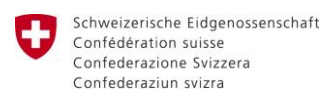


Dual Vocational Education and Training in Development Cooperation

Mutual Understanding and Principles

Donor Committee for Dual Vocational Education and Training



Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Donor Committee for dual Vocational Education and Training (DC dVET)

Vocational education and training is an important pillar of the development policies of Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland. In order to better use and communicate their experiences and expertise in dual vocational education and training (VET), these four countries have established the Donor Committee for dual Vocational Education and Training (DC dVET).

The members of the DC dVET are:

- the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the operational unit of Austrian Development Cooperation,
- the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)¹,
- the Liechtenstein Development Service (LED) and
- the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Organisation:

The members have set up a secretariat to coordinate and support their activities.

¹ The *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH* supports BMZ in the role of their operative implementing partner.

Dual Vocational Education and Training

Combining our Strengths!

The four donor committee members ADA (Austria), BMZ (Germany), LED (Liechtenstein), and SDC (Switzerland) have been implementing vocational education and training (VET) projects for many years now². Among them also projects with dual approaches. The dual VET systems in the four donor countries serve as reference models for implementation. In these countries dual VET³ is a widespread and well-recognised component of their education systems.

In recent years, there has been a spike in international interest in dual VET. The Donor Committee for dual Vocational Education and Training (DC dVET) considers this as an opportunity and aims to support the further integration of dual VET approaches into development cooperation and raise public awareness to it - without promoting a one to one transfer of the system. The advantages of dual VET shall be made (more) accessible to southern and eastern partner countries.

The Donor Committee has commissioned two studies, which serve as the basis for the thematic discussion: a comparative study of the four VET systems in the member countries and one that documents the experiences the four donors have had with dual VET approaches in development cooperation. Based on these studies, the member organisations' many years of experience and expertise, as well as additional reports and discussions on the subject, the Donor Committee has formulated a mutual understanding and shared principles as regards to dual VET in development cooperation. Based on the four topics below, the mutual understanding of dual VET and the takeaways for the development cooperation are illustrated:

- Dimensions of dual VET
- Success Factors
- Opportunities for Implementation
- Delimitation

² The term "development cooperation" encompasses the entire spectrum of the member institutions, i.e. cooperation with southern and eastern countries, as well as humanitarian aid.

³ The terms vocational education, vocational training, first apprenticeship, and continuing professional education will be used generically in this document.



Dimensions of dual VET

Generally one can differentiate between three dimensions of dual VET.

Organisational - Institutional Dimension: the dual VET system:

The system's key components are as follows:

- **Learning Venues:** The training is held at two learning venues school and business. The classroom-based component provides theory and general education, while the business component is where hands-on knowledge and skills are gained. In some cases, there might be additional venues.
- **Ownership:** Dual VET is a shared responsibility by public and private respectively schools and business partners. The existence of private sector representational bodies (e.g. professional associations, chambers of commerce, and the like) is essential for this purpose.
- **Status of Trainees:** In dual VET, businesses recruit trainees who then become employees with an employment resp. apprenticeship contract.
- **Duration of training:** In countries with a dual VET system, initial apprenticeship lasts from two to four years.
- **Ratio of learning the business to learning in the classroom:** In countries with a dual VET system, the proportion of business-based training to classroom education is between 80:20 and 60:40.

The Pedagogic Dimension: the dual Concept

The alternation between classroom and practical learning lies at the heart of the dual concept. Depending on the context, hands-on practical training can also take place at training workshops, labs, simulated businesses, or project work.

The Societal Dimension: the Professional Concept

In the countries with a dual VET system, VET is closely tied to the concept of a profession and pride therein. This means that an apprenticeship will result in a comprehensive qualification and not simply in a job or a number of selected skills. Furthermore, society associates dual VET with concepts of quality, skilled work, and views the "Meister" (Master Craftsman) as a respected title.



