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Stakeholders and procedures in the development of national training standards – a European comparative study



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List of abbreviations

ANQEP	Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional (National Agency for Qualifications in Vocational Education and Training (Portugal))
B&Q Commission	Kommission Berufsentwicklung & Qualität (Commission for Occupational Development and Quality (Switzerland))
BAG	Berufsausbildungsgesetz (Vocational Training Act (Austria))
B-BAB	Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat (Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training (Austria))
BBiG	Berufsbildungsgesetz (German Vocational Training Act)
BIBB	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Germany))
BMBF	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Germany))
BMBWF	Bundesministerium für Digitalisierung und Wirtschaftsstandort (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (Austria)) <i>Does not exist anymore</i>
BMDW	Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung (Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (Austria))
BMWi	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (Germany))
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CNQ	Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações (National Qualifications Catalogue (Portugal))
CSQ	Conselhos Setoriais para a Qualificação (Sectoral Councils for Qualifications (Portugal))
DGB	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (German Trade Unions Confederation)
EBBK	Eidgenössische Berufsbildungskommission (Federal Commission for Vocational and Professional Education and Training (Switzerland))
EDK	Schweizerische Konferenz der kantonalen Erziehungsdirektoren (Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education)
EFZ	Eidgenössisches Fähigkeitszeugnis (Federal VET Diploma (Switzerland))
EU	European Union
HwO	Handwerksordnung (Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (Germany))
Ibw	Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft (Austrian Institute for Training Research in Trade and Industry)
IEFP	Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (National Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (Portugal))

KMK	Kultusministerkonferenz (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Federal Republic of Germany)
KoA	Bund/Länder Koordinierungsausschuss (Federal States Coordination Committee (Germany))
KWB	Kuratorium der Deutschen Wirtschaft für Berufsbildung (German Employers' Organisation for Vocational und Further Training)
ME	Ministério da Educação (Ministry of Education (Portugal))
MTSSS	Ministério do Trabalho, Solidariedade e Segurança Social (Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security (Portugal))
OdA	Organisation der Arbeitswelt (Professional organisations (Switzerland))
REU	Rådet for de Grundlæggende Erhvervsrettede Uddannelser (Advisory Council for Initial Vocational Education and Training (Denmark))
RVCC	Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Competências (Recognition, Validation and certification of non-formal and informal competencies (Portugal))
SBBK	Schweizerische Berufsbildungsämter-Konferenz (Swiss Conference of Vocational Education and Training Offices)
SBFI	Staatssekretariat für Bildung, Innovation und Forschung (State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (Switzerland))
SFIVET	Eidgenössische Hochschule für Berufsbildung EHB (Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training) <i>On 1 August 2021, SFIVET was renamed the Swiss Federal University for Vocational Education and Training SFUVET</i>
SIOV	Státny inštitút odborného vzdelávania (State Institute for Vocational Training (Slovakia))
SOŠ	Stredné odborné školy (Vocational School (Slovakia))
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VPETA	Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (Switzerland)
WKO	Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry)

Preface

This BIBB Academic Research Discussion Paper addresses important ongoing reforms in vocational education and training systems at a European level by analysing the processes involved in the formation and development of training standards. Thus a link is provided with one core element of the Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness, and resilience.¹ A reference is also made to the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships² and to the Osnabrück Declaration.³

Two of the 14 European criteria for framework conditions – ‘Regulatory framework’ and ‘Involvement of social partners’ – are categorized and analysed within their historical and institutional contexts for Austria, Denmark, Germany, Portugal, Switzerland, and Slovakia. A particularly clear light is shed on the cooperation that takes place between stakeholders during the process of the formation, development, and adoption of training standards. The differences regarding areas of responsibility, authorities, and roles of stakeholders become similarly apparent. This applies both when a comparison is made between the dual training systems (Germany, Denmark, Austria, and Switzerland) and when these systems are contrasted with school-based VET systems (Portugal and Slovakia).

The BIBB project ‘Development of national training standards – stakeholders, procedures, and design in European comparative terms’ centres on a comparative study of the development of training standards, a major thematic area of the European VET policy agenda. Six countries were included in the comparison. These comprised four countries which are generally considered to operate a dual training model – Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Denmark. The two other countries were Portugal and Slovakia, which have a largely school-based training system in place. Both of the latter have also been collaborating closely with Germany in the field of vocational training since 2012. The main focuses of the comparative investigation were a process description of the procedures used for drawing up training standards in these six countries and an analysis of the interaction between the stakeholder groups involved, particularly in the countries with dual systems. The aim of the latter was to provide indications for the possible structuring of future international projects.

The project thus ties in with a research strand that has become increasingly significant at BIBB over recent years – vocational education and training transfer.⁴ One of the reasons for this growing importance is that interest in VET systems with a dual model have considerably risen since the financial crisis of 2008/2009. States which were affected by high rates of youth unemployment in the wake of the crisis were especially keen to design their training systems in a more efficient way, and in some cases, they still are. In this process, they are guided by the countries with a dual training system that exhibit comparatively low levels of youth unemployment. The current coronavirus crisis may emerge as a new driver of demand for systemic consultancy in the area of vocational education and training.

1 Council Recommendation, 24 November 2020: [https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/celex_32020h1202\(01\)_de_txt.pdf](https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/celex_32020h1202(01)_de_txt.pdf) (Status: 18.05.2021).

2 Council Recommendation, 15 March 2018: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/de/txt/pdf/?uri=celex:32018h0502\(01\)&from=hr](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/de/txt/pdf/?uri=celex:32018h0502(01)&from=hr) (Status: 18.05.2021).

3 Cf. https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/shareddocs/downloads/files/osnabrueck-declaration.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1 (Status: 15.10.2021)

4 In November 2018, BIBB staged a Vocational Education and Training Research Network forum on this topic ‘Evaluation and impact research in vocational education and training’: https://www.agbfn.de/de/agbfn_veranstaltung83134.php (Status: 15.10.2021). See also GEIBEN, Marthe (Ed.): Transfer in internationalen Berufsbildungskoooperationen, Bonn 2017.

The project forms part of the activities in the field of comparative European and international VET research and development⁵ which BIBB has pursued over a period of many years and therefore makes a contribution towards the creation of possible solutions to meet the challenges in vocational education and training at the European and international levels. The necessity of context analysis plays a central role in the academic debate surrounding transfer processes. Experiences gained in international projects since the financial crisis, particularly those which relate to the question of how a successful transfer of dual vocational education and training elements could be achieved (the broad prevailing consensus being that the direct transfer of a VET system is impossible), clearly showed that concepts of VET transfer ‘respectively can only be developed within the scope of specific social, cultural and economic conditions’ (EULER 2013, p. 326; STOCKMANN 2021).

International comparative research on vocational education and training thus faces a methodological difficulty. Simply comparing individual elements or institutions in each system is insufficient in terms of recording the ‘context of meaning and function’ (GEORG 2000, p. 179) of the organization of vocational education and training in other countries. A better understanding of the diverse natures of VET systems can only be arrived at by carrying out a comprehensive analysis of the respective general national cultural, political, and economic conditions and of the ‘societal values that appear to be of significance to vocational training’ (LAUTERBACH 2005, p. 45).

The BIBB research project has produced responses to both challenges in the area of training standards. They are presented in this Academic Research Paper. The first step involved undertaking a historical review of the national development of vocational education and training in six selected countries. Such a review allowed a better understanding of the respective national VET systems and also formed an important foundation for the investigation of stakeholder configurations in the individual countries. In the second stage of the process, the governance concept was used to depict the governance structure underlying the procedures for the development of training standards and to demonstrate the most important stakeholders and their roles. Deploying this method in conjunction with the detailed process descriptions enabled a new approach to analysis of this central thematic area within VET to be created.

The analyses were used to derive several impetuses for future cooperation arrangements with regard to vocational education and training transfer. One of the successes of the research project was the identification of specific characteristics of cooperation between various stakeholder groups in the development of training standards in the dual model countries. Although the training models in these countries may be presumed to be very similar, they exhibit significant differences in respect of particular cooperation factors. In its turn this underlines the importance of contextualizing every instance of the dual training structures transfer. The present Academic Research Paper seeks to make a contribution in precisely this area.

Prof. Dr. Hubert Ertl

Director of Research and Deputy President of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training

5 BIBB has been taking on research, development, and consultancy tasks in the area of international vocational education and training cooperation for more than three decades. These activities included the provision of advisory and support services for funding projects in eleven reform states in Central and Eastern Europe as part of the German TRANSFORM Programme of the 1990s. Since that time, BIBB has continued to expand its cooperation with EU institutes (CEDEFOP and ETF) and has also extended its collaboration at a supranational level with UNESCO, UNEVOC, and the OECD on an ongoing basis (cf. DYBOWSKI/WALTER 2001).

1 Introduction

Over the past few years, there has been a sharp rise in the level of international interest in vocational education and training featuring a dual model. States which have been affected by high youth unemployment since the 2008 financial crisis are particularly keen to structure their vocational education and training systems in a more efficient way in order to offer better employment opportunities for the young people. In many cases, they orient themselves towards the states which have a dual training system in place and which boast comparatively low levels of youth unemployment, such as Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Denmark. Several initiatives have been launched at an EU level to support the European reform states.⁶ In addition to this, some countries have concluded bilateral vocational education and training cooperation agreements. Germany, for example, has done so with a series of European states.⁷

The topics addressed by European VET cooperation programmes range from the training of company-based staff (e.g. within the scope of the cooperation with Portugal and Italy) to vocational orientation (Slovakia), and also extend to include the quality assurance of company-based training (Latvia).⁸ The development and modernization of training standards forms a further main focus of international cooperation in the field of vocational education and training. This topic is of relevance for two reasons. Firstly, it affects a core area with regard to the question of how a closer connection can be achieved between the VET system and the skills needed in trade and industry. Secondly, this key issue also brings a basic VET principle in the dual model countries to the fore – cooperation between the state and social partners.

Both aspects – the procedure for drawing up national training standards and interaction between various stakeholder groups – lay at the heart of the present research project, which is designed as a comparative investigation. Six countries were selected. Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Denmark were included as representing states which are generally considered to have a conventional dual vocational education and training system in place. Portugal and Slovakia, two countries which have agreed to engage in close cooperation with Germany in the field of VET, were chosen as examples of states with a primarily school-based training system.

This Academic Research Paper consists of three parts. Firstly, it sets out theoretical aspects which informed the project. The concepts of governance and neo-corporatism, two explanatory terms from the political sciences, were the key basis in this regard. The second part of the paper explains the methodological approach adopted. It also addresses problem areas associated with international comparative studies. The third part presents the main results of the research project. These are as follows:

6 Cf. THE 'EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS' 2013: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_ip-13-634_de.htm (Status: 11.02.2020); THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY AND EFFECTIVE APPRENTICESHIPS INITIATIVE, 5 october 2017: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_17_3585 (Status: 11.02.2020).

7 In December 2012, Germany entered into a cooperation agreement in the area of vocational education and training with six European countries (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Slovakia, and Latvia). Cf. https://www.ifo.de/DocDL/ifosd_2013_16_1.pdf (Status: 07.11.2021); the international activities undertaken by Switzerland in the area of vocational education and training are outlined in JUNE 2017 REPORT OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL: <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbf/en/home/education/international-cooperation-in-education/strengthening-the-position-of-swiss-vpet-in-an-international-con.html> (Status: 10.02.2020); Austria has also concluded international VET cooperation agreements: <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/themen/euint/ikoop/bikoop/bb.html> (Status: 10.02.2020).

8 Cf. <https://www.bibb.de/govet/de/2910.php> (Status: 24.06.2019).

- ▶ A presentation of the procedures for drawing up national training standards in six selected countries. This is preceded by a historical review of the development of the national VET systems and by a detailed summary of governance structures of the stakeholder groups involved in the individual countries in order to provide a better understanding and categorization of the process stages.
- ▶ An analysis of the cooperation which takes place between the relevant stakeholders in the development of training standards in the dual model countries. One of the aims of describing this 'cooperation model' is to identify the characteristics of the interaction between the stakeholders in a central area of vocational education and training. A second intention is for the analysis of the model to make a contribution to the theoretical discussion within the context of the governance concept.
- ▶ Impetuses for consultancy on and the implementation of projects in international VET cooperation in which the main focus is on the development of vocational curricula. Impetuses are essentially produced by the investigations into the procedures in the six countries and by the analysis of the 'cooperation model' in the dual model countries.

2 Theoretical approach

Two theoretical concepts were borrowed from the political sciences as a theoretical foundation for processing research questions – the ‘governance’ and ‘neo-corporatism’.

