



Reference framework

Excellent career guidance in the context of Vocational Education and Training Shaping Sustainable Development VESD

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1. Objective of the framework and match with existing concepts

This reference framework is not designed according to the classical pattern of reference frameworks for school quality. These orientation frameworks for learning place development are written with indicators from operational quality management and classically composed according to three major fields - framework conditions, processes, results.

The reference framework created by the members of the Network of Excellence on Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development (VESD) in European dialogue and discourse is a valuable addition to the DunE-BB-EU Guide. It is compatible with national reference frameworks on school quality and existing guidelines on vocational guidance and thus contributes to the wider thematic national excellence discussions.

Vocational guidance in Europe and on other continents is usually organised by general and vocational schools. In 2022, the Bertelsmann Foundation stated in a study that **successful vocational orientation** is characterised by three aspects:

"... a good mix of guidance and self-learning as well as practice Vocational orientation does not work digitally only." Source: [Bertelsmann Foundation: Study points to excessive demands in vocational orientation. A good thing to ask those affected yourself \(bildungswissenschaftler.de\)](https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/press-releases/2022/07/2022-07-20-study-points-to-excessive-demands-in-vocational-orientation)

See also: [Majority of young people lack perspective when choosing a career \(bertelsmann-stiftung.de\)](https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/press-releases/2022/07/2022-07-20-majority-of-young-people-lack-perspective-when-choosing-a-career)

The **current system of vocational orientation shows tendencies to overtax** young people or adult retrainees and, at least in Germany, has not led to an improved dropout rate for more than 20 years. Our Excellence Network partners from Estonia, Italy, France, Malta, Austria and Germany confirmed in the discourse that this statement was not only true for Germany, but also for their countries. Looking at the continuing high youth unemployment rate in Europe, it seems that **the transition to work, i.e. the currently practised vocational orientation, is not excellent enough!**

Focusing on the UN Sustainable Development Goals 17, 4, 3, 10, 5, 11, 12, 13 and 16 and in the context of the other UN Sustainable Development Goals, a constructive and insightful discourse on the design of **excellent vocational orientation** took place at the first and second hybrid conference organized by the Estonian and Italian hosts. The members of the Network of Excellence on Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development (VESD) discussed there, but also

subsequently, an expanded sustainability-oriented concept of vocational guidance whereby the **three dimensions of sustainability** - social, economic and ecological - were debated.

The final demands for European vocational learning venues describe the discourse results in order to be able to realise **excellent vocational orientation, especially in the transition from school to work in Europe**.

In the opinion of the members of the Network of Excellence on Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development (VESD), the **UN Sustainable Development Goal 17 "Partnerships to achieve the Goals"**, together with the future competence "Communication", which must be non-violent, is the basic prerequisite both for **excellent vocational orientation/guidance – Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development (VESD) (UN Sustainable Development Goal 4)** and for the implementation of the other UN Sustainable Development Goals. The "UN Sustainable Development Goal 1 No Poverty" and "UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 No Hunger" benefit from the success in achieving Sustainable Development Goals 17 and 4 as well as 5, 10 and 3.

2. Structure of the frame of reference

The discourse was based on the **"three-pillar model of sustainability"** and was also aligned with the **17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations**. Since for the members of the Network of Excellence on Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development (BBNE) the human being must be at the centre of consideration, contrary to the usual structure of the three-pillar model of sustainability, it is not started with the ecological dimension, but the social dimension is placed in front. The model is reversed:

The **social, economic and ecological dimension** are discussed and reflected upon one after the other and in the context of the 17 sustainability goals.





Source: [17 sustainability goals - \(un.org\)](https://un.org)

In the sustainability dimensions, the formulated "excellence indicators" are related to the respective UN Sustainable Development Goals.

