

Ute Hippach-Schneider, Christian Woll, Georg Hanf



ReferNet-Country Report

Germany

VET Policy Report 2008



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ReferNet Country Report Germany 2008

Progress in the policy priority areas for
vocational education and training

July 2008

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Preface

The "Copenhagen process" was launched as the contribution of Vocational Education and Training (VET) to the challenges identified in the Lisbon-Agenda. In the Copenhagen Declaration, approved on 30 November 2002, the ministers responsible for VET in 31 European countries (EU Member States, candidate countries, EFTA-EEA countries), the European social partners and the European Commission agreed on enhanced European cooperation in VET.

This **Policy Report** forms part of the Cedefop ReferNet 2008 work programme. It provides information on Germany's progress in VET towards EU policy goals within the framework of the Copenhagen process and according to the policy priorities defined in the Maastricht Communiqué (2004) and the Helsinki Communiqué (2006). It considers measures taken in the context of the Education and Training 2010 programme since the Copenhagen Declaration.

The main section of the report is subdivided into the following seven policy areas identified by education ministers as priorities for national policy design in the VET sector:

- Improving access to and equity in VET;
- Lifelong learning through VET;
- Improving quality of VET;
- Strengthening the links between VET and the labour market;
- Governance and funding;
- EU tools and geographic mobility within VET;
- Development of VET statistics.

The introductory chapter of this report deals with socio-economic aspects and aspects of labour market relevance, the background of which aims to enhance understanding of national policy design. The final chapter provides an outlook of possible educational policy priorities after 2010, when the Lisbon process will be completed.

The national ReferNet policy reports will be one of the main sources Cedefop will use to produce the 2008 review of the Copenhagen Process, in line with its mandate. They will feed into an analysis of policy progress which Cedefop will prepare for the informal meeting of Education Ministers to be held during the French Presidency at Bordeaux on 26 November 2008 as well as into a policy progress report which Cedefop will publish presumably in spring 2009.

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1. National political and socio-economic context

Globalisation, demographic and sectoral change, migration, altering economic and labour market circumstances and requirements are some of the challenges Europe is facing, which also affect VET policy. This theme aims to contextualise VET changes occurring at national level.

1.1. National political/policy context

In Germany, responsibility for VET is divided up between the German Federal Government and the regional state (*Länder*) governments: the Federal Government is responsible for VET in companies while school-based initial vocational education and training (IVET) is the domain of the *Länder* governments. The most important component of the German VET system is the “Dual System” in which two places of learning,¹ the part-time vocational school and the training company, interact productively to teach both the theoretical and methodological principles of an occupation and build practical workplace experience. In 2007, 66.2% of the school-leavers from general education opted for a dual-system apprenticeship (cf. BMBF 2008b, p. 27). Access to a dual-system apprenticeship is not formally dependent on a particular school-leaving qualification. However, a higher-level school-leaving qualification improves the chances of finding a training place. Depending on the chosen occupation, an apprenticeship takes between two and three-and-a-half years. Especially high achievers may submit an application mid-training to have their qualifying period shortened.

The aim of vocational training in the Dual System is to lay a broad-based foundation for vocational training and to equip young people with the skills and competencies necessary to perform a skilled occupation in the changing world of work. Successful completion of an apprenticeship is a prerequisite for skilled employment in one of approx. 340 state-recognised occupations requiring formal training (‘training occupations’).² These are regulated by a standard national system of training regulations which govern the company-based element of training, and framework curricula which govern vocational school teaching.

The training occupations are developed and adapted to the needs of the world of work in cooperation with Federal and *Länder* administrations and the social partners. In evidence that VET policy has reacted quickly to increasing requirements and rapid structural change in industry, in the last ten years (the period 1998-2008) 162 training regulations have been modernised and 62 have been newly developed (cf. BIBB 2008a, p. 5) (see 5.2.1).

Some occupational qualifications can only be gained on full-time school-based courses. This applies especially in the vocational fields of business and administration, hygiene, health and home economics. Since the full-time vocational school courses are regulated by individual *Länder*, there can be instances where vocational qualifications with apparently similar designations mask differences in the length and content of IVET programmes, or where similar programmes lead to qualifications with different occupational titles.

¹ That said, neither the part-time vocational schools nor the companies are uniform places of learning. The company setting, in particular, can be very multi-faceted: apart from standard on-the-job learning and the training workshops used by large companies, sectors such as the skilled crafts and construction operate inter-company vocational training centres (*überbetriebliche Berufsbildungsstätten*, ÜBS). Training regulations set out the required training content for each particular occupation, and many small and medium-sized enterprises in these sectors are unable to cover every aspect themselves. They therefore make use of the facilities of the ÜBS where certain training elements are taught to supplement the company-based training. Even within the vocational school there are different places of learning, e.g. the classroom for vocational theory lessons and general (non-occupation-specific) teaching, the school laboratory for vocational practice in the industrial-technical occupations and the simulation office for initial vocational training in commerce.

² The current list of state-recognised training occupations gives an overview:
<http://www2.bibb.de/tools/aab/aabberufeliste.php>

The two greatest challenges for the German education and employment system in the next few years are demographic change and economic structural change (see 1.2).

Against this backdrop, the German Federal Government sees education and training as key to the future of economic and social development, and higher qualifications and lifelong learning as the best precautions against unemployment. Ensuring the medium- and long-term supply of skilled workers is seen as a priority in order to maintain growth and employment in Germany.

To step up the pace of progress in education and training, the Federal Government launched its “Qualification Initiative” in January 2008 (BMBF 2008a). It encompasses activities to advance and support lifelong learning, from early childhood education to continuing education and training at work. Implementation and further measures are coordinated with the *Länder*, companies and social partners.

Together with the Qualification Initiative, the political priorities for VET listed in the table below were outcomes of two task forces, the “Innovation Circle on Vocational Education” (*Innovationskreis Berufliche Bildung*, IKBB) and the “Innovation Circle on Continuing Education and Training” (*Innovationskreis Weiterbildung*, IKWB), which were set up in spring 2006 by Education Minister Annette Schavan to lay foundations for new structures in IVET and CVET. Both innovation task forces were recruited from high-level representatives from business, research, industry associations, trade unions and *Länder* administrations. In July 2007 the IKBB set out ten guidelines on the reform of vocational education, the majority of which were taken up in the Qualification Initiative (BMBF 2007a). The stated objective of the IKBB was to identify the central challenges for innovation in the German vocational education and training system, and to work out concrete options for improving the structures of vocational education and training. The recommendations of the IKWB which were published in March 2008 follow on from the “Strategy for Lifelong Learning in the Federal Republic of Germany” agreed in 2004 by the Federal and *Länder* governments as represented by the Bund-*Länder* Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (BLK) (BMBF 2008c). They build on diverse range of previous initiatives and approaches to strengthen lifelong learning and are embedded in current initiatives, e.g. the Qualification Initiative. The overall objective is to achieve a 50% participation rate in continuing vocational education and training by 2015 (see 9.1).

No.	Policy priority	Main causes and reasons	Policy approach
1.	Training places for all	To meet demand for skilled workers, improve equal opportunities in education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continuation of the National Pact for Training ➤ Conversion of the previous special programme “Introductory training for young people” (<i>Einstiegsqualifizierung Jugendlicher</i>, EQJ) into universal Introductory Training (<i>Einstiegsqualifizierung</i>, EQ) which is now available to job-seekers of any age as a routine entitlement and an integration mechanism ➤ Improvement of regional IVET structures: BMBF “JOBSTARTER” and “Training places for the eastern states” (<i>Ausbildungsplatz Ost</i>) programmes

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction of a training bonus (<i>Ausbildungsbonus</i>) ➤ Training module programme ➤ Use of extra- and inter-company training capacities for repeat applicants (<i>Altbewerber</i>) ➤ Expansion of practical classes ➤ “Vocational qualification prospects” (<i>Perspektive Berufabschluss</i>) programme ➤ Recruitment of companies in innovative and research-based sectors and in growth sectors for IVET, e. g. targeted sector campaigns
2.	Advancement through education	Structural and economic change, maintain (international) competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Award of an advancement bursary to talented completers of dual-system apprenticeships wishing to proceed directly into higher education study ➤ Raised level of grant support for upgrading training
3.	Improving permeability and integration between education sectors, especially smoothing the transition from school to university	Too few students embarking on higher education degrees in Germany (36.6% in 2007) by international comparison (OECD average: 54%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Higher Education Pact 2020 ➤ Stepping up information campaigns, e. g. through the German international schools and the “Routes into study” (<i>Wege ins Studium</i>) network in which the Federal and <i>Länder</i> governments support academic counselling jointly with other partners ➤ Stepping up promotion of study at German universities via the German international schools ➤ Development of additional qualifications at the interfaces between initial and continuing vocational education and training ➤ Creation of additional, differentiated options for crediting prior qualifications towards a higher education degree
4.	Strengthening the European dimension during IVET	To address increasing globalisation, to maintain (international) competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of a German Qualification Framework (<i>Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen, DQR</i>) ➤ Development and piloting of a credit transfer system for VET ➤ Opening up the German system of training and further training regulations to Europe ➤ International training for apprentices ➤ Reinforcement of VET on the dual system and dual principle within Europe

5.	Significant increase in participation in continuing education, particularly the participation rate of low-qualified workers, by 2015	Demographic change, globalisation, rapid technical progress and the economy's constantly changing needs for qualified staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthening the motivation and responsibility of individuals for their lifelong learning ➤ Enhancing recognition and acceptance of lifelong learning ➤ Improving permeability and integration between education sectors ➤ Ensuring transparency and high quality vocational guidance, development of guidance opportunities ➤ Improving integration of migrants into the education system ➤ Boosting the appeal of continuing education opportunities for older people, e. g. the Federal Employment Agency's special programme "Continuing vocational education and training for low-qualified and older workers in companies" (<i>Weiterbildung Geringqualifizierter und beschäftigter Älterer in Unternehmen, WeGebAU</i>) ➤ Introduction of a learning subsidy (<i>Bildungsprämie</i>) (saving for continuing education and training)
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1.2. Socio-economic context

In terms of the three sectors of the economy, Germany has witnessed a distinct shift from the industrial to the service economy in recent decades, albeit somewhat later than in other countries. Over this time the service sector has become by far the largest sector of the German economy, measured by gross value-added and by labour force structure. This transformation from an industrial to a knowledge and service society has direct effects on demand for skilled workers. Declining employment in the primary and secondary sectors and in areas of the economy allied to production contrasts with high growth in the tertiary sector (e. g. in business and personal services). Analyses of employment and training trends show, however, that at least some parts of the tertiary sector are less active than average in providing vocational training, compared with crafts or industrial-technical occupations. The aim is therefore to steer companies and businesses in innovative research and technology-based sectors with employment growth but without a tradition of VET - e.g. optical technologies, bio- and nanotechnology or microsystems technology - towards dual-system initial vocational training.

The overall trend in the apprenticeship-place market showed a positive upturn in 2007. A total of 625,914 new apprenticeship contracts were concluded, enabling the competent bodies to report the second highest contract results since German reunification, as of the 30th September 2007 reporting date (cf. BMBF 2008b, pp. 14f.). This clear rise in new contracts contributed to the distinctly lower figure for young people still without placements. As of 30th September 2007 the Federal Employment Agency's statistics showed that 29,102 applicants remained unplaced. That amounts to some 20,000 or 41.2% fewer than one year before. At the same time, however, the trend in the number of repeat applicants (*Altbewerber/innen*) continued to rise (see 2.1).

Germany's labour market situation has improved tangibly in the past three years. The unemployment rate has fallen from 10.7% (2005) to 8.4% (2007) (Eurostat 2008). Nevertheless Germany's unemployment rate remains above the EU average (7.1% in 2007). Furthermore, low-qualified workers in Germany bear a disproportionately high labour market risk. Broken down by qualification, the unemployment rate in Germany for economically active individuals with no vocational qualification was 26% in 2005 compared with 9.7% for completers of a dual-system apprenticeship or a trade and technical school programme. Only 4.1% of higher education graduates were unemployed (cf. Reinberg/Hummel 2007, p. 4). A labour market policy priority in Germany is therefore to combat and prevent long-term unemployment and to integrate low-qualified workers into the labour market. The German Federal Government attaches particular value to support for young people without a vocational qualification. One example of this is the former special programme "Introductory Training for Young People" (*Einstiegsqualifizierung Jugendlicher*, EQJ; see example 2 in 2.3.2) which was incorporated into Book III of the German Social Code (*Sozialgesetzbuch*, SGB) in October 2007 as a discretionary entitlement for employers. Companies which offer young people without apprenticeship places a six- to twelve-month introductory training programme qualify for a subsidy towards the young people's training allowance. Unlike the previous EQJ programme, public employers can also receive this funding. In addition, there is no longer a formal age limit. Furthermore, along with the "**training subsidy**" (*Qualifizierungszuschuss*, Section 421o SGB III) a wage-cost subsidy was introduced for long-term unemployed workers without a vocational qualification. It is mandatory to use part of the subsidy for training provided by the employer. Efforts are also in hand to improve the employment prospects of long-term unemployed people who have little contact with the labour market and multiple barriers to placement. Without support, the labour market offers them no opportunities. Under the new instrument of "allowances to assist employment" (*Leistungen zur Beschäftigungsförderung*) in Book II of the Social Code (SGB II), new employment contracts attract initial short-term support for 24 months and subsequently a permanent allowance of up to 75% of wage costs, plus subsidies for accompanying training. Currently the Federal Employment Agency's special programme "Continuing vocational education and training for low-qualified and older workers in companies" (WeGebAU) supports training for older employees (over the age of 45 in companies with fewer than 250 employees) and unskilled workers (see 6.3).

One of the major challenges in years and decades to come is demographic change, which affects Germany even more severely than many other European countries. Since 2003 the population count has been in slight decline since the migration surplus can no longer compensate for the birth-rate deficit (cf. Statistisches Bundesamt 2007b, p. 34). At the same time, a shift in the age structure is producing an ageing workforce. The age-group aged 20-25 which is relevant for the supply of young skilled workers will shrink drastically from 2010. Even now, there is a discernible shortage of skilled workers in some sectors and regions. There is particular demand for people with qualifications in mathematics, information technology, natural sciences and technical disciplines (known as "MINT" subjects) and for those with "Technical Engineer" and "Master Craftsman" level qualifications in technical fields (cf. BMBF 2008a, p. 2). By 2010 the number of young people aged under 20 will be 10% lower than in 2006, and will continue to decline markedly (cf. Statistisches Bundesamt 2006, p. 5). With regard to numbers of school-leavers from general education, two trend lines can be identified: in the old *Länder*, the number of school-leavers is likely to remain high until 2013 whereas in the new *Länder*, according to current estimates, the figure in 2013 is expected to be half the year 2000 level (cf. BMBF 2008b Übersicht 17). To safeguard the necessary basis for growth in Germany's skilled workforce, the Federal Government has extended the "**National Pact for Career Training and Skilled Manpower Development in Germany**" by another three years, having originally concluded it in June 2004 as a 3-year pact with the top-level organisations of German industry (see 5.3). The BMBF "JOBSTARTER – Training for the Future" programme aimed at improving regional training structures was launched in 2006 and is scheduled to run until 2010 (cf. 2.2.2 Example 1). Its funding has been raised to € 125 million in total. The BMBF has also developed a new

programme “**Vocational qualification prospects**” (*Perspektive Berufabschluss*) to increase training opportunities for disadvantaged young people and second-chance qualifications for young adults. It was launched at the start of 2008 (see 2.3.1). Finally, a new support programme “**Vocational orientation in inter-company and comparable training facilities**” (*Berufsorientierung in überbetrieblichen und vergleichbaren Berufsbildungsstätten*) was set up to provide school pupils with some early vocational orientation and to assist companies with the timely recruitment of young skilled workers (see Example 1 in 3.3.2). On the other hand, the Federal Government has further enhanced its efforts to integrate older workers into the labour market. October 2005 marked the start of the federal programme “Initiative 50 plus” for an initial term of two years. The second phase of the programme began on 1st January 2008 and runs until the end of 2010. The goal of the initiative is to raise the employability and employment opportunities of older people. Older people’s labour market prospects should be improved by extending and fine-tuning the attractiveness of the wage top-up scheme (*Kombilohn*) which balances out a drop in earnings on acceptance of a low-paid job, as well as integration grants to employers and assistance for CVET. To encourage companies to appoint more older employees, the use of fixed-term contracts for employees over the age of 52 has been made permanently easier in compliance with Community law. Across Germany, 62 regional projects are being supported which involve a total of 194 consortiums (*Arbeitsgemeinschaften, ARGEn*) and authorised local authority agencies fulfilling separate tasks. The Federal Government provided a total of € 250 m in support for employment pacts in 2006 und 2007. For the second phase of the programme, the Federal Government is making around € 275 m available. The “**New quality of work**” (*Neue Qualität der Arbeit - INQA*) initiative and the funding of pilot projects to develop age-appropriate working conditions are intended to optimise the conditions for maintaining health and employability.

1.2.1. Examples of policy measures

At this point a detailed presentation of individual examples is not provided. The measures and initiatives mentioned and briefly described in section 1.2 will be reintroduced as examples in the relevant thematic sections.

The example descriptions in each section are structured as follows:

A. Title of policy measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full title and if applicable acronym • Term or year of introduction/adoption/implementation
B. Outline of the policy/measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale; • Objectives and/or measurable targets; • Target groups/education level(s)/sector(s) • Status of implementation
C. Policy/measure operation and delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of operation; • Is it an isolated policy/measure or part of a larger education/training/employment/ social policy approach? • Key actors involved.

D. Assessment of the policy/measure

- Assessment of impact (including results of evaluation studies);
- Indicators of success;
- Integration of outcomes into other policies.

E. Conclusions

- Obstacles encountered and overcome (what did not work and why?)
- What issues remain to be addressed?

2. Improving access to and equity in VET

Widening access to training opportunities can have a number of benefits: participation increases and social exclusion can be tackled. This theme asks for information on policies which raise participation rates in VET both for young people and adults, in particular for those with low formal qualification levels (e.g. early school-leavers, people with migrant background or with special needs, older workers, ethnic minorities, etc.) who often need different ways of learning to develop their competences.

2.1. National policy context on improving access to and equity in VET

The importance of VET in Germany is shown inter alia by the fact that in 2005, approximately 67% of an age cohort gained a vocational qualification; of these, 73% were from the Dual System, with the remainder obtained predominantly from full-time school-based vocational courses (cf. BIBB 2008c). Traditionally, VET has high social status in Germany. 16.1% of all young people who concluded a training contract in the year 2006 already held a higher education entrance qualification (cf. BMBF 2008b, p. 101). The VET system produces skilled workers who, with further vocational training, go on to manage craft businesses and take up middle management positions in companies.

As a matter of principle, access to the Dual System is open to all young people. There are no formal entrance requirements. However, as a consequence of the negative employment trend up to 2005, the availability of apprenticeship places fell dramatically whilst the number of school-leavers was still rising markedly for demographic reasons. (Between 1992 and 2005 the supply of apprenticeship places fell by 159,000 places; meanwhile the number of school-leavers from general education rose by 179,500). For some long time, therefore, the Dual System of vocational education and training no longer had the capacity to meet young people's steadily rising demand for apprenticeship places. This resulted in fierce competition for in-company apprenticeship places, in which young people without a school-leaving certificate, with poor grades, or young people from migrant backgrounds were at a disadvantage (cf. Beicht/Friedrich/Ulrich 2007).

In order to ease the transition at what is known as the "first threshold" – the transition from school into initial vocational training – for young people with special needs, a remarkable transition system has developed. This includes educational courses and training measures which provide basic vocational training or preparation for initial vocational training/employment (cf. BMBF 2008b, pp. 160 ff.) (also see 2.3).

Since 2006, however, the apprenticeship places market has seen a positive upturn (cf. Ulrich et al. 2008). In September 2006, 4.7% more dual-system training contracts were concluded than in September 2005, and as of September 2007 a further 8.6% growth in numbers had been achieved (cf. BIBB 2007) (also see 5.3.1 National Pact for Training).

Nevertheless, from 1992 to 2006 the relative composition of the various training courses delivering full occupational qualifications and basic vocational training has undergone a major shift (cf. BMBF 2008b, Übersicht 20). The number of young people commencing a contractual apprenticeship in the Dual System was 3.2% lower in 2006 than in 1992. In contrast, the number of entrants to school-based programs leading to a full qualification (full-time vocational schools, health care schools) was nearly 84.4% higher than at the start of the 1990s. The number of university entrants has also risen (+18.6%). Strong growth is also registered in the number of young people entering the transition system, which rose by 173.4%.

A qualitative and quantitative drift opening up between supply and demand is a particular issue (cf. Beicht/Friedrich/Ulrich 2007, p. 6): the demands of training increased but young people's apprenticeship maturity declined, in the view of experts. In recent years this has lengthened the duration of the transition from school into initial vocational training and led to a high number of "repeat applicants" (*Altbewerber/innen*). Repeat applicants are young

people seeking IVET who have been applying for an apprenticeship place for a year or more, without success, through the labour administration or an unemployment benefit agency, or who can provide evidence of at least five rejected applications for apprenticeship contracts which should have commenced in the previous year or earlier. In 2007 the Federal Employment Agency recorded around 385,000 repeat applicants; 281,000 in Germany's old *Länder* and 103,900 in the new *Länder* (cf. BMBF 2008b, p. 18). Despite the reducing tension in the apprenticeship place market, so far the number of repeat applicants has remained at a high-level (cf. Beicht/Friedrich/Ulrich 2007, p. 10). In this regard, particular mention must be made of two measures which attempt to counter this trend: one is the "training bonus" (*Ausbildungsbonus*, see 6.3); the other is the development of "training modules" (*Ausbildungsbausteine*, see 2.3).

In future years, however, a growing shortage of applicants for apprenticeship places is likely to heighten the relevance of another issue: the qualification of school-leavers and their maturity to embark on an apprenticeship. So far, companies finding a proportion of apprenticeship applicants unsuitable have always had plenty of others to choose from. Against this background, the German *Länder* - which are responsible for schools - are endeavouring to introduce common educational standards (cf. BMBF 2008a).

2.2. Increasing access to and attractiveness of VET

2.2.1. Policy progress since 2002

In order to improve access to VET and increase its attractiveness, various policy approaches have been and are being applied.

Improving the supply of apprenticeship places

For the German Federal Government, a key objective of VET policy is to provide the opportunity of a formal vocational qualification to all young people who are willing and able to benefit. One essential step towards this is for companies to provide an adequate number of apprenticeship places (see 2.1 above and Examples under 2.2.2, National Pact for Training 5.3.1).

Modernisation of the Dual System

One crucial aspect in maintaining the attractiveness of a vocational qualification is to ensure that training regulations are updated (see 5.2.2) or new ones introduced, particularly in innovative growth sectors (also see 5.2 and 5.4), together with ongoing and sustainable modernisation of the Dual System itself. This is seen as a long-term task both for the political sphere and for the social partners.

For instance, the reform of the Federal Vocational Training Act (*Bundesberufsbildungsgesetz*, BBiG) in April 2005 introduced the model of the "extended final examination", an **innovative examination regulation** which enables a staggered assessment of competency at two different points in time. Currently the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) is evaluating this form of examination in eleven occupations.

In connection with the development of a German Qualification Framework (*Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen*, DQR), questions of outcome orientation in VET are of growing importance. A competency model geared towards the needs of VET is being developed and tested to create the necessary foundations.

Innovative impulses for VET in practice are tested in the context of pilot studies and development projects. The results inform the ongoing development of future-oriented and sustainable means of standardising and regulating IVET and CVET.

Assisting young people requiring special support

A central challenge is the provision of targeted support to young people who require special help, so as to give them a springboard into working life (see 2.3).

Improving the ease of movement between different educational pathways

Opportunities for career advancement and the options for further qualification are among the critical factors in young people's choice of an initial vocational qualification. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*, BMBF) promotes various initiatives to support developments in the direction of greater permeability between educational pathways. These initiatives are embedded in the European Strategy for Lifelong Learning and in the Bologna and Copenhagen processes, all of which support long-term strategies to meet the demand for highly skilled workers and to remove barriers to participation in training (see 3.2).

Individual assistance for high achieving and talented individuals in VET

Individually targeted support is also available for high achieving and gifted individuals in VET. The Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz*, AFBG) is jointly financed by the Federal and *Länder* governments. It ensures an individual legal entitlement to assistance for upgrading training in the vocational sector, i.e. courses in preparation for the Master Craftsmen qualification or other comparable advanced qualifications (see 2.2.2).

The BMBF "**Vocational Training Programme for the Highly Talented**" (*Begabtenförderung berufliche Bildung*) has been in place since 1991 to support the continuing education of particularly high-achieving and well-motivated young employees who have already completed a recognised vocational qualification under the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) or the Crafts Code (*Handwerksordnung*, HwO). With effect from 2008, the emphasis of this successful programme has been altered (cf. BMBF 2008b, p. 221): Since January 2008 it is possible to support vocationally qualified individuals who wish to complement their initial vocational training with a higher education degree but do not hold a formal higher education entrance qualification. The programme makes it possible to claim assistance with degree programmes which build on the technical and theoretical training and occupational experience of skilled workers who have qualified via the vocational route. As a precondition, the degree programme must be organised in parallel with work, i.e. alongside employment with a workload of at least 15 hours a week. This extension of the programme satisfies the aim of improving permeability between vocational and academic pathways by creating access to higher education for vocationally qualified individuals. Moreover the demand for further qualifications of this kind has risen. A broad range of job-compatible degree programs are now offered by both private and public providers. They are particularly popular with highly qualified and talented completers of vocational programmes. The expansion of this area of assistance highlights the opportunities open to holders of a vocational qualification. The VET programme for the highly talented reached around 13,900 recipients as of the end of 2007.

