



New Models in Work-based Learning

Overall Report on Interviews

Work package: 5. Stakeholder consultation

Deliverable: 5.5.2.

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1. General information about interviews

The interviews were carried out in Slovenia, Latvia and Bulgaria the period June 2017 - August 2017 - face to face and by telephone. The duration was approximately 1 hour and half. Stakeholders' representatives from different regions in the three countries were involved in order to get the best possible variety of experience and opinions.

1.1. Number of interviews conducted

In total 94 interviews were conducted:

- in Slovenia (SI) – 31;
- in Latvia (LV) – 30;
- in Bulgaria(BG) - 33.

The number of interviews by challenges in the three countries is relatively equal, as obvious from Table 1.

Table 1. Number of interviews by challenges and by country

Country	VET response	Awareness	Quality
SI	11	10	10
LV	10	10	10
BG	10	11	12
Total	31	31	32

1.2. Type of institutions reached

Representatives of different institutions and organisations were interviewed (information presented in Table 2.).

Table 2. Types of institutions reached in numbers of interviewees by countries

Type of institutions	SI	LV	BG
VET school	8	5	9
Regional educational authority		1	7
Regional organisation of trade unions			3
Company	9	9	4
National educational authority	5	5	1
Ministry of Labour	1		
National employers' organisation	2	3	
Regional employers' organisation	2	3	
Regional sectoral organisation	1		

School board/ parents association		2	1
Labour office (regional/local)	3		4
Municipal administration			2
Career guidance centre		1	1
University			1
Training company		1	

1.3. Working positions profile of the interviewees

Substantial part of the interviewees (51) in the three countries occupied managing positions (director, head of department, owner, manager), followed by experts (21), teachers (14), parents' representatives (2), career counsellors (1), university assistant (1).

1.4. WBL related experience profile of the respondents

The stakeholders' representatives involved have relevant to the interviews topics experience. Almost all interviewees in SI and LV and the majority of the respondents in BG declared that they have knowledge of the legislation, policy and practice of WBL in the country. The remaining part have experience in WBL organisation and provision, VET policy documents elaboration and implementation and in other fields - career guidance, teachers' qualification improvement, school policy and administration.

2. Assessments, recommendations and suggestions of the respondents concerning the structure, content and feasibility of Model 1

2.1. VET response related feedback

Scope of activities in ensuring adequate VET response in Model 1

The respondents in the three countries shared positive opinions about the measures included in all thematic areas of Model 1. The common position was that all actions are necessary and ensure achievement of the defined objective (BG). The importance of WBL for adequate VET response was stressed in SI. The necessity of close cooperation with employers in development of VET curricula and identification of labour market needs (included in the proposed actions) was underlined in LV.

In BG suggestions were made for inclusion of new measures in the Model:

- In Thematic area 1 - Planning dual training in line with the development of the economy in the respective region / municipality.
- In Thematic area 2



- ✓ Updating the List of professions for VET in compliance with the qualification needs in the different branches;
- ✓ Maintaining a database of qualifications' needs of the business in the different sectors by regions;
- ✓ Creating a model for interaction between students and businesses in order to ensure the planned improvement of the match-making process between VET students and companies.

In all countries the measures defined under Thematic area 2 were assessed as feasible in the respective national context. Only some interviewees from BG pointed out difficulties that should be taken into consideration:

- Businesses too often do not respond to initiatives of educational institutions which makes difficult the connection VET schools – enterprises, so active participation of employers in all processes is problematic.
- The main obstacle for implementation of the measure “Regulated enrolment in VET school based on qualifications forecasts” is that the budget of VET schools depends on the number of students. If the forecasts identify a need of decreasing the number of students this is not in the interest of a respective VET school, which shows necessity to rethink the main principle of funding VET schools.

Forecasting labour market needs

Concerning the measure *Creating conditions for regular mid- and long-term forecasting of labour market needs* all interviewees from the three countries confirmed the defined conditions and the summary ranking obtained is as follows:

I - Legislation;

II - Unified research methodology allowing identification of qualifications and knowledge, skills and competences needed at national and EU level;

III - Presentation of researches' results allowing easy translation into learning outcomes.

In LV direct involvement of VET schools at local level was additionally proposed. It is worth pointing out that that respondents in SI made an important remark that legislative changes are necessary but also a mechanism for constructive cooperation between actors is necessary to be established, too. It is also necessary to identify the areas or profile of where the apprenticeships will be introduced, look at the development of technology, industry and the profession.

Enrolment in VET schools based on qualifications forecasts

The feedback about *Enrolment in VET schools based on qualifications forecasts* in the different countries is different reflecting the stage of WBL/apprenticeship implementation.

In SI the common starting point of all respondents was that it is necessary to create basic competences, which should be used by all stakeholders, including the Employment Service, which acts as an intermediary between searchers and job providers. The country currently uses the KLASIUS system, which is based on the education and level of education. The SOK system, which includes also competences, was proposed from the respondents' standpoint. It was stressed that the competences are formed together, in cooperation of schools and enterprises. It was proposed that the existing method of recording individual competencies through a portfolio to be upgraded with a portal where apprentices can enter with their personal competences and companies that, on the other hand, seek exact competences in apprentices.



Several interviewees pointed out that the formal school system should give the individual those knowledge, skills and competences that are easier to adapt to the rapid changes in the market.

In **BG** the opinions could be summarized as follows:

- The decisions should be taken at regional level. It was stressed that except Regional Departments of Education, employers have to be involved through the nationally representative employers' organizations. SMEs to provide information to the Chambers and to Employment Agency for their needs of personnel with particular qualification.
- The monitoring of compliance between enrolment in VET schools should be implemented also at regional level – by a partnership of all actors involved.

In **LV** the following positions were shared:

- Sectoral Expert Councils involved in decision-making process about VET schools' enrolment in correspondence to labour market needs.
- Legislation has to be changed. The proportion between general secondary and vocational education should be changed: more VET students than general secondary.
- Short VET programmes after general secondary schools have to be realized.
- Awareness is very essential. Career guidance system to support students in making their choices.
- It is needed to improve financing. VET schools implement programmes not always corresponding needs in labour market. The enrolment system has to be more flexible. VET schools inform Ministry of Education and Science about VET programmes they are going to implement at the end of a previous year or at the beginning of realizing the VET programme, these plans are confirmed in Tripartite Cooperation Council in VET and Sectoral Expert Councils. This process has to be shortened.
- VET schools' responsibility should be higher. They should consider matching needs of each of their partner enterprise in WBL.

Definition and regular up date of learning outcomes for WBL / apprenticeship training based on skills needs forecasts

The feedback provided by respondents in the three countries could be summarized as follows:

- VET stakeholders should be responsible for implementation of the actions in this field by providing clear framework conditions, mechanisms for cooperation at system's and provider's level and methodological support.
- The work on updating learning outcomes should be done in partnerships. In SI and LV prevails the opinion about cooperation at system's level, while in BG the positions are divided between cooperation at system's level and at providers' level.
- The process has to start with updating the occupational standards/educational standards.

