



EQAVET Peer Review in Germany

Quality assurance and qualification of in-company trainers in IVET (dual system) and CVET in Germany

**2nd event of the 2024-2026 EQAVET Peer Review Cycle
25-26 June 2024, Bonn**

Feedback report

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The EQAVET system level peer review initiative

The [2020 Council Recommendation on VET](#) called on the EQAVET Network to develop a specific methodology for EQAVET peer reviews, with the objective to support the improvement and transparency of quality assurance arrangements at system level in Member States. Over the course of 2021, with the support of DG EMPL and the EQAVET Secretariat, the EQAVET Network agreed on a joint methodology and prepared a Peer Review Manual. The Quality Assurance National Reference Points (EQAVET NRPs) from 21 Member States agreed to take part in the first phase of the EQAVET Network's peer review initiative, and 21 system level peer reviews were successfully implemented in 2022 and 2023.

A new peer review cycle was launched in 2023, with 20 NRPs participating. The second EQAVET Peer Review of the new cycle took place on 25-26 June 2024 in Bonn, hosted by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) which is where the German National Reference Point is located. Eight EQAVET Network members from Austria, Czechia, Greece, Portugal and Spain acted as peers.

This report summarises the information shared at the meeting and the peer feedback.

In-company trainers and their qualification

1. Information shared by the host country

1.1 Qualifications for in-company VET personnel

During the online preparatory meeting, the German NRP presented the qualifications for in-company trainers (IVET and CVET) in Higher VET. They are an additional and compulsory offer to a certification which is based on the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude (AEVO). According to the Vocational Training Act, in-company trainers should be personally and professionally suited. They should show occupational skills, knowledge and competences as well as vocational and work-related pedagogical competences. In case they are registered by name with the corresponding competent body, they are legally responsible for properly executing trainings according to a certain training regulation. Companies providing training need to register at least one in-company trainer who has passed the examination based on the AEVO.

The AEVO, introduced in 1972, regulates the authorisation for training and the attestation of the vocational and work-related pedagogical competences of in-company trainers in IVET. The AEVO is supplemented by a framework plan that sets out the content to be examined and is used as a recommended curriculum for courses that prepare for an examination based on the AEVO.

In the past, the AEVO experienced partial resistance from the economy, as companies did not want conditions to be imposed on them for carrying out the apprenticeship training. The AEVO was suspended in 2003 to reduce the administrative pressure on companies and encourage them to offer more training places, but due to the lack of positive impact on the number of offerings of apprenticeship placements and to negative trends for the quality of training, the AEVO was reintroduced in 2009. Since then, it has experienced acceptance as the minimum standard qualification among all parties, including employer representatives. This also strengthened efforts to further professionalise in-company trainers and led to the introduction of two additional training qualifications: the Certified Trainings and CVET Pedagogue (EQF/DQR level 6) and Certified Vocational Pedagogue (EQF/DQR level 7). Due to lack of demand, however, these certificates have not met the expectations and need to be revised. The BIBB is currently conducting a preliminary study to first explore whether there is a need for introducing another qualification at EQF/DQR level 5.

1.2 The situation of in-company trainers

To kick-off the peer review meeting in Bonn, the host country presented the situation of in-company trainers and the challenge of their professionalisation. The dual IVET system relies on two learning venues with 70% of the training performed in a company and 30% in a vocational school, therefore in-company trainers have the main responsibility for the training. The Vocational Training Act requires companies wanting to provide training to have suitable training premises and training staff. Any company wanting to offer apprenticeship training needs to register at least one employee who can function as the designated responsible trainer ('Ausbilder') for the occupation being trained. In the German dual system, in-company training must follow minimum standards defined in the training regulations. In-company trainers bear the legal responsibility for the proper implementation of the apprenticeship training but also 'skilled workers providing training' take on training tasks under the responsibility of the in-company trainer.

