

Promoting international mobility of VET learners

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 GERMANY

Timeline

2015 Implementation	2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation	2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation
2021 Implementation	2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation
2024 Implementation	2025 Implementation	

ID number 39569

Background

Against the background of increasing globalisation, VET learners need skills to work in international contexts. Since 2005, the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) supports explicitly international mobility as part of the apprenticeship. National and regional targets have been set. The National Agency at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (NA at BIBB) is implementing the Erasmus+ programme for VET, following the Leonardo da Vinci programmes. The NA at BIBB is also monitoring the overall international mobility of IVET-learners in Germany.

Objectives

The support measures want to give more VET learners the opportunity to make an internship or part of their apprenticeship in another country. The aim of the measures is to provide young people with worldwide learning experiences in VET and thus to address the need of globally operating companies for skilled workers with international professional competence and at the same time to increase the attractiveness of VET.

Description

Outgoing mobility:

- Erasmus+: as shown in the Study on Mobility (NA at BIBB, 2018), Erasmus+ funds about half of all outgoing mobilities of VET learners. Since 2015, Erasmus+ has also been promoting the internationalisation of VET learning venues through accreditation of vocational schools and companies for a simplified participation in the VET mobility programme.
- VETworldwide: to expand IVET mobility outside the EU, BMBF and NA at BIBB initiated the programme VETworldwide (AusbildungWeltweit) end of 2017. The new programme provides an attractive supplement to Erasmus+ for VET mobilities outside the EU.
- Bilateral exchange programmes: the National Agency Erasmus+ for VET (NA at BIBB)

is also coordinating a bilateral VET exchange programme with Israel. There are also bilateral (cross-border) programmes for example with Germany's neighbours, like ProTandem (the German-French-Office for exchange in VET) and DFJW/OFAJ (Franco-German Youth Office) with France, or similar programmes with the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Poland, as well as with Greece.

- (d) Chamber mobility project: the chambers mobility coaches (initiative 'Training without borders', funded by BMWK) are promoting mobility among IVET learners and training companies as well.

The NA at BIBB is the main source of information on outgoing VET mobility in Germany and provides relevant information through its website, social media, events and publications. The IBS information service provides IVET-learners individual information and guidance, connects individuals to regional or sectoral counsellors for further in-depth guidance on mobility opportunities and in finding financial support and an internet database for programmes supporting VET learning abroad. Both actors are funded by the BMBF and implemented by the NA-BIBB.

The total number of IVET learners staying abroad consistently grew from 2010 to 2017. Whereas in 2010 approximately 17 000 IVET-learners were staying abroad (mobility rate of 2.4%), the number increased to more than 30 000 IVET-learners until 2017, reaching a new mobility record of 5.3% of all IVET-learners. In 2018: 22 770 IVET learners participated in a transnational mobility funded by Erasmus+, compared to 7 515 in 2008, tripling in 10 years. Some training occupations have already reached the benchmark of 10% mobility, such as the industrial sales manager.

Incoming mobility:

To foster incoming mobility of apprentices, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Employment Agency (BA) funded from 2013 to 2020 a special programme to promote the vocational mobility of about 17 000 young Europeans (18-27 years old) interested in vocational training in Germany (MobiPro-EU: *Sonderprogramm 'Förderung der beruflichen Mobilität von ausbildungsinteressierten Jugendlichen aus Europa'*).

The Europass Mobility documents learning outcomes from stays abroad and makes the Erasmus+ programme visible. In addition to the mobility certificate, Europass offers further documents: the Europass Certificate Supplements, which explain vocational qualifications as proof of qualification.

2015 Implementation

2016 Implementation

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

In 2019, the Erasmus+ VET mobilities reached a peak of 33 000 learners taking part in mobility.

The MobiPro-EU programme to promote the in-coming mobility of European apprentices was evaluated and a practitioners' handbook was published in 2019.

2020 Implementation

In 2020, the Erasmus+ VET mobilities dropped due to the Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic. The former Erasmus+ funding period ended in 2020 and the NA at BIBB has relaunched its portal with information and guidelines for the new Erasmus+ funding phase 2021-27.

Through the programme *AusbildungWeltweit*, around 1 200 learning stays have been funded in more than 40 countries on all continents from 2018 to 2020.

In 2020, new field reports were posted on the IBS/NA-BIBB portal *Mein Auslandspraktikum* (My internship abroad). These give learning mobility an individual face and a personal story.

Network Training without borders (*Berufsbildung ohne Grenzen – BoG*): the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) extended the funding of mobility coaches of Training without borders from 2020 to 2023. The coaches support small and medium sized enterprises (SME) with face-to-face advice on planning, carrying out and evaluating stays abroad for apprentices. The 35 coaches are located throughout Germany in over 50 chambers of skilled crafts and chambers of commerce and industry and are coordinated by a central office.