It is worth pointing out an opinion shared by many respondents in BG that the forecasts for the necessary skills have to be prepared by occupations/specialties, which will facilitate the translation of skills forecasts into learning outcomes. In this context in BG and LV interviewees shared the opinion that List/Catalogue of professions for VET should be also regularly updated based on qualifications forecasts.



In the process of updating learning outcomes except skills forecasts it was proposed to take into consideration the novelties in the different professions (technology, equipment etc.) and results of qualification exams (level of concrete skills development) respectively in BG and LV.

Match-making process between VET students and companies

In the three countries common positions were shared with respect to:

- Necessity to build mutual trust – between companies providing WBL and students. The most effective approach - personal contact done in a way that is interesting for both parties - joint events (demonstrations, meetings, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, discussion forums on the territory of the companies), on-site visits (both of students in companies and of representatives of companies in schools);
- Creating a database/platform where companies that offer WBL and VET schools/students can meet (in BG it was proposed the platform to be organized by regions, in LV involvement of sectoral organizations in creating the platform was underlined).

In order to support the cooperation between VET schools and companies in the matchmaking process in BG was proposed to designate coordinators in companies and schools for regular exchange of information.

Stakeholders' involvement and cooperation

The following common for the three countries opinions about important measures in the field were identified:

- It is necessary to improve cooperation of key VET stakeholders – government institutions (Ministries, Agencies, Institutes), Employers' organizations, trade unions, companies based on common vision about VET, including WBL/ apprenticeship development, at national level, objectives and responsibilities, coordination and networking. In this context annual meetings for discussion of progress and finding solution of identified problems were proposed to be held by interviewees in LV.
- Key for WBL/apprenticeship success is the cooperation between VET schools and companies. That is why it is important to provide incentives for the companies to get involved and to invest efforts in WBL/apprenticeship benefits promotion among companies. In LV was underlined that companies also have to promote in an attractive, visualized way their activities and working conditions. In BG was also suggested to improve the qualification of teachers (initial and continuous) in all issues related to cooperation with companies.

In LV additionally was proposed:

- to establish VET school convents, Sectoral Expert Councils involved;
- to develop sectoral partnerships in which all partners are equally responsible and involved;
- to develop regional/local partnerships with participation of regional/local authorities.

In our opinion the above proposals are applicable in SI and BG, too.

2.2. Awareness related feedback

Development of career guidance in general

The proposals made by the interviewees in BG and LV were related mainly with specification of the proposed measures for the different target groups, which is obvious from the summary, provided below:

- Organizing a Career Day to be included in the first defined measure (BG);
- Introduction of Early Career Guidance (LV, BG);
- Create conditions for exchange of experience at an international level (LV, BG);
- Providing information to VET students about achievements in the respective professional field that international companies operating in the country have (BG);
- Provide information from the labour market. Organizing workshops to learn more about professions, to experience work process practically. To involve parents. (LV)
- Promote the payment of the work of students in a real work environment (BG);
- Interaction of career centres with representatives of local businesses in order to jointly inform pupils in schools about the need of certain profession in the city and the region (LV, BG);
- Involvement of parents for presenting their profession and work activities and organization of visits at their workplace (BG);
- Providing counselling to companies about possibilities for receiving funding by participating in European projects (BG).

In SI an expert group for carrier guidance with involvement of representatives of all stakeholders was formed. The group prepared guidelines for 2015, which is the first document where recommendations are collected. At the moment things are going too far at the level of politics, they are unsystematic and without clear goals and without understanding of the actual situation. At this point, they also exposed that vocational education is underestimated.

As *most feasible measures* the respondents in LV and BG pointed out the following ones:

- Intensification of VET promotion and Better support for VET students in career planning – there is willingness for co-operation and initiative by a training institutions, RDE, enterprises etc.;
- Organization of fairs of VET at regional and national level, as well as skills competitions.

As *less feasible* measure due to some existing conditions interviewees in LV and BG commented the mandatory involvement of enterprises in providing career guidance - difficulties could arise due to absence of human resources in enterprises that could provide career guidance, the obligation must be financially secured.

In BG additionally the following actions were pointed as difficult for implementation:

- Organization of visits of students to enterprises - insufficient number of enterprises in the territory of the municipality wishing to accept students for WBL;
- Activities aimed at parents – in some municipalities the percentage of parents working abroad is high.

Intensive VET promotion among the different target groups



In SI was underlined the necessary to work on the *intensive promotion of VET at the national level* (social networks, TV shows / short films, newspapers, fairs, online presentations of the professions, inviting successful entrepreneurs for presentations in the media, the day of open doors. ..), which must be also directed at parents, as they are also involved and significantly influence their children decision on further course of the educational path. Promotion have to emphasize the advantages of professions. Interviewees also believe that *all stakeholders should be involved in the promotion*. An example of promotion of professions with involvement of different types of stakeholders was provided (www.pgz.si).

Various activities were proposed in all countries *targeted at students to be organized in the frames of school curricular, extracurricular and out of school events*, like:

- Including hours in the curriculum on issues regarding WBL and for career guidance training;
- Providing presentations of different professions (simulations) during class teacher lessons; Creation of information films about professions, which could be uploaded on a special web site
- Job shadowing; regular visits in companies;
- Organizing Sectoral events, for example, Metal and visits to sectoral exhibitions with opportunity to experience work with machines;
- Regular visits of WBL tutors from companies, as well as of sectoral specialists to schools;
- Providing more opportunities for practicing and further development of knowledge and skills in extracurricular activities - organizing project days/weeks with practical content;
- Establishing Clubs of interests with involvement of leading local business representatives;
- Joint activities with students involved in WBL/apprenticeship

In LV and BG the necessity of cooperation between the school and the career guidance consultants in organisation and provision of activities and events for students was underlined.

The following opinions related to *activities aimed at school students' parents* were shared by the interviewees in BG and LV that are applicable in SI:

- Involving parents and students in joint extracurricular/ out-of-school activities devoted to the promotion of WBL with participation of employers and schools piloting dual training;
- Providing systematized information about WBL on a specialized web site;
- Organization of periodic meetings between parents and representatives from the business, including visits to companies;
- Involving parents in presenting own profession and work activities;
- Representatives of companies from specific sphere to be invited to organized events where the results of the pupils' training are demonstrated.

The proposals for *activities aimed at companies*, provided by the respondents in LV and BG and applicable in SI, are as follows:

- Popularization of the companies providing WBL;
- Informational seminars and workshops about the benefits and advantages for the companies to provide WBL, organized by the regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry;



- Preparation of TV commercials and explanatory posters and brochures about WBL;
- Providing information about curricula in VET schools to companies on regular basis.