- ▶ In the academic debate, governance tends to be viewed as an analytical concept rather than a theory. It can be used to investigate certain ‘forms of social organisation’ (HAUSCHILD/WITTIG 2018, p. 273; BENZ et al. 2007, p. 16). The term ‘governance’ relates to all mechanisms, regulations, or procedures which help to overcome the ‘interdependence of stakeholders in complex social contexts’ and in this way ‘facilitate the coordinating of their actions for the purpose of the pursuit of joint objectives or the resolution of common problems’ (HAUSCHILD/WITTIG 2018, p. 272).⁹ In vocational education and training, governance usually takes place via state and private sector stakeholders. However, depending on the VET system, the influence exerted by these stakeholders displays differing characteristics. In one area of research, a differentiation is drawn between three ideal-typical governance models within this context.
- ▶ The ‘state-bureaucratic model’. In this model, ‘planning, organisation, and control is carried out (by the state) alone’. The ‘type of vocational qualification’ is less oriented towards the ‘use situations’ of companies. ‘Verbalisation and theorisation usually form the central curricular principles’ (DEISSINGER 2018, p. 260; GREINERT 2004, p. 22).
- ▶ The ‘liberal market economy model’. In this case, the ‘type of vocational qualification’ is directed at the ‘putative use situations’ on the labour market. ‘The state largely foregoes regulation and control via laws and ordinances’ (GREINERT 2004, p. 21; WEISS 2017, p. 6).
- ▶ The ‘dual-corporatist model’. In this third model, occupational profiles are ‘mutually stipulated in a regulated procedure by employers, trade unions and state bodies’. The state integrates market participants into the governance process as ‘relevant stakeholders’ (GREINERT 2004, p. 22; WEISS 2017, p. 6).

The governance concept is now being used for analyses in various areas, including in the education sector. Although in many cases investigations concentrate on higher education and school systems (ALTRICHER/BRÜSEMEISTER/WISSINGER 2007, p. 10), some studies are transferable to the field of vocational education and training. Analyses here focus on the question of how ‘action coordination’ can take place in a ‘multi-level system’ with many stakeholders (stakeholder structures) who normally have different interests, different logics underlying their actions, and different decision-making competencies (KRUIP 2011, p. 17; KUSSAU/BRÜSEMEISTER 2007, p. 16). According to Kruij, the result of the associated complexity is that changes cannot simply be achieved via ‘direct administrative action’. In fact, changes need to be explained ‘at least to those stakeholders who are in possession of a certain degree of autonomy or potential for resistance’, and such stakeholders also need to be convinced. A consideration of cooperation research shows that ‘genuine and successful cooperation is most likely to come about if the stakeholders have objectives which they recognise as being mutual and know that they can only realise these together’ (KRUIP 2011, p. 18).

Valuable indications for the research project were also provided by the investigations into the governance approach conducted in the area of ‘negotiations’ (BENZ 2007, p. 106), which emphasize such aspects as the significance of ‘personal communication’. This generates an ‘independent momentum’ which supports the transition from ‘competitive or egocentric behav-

9 The description by Hauschild and Wittig relates to Renate Mayntz. Cf. also MAYNTZ: Governance theory als fortentwickelte Steuerungstheorie 2004.

our to cooperative behaviour'. Personal conversation enabled the stakeholders to assess themselves better and establish trust to one another. Both of these reduce the 'risk that cooperative behaviour is exploited' (BENZ 2007, p. 111).

The neo-corporatist approach also has its origins in the political sciences and was mainly applied to exploring the role of social partners in vocational education and training in Germany. In a study on the dual system in Germany, a research group led by Wolfgang Streeck concluded that the institutions supporting vocational education represent a 'triadic' (corporatist) system, in which 'the state, the employers, the employers' associations and the trade unions are all involved', rather than a 'dual' system. From the point of view of the researchers, social partners are largely able to resist the temptation of mixing up 'industrial relations' issues with vocational education and training questions and that of 'exchanging concessions in one area for concessions in the other'. They find the most important reason for this to be the fact that both sides recognize the significance of vocational education and training as a 'prerequisite for the competitiveness of a high-wage economy on the world market' (STREECK et al. 1987, pp. 5ff). The view of Baethge is that the 'strength of the corporatist arrangement in the quality issue' is 'best' visible in the updating of training regulations. Over the past few decades in particular, he believes that this has led to the development of 'an instrument for the content modernisation of vocational education and training' which could have 'an exemplary impact on curricular revision in other education sectors'. He sees the 'experience of the reality of company work organisation and its skills requirements' as being the reason behind the 'high degree of corporatist consensuality' in the updating of regulations. This is a view which is shared by both 'corporative stakeholder groups' (BAETHGE 2006, pp. 458ff).

3 Methodological approach

‘Learning from one another’ is an essential goal of international comparative vocational education and training research. This objective is frequently used either to illustrate alternatives to domestic policymakers or to support partner countries in the design of reform measures, such as within the scope of international VET cooperation. A further effect of comparison is to sharpen a country’s view of its own vocational education and training system. When observers look at the ‘foreign system’, they are struck both by its differences and in particular by the characteristic features of their own system. Both aspects of comparison played an important role in the research project. Especially at international conferences, the experience was that questions regarding the transfer of dual training structure elements to countries with a school-based system were discussed in a differentiated way. It was also revealed that discussions on the comparisons between countries with a dual training model could lead to fruitful networking between policy and research experts from these states (MÜNCH 1997, p. 180; GEORG 2005, p. 187; BEHRINGER/KÄPPLINGER 2018, p. 321).

The object of the present comparison is the procedure for the development and modernization of training standards. Since different terms and descriptions exist in the six countries selected for this purpose, the research project uses a definition which is closely based on CEDEFOP glossaries. It states that national training standards refer to the ‘knowledge, skills and/or competencies’ linked to practising ‘a job or a group of occupational tasks’ (CEDEFOP 2011, pp. 175ff; CEDEFOP 2014, p. 214). The research project did not consider questions related to the contents and implementation of training standards. Its main focus instead was very much on the process of developing training standards and on the actions of the stakeholder groups involved in the six countries.

The relevant literature makes reference to the fact that there is no ‘patent recipe’ for a ‘systemic recording of the respective reality of vocational education and training in a country’ (MÜNCH 1997, p. 180). International comparative analyses mainly encounter two problem areas. One initial difficulty is that the comparison of a phenomenon is often undertaken by using the so-called ‘ethnocentric categories’. This term relates to the categories which ‘have been obtained in the context of a researcher’s own experiential space’. There is then an inherent risk that prior assumptions may lead to misunderstandings and incorrect interpretations (GEORG 2005, pp. 187ff). In order to confront this danger, Georg believes that it is necessary to conduct an analysis of the historical and sociocultural contexts in the states which are being compared with one another. His view is that it ‘permits an explanation of the society-specific possible solutions and of the respective particular institutional and organisational configurations’ (GEORG 2005, p. 192).

A second problem area is that English is very often used or needs to be used as a common working language when investigating societal structures of other countries. This has several drawbacks. Firstly, as is also the case when ethnocentric categories are used, misunderstandings may occur. Secondly, ‘the respective differentiating cultural context can easily get lost’ (LAUTERBACH 2005, p. 45). Thirdly, as in qualitative studies for example, there is also the fear that information networking may be restricted, depending on the language level of respondents.

These problem areas were taken into account in the project. It made a particular use of country studies, focus group discussions, case studies, and a specialist conference¹⁰ in an attempt to record the reality of vocational education and to create a basis for the conducting of comparative analyses.

Country studies

The first stage of the country studies¹¹ involved collating essential information on the systems of vocational education and training in different countries. This information includes a brief outline of the historical development of vocational education and training, a presentation of legal foundations, a summary of the most important stakeholder groups, and selected statistical data. In the second step of the procedure, the development process of national standards is depicted using two examples.

1) *Document and literature analysis*

This part of the research is based on statutory foundations of each respective country and on fundamental official documents (decrees, ordinances, recommendations, etc.) which affect vocational education and training. Additional information is taken from statistical data and from further publications related to VET (e.g. handbooks, studies). The project group collaborated with national experts from the individual countries in order to gain a picture of the national situation which would be as realistic as possible. This was also necessary because most documents in Denmark, Portugal, and Slovakia were only available in national languages.

2) *Interviews with national vocational education and training stakeholders in the six selected countries*

The purpose of the interviews was to supplement the literature analysis and obtain findings regarding the role and self-perception of the VET stakeholder groups in the individual countries. The interview guide, which was developed to serve as a basis for the interviews in the project group, was adapted to the specific situation in the individual countries in consultation with national experts.¹² Interviews were conducted in the national language.

3) *Focus group discussions*

Focus group discussions with national stakeholders were held in the national language in Portugal and Slovakia in order to validate information from the country studies and evaluations from the expert interviews and to gain a more detailed insight in this regard. These partially structured discussions were aligned to several issues.¹³

10 BIBB held an international conference in Siegburg on 3–4 April 2019 as part of the project. The experts from all six countries participated. See The BIBB communication: <https://www.bibb.de/de/95478.php> (Status: 17.07.2019).

11 For the information on the basic structure of the five country reports (no separate study was prepared for the analysis in Germany) see INTERIM REPORT, 20 JULY 2017: https://www.bibb.de/tools/dapro/data/documents/pdf/zw_15313.pdf, pp. 64ff: (Status: 14.09.2021).

12 A basic guide, see INTERIM REPORT, 20 JULY 2017: https://www.bibb.de/tools/dapro/data/documents/pdf/zw_15313.pdf, pp. 68ff: (Status: 14.09.2021).

13 Schedule of the discussions, see INTERIM REPORT, 20 JULY 2017: https://www.bibb.de/tools/dapro/data/documents/pdf/zw_15313.pdf, pp. 82 ff: (Status: 14.09.2021).

4) Case studies

The sectors of 'tourism' and 'shoe production' were selected for the case studies. Tourism has a high level of economic significance in Portugal, and the sector has also drawn up a new procedure for the development of national training standards over recent years. Although the shoe industry is less important in economic terms, it has seen a remarkable boom in the past few years. Moreover, from 2017 the intention of the sector was to base its procedure for the development of national training standards on that deployed by the tourism industry. This plan has, however, not yet been implemented. The area of tourism was also of interest in Slovakia. Although no dual qualifications in accordance with the new laws of 2015 have been introduced in the sector, training is highly practice-oriented and often takes place alongside close cooperation between various stakeholders. The significance of the shoe sector lied in the fact that the stakeholders in both of the country's manufacturing locations had decided to develop dual training for their sector despite the state not planning to do so.

4 Results

4.1 Procedures for the development of national training standards in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Portugal, and Slovakia

Each portrayal of the procedures in the six countries contains three elements:

- ▶ A historical review of the development of vocational education and training in the respective country. This aspect is of central importance in terms of gaining an understanding of the individual VET systems (GREINERT 2004, 2007; GEORG 2000, 2005).
- ▶ A summary of the most important stakeholders involved in the development of training standards via a 'governance structure'. The aim here is to take a closer look at all relevant stakeholders at various levels of respective VET systems. Governance structures thus permit the aspects such as commonalities and differences in the four dual model countries to be presented more clearly.
- ▶ A description of the stages of the process.

4.1.1 Germany

Historical review

The origins of vocational education and training in Germany go back to the Middle Ages. The contours of the current dual training model were formed by various developments that took place at the turn of the 20th century.

In order to achieve political stability in the face of revolutionary turmoil, the German Empire pursued a policy directed towards small and medium-sized enterprises which took targeted account of the interests of craft trades, retailers, and agriculture. One of the outcomes of this was the restoration of craft trades training based on the principle of regulated occupation. This found its expression in the 1897 updating of the German Industrial Code, also referred to as the 'Craft Trades Protection Act', through which the self-administration of the craft trade sector by chambers was enshrined in law.

The continuing education colleges, set up in the 1870s with a view to provide young people with useful knowledge and societal attitudes following the completion of elementary schooling, were developed further and became vocational schools. The aim was for vocational training or occupation to act as a vehicle for the social integration of young male workers in particular.

Industrialization increased the need for skills in the economy. This gradually led to a change in factory-based training which was initially strongly characterized by the prevalence of traditional craft trades apprentices. Starting with the major firms, companies began to offer dedicated and systematic training which was geared towards their own production requirements and was conducted in training workshops. The German Committee for Technical Schooling (DATSCH) was founded in 1908 and started to draw up occupational profiles, training plans, and examination requirements that would prepare the structure of the future system. The trade unions, which had been calling for statutory regulation of company-based vocational education and training since as early as 1919, were, however, not involved in this process from the outset.

Their participation would not become a reality until 1969, when Germany's first Grand Coalition passed the Vocational Training Act (BBiG). This law created a broad basis for societal

responsibility in vocational education and training and established a uniform statutory foundation in this regard. The Act governs the principles at the core of the system: duality of training, regulated occupation, and cooperation between the state and social partners. Also it introduces a number of quality factors in the form of training and advanced training regulations, the monitoring of the quality of company-based training by competent bodies (usually chambers), the suitability of the training venue, and the aptitude of staff responsible for delivering training. The BBiG also established a Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training Research (BBF). In 1976 this body was renamed as the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) and received an expanded catalogue of tasks. BIBB is subject to legal and technical scrutiny by the BMBF and executes its remit within the scope of the education policy of the Federal Government. The responsibilities include contributing to VET by carrying out academic research and involvement in the preparation of training regulations and other legal ordinances. In addition to this, BIBB develops databases and conducts analyses for annual Reports on Vocational Education and Training. The Vocational Training Act was most recently modernized in 2019. The updated law entered into force on 1 January 2020 (GREINERT 2007; HERKNER 2009; METZLER/RAULAND/WERNER 2015; SCHMIDT 2010; 2014).

