



## Knowledge transfer through consulting – A service provided by BIBB in international vocational education and training

► The growing challenges facing international cooperation in vocational education and training (VET) are what prompted BIBB (Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training) five years ago to reposition itself in the field of international VET. The foundations for the Institute's medium-term activities in international VET were agreed in 2001 with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and laid out in a "Strategy paper on the internationalisation of VET".

The emphasis is on:

- international comparative and transfer research,
- support for the European process in VET,
- strengthening European and international cooperation in VET, especially by creating new and building on existing networks,
- consulting and support services in conjunction with the further development of VET systems in transformation, newly developed and developing countries.

These focal areas have greatly shaped the performance profile and the activities of BIBB in international VET in recent years and steadily consolidated its competence profile in this field. A growing number of domestic and foreign institutions/organisations are turning to the Federal Institute in order to draw on its know-how in vocational education and training and to cooperate with BIBB on research, development and consulting projects. Besides stepping up the creation of networks in Europe and cross-border research cooperation with EU Member States, new areas for cooperation on international VET have emerged in recent years in conjunction with consulting activities in transformation, developing and newly developed countries.

Today, many countries face the challenge of developing and reforming their VET training systems in order to meet not only the needs of the economic sector for qualified personnel but also the social needs of the population for employment qualifications of relevance for the labour market. The growing pressure to speed up these processes has led to many countries looking for new forms of collaboration in international VET cooperation and their making more use of the experiences of other countries in their VET reforms. Against this backdrop, Germany and the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training are in demand as cooperation and consulting partners for the advancement of international vocational education and training.



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The main areas of international VET cooperation in which BIBB has provided consulting services in recent years are:

## System consulting and capacity building

The creation of the framework conditions for steering occupational modernisation processes and their integration into strategic measures for the systematic development of VET are one example of sought-after consulting services. Here, it is important to start with the existing social, cultural, economic and political structures of the respective partner country. After all, each country has been forged by its own traditions and specific environment. The simple importing of models and measures from other countries is not, therefore, realistic. Sustainable reforms can only be achieved through measures that are adapted to the special characteristics of the partner country and are developed together with the political decision-makers on the spot.

It has also been shown that the success of reforms largely depends on the extent to which the institutions and the stakeholders in the partner countries are in a position to carry forward and cement change by means of targeted capacity-building measures.

### Main focuses of BIBB's international consulting services

- system consulting/capacity building
- early recognition of qualification requirements
- introduction of national occupational standards
- VET and sustained development

Thanks to its extensive experience in the setting up and development of organisational structures for vocational education and training, the Federal Institute – mainly in conjunction with a VET project of the Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit (Organisation for Technical Development Cooperation - GTZ) – was able to offer its partners in Serbia on-the-spot support in planning and creating the infrastructure and organisational structure of a Serbian Vocational Education and Training Institute. It also helped to elaborate a normative framework for laying down the Institute's tasks and responsibilities. Furthermore, BIBB was involved in the conceptual work behind the development of a national qualification framework in conjunction with the GTZ "Ethio-German TVET Programme". The next step was then to coordinate this with all the partners involved in vocational education and training in Ethiopia.

## Early recognition of qualifications needs

In many countries a growing need is also emerging for greater orientation of the VET profile towards the needs of the labour market. One ongoing major problem is that the opportunities for companies to assess needs when it comes to developing human resources are limited. Furthermore, many companies are not sufficiently aware of the role which training can play in promoting economic growth and competitiveness. Consequently, it is still difficult to identify the demand for specific skills on the labour market and the VET system, by extension, is only capable to a limited degree of equipping people with the right know-how.

Moreover, it is also a matter of focussing qualification offerings on those areas that could provide the foundation for economic development in the future. Young people and adults must acquire new and higher level qualifications and skills that reflect the needs of the market. Firstly, this involves creating systematic access to the information necessary for the effective monitoring of the market and working towards a regular exchange of this information between the stakeholders. Secondly, reliable and timely information is needed in order to match vocational qualifications to the future needs of the labour market. Over the last two years, a greater need for consulting services has, therefore, also been intimated to BIBB in the field of early recognition. The Federal Institute has responded to this wish in a first step in Uzbekistan. It has discussed tools for the early recognition of qualification needs within the framework of the initial and continuing training projects of the Institute for International Cooperation of the Germany Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV). The goal of the partners is to conceptually adapt instruments and methods of this kind to make them suitable for projects involving regional labour market analyses and the recording of labour market data. The back-up provided for this process is likely to produce more reliable information on how the instruments for the early recognition of qualifications, that have been developed by BIBB in a research network with other institutions, can be tailored to the different situations and specific needs of individual countries.

