important to note that these forms of higher VET do not require HE entrance qualification and are accessible to all former apprentices. Preparatory courses for sitting the exams are, again, mainly offered by providers attached to business interest organisations; the latter are also in charge of governing the exams. As discussed in detail in the case study, the institutional arrangement of these formally regulated CVET bodies needs to be understood as a vital element of the German skill formation system, as these exams strongly extend the career prospects of former apprentices, thereby supporting the attractiveness of the apprenticeship route.

Figure 12. **Schematic overview on the IVET-CVET link in Germany**



In contrast to IVET, CVET is mainly left to individual decisions, with enterprises and households as individual buyers in a non-coordinated training market. Generally, participants in CVET must cover the full costs of programmes and receive no contributions to living costs, as collective funding arrangements are comparatively limited. Supply-side funded provision of CVET used to be scarce (beyond provision for the unemployed) and a clear-cut division between general and vocational adult learning has been dominating. The exception is formal CVET, where a governance framework is in place. The provision is mainly dominated by

organisations attached to business interest organisations and significant public contributions to the costs are made via demand-side combined grant and loan scheme (*Aufstiegsbarfög*), comparable to a similar instrument supporting participation in HE. Against the backdrop of regional demand-side schemes (Käpplinger; Klein and Haberzeth, 2013), grants providing joint funding for low-wage earners (*Bildungsprämie*) were introduced in 2009 (phased out by the end of 2021). The role of the PES used to be limited to supporting training for the unemployed. Recent reforms (2018 onwards) gave the PES a much broader role in supporting the upskilling of the employed as well as supporting enterprises in training their staff. Training funds only play a role in a few small economic sectors. In most of the 16 states (*Länder*), there is a formal right for employees to take (typically) 5 days of paid training leave; however, only 1 to 3% of employees make use of these rights (Heidemann, 2021). According to AES 2016, lifelong guidance (7%) and skill assessment (2.8%) were not strongly developed and slightly below the EU-27 average. Guidance is provided by the Federal Employment Agency for young people for adults throughout the country, both for employed and unemployed; federal States partially developed own services to complement PES services. Validation practices in Germany have remained marginalised, despite recent efforts (e.g. the ValiKom project) ⁽¹⁹⁾, and vary across federal States, with no uniform validation procedures and regulations on their financing (Cedefop, 2018, 2021).

3.2.4. Netherlands: the changing interplay of IVET and CVET

The Netherlands are known for a political economy combining institutions typically found in either liberal, social-democratic or conservative traditions: the country often defies straightforward typification. While vocational qualifications play a role, the employment system is more characterised by the interpenetration of forms of work organisation following an occupational and organisation pattern. Welfare State arrangements show elements typical for social-democratic traditions, but also elements typical for conservative welfare states or even liberal ones. The ways adult learning is supported by the State are more similar to conservative and liberal patterns than to Nordic traditions; the Netherlands had been, for example, the only country reporting that adult learning programmes, even at lower educational levels, are typically fee-taking (European Commission; EACEA and Eurydice, 2021). Experimenting with demand-side policies in adult learning, unleashing market powers, has a long tradition in the Netherlands.

⁽¹⁹⁾ [Valikom: assess and certify vocational skills.](#)

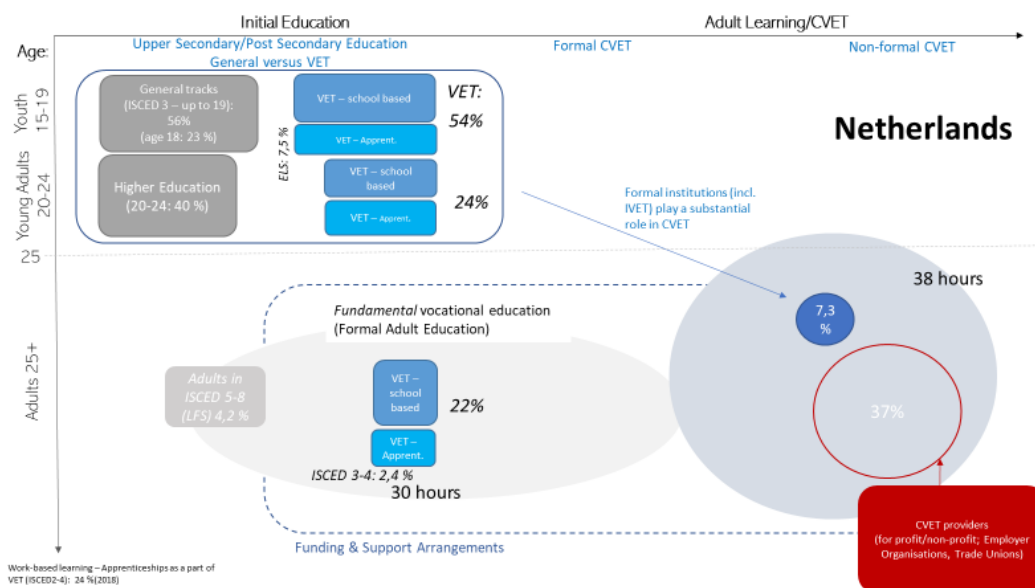
After major reform in 1996, VET has become integrated in one system, with regional training centres (ROC) providing VET for young people and adults, at all levels of education and both in school-based and apprenticeship-based tracks; the latter, however, serve only a quarter of VET students. IVET is provided both for adolescents and young adults (20-24), while the proportion of adults (25 and older) among participants remained comparatively low.

Practically all young people take part in upper secondary education, with a comparatively low proportion of the 18-24 not completing (ESL: 7.5% in 2019).

Higher education, including tracks of higher VET, attracts a relatively high share of 20- to 24-year-olds (40%). This is roughly four times higher than the proportion of the same age group participating in VET.

While the proportion of adults 25 and older in VET is rather low (22% by 2019/20), this should not distract from the fact that the overall participation of adults in programmes at ISECD level 3-4 is comparatively high; only in Finland is the relevant participation higher. As the VET system is quite large, even a smaller proportion of adults in VET comprises large groups of adult participants. Participation of adults in HE is also comparatively high.

Figure 13. Schematic overview on the IVET-CVET link in the Netherlands



Source: Cedefop.

The number of hours spent in formal adult education is high (2016: 30 hours per capita), but much lower than in Denmark or Finland.

In contrast, the number of hours reported in non-formal adult learning is the highest of the six countries studied (2016: 38 hours/capita). The proportion of hours

in non-formal education is considerably higher in the Netherlands than in Denmark or Finland and roughly similar to the proportion in Portugal or Germany.

The role of schools and universities in providing non-formal adult learning is limited, with roughly 7% provided by these types of organisations. Only in Germany do institutions in formal education play a comparably limited role. The lion's share of hours in non-formal education are provided by specialised non-profit and for-profit providers, as well as by social partners (chambers, trade unions). Overall, the patterns of provision are similar to Germany but highly dissimilar to Lithuania, Portugal and Finland.

In the Netherlands market-making supply-side instruments prevail while supply-side funded participation places for free are the exception not the rule.

The key support for individuals is the study grant, a monthly allowance supporting the living costs for both students in VET and HE students⁽²⁰⁾, though only up to age 35. The grant can be expanded by a loan, which needs to be repaid only as soon as the individual wage income exceeds a certain level. For supporting CVET in general, an individual learning account (STAP) is in the process of implementation (2022 onwards). Individual, sectoral and enterprise-based training funds play a key role in CVET funding, with collective agreements on a sectoral or company level regulating the levies paid by the employers and the entitlement given to employees (Meer and Meijden, 2013). The availability of (paid) training leave is also subject to the content of collective bargaining and achieved agreements. While the role of the State is generally seen as limited, the provision of CVET is understood mainly as something within the responsibility of the social partners; provision is secured by a training market, with many providers, including for-profit.

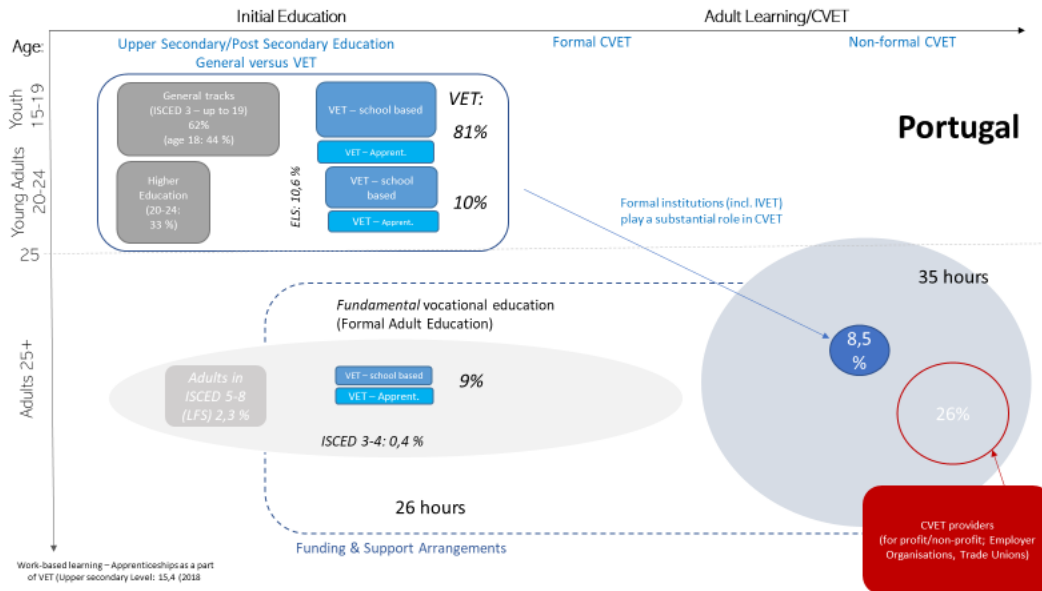
3.2.5. Portugal: the changing interplay of IVET and CVET

In Portugal, IVET is still small compared to general education at secondary-level but has been growing in recent years. Around 60% of those aged 15-19 choose the general education track. However, between 1998 and 2012, the share of VET among upper-secondary level students rose from 20% to just below 40%. Various new pathways have been created that attach VET provision to local secondary schools (new opportunities initiative, *qualifica* system). The share of early school-leavers has significantly decreased within two decades, from 44% to 9%. The

⁽²⁰⁾ Tuition fees for HE are high in the Netherlands, about EUR 2 150 (2020/21) per year during the first cycle. Programmes at a higher cycle are even more expensive (European Commission; EACEA and Eurydice, 2021). The Netherlands is the only country among the six studied where most students pay comparatively high tuition fees.

higher importance of general education compared to VET also holds true for young adults aged 20-24, where the HE sector accounts for 33%.

Figure 14. **Schematic overview on the IVET-CVET link in Portugal**



Source: Cedefop.

Overall, 81% of individuals in IVET are between 15 and 19, while 10% are aged between 20 and 24 and only 9% are aged 25 and above. This makes Portugal's IVET system clearly youth-centred. Within the IVET sector, apprenticeship is of relatively low importance, as only 15% of IVET at upper secondary level was conducted as an apprenticeship in 2018. The school-based sector is of greater importance within VET.

Participation in formal adult education and non-formal education is moderately high, with activity levels well below the Scandinavian countries but on a par with Germany. In 2016, per capita (25- to 64-year-olds), 61 hours of learning activities were estimated, with 26 hours spent in formal adult education, and 35 hours spent in non-formal adult education. Within formal adult education, adults participating in HE are responsible for the largest share of hours, with the share of adults in ISCED level 5-8 account for 2.3%. Participation in formal programmes preparing for qualifications at ISCED levels 3-4 (0.4%) is quite low.

Organisations active in formal education – including IVET institutions – play a moderate role in providing CVET, with around 8.5% of hours in non-formal adult learning; this is higher than in Germany and the Netherlands but lower than in Lithuania. In contrast, 26% of hours in non-formal adult learning are provided by

dedicated CVET providers (for-profit/non-profit, employer organisations, trade unions), which play no significant role in providing fundamental VET.

State funding (supported by the ESF) is channelled in supply-side funding for formal and non-formal provision of adult education; demand-side schemes also exist for companies and individuals (e.g. training voucher, tax credits). Employers and employees contribute a dedicated share of the payroll for active labour market policies, including training for the unemployed and the employed. Lifelong guidance (12.9%) and skill assessment (4.7%) were well developed in 2016.

3.2.6. Lithuania: the changing interplay of IVET and CVET

Lithuania is often classified as a transitional skills system that has remained partly shaped by its Soviet heritage; the State still plays a large part in the provision of general and vocational education for young people and young adults. However, after independence, particularly in CVET, there has been a movement towards policies akin to liberal skill formation regimes, with an emphasis on general skills acquired in HE and the introduction of tuition fees, as well as a private HE sector with extremely high levels of fees (OECD, 2021). Since its accession to the EU, Lithuania has also attempted to strengthen elements of a coordinated, continental European approach to skill formation, characterised by stakeholder engagement through institutionalised mechanisms of social partnership in certain sectors. It has also aimed to increase apprenticeships more recently.

To start, education in Lithuania needs to deal with strongly declining cohorts and high levels of emigration. Between 2013 and 2019, participants in any form of upper secondary education had been reduced by 30%. IVET is of relatively low importance *vis-a-vis* general education at secondary level, with 76% of those aged up to 19 choosing a general education track. The share of early school leavers is relatively low (4%) and general education is important for young adults aged 20 to 24, where the HE sector is strong (39% of young adults) compared to vocational education.

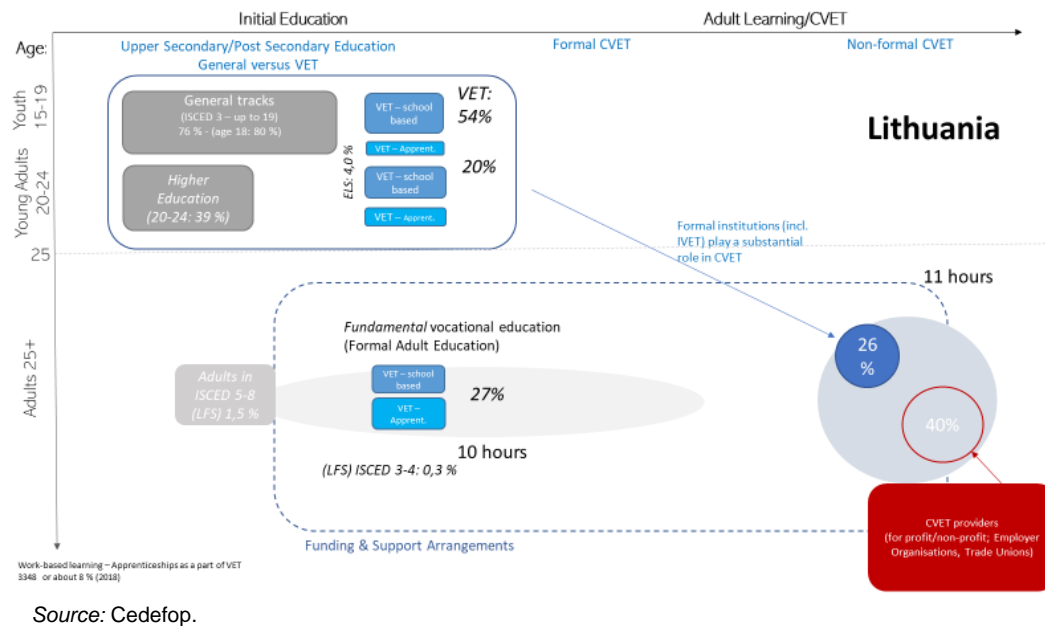
Overall, 54% of individuals in IVET are aged 15 to 19, while 20% are 20 to 24 and 27% are 25 and above. Lithuania's VET system is a mixed system, even though it is more oriented to those aged 15 to 19 than in Germany. Within the IVET sector, apprenticeships have been introduced only recently and are few in number. Until 2008, the share of work-based learning within upper secondary VET was almost non-existent. Only the beginnings of an apprenticeship system have been set up, seen mainly as a second-chance route for young adults without qualification and unemployed adults. Only around 8% of individuals in VET participated in apprenticeship in 2018, leaving the school-based sector of major importance within VET.

Participation in formal adult education and non-formal education is low. In 2016, 22 hours of learning activities per capita (25- to 64-year-olds) were estimated, with 10 hours spent in formal adult education, and 11 hours in non-formal. Within formal adult education, adults participating in HE are responsible for the largest share of hours. The share of adults in ISCED levels 5-8 is 1.5% of the 25 to 64-year-olds. In comparison, participation in formal programmes preparing for qualifications at ISECD levels 3-4, is much lower and even low in comparison to the other countries studied (0.3%).

Organisations active in formal education – including IVET institutions – play an important role in providing CVET, with around 26% of hours in non-formal adult learning. This is a result of merging the two previous subsystems of VET in Lithuania. In 2010, VET schools for the young and CVET for adults (labour market training centres for the unemployed and jobseekers) were integrated, with unified governance under the Ministry of Education, and largely the same modular curricula for IVET and CVET. As a result, IVET and CVET providers also partially merged, providing not only IVET and formal programmes but also non-formal programmes consisting of individual modules. In contrast, 38% of hours in non-formal adult learning are provided by dedicated CVET providers (for-profit/non-profit, employer organisations, trade unions), which play no role in providing basic VET. Lithuania stands out in one respect in that employers play a very limited role in the provision of CVET (Figure 29, see Annex).

The State funds formal programmes for adults up to upper secondary level, including vocational programmes. However, limited supply-side funding arrangements exist for providers of non-formal adult education, mainly depending on fees paid by participants or their employers. Demand-side instruments mostly target companies and are based on EU structural funds. Since 2015, employees are entitled to five days of paid training a year (with a minimum remuneration of 50%). Lifelong guidance (1.6%) and skill assessment are poorly developed.

Figure 15. Schematic overview on the IVET-CVET link in Lithuania



3.3. Summary and conclusion

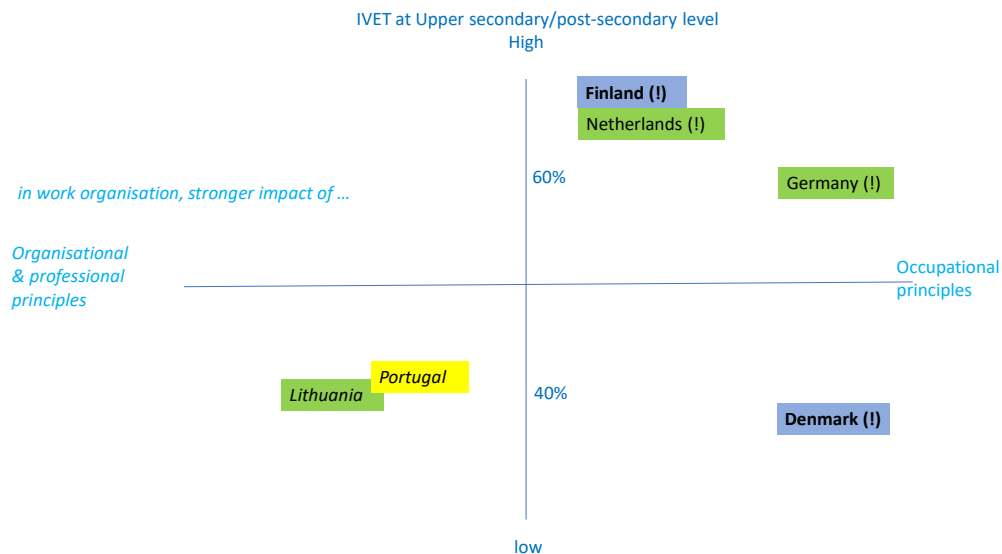
Chapter 4 provides the backdrop for analysing recent policies (Chapter 5) targeting the IVET-CVET link in six countries. These countries differ in many relevant respects but also show some commonalities. Figure 16 summaries some of the key dimensions. Although there are no simple indicators allowing for quantification, Denmark and Germany are known for being key examples of countries where occupations rooted in broad, standardised (fundamental) VET programmes are central to organising the employment system. In the Netherlands and Finland, occupations play a role too, though of less importance than in Denmark and Germany. In all four countries, the role of occupations is strengthened by high or very high levels of economic coordination, with both strong business interest organisations and strong trade unions and prolonged traditions of corporatism or social dialogue. The social partners also have a key influence on the governance of IVET, particularly in Germany and Denmark.

