



ELVETE - Employer-Led Vocational Education and Training in Europe

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Research and Contextualisation

a) Introduction. Historical approach and state of play

Portugal has a population of approximately 10.6 million people. The number of births is inferior (109) to the number of deaths (124) (data from January 2015¹) resulting in an aging population: 19.6% of the population is 65 years or older while the population younger than 15 years old is 14.7%.

With a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of \$ 227.3 billion (2013), the Portuguese economy is ranked 36th in the Global Competitiveness Index (out of 144 economies). Industrial activities are traditionally centred on services (mainly linked with Tourism) with 66.1% of the active population working in this sector (2013 data). Around 62% of people aged 15 to 64 in Portugal have a paid job, close to the OECD employment average of 65%. Some 65% of men are in paid work, compared with 59% of women.

The main Portuguese companies in 2013 (Petrogal, EDP Group, Pingo Doce, Modelo Continente and Repsol Portuguesa) range from the energy and oil sector to the distribution and retail. Also included are TAP, the Portuguese airline and Autoeuropa, in the automobile sector.

Portugal is ranked 41st (out of 187) in the Human Development Index 2014² as a very high human development country, maintaining its position from previous years. In education terms, Portugal had an illiteracy rate of 5.2% (% of residents with 10 years or more who don't know how to read or write), in 2011. In 2013, the early dropout rate was 18.9%. The expenditure in education was 5.8% of the GDP in 2012³.

According to the OECD Better Life Index, 35% of adults aged 25-64 have earned the equivalent of a high-school degree, much lower than the OECD average of 75% and one of the lowest rates amongst OECD countries. This is truer of women than men, as 32% of men have successfully completed high-school compared with 38% of women. In terms of the quality of the educational system, the average student scored 488 in reading literacy, mathematics and science in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This score is slightly lower than the OECD average of 497. On average in Portugal, girls outperformed boys by 10 points, more than the average OECD gap of 8 points.

Portugal is facing a high unemployment rate (15.2%, data from March 2014), with a higher unemployment rate between young people below 25 years old (35.4%), corresponding to 135 000 persons. If we take into account, the ranking of Portugal in pay and productivity (113th), reliance on professional management (73rd), country capacity to retain talent (91st) and to attract talent (72nd)⁴, it is no surprise that there has been a strong brain drain to other European and Portuguese speaking countries.

b) Relevant national and local policy or policies

To understand the Portuguese VET system, it is very important to start by providing a brief

¹ <http://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Quadro+Resumo/Portugal-5452>, accessed January 2015

² <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-1-human-development-index-and-its-components>, accessed January 2015

³ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/expenditure-education-public-gdp#footnote>, accessed January 2015

⁴ <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2014-2015/economies/#economy=PRT>, accessed January 2015

overview of the Education and Training system as a whole. This system has been subject to some changes in order to include a more modern structure as detailed below:

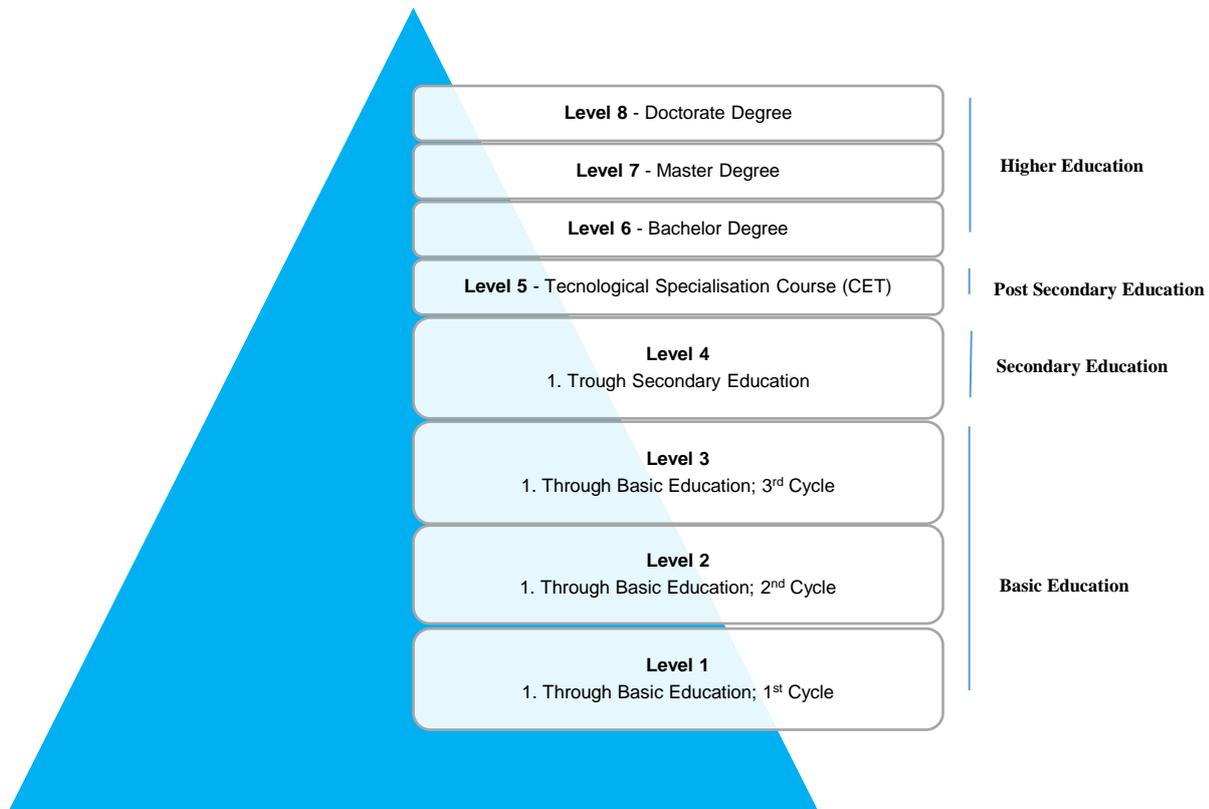


Figure 1.⁵

It is mandatory to attend school from 6 to 18 years old, corresponding to 12 years, divided into 2 levels (basic and secondary):

- **Basic education** is universal, compulsory and free. It includes three cycles (primary school from 6 to 9 years old, 1st cycle including 5th and 6th graders and 2nd cycle from 7th to 9th grade). If basic education is completed with success, students receive a diploma of completion.
- **Secondary education**, also compulsory and free, starts by the age of 15 from 10th to 12th grade, is organized in one cycle, but may be completed in two different ways:
 1. Through general course areas such as science or humanities which is particularly oriented towards higher education;
 2. Through a more vocational pathway, which can be fulfilled via vocational courses, apprenticeship, specialized courses and/or adult education. Although this pathway is mainly oriented to the labour market, it also permits to continue studies at the Higher education level.

After the completion of secondary school, students have the possibility of enrolling in post-secondary education or Higher Education:

- **Post-secondary** (non-tertiary) education is focused on specialized technological courses (CET) aiming, primarily at preparing and qualifying students to the labour market. If

⁵ Figure adapted from Cedefop study 'Governance and financing of apprenticeship' - Country Report – Portugal, SPI, April 2014

completed with success, it allows the access to a CET diploma, but is also enables students to pursue studies at the University.

- **Higher education**, also referred to as tertiary education is structured in 3 different sequential and consecutive levels/degrees (Bachelor, Master degree and Doctorate degree). The implementation of the Bologna Process resulted in the restructuring of curricular contents, assessment systems and degrees awarded.

The table below describes the different possible professional/educational paths, regarding initial or continuous training in Portugal.