## Introduction of national occupational standards

With an eye on Europe but also with an eye on the ability of national vocational education and training systems to narrow the gap internationally, more and more countries are seeking to establish uniform VET standards. It is in-

creasingly being recognised that occupational standards are important benchmarks for the quality of vocational education and training and its ability to close the gap internationally. Furthermore, they constitute a necessary reference framework in order to link the demand for occupational competences on the labour market more closely with the offerings of the vocational education and training system. Finally, they are an opportunity to systematise and raise the standard of informal VET offerings and to have competences certified that have been acquired outside formal educational programmes.

However, what is still missing in many countries is a uniform system of occupational standards that could serve as an orientation for training programmes and as a basis for the examination and certification of the competences acquired. The development of a national standardisation, examination and certification system in cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders, particularly in the economic sector, is a further key aspect of the reform process of the VET systems that has been launched in several countries where BIBB's consulting services are very much in demand. For instance, the consulting activities that began in Turkey in 1994 in the field of occupational standards, training standards, examinations and certificates have been continued in recent years, too. BIBB is currently supporting a project for the reform of training courses in a joint training centre of the textile industry, which was initiated by the Turkish Textile Employers' Association. Moreover, the Federal Institute supports two of the GTZ vocational training reform projects in Serbia and Ethiopia and provides corresponding short-term expertise for the development of occupational and training standards in these two countries. Finally, initial talks were held in 2003 with the Ministry of Labour of the Islamic Republic of Iran which had contacted BIBB about conceptual and methodological support for the development of occupational, training and examination standards.

## Vocational education and training and sustainable development

As demonstrated by the international conference on "Learning for Work, Citizenship and Sustainability", held in Bonn in October 2004, steps have been taken in recent years to reshape national policy in industrial and developing countries along the lines of environmentally-friendly, sustainable development. In this context, efforts are also being made to permanently anchor education in sustainable development in all areas of the education system. Increasing importance is being attached to the networking of vocational education and training and sustainable development. After all, the environmental

## A selection of publications in English



Gisela Dybowski  
**Modernizing Vocational Education and Training**  
 BIBB international Advisory Services

Globalisation, increasing international competition, changes in the demographic development and the requirements of the labour market are the main challenges for vocational education and training. This brochure gives an overview of the activities and advisory services offered by BIBB as an international centre of competence in VET.

BIBB 2004, 20 pages, order no.: 09.092, ISBN no.: 3-88555-746-0, Order at Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB), D-53142 Bonn, fax: + 49-228-1072967, E-Mail: [vertrieb@bibb.de](mailto:vertrieb@bibb.de)

German version: Bestell-Nr.: 09.091, ISBN 3-88555-746-0 beim BIBB



Ursula Beicht, Günter Walden, Hermann Herget  
**Costs and Benefits of In-Company Vocational Education and Training in Germany**

Costs and benefits of in-company vocational education and training have an essential influence on the supply of training places in companies. This publication includes the results of a representative survey in which training companies were asked their opinions about the costs and benefits of training. The results show that cost and benefit values vary widely for different occupations and depending on the basic conditions within the companies.

BIBB 2004, 118 pages, price 22.90 €, order no.: 110.448, ISBN no.: 3-7639-1034-4 Order at W. Bertelsmann Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, P.O. Box 100633, D-33506 Bielefeld Phone: + 49-521-91101-11, fax: +49-521-91101-19, e-mail: [service@wbv.de](mailto:service@wbv.de)

German version: Bestell-Nr.: 102.264, ISBN: 3-7639-1018-2



Elisabeth M. Krekel  
**A European Comparison of Controlling in Corporate Continuing Training**

The way in which enterprises in Europe prepare their workforce for future qualification demands and the measures and instruments they already utilise for the achievement of effective training as well as those which they deem necessary for the future is the subject of this publication.