Provision of information

The interviewees in the three countries share common opinions regarding the content of information that should be provided to the different target groups and the proposals in one country are applicable in the other ones, considering the comments provided in the national reports. Summary of proposals is provided below.

For students

- the different sectors in which they have chosen their profession - development trends, perspectives, production, the content of work, career perspectives, prestige of the professions, state policy linked with the development of the sector;
- all requirements, specifics, the content of the qualification, perspectives, personal abilities, qualities and additional skills needed, opportunities for professional and personal growth, new technologies that are used and are going to be introduced in future, safety, payment;
- labour market current and perspective needs and requirements - what professions are demanded in labour market;
- everything related to WBL/apprenticeship, especially payment for their work, opportunities to continue working on permanent labour contract;
- opportunities for internship in the country and abroad, opportunities for volunteering;
- transitions between educational paths, opportunities for higher education.

For parents

- the opportunity to cooperate with a career guidance consultant and teachers on career issues. (Parents think more about expected salary, less about other issues.);
- the difference between "production practice" and "dual learning"/apprenticeship, the benefits of the second; health and safety conditions at work, insurance of life and health of the students, insurance rights;
- perspectives for practicing the chosen profession, opportunities for development, opportunity for good financial security;
- labour market demands, companies operating in the respective city/region;
- VET schools and profession specialties they offer, personal abilities, qualities and additional skills needed, opportunities for professional and personal growth, new technologies that are used and are going to be introduced in future, safety, payment, places for WBL and its organization;
- opportunities for internships in the country and abroad, the opportunities for volunteering.

For companies

- importance of cooperation with VET schools, how to cooperate, benefits of providing WBL/apprenticeship in long terms (Young trainees are new employees in future);



- VET school technical equipment, the content of VET curricula, students' skill level and competences, learning outcomes achieved;
- the opportunity to hire students under certain programs and projects that allow hiring students;
- funding opportunities - to obtain investment for building up of equipped workplaces for students;
- opportunities for training tutors or for hiring former teachers as mentors of the students.

According to the interviewees in the three countries, the most appropriate WBL promotion channels are Internet and social media, electronic media, as well special events for all target groups. Personal contacts were assessed as more important for companies and for parents and not so important for students, who value much the use of online communication.

Maintaining an effective career guidance system

As it might be expected the opinions about actions for improvement of the existing career guidance system were different in the three countries due to difference in levels of development.

In SI it was proposed to set up an apprenticeship council with all related stakeholders. At the regional / local level, schools and Regional development agencies should be linked. An effective system is based on connecting of the partners, establishing career centers in the elementary and secondary school, and ensuring qualified and educated personnel who can advise and know the system and programs.

Concerning the improvement of the existing career guidance system in Bulgaria the following suggestions were provided in the different fields of possible intervention:

- *Legislation*: The necessity of introduction of a regulation about establishment of a national structure for career guidance was stressed. It should include clear definition of the new structure's functions and main activities. The main functions should be coordination of actions of all actors responsible for the career guidance system functioning and development, building up and maintaining of an information base about professions, labour market and education and training opportunities in the country, providing methodological support to career guidance centres, quality assurance of the services provision to all target groups, professional development of guidance counsellors.
- *Stakeholders' involvement and cooperation*: Focusing of WBL promotion and development suggestions for more often organization of events in order to create partnerships between the interested stakeholders, for provision of VET sessions of the Regional Development Council were provided, as well as for ensuring opportunities for exchange of experience with stakeholders' representatives from countries that have success in WBL.
- The suggestions with respect to *service providers* were related to the situation of career centres in the school system (established under OP Human Resources Development in the previous programming period and not ensured funds for the current period): Ensuring funding for their sustainable functioning and development, as well as establishing new ones in areas of VET providers' concentration.



- *Expanding career guidance services:* The necessity to intensify promotion of WBL among parents, as well as among employers was stressed.
- *Career guidance staff (in schools and centres):* Most of the suggestions were related to ensuring opportunities for guidance counsellors and teachers for regular qualification improvement focused respectively on improvement of methodology for guidance provision to the different target groups and including guidance related issues in the training process and in the communication with students' parents.

In LV the responses provided regarding the first two areas of intervention (legislation, Stakeholders' involvement and cooperation) concerning WBL regulation and cooperation of stakeholders in its promotion, organization and provision – WBL is regulated as well as stakeholders' involvement and cooperation. It was pointed out that career guidance has to be formalized in legislation, especially its integration in the education process. With respect to the other areas of intervention the following positions were shared:

- *Expanding career guidance services:* It is necessary to raise awareness about existing services. More information about sectors, sectoral needs, sectoral qualification structures, content of qualifications should be provided. It is very essential to avoid stereotypes about professions, VET.
- *Career guidance staff (in schools and centres):* They are in all VET schools, municipalities, but the level is not always sufficient. They have to be more involved in cooperation with companies, to be more integrated. It is important for all career guidance centres and consultants to cooperate not to compete.

Stakeholders' involvement and cooperation

In SI and LV, the opinions provided stress on importance of national and regional partnerships and the necessity to coordinate actions between the two levels.

The *measures proposed* by interviewees **in BG** could be summarized as follows:

- The participation of vocational schools and regional employers' organizations (chambers) in local and regional partnerships should be mandatory;
- There should be a person responsible for WBL in VET schools and in enterprises.

The interviewees **in BG** shared the following *main problems and difficulties*:

- At national level – not enough clearly defined rules and responsibilities of participants in the dual learning system, too much documentation taking lot of time;
- At regional level - problems in building effective local partnerships and perceiving the importance of it due to economic development at regional level and insufficient commitment of local and regional authorities;
- Lack of motivation of employers resulting in difficulties in:
 - ✓ Building partnerships at local and regional level between VET schools and sectorial organizations, regional employers' organizations and regional authorities (**same in LV**);
 - ✓ Establishing and maintaining a register of enterprises providing WBL;
 - ✓ Forecasting the qualifications' needs by employers.

In LV additionally was stressed the low level of awareness about VET in society and the low level of quality of practices (Students during practice very often do not have work tasks according their needs.)

2.3. Quality assurance related feedback

Qualified VET teachers and in-company trainers

Improvement of VET teachers' qualification

The respondents in all countries confirmed the importance of this measure for VET and WBL quality assurance.

In BG the proposal for adding new module related to WBL in the programmes for initial VET teachers' training, as a way for implementation of the measure, attracted more opinions than the short-term practically oriented trainings. Comments were provided with respect to latter's realization:

- Employers' representatives should be actively involved;
- Trainings should be organized by professional fields.

In LV both proposed options attracted equal share of opinions.

In SI the majority of the interviewees thinks that the VET teachers' education for their work is good. 7 out of 11 interviewees consider it necessary that VET teachers undergo a short practical training for WBL/apprenticeship, two think the initial education of VET teachers should be improved by adding a new module on WBL/apprenticeship. One considers that VET teachers are already burdened with a lot of work and should not be burdened with further assignments for additional education.

