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# **National Report on Apprenticeship in Poland**

Erasmus+ project

Services for Apprenticeships (SERFA)

**Prepared by the OIC Poland Foundation**

June 2017

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# 1. Apprenticeship and Work-based learning in Poland – Status quo

## 1.1. Legal Framework

In the Polish educational system, apprenticeship is a part of VET. The main condition to participate in this type of training is completion of a lower secondary school and being at least 16 years old, has completed a lower secondary school (gimnazjum).<sup>1</sup> The apprenticeship is organised in small and medium enterprises, mainly in handicrafts. The regulatory framework for apprenticeship is provided in two regulations<sup>2</sup>:

- the regulation of the Council of Ministers of 28th May 1996 on apprenticeship training of apprentices and their remuneration,
- the regulation of the Minister for National Education of 15th December 2010 on practical training for occupation, concerning the whole system of work-based learning in IVET.

The Ministry for National Education (MNE) makes most of its legal decisions regarding vocational education through ordinances.

Apprenticeship can take either of two forms<sup>3</sup>:

(a) apprenticeship as occupational training (nauka zawodu) (ISCED 3) leading to qualification as an apprentice or a skilled worker. This comprises practical vocational training at the employer's organisation and theoretical training. Trainees/students (under the age of 18) can choose theoretical training in the school system or in non-formal education contexts. Most trainees/students (88%) complete their theoretical

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: Under the education reform, starting from the 2017/2018 school year, Poland is to return to its previous system of eight-year elementary schools followed by four-year high schools or five-year technical schools, with upper-secondary schools (gimnazjum) no longer in existence

<sup>2</sup> Vocational education and training in Poland, Cedefop (2011)

<sup>3</sup> Vocational education and training in Poland, Cedefop (2011)



education in basic vocational schools. Training lasts between 24 and 36 months and finishes with the apprentice exam organised by the chamber of crafts;

(b) apprenticeship as training to perform a specific job (przyuczenie do wykonywania określonej pracy) (ISCED 2) and covering only selected work activities. This is limited to a small group who, for different reasons, did not complete lower secondary school and are at least 15 years of age. The employer defines curriculum in line with existing core curricula. Training takes three to six months. After passing a test, the trainee receives a certificate stating acquisition of particular skills in a particular occupation. The certificate is issued by the enterprise where the training took place and is recognised by the education system. After finishing training, the young workers (between 16 and 18 years old) can continue the apprenticeship, leading to a qualification (the duration of the first is included into the duration of the latter).

### **1.1.1. Responsibilities**

The management and administration of the VET system in Poland has a three level structure: national (Ministries), partially regional (school superintendent – kurator, mainly in the area of pedagogical supervision), district authorities (powiaty) (governing upper secondary schools). Social partners are involved in developing VET system. They can give opinions on the changes planned to be introduced in VET.

On the school level, the headmaster of a school or educational establishment, elected in a competition for a 5-year period, approves curricula, provides pedagogical supervision, hires and dismisses personnel, and manages the school budget. Headmasters have autonomy in concluding cooperation of their schools with industry and business in order to organize practical training or teachers' development, modernize curricular content or school equipment but conduct these operations in cooperation with local/regional authorities.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> VET in Europe, Country Report – Poland, Cedefop (2014)



As regards the craft institutions, there are the following organisations: guilds (cechy), craft chambers (izby rzemieślnicze) and the Polish Craft Association (Związek Rzemiosła Polskiego)<sup>5</sup>. They supervise the process of apprenticeship training in the craft.<sup>6</sup>

The regulation of the Minister for National Education from 15th December 2010 on practical training in occupations<sup>7</sup> concerns the quality of vocational training. The regulation obliges employers to sign contracts either with schools or with apprentices themselves. The programme of practical vocational training for VET students is monitored by the school headmaster, who concluded vocational placement agreements with entrepreneur(s).<sup>8</sup>

### **1.1.2. Professions and branches**

Significant changes were introduced in the system of vocational education and training in 2012 on the basis of the legislation adopted in 2011. Occupations are now described in terms of qualifications. The new classification includes 200 occupations which encompass 252 qualifications.<sup>9</sup>

The apprenticeship training may be conducted for occupations defined in:<sup>10</sup>

- the Polish classification of occupations for vocational education (in 77 occupations out of 200, including 47 occupations accessible in the craft),<sup>11</sup>
- the Polish classification of occupations and specializations for the labour market.

The Polish Classification of Occupations and Specializations for Labour Market Needs (Klasyfikacja Zawodów i Specjalności - KZiS, published in 2010) is a national

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.zrp.pl/tabid/314/language/pl/Default.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes, Cedefop (2014)

<sup>7</sup> Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 15 grudnia 2010 r. w sprawie praktycznej nauki zawodu (Dz. U. Nr 244, poz. 1626) [The Decree of the Minister for National Education from the 15th of December 2010 on practical vocational training].

<sup>8</sup> Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes, Cedefop (2014)

<sup>9</sup> The System of Education in Poland, Eurydice(2014)

<sup>10</sup> Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes, Cedefop (2014)

<sup>11</sup> CURRENTLY BEING CHANGED – New ordinance for classification of occupation for vocational education will enter into force on 1st September 2017 <http://legislacja.rcl.gov.pl/projekt/12293407>

adaptation of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) compiled by the International Labour Office, Geneva.<sup>12</sup>

New classification of occupations in VET and definition of a register of occupations possible to acquire within initial and continuing VET:

New classification of occupations for vocational education will be effective from the school year 2017/2018 in the first classes of sectoral vocational school (1<sup>st</sup> level), first classes of the previous four-year technical school and in the first semester of post-secondary, non-tertiary education (szkoła policealna). For other cases, the classification provided in newly issued MEN Regulation of 13 December 2016 (Journal of Laws of 2016. Pos. 2094)<sup>13</sup>, which entered into force on 22 December 2016 will be applicable. This Regulation was to implement the Integrated Qualifications System, under which The Polish Qualifications Framework (Polska Rama Kwalifikacji PQF) was introduced<sup>14</sup>. The PQF means that qualifications in formal and non-formal education will be assigned to designated PQF levels.

### **1.1.3. Curricula**

The Polish regulations relating to the content of VET are defined by the Ministry of National Education and include the Classification of Occupations for Vocational Education (COVE); the Core Curriculum for Vocational Education (CCVE); and the Core Curriculum for General Education (CCGE).<sup>15</sup>

General education in vocational schools is based on the 2008 Core Curriculum (as amended in 2012). Vocational training in particular occupations listed in the 2011 classification of occupations for vocational education is carried out in compliance with the updated Core Curriculum for vocational education (2012).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.mpips.gov.pl/en/labour-market/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.dziennikustaw.gov.pl/du/2016/2094/1>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/en>

<sup>15</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The System of Education in Poland, Eurydice(2014)

Separate vocational qualifications within specific occupations are described in the core curriculum for vocational education as a set of expected learning outcomes: knowledge, occupational skills, as well as personal and social competences.<sup>17</sup>

A monitoring programme (Monitoring and Improving the Implementation of New Core Curricula in VET) to gather information on implementation of new VET curricula was implemented (2012-2015)<sup>18</sup>.

