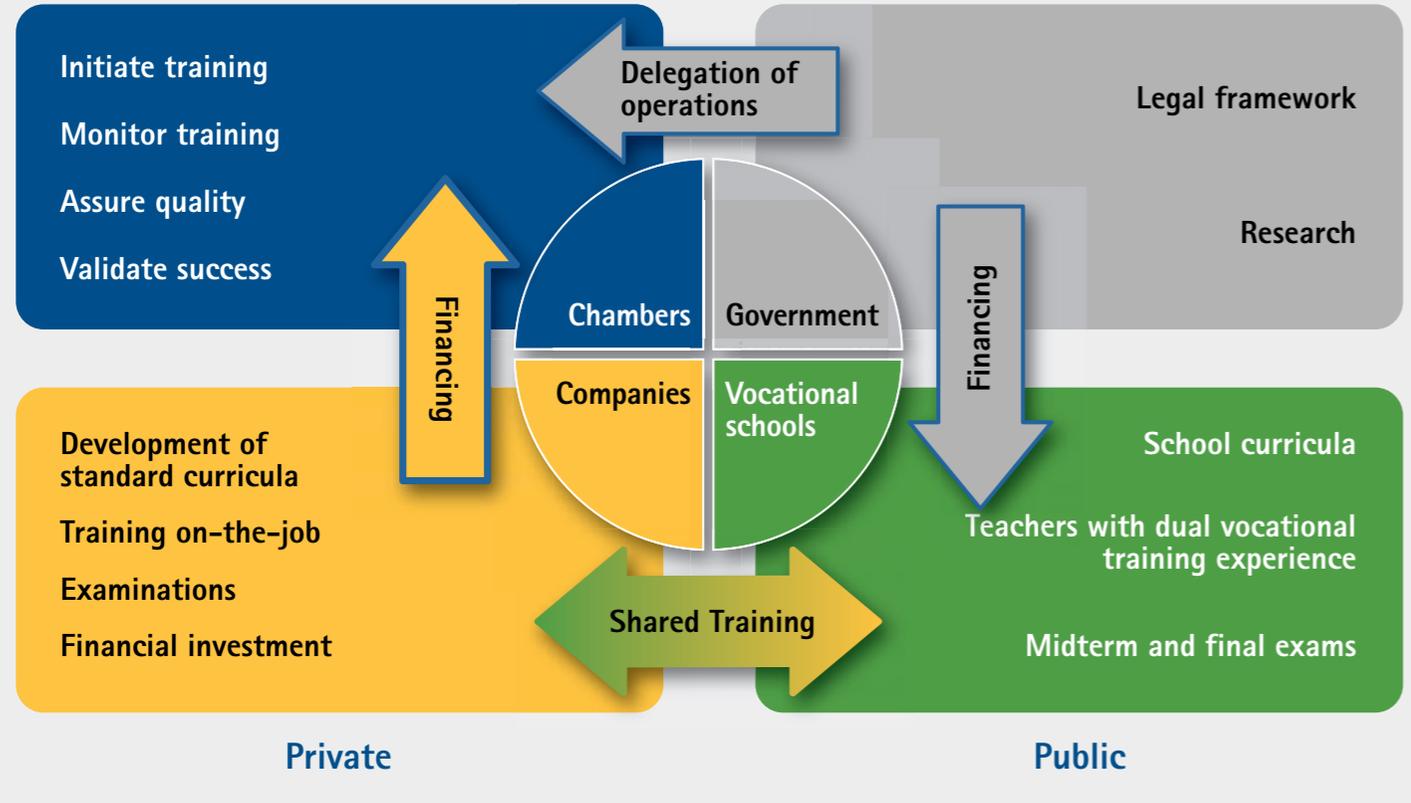


A Public-Private Partnership



ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT FACTORS OF VET

■ A precondition for this kind of apprenticeship in an approved training occupation is a written training contract between the apprentice and the company. This is based on a nationally standardized format. The responsible bodies – in general the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (IHKs), Chambers of Crafts, Chambers of Agriculture and chambers of free professions – evaluate whether the companies are suitable to be training companies.

■ Generally, the dual VET takes three years. However, the regulations are flexible. Depending on previous knowledge or

performance of the candidates applying for a VET, the training period can be reduced or extended by half a year or a year in particular cases. In other exceptional cases, admission to examination is also possible without a formal education, if theoretical and practical skills were gained during several years of professional experience.