<p>Specialized Artistic Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of qualification II; • Targets young people who chose to follow an artistic vocational training. 	<p>CEF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of qualification III; • Targets young people aged 13 and plus, at risk of dropping out of school, providing them with a better suited solution to their needs and interests also covering both educational and initial vocational training, while raising awareness to the labour market and allowing to pursue higher studies if wanted.
<p>Learning Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of qualification IV or secondary; • Aims at enhance rates of youth employability regarding the labour market needs. 	<p>Professional Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of qualification IV or secondary; • Aims at preparing qualified mid-level technicians.
<p>CET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of qualification V; • Supports post-secondary courses with a specific technical training aiming at preparing highly qualified mid-level technicians. 	<p>RVCC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mechanism enabling the recognition of the skills acquired through the different life contexts.
<p>FMC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mechanisms enabling to enhance qualification levels of the active population; • Short duration modules; • An important tool towards lifelong learning since it allows complementing the certification of scholar or professional skills. 	<p>EFA courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual training path to non-qualified adults or without adequate qualification; • Long duration courses.

Table 1.⁶

VET providers in Portugal include public, technical and professional schools, universities, tertiary institutions and training centres.

The education and training system in Portugal is centrally administered, which means that it is the government who defines policies and curricula, teaching methods and financing. The major actors are:

- Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security

⁶ Table adapted from Cedefop study 'Governance and financing of apprenticeship' - Country Report – Portugal, SPI, April 2014

(<http://www.portugal.gov.pt/en/the-ministries/ministry-of-solidarity-and-social-security.aspx>);

- Ministry of Education and of Science (<http://www.portugal.gov.pt/en/the-ministries/ministry-of-education-and-science.aspx>) – responsible for the educational sector;
- Ministry of Economy (<http://www.portugal.gov.pt/en/the-ministries/ministry-of-economy-and-employment.aspx>) – responsible for CVET, apprenticeship and active labour market policies;
- National Agency for Qualifications and VET – ANQEP (<http://www.en.anqep.gov.pt/>);
- Institute for Employment and Vocational Training – IEFEP (<https://www.iefp.pt/>).

As a way to tackle the unemployment issue (mainly for young people), the government has been promoting a series of initiatives described in detail below:

1. *Programa de Relançamento do Serviço Público de Emprego* – seeks to shorten the distance between labour market and those who seek integration, by enhancing their employability. Here, the main objectives are in providing specific training or occupational programs to subsidized unemployed groups (in particular those aged 45 or above and/or unemployed for more than six months). For instances, this includes a very relevant initiative particularly concerning net employment creation: *Stimuli 2012* which states that employers can receive a subsidy of up to 60% of the salary during six months, as long as they provide the integrated trainee with relevant training for the work profile being performed.

2. *Plano Estratégico de Iniciativas à Empregabilidade Jovem e de Apoio às PME – Impulso Jovem* – aims at supporting, not only young unemployed but also SMEs. Financially supported by the European Social Fund, aimed at supporting long term unemployed aged between 18 to 3 years old, are the internships in companies seeking work experience and specific training.

3. *Garantia Jovem* – it is aimed for young people under 30 years old, NEET to promote their qualifications, ease the transition for the labour market and reduce youth unemployment. This programme provides support in several areas: 1) definition of the professional path and in the active search for employment, 2) continued education or training opportunities, 3) internship opportunities, 4) employment opportunities. This programme is not an employment guarantee, rather a guarantee to support NEETs under 30.

4. *Movimento para o Emprego* –platform for young people and companies to seek/publish employment offers. This platform is aimed for young people with Higher Education.

5. *Skills Portugal* – aims to stimulate young people (from 17 up to 22 years for WorldSkills and 25 years for EuroSkills) for obtaining a professional qualification, taking into account their professional development; value the social status of the professional training, favoring the recognition of the professional training as a success alternative; promote awareness for young people, families, companies and workers to the importance of training as a factor of lifelong learning, personal development, innovation, economic growth and social cohesion.

c) Outline of strategies, projects, programmes etc.