The NA at BIBB focused on Internationalisation of VET in its journal Education for Europe No. 31 published in January 2020.

2021 Implementation

The Erasmus+ VET mobilities further dropped in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In November 2021, the National Agency called for participation in the new call for the Erasmus+ 2021-27 programme for 2022 and organised an information week in January 2022.

The VETworldwide programme faced constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a decrease of numbers of participants.

The former Information and Guidance Service for International Mobility in VET (IBS) was restructured in 2021 and is now called *Beratungsservice für Auslandsaufenthalte in der Ausbildung* (support centre for transnational mobility in VET). The centre is funded by BMBF and implemented by NA-BIBB. It launched the portal *Mein Auslandspraktikum* in 2021, which offers information and guidance to apprentices on internships abroad.

Within the network Training Without Borders, 50 mobility coaches advised and supported companies, apprentices and young professionals in realising stays abroad.

2022 Implementation

The number of Erasmus+ VET mobilities increased again and a total of 23 758 VET stays abroad were approved in 2022 and are already at 80% of pre-Corona levels from 2020. Further, 227 applications for Erasmus+ accreditation were submitted. After around 400 and 200 applications respectively in the two previous years, the interest in accreditation is also high in the third year of the new Erasmus+ 2021-27.

Until the end of 2022, more than 1 500 stays abroad in over 40 countries on all continents have been approved within the VETworldwide programme. China and the USA were the most popular destinations. An update of the funding guidelines increased the flexibility of funding in the pandemic situation. The NA-BIBB organised a virtual info event on the VETworldwide programme on 24 November 2022 with documentation.

On the portal *Mein Auslandspraktikum*, a brochure published in 2022 gives all the important information and contacts for organising an internship abroad. It offers guidance in the search for an internship, provides information on funding opportunities and gives tips on preparing for and following up the VET learners' stay abroad.

The number of mobility coaches of the chambers' network Training Without Borders increased to 80 in 2022. The coaches are located throughout Germany in over 50 chambers of skilled crafts and chambers of commerce and industry.

BIBB published in 2022 a competence module with specific examples of formulations to help integrate 'international professional competences' in German training regulations. This can help to establish stays abroad as a fixed component of a training programme.

The newly developed format Weltwartz is a pilot project of Buusiness Scouts for

Development programme in the field of skilled crafts. Weltwalz offers young craftspeople a simple and financially supported opportunity to gain experience in international cooperation in the target countries (Rwanda, Uganda and South Africa and now also in Georgia).

2023 Implementation

In 2023, following the pandemic-related drop, the number of applications for the Erasmus+ and VETworldwide (AusbildungWeltweit) programmes is once again significantly higher than before the pandemic. A total of 33 011 people were able to take part in stays abroad funded by Erasmus+ grants. 94% of these mobility measures are located within institutions that were previously accredited with Erasmus+ and can now take advantage of simplified and continuous funding for mobility measures. 14% of all approved stays abroad were for people with fewer opportunities in education (extended definition of inclusion). In the BMBF's national funding programme VETworldwide, the total number of all funded stays has amounted to more than 2 800 since the programme started in 2018. Two thirds of the funding applications come from companies and chambers. The USA, China and Switzerland are the most popular target countries, followed by Canada, the UK, South Africa and Australia.

On the one-stop portal for VET learners Mein Auslandspraktikum, a brochure was published in January 2023, providing a checklist on how to organise an internship abroad (e.g. how to find a placement or funding). Further, a portal targeting VET institutions was launched in September 2023, informing about their possibilities to support international apprentice mobility.

Mobility coaches of the chambers' network Training Without Borders promoted mobility among IVET learners and training companies in over 70 chambers of skilled crafts and chambers of commerce and industry in 2023. The number of VET learners making an internship abroad (mostly 3-4 weeks) with the support of the chambers' network increased significantly from 1 590 internships in 2022 to 2 136 in 2023.

Favourite destinations were Spain, Greece, Malta and France. There was also an increase in the number of apprentices from abroad (782 in 2023 compared to 731 in 2022). In November 2023, four companies were awarded the 'Training without Borders' company prize for their outstanding commitment to cross-border mobility in vocational training.

In 2023, with the format Weltwalz, young craftspeople in the target countries (Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa and Georgia) could lead projects in companies, carry out smaller training courses, support teachers in vocational training institutions and be deployed as ambassadors for the skilled crafts sector.

2024 Implementation

In 2024, the support portal for companies on stays abroad during training informed about possibilities to support international apprentice mobility through the website, events and guidance. In 2024, the NA at BIBB published the brochure 'EuroApprentices - Sharing and inspiring experiences abroad' as well as its Erasmus+ Inclusion Strategy Access for all - Implementation of Inclusion and Diversity 2021-2027.