Lithuania and Portugal are countries where employers organise work mainly according to their own preferences, with occupations based on a broad standardised IVET playing a subordinated role. In both countries, the degree of economic coordination is comparatively low (although higher in Portugal than in Lithuania), with comparatively weakly institutionalised employer organisations and trade unions.

Participation in upper secondary education has become universal in all countries studied, with Portugal the only country where substantial extension of participation had been taking place since 2000. VET plays a quantitatively different role within upper secondary education in the six countries. The proportion of VET is particularly high in Germany, the Netherlands and Finland. In Denmark, the proportion of VET within upper secondary education seems to be unexpectedly low, though this can be explained by the fact that school tracks with a vocational specialisation are labelled as general and only apprenticeship tracks are reported as vocational. In contrast, the proportion of VET within upper secondary education is comparatively low within Portugal and Lithuania; however, in both countries, expanding IVET provision has been among the key goals of recent policy-making.

In none of the countries studied is IVET the most frequent choice of young people up to age 19. When observing the upper secondary programmes of the 18-year-olds in isolation, only in the Netherlands and (surprisingly) in Portugal do more than half of all participants follow a vocational route.

Figure 16. **Employment system, importance of IVET and role of adults in IVET (as captured by the ISCED Mapping)**



NB: Age profiles in VET: yellow = more than 60% below age 20; green = mixed structure, neither 60% younger than 20 nor 60% older than 19; blue: more than 60% older than 20.
 Country names: bold: generous welfare states (social-democratic); regular: status sustaining welfare states (conservative), italic: low provision welfare states (familiaristic or rudimentary/neo-liberal);
 Economic coordination: (!) (very) high.

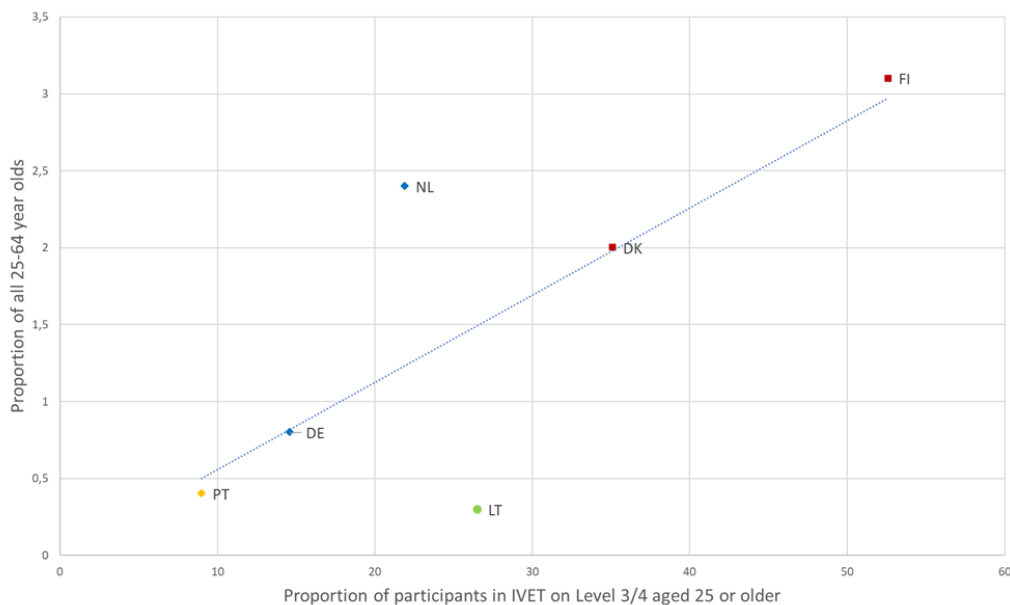
Source: Cedefop.

Reviewing the six countries, the overall trend has been confirmed, that IVET has lost considerable parts of its youth-centeredness (Markowitsch and Hefler, 2019), which would had been taken for granted 30 years ago. IVET at upper

secondary or post-secondary includes a substantial number of young adults (20-24) or adults (age 25 and older) in all countries studied. Only in Portugal are more than 60% (69%) of reported VET participants younger than 20. In contrast, in Denmark and Finland, more than 60% of VET participants are at least 20 years old, with Germany and Netherlands having a more mixed age structure.

However, where IVET populations are small, even higher proportions of adults do not imply large proportions of adults participating in VET. Figure 17 shows that, adult participation in formal adult education at ISCED level 3-4 (which accounts for the larger part of vocational) is much higher in Finland, the Netherlands, and Denmark than in Germany, Portugal, or Lithuania. The proportion of adults in IVET is an important indicator of the institutional set up and evolution, but it needs to be interpreted against the backdrop of the size of the IVET population, specifically the proportion of adults participating in IVET.

Figure 17. **Scatter diagram: adults in IVET (2019/2020) against the proportion of adults in formal adult education on level (4 weeks prior to the survey; LFS 2016)**



Source Cedefop. Country typology based on (Roosmaa and Saar, 2012).

- Coordinated capitalism and Social democratic welfare state
- ◆ Coordinated capitalism and Conservative welfare State
- ◇ Coordinated capitalism and Familiaristic/rudimentary welfare State
- Dependent capitalism and (Neo) Liberal welfare State

Adult participation is much higher in countries with strong State support for adult learning, and forms of formal and non-formal CVET in particular. Much higher levels of participation in adult learning are mainly driven by high State joint funding, with forms of parataxis funding (e.g. levies to a training fund, dedicated contributions to an (un-)employment fund) as one of the options (as in Denmark and Finland). The Netherlands funding arrangements for adult learning are more of a mix of approaches thought to be typical for liberal and conservative welfare States. However, free provision of formal programmes for adults within VET centres is obviously a highly effective way to provide fundamental VET at different levels to large groups of adult learners. Low participation rates in formal adult education in Germany, and even more in Portugal and Lithuania, reflect an overall lower level of public resources made available. However, public funding plays a pivotal role in recent progress made in adult learning in all three countries.

There are highly diverse patterns in organisations providing formal education (schools, universities) also providing non-formal job-related education and training. In Finland and Denmark, as well as in Lithuania, providers of formal education play a substantial role in the provision of non-formal job-related CVET. The role of schools and universities is limited in the Netherlands, Portugal and particularly in Germany.

In contrast, organisations specialised in CVET provision – profit and non-profit, those affiliated to business interests or trade unions – play a significant role in Germany, the Netherlands and also in Lithuania and Portugal. They play a limited role in Denmark and only a marginal role in Finland.

The current chapter has provided the context required for better understanding recent policies outlined in the following chapter (Box 4 to 9 in Chapter 5). In Denmark, formal VET programmes should be made more attractive against the backdrop of a system with fairly high levels of adult involvement and attractive alternatives to formal education; adults can acquire qualifications without following extended programmes based on non-formal courses and the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Given the degree of State-funded VET and adult learning in Finland, reforms aiming at improving the system's efficiency are potentially of benefit to its overall purpose. For Germany, sustaining high participation rate in its distinctive *Aufstiegsfortbildungen* forms one cornerstone in a broader strategy to defend its unique apprenticeship system and defy academic drift; however, access to VET for adults is much more restricted than in Denmark, Finland or the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, policies aiming at promoting IVET providers to 'sell' more CVET can be better understood against a backdrop of high levels of (State-funded) participation in formal adult education, but a mainly market-based approach within the CVET sector.

In Portugal, the long-term project of setting up a viable VET component within upper secondary education and inviting more adults to acquire qualifications by a three-step approach of assessment, tailored provision, and certification of acquired competences need to be seen against a backdrop to overcome the legacy of a former school system producing high proportions of low-qualified adults. However, progress in formal adult education, including VET, has been shown as still limited. Policies in Lithuania to introduce comprehensive VET centres, catering for all types of learners, young people, low-qualified adults, the employed and unemployed, as well as recent HE graduates, can be understood against the backdrop of the overall weakly developed VET and adult learning system.

CHAPTER 4.

Policies and national reforms

4.1. Introduction: policies impacting the relationship between IVET and the learning of adults

This chapter discusses developments and reforms in six European Member States (Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal and Finland) that influenced the relationship between IVET and the learning of adults. These countries present the wide diversity in the direction of travel of IVET/CVET systems in Europe. The aim of the chapter is to understand better how policy developments impacted the role of IVET providers in offering learning to adults, and how IVET and CVET systems are related to each other. Before discussing the reform orientations, objectives and results in terms of opening IVET to adults, the reforms in focus of this chapter are briefly introduced in Box 4 to 9.

Box 4. Reforms studied in Denmark

A major vocational education and training reform came into force 2015. As part of this, a new pathway for adults in the IVET system, *Erhvervsuddannelse for Voksne, EUV* (Vocational education for adults) was introduced ⁽²¹⁾. The main change was that it made validation and recognition of prior learning compulsory, and that it introduced extensive criteria for how much the programme should be shortened following the result of the validation. The EUV programmes for adults are fundamentally identical to the programmes for young people, but the duration of the programme may vary depending on potential students' existing qualifications and labour market experience. Standard catalogues of courses that award credit have been developed for every IVET course, and three model programmes of different duration (EUV1, EUV2, and EUV3) are thus available for potential participants, depending on their documented experience ⁽²²⁾. Participation in the EUV programmes is free and participants receive a salary or a State education grant (*Statens Uddannelsesstøtte, SU*) depending on their employment status. Training companies may apply for a salary refund from the Employers' Training Contribution (*Arbejdsgivernes Uddannelsesbidrag – AUB*).

Source: Cedefop, based on case study reports.

⁽²¹⁾ It replaced the previous pathway, called Basic (vocational) education for adults, Grunduddannelse for Voksne (GVU).

⁽²²⁾ See explanation (in Danish) on the website of the Ministry of Children and Education, [Generelt om euv | Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet \(uvm.dk\)](https://www.uvm.dk/generelt-om-euv)

Box 5. Reforms studied in Finland

In the 1990s, the roles of IVET and CVET providers were separated in Finland and had different regulations. Each VET sector had different acts and decrees to guide their work. Since the 1990s, the major reforms, where the relationship of IVET and CVET has been redefined and realigned in Finland, include the following: establishing the competence based qualifications system for adults in 1994; aligning youth and adult national qualification requirements as of 2008/09; reform of 2015-18, where the legislation for youth and adult vocational education was unified and regulation reduced, to enable flexibility and individual study plans and progress for the students; prolonging compulsory education until the age of 18; reform of continuous learning. The case study focused mainly on the 2015-2018 reform.

Source: Cedefop, based on case study reports.

Box 6. Reforms studied in Germany

The case study in Germany did not focus on a distinctive policy reform, but it considered the various forms of incremental (gradual) changes in the relationships between IVET and CVET, that, over time, may fundamentally impact the functioning of the whole system (Graf, 2017). Building a career on IVET used to be, and is still, possible based on an institutionalised system of formal (regulated) CVET offers linked and attuned to both types of IVET and forms of organisational career patterns. IVET represented a viable alternative to HE also for young adults having acquired a HE entrance qualification. Formal CVET supported the prestige of IVET, as it guaranteed a realistic chance to enter occupational positions reserved for university graduates in most other skill formation systems. However, the IVET-CVET link as represented by distinctive forms of formal CVET addressed as *Aufstiegsfortbildung* had come under pressure, resulting in declining numbers of participants in the related upgrading CVET programmes (from over 130 000 graduates per year in 1992 to about 90 000 in 2019); this also reduced the attractiveness of the (initial) dual system as a reliable ladder for supporting careers. Recent reforms, however, aim at restrengthening the original IVET-CVET link by providing more public joint funding to individual upgrading CVET costs and by reforming the regulatory framework (2020); this included a change in names to make CVET better comparable to HE and internationally (renaming *Aufstiegsfortbildung* (upgrading CVET) to *höherqualifizierende Berufsbildung* (Higher VET)), thus also making standard dual IVET more attractive for both the young and adults (including migrants and refugees).

Source: Cedefop, based on case study reports.

Box 7. Reforms studied in Lithuania

During the first two decades of the independent State after 1990 the provision of IVET and CVET was rather strictly separated in the institutional, legal and process sense. IVET provision was concentrated in the public initial VET schools, providing the first vocational qualification for the young. CVET was provided either by enterprises (for employees), or by employment training centres (labour market training centres) responsible for the provision of continuing training courses for the unemployed and jobseekers. There was no particular link or effective substitution in the activities of

these two fields of vocational training. Labour market training centres were coordinated by the Labour Market Training Authority under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, while initial VET was under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. All the processes of training provision were also separated: curricula were developed based on the different types of VET standards, there were different regulations for the provision of training and didactics (like training duration), as well as of assessment approaches and methods. In this context the reform focused on institutional development: merger of IVET and CVET providers and consolidation of the governance of the CVT and IVET provision under Ministry of Education and Science after 2010, transformation of the status of public VET and CVET providers into public entities by opening access for other stakeholders to their governance).

Source: Cedefop, based on case study reports.

Box 8. Reforms studied in the Netherlands

Against the background of the large reforms of the VET system in the 90s (Broek, 2022), the plea for more flexibility in VET and more room for VET schools to provide training to adults emerged in the 2000s. This resulted in some changes (for instance allowing VET institutions to offer formal VET qualifications without having to comply with the hourly standards (so-called third learning pathway, *derde leerweg*), but generally it remained challenging for VET institutions to compete in a market where private providers are the dominant players (Nrto, 2019; Onderwijsraad, 2009). In an effort to formulate an overarching national policy on adult learning, the Dutch government introduced in 2018 an inter-ministerial programme for lifelong development (*leven lang ontwikkelen, LLO*) (Ministerie van Sociale, 2018; Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en, 2020). Since the launch of this strategy, there has been a continuous flow of initiatives with changes to legislation and policy reforms. In recent years discussions have taken place within the VET sector and within government about making VET schools better able to serve adult learners.

Source: Cedefop, based on case study reports.

Box 9. Reforms studied in Portugal

The provision of adult learning has undergone multiple reforms since 2005, which have resulted in the current network system of Qualify (*Qualifica*) centres. These offer low-qualified young people and adults the possibility to validate their skills and competences, guidance for the future and additional certified training provision, all in the same place. The development of the networks of these centres has gone through varying forms and levels of popularity over the years. The relevance and utility of the centres need to be seen against the broader policy context, within which various larger developments can be seen in the national qualification system. These concern the introduction of a dual certification pathway in vocational education and training, the introduction of a credit system, and increasing attention to the modularisation of education programmes.

Source: Cedefop, based on case study reports.

The six case studies show a diversity in terms of the time period covered by the reform, the scope of the reform in terms of orientation towards the learning of adults and the level at which the reform was implemented. Table 5 provides a summative overview.

Table 5. **Overview of the six reforms reviewed**

Country	Time period of reform	VET orientation targeted	Level of reform
Denmark	2015	Orientation 2. VET leading to a formal qualification	Reform programmes
Finland	2015-2018, but covering developments since the 1990s	Orientation 2. VET leading to a formal qualification	Reform institutions
Germany	about 2010 onwards (multiple steps)	Orientation 2. VET leading to a formal qualification	Strengthen IVET-CVET link
Lithuania	2010, but covering developments since the 2000s	Orientation 2. VET leading to a formal qualification	Reform institutions
Netherlands	2018, but covering developments since the 2000s	Orientation 1. VET leading to acquisition of specific vocation/occupation-specific skills and not leading to a formal qualification Orientation 2. VET leading to a formal qualification	Reform programmes
Portugal	2017, covering broader development since 2005	Orientation 2. VET leading to a formal qualification	Reform system

Source: Cedefop.

These reforms and developments can be positioned in a wider European perspective concerning stimulating lifelong learning and adult learning, also acknowledging the role of the VET sector in supporting this. The 2019 Ecorys study (European Commission and Ecorys, 2019, p. 44) provides an overview of the latest reforms covering adult learning. Besides specific adult education reforms, reforms in IVET and CVET are also covered. The report also maps the emergence of strategies that cover adult learning. These can be overarching lifelong learning strategies as identified in 13 countries: specific (basic) skills strategies (three countries); reform strategies for VET/HE (in 4 countries); and/or skills strategies (in eight countries) (European Commission and Ecorys, 2019, p. 56).

4.2. Reform policy objectives

The reforms presented in the case studies have different backgrounds and express different objectives and intentions. These objectives and intentions must be seen in wider historical developments of the whole IVET system and the systems of industrial relations in a country. The country case studies indicate that VET systems are in continuous development and subject to ongoing incremental changes. Further, they show that major reforms, initiated in the 1990s, are still needing time to settle and deliver on their policy intentions, requiring additional reform to readjust systems and avoid negative effects. Examples are the Netherlands, where the reforms in the 90s still determine the direction of travel; and in Finland where the policy goals of the 2015-18 reforms were already recognised in policy documents 5 years prior. Also, the reforms in Finland concerning the relationship of IVET and CVET and the reorganising of the labour policy education seem to continue the turn towards liberalisation and deregulation of the education system since the 1990s. The case studies show that the reforms do not materialise overnight. In fact, it is very difficult to establish cut-off dates for reforms as they often refer to a longer transition process in which there is neither a clear starting point nor a clear endpoint. The systems remain in continuous flux. New challenges and needs are also continuously emerging, for which VET systems need to provide an answer. In this section, we discuss several policy intentions related to the reforms studied. These can be clustered under external and internal drivers. As introduced earlier (Section 1.8), external drivers refer to PESTLE-type drivers; internal drivers refer to the pressures for change or trends that emerge from the VET sector itself.

4.2.1. External drivers underlying the reforms and developments

The external drivers that were identified in the descriptions of the reforms and developments refer mostly to economic perspectives, such as improving efficiency of systems and delivering the skills needed for the economy.

4.2.1.1. *Skills shortages*

A main policy intention behind the reforms studied is to improve systems' responsiveness to the societal and economic need for skills workers. This is an underlying, often implicit policy objective.

In Denmark, however, this objective is explicitly stated. Here, the political objective that more adults should obtain a vocational qualification should be seen in the light of developments in the labour market, where it was expected that there will be a decreasing demand for low-skilled workers and an increasing demand for skilled workers and for employees with a HE qualification. In Denmark it is foreseen

that there will be, in the near future, a significant shortage of skilled workers (Denmark could face a shortage of 70 000 to 99 000 skilled workers by 2025 depending on the date and methodology forecast (Andersen and Helms, 2019; Cedefop, 2020a; Damm; Jensen and Hansen, 2021), which could ultimately slow the pace of economic growth. Similarly, a surplus of unskilled workers (59 000) and of young people with no education beyond upper secondary general education (51 000) is expected (Damm; Jensen and Hansen, 2021). Seeing that a low share of young people chose a vocational pathway, it was deemed even more important to ensure that more adults who had left education after primary school obtain a vocational qualification (Danmarks, 2017) (Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut, 2017). Based on these observations, a political agreement was reached, whereby adults aged 25+ should be offered a more attractive, clear, and targeted path from unskilled to skilled. This would be achieved through the creation of the pathway called EUV, vocational training for adults (Regeringen, 2014). The advance of new technologies and automation also highlight the need for adult learning at all qualification levels. Having the capacity and opportunity to adapt occupational and personal skills sets and adjust to the changing world of work is equally important for higher educated individuals (European Commission and Ecorys, 2019).

In Lithuania, one of the policy objectives was to increase CVT accessibility and provision in coping with the challenges of skill shortages caused by the demographic situation (including emigration). In this context the discussion of VET for migrants also plays a role.

In Germany, the reforms broadly aim at tackling an alleged/projected shortage of skilled labour (*Fachkräftemangel*) and consequent shortage of VET graduates that has been at the core of German discourse on labour market and economic policy of recent decades (Rahner, 2017). The examples show that reforms are framed in broader economic, technological, societal context and that the aims to make systems better responding to the skills demands resulting from contextual developments.