The proposals for ensuring more opportunities for teachers' qualification improvement, provided in BG are applicable for the other two countries, too:

- Providing opportunities for on-line / distance learning;
- Establishment of an information bank with training materials on the topic - for self-learning
- Creating an opportunity (on the Internet) to share good practices, experiences, ideas, etc.

The proposal for tandem approach (joint training of VET teachers and in-company trainers) in LV is applicable for BG and SI, as well.

The ranking of topics on which VET teachers' qualification improvement should focus on, according interviewees opinion in the three countries, is presented in the table below:

Topics	SI	LV	BG
Selection of the companies where to organize the practical training/WBL of the students	3	3	1
Specification together with the companies' representatives of the practical training/WBL content and methodology	1	2	2
Monitoring students' progress in LO achievement during WBL	2	1	3
Other important/very important issues:	X		

✓ Characteristics of the current generation, which is different from the generation some years ago			
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The topic proposed in SI is applicable for the other countries.

The respondents' opinion about the *responsible for VET teachers' qualification improvement*, in the field of WBL, institutions resulted in the ranking presented in the table below.

Institutions	SI	LV	BG
Departments of Universities	1	3	1
Specialized teacher training institutions		4	2
National VET authority		5	3
Respective branch employers' organisations	2	6	4
Teachers' unions		2	5
Local/regional authorities		1	6
Other, please specify:	-		-
• VET schools – peer-learning activities		X	
• Employers' Confederation		x	

The ranking of the institutions which according to the interviewees in the three countries should be responsible for the in-company tutors' qualification is presented in the following table.

Institutions	SI	LV	BG
VET schools in the respective sector	2	2	1
Branch organizations of employers	2	3	2
Representative at national level employers' organizations	1	3	3
In-company trainers	3	1	4
Other, please specify:	-		-
• National VET authority		X	

It should be pointed out that in SI and BG the majority of opinions was distributed between the first two options.

The ranking of topics that should be included in the training of in-company tutors, according respondents in the different countries is presented in the table below.

Topics	SI	LV	BG
Training methods	2	5	1

Defining and development of training content	3	3	2
Communication with students	1	4	3
Monitoring students' progress during WBL	1	2	5
Assessment of LO achieved	1	3	6
Communication with VET teachers	4	1	4
Other, please, specify:	-		-
• Students' age specifics		X	

The proposals for *including of additional measures in the thematic area 5* (Ensuring qualified VET teachers and in-company tutors for organization and provision of quality practical training/WBL/apprenticeship) applicable in the three countries could be summarized as follows:

- Regular analysis of VET teachers' and in-company tutors training needs;
- Regulation of providers of teachers and in-company tutors training;
- Fostering the networking and cooperation between VET teachers and in-company tutors; Peer learning activities, mixed groups: company tutors and VET teachers working together in groups
- Financial support for assuring well-qualified VET teachers and in-company tutors
- Rotation of VET teachers and in-company tutors
- Strengthening VET schools as sectoral methodological centres. Involving sectoral experts in VET teachers' training.

In SI as most important in this thematic area is ensuring in-company tutors' training and least important – developing capacities of organisations such as VET schools or chambers for the training of in-company tutors.

In LV and BG most of the interviewees shared the opinion that the five measures in thematic area 5 are feasible and assessed as most feasible the following measures:

- Restructuring duties of VET teachers, adapting to new needs;
- Improvement of VET teachers' qualification;
- Elaboration of a national/ regional training programme for in-company tutors.

The interviewees **in LV and BG** provided comments about *difficulties and problems in thematic area 5 overall implementation*, which could be summarized as follows:

- Ensuring funding for in-company tutors trainers;
- Employers, especially small enterprises, will not agree to detach from work an employee to be trained and also who will pay for it; Employers are also afraid of loss and damages caused by students' lack of skills and experience working with technologies.
- Increasing the motivation of workers to be trained for tutors - appropriate pay, reducing the volume of their main work, taking into account the work with students;



- Reluctance of many teachers to upgrade their qualification, many of VET teachers are overloaded with work;
- Many companies' refuse to engage in the implementation of the model of dual training;
- Improper and inefficient updating of content and training materials in the VET system.

Development of support measures to companies providing WBL / apprenticeships

The interviewees in the three countries agreed with the measures proposed and provided comments related to their implementation and proposals for including additional measures were defined.

The comments and proposals provided by the respondents **in BG** with respect to this thematic area (6) could be summarized as follows:

- Implementation, in addition to national, regional coordination of the support network;
- The analysis of the support needed should be done with the active involvement of employers representing different branches;
- To ensure supporting dual learning with public funds;
- Elaboration of a set of instructions for enterprises related to the safety of the pupils at the workplace, the duration of the study / work day, the breaks, etc./, as well as to issuing of certification document from the enterprise (e.g. an official note or certificate, an internship diary / booklet, or work-day protocols) etc.

In SI with respect to Development of materials for WBL/apprenticeship for companies it was pointed out that the materials should be practically oriented and not too long. Also, more attention has to be paid to small companies. Additional measures that were suggested:

- Establishing a network of mentors;
- Offering individual support to in-company trainers, if need;
- Establishment/development of school centres that are in charge of the development of teachers' competences.

The proposals provided **in LV** were as follows:

- Development of materials for supporting VET schools and teachers;
- Involve Employers' Confederation in all WBL implementation steps, because they are in charge of all processes;
- Increasing the role of Sectoral Expert Councils in each sector;
- Analysis and learning the best European practice;
- Involving sectoral training centres with high prestige in training in-company tutors to raise significance and social and legal status of tutors at national level.

In our opinion proposals defined at national level are relevant for all countries.

The companies in the three countries face a *common main difficulty in WBL provision* - limited financial and human resources – they need financial and methodological support for WBL provision. The financial support could be tax deductions for those which provide WBL/apprenticeship, as proposed by



interviewees. The methodological support should be focused on development of in-company tutors' pedagogical and psychological knowledge, skills and competences to work with students, including with low motivation and behavioural problems.

Assessment of practical training in companies/WBL/ apprenticeship

In BG the interviewees provided the following proposals related to this thematic area (4) in the model in general:

- Creating a unified assessment system/criteria aimed at qualitative rather than quantitative assessment and elaboration of instructions for its implementation;
- Involvement of an independent employer from the same industry in the assessment process;
- Establish an assessment system for WBL training providers;
- The way of assessment should stimulate the student to improve and develop;

In SI the necessity of clear differentiation between the learning outcomes that should be achieved during the training in school and in company was stressed.

In LV the common opinion was that assessment should be implemented in cooperation by the VET teachers and in-company tutors and be based on demonstration of skills acquired during practical training. In the three countries there were proposals to use different tools like "Internship Diary" and / or "Job Logs", Portfolio (photos of products h'/she has produced, copies of documents prepared, etc.).