Around a quarter of trainees complete a full-time school-based training in their chosen occupation. This largely takes place at vocational schools. Healthcare, education, and social occupations clearly constitute a main focus of school-based training (ZÖLLER 2018).

Governance structure for the development of training standards (training regulations)

Company-based part of training	School-based part of training
<i>Federal level (national level)</i>	
<p><u>Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Supports the process from application discussions onwards ▶ Acts as the coordinating ministry for training regulations ▶ Lead management role for the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) 	<p><u>Federal states (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Federal Republic of Germany, KMK)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Deployment of the 'Federal Government/Federal States Coordination Committee' (KoA). The KoA has its basis in a Federal Government–federal states agreement of 30.05.1972 ▶ Consults on the initiatives put forward by social partners ▶ Responds to the drafts which have been prepared ▶ Appoints experts for the preparation of the skeleton curriculum
<p><u>Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Usually issues ordinances. A different ministry may issue ordinances depending on the area of responsibility (§ 4 SUBPARAGRAPH 1 BBiG) ▶ Supports the process from application discussions onwards ▶ Informs the federal states about concepts updates and includes them in the harmonization process (§ 4 SUBPARAGRAPH 5 BBiG) ▶ Lead management role for the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (HwO) 	

Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)

- ▶ 'President' body – project heads chair the process. They work on updating procedures in conjunction with coordinators and experts appointed by social partners (§ 90 SUBPARAGRAPH 3 CLAUSE 1 B BBIG)
- ▶ 'Board' body (§ 92 SUBPARAGRAPH 3 BBIG) – a committee consisting of eight representatives from employers, employees, and federal states and five representatives from the Federal Government (Federal Government also has eight votes)
- ▶ Responds to documents such as draft training regulations (§ 92 SUBPARAGRAPH 1 NO. 5 BBIG)

German Employers' Organization for Vocational and Further Training (KWB)

- ▶ Coordinates and represents the position of employers' associations and that of trade and industry associations
- ▶ Appoints policy coordinators and experts for the development of new training regulations

German Trade Unions Confederation (DGB)

- ▶ Coordinates and represents the position of trade unions
- ▶ Appoints policy coordinators and experts for the development of new training regulations

Federal state level

Federal states

- ▶ Ministers of education and cultural affairs enact the skeleton curricula which have been drawn up

Federal state committees – advise the respective federal state government (§§ 82, 83 BBIG)

Regional level

Competent authorities (usually chambers)

- ▶ Carry out intermediate and final examinations (§ 39 BBiG)
- ▶ Advise companies and trainees (§§ 76–79 BBiG)
- ▶ Scrutiny of the suitability of training venues and staff (§ 32 BBiG)

Local level

Companies providing training

Vocational schools

Sources: BMBF 2020¹⁴; BIBB 2017

14 Cf. https://www.bmbf.de/SharedDocs/Publikationen/de/bmbf/pdf/das-neue-berufsbildungsgesetz-bbig.pdf;jsessionid=8DCC68DBD68C25CFB27992067986B3D7.live092?__blob=publication-File&v=2 (Status: 18.09.2020).

There are currently 326 recognized training occupations (pursuant to § 90 SUBPARAGRAPH 3 NO. 3 BBIG). The responsible Federal Ministry, usually the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi), enacts training regulations for these recognized training occupations in agreement with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). These regulations contain minimum standards for the company-based element of training. Part-time vocational school teaching is imparted in parallel with company-based training. This lies within the area of responsibility of the federal states.

On 27 June 2008, the BIBB Board adopted a Recommendation ‘on quality assurance and quality management in regulatory procedures’.¹⁵

This recommendation states that the ‘procedural description’ regulates ‘the processes and quality assurance of the development of training regulations starting with the directive by the responsible Ministry and ending with the result being forwarded to the responsible Ministry and the Ministry of education for the final joint meeting. During this meeting, the Federation and the Länder coordinate their respective regulatory frameworks, respectively training regulations and framework curriculum. The process ends with a final version of both frameworks, formulated as a resolution of the Board and forwarded to the responsible ministry and the ministry of education for its enactment.’ (BIBB BOARD 2008, pp. 2ff; see also the description of the process below). (Source: BIBB 2017)

The procedure

- (1) A stakeholder from within the field of vocational education and training will usually seize the initiative for the development of a training standard (of a new occupational profile) on the basis of current developments/challenges of various types. Such an initiative may also emerge from responsible ministries.
- (2) At first, an initial discussion and coordination of this new development takes place internally, i.e. usually on the part of the employer or the employee side. Employer and employee representative bodies subsequently establish contact and agree on the so-called ‘benchmarks’ for the new development. BIBB may be commissioned to carry out an investigation if the basis of information is insufficient for reaching agreement.
- (3) These benchmarks are presented and debated in ‘application discussions’ with responsible ministries. The BMBF, the KMK, and BIBB are also present.
- (4) The application is then forwarded to the Federal Government/Federal States Coordination Committee for Training Regulations/Skeleton Curricula (KoA). If approval is forthcoming, responsible ministries act in conjunction with the Ministry of Education to send a ‘directive’ to BIBB for the development of relevant training regulations.
- (5) BIBB asks the KWB and the DGB to appoint experts who then work together with BIBB as part of a so-called ‘advisory council’ to process the new development. Each side will usually nominate three experts and one coordinator. Coordinators represent the interest of the respective social party.
- (6) The advisory council, which is chaired by BIBB, draws up the draft for the new development (training regulations).
- (7) At the same time as the training regulations are being developed, the experts from the federal states prepare a draft version of the skeleton curriculum to be used in vocational

15 BIBB Board ‘Recommendation of the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training on Quality Assurance and Quality Management in the Regulatory Procedures’: <https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/ha130.pdf> (Status: 11.02.2020).

school teaching. The coordination of these two documents in terms of content and scheduling takes place via joint participation in the meetings. This task is normally performed by the BIBB project leads and the chairs of the skeleton curriculum committees.

- (8) At the end of the development phase, the experts of the Federal Government and federal states hold a joint meeting for final consultation on the two drafts, which they harmonize with regard to time and contents.
- (9) The agreed draft training regulations are submitted to the BIBB Board for an official response. A positive response from the Board also constitutes a recommendation to the Federal Government that the training regulations should be enacted in the form submitted. Approval from the KoA is also obtained. The Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection concludes the process by carrying out a check to ensure that the correct legal form has been adopted.
- (10) Responsible ministries then enact the training regulations with the agreement of the BMBF and publish them in the Federal Law Gazette. The skeleton curriculum is usually either adopted directly by the individual federal states or implemented in the form of state-specific curricula for vocational schools.

4.1.2 Austria

Historical review

The roots of vocational education and training in Austria also stretch back to medieval times. The key events leading to the establishment of dual training took place between the end of the 19th and the start of the 20th century. The Industrial Code of 1859 abolished the guilds and introduced extensive freedom for the exercising of trades. In order to counter the consequent loss in the significance of craft trade organizations, the state attempted to support craft trade apprenticeships by offering additional school-based provision. The updated Industrial Law of 1897 introduced compulsory attendance at continuing education colleges and also governed the contents of apprenticeship contracts (including such aspects as wages). Further general conditions relating to dual vocational education and training were put in place during the First Republic (1918 to 1938). These improved the degree of protection afforded to apprentices via, for example, a 1919 ban on night work for young people, the stipulation of a 44-hour working week, and the creation of works councils. Chambers acting as lobbies for workers and salaried employees were set up in 1920. These labour chambers quickly turned their attention to vocational education and training. Apprentice protection centres were established the very next year in order to monitor a proper treatment of trainees (GRUBER 2008, pp. 43ff; TRAMPUSCH 2014, p. 172). Within this context and in comparison with Germany, Trampusch points out that in Austria 'collective wage agreement policy (was) less of a factor than state social policy in terms of ensuring inter-company regulation of the company-based part of training and apprenticeship wages in particular and also incorporated the trade unions at the same time'. However, unions also took part in the administration of schools as were involved in company-based training (TRAMPUSCH 2014, p. 174).

The Industrial Code remained the legal basis for the company-based element of apprenticeship training until the end of the 1960s. The Vocational Training Act (BAG) of 1969 set out new general conditions for dual VET. The BAG was last updated in 2015, and its underlying

principles still apply today. Apprentices have an employee status. The execution of the BAG was transferred to ‘apprenticeship offices’ which are operated by the federal state chambers of trade and industry. These receive support from advisory councils on vocational training, in which the employer and employee sides are equally represented (BLIEM/PETANOVITSCH/SCHMID 2016; GRUBER 2008, p. 45).

Full-time school-based vocational education and training has been gaining significance in Austria since the 1970s. It now accounts for a proportion which is almost as high as that of dual training. A fundamental distinction can be drawn between two forms of full-time school-based vocational education and training: ‘intermediate vocational schools’ that mostly provide three years training and ‘higher vocational schools’ offering five years programmes. The completion of training at the latter leads both to a vocational qualification and to an upper secondary school leaving certificate (‘Matura’) which confers an unrestricted higher education entrance qualification (EBNER/NOKOLAI 2010, pp. 618ff).

Governance structure for the development of training standards (training regulations)

Company-based part of training	School-based part of training
<i>Federal level (national level)</i>	
<p><u>Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lead management role for the Vocational Training Act (BAG) ▶ Pursuant to the BAG, the BMDW is responsible for the coordination and fostering of cooperation between the authorities and institutions charged with vocational education and training ▶ Enacts ordinances for the individual apprenticeship occupation ▶ The highest supervisory authority for the company-based part of training 	<p><u>Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lead management role for the School Organisation Act (SchOG) ▶ Enacts skeleton curricula for the vocational schools for each apprenticeship occupation
<u>Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training (B-BAB)</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Equal membership of social partners (the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Federal Chamber of Labour). Council members also include vocational school teachers ▶ Draws up assessments of new occupational profiles which form the basis for the development of training regulations and skeleton curricula for the vocational schools (§ 31 BAG) 	
<u>Austrian Institute for Training Research in Trade and Industry (ibw)</u>	
<p>The ibw is a research institute which has close ties with the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Its tasks include working on behalf of the BMDW to draw up proposals for new apprenticeship occupations together with experts</p>	

Federal state level	
<u>Apprenticeship offices of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tasks include checking the suitability of companies which wish to provide training ▶ Carry out final examinations (§ 19 BAG) ▶ <u>A state advisory council on vocational training</u> is established at each apprenticeship office. Social partners also make up the membership of this advisory body 	<u>Federal states</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The administration of vocational schools and specific design of the skeleton curricula are incumbent upon the federal states ▶ Pedagogical and technical supervision via the directorates of education
Local level	
Companies providing training	Vocational schools

Sources: WKÖ (Portal of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry) 2019; GUTKNECHT-GMEINER/TRITSCHER-ARCHAN 2016

There were 205 ‘apprenticeship occupations’ in Austria as of 1 August 2019.¹⁶ These are governed by ‘training regulations’. The duration of training is two, two and a half, three, three and a half, or four years, depending on the apprenticeship occupation. Training regulations contain a relevant occupational profile and the information on the structure and procedure of the final examination.

Various follow-up measures may be instigated once the new training regulations have been enacted. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry prepares ‘training documentation’ which provides a summary of the entire training content. If necessary, the ibw develops a ‘training guide’ with the aim to support company-based training staff in the structuring of learning processes.¹⁷

The procedure in Austria is characterized by its high degree of flexibility. Several variants exist alongside the conventional procedure presented below.¹⁸

The procedure

- (1) A stakeholder from the field of vocational education, usually social partners/companies, takes the initiative to create or update an apprenticeship occupation on the basis of current developments/new challenges of various types. It may also be the case that an association and a trade union within a particular sector take action jointly. The initiative may also emerge from the BMDW and the Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training (B-BAB).
- (2) The harmonization takes place within the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry if more than one sector is affected. The agreement also frequently occurs between the employer and the employee sides. The proposal is then submitted to the BMDW.
- (3) The BMDW will normally task the ibw with drawing up a competence profile in conjunction with occupational and branch experts. This ensures that the training regulations take applicable standards and formal requirements into account. In some cases external experts (e.g. from craft trade associations) are involved with regard to specific aspects of the respective occupations.

16 Cf. ibw: <https://lehrberufsliste.bic.at/> (Status: 17.12.2019).

17 Cf. WKÖ: https://www.wko.at/service/t/bildung-lehre/Ausbildungsplanung_und_Ausbildungsdokumentationen.html (Status: 15.10.2021).