All countries see increased recognition of making systems more lifelong learning oriented and providing more and better opportunities for adults to upskill and reskill, also supported by VET providers.

4.2.1.2. *Financial pressure*

Financial considerations related to efficiency gains play a role in some reforms studied, also concerning bringing education sub-sectors together from an organisational perspective and better connecting education sectors.

In Lithuania, during 2004-10 it became clear that investments in two training centres providing the same type of qualifications in the same geographic area

cannot be justified economically. Reducing number of VET students (demographic change) and challenges in recruiting and sustaining the VET teaching staff supported reforms that improve the efficiency of the system while maintaining or improving the quality.

In Finland, the reform was partly driven by efficiency concerns. Box 10 provides some further reflections on the financial aspects of the Finnish reform.

In the Netherlands, financial considerations do not heavily dominate policy discussions in recent reforms. They did determine the discussions in the 90s around bringing together school-based and work-based learning pathways and merging VET schools into larger regional education and training centres. One important aspect concerns the role of publicly-funded VET institutions in training adults, as opposed to privately-funded training institutions.

Box 10. Financial considerations in the Finnish reform

In Finland, the reform 2015-18 changed the role of IVET providers when many of them opened their educational provision to adults. The change in the educational institutions' funding was fundamental. However, there are large differences in how adult education centres and IVET providers adapted to the changed operational environment, depending on the region where they operate and its population structure. The traditional youth education providers combined groups of the young and adults when it was possible. Typically, this was possible for traditional youth education providers situated in the larger cities or close to them. The adult education providers choose this strategy less often due to fewer young entrants, their traditions and pedagogic approach, which was more suitable to teaching adults. The education providers of metropolitan areas were more favourably positioned in terms of the large student population.

The experts interviewed were expecting a change in the funding system of adult education as well as a change in the qualifications system through establishment of the new working group (so called *TUTKE 4*). These reforms are expected to find solutions for the education of adults who have difficulties in completing the common studies, and for the young who have learning difficulties. In their view, and based on the information they had received from the Ministry of Education and Culture, the funding system of young and adults' vocational education will be differentiated in the future (again). The experts expected that the funding for the studies through compulsory education system (IVET for those under 18 years and those who have not completed compulsory education) will have a different formula.

Source: Case study reports.

From the examples it becomes clear that efficiency-gains considerations relate to reflections on how public funding can best be spent. While in Lithuania and Finland the IVET and CVET systems depend largely on public funding, considerations related to consolidating these systems to assure efficiency. In the Netherlands, an opposite consideration is visible concerning how publicly funded

VET institutions can be better involved in the learning of adults and how these institutions and the expertise built with public funding can better support the policy objectives to establish a learning culture.

4.2.2. Internal drivers underlying the reforms and developments

The internal drivers referred to in the descriptions of reforms and developments relate to the need to change the organisational structure, to change the content and delivery and increase the attractiveness of VET.

4.2.2.1. Increasing attractiveness of VET (particularly for adults)

Some objectives of the reforms are described in terms of increasing attractiveness of VET and in particular the learning of adults in VET.

In Denmark for instance, the main goal of the 2015 reform was to increase the attractiveness of VET for adults as well as for young people (Danmarks, 2017). As part of the reform, a new pathway for adults in the IVET system, *EUV, Erhvervsuddannelse for Voksne* (Vocational education for adults) was introduced, replacing the previous pathway, called Basic (vocational) education for adults, *Grunduddannelse for Voksne (GVU)*. When the reform *Better and more attractive vocational education and training programmes* was launched in August 2015, it was with clear goals to reduce the drop-out rate, make vocational education more attractive, and get more people to choose this education path (Cedefop, 2020a). More specifically, the reform had four overarching objectives:

- (a) more students must choose vocational education directly after the 9th or 10th grade;
- (b) more people must complete vocational education;
- (c) vocational education must challenge all students to become as proficient as their abilities allow;
- (d) confidence and wellbeing in vocational schools must be strengthened (Regeringen, 2014).

In Germany, the case study focused on the role of CVET in maintaining the prestige and attractiveness of IVET. By increasing the system's overall attractiveness, the reforms also aim at securing access of disadvantaged groups of participants (e.g. adults with no VET and HE qualifications) to credentials with relatively high social esteem.

In Lithuania, one of the explicit policy objectives was making VET an attractive choice of skill formation and career pathway for young people by opening further learning and development prospects through better permeability with HE and CVT (lifelong learning). Here a similar reasoning linking IVET and CVET can be found

to that in Germany: the attractiveness of IVET depends on further learning opportunities.

In the Netherlands, specifically for IVET providers in recent years there have been initiatives to make IVET more attractive for adult learners and for VET institutions (*ROCs*) to provide more opportunities for adult learners and be a skills development partner to employers within their region. There are three strands of actions that allow a more lifelong orientation of VET institutions:

- (a) changes to the legal frameworks and regulations for formal VET qualifications;
- (b) stimulating VET institutions to make use of the flexibility in existing frameworks;
- (c) providing financial incentives (Box 11).

Together, these three strands create an environment in which VET institutions can reorient themselves towards lifelong development. There are some VET institutions that do, and others that are not there yet. The underlying theory is that VET institutions are autonomous and will have to see it in their own interest to focus on adult learning. As this comes with considerable institutional changes, reforms and adjustment of the mindset, a long-term perspective is needed, based on providing favourable (legal framework) conditions; knowledge exchange and development; partnerships; and the right financial incentives. For the last, demand-side funding is prioritised, also given that it is legally challenging to provide direct public funding support to operate on private markets (Ministerie van Onderwijs, 2004, 2021a).

Box 11. **Three actions in the Netherlands to make adult learning more attractive to IVET providers**

Changes to the legal frameworks and regulations for formal VET

qualifications. Through changes in the VET act, VET institutions are offered more flexibility in offering certificates for units of full VET qualifications (*MBO certificaat of MBO verklaring*) (Ministerie van Onderwijs, 2016), for instance based on the elective modules (*keuzedelen*) (ResearchNed, 2020). This also relates to relaxing the requirements for adults concerning civic education and labour market orientation obtaining a VET qualification.

Support to make use of the flexibility in existing frameworks. This relates to stimulating VET institutions to cooperate within local and regional skills development ecosystems and intensifying regional approaches and cooperation between VET providers and regional stakeholders such as companies, PES and municipalities (see for instance (Kennispunt MBO leven lang ontwikkelen, 2020). It also includes providing clear guidance on what is and what is not possible for VET institutions in organising lifelong development courses in the private market as a public institution. In 2020, a guide was developed for VET institutions (state funded and non-state funded) to offer more flexible VET provision (Ministerie van Onderwijs, 2020a). In addition, an expertise-platform (*Kennispunt leven lang ontwikkelen*) has been established by the VET sector on how VET institutions can organise lifelong development ⁽²³⁾.

Providing financial incentives. There are various financial incentives to stimulate lifelong development. Most notably this concerns the ESF-supported subsidies on sustainable employment (NL *leert door*), or stimulating learning in SMEs ⁽²⁴⁾ that offers an economic-sector approach to supporting individual learning; the work-based learning financial support scheme (Rvo, 2022); and the further development of the frameworks for the STAP (Incentive labour market position) allowance scheme. This scheme is an individual learning account, or voucher, which can be used by individuals to pay for training. With this (personal) development budget, which was implemented in March 2022, adult learners can participate in a wide variety of training activities, also offered by VET institutions. This scheme forms part of a larger initiative to empower adults to gain control over their own learning and development and aims to stimulate adult learning. Further, subsidies are available for VET institutions to develop lifelong learning opportunities in cooperation with other stakeholders (Ministerie van Onderwijs, 2019). An overview of 13 funded initiatives and their intermediate results was published in 2021 (Ministerie van Onderwijs, 2021b).

Source: Case study reports.

The examples show that different policy objectives are intertwined and mutually enforcing. On the one hand, the policy objectives concern making VET attractive by allowing further progression routes for graduates (both in terms of further learning and career progression); and on the other hand, policy objectives

⁽²³⁾ [Kennispunt leven lang ontwikkelen](#)

⁽²⁴⁾ [SLIM: subsidieregeling leren en ontwikkelen in het mkb](#)

aim to stimulate lifelong learning more generally in which VET providers will also have to play their part.

4.2.2.2. *Reforming organisational set-up of systems: reducing overlap and supporting synergies*

Closely linked to efficiency-gains considerations are VET-internal organisational developments that provide the background to reforms. These considerations can relate to merging subsystems; supporting more autonomy of institutions, or improving key stakeholder engagement in the governance of VET systems supporting the learning of adults.

In Lithuania, the 2010 reform transferred the labour market training centres under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour to the Ministry of Education and Science, merging the training centres for vocational training of adults with the vocational schools, and unifying the governance of the IVET and CVET provision (including curriculum design, organisation and provision of training, competence assessment). As early as 2003 steps were taken to change the status of the IVET and CVET providers with the decentralisation reforms of VET aiming to increase the autonomy of VET providers and to strengthen involvement of the private stakeholders in the governance of VET and CVET. Then the VET providers and labour market training centres were given a right to become a public entity, opening the possibility to enrol private stakeholders in the governance. More specific details are provided in Box 12.

A similar consideration played a role in Finland in bringing together two subsystems (IVET and CVET). As the same education providers were to provide youth and adult education through the same national qualification requirements, the different groups were no longer allocated funding separately: the overlapping education provision and borders between youth and adult education were to be removed. The administration, the supervision and funding of unified forms of VET were organised as a new unit under the Ministry of Education and Culture, while the efficiency of the system and increase in workplace learning were set as important goals. From the perspective of reorganising the allocation of funding, it was decided that the differentiated systems for initial VET, further VET, apprenticeship training, and their regulation, guidance and funding will be unified. The change was planned in 2016.

Box 12. Sectoral Centres for Practical training in Lithuania

Unification of initial and continuing VET also took place in the organisation of training provision. One of the key areas of such unification could be practical training and work-based learning. Here we can distinguish such institutional interventions as establishment of the 42 sectoral practical training centres based on the chosen VET centres in the period 2015-18 and the efforts to implement dual apprenticeships.

The Sectoral Centre for Practical Training is a vocational training institution equipped with modern practical training facilities, providing initial and continuing practical vocational training for all Lithuanian citizens: vocational school students, college and university students, employees of companies upgrading their qualifications, and jobseekers retraining and improving their competences under programmes regulated by the employment service.

Modern practical training facilities better meet the needs of potential users of the services, helping increase the number of users of vocational training services. The high level of training technology installed in training institutions better responds to the economic situation in the country and to the requirements of employers, thus increasing the demand for continuing training services. In line with the sectoral practical training centre, these centres train highly qualified workers with sufficiently good practical skills to be able to enter straight into the labour market. The centres give trainees the opportunity to work with the latest machinery and to acquire the practical skills they need for their professional careers.

The establishment of sectoral practical training centres is an integral part of the competence-oriented reform of vocational training, as modern technology opens up opportunities for the development of new vocational training services, encourages vocational training institutions to update their curricula and to move towards more flexible, modular training that is more adult-friendly. Sectoral centres for practical training should also contribute to the development of dual apprenticeships.

Source: Case study reports.

4.2.2.3. Revising content and delivery: tailoring VET to adult learner needs

The reforms aim to change the content of the VET programmes and how they are delivered to adult learners. This is linked to previous reform intentions such as increasing responsiveness and attractiveness of VET for adults.

In Lithuania, one of the objectives was framed as improving the quality of IVET and CVET provision by following the policies and guidelines of EU policies and strategies. In this context, the reform also included revising curriculum design through implementation of the unified modularised competence-based curricula for IVET and formal CVET as a part of implementation of the LTQF (national modular VET curricula based on the occupational standards). Initial and continuing VET is provided by following the national modular VET curricula with some slight differences. Continuing education programmes provide training for adults who often already have qualifications and work experience and need either to develop some competences or to acquire a new qualification. As a result, some modules

of the national modular curriculum (introductory module for familiarisation with the occupation and the curriculum, general modules, optional modules) are not covered in these programmes. The move towards modular programmes in vocational training has led to a move away from training defined in contact hours or self-directed work to training in credits. This assessment of volume allows learners to adapt their learning more flexibly to their personal needs, to combine work and learning activities, and to choose flexible forms and methods of learning. Continuing education programmes can be personalised by tailoring the curriculum to the needs of the specialisation, through distance learning and daily or independent learning. Modular training programmes allow learners to take credit for previously acquired competences, where appropriate and possible. The reforms also included more emphasis on validation and recognition of prior learning. Since 2017 the recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning can be a tool to support the learning of the unemployed.

In Finland, the structure of the qualification system and individual qualifications had been developed at varying periods of time based on the labour market initiatives. Inadequate coordination of the initiatives had resulted in an unclear structure in the qualification system, and there were overlapping study units across various qualifications. Further, some qualifications were too specific and narrow with respect to the career opportunities available on the labour market. In 2008-09 the national qualification requirements were unified so that the new requirements included both the curriculum and competence-based qualifications. In practice, it meant that the requirements for both youth and adult education were presented in the same documents and were not differentiated.

In the Netherlands, as indicated above (Box 11 in Section 4.2.2.1), the reforms aimed to allow more flexibility to tailor the provision of both formal qualifications and shorter courses to adult learners needs.

In Germany, in contrast, while these system-level reforms aim to increase the system's overall attractiveness, they do not directly modify the content, provider structure, and mode of CVET delivery.

In this context, the reforms in Portugal that have focused on the possibilities of recognition and validation of prior learning are relevant. The broader trend in policy development, in which the establishment of new opportunities centres in 2014 was the first formal initiative on centres for qualification and vocational education (*Centros para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional, CQEP*)⁽²⁵⁾, and in 2017 the *Qualifica* centres in 2017 were all directed towards making better use of the potential offered by more flexible qualification systems and modularisation.

⁽²⁵⁾ Portaria No 135-A/2013, 28.03.

The *Qualifica* centres bring together the recognition, validation and certification processes with the actual provision of certified training activities, which can consequently be more targeted to individual needs.

4.2.3. Overview and discussion of policy objectives and orientations

The case studies show a diversity of reforms that provide a different combination of main policy intentions and objectives. Table 6 provides a concise overview of the main intentions and orientations.

Table 6. Policy objectives and intentions of reforms and developments

Country	External drivers		Internal drivers		
	Skills shortages	Financial pressure	Increasing attractiveness of VET (in particular for adults)	Reforming organisational set-up of systems offering learning to adults: reducing overlap and supporting synergies	Revising VET content and delivery, tailoring it to needs of adult learners
Denmark	X		X		
Finland	(x)	X		X	X
Lithuania	X	X	X	X	X
Netherlands	(x)	X	X		X
Portugal	(x)		X	X	X
Germany	X		X		

Source: Cedefop.

The reforms and developments cannot be isolated from their historic, economic, and organisational contexts. They are formed in the interplay of preceding policy reforms, interests from different stakeholder and policy intentions. The case studies show that external and internal drivers are referred to in describing the policy objectives. From the case studies a general picture emerges that the policy direction points to creating IVET-CVET systems able to respond to emerging needs for skilled workers, to respond to adult learners' needs, make VET an attractive option, and all this in the best economic value-for-money organisational set-up.

The role of EU policies and frameworks can be identified mainly in the context of revising the content and delivery of VET, especially focusing on validation and recognition of prior learning.

In Lithuania, one of the most important impulses for the development of continuing vocational training is the financial support provided by EU programmes. The main challenges are related to the sustainability of existing CVET practices

and the involvement of employers in CVET, which are very much dependent on the EU funding.

In Finland the role of EU initiatives was also mentioned. Here, the European qualification framework, European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET), European quality assurance reference framework for VET (EQARF), and Europass were mentioned. In the Bill for the new legislation, they were considered alongside the new skills agenda established by the European Commission 2016 (Bill: HE 39/2017). Further, the diminishing age cohorts, urbanisation and needs of the labour market resulting from technological change and the development of work processes, as well as the emergence of new occupational profiles, were seen to contribute to the need to develop the qualification.

4.3. Results of studied reforms and developments

In many of the countries studied, it is still too early to see the final results of the reforms and development. In addition, there is the question of whether it is at all possible to isolate the results of specific reforms given that systems are in continuous flux, whereby earlier reforms still echo and determine the direction of travel of the system. In this section, we aim to shed light on some early results and indications of change in the six countries studied. The result areas are clustered to make use of the three-perspective model (Chapter 1.8), looking at the results from epistemological and pedagogical perspectives, education system and socioeconomic or labour market perspectives.

4.3.1. Education system perspective on results

An education system perspective looks at how VET as an institution has evolved, and continues to evolve, over time. From this perspective, the variety of forms of VET, types of providers, levels and funding sources and mechanisms, the nature and scale of VET in the initial (compulsory) phase of education and for adults, or the status of learners (whether students in education or apprentices holding employment contracts with employers) are key issues. The relationship with other systemic sectors, such as general education, is also of particular interest (Cedefop 2022d). In the context of this work, the education system perspective reflects on what characterises IVET and CVET that can explain their relationship. This education system perspective is applied differently: for IVET, the focus is on what education system characteristics relate to the opening up to adults; for CVET – given its variety – the focus is on its position within the education system and how this position encourages or hampers IVET institutions in playing a role. The case

studies show the results from this perspective as presented in the following sections.

4.3.1.1. *Changing institutional roles and responsibilities*

A first noticeable change in some of the countries is that due to the reforms the institutional roles and responsibilities shifted.

In Lithuania, the reform integrated initial vocational training centres and labour market training centres. However, currently, it can be said that this integration has been only partial. In CVT (consisting of labour market training for unemployed persons and the CVT provided for the employees of enterprises) a rather small range of vocational training programmes is dominant in such fields as transport (truck drivers), metalworking (welders), services (beauty services, hairdressing). While the VET centres provide the training courses for adults (including the courses for the unemployed), the surviving five public labour market training centres do not provide initial vocational training programmes.

In Finland, the reforms intended to merge types of institutions, but here, also, only partial results have been achieved. The roles of IVET and CVET providers after the reform 2015-18 were characterised by an expert interviewee to have transformed: 'those who have been on the side of vocational adult education do not provide education for young. In contrast, the traditional youth education institutions provide education for adults' ⁽²⁶⁾. The number of vocational education providers has decreased substantially and some education providers, which formerly focused on IVET or CVET, have reoriented the focus of their work and the qualifications they provide. The demand for these changes has been dependent on the regional circumstances, the ownership of the institutions, other sources of funding available for them (except for State) and the strategies individual VET providers have taken to adapt to the changed context. The educational institutions are typically long-standing. The adult education centres in the region considered had already been profiled as adult education centres, which dominated their image. As a result, they had difficulties in finding new, young clientele after the reform. For

⁽²⁶⁾ The reasons for the differentiation of the education providers' profiles were seen to stem from the size of age cohorts. There are relatively more adults in need of education than those aged 15-19 years from the perspective of diminishing age cohorts. Another expert reflected on the traditional images of the education providers in the eyes of the applicants. The pedagogic approach of adult education centres was also seen as a barrier for educational provision for the young by one adult education expert interviewed: 'We expect independent learning and self-directed learning, autonomous approach. We have less guidance and an orientation to short, effective processes. We expect students to have skills for working life participation. The pedagogic approach is, however, the main reason.'

the institutions which had been educating mostly the young, taking adults as students was easier, but depending on the targeted qualifications.

In Denmark, the reform was not successful in breaking down the existing barriers between the three adult education systems. Basic skills are still taught in a non-occupational context in the VEU centres, AMU courses are still narrowly occupational, and EUV is mainly attractive to adults without any employment experience. This target group is offered the EUV3, which is hardly distinguishable from IVET for young people.

