

A bridge to the future

European policy for vocational education and training 2002-10

National policy report – Sweden

This report is one of a set of European country reports on VET policy development prepared within Cedefop's ReferNet network. ReferNet is a European network of national networks providing information and analysis on national VET to Cedefop and disseminating information on European VET and Cedefop work to stakeholders in the EU Member States, Norway and Iceland. The report has been produced by ReferNet Sweden as a contribution to Cedefop's fourth policy report which reviews progress in VET towards the policy goals of the Copenhagen process. The opinions expressed in this national report are not necessarily those of Cedefop.

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The ReferNet work plan for 2010 includes under Activity 1.2 a *National VET policy report*. Within this activity, national consortia are asked to report on national progress in VET in the framework of the Copenhagen process.

ReferNet contributions have been used to elaborate Cedefop's 2010 VET policy report which takes stock of progress towards commonly agreed objectives and priority areas for VET in the EU set up in the Copenhagen declaration and the subsequent Maastricht/Helsinki/Bordeaux communiqués and related Council conclusions (¹).

The outcomes of the Cedefop's review as summarized in the 2010 VET Policy report presented at the informal ministerial meeting held in December 2010 in Belgium. The preliminary findings of the analysis have also fed into the work of the European Commission and the Bruges working group preparing the 2010 communiqué on cooperation in VET beyond 2010 and other related policy documents.

The template provided by Cedefop for the 2010 VET policy report is structured around the following themes:

- Theme 1** – Socioeconomic challenges for future VET policy development;
- Theme 2** – Economic crisis – VET policies as recovery measures;
- Theme 3** – Impact and implications of the joint work on European principles and tools;
- Theme 4** – Strengthening links between VET and the labour market;
- Theme 5** – Addressing equity, social inclusion and active citizenship;
- Theme 6** – Quality, excellence and attractiveness of VET;
- Theme 7** – Enhancing creativity and innovation;
- Theme 8** – Financing VET.
- Theme 9** – Progress in modernising European VET systems in the Copenhagen process and priorities for future cooperation;

(¹) See the most recent documents: The Bordeaux communiqué on Enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training. Communiqué of the European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European social partners and the European Commission to review the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen process. Bordeaux (26 November 2008). Council conclusions on the future priorities for enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET), Doc. 16459/08, Brussels (21 November 2008). Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020). Brussels (12 May 2008).

THEME 1:

SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE VET POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In 2008, the Bordeaux communiqué emphasised the relevance of global challenges for education and training and underlined the need for a strategic vision for European VET policies.

Main challenges include:

- *globalisation (competition, global trade and foreign investments, social and economic permeability, interdependent financial markets, (intercultural) environments, offshore production);*
- *demographic change and migration;*
- *technological change.*

VET policies need to take account of these challenges to ensure that VET systems are flexible enough to transform challenges into opportunities.

Early responses to these challenges with appropriate policies for education and training will provide a major contribution to securing proper employment for people and their full participation in society. Having the right skills for future labour market needs will help social inclusion as well as competitiveness of our economies.

The need for sustainable development and measures to mitigate climate change has become more urgent. Policy-makers by and large acknowledge the need for greener economies, which will provide new jobs, but which will also require new and changing skills.

1.1 Impact of globalisation on VET

Globalisation makes the issue of economic competitiveness critical, not only in Sweden but in all open economies. Consequently, globalisation impacts the Swedish VET system as it is one of the main tools (i.e. the provision of skilled workers to facilitate economic growth) to ensure Sweden's continued economic competitiveness. Globalisation makes it more important than ever for Swedish VET to ensure it is relevant, of high quality and meets real sector skills needs. The need to remain competitive in the global economy also means that VET in Sweden must remain dynamic (i.e. modernising to meet changing labour market demands) and open to both young people and adult learners through new VET models as well as with solid financial assistance for those who choose to invest in vocational education and training.

Title of policy/measure (include year introduced).
Reform of upper secondary education (from 2011)
Policy/measure rationale and goals including: a) rationale; b) objectives/targets; c) target groups; and d) status of implementation).
To improve the quality and relevance of vocationally-oriented education at upper secondary school. Curricula will be renewed with more focus on employability. There will also be a greater emphasis on vocational subjects, stronger requirements for workplace-based learning, both national and local councils, a new system of upper secondary apprenticeship training and, finally, a vocational upper secondary diploma. The target group is upper secondary IVET

students. It will be implemented from the autumn of 2011.

Policy/measure operation and delivery including a) level of operation; b) an isolated measure or part of a larger approach; and c) key actors involved.

The new system of upper secondary education will apply nationally and is, therefore, a larger reform involving all key actors (all levels of government and government agencies, social partners, students, etc.).

Evaluation including a) assessment of impact; b) indicators of success; and c) integration of outcomes into broader policies at national, sectoral or regional levels.

The reform is largely based on a comprehensive government commission which investigated how the new system of upper secondary education should be structured and implemented. Indicators of success (e.g. completion rates, results in international surveys, etc.) will be seen in coming years as results from those in the new system are compared with those in the old system.

Conclusions including: a) obstacles encountered; and b) measures to overcome them.

The main obstacles have been related to the time required to completely reform the system of upper secondary education in Sweden. This has required a significant effort in terms of curriculum development and in other areas which has resulted in the launch of the new system being “pushed back” from 2010 to 2011.

Source: Swedish Ministry of Education and Research. Information available in English at: www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/8203/a/101962

1.2 Impact of technological progress on VET

Sweden is a very open, trade-dependent, technology-based economy. Therefore, curricula, teaching methods, sector organisations and financing models are, and have been for many years, cognisant of, and heavily impacted by, technology. The Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) support the use of ICT in teaching, learning and in schools. Here are, however, no major, national initiatives regarding the impact of technological progress on VET to report on at this time.

1.3 Impact of demographic change and international migration on VET

Sweden has one of the higher fertility rates among member states of the Europe Union. Consequently, the country is projected to have a lower old age dependency rate than the EU average in the coming decades. However, the demographic challenge facing Sweden is becoming one of the most worrisome, and expensive, challenges the country faces. The number of older people will grow faster than younger ones in the coming years and this will put enormous pressure on governments, and will have implications for vocational education and training as relatively fewer people enter the labour force while an increasing number leave. This may lead to skills shortages which will make it especially important to develop VET options that can respond to labour markets needs.

The main thrust of Sweden’s response to demographic change, in the context of VET, is to ensure that all young people and adults have the opportunity to participate in education and training. There are numerous forms of state support, for example, tuition-free studies, universal student financial, labour market policy etc. to support young people and adults who wish to remain in, or enter, education and training. In a comparative perspective, it may be said that

recent Swedish reforms emphasise VET for adults. The country has a tradition of publicly-funded lifelong learning, Sweden is stressing the importance of opening the VET door to adults. The country is providing additional public funds for adult learning geared towards vocationally-oriented training to counteract the impact of the crisis. One of the more prominent measures is (*Yrkesvux*), detailed in section 2.1.

1.4 Impact of greening of economy on VET

New curriculum is being developed for all upper secondary programmes for the launch of the new system of upper secondary school in 2011. Part of the updated curriculum will address “green economy” issues but there is no major, earmarked thrust to address green economy issues.

Higher vocational education in Sweden is designed to rapidly respond to industry needs. Some of the higher VET programmes train workers for employment in green economy jobs. Moreover, higher VET is designed to be responsive to changes in the labour market so any future green economy skills needs could be addressed with short programme development time.

1.5 Other challenges for VET

There are a number of other challenges for VET in Sweden but three of the more pressing are: 1) to raise the status of vocational education and training to attract more young people and adults to VET; and 2) to ensure VET meets real industry needs, which requires a significant increase in Sweden’s capacity to forecast future skills needs; and 3) to ensure VET training (i.e. both teacher/trainer competence and advanced equipment in schools and training centres) keeps abreast of rapid technological change.

The new Agency for Higher Vocational Education (*Yrkeshögskolan*) will help to raise the status of post-secondary VET and it also has a mandate and resources to gather social partners to help forecast industry skills needs. The third point is a continuing challenge which will be partly addressed by increasing possibilities for work-based training in upper secondary IVET.

THEME 2:

ECONOMIC CRISIS – VET POLICIES AS RECOVERY MEASURES

In response to a severe worldwide economic crisis the December 2008 European Council endorsed a European economic recovery programme. It called for an overall fiscal stimulus equivalent to 1.5% of EU-27 GDP, and underlined that priority should be given to structural reform measures.

Countries have taken relevant action across a broad spectrum of policy areas, including VET. VET policies play a central role in the efforts to overcome the crisis and balancing out weaknesses of the labour market.

To overcome the current economic downturn and recognising the crucial role of education and training in this context, education ministers called for targeted and coordinated action at European level.

The aim of the analysis in this section is twofold:

- *to gain a better overview of the major consequences of the crisis on skills and VET policies - if possible differentiating between short- and medium-term effects (reduce/increase public and/or private expenditure for VET, reduce/increase the willingness of companies to provide work-based training, what groups of population are mainly affected, skills mismatches in specific badly hit sectors, etc.);*
- *to gain an overview of VET-focused policies and measures undertaken by countries to overcome the crisis (making a distinction between measures already planned as part of medium-term reform strategies, and measures which can be considered as a new response to the crisis).*

This input will update information already collected by the Swedish Presidency (May 2009) and Cedefop via ReferNet. Form and procedure for the update will be clarified with the Presidencies to ensure integration of complementary and up-to-date information

2.1 Initiatives for recovery

The Swedish economy, like most open, export-dependent economies, was seriously impacted by the onset of global economic crisis in the latter part of 2008. For example, by February 2010 the unemployment rate had doubled since the autumn of 2008. As part of a national response to the economic crisis, the Government appointed regional coordinators in every county (*län*) to coordinate public resources and to report on the development and actions proposed or undertaken in each region to a national coordination group consisting of all relevant State Secretaries.