18 Cf. WKÖ 2019.

- (4) The Chamber of Commerce and Industry balances the interests of the branches affected in the draft which has been prepared. The draft is then discussed with the employee side before being submitted to the BMDW. It is then forwarded to the Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training (B-BAB).
- (5) The B-BAB debates it and endeavours to provide a unanimous response since this is a prerequisite for any expectation that the BMDW will enact the new training regulations. The simplest scenario is that the council directly issues a positive response. This may be the case if the draft has already been the object of prior and detailed agreement between the employer and the employee sides. A committee is usually set up to work together with experts in order to revise the draft with regard to the differences between the employer and the employee sides. If no agreement is reached, the procedure will be discontinued at this point or else referred back to the initiators.
- (6) The BMDW is notified once the draft has been accepted by the B-BAB. The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) then works in conjunction with school specialists to draw up a corresponding skeleton curriculum for use at vocational schools. The draft training regulations are also forwarded to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection.
- (7) Both documents, the draft training regulations and the draft skeleton curriculum, are sent for evaluation to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, to the Chamber of Labour, to any ministries involved, and to any other stakeholders affected. All are afforded an opportunity to express their views within a stipulated deadline and to submit proposals for revisions.
- (8) The B-BAB evaluates the responses, revises the training regulations and skeleton curriculum where necessary, and presents these amended versions to the BMDW and the BMBWF.
- (9) The BMBWF and the BMBWF enact relevant ordinances.
- (10) Apprenticeship offices pass on the information to all companies providing training in order to publicize the new/modified apprenticeship occupations. Training guides are prepared by the Ministry of Economic Affairs or by lobbying groups of the companies (often in conjunction with employee representative bodies or VET research institutes) with the aim of enhancing the quality of company-based training. Vocational information centres inform young people about the new/modified apprenticeship occupation provision.

(Source: GUTKNECHT-GMEINER/TRITSCHER-ARCHAN 2016)

4.1.3 Switzerland

Historical review

The foundations of Swiss vocational education and training were established between the end of the 19th and the start of the 20th century. This took place against the background of the introduction of free enterprise across the entire country (1874) and of the socio-economic change taking place in the wake of industrialization. The craft trades sector entered a deep crisis as a result, and this also caused a continuous decline in apprenticeships. The first bodies to react were 'trade associations' which had been founded during the final decades of the 19th century in order to represent the interests of certain occupations or economic sectors. They began by drawing up 'apprentice regulations' to ensure 'proper and methodologically structured apprenticeships' (WETTSTEIN 2005, p. 5). One of the most prominent of these associations was the Swiss Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, an employer body established in 1879. It produced a proposal that led to a 1884 decision by the Confederation – Switzer-

land's central government – that institutions active in vocational education and training would receive financial support. The cantons, which at the time exercised autonomy in educational matters, started to enact apprentice laws from 1890 onwards, and this also constituted a further important development of VET in Switzerland. Alongside regulations relating to working and training conditions, these cantonal laws also contained elements which form some of the core basic principles of dual vocational education and training in Switzerland today. A written apprenticeship contract is mandatory. Apprentices must also attend vocational school during working hours and complete a final examination (BONOLI/NOTTER 2016; BONOLI 2017; WETTSTEIN 2005).

Nevertheless, there were major differences in sectors and regions. The Confederation, the cantons, the employer associations, and the trade unions thus agreed to adopt national legislation. The Vocational Training Act of 1930 included such aspects as the definition of the tasks to be performed by different vocational education and training stakeholders. The Confederation was assigned the task of the coordination and overall supervision of the system. The cantons became responsible for the implementation of the law at regional level, and the trade associations were charged with the remit of defining training contents and organizing apprenticeships. This division of labour essentially remains valid up to the present day.

Article 1 of the current Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (VPETA), which was passed at the end of 2002 and now also encompasses healthcare and the social services sector, stipulates that vocational education and training is a 'shared responsibility between the Confederation, the cantons and the professional organisations (social partners, trade associations as well as other organisations and education and training providers within the VPET system)'. According to Gonon, the new VPETA thus 'further strengthens the competence exercised by the public sector'. The law now also stipulates that the Confederation and the cantons should be involved 'from the outset' in the development of new training ordinances (GONON 2017 a).

The cooperation that takes place between these three partners is referred to as 'collaborative partnership'. A 'Charter' published in 2016 describes the basic principles underlying this cooperation and emphasizes the collaborative attitude and spirit of partnership adopted by all stakeholders involved (GONON 2017 b; BONOLI/NOTTER 2016).

Vocational education and training may be organized in a company-based or school-based form. Both forms lead to the same qualifications. The company-based form of organization is predominant. Vocational education and training takes place at companies, at vocational schools, and via inter-company courses. Only ten percent of young people acquire their qualifications via school-based vocational education and training (WETTSTEIN/SCHMID/GONON 2014, p. 32).

Governance structure for the development of training standards (training ordinances)

Company-based part of training	School-based part of training
Federal level (national level)	
<p><u>The Confederation represented by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SBFI)</u> The SBFI is directly subordinate to the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Innovation. The SBFI</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ enacts training ordinances and training plans. The latter show the contents and venues of training (Article 19 VPETA) ▶ supports the process ▶ maintains an electronic Register of Occupations 	
<p><u>The cantons</u></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ support the entire development and modernization process. They are represented at a national level by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) and by its sub-committee, the Swiss Conference of Vocational Education and Training Offices (SBBK) ▶ Both of these institutions are responsible for inter-cantonal coordination 	
<p><u>Professional organizations (OdA)</u></p>	
<p>This term was introduced into the Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act at the end of 2002 (Article 1 Paragraph 1 VPETA). According to Article 1, professional organizations encompass 'social partners, trade associations, other responsible organisations and education and training providers within the VPET system'¹⁹</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In its capacity of the sponsor of an occupation, a professional organization acts as the project lead for development and modernization procedures ▶ They define training contents (training programmes for the company providing training, vocational schools, and inter-company courses) and national qualification procedures (final examinations) ▶ They organize inter-company courses 	
<p><u>Commission for Occupational Development and Quality (B&Q Commission), on the basis of Article 54 VPETA</u></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All three collaborative partners (the Confederation, cantons, and professional organizations) work together in these commissions. The canton representation also includes schools and teaching staff ▶ The central task of the commissions is to undertake a periodic scrutiny of the aims and requirements of vocational education and training. This monitoring takes place at least once every five years ▶ The commission issues training programmes for companies providing training, curricula for vocational schools, training programmes for inter-company courses, and provisions relating to the execution of qualifications procedures²⁰ 	
<p><u>Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET)</u></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provides professional organizations with pedagogical support throughout the revision and development process, draws up the 'training programme for companies providing training', the 'training programme for the inter-company courses', school curricula, and 'provisions relating to the execution of qualifications procedures' ▶ Trains VET teachers and trainers in new developments at all venues 	

19 SBFI 2019a, p. 1. See also THE VOCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACT (VPETA): <https://www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/20001860/201901010000/412.10.pdf> (Status: 11.02.2020). A communication by the SBFI on the professional organizations states: 'When further development of vocational education and training takes place, there is involvement from both the sponsoring organization and from the employer associations on the Commissions for Occupational Development and Quality.' SBFI 2019b.

20 SBFI 2017, p. 8.

Cantonal level

Cantons

- ▶ Supervise vocational education and training – teacher contracts and vocational schools (Articles 22, 24 VPETA)
- ▶ Issue authorisations for companies providing training
- ▶ Implements the qualification process (Article 24 Paragraph 3C VPETA)
- ▶ Ensures the training of training staff (Article 45 Paragraph 4 VPETA)

Local level

Companies providing training	Inter-company courses	Schools
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Sources: SBFI 2019a, b; SBFI 2017; WETTSTEIN/SCHMID/GONON 2014; BONOLI/NOTTER 2016; BLIEM/PETANOVITSCH/SCHMID 2013; BCH|FPS BERUFSBILDUNG SCHWEIZ 2011²¹

Vocational education and training at the upper secondary level in Switzerland is referred to as ‘berufliche Grundbildung’.²² A vocational education and training ordinance – also called a ‘training ordinance’ – sets out the ‘employability skills’ which apprentices need to possess in order to exercise an occupation. There is a ‘training ordinance’ and a ‘training plan’ for each occupation. The latter includes training contents and supports training managers at all three venues – the company, the vocational school, and inter-company courses.²³ There are currently 239 training occupations in Switzerland.

The SBFI has issued a handbook *Process of occupational development in vocational education and training* in order to assist with the preparation of training ordinances. According to the SBFI, it represents a ‘tool’ which aims to provide ‘indications on the essential aspects of occupational development and information on processes, templates and further documents’. The handbook is designed in such a way as to render it ‘periodically adaptable to the status of developments’ (SBFI 2017, p. iii). (Sources: SBFI 2017, 2019; BCH|FPS BERUFSBILDUNG SCHWEIZ 2011)

The procedure

- (1) The initiative is taken by the ‘responsible body’ (Trägerschaft; usually a trade association/sector organization),²⁴ usually based on an application from the Commission for Occupational Development and Quality (B&Q Commission). This commission has the task of undertaking a periodic scrutiny of the aims and requirements of vocational education and training, at least once every five years.
- (2) The responsible body prepares an analysis (including the proposed duration of vocational education and training, requirements of the labour market, the supply of apprenticeship places). This may also be performed within the scope of the ‘five-year monitoring’.

21 BCH|FPS BERUFSBILDUNG SCHWEIZ 2011: <https://www.bch-fps.ch/aktivitaten/berufe-verordnungen/reformprozess/> (Status: 24.09.2019)

22 Two-year vocational education and training leads to a ‘Federal VET Certificate’. After the completion of three-year or four-year vocational education and training, a ‘Federal VET Diploma’ (EFZ) may be acquired. The Federal Vocational Baccalaureate supplements vocational education and training at the EFZ level by providing extended general education. A Federal Vocational Baccalaureate Certificate represents an entrance qualification to the first level of higher education (bachelor’s) at the universities of applied sciences (SBFI 2017, p. 6).

23 The inter-company courses ‘provide additional practically oriented and school-based training insofar as this is required for the occupational activity in which training is taking place’ (SBFI 2017, p. 5).

24 The ‘responsible body is the “professional organization responsible for the vocational education and training’ (SBFI 2017, p. ii).

- (3) The responsible body organizes a plenary meeting with all collaborative partners and manages the project. The steering groups (usually the B&Q Commission) has the representation from the SBFI, professional organizations, the cantons (SBBK), specialist teaching staff, and other experts as required. The SBFI greenlights the continuation of the development work.
- (4) Firstly, workshops are held with experts in order to draw up a ‘qualification profile’. The main focus here is on analysing what employability skills are needed. The qualification profile is checked by the SBFI, and the B&Q Commission authorizes further work to take place. These activities are usually carried out together with SFIVET, which provides pedagogical support.
- (5) The next stages are the development of the ‘training ordinance’ with the assistance of SFIVET and drawing up of the ‘training plan’ under the lead management of the B&Q Commission. The training ordinance includes such legally defining elements as the occupational profile, duration of training, training plan, and the qualification procedure (final examination). The training plan determines the training contents which must be imparted at three learning venues – the company providing training, the vocational school, and the inter-company courses. The responsible body is responsible for drawing up the training plan, whilst the SBFI prepares the training ordinance.
- (6) The responsible body then forwards the drafts of the training ordinance and the training plan to the respective relevant stakeholders within the occupational field so that consultations can take place. Possible amendments are incorporated by the steering group (normally the B&Q Commission). A ‘language consistency test’ is conducted by the SBFI at the same time.
- (7) The SBFI then carries out consultations with the cantons. Documents are amended if necessary.
- (8) The responsible body submits an application for the training ordinance to be enacted. The SBFI enacts the ordinance and approves the training plan. The training ordinance is published in the Official Compilation of Federal Legislation.
- (9) The responsible body and the cantons prepare the so-called implementation documents with the support of SFIVET. These comprise the training programme for the companies providing training, the curriculum for vocational schools, the training programme for inter-company courses, and the provisions relating to the execution of qualifications procedures. The B&Q Commission provides an official response.
- (10) The B&Q Commission scrutinizes the development of the occupations. Its remit is to monitor the training ordinance and the training plan on an ongoing basis, and at least once every five years, in respect of economic, technological, ecological, and didactic developments.

(Sources: SBFI 2017, 2019; BONOLI/NOTTER 2016; RAUNER 2009; ZELLWEGER 2013)

4.1.4 Denmark

Historical review

Denmark is similar to Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in that the most important phases of the country’s vocational education and training system occurred in the second half of the 19th century and in the 20th century.

An early and critical period was initiated in 1857 when free enterprise was introduced and guilds were abolished. The former representatives of these corporations subsequently organized into trade associations, and their activities centred on such aspects as passing on occupation-specific knowledge. The first evening schools were formed in cooperation with regional Sunday schools. The Apprenticeship Act of 1889 ushered in a second phase. For the first time since guilds had been dissolved, training conditions for apprentices once again became nationally regulated to some degree. Training contracts concluded between master craftsmen and apprentices were brought back into use. The Apprenticeship Act of 1921 went on to stipulate that persons aged under 18 could only be employed as apprentices in industry and in craft trades. It further set out that companies providing training needed to have at least one professionally suitable person in possession of a master craftsman or journeyman qualification. The company offering training was also required to ensure that apprentices attended school regularly and that their fees were paid. The establishment of technical councils to advise the Ministry of Education was another recommendation. The first local advisory boards for technical schools came into being during this period. Some of these had trade union representation. The Apprenticeship Act of 1937 made these boards mandatory (and they also began to participate in the design of examinations). Compulsory attendance at vocational schools was introduced. The 1956 Apprenticeship Act strengthened the role of technical councils further, and they also started to participate in the regulation of curricular issues from this point (BUSKE/CORT/GROLLMANN 2009, pp. 85 ff; EBNER 2013, pp. 75ff). The Danish VET system has undergone considerable decentralization and modularization since the beginning of the 2000s. This enables colleges to adapt their vocational training programmes to the respective needs in a more effective way.

