

Labour market information in lifelong guidance

AO/RPA/PMDFON/LMI in Guidance/007/14

Case study visit focusing on BiWi, Austria

prepared for CEDEFOP – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

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1. Background information for the case study

The current section starts with a short introduction to the focus of the current case study and the field-visit to Austria. It continues with a presentation of the host organisation which played a vital role in the organisation of the field-visit and ends by providing meaningful information about the Austrian labour market as well as the national career education and vocational guidance system and the integration of Labour Market Information (LMI) in this context.

1.1 Field-visit identity

The following Table 1 summarises the main elements of the field-visit, including the host organisation that facilitated the field activities, the main contact persons and locations visited as well as the timing of the field-visit.

Table 1: Main elements of the field visit

County in focus	Austria
Host organisation	Styrian Association for Education and Economics (www.stvg.at)
Focus of the case study	BiWi – Berufsinformationszentrum der Wiener Wirtschaft: The career guidance and information centre of the Vienna Chamber of Commerce and Industry, aimed at providing people with practical insights into the professional world and helping them find the right education and/or career path.
Location(s)	(a) Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, Department I/9 (http://www.bmbf.gv.at) – Vienna (b) AMS Österreich (http://www.ams.at) – Vienna (c) AMS Wien (http://www.ams.at/wien) – Vienna (d) BiWi – Berufsinformationszentrum der Wiener Wirtschaft (http://www.biwi.at) – Vienna (e) National Agency for Lifelong Learning (http://www.lebenslanges-lernen.at) – Vienna
Contact persons	Host Organisation ✓ Michaela Marterer – Deputy Managing Director, Styrian Association for Education and Economics (mm@stvg.com , +43 6768 417 17 14) Contractor ✓ Elissavet Lykogianni – LMI Project Manager (elissavet@gmail.com , +32 4944268 22) ✓ Kostas Giagtzoglou – Consultant, Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL LTD (giagtzoglou@qplan.gr , +30 2310 411 191)
Dates of field-visit	17 to 19 June 2015

1.2 Background on the host organisation

The Styrian Association for Education and Economics (STVG) is an educational trade and industry institute focusing on education and business. It operates at the transition point between educational institutions, the world of work and occupational training and is defined as part of a network with a wide range of partners, cooperating with adult education institutions, schools, social partners, companies and institutes of learning and training. Seminars, lectures and courses are held, projects are initiated and carried out and comprehensive developmental processes are organised and managed – all to attain the educational and economic aims of the organisation. In addition to these activities, the STVG and its employees are active in developing, organising and structuring measures for educational policies on various committees, both at state and federal level, including (but not limited to):

- (a) Committee on Educational Policies – Federation of Austrian Industry;
- (b) Lecturers for teacher training on universities and for some topics on universities for applied sciences;
- (c) National Steering board of the committee for adult education;
- (d) Task Group of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.

STVG fulfils its work within five working areas: Seminars and Trainings; Career Guidance and Transition Management; Transversal Topics; Entrepreneurship Education; and Processes and Strategies.

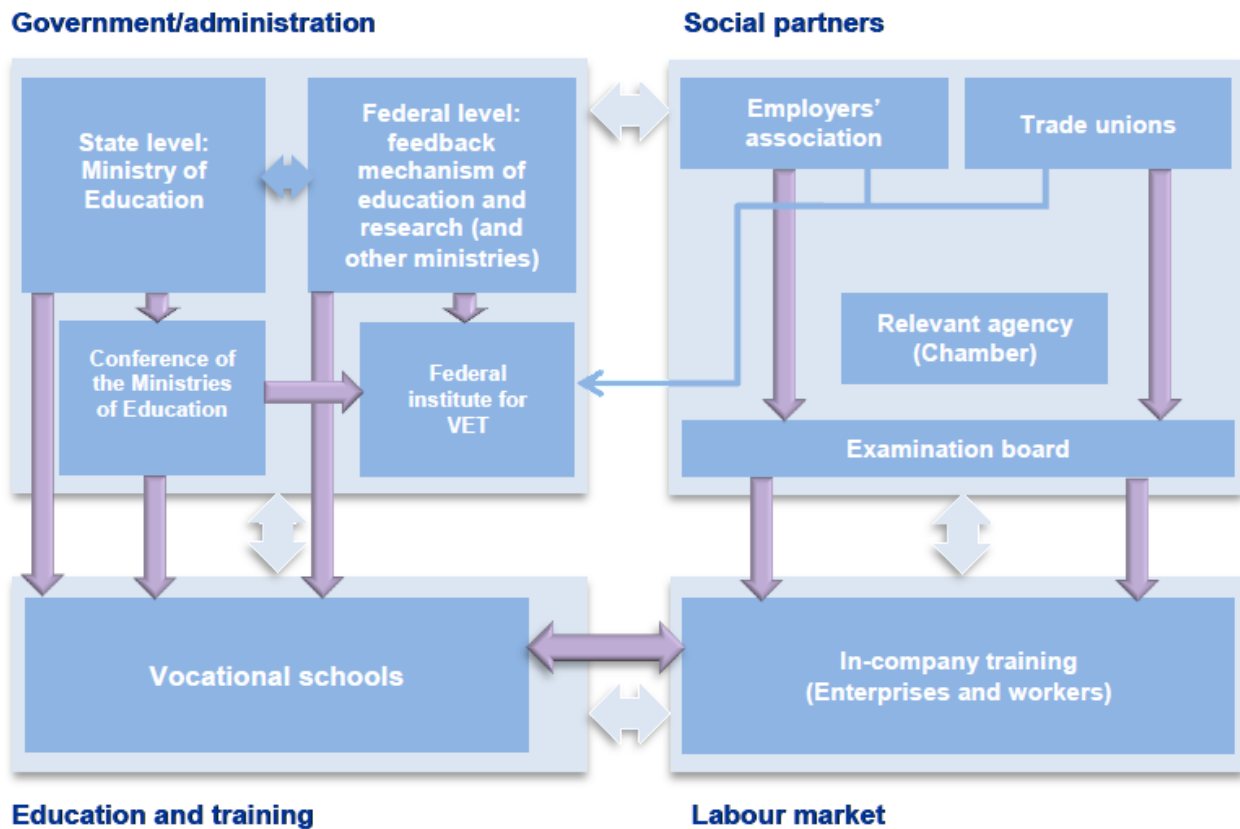
1.3 Background on the labour market and integration of LMI