Overall, it can be said that Sweden responded rapidly to the economic crisis by introducing measures to ensure that all people including, those recently displaced from the labour market, have the opportunity to participate in education and training. In this regard, measures have been introduced by agencies under both the Ministry of Education and Research (e.g. Swedish National agency for Education) and under the Ministry of Employment (e.g. the Public Employment service). The major initiatives under the Ministry of Education and Research have been:

- ***Yrkesvux (the adult VET initiative) (detailed below)***
A special initiative for VET for adults was introduced for the period 2009-2011, creating over 20 000 additional VET spaces for adults in municipal adult education. Over SEK 2,4 billion (EUR 250 million) of supplementary state grants have been earmarked to municipalities to provide more VET for adults within the public education and training system between 2009 and 2011. More information on this initiative is provided below.
- ***Higher Vocational Education (Yrkeshögskola)***
Supplementary state grants have been earmarked to support for more spaces within Higher vocational education, both in the short- and long-term. More information on this Higher Vocational Education is provided under section 4.2.
- ***Higher Education***
State grants have been set aside for 10 000 extra study places at Universities and Higher Education Institutions during 2010 and 2011.

Under the Ministry of Employment, the Public Employment Service offers basic or supplementary vocational training to unemployed jobseekers. The training is delivered by subcontractors such as training companies, municipalities or organisations. From 2008 until 2010 the average number of people per month in the labour market training was increased from an average of 2 500 places to approximately 8 100 places.

Overall, there are numerous forms of state through fee-free training, universal student financial, labour market policy etc. to support young people and adults who wish to remain in. or enter, education and training. In a comparative perspective, it may be said that recent Swedish reforms emphasise VET for adults. The country has a tradition of publicly-funded lifelong learning, and Sweden is stressing the importance of opening the VET door to adults. The country is providing additional public funds for adult learning geared towards vocationally-oriented training to counteract the impact of the crisis. One of the more prominent measures is (*Yrkesvux*), detailed below.

<p>Title of policy/measure (include year introduced). The adult VET initiative (<i>Yrkesvux</i>), 2009-2011</p>
<p>Policy/measure rationale and goals including: a) rationale; b) objectives/targets; c) target groups; and d) status of implementation).</p> <p>The adult VET initiative, also called VET boost, (<i>Yrkesvux</i>) was launched in 2009. The initiative consists of earmarked state grants to municipalities to provide more VET for adults within the system of municipal adult education (<i>Komvux</i>). The aim is to reach those who either lack upper secondary education or who need to complement their upper secondary education. In order to meet the flexible learning needs of adults municipal adult IVET should be offered in a flexible and accessible manner. At present, most adults who enter VET do so through municipal adult education and in 2009 the government announced the new adult VET initiative (<i>Yrkesvux</i>) to fund the creation of approximately 25 000 additional adult VET training places between 2009 and 2011. Approximately 10 000 <i>Yrkesvux</i> training spaces were funded in 2009.</p>
<p>Policy/measure operation and delivery including a) level of operation; b) an isolated measure or part of a larger approach; and c) key actors involved.</p> <p>The new system of upper secondary education will apply nationally and is, therefore, a larger reform involving all key actors (all levels of government and government agencies, social</p>

partners, students, etc.).

Evaluation including a) assessment of impact; b) indicators of success; and c) integration of outcomes into broader policies at national, sectoral or regional levels.

As of February 2010, there had only been interim reports to the Government on the impact of Yrkesvux. Virtually all funding for Yrkesvux spaces was utilised in 2009 and the demand for funding exceeded the supply. In order for municipalities to obtain funding for Yrkesvux, they were required to demonstrate cooperation with the public employment service, with social partners and other relevant parties to ensure this investment in adult VET builds on other, existing programmes to support lifelong learning.

Conclusions including: a) obstacles encountered; and b) measures to overcome them.

Yrkesvux was a rapid response to the economic crisis with funding flowing to municipalities to deliver supplemental adult IVET several weeks after enactment of the legislation.

Moreover, municipalities applied for approximately double the number of spaces funded indicating a strong demand for the policy measure. One challenge has been ensuring that municipalities apply for funding of adult VET training spaces that meet actual labour market demand. There has been concern that most municipalities apply for funding of long-term health care vocation training, which is easier and cheaper to deliver, than more complicating, and expensive, VET training in more technical fields such as automotive mechanics.

Consequently, the Swedish National agency for Education is enacting measures to ensure the municipalities better document actual VET skills needs in local labour markets.

Source: *Redovisning av regeringsuppdrag att förbereda och genomföra insatser inom yrkesvux.* Available in Swedish at: <http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/2615/a/17635>

THEME 3:

IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE JOINT WORK ON EUROPEAN PRINCIPLES AND TOOLS

The Copenhagen declaration initiated extensive joint work on European principles and tools aiming at increased transparency of qualifications and improved systems for recognition of competences and qualifications. This work has resulted in development of Europass, the European qualifications framework (EQF), the European credit system for VET (ECVET) ⁽²⁾, common European principles and guidelines for validation of non-formal and informal learning ⁽³⁾, the Council resolution on Strengthening policies, systems and practices in the field of guidance throughout life ⁽⁴⁾ and the Council resolution on Better integration of lifelong learning guidance into lifelong learning strategies ⁽⁵⁾. Formally adopted between 2004 and 2009, all these instruments have now reached the implementation stage.

Work on principles and tools is based on a lifelong learning (LLL) perspective. VET is seen as an integral and interlinked part of an overarching education, training and learning system. Transparency and recognition is needed because individuals move between different parts of the education and training system, between education and work, and between sectors and countries. This effort needs to be seen also in the context of European strategic goal to expand mobility for learners, teachers and trainers and to make periods of learning abroad the rule rather than the exception also in the VET sector.

The learning outcomes approach, shifting focus to knowledge, skills and competences, has been the common basis for the European tools.

3.1 Impact of joint work on European principles and tools on national LLL policies and practices and VET developments

Sweden has a long tradition of lifelong learning as well as supporting outcomes-based learning and validation. That said, the European tools and principles on transparency have had an impact on lifelong learning practices in Sweden in two ways: 1) by ensuring Sweden's approaches are understood throughout Europe; and 2) by making it easier for people and/or institutions in Sweden to understand learning outcomes achieved in other countries. The common framework developed at the European level also spurs additional innovation in this field in Sweden which is a positive impact.

A concrete example of the impact of the European tools concerns Sweden's current development of a national qualifications framework (NQF) as part of the EQF-process. Initial development of an NQF focus on the public VET system but all stakeholders are involved in development of the NQF and it will ultimately cover all vet forms. Moreover, all of the Europass tools are implemented and supported in Sweden and will be expanded in the coming years to ensure that post-secondary VET is also covered by, for example, Europass certificate Supplement. Overall, the most positive effect of European cooperation on these issues is the emergence of a common language with which to address these issues throughout Europe.

⁽²⁾ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European credit system for vocational education and training, 2009/C 155/02, OJEU 155, (8 July 2009).

⁽³⁾ EQARF is covered by Theme 7 on quality in this questionnaire.

⁽⁴⁾ Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening policies, systems and practices in the field of guidance throughout life in Europe, Brussels (18 May 2004).

⁽⁵⁾ Council resolution on Better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies. 2905th Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting Brussels (21 November 2008).

The main weakness of the European approach may be a lack of mutual trust. Europe has achieved impressive progress and success developing Europass, the EQF and, to a lesser extent, ECVET but these tools will not achieve their potential without European-wide mutual trust in the quality of both the instruments and the outcomes represented by them. This makes EQARF a critical element supporting the European tools, addressed in section 6.

Sweden is currently developing a national structure for validation that will contribute to social inclusion and recognise the competence of individuals, aiding entrance to the labour market, mobility between occupations and participation in education and training. As VET in Sweden is largely based on a tradition of lifelong- and outcomes-based learning, there are major national policy measures addressing these issues. However, the new Swedish Agency for Higher Vocational Education has a mandate to coordinate and support a national framework for validation. The Agency also serves as national coordinator for the EQF. More information on the agency is highlighted as a policy measure in section 4.2. This represents a follow-up on the National Commission on Validation which “wrapped up” its four years of work on December 31, 2007.

3.2 Promoting geographical mobility of learners/apprentices and teachers/trainers in VET

<p>Title of policy/measure (include year introduced).</p> <p><i>Atlas Praktik</i> (formerly workplace Training abroad – <i>APU utomlands</i>) Originally introduced in 2002 by Swedish National Agency for Education, moved to International Programme Office for Education and Training and re-branded at the end of 2008.</p>
<p>Policy/measure rationale and goals including: a) rationale; b) objectives/targets; c) target groups; and d) status of implementation).</p> <p>The underlying rationale for <i>Atlas Praktik</i> is to meet the need for VET mobility above and beyond that support by Leonardo da Vinci mobility and open-up VET mobility beyond Europe. The programme’s objective is to meet student demand for workplace training abroad in upper secondary IVET programmes and to provide and opportunity for cultural exchange and better development of language skills. To programme is meant to be a complement to IVET mobility facilitated through Leonardo da Vinci. <i>Atlas Praktik</i> is targeted for upper secondary IVET students doing their workplace training. <i>Atlas Praktik</i> has an annual budget of approximately SEK 3.5 million (EUR 350 000) and is considered a permanent programme to encourage mobility among IVET learners. The programme supports IVET work-based training anywhere in the world.</p>
<p>Policy/measure operation and delivery including a) level of operation; b) an isolated measure or part of a larger approach; and c) key actors involved.</p> <p><i>Atlas Praktik</i> is a national programme available to all IVET students wishing to do workplace training abroad, involving the International Programme Office for Education and Training, municipalities, upper secondary schools and other relevant actors.</p>
<p>Evaluation including a) assessment of impact; b) indicators of success; and c) integration of outcomes into broader policies at national, sectoral or regional levels.</p> <p>There have not been any large scale evaluations but programme reviews have highlighted the programme’s popularity (more than three times as many spaces that are funded are sought).</p>

Like Leonardo da Vinci, *Atlas Praktik* does not have a high profile among upper secondary educators and learners. A concern highlighted in programme reviews is the fact that such a high proportion of participants do their work-based training abroad in a European country through which they could have otherwise sought support for through the Leonardo da Vinci programme (more on this issue below).