3. Assessments, recommendations and suggestions of the respondents concerning the structure, content and feasibility of Model 2

3.1. VET response related feedback

Scope of activities in ensuring adequate VET response in Model 2

The Interviewees in the three countries agreed with the measures defined and pointed out that full implementation of Model 1 will provide the necessary basis for realization of Model 2. Some difficulties that might be faced in the implementation of the following measures were also pointed out in BG, that could be considered in the other countries:

- Ensuring participation of all national, regional and local partners in all VET processes;
- The principle of VET schools funding generates difficulties - they have no interest in regulating (decreasing) this number of students to the labour market needs;
- Ensuring the active participation of employers in the definition of curricula;
- Implement tools and measures for effective match making process between VET students and enterprises – limited number of companies providing opportunities for WBL.

Forecasting labour market needs

The respondents in the three countries pointed out different institutions to be involved in collecting and processing data about labour market needs. The answers provided show the necessity of active involvement of employers' organizations, as well as other relevant government institutions (Ministries of economy and of Labour, Employment agencies) as well as research organizations.

Enrolment in VET schools based on qualifications forecasts

With respect to *institutions responsible for Regular monitoring of enrolment in VET school based on qualifications forecasts* a diversity of opinions was registered in each of the three countries.

In LV the position that Ministry of Education and Science should be responsible was shared by half of respondents, while in BG - the shared responsibility between Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy attracted highest number of opinions. Consequently, the decision on this issue should be taken based on discussion between interested parties in each country.

Definition and regular up date of learning outcomes for WBL / apprenticeship training based on skills needs forecasts

Concerning the responsible for this institutions, interviewees' opinion *in BG and LV is similar*: Positions are divided between centralized approach - Ministry of Education and Science and its subordinated institutions could be responsible for coordination of work on regular up-date of learning outcomes for WBL training based on skills needs forecasts and regional approach – VET schools together with enterprises in the respective sector.

In SI the common position is that Ministry of Education/CPI should prepare regular up to date learning outcomes based on skills needs forecasts.

Match-making process between VET students and companies

The comments and proposals provided by the respondents in all countries were similar to the ones for Model 1. They share common opinion that it is necessary to create and maintain a platform where companies and VET schools/students can meet. This should be complemented by organizing match-making events. In BG additionally to designate coordinators in companies and schools for regular exchange of information was proposed.

Stakeholders' involvement and cooperation

In all countries the necessity of strengthening the role of local / regional authorities and their involvement in regional partnerships was stressed, as well as enhancing the capacity of these partnerships (regional and local). The *problems and difficulties* defined are similar to already pointed out for M1. Additionally, ensuring synergy and partnership between different levels (national, regional, local) was defined as area that definitely needs improvements on the basis of clear distribution of roles and responsibilities between different stakeholders.

3.2. Awareness related feedback

Development of career guidance in general

The interviewees in the three countries agreed with the measures defined in the model commenting that their implementation is of high importance. With respect to feasibility some of the respondents in BG and LV pointed out that the involvement of companies in career guidance provision might be difficult for implementation due to problems already pointed out for M1 – limited human and financial resources of companies or lack of interest in VET.

Regarding implementation of the measure **Intensive VET promotion through effective measures targeted at students and their parents**, assessed as most feasible in all countries, the following comments were provided in LV, which are applicable for SI and BG:

- To ensure various opportunities for getting adequate information about jobs and work life;
- To make general school subjects more practical, linked with professional subjects;
- To conduct regular researches about VET graduates' next steps – in employment or further education;
- The information about labour market needs has to be more precise and based on results from researches

In SI the necessity of continuing the work of the already established expert group for carrier guidance, in which various relevant institutions were involved, but more systematically and with clearly defined goals.

Intensive VET promotion

According to the interviewees' opinion in all countries, the activities for intensive VET promotion that will be implemented under M1 should be monitored and feedback from different target groups collected and assessed. Based on that the planning of actions under M2 should be done.

Maintaining an effective career guidance system

The opinions provided in the different countries take into consideration the respective national specifics. **In BG** it was stressed that establishment of a national career guidance institution (proposed under M1 with coordination and development functions) is crucial for the maintaining of an effective career guidance system. Also the importance of providing information to students' parents and companies in WBL related issues was underlined.

In SI the respondents pointed out that the actions in this respect under Model 1 should stand on improved measures proposed from Model 1. Previously established career centers should care about implementation of career guidance in in the elementary and secondary school in cooperation with all stakeholders. Apprenticeship council proposed in Model 1 should be in charge of coordination and cooperation of involved stakeholders and effectiveness of established career guidance system.

Stakeholders' involvement and cooperation

In all countries positive opinion and agreement with the proposed measures in this field under Model 2 was expressed. The interviewees' common position was that in order to ensure M2 implementation the national policy for VET development with focus on WBL/apprenticeship should be improved in order to create conditions for:

- Increased involvement of national, regional and local partners in all VET processes with clearly defined responsibilities and tasks;
- Large extent of personalization and flexibility both for students and businesses;



- Encouraging of local and regional partnerships between VET schools and sectoral organizations, regional employers' organizations (chambers) and regional authorities;
- Adequate incentives for all parties in WBL provision;
- Monitoring of WBL/ dual learning implementation at regional level and reporting results yearly, identifying measures to address gaps, holding stakeholders' meetings twice a year (including collecting feedback from students)
- Formalization of partnerships between VET schools and respective branch organizations;
- International cooperation of national and regional partnerships from different countries.

3.3. Quality assurance related feedback

Ensuring support to all actors in planning, organization and provision of practical training/WBL/apprenticeship on regular basis

The interviewees in the three countries expressed highly positive opinion about the measures defined under this thematic area (5) in Model 2. Proposals were provided regarding implementation process, presented below by countries. In our opinion they are applicable in the other countries, too.

In SI:

- Officially to assign the duty of monitoring apprentice's performance in the company to VET teachers;
- The differentiation between student's activities in school and in the company to be done together by the respective VET school and the employer providing apprenticeship.

In LV:

- Implementation of national training programme for both company tutors and VET teachers. It would be better to mix both groups together, to use peer learning method;
- Ensuring strong link between VET programmes and labour market needs;
- Formalizing the support system for employers and subsidies for companies involved in WBL.

In BG:

- Organization of annual meetings between employers and VET schools in order to share good practices in WBL planning, organization and provision at regional/local and national level;
- In-company tutors to be registered by competent authorities.

Regarding the responsibility in providing the necessary support **in LV** public institutions and the organisation of employers *at national level* were pointed out, while **in BG** additionally regional level institutions and organizations, as well as municipalities, were listed. **In SI** the opinion that the already included ones are enough was shared.

Ensuring Further development of QA

The respondents in the three countries expressed support to the measure **Defining of common EQWBL indicators**, pointing out the following benefits of its implementation:

- Transnational relevance of knowledge and skills and recognition of training certificates across the EU;

- Unifying the overall VET and WBL process;
- Facilitation of labour mobility in EU;
- Better employability of VET graduates;
- Support to comparing the quality of WBL between EU countries, identifying good practices, encouraging improvement at national level, taking into account the VET systems' specifics and national context.