The ongoing reforms aim to improve effectiveness and relevance of the VET system and to adjust it to current needs of the labour market.

#### **1.1.4. Remunerations**

The financing of training for pupils differs from the financing of training for young workers. If the trainee has a pupil status, the costs of practical training are covered by the school running body. These resources cover, among others, the salaries of practical vocational training instructors. The pupil is not remunerated.

If the trainee has a status of a young worker, he/she receives wages from his/her employer, and their amount is calculated on the basis of amounts defined by the government. The young employee is paid for his/her work and has to comply with the Labour Charter regulations as well as with his/her individual employment contract. The training is implemented on the basis of a contract concluded between the employer and a particular training institution. School based form of training which can be considered as apprenticeship in the case when practical training takes place outside school, at the employer's place and is based on a contract between the employer and the school head. In this case the school is responsible for the organization of training.

Accordingly to existing regulations the learner (juvenile worker) gets not less than 4% (1st year of training), 5% (2nd year of training) and 6% (3rd year of training) of the average monthly salary, however the employer can indicate another amount of salary

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/what-we-do/implementing-the-framework/poland.aspx>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.koweziu.edu.pl/projekty/projekt-6>



for the trainee (not smaller than the one indicated above) which shall be specified in the Apprenticeship contract.

### **1.1.5. Formal and qualificatory requirements for trainers**

Practical classes carried out at the employer's premises are taught either by teachers or practical vocational training instructors. In both cases pedagogical qualifications as well as specialist knowledge in the given area are required.

The vocational education teachers<sup>19</sup>:

- participate in specialist professional development activities (e.g. apprenticeship and/or internship at the employers' place at least once every 4 years);
- are examiners authorised to conduct examinations confirming vocational qualifications;
- apply various teaching methods to develop vocational skills and personal and social competencies;

In addition, the managerial and teaching staff of vocational schools can participate in the professional development projects for vocational education teachers implemented abroad under EU programmes.

Qualifications required in the case of employers, practical training instructors are governed by Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 15 December 2010 on vocational training, according to which apprenticeship training may be conducted by:

- an employer,
- a person managing a work establishment on behalf of the employer,
- a person employed at the employer's on condition that s/he has qualifications required for an instructor of practical training (both vocational

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<sup>19</sup> Quality Standards in Vocational Education, Kowezi (2013)



i.e. master craftsman diploma (dyplom mistrzowski) and pedagogical preparation gained through the completion of a pedagogical course)<sup>20</sup>

Apprenticeship training at employer's is carried out under the guidance of apprenticeship tutors/supervisors (employers or assigned employees).

### **1.1.6. Assessment**

Schools assess the educational achievements of students and prepare them for confirmation of vocational education. Internal school assessment is analysed and monitored by teachers (based on grades and students' behaviours). VET students may take external exam(s) confirming vocational qualification(s), which is/are conducted separately for each qualification specified in a given occupation.

The Central Examination Board<sup>21</sup> (CKE) with eight district examination boards (OKE) set up by the Minister for National Education in 1999 is the external institution in charge of organising exam confirming vocational qualification. The exams are unified and led according to the same criteria. The external evaluation system is supervised by the Minister of Education.

In the external examination system, all examinees solve the same problems to verify whether they have achieved the learning outcomes defined in the core curriculum. Exam results are rendered anonymously and assessed according to uniform criteria for the entire country. Trained examiners registered at the regional examination boards assess the exam results. The examination consists of a written part (conducted in the form of a test) and a practical part. The exams are conducted only in centres possessing the necessary infrastructure to

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<sup>20</sup> Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 15 grudnia 2010 r. w sprawie praktycznej nauki zawodu (Dz. U. Nr 244, poz. 1626) [The Decree of the Minister for National Education from the 15th of December 2010 on practical vocational training].

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.cke.edu.pl/>

carry out the practical part of the examination. The practical part may be assessed by practitioners working in the field in which the exam is conducted.<sup>22</sup>

In case of occupations that are outside the classification of occupations for VET, the quality standards for apprenticeship training in craft are designed by the Polish Craft Association<sup>23</sup>, including the standards of requirements, which are the basis for the exams for journeymen and masters in craft. Polish Craft Association is also defining the rules of monitoring of the Examination Boards of Craft Chambers.

The procedures concerning validation of non-formal and informal learning (extramural exams), that have entered into force in September 2012, are coherent with the Council recommendation of 20th December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.<sup>24</sup>

Until 2017 it will be possible for the graduates of vocational schools who followed the programme according to the previous VET core curriculum to take the “old” version of the vocational examination.

## **1.2. Institutional Framework/Involvement of Stakeholders**

### **1.2.1. National authorities**

The education system in Poland is centrally managed by two institutions – the Ministry of National Education<sup>25</sup> (general and vocational education) and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education<sup>26</sup> (higher education). It is only the national educational policy that is developed and carried out centrally, while the administration of education and the running of schools are decentralized.

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<sup>22</sup> VET in Europe – Country Report Poland, Cedefop (2014)

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.zrp.pl/>

<sup>24</sup> Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes, Cedefop (2014)

<sup>25</sup> <https://men.gov.pl/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.nauka.gov.pl/>

The Minister co-ordinates and pursues the national education policy, cooperating in this respect with regional authorities and other organisational units responsible for the school education system.

Upper-secondary schools, which are not compulsory, are attended by the vast majority of the population in the age group 16–19/20 years and are administered by district (powiat) authorities.

### **1.2.2. Regional/local authorities**

The decentralised Polish educational governance system is composed of 16 regions (województwa), 379 districts (powiaty) and 2 479 municipalities (gminy). Municipalities are responsible for establishing and administering preschool, primary and lower secondary education institutions. They have high levels of autonomy in financial decision making. Districts are responsible for upper secondary education (general, basic vocational schools, technical upper secondary schools and special schools). Regional authorities have a co-ordinating function in implementation of national education policy (via the Education Superintendent Offices) and ensure pedagogical supervision. Provincial governments oversee some VET institutions.<sup>27</sup>

At schools/ establishments there are cooperation programmes implemented within the framework of strategic partnerships of institutions acting at a regional and/or local level including inter alia associations of employers, labour offices and other labour market institutions and higher education institutions.<sup>28</sup>

### **1.2.3. Social partner institutions (Chambers, Trade Unions)**

The social partners' involvement in VET is organised through the main institutional platform, Social Dialogue Council<sup>29</sup>. It is the main institution of the national tripartite dialogue. In the voivodship level there are the Voivodship Social Dialogue Councils.