In the Netherlands, the changing institutional landscape is different from what is seen in the other countries. The reforms aimed at stimulating a lifelong learning culture and encouraging highly autonomous IVET providers to play a larger role in adult learning. Overall, in recent years the attention in VET institutions to lifelong learning increased and VET institutions increasingly rethought their offer to adult learners and their role in the regional skills development ecosystem, working together with labour market stakeholders. Conversations with 60 representatives of VET institutions on the role of VET institutions in lifelong learning (commissioned by the *Kennispunt MBO Leven Lang Ontwikkelen* (Knowledge point VET and lifelong development) revealed that all VET institutions see a role for themselves in lifelong learning (Hutspot, 2019; Kennispunt, 2020). This is mainly in serving companies and organisations in training their employees in groups, but also by working together with PES and municipalities in offering language education to migrants and training programmes for individuals at a distance from the labour market. Some VET institutions are further developed in terms of lifelong development than others. These generally position themselves as skills-development partner to companies and from that perspective offer VET training to employees. They target slightly fewer individual adults to enrol in VET programmes; this is a feature more developed in the HE sector (mainly by the universities of applied sciences).

While the reforms in Lithuania, Denmark and Finland were only recently implemented, it is difficult to say how much the reforms will lead to changes in institutional roles and responsibilities. What can be seen at this moment is that the reforms play out differently in different regions and contexts. While in some contexts the reform forced institutions to merge, in others it did not. In the Finnish case, it can be questioned whether the merging of IVET and CVET is beneficial for adult learners. In regions with enough clientele, the adult education centres prefer to stay autonomous and not to merge with their IVET counterpart. In Lithuania, the reform did not provide coverage of CVET courses in all economic sectors.

4.3.1.2. *Changing qualifications and the IVET/CVET programme landscape*

Some of the reforms targeted the qualifications framework, reducing overlap, creating synergies and providing more transparency within the qualifications systems covering both IVET and the learning of adults. These reforms are often linked with the developments around the establishment of NQFs.

An example of this change can be found in Finland. The aim of the VET reform of 2015-18 was to align the qualifications system, remove overlapping provision as well as simplify the governance of qualification requirements. In the present qualification system, there are 64 further vocational qualifications and 54 specialist vocational qualifications. Compared to the 177 further vocational qualifications and 122 specialist vocational qualifications that were available prior to the reform 2015-18, the reduction is remarkable (Bill: HE 39/2017). The development of the qualification structure, and related fall in the number of qualifications is presented in Box 13. Following the development general trend after the 2015-18 reform, the qualification structure has become more compact also with respect to these education programmes, so there are fewer qualification titles. However, some former qualification titles have been transformed into competence areas provided as part of the reduced number of titles. The 2015-18 reform was a shift toward a more simplified qualification structure.

Box 13. **Finland: change of qualification structure since the late 1990s**

Time period	Qualification structure: number of qualifications
Late 1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 77 upper secondary VET qualifications; - 80 post-secondary VET qualifications.
2010s prior to the 2017 legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 52 initial vocational qualifications; - 177 further vocational qualifications; - 122 specialist vocational qualifications; <p>total = 351 vocational qualifications on various levels.</p>
2018 to 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 164 vocational qualifications on various levels (initial vocational qualifications further and specialist vocational qualifications)
Since 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 44 vocational upper secondary qualifications; - 64 further vocational qualifications; - 54 specialist vocational qualifications.

NB: The box does not present the competence-based qualification system separately, because the qualification structure was the same for the curriculum-based VET and competence-based VET.

Source: case study report Finland

In Germany, the developments and initiatives to stimulate CVET enrolment and improve the attractiveness of IVET were closely related to better representation of CVET programmes within the NQF. More precisely, new names for each of the three German levels of upgrading CVET have been allocated, to

increase the social esteem and visibility of the respective degrees in the national context and make them more comparable internationally (Bibb, 2021). Each level in the traditional ‘upgrading’ CVET sector has been allocated names (bachelor professional and master professional) corresponding to the respective degrees at universities (academic higher education) and IVET/CVET at universities of applied sciences (UAS) (both reward bachelor and master degrees). Similarly, the label of upgrading CVET (*Aufstiegsfortbildung*) has been changed to higher VET (*höherqualifizierende Berufsbildung*). The adjusted names and NQF reform clearly show an attempt to position the upgrading CVET qualifications as equivalents to the bachelor and master degrees from universities. Further, during an incremental process over recent decades, upgrading CVET programmes have been adjusted to new skill demands and technological progress, and new upgrading CVET programmes have been created, which might lead to increased attractiveness for individuals (Weiß, 2014).

In Denmark, the reform introduced a new pathway for adults in the IVET system, *Erhvervsuddannelse for Voksne*, EUV (vocational education for adults) consisting of three strands, each targeting different adult learners and offering courses of different duration (Box 14). The main change compared to the previous programme was that it made validation and recognition of prior learning compulsory, and introduced extensive criteria for how much the programme should be shortened following the result of the validation. The EUV programmes for adults are fundamentally identical to the programmes for young people, but the duration of the programme may vary depending on potential students’ existing qualifications and labour market experience. Standard catalogues of courses that award credit have been developed for every IVET course, and three model programmes of different duration (EUV1, EUV2, and EUV3) are thus available for potential participants, depending on their documented experience. The first evaluation results are not too positive. The main conclusion of the 2017 report is that the political goal to provide adults aged 25 and over with a more attractive, clear, and targeted pathway from unskilled to skilled had not yet been reached. The share of adults in EUV in 2017 was smaller than the share in VET before the reform in 2015: while the participation in EUV is increasing and the participation in AMU has fallen overall since the 2008 financial crisis, the participation in EUV is still only about a third of the participation in AMU (Danmarks, 2017). Further, while participation in EUV2 and EUV3 has increased steadily, participation in EUV1, which is targeted at upskilling experienced employees, has remained at a very low level. All interviewees suggest that the main explanation for this is the presence of practical barriers for employers associated with sending employees to the programme. Since the school periods in the programme are planned to suit the workplace

training of young apprentices, they may conflict with the planning of the enterprise. In addition, if an employer wants to send a group of employees to the same programme, they may end up having to go to school on different days, since the courses they need to follow are decided according to the results of the individual validation and recognition of prior learning.

Box 14. Denmark: vocational education for adults three-strand model

EUV1: This pathway targets adults with at least 2 years of relevant (to the occupation targeted by the VET programme) employment. These students do not have to follow the basic programme ⁽²⁷⁾, and their programme will not include apprenticeship (since it is the main assumption that they are already in employment, and that any work-based learning can take place in the current workplace). However, this pathway can be followed also by the unemployed, if they have the 2 years of relevant employment, when they are offered a supplementary module of up to 9 weeks duration.

EUV2: This pathway targets adults with less than 2 years of relevant work experience, or who are recent graduates from another educational programme (e.g., general secondary education or a VET programme leading to another occupation). These students are offered participation in the second half of the basic programme and a main programme including apprenticeship. In order to enter the main programme, the individual must fulfil the same requirements as the young students who have followed the full basic programme (these requirements differ between VET programmes).

EUV3: This pathway is for adults without relevant employment experience or education. These individuals must participate in the second half of the basic programme and sit the examination at the end of the basic programme on an equal footing with young students. The main programme for this group is identical with the programme for young apprentices.

Source: Case study reports.

In Portugal, this drive for increased flexibility and transparency in qualification systems is also reflected in recent policy developments for adult education. The shift from qualification and vocational education centres (*Centros para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional, CQEP*) ⁽²⁸⁾, which replaced the network of new opportunities centres in 2014, and which themselves were superseded by the *Qualifica* centres in 2017, accompanies broader trends in the national qualification system. These centres bring together the recognition, validation and certification with the provision of certified training activities, which can consequently be more

⁽²⁷⁾ All IVET programmes in Denmark are dual programmes consisting of a basic school-based programme of variable duration, and a main programme, in which periods in a training company alternates with periods at school.

⁽²⁸⁾ Portaria No 135-A/2013, 28.03.

targeted to individual needs. These reforms are embedded in more structural changes to the national qualifications system ⁽²⁹⁾. The introduction of a national credit system for vocational education and training ⁽³⁰⁾ enabled the broader rollout of modularisation, allowing increased mobility and flexibility in the provision of vocational education in Portugal, particularly also for the target group of the *Qualifica* centres, i.e. low-qualified young people and adults.

The changes in the qualifications landscape must also be seen in developments related to offering more modularised approaches to IVET and education and training in general. In this context, in the Netherlands a similar development is noticeable as in Finland in recent decades, but also a reverse one. The total number of qualifications reduced significantly (from 675 in 2012 to 473 in 2021) ⁽³¹⁾ but with the introduction of elective modules, a large variety of shorter formal modules are offered that can also be marketed to adults. The offer of the VET institutions are formal work-based learning programmes at mbo level 4 (equivalent to EQF 4), meaning that the student will go 1 day to school and will work 4 days in the company. The offer of tailored, shorter courses is still limited within VET institutions and is developed on demand. Some VET institutions are more developed in this regard, conducting market research on the needs and establishing organisational units (with account managers) to serve this market.

The broader emphasis on microcredentials is of importance here as well, showing a tendency towards more modularised and shorter programmes for adults. From the case studies it becomes clear that changing the qualification landscape is – similar to changing the institutional landscape – a long-term process, requiring multiple subsequent policy reforms, often build on project-based experimentation, close monitoring and evaluation. Further, the case studies show that results are currently partial at best. The reforms might be noticeable in some economic sectors, or might reduce the overall number of qualifications, but the increase in the number of shorter programmes and specialisations within qualifications questions whether the reforms actually contribute to increased transparency for learners and employers and contributing to increasing participation for adults in learning at all.

4.3.2. Epistemological and pedagogical perspective on results

From an epistemological or pedagogical perspective, it can be argued that the identity of vocational education is rooted in distinctive modes of production, representation, use and transfer of knowledge, which can be associated with

⁽²⁹⁾ Decreto-Lei No 14/2017, 26.01. “

⁽³⁰⁾ Decreto-lei No 47/2017, 01.02 (also regulates the *Qualifica* Passport).

⁽³¹⁾ Future of VET case study report the Netherlands: *Crebo lists for 2012 and 2021*

particular ways of teaching and learning. For instance, VET highlights that knowledge is mainly practical (know-how, skills) and implicit and often personal and situational. Learning always involves practical experience (learning-by-doing) and happens through socialisation in communities of practice (Cedefop 2022d). From the pedagogical perspective, the study will look at the character of 'what VET' is offered to adults. The case studies show the results from this perspective as presented in the following sections.

4.3.2.1. *Changing modes of delivery: same or distinct programmes for young and adult learners*

The convergence of IVET and CVET qualifications led in Finland to joint delivery of VET programmes to young and adult learners. This was not without challenges. As reported by a respondent, teachers were not necessarily prepared to teach more students with varying ethnic backgrounds. Also, the grouping of young people and adults was not for pedagogic reasons, but for economic reasons, so learning might not be more tailored to adult needs.

In other countries, such as Denmark, the reform clearly aimed to make VET better aligned to adult needs. While the EUV programmes are identical to regular VET programmes, their mode of delivery is specifically tailored to adult learners, targeting the objective to establish learning environments that were suited to the demands and learning styles of adults. 'In EUV, didactic and pedagogical approaches should be tailored to the needs of adults' (Regeringen, 2014). However, also in Denmark (similar to Finland) this ambition causes a challenge for schools, since, while schools and employers may want to pool adults (for example a group of employees from a company) in separate classes, this is often not practically possible due to the small numbers of EUV students. Only in a few schools with large student populations has it been possible to establish classes for adults alone: as a rule, the classes are mixed. It should be noted, though, that the share of very young people (younger than 18 years) is very small in Danish VET, so in reality, it is more a question of younger adults mixing with older adults.

In the Netherlands, the VET institutions also acknowledge the impact lifelong development has on increasing flexibility in initial VET (Hutspot, 2019). The convergence of IVET and CVET, or integrating adult learners into IVET, can impact IVET provision (for younger learners); this is shown by the Finnish, Danish and Dutch examples, organising IVET more in line with general adult learning principles such as making provision better tailored to needs and prior experience, providing more modular approaches and allowing more flexibility in course delivery and assessment.

4.3.2.2. *Changing the pedagogical approaches: competence-based approaches and modularisation*

The case studies indicate longer-term changes and shifts in the pedagogical approaches to IVET and the learning of adults (CVET). A longer-term development is the use of competence-based provision.

In Finland, pedagogically, the national qualification requirements for IVET, further VET qualifications and specialist VET qualifications have shifted toward a more competence-based approach since the 1990s. The requirements give emphasis to specific assessment criteria, which are defined for each competence area, instead of a more holistic approach. At the same time, the present opportunities to credit and certify student completion of individual competence areas, which expand their competence and employability, enables the flexible enhancement and certification of individual competences compared to the past. Student experiences of their benefits for employment, and life-long, life-wide learning has not been investigated thoroughly, though. While the change toward a competence-based approach in adult VET education took place when the competence-based system was established in 1994, since the 2015-18 reform, the same national qualification requirements are valid for both the young and adults in initial VET. This has meant adopting a more competence-based approach in the national requirements for the young. After the 2015-18 reform the pedagogic approach shifted toward a more competence-based approach and more individualised, flexible completion of qualifications was possible, also enabling expansion of existing competences through the completion of individual competence areas in the form of whole qualifications. At present, the national qualification requirements give more specific assessment criteria than in the past; the criteria are listed for each competence area separately, but practitioners in some occupational fields do not find the criteria particularly helpful and easy to interpret (e.g. *Kone- ja tuotantotekniikan työelämätoimikunta, [2020]*). The 2015-18 reform meant enhancement of competence-based approach. The completion of competence units, parts of qualifications relevant for each learner, became easier for students and profitable for education providers, as they also get funding for partial completion of qualifications (competence units).

In Lithuania, a similar development can be noticed. The reform of the VET curriculum in 2013-19, with the introduction of competence-based occupational standards and national modular VET programmes, should increase transferability between initial and continuing vocational training, but the concrete results of this reform are yet to be seen. For example, it is expected, that modular VET curricula will help VET graduates and employers to plan the updating and development of competences during the working career, as well as will raise the participation of

adults in continuing vocational training by choosing modules relevant for skill needs in the labour market. However, the results of these changes are not yet fully visible ⁽³²⁾. Modularisation of VET curricula (both for VET and CVET) brought bigger change in initial VET in terms of stronger integration of teaching of general and vocational knowledge, according to the requirements of the module content (competences), while for CVET similar integration was already present before the reform.

In the Netherlands, through the changes to the legal frameworks and regulations for formal VET qualifications, VET institutions have more flexibility in, for instance, offering certificates of units of full VET qualifications (*MBO certificaat of MBO verklaring*) (Ministerie van Onderwijs, 2016), based on the elective modules (*keuzedelen*) as well as full VET qualifications (ResearchNed, 2020). This also helps relax the requirements for adults concerning civic education and labour market orientation obtaining a VET qualification, making it easier for VET institutions to target adult learners.

An interesting aspect in the pedagogical approaches affected by the reforms is the role of generic subject and transversal skills and competences in the provision of VET learning to adults. With the integration of IVET and CVET qualifications and harmonisation of learning outcomes, in some countries requirements in terms of general subjects, basic skills, civic competences and labour market orientation, which used to be only mandatory for young people, are now required for adult learners.

In Finland, one of the fundamental changes that took place after the 2015-18 reform was that also adults who completed initial vocational qualifications following national qualification requirements had to complete common studies. In practice this meant around half a year of studies (35 competence points). For those adults with low basic skills this has been problematic; typically, according to an interviewee, these are young men. In the past, prior to the reform of 2015-18, they were able to complete their studies without the common studies units ⁽³³⁾.

⁽³²⁾ The implementation of the modular curricula in the practices of VET and CVET requires more time, because of profound changes to training practices, new requirements for the skills and competences of VET teachers and trainers. Also, the full scale launch of the modular VET curricula only started in 2019 and, so far, there are few graduates from these programmes who could continue their training by taking CVET modules.

⁽³³⁾ As reflected by an expert interviewee: 'Here they [policy-makers] should have created options [for the qualification requirements] that are not so categorical. There should have been options and free-choice.' 'The problem concerns also some of those who come to fulfil their compulsory education. They have never continued their education because they have learning difficulties. They have need of special aid, which has

The Danish EUV system is deliberately designed in such a way as to maintain the link with IVET learning outcomes (exactly the same), but structurally allowing shortening the programme through reducing generic parts from the programme based on the background of the adult learning and validation procedures (see next section).

4.3.2.3. *Use of validation of prior learning and shortening (IVET) programmes*

Another pedagogical change reported in the case studies is the use of validation and recognition of prior learning. This was explicitly part of the Danish reform, building an adult learning vocational education system that uses recognition processes to shorten programmes for different target groups. The EUV programmes do not differ from the IVET programmes for young people in respect of curriculum, content, or teaching. The only differences are the shorter basic programme followed by the adult EUV students, and the offer (for those who might need it) of an additional course (Basic programme+). So, the only instrument available to turn a VET programme aimed at young people into a programme aimed at adults is reduction of the duration of the programme and its component parts. The reduction in duration is established at an individual level as a combination of compulsory and individual shortening based on validation of prior learning⁽³⁴⁾. Box 15 presents some evaluative findings from the first years of experience with the EUV in Denmark.

increased tremendously. It has been a barrier to continuing education. Due to prolonged compulsory education, they must study in one way or another. It should have been thought how we will ensure the throughput of this group, and their participation in society, to make sure that they do not cancel studies based on the learning difficulties in subjects which are not central in the occupation.' 'If they do not finish the qualification, they have difficulties in participating in society.' 'The learning difficulties should be given more attention in basic education. And there is a need to build the qualification system so that completion of qualifications is possible [for all including those with learning difficulties].'

⁽³⁴⁾ The compulsory shortening has two components: the school-based parts should be reduced by 10% for all VET students 25 years and over; and each VET programme in Denmark is regulated by an executive order for the programme. These executive orders have an annex (criteria for award of credit) with two parts: first, detailed criteria for what should be considered '2 years of relevant work experience' is laid out. Using these criteria, it can be established whether the potential student should go into EUV1. Subsequently, detailed criteria for reduction of specific parts of the programme and the associated (compulsory) reduction of the part/course/module is laid out.

Box 15. Denmark: EUV and first evaluative findings on the use of validation to shorten the programmes

From the perspective of the VET school, an evaluation of the VET reform of 2014 by the Danish Center for Social Science Research (*VIVE*) 55% by school leaders found the implementation of validation of prior learning easy or very easy 3 years after the reform. This result reflects that the method was already implemented in the previous system (*GVU*). But 75% of school leaders continued to find the implementation of credit difficult or very difficult (*Vive*, 2020). These difficulties were confirmed in an interview with the former Director of the Association of Danish VET schools and Gymnasiums. According to the interviewees, candidates for EUV1 who are low-skilled individuals with more than 2 years of relevant employment face 'robust' requirements concerning proof of basic and transversal skills as a ticket to enter the main programme. In order to overcome these difficulties, an adjustment of the reform in 2018 introduced a Basic programme+ (*Grundforløb+*). It entails 10 weeks of extra basic programme with subjects such as methodology and workplace culture, possibly supplemented with some occupational skill teaching. The programme does not, however, include basic knowledge and skills in Danish language, mathematics, physics etc., and it is often those subjects that pose challenges for prospective EUV students. In spite of the difficulties, the evaluation by *VIVE* found that the VET programmes had been shortened more after than before the reform, i.e. the duration of an EUV programme was shorter than had been the case for *GVU* programmes prior to 2014. The question raised by *VIVE*, however, is whether this shortened duration reflects the competences and knowledge that adults bring to EUV.

Source: Case study reports.

In Lithuania, recognition of prior learning is emphasised as an important pillar, but this area is not yet developed. As indicated in the case study report, the assessment and recognition of non-formal vocational training and prior learning achievements is not yet sufficiently developed, linking this process to national-level occupational standards and modular vocational training programmes. In January 2022 the first assessments of the theoretical part (knowledge) of a person's acquired competences for a qualification started under the updated description of the procedures. As in the past, the assessment of competences consists of a theoretical part (knowledge) and the practical part (competences). However, under the new procedure, the assessment of the theoretical part will be carried out centrally by electronic testing, while the practical part will be carried out at the base of a vocational training provider, equipped with the necessary technical equipment and tools to perform the task, or at an actual workplace equipped with the necessary technical equipment and tools. More than a thousand assessments are planned for 2022.