Part-time VET opportunities

Combining IVET and family life should be made easier, particularly for young women. The reformed Vocational Training Act of 2005 contains the right to a shortened training day or week (Section 8 (1) BBiG), which can be invoked when there is a justified interest and when the training objective can still be attained in the shorter length of time. An example of a justified interest might be an apprentice with a child or with caring responsibilities for a close relative. This is designed to make it easier to combine training and family life, or indeed make this a possibility at all. Since this amendment to BBiG, numerous activities have been undertaken in the *Länder* to put this new statutory option into practice.

2.2.2. Examples of policy measures

Example 1:

- A. **JOBSTARTER - Training for the Future**
(term: 2006-2010)

- B. At the start of 2006, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) initiated the IVET structural programme “JOBSTARTER – Training for the Future” to create additional in-company apprenticeship places and to improve regional IVET structures. JOBSTARTER supports projects which generate additional in-company apprenticeship places in the regions and help to attract applicants. By improving cooperative links between local actors the aim is to strengthen regional responsibilities for VET and, at the same time, contribute to regional structural development. Cross-border training cooperation ventures and training alliances also have a role to play, because in border regions it makes no sense to think and operate within a purely national framework – not least because Germany, surrounded by nine neighbouring countries, has more border regions than any other country in Europe. The JOBSTARTER projects being funded provide particular support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and small-business founders on all issues and responsibilities associated with IVET, in order to build and maintain their willingness and ability to provide training. The projects are addressed primarily to industry sectors and groups of companies which have previously had below-average involvement in IVET, e.g. companies with owners from migrant backgrounds or in innovative research and technology-based sectors.
- C. The BMBF is funding this programme to the tune of EUR 125 million up to 2010, including funds from the European Social Fund (ESF). JOBSTARTER is implemented by the programme office at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BiBB). Four regional offices in different parts of the country support the programme office. They provide information about the modalities of support under the JOBSTARTER programme and promote cooperation between different regional projects and actors. Project executing agencies include “competent bodies” (chambers), local authority and regional institutions, training providers and companies themselves. The JOBSTARTER projects assist with the organisation and implementation of training, and provide information on the prerequisites and expectations of dual-system training and on new and updated training occupations. Beyond this they support companies in locating and refining their selection of suitable applicants, and by organising training cooperation ventures. Beyond these services it provides to companies, JOBSTARTER supports the implementation of the reformed Vocational Training Act (BBiG) of 2005. Regional projects are selected at annual project selection meetings on the basis of the current funding guidelines, which define the thematic priorities with reference to funding components and funding conditions. The maximum amount of funding for a JOBSTARTER project is EUR 375, 000, of which at least 20% must be contributed by the applicant. The funding period is no longer than 24 months; afterwards it is possible to apply for a further extension of 18 months maximum. In 2007 there were 142 active JOBSTARTER projects in total (51 projects from the first funding round and 91 from the second round). 17 projects from the first funding round ended in December 2007, while 34 were extended until September 2008. At the beginning of 2008, 57 projects from the third funding round commenced their work. The fourth funding guideline was published in the Federal Gazette on 27 May 2008. Beyond this, one further funding round is planned for 2009. In total, around 350 regional projects throughout Germany will be funded under the JOBSTARTER programme.
- D./E. At the end of 2007, a total of 11,674 apprenticeship places were registered with the programme office at BiBB by the active projects from the first and second rounds of funding. Of these, 1,975 are categorised as new school-based training places created under the pilot measures for BBiG Sections 43 (2) and (7). Out of the total number of apprenticeship places reported, 8,609 fulfil the criteria of additionality, i.e. they were not reported during the previous three years or were created in a company that

provided little or no training previously. 737 further vacancies were notified to the project by third parties for placement purposes. In total, 65.5% of all the places available to the projects were filled. The proportion of apprenticeship places in collaborative training arrangements dropped from 19% in the first funding round to 9% in the second funding round. Most of the apprenticeship places created were in single companies.

Sources:

- Website of the project: <http://www.jobstarter.de/>
- BMBF 2008b, p. 73-75

Example 2:

A. Development of the Upgrading Training Assistance Act (AFBG)

B. The Upgrading Training Assistance Act (AFBG), which is jointly financed by Federal and *Länder* governments, guarantees an individual entitlement to assistance for vocational upgrading, i.e. courses preparing for a Master Craftsman or comparable further training qualification. AFBG support for the extension and development of vocational skills serves to motivate young skilled workers to undertake further training. Over and above the subsidised loan, it offers an incentive to potential small-business founders, on successful completion of further training, to take the step into self-employment and create jobs.

Since 2002, support for skilled workers and potential small-business founders wishing to undertake further training has proceeded with substantial improvements, e.g. widening of the groups qualifying for support and the scope of support, significant improvements to the conditions of assistance for all participants, extension of the family component, a stronger incentive to set up in business, support for skilled workers from non-German backgrounds and simplified procedures for applying and granting assistance.

C. For 2008 to 2011, the Federal Government alone has earmarked around EUR 480 million for the AFBG (78% of its total expenditure). The *Länder* make a contribution to the AFBG of around EUR 135 million (22% of total expenditure). 100% of the federal share of AFBG funding is borne by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. In the framework of the AFBG, the development loan corporation Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) lent some EUR 179 million in 2007, and has issued loans of around EUR 1.9 billion since the law came into force in 1996.

D. According to statistics on upgrading training assistance for 2006, published by the Federal Statistical Office in July 2007, the number of individuals assisted was approx. 136,000, a slight decline of around 3.5% from the year 2005 (2005: 141,000 individuals assisted). Around 50,000 (36%) assisted individuals took part in a full-time course and 86,000 (64%) in a part-time course. 80% of those who received assistance were between the ages of 20 and 35. The largest share (35%) went to participants aged from 25 to under 30, followed by the 20 to under-25 (30%) and the 30 to under-35 (15%) age-groups. 32% of those assisted were women. The Industry and Commerce sector led the field for further training qualifications, with almost 64,000 individuals receiving assistance (47%). In the Crafts sector, where the proportion that later opt for self-employment is especially high, assistance was received by around 44,500 individuals (33%). Furthermore the official Federal Statistics for 2006 underscore the success of the AFBG. The consistently high numbers claiming assistance proves that the law has achieved long-term success in raising the motivation of young skilled workers to undertake CVET, often also with a view to setting up in business or self-employment afterwards.

- E. The German Federal Government will continue to develop the AFBG (see 3.2). In particular, the assistance will be extended to a wider target group and additional incentives offered for outstanding achievement and for taking the step into self-employment. The statutory conditions for this will be established in the year 2008.

Sources:

- BMBF 2008b, p. 220
- Statistisches Bundesamt 2007a

2.3. Improving equity for specific target groups

2.3.1. Policy progress since 2002

In 2005, 16.1% of young adults aged between 20 and 29 years had not completed an initial vocational qualification (cf. BMBF 2008b, p. 110). A major objective of general and vocational education policy is therefore to ensure that all young people who are willing and able to benefit are offered the opportunity initial vocational training and vocational qualification. However, there are certain groups of people for whom gaining access to initial vocational training is extremely difficult. In particular, this description applies to young people who have not (yet) attained apprenticeship maturity, young people with learning difficulties, and people with disabilities, unskilled and semi-skilled workers, those with social disadvantages, and young people from migrant backgrounds. In 2005, 38% of young adults of non-German nationality had not gained an occupational qualification compared with 12.6% of young Germans; in other words they were about three times as likely to have no vocational qualification as a comparable German peer group (cf. BMBF 2008b, p. 110).

To change this situation, at the beginning of 2008 the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) launched a new programme to improve vocational training opportunities for disadvantaged young people and to offer second-chance qualifications for young adults. The intention of the “**Vocational qualification prospects**” (*Perspektive Berufsabschluss*) programme is to optimise the regional transition management system to support young people requiring special support (e.g. young people with learning difficulties, at a social disadvantage or without a lower secondary school-leaving certificate, and young migrants) and to make more use of the possibility of second-chance training for a qualification for semi-skilled and unskilled young adults from German as well as migrant backgrounds. The two funding priorities of “Regional transition management” and “Qualification-oriented modular second-chance training” acknowledge the fact that two types of measures are necessary to help disadvantaged young people access training and ensure their long-term integration into the employment system: preventative measures to assist them in gaining educational and occupational certificates, and reintegrative measures to enable second-chance training and retaking of vocational qualifications. The basis of the new assistance programme are the results and experiences from a programme which is now phased out: “Promoting Competences - Vocational Qualification for Target Groups with Special Needs” (the BQF programme, see Example 1 in 2.3.2) and the pilot project overseen by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) on “Second-chance training in conjunction with employment” (*Berufsbegleitende Nachqualifizierung*). The programme is supported with funding from the Federal Government and from the European Social Fund (ESF). For the period from 2008 to 2012 a total of EUR 35 million will be made available.

To meet the needs of the “repeat applicants” group (on this issue, see 2.1), in 2007 the “**Training modules**” (*Ausbildungsbausteine*, see Example 1 in 7.3.2) programme was launched. In 11 significant occupations within the Dual System, training modules were developed with a view to helping repeat applicants to make a progressive transition into a standard dual-system apprenticeship. Funding is envisaged for 50 pilot regions in Germany.

Individuals with learning difficulties or social disadvantages, whose developmental stage is such that they cannot yet be expected to complete an apprenticeship in a training occupation or gain an equivalent vocational qualification, have the opportunity of **prevocational training** (*Berufsausbildungsvorbereitung*).

In addition to school-based prevocational courses and in-company “Introductory Training” (*Einstiegsqualifizierung*, EQ; see Example 2 in 2.3.2), mention must be made of **vocational preparation schemes** (*berufsvorbereitende Bildungsmaßnahmen*, BvB) pursuant to Book III of the Social Code (Section 61 SGB III), which are funded directly by the Federal Employment Agency (as part of the “transition system”). The target group for these measures consists of young people and young adults who have no initial vocational qualification, are under 25 years of age, and have completed the obligatory length of school attendance in the general education system.

Beyond this, the Federal Employment Agency supports IVET for disadvantaged young people. The measures consist of:

- apprenticeship support (*ausbildungsbegleitende Hilfen*, abH) in the form of remedial teaching and social-pedagogic support within the framework of an apprenticeship contract; IVET in extra-company training centres (*Berufsausbildung in außerbetrieblichen Einrichtungen*, BaE) to gain a final qualification in a training occupation recognised under the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) and the Crafts Code (HwO);
- Transitional support (continuation of apprenticeship support after completing or dropping out of an apprenticeship);
- on-the-job integration support, in the form of remedial teaching and social-pedagogic support within the framework of an employment contract in a company.

Support measures also exist to address the particular needs of people with disabilities.

As yet, apprenticeship support is not used to the maximum extent or effect (BMBF 2008a, p. 15). With broader provision for weaker apprentices and simplified application and implementation procedures, this support should be used more actively to prevent young people from dropping out of apprenticeships and to assist training companies in making full and timely use of assistance opportunities. Help and guidance is particularly desirable for smaller companies, who generally lack the necessary diagnostic skills and specialised educational knowledge to deal effectively with learning problems and to resolve conflicts that arise as a result.

Young people’s initial vocational training opportunities will be improved by significantly enlarging the group of non-German young people eligible for financial assistance, and by raising the cost of living allowances and offset amounts under the schemes for vocational training grants and vocational training grants for young people with disabilities.

The Coordinating Office for Training in Non-German Enterprises (KAUSA, see Example in 5.3.2) aims at recruiting companies based in Germany with non-German owners as in-company training providers.

With the help of career-start counsellors weaker pupils in general education should have the opportunity to benefit from individual counselling during their transition into initial vocational training (see 3.3.1).

2.3.2. Examples of policy measures

Example 1:

- A. **Promoting Competences - Vocational Qualification for Target Groups with Special Needs (BQF Programme)**
(term: 2001-2006)

- B. The goal of the programme was to contribute to the further development of support for disadvantaged young people and to improving the educational and training situation of migrants.
Over the entire period, 136 projects received financial support.
- C. To ensure that approaches from the programme phase can be taken forward, used and brought to bear in special needs VET practice, the BMBF decided to implement a transfer phase as a follow-up to BQF when the programme ended. This transfer phase itself is now concluded. Nevertheless, the results of the programme continue to be disseminated via the central transfer office at BIBB - the Good Practice Centre for the Support of Disadvantaged Young People in Vocational Education and Training (GPC) - and transfer efforts continue to be pursued (<http://www.good-practice.de/>).
- D. Results and lessons learned from the BQF programme have already had an impact on overarching education policy developments during the course of the programme's implementation. The Second Act on Modern Services in the Labour Market (*Zweites Gesetz für moderne Dienstleistungen am Arbeitsmarkt*) of 1st January 2003 broadened the material scope of the Vocational Training Act and anchored prevocational training in the law as an independent element of VET. Furthermore, qualification modules (*Qualifizierungsbausteine*) (see Example in 6.2.2) were incorporated into the law as an important instrument of prevocational training. The law refers to them as units of learning of defined content and length, which are developed on the basis of the training curricula for state-recognised occupations regulated by training regulations. Companies thereby have greater scope to offer their own prevocational training courses and make use of qualification modules to help disadvantaged young people gain a grounding in vocationally relevant learning and initial in-company work experience, as a means of exploring their potential and guiding them towards a suitable company-based apprenticeship.
A project by the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (*Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks*, ZDH) in collaboration with the Central Office for Further Training in the Craft Trades Sector (*Zentralstelle für die Weiterbildung im Handwerk*, ZWH), supported under the BQF programme, has developed qualification modules for the training occupations in the craft trades attracting the largest numbers of apprentices. At the time of writing Juli 2008, progress stands at 117 qualification modules from 21 craft occupations (also see Example 2).
In January 2004, the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*, BA) published a new strategic concept for the vocational preparation schemes it is responsible for financing. The paper introduced a completely new funding structure for measures planned from September 2004 (see 6.3.1).

Sources:

- Website of the project: <http://www.kompetenzen-foerdern.de/>
- BMBF 2008b, p. 171-173

Example 2:

- A. **Introductory Training** (*Einstiegsqualifizierung*, EQ)
(as of October 2007 a routine entitlement provided by the public labour administration; previously piloted under a Federal Government special programme - "Introductory Training for Young People" (EQJ) - from October 2004 to September 2007)
- B. On 16th June 2004, the Federal Government and the top-level organisations of German industry concluded the "National Pact for Career Training and Skilled Manpower Development in Germany" (see 5.1 and 5.2.2). The EQJ special programme was agreed as a sub-element of this pact. It was launched on 1st October 2004. From 1st October 2006 the capacity of the EQJ programme was expanded from

25,000 to 40,000 places per year. With the publication of the Fourth Act to amend the Third Book of the Social Code in October 2007, Introductory Training was incorporated into employment promotion law as a routine entitlement (Section 16 (1) SGB II in conjunction with Section 235b SGB III).

Company-based Introductory Training (EQ) consists of a prevocational work experience placement in a company lasting 6 to 12 months. Young people have the opportunity to accumulate modular qualifications (see Example in 6.2.2) towards a recognised occupation by completing “qualification modules” in a specific occupational field.

The target group for Introductory Training consists primarily of young apprenticeship applicants whose prospects of finding a placement are limited, and young people who have not fully reached the requisite level of apprenticeship maturity. Since Book III of the Social Code specifies no age limit for support of young people, in a departure from the rules of the previous EQJ Programme, the new statutory provision (Section 235b SGB III) defined no age limit either.

- C. Companies which offer Introductory Training enter into a contract with the young people concerned. Introductory Training programmes are supported by the employment agencies and the unemployment benefit agencies in the form of a non-repayable monthly subsidy towards the allowance paid by the employer. The maximum amount subsidy is EUR 192 plus a standardised share of the total social insurance contribution. On completion of the work placement, participants receive a certificate issued by the competent body (e. g. chamber of industry and commerce, chamber of skilled crafts). In certain circumstances up to six months credit for the work placement can be offset against the qualifying period of a subsequent apprenticeship.

The providers of Introductory Training are predominantly companies in the craft trades (40.2%) and commerce (27.6%). Companies from the liberal professions (5.3%) and industry (4.9%) follow a considerable way behind. The majority of the companies are micro- and small businesses with between 1 and 26 employees. Less than one-fifth of participating companies had 26 or more employees. Large companies employing 250 or more made up just 3% of providers.

The majority of participants are young males (57.4%). Their average age is 19.41 years. 34% of the young people come from a migrant background. The majority have a lower secondary school leaving certificate (44.7%) followed by an intermediate or general secondary school leaving certificate (39.9%). 6.2 have no school-leaving qualification.

- D. Flanking scientific research confirms the success of EQJ: in the third year of the programme (period from October 2006 to September 2007) 37,576 young people took up the opportunity to access training via EQJ. 65.5% of participants subsequently completed in-company apprenticeships (previous year: 62.4%). If extra-company and full-time school-based training programmes are taken into account, the percentage rises to 74.7% (previous year: 69.7%) (cf. *ibid.*). In a comparable control group of non-participants in the EQJ programme, only 59.2% began vocational training in the same time period. 30.8% of companies which were not previously engaging in IVET became training companies after running the Introductory Training scheme.

In the context of an exploratory study, 230 companies which participated in this measure were contacted by telephone and interviewed using a standardised questionnaire. The thematic issues addressed included the cooperation with social-pedagogic support staff, the use of qualification modules, the support available before the beginning of the work placement, and the work assigned to the young people on placement. 87% of surveyed companies confirm that at the beginning of the placement they received information, help and support, above all from the competent bodies or chambers, the employment agency and from education providers or

educational institutes of industry. However, 23% of companies commented that they would have liked more support. (Multiple responses were possible). 18.3% believed that young people's pre-existing skills should have been better coordinated with the company's requirements. 18.7% wished to have more input to the social-pedagogic support, and 33% believed that clear and comprehensible leaflets on the content and implementation of the work placement (24.4%) and on the tasks of the social-pedagogic support staff (25.2%) would have made things easier for them.

- E. According to flanking research, one weakness is the issuing of reports and certificates for completed EQJ work placements. In 47.5% of cases, neither a report nor a certificate was issued to confirm that the EQJ placement had been completed successfully.

A further shortcoming that emerged was that the use of qualification modules is not very widespread. 59.1% of the companies surveyed are unaware of qualification modules. And of those that are aware, over a quarter do not make use of them. 34.3% would like more information about qualification modules.

Sources:

- Becker et al. 2007, p. 2, 6, 32, 58f., 68, 70-72
- BMBF 2008b, p. 163f.

3. Lifelong learning through VET

Creating a framework for, and a culture of, lifelong learning has been at the heart of all EU education and training policies for the past decade. The Helsinki Communiqué requires countries to create “open VET systems which offer access to flexible, individualised pathways and create better conditions for transition to working life, progression to further education and training, including higher education, and which support the skills development of adults in the labour market”.

3.1. National policy context on Lifelong learning through VET

Qualifications achieved at one point in time are becoming increasingly inadequate for mastering new challenges in the economy and society. Continuous lifelong learning is of ever-growing importance. Data on continuing education and the consequences of deficits in lifelong learning show that the decline in Germany’s working-age population – caused by demographic change – and the decline in continuing education are trends which amplify one another: we are doing too little learning, we ageing, and together these combine to erode our knowledge steadily.

In particular, low-qualified people are taking too little advantage of continuing education opportunities. Therefore the BMBF instituted an Innovation Circle on Continuing Education and Training (IKWB) (also see 1.1 and 9.1) which presented recommendations in March 2008 for strengthening continuing education in future (BMBF 2008c).

Recognition and acceptance of lifelong learning is facilitated in the medium term by a reorientation away from formal, certificate-based qualifications and towards competence-based learning. In this way new target groups can be attracted to lifelong learning. The development of both the European Qualification Framework and the German Qualification Framework (see 7) is intended in the medium term to bring about a paradigm shift from formal certificate-based qualifications towards more competence orientation, to enable optimum utilisation and development of people’s competencies and potential, including informally-acquired competencies. The IKWB recommends that recognition should also be given to competencies acquired outside the education and training systems. It points out that this calls for instruments and procedures which simplify the assessment and recognition of competencies, not least as a basis for re-entry to formal education and training. The recognition of competencies also includes the award of credit for other training courses, and must contribute to more effective integration between the educational and training sectors (also see 9.1 and 9.2).

These recommendations have close parallels with measures already adopted, such as the **learning subsidy** (*Bildungsprämie*; see Example 2 in 6.3.2), which has been approved by the Federal Government on 23 April 2008. The learning subsidy is particularly intended to mobilise participation in CVET by low and middle income groups. It will be available from October 2008 as a new form of CVET assistance with flanking guidance services.

By setting up its **Continuing Education Reporting System** (*Berichtssystem Weiterbildung*, BSW) in 1979, Germany made an early move to establish the statistical basis for continuous and differentiated reporting on continuing education. Since then, surveys have been carried out on a 3-year cycle. Statistical data is collected on training courses attended in the category of “continuing vocational education and training” which are “directly related to work”, e.g. retraining, professional upgrading, induction and adaptation to new occupational demands (cf. von Rosenblatt/Bilger 2008, p. 10). Since the end of the 1980s the BSW has been progressively extended to cover new aspects, particularly in the area of informal learning.

A similar reporting scheme is now being introduced for European training statistics in the form of the **Adult Education Survey (AES)** (see 8.1).

Since the end of the 1990s a contradictory situation has developed in relation to participation in continuing education in Germany. Whereas the growing significance of lifelong learning has been recognised in policy and adopted as a theme of education policy strategies, in the year 2000 for the first time and again in 2003, the BSW figures indicated that participation in training was declining in Germany. Previously and since the end of the 1970s, the BSW had consistently reported growth in participation rates – now the trend was reversing. According to the latest statistics from 2007, however, the declining trend has been halted successfully. The participation rate of 43% in 2007 was two percentage points higher than in the year 2003 (cf. von Rosenblatt/Bilger 2008, p. 20).

More marked growth is recorded for informal learning activities which are not part of formally organised courses. BSW records various workplace-based forms of vocational training as “informal CVET”. The proportion of working people to take part in at least one of these forms of training in the previous 12 months is 68% in the current report, compared with 61% in 2003. “Independent learning in leisure time” - in the sense of “teaching oneself something” - is now reported by 39% of respondents compared with 35% in 2003. (Cf. von Rosenblatt/Bilger 2008, p. 4)

The most active participants in training are the 19-24 year-old age-group. Nearly one in two of them had attended a regular course (higher education or vocational training). A substantial proportion of these training courses – one-fifth for the 19-24 age-group, one-third for all people over the age of 19 – were not categorised as part of their personal IVET but as second-phase training. In these cases, the regular training course (*formal education*) could also be viewed as “continuing education”. Regardless of this, participation in continuing education courses (*non-formal education*) in this age-group was equally high as among the over-25 year-olds. As a consequence of the job-related nature of most continuing education activities, participation in training declines in the older age-groups. Considering working people only, participation in continuing education remains constant across age-groups and only begins to decline slightly among the over 55-year-olds. The same is not true of non-working people. For this group, participation in education – whether in regular courses or continuing education – overwhelmingly fulfils preparatory functions for entry or re-entry into employment. Hence participation is high in the younger age-groups and declines significantly with rising age. In contrast, there is a rising proportion of “exclusively independent learners” – as people can be described who do not participate in training courses but are nevertheless “active in learning” in the sense that they are “teaching themselves something”. (Cf. von Rosenblatt/Bilger 2008, p. 5f.)

Training participation depends on educational level

Training participation reflects the person’s general orientation towards education - a disposition towards lifelong learning as a normal part of professional and personal development. The better the level of school achievement, the more evident this orientation towards education becomes, and is reflected in a variety of behaviours and attitudes towards learning. Participation in continuing education in the previous 12 months broke down as follows:

- of all people with a lower secondary school leaving certificate: 29%;
- of all people with a general school-leaving certificate 49%;
- of all people with a university or university-level entrance qualification: 60%.

(Cf. von Rosenblatt/Bilger 2008, p. 6)

Few remaining differences between men and women

Men’s participation in continuing education is still slightly higher than women’s. But this is attributable most of all to the lower proportion of women in the working population. Among working people, there was practically no gender differential in relation to participation in CVET. Women tend to be somewhat more active than men in the area of general (i.e. non-vocational) continuing education. (Cf. von Rosenblatt/Bilger 2008, p. 6)

People from migrant backgrounds are catching up

Participation in continuing education by people with migrant backgrounds is lower than among “native” Germans. In comparison with the last BSW survey three years ago, however, the gap has narrowed distinctly. The section of the population with non-German nationality has made up considerably more ground than the group of migrants with German nationality. (Cf. von Rosenblatt/Bilger 2008, p. 6)

3.2. Facilitating transfer between VET pathways

3.2.1. Policy progress since 2002

The Innovation Circle on Vocational Education (IKBB) convened by the BMBF (see 1.1 and 9.1) recommended the following measures which should result in improved ease of movement between educational pathways:

- Further development of additional qualifications between IVET and CVET to permit the accumulation of credit for modules of further training even before initial vocational training is complete;
- Reduction of the number of years of work experience required for admission to further training;
- Modular structuring of further training regulations;
- Creation of additional, differentiated opportunities for transition and learning credit between vocational education and higher education;
- A more transparent and open system of regulations for the admission of vocationally qualified people into higher education, by creating a common interregional basis;
- Appeal to higher education institutions to develop study programmes which take account of vocational qualifications and to work jointly with industry to develop admission, recognition and credit transfer procedures for people qualified via the vocational route.