Conclusions including: a) obstacles encountered; and b) measures to overcome them.

In the initial years, the Government felt that too many applicants to the programme sought to do their workplace training abroad in Europe. The programme has therefore been revised to give bonus points in the application process to those seeking to do their workplace training outside of Europe (i.e. outside countries participating in the Leonardo da Vinci programme)

Source: www.programkontoret.se

<p>Title of policy/measure (include year introduced). Athena (the programme for global exchange within VET), 2008</p>
<p>Policy/measure rationale and goals including: a) rationale; b) objectives/targets; c) target groups; and d) status of implementation).</p> <p>The main objective of Athena is to facilitate cooperation between participants (e.g. students, teachers, etc.) in Swedish upper secondary IVET and participants in similar levels of VET in developing countries. Athena should contribute new knowledge and skills and give students and teaching staff within upper secondary IVET the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience with their counterparts in development countries. The programme should also contribute to a better understanding of other cultures and issues related to development cooperation. Athena should also increase participants' interest for foreign languages and strengthen their vocational skills.</p> <p>The programme is targeted to upper secondary IVET students, teaching staff and school leadership and was established as a permanent programme in 2008, administered by the International Programme Office for Education and Training and funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).</p>
<p>Policy/measure operation and delivery including a) level of operation; b) an isolated measure or part of a larger approach; and c) key actors involved.</p> <p>Athena is a national programme available to IVET students and teachers involving the International Programme Office for Education and Training and funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, municipalities, and upper secondary schools.</p>
<p>Evaluation including a) assessment of impact; b) indicators of success; and c) integration of outcomes into broader policies at national, sectoral or regional levels.</p> <p>There has not been any formal large-scale assessment yet. The pilot project was evaluated and received positive feedback and participants in the programme report positive results in their final reports submitted by projects. Like Leonardo and Atlas, Athena is not fully integrated into IVET "consciousness" but, rather, an extra tool to increase the status and quality of IVET.</p>
<p>Conclusions including: a) obstacles encountered; and b) measures to overcome them.</p> <p>Both Athena and Atlas represent efforts to reduce the amount of bureaucracy and paperwork required in order to participate in internationalisation. These nationally funded programmes respond to the need for internationalisation that is not fully met by the Leonardo da Vinci programme.</p>
<p>Source: www.programkontoret.se</p>

THEME 4:

STRENGTHENING THE LINKS BETWEEN VET AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Europe is facing several socioeconomic challenges which accelerate the pace of change in the labour market and skills requirements. To make sure that VET responds adequately, a key priority of European cooperation in VET is to forge better links between VET and the labour market (Bordeaux communiqué). It is essential to involve all labour market actors in VET development, including promoting workplace learning, and encourage closer cooperation.

Partnerships between education and training institutions and employers have a particular role to play in improving learners' employability, developing their entrepreneurial potential and make them more familiar with the working world. Greater awareness of trends in the labour market can help to make learning more responsive to future needs and increase students' motivation by providing a clear context for learning. Cooperation with education and training institutions can also help to update skills and ensure professional development of staff⁽⁶⁾.

In this context, it is necessary to develop systems for early identification and anticipation of skill needs and mismatches to ensure that the skill needs identified are incorporated in VET on time, as advocated in the relaunched Lisbon strategy and the 'New skills for new jobs'⁽⁷⁾ initiative.

4.1 Identifying and anticipating skill needs

There is a growing interest in Sweden in skills forecasting and attempting to ensure that education and training outputs better match labour market skills needs. There are a number of actors at the national level that have a role to play in this regard including Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska Centralbyrån*) with its forecasting institute; the Swedish Public Employment Service (*Arbetsförmedlingen*), which uses both quantitative and qualitative data to forecast skills needs by region twice per year; and the two national education agencies that have responsibility for VET – the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) and the new Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (*Myndigheten för yrkehögskola*). The Agency for Higher Education has a specific mandate to ensure VET outputs closely match labour market skills needs and it is highlighted below as a policy measure to address this issue. There are also actors at the regional, municipal and sectoral that play a role in skills forecasting, including in an advisory role to national skills forecasting efforts.

It is important to note, however, that the majority of, though not all, education and training in Sweden is driven by student/learner choice. Specifically, the largest VET form, upper secondary IVET, mainly responds to student choice rather than labour market skills forecasts. Moreover, studies have shown that student choice of programme closely reflects current and future labour market prospects. Therefore, the Swedish system of VET is partly built on the assumption that well informed learners (i.e. after checking labour market skills futures or consulting with career counsellors who have reviewed skills forecasting reports) make logical

⁽⁶⁾ Conclusions of the Council and Representatives of the Governments of Member States, meeting within the Council, of 12 May 2009 on Enhancing partnerships between education and training institutions and social partners, in particular employers, in the context of lifelong learning. 2941. Education, youth and Culture Council meeting, Brussels (12 May 2009).

⁽⁷⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. 'New skills for new jobs. Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs'. Brussels, European Commission, 2008 (COM (2008) 868 final).

choices when investing in their skills. However, higher vocational education is more closely linked to VET providers' convincing public authorities that the skills they confer are needed in the labour market (see information on Higher Vocational Education below).

A strength of skills forecasting in Sweden is the tradition of involving social partners in such activities. This has ensured that qualitative factors are included along with the quantitative basis for most skills forecasting. This form of cooperation was especially well established at the country labour market board level in previous years and new forms of government-social partner cooperation are now being explored.

A potential weakness of Swedish skills forecasting has been a lack of coordination between the relevant authorities (i.e. Statistics Sweden, the Public employment Service and agencies responsible for education and training). This is being addressed, on a limited scale, through the efforts to forecast future skills needs for higher vocational skills, highlighted below. Another weakness that is not unique to Sweden is the difficulty to forecast skills needs more than a few years in the future due to rapid technological and industrial change as well as other factors such as globalisation and demographic change.

4.2 Integrating skill needs of the labour market into VET provision

Although there is a wealth of high quality labour market and education data in Sweden, there is limited coordination between Statistics Sweden and bodies responsible for education and training. Instead, the main agency working on this issue (anticipation of future skills) has been the Public Employment Service. Work on this by agencies responsible for VET in Sweden has been more characterised by one-off studies than regular, institutionalised cooperation between responsible agencies for statistics, labour market policy and education and training. The challenge here is linking labour market intelligence with VET provision and there is much work to be done in this regard in Sweden.

Overall, the links between labour market skill needs and VET programmes and curricula vary according to the type of VET. For example, the provision of upper secondary IVET, the largest VET form, is largely driven by student choice of programme, while post-secondary VET for adults is often driven by industry skill needs motivated by training providers. The new Agency for Higher Vocational Education, established on 1 July 2009, has a clear mandate to conduct labour market skill needs analyses to ensure that post-secondary vocational education and training delivery reflects industry skill needs. Two policy measures are detailed below.

Title of policy/measure (include year introduced).
Creation of Swedish National Agency for higher Vocational Education (<i>Myndigheten för yrkehögskola</i>), established July 1, 2009
Policy/measure rationale and goals including: a) rationale; b) objectives/targets; c) target groups; and d) status of implementation).
The Government established advanced vocational education, and more recently higher VET, to meet labour market demands for skilled labour. To be attractive on the labour market a person needs to have not only traditional knowledge but also wide-ranging proficiency. This includes flexibility, social skills, a capacity to see both the overall picture and individual processes, and an ability to solve production problems in the operations of an enterprise. In

several sectors specialist competence is in short supply and this calls for a new form of education closely linked to employer skills needs. The training must be at least one-third workplace-based in order to further strengthen the link to the labour market.

Target groups -- adults seeking post-secondary VET who have completed upper secondary school.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education was established to develop and oversee a new form of publicly funded vocational education at the post upper secondary level. The agency has a clear mandate to ensure quality of post-secondary VET and also has a mandate to analyse future labour market skills needs. One part in this is the establishment of a Labour Market Council with representatives from different industries, social partners, the Public employment Service and other relevant actors. Higher vocational programmes cover a wide range of occupations but they have one goal in common, namely the provision of advanced vocational education, tailored to the needs of the labour market. At least one-third of higher vocational education training must be workplace-based and all programmes are organised in close cooperation with workplaces. Overall, there is an increased focus on quality development and assurance, goals supported by the new Agency for higher VET. Indeed, the new agency is establishing more consistent guidelines for post-secondary VET. Until 2009 quality had mainly been assured through follow-up studies on, for example, the destination of higher vocational completers, but the new Agency for Higher Vocational Education has a mandate to develop more robust quality assurance and improvement procedures.

Finally, in terms of rationale and objectives, the new agency has responsibility for supporting validation including the task to develop a more cohesive national structure for validating vocational education, skills and competences. The new Agency should also promote and advance development of high quality methods and systems for validation.

Policy/measure operation and delivery including a) level of operation; b) an isolated measure or part of a larger approach; and c) key actors involved.

The new system of higher vocational education applies nationally and is, therefore, a larger reform involving all key actors (all levels of government and government agencies, social partners, students, etc.). It is a permanent and rapidly growing form of post-secondary VET.

Evaluation including a) assessment of impact; b) indicators of success; and c) integration of outcomes into broader policies at national, sectoral or regional levels.

Higher vocational education is largely based on the previous Advanced vocational education (*Kvalificerad yrkesutbildning*), which the Government made permanent in 2002. This form of post-secondary VET (ISCED 4) raised the status of VET in general. However, plans to provide those KY students who wish to pursue higher education with transfer credits were never realised. Therefore, although higher vocational education is supposed to provide pathways (including transfer credits) to higher education the reality to date reveals that higher education institutions have not granted these learners advanced standing. However, employers appreciate the fact that higher VET graduates are typically labour market ready.