The training staff is composed of four categories: training managers, full-time in-company trainers, part-time in-company trainers and skilled workers providing training. The national employee surveys (1998/99) suggested that 16% of German employees are regularly in

charge of training apprentices. 6% of them were full-time trainers while 94% of all employees involved in apprenticeship training were part-time trainers. Many 'informal' in-company trainers do not identify as trainers. Companies usually register one person as a trainer as foreseen by law, but in practice several skilled workers and clerks perform the training informally without having the certification. Inter-company training centres support among other things companies that cannot provide the required technology or resources and are not in the position to fully impart the vocational skills, knowledge and abilities of the training regulations. They also offer guidance and classes. In-company trainers are selected based on their knowledge of their occupation and their willingness to share their knowledge, generally in an informal process.

1.3 AEVO and framework plan changes

In 2020/21, BIBB conducted a study to assess whether the AEVO and its framework plan adequately reflected the current challenges for training personnel and company-based training practice and if an update was necessary. It appeared that competences examined on the basis of the AEVO were rather limited and considered insufficient to tackle transformation challenges on the labour market. Moreover, the role of in-company trainers is not well recognised and appreciated in companies.

The study recommended maintaining the AEVO as it is flexible enough. However, while the framework plan is an important component of the AEVO, its content should therefore be adapted and modernised to cover challenges such as digitalisation, sustainability, demography and heterogeneity. This has been done in 2023. In the context of the study, it was also recommended that voluntary further training programmes as well as refresher courses could be offered.

1.4 Projects to support in-company trainers

Four initiatives and projects were presented to illustrate further support to companies and their trainers as well as how to better consider the themes of digitalisation and sustainability in apprenticeship trainings:

- **PrimAQ (great training quality)** is a licensed model of the chamber of crafts Hannover, which is offered to companies to support and improve in-company trainings. Training advisors in the chambers can provide tools such as guidance, booklets or training plans, as well as organise events, including workshops for trainers and apprentices, breakfasts for apprentices where they can exchange their experience or round tables for managers/CEOs.
- **MIKA – Media and IT skills for trainers** was developed to strengthen in-company trainers' digital skills and their use of digital media in their training. MIKA offers an e-learning platform, online trainings, seminars, digital training tools, a community of practice and educational games.
- **Sustainability** is among four standards (law, safety and digitalisation) which need to be implemented within the training of apprentices. Pilot projects have been developed to make sustainability more tangible for apprentices by implementing dedicated content in the trainings for in-company trainers.
- **'Weiterbildungsmentoring'** is a new approach to initiate and support better participation in CVET in companies for employees with low formal qualifications. Over 300 mentors work in 100 companies across Germany on these projects to advise their colleagues and encourage their participation in CVET, initiate conversations on career development and to support structural change.

2. Peer Feedback to topic 1

Against the background of the needs of apprentices and in-company trainers/inter-company trainers and their general conditions of work in companies:

In your view, what qualification content (learning objectives) for in-company training personnel and inter-company trainers is central?

With regard to qualification content, the peers emphasised the following topics in particular:

- The peers believed that in-company trainers must have relevant **competences to deal with the diverse group of apprentices**, including in terms of age, interests and topics relevant to them. For example, they must take into account the development phase of the apprentices and their level of maturity (including puberty) and understand Generation Z. The in-company trainers need to know, for example, how they should behave in special situations (e.g. apprentice is late, lacks concentration or shows other behavioural problems). Knowledge of other institutions (for cooperation with schools, youth counselling centres, etc.) is also crucial. As many of the apprentices are adults, the peers suggested that the framework plan should also take into account theories of adult education and andragogy. Thus, as dual training is offered to both youth and adult learners, the preparation of the in-company trainers should reflect pedagogical competences for both age groups in order to deal with them in an appropriate way. The peers also emphasised the importance of assessing the competence level of the apprentices at the beginning of their training and tailoring the pedagogical approaches to the respective level (e.g. building on previous learning experiences) as well as to the specific target groups (adults, young people, low-skilled, people with a migration background, people with individual needs).
- **Pedagogical and didactic competences** should be **balanced and aligned with technical/professional skills**. Even if in-company trainers are not necessarily categorised as pedagogical staff, they interact intensively with apprentices. They must have pedagogical and didactic competences to adapt their approach to the heterogeneous target groups and also to reduce the complexity of the technical knowledge they pass on to the apprentices. Sometimes, a skilled worker has high technical competences but not the appropriate skills to explain how to train another person in this field. It is a further step to be able to explain a technical task in order to make it understandable for trainees. Through the reflection and analysis that takes place when trying to explain a technical task to another person, it is possible to improve the understanding and self-awareness of one's own task, which can also lead to an improvement in the technical level of the trainer. Some technical problems can be solved thanks to these pedagogical considerations and efforts to make the task understandable.
- According to the peers, a further focus could be placed on **soft skills**. For example, readiness for change is very important, as well as communication (in smaller and larger teams as well as for working with the parents of apprentices) and feedback competences, conflict resolution skills, interpersonal skills, empathy, team building competences, know how related to motivational strategies, mentoring apprentices, effective training management, ability to assess acquired skills, resilience, inclusion and integration techniques (for working with minorities and apprentices with special educational needs). Soft skills are crucial and it is important to strengthen the face-to-face and one-to-one approach as these are among the most important learning objectives in terms of the in-company trainers' qualification. The technical