Vocational education and training comprises two stages. An orientation phase of initial vocational education and training is followed by the main period of training. The initial vocational education and training is usually completed at a vocational school. Depending on the performance level and the occupational field, the duration of the initial vocational education and training may be twenty, forty, or sixty weeks. Most of the main period of training takes place at the company. In order to be able to commence the main training, young people need to conclude a training contract with a company that is recognized by social partners as a training provider. The college is required to find a training place (EMMENEGGER/SEITZL 2019; GROLLMANN/GOTTLIEB/KURZ 2003; BQ PORTAL DENMARK;²⁵ LAMSCHECK-NIELSEN 2016).

The possibility of beginning a full-time school-based training in Denmark only exists if young people have been unable to conclude a training contract with a company. Even while the full-time school-based training is ongoing, young people are still required to keep looking for a company to provide training. The proportion of full-time school-based training in Denmark is low (EBNER 2013, p. 65, Note 44).

Vocational education and training in Denmark is characterized by the endeavours undertaken by various interest groups, especially by social partners, to achieve consensus. (BUSKE/CORT/GROLLMANN 2009, p. 18). According to Lamscheck-Nielsen, it thus represents an expression of the 'Danish model' (LAMSCHECK-NIELSEN 2016, p. 3) which has existed since the turn of the 20th century, especially in the area of regulation under employment law, and which is 'largely subject to autonomous structuring by the social partners' (LEIBER 2003, p. 7).

25 <https://www.bq-portal.de/db/l/%c3%a4nder-und-berufsprofile/daenemark> (Status: 01.10.2019).

Governance structure for the development of training standards (training regulations/Uddannelsesordning)

Company-based part of training	School-based part of training
Federal level (national level)	
<u>Ministry of Children and Education</u>	
The tasks of the ministry include the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The approval of new and the modernization of existing vocational education and training programmes (§ 4 Vocational Training Act) ▶ The recognition and certification of qualifications ▶ The determination of qualification requirements ▶ The ministry is also responsible for vocational schools 	
<u>National trade committees (de faglige udvalg)</u>	
A national trade committee exists for each VET programme	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The committees have equal representation of social partners ▶ They initiate the renewal of training programmes (training regulations) ▶ They identify the need for new or modified training programmes and are responsible for the structuring of these ▶ They formulate the curricula (Article 5 § 38, Vocational Training Act) ▶ They issue authorization for the companies providing training 	
<u>Advisory Council for Initial Vocational Education and Training (Rådet for de Grundlæggende Erhvervsrettede Uddannelser, REU)</u>	
The Council comprises ten members from employer associations and trade unions, one representative from each of the regions, one representative from local government bodies, two delegates from learner organizations, and representatives of vocational schools and teaching staff (§ 34 Vocational Training Act). Its functions are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Advise the Ministry of Children and Education on all matters related to the vocational education and training system ▶ Recommend the establishment of the new VET courses and the abolition of the old programmes ▶ Monitor developments on the labour market (§ 35 Vocational Training Act) 	
Local level	
<u>Local training committees (de lokale uddannelsesudvalg)</u>	
Pursuant to §§ 39, 40, 41 of the Vocational Training Act, colleges are required to establish one or more training committees. The committees have equal representation from employers and employees	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ They act as advisory bodies for colleges in order to foster cooperation between colleges and the local labour market ▶ They are responsible for the specific implementation of the training regulations 	
Companies providing training	Vocational schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Employer and employee organizations are also members of school boards ▶ The board takes the recommendations of the principal into account in deciding what training provision the school will offer

There are currently 107 training regulations with further specializations in Denmark. The development of regulations is characterized by the flexible procedure and by the decentralized specification of training which takes account of local general conditions. At a national level, only the so-called 'guidelines' are drawn up. They include school subjects taught, learning objectives of a company-based training, the required level for transition to the main training, and examination requirements (LAMSCHECK-NIELSEN 2016, p. 18).

The procedure

- (1) Impetuses for the development or modernization of training regulations may emanate from national trade committees (*de faglige udvalg*), from companies, from the Ministry of Children and Education, and from vocational schools themselves.
- (2) This is followed by discussion and agreement between social partners and a relevant national trade committee. Employers and employees have equal representation on these committees.
- (3) If only a 'minor change'²⁶ affecting a company-based training is involved and if social partners are in agreement regarding the matter, then the initiative will be directly included in the annual Monitoring Report for the Ministry of Children and Education (*Udviklingsredøgørelse*). All national trade committees are required to submit such a report to the Ministry each year (§ 38 PARAGRAPH 5 VOCATIONAL TRAINING ACT).
- (4) In this case the Ministry consents to the desired changes, and they are then included and published in the 'Catalogue of Laws, Ordinances and Training Regulations'. The changes enter into force one year later.
- (5) If, on the other hand, a major change is involved,²⁷ experts from the committees will work in conjunction with 'consultants' from the Ministry of Children and Education to draw up guidelines for new training regulations (the consultants are usually the experts from vocational schools). The guidelines cover school subjects taught, learning objectives of the company-based training, the required level for transition to the main training, and examination requirements.
- (6) The Advisory Council for Initial Vocational Education and Training (*Rådet for de Grundlæggende Erhvervsrettede Uddannelser*) is incorporated into the process if the major change forms part of the categories stated in § 35 of the Vocational Training Act, such as provisions relating to vocational education and training in general (Paragraph 1), the establishment or abolition of VET programmes (Paragraph 2), or the organization of initial vocational education and training (Paragraph 9).
- (7) A major change is deemed to have been accepted if all groups participating in the updating procedure reach a consensus or if the Advisory Council for Initial Vocational Education and Training gives its approval in instances where it is mandatorily involved.
- (8) The change is then published in the 'Catalogue of Laws, Ordinances and Training Regulations'. It enters into force one year later.
- (9) The guidelines are subsequently specifically formulated for company-based and school-based training under the lead management of vocational schools via local training committees (*de lokale uddannelsesudvalg*), which have equal representation.

26 Cf. LAMSCHECK-NIELSEN 2016; own notes made at the BIBB International Conference in Siegburg on 3 April 2019.

27 As Note 26.

4.1.5 Portugal

Historical review

Vocational education and training in Portugal has undergone fundamental changes over the past four to five decades. An initial turning point occurred in 1974, when the military dictatorship came to an end. Vocational education and training was almost entirely abolished in the wake of the so-called Carnation Revolution. It had been largely directed at young people from disadvantaged families and was therefore viewed as a synonym for social inequality. Existing vocational schools were either closed or else converted into general schools. The aim was to provide all groups in society with access to higher education. Nevertheless, these measures achieved no success. The level of education and training of the population remained low, and there was an urgent need for skilled workers. This led to a rethink in the 1980s when vocational education was re-established in several stages. This second turning point was followed by a further fundamental change in the form of the introduction of the National Qualifications System (*Sistema Nacional de Qualificações, SQN*) in 2007.²⁸ This reform, which is still in force today, created a uniform institutional framework for various education and training pathways which had not thus far been integrated. The reform also strengthened the role of social partners in vocational education and training, especially with regard to the development of new skills profiles.

Two ministries are responsible for vocational education and training: the Ministry of Education (primary and secondary school sectors) and the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security (apprentice training, continuing training). The National Agency for Qualifications in Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP) and the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) are both further major stakeholders.

The ANQEP was founded in 2007, and one of its tasks is to administer the National Qualifications Catalogue (CNQ). The CNQ encompasses qualifications which are not acquired via a higher education degree. All qualifications registered in the catalogue lead to a dual qualification for young people – a vocational qualification and a higher education entrance qualification. This double certification is of particular significance to the acceptance of vocational education and training in Portugal because equal access to education was a central outcome of the revolution of 1974. The qualifications have a modular structure. The fact that individual modules are certifiable makes the Portuguese VET system flexible in many ways. It makes it easier for pupils to switch between various education and training programmes, and adults are able to update their skills by acquiring partial qualifications. The system also facilitates the recognition, validation, and certification of non-formal and informal competencies. Within the scope of the ‘New Opportunities’ national project, employees who have many years of occupational experience are thus able to obtain certification for the know-how they have acquired without needing to undertake relevant training.

The IEFP was established in 1979. It manages 29 VET centres directly and administers 23 further qualifications-focused centres in relevant sectors together with social partners.

The ANQEP and the IEFP are responsible for two most important vocationally oriented training programmes. *Cursos Profissionais* are pursued by a proportion of approximately 29.1 percent of young people at the upper secondary level (these fall within the remit of the ANQEP and the Ministry of Education). About 5.4 percent follow *Cursos de Aprendizagem*²⁹ (for which the IEFP and the Ministry of Labour are responsible). The main difference between

28 Cf. Legislative Decree No. 396/2007, 31 December 2007.

29 PORDATA 2018: <https://www.pordata.pt/portugal/alunos+matriculados+no+ensino+secundário+total+e+por+modalidade+de+ensino-1042> (Status: 14.09.2021).

these two programmes is the amount of company-based learning which takes place. Company placements of around twelve weeks (about ten percent of the programme) are stipulated for the *Cursos Profissionais*. By way of contrast, the proportion of company-based learning for *Cursos de Aprendizagem* is about 40 percent.

Social partners are represented in various organs within the sector of vocational education and training. The Economic and Social Council is a constitutional body for which social partners normally exercise a consultancy function. They are also involved in the boards and monitoring committees of organs which are responsible for the implementation and supervision of measures within the scope of the VET system. They have further representation in the boards of the ANQEP and the IEFP and in the advisory councils of vocational education and training centres. Several centres are managed by social partners themselves together with the IEFP.

The introduction of the so-called Sectoral Councils for Qualifications (CSQ) in 2009 further strengthened the influence exercised by social partners in vocational education and training. The 18 Sectoral Councils (which include Agriculture and the Food Industry, Artisan Craftwork and Jewellery, Construction and Urban Planning, Energy and the Environment, Information technology, Electronics and Telecommunications, Wood, Furniture and Cork, Metalworking and Tourism and Leisure) support the ANQEP in the development of qualification profiles.

(Sources: COSTA ARTUR 2016; FLAKE 2015; CEDEFOP 2016, 2018; OLIVEIRA/SOUSA/FINO NOGEIRA 2017; SOUSA/FINO NOGEIRA (no year stated))

Governance structure for the development of training standards (standards de qualificação)

Company-based part of training	School-based part of training
National level	
<u>Ministry of Education</u> (<i>Ministério da Educação, ME</i>)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Is responsible for the primary and secondary school sector. The ministry is also responsible for the vocationally oriented education and training programme with the highest proportion of young people at the upper secondary level, the <i>Cursos Profissionais</i> ▶ the areas of science, technology, and higher education were transferred to an independent department in 2015 (<i>Ministério da Ciência, Tecnologia e Ensino Superior</i>) 	
<u>Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security</u> (<i>Ministério do Trabalho, Solidariedade e Segurança Social, MTSSS</i>)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Takes charge of tasks in the areas of vocational education and training and company-based apprenticeships (<i>Cursos de Aprendizagem</i>) via its Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) 	
<u>National Agency for Qualifications in Vocational Education and Training</u> (<i>Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional, ANQEP</i>)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This agency assumes a coordinating role and a bridging function. This is also revealed by the fact that it lies within the area of responsibility of the two ministries, ME and MTSSS ▶ It is responsible for the National Qualifications Catalogue (<i>Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações, CNQ</i>) ▶ It administers RVCC provision (<i>Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Competências</i>) for the recognition, validation, and certification of non-formal and informal competencies 	

National Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (*Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional, IEFP*)

- ▶ This institute forms part of the remit of the MTSSS. It is responsible for the implementation of the labour market policy measures
- ▶ It manages twenty-nine VET centres directly and administers twenty-three further qualifications-focused centres in relevant sectors together with social partners
- ▶ It is responsible for the second most important vocationally oriented education programme, the *Cursos de Aprendizagem*

The 18 Sectoral Councils for Qualifications (*Conselhos Setoriais para a Qualificação, CSQ*)

- ▶ Were established by the ANQEP in 2009 by Decree No. 396/2007
- ▶ Comprise working groups, the members of which represent ministries, the ANQEP, the IEFP, social partners, companies, schools, training providers, and experts
- ▶ The task of the Sectoral Councils is to identify areas within the National Qualifications Catalogue (CNQ) which require updating and to support the ANQEP in drawing up new qualifications profiles

Regional level

Network of IEFP centres

A network of VET centres, of which several have established branches in some of the country's 18 districts, including CENFIM (metal), CECOA (retail), CENFIC (construction), and MODATEX (fashion and clothing)

Local level

Companies providing training

Vocational schools

Sources: ANQEP³⁰; COSTA ARTUR 2016; FLAKE 2015

The Qualifications Catalogue covers 41 areas of education and training and currently contains 310 qualifications.³¹ Alongside the CSQ procedure, which will be described below, the Portuguese vocational education and training system provides for an 'open consultation model'. The aim here is to facilitate the broadest possible degree of participation by all relevant groups in vocational education and training. Any company or organization (for instance, vocational education and training centres) is able to seize the initiative and submit proposals for the updating of the catalogue. Such proposals are disseminated via the website of the ANQEP and integrated into a relevant profile. Sectoral Councils are not involved in this case. Nevertheless, a very little use is made of the open consultation model.