In order to analyse BiWi, we need to place it within the context of the overall characteristics of the labour market in Austria as well as of the national career guidance and vocational education system. To this end, this section provides background information about the general context of LMI in Austria along with some additional insights into the Austrian labour market as well as an overview of the main elements of career guidance and vocational education in Austria.

1.3.1 General context of LMI in Austria

Cooperation between Austrian businesses and public Vocational Education and Training (VET) actors is considered crucial for the effectiveness of the overall VET system in Austria. As a result, the Austrian VET system is regularly revised and updated with a view to not only deepening the cooperation between employers and public VET actors, but also developing novel methods and tools to better forecast labour market supply and demand and adjust accordingly.

Figure 1: The Austrian feedback model for VET



Source: Cedefop

In fact, Austria employs dynamic and customised feedback mechanisms aimed at improving the design and implementation of VET with strong participation of social stakeholders and in particular representatives from the business community. According to European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), social partners in Austria are categorised into statutory (economic chambers, organizations of workers, agricultural chambers, etc.) and voluntary groups of participants such as the Federation of Austrian Industry and the Austrian Trade Union Federation. Social participation through representative organizations plays an important role in the vocational dimension of education with active contribution to legislation issues and curricula development. Furthermore, close cooperation with business stakeholders ensures that VET curricula are adapted to the real needs of the local, regional and national economy and labour market.

The Austrian feedback model and the importance of the social partners and national labour market in shaping, implementing and evaluating VET are illustrated in Figure 1.

In this context, curriculum committees comprised of public and private sector stakeholders participate in the co-development of teaching material which is adapted and reflects current economic and social realities and labour market conditions. Furthermore, research and development is conducted in a practice-oriented way in joint projects between schools and industry (e.g. in the form of diploma projects or projects carried out in training firms), while a large percentage of VET professionals hold hands-on experience of taught subjects in the private sector.

Furthermore, the Public Employment Service (AMS) is intensively active at determining qualification requirements and forecasting supply and demand in the labour market in order to better shape employment and training policies. Representative tools used by the AMS are reports commissioned by the AMS concerning skill demand and the operation of the

Qualification Barometer (AMS-QB), a dynamic tool that gathers, analyses and foresees trends in the labour market in relation to qualifications and skills needs.

All in all, the VET system in Austria is closely related to the needs of businesses as well as the labour market. However, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD, 2010), the quality and availability of LMI is not readily available to the entire population of VET participants, while some subjects offered are considered as too narrow in scope in terms of actual labour market conditions.

1.3.2 Career education and vocational guidance

There are two established guidance and counselling systems in Austria complementing each other:

- (a) guidance and counselling provided by education and training institutions; and
- (b) guidance services provided by the employment administration and other institutions in the field of career guidance.

A national strategy for lifelong guidance was prepared in 2005 and 2006 under the auspices of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education (now titled Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs) by an inter-ministerial working group, involving the Public Employment Service of Austria (AMS), the social partners and other major partners in connection with this theme.

The Vocational Education system in Austria is present at all levels of the educational system and is characterized by a broad spectrum of offered subjects and courses and great institutional diversity, as further elaborated below.

Lower Secondary level VET

Career guidance in Austrian schools is organised according to a three-level model: career education lessons are provided by career teachers; individual advice is provided by student advisors; and both of these are supplemented by a School Psychology Service that offers specialised assistance. These three levels of career guidance are supplemented by classroom teachers and a wide range of other individuals and agencies outside the school.

Secondary Technical and Vocational schools (BMS)

Technical and Vocational schools provide vocational education in various subjects and with different durations (one to four years) and begin from the fourth or eighth year of formal education. Attendance at a vocational and technical school also includes a training period that lasts either one or two years and leads to partial professional training, or three to four years and leads to full professional training. Graduates are considered certified professionals according to the Austrian Commercial Code.

Higher Vocational Education

Higher vocational education schools (BHS) attendance imparts students with a higher level of vocational education supplemented by broader educational areas. The duration of attendance is five years and graduation provides students with the opportunity to attend Universities and Colleges of teaching education. Graduates are legally permitted to become employed in professions regulated by the Austrian Commercial Code.

A new diploma is scheduled to be put in effect during the 2015/2016 year and will have national as well as international comparability as it will standardise skills and qualifications among

different institutions. The new type of diploma will offer flexibility in the examination method for students as well as a standardised examination system throughout the country.

