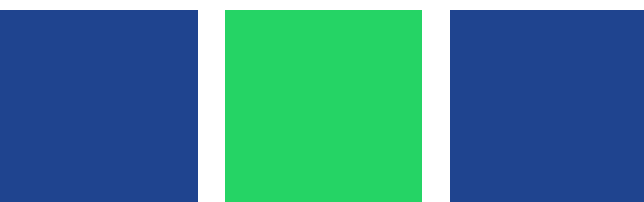

IMPLEMENTING EUROPEAN PRIORITIES IN VET

Making national VET agile,
flexible, innovative, attractive,
inclusive and quality assured

GERMANY



Implementing European priorities in VET

Making national VET agile, flexible, innovative, attractive,
inclusive and quality-assured:
Germany

[Thematic perspectives](#) provide national overviews of specific themes in a common format and offer comparative dimension across the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway.

This thematic perspectives series complements the general information on vocational education and training (VET) policies and systems provided in [VET in Europe database](#) and the [Timeline of VET policies in Europe](#). The themes presented in the series feature high on the European agenda.

This thematic perspective was prepared based on data/information from 2023.

Thematic perspectives are co-financed by the European Union and ReferNet national partners.

[ReferNet](#) is a network of institutions across Europe representing the 27 Member States, plus Iceland and Norway. The network provides Cedefop with information and analysis on national vocational education and training (VET). ReferNet also disseminates information on European VET and Cedefop's work to stakeholders in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway.

Authors: Adrienne Huismann and Ute Hippach-Schneider (BIBB)

Peer reviewed by: National Centre for TVET Development, ReferNet Team, Romania

Edited by Cedefop: Silke Gadji, policy assistant

Technical support in preparing the publication by: Katsoura, Eleni Maria, assistant, and Santos, Maria Teresa, assistant (Cedefop)

© BIBB (Cedefop ReferNet Germany), 2024

Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

Disclaimer: The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of Cedefop. The publication has neither been edited nor proof-read by Cedefop's editing service.

Please cite this publication as:

Hippach-Schneider, U., & Huismann, A. (2024). *Implementing European priorities in VET: making national VET agile, flexible, innovative, attractive, inclusive and quality-assured: Germany*. Cedefop Refernet thematic perspectives.

Contents

CHAPTER 1. Introduction	5
CHAPTER 2. Main policy developments in 2023.....	5
2.1 Agile and resilient VET, adaptive to labour market needs	5
2.2 Flexible VET, providing progression and lifelong learning opportunities	6
2.3 Innovative and excellent VET	8
2.4 Attractive VET, based on modern and digitalised provision	9
2.5 Inclusive VET promoting equal opportunities	10
2.6 VET underpinned by quality assurance	12
CHAPTER 3. Involvement of VET stakeholders in the implementation of policy developments related to NIP	12
CHAPTER 4. Achievements of implementation	13
CHAPTER 5. Challenges of implementation	14
CHAPTER 6. Conclusions.....	15
References	16

CHAPTER 1. Introduction

The national vision for the period 2021 – 2025 is presented in Germany's coalition agreement entitled '[Dare more progress – an alliance for freedom, justice and sustainability](#)'. Future-oriented investments, in particular in climate protection, digitalisation, education and research, will modernise the state, the economy and society. As shown in this report, the coalition agreement contains clear interfaces with the European VET priorities. For example, one of the main policies established by the coalition is the umbrella initiative Excellence in VET. It combines existing and new measures to build an attractive and innovative VET landscape, helping secure the skilled workforce needed by the economy.

In accordance with the consensus reached by the VET stakeholders in Germany and in line with the VET Recommendation and the Osnabrück Declaration (OD), the national implementation plan addresses five thematic priorities, which follow the OD structure ⁽¹⁾. This report presents updated information on main developments in initial and continuing VET in Germany in 2023, in line with the priorities in the NIP and following the six EU priority areas of the Council recommendation on VET:

- (a) Agile and resilient VET, adaptive to labour market needs,
- (b) Flexible VET, providing progression and lifelong learning opportunities,
- (c) Innovative and excellent VET,
- (d) Attractive VET, based on modern and digitalised provision,
- (e) Inclusive VET promoting equal opportunities;
- (f) VET underpinned by quality assurance.

Further, the report reflects on the involvement of VET stakeholders, on the main achievements so far and on the challenges of implementing measures planned in the NIP.