In Finland, validation takes a central position in the system. While general subjects are mandatory for adults, they may have prior studies recognised and accredited when individual study plans are initially drawn up.

In Portugal, the system is built on validation processes. The *Qualifica* programme offers individualised guidance, which is based primarily on an individual's education and training backgrounds. *Qualifica* passports are the concrete instrument through which adult learners can track their past educational and training experiences and based on which targeted learning paths can be charted. The *Qualifica* centres focus predominantly on getting low qualified young persons and adults towards a qualification that fits. These qualification tracks, in addition to the validation process, are also offered by the *Qualifica* centres.

4.3.3. Socioeconomic or labour market perspective on results

Using a socioeconomic or labour market perspective, the wider functions of VET are considered. These may include the ways in which it contributes to social stratification by providing access to particular career pathways and to the skills, competences and attitudes demanded by companies and their work systems, allowing workers to meet the challenges of their workplaces, while workplaces at the same time can allow for the acquisition of skills (Cedefop 2022d). The case study analysis found evidence only to a limited extent that the reforms aim to bring changes in relation to this perspective. One aspect, however, is the development of a lifelong learning culture, also in relation to solving future skills challenges.

4.3.3.1. Towards a lifelong learning culture and mindset

Some reforms had as implicit objective to establish a learning culture and changing mindsets towards lifelong learning in VET (Denmark and Netherlands). In this respect, the reforms are not (yet) regarded as being effective.

In Denmark the reform did not result in better serving adult learners. Retrospectively, the 2014-15 VET reform cannot be seen to have had significant impact on the provision of vocational education and training to adults. Participation in EUV has been low but steadily increasing since the reform. However, participation in the pathway aimed at upskilling low-skilled employees with more than 2 years of relevant experience (EUV1) has consistently remained low and has not increased at the same rate as the other two pathways. It can be concluded that the reform has largely failed to reach the main target group for the initiative, while it has been more successful in reaching target groups that are not already firmly established in the labour market. In the same period, participation in AMU

increased, but only slightly, from 200 523 in 2015 to 209 737 in 2019 ⁽³⁵⁾. While the reform aimed to make it easier for adults to get access to a full VET qualification, in practice the bureaucratic requirements posed too many challenges for schools and for prospective students, just as there was little incentive for employers to send employees to EUV. Box 16 presents findings from a recent evaluation on whether the EUV improved the learning environment for adults.

Box 16. Denmark: EUV and first evaluative findings on the learning environment for adult learners

The VIVE evaluation indicates that school managers, teachers, and students disagree on whether the learning environment has improved following the reform. An increasing share of school managers find that the learning environment in the school is not good (18% in 2019 compared to 5% before the reform), while a decreasing share find it very good (Vive, 2020, 109). Teachers' responses indicate that the adult education environment has evolved in a more positive direction. For programmes in Care, health and pedagogy, Technology, construction and transport, Office, commerce and business services, and Food, agriculture, and experiences, over 60% of teachers state that the learning adults in their school and programme is good to some or to a high extent (for Care, health and pedagogy this reaches 84%). Student assessment of the learning environment did not change significantly over the 3-year period. Around 70% of adult students find that they thrive in their education, and this has not changed from before until after the reform.

An important factor contributing to a learning environment suited to the needs of adults is that the teaching can be adapted to the needs of adult learners. More than half of teachers across all programmes, except the mercantile programmes, expressed that they plan the teaching to consider the needs of adults that have not followed the full basic programme. This suggests that a well-functioning adult education environment has been established in several places, but that there is a clear potential for improvement. Further, the evaluation found that teachers in large schools are less likely to consider that the adult learning environment is good, so the size of the school also appears to play a role.

Source: Case study reports.

In the Netherlands, despite the increased awareness among VET institutions, the policy measures have not yet resulted in increased participation in lifelong learning or increased participation in VET-related provision more specifically. Also, the aim to establish a learning culture is not yet achieved, as concluded in recent studies (de Grip, 2021; Maslowski and Vogels, 2019). VET institutions also still see many challenges in making lifelong development within the VET institutions a reality (Hutspot, 2019). However, after a loss in momentum in lifelong learning

⁽³⁵⁾ In 2020 and 2021, participation in AMU dropped again, probably as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Børne- og undervisningsministeriet, 2022).

between 2011 and 2017 (Ministerie van Onderwijs, 2020b, p. 7), the political and public awareness of lifelong learning and lifelong development increased in recent years, especially with the publication of the *Policy on lifelong development* (Ministerie van Sociale, 2018) and the subsequent many different measures, subsidies, experimentation schemes; it further increased in number and budget in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. What the policy initiatives did for the VET sector was to contribute to a change in the lifelong learning mindset, to something that is essential for VET institutions in the future. Also, a start has been made to make VET provision better suited for adults, offering more flexibility, personalisation in delivery, and more modular approaches. However, the policy initiatives failed to create favourable conditions for public VET institutions to establish a sustainable infrastructure for lifelong development. Economic sectors differ in their initial lifelong learning orientation and the policy initiatives did not significantly change this. In retail, the training-mindset still needs to be further developed. In manufacturing, this mindset was already present. The subsidies (e.g. *NL leert door*) are used by employees in the sectors, but it remains unclear whether these employees would have participated anyway (funded by the employer).

A change that is observable is that the reforms impact on IVET provision and that the IVET provision is becoming more built on adult learning principles. While perhaps the direct impact on opening IVET to adult learning is not visible, IVET is offered in an increasingly modular manner, takes into account prior experiences, is offered in a more flexible format, and uses less strict assessment formats allowing alternative ways to assess the acquired learning outcomes. This trend is visible in Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal and Finland.

4.3.4. Overview and discussion: are systems serving adult learners better?

This section showed several change processes initiated or stimulated by the reforms studied in terms of opening up IVET to adults. The following table provides a brief overview.

Table 7. **Result areas of the studied reforms and developments**

Country	Education system perspective		Epistemological and pedagogical perspective			Socioeconomic or labour market perspective	General assessment: did the reform achieve its results
	Changing institutional roles and responsibilities	Changing qualifications and IVET/CVET programme landscape	Changing modes of delivery: same or distinct programmes for young and adult learners	Changing the pedagogical approaches: competence-based approaches and modularisation	Use of validation of prior learning and shortening (IVET) programmes		
Denmark	X	X	X	X	X	X	- (not yet)
Finland	X	X	X	X	X		-/+ mixed views
Lithuania	X	?		X	(x)		+
Netherland	X	X	X	X		X	-/+
Portugal	X	X		X	X		+ (with potential to improve)
Germany		X					-/+

Source: Cedefop.

The case studies show that how VET for adults is provided and organised depends on long-term historical developments for which the direction of travel is not easily altered. It is, therefore, difficult to see radical changes in the countries and the reforms largely showcase that the systems alter through incremental changes. The reforms generally did not fully deliver on their promises. This is largely due to the short period of time since the reform was initiated (around 5 years); reforms of this scale often need much more time to settle. As a general tendency it can be observed that the distinction between orientations (Orientation 1. VET leading to acquisition of specific vocation/occupation-specific skills and not leading to a formal qualification; Orientation 2. VET leading to a formal qualification) is fading. This indicates that providers increasingly offer both orientations; that formal programmes are modularised and awarded with certificates; delivery modes integrate more non-formal learning approaches; and use of validation processes is stimulated. The same direction of travel can be observed in the emergence of microcredentials in HE and VET.

But, are IVET systems opening up to adult learners? Are adult learners better served? Are lifelong learning cultures being established in IVET systems? The case studies are not too positive about this. Both in terms of number of adult learners participating in IVET programmes and of tailoring the provision to adult learners' needs, the reforms reviewed do not yet show clear positive outcomes. And more needs to be done to truly open up IVET to adults.

The survey results shed some light on how VET institutions consider themselves aligned to adult learning principles and serving adult learners. Table 8 shows results for 11 countries with enough responses: only Finland and the Netherlands are case study countries covered with sufficient responses. What can be observed in the table is that guidance services and cooperation with companies to train employees is mostly well in place. Countries that are particularly positive about their institute's ability to facilitate adults are Finland, France, Italy and the UK.

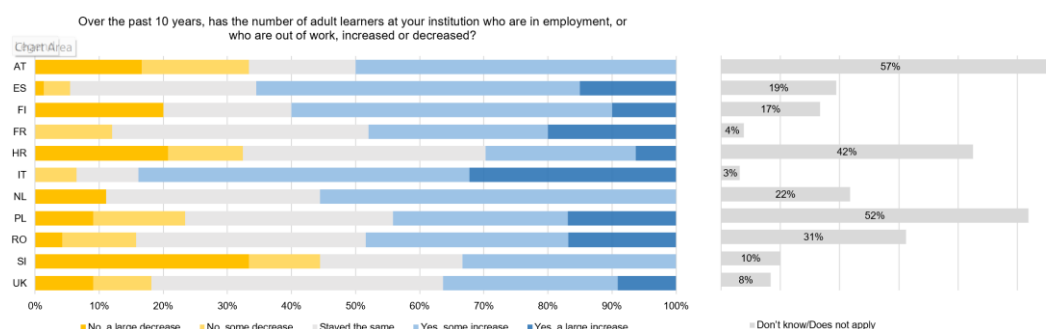
Table 8. VET institutions addressing adult learners (answers ‘to a great’ extent’ to the following statements

		Our institution explicitly focuses on adult learning: it is part of our mission	Our teaching/training takes into account adult learning principles (e.g. using prior experience as resource for learning)	Teachers and trainers are specifically trained/coached to work with adult learners	Adults can make use of validation of prior learning procedures	Our assessment is designed to take into the account the specific needs of adult learners	Adults are offered specific information, advice and guidance	Our outreach activities target specific groups of adult learners	Our institution cooperates with companies to train their employees	Our institution has financial incentives to train adult learners
Youth-centred	SI	0%	16%	18%	30%	30%	40%	9%	30%	9%
	RO	9%	17%	14%	13%	18%	27%	14%	19%	8%
	PL	24%	25%	11%	4%	14%	22%	13%	13%	8%
	IT	50%	50%	47%	28%	41%	72%	50%	56%	41%
	HR	5%	10%	16%	9%	9%	15%	9%	11%	4%
	FR	48%	54%	54%	42%	54%	62%	35%	50%	19%
	AT	7%	14%	0%	7%	14%	14%	14%	0%	0%
Mixed	ES	15%	14%	22%	15%	15%	28%	13%	21%	8%
	NL	30%	35%	13%	30%	35%	48%	22%	61%	17%
	UK	42%	42%	50%	50%	75%	75%	58%	75%	25%
Adult-centred	FI	8%	50%	42%	83%	67%	50%	25%	67%	33%
	Average	21%	29%	29%	28%	33%	41%	23%	37%	14%

Source: VET provider survey. Data from selected countries. n = 893.

The survey also asked whether the number of adult learners increased or decreased. The following figure shows how VET institutions see the development of numbers of adult learners. While many of the respondents were not in a position to assess this, those who did tend to see an increase in the number of adult learners. This is more noticeable in Spain, Italy, Austria and Finland (more than 50% of those that provided an answer saw an increase).

Figure 18. **Changes related to the number of adult learners at VET institutions**



Source: VET provider survey. Data from selected countries. n = 893.

4.4. Future orientations

In line with the *Changing nature and role of VET scenario model* (Cedefop, 2020c), scenarios can be envisaged concerning the direction of travel of IVET systems in relation to opening-up to adults. The way IVET is open to adults can be characterised into three orientations.

- Pluralistic VET for adults:** in this scenario, VET for adults has different purposes and orientations, ranging from basic skills training to VET offers at higher levels. Distinctions between IVET and CVET systems, between general education and VET and types of providers become obsolete. In this scenario, IVET providers, besides others, can play an important role in delivering learning to adults and see adult learning as a core function of their organisation.
- Distinctive VET for adults:** in this scenario, VET for adults has a specific purpose related to providing job/occupation-specific skills and competences. It is well institutionalised and strongly connected to the world of work. It is distinct from general education and second-chance-type adult learning. It is also (mostly) distinct from school-based IVET provision.
- Special purpose VET for adults:** in this scenario, VET for adults has a special purpose and found a specific niche, being mostly associated with solving a skills deficit and a quick fix to emerging skills gaps. However, it can

also find its niche, or special purpose in providing skills at higher levels. IVET providers in this scenario transform into adult learning/CVET providers and find their main purpose in supporting adult learners instead of young learners.

The mapping exercise (Chapter 3) shows that the role of IVET providers in offering learning to adults can be characterised by using the three scenario-orientations. The pluralistic VET for adults is, for instance, represented by Finland and Ireland. In these countries IVET providers play a role in the different orientations ranging from vocational courses to basic skills programmes and formal VET programmes. From the case studies, this future orientation can be identified for Denmark, the Netherlands and Finland (Box 17). The distinctive VET for adults is represented by those countries where IVET providers are an important provider of both formal and non-formal VET (e.g. Czechia and Estonia). Mostly the emphasis is on the formal VET programmes. From the case study countries, the Netherlands could serve as example. The special purpose VET for adults is more difficult to find among the countries but could be associated with the UK-England further education colleges. It must be emphasised that this analysis only looked at the role IVET providers play in providing training to adults. As indicated earlier (Chapter 3) in countries where IVET providers play a limited or no role, separate adult education systems can be established that serve the adult population.

Box 17. Future orientation as identified in the case studies

In the Netherlands, several policy strands (legal, financial) stimulate a culture of lifelong learning. VET institutions are, to different intensities, following this policy direction. But their role in lifelong development is still limited and is not likely to expand radically. In this sense, the scenario of a distinctive VET for adults is still the likely direction. This situation will probably not radically change unless significant reforms are initiated based on the idea that adult learning is a public concern instead of private. This would open the discussion about establishing a sustainable infrastructure for adult learning where public VET institutions have an important role to play. Further, additional support measures are needed to improve the lifelong learning orientation within specific sectors (for instance retail) and more broadly in society and the economy. Different studies mention some form of individual learning account, or entitlements for learning, extensive and regular (career) guidance services (Commissie Regulering van, 2020, 89; de Grip, 2021). Specifically for VET, it would be helpful if more flexibility is offered to leave out some of the generic parts of the VET qualification (e.g. citizenship, languages and career orientation) in programmes for adults, as often this might be less relevant for them and prevents enrolling in formal VET programmes.

Source: Case study reports.

In Denmark, while the way forward seems unclear, a study from 2017 (commissioned by the ministry and carried out by an expert group) (Ekspertgruppen for voksne, 2017) on the future of continuing education and training for adults clearly points to a more holistic and all-encompassing approach to adult learning. What role IVET providers play in this, however, is not spelled out. The study recommended establishing one entry point for adult, continuing and further education in the form of a common platform, including public as well as private provision; supporting increased use of validation of prior learning; strengthening partnerships for adult, continuing and continuing training; increased flexibility, achieved through increased use of digital learning; and increased focus on adult, continuing and further education through the provision of individual learning accounts. So far, none of these recommendations have been brought to the forefront of Danish education policy, and the interviewees from the provider side and the social partners see no signal that a change of direction is under way; the direction of travel, however, would point to a more pluralistic approach to VET for adults, seeing it as a service available to all. In view of the governance structures in Danish VET, all will depend on the ability of the social partners in cooperation with the Ministry of Children and Education to arrive at a common strategy for the way forward. While buzzwords like the 'need for a qualified workforce' are not in want, the solutions are not currently visible on the horizon.

Source: Case study reports.

In Finland, the reforms clearly indicate a scenario of VET for adults being pluralistic, seeing no distinction between IVET and CVET. However, here as well, experts plead for more flexibility to accommodate the learning of adults fully in the given structures. As indicated in the case study report, in their [experts'] view the qualification requirements should be given more variance and more free-choice based on the student groups and fields of occupation when education institutions are licensed by the National Agency for Education. Also, the length of studies, which in IVET is typically 3 years (despite individual study pace allowed by the legislation), should be taken into open discussion: is it a good duration for all the occupational fields. Experts also saw a need to develop the contents of the specialist vocational qualifications further. The demonstration of existing skills was not seen as satisfactory. The students should have an opportunity to expand their skills, competences and understanding of their field and occupation. The teachers' communities of practices should be utilised for developing education and qualification requirements in each field more actively.

Source: Case study reports.

CHAPTER 5.

Discussion and conclusions

The following research findings are presented in relation to the three research questions ⁽³⁶⁾.

5.1. Links between IVET and CVET over time

This section provides an answer to the research question ‘What characterises the link between IVET and CVET and how has this interface evolved over time?’

In this study CVET is conceptually approached as the learning of adults; this learning can relate to obtaining occupation-related learning outcomes, or more generally, generic or basic skills-related learning outcomes. It can also relate to provision leading to full qualifications and certificates or only attestations of completion. IVET is approached as the provision offered mainly to young people before, and as preparation for, entering the labour market.

The link between IVET and the learning of adults can then be characterised in different ways. First would be to look at the number of adults (age 20+ or 25+) that participate in programmes leading to a formal VET qualification. Second would be to look at ways adults, after entering the labour market, re-engage with IVET providers to upskill or reskill. This they can do while being in a job, updating their skills or obtaining new skills by which they can pursue career progression or another job; or while being unemployed, enlarging their skills-set, by which they increase their opportunities on the labour market. Finally, it can relate to people that need to acquire basic skills or obtain a general education qualification allowing them to pursue further learning. Looking at the IVET-CVET link from the first perspective, there are countries that are mainly youth-centred (more than 60% of VET learners younger than 20); adult-centred (more than 60% of learners 20+); and mixed. In this characterisation, it can still be the dominant case that learners treat the VET programme as an initial education and training pathway, preparing them for their (first) skilled labour job. Taking the second perspective, the study sees a large diversity how in national IVET providers play a role in the reskilling of adults. In many countries, IVET providers do play a large role in offering full VET qualifications to adults; however, they do not always consider adult learning principles and have both adults and young people in the same groups. In some

⁽³⁶⁾ The order of the research question is slightly altered for a better flow.

countries IVET providers do not play a significant role as there are specific adult education institutes that focus on this task. In around one quarter of the countries, IVET providers play a large role in offering general education second-chance programmes. Also, specific adult education institutions or general education schools can be important. For non-formal VET (i.e. not leading to a qualification), only in a few countries do IVET providers play a large role. In most countries, either private providers, sectoral organisations or specific adult learning providers are the main sources of this up- and reskilling. When considering the contextual factors that explain differences in how countries' IVET systems are involved in the learning of adults, the study found only some indications that the overall autonomy of IVET providers explains whether they are involved in other orientations of the learning of adults besides formal VET programmes. Where the IVET providers are not directly governed by public authorities (indicated by where teachers are not civil servants), their role in providing learning to adults, in all four orientations, seems to be larger.

Considering evolution, the study (mainly in the case studies) notices different directions of travel. In some countries, IVET providers increased their importance through merging IVET with other types of provision. In Lithuania, vocational labour market training was integrated in IVET and IVET providers were encouraged to create larger institutions playing a larger regional role in both IVET and the learning of adults. In Finland, the adult education institutions and IVET providers were brought together under one legislative and governing framework, causing mergers in less populated regions. In other countries, separate systems were in place or put in place to facilitate the learning of adults, largely outside the influence of IVET providers. In Denmark for instance, the separate adult education system is responsible for all adult learning. There are also new VET programmes that are identical in content and learning outcomes to IVET qualifications but differ in delivery and duration. In Portugal, the *Qualifica* initiative is the main support for up- and reskilling, making use only of some facilities of IVET providers. In countries like the Netherlands, IVET providers are encouraged by different policy changes related to VET to focus more on adults, taking up the competition with private providers (and each other). In this study Germany is a slightly different case where the institutionalised links between IVET and CVET systems have not changed, but where enrolment in CVET is decreasing, also negatively affecting the (high) esteem of the dual system.