Post-secondary VET

Colleges offer higher vocational training courses with a two-year attendance period (or three years for professionals).

Apprenticeship system

Apprenticeships are a very strong element of the Austrian vocational education system. As such, significant resources have been allocated in order to design and implement a successful vocational apprenticeship system that connects students with the world of work while complementing hands-on training with a theoretical background.

Austria implements an apprenticeship system that entitles graduates with full vocational qualifications of advanced level at one of the about 240 certified professions and trades. The apprenticeship system is described as dual, as it entails the compulsory attendance of a part-time, vocational school while students participate in company-based apprenticeships. Apprenticeships last from two to four years, with the most common duration being around three years. The vast majority (80%) of the apprenticeship is allocated at company-based training while 20% is allocated to attendance at vocational school. The purpose behind this design is to complement practical experience with structured professional knowledge. Upon completion the apprenticeship period, students are required to take an apprenticeship-leave exam in order to establish that they have acquired the necessary qualifications and skills required to practice their learned trade as professionals. The exam consists of both practical and theoretical sections and can be taken by candidates who have not attended the part-time vocational school upon fulfilment of certain requirements. Throughout the apprenticeship period students enjoy full social insurance and according to the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, 40% to 44% of apprentices continue to work at the company they received their initial training.

Company-based training is regulated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour while educational matters are managed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

Adult VET

Adult education in Austria is offered through a diverse mix of institutions and organizations, and entails a wide range of subjects and purposes such as professional education, basic and general education and second chance education, while certain courses and institutions offer pathways to university admission.

Adult education and training is an education sector of high interest among social groups in Austria and is under continuous reform and development in order to better adjust to local, regional and national requirements.

The majority of universities offer career planning centres, which support students with their entry into the world of work. These institutions fall within the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Science and Research.

Furthermore, the career guidance centres of the Public Employment Service (more than 60 across Austria), offer comprehensive information about occupations, their contents and requirements as well as about Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) and Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET) paths, the labour market and employment options, etc. In addition, to information material in the form of brochures, information leaflets, videos, etc.

AMS also develops and maintains information databases on occupations as well as on IVET and CVET programmes for different target groups, all of which are accessible online.

Career guidance in Austria is also provided through private institutions outside the formal system. The counselling services of the economic chambers and their adult education institutions, namely the Economic Promotion Institutes (*WIFIs*), focus on IVET and CVET in particular. These services are offered across Austria at several locations.

According to the OECD (2010), the Austrian VET system is characterized by a very strong social participation element with stakeholders from various sectors cooperating in design and delivery. The VET system in Austria provides flexibility for all target groups and effectively addresses the needs of groups with special requirements, while VET professionals are highly trained and qualified and hold relevant work experience on their subject in the private sector (mandatory professional requirement). However, the OECD also reports a structural anomaly in the Austrian VET system and in particular in the ninth grade, when due to the double transition for apprentices, some students may end up spending a year following an inappropriate track.

Training of staff

Teaching staff in IVET and school-based and university-based CET are essentially trained in two types of institutions in Austria, namely at (i) university colleges of education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen, PHs*) and (ii) universities. For the professionalization of IVET trainers, IVET trainer colleges have been set up. IVET trainer colleges are mostly coordinated by the regional Economic Chambers in cooperation with the chamber-specific CET institution, the Economic Promotion Institute. In the field of continuing professional development of adult educators, reference must also be made to the services provided by the Austrian Academy of Continuing Education.

In Austria, the last five years were marked by two key innovations in this field: the transformation of (vocational) teacher training colleges (*(Berufs-) Pädagogische Akademien*) and in-service teacher training colleges (*Pädagogische Institute*) into university colleges of education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen, PHs*) as well as the professionalization of IVET trainers.

2. Initiative in focus: BiWi - Berufsinformationszentrum der Wiener Wirtschaft

2.1 Objectives

The Berufsinformationszentrum der Wiener Wirtschaft (BiWi) – or Career Information Centre of the Viennese Economy, in English – was established by the Vienna Chamber of Commerce and Industry in October 1991. Situated within the 18th district of Vienna, the main objective of BiWi is to serve as a connecting platform between education and the labour market, providing practical career information and customised services to individuals and schools as well as businesses of the Viennese economy.

The concept of career guidance and information services in Austria, which led to the birth of BiWi, dates back more than 30 years when Alfred Dallinger, the Austrian Minister for Social Affairs at the time, envisioned a career information and employment service that would span across political and ideological boundaries. In spite of his unfortunate death in an accident (1989), his vision lived on and his ideas were further developed over the time by Austrian chambers of labour and commerce, along with several concepts of their own with respect to the provision of career information and services.

In this context, BiWi was initially established with a view to providing information and guidance to young children who required help in deciding on their education and career path. Indeed, at the beginning BiWi was limited to advising pupils of compulsory schools. Gradually, however, the centre expanded the range of its target group so as to support and counsel people of all ages. Still, at the moment young students aged between 13 and 17 years of age are the main audience targeted by BiWi. Teenagers at this age, typically lack the ability to make important decisions that will determine their entire future career and thus specialised support is required to facilitate the right decision.

All in all, BiWi is a good example of a well-functioning career guidance and information centre, which provides young people with an inside look at the working world with a view to guiding them in finding the right education for the right vocation with the help and engagement of all interested stakeholders including parents, teachers as well as schools and businesses.