competences are required for a skilled worker, so there should be a strong focus on these competences. These soft skills should be developed in a personalised and practical way so that they can be acquired more effectively. Ensuring that in-company trainers acquire these soft skills will help to make the training of apprentices more successful.

- The peers also suggested taking greater account of **digitalisation** in the curricula (e.g. with MIKA); it could even be included in the ordinance. **Sustainability** could be included as a transversal topic.

How could technical knowledge be enriched by pedagogical competences through qualification?

The peers made some suggestions on how technical knowledge could be enriched by pedagogical competences:

- **Courses or any kind of preparation** are beneficial for in-company trainers as they are confronted with various challenges, including technological development, new topics such as eco-friendliness/sustainability or digitalisation and the heterogeneity of the group they work with (Special Education Needs learners, socially disadvantaged learners, migrants, gender issues and many others).
- **Acquiring pedagogical competences** online is a challenge. Interactive and group dynamic **face-to-face training** should be favoured. Face-to-face training is of utmost importance to unleash the synergies that emerge in the course of human interaction and thus increase the performance of the training. Pedagogical competences should also be trained in a **practical way**. Therefore, the peers recommended increasing the number of hours dedicated to this topic.

Example from Czechia

In Czechia, courses also include a practical part, which takes place at a company's workplace or in school workshops. On this day, new trainers focus on the work of their experienced colleagues, taking notes on what was not correct and why, and suggesting their solutions. Thus, inexperienced trainers observe how experienced colleagues (i.e. trainers with many years of practice in interacting with learners) implement what they have learnt in the course. This gives them the opportunity to see situations where trainers act well and appropriately, but they also have the opportunity to compare what works less well in their interaction with students in the workplace and explain how they would resolve the situation. At the end of the day, there is a joint reflection with the participants of the course and the instructor. Fresh graduates of trainer courses can analyse the situation with their lecturer/mentor and suggest a more appropriate solution. This is very effective and valuable, and the feedback from the participants of these courses is also positive. Part of this training can take place either in a company or in the workshops/laboratories/kitchens of schools etc. where the participants follow the practices of experienced teachers in terms of final assessment and motivational feedback, dealing with mistakes etc. Recommended is 8 hours of this 'internship', but companies or schools offering courses can extend the number of hours or even days (if they deem it necessary) to increase the confidence of the new trainers.

- **Sharing experiences with other in-company trainers** from different companies **within a sector** can also help to expand pedagogical competences and increase the motivation of trainers. In Czechia, there has been good experience with such meetings (which usually take place once a year or every two years). The (joint) **development of innovation or excellence projects** could also be encouraged as well as a **learning**

network to collaborate on pedagogical-didactical methods for technical training could be created.

- Another option could be to provide **interactive online manuals** for all target groups focussing on pedagogical competences (at the same time digital competences would be promoted).

Other suggestions for strengthening pedagogical competences of in-company trainers include:

- **Mentors** for in-company trainers could be introduced to support them in their tasks.
- The **monitoring and supervision of in-company trainers' pedagogical competences** could be considered, as well as the organisation of regular refresher training to update qualifications.
- The link with **teachers in schools** and their pedagogical competences could be strengthened.