The sectoral dialogue has also the tripartite formula. Social partners are involved in

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<sup>27</sup> Education Policy Outlook Poland, OECD (2015)

<sup>28</sup> Quality Standards in Vocational Education, Koweziu (2013)

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.dialog.gov.pl/en/>



developing VET system. They can give opinions on the changes planned to be introduced in VET.

There is a second national body to support social dialogue - the Central Employment Board (“Rada Rynku Pracy”)<sup>30</sup>. It has an advisory role to the Minister for Labour and includes representatives from public administration, employers’ organisations, trade unions and local government. It is consulted on issues related to training for unemployed people, programmes which promote employment, planning, and use of the State labour fund (a national social insurance system for those who are unemployed).

As a national social partner, the Polish Craft Association<sup>31</sup> takes part in the Tripartite Commission’s meetings. The Polish craft is very active in the vocational education. ZRP members offer wide range of training opportunities: from the modern to unique (especially handicraft and artistic) professions.

Employers of Poland<sup>32</sup> are the oldest, the largest and the most representative employers’ organization in the country. The Confederation forms an association of entrepreneurs of 12 000 companies who employ over 5 million employees; the most of all such organizations in Poland. It is a partner of social dialog, a participant in the Social Dialog Council (formerly the Tripartite Commission for Socio-Economic Affairs) and a co-originator of independent dialog.

As regards the craft institutions, there are the following organisations: guilds (*cechy*), craft chambers (*izby rzemieślnicze*) and the Polish Craft Association (*Związek Rzemiosła Polskiego*). They supervise the process of apprenticeship training in the craft.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.mpips.gov.pl/praca/naczelnarada-zatrudnienia/>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.zrp.pl/tabid/314/language/pl/Default.aspx>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.pracodawcyrp.pl/en/>

<sup>33</sup> Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes; Poland, Cedefop (2014)

#### **1.2.4. VET Institutions (Colleges, public or private VET providers)**

The out-of-school education institutions are: Continuing Education Centres (CKU), Practical Training Centres (CKP) and Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP)<sup>34</sup>, which enable people with learning difficulties to obtain vocational qualifications.

#### **1.2.5. Companies**

Changes introduced since 1st September 2012 in vocational education widened the scope of possible forms of the cooperation between schools and employers. The employers can participate in every stage of vocational education process: from the process of identifying the skills needs for an occupation to the moment of assessing learning outcomes of VET students during external exams.<sup>35</sup> They can especially:

- design, in cooperation with school, the teaching programme (with special regard to the programme of practical training) on the basis of VET core curriculum,
- organise practical training and apprenticeship for VET students and juvenile workers,
- participate in the system of external exams (they can be examiners and the exams may be conducted in their premises),
- organise internships for VET students and teachers to provide them with the possibility to use most modern technology.

The employers that supervise the apprenticeship training are usually members of a guild or chamber of handicrafts. The Polish Association of Crafts and the Federation of Polish Employers have developed networks of companies which provide work placements.

The employer employing an apprentice for occupational training is obliged to:<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> [https://ohp.pl/?page\\_id=434](https://ohp.pl/?page_id=434)

<sup>35</sup> Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes, Cedefop (2014)

<sup>36</sup> Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes, Cedefop (2014)



- design the training programme on the basis of the core curriculum for a given profession, or
- design the training programme on the basis of the examination standards defined for the title of journeyman by the Polish Craft Association;
- provide apprentices with trainers who are adequately qualified;
- provide workwear and protective measures for apprentices.

An employer is obliged to monitor whether the apprentice takes compulsory theoretical training:

- in a basic vocational school,
- in the centres of continuing education and professional development (ODiDZ),
- in the employer's seat

Company can also take patronage of a class at local vocational school; in which case the practical education is fully organize at the employer's. The agreement between school and the employer is set and the expectations of the employer are taken into consideration i.e. during the design of the learning programme.. The initiative is a response to a shortage of qualified workers on the local labour market.<sup>37</sup>

## **1.3.Financial Implications**

### **1.3.1. Cost responsibility**

VET education is jointly funded by employers and the Labour Fund, a special fund under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour. Apprentices do not cover the costs of apprenticeship training.

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<sup>37</sup> Examples of patronage classes: <http://www.volkswagen-poznan.pl/en/news/volkswagen-poznan-betting-professional-development>; <http://cometaresearch.org/uncategorized/patronage-classes-linking-labor-market-with-education/>

### 1.3.2. Public Funding

Public funding allocation remains in the hands of schools and school governing bodies – communes (in the case of public kindergartens, primary and lower secondary schools) and districts (in the case of public upper secondary schools).

The greater part of financial support for education comes from the public budget. The amount of the general subvention for all local government units is defined annually in the budgetary act.<sup>38</sup>

Local self-government units as the authorities in charge of schools receive the educational part of the General Subvention for financing educational tasks. Within educational subvention, the authorities in charge reimburse employers with whom schools have concluded agreements for practical vocational training for: the remuneration of practical vocational training instructors, who conduct practical training with learners – up to the minimum basic salary of a contract teacher holding a teacher training college (in 2013: PLN 1,802, c.a. EUR 437); a training subsidy for the instructors of practical vocational training – not less than 10% of an average remuneration in the sector of enterprises which do not pay bonuses from profits (in 2014: not less than PLN 400.44, c.a. EUR 97).<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, also the costs of clothing and shoes are reimbursed if the real life conditions in the workplace require special clothes (up to 20% of the average remuneration) and per diem remuneration for students who attend apprenticeship on ships being away from home.

Financial mechanism are subsidies paid to employers from the Labour Fund to assist with the cost of apprenticeship training of juvenile workers. According to the Act of 7 September 1991 on the Education System (Art. 70b), employers conducting the apprenticeship training are entitled to the co-financing of the training costs from the Labour Fund (on the condition that the apprentice passed a required vocational

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<sup>38</sup> The System of Education in Poland in brief, Polish Eurydice Unit (2015)

<sup>39</sup> Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes, Cedefop (2014)



exams). The subsidies are subject to valorisation on the basis of the general consumer price index.

Employers who have a contract for apprenticeship training with apprentices are also entitled to applying for the reimbursement of employment costs from the Labour Fund. Accordingly to existing regulations the learner (juvenile worker) gets not less than 4% (1st year of training), 5% (2nd year of training) and 6% (3rd year of training) of the average monthly salary, however the employer can indicate another amount of salary for the trainee (not smaller than the one indicated above).<sup>40</sup> Employers may apply for the reimbursement of apprentices' remuneration up to the above mentioned levels and also for the reimbursement of social security costs.<sup>41</sup>

## **2. Support Services for Companies – Status quo**

### **2.1. Supporting institutions**

#### **2.1.1. Public Institutions**

For several years, the Voluntary Labour Corps has been conducting a task commissioned by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy to support employers who take young workers on board in order to provide them with vocational training. The key vehicle of this initiative is reimbursement of the wages of young workers.<sup>42</sup>

#### **2.1.2. Social Partnership institutions**

For social partnership institutions, mainly chambers and guilds provide information support to companies e.g. issuing brochures on the apprenticeship training, providing practical information on apprenticeship organization, terms of employment,

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<sup>40</sup> Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 28.05.1996 r. w sprawie przygotowania zawodowego młodocianych i ich wynagradzania (Dz.U. nr 60, poz. 278, z późn. zm.) [The Decree of the Chambers of Ministers from 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1996 on the vocational preparation of juveniles and the rules of the remuneration].