The interviewees also agreed with the scope of the indicators, as defined in the interview questionnaire. Some of them in BG pointed out that there should be *a quality indicator related to the definition of WBL learning outcomes*. There are differences in the ranking of the thematic areas that should be covered by the indicators in the three countries (results are presented in the table below), which most probably is due to the difference in the progress of WBL implementation and quality assurance.

Thematic areas to be covered by quality indicators	SI	LV	BG
Training methodology	-	2	2
Criteria the companies willing to provide WBL should meet	2	2	1
Students' achievements assessment – current and final	-	3	3
WBL provision control	-	1	4
In-company tutors' qualification	-	2	2
VET teachers' qualification	3	2	2
VET graduates' performance at the workplace	1	4	3
Other, please specify: Definition of learning outcomes	-	-	1

Note: The criteria marked with “-“ for SI were not commented or opinions were shared that all are important and it is difficult to rank them.

However, similarities in the opinions shared in LV and BG with respect to the importance of almost all thematic areas that should be covered by the quality indicators are evident, except *WBL provision and control*, ranked 1 in LV and 4 in BG. The most obvious difference between the three countries is regarding *VET graduates' performance at the workplace* - it is most important for SI and less important in LV and BG.

4. Assessments, recommendations and suggestions of the respondents concerning the structure, content and feasibility of Model 3

4.1. VET response related feedback

Scope of activities in ensuring adequate VET response

In SI and BG very important opinion was shared that in order to have a *Functioning mechanism for translation of LM needs into VET schools' enrolment plans and LO for acquiring qualification in different professions* (thematic area 2), first it should be established – establishment to be included in Model 1.

In LV it was stressed that there should be a system for regular updating of VET curricula (implicitly included in Model 2), as well as system for regular tutors' in-service training (included in Model 1).

In this context the successful implementation of measures planned under M1 and M2 will provide basis for M3 realization.

Stakeholders' involvement and cooperation

In SI and BG, it was underlined that the key issue is the cooperation between VET schools and companies at regional/local level. That is why regional and local partnerships are very important. Their work should be supported by the national partnership. Cooperation between the stakeholders at the two levels and between levels should be in place. It was suggested to institutionalize the networks' connections.

In BG and LV cross border cooperation was proposed as a possible solution to the problem related to difficulty in finding companies providing WBL, which is **relevant for the other countries, as well**.

The following proposals regarding implementation of actions for effective partnerships and cooperation, provided **in LV, are also applicable in SI and BG**:

- To create a Data base of regional, national and international partnerships;
- To internationalise VET programmes;
- To develop VET schools' capacity for work with the stakeholders;
- To utilize partnerships' capacity in elaboration of labour market prognoses and ensure the necessary funding for this.

Recommendations at EU level were defined in the countries that could be summarised as follows:

- Supporting designing and piloting international VET programmes;
- Ensuring opportunities for WBL in transnational mobility;
- Promotion of the best practices; Conduction of regular meetings for sharing good practices and exchange of experience, work on joint qualifications with serious WBL component
- Developing sectoral cooperation between Member States, WBL across borders with support of sectoral associations.

4.2. Awareness related feedback

Development of career guidance in general

The interviewees in the three countries expressed a common position that if Models 1 and 2 will be successful, proposed upgrade of activities concerning career guidance in Model 3 can be successful.

The proposals of respondents from each country are applicable in the others and could be summarised as follows:

- Improvement of teachers' qualification (initial and continuous) on career guidance issues, especially how to integrate it in the training on different school subjects and how to support students' individual self-awareness and stimulate their activity in development of knowledge and skills in the areas of interest;
- Implement interdisciplinary link between general and professional school subjects and in all learning process in general;
- Ensuring opportunities for students for practice in companies of different size (small and large) to get real understanding of the profession they are studying;
- Creating conditions for career guidance centres networking;
- Ensuring involvement of wide spectrum of actors in career guidance;
- Study, assessment and adaptation to national context of other countries experience in WBL and career guidance, including study visits of VET schools' representatives in similar institutions in other countries;
- Popularization of results achieved by different partnerships in career guidance provision and development.
- Analysing the data on graduates' future steps: entering the labour market or taking other path and using this information for planning of VET and of promotional campaigns.

According to the interviewees **in the three countries**, all defined measures are feasible. **In BG** most of them pointed out that it will be difficult to ensure the responsiveness of career guidance to company needs and skills forecasts – it is still a challenge for the companies to make such forecasts. The interviewees **in LV** share just the opposite opinion – they consider this measure most feasible. They see difficulties in providing support to VET graduates in transition from school to labour market/ higher level of education due to lack of strong cooperation between VET schools and companies.

4.3. Quality assurance related feedback

Development of support measures to companies providing WBL/ apprenticeships

Concerning thematic area 6 - Maintaining of effective support measures to companies providing WBL/ apprenticeships the interviewees' opinion in the three countries is similar and could be summarised as follows:

- Companies expect for the future support in representing their interests and creating favourable conditions for businesses, especially small ones. This enables them to be successful and create jobs and to implement apprenticeship. It is also necessary to regulate financial incentives for enterprises providing WBL in order to increase the number of companies involved in WBL organization and provision.
- At national level to implement a system for raising the status of companies that take part in VET.



- Coordination and improvement of the mechanism of close cooperation of all stakeholders is needed to ensure effectiveness of the support measures.

The comments provided by respondents in the three countries with regards to thematic area 7 – Networks and cooperation were different:

In SI the importance of investing efforts in development of partnerships and cooperation mechanisms was stressed.

In BG the accent was given on transnational partnerships which should:

- be focused not on exchange of experience and study visits but on joint projects that allow expert support from more experienced to those with lower experience in WBL implementation;
- allow involvement of actors from different levels to work together on particular issues – improvements in legislation, implementation of WBL, monitoring, assessment and certification etc.

In LV all levels of partnership were addressed by sharing the following proposals:

- Creating opportunities for international WBL practices;
- Development of regional coordinators' network;
- Development of International qualifications, sectoral qualification systems;
- Cooperation between the main stakeholders: Employers' Confederation of Latvia and Employees' Association of Latvia.
- VET school convents to be included in national and international partnerships.

Ensuring Further development of QA

With respect to **institutions and organizations which should participate in providing quality WBL** the interviewees in the three countries mentioned different government institutions responsible and related to VET. In BG additionally Employers' organizations and VET providers were pointed out.

Regarding **monitoring the progress in achievement of WBL quality indicators at company level** the respondents' opinions provided variety of options:

- Sectoral expert councils;
- National qualification authority;
- Employers' organisations
- Vocational schools – teachers;
- Employers - managers in the respective companies;
- Employers' representatives together with the teachers or Committees from vocational schools and companies;
- External experts.