Example from Czechia

In Czechia, there is the Recommendation of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2016) regarding the uniform procedure for concluding a contract on the content, scope and conditions for the practical training provided at the workplaces of natural or legal persons authorised to carry out related activities. They stipulate that the school appoints an employee of the school (coordinator or head of practical training) who is responsible for the realisation and implementation of practical training in a company. This coordinator also ensures cooperation between the teacher appointed by the school for the practical training and the company's trainer and is responsible for the ongoing monitoring of the practical training. In particular, the coordinator represents the school in communication with the company and provides the trainer with methodological support during the practical training. If necessary, the school enables the trainers to participate in pedagogical and methodological events or school meetings.

- The **practical part of the exam** (currently only 30 minutes) could be extended to include **demonstrations** of pedagogical and didactic skills and observations in real-life situations.
- In-company trainers should **represent the diversity of society** to ensure inclusion (e.g. women in male-dominant professions, people with a migrant background, people with disabilities). Further promotion at a political level could help to address these groups.

To your view which are the strengths and weaknesses of the German approach to qualifications of in-company personnel in IVET?

The peers emphasised the following key strengths:

- The system for in-company trainers has a long-standing tradition, is **well established and generally recognised**. It is very **well structured, organised, clear** (self-explanatory for all stakeholders) and **supported by legislation** (the requirements are enshrined in law at federal level).
- The **range of courses** for in-company trainers using different methods/formats/channels is also well developed.

- **Research** has been carried out on key issues and the AEVO and framework have undergone a **review** phase to better adapt them to current trends and the situation of the economy/VET sector/green and digital transition.
- There are **several supporting tools** (e.g. MIKA, mentoring project, primAQ).

The peers also identified some weaknesses and – in some cases – made suggestions as to how these could be overcome:¹

- The **dual system in Germany is currently facing challenges** in general, both in terms of acceptance on the part of employers and learners (e.g. SMEs only offer a limited number of training places and there is a visible trend that many young people prefer the higher education sector to initial vocational training).

>>> Targeted communication strategies and measures could be used to increase awareness and appreciation of the system. Motivational measures (e.g. state funding) could also be used.

- The **role of in-company trainers is not very attractive**, their prestige is rather low and there seem to be no obvious benefits or incentives associated with this role. In addition, pedagogical competences are often less valued by companies compared to technical competences.

>>> The work on in-company training is crucial to counteract the ‘work or training’ dilemma at company level and at the same time increase the added value of apprenticeship training.

>>> Measures could be considered to better recognise this role, to motivate skilled workers to become in-company trainers and to train future trainers or support those who have recently obtained the trainer certificate.

>>> Benefits/incentives for in-company trainers could be considered. It seems that reducing the direct workload as a trainer is not sufficient motivation.

>>> Benefits/incentives for companies could be considered as well. For example, the State could offer tax reductions.

>>> Other possibilities are inviting trainers to events organised by cooperating schools or chambers/guilds etc., or perhaps organising a competition where trainers are awarded by apprentices in different categories (skills), e.g. patience, comprehensible transfer of knowledge and skills, organisation of training, pedagogical skills, innovative approach etc.

>>> If there is no prospect of remuneration based on the function, the qualification could at least be better recognised, e.g. through micro-credentials to increase the added value of the certificate, including abroad.

>>> A company trainer association could give trainers more visibility and give them a voice in policy making.

>>> The role of the in-company trainers should also be recognised in terms of the tasks themselves and the energy spent on them. Companies could be awarded on the basis of their high-quality trainers. In Austria, for example, there is a state recognition and prize for companies that provide quality training, which helps to attract apprentices.

¹ Suggestions are marked with >>>

Example from Austria

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour and Economic Affairs (BMAW) recognises training companies that perform particularly well in apprenticeship training as a 'state-awarded training company' ('Staatlich ausgezeichnete Ausbildungsbetriebe')².

The criteria for receiving the state award include:

- Success in final apprenticeship examinations and in state and national competitions;
- Commitment in the area of career information;
- Co-operation of the training company;
- In-company and external further training programmes for apprentices and trainers.

Apprenticeship companies can apply for this award at the apprenticeship office of the responsible federal state. The award is presented following a unanimous decision by the provincial vocational training advisory board.