Numerous follow-up studies of advanced VET students found that 80 to 90 per cent of them either found employment or started their own business after completion of their studies. Higher vocational education programmes may not be continued unless there is a documented demand for the skills they confer. Therefore, the most important indicator of success s

employment of graduates. Higher vocational education is integrated into the national education and training system as well as regional and sectoral policies.

Conclusions including: a) obstacles encountered; and b) measures to overcome them.

The main challenge with higher VET may be to ensure that programmes offered meet real industry skills needs rather than the operational needs of vocational education providers. Higher vocational education is designed, first and foremost, to serve the needs of job seekers and industries where competence and labour are in demand. For this reason companies and the business sector partner in the design and construction right from the very start. Programme and course content is jointly determined and course instructors and mentors have accumulated knowledge and expertise gained from many years of working in their respective areas. Higher vocational education provides opportunities to gain firsthand experience and contacts in the labour market and work-based training allows participants to get an insight into their chosen professions early in their training. Finally, this model allows employers to become familiar with the competence and skills of their potential co-workers of the future.

Source: www.yhmyndigheten.se

4.3 Involving labour market actors in VET

Sweden has a strong tradition of involving social partners, especially through peak level business and labour organisations, but this involvement has not been as well developed as it could be vis-à-vis skills the development and delivery of vocational education and training. The institutional involvement of social partners in Swedish VET will be increased in the coming years because of new policy measures introduced for post-secondary VET by the Swedish Agency for higher Vocational Education and for IVET by the Swedish National Agency for Education.

Title of policy/measure (include year introduced).

Creation of **Programme Councils** (*Programråd*) for all upper secondary programmes from 2011 (programme councils will exist at both the national and local levels and must include representatives from employers and employees as well as other experts).

Policy/measure rationale and goals including: a) rationale; b) objectives/targets; c) target groups; and d) status of implementation).

Rationale for the policy/measure – to support the Swedish National Agency for Education develop steering documents and curricula that is relevant to the labour market; and to play an active role in quality assurance and the providing of information to students.

Objectives/measurable targets – to contribute to higher completion rates and greater relevance (e.g. IVET completers having skills the labour markets needs and therefore contributing to a lower rate of unemployment among young people)

Target groups – Upper secondary schools including teachers and students.

Status of implementation – Currently being developed by the Swedish National Agency for Education for implemented from the autumn of 2011 as part of the new system of upper secondary education.

Policy/measure operation and delivery including a) level of operation; b) an isolated measure or part of a larger approach; and c) key actors involved.

<p>Level of operation – at both national and local levels.</p> <p>Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger approach? – part of comprehensive reforms of upper secondary education including IVET.</p> <p>key actors involved – Swedish National Agency for Education and social partners at the national and local levels.</p>
<p>Evaluation including a) assessment of impact; b) indicators of success; and c) integration of outcomes into broader policies at national, sectoral or regional levels.</p> <p>As the policy as not been introduced yet, indicators of success have not been developed and it is not possible to assess the degree of integration into broader education and training policies.</p>
<p>Conclusions including: a) obstacles encountered; and b) measures to overcome them.</p> <p>It is too early in the process to assess. The main challenge will be to ensure that social partners are actively involved in programme councils.</p>
<p>Source: Swedish National Agency for Education, part of website devoted to reform of upper secondary education (only in Swedish): http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/2885</p>

4.4 Promoting workplace learning

There is broad agreement among observers in Sweden that there is a need for a better match between education and training output and labour market needs. In recent years there has been much discussion of the positive role workplace learning plays, or should play, not only in vocational education and training but in other forms of education and training as well. Much of the discussion surrounding this issue has focused on Sweden's largest VET form – upper secondary IVET – which is largely school-based but requires at least 15 weeks work-based learning (Arbetsplatsförlagd utbildning).

The new system of upper secondary IVET from 2011 will place a greater emphasis on workplace training and several initiatives have been launched to support this. The role of workplace training in upper secondary IVET programmes will be strengthened from 2011, coordinated by the Swedish National Agency for Education and achieved in cooperation with newly established Programme Councils (see section 4.3 for more information) for each national upper secondary IVET programme. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*) has also been commissioned to investigate workplace learning during their inspections and quality evaluation of upper secondary schools. One of the most significant development is the introduction of upper secondary apprenticeship training, detailed below.

There is a stronger tradition of workplace learning in several sectors in Sweden where apprenticeship-like programmes are required prior to full certification (i.e. journeyman status/*Yrkesbevis*) in many trades (e.g. carpenters, electricians, welders, etc.). This type of apprenticeship-like training is conducted completely outside the public education system through joint business-labour training boards (*Yrkesnämnd*) at the sectoral level. The challenge here is to improve/increase linkages between the largely school-based public VET system and the largely work-based, but small scale, apprenticeship-like training at the sectoral level in Sweden.

In Higher Vocational Education a new approach is taken where theoretical learning is integrated and blended with unpaid vocational training/practicum placements at the workplace.

This typically accounts for one-third of the learning but the minimum requirement 25per cent of the total time.

Two of the main challenges/weaknesses regarding the promotion of workplace learning in Sweden are: 1) the difficulty of finding workplace training placement for learners, especially in certain sectors or during economic downturns; and 2) the weak institutional links between public VET and the more work-based apprenticeship-like VET in certain sectors.

Title of policy/measure (include year introduced).

Upper secondary apprenticeship (Gymnasial lärlingsutbildning), introduced as pilot project in 2008 and part of new upper secondary system from the autumn of 2011.

Policy/measure rationale and goals including: a) rationale; b) objectives/targets; c) target groups; and d) status of implementation).

The ‘modern’ upper secondary apprenticeship training entails at least fifty per cent workplace learning and apprentices may or may not earn a wage. As with the new upper secondary vocational from 2011, learners in upper secondary apprenticeship will receive a vocational upper secondary diploma upon completion of their studies/training. Those who participate in upper secondary apprenticeship training will be able to reduce their load of core courses in Swedish/Swedish as a second language, English, mathematics, social sciences, history, religion and physical education. To meet the entry requirements to higher education, upper secondary apprentices may take additional core courses during their time at upper secondary school or can, at a later date, supplement their education through municipal adult education (*Komvux*).

Employers that hire and supervise apprentices will receive approximately SEK 25 000 per apprentice per year to cover the cost of employing the apprentice and for training supervisors. In total, the government set aside SEK 500 million between 2008 and 2011, with SEK 400 million earmarked to cover the costs for employing an apprentice and SEK 100 million earmarked for training apprentice supervisors. Thus, funding is in place to cover the costs for 18 000 apprentices over the first three years.

Policy/measure operation and delivery including a) level of operation; b) an isolated measure or part of a larger approach; and c) key actors involved.

Those municipalities, or countries or independent schools, that introduce upper secondary apprenticeship training must establish an apprenticeship council (*lärlingsråd*) with representatives from schools, industry and trade unions to reflect current labour market skill needs. There is a great degree of flexibility to design programmes to meet local and regional needs, but, ultimately, upper secondary apprenticeship training must meet nationally established goals.

Evaluation including a) assessment of impact; b) indicators of success; and c) integration of outcomes into broader policies at national, sectoral or regional levels.

There have not been any large scale evaluations but the fact that counties, municipalities and independent schools apply for funding for more spaces that are available indicate the upper secondary apprenticeship training is in demand. For example, actors applied for funding for 9000 spaces in 2009/2010 but funding was only available for 6000 apprenticeship training

spaces.

Conclusions including: a) obstacles encountered; and b) measures to overcome them.

The main challenge has been ensuring that schools establish functioning apprenticeship councils (*lärlingsråd*). This is an important prerequisite but officials at the Swedish National Agency for Education have noted some difficulties associated with the establishment of apprenticeship councils.

Source: Information on apprenticeship training in upper secondary IVET (only in Swedish): <http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/1959>

THEME 5:

ADDRESSING EQUITY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

The year 2010 is the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion. The priorities of the European Year include the reducing disadvantages also in education and training, focusing on the specific needs of groups at risk, for example early school-leavers, people with special needs, low skilled people and migrants.

The strategic framework Education and Training 2020 calls for education and training policies which will “enable all citizens, irrespective of their personal, social or economic circumstances, to acquire, update and develop over a lifetime both job-specific skills and the key competences needed for their employability and to foster further learning, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue”⁽⁸⁾.

Supporting services, including guidance and counselling as well as access to information play a fundamental role for groups at risk.

5.1 Addressing equity in VET

Sweden is well known for its well developed welfare state and commitment to egalitarian public policies. This is reflected in the highly developed, well-funded public education and training system that is provided fee-free. This is supported/complimented by a comprehensive system of student financial assistance composed of grants and loans that is not linked to parental income as in many countries. The combination of fee-free studies at compulsory and upper secondary school, through adult education and at higher education and higher vocational education reduces the impact of socio-economic background.

Other elements of the system that address equity and social exclusion include the adult education system which allows those without a complete upper secondary education, or those wishing to upgrade their education and skills, to enter IVET on a very flexible basis. A recent initiative, the adult VET initiative (*Yrkesvux*), detailed in section 2.1, focuses on the needs of the unemployed, immigrants and other groups at risk of long-term unemployment. Older workers are also able to enter adult education and immigrants have access to regular adult education as well as Swedish language training for immigrant training. There is also an adult education system, including IVET, that addresses the needs of learners with special needs to ensure that they do not get further marginalised.

5.2 Support services for groups at risk

There is a long tradition of support for at risk groups in Sweden. Both municipal adult education (*komvux*) and liberal adult education (e.g. folk high schools, study circles, etc.) offer a wide range of education and training opportunities, including both IVET and CVET options, for at risk groups. Indeed, groups at risk often have priority access with, for example, those lacking a full compulsory education having a legal right to adult education. Those with learning disabilities have similar rights and other at risk groups have priority access to initiatives such as the adult VET initiative (*Yrkesvux*). New legislation will transfer responsibility for introduction activities for immigrants from municipalities to the Public Employment service

⁽⁸⁾ Council conclusions on a Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020"). Brussels (12 May 2009)

(*Arbetsförmedlingen*), which will offer improved skills assessments and active labour market policy measures to new immigrants.