CHAPTER 2. Main policy developments in 2023

2.1 Agile and resilient VET, adaptive to labour market needs

[Training regulations are revised at regular intervals](#) (Cedefop, & ReferNet, 2023f) and new ones are created, if needed, so that qualifications meet the current demands of the economy, policy and society. The process is often initiated by a social partner or the federal government and coordinated by the Federal Institute for VET (BIBB). In 2023, [six initial VET regulations](#) and [33 advanced VET regulations](#) were updated or newly set up. The mandatory integration of the new [cross-occupational training standards](#) 'Environmental protection and sustainability', 'Digitised world of work', 'Safety and health at the workplace' and 'Company, VET, labour and tariff law' in all dual VET courses at both places of learning was continued in 2023.

This regulatory work at BIBB is partly based on skills anticipation research. The [H2PRO research project](#) launched in 2021 is investigating which qualification needs of skilled workers will arise through the use of green hydrogen. Three factsheets with sectoral analyses (hydrogen production; chemical and refining industry; and mobility sector) have been published in 2023.

⁽¹⁾ 1. Access to training and labour market, 2. Ecological and technological transformation, 3. Digital education and training area, 4. Excellence in VET, 5. European education and training area in a globalised economy.

BIBB is also developing the [Occupation and Competence Radar](#), a data-based information portal (funded by the education ministry BMBF). It combines retrospective data (since 2000) and forecast data (up to 2040) from various data sources to open up new analysis and information possibilities at sector and occupation level and to give orientation for actors from labour market and VET politics, research and companies, employees and apprentices. By the end of 2023, the data have been collected, processed and harmonised to document the existing base and develop it continuously. Parallel to this and building on it, the online portal for users is being developed, tested and will be put into trial operation by the end of 2024.

To enable small and medium sized companies (SMEs) to meet new requirements of working and learning processes for apprentices and employees due to increasing digitalisation, [JOBSTARTER plus funding programmes](#) (BMBF) are supporting structures and developing advisory concepts addressing SMEs (9 transfer projects ended in June 2023). Further, the national labour ministry (BMAS) is funding [Future centres \(Zukunftszentren\)](#), which support and enable companies and their employees as well as the (solo) self-employed to shape demographic, digital and ecological change, for example with innovative CVET qualification concepts (e.g. on AI). Twelve [regional Future centres](#), a House of the self-employed and a coordinating Centre for the future of work are part of the programme. All selected projects were launched at the beginning of 2023 and will run until the end of 2026 ⁽²⁾.

Finally, the [Perfect Match programme](#) (BMBF) (Cedefop, & ReferNet, 2023k) aims at counteracting matching problems on the training market. It finances advisors at the chambers of industry and commerce, skilled crafts, liberal professions and other business organisations. The funding priorities are adapted to the needs of SMEs. The 2023 focus is on promoting sustainable and quality employment, start-ups and entrepreneurship, and adaptation to change. From 2024, the Perfect Match and the Welcome Guides programmes (see Section 2.5) have been merged, adding up to 140 chamber guides supporting companies in filling their vacant training places with suitable young people from Germany, abroad or with a refugee background. The [new directive of this programme](#) applies from January 2024 until end of 2027.

2.2 Flexible VET, providing progression and lifelong learning opportunities

The [National Skills Strategy](#) (Cedefop, & ReferNet, 2023i) aiming at developing, upskilling and further training opportunities, was renewed by all partners at the end of 2022 and reinforced at the national CVET conference in November 2023. The updated paper identifies new strategies for action, such as strengthening the acquisition of new skills and possible reorientation in working life in the company context. For example, with the help of [CVET mentors](#) (more than 300 in approx. 100 companies in 2023), BMBF-funded projects organised by trade unions and social partners are expanding company support structures to establish sustainable CVET guidance and support, so that employees (in particular low-skilled workers) are more aware of CVET and more motivated to participate in it. The focus of the programme [Development of CVET networks](#) (funded by the labour ministry BMAS and carried out by social

(2) See also: Cedefop, & Refernet (2023s); Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023r).

partners) is to increase the participation of SMEs in further training and to strengthen regional business and innovation networks. Both industry-specific and cross-industry CVET networks (53 in 2023) support companies in securing their skilled labour potential and preparing employees for changing professional requirements.

In July 2023, the [Act to promote initial and further training](#) was passed (coming into force successively until August 2024), supporting particularly SMEs. Part of this law is the introduction of the [qualification allowance](#) in April 2024, which makes continuing vocational training more accessible. Fixed funding rates make CVET funding more transparent and will be accessible to all companies. Employment agencies pay companies the qualification allowance for their employees, who are threatened with losing their jobs as a result of structural change, but for whom further training can enable them to find future-proof employment in the same company. The allowance will be paid instead of remuneration during training.