3. Social dimension of sustainability

The social dimension of sustainability (**assigned sustainability goals 17, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 16**) includes that

- students (learners) in cooperation **with all those involved in the process of vocational orientation**, both at the learning locations of the companies and vocational schools (the dual training locations), receive **excellent guidance and systematic practice-oriented support** during the transition to vocational training (sustainability goals 17, 4, 5, 8, 10, 16).
- the **training and curricula in the company and the vocational school are explained** during the excellent vocational orientation, i.e. the performance requirements of the two dual training locations are made transparent for the young people and their parents and for adult retrainees (sustainability goals 17, 4, 5, 8, 10, 16)
- **digital options** (metaverse technology, digital barrier-free and simple-language **career or network portals**, such as "Green World of Work") are also shared (Sustainable Development Goals 17, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16).
- meaningful offers from extracurricular partners, such as summer schools or other institutions, are also used conceptually (see: [17 Making goals a career - Engagement Global - engagement-global.de -](https://www.engagement-global.de)).
 - The BOOM project is also oriented in a similar way:
 - <https://www.nachhaltige-berufsorientierung.de/>
- This supplementary sustainability-oriented vocational orientation offered in Germany could be promoted by Erasmus Plus and further developed into an **EU Summer Academy on Vocational Orientation** in other European countries (Sustainable Development Goals 1-17).
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- through **practical vocational and sustainability-oriented small-scale projects**, learners at general education schools, accompanied by their teachers, can discover their talents and be introduced to occupations suitable for them. These small projects are designed cooperatively by the dual training partners with the involvement of young people/retrainees who are already in training. They are also climate protection-oriented and thus make it possible to get to know the "green professions". They could start as early as the 5th grade and be organised cooperatively at the **school/vocational school and company/internal learning locations** every year until the end of grade 9 or 10. This systematically and reliably designed career orientation enables a 360-degree view of the sustainability-oriented world of work and ensures improved decision-making support for learners and their parents/guardians, who are always informed at appropriate points (sustainability goals 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 16, 17).
- the training staff, teachers and support staff **cooperate intensively** with the learners and their relatives. It makes sense to organise a multi-professional learning support team in order to shape the **joint task of excellent career orientation/guidance** in the context of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the UN focus on SDG 17.
- **from the first day of training excellent individual learning and support plans** for both places of learning in vocational education and training must be drawn up in a jointly coordinated manner in order **to avoid training drop-outs** and thus create the **conditions for excellent**



training. The working time and personnel resources at the VET schools must be organised reliably and in line with demand in order to provide the best possible entry into dual VET for the student body and retrainees. All those involved in VET maintain **close and binding cooperation**, e.g. on digital working and cooperation platforms, with the schools that provide the training, integration offices, the chambers, the national employment agency, companies in the region that provide training and other supporting institutions such as the regional education offices, youth welfare services, the district adult education centres and the employment agency. The Agency for Employment's career portals for independent learning should be publicised more and used at all European learning venues. Tried and tested practice should be successively posted on the portal of the Network of Excellence for Sustainable Development in Vocational Education and Training and shared internationally. (Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17).

- common climate-friendly healthy food and drinking affordable for everyone, including free drinking water, is made possible at the place of learning (Sustainable Development Goals 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17).
- **sustainability-oriented and excellent career guidance** and the associated extended tasks of teachers, support staff and management staff are identified in **national school laws**. (Sustainability Goals 4, 16 and further 1-3, 5-15 and 17).

4. Economic dimension of sustainability

The economic dimension of sustainability (**assigned sustainability goals 17, 4, 8, 9, 10, 16**) means investing in **improved framework conditions - staff positions, training and further education and in analogue or digital assistance systems**.