<sup>41</sup> Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes, Cedefop (2014)

<sup>42</sup> [https://ohp.pl/?page\\_id=71](https://ohp.pl/?page_id=71)



remuneration possibilities, etc. See example <http://izba.lublin.pl/praktyczna-nauka-zawodu>

### **2.1.3. Private Institutions**

Not found

## **3. Experience and needs of enterprises: results of the company survey**

### **3.1. Statistical Profile of participants**

In February – March 2017, OIC Poland Foundation conducted the survey on SMEs experiences, needs and expectations when engaging with apprenticeship schemes in Lubelskie voivodship and beyond. A total of 22 completed questionnaires were returned.

On the 22 companies surveyed,

- 7 companies (32%) have from 1 to 4 employees
- 3 companies (13,5%) have from 5 to 9 employees
- 7 companies (32%) have from 10 to 25 employees
- 3 companies (13,5%) have from 26 to 49 employees
- 2 companies (9%) have from 50 to 99 employees

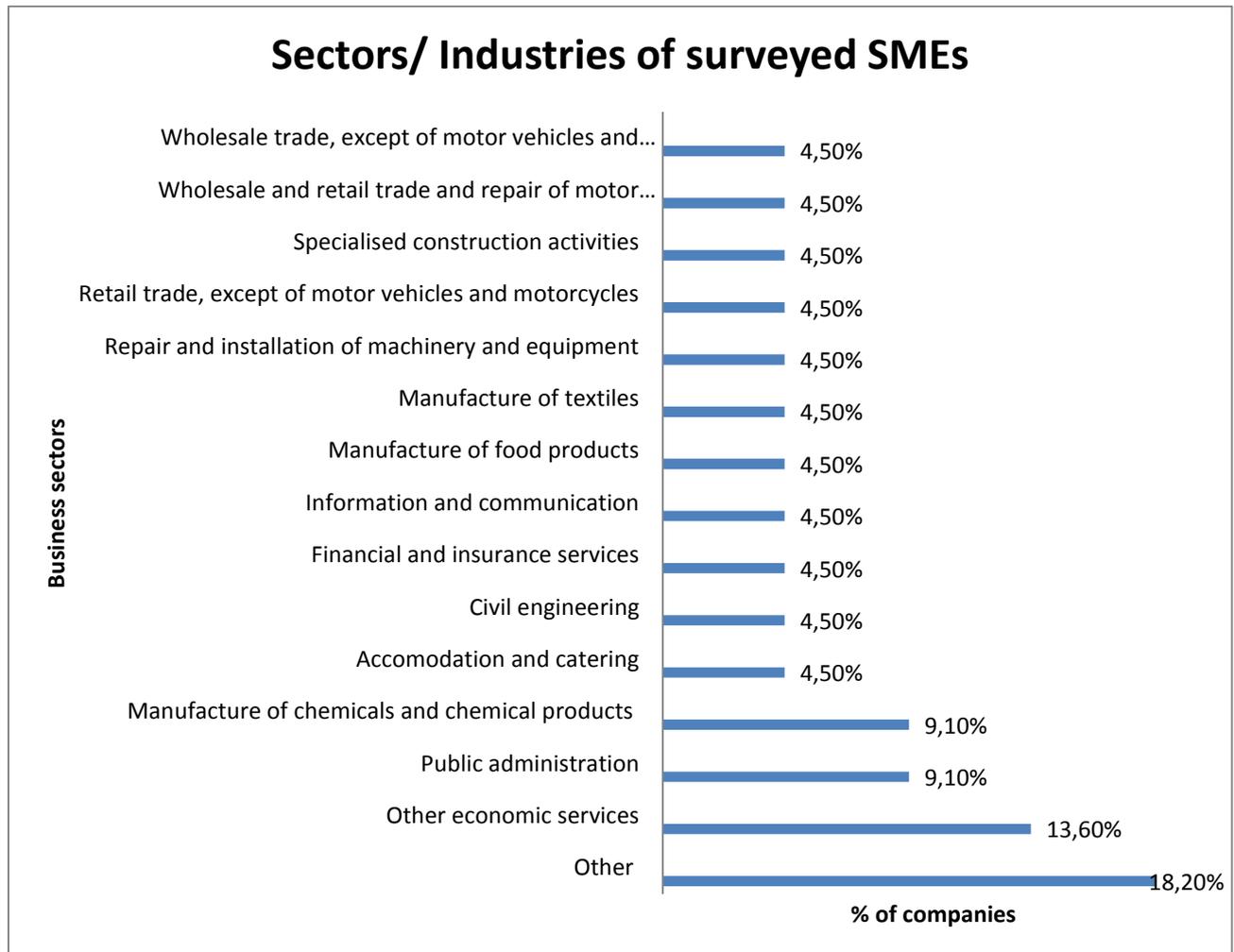
Considering involvement in apprenticeship,

- 14 have currently no apprentices (64%)
- 8 have currently apprentices (36%)

Moreover,

- 16 have currently no interns (73%)
- 5 have currently from 1 to 5 interns (23%)
- 1 has currently from 6 to 10 internes (4%)