For implementation of the IKBB guidelines, the BMBF immediately launched several new programmes and projects in 2007. The first of these to be highlighted is the programme “**Piloting a national credit transfer system in vocational education and training**” (*Erprobung eines nationalen Leistungspunktesystems in der beruflichen Bildung*). Tendering took place in the second half of 2007, resulting in selection and approval of 11 pilot projects on the use of credit points for better cooperation at transitions in the VET system. The project term runs until 2010.

Attention is focused on the following transition points within the VET system:

- between prevocational training and dual-system initial vocational training;
- within dual-system IVET programmes (across occupational profiles in an occupational field);
- between full-time school-based and dual-system IVET;
- between dual-system IVET, second-chance vocational qualifications, and CVET.

Taking a learning-outcome description in the individual areas of training as a starting point, ten regional projects are working to develop, pilot and implement evaluation, equivalency and credit transfer procedures. The experience gained under the ANKOM initiative (see Example 1 in 3.2.2) will be taken into account and applied to the framework conditions in VET.

Better advancement routes for a larger number of people with qualifications from the vocational system or from educationally excluded families, and more motivation for advancement, are central goals of education policy. Therefore the BMBF will award an **advancement bursary** to talented individuals who want to gain a higher education degree following completion of a dual-system apprenticeship (cf. BMBF 2008a). This provides additional incentives for advancement. Furthermore a competition for universities is in

preparation, the aim of which is to promote study in conjunction with employment and to encourage higher education institutions to develop tailored provision to give people in employment access to academic continuing education.

As part of the amendment of the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) in 2005, two new provisions were incorporated into the new law which should bring about greater flexibility between the Dual System and full-time school-based VET. The German *Länder* are now authorised to pass regional regulations of their own.

- First, the *Länder* can determine that attendance of a vocational school course or initial vocational training in any other establishment may be wholly or partially credited towards the required length of initial vocational training (Section 7).
- Second, the *Länder* can decree that specific initial vocational training courses completed outside the Dual System – e.g. at full-time vocational schools – confer an entitlement to admission to the final qualifying examination, if this initial vocational training course corresponds to a recognised occupation according to criteria specified in detail by law (Section 43 (2)). For practical experience with these legal provisions, see Example 2 in 3.2.2.

3.2.2. Examples of policy measures

Example 1:

A. ANKOM - Accreditation of Prior Learning from VET and Work for Higher Education Programmes

(term: 2005-2007/2008)

- B. The overall objective is openness and permeability of educational pathways. The object of this initiative is to develop methods for identifying and assessing qualifications and competencies acquired in CVET and for awarding credit towards higher education programmes, using examples of good practice. The basis is a comparison of equivalency between vocational and university qualifications with reference to learning outcomes. This is intended to facilitate transfer between the vocational and the higher education sectors, working on the basis of the European Credit Transfer System. Under the initiative a number of development projects were supported which developed and piloted concrete recognition and credit transfer procedures for competencies acquired on a specific CVET course. The initiative contributes to the aim of creating a reference framework for competency-based assessment.
- C. The background was the “Joint recommendation of the BMBF, the KMK and the HRK to the German universities on the award of credit points in further training and transfer of credit towards a higher education degree” dating from 2003, which was itself rooted in the context of the 1999 Bologna Declaration. The models developed in this framework are being applied in the participating higher education institutions, but no details of wider dissemination are currently available. Eleven development projects are contributing to the development and piloting of the models, operating as project consortiums in which higher education institutions work alongside CVET providers, chambers of trade and industry in their capacity as competent bodies, companies in their capacity as IVET providers, unions and employer organisations, practice centres and professional associations. They are active in the clusters of engineering sciences, information technologies, health and social care, and business and economics.
- D. Currently an evaluation is being undertaken by Hochschul-Informationssystem GmbH by means of scientific monitoring, with the aim of generating a system-wide reference framework for recognition of vocational learning and informally-acquired competencies and credit transfer towards higher education programmes based on the findings in the individual development projects. The underlying quality criteria will be the quality of the

formulated competencies, the equivalence of the competencies acquired, transparency of credit and recognition procedures and assessment criteria, simplicity of application, and the sustainability and transferability of the instruments used. Furthermore recommendations will be developed for higher education institutions, for vocational and academic education, and for education policy.

- E. The special feature of this approach is that it sees higher education institutions applying competence-based rather than workload-based methods for assessment. Furthermore, it draws together different perspectives on competence, bearing in mind the more metacognitive outlook in higher education and the more proficiency-based outlook in the vocational system. The challenge here is to overcome the mental barriers between these two areas of the education system with due regard for appropriate quality criteria.

Sources:

- Website of the project: <http://ankom.his.de/index.php>
- BMBF 2008b, p. 135f.
- Seidel et al. 2008, p. 49f.

Example 2

- A. **Reform of the Vocational Training Act** (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*, BBiG) (April 2005)
- B. To improve transfer opportunities between various forms of vocational training, two new provisions were included in the amended version of the BBiG (for details see 3.2.1).
- C. This is a reform of a federal statute (BBiG), which delegates authority to the *Länder* to issue their own regulations.
- D. A query to the German *Länder* as to whether they had made use of the regulatory powers delegated to them under the reformed Act, which would mean greater flexibility for young people undertaking IVET within the VET system, yielded the following results as of October 2007: Considerably more use is being made of the authorisation to pass a regulation on credit transfer (Section 7 BBiG) than to grant admission to a final chamber examination on completion of school-based vocational courses (Section 43 BBiG). A total of eight *Länder* regulations pursuant to Section 7 BBiG are in prospect, of which five are already in force (Hesse, Lower Saxony, North-Rhine/Westphalia, Saxony and Thuringia) while three others are at the planning stage (in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria and Saxony-Anhalt). Regulations pursuant to Section 43 BBiG have only been passed in two cases (North-Rhine/Westphalia and Thuringia) and one more is in preparation (Bavaria). According to information received from the *Länder*, however, both credit for prior qualifications and admission to final chamber examinations are also being realised at levels subordinate to the powers delegated under the reformed BBiG, e.g. by means of concrete agreements between the *Länder* ministries and the competent bodies (usually chambers of trade and industry).
- According to a supplementary representative survey conducted in spring 2007 making use of the "Reference Company System" (*Referenz-Betriebs-System*, RBS) set up by BIBB with a sample size of 1,467 from which 456 completed questionnaires were returned for evaluation, around three-quarters of training companies could imagine using some concrete form of combined model involving cooperation between full-time vocational schools and companies for their initial vocational training; however their eagerness to do so is heavily dependent on the duration of school attendance required. Models which envisaged a two-year school-based phase followed by one to one-and-a-half years of steady work experience in the company gained a high level of

acceptance. However, large firms with more than 500 employees express more scepticism about the possibility of participating.

A three-year full initial vocational training programme in full-time vocational schools followed by a six-month practical placement, on the other hand, was less well received due to fears that young people would tend to expect “spoon feeding”. Esteem for such combined models of initial vocational training is also revealed by companies’ willingness to employ participants once fully trained. 42% would be prepared to do so as long as the in-company training took place in their own company.

- E. Often the suspicion was expressed that the introduction of models integrating full-time vocational school and in-company IVET could lead to a considerable decline in classic dual-system apprenticeships, and perhaps cause a decline in company-based apprenticeship places. (Note: **full-time vocational schools** (*Berufsfachschulen*) offering IVET programmes are not to be confused with the **part-time vocational schools** (*Berufsschulen*) of the Dual System, where the time ratio of in-company training to school-based learning is approx. 4:1).

It emerged that in the companies’ view, introducing combined models for use only when the classic Dual System is overstretched in terms of quantity and quality would be unlikely to have negative effects on overall system capacity, i.e. company/full-time vocational school places: the number of young people who could access training might even rise, because the very few companies likely to restrict or give up IVET were offset by the mathematical possibility of expanding IVET capacity in the overwhelming majority of companies.

Sources:

- Bellaire/Brandes 2007
- BMBF 2008b, p. 137f.

3.3. Improving guidance and counselling services and creating guidance structures

3.3.1. Policy progress since 2002

Despite some initiatives and efforts Germany is still far from having a coherent system of educational and vocational guidance as recommended by the EU Council Resolution (Council of the European Union 2004), or an intentional and above all cross-departmental policy on lifelong learning guidance which includes both Federal and *Länder* administrations. The Bund-*Länder* Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (BLK) “Strategy for Lifelong Learning in the Federal Republic of Germany” published in 2004 is indicative of this (BLK 2004). Educational and vocational guidance feature in this document only in the very limited form of “learning guidance”. However, no systematic priority is ascribed to guidance and an overall strategy for guidance in the education sector is neither called for nor sketched out.

In official documents from Germany’s educational reporting systems there are rudimentary references, if any, to the role and function of different forms of guidance in the various parts of the education system and their activities, take-up and outcomes. Neither the Federal Government’s Annual Vocational Training Report nor the National Education Report from the Federal Government and the *Länder* contain relevant sections – and certainly no empirical data on the subject.

Nevertheless it is a political objective in Germany to establish educational guidance as a service which (in line with the 2004 OECD definition; cf. OECD 2004, p. 19) aims to support individuals of all ages at every stage in their lives to make their own educational, training and

career decisions on a well-prepared and informed basis and to take responsibility for their own working lives (Council of the European Union 2004).

This was emphasised most recently by the Innovation Circle on Continuing Education and Training (IKWB) (see 1.1 and 9.1) in its recommendations of March 2008. Some one-off measures and initiatives funded by the Federal Government, the Federal Employment Agency and the European Commission must be taken into consideration. The results of two programmes funded by the BMBF/ESF (“Learning Regions - Providing Support for Networks” (Example 1 in 6.4.2) and “School - Industry/Working Life” (Example 2 in 3.3.2)) and the “Competence Agencies” (see below and Example 2 in 6.4.2) set up within the scope of the former programme also need to be included.

Overview of programmes and initiatives already in progress:

- Based on the EU Council Resolution on Lifelong Guidance, in June 2004 an initial conference took place on educational, vocational and career guidance, jointly organised by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour (BMWA, now BMAS), the Federal Employment Agency (BA) and the National Agency “Education for Europe” at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (NA at BIBB), which attracted a good attendance from all institutions involved with educational, vocational and career guidance. In discussion, the conclusions and recommendations of the EU Council Resolution were applied to the German context. The outcomes were formulated as a list of recommendations, which is still highly relevant even today, and the desire was expressed for better networking across all fields of guidance and for a continuous, inter-institutional exchange of knowledge and experience.
- As a result, the National Forum on Career Guidance in Education, Training and Employment (NBF) was founded in 2006. The aim of the NBF is to work actively towards implementation in Germany of the recommendations from the EU Council Resolution, and to bring together the numerous actors and stakeholders in this field of action in order to develop common positions and strategies, present them to policymakers and assist with implementation (www.forum-beratung.de).
- To broaden the knowledge base and improve the empirical evidence for a policy for educational and vocational guidance, in 2005 the BMBF commissioned an extensive study of educational, vocational and career guidance in Germany (Niedlich et al. 2007). Two thematic areas were investigated:
 - o The first aspect was an inventory of the structures, providers, target groups, reasons for guidance and methods of guidance in educational, vocational and employment settings in Germany. Its purpose was to describe the range of guidance provision, which has become increasingly fragmented and un-coordinated following the lifting of the Federal Employment Agency’s monopoly on guidance in January 1998, to enable conclusions to be drawn on any structural deficits in public guidance provision.
 - o The second part of the research brief related to quality and quality assurance in educational, vocational and career guidance, because pluralisation and decentralisation can lead to arbitrariness unless there is a common understanding about the quality of guidance and indispensable quality criteria and minimum standards for public educational and vocational guidance services. The study yields useful information. Questions it can only answer to a limited extent, because only providers and not clients were initially surveyed, are whether certain target groups are not reached appropriately or at all, and if so which; what barriers to access exist from the viewpoint of guidance clients; and how they perceive the thoroughness and quality of the guidance provided. Further research is needed on these issues.

- The *Länder*, with the project “Continuing education and training passport with certification of informal learning”, not only developed the “ProfilPASS” system as a self-assessment instrument but also embedded it in a professional guidance system (see Example 2 in 3.4.2).
- Training guidance for companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, is another new field of activity in this context. It is supported within the project “Consulting tools for skills training in the low-tech and small and medium sized business sector” (IMODE, <http://www.imode.f-bb.de/>), which is funded by the BMBF (term: 01.10.2005 to 30.06.2008). Whilst it is not addressed to individuals, it is nevertheless an important precondition which enables companies to devote more effort than in the past to the (continuing education) guidance of their employees.
- Positive developments are also taking place with regard to the demand for professionalisation of guidance counsellors, along the lines of a qualified and recognised training programme and further in-service training. Apart from the course which the Federal Employment Agency (BA) set up in 1978 for professional employment-agency guidance counsellors, based in Mannheim at the Federal University of Applied Administrative Sciences, until quite recently Germany had no professionalised academic qualification in educational, vocational and career guidance. This has now changed and a series of new degree courses have emerged, although only a few of them are accredited as higher education courses. This is in addition to the Federal Employment Agency’s new bachelor’s degree course (“Career Guidance and Case Management”) which began in the winter semester of 2006/2007, and the Master’s degree in guidance studies (“ma.bob”) at the University of Heidelberg which likewise opened in the winter semester 2006/2007.
- As ever, a not-inconsiderable proportion of young people making their transition from school into the world of work fail to access the existing system of assistance and cannot be reached by it. The ESF-funded “Competence Agencies” programme (see also Example 2 in 6.4.2) offers assistance to these especially disadvantaged young people in around 200 locations nationwide. Special case managers organise a sequence of assistance measures from the different areas, “tailored” to the young person’s life situation. This helps to improve the local and regional structures of provision for supporting disadvantaged young people.
- **Girls' Day** (<http://www.girls-day.de/>)
Germany’s eighth nationwide “Girls’ Day” took place in April 2008. Numerous events are held to encourage young women to find out about areas of work that they rarely consider when making career choices. Scientific and technical occupations are the main focus.
The present generation of young women in Germany leave school with a particularly good education. Nevertheless, when it comes to choosing an apprenticeship or university programme, girls still choose “typically feminine” occupational fields or academic subjects in disproportionate numbers. Yet while they are failing to take up the full range of career options, companies increasingly face a shortage of qualified junior staff in technical and allied fields. On Girls’ Day, girls gain an impression of occupational fields which they only rarely consider during the vocational orientation process. Girls’ Day events for girls are offered primarily by technical companies and departments, universities, research centres and similar establishments. With practical examples, participants experience for themselves the interesting and stimulating nature of work in labs, offices, workshops and press rooms. Girls’ Day is supported by the BMBF and the BMFSFJ, and with funding from the European Social Fund. Girls’ Day 2007 set a new record for participation: in total, some 650,000 girls took part, and 8,113 companies and organisations were involved.

New initiatives:

Assignment of career-start counsellors

Currently many committed citizens are giving up their time to act as volunteer mentors to apprentices. This exemplary commitment should be taken forward, enabling even more young people to benefit from individual support during their transition from school into vocational training.

As part of an experimental trial, weaker pupils in general education will be assigned a career-start counsellor in their final years at school and receive one-to-one guidance over an extended period of time to help them into an apprenticeship place or - if that is not possible - a training course or a job. The intention is to integrate funded career-start counselling into the overall context of existing voluntary mentoring projects and other programmes (e.g. Competence Agencies, school refusal). Further initiatives to strengthen the important voluntary efforts of apprenticeship mentors are still being examined by the German Federal Government.

Increasing human resources in vocational guidance

It is essential to have enough careers guidance staff to provide young people with individual vocational guidance and counselling and maintain an adequate presence in schools. To balance out regional shortages in the guidance of young people, the Federal Employment Agency will use its remaining scope to create new posts to appoint 200 additional careers guidance staff and 200 additional apprenticeship placement staff by the end of 2008.

Vocational orientation in inter-company and comparable vocational training facilities (see Example 1 in 3.3.2)

By offering early, practice-based and systematic vocational orientation in inter-company and comparable vocational training facilities, young people in the general school system - primarily schools offering the lower secondary school leaving certificate - are helped with their transition from school into dual-system IVET. An effective contribution can be made to reducing the number of school-leavers without a school leaving certificate and/or without prospects of an apprenticeship place.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research is flanking this process within the scope of its public mandate for education by supporting training facilities to fulfil this new task of occupation-specific vocational orientation. This funding will enable the development of suitable measures to be piloted, and the establishment of permanent structures which are expected to become independent of federal funding in the long term. A sustainable improvement of transition management should be the outcome.

3.3.2. Examples of policy measures

Example 1

- A. **Vocational orientation in inter-company and comparable vocational training facilities**
(term: 2008-2010)
- B. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is supporting measures for vocational orientation in inter-company vocational training centres (*überbetriebliche Berufsbildungsstätten, ÜBS*) and comparable training facilities for pupils at schools offering a general school-leaving certificate. Young people, generally from the 8th grade onwards, may opt to undertake work experience and familiarise themselves with different occupations requiring formal training.
Vocational orientation measures give young people the opportunity to spend two weeks in a training centre gaining practical experience in three occupation-specific workshops. Supervised by a trainer, they do practical work as a means of exploring their aptitude and interest in three selected occupations. A final certificate is awarded

at the end of this vocational orientation, which is intended to guide pupils' final career choices or convince potential apprentice trainers to offer them an apprenticeship. The aim is to offer early, practice-based and systematic individual vocational orientation in inter-company and comparable vocational training facilities, to help young people with their transition from school into IVET, and thereby make an effective contribution to reducing the number of school-leavers without a school leaving certificate and/or without prospects of an apprenticeship place.

- C. The applicant must offer inter-company instruction of apprentices in at least three recognised occupations, or have equivalent experience in initial vocational training. The vocational orientation measure must be carried out separately from inter-company apprentice training and provide for the following:
- Practical induction and information on general topics and the latest technology in at least three occupations, over a period of at least 80 hours per pupil.
 - Encouraging the young people to develop their own ideas and preferences;
 - Testing their own competencies in practice;
 - Close coordination between and feedback from the project leader to the school, teachers, parents, companies, agencies for employment, youth services and other local players with regard to regional requirements;
 - A generic assessment of competencies for every participating pupil ("profiling");
 - Documentation of the profiling in a certificate awarded at the end of the measure.

A cooperation agreement between the training centre and at least one school offering a general educational leaving certificate must be submitted with the application.

The applicant must also provide evidence of third-party co-funding of the measure.

The BMBF is making available € 15 million per year for this programme until the year 2010. In 2008 around 50,000 vocational orientation measures can be carried out, so that approx. 25% of the forecast number of lower secondary school-leavers will be reached.

- D. Monitoring and evaluation of the programme by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) will look at the young people's motivation and the transition from school into IVET.

Sources:

- Website of the programme: <http://www.bibb.de/de/32010.htm>
- Richtlinien für die Förderung der Berufsorientierung in überbetrieblichen und vergleichbaren Bildungsstätten vom 18.03.2008: http://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/a34_berufsorientierung_richtlinien.pdf

Example 2

- A. **"School - Industry/Working Life" programme** (*Schule-Wirtschaft/Arbeitsleben*) (term: 1999-2007)
- B. The BMBF programme had set itself the objective of improving young people's transitions from school into IVET. To this end, in the period from autumn 1999 to the end of 2007, a total of 46 innovative projects were supported in all the German *Länder* and among the social partners. In a variety of ways, the projects tackled the numerous orientation, competence and coordination problems affecting the transition from school into work and VET. The goal of these innovative projects was to provide young people with hands-on preparation appropriate to their experience for the demands of the world of training and work, and to help them realise for themselves the importance of economic thinking and action. Beyond the measures already taken by the *Länder*, innovative concepts have been piloted for each specific type of school

and with due regard for pupils' ages, stages of development and gender differences, to make the theme of industry and working life more easily accessible to pupils. By means of systematic and continuous teacher-supported exploration of the world of work and business, examples of gender bias could be critically examined, young people could be better oriented towards vocational training or higher education, and career choices could be made easier. All these combine to produce more effective transitions. Critical analysis of issues from the world of work aimed to promote self-reliance in acquiring knowledge and a critical approach to information, which enhanced the ability to adapt to changing requirements. Other projects have been supported which use new media for self-directed learning about the world of work.

By way of illustration, the following aspects of projects were seen as high priorities by the steering committee:

- the running of systematically prepared and supported company-based work-experience days, undertaken regularly by pupils over an extended time frame (e.g. 6 months);
- the establishment of project groups in which pupils with learning or school attendance problems take part in production and service projects supported by teams of teachers;
- the development of Internet-supported training programmes for use in preparatory career guidance for pupils and for teacher in-service training.
- greater involvement of industry professionals in school to make teaching more relevant to practice, or as mentors able to counsel pupils individually on their educational, vocational and life plans over an extended period of time; industry professionals also have a role as members of regional advisory councils on better integration between school and the world of work.

C. Federal and *Länder* governments set up a steering committee in which the parties involved agreed programme objectives, priorities and funding decisions. Representatives from employers' organisations, the National Executive of the German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB), the Federal Employment Services and the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training are also involved in consultations. At the level of concrete project implementation, the participating organisations consisted of a range of higher education institutions, research institutes, school maintaining bodies and teacher training establishments and, above all, schools, companies, chambers of industry and commerce, chambers of skilled crafts, job centres, youth welfare departments and charitable welfare associations.

D./E. The programme was an important element in a strategy to realise lifelong learning and, by virtue of its cooperative approach, it contributed to the networking of providers and consumers in "learning regions" (see Example 1 in 6.4.2).

Sources:

- Website of the programme: <http://www.swa-programm.de/>
- BMBF 2007b, p. 213

3.4. Validating (identifying, assessing and recognizing) skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning

3.4.1. Policy progress since 2002

Since 2004, the "Strategy for Lifelong Learning in the Federal Republic of Germany", jointly developed by the Federal and *Länder* governments, has set out an education policy approach for Germany in which substantial significance is attached to the validation of non-formally and informally acquired skills and competencies as a development focus within the

promotion of lifelong learning for all (cf. BLK 2004). In relation to VET, the “Innovation Circle on Vocational Education and Training” appointed by the Federal Minister of Education issued recommendations in 2007 which included improving transfer opportunities and credit for prior learning to increase permeability between education and training sectors. Current studies on validation show that in education and training practice, dynamic progress has already been made in this area over the last few years. The opportunities that already exist are more extensive than they might appear at first glance.

One option for formal recognition has been in force since the late 1960s, namely the *Externenprüfung*, or examination for non-apprentices, under the Vocational Training Act and the Crafts Code. In 2005 an amendment was made to reduce the length of relevant employment experience required for special-case admission to a final qualifying examination in a recognised training occupation. At the level of continuing education, following introduction of the national system of IT training in 2002, practitioners of these occupations without relevant qualifications as well as lateral entrants from other fields now have access to work-process-oriented continuing education. Furthermore, qualified people in employment have the opportunity of entrance to higher education, although each German *Land* has a different combination of requirements so no universal regulation is in force. Professional experience is the decisive admission criterion in all cases. Given the emphasis on the concept of proficiency in VET and the more metacognitive understanding of competence in higher education, however, practical implementation gives rise to certain difficulties of compatibility between these sectors.

Methods of awarding credit for vocational competencies were developed and piloted in a variety of occupational clusters under the BMBF initiative “Accreditation of Prior Learning from Vocational Education & Training (VET) and Work for Higher Education Programmes” (ANKOM). As a working basis, competence standards were formulated as a benchmark for any award of credit. The approaches generated will serve as a foundation for further steps in implementation.

In past years, assisted by publicly funded studies, programmes and pilot schemes, a bewildering array of approaches and methods addressing the aspect of identification have emerged in different sectors of education and spheres of life. There are both standards-based methods, which emphasise quantitative measurement, and quality-based methods which make use of portfolio-like instruments and are more development-oriented in approach, with the aim of affirming the personality and gaining social recognition of skills and competencies. Learning acquired outside vocational contexts is also incorporated. A fundamental problem of these methods, which are often based on self-evaluation, is considered to be the reliability of the competence assessments they contain. Derived from this concern, importance is attached to flanking guidance as a contribution to quality assurance, for this form of validation particularly but also for others.

One further aspect not to be underestimated is the recognition of skills and competencies in the employment system, either tacitly by employing people who do not have a (relevant) vocational qualification, or by means of explicit provisions in collective agreements. Moreover, identification takes place within companies by means of human resources interviews, work references, assessment procedures, potential analysis or profiling.

Overall, in the past few years, a growing awareness of the significance of non-formal and informal learning can be observed. A central challenge is to make the different approaches distinctly more transparent and to progressively link and integrate them, in the context of the complex structure of Federal Germany’s education system. The German Qualification Framework (DQR, see 7.2.1) currently being prepared is likely to make a key contribution to a broader culture of recognition. Specifically for the VET sector, the aspect of broad and differentiated measurement of occupational competences is now attracting substantially more attention in the research context.