Experience and Implications for Development Cooperation

All three dimensions can take on various forms and expressions under implementation. These depend on the given history of the (vocational) education system, the economic and social structures, as well as political and institutional set-up. In partner countries of development cooperation the chosen approach must be adapted to the local needs and framework conditions to ensure that they can benefit from the advantages of dual VET.

- All elements of the organisational-institutional dimension of dual VET apply in principle to development cooperation as well. Nevertheless, adjustments are required because not all elements can be implemented immediately.
- The professional concept understood as a broad qualification that - in addition to the technical knowledge and skills - also comprises the professional socialisation, can normally not be implemented directly in partner countries unfamiliar with it. However, in projects and programmes it can be articulated as a development objective.

Especially at the beginning of development cooperation, the Donor Committee member organisations have set up training centres oriented to the dual and professional concept in various countries. At these centres, experts were trained and practical hands-on training was organised in internal workshops. Many of these centres are still functioning successfully based on this training concept. However, due to the relatively high costs, the approach is less suited to large-scale implementation but much more to promoting strategically important professions or training multipliers, e.g. training of trainers or VET responsables.



Success Factors

In recent years, key success factors of dual VET systems have been articulated in various discussions and reports. These form an important basis for the discussion as to what extent dual VET can offer advantages to partner countries. Based on these works, the Donor Committee highlights the following key success factors of dual VET⁴ (the sequence does not follow a hierarchy):

Learning in Alternation

By learning in the classroom as well as in a professional setting, trainees not only gain valuable technical and social skills, they also learn to implement these skills in practice. Consequently, they become better positioned on the labour market after completing their training.

Role of the Private Sector

Joint responsibility of the state and private sector partners ensures the systematic involvement of the private sector in the development of occupational profiles and curricula, the training delivery, examinations, steering and financing of VET. This ensures that the professional skills and expertise obtained during training meet the demands of the economy. By companies recruiting the trainees they decide themselves, how many and which people are to be trained. Thus, trainings meet the demand of the economy not only in terms of content but also quantitatively.

Social Recognition of Standards

Societal recognition of dual VET and its certificates is an important element of its attractiveness and success. It is closely connected to quality and opportunities for further education. This in turn requires a VET system that allows for high flexibility despite standardization. Only in this way training courses can be adjusted to keep pace with economic changes and the system itself be further developed.

Qualification of Training Institutes and Staff

Staff, technically and institutionally competent training institutes, and qualified vocational trainers within businesses form the basis of high-quality teaching and learning processes.

⁴ Some of these factors are not merely specific to dual VET systems but are so crucial to the success of a given system that they are highlighted here as well.

Joint Financing

Compared with school-based VET systems, a dual system is relatively lower in cost for the state, as businesses bear a substantial part of the training costs. At the same time, many of the businesses benefit even financially. In some sectors already during apprenticeships (due to relatively long training periods of initial apprenticeships), otherwise subsequent to it in form of qualified employees for their business.

Broad Objectives

A well-functioning, mature VET system comprises the following objectives:

- Economic objectives: productivity, competitiveness, and quality.
- Social objectives: education and social integration.
- Individual objectives: employment and income, mobility, personal development, and career.

Not every training course can and shall reach all these objectives equally. The system as a whole should ensure a careful balance of all the objectives though.



Experience and Implications for Development Cooperation

In the frame of projects and programmes, the aforementioned success factors are at the beginning often either not or only partly existing. In dual VET projects, they can and should be formulated as objectives taking into account the local context. In practice, the partner countries can be supported in the following efforts (this list is not exhaustive):

- Establishing systematic partnerships between state and private sector resp. between schools and businesses. Over the long term, a mature and organised private sector is required for this.
- Creating or updating teaching curricula in accordance with the demands of the labour market.
- Organising practical hands-on learning by involving businesses or – if cooperation with businesses is not possible - by building training facilities that satisfy the requirements of the course curricula while recreating a realistic work environment.
- Training and continuing education of teaching staff, in particular with regard to the practical requirements of VET.
- VET system reforms without aiming to reorganise the entire system into a dual system (dual VET approaches should always be one option among several).
- Improving the image of VET through initiatives such as consulting, information, public campaigns, professional competitions, etc.