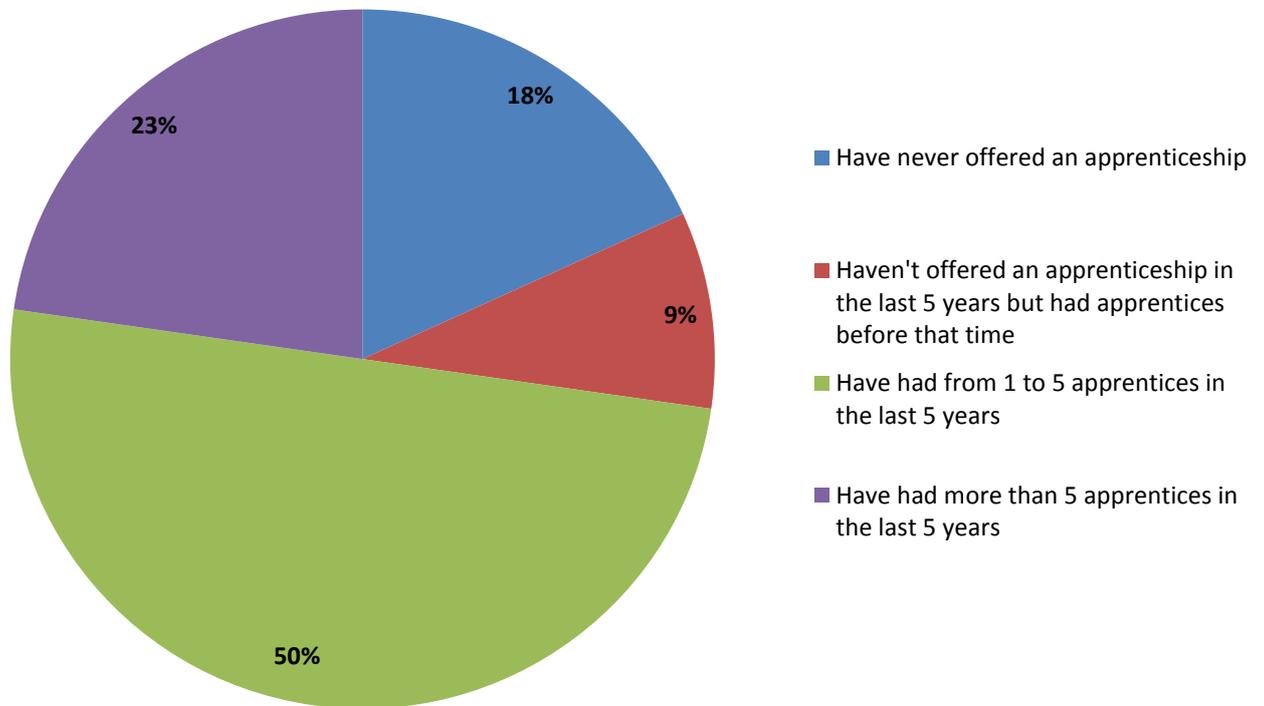
Below table represents the sectors/industries the survey companies represented.



On the 22 companies surveyed,

- 4 have never offered an apprenticeship (18%)
- 2 haven't offered an apprenticeship in the last five years, but had apprentices before that time (9%)
- 11 had from 1 to 5 apprentices in the last five years (50%)
- 5 had more than 5 apprentices in the last five years (23%)

### Have your company offered an apprenticeship in the last five years ?



### 3.2.Reasons for not offering apprenticeships/internships

Respondents were asked the following question:

What are the reasons why you have not offered apprenticeship in the last five years?

6 companies (27%) answered to this question. Below there are top reasons of not offering apprenticeship among surveyed companies. For this analysis the answers “especially important”, “very important” and “rather important” were added to calculate the percentage results.

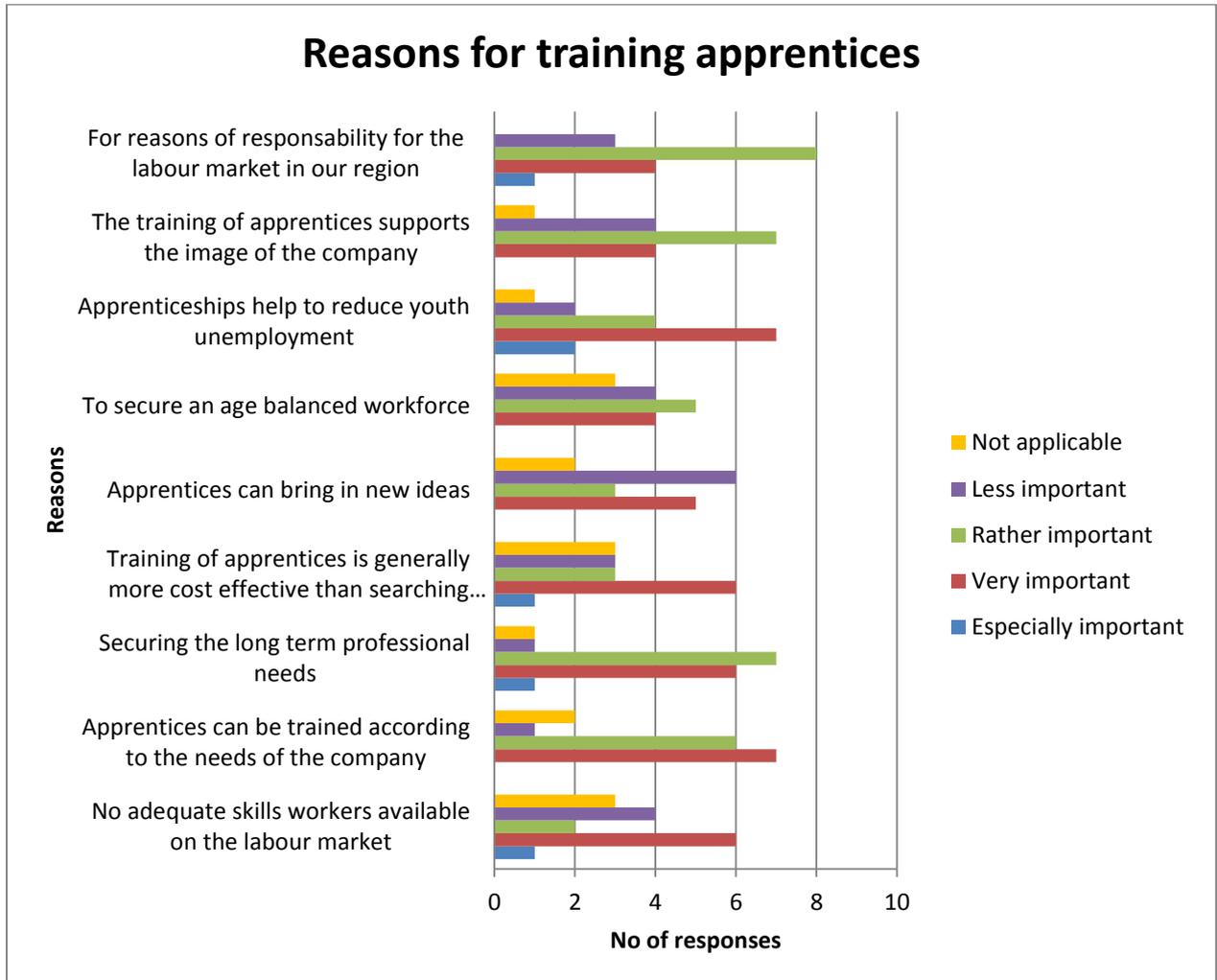
## Top reasons for not offering apprenticeship



In addition, 2 respondents stated that they do not offer apprenticeship due to lack of knowledge on apprenticeship schemes, and company policy of not training apprentices.