The [innovation programme INVITE](#) (Cedefop, & ReferNet, 2023c) also 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, learner-centred and modular approach. In 2022-23, the BMBF-programme funded digital CVET projects in various sectors. The prototypes developed so far in the projects could first be tested in December 2022 and again in March 2024 ([INVITE- ToolCheck 2.0](#)). The prototypes from areas such as AI, blockchain or serious games addressed diverse groups of participants (HR staff, teachers, specialists, managers, career changers) and sectors (health and care, logistics, production).

[Partial qualifications](#) (*Teilqualifikationen*, TQ) (Cedefop, & ReferNet, 2023j). are educational offers, which allow employees without qualification to obtain one through systematic, successive modules adding up to full dual training qualifications, thus contributing to the flexibility of VET by offering qualification opportunities with a low threshold. In 2023, the three cooperating initiatives nationwide (by employers / chambers / BMBF) worked on procedures for certifications (such as digital competence assessment), [developing new training modules](#) (for occupations such as electronics technician for industrial engineering, IT specialist, cook, specialist in the hotel business) and disseminating amongst companies and employees (using media in various languages and regional action day with events in June 2023).

The [ValiKom project](#) (Cedefop, & ReferNet, 2023v). promotes the validation of non-formally and informally acquired skills and was initiated by the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (DHKT) and the German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK), together with BMBF. ValiKom is considered a reference project for setting up a validation system in Germany. It addresses adults who acquired skills and competences through work but lack a formal qualification, including those who wish to access further training. In 2022, the follow-up project [ValiKom Transfer](#) was extended until October 2024 to transfer the validation procedures to 32 chambers for a total of 40 occupations in industry, trade, crafts and agriculture. In 2023, various events and social media campaign raised awareness. Closer cooperation between employment agencies, job centres and ValiKom project chambers is being piloted at selected locations to increase the labour market opportunities of unemployed people and enable more targeted development. Valikom Transfer cooperated in 2023 with the

nationwide project ‘[TalentPASS](#) - identifying, validating and upskilling’ aimed at people with a recognised severe disability who are employed and have no formal recognition for their current job. Among other things, the TalentPASS project offered this target group the opportunity to have their professional skills assessed and certified by a chamber using the Valikom validation procedure.

In February 2024, the government drafted the [Vocational training validation and digitisation act](#) (BVaDiG). For the first time, people without a formal vocational qualification will be entitled to have their vocational skills assessed and certified against the standards of a dual training occupation. In addition, digitalisation and the reduction of bureaucracy in VET will be promoted.

2.3 Innovative and excellent VET

The [Skilled labour strategy](#) (adopted in October 2022) promotes modern dual VET with attractive training opportunities, including offers at EQF level 6-7. This strategy is followed by the launch of the umbrella initiative [Excellence in VET](#) (Cedefop, & ReferNet, 2023u). In December 2022, aiming to increase the attractiveness of VET for all young people, with a special focus on those who have a higher education entrance qualification and tend to choose university over professional qualification paths as dual training. There are three fields of action:

- (a) improving individual opportunity support for talents in VET;
- (b) innovative VET programmes to build a modern VET landscape including infrastructure and content;
- (c) enabling young people and skilled workers to benefit more actively from international exchange.

The [initiative](#) includes existing and new measures, such as [InnoVET](#) (Cedefop, & ReferNet, 2023m) and [InnoVET PLUS](#) programmes (follow-up launched in May 2023), the [dual – VET with system](#) campaign, programmes supporting inter-company training centres (such as the new funding programme for innovative and excellent inter-company training [INex-ÜBA](#), launched in August 2023) or vocational orientation at secondary general education schools ⁽³⁾. The 17 selected InnoVET funded projects are to increase the equivalence of VET with a focus on higher VET through innovation and excellence, as well as new learning location collaborations. For example, the [BM=x³ project](#) developed and tested in 2023 a decentralised supra-regional vocational training academy for the high-technology sector with micro- and nanotechnology occupations. The social partners also promote excellence in VET with own initiatives, such as the annual [German Craft Skills Championships](#) (DMH) with around 3 000 VET graduates in 130 trades competing for the national title.

Until end of 2022, the initiative on [VET for sustainable development \(BBNE\)](#) (Cedefop, & ReferNet, 2023t) aimed at developing sustainability skills of apprentices and training personnel, thus contributing to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals as well as the [cross-occupational training standard](#) ‘Environmental protection and sustainability’ in all dual VET courses at both places of learning. To follow up, the education ministry (BMBF) published a new funding guideline in 2023: [Sustainable at work – future-oriented training](#) (NIB) funding programme. The first selected projects could start their work in 2024. The first funding

⁽³⁾ See also: Cedefop, & Refernet (2023l).

phase focuses on projects strengthening professional competences of training staff in sustainability and establishing BBNE offers in more VET institutions. A centre set up at BIBB on behalf of BMBF promotes the transfer of results and networking with VET initiatives and stakeholders.

