

Developing digital CVET area - innovation programme INVITE

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 GERMANY

Timeline

2020 Implementation 2021 Implementation 2022 Implementation

2023 Implementation 2024 Implementation 2025 Implementation

ID number 37903

Background

In the National Skills Strategy of 2019, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) committed to support the transparency of continuing vocational education and training (CVET) opportunities and programmes by developing interactive learning platform structures.

Objectives

The innovation programme INVITE aims at increasing participation in CVET by connecting existing learning platforms, improving the transparency and quality of digital CVET offers, and allowing a low-threshold, individual, modular approach, building on existing skills, in a secure digital environment.

Description

Starting point was the innovation competition INVITE, initiated by BMBF within the National skills strategy and is implemented by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) with the support of an IT consulting company (VDI/VDE Innovation + Technik GmbH). The competition has had a two-stage structure (outlines: April-September 2020 / applications: January-March 2021). It addresses platform operators, continuing education providers, academic institutions (interdisciplinary), companies (SMEs) and other technology-savvy actors in CVET. An external jury finally selected the projects for funding. From March 2021, funding started for up to 36 months (development projects in fields 1 to 3) or up to 42 months for the meta-project (see below). The total funding volume is approximately EUR 35 million.

Projects are funded in three development fields:

- (a) projects that connect existing continuing education platforms with one another;
- (b) projects that increase the quality of continuing education platforms, for example by recommending personalised continuing education offers;
- (c) projects that develop AI-supported continuing education offers, making individualised learning possible, for example by using game elements or incentives for learners.

The CVET tools developed by the funded projects simplify the finding of suitable training opportunities, strengthen user-orientated approaches of educational platforms, and expand the range of artificial intelligence (AI) supported training offers. Among the applications developed are AI-based recommendation systems to facilitate finding suitable learning opportunities and to create individualised learning pathways, learning analytics, chatbots that accompany learning processes and mobile applications to facilitate learning 'on the go'.

Parallel to the projects in the development fields and interlinked with them, a meta-project is funded which, based on applied research, will produce standards and recommendations for action for the design of an innovative digital continuing education space.

The INVITE programme includes networking and the further development of infrastructure, especially internet-based platforms, applications and services, for example search engines.

2020 Implementation

The call for proposals was published by BMBF in April 2020 with a submission deadline to BIBB by mid-September 2020. In December 2020, the jury selected 17 project outlines (out of 107) submitted by consortia with up to 11 partners. From January to March 2021, the selected consortia are to send their application to BIBB. The funding started in March 2021.

The project outlines selected are characterised by:

- (a) high potential for transferability;
- (b) focus on users through learning assistance systems;
- (c) high attractiveness through incentives for learning;
- (d) validation and certification via micro-certificates;
- (e) connection of existing CVET platforms in adult education, social fields, skilled crafts and care fields;
- (f) innovative and secure digital CVET space.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, the BMBF-funded innovation competition INVITE started its implementation phase with a digital kick-off conference. Over the following three years, 35 selected project consortia work on the design of diverse, innovative solutions in CVET. The projects receive technical and administrative support from the BIBB. Further, a dossier was published in 2021 that provides an overview of current standards and recommendations for the design, implementation and further development of digital CVET platforms. During the funding period (2021-2024), a budget of approximately EUR 88 million was available.

2022 Implementation

In 2022, every single individual project was working intensively on innovations that offer tangible improvements and added value for those active in continuing education in such important sectors as care, crafts, social services, retail, public transport, logistics or energy technology.

First insights into the innovation programme INVITE were published. Six thematic working groups were set up on an internet platform in which common topics of the various projects can be explored in depth.

The prototypes developed so far in the projects could be tested in December 2022 at a so-called tool check. The available prototypes from areas such as AI, blockchain or serious games were comprehensive and addressed diverse groups of participants (HR staff, teachers, specialists, managers, career changers) and sectors (health and care, logistics, production).

2023 Implementation

In 2023, the innovation programme INVITE continued to fund the 35 selected digital CVET projects of 182 institutions developing prototypes in various sectors (health and care, logistics, production).

2024 Implementation

The 2024 programme brochure on digital VET presents the results and focal points of the INVITE innovation competition with interactive radar boards. The first edition was presented on 12 March 2024 as part of the INVITE symposium at BIBB (100 participants).

The 40 prototypes were tested in March 2024 (INVITE ToolCheck 2.0), for example:

- (a) an 'intelligent app' for your own lifelong learning journey;
- (b) a virtual workshop in which skills for operating CNC machines are taught;
- (c) a measurement of personal future skills and their corresponding assignment to the job profiles from ESCO.

2025 Implementation

The BIBB project INVITE, showcased future vocational training trends at the re:publica 2025, with the talk *Skills, skills, skills - How I can shape my job and transformation through further training*.

re:publica Berlin is Europe's largest digital society festival and took place from 26-28 May 2025 at STATION Berlin under the motto 'GENERATION XYZ', attracting over 30 000 visitors during the three conference days.

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)
- Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)

Target group

Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)

Adult learners

Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment

Education professionals

Teachers

Entities providing VET

Companies

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Modernising VET infrastructure

Modernising infrastructure for vocational training

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Diversifying modes of learning: face-to-face, digital and/or blended learning; adaptable/flexible training formats

Developing and updating learning resources and materials

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Developing and applying qualifications smaller/shorter than full

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Lifelong guidance

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

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

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Subsystem

CVET

Further reading

[INVITE on BIBB website](#)

[INVITE programme brochure \(2024\)](#)

[INVITE tool check 2.0 \(2024\)](#)

[INVITE Implementation phase 2021](#)

[Dossier about standards and recommendation \(2021\)](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

National education platform (NOW!)

In 2021, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is funding the first prototype of a technical infrastructure for a digital education platform.

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

National Skills Strategy

In November 2018, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) launched a committee to develop a National continuing education strategy (*Nationale Weiterbildungsstrategie*).

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

CVET

2021 Completed

Pact for vocational training

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

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Developing digital CVET area - innovation programme INVITE: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe (2025 update)* [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/37903>