2.2 Implementation

BiWi provides practical career information and well-tailored services aimed at three main target groups, namely (i) individual clients (principally young students), (ii) professional clients, and (iii) teachers, schools and parents of their students. A concise overview of the services provided by BiWi is provided below, distinguishing between its various target groups.

2.2.1 Services for individual clients

(a) Career guidance information: This service provides individual BiWi clients of all ages with the opportunity to obtain valuable information on potential education and career pathways based on their particular interests and needs. To this end, each client is required to develop an Interest Profile through a computer-based Q&A tool (¹). Clients can find information on more than 1600 professions in the extensive databases and well-stocked libraries of BiWi including

¹ Questions and Answers

job descriptions, photos, movies, company profiles as well as more than 300 folders prepared by professional clients of BiWi, containing written and illustrative information on a broad spectrum of professions. This service is available to interested clients without an appointment.

(b) Individual Professional Briefing: In the course of an individual professional briefing, BiWi career counsellors discuss with individual clients on interesting education and/or career opportunities and provide them with personalised advice and guidance. Clients must already possess good knowledge of their own interests, talents and priorities in order to receive meaningful guidance and as thus, this service typically comes after developing an Interest Profile. This service is oriented mainly towards teenagers and young adults (typically up to 25 years old) and requires an appointment.

(c) Application Training: In the frame of this service, BiWi career counsellors talk with and provide hands-on support to students who are about to complete their compulsory schooling and want to join an apprenticeship. Topics covered include: Preparing for a job interview; preparing and completing the documents required for a proper application, how to find apprenticeships that match the interests of the client; how to behave in the actual interview, etc. This service requires an appointment and is provided at a personal level. Thus, it is not available for school classes or groups.

(d) Orientation Checks: The orientation checks provided by BiWi provide its individual clients with meaningful support in choosing the right training path and help them identify their own interests, strengths and weaknesses through the following tools:

(i) Interest Profile: This check is employed for the identification of the individual client's vocational interests. As already mentioned, it is a computer-assisted Q&A tool aimed at guiding individual clients to reveal their own interests. The process takes around 15 minutes.

(ii) Basic Startup Check: The Basic Startup Check is an industry-independent orientation check. Its aim is to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the individual client in terms of practical arithmetic and number skills, German, reading comprehension, concentration, power of observation, logic and English. The check takes around 75 minutes.

(iii) Startup Check modules: Customised Startup Check modules are employed by BiWi in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of its individual clients in fields different than those covered by the basic respective check (such as technology crafts, creative arts, office and organisation, etc.). The completion of each module takes about 45 minutes.

Apart from the Interest Profile, all other orientation checks target the age group of 13 to 17 and require an appointment to be set up.

2.2.2 Services for professional clients

(a) Support for apprentice selection: This service is aimed at supporting professional clients to select the most suitable apprentice for their needs, leveraging the whole range of the well-designed orientation checks of BiWi (i.e. from the standard Interest Profile to the specialised Startup Check modules). Personal meetings are organised to present the service and its benefits to entrepreneurs and business representatives.

(b) Image building of professions and industries: Under the motto 'Do a picture of your profession', this BiWi service allows professional clients to build an appealing image of their profession and/or industry to be presented to current or future apprenticeship-/job-seekers. The aim is to break down common misconceptions and promote a common understanding of different professions and entrepreneurship among students, parents and teachers. In particular, with this service BiWi encourages professional clients to:

(i) Develop with the support of BiWi staff a profile of their profession/industry and present their work with illustrative information and pictures in the multimedia BiWi database.

(ii) Create and include a presentation of their profession in the physical profession folders included in the BiWi library.

(iii) Leverage the Industry Presentations offering of BiWi in order to better present their work and communicate their needs to young people, parents and teachers in practice.

Figure 2: BiWi home page



2.2.3 Services for teachers, schools and parents

(a) Services for teachers and schools: BiWi supports teachers and schools in providing career guidance, by scheduling class visits to the premises of BiWi. These class visits are discussed, planned and scheduled along with the responsible school teachers of each class, who also accompany the students during the visit. Each class visit to BiWi lasts around two hours. It starts with an introduction to the criteria that students should employ for choosing an occupation and continues with the co-development of suitable educational and career pathways with the

students. More specifically, after creating an Interest Profile with the support of their teacher and BiWi career counsellors, each student has the opportunity to obtain a wealth of valuable information on interesting training paths and occupations through the BiWi library and the profession folders developed by professional clients of BiWi. Students are encouraged to have further appointments with BiWi career counsellors at individual level (either with their parents or on their own) in order to define a suitable educational and career path for their future.

(b) Services for parents: BiWi organises dedicated parents' evenings either in school or in the premises of the centre. During parents' evenings, BiWi career counsellors discuss with parents their role in their children's career choice and provide them with an overview of possible learning pathways and the current situation of the labour market.

(c) Parent-teacher Conferences: This type of conferences are organised at the premises of BiWi and target both parents and teachers of young students with a view to presenting the comprehensive career guidance and information offering of the centre.

2.2.4 Services aimed at all BiWi target groups

(a) Occupation Taste: This service provides young individual BiWi clients with the opportunity to have a "taste" of the real working conditions of their occupation of interest by participating in non-hazardous, everyday activities. At the same time, teachers and schools can effectively complement the career guidance of their students, while professional clients have the opportunity to identify young, emerging talents that could work for them in the future as apprentices or even employees. The duration of the "tasting" period is limited to five days per occupation, but the youngster is allowed to experience several occupations per year. Overall, the work experience period may not exceed a total of 15 days per calendar year. Furthermore, as there is no employment relationship between the "taster" and the company, youngsters typically have no right to compensation. The interests of both the "taster" and the company are safeguarded through a dedicated, written agreement.