The Portuguese government introduced the System for the Early Recognition of Training Needs (SANG) in 2015 in order to support stakeholders. This falls within the remit of the ANQEP.³² The SANG is coordinated via a council in which the ANQEP, the IEFP, and employer and employee organizations are all represented. One major goal of the SANG is to collate information with the aim of helping to make decisions on the relevance of qualifications. The SANG issues annual recommendations for this purpose.

The procedure

- (1) A member of a Sectoral Council usually takes the initiative. The members include employer and employee organizations, ministries, the ANQEP, the IEFP, vocational schools, training providers, and experts. The actual composition varies across the sixteen Sectoral Councils.
- (2) The initiator submits a proposal to the ANQEP.

30 <http://www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/home/csq> (Status: 09.10.2020).

31 CEDEFOP 2018, p. 39.

32 Cf. Decree No. 82 A/2014, 31 December 2014.

- (3) The ANQEP conducts an analysis and calls upon the initiator to furnish evidence in the form of information related to the labour market and training.
- (4) The ANQEP subsequently organizes a meeting of the Sectoral Council affected where the proposal is presented and debated.
- (5) If the proposal is approved, the initiator develops a new qualifications profile and the curriculum with the support of the ANQEP. Experts from companies, trainers, and teaching staff participate in this process.
- (6) The Sectoral Council is notified of the result of the partial updating if only a minor change is involved. The outcome is then published in the National Qualifications Catalogue for which the ANQEP is responsible.
- (7) If there is to be a fundamental change or a new qualification, the Sectoral Council convenes once more to consult on the result of the new development. The update is published in the National Qualifications Catalogue if the Council gives its consent.
- (8) Every qualification recorded in the catalogue comprises learning objectives and competencies required for the dual qualification. The training content is divided into modules. The aims here are to enhance transparency between various forms of training and to allow adults to obtain certified partial qualifications via this route.

(Source: COSTA ARTUR 2016³³)

4.1.6 Slovakia

Historical review

The reform of the legal foundations underlying the educational policy in Slovakia began immediately after the political restructuring of 1989 and before the country gained full independence on 1 January 1993. The first step was to remove Marxist–Leninist teachings from all curricula. The democratic and pluralist character of the education system was proclaimed in 1990, and the establishment of private or church-run schools was facilitated. A process of democratization was instigated in schools during the same year. This was followed by further updates, although these did not include any fundamental changes (KOPP 1997; KOSOVÁ/PORUBSKÝ 2017).

The major reform was ushered in by the Vocational Training Act of 2008. Various vocational schools offering training of a duration of two, three, four, or five years were consolidated under the name of *Stredné odborné školy* (SOŠ), and a designation of the respective profile of the school was added in each case (e.g. Vocational School for Cosmetics).³⁴ The curricular development was decentralized. Schools developed their own training programmes on the basis of ‘state education programmes’ containing framework stipulations regarding the content and scope. These comprise theoretical and practical parts which vary according to specialism.

The aim of the 2009 act was to achieve better harmonization between the VET system and skills requirements in trade and industry. A national vocational education and training committee (Government Council) was established at the national level for this purpose. The bod-

33 Supplemented by our own notes made at the BIBB International Conference in Siegburg on 3 April 2019. See also Note 10.

34 According to Kopp, full-time vocational schools in Slovakia enjoy a “high degree of esteem’ (as is also the case in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland). His view is that this differentiates the states of Central Europe from many countries in the West, South, and North of Europe where ‘full-time vocational schools are seen as being second choice behind upper secondary schools, and the apprenticeship system is perceived as being third choice’ (KOPP 1997, p. 10).

ies represented include the Ministries of Education, Labour, Economics and Agriculture, the self-autonomous regions, the professional organizations (chambers), the professional bodies (employer/trade associations), and trade unions. The role of this committee is to advise the Ministry of Education. District Councils were deployed at a regional level to advise the country's eight semi-autonomous regions.

In 2015, a dual system was introduced to supplement the school-based VET model. The new Vocational Training Act allows dual training programmes in various occupations for the first time. The dual training features a practical component of 60 percent and leads to a double certification (a vocational qualification and an upper secondary school leaving certificate). Companies select their trainees and conclude a learning agreement with them. An agreement is also concluded with the vocational school (SOŠ). This sets out the areas within which training will take place and sets out provisions for organizational issues related to 'practical teaching'. The learners have the status of a pupil.

According to the business magazine *TREND*, the dual system has integrated about 6,000 trainees and around 1,000 companies in the five school years since 2015. The aim of the Slovakian government is to increase the number of trainees to 12,000 by the end of 2020 (CSEPE-BANNERT 2016; PETANOVITSCH/SCHMID/BLIEM 2013; BMWi 2019; MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION ET DE LA JEUNESSE 2018; GTAI 2019).

Governance structure for the development of vocational curricula (state education and training programmes/ vzdelávacie programy)

Company-based part of training	School-based part of training
National level	
<u>Ministry of Schools, Science, Research and Sport</u> (Ministry of Education)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Directs and administers the school system ▶ Is responsible for the regulation of vocational education and training. The semi-autonomous regions and the professional organizations and bodies (§ 30 Subparagraph 1a Vocational Training Act of 2015) are also involved in these processes ▶ Issues state education programmes in conjunction with professional and vocational organizations (§ 30 Subparagraph 1c) ▶ Works with the Ministry of Labour, the semi-autonomous regions, and the professional organizations and bodies to draw up an index of study programmes and teaching subjects (§ 30 Subparagraph 2) ▶ Supervises the State Institute for Vocational Training (SIOV) and the State Pedagogical Institute (SPU) (The respective specialist ministry is responsible for some occupations. The Ministry of Health, for example, takes charge of healthcare professions, (§ 31 Subparagraph 2)) 	
<u>National Government Council</u> (<i>Rada Vlady</i>)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The Ministries of Education, Labour, Economics and Agriculture, the semi-autonomous regions, the professional organizations (chambers), the professional bodies (employer/trade associations), and trade unions are all represented in the Council. The National Government Council advises the government on matters related to vocational education and training (§§ 29, 35). All eighteen working groups covering selected occupational fields dedicate themselves to the task of better adjusting education and training programmes to the requirements of the labour market 	
<u>State Institute for Vocational Training (SIOV)</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Is responsible for the development of state education and training programmes. SIOV experts, teaching staff, and practitioners are all involved ▶ Provides support for the development of school vocational curriculum 	

State Pedagogical Institute (SPU)

- ▶ Assists with curriculum development for general subjects at vocational schools

Professional organizations and professional bodies

- ▶ Check the 'suitability' of companies providing training to deliver 'practical teaching' (§§ 14, 33 Subparagraph 3a).
- ▶ Draw up skeleton curricula in cooperation with the Ministry of Education (§ 33 Subparagraph 3e)

Regional levelSemi-autonomous regions (the total of eight)

- ▶ Providers of vocational schools
- ▶ Develop VET strategies in conjunction with respective vocational education and training committees (District Councils)

Regional District Councils

- ▶ Representation in the District Councils includes professional organizations (chambers), professional bodies (employer/trade associations), and trade unions. They advise the semi-autonomous regions on matters related to vocational education and training

Local levelCompanies providing training

- ▶ Conclude a contract with trainees
- ▶ Conclude an agreement with the vocational school

Vocational schools

- ▶ Develop their own education and training programme which is based on the state education and training programme

Vocational curricula have been developed in a decentralized manner since 2008. Since this date, the stipulation has also been that both the national framework for state education and training programmes and the programmes which are developed autonomously on this basis need to be agreed upon with professional and employer associations prior to entry into force.

There are 28 specialist groups in which vocational education and training can be completed. Dual training is possible in 17 of these. The same curricula have been deployed for vocational schools and for dual VET since the 2018/2019 school year.

The procedure

- (1) The initiative for a new training programme usually comes from the employer. It may, however, also emerge from the vocational school.
- (2) The initiators submit an application to the Ministry of Education. This proposal should be supported by the semi-autonomous region affected (which maintains vocational schools) and should also be discussed with regional/local employer associations and sector representatives.
- (3) A new training programme is then drawn up together with experts from the SIOV. Vocational schools, chambers, and employer organizations are all involved in this process. Trade unions may also participate in the procedure. The draft of the new training programme contains the following framework stipulations:
 - ▶ The necessary core skills and occupational competencies
 - ▶ The thematic areas of training
 - ▶ An implementation schedule
 - ▶ The necessary financial and human resources.

- (4) The proposal is then presented to the working group in the National Government Council. The proposal is approved by the Ministry if it is recommended by the Council.
- (5) The SIOV subsequently recommends piloting the new training programme at least at three vocational schools. The initiators suggest the pilot phase partners to the ministry.
- (6) The Ministry of Education arranges for the piloting. Evaluation and monitoring take place via the SIOV and the SPU.
- (7) The initiators submit the final version of the training programme to the Ministry. A final recommendation by the SIOV and independent experts also forms part of this process. The training programme is included in national provision if the recommendation is positive.
- (8) Every vocational school is now able to offer this training programme. Schools develop more specific training programmes adjusted to regional needs on the basis of the state framework stipulations. Representatives of professional and employer associations are involved.

(Sources: CSEPE-BANNERT 2016; CEDEFOP 2016,³⁵ CEDEFOP 2018;³⁶ CEDEFOP 2019;³⁷ BMWi 2019; MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION ET DE LA JEUNESSE 2018)

4.2 Cooperation model for the development of national training standards

A second main focus of the research project was the question regarding the core of cooperation between stakeholders in the development of national training standards in the dual model countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Denmark), which is largely categorized as being successful by the fields of VET policy, research, and practice.³⁸ The main emphasis was therefore placed on the following issue: which factors foster cooperation between stakeholder groups in this central action area of vocational education and training?

The comparison of governance structures, process descriptions in four dual model countries, and analysis of expert interviews³⁹ enabled the identification of six factors which expressly favour and support cooperation between stakeholders in the development of training standards. Because these factors are not equally pronounced in all four countries, the project developed a model in which six characteristics are identified. A further aim of drawing up the 'Cooperation model for the development of national training standards' was to contribute to the further development of the governance approach.

- (1) *Rights for cooperation.* This first feature is fundamental to cooperation between the state and social partners. The involvement of social partners is formally specified in all four countries with codified laws relating to vocational education and training.⁴⁰ The parti-

35 Cf. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/slovakia-vet-europe-country-report-2016> (Status: 19.12.2019).

36 Cf. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/fr/publications-and-resources/country-reports/vocational-education-and-training-europe-slovakia-2018> (Status: 19.12.2019).

37 Cf. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/de/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/slovakia> (Status: 19.12.2019).

38 One example is the general evaluation by the participants at the BIBB International Conference in Siegburg on 3–4 April 2019. Cf. <https://www.bibb.de/de/95478.php> (Status: 17.07.2019).

39 Interviews were conducted with four experts from Germany (referred to as DE 1, DE 2, DE 3, DE 4), four from Austria (referred to as AT 1, AT 2, AT 3, AT 4), four from Switzerland (referred to as CH 1, CH 2, CH 3, CH 4) and four experts from Denmark (referred to as DK 1, DK 2, DK 3, DK 4').

40 In Germany, § 92 Subparagraph 1 BBiG states that the BIBB Board, on which employer associations and trade unions are represented by law, must be consulted on draft training regulations that are drawn up by BIBB. – In Austria, § 31 Subparagraph 3 BAG (Vocational Training Act) makes the fol-

icipation of employer and employee organizations enables the design of occupations to be informed by the necessary know-how from practice. However, the co-involvement of stakeholder groups is identifiable in different forms in the four countries. An equal representation of social partners plays a central role in Denmark, Germany, and Austria, for example. By way of contrast, this issue is of secondary importance in Switzerland.

- (2) *A procedure which is organized by the state and social partners jointly.* The procedure may be supported by written documents (such as the handbook *Process of occupational development in vocational education and training*⁴¹ in Switzerland, the Recommendation for quality assurance and quality management in regulatory procedures in Germany,⁴² and the annual Monitoring Report produced for the Ministry of Children and Education in Denmark), or by institutions like the BIBB (Germany) and the ibw (Austria). The stated benefits are that the support of this nature ‘sets the pace (of the procedure)’ (CH 1) and gives certainty to the course of the process (CH 2, DE 1) as well as for the development of drafts with regard to form and structure (AT 2 and DE 4).⁴³ Nevertheless, there is also a warning that a ‘challenge’ may ensue if the ‘administrative burden’ is too high (CH 1). If the process is arranged too rigidly, there is a risk that the positive effects of dialogue between stakeholders cannot be fully unfurled. One Danish expert points out within this context: ‘The revising process (in Denmark) is not structured rigidly but implies high flexibility and openness to dialogue’ (DK 2).

lowing stipulation in respect of the Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training: ‘If the Federal Minister of Economy, Family and Youth intends to issue or amend one of the ordinances listed in para. 2.7, he/she shall obtain the opinion of the Advisory Council by setting a reasonable deadline of at least two months and shall take into account any opinion submitted within the deadline when issuing the corresponding ordinance’.