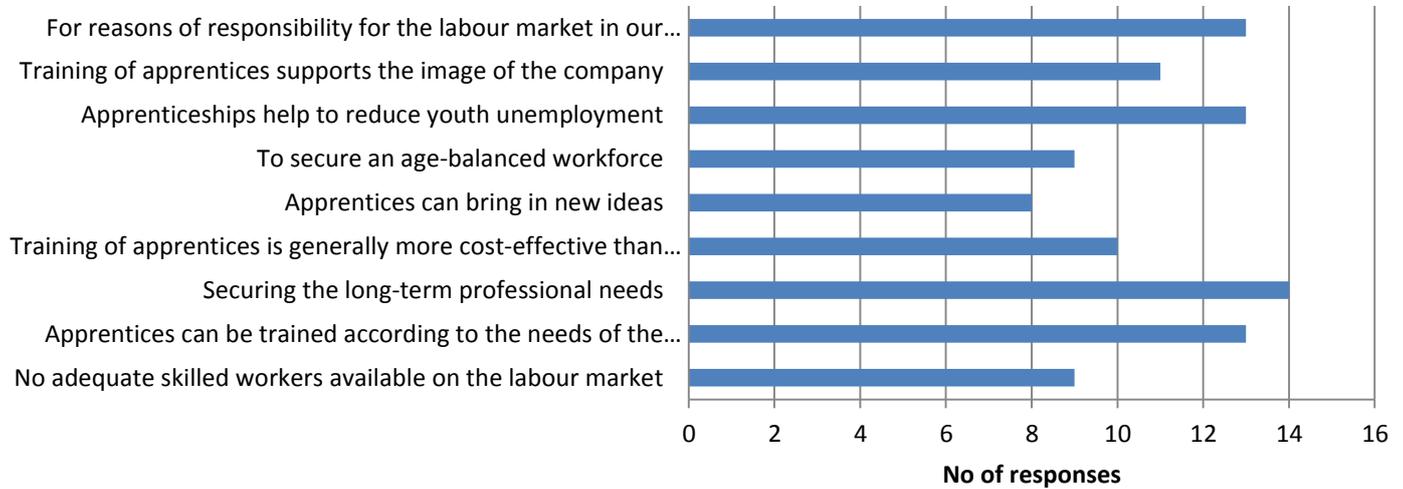
### 3.3.Reasons for training apprentices/interns

For this analysis, 16 questionnaires (73%) were taken into account.



For the below analysis the answers “especially important”, “very important” and “rather important” were added to calculate the percentage results.

## Most important reasons for taking on apprentice

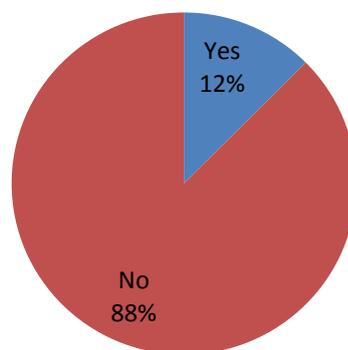


### 3.4. Recruitment of apprentices/interns: Problems, challenges and needs

Out of 16 companies recruiting apprentices, 14 (88%) didn't report any particular problems with the recruitment process.

Only 2 companies (12%) did have problems with recruitment of apprentices.

### Did your company have any problems with the recruitment of apprentices?



The 2 companies agreed on the following problems as being important:

- The practical understanding or basic practical skills of the applicants were / are insufficient



- The basic school competences of the applicants were / are insufficient
- The personal / social competences of the applicants were / are insufficient
- Lack of resources and time-consuming dimension of apprenticeship schemes
- Rural isolation and barriers to travel

As solution to the encountered problems, one company suggested to elaborate a set of informative materials, on which basis the applicants for apprenticeship would have to take on the entry test. It would be also good idea to check on applicant's interpersonal skills.

### **3.5.Support received**

Among the two companies reporting recruitment difficulties, one didn't receive any support, whereas the other was supported.

The company which received support in dealing with these problems said they had support from: Representative of interests (e.g. Chambers, Guild, and Federation of Small Business)

The support which they received was:

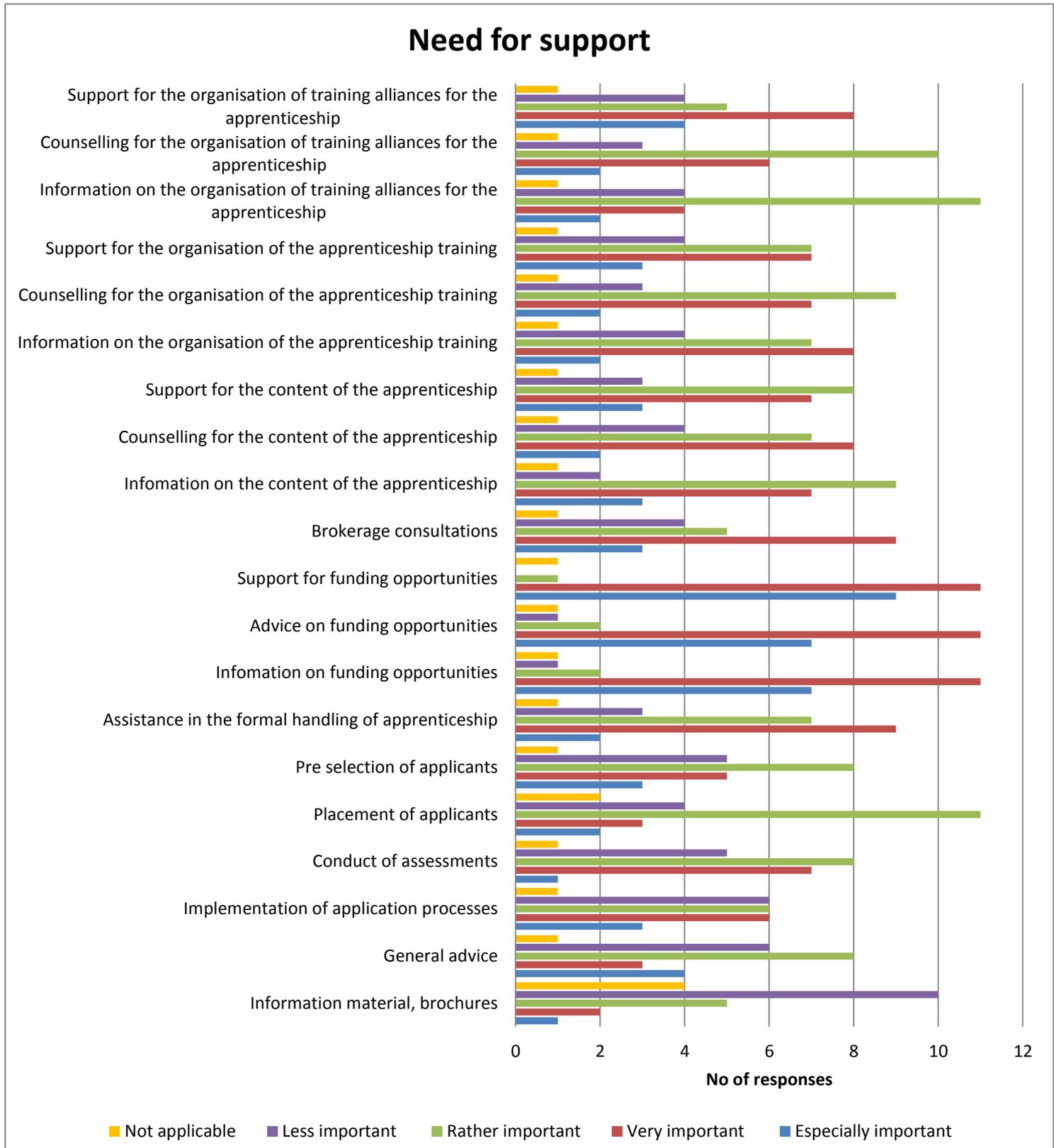
- Assistance in the formal handling of apprenticeship (teaching or internship contract, insurance notifications, remuneration),
- Information on funding opportunities
- Advice on funding opportunities
- Brokerage consultations (Completion of training/skills need analysis)
- Information on the content of the apprenticeship
- Counselling for the content of the apprenticeship
- Support for the content of apprenticeship
- Information on the organisation of the apprenticeship training
- Counselling for the organisation of the apprenticeship training