Given Sweden's strong tradition of lifelong learning (e.g. through the well-developed system of municipal adult education), there are ample education and training options for older workers and other non-traditional learners.

5.3 Active citizenship

Education and training address active citizenship through the teaching and encouragement of civic values. Both theoretical and vocationally-oriented programmes at upper secondary school share the same core curricula which teaches fundamental democratic values including the sanctity of human life, the freedom and integrity of the individual, the equal value of all people, equality between men and women and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable. The same curricula apply to municipal adult education school.

THEME 6:

QUALITY, EXCELLENCE AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF VET

In the Education and training 2010 work programme, Member States agreed to make their education and training systems ‘a world quality reference’ by 2010. The objective to improve quality and attractiveness of VET systems is one of the pillars of the Copenhagen process.

The Council conclusions on Quality assurance in vocational education and training, adopted on 28 May 2004 ⁽⁹⁾, and the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Establishment of a European quality assurance reference framework for vocational education and training, adopted on 18 June 2009 ⁽¹⁰⁾, are designed to support Member States in promoting and monitoring quality improvement in VET at different levels. The latter provides a common basis for further development of quality principles, reference criteria and indicators. Quality assurance is a prerequisite for common trust between countries or different parts of the education system. Moreover, fostering excellence in vocational education and training is of paramount importance.

Teachers and trainers safeguard quality of VET and drive VET reforms. They should receive high quality professional training to foster their continuous development.

Individuals should be able to move from one qualification to another. Horizontal and vertical permeability of education and training systems increases the attractiveness of VET.

6.1 Improving the quality of VET

Sweden is committed to high quality education and training and this has been one of the main political issues over the past three years as the government has introduced a wide range of reforms designed to generate better results from education and training institutions in the country. In general, it could be said that there is a trend towards quality and results in addition to the traditional Swedish education and training goal of equity. Quality in education and training in Sweden is being reinforced by more frequent school inspections, creation of a Swedish Schools Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*) on October 1, 2008 (detailed below as a policy measure), more national testing of students and learners and the issuance of grades at an earlier age. These reforms are in addition to existing practices including a wide range of statistical indicators, benchmarking and follow-up studies to measure and further develop quality in vocational education and training. The new Swedish Agency for Higher Vocational Education .

⁽⁹⁾ Council conclusions on Quality assurance in vocational education and training, 8950/04 EDUC 96 SOC 206 (28 May 2004).

⁽¹⁰⁾ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Establishment of a European quality assurance reference framework for vocational education and training 2009/C 155/01, OJ EU C 155 (18 June 2009).

<p>Title of policy/measure (include year introduced).</p> <p>Creation of Swedish Schools Inspectorate on October 1, 2008.</p>
<p>Policy/measure rationale and goals including: a) rationale; b) objectives/targets; c) target groups; and d) status of implementation).</p> <p>The new agency was established to support the development of quality assurance in Sweden schools. One of the objectives is more frequent and relevant school inspection with a focus on the development of learners' knowledge. The target groups are children in childcare, compulsory school and upper secondary school, learners in adult education, teachers and school administrators. The new national agency launched on October 1, 2008 and was fully staff by the beginning of 2010.</p>
<p>Policy/measure operation and delivery including a) level of operation; b) an isolated measure or part of a larger approach; and c) key actors involved.</p> <p>The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is a national policy governing all compulsory, upper secondary and adult education in Sweden. The key actors involved include the Ministry of Education and Research, Swedish Schools Inspectorate, municipalities, other education providers, children, students and adult learners.</p>
<p>Evaluation including a) assessment of impact; b) indicators of success; and c) integration of outcomes into broader policies at national, sectoral or regional levels.</p> <p>There has not been a formal impact analysis yet but the new agency has received more resources and clear mandate to conduct inspection than the previous agency which had school inspection as one of its many core functions.</p>
<p>Conclusions including: a) obstacles encountered; and b) measures to overcome them.</p> <p>The main challenge has been ensuring that schools establish functioning apprenticeship councils (<i>lärlingsråd</i>). This is an important prerequisite but officials at the Swedish National Agency for Education have noted some difficulties associated with the establishment of apprenticeship councils.</p>
<p>Source: Information in English on the Swedish Schools Inspectorate at: www.skolinspektionen.se/sv/Om-oss/In-English/</p>

6.2 Promoting excellence in VET

One of the most significant initiatives in recent years in Sweden that addresses excellence in VET is the establishment of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (more details in section 4.2). The new agency puts most post-secondary VET forms in Sweden under one administrative roof and puts the focus on quality and relevance. The most apparent strength may be the close linkage between employer skills needs and the training funded by the Agency for Higher VET. A weakness may be the lack of institutionalised links between higher vocational education and high education (i.e. ISCED 5 and 6) in Sweden. A closer linkage between the two education forms, perhaps entailed credit transfer between them, may further

advance excellence in VET in Sweden as well as address issues related to transition and permeability. Work in Sweden to develop a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) will be spear-headed by the Agency for Higher Vocational Education and this should have a positive impact on transition and permeability.

A major challenge in promoting excellence in VET is the issue of status. As in many countries, vocational education and training in Sweden has arguably had lower status than traditional, theoretical/academic studies. A gradual increase in the proportion of those enrolled in vocationally-oriented programmes at upper secondary school may reflect increasing status of VET in Sweden.

An interesting initiative that promotes excellence in vocational education and training in Sweden is the national support for VET competitions at upper secondary schools. This initiative is detailed below.

<p>Title of policy/measure (include year introduced). VET competitions at school level (<i>Yrkestävlingar på skolnivå</i>), pilot projects in 2010</p>
<p>Policy/measure rationale and goals including: a) rationale; b) objectives/targets; c) target groups; and d) status of implementation). To stimulate quality, excellence and entrepreneurship in vocationally-oriented education at upper secondary school. Target group is upper secondary IVET students and pilot projects will be evaluated for possible implementation as permanent measure.</p>
<p>Policy/measure operation and delivery including a) level of operation; b) an isolated measure or part of a larger approach; and c) key actors involved. VET competitions are a national pilot project which will be evaluated and then considered for permanent introduction as measure to promote excellence in IVET.</p>
<p>Evaluation including a) assessment of impact; b) indicators of success; and c) integration of outcomes into broader policies at national, sectoral or regional levels. Interim results of the pilot project will be reported on April 1, 2010. The final report will be submitted to the Ministry of Education and Research by October 1, 2010.</p>
<p>Conclusions including: a) obstacles encountered; and b) measures to overcome them. This pilot project will be evaluated throughout 2010 with a final report to the Ministry of Education and Research in October 2010.</p>
<p>Source: Ändring av regleringsbrev för budgetåret 2009 avseende Statens skolverk.</p>

6.3 Higher level qualifications in VET

There have not been any significant initiatives vis-à-vis the introduction of vocational qualifications/ programmes in higher education/tertiary education in recent years in Sweden. There are academic degrees that are more vocational in character than others but they are not technically considered to be vocational education and training. Development of a National Qualifications Framework, as part of Sweden's commitment to the EQF, is being spearheaded by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education and this may include a discussion of higher vocational qualifications. Moreover, the new agency has introduced new diplomas for different levels of higher VET.

6.4 Improving horizontal and vertical permeability of education and training systems

In many ways, Sweden has well developed horizontal and vertical permeability of its education and training systems. For example, all upper secondary programmes, both theoretical/academic and vocational, currently provide eligibility to enter higher education. Moreover, the entire system is highly modularised, course-based system (or even partial course-based) and built on credits, which facilitates permeability. IVET is also open to adults without VET backgrounds through the robust system municipal adult education.

However, some challenges remain including making VET more attractive by building new, and strengthening existing, paths between levels of education, and by strengthening links between VET and higher education. The Bologna and Copenhagen processes contribute to national policy development and issues such as validation of learning outcomes are relevant at all levels of education and training.

In Sweden the lack of a tradition of formal qualifications may be seen as both a strength and weakness on the issue of transition and permeability. Upper secondary IVET completers do not receive a qualification (*yrkesbevis*), which makes Sweden open and flexible but perhaps not as transparent as it might be. It also makes it difficult to address the issue as Sweden does not engage the issue of qualifications frequently. Moreover, the majority of vocational qualifications are governed and issued by joint training boards at the sectoral level with little, if any, state involvement.

In theory, the Swedish education and training system is built on learning outcomes and credit units. In practice, credit units are the norm, which facilitates the move to ECVET but culture of learning outcomes is still more of a policy idea than a reality, especially at higher education institutions in Sweden.

In summary, the strong adult education system in Sweden supports lifelong learning and the validation of learning outcomes. Moreover, the education and training system is designed to facilitate transition between VET and higher education (HE) but not, unfortunately, from higher VET to HE. Ultimately, transition is about cultural and institutional acceptance and this is growing and supported by recent reforms in Sweden.

6.5 Teachers and trainers

The continuing professional development of teachers has been a significant issue in Sweden in recent years and in 2007 the government launched a major initiative – the teacher knowledge lift (*Lärarlyftet*) – to invest in the further education of teachers and raise the status of teaching. In total, SEK 2.8 billion are available, enough to fund the participation of 30 000 teachers. The Swedish National Agency for Education is responsible for administering the initiative and the aim is to improve teacher competence, thereby increasing the proportion of students reaching

national knowledge goals. Upper secondary teachers can study between 20 and 45 ECTS credits from either higher education institutions or education commissioned by the the Agency for Education, which are more tailored to the specific needs of active teachers. During 2008, the first full year of the programme, 5 700 teachers participated in further education with support from the initiative.