- Additional staff positions and support personnel for **the organisation of reliable vocational orientation** must also be made available to the vocational schools by those with political responsibility. Furthermore, additional working time quotas must be allocated to existing VET staff in order to ensure the exchange of information and communication between all education and VET stakeholders as a prerequisite for **excellent cooperation** (Sustainable Development Goals 4, 8, 10, 16, 17).
- Multi-professional career guidance teams must be formed at the vocational schools and cooperation with supporting institutions must be initiated and the appropriate personnel and financial resources must be provided for them. A school sustainability management is introduced and **annual school sustainability-oriented vocational orientation action plans** are drawn up, which are integrated into regional ESD action plans. Annual sustainability reports should present career guidance achievements in a data protection-compliant manner (sustainability goals 4, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17).
- **Cooperation between places of learning must be improved and joint research promoted.** The facilities and equipment of the VET schools are to be made usable in coordination with other public educational institutions as well as supporting institutions, e.g. with the colleges, universities, chambers for initial and continuing VET. In this way, underutilised parallel capacities can also be avoided and **resources can be shared, also in a cost-saving manner** (Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17).
- In order to design excellent VET, there is a need for stronger interlinking (cooperation) of all VET stakeholders and for joint research. **VET schools must be research partners** and receive better staffing and financial support for research projects (Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17).
- **Training and support staff must be trained during regular working hours.** The constant adaptation of training to the rapidly changing professional and living environments increases



the need for further training of training personnel in cooperative formats in order to be able to design sustainability-oriented small projects in matters of vocational orientation and ESD or BBNE project management. Especially there, besides theory, exchange of experience in expert circles, also with teachers of general education schools and their support staff, is required. Cooperative - multiprofessional - further training events must be made possible for them at regular intervals (at least once a month, better every fourteen days), both for the teachers of general education and vocational schools as well as company training personnel and other support personnel, within the framework of their company and vocational school working hours (sustainability goals 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17).

5. Ecological dimension of sustainability

The ecological dimension of sustainability means investing in improved framework conditions - climate-neutral or climate-positive and barrier-free buildings - at the learning locations of vocational orientation (sustainability goals 17, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 16)

- The buildings and learning spaces/labs, workshops are to be designed barrier-free, with very high structural climate-positive standards and in line with sustainability goal 3 "Health and well-being", with the best functional acoustics and air quality as well as ergonomic equipment. In accordance with Sustainability Goals 11 and 13, the premises are also to be equipped with energy-efficient digital systems, e.g. energy monitors and power-saving technical equipment (for example sound technology, PCs, LED lighting systems or powerless lighting control technology) by the school operator.
- The structural investments in renewable energy systems (PV systems, geothermal, biogas and house wind power systems) and rainwater utilization or smart irrigation technology have a multi-value effect, since these systems, if planned and built without barriers, can be used as learning arrangements - also for vocational orientation (strong focus on sustainability goals 4 and 13) and "3rd educator", but also in the context of sustainability goals 17, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 16.
- When procuring ergonomic equipment (chairs, tables, furniture), climate-neutral and fairly produced products - supply chain law-compliant - in C2C design or with a sustainability certificate should be selected. Further procurement measures for technical equipment, building materials, consumables should also be sustainability-oriented. (strong focus on sustainability goals 12 and 13) and "3rd educator", but also in the context of sustainability goals 12, 13, 1, 2, 8, 3, 6, 11, 14, 15.

6. Outlook

The above-mentioned sustainability-oriented features of excellence and design requirements offer transformation-ready learning locations of vocational sustainable development (VESD) and the national and European political decision-makers (including school authorities/municipalities, authorities and ministries), companies, vocational schools and vocational training institutions, parents and the student body and trainees a **valuable orientation aid** for the **design of excellent vocational orientation**. This should be accompanied by an **updated and optimized European training guarantee** that is jointly designed in **the context of vocational education and training for sustainable development (VESD)**.

The members of the Network of Excellence on Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development will continue the European dialogue and discourse on a global level with learning sites in Africa, Asia, Australia, South and North America and further share their knowledge and experiences. The created reference framework will be made available as a valuable complement to



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the DunE-BB-EU Guide on the website: www.ex-n-bbne.com worldwide also in English and thus contributes to the wider thematic global excellence discussion of **VET Sustainable Development (VESD)**.

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