While it is appropriate to make generalisations on the IVET-CVET link at national level, this is not without challenges and pitfalls. The main challenge is that this link is also shaped by economic sector traditions concerning the role of training and learning in career development. First, the training-willingness among

employers and employees can differ between sectors; second, the role IVET providers play can be differently shaped. The case studies collected material on the manufacturing and retail sector that supported general ideas that the retail sector is less re- and upskilling focused and furthermore that IVET providers play a much more limited role in offering this compared to the manufacturing sector.

This study tried to go beyond the mere quantitative overviews of participation rates of adults in VET, an approach that opened new prospects on the role of IVET providers in the learning of adults. While the study sees a considerable role for IVET providers in up- and reskilling, it cannot be concluded that IVET providers are a dominant player, or even would be a more prominent player under the assumption that the future resembles the past direction of travel. This is even before considering the role of HE institutions in offering up- and reskilling opportunities. However, the study showed that, across countries, IVET providers can be involved in different types of adult learning and are not necessarily confined by national traditions. The comparison between countries could open prospects to policy-makers and VET stakeholders to see opportunities to open up more to adults and offering more, different and tailored adult learning programmes, even in partnership with other organisations.

5.2. Policy on IVET/CVET and the learning of adults

This section provides an answer to the research question 'To what extent and in which form are national and regional policies supporting a closer link between CVET and IVET?'

In the last decade, the emphasis on adult learning and CVET has increased at European and Member State level and overarching skills policies and strategies have emerged in many countries (European Commission and Ecorys, 2019). In the current study, the focus was on specific policies and reforms that impact the IVET-CVET link; it was less on overarching skills development policies and strategies. Some of the case studies did address more overarching policy frameworks (for instance in Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal and Finland); but in the analysis of these overarching frameworks the focus was more on what changes were proposed to IVET systems to accommodate better the learning of adults and what drove those changes. From this perspective, the case studies illustrate external drivers: skills shortages and financial pressure forcing systems to work efficiently and offer best value for (public) money. In terms of VET internal drivers, the case studies showcase the aim to increase attractiveness of VET (and particularly for adults); reform organisational set-up of systems offering learning to

adults: reducing overlap and supporting synergies; and revise content and delivery of VET, making it more tailored to needs of adult learners.

When looking at the policies, reforms and developments in more detail, some cross-cutting aspects are noticeable: first increased emphasis on modularisation and learning outcome approaches; second, more emphasis on validation processes to shorten and tailor provision to individual needs; and third, setting up guidance structures.

5.3. IVET for adults: programme content, pedagogies and assessment

This section provides an answer to the research question ‘To what extent and in which form are IVET sub-systems being opened-up to adults and how does this affect programme content, pedagogies and assessment?’

In recent years, EU-level studies and reports were published that highlight conditions for lifelong learning oriented (VET) systems. According to the European Training Foundation (ETF, 2021, p. 3) key features of a good lifelong learning system include the following: expanding learning opportunities in different settings; creating meaningful and engaging learning environments; providing flexible learning pathways; developing dynamic skillsets; providing guidance to navigate and manage career and learning opportunities; and creating awareness and incentives for people to engage in learning. A 2010 European Commission study (Broek et al., 2010) looking at the impact of reforms in education and training on the learning of adults identified six mobilisation strategies that countries need to consider when they want to increase participation of adults in learning (Broek et al., 2010, pp. 98-99): the involvement and cooperation of multiple stakeholders; being attuned to the specific situation the learner is in; need for appropriate government support; need for good branding; need for a clear set of indicators and feedback loops; need to involve competent staffing at all levels; and need to make learning relevant for both the learner and for others (enterprises). A 2014 Commission study (European Commission and ICF, 2015, p. 156) identified similar factors for effective policies, looking at quality, funding, relevance, equity, increasing learners’ disposition towards learning, and coordination. A 2021 Eurydice report (European Commission; EACEA and Eurydice, 2021) investigated approaches to promoting lifelong learning, with a focus on policies and measures supporting adults with low levels of skills and qualifications to access learning opportunities. The report took a broad perspective across a range of interlinked vital areas (European Commission; EACEA and Eurydice, 2021, p.13): governance and policy frameworks; learning provision; financial support; flexible

learning; recognition and validation of learning outcomes; awareness-raising and outreach activities; and guidance services. The 2019 *Cedefop study on VET from a lifelong learning perspective* (Cedefop, 2019b), looking at developments between 1995 and 2015, concludes that national qualification frameworks (NQFs), together with validation approaches, are key instruments for 'strengthening the links between CVET and IVET, for reducing barriers to progression in education and training, and for moving towards lifelong learning' (Cedefop, 2019b, p. 84). The 2020 *European Commission study on the future of non-formal and informal learning* (European Commission; AIT and DUK, 2020) foresees that the borders between formal, informal and non-formal learning will become less rigid and distinctive. As a result, formal sector providers will have to develop clear strategies and practices to incorporate the expertise people have already acquired in their educational credentials. Opening public education institutions to other education providers, to different communities and society is also particularly important, as is support to cooperation and peer-learning among teachers and other stakeholders (European Commission; AIT and DUK, 2020, p. 37). Further, public institutions need to be supported by public policies to make the transformation into institutions that best serve adult learners. This requires training of school leaders and support to make programmes more flexible.

From these studies and reports it can be concluded that making the (VET) system more lifelong learning oriented and open to adults should be supported by policies that pay attention to aspects of access, funding, qualifications frameworks, quality, learner-centred approaches, cooperation and coordination, and monitoring. Translated into national contexts however, the case studies show that the situation is much more complex, already starting with balancing the different interests of stakeholders and the external and internal drivers for policy development. The direction of travel is often already given by reforms and developments initiated within the last 10 to 20 years, making it difficult to isolate the driver of reform and the results linked to the reform.

In terms of areas affected by the reforms that changed the link between IVET and CVET, and that worked on the opening-up of IVET for adults, the case studies showcase the following. From an education system perspective, the developments can be seen in relation to changing institutional roles and responsibilities and in changing qualifications and IVET/CVET programme landscapes. From an epistemological and pedagogical perspective, change can be observed in the modes of delivery: distinct provision for young and adult learners; the pedagogical approaches, competence-based approaches and modularisation; and the use of validation of prior learning and shortening (IVET) programmes. From a

socioeconomic or labour market perspective changes are reported on related to developing a lifelong learning culture and mindset.

More specifically for the epistemological and pedagogical perspective, the cases indicate a general tendency towards more modular approaches and making IVET programmes more based on adult learning principles, also for younger learners, allowing more flexibility in the programme delivery. However, IVET systems struggle with making general parts of IVET programmes mandatory for adults. While this is reintroduced in some countries (FI) while being better aligned to adult learner needs, it is possible to skip these parts based on validation and recognition of prior learning in other systems (for instance in Denmark). Overall, the role of validation of prior learning is regarded as essential in making IVET programmes better accessible for adults and aligned to their needs. On changes in assessment practices, the case studies did not highlight significant changes. To conclude, the study shows that opening up IVET for adults is a slow and uneven process across countries and economic sectors.

5.4. Adult learning providers and comparative VET perspectives

This study provided an alternative approach to analysing the link between IVET and CVET compared to previous studies on this topic (Cedefop, 2019b) as it approached CVET more broadly as the learning of adults. In doing so, the study revealed that IVET systems, and how the learning of adults is organised, are formed in a complex interplay of historic developments, socioeconomic contexts, perceptions of the public role in offering learning to adults and of the esteem of VET in general.

In this, four distinct, but closely related orientations in services IVET providers can provide to adults were identified:

- (a) VET leading to acquisition of specific vocational/ occupation-specific skills and not leading to a formal qualification;
- (b) VET leading to a formal qualification;
- (c) basic skills training;
- (d) general education tracks (academic tracks and second chance).

The approach allowed mapping and comparing in qualitative terms what role IVET providers play, also in a wider context in which other organisations are involved (including private training providers, separate adult education providers, civic organisations), and allowed to see the direction of travel that explains the status quo. The study showed that countries attribute different roles to IVET providers in supporting the learning of adults and showed that policies to increase and improve this role vary in their policy intentions and effectiveness.

The analytical framework proved useful in opening comparative perspectives. The framework developed for this study applied the three-perspective model, suggesting looking at an epistemological and pedagogical perspective, an education system perspective, and a socioeconomic or labour market perspective on how IVET providers facilitate the learning of adults. The comparative perspective, to understand the status quo of the role of IVET providers in supporting the learning of adults, looked holistically at the character of IVET (youth-centred, mixed, or adult-centred) and a detailed (quantitative) account of CVET and what role public entities play. It allowed a focus on the orientations of IVET providers, the legitimisation of the qualifications they offer and the level of autonomy of IVET providers to make decisions. This resulted, for all countries but more specifically for the six case study countries, in better understanding of the context in which the reform and developments took place. In the analysis of the case studies, however, the analytical framework did not fully support comparison between cases; the main reason was that the case studies focused on substantially different reforms and operationalised the learning of adults in a completely different socioeconomic context. The analysis of the reforms and developments tried to cluster the results in line with the three perspectives. However, some important CVET-related indicators (e.g. concerning autonomy of the VET providers, the institutional legitimacy for providing recognised credentials) were challenging to operationalise within countries and to compare across countries, particularly given the substantially different socioeconomic context of the learning of adults. For future research, the analytical framework offers an interesting approach to mapping countries' characteristics.

Some aspects need further research:

- (a) identify what is considered to be an 'IVET provider': in line with our analysis, classifying providers based on the services (qualifications, certifications) they offer to different target groups (young and/or adult learners) could be a way forward instead of looking at the underlying governance model or legal framework by which the institutions are covered ⁽³⁷⁾;
- (b) further develop the economic sector perspectives and differences in how, at sectoral level, the IVET-CVET link is forged;
- (c) continue pursuing this comparative approach, bringing together the more qualitative and quantitative perspectives and completing the systematic mapping of orientations and the role of IVET providers vis-a vis other types of providers, and their historical background, for more countries besides the country case studies.

⁽³⁷⁾ This approach resembles the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education in the United States.

Acronyms

AEC	adult education centres
AES	Adult education survey
ALMP	active labour market policies
ALWG	Adult Learning Working Group
AMU	<i>Arbejdsmarkedsuddannelser</i>
AUB	<i>Arbejdsgivernes Uddannelsesbidrag</i>
AVU	<i>Almen Voksenuddannelse</i>
BHS	<i>Berufsbildende höhere Schulen</i>
BIBB	<i>Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung</i>
BLUESS	<i>Blueprint for Basic Skills Development in Slovakia</i>
BMS	<i>Berufsbildende mittlere Schulen</i>
CBE	Centre for Basic Education
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CIPA	<i>Centro provinciale per l'istruzione degli adult</i>
CNQ	National qualifications catalogue
CQEP	<i>Centros para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional</i>
CSL	centres for self-directed learning
CVET	continuous vocational education and training
CVT	continuous vocational training
DAES	<i>Diplôme d'accès aux études supérieures</i>
DLL	Directorate of Lifelong Learning
EBTC	experience-based trade certification
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EFA	<i>Cursos de Educação e Formação para Adultos</i>
EFP	<i>Espace Formation Petites et Moyennes Entreprises</i>
ENAD	<i>Ecole national pour adultes</i>
EOPPEP	National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Career Guidance
EPAL	vocational upper secondary school
EPALE	Electronic platform for adult learning in Europe
EQARF	European quality assurance reference framework for VET
EQF	European qualification framework
ESF	European Social Fund
ESL	early school leavers
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETF	European Training Foundation

ETS	evening technical schools
EUV	<i>Erhvervsuddannelse for Voksne</i>
EVHL	<i>Eesti Vabariidusliit</i>
FE	further education
FES	Foundation for Educational Services
FET	further education and training
FNARS	<i>Fédération nationale des associations d'accueil et de réinsertion sociale</i>
FVU	<i>Forbedredende Volkseundervisnin</i>
GE	general education
GRETA	<i>GRoupements d'ETAbissements</i>
GVU	Grunduddannelse for Voksne
HE	higher education
IEB	<i>Initiative Erwachsenenbildung</i>
IEFP	<i>Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional</i>
IFAPME	<i>Institut wallon de formation en alternance et des indépendants et petites et moyennes entreprises</i>
IFP	<i>Relazione sull'istruzione e la formazione professionale</i>
IKV	<i>Individuel Kompetenz Vurdering</i>
ILA	individual learning account
ITS	Institute for Tourism Studies
IUT	<i>Instituts universitaires de technologie</i>
IVET	initial vocational education and training
KEBÖ	<i>Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs</i>
KKZ	<i>Kwalifikacyjne kursy zawodowe</i>
LLC	lifelong learning centre
LLO	Leven lang ontwikkelen
MBO	<i>Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs</i>
MCAST	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
MEDE	Ministry of Education and Employment
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OJTC	on-the-job trade certificate
PES	public employment services
PESTLE	political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental
PLC	post leaving courses
ROC	<i>Regionaal Opleidingscentrum</i>
RVCC	recognition, validation and certification of competences
SCS	second-chance school
SEN	special educational needs

SEPE	Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal
SIGO	<i>Sistema integrado de informação e gestão da oferta educativa e formativa</i>
SME	small and medium-sized enterprises
SOŠ	<i>Střední odborné školy</i>
SOU	<i>Střední odborná učiliště</i>
SPTC	<i>Sektoriniai praktinio mokymo centrai</i>
STAP	<i>STimulerings Arbeidsmarkt Positie</i>
SU	<i>Statens Uddannelsesstøtte</i>
UAS	university of applied sciences
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VAVO	<i>Voortgezet algemeen volwassenonderwijs</i>
VDAB	<i>Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding</i>
VET	vocational education and training
VUC	<i>Voksenuddannelsescenter</i>
WBL	work-based learning

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Annex 1

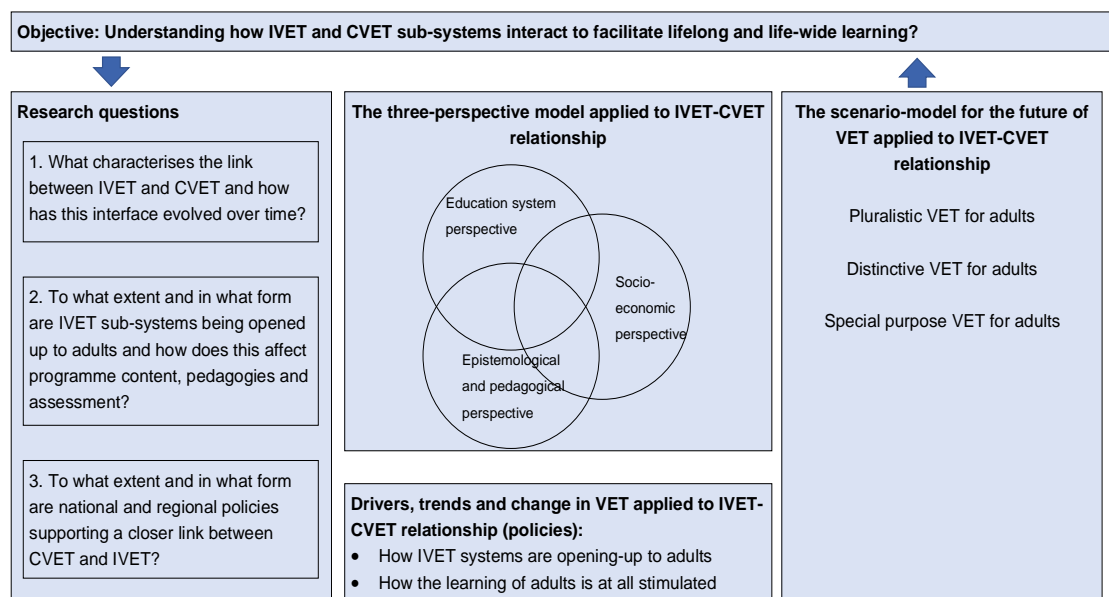
Analytical framework

The analytical framework explores conceptually the IVET-CVET relationship from two angles: first, the IVET system characteristics relevant to understanding the relationship with CVET; and second, the CVET characteristics relevant to understanding the relationship with IVET. As a starting point in exploring these two angles, the prior work on developing an analytical framework to analyse VET is taken into account. Cedefop (2020) analysed how vocationally oriented education and training has changed in the European Union (as well as Iceland and Norway) in the past two decades (1995-2015) and, based on these results, investigated the main challenges and opportunities the VET sector is facing today and may face in the future. The analytical framework developed in this context which allows to incorporate both the different understandings of VET and the different contexts in which VET is formed nationally, has been further developed in the current Future of VET project (Cedefop, 2022a). To characterise IVET and its relationship with CVET, to understand directions of travel and identify drivers for change, the analytical framework for Theme 4 – in line with that for Theme 1 – consists of:

- (a) the three-perspective model;
- (b) drivers, trends and change in VET;
- (c) the scenario model for the future of VET.

The figure below provides an overview of how the different elements of the analytical framework link to the objective and research questions.

Figure 19. Overview elements of the analytical framework



Source: Cedefop.

Three-perspective model and IVET-CVET relationship

As described in the *WA1 interim report: annex A (2020)*, VET systems can be analysed from three partly overlapping perspectives: an epistemological and pedagogical perspective, an education system perspective, and a socioeconomic or labour market perspective. While the three-perspective model has been developed with a focus on initial VET, it does not exclude CVET and, within the perspectives, specific dimensions can be further developed that are relevant in analysing the interplay between IVET and CVET. In this section, we briefly discuss the perspectives and the dimensions that have been considered in Theme 4 to characterise the relationship between IVET and CVET and to answer the research questions. Different from the order of perspectives in Theme 1 and Theme 2, we start with the education system perspective as here the study team sees most need for adjustment.

From the education system perspective, first the relationship between IVET and CVET need to be identified. In what parts of CVET are IVET providers involved? Where can close relationships between IVET and adult learning be found? In the epistemological and pedagogical perspective, the overlaps in approaches and content between IVET and CVET are examined. What is the character and content of IVET-provided CVET? In what kind of courses are adults enrolled; how are they provided and organised by IVET providers? From a socioeconomic perspective, the focus shifts to factors that explain how the learning

of adults is governed and the role IVET providers play in this. Hence this relates to funding of the learning of adults and the policy orientations that, on the one hand, support the opening-up of IVET to adults, and on the other hand, stimulate adults to continue learning.

Education system perspective

As indicated in the *WA1 interim report: annex A*, 'An education system perspective looks at the way how VET as an institution has evolved, and continues to evolve, over time. From this perspective, the variety of forms of VET, types of providers, levels and funding sources and mechanisms, the nature and scale of VET in the initial (compulsory) phase of education and for adults, or the status of learners (whether students in education or apprentices holding employment contracts with employers) come to the fore. The relationship with other systemic sectors, such as general education, is also of particular interest.' (Cedefop 2022d). In the context of Theme 4, the education system perspective reflects on what characterises IVET and CVET that can explain their relationship. This education system perspective is applied differently for IVET and for CVET. For IVET, the focus is on what education system characteristics relate to the opening up to adults. For CVET – given its variety – the focus is on its position within the education system and how this position encourages or hampers IVET institutions to play a role.

Several dimensions of the analytical framework for Theme 1 are relevant to Theme 4 understanding of the IVET system in relation to CVET. For instance, a strong interaction with employers and employer organisations could suggest that IVET also plays a role in further training of employees (CVET). There is also the age dimension while referring to openness of IVET to adults; this does not directly mean that programmes are also targeted at adults or that a tailored approach is applied for adults. Given the different orientations of CVET, the outcomes/destinations of IVET can shed light on its position in providing CVET. The educational purpose is more associated with the repairing function of CVET (basic skills, second-chance), while the occupational purpose is more associated with reskilling or obtaining specific skills (upskilling). Also, in many countries IVET is considered the realm of schools or VET institutions, while CVET is the domain of companies. This can obviously differ and change over time. An indication of the key IVET providers sheds light on this assumption. The autonomy of VET providers can also be associated with better tailoring programmes to new target groups and going beyond formal IVET programmes into non-formal programmes.

Dimensions in the overarching analytical framework, which have received less attention in this strand of the project, concern the organisation of VET/GE at

programme level, the level of education, parity of esteem and VET teacher education.