Portugal has a new framework programme for Portugal 2020, in line with Europe 2020 goals, with three operation programmes focusing in Human Capital, Social Inclusion and Employment as well as Competitiveness and Internationalization. These programmes aim to promote higher and better qualifications more oriented to the labour market, improve school achievement, decrease rates of early school dropout and elevate the country competitiveness:

- *Programa Operacional do Capital Humano* (Operational Programme of Human Capital – POCH) and the *Programas Operacionais Regionais* (Regional Operational Programmes – POR) concerning education and training either for academic or professional certification;
- *Programa Operacional Inclusão Social e Emprego* (Operational Programme Social Inclusion and Employment - POISE) focused particularly on the training of the active population (specially, unemployed and vulnerable groups) aiming at improving employment rates;
- *Programa Operacional Competitividade e Internacionalização* (Operacional Programme Competitiveness and Internationalization – POCI) aiming to support strategies for companies and other organizations reinforcing their productivity and Competitiveness.

d) Evaluation, feedback, reports on success. Advantages and disadvantages

The Portuguese vocational education and training system has been developing in the past years trying to tackle some of the challenges and turning the system more effective. The Portuguese government has been implementing several measures and initiatives to promote youth employment (as already mentioned) which include professional and vocational education alternatives. Moreover, the Government is reorganising the VET system to further align it with market needs and is discussing the creation of professional schools of reference in some specific sectors, but no additional information is available yet.

The three different professionalizing offers available in Portugal – Vocational, Professional and Apprenticeship – cause confusion as it is not easily perceptible their differences, complementarities and added values, so there is a need to better define the governance model.

Other challenges to be tackled are as follows:

- to increase the number of students (to meet the numbers established by the European Commission);
- to increase the articulation between the different stakeholders (companies, students and academic counterparts);
- to increase the recognition of this system as a high quality and employability alternative;
- to further use better quality and monitoring tools and make it available to all stakeholders including general public.
- to enhance the attractiveness of the system by raising awareness to its strengths and advantages (also disseminate success stories and best practices);

The case studies presented in this report will provide more concrete information on the success, advantages and disadvantages of the system.

3.5 Interviews

3.5.1 Companies involved:

Company 1

Name of company: Pictonio, Lda

Type of activity: Development of software solutions

Status: Private

Size: SME

Level of education targeted: students of 4th-5th grade (17-19)

Website: <http://www.pictonio.com/pt>

Contact person and role: Francisco Almeida

Email address: pictonio@pictonio.com

Company 2

Name of company: Trust It

Type of activity: IT Services

Status: Private

Size: SME

Level of education targeted: students of 4th-5th grade (17-19)

Website: <http://www.trustit.pt/Home.aspx>

Contact person and role: Paulo Gafanha

Email address: pgafanha@trustit.pt

Company 3

Name of company: Inova-Ria: Associação de empresas para uma rede de inovação

Type of activity: IT Consultancy

Status: Private

Size: SME

Level of education targeted: students of 4th-5th grade (17-19)

Website: <http://www.inova-ria.pt/>

Contact person and role: Regina Maia Sacchetti

Email address: regina@inova-ria.pt

Company 4

Name of company: Shortcut

Type of activity: IT Services

Status: Private

Size: SME

Level of education targeted: students of 4th-5th grade (17-19)

Website: <http://shortcut.pt/>

Contact person and role: Inês Domingues

Email address: inesdomingues@shortcut.pt

Company 1

3.5.2 Content of the interviews

General introduction:

Pictonio is a SME, based on Aveiro which main goal is to develop software solutions for their clients, based on their needs. The most usual services provided include the creation of content management platforms, online stores and social platforms, for either private and public clients
The interview was carried out by Tiago Marques with Francisco Almeida, IT Manager of the company, on 9th December 2014.

Information on the implementation of the selected programme/project in the company:

The students that do internships on the company are the ones ending their qualifications on Escola Profissional de Aveiro.