As in many countries, Sweden has a long history of a shortage of vocational teachers in upper secondary IVET. A report in 2006 concluded that Sweden would need to educate almost 4 000 vocational teachers between 2006 and 2011 (almost 800 teachers per year until 2011) but in 2006 only 200 vocational teachers graduated from teacher training. Given the current and future shortage of vocational teachers in upper secondary IVET, several initiatives have been developed to attract more people into the VET teaching profession. Between 2002 and 2006, an initiative (*Särskild lärarutbildning – SÅL II*) supported over 4 000 IVET teachers to become fully qualified teachers by combining teaching with studies to gain a teaching degree. This was followed in 2005 by an initiative for IVET teachers at upper secondary school (*SÅL III – Särskild lärarutbildning för lärare i yrkesämnen på gymnasiet*) involving eight teacher education institutions and geared to IVET teachers without teaching degrees. SÅL III is offered through distance and open education and the last students completed the programme at the end of 2009. Another initiative called special teacher education (VAL) was in effect until 2009 and allows non fully-qualified teachers to gain a teaching degree through a combination of work and study on either a full- or part-time basis or through Internet-based distance education. Several government commissions have examined these issues in recent years.

A Government Commission investigating vocational teacher training issued a final report entitled *New paths to VET teacher education (nya vägar till yrkeslärarutbildning)* at the end of 2008. The goal was to help recruitment for VET teacher training and develop a system for assessing and recognising individuals' VET knowledge and skills, which could have been attained through higher education, work or a combination of both. At present, to work as an upper secondary IVET teacher, 180 ECTS (European credit transfer and accumulation system) credits (three years of full-time study) are the minimum. The commission concluded that knowledge and skills acquired outside formal education should have the same legitimacy as knowledge and skills acquired through traditional courses at higher education institutions and recommended the introduction of a one-and-a-half year (90 ECTS credits) programme for skilled vocational work comprising one year (60 credits) of course-based study and one semester (30 credits) of work-based training in upper secondary schools. The commission recommended three variations of IVET teacher education pathways:

- (a) completion of 90 ECTS credits in a relevant field combined with relevant vocational experience in the workplace;
- (b) completion of at least 60 credits of other post-secondary education in a relevant vocational field combined with relevant vocational experience;
- (c) a certificate issued by the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) confirming knowledge and competencies that meet the qualifications required in the selected field of teaching.

In response to teacher training and certification concerns, a Government Bill (*Bäst i klassen – Best in the Class*) on teacher education was introduced in February 2010 and suggests a new structure for teacher training. The highlight of the Bill is a suggestion that the current single teacher degree be disaggregated into four teacher degrees: pre-school teacher; compulsory school teacher; subject teacher (for junior and upper secondary); and vocational teachers. The new vocational teacher degree follows most of the aforementioned Commission's recommendations and would make it easier for competent people with vocational skills to become vocational teachers. The vocational teacher degree would be characterised by flexibility and would require a total of 90 ECTS credits.

THEME 7:

ENHANCING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Creativity, innovation and intra-/entrepreneurship¹¹ are important for economic development and Europe's competitiveness. Research and cutting-edge innovation mostly require high levels of knowledge, skills and competence.

VET, fostering creativity and preparing learners for innovation and entrepreneurship should promote acquisition of key competences such as learning to learn, a sense of initiative, realistic assessment of risks, and a quick grasp of opportunity. The knowledge triangle of education-research-innovation illustrates this interrelationship.

Partnership between enterprises and education, training and research ensure a close focus on the skills and competences required in the labour market and can be instrumental in incorporating innovation and entrepreneurship in all forms of learning.

Broader learning communities, with representatives of the civil society and other stakeholders, to promote creativity and better reconciliation of professional and social needs, and individual well-being should be encouraged.

Many related skills and competences have been acquired in the past outside formal settings. Their recognition depends on the availability of learning outcome-based assessment methods. Recognition of these competences is also likely to encourage learners to develop their creativity and capacity for innovation further.

7.1 Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in VET

In Sweden, entrepreneurship refers as much to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action as to starting businesses. It includes creativity, innovation and taking calculated risk, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. National steering documents (e.g. curricula and syllabi) support entrepreneurship in VET but the level of support varies between different VET programmes. Moreover, there are variations between VET programmes in terms of what the level of entrepreneurship education/training that is compulsory and optional/voluntary. There is certainly room for improvement in this area.

National VET advisory committees participate in the development of vocational education and training programmes. Every upper secondary school with VET programmes has a VET advisory committee that participates in the planning, delivery and evaluation of VET at both the local and

¹¹ *Creativity* refers to the ability to bring ideas or works into being which are new, surprising and valuable/useful. *Innovation* refers to a new and significant way of doing something which is useful, particularly the successful implementation of creative ideas (in products, work process, organisation, etc.). *Intrapreneurship* refers to employees and students using entrepreneurial skills without taking on the risks or accountability associated with entrepreneurial activities, by using a business model. *Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship* is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of their work and is able to seize opportunities which arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.

regional levels. VET should specify/clarify the goals and anticipated outcomes in VET programmes that encourage the integration of learning and development of entrepreneurship. It is critical to underscore the importance of entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviour in steering documents. It is also important to emphasise the necessity to strengthen learners' ability to work in a process- and project-oriented manner. At the school level, the principal/head master is responsible to ensure that VET teachers receive support to teach according to established steering documents.

VET teachers should be involved and engaged, and entrepreneurship must be clearly integrated throughout education and training programmes. Learners should be given the opportunity to work on practice projects as a work method during their education and training (e.g. they should be given the opportunity to practise planning, delivery, documentation, book keeping and evaluation of different projects). Learners should also be given the opportunity to gain knowledge through contacts with businesses, government agencies and other organisations. Finally, learners should also practice their ability to cooperate and build a positive, efficient manner of work. All these efforts should be supported by principals/head masters, teachers and steering documents (e.g. curricula and syllabi).

Two positive examples can be seen through the activities of Young Enterprise Sweden and through the Business Training Center, which is part of the European network of practice firms. Both of these organisations are involved with numerous activities that support entrepreneurship among VET learners in Sweden.

The Swedish Government launched a national strategy for entrepreneurship in education and training. The strategy aims at encouraging the integration of entrepreneurship into all levels of education and training. There is a specific effort to emphasise the importance of entrepreneurship in the new system of upper secondary education launching in 2011 and the Swedish National Agency for Education is addressing the issue of how to best ensure entrepreneurship is integrated into relevant upper secondary school syllabuses.

From 2011, upper secondary vocational education will be more closely linked to the labour market and companies and workplace-based learning will be an important component of future upper secondary vocational training. Entrepreneurship will be emphasised by promoting cooperation with working life, offering continuing professional development, facilitating the exchange of experience and distributing development funds.

The Swedish National Agency for Education is also analysing efforts in the field of entrepreneurship in compulsory and upper secondary schools.

The Swedish National Agency on Higher Vocational Education has been given a special assignment from the Government to contribute to the development of entrepreneurship through mapping, analysing and through different means stimulating the entrepreneurial elements in the education and training. The Agency guarantees that entrepreneurship is included in the courses provided in post upper secondary vocational education and training outside higher education level.

7.2 Improving quality of teaching

7.3 Innovation-friendly institutions

The responsibility for competence development and innovative pedagogy in upper secondary schools and adult education is largely decentralised to municipalities. Responsibility for these issues for post-secondary VET forms is typically devolved to the VET provider. Goals are

decided by the parliament and the Government but the entire responsibility for providing upper secondary education is delegated to the municipalities. The way to teach the goals is a responsibility for the local authorities. That means that the local schools have already great autonomy and can for example decide themselves to develop specific teaching and learning methods. In addition to the freedom in the schools run by the municipalities, it is possible to start independent schools in Sweden with even more autonomy. The share of independent upper secondary schools is 2008 about 44 percent of all upper secondary schools in Sweden and the number has increased by 71 percent over the past five years.

From 2011 the new upper secondary system will be established with an emphasis on quality assurance system to ensure that local initiatives to new specialised education and training programmes fulfil quality standards. Municipalities and independent schools can still take initiatives to special educational programmes for local or regional needs for which the national programmes not can be used. From 2011 the local proposal has to be proven by the Swedish National Agency for Education and the final decision is taken by this agency. In that way students and employers can be sure that an education and training programme with a profile outside the national programmes gives an education and training with good quality.

Innovative VET

The majority of vocational education and training in Sweden is highly modularised and course-based, which gives upper secondary schools a high degree of flexibility to organise education. Courses may be studied intensively, by taking several subjects at once, or by spreading them out over several years. Courses may also be integrated with other subjects, grouped into modules or studied by themes. Students may be grouped together from both academic and VET programmes and individuals may choose from a wide range of optional courses in all programmes. Those experiencing study-related difficulties may opt out of one or more courses in what is called a reduced programme. The normal period of study is three years, but under the system of courses and credits, students can complete upper secondary schooling over a shorter or longer period. Through municipal adult education learners can also take parts of courses, disaggregated into smaller subcomponents.

Much recent work in innovative pedagogy has been on introducing information and communication technology (ICT) into teaching and learning. Since 1994, the Swedish schoolnet (Skoldatanätet) website has served to stimulate use of information technology in schools. The first national action plan for ICT in schools (*IT i Skolan – ITiS*) included in-service training for 75 000 teachers (half the teaching workforce), State grants to improve schools' access to the Internet, e-mail addresses for all teachers and pupils, and support for developing the Swedish schoolnet and the European schoolnet. ITiS had four guiding principles: equal standards between schools and quality for pupils; school development; supplementing and reinforcing programmes; and increasing schools' access to the Internet. Parallel with this, ITiS provided a portion of the funding for the expansion of schools' ICT infrastructure; access to ICT in schools has increased significantly in recent years from 4.2 upper secondary students per computer in the school in 2001 to 2.5 students per computer in 2008. The same survey found that over 75 % of upper secondary teachers had their own computer in the school in 2008.