The company that received support said it benefited from it. They were offered the pedagogical and craftsman course.

### 3.6. Need for support

The following question was asked to all 22 companies: What kind of support would you like to receive in the preparation and implementation of apprenticeships?

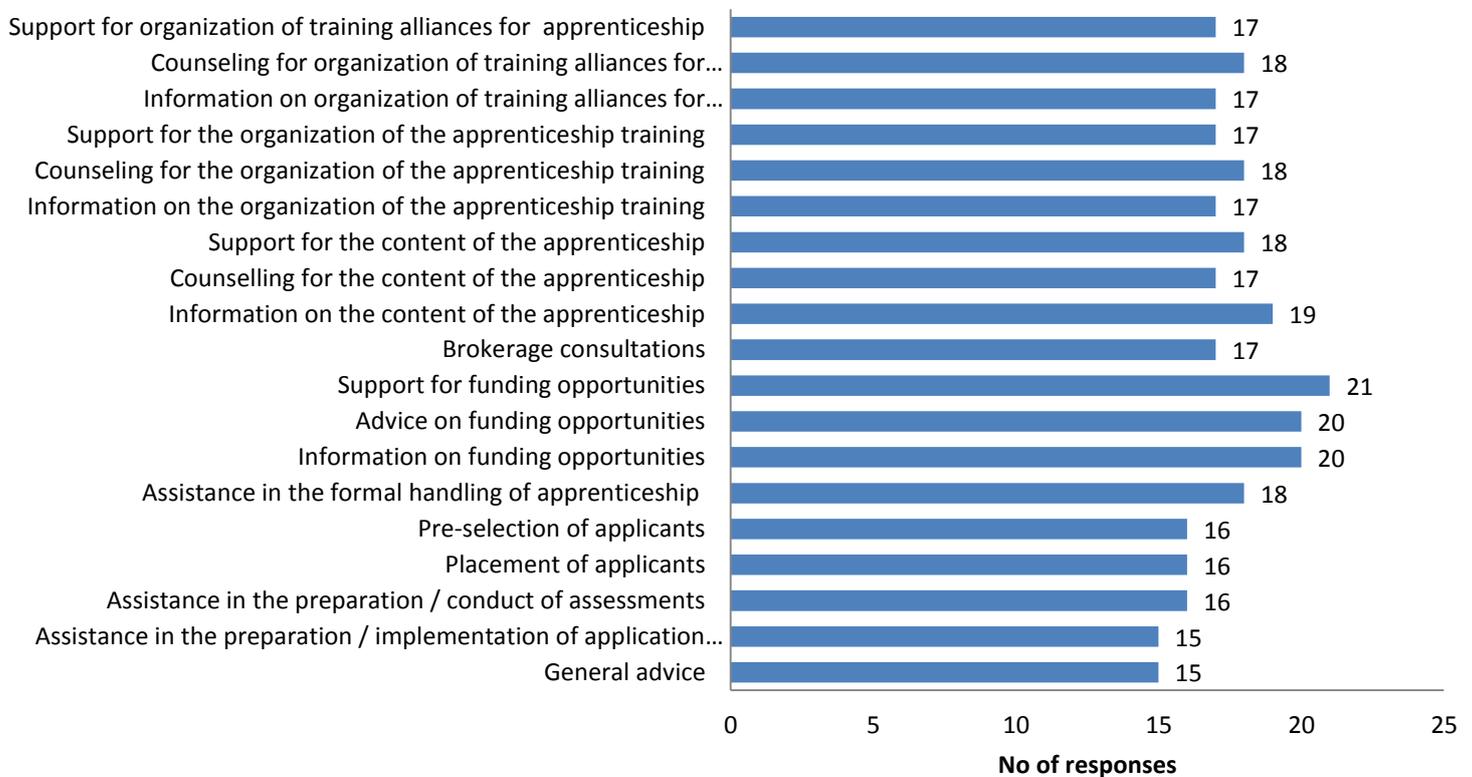
Below chart displays respondents' answers:



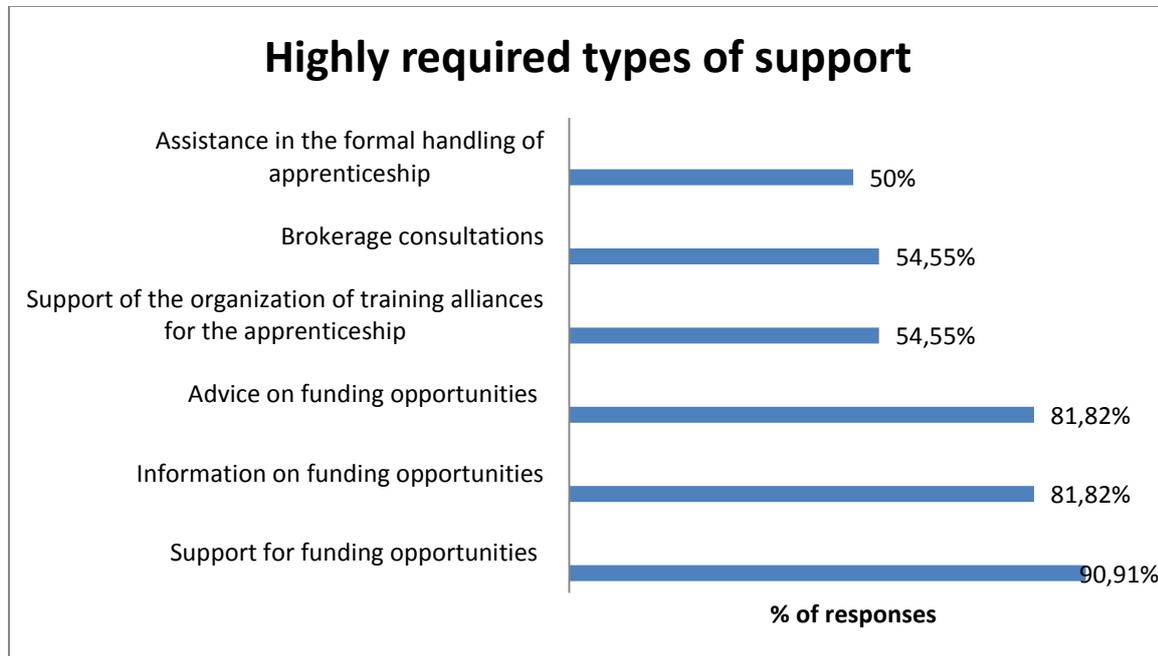
As displayed by the above chart, the SMEs are interested in learning more about funding opportunities and need further assistance in handling formal aspects.

