Methods and results of skills demand and supply forecasting – the case of Germany
Tobias Maier¹, BIBB, Germany

Abstract

In June 2010 detailed results of two new forecasts of future occupational and qualification structure in Germany was published. One of them has been the Cedefop forecast ‘skills supply and demand in Europe’ the other one has been ‘Occupations and Qualifications in the future’ (‘Beruf und Qualifikation in der Zukunft’) from Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) and Institute for Employment Research (IAB) with Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Information Technology (FIT) and the Institute of Economic Structures Research (GWS). Both forecasts relay on similar databases but used different taxonomies and methods. Therefore, results are not completely comparable but it is possible to identify differences and common trends. The paper, to be presented at the ‘Expert conference on skills demand and supply forecasting’, will compare quantitative methods used in both forecasts and will provide consistency checks of the German result. To support further development of both forecasts the author will give a short overview of how the Cedefop-approach has been considered in the BIBB-IAB-forecast and what kind of methods from the German model-calculations could be integrated in a pan-European approach. The proposed structure of the paper/presentation will look as follows:

1. Introduction into the methods of BIBB-IAB-Occupation and Occupational Field projections. As it is assumed that experts attending the workshop are familiar with methods of Cedefop-forecasts, it is proposed to solely give a short introduction into the method of the German national forecast. The BIBB-IAB-qualification and occupational field forecasts differ from all former German projections as they balance supply and demand on occupation level by using an occupational flexibility matrix. This occupational flexibility matrix considers the trained occupation as well as the current occupation of employed persons. It thus serves as a rich tool for interpretation and balancing. To compute the flexibility matrix, BIBB used data from the Microcensus 2005. Both approaches – from Cedefop and BIBB/IAB – thus rely on a similar data source, as the German Labour Force data is a subsample of the Microcensus. Major methodological differences of both forecasts will also be discussed.

2. Differences and common trends between Cedefop- and BIBB-IAB-forecasts. After introducing the methods of the BIBB/IAB model calculations it will be shown, which results of both approaches are comparable and where differences occured. Common trends in both forecasts – especially on qualification level – will be pointed out. Further it will be given an overview of what BIBB recommends to public in the light of those results.

3. Future development and mutual exchange. It will be discussed, how pan-European ideas were considered in the national approach and what kind of tools could be included in the Cedefop forecast. The Author will also point out how LFS data from Germany can be made more reliable by adapting the LFS figures on national account level. The author will give a short perspective of future development of

¹ e-mail: tobias.maier@bibb.de
the BIBB/IAB-forecasts and point out similarities and differences in the development of both Cedefop and BIBB/IAB approaches.