Relationship company-training agency/VET provider and management of incoming students:

This cooperation started by the initiative of the company and from 5 years ago they have continuously received students from Escola Profissional de Aveiro as interns. The school provides enough information throughout all the internship to the company and the internship process starts with contacts between the school and the company that from a list of students select the one(s) that they think are more suitable to perform the planned tasks.

The school, during, the internship, keeps on following the students.

Joint design/planning of training path:

The company as an active role on defining the tasks that the students should perform (the interviewee is trainer and tutor of the interns).

Implementation: relations company-VET provider during project implementation

The communication is very fluid and besides three meetings per school year the contact is made by phone/email on a regular basis.

SWOT Analysis:

This type of activity/program allows the student to gain training/experience on a company level but, sometimes and depending on the work area the time the student spends on the company is short.

The quality of the training provided by the VET school is very important and have a direct impact on the relation created between the student and the company, so it is crucial that the training programs of these kind of entities are updated and keep up with the market demands and the evolution of the labour market.

The relationship between both actors is evaluated as a 5, on a scale from 1 to 6, with being one totally unsatisfied and 6 completely satisfied.

Students' Skills:

Students have the necessary skills to perform all the activities needed during the internship, especially learn to learn, IT and social skills (the skills perceived as most developed by the students tutor, achieving 5 on a scale from 1 to 6) and are very interested to be on the practical side of the training. On the other side, entrepreneurship could be a little more developed.

If needed the company gives practical training to allow the students to progress on the skills/competences/knowledge and be able to perform the tasks they are supposed to.

Cooperation company-VET institute/training agency on other projects/initiatives:

The company supports the idea that during the theoretic part of the training the students should learn and be introduced/aware to real/day to day cases that companies have to deal with and try to solve them (of course this would mean a more tight collaboration between both entities). It would also like to join efforts with training entities, developing projects, sharing experiences and of course discovering new opportunities.

Key messages and recommendations:

- More cooperation company and VET institution
- Use of real situations during classes

Company 2

3.5.2 Content of the interviews

General introduction:

Trust it is a SME, based on Aveiro that aims to provide technology services and develop innovating and creative solutions to allow their clients to prosper and succeed. To achieve the goals the company relies on its core values - proximity, trust, flexibility, adaptability and pragmatism. The interview was carried out by Tiago Marques with Francisco Almeida, IT Manager of the company, on 9th December 2014.

Information on the implementation of the selected programme/project in the company:

The students that do internships on the company are the ones ending their qualifications on Escola Profissional de Aveiro and Escola Profissional de Agricultura e Desenvolvimento Local

Relationship company-training agency/VET provider and management of incoming students:

This cooperation started by the initiative of the school and from 5 years ago they have continuously received students two schools as interns. The school provides enough information throughout all the internship to the company.
The school, during the internship, keeps on following the students.

Joint design/planning of training path:

The company helps the schools defining the tasks that the students should perform and is pretty aware about what competences/skills students should develop during the internship program.

Implementation: relations company-VET provider during project implementation

The communication is constant between the company and the VET providers, with monthly meetings occurring on the company.

SWOT Analysis:

According to the interviewee the contact with the VET system, with some interns that might be recruited to work on the company and the creation of synergies on a local/regional basis are the strong points of this cooperation. On the other side teachers should have a more active role on the process.

The relationship between both actors is evaluated as a 5, on a scale from 1 to 6, with being one totally unsatisfied and 6 completely satisfied. This relationship could be improved with bigger involvement of the companies on the entire learning process and more interaction.

Students' Skills:

Students have low skills to perform the activities foreseen during the internship (most of them achieving 3 or 4 on the one to six scale developed), so the company needs to train the interns in almost all the skills. The skill seen as less developed it foreign languages.