The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) runs a website ICT for teachers (*IT för pegagoger*) offering support for teachers in schools and adult education centres to use ICT and new media in a creative and critical manner. The website also offers relevant material for competence development such as PIM, a Swedish Internet resource designed to improve teachers' practical IT and media skills. During the autumn of 2007, approximately 30 000 teachers worked on the PIM platform. Skolverket also distributes a book, *Digital learning resources – possibilities and challenges for the school*, describing what digital

learning resources are and how they can be used in education. Many schools in Sweden also have active

The reform for teacher education proposed by the Government in 2010 greatly increases the ability to validate vocational teacher skills. Vocational teachers will still have to study the pedagogical part of the teacher training but this will in the future be studied in parallel with working as a VET teacher in a VET school. The Government believes that this reform will attract more and better qualified people from working life to vocational teaching.

7.4 Encouraging partnership

Curricula state that activities in school should be combined with contact with the labour market as well as with other activities outside school. Teachers have a responsibility to contribute to developing contacts with organisations, companies and other bodies. Compulsory and upper secondary schools should also cooperate closely with working life, higher education institutions and society in general. This helps ensure quality and provides a basis for choosing courses and continuing to further studies or vocational activity. To increase cooperation between different parts of the education system, students may take courses at the upper secondary level while at compulsory school, and those in upper secondary school may take higher education courses, if they have attained the knowledge goals.

Post-secondary level VET often has very close links with the labour market and with social partners but links are not as well developed with higher education institutions (such as with universities and university colleges). It is hoped that vocational higher education will assist transfer of credits in case the student wishes to pursue a degree programme (ISCED 5A) at a higher education institution.

During the 2009 European Year of Creativity and Innovation, Sweden held the closing event in December. During this event, there were two work shops on topic that were especially relevant:

- "Growth of European businesses through creativity and innovation" - how to connect the different spheres of creativity and innovation – culture, business life, education and training, research, design and technological innovation – in order to facilitate growth and sustainable jobs and to ensure the future competitiveness of European business and industries.
- "Building our future on culture – creative industries in Europe". The potential for creative industries in Europe was discussed, both as a growth sector and a development force for our societies.

Entrepreneurship was also one of the five themes put forward at the conference.

THEME 8:

FINANCING VET

Successful implementation of VET strategies requires securing adequate financial resources and ensuring their efficient allocation, equitable distribution and sustainability. Countries and social partners have agreed to improve public and private investment in VET and cost-sharing (Maastricht, Helsinki and Bordeaux communiqués). This may involve:

- a) implementing institutional reforms (such as budget delegation/devolution, public-private partnerships);*
- b) introducing incentives to improve efficiency of VET systems (such as performance-based funding) or to invest more in VET (tax incentives);*
- c) developing and implementing other co-financing approaches to ensure a balanced share (between public bodies, employers and individuals) of costs and responsibilities for VET (vouchers, learning accounts, training funds, etc.).*

Priority should also be given to use EU funds for modernising VET.

8.1 Improving efficiency, equity, levels of VET funding

The vast majority of education and training, outside of in-company training, is fully financed by state grants in Sweden. Moreover, there is a comprehensive system of student financial assistance that ensures that all people, regardless of family background, have the financial resources to study. The system cover not only higher education but also adult education, including adult IVET, liberal adult education and higher vocational education.

There is a state upper secondary apprenticeship grant of SEK 25 000 per upper secondary apprentice to offset some of the costs of apprenticeship (i.e. costs incurred by both the upper secondary school and companies that take apprentices). There are more details on this measure in section 4.4

No major reforms are planned to the existing system of VET financing and student aid.

8.2 Use of Lifelong Learning Programme funds

The previously decentralised Leonardo da Vinci pilot project programme was a tool for development within VET education and training. In some sectors it has been very helpful to develop new methods, cooperation and policy. Unfortunately, the Transfer of innovation programme does not leave much room for real innovation and development.

In order to foster creativity and innovation within VET the Leonardo da Vinci program Transfer of Innovation (TOI) programme should allow actors within VET to cooperate and test the new European tools that are being developed for instant NQF-EQF (actors outside the formal system), ECVET and EQARF. The rules for transfer of innovation are being to narrow interpreted by the administrative rules that no real development or innovation can be made. There is no similar program within LLP and therefore we consider this as an important factor.

Actions have been taken to facilitate applications and administration for the mobility programme but this is not the case for TOI programme. To facilitate also for new actors, SMS or schools to participate in the programme the application and the reporting procedures should be simpler and more user friendly.

EU-programmes should support European cooperation through institutional framework and help building structures for cooperation and make sure that they are relevant to all types of education and training at all levels. Quantitative as well as qualitative goals have to be set for all types of education and training so funds should be steered towards areas where European cooperation specifically needs to be boosted, such as in schools, adult education and vocational training.

In the future, it is hoped that the LLP programme needs funds enough to meet the needs throughout the education system. In order to raise quality internationalisation is required as it brings in new ideas. Being able to choose between education and training institutions, including practicum placements, in several countries increases opportunities for individuals to find the educational option that suits them best and contributes to quality development for all. The experiences that come with mobility – improved language skills, intercultural competence, being able to take on greater responsibility and solve problems in new situations etc. – have positive effects over and above the higher quality of the education and training itself and enhance the individual's employability. International learning environments prepare learners to a globalized context that they will meet later in working life. European programmes should give possibilities for cooperation at different level so benefits may be drawn for student, teachers and trainers as well as for the institutions themselves.

8.3 Use of other EU funds

The European Social Fund has not been used for reforms within VET in Sweden. However The National structural fund programme for regional competitiveness and employment 2007-2013, which is co-financed by the European Social Fund has a focus of developing the competence of those already employed (within all sectors of the labour market). During the ex-ante planning of each project, the needs of the target group is matched with the overall demand for competence development at the workplace. These demands are linked to future needs of change over.

Swedish priorities vis-à-vis the use of other EU funds have not included vocational education and training up till now. The possibility to do so will be raised during the next national priority exercise.

8.4 Improving VET governance

As stated earlier in this report, the largest VET form in Sweden by far is upper secondary vocationally oriented education (IVET) with approximately 190,000 students enrolled in 2009. IVET is part of a Swedish school system that is goal-based system with a very high degree of local responsibility. In fact, administration of preschool activities, child care for school children, schools and adult education was devolved to municipalities in 1991. Therefore, municipalities are responsible for distributing resources and organising education in a manner that facilitates students' achieving national goals established by the Swedish National Agency but curriculum, national objectives and guidelines for the public education system are formally established by the Swedish Parliament and Government where the key actor is the Ministry of Education and Research.

Municipalities determine how its schools are to be run following national objectives and broad guidelines. Municipalities are required to develop a local "school plan" describing the funding, organisation, development and evaluation of school activities. Using the approved curriculum, national objectives and the local school plan, the principal of each school draws up a local work plan, which is developed in consultation with the school's teachers and other staff. On the basis

of this municipal input and the goals and guidelines set out in the steering documents, individual schools, preschools and before- and after-school care centres choose work methods suited to their activities and local conditions. The Swedish National Agency for Education evaluates, follows up and supervises the public school system, including the public school system for adults.

The regulations governing post-secondary VET forms are even more devolved to training providers than those that govern upper secondary IVET. The main post-secondary VET form, with 40,000 students in 2009, is Higher Vocational Education (*Yrkeshögskolan*) under the Swedish National Agency for Advanced Vocational Education. Other VET for adults forms, except municipal adult IVET, are fully devolved to joint training boards at the sectoral level (or, in rare cases to Folk High Schools) with minimal, if any, framework and/or guidelines from government agencies.

The only significant change regarding the administration of upper secondary IVET in Sweden concerns the proposed introduction of programme councils (*Programråd*) composed of social partners and other actors. There will be a programme council for each of the proposed 19 national upper secondary programmes from 2011.

THEME 9:

PROGRESS IN MODERNISING EUROPEAN VET SYSTEMS IN THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE COOPERATION

Cooperation between Member States, the European Commission and social partners in the Copenhagen process has been based on the open method of coordination, and has relied on voluntary contributions from Member States and stakeholders.

Countries have defined common objectives and priorities for their national VET policies and reforms, evaluated progress and exchanged good practices to learn from one another. At the same time, responsibility for political decisions has remained at national level.

The Copenhagen process also has an external dimension, to open European VET systems to the outside world, to foster the mobility of learners, apprentices and teachers and trainers and exchange experiences with other countries.

9.1 Impact of European cooperation in VET on development of national VET policies

Much of the Swedish VET already reflected many of the European tools and priorities concerning lifelong learning and VET before the tools were introduced at the European level. That said, there is still an impact on VET in Sweden because the Swedish system was designed to work in the national context and has not been as transparent, from an international perspective, as it might be.

Vocational education and training has been a policy focus in Sweden over the past several years and the European tools “fit” well with national priorities. For example, much of the Swedish system of education and training already reflects learning outcomes but the European tools allow Sweden, and those coming to Sweden, to better articulate learning outcomes in an international/European context.

Sweden has a very well-developed infrastructure for lifelong learning, including not only formal education and training, but also the informal learning that takes place in both working life and people's spare time. An important factor in this context is a national law on the right to leave of absence for studying.

Sweden has a highly developed system of adult education and training. Adults (19 years of age and older) can acquire qualifications equivalent to initial VET (upper secondary level) as well as at the post secondary level. Sweden has a tradition of publicly-funded lifelong learning and consider it important to give access to VET to adults.

Sweden has fully implemented the Europass tools for mobility and the use of Europass is increasing. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education is developing a significant number of new Certificates Supplement to ensure that form of training is also covered by Europass. The Agency was also commissioned by the Government to develop a National Qualification Framework (NQF) which will thereafter be linked to the European Qualification Framework (EQF).

There are no legal or regulatory obstacles to implementing the priorities under the Copenhagen Process in Sweden. A challenge will be to ensure that the social partners in Sweden embrace and the European tools such as Europass, EQF, ECVET and EQARF because many of these

issues (e.g. vocational certification, apprenticeship-like training in certain sectors, etc.) are regulated by social partners rather than the state in Sweden

Sweden has already benefited from an influx of skilled workers from the European Union and there will likely be increasing skills shortages in several vocational skills categories in the coming years and decades due to the aging population in Sweden, and indeed, in all advanced industrialised economies. Tools such as EQF could help employers to recognise qualifications that foreign job seekers have but the quality assurance tools entailed in EQARF will be critical to ensure mutual trust among, and between, European countries.

