



Reference framework

Excellence in Entrepreneurship in the Context of Vocational Education and Training Shaping Sustainable Development VESD

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1. Objective of the reference framework and match to existing concepts

This reference framework is not designed according to the classic pattern of reference frameworks for school quality. These reference 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 developed 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 to national reference frameworks on school quality and existing guides on entrepreneurship and thus contributes to the wider thematic national excellence discussions.

Sustainability-focused entrepreneurship in Europe and on other continents in VET learning settings is an important prerequisite for collectively achieving the Green Deal's national and international climate change and sustainability goals. So far, learners are usually introduced to sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship by general education and vocational schools through "student companies", where they can try their hand in a secure area. See for example:

[NaSch-Community - Network for Sustainable Student Companies | German Commission for UNESCO](#)

[Sustainable student companies: Portal Education for Sustainable Development \(bildungsportal-niedersachsen.de\)](#)

Many sustainability-oriented business models of student companies actually have the potential for startups in the real economy. So far, startup funding has only been geared towards the college/university sector.

Our excellence network partners from Estonia, Italy, France, Malta, Austria and Germany have confirmed in discourse that this statement would be true not only for Germany but also for their countries.



Focusing on the UN Sustainable Development Goals 17, 4, 3, 10, 5, 11, 12, 13 and 16 and in the context of the wider UN Sustainable Development Goals, "sustainability-oriented student companies" were presented by the student body/trainees and their supervising teachers at the first, second and third hybrid conferences (Tartu, Borgo San Lorenzo, Uelzen) and used for a constructive and insightful **discourse on how to shape excellent entrepreneurship**. The members of the Network of Excellence on Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development (VESD) discussed an expanded sustainability-oriented concept of entrepreneurship, whereby the **three dimensions of sustainability** - social, economic and ecological - were debated.

The final demands for European vocational learning sites describe the discourse results **in order to be able to develop and realize excellent entrepreneurship at the learning sites of vocational education**.

According to 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"** is closely linked with the future competence "communication", which must be designed in a non-violent way. It is the basic prerequisite **both for excellent entrepreneurship - Vocational Education and Training 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 the "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 reference framework

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 (VESD), 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.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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

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) cooperatively develop **sustainability-oriented products/services/business ideas using, for example, the design thinking method** (focus on sustainability goals 17 and 4 as well as 1-3 and 5-16).
- sustainability-oriented products/services/business ideas can be used for the development of sustainability-oriented business models for the real economy **using digital possibilities** (metaverse technology, digital barrier-free and simple language **startup or network portals**) (focus on sustainability goals 17 and 4 as well as 1-3 and 5-16).
- learners receive **excellent advice and systematic and practical support from vocational training staff and other experts** in the further development of sustainability-oriented business models (focus on sustainability goals 17 and 4 as well as 1-3 and 5-16).
- the learners as well as the teachers and the support staff **cooperate intensively** with the partners from the real economy - entrepreneurs and the regional business development. It makes sense to organize a multi-professional learning support team in order to shape the **joint task of excellent entrepreneurship** in the context of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on UN Sustainable Development Goals 17 and 4.
- all those involved in excellent entrepreneurship maintain **a close and bindingly regulated cooperation**, e.g. on digital working and cooperation platforms and startup network portals that enable peer learning and are available at all European learning sites. Tried and tested practice is to be successively posted on the portal of the Network of Excellence on Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development (VESD) and shared internationally. (Sustainable Development Goals 17 and 4).



- sustainability-oriented and excellent entrepreneurship and the associated expanded responsibilities of teaching staff, support staff and management staff must be designated in **national school laws**. (Sustainability Goals 4, 16 and the other 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, e. g. positions, training and further education and in analog or digital assistance systems:

- Additional positions for manpower and support staff for the **creation of excellent entrepreneurship** must be made available by the political decision-makers in the vocational schools. Furthermore, additional working time contingents for the already existing vocational training staff must be made available for more information exchange and communication between all parties involved in education and vocational training in order to create the preconditions for **excellent cooperation with entrepreneurs and regional business development and other relevant partners** (sustainability goals 4, 8, 10, 16, 17).
- Multi-professional entrepreneurship 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 system is introduced and **annual school sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship/startup action plans** are created and integrated into regional ESD action plans. Annual sustainability reports should present entrepreneurship achievements in a privacy-compliant manner (Sustainability Goals 4, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17).
- **Learning arrangements for entrepreneurship and regional startup support are to be improved and joint research promoted**. The facilities and equipment of vocational schools are to be made available for use in coordination with other public education providers as well as supporting institutions, e.g., colleges, universities, chambers for vocational education and training. In this way, underutilized parallel capacities can also be avoided and **resources shared in a cost-saving manner** (sustainability goals 4, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17).
- In order to create excellent vocational education and training, there is a need for greater interlinking (cooperation) between all stakeholders in vocational education and training and joint research. **Vocational schools must be research partners** and receive better personnel and financial support for research projects (Sustainability Goals 17 and 4, 5, 8, 10, 16).
- **Teachers and support staff must be trained during regular working hours**. The constant adaptation of training/education to the rapidly changing professional and living environments increases the need for further training of teaching staff - in terms of entrepreneurship/startup and ESD or VESD project management - to design sustainability-oriented business models in cooperative formats. Especially there, besides theory, exchange of experience in expert circles with teachers and their support staff, with the entrepreneurship as well as the regional economic development is required. **Cooperative - multiprofessional - further training events** must be made possible for them at regular intervals (at least once a month, better every two weeks), as part of their company and vocational school working hours (sustainability goals 17 and 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12 16).

5. Ecological dimension of sustainability

The ecological dimension of sustainability also means investing in **improved framework conditions - climate-neutral or climate-positive and barrier-free buildings - at the learning sites of entrepreneurship and startup design** (Sustainability Goals 17, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 16).



- The buildings and learning rooms/labs, workshops are to be designed barrier-free, with very high structural **climate-friendly engineering standards** and according to 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 to be equipped with energy-efficient digital systems, e.g. energy monitors and energy-saving technical systems (sound technology, PC, LED lighting systems or currentless lighting control technology) by the school operator. These exemplary designed buildings and **health-promoting learning and living spaces** can be found in the sustainability-oriented business models, in the design of start-ups or the living environments of the learners - **transfer to the living and working world** (sustainability goals 17 and 4 as well as 3, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16).
- The structural investments in regenerative energy systems (PV systems, geothermal energy, 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 barrier-free, are also used as learning arrangements for the development of business models and start-ups (strong focus on sustainability goals 4 and 13) and "3rd educator" as well as in the context of sustainability goals 17, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 16.
- In the procurement of ergonomic equipment (chairs, tables, furniture), climate-neutral and fair - supply chain law-compliant - products 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, but also in the context of sustainability goals, 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 venues for Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development (VESD) and those politically responsible at national and European level (including school boards/local authorities, public authorities and ministries) companies, vocational schools and vocational training institutions, parents and the student body, as well as the trainees, the entrepreneurship and the regional economic development **a valuable orientation aid for the design of excellent entrepreneurship and sustainability-oriented start-ups in the regional economic area**, which is jointly designed in the context of **Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development VESD**.

The members of the VET Excellence Network on 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/experience. The reference framework produced will be made available in English as a valuable complement to the DunE-BB-EU Guide on the website: www.ex-n-bbne.com worldwide, thus contributing to the wider thematic global excellence discussion of in **VET for Sustainable Development**.

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