– Article 19 § 3 of the Swiss Federal Act on Vocational and Professional Education and Training sets out the following provision in respect of ordinances on vocational education and training: ‘The structuring and enactment of training ordinances by the SBFI requires the involvement of the cantons and of the professional organisations’.

– § 38 Subparagraph 3 of the Danish Vocational Training Act stipulates: ‘The committees determine training regulations for the individual training programmes’.

- 41 The preface to the handbook states: ‘The entry into force of the Federal Act on Vocational and Professional Education and Training on 1 January 2004 instigated the reform of all vocational education and training qualifications’. The handbook on ordinances was a reliable companion for all stakeholders during the reform process. (...) The handbook is designed in such a way so as to render it ‘periodically adaptable to the status of developments with the agreement of the collaborative partners’ (SBFI 2017, p. iii).
- 42 The Recommendation of the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training on quality assurance and quality management in the regulatory procedures of 27 June 2008 states: ‘This procedural description governs “the processes and quality assurance for the drawing up of training regulations from the time when a directive is passed from the responsible ministry responsible until the outcome is forwarded to the ministry responsible and to BMBF for a final joint meeting, in which the regulatory instrument of the Federal Government (training regulations) and of the federal states (skeleton curriculum) are coordinated with each other and until a resolution is adopted by the Board’ (cf. <https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/ha130.pdf>, pp. 2, 3 (Status: 19.12.2019).
- 43 AT 2 is of the opinion that the support provided by the ibw is ‘of major significance’. This expert believes that sector experts are important technically ‘(but) usually do not understand how an occupational profile is drawn up and how it needs to be formulated so that it stays in the system (...) and provides a coherence which enables related areas to be taken into account’. Also with regard to the structuring of occupations, DE 4 expresses the view that the occupations ‘are relatively standardized in form, and these stipulations are governed by the recommendations rather than via the BBiG’. This aspect is important.

- (3) This brings us directly to the third factor – *a continuous dialogue between stakeholders*. Like the ‘rights for co-determination’, this is a fundamental characteristic of the ‘cooperation model for the development of national training standards’. One aspect of considerable significance is that the dialogue also takes place within individual groups on an ongoing basis rather than merely occurs between relevant stakeholder groups. Continuity is supported by the fact that the dialogue is institutionalized⁴⁴ and that in many cases stakeholders have known each other for years.⁴⁵ The consequence is that the dialogue is regularly instigated at an informal level, for example when difficulties emerge during a procedure and solutions are initially sought in personal discussions.⁴⁶ The continuous dialogue thus results in the establishment of trust between stakeholder groups⁴⁷ and also leads to a growth in mutual understanding of different positions. Over the course of years, however, the organizations involved come to possess extensive expertise in the various action areas of vocational education and training and increasingly view VET as a ‘policy field’ (DE 3).⁴⁸
- (4) The understanding of the other side which is developed via continuous dialogue is a crucial prerequisite for the fourth characteristic – *ability to compromise*. The object of negotiation forms one point of reference here since stakeholders are usually able to view the arguments and ideas of the other side as legitimate demands.⁴⁹ ‘People know one another. We know what our counterpart wants and what is enforceable in respective institutions. Everyone in the Council is equipped with a certain “backpack”. (...) All these (opinions) need to be taken into account. But an attempt is made to reach agreement’ (AT 3)⁵⁰. This aspect further relates to the atmosphere in which discussions take place. The regular contacts, which in many cases stakeholders have maintained over a period of years, exert a beneficial effect on personal dealings and are conducive to negotiations. People speak ‘as equals’, and this has ‘very positive impacts’ (CH 1).⁵¹ DE 1 summarises: ‘The crucial thing
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- 44 In Germany, for instance, the BIBB Board usually convenes three times a year while the Standing Committee meets on six occasions annually. The Standing Committee comprises sixteen members of the Board. It prepares the Board’s meetings and conducts its business during the interim periods (cf. <https://www.bibb.de/hauptausschuss>). In Austria, the Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training generally meets once a month (AT 1).
- 45 AT 2 remarks that ‘the continuity of support’ is required. Many members of the Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training know one another well because they have been working together for years. CH 2 emphasizes that it is a ‘huge advantage’ when stakeholders have known each other for many years.
- 46 DE 2, for example, points out that continuous networking does not only take place officially, it also occurs on an ‘ad hoc’ basis as opportunities arise, ‘And if we meet up in a different procedure, we talk about the process we are involved in. We try to come to an arrangement somehow’. AT 2 also underlines the importance of ‘informal networking meetings’.
- 47 One expert from Denmark presents the view: ‘It is important to understand that personal relations and an open-minded approach are crucial’ (DK 2). One interviewee from Switzerland (CH 2) also emphasizes that the fact of being able to work with the same contact partners over a longer period of time is ‘very valuable’.
- 48 Speaking from the point of view of trade unions, DE 3 states that vocational education and training is ‘an important area of trade union policy’ and gives the following explanatory example: ‘One of the areas of policy we pursue is “good work”. A publication is issued (...) in conjunction with the German Confederation of Trade Unions each year. It formulates standards, and research is also conducted at the companies.’
- 49 Horan Lee also alludes to this aspect in his essay ‘Good Will Hunting – Sozialpartnerschaft und Konfliktregulierung in der betrieblichen Weiterbildung’ (LEE 2015, p. 50).
- 50 One Swiss expert expresses a clear demand within this context: ‘Everyone should be in a position to recognize the positions of others to a greater or lesser degree’ (CH 1). A Danish expert puts forward a similar view: ‘We have to agree on being able to make a difference’ (DK 2).
- 51 The author of the Danish country study, Lamscheck-Nielsen, makes the following concluding remarks

is (...) that people are prepared to compromise. The focus is on further (conducting) the discussion with the goal of satisfying everyone or of taking everyone's views into account. The objective is also to end up with a product with which everyone is satisfied' (DE 1).⁵²

- (5) The assessment of DE 1 already points to the fifth characteristic – the *search for a consensual solution*. This factor is of considerable importance in respect of two aspects in particular. Firstly, an outcome achieved via consensus usually ends up being implemented.⁵³ 'Consensus is desirable, because it is all supposed to work in practice too'. A 'joint commitment' is needed in order for this to happen (AT 1). 'We want to create something which we can all stand by, something which we can communicate to our further dependent institutions, something which we can also impart to the companies and something which we know will be supported in precisely the same way by our colleagues (from the other organisations) (...)' (DE 1). Secondly, the search for a consensual solution facilitates stronger identification with the result on the part of the actors involved. 'All practitioners and all users of standards should be able to identify themselves with the final product' (DK 1).
- (6) *Joint basic understanding of vocational education and training*. The depiction of the previous three factors, in particular the fifth factor *search for a consensual solution*, have shown that stakeholders have a joint basic understanding of vocational education and training in their negotiations. The aim is to develop attractive occupations which take the requirements of trade and industry and that of the labour market into account. Well-trained young skilled workers are needed for this purpose. The idea is that such workers will secure the competitiveness of companies while also being afforded career opportunities. For these reasons, the stakeholders have the same objectives: 'They want good and high quality initial and continuing vocational education and training' (DE 3).

In summary, we may ascertain that all six factors are closely interlinked. The characteristic 1 *rights for co-determination* and the characteristic 3 *a continuous dialogue between stakeholders* are of fundamental significance.

The *rights for co-determination* means that various stakeholder groups can rely on being heard and that they will be entitled to take part in the whole process. A practical approach honed over a period of decades then allows the stakeholders to agree on a procedure which is adapted to the general conditions and which will enable a stronger degree of systematization to be achieved.

The third factor, *continuous dialogue*, is also of crucial importance because it forms the basis for the development of other factors. Firstly, continuous dialogue fosters the establishment of expertise among the stakeholder groups involved and facilitates the development of a policy action area to which the organizations feel a sense of commitment and responsibility. It also facilitates the development of a basis of trust between stakeholders, something which often takes place via the contacts nurtured for years and leads to a better understanding of different positions and action logics. *The search for a consensual solution* is rendered easier in its turn,

in her interview with DK 2: 'It is important to understand that personal relations and an open-minded approach to development are crucial. Agreements are not achieved by lining up the fronts, and personal ambitions have to step backwards for the advantage of joint progression.'

52 The remarks of the experts confirm an important finding of corporatism research which states that the compromise strategies adopted by the stakeholders consist in engaging in constructive talks with one another and in having a 'certain empathy for the "essentials" of the other side' (OFFE 1984, p. 246).

53 Implementation is also supported by the follow-up measures instigated by the stakeholders after the new ordinances have been enacted. These may, for example, comprise 'implementation guides' (Germany), 'training guides' (Austria), or training courses for 'VET trainers' (Switzerland).

and this will normally lead to a successful implementation of the achieved result. The outcome is the development of a joint understanding of vocational education and training which supports the overall process.

4.3 Impetuses for cooperation between stakeholders

The findings acquired from the project enable impetuses to be provided in the form of information and considerations which can support cooperation between stakeholders in the development of training standards. Four impetuses will be briefly described below, and explanations will be provided on the basis of examples.

(1) An impetus of the 'establishment of participation structures'

Councils have been formed both in Portugal and Slovakia in order to convene stakeholder groups which are of relevance to the furtherance of vocational education and training. The forms and structures of participation are different in each case, a circumstance which relates to the general national conditions and to the period of time in which reforms were instigated.

- ▶ The National Government Council was established in Slovakia on the basis of the Vocational Training Act of 2015. The council advises the government on matters relating to vocational education and training and largely assumes a coordinating function. Its representative members include the Ministries of Education and Economics, the semi-autonomous regions, professional organizations (chambers), professional bodies (employer/trade associations), and trade unions. The National Government Council has set up 18 working groups to cover selected occupational fields. The aim is for these working groups to dedicate themselves to the task of better adjusting education and training programmes to the requirements of the labour market. Vocational education and training committees have also been established in the semi-autonomous regions. The semi-autonomous regions are integrated into the development of state education and training programmes (PROCESS DESCRIPTION, pp. 42–43).
- ▶ The National Agency for Qualifications in Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP) was founded in Portugal in 2007. The agency has a coordinating and integrative role. It is responsible for the National Qualifications Catalogue and for the recognition, validation, and certification of non-formal and informal competencies. The ANQEP introduced 18 Sectoral Councils for Qualifications (CSQ) in 2009. These councils comprise working groups with the representation from ministries, the ANQEP, the IEFP, social partners, companies, schools, training providers, and experts. Their remit is to identify areas within the National Qualifications Catalogue where updating is required and to support the ANQEP in drawing up new qualification profiles.

The examples from Slovakia and Portugal outlined here show the central role played by participation structures in the reform process of vocational education and training systems. They assume an important coordinating function between school-based and vocation-oriented training programmes and provide a platform for discussions and reaching agreements. The instigation of the Sectoral Councils for Qualifications in Portugal has also created a formal basis for cooperation between relevant stakeholders in the development of occupational profiles and curricula.⁵⁴

54 Decree 173/2007, 31 December 2007, speaks of necessary cooperation (*necessária cooperação*) between the state, employers, employees, and educational and training institutions, particularly with regard to the definition and updating of qualification standards (*nomeadamente na definição e actualização dos standards de qualificação*). Cf. RESOLUÇÃO DO CONSELHO DE MINISTROS Nº 173/2007, p. 8143. Cf. <https://dre.pt/pesquisa/-/search/629163/details/maximized> (Status: 18.09.2021)

(2) An impetus of 'ownership'

The factor of 'ownership' is crucial for effective cooperation between stakeholder groups participating in the development of standards. The conference held in Siegburg on 3–4 April 2019 made a particular reference to this aspect.⁵⁵ The interviews with national experts also underlined just how important it is for the organizations involved to develop 'ownership'. 'The system is strongly aligned to fundamental commitment by participants. We call this ownership. This means I am now representing sector X and I identify myself with my occupation' (AT 1). In response to a relevant question posed, one of the Danish experts expressly recommended that stakeholders in the reform countries seek to approach one another: 'Do not stay behind your desk but take personal ownership!' (DK 2).

Both remarks indicate an essential aspect of cooperation, which has also emerged from the analysis of the 'Cooperation model for the development of national training standards'. The main requirement for the development of good cooperation is for the groups involved to engage in discussions regularly, both in an institutional and informal form.⁵⁶ This initiates a process which may lead stakeholder groups to identify with their respective occupations and to view these as a 'policy field' for which they feel responsible and to which they are prepared to commit themselves. In other words, continuous dialogue at various levels creates the necessary prerequisites for the development of a sense of 'ownership' among participants.

(3) An impetus of 'practical guides'

The following examples of practical guides for the drawing up of training regulations may be divided into three categories:

- ▶ Guides for the procedure itself
- ▶ Guides for the implementation of new occupational profiles and curricula
- ▶ Governance guides

A comparative study of VET in seven European countries undertaken by the iwd indicates five factors for success. These are acceptance, company participation, social partners, permeability, and relevance to the labour market. It has the following to say about the factor of the social partners. 'Active social partnership is helpful in terms of structuring training in as practically related a way as possible. In Germany, the employer associations and the trade unions have been working together to develop training regulations over a period of many decades. The establishment of sector-specific programme councils in line with the practice adopted in Sweden, Portugal, and the United Kingdom could, however, also constitute an initial step in this direction'. (iwd 2015).