3.4.2. Examples of policy measures

Example 1:

- A. **Externenprüfung** - special admission for non-apprentices to the qualifying examination in a recognised occupation (introduced in 1969, amended in 2005)
- B. Admission to a final examination in a recognised occupation is possible in special cases, under Section 45 (2) of the Vocational Training Act and Section 37 (2) of the Crafts Code, if evidence of employment experience can be furnished. Employment in the relevant occupation must be at least one-and-a-half times as long as the prescribed initial vocational training period, so in normal cases it should amount to 4 ½ years. This form of evidence may not be required if, by providing references or other evidence, an individual can show convincing proof that they have acquired the necessary vocational competence. In this way, people without vocational qualifications who have acquired occupational competencies in an area, sometimes as a result of longstanding employment experience, are given the opportunity to acquire a recognised vocational qualification and hence lower their risk of unemployment. The *Externenprüfung* option has been available since the introduction of the Vocational Training Act in the year 1969 and was amended in 2005 to the effect that the required length of employment experience was reduced from twice to one-and-a-half times the length of the prescribed initial vocational training period.
- C. Because it was introduced in 1969, the *Externenprüfung* cannot be called a new approach. It can nevertheless be integrated as a central element within current efforts to formally recognise non-formal and informal learning. Being a regulatory instrument, the legislating organs of the Federal Republic of Germany are the key actors. At the level of practical implementation, i.e. reviewing the admission requirements and administering the examinations, the other main actors involved are chambers of industry and commerce, chambers of crafts and trades, and chambers of agriculture, in their capacity as the competent bodies. Their involvement extends to running preparatory courses in advance of the examinations to prepare candidates particularly for the theoretical part of the exam.
- D. In the year 2006, 29,258 people, which equates to around 7.2% of examination entrants, gained admission under the special-case provisions. Since the year 2000 the proportion has risen noticeably but has not reached the 1995 level. Viewed over time, the figures fluctuate considerably and no clear trend can be discerned. The majority (80%) of non-apprentice examination candidates come from the "Industry and Commerce" domain of training. In the domain of "Agriculture" the candidates with relevant employment experience gain consistently better examination results than standard apprenticeship candidates. In contrast, in the other domains of training, and particularly in "Industry and Commerce", the results are the other way round. As part of a study conducted by BIBB in 1994 (cf. Hecker 1994) it was shown that the key advantage of a second-chance vocational qualification, from the point of view of those passing the examination, lay in improved labour market prospects and mobility opportunities.
- E. From the candidates' viewpoint one difficulty is that the profile of their employment experience is not generally comparable with the specified occupational profile. Individual personal commitment, especially to preparation for the examination, needs a corresponding level of backing from the company. An incentive was created in this respect in 2006, when the Federal Employment Agency set up its special programme "Continuing vocational education and training for low-qualified and older workers in companies" (WeGebAU) (see 6.3). So far there has been barely any take-up,

however. In relation to review of the admission requirements by the competent bodies, one difficulty of the process is that there are no binding criteria or standards; it is rather the case that a large amount of discretionary scope is used in reaching a decision.

Sources:

- BMBF 2008b, p. 107f.
- Seidel et al. 2008, p. 21-24

Example 2:

A. ProfilPASS system
(introduced in 2004)

- B. The core idea is a process of self-assessment supported by qualified guidance, in which individuals explore their own skills and competencies, as a means of enhancing their reflection and dialogue skills. Beginning with a compilation of biographical elements in various fields of activity, related activities are analysed to identify the skills and competencies applied. These are subsequently drawn together in a report. This assessment of the current status is followed up by formulating goals and an action plan. The ProfilPASS system is designed as a universal approach for use across educational sectors and target groups. In the course of a pilot scheme, it became clear that it most effectively reaches adults in turning-point situations, whereas the principle of focusing on strengths works in a much more limited way with young people. In light of this, a target-group-specific version of the ProfilPASS was created for young people. No other versions for specific target groups are planned. The ProfilPASS was rolled out to the whole of Germany in May 2006, followed by the ProfilPASS for young people in May 2007. The ProfilPASS system is a contribution to the promotion of social recognition of informally acquired competencies, and is operated at sub-legislative level.
- C. Financed with funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the European Social Fund, the ProfilPASS system was initially developed on the basis of a feasibility study as a network project by three educational research institutes as part of the “Lifelong Learning” pilot scheme. The main parties involved were the Federal and *Länder* governments along with the social partners. Development consisted of a phase of trial, evaluation and optimisation of the instrument and the guidance approach, followed by nationwide implementation. When the support programme comes to an end, the approach will be coordinated centrally by a ProfilPASS support office and put into practice regionally by around 40 ProfilPASS dialogue centres.
- D. The first version of the ProfilPASS system, developed on the basis of the recommendations from the feasibility study, was trialled from September 2004 to April 2005 with more than 30 cooperation partners working in very different contexts, and evaluated by means of standardised questionnaires and structured interviews. Since the nationwide roll-out, suggestions for improvements have been channelled through the support office and dialogue centres. So far, around 25,000 ProfilPASS documents for adults and young people have been issued. To date, some 1,800 people have undertaken a two-day training course in preparation to work as ProfilPASS guidance counsellors. The ProfilPASS is used in the context of individual guidance sessions and seminar-style programmes for individual orientation by training providers. As a rule, these sessions are limited to a few hours, but it is also being used in long-term measures as a building block for intensive profiling. Furthermore, CVET and personal development measures making integrated use of the ProfilPASS have been accredited for support by the Federal Employment Agency.

- E. Due to the versatility of the ProfilPASS system for use across education and training sectors and target groups, highly varied forms of implementation have emerged since the nationwide roll-out. One of the central challenges is to make this diversity transparent and to present it in a way which gives guidance staff and potential training providers an impression of the system's potential and how it might be used in their own settings. In relation to the ProfilPASS for young people, currently a training concept for guidance staff is under development, and work is in progress to set up an infrastructure for this target-group-specific instrument. In the main, this will be bolted on to the existing ProfilPASS network. Beyond this, work will be carried out, in collaboration with other mainstream approaches involving competency profiling and portfolio initiatives, on joint "Quality Standards for Competence Certificates" at sub-legislative level in Germany, to foster a process of convergence.

Sources:

- Website of ProfilPASS: <http://www.profilpass-online.de/>
- BMBF 2008b, p. 213f.
- Seidel et al. 2008, p. 45-47

4. Improving quality of VET

The aim to make the European Union more competitive and create more and better jobs requires a solid contribution from education and training. Member States have been asked to modernise their education and training systems and make them “a world quality reference” by 2010. Developing high quality VET, able to provide European citizens with the knowledge, skills and competences relevant for the labour market and knowledge-based society, is crucial.

The Helsinki Communiqué calls for national quality assurance and improvement, drawing on the principles underlying Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF)³, as well as promoting “a culture of quality improvement and wider participation in the ENQA-VET network”. The Communiqué confirms the need for highly qualified VET teachers and trainers in order to improve quality in VET. Due attention should be given to their learning needs. They must be provided with opportunities for continuous professional development to perform broader tasks and address more heterogeneous learners.

4.1. National policy context on improving quality of VET

As recently as March 2008, the recommendations of Innovation Circle on Continuing Education and Training (IKWB; see 1.1 and 9.1) expressly stressed that a quality development and quality assurance system that operates across educational sectors and providers is a necessity for lifelong learning. According to the IKWB, lifelong learning calls for concentrated and consistent refinement of quality strategies which also need to be transparent to users. It also called for enhancement of the professional status of staff.

However, quality and quality assurance have been a standard theme in VET for over 30 years, although the significance attached to this debate and the level of attention it has received in IVET and in CVET vary greatly. Even if the theme of quality has its origins in the domain of IVET, the debate about quality development is concentrated primarily around continuing education.

Whereas at national level questions concerning the quality of VET tend to be discussed in relation to individual subsystems of education and training, the European debate is far more geared towards a whole-system view.

A further sign of the political significance of quality in VET was the German Bundestag's request in January 2005 that the German Federal Government should work with the social partners and the *Länder*, with support from BIBB, to develop methods for external evaluation of quality assurance practice in initial and continuing vocational education and training. The purpose of such evaluations should be to help those engaging in VET to develop their quality assurance practices, and to equip them with suitable and practicable instruments for ongoing quality assurance and for quality assurance management.

In summary, Germany's Vocational Training Act (BBiG) contains a comprehensive apparatus for assuring the quality of initial and continuing vocational education and training. It ranges from national standards for initial vocational training and examinations, as defined in the Federal Government's initial and further training regulations, to the responsibilities of the competent bodies for ensuring the professional aptitude of trainers and the quality of in-company IVET. In addition, the reformed BBiG of 2005 obliges the chambers' vocational training committees and the *Länder* committees for vocational education and training to strive for continuous development of the quality of VET.

³ Council of the European Union. Council conclusions on quality assurance in vocational education and training (doc 9599/04). See http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/vetquality_en.pdf

4.2. Improving quality in VET provision

4.2.1. Policy progress since 2002

Initially, the German policy debate engaged intensively with the question of what is actually meant by quality. This brought forth a diverse array of approaches and concepts that almost defy systematic classification.

A major contributory influence to this diversity was that the object of a quality assessment may be a school or a company, the performance of a teacher at a school or a trainer in a company. However, the object may also be a certain training course or – something which is currently a focus – part of a training course tied to one learning venue, be it the school-based or the company-based element of initial vocational training.

It is a challenge for the quality debate in Germany to progress from that somewhat fragmented perspective to a systematic, integrated view.

In-company IVET

An extensive body of statutory regulations exists for IVET within the Dual System. The Vocational Training Act, the main statutory basis, stipulates quality standards that apply to all occupations; these primarily address required standards of suitability for training facilities and trainers, the curricula on which training is based, and the examinations administered during and at the end of IVET. It is the responsibility of the competent bodies (e.g. chambers) to check and monitor compliance with the standards for training facilities and personnel.

Whilst the standards from the Vocational Training Act and the training regulations provide relatively differentiated regulation of the **framework conditions** for IVET, the **practice of in-company IVET** itself is barely covered, and then not in much detail. Indeed it would hardly be possible to do so, because aspects of the organisation of IVET, e.g. the methodology and teaching principles, can only be chosen in the context of the conditions pertaining in the given company. Nevertheless, the organisation of IVET practice can be seen as a key quality factor.

A look at quality development in company-based IVET reveals three different approaches in companies:

- In some companies the training department works on mapping “IVET as a business process” from start to finish. This involves developing quality targets for all stages – from the recruitment of apprentices to their job assignment after they qualify.
- Under the second approach, quality development concentrates on selected processes. This tends to be the process of rotation through departments. The central training department evaluates what is being done with apprentices in the decentralised departments, and thereby obtains suggestions for optimising their rotation.
- The third approach consists of one-off activities in response to problems that arise. The first two approaches are proactive, the third is more reactive. People react when problems are brought to them by the company or the school.

In contrast to school-based training institutions, in companies the quality of IVET is closely coupled to the quality of work processes. The primary focus is not on the apprentices’ learning outcomes but on their **competence development**, which can then be utilised productively in the work processes of specialist departments.

With the aim of qualitative further development of VET, in the sense of developing, implementing, modifying and ensuring transfer of innovative concepts, the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) carries out pilot projects commissioned by the BMBF. Currently these cover the following main points:

- Scope for greater flexibility in initial and continuing vocational education and training in SMEs (28 pilot projects),
- Vocational training for sustainable development (10 pilot projects) and

- Process orientation and knowledge management (10 pilot projects; concluded, evaluation in progress).
(Further information (in German) at: <http://www.bibb.de/de/1291.htm>)

School-based IVET

When reforms are tackled in each German *Land* (the *Länder* are responsible for the school system including vocational schools) they rarely take the form of one project in isolation; more often, several initiatives, school projects and pilot projects will be tackled in parallel (see Example 1 in 4.2.2). As varied as the reform steps taking place in the vocational schools might be, they are all very much geared towards the same goal, namely to utilise the schools' full potential, above all for successful regional partnerships, and to continually raise and assure the quality of vocational teaching.

The development of vocational schools into autonomous learning organisations is being driven forward in Germany with great vigour. Efforts are directed towards establishing, developing and securing autonomy via changes in external control on the one hand, and via initiatives from the school, on the other. The initiators are the ministries and those working in or with vocational schools. Particularly by delegating (including reducing and extending) responsibility in the areas of "steering", "quality", "personnel", "finances" and "training", key indicators have been laid down which vocational schools must now help to shape and, at the same time, manage. The underlying development processes are in their trial stage and are accompanied by discussions on the most suitable measures, projects and initiatives.

CVET

The findings from this development process have also been fed into the new guidelines on the support of continuing vocational education and training pursuant to Book III of the Social Code. Accordingly, CVET providers in receipt of public funding have had to make use of a system of quality assurance since 01.01.2003. This is regulated in more detail in the Accreditation and Certification in Further Training Ordinance (*Anerkennungs- und Zulassungsverordnung – Weiterbildung, AZWV*) which came into force on 01.07.2004. The ordinance regulates the details of certification and specifies, among other things, the quality standards required of training bodies and their CVET provision. A further component of this reorientation of CVET support is the instrument of *education vouchers* which the Federal Employment Agency has been using since 2003 to assist the unemployed, who can spend them with any continuing education provider that has a verified quality assurance system.

ENQA-VET

A National Quality Assurance Reference Point for VET is currently being established at BIBB.

Quality issues also constitute a distinct thematic focus of **research and development**, within which three strands of work can be discerned (cf. BMBF 2008b, p. 118):

- Studies on standards and evaluations of the quality of in-company training and quality assurance from the perspective of apprentices,
- Development of instruments for (self-) evaluation and for quality development in company-based IVET.
- Studies and analyses on the current status of in-company quality assurance practice, some of which make reference to objectives, instruments and strategies.

4.2.2. Examples of policy measures

Example 1:

- A. **Status of continuing development of vocational schools into autonomous learning organisations as partners in regional VET (BEAGLE project)**
(term: 2004-2006)

- B. The BEAGLE project systematically surveyed the progress of reforms in Germany's individual *Länder* and subjected this data to scientific and system-related analysis. The study looked at the priorities set by the *Länder* for the further development of vocational schools into regional VET centres, and how these are being addressed by vocational schools.
- The objectives, plans and decisions of the *Länder* and the experience of these reforms were drawn together in a report, which was intended to serve as a discussion resource and an aid to implementation for VET policy and for implementing actors. To this end the individual initiatives in the *Länder* were surveyed and analysed during the support phase (2005-2006) by means of document analysis and a questionnaire addressed to the responsible ministries. In addition, case studies were carried out in selected schools. These will reveal what developments are actually taking place, what difficulties are arising in the course of implementing the reforms, and what approaches and processes are working in school-based practice. It is envisaged that the BEAGLE studies should be carried on over the longer term, in order to build up a reliable basis for system-oriented and professionalised VET planning.
- C. The project was funded by the BMBF. It is an initiative of the "Initial and Continuing Education and Training" working group of the Bund-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (BLK) and the "Vocational Education and Training" subcommittee of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (KMK).
- D./E. In 2006 the final report was published with detailed information on the *Länder* initiatives.

Sources:

- Becker et al. 2006

Example 2:

- A. **Consumer testing of CVET by Stiftung Warentest**
(introduced in 2002)
- B. From July 2002 to December 2007, the consumer watchdog Stiftung Warentest carried out around 100 tests of CVET courses as part of a project funded by the BMBF. Since 2008, continuing education tests have been allocated routine funding by the BMBF. The aim of the continuing education tests is to bring greater transparency to the market, which consists of approx. 25,000 CVET providers and at least 400,000 different courses, for the benefit of consumers and to enhance the providers' quality efforts. As a result of this sampling and assessment of the quality of training media, measures and guidance, consumers can find out what quality they can expect and how to find or recognise good courses. Furthermore they are informed about their rights and obligations as continuing education consumers, so that they can insist on appropriate quality. The tests also give providers important reference points on how they can improve the quality of their courses, learning media and guidance. In this way, CVET tests complement other instruments of quality assurance such as quality rings and certification systems. Since 2003, the test results have featured regularly in two journals, "test" and "FINANZtest". In addition, annual special issues have been published on themes such as successful self-employment (2003 FINANZtest Extra), new opportunities at work for upgraders, the unemployed and re-entrants (2004 test Spezial), jobs in wellness, fitness and care (2005 test Spezial), marketing and distribution (2006 FINANZtest Spezial) and language learning: English and Spanish (2007 test Spezial). The results are also available online (in German) at www.weiterbildungstest.de.

- C. Stiftung Warentest operates with complete independence in accordance with its mandate and its charter. However, it is not possible to finance these tests solely or even mainly from publication revenues. Essentially the same situation applies to the other product areas subject to testing, but for training products the issue is more acute. Stiftung Warentest decides on the selection of individual tests. Its decisions are influenced by consumer-related and methodological aspects, market analysis and editorial criteria and by the opinions of experts in the relevant sectors. The selected themes for each project are discussed by technical advisory panels, made up of both consumer and provider representatives as well as neutral experts.
- D./E. In the difficult-to-navigate field of continuing education and training, the tests are making a major contribution to transparency and quality in the public perception. The organisation has developed a well-founded apparatus for the evaluation of CVET programmes. Overall, the tests have gained considerable and growing endorsement from both consumers and providers of continuing education, as an impact study (Kuwon/Waschbüsch 2007) has shown. Due to the importance of the tests for promoting the idea of quality in the CVET sector and their positive reception by the public, the BMBF has decided that it should continue with funding of the tests on an indefinite basis as from 2008.

Sources:

- <http://www.bmbf.de/de/144.php>
- <http://www.test.de/themen/bildung-soziales/weiterbildung/>
- BMBF 2008b, p. 215
- Kuwan/Waschbüsch 2007

4.3. Supporting the professional development of VET teachers and trainers and increasing the attractiveness and social status of the teaching and training professions

4.3.1. Policy progress since 2002

In-company trainers

Any company carrying out training and giving a contract to a trainee has at least one employee who is the designated responsible trainer (“*Ausbilder/in*”) and has proven his or her aptitude to take over this task. In a small enterprise this may be the owner him- or herself.

IVET trainers in particular have a very important function in helping the trainees to develop a professional identity and develop their occupational profile together with a strong identification with their company. In small enterprises in particular the trainer is an important role model for the following generation of employees.

CVET trainers are important agents in helping adults to learn again and to continuously update their knowledge, skills and competences, i.e. to cope with the demands of a rapidly changing work environment.

While company-based initial training within the German Dual System is a rather precisely defined activity, the trainer as person can hardly be conceptualised. We rather have to speak of a *function* than of a defined occupational group. The staff concerned first of all sees itself as specialist in its particular occupational field taking over an extra educational task.

In Germany at least three types of in-company trainers need to be distinguished. Two of them are primarily involved in initial VET and one primarily in continuing VET.

Type 1: Part-time-trainers

The large majority of the initial training of apprentices is carried out by skilled workers, journeymen or foremen. As part-time trainers they engage in training as a part-time activity directly at the workplace. Only some of them have received any kind of preparatory training or are formally qualified for this activity.

Type 2: Full-time trainers

Full-time trainers in IVET are primarily found in the industrial manufacturing sector (and other companies with more than 200 employees) and usually have an advanced qualification as master craftsman. Depending on the sector and the size of the company they often work in separate training workshops set up for this purpose. In large companies "training managers" ("Ausbildungsleiter/innen") are responsible for the whole process of steering initial training in the various occupations offered. They are less involved in actually carrying out the training.

Type 3: Trainers in continuing VET

They usually work with their target group on a much more selective basis. Whereas the trainers involved in IVET provide a very comprehensive training and lay the foundation for the whole occupational profile of the young apprentices, trainers in CVET train specific technical and/or soft skills according to the needs of the adult employees. Similar to the situation of full-time trainers in IVET, only larger companies can afford their own training department and CVET trainer staff. Employed trainers tend to be charged with planning training activities and other organisational and administrative tasks.

SMEs engage self-employed or other external trainers.

The pre-service training of in-company training staff in IVET is regulated by the federal law. In accordance with the legal regulations (Sections 28-30) of the Vocational Training Act the trainers have to be personally and professionally eligible for the training of young people in a work environment.

Proof of qualification besides a vocational qualification is passing an examination as defined in the Trainer Aptitude Regulation (AEVO, Section 2) or an examination for a master craftsman's diploma. Trainers in craftsmen's businesses must be master craftsmen. Outside the crafts, any AEVO qualified trainer is acceptable. To obtain the AEVO certificate, preparation courses of 120 hours are recommended and offered by the respective chambers. However, participation in these courses as a means of preparing for the trainer aptitude examination is not compulsory.

In 2003 the Trainer Aptitude Regulation (AEVO) has been suspended for five years (until 31 July 2008) in the context of the training offensive (see Example in 4.3.2). By the suspension of these regulations the enterprises were to be given incentives to offer more training places. Since then, the companies do not have to furnish proof of an appropriate certificate of their training staff in accordance with the Trainer Aptitude Regulation. That means that the trainers do not have to pass an examination any longer, but there is no exemption from the qualification which is documented by the examination. The tasks of the chambers - monitoring the quality of the in-company training in IVET- remain in force.

In spite of the important role IVET trainers play within the Dual System, their image and reputation has suffered during the last years. This development is in close correlation to economic development and technological change. The general trend to evaluate everything according to cost and benefit considerations and the weak order-book situation in many companies has put a lot of pressure on the training departments. Since it is easier to express in figures the costs rather than the benefits of training, many companies have reduced their activities. Less junior staff was needed too, and there is a huge gap between the numbers of young people looking for an apprenticeship placement and the placements actually offered by the crafts, the commerce and the industry etc. But this trend seems to be changing (see e.g. 2.1).

The image of CVET trainers was never bad but has somewhat risen lately. Due to the economic crisis many self-employed trainers have not survived the past years and for the better this has “cleared the market” in the eyes of many professional trainers. Some deplore that their profile still has not been recognised as an officially regulated profession. (Anyone can call him- or herself a “trainer”.)

It is hard to tell how innovative the work and how innovative the training of trainers in IVET or CVET actually is since hardly any empirical research has tackled these questions during the past ten years.

Funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) in 2005 a first survey was launched to explore the professional and social situation of adult education trainers (BMBF 2005).

These are primarily freelance trainers whose work conditions and salaries are rather poor.

No actual survey, however, has tried to sketch the situation of VET trainers in and outside the companies yet.

The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) has begun to explore the situation of IVET trainers in enterprises in particular and will launch a research project in 2008.

In the area of IVET the focus during the past years has been very much placed on quantity and too little on quality issues of training in the workplace. This is about to change and the relevant bodies begin to think about measures improving the qualification of trainers. Probably the curriculum for the training of IVET trainers will be revised soon.

Initiated by the German IVET Trainer Association (BDDBA) and supported by European Social Funds, a vocational training institute (GAB) together with the Munich chamber of industry and commerce, BIBB and other partners has developed and is currently assessing a continuing vocational training course of approx. 500 hours for full-time IVET trainers (see <http://www.ausbilder-weiterbildung.de>). Other chambers have started to adapt and offer the training scheme, too, and there is a formal process on the federal level to approve it as a nationally accepted continuing training regulation (*Berufspädagogin/-pädagogin*). Once this regulation is in place, the profile of these VET trainers will be regarded as a continuing training *occupation* (recognition of the professional profile in the educational sector).

In the field of e-learning based further training of trainers, quite a few remarkable initiatives have been brought under way by various organisations in Germany:

- The Central Office for Further Training in the Craft Trades Sector (*Zentralstelle für Weiterbildung im Handwerk - ZWH*) has started offering eLearning to a network of 35 local chambers of craft trades.
- The Association of German Electrical and Information Technology Trades (*Zentralverband der Deutschen Elektro- und Informationstechnischen Handwerke - ZVEH*) has brought together 3 training colleges under the umbrella of ELKONET (<http://www.elkonet.de/>).
- The Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (*Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag - DIHK*) with 82 local chambers of industry and commerce has established online courses.

Information on all these opportunities is also available on specialised IVET trainer websites (e.g.: www.foraus.de and www.ausbilder.net).

Teachers in vocational schools

As partners of industry, the vocational schools are directly affected by the rapid pace of change in the world of work and by structural changes in the VET system, and must never be allowed to fall behind the modern state of the art. Meeting this imperative to keep vocational schools up to date – particularly with regard to new vocational content to be learned and effective teaching methods – is a permanent task which has to be accomplished rapidly and in coordination with industry’s changing qualification requirements.

Improvements to the quality of vocational school teaching and vocational schools may enhance the image of these establishments and their teachers, raising the attractiveness of this branch of the teaching profession and thereby helping to reduce the vocational school teacher shortage. Industrial-technical subjects in particular were hit by an acute shortage of younger teaching staff. The number of graduates from relevant degree courses was nowhere near sufficient to meet the needs of the vocational schools. The *Länder* therefore appointed more lateral entrants from other fields – for instance, qualified engineers or computer scientists – to teaching posts.

The teaching staff working in vocational schools can be divided into two groups:

- **Class teachers in vocational schools/vocational schoolteachers:** These teachers provide young people with the necessary subject-specific theoretical knowledge and with in-depth and extended general education in the context of the future occupation. They teach both vocational subjects (e.g. metalworking techniques, electrical engineering, home economics, healthcare) and general subjects (e.g. German, English, mathematics, politics, physics).
- **Teachers teaching vocational practice** ('works' teachers, also known as "technical" teachers or simply "vocational" teachers [*Fachlehrer/in*] in some *Länder*): Their task is to provide young people undergoing in-company training with supporting subject-specific practical teaching. They teach in industrial/technical and home economics schools and, in some *Länder*, also in business schools. In vocational schools (industrial/technical schools), state-examined technicians or certified masters are used to teach vocational practice. In home economics schools, specialised teachers teach home economics and crafts. In business schools, specialised teachers are trained to teach word processing and office management.

In Germany, the *Land* Ministries of Education are responsible for teacher training. The relevant legal standards include the laws and regulations on teacher training, the study directives on study programmes for the teaching profession, the training directives on teaching practice and the examination directives for the first and second state examinations. The examinations are the responsibility of state examination offices or *Land* examination commissions.

The training of vocational school teachers (*Berufsschullehrer/innen*) consists of a degree course at a university or technical university (1st phase), then a period of preparatory service / initial teacher training (2nd phase) and subsequent in-service training (3rd phase).