(b) Industry Presentations: Industry presentations are events where occupations are demonstrated by professionals in the form of 'Living Workshops'. Students (either as individual visitors or along with their school class), parents and teachers as well as other participants (such as politicians, professionals, etc.) test themselves in various activities and professions while having the opportunity to interact with a wide variety of professionals, ranging from apprentices to masters, who in turn are able to communicate their needs.

(c) Career Guidance Brochures: Informational brochures offered by BiWi provide valuable information about and how to prepare for the educational and professional world. They are available free-of-charge to all interested parties both in digital and printed form.

2.3 Results and SWOT of BiWi

In 2014, more than 10,000 young students visited BiWi, either as individual visitors or in the frame of a class visit, with a view to receiving valuable information and guidance on potential education and career paths. The same year, BiWi helped more than 18,000 young people to get a “taste” of various occupations and work places, its Industry Presentations and other events gathered more than 8000 participants and about 500 professionals were provided with the opportunity to exhibit their profession.

With the above in mind, it becomes evident that demand for the services provided by BiWi is high. Indeed, the field-visit also revealed that the services of the centre are well-received and sought-for across the province of Vienna. For example, many teachers have to make a reservation for their class to visit BiWi one year or more in advance. Undoubtedly, this high demand signals a successful approach towards career guidance and education. Below we discuss some interesting elements of the approach of BiWi as well as their implications.

A crucial element of the approach employed by BiWi, is the fact that all its career guidance services are based on the principle of ‘accompanied self-service’. As such, students are empowered to explore interesting education and career paths on their own and in this way start building their career management skills with the support of their parents, teachers and dedicated BiWi career counsellors. For instance, the process of creating an Interest Profile as well as the subsequent search for suitable training and professions is undertaken by the students themselves under the subtle supervision of their teacher. It is only after the students have answered numerous questions about their personal interests and researched suitable education and occupation opportunities, that the results are discussed and scrutinized with the help of BiWi career counsellors.

Furthermore, an important factor which distinguishes the approach of BiWi from other career information centres, is the close cooperation with the business community. The profession folders contained in the BiWi library are a prime example of the fruitful synergies which BiWi develops with professionals. By allowing professionals to create a presentation of their profession by themselves, BiWi is able to present individual clients with labour market information (e.g. on skills and qualifications needed by Viennese employers) in a cost-effective manner as professionals prepare the folders without any monetary compensation. However, the effectiveness of this approach is highly dependent on the willingness of the professionals to contribute to the activities of the BiWi. In this respect, BiWi has been rather successful in motivating professionals to participate in its career information and guidance practices by inspiring a philosophy of reciprocal benefits. Students benefit from the insights and material provided by the professionals in their search for a suitable apprenticeship or career, whereas businesses are able to communicate what they need and potentially even find and attract well-suited apprentices and employees.

In fact, BiWi strives to involve several career guidance stakeholders in the majority of its activities. For instance, the different types of Orientation Checks developed and delivered by BiWi are also taken by teachers, in order for them to be able to better inform and prepare their students. In addition, employers are also encouraged to take these checks so as to know what scores to expect from potential apprentices who approach them. As a result, Orientation Checks can prove a valuable aid for well-prepared students who are applying for an apprenticeship and their results are highly valued by some companies. Parents also play a key role in the process of the education and career decision making of students. Therefore, BiWi career counsellors make a conscious effort towards winning them over as partners in their practice. To this end, many activities of BiWi specifically target parents such as the parents’ evenings or the parent-teacher conferences.

It is apparent that the career information and guidance services provided by BiWi are principally oriented towards younger audiences (typically up to 25 years old) and especially young students of the Austrian education system (i.e. 13 to 17 years old). As such, all the material and labour market information utilised in the practices of BiWi, are directed and presented in a

format tailored to this particular audience. There is a lack of properly adjusted material and information for the career guidance of older adults (i.e. for clients above 25 years old). In this respect, it is important to note that career guidance aimed at adults and especially job-seekers in Austria is provided, mainly, through the career information centres (BerufsInfoZentren – BIZ) of the AMS, which emphasize on providing theoretical vocational orientation and labour market information (such as through the Qualifications Barometer). While some overlap between their services does exist, the different approaches employed by BiWi and BIZ (i.e. practice-oriented vs. theoretical focus) form a complementarity in the lifelong guidance system of Austria, which is vital for covering the increasing demand for career information and guidance services in the country.

With respect to geographical scope, the career guidance and information services provided by BiWi are only available to clients in the province of Vienna. However, there are several other career information and guidance centres established by social partners across Austria and each one is free to follow its own approach in terms of developing and delivering career guidance and information services, tailored to the needs and particularities of the regional economies and population.

Finally, as there is not a set training path for someone to become a career counsellor in Austria, the career counsellors of BiWi have diverse educational backgrounds. However, what they all have in common is a strong business background. In addition, they are in constant contact with entrepreneurs and professionals in order to mine meaningful insights on the situation of the labour market. As such, they can demonstrate from experience and effectively convey to their clients up-to-date labour market information along with the conditions that they will encounter when they become part of the labour force. In particular, BiWi counsellors are required to (i) have in-depth knowledge of their profession, (ii) be team players and open-minded, and (iii) be driven by the desire to learn everyday (lifelong learning).