2.4 Attractive VET, based on modern and digitalised provision

Through continuous research and regulatory work at BIBB based on the modernised Vocational Training Act (BBiG), higher VET qualifications at EQF levels 5 to 7 are developed (in 2023, [33 updated or new advanced VET regulations](#)) to support a growing need for higher vocational skills and to offer more attractive VET career pathways, equivalent to academic education.

A modern provision of training makes VET more attractive as well. The [National education platform NOW](#) is embedded in the BMBF digital education initiative where learning, teaching and training are improved across the entire education pathway so that all generations can move confidently in the digital world ⁽⁴⁾. As a hub, it shall integrate existing and new digital education platforms into a nationwide platform system, providing every user with central access to education offers. The first prototype of a technical infrastructure has been developed in 2023 and shall be available in 2024.

Another tool promoting modern training provision is the project database of the web portal [Digital Media in VET](#) (Cedefop, & ReferNet, 2023d) including 229 projects in 2023. The projects developed exemplary solutions for the use of digital media, Web 2.0 and mobile technologies in initial and continuing VET practice (such as virtual and augmented reality or digital networks). In addition, digital media competence and the dissemination of open education materials (OER) in VET are promoted. Three BMBF [roadshows 'Digital media in everyday VET'](#) with practical user workshops took place in 2023 in Nuremberg, Rostock and Bonn. The project 'Apprentices as [digitalisation scouts](#)' funded by the national ministry for economic affairs and carried out by the chambers also makes dual VET more attractive and identified potential for digitalisation in companies in numerous projects in 2023.

Training and examination staff in VET are key actors for a modern provision of VET ⁽⁵⁾. They are faced with challenges caused by rapid technological developments and change processes in economy and society. This target group is now being supported by the new [Leando portal](#), launched on 20 November 2023. Leando (previously foraus.de) serves as a central contact platform and provides information and CPD on daily training practice and the examination system. BIBB monitors the competences needed by trainers as well as the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude (AEVO). The [review and updating process of the framework curriculum for preparing the AEVO examination](#) was completed in July 2023. Further, the qualification initiative Digital Change Q 4.0 carried out many CPD measures for trainers in 2023, as well as a roadshow and a blog directly linked to their work processes. Another project of the initiative, Media and IT competence for training personnel ([MIKA](#)), was threefold in 2023: learning platform MIKA-Campus, CPD offer MIKA-Seminars, and training for future seminar leaders (MIKA-Trainer). The offer was expanded mid-2024 with three services: MIKA-Game

⁽⁴⁾ See also: Cedefop & ReferNet (2023h).

⁽⁵⁾ See also: Cedefop & Refernet (2023p).

(educational game in quiz format testing knowledge in digitalisation and media education), MIKA-VR (easy-to-use virtual reality application for company training staff) and MIKA-Do (digital pinboard for VET teachers and trainers with learning and work tasks).

Another way of making VET an attractive choice is to [promote international mobility opportunities in VET](#) (Cedefop, & ReferNet, 2023n). The Vocational Training Act (BBiG) supports explicitly international mobility as part of the apprenticeship and BIBB supports the [integration of international competences in training regulations](#) to establish stays abroad as a fixed training component. The National Agency (NA at BIBB) is implementing the Erasmus+ programme for VET (about half of all VET mobilities). The NA at BIBB is also promoting international mobility of IVET and adult learners as well as staff within other programmes, such as AusbildungWeltweit, EPALE platform, Europass tool or bilateral (cross-border) programmes. On the one-stop portal for VET learners, [Mein Auslandspraktikum](#), two brochures ⁽⁶⁾ (published in 2022-23) inform about organising an internship abroad (e.g. how to find a placement or funding). Further, a [portal targeting VET institutions](#) was launched in 2023, informing about their possibilities to support international apprentice mobility.

Besides the NA at BIBB, chambers are important actors in VET mobility. About 80 mobility coaches of the chambers' network [Training Without Borders](#) promoted mobility among IVET learners and training companies in over 50 chambers of skilled crafts and chambers of commerce and industry in 2023. Finally, the education ministry and the ministry for economic affairs are funding the participation of the national team of 33 young talented skilled workers in the skills competitions EuroSkills, European Vocational Championships and [WorldSkills](#), with a successful year 2023: Team Germany won a total of [24 medals at European vocational competitions](#), making them European vice-champion overall in 2023 ⁽⁷⁾.