The goal of the Bund-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (BLK) programme "Innovative concepts for teacher training (2nd and 3rd phase) for vocational schools" (*Innovative Konzepte der Lehrerbildung (2. und 3. Phase) für berufsbildende Schulen*, term 1.2.2001 to 31.12.2006) was to improve the 2nd and 3rd phase training of vocational school teachers. The pilot projects under this programme were intended to develop and test new or improved training concepts for preparatory service and in-service training of vocational school teachers, and roll them out within a short time-frame for wider use. The foremost concern was to update teaching content and methods to meet modern requirements, but additional themes addressed were the role and organisational development of vocational schools within the VET system as well as issues relating to the optimum organisation of the training itself. 28 pilot projects were carried out in 12 of the German *Länder*. The outcomes, i.e. the piloted concepts, instruments and teaching and learning materials for the detailed provision of preparatory service, related to the following areas:

- training of lateral and non-standard entrants,
- initial and further training for teachers teaching vocational practice,
- teacher training for regional VET centres,
- the phases of: entry to the profession, professional practice and end of professional service.

The outcomes and final reports have been processed and documented in the form of a themed database (<http://innovelle-bs.lernnetz.de/inhalt.htm>).

With the experience gained from the pilot projects, necessary changes can be introduced in the vocational schools quickly and directly. In particular, tried-and-tested innovations from BLK pilot projects in vocational schools will be transferred to in-service teacher training and preparatory service, as a mode of dissemination and transfer into practice. As a result of cooperation with higher education institutions in some cases, it can be assumed that the initiative will have repercussions upon the design of teaching degrees and the coordination of the three phases.

4.3.2. Examples of policy measures

Example

A. Suspension of the Trainer Aptitude Regulation (2003 to 2008) (also see 4.3.1)

B./C. The nationwide suspension of the Trainer Aptitude Regulation (AEVO) which parts of industry had classified as a bureaucratic hurdle, was intended to make it easier for companies to engage in IVET.

D./E. Suspension of the AEVO can be shown to have qualitative impacts, above all on the success of IVET. For instance, the results of a **survey of companies** showed that the drop-out rate – regardless of company size and industry sector – was higher in companies which had no AEVO-qualified training staff and which stated that suspension of the AEVO had made it easier for them to embark on initial vocational training.

The same firms complain more frequently of difficulties, and state that their apprentices achieve poorer grades in their examinations.

These findings coincide with the trend identified in the **chambers survey**: here almost half of IVET consultants believe that suspension of the AEVO has brought about a decline in quality and harmed the image of IVET. However, it would be wrong to ascribe qualitative impacts purely to the presence or absence of AEVO-qualified training staff without deeper scrutiny. For an absence of formally qualified training staff is often found in conjunction with other aspects which (can) have a negative influence on training quality: for example, inexperience – or no recent experience – of initial vocational training, training aptitude or the motivation of young people.

The majority of both training and non-training firms see the statutory regulation of trainer aptitude as a contribution to ensuring that training staff are qualified at least to a minimum acceptable standard, and to assuring the overall quality of IVET.

On the other hand, one in two firms believes that many companies could not afford the associated costs, and 44% judge statutory regulation to be a bureaucratic obstacle to participating in IVET.

Sources:

- BMBF 2008b, p. 159
- Ulmer/Jablonka 2007

5. Strengthening the links between VET and the labour market

To make VET more responsive to labour market needs it is crucial to involve social partners and ensure closer cooperation between education and training and the world of work. In this context, European policies increasingly aim to improve identifying and anticipating skill and competence needs with activities being carried out in several countries. However, rationale, approaches, methods and data used differ substantially from country to country.

5.1. National policy context on strengthening the links between VET and the labour market (LM)

Close cooperation between the social partners (employers' organisations, trade unions and employee's organisations) and the government is more or less a core element of the German VET system. Social dialogue and co-determination are vitally important means of ensuring the acceptance of reforms in the VET sector.

At national level the social partners are represented via the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB). Membership of the Board consists of three delegations of eight representatives from each of employers' organisations, employees' organisations and the German *Länder*, and five delegates from the Federal Government. The BIBB Board advises the Federal Government on fundamental questions of VET and can submit a response to the draft Annual Vocational Training Report.

At *Land* level, the *Länder* committees for vocational education and training are similarly composed of employers, employees and senior *Land* officials in equal numbers. The role of the *Länder* committees is to advise their respective *Länder* governments on questions relating to VET, and to strive for constant development of VET quality.

At regional level the "competent bodies" play a prominent role. The competent bodies consist of the chambers of industry and commerce (for the industrial sector), the chambers of crafts and trades (for the crafts sector), the professional chambers in the *Länder* (for the independent professions) and, for the civil service, the departments designated by the competent authorities. The responsibilities of the competent bodies are to verify the suitability of training facilities, monitor IVET in training companies, support IVET via advisory services to training companies, trainers and apprentices, set up and maintain the register of training contracts in force, and set up the examination system including administration of the final exams. Every chamber has a vocational training committee which is composed from representatives of employers, employees and vocational school teachers in equal numbers. The vocational training committee has to be kept informed and consulted on all important matters relating to VET. Furthermore it can pass legal regulations for the implementation of initial vocational training in its area.

At sectoral and company level, the Works Constitution Act (*Betriebsverfassungsgesetz*) for the private sector and the Staff Representation Act (*Personalvertretungsgesetz*) for the civil service give works council and staff council representatives a range of co-determination rights and means of influencing both initial and continuing vocational education and training. These are exercised in the context of collective agreement negotiations, e.g. in connection with training allowances, the planning and implementation of in-company CVET and the appointment of trainers.

In addition, high-level representatives and experts from companies and industry associations, among other organisations, were represented in the Innovation Circle on Vocational Education (IKBB) and the Innovation Circle on Continuing Education and Training (IKWB) (see 1.1 and 9.1).

5.2. Involving companies/sectoral organisations/social partners in VET provision to make it more responsive to labour market needs

5.2.1. Policy progress since 2002

Modernising recognised training occupations and adapting them to the new requirements of the world of work is an **elementary component** of the continuing development of initial vocational training.

Traditionally the **training regulations** which govern in-company IVET in Germany have been newly developed or updated in consultation with employers.

A training regulation sets out all the occupational competencies to be acquired during the in-company apprenticeship. For the vocational school element of instruction, the *Länder* produce a framework curriculum for each recognised training occupation. This is coordinated with the corresponding training regulation.

In view of the rapid pace of technological and organisational change, many training regulations appear to need updating after a few years. Very often the first move to modernise training regulations comes from the companies. In this event, companies report the need for modernisation to their representative organisations. These forward the request for modernisation, adaptation or reformulation of particular qualification profiles to the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB). The Institute instigates a review of the matter involving empirical studies and, if necessary, coordinates the updating or adaptation of the training regulations.

This is a multi-phased process in which all parties engaged in VET – employers, trade unions, Federal and *Länder* governments – are given substantial involvement.

From the very outset, in the testing of innovative approaches for the continuing development of VET practice, the companies are active partners. **Pilot projects** interact between the three reference systems of VET practice, VET research and VET policy (cf. BMBF 2008b, p. 149). On the one hand this creates a need to balance divergent requirements, but on the other hand, it enables innovative approaches and ideas to be developed cooperatively and structurally embedded in the three reference systems. Pilot projects place value on the organisation of VET practice, meaning that key approaches to content which originate in practice can also be developed and tested. In this way, ideas for innovative pilot project concepts generally come from actors in VET, i.e. from companies, training providers or from regional partners wishing to cooperate in piloting innovative approaches for a region or sector, whether as a contribution to high-quality IVET provision, to attractive careers in recognised occupations, or to other promising developments. For an overview on single pilot projects and pilot project series carried out by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) see <http://www.bibb.de/de/1233.htm>.

5.2.2. Examples of policy measures

Example

A. Procedure for updating existing and preparing new training occupations

B./C. All players involved in vocational training work together in planning and preparing new occupational profiles or profiles that are to be updated. These players are: companies and chambers (employers), trade unions (employees), the *Länder* (federal states) and the federal government.

As a rule, the initiative for updating the occupational profile of a training occupation or for developing an entirely new occupation comes from trade associations, employers' associations, from trade unions or the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB).

As a first step, vocational training regulations' benchmarks (*bildungspolitische Eckwerte*) are defined during an "application meeting" at the competent ministry

(usually the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology). After hearing all players involved, the competent federal ministry decides in consultation with the *Länder* governments whether to proceed. In many cases, the BIBB issues an advisory opinion or, particularly when larger-scale revisions are being considered, conducts a research project before the ministry takes its decision.

During the drafting and coordination phase, the training regulations (for firms providing in-house vocational training) and framework curriculum (for vocational schools) are drafted for the particular occupational profile and coordinated with one another. The BIBB asks the employers' associations and trade unions to designate experts who, acting as experts on behalf of the federal government (representatives of actual in-house vocational training practice), then develop new training regulations or revise existing training regulations together with the Institute. Proceeding in concert with the work done by the federal government's experts, the *Länder's* experts develop a draft curriculum for instruction held at part-time vocational schools. At the end of the drafting phase, the two groups of experts meet to discuss the two drafts and bring their respective content and timetables in line with one another.

Once the two have been coordinated with one another, the draft training regulations are forwarded to the Board of the BIBB for its comments. When the Board issues a positive position on the draft regulations, its statement also serves as the recommendation to the federal government to "issue" the particular vocational training regulations in the submitted form.

The "Federal-Länder Coordination Committee for Vocational Training Regulations / Framework Curricula" eventually approves the new vocational training regulations and the framework curriculum that has been coordinated with it. The competent ministry in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) subsequently issues the training regulations and publishes them in the Federal Gazette. The date that a new set of regulations goes into force is usually the start of the next training year - in Germany, 1 August. They are also published together with the respective framework curricula and training profiles in the Federal Gazette. Furthermore, new vocational training regulations are entered in the register of recognized training occupations that the BIBB maintains. The updated register is published once a year.

As a rule, the individual *Länder* adopt the framework curriculum for the particular occupation or incorporate it into their own specific curricula for part-time vocational schools.

Sources:

- BIBB 2008a, p. 22-31
- BIBB 2006b, p. 7

More examples for the involvement of the different stakeholders can be found in the sections 5.4.1 (research network FreQueNz on the early identification of qualification needs) and 3.2.2 (ANKOM, Example 1).

5.3 Integrating learning with working

5.3.1. Policy progress since 2002

To lay firm foundations for the supply of young skilled workers, under the coordination of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie*, BMWi), Germany's National Pact for Career Training and Skilled Manpower Development in Germany was extended for a further three years on 5th March 2007 and continuously developed. The Federal Association of Liberal Professions (*Bundesverband der Freien Berufe*, BFB) becomes an additional partner in the pact. Industry doubles its commitment to 60,000 new apprenticeship places per year and undertakes, in addition, to

recruit 30,000 new training companies annually. The target for in-company Introductory Training programmes (EQ; see Example 2 in 2.3.2) was raised from 25,000 to 40,000. The final totals of 75,000 new apprenticeship places and 47,000 new training firms (as of October 2007) exceeded these commitments. In the same way, the Federal Government will continue with its flanking programmes to ensure an appropriate level of IVET provision up to 2010: the training place programme for the eastern states ("*Ausbildungsplatzprogramm Ost*"), a special programme sponsored jointly by the Federal Government and the new German *Länder*, and the JOBSTARTER programme with a support volume of EUR 125 million (see Example 1 in 2.2.2).

To attract new companies to engage in IVET and to maintain the attractiveness of dual-system initial vocational training for young people and companies in future, the Federal Government has already begun to implement an innovation package for VET (BMBF 2008a):

- In consultation with the social partners and the *Länder*, Germany's approx. 340 training occupations have been concentrated into occupational groups, common core skills have been identified, and on that basis opportunities and routes for specialisation have been created.
- Further training and initial vocational training will be dovetailed more effectively to enable high-achieving young people to advance more rapidly.
- A sector-specific early identification initiative means that skills needs arising through technical progress can be incorporated into continuing education programmes and initial vocational training more rapidly than in the past.
- The health occupations which are not covered by the dual vocational system will be continuously developed, looking ahead to future trends and needs.
- Training programmes abroad within VET will be doubled by 2015.

Small and medium-sized companies are the backbone of the German Dual System of IVET. They train more than two-thirds of all the young people who embark on in-company training. Their further training efforts are also remarkable. Nevertheless they are not always in a position to cover all the required training content in the workplace itself. To ensure that these companies, too, have the capacity to provide initial and further training of rigorous quality, it is necessary to have inter-company vocational training centres (ÜBS) as a complement to in-company training. Otherwise many of these smaller companies would be unable to offer any apprenticeship placements at all.

Since 2001, funding has been provided for the development of ÜBS into competence centres on the basis of the BMBF funding concept of 7th May 2001. Competence centres, in line with their educational mandate, offer additional information and guidance, especially on new technologies and methods including how to apply and market them. They do so using modern methods of training facility management, which involves utilising existing infrastructure and developing it in step with new requirements. For example, they support small and medium-sized enterprises to gain better and faster access to newly discovered information in the high technology sector (cf. BMBF 2008a, p. 47). Competence centres maintain coordinated but differentiated areas of strength, and build networks with co-operation partners for this purpose.

The BMBF and the BMWi carry out effective publicity events in cooperation with representatives of different migrant groups. These are intended to inform people from migrant backgrounds about the Dual System of IVET – and especially recognised training occupations – and motivate them to provide or take up initial vocational training. The Federal Employment Agency also provides targeted support to young people from migrant backgrounds on career choices and career entry, and encourages firms with non-German owners to consider providing initial vocational training (see Example in 5.3.2).

5.3.2. Examples of policy measures

Example

- A. **Coordinating Office for Training in Non-German Enterprises (KAUSA)**
- B. Currently participation in IVET by companies with non-German owners is significantly below the average for other companies in Germany. The potential of these companies as training providers is not being fully utilised. A large proportion of these business owners have no personal experience with the Dual System in Germany and are unaware of its benefits or how it works.
- C. The Coordinating Office for Training in Non-German Enterprises (KAUSA) specifically targets companies based in Germany with non-German owners. The aim was to recruit these companies as in-company training providers by means of multilingual information and consulting. This was done by making direct contact with companies through regional partners, but also public relations work using the German and foreign-language media. A continuous stream of information about VET reached companies and young people alike. Together with the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK), the BMBF established a targeted advisory programme for this audience which has produced good results. KAUSA's mandate was to assist the growing number of companies with owners of non-German origin with embarking on the provision of in-company IVET. Across Germany there are now around 35 regional initiatives targeting this group of entrepreneurs to promote the idea of providing apprenticeships. KAUSA organised the exchange of experience at professional conferences and provided concrete advice. In addition, KAUSA produced materials which provide useful information for projects and business owners.
- D./E. The efforts of the regional initiatives have paid off: according to a survey carried out by KAUSA among 42 regional partner projects in December 2003, within three years 4,577 new apprenticeship placements had been created in companies owned by migrants. The programme ended in 2005. Its instruments continue to be used under the JOBSTARTER programme (see Example 1 in 2.2.2).

Sources:

- Website of the project: <http://www.jobstarter.de/de/114.php>

5.4. Integrating skill and competence needs of the labour market into VET provision

5.4.1. Policy progress since 2002

In its guidelines on modernisation and structural improvement, the Innovation Circle on Vocational Education (IKBB) (see 1.1 and 9.1) advocates targeted sectoral campaigns to establish and consolidate the training culture of the Dual System in new, innovative and research-based industries as well as growth industries, particularly in the service sector.

To achieve this it is vital to have early information on trends with regard to skills and competencies likely to be in demand in the labour market in the medium term. To this end, "sector monitoring" is carried out.

The **early identification of qualification needs** makes use of various methods for identifying future trends as a basis for deriving information on new requirements of companies and employees. The results of early identification of qualification needs take the form of qualitative descriptions of new work requirements and activities, as well as the conclusions drawn on current and future training needs. The emphasis of early identification

is therefore to identify trends with future implications which are already apparent, and which can be expected to have a bearing on VET in future.

The FreQueNz research network makes use of multi-perspectival multidisciplinary approaches in order to do justice to the complex material of early identification of qualification needs. The various methods brought to bear range from workplace observation to business process analysis to job advertisement analysis, supplemented by monitoring of international trends. Its studies and methods hinge on a qualitative research approach. Due to the predominantly qualitative nature of analysis, it is possible to observe developmental trends from a bottom-up perspective in the early phase of their emergence, and to make the results available as immediately as possible. Besides studies and investigations on employment trends, the research network can also provide information indicating future trends which cannot yet be captured by means of macro-economic analyses. This enables VET actors to anticipate new or forthcoming qualification needs in plenty of time. The focal point of these studies is on the micro-level, whilst macro-level analyses such as population and industry data are incorporated as a secondary analytical dimension, to allow for the verification of results using quantitative methods.

In the first few years of the initiative from 1999, the network partners explored and developed early identification methods. The second phase of the early identification initiative was devoted to the actual research on early identification of skills requirements, and hence to application of the methods previously developed.

In a further phase, after methods had been developed and research carried out in highly disparate thematic areas, the network's brief was increasingly refocused towards the transfer of research findings.

It became evident that, specifically with regard to new areas of work and fields of employment where formal structures along sectoral and occupational lines had yet to become established, transfer to all target groups was in need of further development. Results from the research projects have been contributed for various purposes including the debate on regulation revision procedures, a continuing education profile, various training modules, pilot projects and a university of applied sciences degree programme. Studies, publications and downloads are available online at <http://www.frequenz.net/>, where project results (in German, under "Projektergebnisse") have been classified by sectors, occupations and fields of work (e.g. renewable energies, nanotechnology, tourism) as well as general themes (e.g. low-qualified workers, international comparisons) (see Example in 5.4.2).

At the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) new skills requirements are being monitored using different and complementary approaches:

- **Surveys of companies** help to build up a comprehensive picture of technological and organisational developments in the companies and the associated skills requirements. Relevant surveys are conducted at regular intervals with the companies on the BIBB panel known as the Reference Company System (*Referenz-Betriebs-System*, RBS), which encompasses more than 2,000 training and non-training firms which vary in size, sector (e.g. industry, services, crafts) legal form, length of time in operation and main occupations employed. Furthermore surveys are carried out in selected sectors. These are geared towards particular fields of work, and yield sufficiently differentiated and empirically verified information on the requirements in individual occupations.
- **Job advertisement analyses** yield empirically verified information on the demand for skilled workers in the job market and the qualification profiles desired by companies (the ideal).
- **Surveys of advertisers** are conducted to find out whether the advertised vacancies were filled or the reasons why they were not (the reality).
- **Surveys of guidance staff** generate expertise on in-company strategies for change and skills development.

- Representative surveys of people in employment give indications of their subjective perception of expertise requirements, job profiles, working conditions and continuing education and training needs.
- Regular **surveys of continuing education providers** gather data on the implementation, reception and any modifications of courses offered, as well as experiences and assessments of trends in training establishments.
- The **Prize for Innovation in Continuing Education and Training** (WIP) is a direct initiative to seek out innovative approaches to continuing education and to set the tone for new developments and a contemporary style of VET.
- Structural and longitudinal studies of the continuing vocational education and training courses listed in the **KURS database** yield information on changes and trends in CVET provision.

These early identification activities by BIBB can best be subsumed under the heading of “qualification development research”. It homes in on changes in existing fields of work or the emergence of new fields, and the accompanying qualitative development in relation to changing or new qualification requirements faced by employees, including the factors which influence these. In this sense, BIBB's qualification development research apparatus is set up for an anticipative assessment of qualification needs which is also capable of identifying qualitative tendencies or trends.

5.4.2. Examples of policy measures

Example

A. New fields of practice and employment in the renewable energies sector

B./C. In the renewable energies sector, new fields of practice and employment are developing. In 2006, 214,000 people were working in the field of renewable energies, up from only 157,000 in 2004. This equates to growth in the region of 36%.

On behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, in 2004 a study was carried out in the renewable energies sector entitled “**Work-related ongoing observation of skills development with the aim of early identification of changes in work and companies**” (*Arbeitsnahe Dauerbeobachtung der Qualifikationsentwicklung, ADeBar*). The objective was to anticipate trends in order to adapt initial and continuing vocational education programmes to the changes identified. Researchers from the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering (FhIAO) began by visiting large and mid-sized companies in the sector and generated hypotheses on skills trends. Afterwards interviews were carried out with 312 companies.

Skills development in this area affects skilled workers from different industries and occupations. Staff in wind power plants face new requirements in areas including planning, production and supply as well as service and maintenance. The workforce consists of skilled workers with expertise in mechatronics, drive technology, steel construction, electrical engineering and metal technology.

D./E. Skilled workers from other trades can access the renewable energies sector by undertaking an **advanced qualification as an Energy Consultant**. Similarly, an **additional qualification as a Solar Energy Specialist** is another route into this field.

The study also showed that the change in working practices in the field of renewable energies meant that in addition to the standard knowledge and skills from their traditional craft occupations, skilled workers increasingly need new qualifications for this area of work. A further consequence is the emergence of combinations of requirements from different areas, e.g. service, distribution and consulting.

6. Governance and funding

Policies to achieve the aims within the above themes require changes in coordination and governance of VET (e.g. through more decentralisation, delegation, and/or changes in partnerships). Success in implementing policies may also require commitment by stakeholders and increased input of human and financial resources.

6.1. National policy context on VET governance and funding

In Germany, the state's functions are shared out between the Federal Government and the 16 *Länder*. Fulfilment of these functions is a matter for the *Länder*, provided that the Basic Law does not provide or permit otherwise (Article 30).

The *Länder* are also responsible for public-sector schools and education, and hence for vocational schools, the majority of which come under the responsibility of the *Land* and a local authority. All legislation on schools, including that on vocational schools, is *Land* legislation. The Standing Conference of Ministers for Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) is an important institution working to harmonise education policies in the 16 *Länder*.

In contrast, the Federal Government is responsible for in-company, out-of-school vocational education and training (VET). The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has general responsibility here, and is also responsible for coordination (including central co-ordination of the Vocational Education and Training Act, responsibility for fundamental issues of VET policy).

Owing to this division of responsibilities, a procedure has been developed for the field of VET that ensures close coordination and cooperation between the Federal Government and the *Länder*, with the involvement of the social partners.

The German system of CVET is characterised by: a pluralism of providers, a largely market character, and a comparatively minimal degree of regulation by the state. In contrast to IVET, the influence of the social partners on CVET is marginal.

Under the Vocational Training Act and the Crafts Code, the chambers as the public-law self-regulatory organisations of industry are responsible for overseeing compliance with statutory and regulatory norms for prevocational training, IVET, further training and retraining. They are also in charge of administering intermediate and final examinations and for advising the actors involved in VET.

The funding of initial and continuing VET is based on a system of mixed financing with a variety of different backers, both public and private.

The school-based element of dual vocational training is financed by *Land* and local authority public funds. The *Länder* bear the costs of internal school affairs (e.g. supervision of schools, implementing curricula, teacher training, teachers' pay), and local authorities are responsible for financing external school affairs (e.g. construction, maintenance and renovation of school buildings, ongoing management, procurement of teaching and learning resources).

In-company training in the Dual System is usually financed by the individual enterprise, which decides autonomously whether it will offer training and in which occupations. In some sectors (e.g. the construction industry, the roofing trade), financing regulations have been collectively agreed whereby all enterprises pay into a joint fund (e.g. through giving a percentage of the total wage bill). The fund is used to reimburse enterprise expenditure on training.

Training in a full-time vocational school outside the Dual System and special measures to promote VET, such as *Land* programmes to create additional training places, are financed out of *Land* budgets.

Enterprises, the state, the Federal Agency for Employment and private individuals themselves are involved in financing continuing vocational training:

The enterprises finance continuing training from sales revenues, interest income, income from leasing and direct state subsidies, from credits and loans in anticipation of future income and from transfer of retained earnings from previous periods. Tax relief in the form of

tax reductions or mitigation of tax liabilities for enterprises showing a profit may subsidise in-company continuing training indirectly.

The state, i.e. federal government, *Länder* and local authorities, make funding available from their budgets primarily for continuing training of public sector employees. In addition, there are various state-subsidised continuing training programmes, e.g. the Vocational Training Programme for the Highly Talented (*Begabtenförderung Berufliche Bildung*) and the Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz - AFBG*, known as “*Meister-BAföG*”, see Example 2 in 2.2.2). The *Meister-BAföG* is an instrument to support people in undertaking vocational upgrading training and to encourage them to set up their own businesses. It is intended to develop it further (cf. BMBF 2008a, p. 33).

The Federal Agency for Employment supports continuing training measures for unemployed people and for people at risk of unemployment. The budget is made up of employers’ and employees’ unemployment insurance contributions, grants from the Federal budget and other income.

Individuals use mainly direct sources of funding for continuing vocational training such as recourse to current income, advances on future income (credit, loans) and transfer of capital (savings or inheritances). Furthermore, individuals can claim tax relief when they are liable to pay tax on income and are acquiring qualifications for a new occupation (special expenses) or are undergoing further training in their present occupation (income-related expenses).