The following table summarises the main conclusions that the field-visit team has drawn from the implementation and results of BiWi in the form of a SWOT analysis (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats).

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Career information and guidance services which are tailored to and well-received from the Viennese economy and society (b) Empowerment of students to explore suitable educational/career pathways with the support of career counsellors, parents and teachers (c) Integration of several different stakeholders into career information and guidance practices (d) Detailed and practical insights into the labour market coming straight from the business community (e) Orientation checks that serve as a valuable aid for students who want to apply for an apprenticeship (f) Vocational guidance and labour market information provided through hands-on working experiences (such as Occupation Taste) and direct interactions with professionals (such as “Industry Presentations”) (g) Strong ties of career counsellors with the business world
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Services are only available for clients of the province of Vienna (b) No standard qualification requirements for career guidance counsellors (c) Lack of well-tailored career information and guidance services for adults
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Exploitation of complementarities with other career information centres (e.g. BIZ of the AMS) (b) Increasing demand for career information and education services
<p>Threats</p>

- (a) Limited personnel vs. increasing demand for career guidance and information services
- (b) Dependence on the labour market information and material provided by professional clients

3. Transferability and developments towards the future

In order to assess the prospect of transferring the career information and guidance practices of BiWi to other contexts, it is essential to consider the educational and labour market contexts which led to the inception of the centre and since then, enable and facilitate its successful operation. More specifically, with respect to the transferability of the approach employed by BiWi, the following contextual parameters need to be considered:

(a) Design of career guidance and information services well-tailored to the needs of specific target groups: Career choice is probably one of the most important decisions in a person's life and youngsters in Austria are called to make several important decisions of this kind quite early in their lifetime. In this context, effective and meaningful support is required to ensure to the degree possible that they make the right decisions with respect to selecting a suitable educational path towards their career of choice. In Austria, this has been a core driver for developing and providing specialised career information and guidance services that target the needs of these young and sensitive age groups.

(b) Establishment of career guidance and information centres with activities customised to the particularities of the national educational system: Apprenticeships are an integral part of the Austrian educational system. This is evidenced by the fact that about 80% of Austrian students follow a vocational education path, out of whom almost half decide to join an apprenticeship. However, deciding on an appropriate apprenticeship is far from easy, especially given the young age of prospective apprentices and the (sometimes conflicting) wants and priorities of their parents. In this context, BiWi appears to be a perfect fit in the Austrian educational system in terms of supporting its dual training aspect. Many activities of the centre (such as Application Training, Orientation Checks, Occupation Taste, etc.) are directly aimed at supporting the right decision making of students in close cooperation with their parents, for the benefit of both the prospective apprentices as well as their potential employers.

(c) Strong support and involvement of social partners in career guidance and education: Austria has a well-developed landscape of social partners (such as Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chamber of Labour, Federation of Austrian Industry, etc.) that support and participate in career guidance and education activities. For instance, the costs of many of the services provided by BiWi are borne by the Vienna Chamber of Commerce and Industry and frequently representatives of social partners participate in Industry Presentations of the centre. The role of social partners is also key in gathering labour market information.

(d) Integration of the business community into career guidance practices: The development of fruitful synergies with the business community is vital for the transferability of the guidance practices employed by BiWi. The strong involvement of professionals in the services of BiWi allows for the development and delivery of practice-oriented career guidance practices (such as Occupation Taste, Industry Presentations, etc.) as well as the cost-effective collection of up-to-date labour market information.

(e) Adoption of a “continuous improvement” mind-set: Austrian institutions, such as ibw Austria - Research & Development in VET ⁽²⁾, and the Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (ÖIBF) ⁽³⁾, constantly conduct research on how to improve the LMI that is integrated into the practices of career guidance and information centres in Austria. The directions followed in this respect include (among others) collecting and better adjusting LMI to suite different target groups (such as older adults, people with special needs or disabilities, immigrants, etc.) as well as improving LMI quality (such as by increasing its update frequency, collecting information from neutral sources, employing interactive means to present it, etc.).

² <http://www.ibw.at/en>

³ <http://www.oeibf.at/>

All in all, it appears that the career information and guidance services provided by BiWi are well-rooted within the Austrian educational system. Indeed, the design of the Austrian educational system and especially its dual training aspect as well as the decisive role of the Austrian social partners and the strong involvement of the business community facilitate the promotion of BiWi services and serve as multipliers of their impact on the Viennese economy and society.

Annex I – Educational framework

I.1 Overview of the educational system

The Austrian educational system consists of a compulsory stage as well as non-compulsory stages. The duration of compulsory education in Austria is nine years, beginning at the age of six. Below, a concise overview of the main compulsory and non-compulsory components of the Austrian educational system is provided (see Figure 3 at the end of this section for an illustrative overview).

Primary School

Primary school attendance is considered compulsory and lasts for four years. The objective of primary school is to offer general education to pupils while developing their personal skills. For students who are not deemed as mature enough to attend primary school, the option of pre-primary school is provided. The Austrian educational system caters for children with special needs by offering specialised schools or by organising and operating special classes in conventional primary schools.

New Secondary School

The New Secondary School was introduced in 2012 and is gradually replacing the regular secondary school. By the school year of 2015/2016, all schools in Austria are set to become new secondary schools. Attendance at the new secondary school begins at the age of 10 and ends at the age of 14.