2.5 Inclusive VET promoting equal opportunities

The [Alliance for initial and further training](#) (Cedefop, & ReferNet, 2023a) between the main VET actors has been [relaunched for 2023-26](#) to support the school-to-work transition and promote an inclusive VET. Its Summer of VET 2023 supported the VET market with events and campaigns nationwide. Young people are given insights into occupations and are brought together with training companies. Training seekers without placement receive support in finding opportunities. Along these lines, the German parliament has promulgated the [Act to promote initial and further training](#) including the [Training guarantee](#) in July 2023, introducing a subsidised vocational orientation internship, a mobility grant, and making participation in introductory training easier.

The [youth employment agencies](#) (JBA) help to design and implement the [training guarantee on a regional basis](#) ⁽⁸⁾. Their aim is to provide a local one-stop contact point for young people (under 25 years - with special attention to those who are in particular need of support), bundling all local support services at the transition between school and work. This includes vocational guidance and individual social support, also during training, helping to prevent early leaving from VET. These cross-jurisdictional cooperation alliances between

⁽⁶⁾ NA at BIBB (2023). [Dein Weg ins Ausland](#) [Your way abroad]. ZAV at BA (2022). [In die Ferne, fertig, los: Dein Weg ins Auslandspraktikum](#) [Into the distance, ready, go: your route to an internship abroad].

⁽⁷⁾ See also: Cedefop & Refernet (2023w).

⁽⁸⁾ See also: Cedefop & ReferNet. (2023b).

employment agencies, job centres and youth welfare offices, as well as their partners (such as schools, chambers, youth migration services, employer organisations) vary greatly, depending on the specific local conditions (more than 350 JBAs in 2023). For example, the ‘GO!ES’ offer (five youth centres and a work-mobile in 2023) was realised jointly by the partners of the Esslingen youth employment agency to close a gap in the local support system. The main JBA initiators are the ministry of labour and social affairs (BMAS), the youth ministry (BMFSFJ), the federal employment agency (BA), the German county association, the association of German cities, and BIBB, hosting the [national service point for JBAs](#). Cooperation within youth employment agencies is supported by a joint IT system [YouConnect](#) with the consent of young people.

In 2023, the federal government, Länder and local authorities, federal employment agency (BA), social partners, companies and civil society actors continued their various measures to improve the [integration of migrants and refugees into training](#) and the labour market. For example, [vocational orientation for refugees](#) (BOF) courses give insights into up to three training occupations for a period of 13 to 26 weeks, take place in training centres and companies, and address those with particular language support needs that are no longer subject to compulsory education. The follow-up programme [BOFplus](#) started in 2024. Further, the focus of the 42 [KAUSA](#) regional service centres is on informing young migrants and their parents about dual VET, on raising the awareness of self-employed people with a migration background for vocational training and also to provide apprenticeship places for refugees (Cedefop & ReferNet. 2023e).

The network ‘[Companies integrate refugees](#)’ offers the opportunity to exchange experiences and practical information on training and employing refugees to its member companies (almost 4 000 by the end of 2023), three quarters of which are SMEs. Further, more than 75 [Welcome guides](#) (*Willkommenslotsen*) were available in 2023 to small and large companies as contact points for all questions on integrating refugees in training, internships or employment at more than 60 chambers. From 2024, the Welcome guides and the advisors of the Perfect match programme (see Section 2.1) will be merged, adding up to 140 chamber guides supporting companies in filling training places with young people from Germany, abroad or with a refugee background with the right match.

Finally, the follow-up ESF integration programme ‘[WIR - Networks integrate refugees into the regional labour market](#)’ funded 41 projects in 2023 to promote the labour market integration of the target group and maintain, increase or restore their employability. Structural measures aimed at administrative institutions, companies and other organisations shall improve access to work and training. In addition, a nationwide social media pilot project offers initial outreach information and referral counselling (digital streetwork).

Germany is also reliant on the immigration of foreign skilled workers, to secure the needed workforces for the labour market. This means, among other things, that administrative procedures and the recognition of professional qualifications need to be simplified. The new [Skilled Immigration Act \(FEG\)](#) (passed in July 2023 and entering into force successively in November 2023, March and June 2024) will make it easier for skilled workers with vocational

training and individuals with practical knowledge to immigrate to Germany ⁽⁹⁾.

The initiative Providing gender cliché-free vocational guidance informs and brings together all those involved in vocational orientation processes to enable young people to choose a vocation and education pathway based on their individual strengths and interests. As of February 2023, 475 partner organisations have joined the [Cliché-free initiative](#) (Cedefop & ReferNet; 2023o).