In addition to these dimensions, there are a few dimensions concerning CVET that need to be added. CVET is conceptualised (Chapter 1.5) as the learning of adults after leaving initial education as an umbrella term for different forms of educational provision. This CVET orientation can be found in different sub-systems and sectors: IVET, general education, HE, employment/PES policies or (liberal) adult education. From an education system perspective, reflecting on CVET and the role played by IVET can only be facilitated by an exploration how different CVET forms are positioned in the whole education and skills development system. Only if this is clarified, can the role of IVET be determined and systematically discussed. There are possible additional dimensions for IVET-CVET relationships.

- (a) **NEW A: CVET purpose (subject-orientation and qualification-orientation).** This dimension looks at the purpose of CVET orientation supported by IVET institutions. It provides a characterisation of what kind of CVET orientation is covered by IVET. A rough distinction can be between CVET oriented to vocational/occupational skills and competences and CVET oriented to basic skills and general education. A distinction can also be made between CVET leading to a formal qualification and CVET not leading to a formal qualification/credential that is included in the formal education system and/or NQFs. Usually, formally regulated qualifications are under some form of accreditation procedure. CVET credentials are not necessarily formal credentials but can also include qualifications/certifications in the open market and based on industry demands/standards (non-formally regulated qualifications).
- (b) **NEW B: Institutional legitimacy.** A specific CVET-related dimension is how the organisations offering adult learning acquire institutional legitimacy in order to provide recognised credentials (Hefler and Markowitsch, 2013). In short, this can come from association with the initial education system (e.g. general education, VET, HE); from social legitimacy of occupational and professional fields (importance of specific credentials for occupational fields); or from organisations modelling themselves according to the most legitimate organisations established in a particular field of formal adult learning (Hefler and Markowitsch, 2013). This is especially advantageous for understanding the relationship of IVET and CVET. It can be the case that IVET provides legitimacy for CVET; on the other hand, CVET can be organised separate from IVET (receiving legitimacy from another source). A key question related to this is whether initial education (IVET, HE) is becoming more important over time for acquiring the institutional legitimacy of offering credentials. The level

of State regulation might increase or reduce the possibilities for IVET providers (given their characteristics) to be active in CVET. The legitimacy might indicate the orientation of CVET towards formal education or more towards the professional fields.

- (c) **NEW C: Organisation and governance of providers (linked to Dimension 22).** This dimension looks at whether the providers of CVET programmes are under some form of state governance or whether they operate as autonomous bodies. Education providers like HE institutions and VET colleges generally fall under some form of national inspectorate (while in some cases being private organisations). Providers like private training organisations, sectoral organisations, and employer-led training providers have a different level of autonomy to operate on an open CVET market. This dimension explores the extent to which CVET is subject to governance interference. The level of State governance of CVET providers might increase or reduce the possibilities for IVET providers to operate in CVET.

Table 9 maps dimensions included in the WA1 analytical framework and the additional dimensions that are relevant to understanding the IVET system in relation to CVET. As a thorough discussion on these dimensions is already included in WA1, here we only mention the variants and provide some further clarification.

Table 9. **Dimensions in the education system perspective**

Dimensions	Variants / Features			
14. Organisation of VET/GE at programme level	Separated (either career development/vocational or general/HE preparation)		Integrated (combining career development and HE preparation)	
15. Organisation of VET/GE at institutional level	Separated		Integrated	
16. Coordination education work – school/provider level	Strong interaction and coordination		Weak interaction and coordination	
17. Coordination education and work – system level	Strong interaction and co-ordination		Weak interaction and coordination	
18. Level of education	Mainly lower level (i.e. ISCED level 2, EQF level 2)	Middle level of education (i.e. ISCED level 3-4, EQF level 3-4)	Middle level and some higher VET (i.e. ISCED level 3-5, EQF level 3-5)	
19. Age	Adolescent / young people (15 to 19)	Young adult / adults (18-24)	No particular age group	
20. Outcomes/ destination	Occupational qualifications or rights	Educational qualifications/access rights to higher levels of education	Occupational rights and access rights to higher levels of education	No specific occupational rights/rights for progressing in education
21. Key providers	Companies	Schools/ VET institutions	Further and/or HE providers	
22. Autonomy / curriculum flexibility of providers	High		Low	
NEW A: CVET purpose (subject- and qualification-orientation)	VET leading to a formal qualification	VET leading to specific vocational/ occupation-specific skills and not to a formal qualification	Basic skills training	General education tracks (academic tracks and second chance)
NEW B: Institutional legitimacy	Legitimacy derives from formal IVET/HE system		Legitimacy derives from value of the credential in the occupational and professional fields	
NEW C: Organisation and governance of CVET providers	CVET providers are under some form of State governance (State governed)		CVET providers operate with a high degree of autonomy (non-State governed)	

Source: Expanded from (Cedefop, 2022a) and (Cedefop, 2022).

Patterns can emerge concerning the organisation of VET/GE and the CVET orientation in which IVET providers are involved. Further, the link to the world of work can correlate with the outcomes of CVET and whether it leads to a formal qualification or not.

Epistemological and pedagogical perspective

As indicated in the WA1 interim report: annex A, 'From an epistemological or pedagogical perspective, it can be argued that the identity of vocational education is rooted in distinctive modes of production, representation, use and transfer of knowledge, which can be associated with particular ways of teaching and learning. For instance, VET emphasises that knowledge is mainly practical (know-how, skills) and implicit and often personal and situational. Learning always involves practical experience (learning-by-doing) and happens through socialisation in communities of practice.' (Cedefop 2022d)

Under the pedagogical perspective, the study looks at the character of 'what VET' is offered to adults. The character of CVET offered by IVET institutions to adults is associated with the CVET purpose (see earlier) and in the analyses, these different purposes and how they are linked to the 'what in CVET' needs to be discussed separately. For instance, it would not make sense to compare the CVET orientation to help adults improve their basic skills in the Netherlands with opening tertiary education to adults in Spain. Against this background, only a limited number of CVET orientations are included in the epistemological and pedagogical analysis: those that have an explicit occupation-related skills focus, either where CVET offers a formal VET qualification (directed to labour market application or to further learning); or where CVET provides skills and competences to be directly used in professional fields (non-formal VET). This means that the basic skills and general education orientation have not been covered explicitly. The reason for this is that the changes over time in these orientations will likely be less determined by IVET-related developments and more by developments in general education. For the study on IVET opening up to adults, we consider it more relevant to focus on IVET-related developments, for instance how labour market and sectoral demands impact on how VET is provided to adults, how occupation-specific learning outcomes are balanced against transversal learning outcomes, and what role learning in the workplace plays.

To understand the CVET orientation better, and what courses and training are offered to adults, the selected following WA1 dimensions can be applied as presented in Table 10.

Table 10. **Dimensions in the epistemological and pedagogical perspective**

Dimensions	Variants / Features		
1. Theoretical knowledge (knowing that)	Specialised/structured according to 'pure' disciplines	Specialised/structured according to 'applied' disciplines	Non-specialised/not systematically structured (e.g. taxi-driver knowledge)
2. Practical knowledge (knowing how, skills)	Specialised/structured by general, context-independent purposes (e.g. scientific literacy)	Specialised/structured by contextual purposes (i.e. occupation-specific skills)	Non-specialised (general and basic key competences, e.g. literacy)
3. Relationship between general and vocational subjects	Vocationally related subjects (different types, see point 5 below)		General subjects (no differences between classical, modern or science-oriented)
5. Breadth or specificity of learning outcomes	Occupation/profession-specific (e.g. brickmaker, nurse)	Broader vocational field related (e.g. construction, health)	Vocational preparation (various vocational fields, polytechnic)
6. Learning sites	Mainly on job/work-based learning in real work contexts	Multiple learning sites (e.g. some form of duality)	Mainly in classrooms with some practical experiences or workshops
7. Learning environment (digital/real)	Digital/simulated learning environments		Physical/real learning environments
10. Teacher role	Facilitator, coach, moderator, adviser		Lecturer, teacher (knowledge carrier)
11. Control over learning	Self-directed; student-centred		Instruction-centred; teacher-centred

Source: Expanded from (Cedefop, 2022a).

In the analysis, patterns can emerge between the education system perspective and the epistemological and pedagogical perspective. For instance, IVET systems that are more closely linked to general education, in which CVET qualifications primarily obtain institutional legitimacy from the VET institution (being a formal IVET provider), the content and delivery mode in CVET might be focused on general subjects and in-school learning. IVET systems that are closer to the world of work and have more autonomy, might concentrate more on non-formal VET and tailored occupation-specific skills development, focusing less on general subjects, and involve more different learning sites. Also, the profile and status of teachers in both IVET systems might differ.

Socioeconomic perspective

As indicated in the WA1 interim report: annex A, 'Using a socioeconomic or labour market perspective, the wider functions of VET are considered. For

instance, the ways in which it contributes to social stratification by providing access to particular career pathways and to the skills, competences and attitudes demanded by companies and their work systems, allowing workers to meet the challenges of their workplaces, while workplaces at the same time can allow for the acquisition of skills.’ (Cedefop 2022d).

From the education system perspective, the report already reflects on the purpose of CVET orientations and the socioeconomic perspective adds to this a link related to the role of CVET offered by IVET institutions in the wider context of industrial relations and socioeconomic expectations. While this has not been the core perspective for this study, the inclusion of some dimensions allows to situate the identified different patterns of IVET-CVET relationship in a wider context and find possible explanations for these different patterns. Table 11 includes some of the WA 1 dimensions that have been considered in the analysis.

Table 11. **Dimensions in the socioeconomic perspective**

Dimensions	Variants / Features			
32. Sources of funding	Mainly by companies	Mainly by the State – education budget		Mainly by the State – labour market / social security budget
34. Occupational hierarchy	Semi-skilled workers	Skilled workers	Technicians / professionals / para-professionals	Managers, entrepreneurs
35. Governance	Low coordination – industry led	High coordination – led by organised business or business/trade unions		High coordination – State led
37. Context of justification	Securing supply of skilled labour	Innovation and economic growth	Individual progression, work readiness and smooth education work transition	Equity and inclusion

Source: Expanded from (Cedefop, 2022a).

Drivers, trends and change in VET applied to IVET-CVET relationship

The WA1 analytical framework refers to drivers and internal drivers. External drivers to change in VET include economic changes and technological developments. A distinction can be made ‘between broad PESTLE-type drivers on the one hand that exist outside VET (political, environmental, social, technological, legal and economic factors) and the pressures for change or trends that these cause within VET itself. [...] External drivers and the internal changes/trends within VET can be mapped empirically to improve our understanding of VET’s response to wider forces’ (Cedefop 2022d) In the context of this strand of the project, drivers can differ in how they interact with the VET system:

- (a) strengthening the purpose of VET systems in offering VET to adults, driving up the demand for services (e.g. growing skill gaps induced by technological change causing a need for reskilling);
- (b) undermining a VET system's base for offering VET to adults, for instance because legislative frameworks hamper the involvement of public IVET providers in non-formal VET (level playing field with private providers);
- (c) inducing new challenges, for example, when growing parts of the working population lose employer support for training, as they are challenged into precarious forms of employment, with platform-governed work as its latest variation.

While this work has not focused on the external and internal drivers directly, it will focus on policies concerning the IVET-CVET relationship, specifically on reforms that changed how IVET systems support adult learning⁽³⁸⁾. When analysing these policies, the external drivers (policy theories) are examined as well, looking at the problem statement, the change process and change markers associated with the introduced policies; implementation modalities, partners and stakeholders involved and assumptions and associated risks for policy implementation are also considered.

The scenario-model for the future of VET applied to IVET-CVET relationship

In line with the *Changing nature and role of VET scenario model* (Cedefop, 2020), which is also taken as starting point for the Theme 1 and Theme 2 of the *Future of VET* project, these scenarios are also applied in Theme 4 to indicate the direction of travel of IVET systems in relation to opening up to adults. While these scenarios are not a perfect fit when related to the IVET-CVET relationships, they are helpful.

⁽³⁸⁾ In line with the initial angles (angle 1: focus on how IVET is opening up; angle 2: focus on CVET characteristics) two similar but slightly different sets of policies can be identified. A first set focuses on how IVET systems are opening up to adults: for instance, removing age-restrictions, developing more modular approaches, establishing separate systems for adults. The policies in this set reason from the perspective of the IVET system and look at how IVET can be more attractive for adults. The orientation in these policies is, in a way, supply-driven, exploring possibilities to accommodate adults better in existing and adjusted IVET systems. A second set of policies focuses on how adult learning is stimulated: for instance, introducing individual learning accounts or voucher systems, increasing transparency, recognising prior learning. Specific types of policy links are taken on board: as part of overall skills policies; policies for balancing and adjusting needs and provisions; policies for increasing transparency; and policies related to developing individually oriented guidance, validation, etc. In these policies, IVET systems may play a role, but the policy orientation is more demand-driven: stimulating the demand for adult learning and CVET wherever they are provided. The focus in Theme 4 is on the first set of policies.

The first scenario (pluralistic VET) expresses the idea that there is one skills development system and that distinction between general education, IVET and CVET becomes less relevant. The second scenario (distinctive VET) expresses the idea that there are strict boundaries between sub-systems, such as general education, IVET and CVET. The third scenario (special purpose VET), expresses the idea that IVET transforms into CVET, finding its specific purpose in solving emerging skills deficits. In more detail, the way IVET is open to adults can be characterised into three orientations.

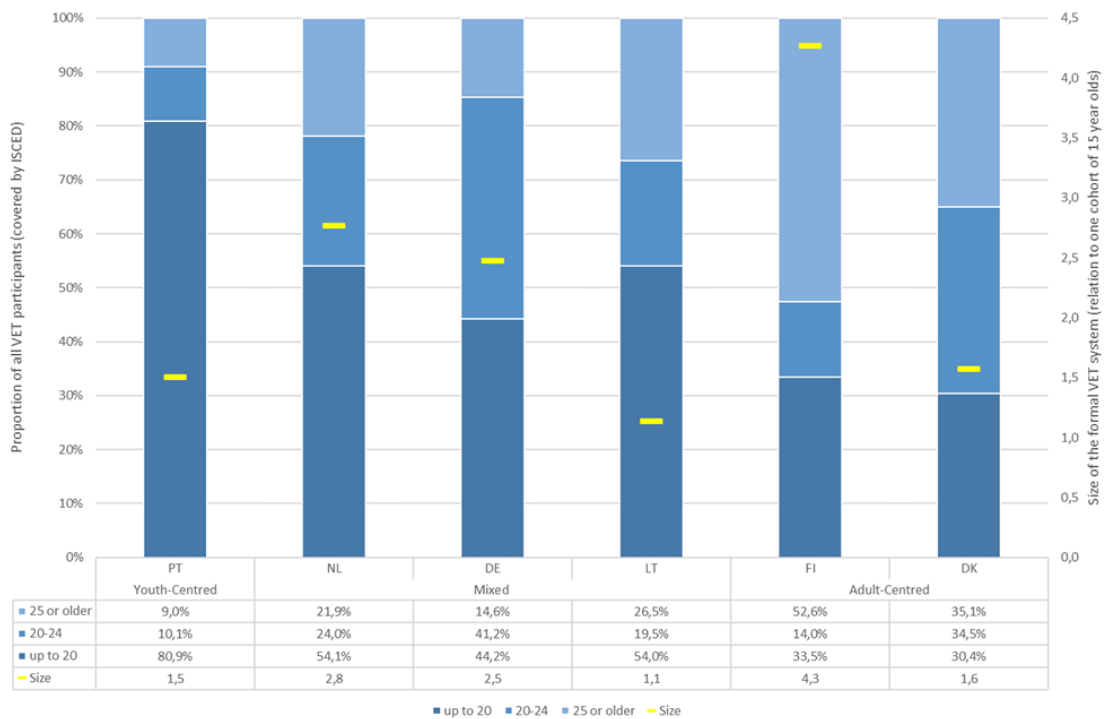
- (a) **Pluralistic VET for adults.** In this scenario, VET for adults has different purposes and orientations, ranging from basic skills training to VET offers at higher levels. Distinctions between IVET and CVET, between general education and VET and types of providers become obsolete. IVET providers, besides others, can play an important role in delivering CVET and see CVET as a core function of their organisation.
- (b) **Distinctive VET for adults.** In this scenario, VET for adults has a specific purpose related to providing job/occupation-specific skills and competences. VET for adults is well institutionalised and strongly connected to the world of work. It is distinct from general education and second-chance-type adult learning. It is also (mostly) distinct from school-based IVET provision.
- (c) **Special purpose VET for adults.** In this scenario, VET for adults has a special purpose and found a specific niche, being mostly associated with solving a skills deficit and quick fix to emerging skills gaps. It can also find its niche, or special purpose in providing skills at higher levels. IVET providers in this scenario transform into CVET providers and find their main purpose in supporting adult learners.

Annex 2

Supporting diagrams for Chapter 4

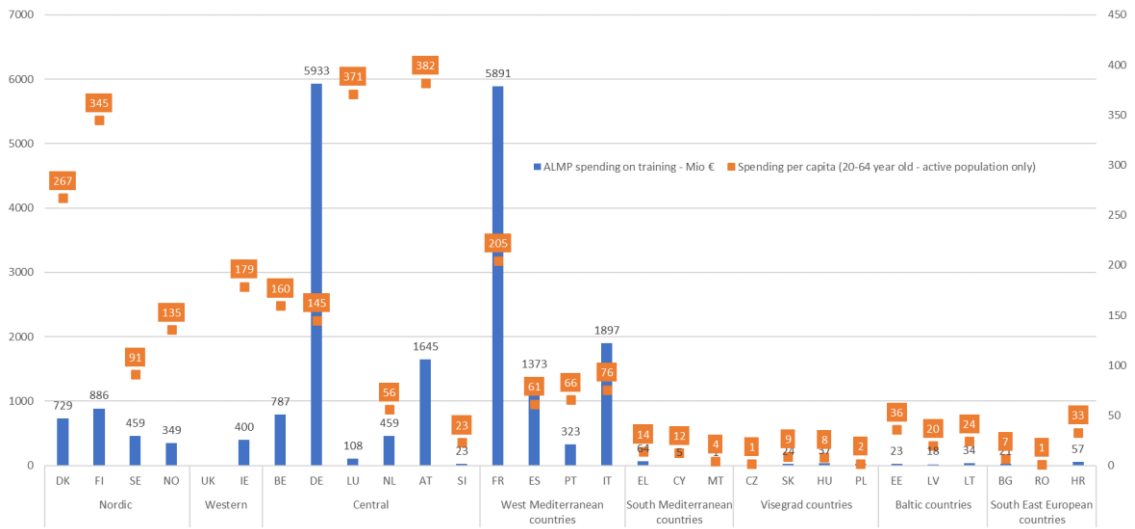
Diagrams on various topics

Figure 20. **Age structure of participants in VET: ISCED Levels 3 and 4, school year 2019/20**



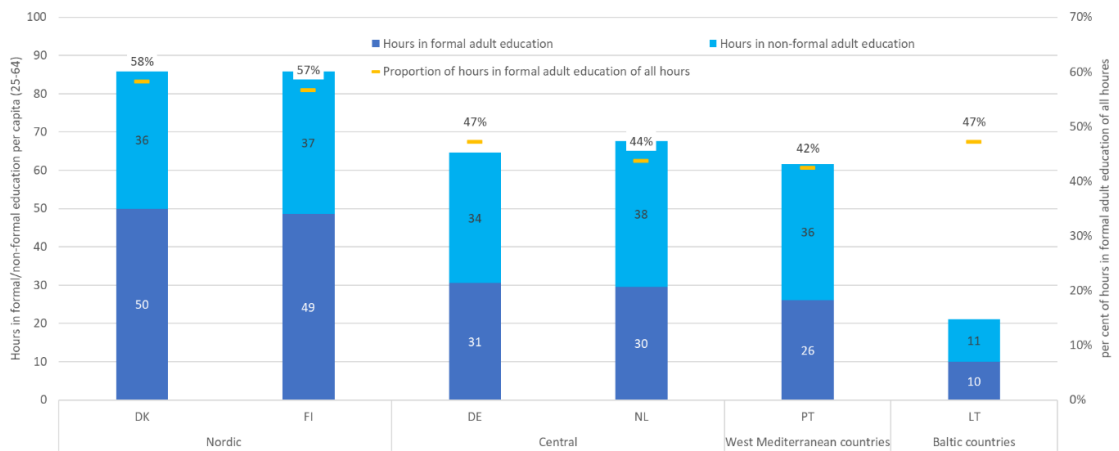
Source: Eurostat [educ_uoe_ens05] and [educ_uoe_ens08]; Version: 21.2.2022; Cedefop calculations.