The curriculum of the New Secondary School is jointly developed and managed by committees consisting of secondary school and academic secondary schools or colleges for higher vocational education professionals. Successful completion entitles attendance to an academic or secondary school, depending on the pupil's chosen path and performance.

Pre-vocational Schools

Pre-vocational school begins at the end of compulsory education and particularly at the ninth or voluntarily 10th year of school. At pre-vocational schools, pupils are taught subjects which prepare them for entrance to the labour market, consisting of supplementary general education, professional guidance and basic vocational training. Pre-vocational school also includes apprenticeships of limited duration for pupils. The taught material consists of basic professional knowledge and skills aiming to prepare pupils for entrance into secondary schools and apprenticeships. After attendance, pupils can be admitted to the second grade of a vocational secondary school in the same field of study or the first grade of a college for higher vocational education without admission exams.

Academic Secondary Schools

Academic secondary schools (AHS) comprise a four-year lower level and a four-year upper level, and conclude with the qualification of the upper secondary diploma (Matura). Upon successful attendance, students can pursue admission to university, universities of applied sciences, colleges of teacher education as well as other colleges.

Compulsory technical and vocational school

The compulsory technical and vocational school includes specialised taught material regarding basic theoretical knowledge to apprentices relevant to their professional training, intended to supplement training on the job and general education. Technical and vocational school attendance runs in parallel with the apprenticeship which may last between two to four years.

Secondary technical and vocational school

The attendance period of secondary technical and vocational schools (BMS) is between one to four years. One to two years attendance grants graduates with a partial vocational training certificate while full attendance (three to four years) leads to a full vocational training certificate. All certificates of vocational training follow the definitions of qualifications as described in the Austria Commercial Code. Graduates of full attendance can pursue admission to certain types of professional colleges.

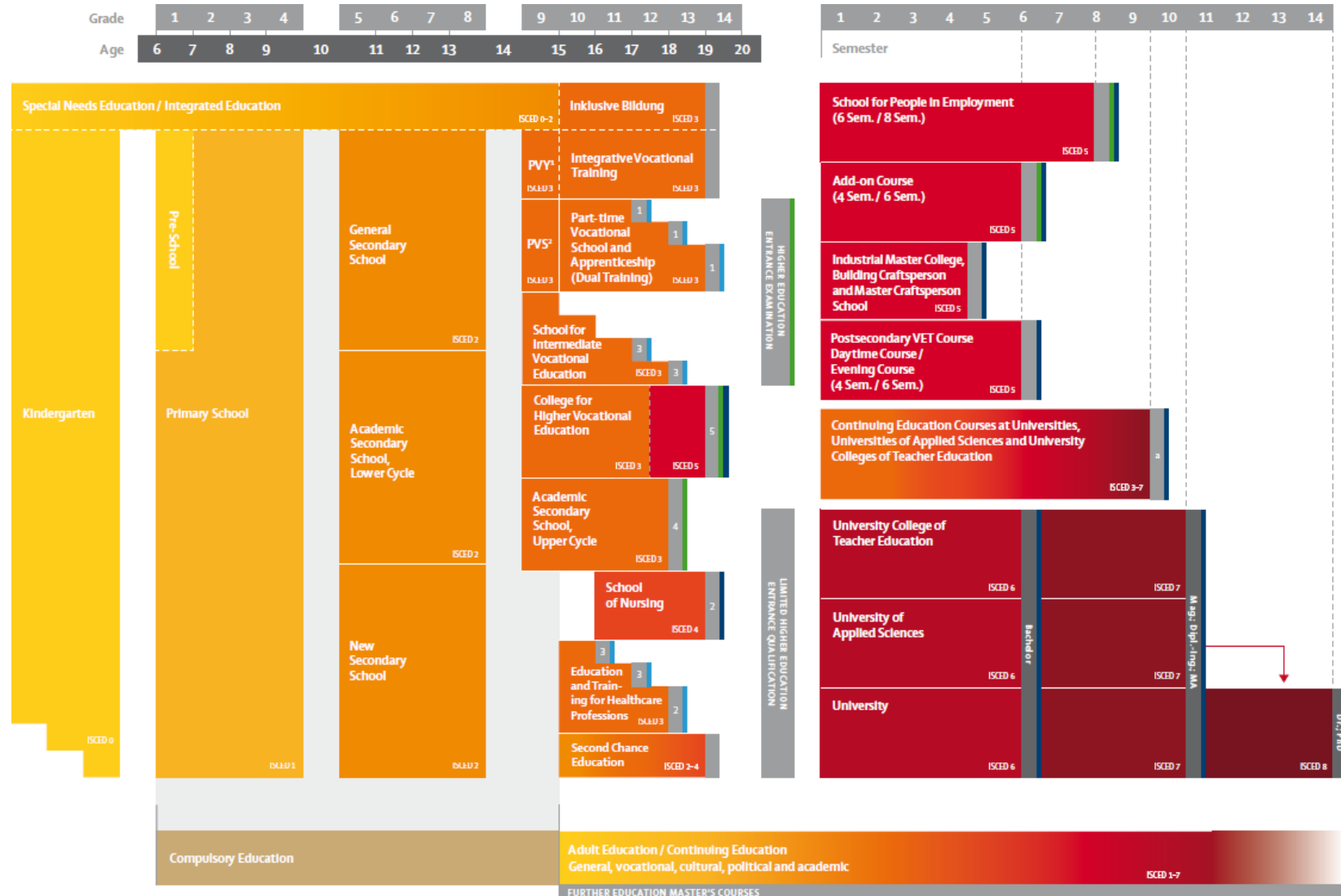
Colleges for higher vocational education

The duration of attendance at higher technical and vocational schools is five years and graduates are entitled to pursue admission to universities, universities of applied sciences and colleges of teacher education. Successful completion also permits employment in legally regulated professions as defined by the Austrian Commercial Code. Taught material covers advanced vocational training as well as expanded general education subjects.