2.6 VET underpinned by quality assurance

Quality assurance in VET is conducted by various bodies, at different levels and through different tools. The national qualification framework classifies formal qualifications by level. BMBF and BIBB are the main players in reporting and monitoring developments in VET and thereby contributing to quality assurance. They identify areas which require updates, leading to the setting up of projects or policy changes, such as updating training regulations (Cedefop, & ReferNet.; 2023g). Quality assurance is conducted differently for company-based training, theoretical training at schools or CVET. National standards for company-based training are defined in the Vocational Training Act and the Trade and Crafts Code. They concern training regulations, training facilities, trainers and examinations. Employer organisations working with trade unions have a key role in quality assurance of company-based training. Local chambers monitor regulations on trainers and training facilities, as well as on competences gained in the programmes. Employer and employee organisations and teachers are equally represented on their examination boards. The chambers also play a major role in quality assurance by advising companies. All apprenticeship contracts have to be registered by the chambers. Works councils, youth and apprentice representatives contribute to ensuring that training companies comply with minimum standards.

Germany is implementing the EQAVET framework and participates actively in the European network for quality assurance in VET with its national reference point [DEQA-VET](#) hosted by BIBB on behalf of BMBF. DEQA-VET published [brochures on central quality assurance mechanisms](#) which underlie the company-based part of initial training in the dual system in Germany. DEQA-VET is also monitoring the [consequences of the digital transformation](#) for standards and elements of quality assurance in VET. In 2023, DEQA-VET published a systematic inventory of [quality initiatives in dual VET by the chambers](#) of skilled trades and the chambers of industry and commerce. The national reference point also participates in [self-evaluation and peer-review](#) within the EQAVET network (in 2022-23 focus on CVET).

CHAPTER 3. Involvement of VET stakeholders in the implementation of policy developments related to NIP

All policy developments described in Chapter 2 reflect a clear and consistent stakeholder cooperation, with a strong, constant and reliable interaction among the various stakeholders. The Alliance for initial and further training and the National skills strategy are two examples of

⁽⁹⁾ See also: Cedefop & ReferNet. (2023q).

umbrella initiatives, which bring together a wide range of stakeholders. The youth employment agencies should be highlighted as well. They gather various stakeholders at the regional or local level into cross-jurisdictional cooperation alliances (between employment agencies, job centres, youth welfare offices, schools, chambers, youth migration services, employer organisations, etc.).

Dual VET is based on cooperation between the two places of learning (training company and vocational school) and characterised by the shared responsibility between four groups of stakeholders: the federal government (responsible for the in-company part of the training), the Länder (16 federal states, responsible for the school part of the training) and the social partners with equal representation of employers organisations and trade unions. The roles, tasks and services of relevant institutions and stakeholders are based on a balanced system of rules and funding, and are essentially defined by law (in particular Vocational Training Act and Trade and Crafts Code). The VET Act gives a particular role to the federal institute for VET (BIBB) and to the chambers (such as chambers of industry and commerce, chambers of skilled trades). For example, training content for new or updated training occupations is designed by expert representatives of the social partners with the support of BIBB.

Cooperation based on mutual trust is essential between government and social partners. Employers and trade unions jointly formulate the requirements for the occupational standards. All cooperation related to VET is based on consensus. The employers and the unions assume shared responsibility for shaping VET. This connection forms the basis of a working public-private partnership (PPP).

Political and strategic initiatives as well as funding programmes in VET run by the relevant ministries (mostly by ministries for education BMBF, economic affairs BMWK and labour and social affairs BMAS), Länder and social partnership agreements complement the legal framework on the macro level, with a broad range of stakeholders implementing the various funded projects on the micro level (such as vocational schools, companies, chambers, training providers, actors at regional and local level). The federal employment agency has an active role as well. Regarding international mobility in VET, the National Agency at BIBB has a coordination role. To accompany the developing and monitoring process of the NIP, the education ministry (BMBF) with BIBB (EU-VET project) involves a committee ⁽¹⁰⁾, with representatives of all main VET stakeholders.

CHAPTER 4. Achievements of implementation

The regular updating of training programmes based on research and dialogue between social partners with the ministries is a key success factor for making progress in most of the EU priority areas, especially to adapt to labour market changes, as well as digital and green transitions, to make VET more attractive by developing advanced career pathways, and also to ensure a high quality of VET. Since 2020, 40 initial training programmes and 136 advanced VET programmes have been modernised or newly set up. This regulatory work is based on skills anticipation research, which has been strongly developed since 2020 to identify new skills needs, for example in the green hydrogen economy or for new technologies. Another

⁽¹⁰⁾ Represented on the National Monitoring Committee are the BMBF, BMAS, BMWK, KMK, ASMK, WiMiKo, HRK, BA, BIBB, BDA, DIHK, ZDH, DGB, IG Metall and the national Erasmus+ agencies in DAAD and BIBB.

consistent success factor in implementing all EU priorities is the active part of all VET stakeholders (Federal government, Länder, social partners) in shaping a modern and inclusive VET. The continuous monitoring of VET developments in Germany as outlined in the annual [BIBB data report](#) and the corresponding [BMBF report on VET](#) is the basis for the continuous further development of the system.