9.2 Governance, cooperation and ownership of the different actors in the Copenhagen process at European level

Sweden is an active participant on all aspects of the Copenhagen Process and representatives from Sweden have participated in EQARF, ECVET and EQF meetings, conferences and peer learning visits.

9.3 External dimension of European cooperation in VET

There are a number of programmes that were developed and financed nationally that support cooperation and internationalisation of vocational education and training globally (i.e. beyond the European Union). In section 3.2 two programmes that support the development and exchange of VET internationally – *Athena* and *Atlas Praktik* – are described in detail.

Larger scale support is provided by the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (Sida) to support capacity development in the area of vocational education and training in developing countries.

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10.2 Sources, references and websites

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activities, school-age childcare, schools and adult education in Sweden 2006. Stockholm: Skolverket, 2006.

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Main organisations

Government ministries and agencies

Arbetsförmedlingen [Swedish Public Employment Service]
www.arbetsformedlingen.se

Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet [Ministry of Employment]
www.regeringen.se/sb/d/8270

Centrala studiestödsnämnden [National Board of Student Aid]
www.csn.se

Internationella programkontoret för utbildningsområdet
[International Programme Office for Education and Training]
www.programkontoret.se

Myndigheten för Yrkeshögskolan [Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education]
www.yhmyndigheten.se

Skolinspektionen [The Swedish School Inspectorate]
www.skolinspektionen.se

Skolverket [Swedish National Agency for Education]
www.skolverket.se

Statistiska centralbyrån [Statistics Sweden]
www.scb.se

Ungdomsstyrelsen [National Board for Youth Affairs]
www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se

Utbildningsdepartementet [Ministry of Education and Research]

www.regeringen.se/sb/d/1454

Social partners

Byggnadsindustrins Yrkesnämnd – BYN [Swedish Construction Industry Training Board]

www.byn.se

Elbranschens Centrala Yrkesnämnd – ECY [Training board for Sweden's electrical trades]

www.ecy.com

Hantverkarnas Riksorganisation [National Association of Handicrafts]

www.hantverkarnasriksorganisation.se

Landsorganisationen i Sverige – LO [Swedish Trade Union Confederation]

www.lo.se

Läraryrkesförbundet [Swedish Teachers Union]

www.lararforbundet.se

Lärarnas Riksförbund [National Union of Teachers in Sweden]

www.lr.se

Motorbranschens Yrkesnämnd – MYN

[The Vocational Training Board of the Swedish Motor Trade]

www.bilproffs.se

Svenskt näringsliv [Swedish Federation of Business]

www.svensktnaringsliv.se

Teknikföretagen [Association of Swedish Engineering Industries]

www.teknikforetagen.se

Other organisations

Arbetarnas bildningsförbund [Workers' Educational Association]

www.abf.se

Folkbildningsförbundet [Swedish National Federation of Study Associations]

www.studieforbunden.se

Folkbildningsrådet [Swedish National Council of Adult Associations]

www.folkbildning.se

Sveriges kommuner och landsting – SKL

[Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions]

www.skl.se

Vägledarföreningen [Swedish Association of Guidance Counsellors]

www.vagledarforeningen.org

Youth Skills Sweden

www.yrkeslandslaget.se

10.3 List of acronyms

CVET	Continuing vocational education and training
ECTS	European credit transfer and accumulation system
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EQARF	Recommendation for a European quality assurance reference framework
EQF	European qualifications framework
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EURES	European employment services
ICT	Information and communication technology
IPK	Internationella programkontoret för utbildningsområdet [International Programme Office for Education and Training]
ISCED	International standard classification of education
ITiS	<i>IT i Skolan</i> (ICT in schools)
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
KY	Kvalificerad yrkesutbildning Advanced vocational education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NRP	Nationellt referenscentrum för yrkesutbildning [National reference point for vocational qualifications]
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIM	Practical IT and media skills
SEK	The Swedish currency is the Krona; EUR 1 = SEK 10.8 on 1.7.2009.
SFS	Svensk författningssamling Swedish code of statutes
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SOU	Statens offentliga utredningar Swedish government official reports series

10.4 Glossary

Adult learning association (*Studieförbund*): the nine national adult learning associations are part of liberal adult education (*folkbildningen*) and foster learning, mainly through study circles (*studiecirklar*), officially defined as groups of three or more people that meet at least three times for a minimum of nine hours to further their common quest for knowledge. In 2008, over 1.9 million people participated in study circles, which can be run either with or without a teacher. See also definition for liberal adult education.

Advanced vocational education (*Kvalificerad yrkesutbildning, KY*): post-upper secondary vocational education designed in consultation with employers to meet labour market skill needs. One third of the learning is work-based and programmes typically cover two years but range from one to three years. This VET form was reformed on 1 July 2009. See also definition for post-secondary VET.

Compulsory school (*Grundskola*): nine years of compulsory school for children, typically from the year they turn seven but they may also start the year they turn six or eight. Compulsory school is mandatory for all children, has no IVET component and leads directly to upper secondary school for the majority (over 98 %) of young people.

Continuing vocational training: this term is not typically used in Sweden but may be understood, in the Swedish context, to refer to enterprise-initiated, in-company vocational education and training.

Folk high school (*Folkhögskola*): there are 148 folk high schools, sometimes referred to as independent adult education colleges. Folk high schools are a part of liberal adult education (*folkbildningen*) and offer courses at different education levels (ranging from compulsory to post-secondary education). Courses, content and levels are decided at each folk high school and people with little previous formal education are usually given priority of entry. Students must be at least 18 years of age.

Higher vocational training (*Yrkeshögskola*): since 1 July 2009 higher vocational education in Sweden refers to those post-secondary, non-tertiary vocational education and training forms (mainly at ISCED 4B but also 5B rather than traditional higher education at ISCED 5A and 6) administered by the Agency for Higher Vocational Education (*Myndigheten för yrkeshögskola*). See also definition for post-secondary VET.

Independent school (*Friskola*): independent schools are organised by bodies other than municipalities or county councils (private education providers, interest organisations). They are at both the compulsory and upper secondary school levels and they follow the same curricula and guidelines as municipal and county-administered schools.

Initial VET (*Grundläggande yrkesutbildning*): in the Swedish context, initial vocational education and training usually refers to the 13 vocationally-oriented programmes at upper secondary school. However, IVET is also offered through municipal adult education and, less common, through programmes at folk high schools, in post-secondary training and/or in supplementary education.

Labour market training (*Arbetsmarknadsutbildning*): this training aims to increase the competences of the unemployed to meet employer qualifications demands.

Liberal adult education (*Folkbildning*): liberal adult education is non-formal, voluntary education for all ages and is not tied to academic qualifications. It is organised through 148 folk high schools (*folkhögskolor*) and adult learning associations (*studieförbund*) supporting study circles for over 1.9 million people in 2008. Liberal adult education aims to reach groups of people who have often remained outside the formal education system. See also definition for adult learning association.

Municipal adult education (*Kommunal vuxenutbildning or Komvux*): the adult education system includes municipal adult education (basic education for adults, upper secondary education and post-secondary training programmes), education for adults with learning disabilities and Swedish language training for immigrants. The aim of basic adult education is to help adults gain the knowledge and skills they need to take part in society and working life. It is also meant to prepare adults for further study.

Municipal upper secondary adult education (*Gymnasial vuxenutbildning*): municipal upper secondary adult education aims to increase adults' knowledge and skills so that they meet the standard acquired at upper secondary school level, either through complementing existing upper secondary studies or offering upper secondary education to those without any education after compulsory school. Upper secondary adult education provides access to higher education if the learner passes the appropriate courses.

National programme (*Nationella program*): the different education programmes at upper secondary school level are called *nationella program*. These programmes give students a broad education, which enables them to continue to higher education if they pass at least 90 % of the courses in their programme.

Post-secondary training (*Påbyggnadsutbildning*): vocational training programmes for adults designed and adopted locally in consultation with the business community. Post-secondary training was administered under municipal adult education until July 2009 at which point it was moved under a new unified administrative structure for all post-secondary VET. The new Agency for Higher Vocational Education will establish more consistent guidelines for postsecondary training and other post-secondary VET forms.

Post-secondary VET (*Eftergymnasial yrkesutbildning*): unlike post-secondary training which has been a specific VET form in Sweden, post-secondary VET refers to all VET after upper secondary school. Post-secondary VET is a broader term than higher vocational education as it includes all post-secondary VET (higher vocational education, some forms of VET at folk high schools, etc.), not just those forms under the Agency for Higher VET. See also the definition for higher vocational education.

School plan (*Skolplan*): each municipality has a local school plan. This school plan describes the financing, organisation, assessment, quality assurance and development of activities of schools in the municipality.

Supplementary education (*Kompletterande utbildning*): programmes, which are often vocational, provided outside the public education system and lasting from 200 hours to two to three years. Supplementary education may, or may not, receive State support. There are no guidelines on the type of certificate awarded. However, the new Agency for Higher Vocational Education, established in July 2009, will devise more consistent guidelines for this VET form.

Swedish language training for immigrants (*Svenskundervisning för invandrare, SFI*): this training aims to provide newly arrived adult immigrants with basic knowledge and proficiency

in the Swedish language as well as knowledge about Swedish society. It is part of the municipal adult education framework.

Upper secondary school (*Gymnasieskola*): all young people who finish compulsory school, usually the year they turn 16, are entitled to three years of non-compulsory upper secondary school. Over 98 % of 16 year olds enter upper secondary school in Sweden and approximately 50 % of them enter one of the 13 vocationally-oriented programmes.

Upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*Slutbetyg från gymnasieskolan*): an upper secondary school-leaving certificate is issued to students who receive a grade in all their courses. The same certificate assists entrance to higher education if the student passed at least 90 % of all courses.

Workplace training (*Arbetsplatsförlagd utbildning, APU*): workplace training is obligatory.