5. Assessments, recommendations and suggestions of the respondents concerning the structure, content and feasibility of the Policy recommendations proposed

5.1. Improvement of the Policy recommendations

The majority of the respondents in the three countries agree with the recommendations, it was said that they are well prepared. All respondents shared the opinion that partnerships both at national and regional/local level are very important for WBL introduction and development. Many stressed that in order to be efficient the cooperation should be institutionalized and adequate funding has to be ensured for the administrative and coordination work that participating institutions/organizations will have to do in addition to their regular duties. The necessity of clear distribution of roles and tasks among all partners at all levels: national, regional and local was also underlined.

The following comments and proposals were provided in the different countries:

- Concerning point 1, item b (skill forecasting) it was underlined that chambers have to provide accurate information; the forecasts should provide the needed information in understandable and easy to use way;
- Point 1, item c (Strategy for national career guidance) should include actions for training of career consultants in schools;
- Point 1, item h (financing) – financial model (tax reduction) which supports companies providing WBL should be introduced;
- About point 4. New profile of VET teachers - at the time when students are at companies, the teachers to be given the opportunity to improve their qualification or spend time in the company. This should be also financially regulated. A proposal was made that the VET teacher is part-time employed by the school and by the company;
- Regarding point 2 - Regional coordinators in WBL are needed;
- Point 2, item b (Implementing career guidance and image campaigns) – the campaigns and other actions should ensure raising the reputation and the popularity of apprenticeships and VET, as well as of VET professions;
- Considering the importance of cooperation between companies and schools, the national and regional partnerships should provide support in this respect;

In BG, additionally some improvements in defining the following items were proposed, marked in red:

point 1. National partnerships

- a. Monitoring of labour market needs and regular publishing of results
- b. Skill forecasting and publishing results
- d. VET Image campaigns with focus on WBL, involving national media
- h. to include Erasmus+; funding the work done by social partners
- i. Monitoring and evaluation of the reform process based on regular communication with sectoral partnerships

point 2. Regional partnerships



- f. to enrich the text, as follows: Monitoring and evaluation of the reform process, including collecting feedback from students and parents.

Point 3. - the text in the brackets to be deleted because in the different countries there are different criteria for financing of VET schools, not only the time students spend in school but also the number of students etc.

5.2. Additional issues to be included in the Policy recommendations

The comments provided in the three countries refer to point 1 and point 2.

The following additional items were proposed to be included under **point 1. National partnerships:**

- Establishing mechanism for ensuring adequate VET response to the results from labour market monitoring and skills forecasts;
- Defining proposals for VET policy improvement and for adequate legislative changes in support of WBL implementation;
- Creating and maintaining WBL trainers' data base by regions and municipalities with clear responsibilities of the institutions and organisations involved in the process.

The opinions shared on this point of the recommendations were related mainly to specification of the items included:

- c. Strategy for national career guidance – it should include starting guidance in the primary school, design of activities and services for parents, systematic awareness raising about WBL/ apprenticeship at national and regional level reaching broad audiences in society;
- e. Strategy for support to companies: tutor training, development of materials, measures, ... - the role of all actors, including of local authorities should be clearly defined;
- h. Financing plan / resources (structural funds, national funding, social partners, ...) – the financial model should stimulate all partners' interest and motivation (e.g. direct funding of VET schools and enterprises, taxes reduction for companies, providing WBL etc.).

Under **point 2. Regional partnerships** the interviewees suggested the following additional items:

- Organizing VET teachers' qualification improvement by professional areas;
- Maintaining register of companies, providing WBL and popularizing their activities;
- Building up in-company tutors' network.

5.3. Feasibility of the Policy Recommendations in the national context

As a whole the respondents shared the opinion that the defined policy Recommendations are applicable in the national context. Some of them pointed out that their implementation will ensure the necessary quality of WBL. The introduction of WBL/ apprenticeship in the mass practice will contribute to increasing employability of VET graduates.

Others underlined that the recommendations are applicable if policy makers have the will, all stakeholders are involved and their active participation and commitment is ensured.



Some stressed that in the process of recommendations implementation special attention should be given to achievement of coordination and coherence of actions at national and regional level. An opinion was shared in BG that it is necessary to think on decentralization and prioritization of regional VET polices. Concerning the first steps, the common opinion was that adequate legislative changes are of crucial importance. Many interviewees focused on the necessity to start with building up regional/local support network for companies, as well as with well-planned awareness raising campaigns on WBL and development of positive attitude to VET professions, using all communication channels, VET teachers' and in-company tutors' training. The importance of WBL quality assurance mechanism implementation was underlined, too.

6. Overall conclusions

6.1. With respect to scope of activities proposed under the models

- The measures defined under all models were assessed positively by the stakeholders' representatives as covering all important aspects in addressing the challenges discussed – VET response, awareness and quality assurance. It was underlined that full implementation of Model 1 is a basis for realization of Model 2, which in turn ensures achieving the objective of Model 3.
- The proposals provided were related mainly with the process of implementation of the defined measures and the suggested by the participants actions are entirely in the scope of activities of the three models.

6.2. With respect to Model 1

Thematic area (2) Improvement of VET system response to labour market needs

- In all countries the measures defined were assessed as feasible in the respective national context. Only some interviewees from BG pointed out difficulties that should be taken into consideration in the model's implementation.
- Concerning the measure *Creating conditions for regular mid- and long-term forecasting of labour market needs* all interviewees from the three countries confirmed the defined conditions, assessing ensuring of appropriate legislative framework as most important in this respect.
- The opinions provided about implementation of the measure *Enrolment in VET schools based on qualifications forecasts* in the different countries were different reflecting the stage of WBL/apprenticeship implementation. So, they should be taken into consideration in defining the country specific policy recommendations.



- Regarding the measure *Definition and regular up date of learning outcomes for WBL / apprenticeship training based on skills needs forecasts* the common opinion of the respondents was that VET stakeholders should be responsible for implementation of the actions in this field by providing clear framework conditions, mechanisms for cooperation at system's and provider's level and methodological support and that the work on updating the learning outcomes should be done by partnerships at system's or providers' level depending on country specifics. The process has to start with updating the occupational standards/educational standards.
- All stake holders' representatives agreed that in order to ensure the *Match-making process between VET students and companies* it is necessary to create a database/platform where companies that offer WBL and VET schools/students can meet.