Another area of progress to be highlighted is innovation and excellence in VET. The umbrella initiative Excellence in VET combines existing and new measures, supporting individual talents and advanced VET programmes to build an attractive and modern VET landscape, for example in inter-company training centres. The provision of VET is becoming more attractive by applying digital tools and upskilling VET trainers, as well as by promoting international mobility opportunities through information, guidance and dissemination, reaching again in 2023 numbers of VET stays abroad with Erasmus+ as before the pandemic.

In the priority areas of flexible and inclusive VET, progress has been made by developing successive modular qualifications leading to a full qualification and by disseminating the validation of non-formally and informally acquired skills. In both cases, social partners (employers, chambers) are important actors, which is again the main success factor. School-to-work transition is to be further improved by regional youth employment agencies bundling all local support services, as well as by implementing the new training guarantee (law passed in July 2023). Finally, many support programmes focus on improving the [integration of migrants and refugees into training](#) and employment, again with a broad stakeholder participation, enabling for example war refugees from Syria and Ukraine to enter a VET programme after targeted language and guidance courses.

CHAPTER 5. Challenges of implementation

The biggest challenge for the training and labour market is the shortage of VET learners and skilled workers, needed all the more for the green and digital transitions. Training companies have difficulties finding apprentices, especially SMEs and in rural areas. The lack of skilled workers is already an existential issue for many companies. Due to population developments, the active population is aging and needs to be replaced. On the other hand, there are less secondary school graduates, and for many of them, the image of VET is not as attractive as academic education.

Many (vocational) schools – and to a lesser extent SMEs - are still missing a modernised infrastructure and VET provision (e.g. not enough teachers). For disadvantaged young people and migrants, the school-to-work transition can still be difficult, with an increasing rate of early leaving from school and training. The new training guarantee and the youth employment agencies are to improve this situation, but still need some time to be broadly implemented. Upskilling and further training opportunities (including modular qualifications) are still not sufficient and participation in CVET too low. Further, until February 2024 with the government's draft of the Vocational training validation and digitisation act (see Section 2.2), there was no legal basis for - and therefore no entitlement to - validation procedures for non-formally and informally acquired skills. However, these validation procedures will become increasingly important in combating the shortage of skilled labour ⁽¹¹⁾.

⁽¹¹⁾ See also: [BIBB Data report 2023](#) and the corresponding BMBF Report on VET.

CHAPTER 6. Conclusions

As described in Chapter 2 and summarised in Chapter 4, progress has been made in all EU priority areas, in particular in adapting to labour market changes, as well as digital and green transitions. Innovation and excellence in VET, including a modern and high-quality provision, have been promoted to make VET more attractive. At last, many programmes have supported a flexible and inclusive VET. All policy developments described reflect a consistent stakeholder cooperation.

Access to the training market has been eased by initiatives such as the Alliance between all VET actors, the training guarantee and continued support to training companies facing matching problems and skilled labour shortage. However, as unanimously expressed by the main actors in their statements on the [BMBF Report on VET in 2023 and 2024](#), it remains a challenge to motivate young people to start and complete dual VET. A step towards achieving this goal is early, consistent, targeted and practical vocational orientation in all general education schools, to offer insights into the world of work and contacts to companies e.g. through internships. In the transition between school and training/work, young people should be offered effective guidance and individual support, e.g. through more and better equipped youth employment agencies (one-stop shop). One answer to the challenge of attracting talented learners into dual VET is to promote its excellence and to further develop VET qualifications at a higher level (EQF 6-7) offering attractive development and career opportunities (see section 2.3). Further, massive investments in vocational schools are necessary to ensure the attractiveness of VET (such as structural and digital/technical equipment, as well as supply of teachers and their further training). To face the digital and green transformations, policy initiatives promote digitalisation or sustainability in initial VET (including VET staff) and research projects are identifying and anticipating future needs in new skills. The new cross-occupational training standards, 'Environmental protection and sustainability' and 'Digitised world of work', are implemented in all dual VET courses at both places of learning. Further education remains a challenge, especially in regions facing structural changes, but several online CVET platforms are being developed. Finally, international mobility and cooperation in VET are actively promoted and BIBB supports the integration of international competences in training regulations.