Academic Higher Education - Universities

Universities offer courses in the areas of Humanities and Cultural Studies, Engineering, Arts, Medicine, Natural Sciences, Law, Social Sciences, Economic Sciences, Theological Studies as well courses for professional teaching. Successful attendance at a university leads to Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral educational titles or their equivalents. University is the highest level of the formal education system. The types of universities within the Austrian educational system are: Public Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences and University Colleges of Teacher Education.

Figure 3: The Austrian educational system



Source: EuroEducation.net

I.2 Governance and funding

Governance

The educational system in Austria is managed by the Austrian Federation and the Provincial Governments of each of the nine federal provinces of Austria (⁴). All legislative and implementation authority lies between the aforementioned public institutions. The broad legislative framework and general supervision of the educational system are managed primarily by the Federation (Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs and Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy for Higher Education) while more detailed and specific legislative aspects of the education system are managed by the provincial governments.

Primary and Secondary Education

The Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs holds general management of school organization, operation, teaching staff salary and retirement policies. Construction and maintenance of schools as well as teaching staff provision are managed by the provincial governments. Schools have the ability to adjust the allocated budget to a certain degree as well as modify the teaching material so as to better adapt to the needs of their regional economy and society.

Higher Education

Public and private universities are self-managed and autonomous institutions. The central legislative framework regarding their operation is managed and implemented by the Federation and in particular the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy. University Colleges of Teacher Education are governed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs. The Austrian higher education system entails a set of highly developed tools and practices concerning performance indicators and evaluation, reporting and financial and development management.

Adult Education

At the level of adult education and training, the legislative framework and implementation and management are the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy. At provincial level, funding by provincial or municipal authorities is mainly allocated to affiliated regional and local organizations. In 2011, an initiative concerning adult education, a sector of education of high interest among social groups in Austria, was launched jointly between the Federal administration and provincial authorities.

Funding

All levels of formal education are funded for the most part by public funds, whereas a small percentage of total education funds are covered by private financing.

At primary and secondary level public participation in funding is over 95% diachronically and is mainly organised and managed by the Federation either by direct funding or by taking over expenses that are in the responsibility of provincial governments such as staff salaries of public schools. At higher education level, public funding by the Federation is the principal source of funds, whereas a noticeable increase in private funding has been observed over recent years. Finally, adult education is mainly funded through private funds in the form of business training and/or financial backing provided by private households. In this respect, public funds amount to less than half of the total funding.

⁴ The nine federal provinces of Austria are: Burgenland, Carinthia (Kärnten), Lower Austria (Niederösterreich), Upper Austria (Oberösterreich), Salzburg, Styria (Steiermark), Tyrol (Tirol), Vorarlberg and Vienna (Wien).

Annex II – Agenda of the field-visit

Day 1 – Wednesday 17 June 2015	
12:00 - 14:30	<p>Interview with management level executives at the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gerhard Krötzl, Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, Department I/9 (Schulpsychologie-Bildungsberatung, Gesundheitsförderung, Allgemeine Schulinformation) - Michaela Marterer, Styrian Association for Education and Economics <p>Venue: <i>BMBF, Freyung 1, 1014 Vienna</i></p>
15:00– 17:00	<p>Interview with management level executive at AMS Österreich</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Judith Csarmann, AMS Österreich <p>Venue: <i>AMS, Treustraße 35-43, 1200 Wien</i></p>
Day 2 – Thursday 18 June 2015	
9:00 - 12:00	<p>Interview with management level executive and observation activity at BiWi – Berufsinformationszentrum der Wiener Wirtschaft</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leo Hödl, BiWi – Berufsinformationszentrum der Wiener Wirtschaft <p>Venue: <i>BiWi, Währinger Gürtel 97, 1181 Vienna</i></p>
14:00 - 16:00	<p>Interview with career guidance practitioner at AMS Wien</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harald Wurzer, AMS Wien <p>Venue: <i>AMS Regionalgeschäftsstelle Esteplatz, Esteplatz 2, 1030 Vienna, BIZ</i></p>
Day 3 – Friday 19 June 2015	
9:00 - 12:30	<p>Focus Group on Labour market information in lifelong guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kostas Giagtzoglou, Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL LTD - Elissavet Lykogianni, Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL LTD - Wolfgang Bliem, ibw Austria – Research & Development in VET - Viktor Fleischer, Federation of Austrian Industries - Ernst Gesselbauer, National Agency for Lifelong Learning - Gerhard Krötzl, Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs - Michaela Marterer, Styrian Association for Education and Economics - Peter Schlögl, öibf – Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training - Markus Riedmayer, AK Niederösterreich <p>Venue: <i>Nationalagentur Lebenslanges Lernen, 1010 Vienna, Ebendorferstraße 7</i></p>

Annex III – References – sources of information

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