Thematic area (3) Better career guidance

- The proposed measures were confirmed by all respondents. There were proposals related mainly with specification of the measures for the different target groups.
- The measures were assessed as applicable in practice in all countries. Some concerns were shared about difficulties that might be faced in *mandatory involvement of enterprises in providing career guidance*.
- Concerning implementation of the measure *Intensive VET promotion among the different target groups* it was underlined that intensive actions should be implemented at national level using different information channels and organising various events. In the process all stakeholders should be involved. An example of promotion of professions with involvement of different types of stakeholders was provided in SI (www.pgz.si).
- Various activities were proposed in all countries *targeted at students, parents and companies* that from one side should be considered in implementation process and from another – that the stakeholders recognize the importance of career guidance improvement for VET and WBL in particular promotion and their own role in this field. In this context it was underlined that it is necessary to popularize the companies providing WBL.
- The interviewees in the three countries share common opinions regarding the content of information that should be provided to the different target groups and the proposals in one country are applicable in the other ones, considering the comments provided in the national reports.
- According to the interviewees in the three countries, the most appropriate WBL promotion channels are Internet and social media, electronic media, as well special events for all target groups. Personal contacts were assessed as more important for companies and for parents and not so important for students, who value much the use of online communication.

Thematic area (4) Improve the assessment of practical training/WBL /apprenticeship

Thematic area (5) Ensuring qualified VET teachers and in-company trainers for organization and provision of quality practical training/WBL/apprenticeship

Thematic area (6) Development of support measures to companies providing WBL / apprenticeships

The stakeholders' representatives in the three countries provided reasonable proposals for actions related with the implementation process and suggested additional measures aimed at improvements in



each thematic area, summarized in this report, that should be appropriately reflected in finalization of the model and in the common and country specific policy recommendations.

Thematic area (7) Better stakeholder's involvement and establishment of networks to promote, provide and create the conditions for WBL/apprenticeship

- All respondents stressed the importance of stakeholders' involvement and cooperation for achieving success in addressing of all challenges identified and agreed with the proposed measures.
- As a key for WBL/apprenticeship success the cooperation between VET schools and companies was pointed out. That is why it is important to provide incentives for the companies to get involved and to invest efforts in WBL/apprenticeship benefits promotion among companies.
- The proposals related to mandatory participation of VET schools and regional employers' organizations (chambers) in local and regional partnerships and designation of responsibility for WBL planning and organization to particular person in VET schools and in enterprises are reasonable and is necessary to be considered.

6.3. With respect to Model 2

Thematic area (2) Maintaining of a VET system responsive to labour market needs

- Concerning *Forecasting of labour market needs* the respondents in the three countries pointed out the necessity of active involvement of employers' organizations, as well as other relevant government institutions (Ministries of economy and of Labour, Employment agencies) and research organizations.
- With respect to institutions responsible for *Regular monitoring of enrolment in VET school based on qualifications forecasts* a diversity of opinions was registered in each of the three countries. Consequently, the decision on this issue should be taken based on discussion between interested parties in each country.
- Concerning the responsible for *Definition and regular up date of learning outcomes for WBL/apprenticeship training based on skills needs forecasts* institution the positions were divided between centralized approach (Ministry of Education and its subordinated institutions) and regional approach - VET schools together with enterprises in the respective sector.
- The comments and proposals provided by the respondents in all countries about the *Match-making process between VET students and companies* were similar to the ones for Model 1.

Thematic area (4) Maintaining an effective career guidance system

- The interviewees in the three countries agreed with the measures defined in the model commenting that their implementation is of high importance.
- According to the interviewees' opinion in all countries, the activities for *Intensive VET promotion* that will be implemented under Model 1 should be monitored and feedback from different target groups collected and assessed. Based on that the planning of actions under Model 2 should be done.

Thematic area (5) Ensuring support to all actors in planning, organization and provision of practical training/WBL/apprenticeship on regular basis



- The interviewees in the three countries expressed highly positive opinion about the measures defined under this thematic area.
- The proposals provided regarding implementation process in the different countries are reasonable and should be considered by the partnership in the work on model's and policy recommendations' improvement.
- Concerning the responsibility in providing the necessary support the opinions were distributed between public institutions and the organisation of employers at national level only and both national and regional level institutions and organizations, as well as municipalities. These results show that it is necessary to clarify the necessity of actions at both levels and coordination and coherence between them in ensuring support to all actors in WBL/ apprenticeship.

Thematic area (7) Strong stakeholders' involvement through national, regional and local networks to promote, provide and create the conditions for WBL/apprenticeship

- In all countries positive opinion and agreement with the proposed measures was expressed.
- The interviewees' common position was that in order to ensure this model implementation the national policy for VET development with focus on WBL/apprenticeship should be improved. The proposals provided in this respect should be taken into consideration in the work for finalizing the common and country specific policy recommendations.

Thematic area (8) Further improvement of the quality assurance

- The respondents in the three countries expressed support to the measure *Defining of common EQWBL indicators*, pointing out the various benefits of its implementation.
- The stakeholders also agreed with the scope of the indicators, as defined in the interview questionnaire. Some of them in BG pointed out that there should be *a quality indicator related to the definition of WBL learning outcomes*.

6.4. With respect to Model 3

Thematic area (2) VET system and labour market needs

It was pointed out quite reasonably that in order to have a *Functioning mechanism for translation of LM needs into VET schools' enrolment plans and LO for acquiring qualification in different professions*, first it should be established – establishment to be included in Model 1.

Thematic area (4) Maintaining an effective career guidance system

According to the interviewees in the three countries, all defined measures are feasible. They also provided proposals related with the process of implementation.

Thematic area (6) Maintaining of effective support measures to companies providing WBL/ apprenticeships

The summary of comments provided by stakeholders' representatives, presented in this report should be taken into consideration in the work on model's and policy recommendations improvement.



Thematic area (7) Networks and cooperation

- The respondents underlined that the key issue is the cooperation between VET schools and companies at regional/local level. That is why regional and local partnerships are very important. Their work should be supported by the national partnership. Cooperation between the stakeholders at the two levels and between levels should be in place. It was suggested to institutionalize the networks' connections.
- The importance of investing efforts in development of partnerships and cooperation mechanisms was stressed, too.
- Cross border cooperation was proposed as a possible solution to the problem related to difficulty in finding companies providing WBL.
- The proposals for implementation process at national and EU level, summarized in the report, are also reasonable and need to be considered by the project partnership.

Thematic area (8) Further improvement of the quality assurance

- With respect to *institutions and organizations which should participate in providing quality WBL* the interviewees in the three countries mentioned different government institutions responsible and related to VET. In BG additionally Employers' organizations and VET providers were pointed out.
- Regarding *monitoring the progress in achievement of WBL quality indicators at company level* the respondents' opinions provided variety of options.

6.5. With respect to Policy Recommendations

- The majority of the respondents in the three countries agree with the recommendations, it was said that they are well prepared.
- All respondents shared the opinion that partnerships at both national and regional/local level are very important for WBL introduction and development. Many stressed that in order to be efficient the cooperation should be institutionalized and adequate funding has to be ensured for the administrative and coordination work that participating institutions/organizations will have to do in addition to their regular duties.
- The necessity of clear distribution of roles and tasks among all partners at all levels: national, regional and local was also underlined.
- The comments and the proposals for specification of the defined recommendations and for adding new ones, provided by stakeholders' representatives are quite reasonable and should be taken into consideration in the finalizing the text of the document.