55 Rita Wang emphasized this point in her summary of the workshop: 'If you are not part of the process, you are not part of the product. Ownership to apprenticeship schemes is essential'. Cf. https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/2019_04_03_qualification_standards_siegburg_trier_wang.pdf (Status: 14.09.2021).

56 The investigations in Portugal confirm this conclusion. One expert, for example, bemoaned the fact that there was no culture of cooperation in Portugal. Interview partners on both the employer and employee sides criticized the 'absence of regular meetings of the committees' in which they are represented. This is particularly applicable in the case of the Sectoral Councils (COSTA ARTUR 2016).

Practical guides for the procedure

Suggestions for a higher degree of systematization of procedures may give rise to the following documents:

- ▶ Recommendation for quality assurance and quality management in regulatory procedures⁵⁷ in Germany
- ▶ Handbook on the *Process of occupational development in vocational education and training*⁵⁸ in Switzerland
- ▶ Annual Monitoring Report (*Udviklingsredegørelse*)⁵⁹ produced by the national trade committees for the Ministry of Children and Education in Denmark

Guides for the implementation of new occupational profiles and curricula

- ▶ Germany has 'implementation guides' for over 100 occupations in order to support training practice⁶⁰
- ▶ In Austria, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry issued 'training documentation' for training ordinances that have been newly enacted. The ibw also draw up 'training guides' as required⁶¹

Practical governance guides

The Charter for collaborative partnership from Switzerland represents an interesting example of how to strengthen cooperation between partners with different interests. The Charter was adopted by the Federal Commission for Vocational and Professional Education and Training (EBBK) in 2016. It consists of four guidelines.⁶² According to EBBK President Josef Widmer, partners are 'invited to adhere to these principles wherever possible'.⁶³ Grégoire Évéquoz, Director General of the Office of Vocational Guidance, Vocational Education and Training and Continuing Training of the Canton of Geneva, believes that this Charter bears witness to the fact that 'all stakeholders are prepared to cooperate'. Jörg Aebischer, Managing Director of the training provider ICT-Berufsbildung, is convinced that the Charter assists in 'achieving a better understanding of and a greater respect for the role and perspective of the respective other partner'. He points out, however, that the Charter cannot achieve anything as a mere 'piece of paper'. 'It requires people to work together and maintain a constructive dialogue.' Aebischer concludes by saying: 'In my opinion, the best thing for the occupational development process would be for the Charter to always be highlighted at the outset of a collaborative partner task and for the roles to be discussed or clarified.'⁶⁴

57 Cf. <https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/ha130.pdf> (Status: 31.01.2020).

58 Cf. <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbfi/de/home/bildung/berufliche-grundbildung/berufsentwicklung.html> (Status: 07.11.2021).

59 A summary for the year 2019 is available at: <https://www.uddannelsesnaevnet.dk/udvalgene/handelsuddannelsen/udviklingsredegørelser-handelsudd> (Status: 06.02.2020).

60 Cf. <https://www.bibb.de/de/116895.php> (Status: 15.10.2021).

61 Cf. https://www.wko.at/service/t/bildung-lehre/Ausbildungsplanung_und_Ausbildungsdokumentationen.html (Status: 15.10.2021).

62 1. Planning (governance cooperation); 2. Decision making process (willingness to compromise, consultation, responsibility, final decision, acceptance); 3. Implementation (reliability, acceptance); 4. Evaluation. Cf. <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbfi/de/home/bildung/berufsbildungss-teuerung-und--politik/verbundpartnerschaft.html> (Status: 07.11.2021).

63 In: Panorama. 03/2017 issue http://www.panorama.ch/dyn/1125.aspx?id_article=1657 (Status: 31.01.2020).

64 In: Panorama. 03/2017 issue http://www.panorama.ch/dyn/3545.aspx?id_article=1658 (Status: 31.01.2017).

5 In place of a conclusion

In retrospect, the main idea expressed by the Managing Director of ICT-Berufsbildung in the quotation on the significance of the Charter in Switzerland runs like a common thread throughout the entire research project. He once again underlines the fundamental importance of context factors. A careful analysis of the contextual factors and the due consideration of such aspects are indispensable for effective VET cooperation between stakeholder groups with different backgrounds and action logics and also for a better understanding of the functionality of education systems in international comparative investigations. An attempt was made to conduct the latter within the project by undertaking a comparison of six selected countries in the area of the development of training, by providing a detailed depiction of the historical development of respective vocational education and training systems, and by presenting a precise description of their general institutional conditions.

The question of contextualization in transfer research is equally important. Although this was not placed to the fore in the present project, it is closely related to international comparative research. The search for possible solutions for an effective restructuring or modernization of components of national VET systems is an essential reason behind comparative analyses of training models. Since the beginning of this millennium, David Phillips and Kimberly Ochs have been particularly prominent in identifying the relevance of contextual factors in the field of transfer research. These two Oxford-based researchers have developed a four-stage model for the transfer process. It begins with ‘cross-national attraction’, followed by ‘decision’ and ‘implementation’. The fourth stage is ‘internalization/indigenization’.⁶⁵ Various context factors, which Phillips and Ochs once more divide into categories, play a part across all four of these phases. In the view of Margarita Langthaler, the British researchers have thus triggered a ‘controversial theoretical debate on the phenomenon of policy transfer’. She points out that, in contrast to the discourse taking place in the ‘anglophone area’, German language academic community is dominated by ‘application-oriented issues’. The main emphasis is on the ‘methodological questions regarding the optimization of transfer opportunities’, and this is ‘to the detriment of fundamental theoretical and conceptual reflections on the nature of transfer processes’ (LANGTHALER 2017, p. 4). According to Langthaler, the economic background of international cooperation arrangements thus exerts a considerable influence on this debate (‘education and training export’ being a key phrase in this regard). She states that ‘current research in the German language’ is characterized by the ‘endeavour to draw up solutions with a strong basis in academic research for the multifarious problems of education and training transfer’ (LANGTHALER 2017, p. 13).⁶⁶

There is no doubt that Langthaler’s evaluation is essentially true. It is indeed conspicuous that theoretical discussions that take place in anglophone scholarship have not been adopted to any large extent in German-speaking transfer research and that the latter predominantly

65 Cf. PHILLIPS/OCHS: ‘Researching policy borrowing: some methodological challenges in comparative education’, 2003. In the first stage of the ‘Oxford Model’, ‘cross-national attraction’, impetuses for the search for external education models within a state are created. These inner-state impetuses are integrated into multifarious context factors. The second stage of the model is ‘decision’. The third stage of ‘implementation’ begins if the decision is positive. This comprises adaptation of the transfer to local conditions. The fourth stage of ‘internalisation/indigenisation’, during which transfer is incorporated into the national education system, is reached if implementation meets with acceptance. Cf. also LANGTHALER 2017, pp. 8ff. and BARABASCH/WOLF 2011, pp. 285ff.

66 Euler is one of the authors to point out the significance of economic interests in respect of the VET cooperation agreements that Germany has entered into. Cf. EULER 2021, pp. 369ff.

tackles individual dual structural elements and the opportunities to transfer such elements in target countries.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, a greater degree of differentiation should be drawn in this regard. Firstly, it is certainly true that German language studies, especially those making reference to the governance concept, are increasingly according due discussion and consideration to theoretical aspects (GEIBEN 2017). Secondly, transfer or impact research has now developed concepts and methods to facilitate more extensive contextualization.⁶⁸ In overall terms, however, Langthaler's plea for the 'anglophone discussion surrounding policy transfer' to be allowed to inform the German language debate should be heeded (LANGTHALER 2017, p. 16). This could provide a vehicle for the acquisition of broadly based and more profound knowledge of contextual factors. As Phillips and Ochs propose,⁶⁹ it also seems to be very important to move beyond merely conducting a detailed analysis of contextual factors in 'target countries' (as is frequently the case in the research produced in the German language) and to do the same for those of the 'home countries'. This facilitates a more differentiated analysis, which may in turn open up a greater leeway for stakeholders in vocational education and training cooperation agreements.

This principle was applied in the project in order to highlight more clearly the basis of cooperation between stakeholders' functions in the development of training standards in the four dual model countries. The analysis of the contextual factors in these potential 'home countries' revealed three things:

- ▶ Firstly, vocational education and training has undergone different historical development in all four countries.
- ▶ Secondly, this gave rise to different stakeholder structures and different procedures for the development of training standards.
- ▶ Thirdly, it was possible to ascertain that cooperation between stakeholders, even if differently manifested, exhibits a series of common characteristics which are fundamental to the formation of 'ownership' – the most important prerequisite for effective collaboration in this central area of vocational education and training.

The detailed analysis of the context factors in the 'home countries' thus allows us to move beyond mere recommendations – the recommendation to emerge from the project would be to strive to achieve deeper cooperation between relevant groups in vocational education and training. The analysis that was restricted to the contextual factors of the 'target countries', Portugal and Slovakia in the case of the present project, would have relatively quickly produced the outcome that the differences in the vocational education and training systems between these two countries and the four dual model countries are considerable after all. For this reason, simply issuing a recommendation that more effective cooperation should be sought between all relevant stakeholders in the 'target countries' of Portugal and Slovakia could only be expected to produce a slight effect. However, demonstrating the basis on which collaboration

67 There is a consensus that transfer of the dual training model as a whole is not possible (cf. SECTION 4.3)

68 Cf. the 'Systematic Evaluation Analysis' which was presented at the AGBFN Forum in Bonn (on 29–30 November 2018). This methodology was developed in order to identify the success factors of VET cooperation. The four success factors, which are also further sub-categorized, are: (1) system compatibility, (2) flexible governance, (3) staff, and (4) ownership. See STOCKMANN 2021, pp. 11–24.

69 'The context of the "target" country must also be considered, particularly in comparison to that of the "home country", regarding possible implementation (Stage III). A careful examination of the context in both the "home" and "target" countries is essential to evaluate compatibility and comparability and to determine what is possible to borrow given different cultural mores, demographics, etc.' (PHILLIPS/OCHS 2003, p. 458).

takes place between the stakeholders from the 'home countries' of Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Denmark opens up an opportunity for a more comprehensive reflection, and this may in turn lead to a broader consultancy approach.

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Abstract

The design of vocational qualification standards is one of the key topics in current discussions and initiatives within reform processes of vocational education and training systems in Europe and worldwide. The BIBB research project addressed this issue and compared four countries with a dual training model – Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Denmark – and two countries with a predominantly school-based training system – Portugal and Slovakia. This publication presents and discusses the procedures for developing qualification standards in the six countries and the underlying governance structures as well as an analysis of the interaction patterns of the main actors in the dual countries. It ends with impulses for international VET cooperation, thus addressing VET policy-makers and stakeholders.

Die Gestaltung beruflicher Qualifikationsstandards ist eines der Schlüsselthemen in aktuellen Diskussionen und Initiativen über Reformprozesse der Berufsbildungssysteme in Europa und weltweit. Hierzu hat ein BIBB-Forschungsprojekt vier Länder mit einem dualen Ausbildungsmodell – Deutschland, Österreich, Schweiz und Dänemark – sowie zwei Länder mit einem überwiegend schulischen Ausbildungssystem – Portugal und Slowakei – miteinander verglichen. In dieser Publikation werden die Verfahren zur Entwicklung von Qualifikationsstandards in den sechs Ländern und die ihnen zugrundeliegenden Governance-Strukturen sowie eine Analyse der Interaktionsmuster der wichtigsten Akteure in den dualen Ländern vorgestellt und diskutiert. Sie schließt mit Impulsen für die internationale Berufsbildungszusammenarbeit und richtet sich somit an Entscheidungsträger und Akteure der Berufsbildung.

Sonderedition zum 50. Jahrgang mit Beiträgen aus fünf Jahrzehnten

Fünf Jahrzehnte lang begleitet die BWP den Fachdiskurs zur Berufsbildung in Wissenschaft, Politik und Praxis.

Aus rund 3.500 Beiträgen, die seit der ersten Ausgabe erschienen sind, hat Georg Hanf, ehemaliger Arbeitsbereichsleiter im BIBB, für jedes Jahrzehnt je einen Beitrag aus Wissenschaft, Politik und Praxis ausgewählt.

Die Beiträge behandeln im Wesentlichen zwei übergreifende Themen:

- die Qualität der Ausbildung und
- die Gleichwertigkeit von beruflicher und allgemeiner Bildung.

Das Fazit von Georg Hanf: »Der Rückblick auf 50 Jahre BWP verdeutlicht: Es dauerte oft lange, bis Erkenntnisse und Vorschläge, die in der Zeitschrift erstmals vorgebracht wurden, Eingang in die reguläre Praxis fanden. Manches harrt weiter der Erfüllung.«

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The design of vocational qualification standards is one of the key topics in current discussions and initiatives within reform processes of vocational education and training systems in Europe and worldwide. The BIBB research project addressed this issue and compared four countries with a dual training model – Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Denmark – and two countries with a predominantly school-based training system – Portugal and Slovakia. This publication presents and discusses the procedures for developing qualification standards in the six countries and the underlying governance structures as well as an analysis of the interaction patterns of the main actors in the dual countries. It ends with impulses for international VET cooperation, thus addressing VET policy-makers and stakeholders.

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