6.2. Changes made to administrative/institutional structures

6.2.1. Policy progress since 2002

With the reform of Germany's federal system that entered into force on 1st September 2006, the responsibility for “educational planning” previously shared by the Federal and *Länder* governments was replaced with a new shared responsibility for assessing the comparative efficiency of the education system on an international basis (PISA studies, education reporting, country comparisons on the basis of education standards) (Article 91b (2) of the Basic Law). Components of the shared responsibility for “educational planning” were pilot projects, network projects and one-off pilot schemes commissioned by the Bund-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (BLK), predominantly for the purpose of innovation in part-time vocational schools but also for ongoing development of the full-time vocational schools and other types of vocational school. These were financed half-and-half by the Federal Government and the *Länder* involved. After the amendment of the Basic Law, the Federal Government may now only grant financial assistance in areas where it has legislative powers under the Basic Law. Projects running beyond 31st December 2006 were transferred into the hands of the *Länder* via an administrative agreement on January 1st 2007. For the period from 2007 to 2013, the Federal Government is making available an annual total of EUR 19.9 million for the redefined shared responsibility. These funds may also be used as the Federal Government contribution to complete the funding of ongoing BLK programmes until 2008. The successor organisation to the BLK is the Joint Science Conference (*Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz, GWK*) of the Federal Government and the *Länder*, which began its work on 1st January 2008.

The procedure for the updating of training regulations for recognised occupations (also see 5.2.2) is based on the consensus principle, i.e. the Federal Government will never issue a training regulation which has not been approved by the responsible social partners. This is intended to ensure the labour-market relevance and transparency of training occupations and their broad acceptance by business and industry. However, in isolated cases the procedure can result in delays and sometimes grinds to a halt. In order to minimise these negative impacts, in the course of reforming the Vocational Training Act the number of statutory advisory bodies was reduced: the roles of the former Steering Committee and Standing Committee of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) were combined and reassigned to a new Board. The Board itself was reduced in size whilst

maintaining four-way parity of representation (equal proportion of voting representatives from the social partners – i.e. employers' and employees' organisations – the Federal Government and *Länder* governments). BIBB's *Länder* Committee was abolished. The task of consultation on and coordination of new training regulations with the Ministries of Education and Culture of the *Länder* was transferred to the Bund-Länder Coordinating Committee, which is regulated not by statute but by agreement with the *Länder*. The only aspect regulated by statute is the final hearing before the Board. On (further) aspects of the reform of vocational training law, see 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

When the First and Second Acts on Modern Services in the Labour Market (known as the Hartz reforms) came into force, the promotion of continuing education under the Third Book of the Social Code (SGB III) was reformed: the task of accrediting providers and programmes of continuing education to confirm eligibility for assistance pursuant to SGB III was transferred from the Federal Employment Agency to private certification bodies (*fachkundige Stellen*, FKS). The legal basis for the criteria to be met by providers and programmes and for the certification procedure is the Accreditation and Certification in Further Training Ordinance (*Anerkennungs- und Zulassungsverordnung – Weiterbildung, AZWV*) issued by the Federal Ministry of Economics (BMWi), which took force on 1st July 2004. Furthermore, since 1st January 2003, support for CVET programmes pursuant to Social Code III has been coupled with the provision of education vouchers. These can be issued by the employment agencies to people who are unemployed or at risk of unemployment, to finance a CVET course if this is determined to be necessary during an in-depth consultation. The education voucher states the educational objective, the maximum length of time allocated to achieve the objective, and the region and duration of validity (max. three months). The recipient can spend the voucher with any provider accredited under the continuing education assistance scheme.

Similarly in the wake of the Hartz reforms, as of 1st January 2003 prevocational training was anchored in the Vocational Training Act (BBIG) as an independent element of VET. The core of this prevocational training according to the Vocational Training Act is the offer of qualification modules, which are units of learning of defined content and length (see Example in 6.2.2). These are to be developed by the providers of prevocational training programmes (companies as well as training providers) from the learning content for recognised occupations as set out in training regulations. The young person or young adult receives a certificate showing the qualification modules completed during the course of prevocational training. In the "Ordinance on the certification of the fundamentals of vocational proficiency in the context of preparation for vocational education and training (BAVBVO)", which came into force on 22nd July 2003, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) passed detailed regulations on this area. Accordingly the chambers in their capacity as the competent bodies are required, on application from the provider, to confirm that the provider's qualification profile meets BAVBVO standards (Section 4, Annex 1). The legal ordinance stipulates the form this approval must take. In order to provide a full overview of the qualification modules prepared according to BAVBVO and approved by the competent bodies, the Good Practice Center for the Support of Disadvantaged Young People in Vocational Education and Training (GPC) at BIBB has set up a central national database in which all the qualification modules approved by chambers are collected and documented in a standardised format (<http://www.good-practice.de/bbigbausteine/>).

6.2.2. Examples of policy measures

Example

- A. **Qualification modules** (*Qualifizierungsbausteine*)
(introduced on 1st January 2003 with the entry into force of the "Second Act on Modern Services in the Labour Market")

- B. Qualification modules are units of learning of defined content and length which build proficiency in the performance of work that forms part of an apprenticeship in a recognised training occupation or an equivalent programme of initial vocational training (cf. BAVBVO §3). They describe the competencies that a person possesses on successful completion of the module. The described competencies always make reference to the general training plan for one or several training occupations (criterion of “relevance to an occupational field”). They may relate to more than one phase in IVET, and need not focus solely on first-year training. The modules are subject to assessment and the young person’s progression is documented in a report. The form of this report is regulated by uniform national standards (cf. BAVBVO §3). Qualification modules are developed by providers of prevocational training programmes on the basis of the specialised curricula for recognised occupations regulated by training regulations. Their overall objective is to build vocational proficiency. They are structured as learning units which
- build the skills to perform a work-related (occupation-specific) task,
 - make reference to the relevant general training plan,
 - comprise 140 to 420 hours of training time,
 - conclude with an assessment of progress (§3 BAVBVO).
- C. Providers of qualification modules can develop these themselves according to the standards in BAVBVO Section 3 (2), known as the qualification profile, and put them into practice with young people in the context of their training process. Official confirmation that the qualification profile meets the standards of BAVBVO Section 3 can be issued by the competent body, and supports the written certificate that the training objective has been achieved (Section 7 BAVBVO).
- D. In a representative survey of 3,028 companies in 2004, companies were questioned about their willingness to carry out prevocational training according to BBiG, and their acceptance and use of the instrument of qualification modules (cf. Seyfried 2005). Although the possibility of carrying out prevocational training has existed since 2003, the survey revealed that an overwhelming number of the companies surveyed were uninformed or not well informed on the subject. Even though the companies rated prevocational training as very worthwhile or quite worthwhile, it does not automatically follow that they wish to provide it themselves.
- E. There is still too little awareness in companies of prevocational training under the Vocational Training Act, even if the level of awareness has risen somewhat since the “Introductory Training for Young People” (EQJ) programme was introduced (see Example 2 in 2.3.2). The target group for prevocational training (young people with learning impairments or social disadvantages) should receive comprehensive social-pedagogic counselling and support pursuant to Social Code III Section 421m. As yet, however, very few companies have applied to the Federal Employment Agency for such assistance. Greater participation should be achievable, but this will require better information and explanation of the scheme to companies.

Sources:

- Verordnung über die Bescheinigung von Grundlagen beruflicher Handlungsfähigkeit im Rahmen der Berufsausbildungsvorbereitung (Berufsausbildungsvorbereitungs-Bescheinigungsverordnung - BAVBVO) vom 16. Juli 2003 (BGBl. I S. 1472)
- Seyfried 2005

6.3. Changes made to funding arrangements for VET

6.3.1. Policy progress since 2002

Increasingly, vocational schools are gaining more financial autonomy via devolved budgets, i.e. global allocation of budget funding (materials and equipment funding, some staff funding and capital funding). This extends the flexibility of individual schools to generate their own funding and to spend it on, for example, in-service teacher training. The enthusiasm with which this option is embraced varies greatly in the different German *Länder*, and depends not only on the priorities of school administrations and education policy in the *Länder* but, no less importantly, on regional considerations and the requirements expected of vocational schools.

As a new instrument to support apprenticeship places for young people who have left school one year or more previously and have since been applying for apprenticeships without success ("repeat applicants"), the **training bonus** (*Ausbildungsbonus*) (see Example 1 in 6.3.2) was adopted in June 2008. It can be claimed by companies that conclude apprenticeship contracts with repeat applicants requiring special support. Depending on the level of the particular training allowance, the bonus amounts to between EUR 4,000 and 6,000. To qualify for this support, apprenticeships must begin between 01.07.2008 and 31.12.2010.

In the area of **prevocational training** the Federal Employment Agency's vocational preparation schemes (BvB) are a key instrument of support for young people without an initial vocational qualification. The Federal Employment Agency's new strategic concept introduced a new funding structure for measures planned from September 2004 (cf. Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2004). It abolished the previous multitude of programme categories aimed at different target groups and created an integrated, internally differentiated range of training options which aims to enable individualised sequences of training. The new funding structure was developed and tested beforehand in 24 Federal Employment Agency branches under a pilot project entitled "Development Initiative: New Structure for Assisting Young People Requiring Special Support". This pilot project was carried out by the Federal Employment Agency in conjunction with the BMBF as part of the BQF programme (see Example 1 in 2.3.2). On the strength of the positive results achieved and useful experience gained, by about half-way through the project period the Federal Employment Agency had already decided to incorporate key elements into its new strategic concept and hence to roll them out to the whole of Germany. A central element of the new assistance structure are qualification modules as defined in BBiG/BAVBVO (see Example 1 in 6.2.2). To further increase the effectiveness of vocational preparation schemes, the 2006 strategic concept was adapted to take account of the lessons learned in the course of practical implementation (Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2006). For example, single parents and individuals with caring responsibilities can now take part in these schemes on a part-time basis.

The promotion of CVET remains a core element of labour market policy for the German Federal Government and the Federal Employment Agency. The employment agencies and consortiums redoubled their efforts in continuing education assistance and by the end of October 2007 some 280,000 individuals had received support to take up CVET, which was almost double the figure for 2005. In addition, the Federal Employment Agency reinforced its efforts to maintain and improve the employability of older and unqualified employees with the programme "**Continuing vocational education and training for low-qualified and older workers in companies**" (**WeGebAU**). To qualify for support, the continuing education measure must be more than just a refresher course, i.e. it must contribute to the acquisition of an occupational qualification or a module towards such a qualification. Both the training course costs and a wage subsidy can be paid. The programme contains no new instruments but makes use of the pre-existing support options pursuant to Social Code III (including the new Section 417(1), which more than doubles the group of people potentially entitled to support). With a funding volume of EUR 42.4 million (EUR 40.6 million expenditure and EUR

1.8 million appropriations for commitment) in 2007 the programme already had substantially better take-up than in the previous year. The statistics demonstrate increasing employer interest in the programme, even if they are less than willing to release employees for training due to the flourishing order books that many companies are currently experiencing. To improve the acceptance of continuing education in companies, the Federal Employment Agency is recruiting over 200 continuing education advisers within the scope of the WeGebAU programme. Around 100 began guidance work with providers as of 1st October 2007. Continuing education advisers provide information on the support available under the special programme, clarify the conditions for entitlement to support, assess continuing education and training needs and support the company in organising continuing education for the employees concerned. (Cf. BMBF 2008b, p. 198)

In the aim of increasing participation in lifelong learning, on 23th April 2008 the Federal Cabinet passed a continuing education and training savings model (the “**learning subsidy**”). Its purpose is to make it easier for just about everyone to pay for continuing education and training, and to mobilise groups in the population to take up training opportunities who were otherwise hindered by lack of money from improving their individual labour market prospects (see Example 2 in 6.3.2).

On the development of the Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz*, AFBG), see Example 2 in 2.2.2.

6.3.2. Examples of policy measures

Example 1

A. **Training bonus** (*Ausbildungsbonus*)
(term: 2008-2010)

B. Employers who, by the end of 2010, create additional dual-system apprenticeship places for applicants from earlier school-leaving cohorts who need extra support will receive support in the form of a one-off training bonus. This exceptional provision, which is temporary and runs until the end of 2010, does not encroach on industry’s original responsibility for IVET to meet its own needs for new skilled workers.

The prerequisite for payment is the creation of an additional apprenticeship place, proof of which must be provided in the form of a certificate from the chamber. The apprenticeship place must also be filled by a young person needing support.

Individuals deemed to need support are repeat applicants with a lower secondary school leaving certificate, a general school leaving certificate with a “sufficient” or without a school leaving certificate, and young people with learning difficulties or disadvantaged individuals who left general education the previous year or earlier.

The training bonus was adopted by the German Federal Government on 5 June 2008. The law should take force until the end of July, which will be before the start of the new training year. Employers will still be entitled to the bonus even if the apprenticeship contract is concluded before the law comes into force, however, as the reference date is the contractually agreed start of the apprenticeship. Apprenticeships which begin no earlier than 1st July 2008 and no later than 31st December 2010 will qualify for this support.

C. The amount of the training bonus is determined according to the monthly training allowance for the first year of the apprenticeship as per the collective bargaining agreement, or if there is no collective agreement, according to the usual local training allowance paid for comparable apprenticeships. One-off payments are not taken into account. For every additional apprenticeship contract, the training bonus amounts to:

- EUR 4,000 if the relevant training allowance is less than EUR 500,

- EUR 5,000 if the relevant allowance is more than EUR 500 and less than EUR 750, and
- EUR 6,000 if the relevant allowance is at least EUR 750.

If the duration of apprenticeship stipulated in the training regulation is shortened because the apprentice has already completed parts of the training by the time the contract is concluded, or qualifies for credit for periods of prior vocational training, the bonus is reduced proportionately. 30% of the training bonus is paid after completion of the trial period, and 70% of the training bonus is paid half-way through the agreed apprenticeship period, provided that the apprenticeship contract remains in force.

- D. The Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs is studying the impacts of the training bonus on the training market and public budgets between 2008 and 2013, and will deliver its first report to the Bundestag by 31st July 2010 and a concluding report by 31st December 2013.

Sources:

- BMBF 2008a, p. 22-24

Example 2

A. Learning subsidy (*Bildungsprämie*)

- B. This continuing education model was agreed by the German Federal Government at the end of April 2008. Essentially it encompasses the following three components:

- State learning subsidy (maximum EUR 154) granted to everyone on condition that they are contributing at least an equal amount towards their course participation fees. To keep the administrative costs in proportion with the instrument's benefits, a "trivial sum" excess of EUR 30 prevents applications for the learning subsidy to fund measures with very low participation fees. Only course fees of EUR 338 or more attract the maximum subsidy amount.
- Facility to withdraw savings deposits for the purposes of CVET before the end of the lock-in period without losing the employee savings bonus, by amendment of the Capital Formation Act (*Vermögensbildungsgesetz*, *VermBG*). Depending on the number of years and the monthly rate of saving, this component could even cover the cost of medium to long-term training. Under savings schemes, for example, it is possible to build up deposits of EUR 3,500-4,000. For lower-cost measures it will not generally be necessary to liquidate the entire deposit.
- Continuing education loans at favourable interest rates, whereby funds are made available for training at a moderate rate of interest after an obligatory guidance consultation but without an individual credit check. The provision is not dependent on the level or form of income. It serves the purpose of financing more cost-intensive measures. Living costs can also be taken into account.

- C. The learning subsidy can be used once per year by income groups with taxable annual income of up to EUR 17,900 (single people) or EUR 35,800 (couples/cohabitees). It is awarded within rules set out in a guideline on assistance, and within the scope of available funds. There is no legal entitlement to the learning subsidy. EUR 45 million are available for the introductory phase.

- D. The model is scheduled for introduction in October 2008 and will run for an initial three-year period without regional limitation. On the basis of an evaluation in the third year, a decision will be taken on the form in which the three components will be continued. If required, the trial phase can be extended by a further two years. The necessary funds for the learning subsidy will come from the European Social Fund (ESF).

- E. Experience with instruments of demand-side education financing, in Germany and internationally, show that guidance is of crucial importance to the success of take-up. Guidance performs the following functions in relation to saving for continuing education:
- Information about training opportunities, transparency of the training market;
 - Confirming the relevance of the training objective for employability;
 - Checking the quality of the provision;
 - Counselling on financing options;
 - Inclusive distribution and (support with) claim process.
- Guidance is to be regulated in the assistance guideline in such a way as to ensure quality and transparency and prevent any abuse.

Sources:

- BMBF 2007c

6.4. Promoting partnerships in VET policy making

6.4.1. Policy progress since 2002

In past years the German Federal Government and many of the German *Länder* have set out education policy programmes which aim to bring about structural change in the education and training system and, at the same time, stimulate innovations (e.g. of an institutional/organisational, curricular, financial, didactic/methodological nature; cf. Dobischat 2006). The backdrop to these programme activities is the concept of “lifelong learning” advocated by the EU. In all these programmes, the idea of networks plays a central role, i.e. in the individual projects supported within these programmes, as many actors as possible from a region should cooperate as a network to achieve the stated goals. The concept of regionalisation, with a policy-steering emphasis that focuses on regional problem areas, recognises the wisdom of finding pragmatic solutions within manageable spatial distances. The BMBF programme “**Learning Regions - Providing Support for Networks**” (*Lernende Regionen - Förderung von Netzwerken*; see Example 1) represents an example of the implementation of this approach, in which the steering concept of “regional governance” has come to fruition. In this programme, the BMBF supports the establishment and development of networks at regional level across different institutions and areas of the education and training system, in order to develop, test and put into practice innovative and integrated services for lifelong learning. The programme, for which a total of EUR 135 million is available for the full term from 2001 to 2008 - about 50% of which comes from the European Social Fund (ESF) - involves the relevant actors both in the regions and at national level (including competent bodies, social partners, training establishments, schools, businesses, local authorities and the labour administration). Currently 76 Learning Regions are being supported throughout Germany.

On the basis of the outline agreement between the Federal Employment Agency and the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of 15 October 2004, the collaboration of schools and employment agencies in the area of careers guidance was strengthened (Bundesagentur für Arbeit/KMK 2004). Depending on respective requirements and due to the federal structure, the organisation of this in concrete terms is incumbent on the stakeholders at federal state level (regional head offices of the Federal Employment Agency and state ministries of education and cultural affairs) or at regional or local level (schools/employment agencies). The provisions made by companies, associations, chambers and training centres means that trade and industry contribute towards practice related careers guidance and support schools and vocational counselling services in their work via cooperation projects. A wide range of activities is on offer, such as company visits, open days, work experience programmes for pupils and teaching staff and the use of mentors from

company practice. Furthermore, there is support from trade and industry for firms and projects. A large part of the commitment shown by trade and industry in this area is brought together and promoted by the work of school and business cooperation projects (<http://www.schulewirtschaft.de>).

In the area of assistance for disadvantaged individuals, again the network approach is central. One example is the programme "**Competence Agencies**" (*Kompetenzagenturen*; see Example 2) of the Federal Ministry for the Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), which introduced a new model for enhancing the social and vocational integration of young people with particular disadvantages. When a Competence Agency is established, certain institutions at regional level must be included in the work as mandatory partners. These are the local youth services agencies, the public employment agency, the agencies administering jobseekers' benefits pursuant to SGB II, and schools or the education authority. These cooperative links should make it possible to combine and concentrate the various areas of responsibility and competence, so as to provide individual assistance to young people with particular disadvantages. This is the only way to guarantee a coordinated and transparent view of the various partners' substantive responsibilities. The role of Competence Agencies is to identify tailored opportunities in the region – if available – and make them accessible to these young people. Where suitable opportunities do not exist, they should be suggested by the Competence Agencies.

As part of the amendment of the Vocational Training Act, the opportunities for cooperation between companies and full-time vocational schools were extended. The Vocational Training Act authorised the Länder (in Section 7 BBiG and Section 27a HWO) to stipulate that initial vocational training completed outside the Dual System could be credited either in whole or in part towards the qualifying length of initial vocational training.

The new paragraph 5 in Section 10 BBiG establishes collaborative training as a statutory option. In accordance with this new provision, several training providers can now jointly conclude an apprenticeship contract. Collaborative training arrangements between schools and companies, with the schools as providers, are also possible.

For information on how the social partners are involved in the policy making process see 5.2.

6.4.2. Examples of policy measures

Example 1

A. "Learning Regions – Providing Support for Networks"

(term: 2001-2008)

- B. The programme was launched in the year 2001 with the aim of networking the relevant actors in the regions under a common umbrella, in order to coordinate their education and training provision and supporting activities and to utilise synergies. The objectives of funding include the development and testing of integrated model solutions for the establishment and development of regional Learning Guidance Agencies (*Bildungsberatungsagenturen*), which span all providers and parts of the education system. Their service must be responsive to individual circumstances, taking cues from clients' whole biographies. The desired outcome is Learning Guidance Agencies in their own premises, which should be easily accessible (especially in rural areas), have networked IT infrastructure, use tried-and-tested profiling and competence-assessment methods, and also offer technology-mediated guidance. The Learning Guidance Agencies will be permanently run by regional lifelong learning networks. This should guarantee the high quality of their services, and counsel clients on all forms of learning in accordance with their needs. Since July 2006, in line with the recommendations of flanking academic research, especially successful and transferable developments are being supported in two extension

phases of the programme, a first phase covering "Learning guidance agencies", "Learning centres" and "Transition management" and, since spring 2007, a second phase consisting of "Initial and continuing vocational education and training in SMEs" and "Local authority cooperations".

- C. The funding is directed to regional networks for lifelong learning. The "Learning Regions – Providing Support for Networks" programme funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research will be steered by a management committee (*Lenkungsausschuss*) on which the BMBF, all *Länder* and all the consultative members of the social partners, the Federal Employment Services and the Concerted Action Campaign for Continuing Education (*Konzertierte Aktion Weiterbildung, KAW*) are represented. They jointly select the projects to be promoted and decide on programme development principles. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research has charged the project management agency within DLR (PT-DLR) with the supervision of the single projects and the programme-wide transfer. PT-DLR is a service provider within the German Aerospace Centre (*Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt, DLR*), a research enterprise of the Helmholtz association. The project management agency is specialised in counselling and in the operational business of project promotion. The education research division provides structural innovation support and counselling within the Lifelong Learning policy field. In November 2001, a research consortium controlled by the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) was charged with the scientific support of the programme. Since February 2005, this role is performed Ludwig Maximilian University Munich.
- D./E. Networking and cooperation among actors and political leaders has been a great success, as is demonstrated by the recent expansion to 76 regions and the transfer of a number of projects onto a routine funding basis. Nevertheless, at Federal Government level, this is an aspect that needs to be improved. One challenge for the projects in the Learning Regions is how to ensure their sustainability when Federal Government funding runs out.
- Learning Regions are also directly involved in an international exchange: Some of them operate on a cross-border level or had successfully applied to the R3L initiative (Regional networks for Lifelong Learning) of the European Commission. Four of the 17 European networks are co-ordinated by German networks. Within R3L, a total of 120 partners participate in the exchange of Lifelong Learning issues for a period of 18 months.

Sources:

- Website of the project: <http://www.lernende-regionen.info/dlr/index.php>
- BMBF 2008b, p. 210-212

Example 2

- A. **Competence Agencies**
(term: 2002-2008)
- B. Under the banner of its "Competence Agencies" programme, the Federal Ministry for the Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) introduces a new model for improving the social and vocational integration of young people with particular disadvantages. The basic features of the programme were developed during the pilot phase (2002-2006), during which 15 Competence Agencies were set up throughout Germany under the pilot programme "Youth social work relevant to the world of work - pilot phase: competence agencies" (*Arbeitsweltbezogene Jugendsozialarbeit - Modellphase: Kompetenzagenturen*). Their task was to help young people with multiple disadvantages navigate the spectrum of help and assistance on offer, and to support them in their social and vocational integration. In recognition of the success

achieved during the pilot phase, the pilot programme "Competence Agencies" was advanced to full implementation with the goal of broad and effective transfer. From 01.11.2006, a first round of funding supported 144 Competence Agencies. Following a second announcement, the number of locations was extended to 200 nationwide from 01.07.2007. The implementation phase initially runs until 31.08.2008. For this period, EUR 31.5 million is being made available from ESF funding. Combined with financial participation from the regional partners and the institutions running the Competence Agencies, a total of EUR 63.2 million are being spent until the end of August 2008. Support will be continued in the 2007-2013 ESF period and is an element of the Federal Government's Operational Programme for the ESF. This period will begin with effect from 01.09.2008.

The goals of the Competence Agencies are:

- To develop effective support services, mainly by means of outreach approaches together with target-group-specific transition management, which should start before young people finish school.
- To optimise and systematise processes of vocational integration by putting together a "made-to-measure" sequence of support from the existing services on offer.
- To review local and regional structures for the provision of assistance to disadvantaged individuals; to identify deficits in provision structures and suggest new provision for more effective promotion of vocational integration where required.
- To foster and enhance cooperation and coordination between the institutions and actors of local/regional transition systems.

The core instrument in the Competence Agencies' social-work approach is known as "case management". This is a professional system of individual casework in which case managers take charge of overall case coordination, matching provision to the young person's individual needs, irrespective of constraints on measures. A central element is individual longer-term planning of future options in consultation with the young person, with extensive developmental support where necessary. Assistance should be planned as an integrated whole rather than limited to the steps and time-frame of a single training measure. Avenues for reaching the young people include primary socialisation settings such as the school and the family as well as other points of contact like youth clubs, street work or gang meeting places. Individual casework comprises:

- Outreach and preventative work: avenues for reaching the young people are opened up by initiating contact and building relationships with individuals and groups in the milieu (street work) and by means of preventative action including information, instruction and guidance.
- Pointing young people towards integration and training opportunities: the Competence Agencies should open up avenues of contact with youths and young adults who are not being reached by past educational, training and employment opportunities or who refuse them.
- Competence assessment and assistance planning: Competence assessment techniques are used to identify young people's achievement potential. On this basis, an assistance plan is drawn up together with the young person.
- Case management: case management should be in keeping with the characteristic process-based nature of transitions, and be designed sustain longer-term but perhaps more distanced support if needed. This overcomes the inadequacies of isolated and intermittent forms of guidance.