As described in Chapter 5, the biggest challenge for VET and society as a whole is the growing shortage of skilled workers. The new [skilled labour strategy](#) (adopted in October 2022) is the government's overarching answer and aims to attract even more skilled workers within Germany and abroad, addressing different field of actions. One particular focus is to promote a modern dual VET with attractive training opportunities as well as early and comprehensive vocational guidance for all pupils. The umbrella initiative Excellence in VET launched in December 2022 has started addressing this field of action. As part of the initiative, the government drafted in February 2024 the [Vocational training validation and digitisation act](#) (BVaDiG). For the first time, people without a formal vocational qualification will be entitled to have their vocational skills assessed and certified against the standards of a dual training occupation. In addition, digitalisation and the reduction of bureaucracy in VET will be

promoted. Another priority area is a targeted professional development and further training with qualification opportunities for everybody, irrespective of age. In July 2023, the [Act to promote initial and further training](#) was passed (coming into force successively until August 2024) to make further training more accessible, including a qualification allowance. Employees with low skills and whose jobs are threatened by change will particularly benefit. Germany is also reliant on the immigration of foreign skilled workers. The new [Skilled Immigration Act](#) (FEG) (passed in July 2023 and entering into force successively in November 2023, March and June 2024) will make it easier for skilled workers with vocational training and individuals with practical knowledge to immigrate to Germany. These laws passed in 2023 are the starting point for new VET initiatives and funding programmes to be deployed in 2024 and the coming years.

References

[URLs accessed 29.02.2024]

- European Commission. (2023). *National Implementation Plans*.
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1603&langId=en>
- BIBB. (2024). *Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2024: Informationen und Analysen zur Entwicklung der beruflichen Bildung* [Data report to the VET report 2024: information and analysis on the development of vocational education and training]. BIBB.
<https://www.bibb.de/datenreport/de/189191.php>
- BIBB. (2023). *Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2023: Informationen und Analysen zur Entwicklung der beruflichen Bildung* [Data report to the VET report 2023: information and analysis on the development of vocational education and training]. BIBB.
<https://www.bibb.de/datenreport/de/175452.php>
- BMBF. (2024). *Berufsbildungsbericht 2024*. [Report on vocational education and training 2024]. BMBF. <https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/de/bildung/berufliche-bildung/strategie-und-zusammenarbeit/der-berufsbildungsbericht/der-berufsbildungsbericht.html>
- BMBF. (2023). *Berufsbildungsbericht 2023*. [Report on vocational education and training 2023]. BMBF. <https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/de/bildung/berufliche-bildung/strategie-und-zusammenarbeit/der-berufsbildungsbericht/der-berufsbildungsbericht.html>
- BMBF, & BIBB. (2022). *National implementation plan: Germany*. BMBF; BIBB.
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1603&langId=en>
- Cedefop, & BIBB. (2022). *Vocational education and training in Europe - Germany: system description*. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). *Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions* [Database].
<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/germany-u2>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023a). Alliance for initial and further training: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool].
<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28134>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023b). Cooperation among stakeholders to facilitate transition from school to work: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in*

- Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28131>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023c). Developing digital CVET area - innovation programme INVITE: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/37903>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023d). Digital media and innovative technology in VET: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28138>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023e). Integrating migrants and refugees in VET and work: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28123>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023f). Modernising VET qualifications: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28112>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023g). Monitoring VET system - BIBB annual Data reports: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28117>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023h). National education platform (NOW!): Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/41083>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023i). National Skills Strategy: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28121>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023j). Partial qualifications to support the low-qualified and unskilled: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28122>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023k). Perfect match programme for SMEs: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/35211>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023l). Promoting dual VET: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28114>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023m). Promoting innovations for excellent VET - InnoVET programme: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28127>

- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023n). Promoting international mobility of VET learners: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28147>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023o). Providing gender cliché-free vocational guidance: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28129>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023p). Qualifying trainers for the future world of VET: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28147>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023q). Skilled Immigration Act: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28124>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023r). Supporting competence centres and inter-company training centres (ÜBS) in digitalisation: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28150>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023s). Supporting SMEs to provide future-proof VET: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28149>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023t). Sustainable development in VET: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28128>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023u). The Excellence Initiative for VET: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/43712>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023v). Validation and recognition: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28119>
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023w). Vocational competitions EuroSkills und WorldSkills: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2023 update) [Online tool]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/43947>
- European Commission. (2022). *National implementation plan: Germany*. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1603&langId=en>