BIBB 2001, 58 pages, price 13.00 €, order no.: 110.393, ISBN no.: 3-7639-0947-8 Order at W. Bertelsmann Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, P.O.Box 100633, D-33506 Bielefeld Phone: +49-521-91101-11, fax: +49-521-91101-19, e-mail: [service@wbv.de](mailto:service@wbv.de)

German Version: Bestell-Nr.: 102.250, ISBN 3-7639-0947-8

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compatibility of products and production processes is emerging as a major location factor. In order to avoid a strategically disadvantageous competitive position in the long-term, ecological aspects are more important than ever when taking economic decisions.

Vocational education and training must, therefore, seek to promote the aptitude for sustainable management and to contribute to environmentally mature action in both the economic sector and the world of work on all levels and in the most diverse areas. However, the networking of VET and sustainable development is unknown territory in many developing, newly developed and transformation countries and, at best, only partially implemented in industrial countries. That is why the demand is growing fast for consulting services and support for development projects and for partner organisations, involved in vocational qualification for sustainable development. Concepts and practical examples that already promote the aptitude for sustainable management in both trainees and skilled personnel are particularly in demand. There is also a lack of training and teaching materials which are practice-oriented and, at the same time, give teachers and trainers an opportunity to familiarise themselves sufficiently with this subject.

The Federal Institute has been active for many years in this area. In connection with pilot projects, it has developed material for training practice as well as concepts and tips on the qualification of training personnel. Not only have they been well received on the international stage, they have also considerably increased the demand for BIBB's consulting services. With its Brazilian partner, SENAI, BIBB carried out the project "Horizons 21". In pilot workshops, trainers from varied occupational areas were schooled in how to raise awareness amongst trainees for in-company environmental protection. Together with them, German teaching and learning materials were adapted to the local needs. Finally, a database with good practice examples was set up. The highly promising results of the project in Brazil attracted the interest of CEA (Centro Educacional de Alta Tecnologia) in Chile. An exploratory trip at the end of 2004 aims to identify whether parts of the project "Horizons 21" could also be suitable for Chile. In China BIBB was involved in the GTZ project "Initial and further training for vocational school teachers". Together with the members of the Chinese implementation units, the module "Environment and Vocational Education and Training" was developed. It involves the pegging out of the content framework and a methodological/didactic concept. One special challenge here was that the module was also to be suitable for use in e-learning.

As these examples demonstrate, vocational education and training is being taken increasingly seriously in the development strategies of many countries. During this process new challenges are emerging in respect of cooperation in and the promotion of international vocational education and training. This, in turn, leads to increasing demand for system consulting, methods and instruments for the standardisation of occupational profiles and certificates, as well as for adapted teaching and learning materials on new focal areas of VET. Experience and know-how can be gained from this international cooperation which can then be channelled in different ways into discussions about national developments in the vocational education and training system too. As a federal institution, the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training has been working for more than 30 years for political and economic circles and for VET practitioners. By means of its research and development activities but also its growing consulting activities, BIBB contributes to tackling future tasks and to promoting innovations in vocational education and training both inside and outside Germany. ■

#### **Further information on the subject:**

##### **Report on Vocational Education and Training (annual)**

Ed.: Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Berlin

Print and online version: [www.berufsbildungsbericht.info](http://www.berufsbildungsbericht.info)

##### **Geschäftsbericht des BIBB (annual)**

Ed.: Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Bonn

Print and online version: [www.bibb.de](http://www.bibb.de)

##### **Jahresbericht der GTZ (annual)**

Ed.: Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, Eschborn

Print and online version: [www.gtz.de/publikationen](http://www.gtz.de/publikationen)

Dybowski, Gisela; Gajo, Michael

##### **Deutsche Berufsbildungskooperation weltweit – Potenziale erkennen, Synergien nutzen (with CD-ROM).**

Ed.: Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Bonn 2003

##### **BIBB International: Strategiepapier zur Internationalisierung beruflicher Bildung**

In: BWPspezial No. 7; supplement BWP 4/2002)