- C. The programme is addressed to particularly disadvantaged young people and young adults aged from 14 to 27 years, who are not benefiting from the existing system of support for the transition from school into work or training, or are not accessing

support services of their own volition. Often these individuals are in trouble for habitually negative behaviour, and already socially stigmatised as a result. During their school careers their attendance is very erratic. The school system does not get through to them. They need other incentives and more action-focused methods in order to discover and (further) develop their personalities and skills. The causes of their disadvantages are complex and often amplify one another. They can only be addressed one step at a time, so there are no quick solutions, no easy answers or patent remedies. The Competence Agencies engage in programme-wide exchange of experience in order to draw together and evaluate the results and lessons learned from the projects, and to support nationwide transfer into youth services practice. The best practice models identified in this context are adapted for wider dissemination beyond the programme.

The German *Länder* are involved in selecting projects and programme backup via the *Land* consortium of top-level youth and family authorities (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der obersten Landesjugend- und -Familienbehörden*). Further programme backup is provided by the “Youth Social Work” working group (*Arbeitsgruppe “Jugendsozialarbeit”*), the membership of which includes all national youth social work consortiums as well as experts from research.

- D. Under the terms of programme support, the Competence Agencies are obliged to maintain their casework data in a standardised programme-specific software package. By tracking the key steps in case management, these “electronic case files” facilitate quality and results-driven work processes and contribute to the efficiency of case management in improving the integration of especially disadvantaged young people.
- E. The Competence Agencies should be set up to ensure the stability and continuity of their work as coordinating agencies. Financing must therefore be supplemented with local authority funds from the outset, particularly funding for local child and youth services and for the regional body responsible for youth work and youth welfare services.

Sources:

- Website of the project: www.kompetenzagenturen.de
- BMBF 2007b, p. 203f.

7. EU tools and geographic mobility within VET

Creating tools to improve the transparency and transfer of VET qualifications and remove obstacles to occupational and geographic mobility across all EU countries has been at the heart of EU policy development. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF), Europass and the proposed European Credit System for VET (ECVET) are useful tools to achieve this goal. By integrating these tools into national VET systems and policy frameworks, a more competitive European labour market with free movement of people is promoted.

Mobility within education and training can boost self-confidence, improve employability of participants and shape attitudes towards labour market mobility. The Leonardo da Vinci programme accounts for a sharp increase for mobility within VET. Nevertheless, and despite European facilitating tools, mobility at the initiative of individuals remains limited.

The following sections address national policy developments in relation to the three EU tools and the promotion/facilitation of cross-border mobility within VET.

7.1. National policy context to introduction and dissemination of EU tools: EQF, ECVET and Europass and the promotion of geographical mobility within VET

As an export-oriented country with nine neighbour countries and located as it is in the heart of Europe, Germany has a special interest in promoting a European education area. In addition to the promotion of mobility and co-operation arrangements in cross-border education projects in the EU, the developing European Education and Employment Area (Lisbon and Copenhagen process) increasingly makes possible structural measures to enhance the recognition, crediting and transparency of qualifications and school leaving certificates. An outstanding function is ascribed here to the implementation of a European Qualification Framework (EQF) and to the development and implementation of a credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET). These two instruments could help promote horizontal and vertical mobility, permeability and accreditation.

The European developments and initiatives are not directed towards harmonisation of the national education and training systems. But they have an invigorating effect and orientation function in particular for national reform policies. The European developments result in special opportunities at the national level that can contribute to modernising the dual system of vocational education and training and making it more flexible and thus making it more attractive and stronger.

Making use of the EU tools the Federal Government is extending the number and the duration of exchange programmes so that 5,000 exchanges will be conducted annually in vocational training by 2010 with a training period between six weeks and three months. At the same time the Federal Government is going to improve trans-border collaborative training and establish 100 long-term and permanent trans-border collaborative training networks. These goals will be realized in particular via national priority-setting in the implementation of the Lifelong Learning Programme.

7.2. Promoting the comparability of qualifications between different national, regional or sectoral contexts and their future compatibility with EQF

7.2.1. Policy progress since 2002

There is a consensus at the European and at the national level about the goal of sustainably shaping education and training so that it promotes life-long learning and the employability of

the men and women citizens. In this connection the Federal Government regards such current European developments as the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the European Credit System in Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) as a positive challenge at both the European and national level to promote more mobility, transparency and recognition.

The European Qualification Framework (EQF) is meant to function as a common frame of reference for learning results and competence levels that should simplify the comparison of competencies and thus contribute to better recognition of existing qualifications. The EQF is conceived as a meta-framework, so that it can function as a translation tool between national frames of reference and the European Qualification Framework. The learning outcomes acquired through different forms of learning and at different learning venues are to be comparable with one another and credits are to be transferable both nationally and at the European level.

The function of a German Qualification Framework (DQR) is both to take account of and reflect the specific nature of the German system of education and training and to develop a structure of levels of reference that are as compatible as possible with the EQF. In the process the permeability between and within the fields of education and training is to be improved and hence learning time and resources utilised more effectively. This refers to the access of vocationally qualified persons to university, to the transitions between vocational preparation and vocational training and to the interlocking of initial and continuing education and training.

With the development of a qualification framework transcending the boundaries of educational areas, horizontal mobility (between full-time school and dual vocational training) and vertical mobility and hence permeability can be improved. The precondition for this is consistent orientation of the qualification framework on learning outcomes and competencies, regardless of learning venue, learning duration and form of learning.

From the standpoint of vocational education and training, a DQR should create the preconditions for adequately reflecting the learning outcomes achieved in the context of dual training courses, that is, partial qualifications and competencies, and for describing the outcomes that are assessable and comparable. This should make it more easily possible to transfer vocational qualification credits.

In January 2007, the Federal and state governments set up a co-ordinating group to formulate a German Qualification Framework (DQR). The co-ordinating group agreed on structural starting-points for the formulation of a DQR intended to ensure a high degree of complementarity with the EQF. On that basis, the draft of a DQR is to be prepared jointly with representatives of the social partners and the science and education organisations and then fine-tuned in a national consultation process by the end of 2010.

7.2.2. Examples of policy measures

- A. **Implementation and evaluation of the continuing IT education and training system**
- B. For Germany the IT sector is the pioneering sector in the field of vocational education and training; it has developed a qualification framework in which national and sectoral qualifications are positioned.

In May 1999 the Metal Workers' Industrial Union (IG Metall), the German Postal Union (DPG), the Central Electrical Engineering and Electrical Industry Association (ZVEI) and the Deutsche Telekom AG agreed on "Markers for the restructuring of vocational education and training in the IT sector". The purpose of that agreement was to counter the staff shortage at all levels of the IT field with a system of

continuing and further education and training that opens up career opportunities for IT specialists and makes IT job areas more attractive for qualified applicants. In the markers, certificates corresponding to § 46 Para 2 BBiG were planned for the so-called "professionals" certificates (Chamber exams). The new qualification profiles (specialists) were supposed to finish with certificates that would be recognised by means of an accreditation procedure still to be agreed on. These certificates were to be recognised as proof of examination performance in the further education exams.

The development of the continuing IT education and training system

Between 1999 and 2000, experts from company practice and IT qualification developed the structures of the continuing IT education and training system together with the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training on the basis of the "Markers".

The continuing IT education and training system was constituted by a legal ordinance dated 3 May 2002 in three consecutive levels (§ 1 Para. 1):

- Vocational qualification as certified specialists (29 profiles),
- Upgrading training as operative professionals (4 certificates),
- Upgrading training as strategic professionals (2 certificates).

This gave rise to a horizontally and vertically integrated continuing education and training system and not just separate, parallel certificates that were interconnected to a greater or lesser degree.

Accreditation of continuing IT education and training outcomes to IT courses of study

In their paper, the so-called Markers, the trade union and employer organisations proposed that in-company continuing IT education and training measures be interlocked with university computer science courses. As a tool for credit transfer of the learning and examination outcomes achieved in in-company continuing education and training to courses of study, they proposed the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) model of credit points applied at the university level. Thus care was taken in formulating the professional profiles in the BIBB development project to ensure that the final qualification level was comparable with the corresponding university degrees (Bachelor and Master). Additionally, another development project was started describing exemplarily comparative learning outcomes comparable to those of the universities according to the ECTS schema. Beginning in 2005, in two Federal Government-sponsored pilot projects extending over several years in the Darmstadt and Braunschweig regions, the competencies acquired through continuing education and training were compared with study outcomes, models were tested and procedures were developed for taking such competencies into account as credit towards courses of study.

Certification

For Germany the IT sector is the pioneering sector in the field of vocational education and training in which public and private certification of qualifications are systematically linked with one another. The German Accreditation Council (DAR) functions as a working group funded by German business and the federal and state governments. Certification offices are monitored by the German Accreditation Council, which coordinates activities in the field of accreditation and recognition of certification offices. The German Association for Accreditation (TGA GmbH) is accredited to accredit bodies for the certification of persons. ZVEI and BITCOM applied to the TGA for inclusion of the "IT Specialist" field and for formation of a corresponding sectoral committee in February 2002. The certification of persons on the basis of the international standard ISO/IEC 17024 thus safeguards qualification standards recognised throughout Europe and thereby generates transparency, security and trust among the parties involved. The extent to which this can promote international recognition of the certificates themselves depends on how the market develops.

Permeability

In principle the continuing IT education and training system was founded as an alternative to university studies. It remains to be seen whether equivalence is actually achieved. Presumably that will depend on whether the new graduation certificates are accepted in the labour market, domestically and internationally, as equivalent to university degrees or even better.

On 8 July 2003, a "Recommendation of the BMBF, the KMK and the HRK to the universities to award credit points in further vocational education and training and credit them towards university studies" was given to the universities. Under the terms of the KMK resolution, knowledge and skills acquired in vocational practice could replace not more than 50% of academic study performance if it is equivalent in content and level to that part of the studies that is to be replaced and if this equivalence is tested in the context of accreditation. In addition, university entrance prerequisites must be fulfilled, if need be via the possibilities of university access for especially qualified working people. The arrangements for the latter vary from state to state. Whether these conditions are fulfilled by a specialist certificate, which is not regulated by public law, is an open question.

International connectability

The European approaches, EQF and ECVET, could bring with them prospects for the international recognition of on-the-job learning for the IT continuing education and training system. To the extent that European recognition takes place, the largely formalised practice in Germany would probably not be excepted. Further steps in the direction of more permeability and the equivalence of general and vocational education and training would be conceivable. Over and above that, precisely because of its outcome-orientedness and the relatively great importance of "learning competence" as well as "independence and responsibility", the EQF could offer opportunities for a relatively high classification of the final certificates of the continuing IT education and training system. However, as far as levels are concerned, they must be described in ways that are independent of traditional learning venues (secondary and higher education).

- D. As of July 2007, about 900 persons had registered for personal certification for one of the 29 IT specialist occupations. By the middle of 2007 about 350 graduates had successfully taken specialist qualification courses, according to the certification bodies Cert-IT and GPS-Cert. In 2005, 23 Chambers of Industry and Commerce had offered qualification courses in preparation for the operative professional examination. About 50 qualification courses are taking place at the present time.

Source:

- Weißmann 2008, p. IV-XII

7.3. Promote the transfer and accumulation of qualifications between different national, regional or sectoral contexts and facilitating the future implementation of ECVET

7.3.1. Policy progress since 2002

The goal of national policy is to promote the cross-border mobility of trainees and employees; a precondition for this is that the training periods abroad are connected with added value and practical recognition both for the enterprise and for the mobile employees. In Germany the preconditions for mobility and permeability in initial and continuing vocational education and training were already radically improved with the amendment of the Vocational Training Act

in 2005. Accordingly, taking the vocational principle into account, parts of the training obtained abroad (BBiG, § 2, Para 3) could more easily be recognised and given credit for in the national course of training.

The European Credit System in Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) will further promote the recognition of foreign qualifications, since ECVET has the goal of improving the transparency and acceptance of partial qualifications as well and making it possible to distinguish between them in terms of value and weighting. Such a system, properly defined, could in principle enable learners to have more flexible and individual learning and career pathways. Greater efficiency – especially cost efficiency – and attractiveness through avoidance of duplication of training could be the potential advantages for education providers such as schools, enterprises and further education and training establishments. In autumn 2007 the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) started the pilot initiative "Development of a credit system in vocational education and training". The initiative focuses on the implementation of pilot projects for the systematic testing of a credit system for recording, transferring and giving credit for learning outcomes and competencies from one sub-area of the vocational education and training system to another. The following interfaces are taken into account in this process:

- vocational training preparation and dual vocational training,
- within the dual system of vocational education and training, at the interface of common vocational education and training-transcending qualifications in a vocational field,
- dual and full-time school vocational education and training,
- interface between dual and vocational further training.

The education policy goal is to develop and test transferable accreditation mechanisms. This is meant to open up education pathways and make them more permeable. Moreover, this initiative is supposed to contribute to better linkage of learning modes and co-operation between educational establishments. At the end of 2007, ten projects in different branches were selected for exemplary testing. They are under the responsibility of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) and are being monitored scientifically by a university research group. In addition, the initiative is being counselled by a committee of representatives of the trade union and employer organisations and the state governments (<http://www.decvet.net/>).

7.3.2. Examples of policy measures

Example 1

A. Training modules (*Ausbildungsbausteine*)

B. Training modules are seen as a means to help previously unsuccessful training applicants transfer to regular dual training and have their previously acquired learning outcomes credited towards the regular training period or to enable their admission as external candidates to chamber examinations. In both cases the aim is the award of full qualifications in the dual system. This is to be achieved through regional coordination between the players in the field of vocational training as well as through the provision of continuous support for previously unsuccessful training applicants by regional coordinators in close cooperation with the chambers.

C. A system of training modules was established by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) for the following 11 important occupations in the dual system in the beginning of 2008:

1. Management assistant for retail services;
2. Freight forwarding and logistics services clerk;
3. Warehouse logistics operator;
4. Industrial mechanic;

5. Electronics technician for industrial engineering;
6. Chemical technician;
7. Motor vehicle mechatronics technician;
8. Salesperson specialising in foodstuffs;
9. Plant mechanic for sanitary, heating and air conditioning systems;
10. Electronics technician, specialty "Energy and building technology";
11. Painter and varnisher.

- D. This initiative will be accompanied by a new programme of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) which will start testing these training modules in 50 pilot regions in Germany in summer 2008.

Source:

- Frank/Grunwald 2008

Example 2

We include a Leonardo project as an example. The project was one of the leading projects for ECVET in the national context and is considered relevant for future developments on national level.

- A. **Embedding ICT/Multimedia Standardisation Initiatives into Vocational Training Strategies in Europe**
(term: 2004-2006)

- B. Socio-economic change of the last years was characterized by globalisation of economy and by the arising information society. Both developments have produced new demands on training and education: New job profiles have come into being, requiring new content of training, traditional job profiles have to be modified as basic IT skills have to be included, and new technologies have created new possibilities of learning (e-learning). Last but not least globalisation forces EU member states to co-ordinate their systems of training and education in order to make their economy competitive on the world market.

At the European level, a lot of initiatives have been started after the Lisbon summit of European heads of governments (2000), all aiming to make national systems compatible, sector oriented as well as sector independent (Bologna Process, Copenhagen Process, European Qualification Framework, E-Skills Meta-Framework). But this does up to now only to a very limited extent allow to describe a national system of training and education in terms of another one, and on that basis enable the acknowledgement of learning outcomes independently from national environments, thus creating opportunities for setting up transnational training, and as a consequence, support mobility of employees all over Europe.

The project Embedding Standards was set up in order to deliver a contribution to overcome this kind of „standardisation divide“. The European Credit System for VET (ECVET), proposed by the European Commission and currently discussed by national stakeholders (governments, social partners, industry, institutions of training and education), shall be piloted in the framework of national systems of education in order to create “zones of mutual trust” between stakeholders of national qualification systems, based on a substantially identical assessment of learning results in various countries with different qualification systems. For this purpose, a sectoral approach was pursued which was especially appropriate: ICT/Multimedia sector has come into being in a transnational framework from the very beginning; so job activities should not differ too much from country to country. This facilitated a joint definition of learning units as starting point of assessment which were carried out on a specialist basis.

The following activities were carried out in the framework of the project:

Three job profiles were selected and subdivided in work elements, thus delivering smallest assessable units: (1) IT Project Coordinator (taken from the German Advanced IT Training System - AITTS), (2) IT Security Coordinator (taken from the AITTS), (3) Web Content Specialist (taken from a previous LEONARDO project). According to this, descriptions of professions were created, defined in EQF terms formulating knowledge, skills and wider competences needed to carry out the job. Derived from these job descriptions, qualifications/curricula were designed, according to job descriptions structured in a way that enables the test application of the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational and Educational Training (ECVET). An organizational model for transnational vocational training measure/human resources development was designed. Transnational training was carried out and evaluated, thereby piloting the EQF and ECVET via the transnational collaboration of relevant stakeholders, thus creating Zones of Mutual Trust between competent bodies of national qualifications systems who were willing to collaborate across national borders in the future.

Source:

- Website of the project: <http://www.embedding-standards.com>

7.4. Promoting Europass and ensuring synergy with EQF and ECVET

7.4.1. Policy progress since 2005 to introduce and promote Europass

The EUROPASS concept went into effect of 1 January 2005. The Europass portfolio currently consists of five documents aimed at boosting transparency: the European Curriculum Vitae, the EUROPASS Language Passport, the EUROPASS Mobility, the Europass Certificate Supplement and the EUROPASS Diploma Supplement. Member States have set up National Europass Centres (NEC) to oversee the implementation of the Europass system. The NEC in Germany was established in 2005

and originally based at InWEnt (Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung GmbH). Since January 2007, the National Agency for Education for Europe at BIBB is responsible for this function (<http://www.europass-info.de>).

In 2005 the of production and implementation of the German EUROPASS home page and subsequently the German Database for creating the EUROPASS Mobility on the internet were at the centre of activities. At the opening ceremony which took place in September 2005, the EUROPASS framework concept and specifically the electronic possibilities via the German home page were presented.

Since 2007 promotion of EUROPASS CV is the main activity of the NEC, either to policy makers or to the general public, depending on the budget available. Here the focus has been placed on the competency-oriented approach and the assessment and formulation possibilities offered by europass+ and ProfilPASS have been propagated. A special flyer for the EUROPASS CV was produced. The BA (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) was approached to implement the EUROPASS CV in their online-search-system for jobs (BIZ – Berufs-informationszentrum). The NEC is also aiming to convince more Ministries to make the EUROPASS CV compulsory when applying for a job at the Ministry.

Links between EUROPASS, ECVET and EQF/DQF are specifically seen in the EUROPASS Mobility. With it, what is learned abroad can be entered with the level and in future by means of credit points. The concrete implementation still has to be worked out and agreed on.

The high level of acceptance of the EUROPASS Mobility via the national database is a great achievement for Germany. Since the database was implemented in October 2005, 28,623 EUROPASS Mobilities have been applied for (as of 5 May 2008).

The sluggish implementation of the EUROPASS certificate explanatory notes and the absence of English and French translations present a problem. The NEC often receives inquiries in that regard.

A new heading, named Diploma Supplement was created on the EUROPASS website in 2007, where the template can be accessed. It describes the degree of the graduate.

7.4.2. Examples of policy measures and practice

- A. **europass+**
(term: October 2006 - September 2008)
- B. europass+ aims to support young people in assuring themselves of their own competences and thus, in accord with a strategic aim of European policy on vocational education and training, contributes to making learning achievements apparent, independent of where and how they were acquired.
A support instrument is being developed which:
- can be included in an expanded online support system for the Europass CV and/or made available on national platforms,
 - enables significantly more comprehensive documentation of informally acquired competencies through appropriate subcategories, examples and suggestions,
 - describes these competencies in relation to the levels of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and
 - is also suitable for people who are not exceptionally digitally literate.
- C. europass+ is being developed in a trans-national partnership of experts from a range of different vocational education and training (VET) and qualifications systems. In developing this europass-+ online support tool they are drawing on previous experience with evidencing of learning outcomes by means of competence passports and European transparency instruments.

Sources:

- Website of the project: <http://www.europassplus.de/>
- Fietz/Morawietz 2008

7.5. Promoting geographical mobility of learners within VET

7.5.1. Policy progress since 2002

Mobility in training was first regulated by law in 2005 with the reform of the Vocational Training Act. Paragraph 2, dealing with vocational education and training learning venues, reads in part:

”...
(3) Parts of vocational training can be taken abroad if this serves the training objective. Its total duration shall not exceed one fourth of the training duration stipulated in the Training Ordinance.“

Mobility in vocational education and training is promoted in particular through Leonardo programm. In Germany, more than 18.5 million euros from the Programme Budget for 2007 went to promoting mobility in vocational education and training. From those resources, about 7,500 trainees, 2,800 persons in the labour market and 1,400 vocational education and training specialists were supported.

To supplement the regular Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects, innovative project types have been developed in Germany that are tailored to individual training situations and the needs of the enterprises and institutions providing training:

- Small projects are directed in particular towards training enterprises and vocational education and training establishments that are participating in European programmes for the first time. Small projects provide support for three trainees per company at the most. The projects are not subject to the European application deadlines and can be applied for consecutively and with reduced effort.
- In pool projects, which are offered by Competent Bodies (Chambers) or education providers, individual grants are given to trainees or learners who have completed their training. Pool projects are intended mainly for trainees and SME staff who do not arrange mobility measures themselves.
- Qualification measures abroad lasting four or more months are supported with the transnational grid training concept. The project partners co-operate with one another throughout the training period and consult with one another on the content of training.

Over and above the Leonardo exchanges the BMBF is funding four bilateral exchange programmes in vocational education and training in Europe (France, Netherlands, United Kingdom and Norway) within which special national or bilateral interests can be taken into account.

The Vocational Education and Training Innovation Circle set up by the BMBF also formulated in its "10 Guidelines for Modernising and Improving the Structure of Vocational Education and Training" recommendations for opening German vocational education and training to Europe, particularly by promoting mobility in education and training (see 9.1).

Participants in transborder exchanges in initial training from 2000 - 2007 (advanced till 2003; from 2004 approved)

Duration of stay abroad:

Up to 4 weeks	-	53%
5 to 12 weeks	-	15%
4 to 12 months	-	15%
More than 12 months	-	18%

Countries of destination

-	United Kingdom		21%
-	France		16%
-	Spain		13%
-	Poland		7%
-	Italy		6%
-	Czech Republic/Finland	each	4%
-	NL/ NO/ IRL/ HU	each	3%

Status of participants in training courses in EU countries other than Germany:

- Initial vocational education and training (68%);
- Higher education (12%);
- Continuing education and training (10%);
- General school education (8%)

7.5.2. Examples of policy measures (maximum 500 words/example)

8. Development of VET statistics

Adequate and consistent data and indicators provide important evidence for policy makers to develop well targeted and effective measures. The Helsinki Communiqué indicates how objectives in improving VET statistics could be achieved: 'using and combining existing data', 'while ensuring adequate national data on VET' and 'consistency and comparability with other data on education and training'.

Appropriate national data based on harmonised European concepts are the precondition for comparable statistics at EU level. Therefore, it is crucial that Member States

- raise awareness of the importance of VET statistics at national level;*
- improve and broaden the data basis for VET statistics; and*
- strengthen consequently their national statistical infrastructure (National Statistical Offices and responsible authorities for education and training statistics) and resources devoted to VET statistics.*

8.1. Progress made on national VET statistics since 2002

A few brief remarks on the present situation in the field of **international vocational education and training statistics** are necessary by way of introduction.

In the international debates on the efficiency and effectiveness of vocational education and training systems, there is still a lack of relevant data or the use of different indicators leads to apparently contradictory or at the very least to confusing results.

One example: On the basis of Eurostat data (2004) the proportion of young people with at least a secondary level II school leaving certificate is relatively low. At just 73%, Germany is situated together with Spain and Portugal at the lower end of the list in comparison with other European countries. This contrasts with the secondary level II completion rates published by the OECD in its annual publication "Education at a Glance". There, Germany found itself together with Norway at the top of the OECD countries in 2004 with a completion rate of 99% (OECD 2006).

The problem of non-comparability of the two rates was already referred to in publications of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) at the national and international levels, most recently in the so-called Maastricht Study (Behringer 2004).

Reference has also already been made here to a **glaring lack** of adequate data for estimating the efficiency of vocational education and training. The requisite data for that purpose on outlay on the one hand and on the other the outcomes of vocational education and training are absent. The public expenditures as a portion of the gross national product are identified periodically, but nothing can be deduced regarding the proportion of expenditures devoted to vocational education and training. There are no direct figures on the performance of vocational education and training in schools and enterprises.

To close this gap, Germany has taken the initiative in starting an international comparative study of vocational education and training. Its purpose is to undertake for the first time an outcome-oriented comparison of different European vocational education and training systems, creating common methods of measuring skills.

Future-oriented, targeted, evidence-based further development of the education and training systems in Europe is not possible without valid statistical data.

The BIBB is playing an active role in further developing the European statistical database within CVTS. The project for "Development of a methodology for a long term strategy on the Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS)" made methodical preparations on behalf of

the European Commission and in close co-operation with Eurostat for the third European Continuing Vocational Training Survey. The BIBB, as consortium manager, was supported in this by four international project partners: 3s research laboratory (Austria), Statistics Finland, Statistics Sweden, FÁS - Training and Employment Authority (Ireland).