The most desired types of support are displayed in the below table. For this analysis the answers “especially important” “very important” and “rather important” answers were added to calculate the percentage results.

### Highly required types of support



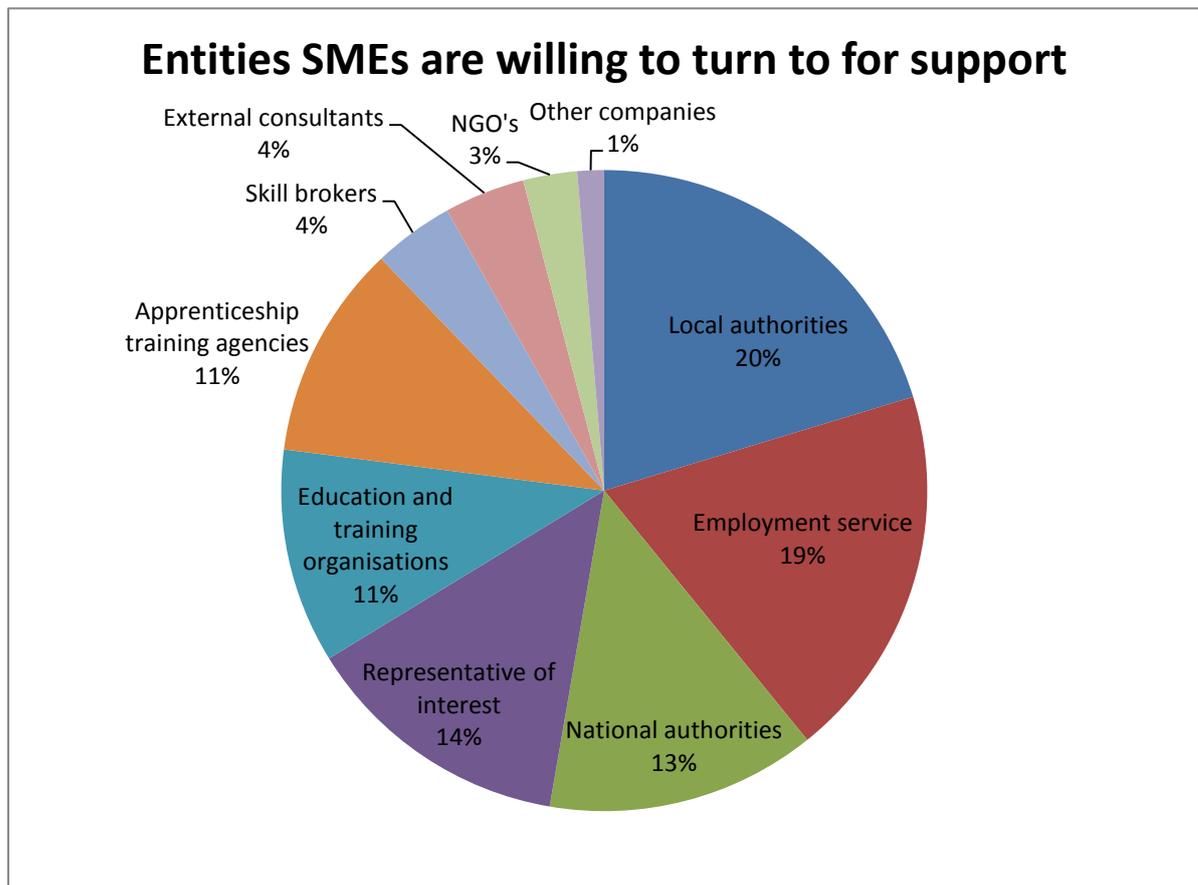
For the below analysis only the answers “especially important” and “very important” were added to calculate the percentage results.



Least desired are promotional materials, general advice and help in placement of applicants.

Additional defined support by respondents is obtaining information on how to get funding, purchase equipment needed for apprenticeships, on wages for apprenticeships, as well as maintenance of collaboration with schools engaging in apprenticeship schemes.

The companies would like to receive this support from:



## 4. Conclusion

Following the change of government in 2015, extensive reforms in the education sector were announced at the end of 2015<sup>43</sup>. The aim of the reforms is to raise the quality of education in upper secondary schools, including vocational schools. Under the education reform, starting from the 2017/2018 school year, Poland is to return to its previous system of eight-year elementary schools followed by four-year high schools or five-year technical schools.

In addition, the school year 2014–2015 was declared as the 'Year of Vocational Schools', which was marked by a programme of improvement of the quality of vocational education. The sector, neglected and underfunded until recently, now has a chance to adjust to conditions in the contemporary labour market, both in Poland and in Europe. Efforts to

<sup>43</sup> <http://reformaedukacji.men.gov.pl/>



increase the attractiveness and quality of vocational education in Poland are being made, however still systematic cooperation with companies remains an issue. The mismatch between qualifications required by the labour market and those provided by VET schools remains significant.

The funding method for VET means that Powiat authorities fund VET programmes even if qualifications are not in demand, while it discourages them from funding vocational qualifications that are costlier to provide and often more in demand (Cedefop 2015a). However, within the framework of the current reform of vocational education it is planned to strengthen actions aimed at closer linking education with the labour market.<sup>44</sup>

The survey conducted in the SMEs sector for SERFA purposes in Poland confirms the need of better engagement of SMEs into apprenticeship schemes. The need was previously identified in the report „Cooperation of vocational schools with employers”<sup>45</sup> by NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SUPPORTING VOCATIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION with adequate recommendations on national, regional, local and school levels.

Although, the surveyed companies in majority do not report recruitment problems with apprentices (88%), which is due to the apprenticeship system in Poland (the involvement of enterprises in VET is mostly arranged through agreements between employers and individual schools) they still need support required mainly for funding opportunities (90%), training alliances, brokerage consultation as well as assistance in formal handling of apprenticeship (more than 50% respondents indicated the above). Moreover, the involvement of companies in the apprenticeship and willingness to host and train apprentices is not on the satisfactory level. It results also from less interest in VET system in last two decades when more emphasis was put on general education than VET.

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<sup>44</sup> Education and Training Monitor 2016, Poland, European Commission

<sup>45</sup> Współpraca szkół zawodowych z pracodawcami, KOWEziU (2013)



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