

Partnerships between VET schools and businesses

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 NETHERLANDS

Timeline

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

ID number 28435

Background

The Cooperation organisation for VET and the labour market (SBB) was established in 2012 and works at sectoral, regional and national levels. Via its eight sector chambers, it acts as an intermediary between training institutions and companies to guarantee appropriate work placements in both VET tracks (BOL and BBL). It is responsible for:

- updating the qualifications framework for secondary vocational education;
- recruiting, accrediting and coaching work placement companies and providing an overview of all accredited companies;
- monitoring and providing information on (qualitative and quantitative) labour market developments.

VET and social partners are equally represented in sector chamber discussions on developments in the labour market and their translation into new courses, the efficiency of the range of courses and prospects in the job market.

Objectives

The statutory duty of SBB and the main objective of the SBB sector chambers' activities is to facilitate and guarantee enough work placements, either internships or apprenticeships.

Description

In July 2015, the 2009 apprenticeship protocol was updated. In August 2015 the responsibility for accreditation of the quality of work placements in companies was transferred from the 17 sector-based centres of expertise to SBB.

In addition, new public-private partnerships are pursuing stronger cooperation between VET schools and regional and local businesses in innovative sectors. These actions are stimulated and funded by the Regional Investment Fund (RIF).

From 2014 to 2017, the education ministry provided a budget of EUR 100 million for regional public-private partnerships through RIF. Besides promoting stronger cooperation between VET and regional and local businesses, the agenda of the subsidy scheme also supports the policy aims set out in the first phase of the Quality agreements initiative. Cooperation between public and private partners should, therefore, include at least one of the following topics: further professionalisation of teachers, the development of teachers' research skills, stimulation of lifelong learning and optimising links between upper secondary VET level 1 programmes (*Entreeopleiding*) and the labour market.

2015 Implementation

2016 Implementation

Between June and October 2016, SBB ran a campaign among employers to raise awareness of and to promote active involvement in workplace learning, achieving positive results; twice as many training places were offered in August 2016 compared to August 2015.

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

In 2018, 125 public-private partnerships were operational. In November 2018, the education ministry decided to extend the duration of this scheme to promote partnerships, funded by RIF, to 2022.

Because RIF was successful, it was decided to continue the scheme for the period 2019-22. The minister once again allocated EUR100 million to stimulate further cooperation.

In 2018, the education ministry also asked the SBB to prolong the campaign aiming to raise awareness and to promote workplace learning.

2019 Implementation

Implementation of the SBB sector chambers' work continues.

2020 Implementation

In 2020, a new campaign was launched aiming to raise the awareness and to promote the active involvement of employers in workplace learning. The campaign aims to respond to shortages of work placements, experienced mainly due to COVID-19; shortages differ across courses. The campaign will be continued in 2021.

2021 Implementation

As of 1 April 2021, an updated protocol applies to improve the quality of supervision during apprenticeships. VET school must now organise sufficient contact moments between the company and the student. VET schools must also make specific agreements with companies and students regarding the frequency of supervision.

2022 Implementation

In November, the internship shortage is at its lowest since monitoring started in 2020 (3 500 vs 22 000). The Action Plan 'Internships and Apprenticeships' was created to cope with the shortages. It ran from 2020 until December 2022. The evaluation shows that the measured decrease in internship shortages is partly due to the efforts of the Action Plan.

Besides, a conditional amount of EUR 210 million has been allocated to strengthen and scale up public-private partnerships in vocational education, such as Centres of Expertise.

2023 Implementation

Because sufficient internships and apprenticeships are essential, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, and stakeholders from education and business signed the ,Internship pact, (*Stagepact*). It runs from 2023 to 2027 and focuses on four themes: improving internship guidance, eliminating internship discrimination, realising sufficient internship placements, and providing appropriate compensation. Under this framework, the Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training, and the Labour Market (SBB) will receive funding to continue, sustain, and enhance the initiatives of the Action plan internships and apprenticeships (2020–2022).

In 2023, the shortage of internships further declined from 3 500 to 1 400. However, some sectors are more affected by staff shortages than others. For instance, internship shortages persist in the care and welfare sector due to limited mentoring capacity. To address this issue, the Ministries of Education, Culture and Science, and Health, Welfare and Sport, along with partners from the education and care sectors, are making additional efforts through the ,Future-proof labour market for care and welfare programme, (*Toekomstbestendige Arbeidsmarkt Zorg & Welzijn*). The annual monitor on work placements and internships show that this year students score their internship an 8.4 on average, and their trainers give an average score of 7.5.

To further support the goal of increasing the availability of attractive, high-quality work placements, the Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training, and the Labour Market (SBB) has introduced an additional condition for recognising training companies. According to this additional condition, companies are required to demonstrate that the learning places they offer comply with legal requirements for social safety.

2024 Implementation

The bi-annual monitor of internship shortages showed a small increase, rising to 1 800 internships.

2025 Completed

The Cooperation Organisation for VET and the Labour Market (SBB) continues to play a stable coordinating role between VET schools and businesses, ensuring sufficient and high-quality work placements.

Bodies responsible

- Cooperation organisation for VET and the labour market (SBB)
- Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment

Target group

Entities providing VET

Companies
VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[The apprenticeship protocol](#)

[Overview of accredited companies that can offer work placements](#)

[The apprenticeship protocol](#)

[Internship and apprenticeship opportunities](#)

[Cedefop Refernet Netherlands \(2018\): public-private partnerships will promote innovation in VET](#)

[Regional Investment Fund 2019-22](#)

[Letter to parliament: supply of internships](#)

[Policy letter with response to motions and commitments MBO, 2 July 2021](#)

[Policy letter on evaluation of Action Plan internships and apprenticeships, November 2022](#)

[Policy letter on addressing labour shortages, June 2022](#)

[Pact on internships in VET, February 2023](#)

[Internship shortages since the COVID-19 pandemic \(2020-2021\)](#)

[2023 monitor of work placements and internships \(SBB\)](#)

[Internship monitor 2024](#)

[Update regulation on accreditation of training companies](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Agenda for VET 2023-2027 and VET Internship Pact 2023-27

The Agenda for VET Working Together on Talent is a covenant signed in 2023 by eight key VET stakeholders: the education ministry, Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), Association of Educators in VET (BVMBO), National youth organisation for VET students (JOB), Cooperation organisation

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET

2025 Implementation

Tackling youth unemployment

In the Cabinet's response, 14 measures were announced that focus on tackling youth unemployment and preventing early leaving from education and training. The most significant measures that focus on employment are:

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Completed

Quality agreements

Quality agreements centre on a (partly) performance-based funding scheme introduced in 2015. They were concluded between public upper secondary VET schools (MBO schools) and the education ministry and monitored by account managers (ministry officials).

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ … ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28435>