The goal of the project was to develop a comprehensive, practical approach on the basis of the CVTS-2 concept for future data surveys on company education and training. The most important activities in this regard were:

- further development of a coherent statistics and indicator system for in-company education and training,
- further development of the European CVTS-2 questionnaire,
- improvement of the practical concepts and definitions for carrying out the survey and the survey guidelines,
- better integration of non-formalised forms of in-company continuing vocational training,
- extension of the survey to initial education and training in enterprises.

Under the consortium management of the BIBB and with the participation of Céreq Marseilles and Isfol Rome, the aggregate CVTS-3 results tables published a little at a time by Eurostat since October 2007 are now being thoroughly sifted through and organised by assignment of Cedefop. The main focus of the work will be on the explanatory presentation of the European findings. Depending on the possibility of access within the term of the project (April 2007 to February 2009), detailed and explanatory analyses will be undertaken on the national quality reports about the survey and on the microdata.

Relevant statistics in Germany

IVET

Different (official) statistics are the basis for the analysis of the structure and development of the dual system of vocational education and training in Germany.

School statistics contain information on the number of school leavers from schools of general education and hence on the expected transitions to initial vocational education and training.

Training market statistics from the Federal Employment Agency (BA) provide important references to the current year's placements in vocational training under the dual system. Thus all applicants who inquire about apprenticeships at the local Employment Agencies are registered in terms of sex, school leaving certificates and other characteristics. The employment statistics of the Federal Employment Agency can be used with reference to the size or industrial branch of an enterprise to calculate trends in in-company training in relation to the development of the employee numbers and the development of the enterprises that provide training.

Two surveys independent of one another provide information on the **number of new training contracts concluded yearly** in the dual system pursuant to the BBiG/HwO as well as on all current contracts and structure. The BIBB survey on new training contracts concluded as of 30 September and the vocational training statistics of the Federal Statistical Office as of 31 December. The business statistics of the bodies responsible for vocational education and training (e.g. Chambers of Industry and Commerce, Trades Chambers, Liberal Professions Chambers) provide the base data for this. Those bodies are obliged under § 34 of the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) "to establish and maintain a register of vocational training relationships". That means that every training contract concluded between an enterprise (trainer) and a young person (trainee) has to be presented to the responsible body and entered by that body in the register of vocational training relationships.

These two central bodies of statistics for describing structure and development are explained more fully below.

The BIBB survey on new training contracts concluded as of 30 September

Pursuant to § 86 of the Vocational Training Act (BBiG), the BBiB conducts a survey once a year on new training contracts concluded as of 30 September. It covers those new training contracts that have been signed in the previous twelve months (the reporting period for the Vocational Education and Training Report) and that are still in force on 30 September of the year of the survey (without having been dissolved). The responsibility for compiling the data under the BBiG lies with the bodies responsible for vocational training (including Chambers of Industry and Commerce, trades, farmers', lawyers', patent attorneys', notaries', tax advisers', physicians', dentists', pharmacists' and veterinarians' chambers, the Ocean Shipping Vocational Education and Training Office, the ministries, federal and state administration offices, military district administrations and administration academies). The BBiB co-operates with about 400 bodies.

The results of the survey are available at the beginning of December for the current training year and together with the data from the training market statistics of the Federal Employment Agency (BA) they are a vital basis for analysing the apprenticeship market. The results of the analyses are used in the annual Vocational Education and Training Report of the Federal Government and elsewhere.

The data are collected at the level of the Employment Agency districts and disclosed in different regional branches. Since 2002, the data have been recorded separately by gender. The survey concept was improved with the 2004 BBiB survey on new training contracts concluded. The classification of training contracts in so-called accumulative and residual groups practiced until then was replaced by the entry of individual occupations. That makes more comprehensive analyses at the occupation level possible. Parallel to that, the survey tool was substantially improved. The responsible bodies can use an online portal for data entry that can at the same time be used as an archive and offers numerous possibilities of evaluation for that closed circle of users.

To improve the database further, information is also to be evaluated in the future on the **kind of funding** with the aim of being able to offer a more differentiated presentation of business and government training performance.

Vocational Education and Training Statistics

Statistical data on vocational education and training are also collected by the Statistical Offices. The legal basis of this is § 87 of the BBiG. The data collection period for this survey corresponds to the calendar year (1 January to 31 December). These data are reported by the responsible bodies as well. This is an annual total survey of all trainees and final exams and of the training personnel in the dual system of vocational education and training in Germany. The individual characteristics to be recorded are currently stipulated in the Vocational Training Act (§ 88, BBiG 2005). In addition to data on vocational further education exams, the vocational education and training statistics provide extensive data for the dual system of vocational education and training, e.g. for the

- Trainees: gender, nationality, previous schooling, training occupation, training year, examination outcome etc.
- Trainers: gender, technical and pedagogical aptitude
- Training counsellors: age, gender, educational background etc.

Important structures and trends in vocational education and training can be observed by means of the vocational education and training statistics. For example, the way the educational participation of young people in the dual system of vocational education and training develops, how large the proportion of women is in the various occupational groups, how the changeover to a service society is reflected in the dual system, how much participation there is in the new training occupations, and which training occupations are taken up most.

While the data from the BIBB survey as of 30 September are available in the same training year, the data in the vocational education and training statistics always refer to the previous calendar year.

The Vocational Training Reform Act of 23 March 2005 revised vocational education and training statistics. It comprises the conversion from an aggregate data survey to an individual data survey and an expansion of the catalogue of characteristics. Article 2a of the Vocational Training Reform Act, which contains these changes, came into force on 1 April 2007, so that 31 December 2007 was the first time that data from the revised statistics could be recorded. On the one hand the reform constitutes an improvement with regard to the characteristics previously covered: In addition to the general school leaving certificate, previous attendance of a vocational school by the trainee and further events relevant to the training (start of training, examination date, dissolution of contract) are also recorded. For example, whether or not the training relationships are for the most part publicly funded is also recorded now. Together with more differentiated data on individual characteristics, the possibilities of analysis are also improved by the Vocational Training Reform Act. This laid a decisive foundation-stone for using official statistics for scientific analyses that can in turn be used in policy-making processes.

Initial results of the revised vocational education and training statistics can be expected from 2009 onwards. In the future it will primarily be a matter of expanding and deepening the analyses on the basis of the vocational education and training statistics in order to obtain better information about trends in different occupations, with reference, among other things, to vocational backgrounds or with reference to regional disparities.

CVET

The principal features of the German continuing education reporting system (BSW) were conceived at the end of the 1970s and have been expanded step by step to include new aspects, especially in the area of informal learning, since the end of the eighties. The basic concepts reflect the German conception of the term continuing education and training. They include:

- the differentiation between initial training and continuing training,
- the differentiation between general and vocational continuing education and training,
- the conception of continuing education and training as a goal-oriented, organised form of learning, i.e. in the form of courses, seminars, lectures (whereby "informal learning" is kept in mind as well).

From the German point of view these are, as it were, "culturally self-evident", but – and this is a common experience – if one adopts an international perspective they become anything but self-evident. The AES as a European reporting system works with a different basic conceptual structure:

- The object of investigation is not continuing education in the narrow sense but all learning performed as adults (adult education or adult learning)
- and it is differentiated on the basis of learning forms or the institutional framework of learning into formal education, non-formal education and informal education.

BSW and AES differ in the way the details of continuing education and training are recorded. Nevertheless, they both arrive at very similar findings. According to the BSW concept 43% and according to the AES concept 44% of the 16- to 64-year-old population have taken part in continuing education and training events in the past 12 months. For the comparison at the international level, the AES took the population aged between 25 and 64 as the basis. In this presentation, participation in continuing education (non-formal education) was 43% for Germany.

8.2. Examples of policies/measures/projects for improving national VET statistics

In addition to the further development of vocational education and training statistics on the basis of the Vocational Training Act mentioned in 8.1, the following measures to improve the information and data base for initial and continuing vocational education and training are under consideration:

Example 1:

- A. **Development of integrated educational reporting**
- B. **Training statistics** are expected to provide information on the preconditions, processes and outcomes of vocational training. They are expected to provide a reliable basis for assessing the situation of young people in this transitional process. For the interested observer, however, the training statistics present themselves as rather unintelligible at present. Many institutions collect data, various institutions are involved in processing them and publish their respective findings on different dates. At the present time, the survey periods for vocational education and training statistics are spread out over the entire training and calendar year. In order to be able to assess developments in the whole training system and the function and quality of the individual courses of training, it is necessary in particular to watch the interfaces at the transition point between school and training on the one hand and between the different vocational training opportunities on the other. Such a detailed analysis is prevented in particular by the fact that there is no nuanced synopsis of all training and qualification opportunities in the training system. Too often, the focus is primarily on the applicant statistics of the Federal Employment Agency and on processes in the apprenticeship market. The findings from school statistics, on the other hand, are scarcely perceived by the public. An improved data situation, and hence integrated training statistics taking **all relevant training and qualification opportunities into account** is therefore urgently needed if we want to be able to assess the training situation of young people on a more solid basis.
- C.-E. For that purpose, a prototype was developed for the State of Hesse for 2007/2008 in the framework of a feasibility study (Anger et al. 2007). On that basis, the Board of the BIBB recommends "unanimously that the Federal Government have the possibility of the findings from the feasibility study supported by the State of Hesse being transferred" to the Federal level (record of the results of Meeting I/2007 of the Board of the BIBB on Thursday, 8 March 2007 in the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Bonn).

Example 2:

Establishment or further development of a set of indicators for reporting in vocational education and training in the context of the Report on Vocational Education and Training. On this point the Board of the BIBB recommends that long-term series be identified "on which reports should be given annually"

(http://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/pressemitteilung_49_2007_anlage_empfehlung_ha.pdf).

BMBF and BIBB are asked to submit a proposal as to which empirical sources on continuing education and training can be used as a basis for reporting and developed into long series. In that connection, there should also be a study of which areas of continuing education and training any statistics at all are taken on and which data are collected.

9. VET beyond 2010

2010 will be a milestone for education and training in Europe as the current work programme to support the Lisbon process will come to an end. Therefore, the review of the Copenhagen process in December 2008 will be of particular importance to learn from the developments so far and shape the policy that should follow, after 2010. The European Commission has already started a reflection process and the French presidency also tackles this issue.

Taking into consideration the national socio-cultural and economic characteristics of your country and other trends (such as demographic change, migration, social cohesion, altering economic and labour market circumstances) and their impact on VET as well as the policies you have described throughout your national report, we ask you to reflect on the following two open questions:

- 1. What VET issues do you believe should be on the national and on the EU policy agenda post 2010 and why?*
- 2. How could these issues be addressed through national and EU policy and/or targets?*

In April 2006 the Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) established a "Vocational Education and Training Innovation Circle". In that think-tank, consisting of high-level representatives of enterprises, science, business associations, trade unions and State governments, 10 Guidelines for Modernising and Improving the Structure of Vocational Education and Training were developed before the summer of 2007 (BMBF 2007a).

In May 2006, also on the initiative of the BMBF, the "Continuing Education and Training Innovation Circle" was created, consisting of high-level experts from science, business and practice and representatives of employer and trade union organisations and the Conference of State Education Ministers. Up until March 2008 that Innovation Circle developed recommendations designed to significantly increase participation in continuing education and training in Germany (BMBF 2008c). The recommendations are to be seen as a foundation that an implementation of lifelong learning can build on. Thus an 80% rate of participation of people between 25 and 64 years of age in life-long learning by 2015 is envisaged as a national continuing education and training target. Participation in formal continuing education shall increase from the 2006 total of 43% to 50% by 2015. For those with rudimentary skills, only 28% of whom have been participating in continuing education and training, the proposed target is at least 40%. (The target rates refer to the EU survey on individual participation in continuing education (Adult Education Survey) to be found in the introduction. Those with rudimentary skills means persons with a low level of schooling.)

The January 2008 Qualification Initiative of the Federal Government (BMBF 2008a) is a first step towards implementing the recommendations. Meeting future skilled labour needs is the main concern of the bundle of measures. Many recommendations of the Innovation Circles in the field of initial and continuing education and training are already being taken up here. The following remarks therefore feed particularly from the Qualification Initiative of the Federal Government and the recommendations of the two Innovation Circles, in which long-term strategic targets are named and described.

NATIONAL POLICY ISSUES:

Heightening training mobility (Schavan 2007; BMBF 2007a)

The number of trainees in Germany who acquire qualifications abroad shall double by 2015. Attainment of that goal will be a contribution to the long-term competitiveness of employees and enterprises.

Measures/Policies

Educational activities across the borders with neighbouring countries must be intensified without neglecting specific regional needs. Special attention needs to be given to the development of educational opportunities specific to border regions, the establishment of cross-border education structures and the development of transnational education areas. Recognition of the limited-time portions of training in other countries is an important innovation that has come about since the enactment of the Vocational Training Reform Act in April 2005.

Recognition of competencies acquired outside the education and training systems (BMBF 2008c)

In order to make optimum use of and further develop people's competencies and potentials acquired outside formal education, the development of a European/German qualification framework has the medium-term and long-term goal of a paradigm shift from orientation towards formal, certificate-related qualifications to orientation towards competencies. Competencies acquired outside the education and training systems should be recognised as well. For example, occupation-relevant competencies acquired through civic engagement shall be recognized and certified.

Measures/Policies

- The basis for recognition of competencies is agreement on what competency means. The variety of certificates of competency must be pressed into a common framework in future in order to ensure international comparability and to support the long-term introduction of a German Qualification Framework.
- Competencies should be certified in such a way that their usability in the education system as in the employment system is improved. To that end, tools shall be developed, experience with recognition and accreditation procedures amassed and models tested. Courses of education and examinations should always be made accessible to lateral entrants as well.
- Possibilities must be developed for making competencies acquired through volunteering and in everyday life visible through certification and for recognising them.

Enabling permeability and dovetailing of fields of education (BMBF 2008a; BMBF 2008c)

The fields of education must become more permeable and require greater vertical and horizontal dovetailing. In particular, continuing general and vocational education and training must be more closely linked and connectivity between initial vocational education, continuing education, vocational education and training and university education must be guaranteed. Every education pathway shall lead to a certificate; there must be no blind alleys in the education system.

Achievements in the framework of continuing education and training should be accredited when a (further) course of study is undertaken. The universities and continuing education must be opened to new target groups.

Measures/Policies

- In Germany, the federal and state governments agreed on the development of a German Qualification Framework (DQR) in January 2007. There is a need for research here in the fields of competency-measuring and reference allocation.
- In autumn 2007 the pilot initiative "Credits in Vocational Education" was launched on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The purpose of that initiative was to conceive, implement and test credit systems in vocational education and training. Consequently the objective is improvement of the transitions at the various vertical and horizontal interfaces with the dual system of vocational education and training as well as deployment in the dual system itself. Over and above this, the intention is to systematically test procedures for recording, accrediting and recognising learning outcomes and competencies.
- Both in developing a National Qualification Framework and in developing a credit system in vocational education and training, the focus is not only on promoting the transparency, comparability and permeability of qualifications but also on quality development (access, qualifications building on one another) (see 7.1).
- Measures to prevent the discontinuation of schooling and training shall be pursued further.
- Opportunities to obtain school or vocational certificates belatedly shall be expanded.
- To open up more pathways to advancement from within vocational training and employment, gifted graduates of dual training who want to follow it up with university studies shall receive advancement scholarships.

Expand education counselling services (BMBF 2008c)

In order to ensure an adequate supply of high-quality counselling services that all target groups and especially those not yet reached can benefit from, an integrated system of educational and vocational counselling covering all phases of learning is needed.

Measures/Policies

- Existing counselling opportunities in the sphere of the schools, universities and municipalities as well as the Federal Employment Agency and the trade union and employer organisations should be bundled and further developed as entry and orientation counselling for lifelong learning. In addition, neutral educational and vocational counselling services not bound to one field of education or one funding agency shall be established and expanded.
- Educational counselling, including vocational counselling, has to be put on a uniform governmental funding basis.
- Educational counselling in Germany shall be guided by the Council of Europe recommendation on lifelong counselling (2004).

Integration through vocational education (BMBF 2008c)

Against the background of demographic change and the special responsibility Germany as a country of integration has towards migrants, opportunities have to be opened up in the education system in particular to take better advantage of the potentials of present and future immigrants for their individual development and their integration into the community.

Measures/Policies

- Young adults with migration backgrounds working without having completed vocational training shall be offered a second chance of modular on-the-job retraining.
- Irrespective of formal recognition as completed vocational training, the formally, informally and non-formally acquired skills of immigrants shall be made more transparent so that their potentials will be taken into consideration in the application process. Building on that analysis of skills, counselling opportunities and opportunities

for retraining and preparation for examinations shall support the process of formal recognition.

- Recognition procedures in vocational education and training that up to now have been carried out in only a few occupations and on the basis of residence status, with differing tools, have to be developed into an individual integration opportunity covering the whole area.

Learning between the generations: Exhausting potentials (BMBF 2008c)

Lifelong learning must remain attractive and evolve further in the late-career and after-career phase as well, so that the knowledge and skills of the older generation are preserved. That is the only way the social participation and the appreciation of the knowledge, experience and skills of the older generation can be ensured, in their interest and that of the younger generation as well.

Measures/Policies

- New kinds of opportunities for intergenerational learning must become more widespread.
- To preserve the employability of the older generation, suitable continuing education and training opportunities must be developed jointly with the enterprises. In addition to on-the-job qualification opportunities, health-promoting and health-preserving opportunities must be extended as well.

Promoting lifelong learning for and with enterprises (BMBF 2008c)

Because of its importance for the economy, the continuing education commitment of small and medium-sized enterprises has to be stimulated and given special support.

Measures/Policies

- At the regional level in particular, the co-operation of large as well as small and medium-sized enterprises with players in the continuing education and training field can be useful. Such regional co-operation schemes and the initiation of grid solutions therefore have to be initiated.
- SMEs have to be helped to anchor on-the-job learning more firmly in their personnel development. The expansion of a culture of innovation and learning in the SMEs needs to be supported.
- Dual and on-the-job study courses that make it possible for employees to take up studies parallel to their jobs have to be further extended.

EU POLICY ISSUES:

Learning without borders (BMBF 2008c)

European integration, progressive internationalisation and globalisation place high demands on intercultural and linguistic competencies as well as on our readiness to be mobile.

Measures/Policies

- For young people engaged in vocational education and training a **"Training ID Card"** that is accepted throughout Europe, comparable to the "Student ID Card", should be developed.
- The transparency of European and non-European education systems and educational opportunities needs to be improved through expansion of the relevant databases.
- The challenges of EU vocational education and training policy shall be integrated rapidly into corresponding measures, especially in respect of the European

Qualification Framework. The focus shall be on promoting mobility, multilingualism and intercultural competence.

- Transparency concerning the international validity of vocational certificates as well as procedures for adequately classifying further education certificates in the qualification framework shall be further developed.

Conducting an international comparative study on vocational education and training (BMBF 2008a; BIBB 2008b)

In the coming years, an international measurement of comparative competence by means of a so-called "Pisa Study of Vocational Education and Training" will be aspired to. The comparative efficiency of vocational training systems and vocational education organisations internationally shall be determined. The Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) has adopted a recommendation concerning such an international comparative study ("large-scale assessment") in December 2007. In their majority decision, the Board members representing employers, labour and the federal states fundamentally support the initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to compare the quality of vocational education and training on an international basis. At the same time however, the Board critically noted, that methods taking adequate account of learning processes in the course of modern, in-company work and business processes are still underdeveloped. According to the Board, the one concept that has been submitted to date for measuring vocational skills still focuses too much on knowledge that is learned in school or through courses - and does not cover comprehensive vocational proficiency. This places dual vocational training at a disadvantage vis-à-vis school-based or academic teaching of knowledge, especially in light of the fact that most training systems in Europe are school-based. For this reason, the Board is calling for the development of scientifically substantiated tools and methods for measuring vocational competences that are based on modern work processes. Only in this way is it possible to adequately assess the different forms of vocational training and qualification between schools and enterprises in Germany or adequately compare them on an international basis.

Development of European core occupations

The idea of developing European core occupations stems from the fact that vocational requirements are largely similar in all European countries. It therefore makes sense to define the vocational qualifications that young people have to acquire jointly in a dialogue between trade union and employer organisations with the participation of the European Commission. It will then be up to the member states whether and in what way they integrate these core occupations into their national legal framework.

Reinforcing partnerships with enterprises in the context of vocational education and raising a new generation of qualified employees

In view of the dynamics in the enterprises, the dynamic development of quality requirements and rapid technological change, it would be a good stimulus for Europe if experience could be garnered in as many parts of Europe as possible as to how schools and enterprises can become natural partners not just in innovation policy but also in education. That strengthens vocational education and above all it improves the situation at the interface between education and employment. (Schavan 2007)

To ensure that the necessary practice orientation and social integration benefits of vocational learning develop further in the vocational education and training systems of the European Union, Germany supports vocational education policy initiatives designed

- to create or expand an attractive supply of high-quality training courses and better prepare school leavers for vocational life and thus increase opportunities of deployment in the world of work;
- to organise vocational education and training in close contact with the enterprises and to harmonise its goals and methods with the requirements of the world of work;
- to orient vocational education and training systems in such a way that they meet defined minimum standards of the world of employment and work and thus open up viable employment prospects. (ZDH/DIHK/DGB/BIBB 2008)

10. Annexes

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10.2. List of Acronyms

abH	Ausbildungsbegleitende Hilfen [apprenticeship support]
AES	Adult Education Survey
AEVO	Ausbildereignungsverordnung [Trainer Aptitude Regulation]
AFBG	Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz [Upgrading Training Support Act]
AGBFN	Arbeitsgemeinschaft Berufsbildungsforschungsnetz [Vocational Education Research Network Study Group]
AZWV	Anerkennungs- und Zulassungsverordnung – Weiterbildung [Accreditation and Certification in Further Training Ordinance]
BA	Bundesagentur für Arbeit [Federal Employment Agency]
BAföG	Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz [Federal Education and Training Assistance Act]
BAVBVO	Rechtsverordnung über die Bescheinigung von Grundlagen beruflicher Handlungsfähigkeit im Rahmen der Berufsausbildungsvorbereitung [Ordinance on the certification of the fundamentals of vocational proficiency in the context of preparation for vocational education and training]
BBiG	Berufsbildungsgesetz [Vocational Training Act]
BDA	Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände [Federal Association of German Employers' Organisations]
BDBA	Bundesverband Deutscher Berufsausbilder [German IVET Trainer Association]
BFB	Bundesverband der Freien Berufe [Association of Liberal Professions]
BIBB	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung [Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training]
BLK	Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung [Federal/State Commission for Education Planning and Research Promotion]
BMAS	Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Sozialordnung [Federal Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs]
BMBF	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung [Federal Ministry of Education and Research]
BMFSFJ	Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend [Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth]
BMWi	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie [Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology]
BQF	Berufliche Qualifizierung für Zielgruppen mit besonderem Förderbedarf [vocational qualification of target groups with special promotion needs]
BSW	Berichtssystem Weiterbildung [Continuing Education Reporting System]
BvB	Berufsvorbereitende Bildungsmaßnahmen [vocational preparation schemes]

DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst [German Academic Exchange Service]
DAR	Deutscher Akkreditierungsrat [German Accreditation Council]
DGB	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund [Federation of German Trade Unions]
DIE	Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung [German Institute for Adult Education]
DIHK	Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag [Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce]
DQR	Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen [German Qualification Framework]
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
ENQA-VET	European Network on Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
EQJ	Einstiegsqualifizierung Jugendlicher [Initial Qualification of Young People]
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESF	Europäischer Sozialfonds [European Social Fund]
GWK	Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz [Joint Science Conference]
HRK	Hochschulrektorenkonferenz [German Rectors' Conference]
HwO	Handwerksordnung [Trades and Crafts Ordinance]
IAB	Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung [Institute for Labour Market and Occupation Research]
IHK	Industrie- und Handelskammer [Chamber of Industry and Commerce]
IKBB	Innovationskreis Berufliche Bildung [Vocational Education and Training Innovation Circle]
IKWB	Innovationskreis Weiterbildung [Continuing Education and Training Innovation Circle]
INQA	Initiative Neue Qualität der Arbeit [New Quality of Work Initiative]
ISCED	Internationale Standardklassifikation für das Bildungswesen <i>International Standard Classification of Education</i>
IW	Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft [Institute for Business Research]
KMK	Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [Conference of State Ministers of Education in the Federal Republic of Germany]
NEC	National Europass Centre
SGB	Sozialgesetzbuch [Social Code]
TGA	Trägergemeinschaft für Akkreditierung [German Association for Accreditation]
ÜBS	Überbetriebliche Berufsbildungsstätte [inter-company vocational training facility]
ZDH	Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks [German Confederation of Skilled Crafts]
ZVEH	Zentralverband der Deutschen Elektro- und Informationstechnischen Handwerke [Association of German Electrical and Information Technology Trades]
ZVEI	Zentralverband Elektrotechnik- und Elektroindustrie [Central Electrical Engineering and Electrical Industry Association]
ZWH	Zentralstelle für die Weiterbildung im Handwerk [Central Office for Further Training in the Craft Trades Sector]

Abstract

The **VET Policy Report 2008** provides information on Germany's progress in VET towards EU policy goals within the framework of the Copenhagen process and according to the policy priorities defined in the Maastricht Communiqué (2004) and the Helsinki Communiqué (2006). It considers measures taken in the context of the Education and Training 2010 programme since the Copenhagen Declaration.

The main section of the report is subdivided into the following seven policy areas identified by education ministers as priorities for national policy design in the VET sector:

- Improving access to and equity in VET;
- Lifelong learning through VET;
- Improving quality of VET;
- Strengthening the links between VET and the labour market;
- Governance and funding;
- EU tools and geographic mobility within VET;
- Development of VET statistics.

It forms part of the Cedefop ReferNet 2008 work programme.