Figure 21. **ALMP spending on training (2019): million Euro and per capita (20-64)**



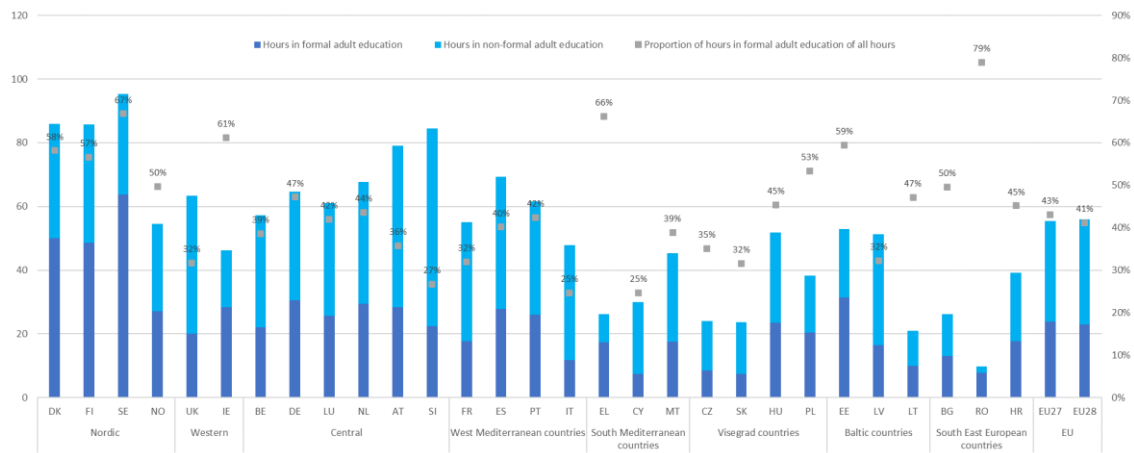
Source: Cedefop calculation based on Eurostat LMP_EXPSUMM (Vers. 3.1.2022) and Eurostat [demo_pjangroup] (Vers 5.7.2021).

Figure 22. **Hours spent on adult education per capita (AES 2016): comparison across countries studied**



Source: Cedefop calculation based on Eurostat data [trng_aes_148] (Vers. 20.2.2020).

Figure 23. **Hours spent on adult education per capita (AES 2016): comparison across EU27 + UK**



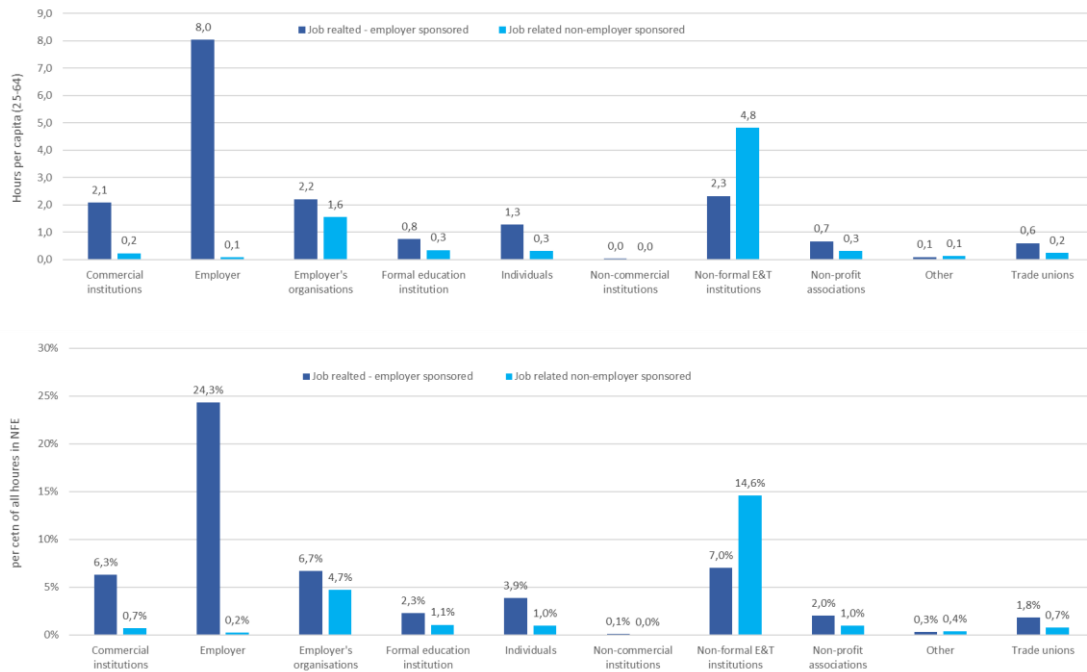
Source: Cedefop calculation based on Eurostat data [trng_aes_148] (Vers. 20.2.2020).

Distribution of hours in job-related CVET across types of providers: results of the Adult education survey (2016)

Explanation of labels used (Eurostat, 2017)

- Commercial institutions where education and training are not the main activity (e.g. equipment suppliers)
- Formal education institutions: schools, VET centres, universities of applied sciences, universities
- Employers: own employer/internal training (including guided-on-the-job training)
- Employer's organisations: chambers of commerce, other business interest organisations
- Individuals, e.g. private tutors, coaches
- Non-commercial institutions where education and training are not the main activity, e.g. libraries, museums, churches
- Non-profit associations, e.g. cultural society, political parties
- Trade unions
- Other (varies across countries, non-disclosed)

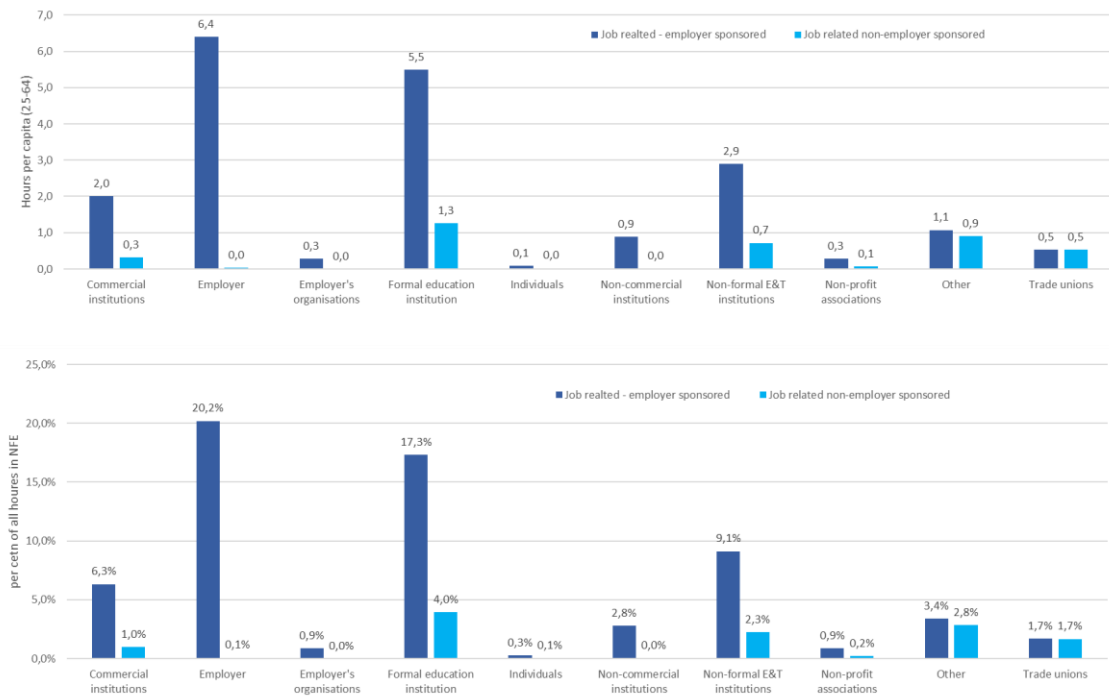
Figure 24. **Germany: providers of job-related non-formal education and training (AES 2016)**



NB: Due to low number of cases, the figures are only indicative; data on non-job related non-formal adult learning are excluded.

Source: AES – special data extraction by Eurostat on behalf of the European Commission, own calculation

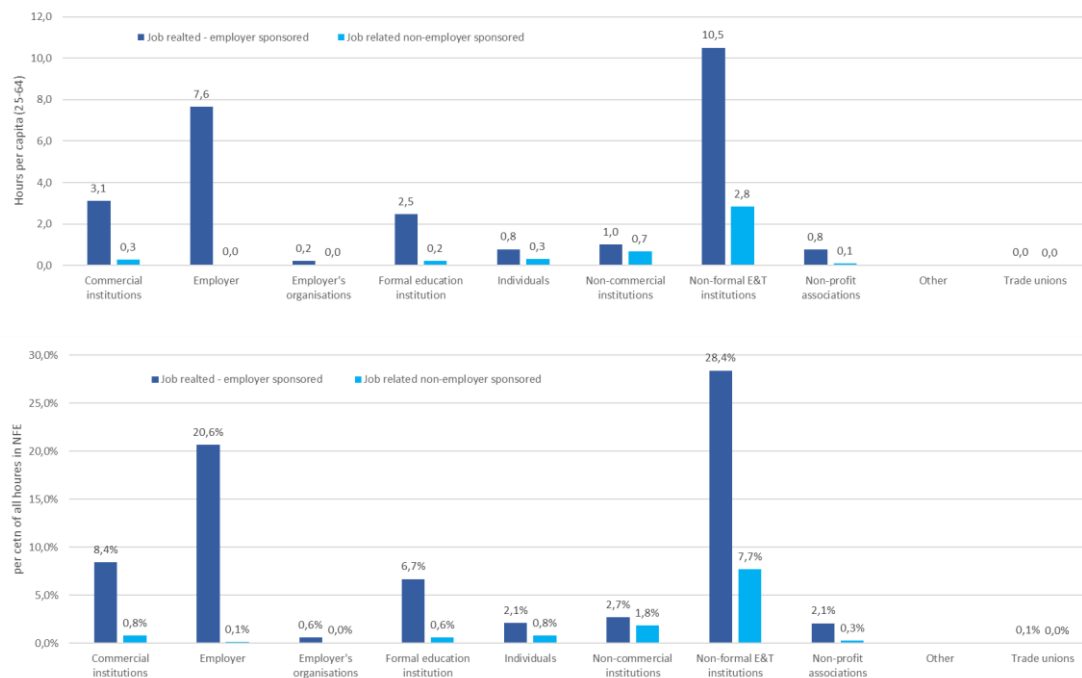
Figure 25. Denmark: Providers of job-related non-formal education and training (AES 2016)



NB: Due to low number of cases, the figures are only indicative; data on non-job related non-formal adult learning are excluded.

Source: AES – special data extraction by Eurostat on behalf of the European Commission, own calculation.

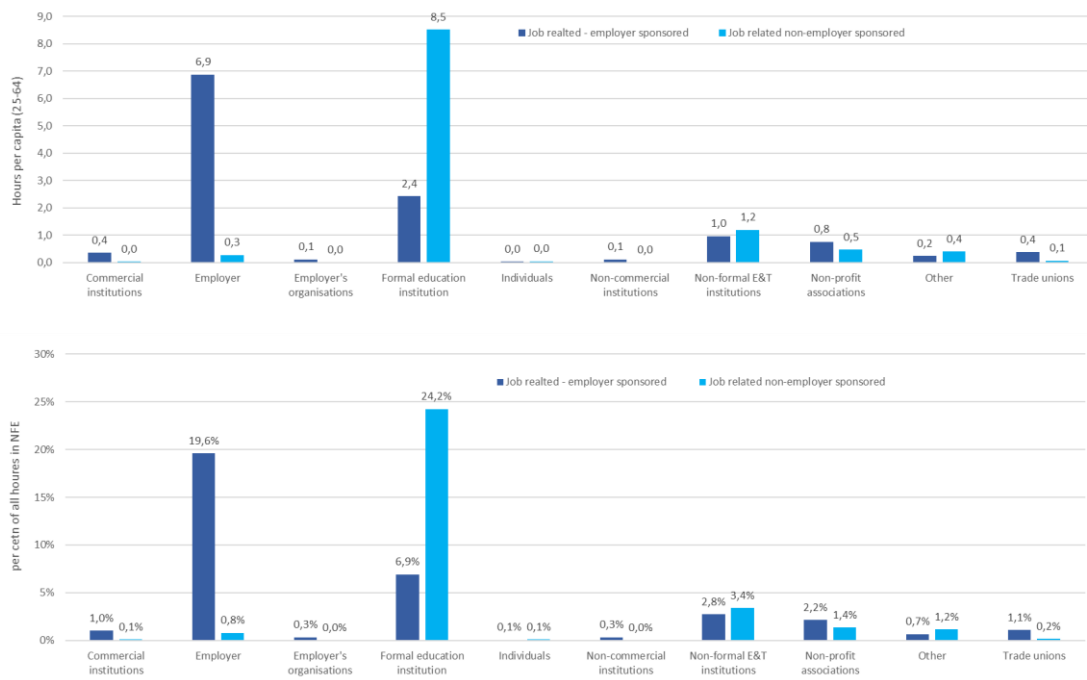
Figure 26. **Netherlands: providers of job-related non-formal education and training (AES 2016)**



NB: Due to low number of cases, the figures are only indicative; data on non-job related non-formal adult learning are excluded.

Source: AES – special data extraction by Eurostat on behalf of the European Commission, own calculation.

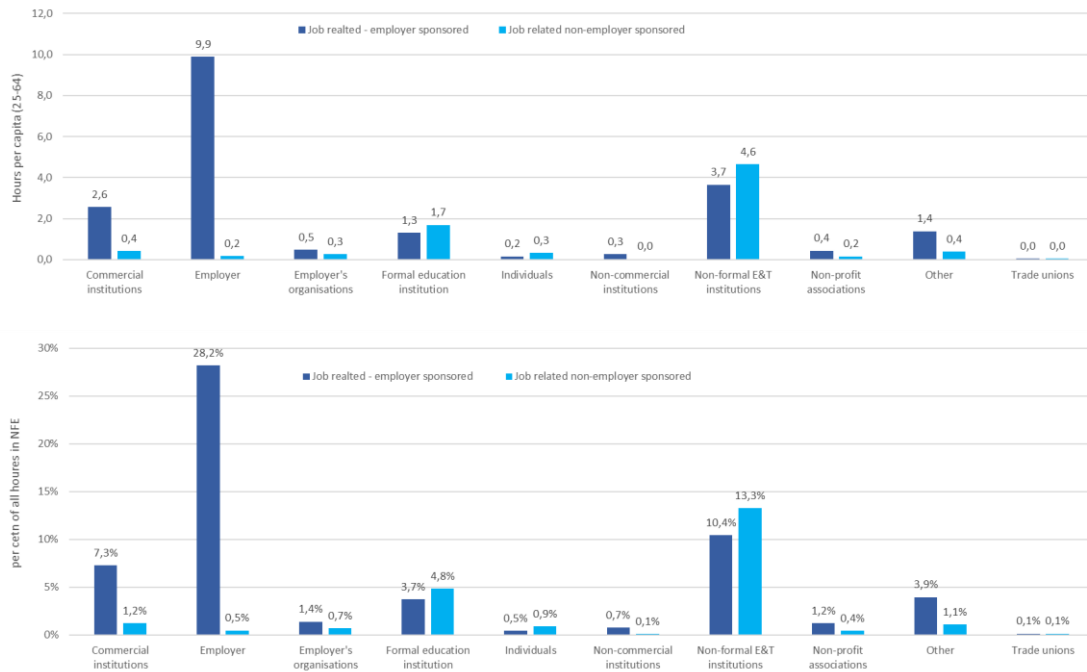
Figure 27. Finland: providers of job-related non-formal education and training (AES 2016)



NB: due to low number of cases, the figures are only indicative; data on non-job related non-formal adult learning are excluded.

Source: AES – special data extraction by Eurostat on behalf of the European Commission, own calculation.

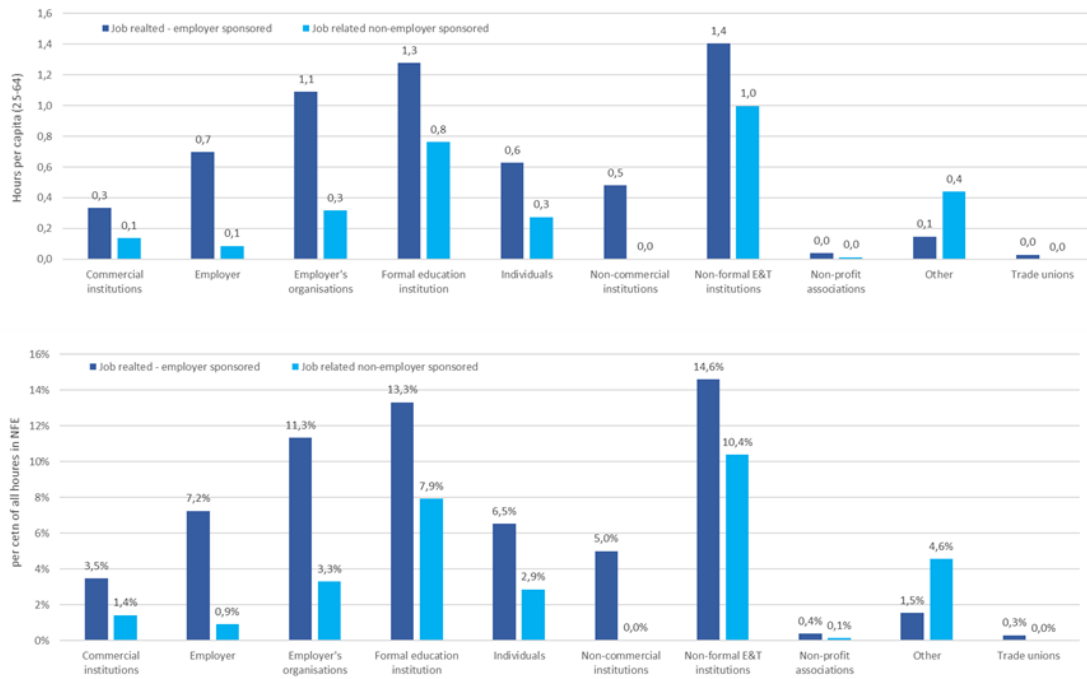
Figure 28. **Portugal: providers of job-related non-formal education and training (AES 2016)**



NB: due to low number of cases, the figures are only indicative; Data on non-job related non-formal adult learning are excluded.


Source: AES – special data extraction by Eurostat on behalf of the European Commission, own calculation.

Figure 29. Lithuania: providers of job-related non-formal education and training (AES 2016)



NB: due to low number of cases, the figures are only indicative; data on non-job related non-formal adult learning are excluded.

Source: AES – special data extraction by Eurostat on behalf of the European Commission, own calculation.



The future of vocational education and training in Europe

Volume 4

Delivering lifelong learning: the changing relationship between IVET and CVET

This study compares the way IVET and CVET sub-systems interact to support the learning of adults, and thus facilitate lifelong and life-wide learning. By comparing the interaction between IVET and CVET sub-systems in the countries covered, the study analyses the extent to which IVET systems are opening up to adults, and questions whether national and regional policies and practices support or prevent a closer link between CVET and IVET. The study builds on concrete national case-studies, allowing for an in-depth, qualitative comparison and analysis of practices and policies. This allows for a better understanding of obstacles and opportunities in this complex area, directly supporting the stakeholders and policy-makers responsible for taking lifelong and life-wide learning in Europe forward.

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