In 2024, a total of 46 084 Erasmus+ grants for mobility were awarded, including 36 720 for learners. 95% of these mobility measures were located within institutions that had previously been accredited by Erasmus+ and were now able to use funding for mobility measures in a simplified and continuous manner. Pool projects are particularly important for apprentices in SMEs, as they provide access to a grant for a stay abroad without their company having to carry out a project itself. 15% of all approved stays abroad were accounted for by people with fewer opportunities in education (extended concept of inclusion).

The national funding programme 'AusbildungWeltweit' (VETworldwide) has funded a total of more than 3 000 stays since the programme was launched in 2018. Two-thirds of the funding applications came from companies and chambers of commerce, with vocational schools accounting for a quarter of the applicants. The USA, China and Switzerland were the most popular destination countries, followed by Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa and Mexico.

The Training without Borders portal updated its FAQ, giving a comprehensive coverage of topics regarding apprenticeship mobilities.

2025 Implementation

In January 2025, the NA at BIBB published an update of the brochures 'An opportunity for your company - stays abroad during training' and 'An opportunity for vocational schools - stays abroad during training'.

By End of March 2025, the programme Training without Borders had organised 96 924 consultations, 13 298 outgoing mobilities and 6 709 incoming mobilities of apprentices, with 12078 participating companies since 2016.

The ZDH published early 2025 a three-language brochure on skilled crafts in Germany (DE, EN, FR).

All programmes described in the description above (Erasmus+, VETworldwide, Training without Borders, Weltwalz, etc.) were operational in 2025 and ran as regular practice. More details on data and information in 2025 will be available at the beginning of 2026.

Bodies responsible

- Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ) (since 2025)
- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) (until 2025)
- Erasmus+ National Agency for VET (NA at BIBB)
- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE) (since 2025)
- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) (until 2025)
- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) (until December 2021)
- Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Adult learners

Education professionals

Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

Companies
VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

National, regional and local authorities

Thematic categories

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Using EU transparency tools (EQF, Europass, ESCO, ECTS, ECVET principles)

European and international dimensions of VET

Mobility of learners and staff

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

Osnabrück Declaration

European Education and Training Area and international VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Portal of Erasmus+ National Agency for VET \(NA at BIBB\)](#)

[Website AusbildungWeltweit \(VET worldwide\)](#)

[Portal for mobility of VET learners Mein Auslandspraktikum \(My internship abroad\)](#)

[Initiative Training without Borders \(Berufsbildung ohne Grenzen - BoG\)](#)

[Portal for VET institutions on international apprentice mobility \(2023\)](#)

[Brochure for VET learners with checklist for internship abroad \(2023\)](#)

[Cedefop ReferNet mobility scoreboard - German country fiche \(2023\)](#)

[Brochure on how to organise an internship abroad \(2022\)](#)

[Competence module on international professional competences \(BIBB, 2022\)](#)

[Pilot mobility project Weltwalz for apprentices in skilled crafts](#)

[Special programme promoting incoming VET mobility - MobiPro-EU \(2013-20\)](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Recognition of foreign professional qualifications

The procedure for the assessment and the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications is regulated and standardised through the Federal Recognition Act (including the federal states recognition acts for professions regulated at this level), which was adopted in 2012.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Recruiting skilled workers from abroad

There are various approaches and actors contributing to a sustainable skilled labour immigration.

Legal framework for access to labour and training market

 GERMANY

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

International cooperation in VET

The subject of bilateral VET cooperation is usually the intentions of a partner country to reform its VET system. Project funding in international VET cooperation serves to make expert knowledge and implementation competences from Germany available to the partner countries.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Vocational competitions EuroSkills and WorldSkills

WorldSkills - the World Skills Championships - and EuroSkills - the European Skills Championships - take place alternately every two years. The WorldSkills Germany network promotes and supports national and international competitions of non-academic professions.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

The Excellence Initiative for VET

With the Excellence Initiative for VET policy projects are combined into an overarching agenda. Individual activities will be launched successively during 2022 to 2026. Over EUR 750 million have been earmarked for this purpose.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2023 Discontinued

ECVET arrangements

Since 2016, in line with the national priority for improving the quality of learning abroad, tasks previously performed by the ECVET national contact point have been carried out by the Erasmus+ National Agency (NA at BIBB).

 GERMANY

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Promoting dual VET

Given the increasing trend towards academic education, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs (BMWi) have set up a joint campaign to present dual VET (apprenticeship) as an attractive option.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2021 **Completed**

Pact for vocational training

The Pact for VET (*Der Berufsbildungspakt*) includes the following measures, partly addressing work-based learning:

 GERMANY

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/39569>