Cooperation company-VET institute/training agency on other projects/initiatives:

The company would like to join efforts with VET entities on new and innovative projects/initiatives and even on designing the courses curricula, as they think that is essential that VET institutions have a perfect understanding of the present job market to constantly adapt the courses

Key messages and recommendations:

- Teachers should be more active on these type of initiatives
- The companies should have an active role during the entire learning process

Company 3

3.5.2 Content of the interviews

General introduction:

Inova-Ria is a not for profit SME, based on Aveiro which main goal is to create an IT cluster, focused on mobile communications, involving companies, schools and R&D entities. The interview was carried out by Tiago Marques with Regina Sacchetti, Human Resources manager, on 12th December 2014.

Information on the implementation of the selected programme/project in the company:

The students that do internships on the company come from very different backgrounds, as the company cooperates with 12 different schools and courses (from two schools interns come from different courses).

Relationship company-training agency/VET provider and management of incoming students:

This cooperation started by the initiative of the company and from more than 5 years ago they have continuously received students as interns, selected by the schools. Although there is enough communication during the internship, the information given by the schools could be better.

Joint design/planning of training path:

The company takes part on the design of the activities that the students have to perform during the internship and is aware of the competences the students should develop.

Implementation: relations company-VET provider during project implementation

The company has an active role on the evaluation of the interns as it oversees and follows the entire internship. In addition to phone and email contacts, personal communication is made every three months, on a meeting.

SWOT Analysis:

The biggest success of these internships is the learning of the students and the interest they have to start the professional career, but in order for this kind of activities to achieve better results they must last more than six months, adding to a strict cooperation between VET schools and companies.

The relationship between both actors is evaluated as a 3, on a scale from 1 to 6, with 1 being totally unsatisfied and 6 completely satisfied. It could be improved by additional information on the courses curricula and internship programmes.

Students' Skills:

The students are moderately well prepared to perform the tasks needed. In some cases there is the need to give some practical training.

Cooperation company-VET institute/training agency on other projects/initiatives:

The company only receives students for internships.

Key messages and recommendations:

- Strict cooperation between VET schools and companies.
- Courses with more practical activities and focused on the companies' realities

Company 4

3.5.2 Content of the interviews

General introduction:

Shortcut is a SME, based on Matosinhos that aims to become a permanent reference of innovation, using information and communication technologies, in opportunities that create passion, challenge and value.

The interview was carried out by Tiago Marques with Inês Domingues, Human Resources manager of the company, on 10th December 2014.

Information on the implementation of the selected programme/project in the company:

Shortcut interns are students from the last year from two different VET entities and courses: ATEC and Oficina de Santo Tirso.

Relationship company-training agency/VET provider and management of incoming students:

The cooperation between the company and the schools became by the initiative of the schools and only happen from time to time. The students are chosen by the school and the company.

Joint design/planning of training path:

The company, together with the school, draws the path that the student should make during the internship.

Implementation: relations company-VET provider during project implementation

Shortcut meets with the VET entities two times during the internship period besides the necessary/usual communication and, regarding the evaluation, it's their role to firstly create a plan and then follow and monitor the student during the internship period. The evaluation of the students is another task performed by the company.

SWOT Analysis:

The strong aspects about this initiative is not only the work performed and the share of experiences between the employees and the interns, but also the development of synergies and other projects with the VET entities. To achieve better results/impact of the programme the bureaucracy should be reduced or better organized (and some help from schools when filling the paperwork), as well as the time management. Another necessity is to motivate the students and make the courses more practical, so that they have a better attitude during the internship, and after that on their jobs.

The relationship between both actors is evaluated as a 5, on a scale from 1 to 6, with being one totally unsatisfied and 6 completely satisfied.

Students' Skills:

The students are very well prepared for the conclusion of the activities during the internship, especially on IT, Science and Technology and Social and civic competences. The skill that is less developed is communication in other languages, and any other additional training needed is given by the company during the internship.

Cooperation company-VET institute/training agency on other projects/initiatives:

Besides the undergoing project with a VET provider, the company would be interested on engaging on cooperation with these entities to better suit the courses curricula to the needs of the job market.

Key messages and recommendations:

- Reduction of the bureaucracy and better time management
- Make the courses more practical