Opportunities for Implementation

The members of the DC dVET mutually agree that their dual VET systems cannot simply be copied in other countries and contexts. This is partly because education systems are always rooted in the local context and grew over time. Moreover, there is not “the dual system”: there are considerable differences and various models between as well as within these systems. The many years of experience of the DC dVET members show that the likelihood of success of the dual approaches in development cooperation is closely correlated with the local framework conditions. They include the economic development and degree of formalisation of the local economy as well as the structure and recognition of available offers in VET and general education. Furthermore, the defined qualification level and target group(s) of a project are also influencing the design of an approach.



Experience and Implications for Development Cooperation

To implement dual VET approaches, the participation by the private sector must be assured. The type and extent of its involvement depends on the local context. The following scenarios are especially promising for introducing dual VET approaches:

- **Dualisation of non-formal VET programmes of medium and large-scale enterprises:** Medium and large-scale enterprises that cannot find the required qualifications on the labour market are often forced to organise their own in-house training programmes. Through inter-firm cooperation, such programmes can be dualised, standardised, and formalised.
- **Pioneering companies as partners for dual VET models:** Medium and large-scale enterprises requiring staff with higher technical qualifications often have difficulty filling these positions. They are potential partners to introduce dual VET models as they have a vested business interest and often also the required financial strength.
- **The organised private sector as partner for dual VET models:** If associations or informal business interest groups recognise the limited availability of qualified staff as a common problem, then this offers a promising basis for mutually developing a dual solution.

- **Innovative training institutes as initiators of dual training courses:** Innovative training institutes with good contacts in industry, organisational competences and autonomy can initiate dual training models if they succeed to motivate and engage business partners.
- **Dualisation of traditional apprenticeships in the informal sector:** Many partner countries in Africa and Asia feature traditional apprenticeships in the informal sector. These can be dualised by expanding the business component with a classroom component.
- **Introduction of dual VET approaches as part of the national VET policy:** If dual VET is introduced as a component of the official government policy, then it is important to ensure that the private sector is involved from the very beginning.

In all six scenarios it is essential that public and private actors collaborate. This ensures that VET offers will meet business needs and enjoy public recognition (through certification of standards) while being firmly embedded in the legal framework. Projects and programmes introducing and expanding dual VET offers require a long time horizon due to their complexity. This might take 15 years or longer.



Delimitation

Economic Development and Poverty Reduction

Due to its economic, individual and social objectives, VET automatically lies in the centre of economic development and poverty reduction. By training skilled workers, VET contributes simultaneously to the productivity and competitiveness of a given sector or economy, as well as to labour market integration and individual development of the trainees. However, it is important to keep in mind that these effects often come to fruition only over the long term. In particular the contribution of VET to social integration is often only effective once an educational system is able to offer specific courses for specifically poor or disadvantaged youth or population.

Vocational Education as a System and Process

In the international terminology, vocational education and training on the one hand stands for training processes that prepare people for the professional world, while on the other hand it stands for (national) systems that organise these processes. VET as a process reaches much further than a VET system: it encompasses all forms of professional training measures – including formal and non-formal – in which every process can be organised based on the dual concept. For development cooperation, this means that not all VET initiatives necessarily need be anchored in the local VET system. Depending on a project or programme's qualification level and target group, such VET programmes are potentially better implemented and financed in the frame of labour market programmes or special programmes for specific target groups.

Other Approaches

Worldwide, VET is organised according to different traditions, philosophies, and approaches. In the framework of development cooperation, these differing directions often come together in a partner country and need to be harmonised with each other. Of particular relevance are the approaches from the Anglo-Saxon world such as "Competency-Based Training" (CBT) and "National Qualification Frameworks" (NQF). In general, both approaches are compatible with dual VET. NQFs under the condition that they focus on skills in the sense of professional capabilities regardless of where and how they were obtained. In this case NQFs can even be advantageous for dual VET approaches as they provide an institutional framework for the skills obtained at dual training venues and forming the basis for the formal recognition of the certificates.



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