■ The apprentice receives a monthly remuneration from the company. This salary rises with time and according to the productive value the apprentice provides to the company. The level of salary can be regulated by collective agreements.

THE DUAL SYSTEM

German Dual Vocational Education and Training (VET)



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STRONG BY PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

■ 1.4 million young people are currently participating in dual vocational education and training (VET) in Germany. This system of studying and working is the foundation of vocational education in Germany and is highly prestigious worldwide. Its key to success: Dual vocational education and training focuses on „learning by doing“ in a company and, thus, increases retention by combining practical and theoretical training

■ Dual VET is an important location factor for companies relying on skilled employees. They use this form of vocational education to ensure the availability of skilled professionals. These in-house trained employees meet exactly the operational requirements of the companies which recruit them.

■ Compared to international standards, the German dual VET is one of the most promising models to integrate young people into the labor market. This is one of the reasons for the low youth unemployment rate in Germany compared to many other countries, where vocational education systems are primarily school-based.

MIRROR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

■ Company-based education in Germany is closely linked to the employment system. An efficient VET system also relies on the economic environment. Skilled employees contribute to positive economic conditions. Likewise, in an unhealthy labor market facing high tax burdens or an economic downturn, a dual VET system will also be negatively affected.

■ At the same time, it is vitally important that enterprises can decide freely whether to offer vocational education and training. Only if it is worth investing in VET due to their needs for skilled employees, will companies decide to get involved in VET. Thus, the existing high job creation effect of dual vocational education and training is optimized.



COMPANY AND VET-SCHOOL: A SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN PRACTICE AND THEORY

VET requires two strong partners:

■ The major part of training within this dual system is performed in companies that are responsible for this practical part. The in-company vocational training concentrates on teaching specialized practical skills and on providing the necessary occupational experience 3–4 days a week.

■ The apprentice spends 1–2 days a week at a vocational school. The vocational school focuses on providing specialized theoretical knowledge for the relevant occupation and on consolidating and improving the level of general education.

A WIDE RANGE OF TRAINING OCCUPATIONS

■ Currently, there are approx. 340 approved training occupations. The German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHKs) supervise 270 of those. Further VET opportunities are offered mainly in the craft sector and the agricultural sector. VET prepares apprentices for more than 15,000 different professions.

■ The details on VET are defined in national training regulations. Hence, a standardized VET-system is guaranteed across Germany. Every VET graduate is therefore mobile and able to work in her/his profession throughout Germany.

■ The regulations are developed by experts from the industry, as they know best what skill set is needed and what qualifications are required to fulfill these needs. The regulations are usually enacted by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy.

LEGAL BASIS: THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING ACT

■ VET has been regulated by the Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz) since 1969. This law grants companies a certain scope, which is essential for the education of skilled employees. It is modernized regularly.

■ This law also defines that the IHKs are responsible for ensuring the quality of VET in the companies.

SERVICES OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (IHKs)

IHKs are institutions of self-administration of the German regional economy. All German companies of industry and trade are obliged to become members in one of the 80 IHKs. Additionally, IHKs are entrusted with tasks of public authority, especially those concerning vocational education and training. In the field of VET, IHKs represent both the interests of the companies as well as on those of the State. IHKs consult and support companies:

■ IHKs act as consultants and supervisors for the companies during VET. In continual exchange of information with enterprises, quality requirements of the programs are updated and training regulations can be adjusted.

■ Not every company is allowed to provide VET in any profession. Companies, offering VET need to have trainers who fulfill professional as well as personal qualifications. IHKs evaluate whether the trainers are suited and arrange corresponding training courses (training of trainers).

■ If a company does not have the resources to realize all steps of the training program, IHKs organize combined training with several enterprises.

■ The training contracts are registered in the list of training relationships. IHKs also examine if it is possible to reduce or extend the training period in each particular case.

■ IHK training consultants are also in charge of supporting apprentices, i.e. as mediators in case of any differences occurring between the training company and the apprentice.

■ IHKs organize the intermediate and final examinations. They set up examination boards which consist of volunteer delegates of entrepreneurs, employees and trainers of VET-schools. About 170,000 volunteer examiners work in approx. 28,000 IHK-examination boards in order to guarantee the practical relevance of the examinations. They ensure need-oriented skilled employees, allow for examinations that are relevant for the economy and, thus strengthen self-administration of the local economy.

■ IHKs regulate the admission of apprentices to the examinations and issue the certificates. Exam questions are predominantly created at the national level to ensure that the IHK-certificate is a testimony for successfully completing vocational education and training throughout Germany.