Every two years, the State Prize 'Best Apprenticeship Companies - Fit for Future' ('Beste Lehrbetriebe – Fit for Future')³ is awarded by the BMAW. The aim of this prize is to strengthen quality, innovation and sustainability in apprenticeship training. The State Prize is intended to send out a high-profile signal in favour of quality in apprenticeships and to honour Austrian training companies for their outstanding work in the field of youth training. The Institute for Research on Vocational Education and Training (ibw) is responsible for the conception and organisation of the State Prize. In 2024, the State Prize will be awarded in the following categories:

- Apprenticeship marketing - Employer branding – Recruitment
- Training initiatives in training companies with up to 50 apprentices
- Training initiatives in training companies with more than 50 apprentices

Special prizes are also awarded:

- Focus on trainers: inspiration and success stories
- Apprentice reels: training up close

Example from Czechia

In Czechia, a competition called Instructor 2015 was introduced as part of an ESF project. The instructors were nominated by the students of the participating VET schools. Unfortunately, this was a unique activity that will no longer be continued. However, it is assumed that such activities promote the attractiveness of trainers and are very important.

There are three competitions in the Czech Republic, but only for teachers. One of them is for inspirational teachers. This could also be an option for in-company trainers in Germany and if they would choose this path, there could be other categories - e.g. for sustainability or digitalisation, pedagogical skills, innovative approaches, etc. This could also bring in good practice examples as these are important for motivating other trainers.

² <https://www.bmaw.gv.at/Themen/Lehre-und-Berufsausbildung/Lehrlingsausbildung-Duales-System/Staatliche-Auszeichnung-gem-Paragraf30aBAG.html>

³ ['Best Apprenticeship Companies - Fit for Future' \('Beste Lehrbetriebe – Fit for Future'\)](#)

- There are **no minimum requirements for access to certification** (such as the number of years of practical experience in a company). This could be one of the reasons why there are more young professionals who are willing to take on this role but lack the necessary experience (e.g. they might have well-developed technical skills but not be as good at leading and guiding because they lack the necessary life experience).

>>> An experience requirement could be considered for in-company trainers. Consideration could also be given to organising co-training between less experienced and more experienced in-company trainers.

>>> In addition, older employees who are not yet trainers but have a lot of experience could play a role here. This could also increase their value on the labour market.

Example from Czechia

In Czechia, from 2017 to 2020, there were requirements stating that instructors should have three years of practical experience in the respective field of education. And there were also requirements for their qualifications: they had to have at least a vocational education certificate from a three-year study programme or a matura certificate (four-year study programme) in the respective field of education. Since 2020, however, there are no longer any requirements for the assessment standard of the professional qualification listed in the National Qualifications Register. Currently, the only requirements are age (18+) and basic education.

- There are a **large number of informal or ‘unofficial’ in-company trainers** who are very important but to some extent under the ‘radar’ of the system (grey area). More specifically, they are not qualified or officially appointed as trainers and often do not understand their role in the company as such. This could be a high risk in the dual system, both at the system level and at the provider/company level.

>>> Peers suggested that there is a need to recognise them and raise awareness of the importance of in-company trainers.

>>> These skilled workers providing training also need to be trained. While the qualification might be too difficult for any informal trainer to obtain, shorter workshops could be organised to train them.

>>> Another option suggested by the peers could be to provide them with some guidelines to support them in their work.

Example from Spain

In Spain, the ‘Dual VET Trainers’ Handbook⁴ was developed a few years ago by the Fundación Bertelsmann, which endeavours to promote the dual system in Spain as well as other aspects of the VET system. The second edition of this document, which complies with the new VET legislation, was recently published. The document was drawn up by the Catalan Council of Chambers of Commerce, the Alliance for Dual Vocational Training (a platform of organisations that promote dual VET) and the Fundación Bertelsmann. It is a practical document intended for company trainers. As there are no national regulations for education in Spain - responsibilities are decentralised - it is very useful for the different regions to have such a supporting document as a reference.

⁴ https://www.fundacionbertelsmann.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Manual-del-tutor_web.pdf (in Spanish)

- Although the **in-company training system** has been reviewed for effectiveness and changes have been made to the BBiG and AEVO, the system is not very flexible and **does not accommodate necessary adjustments and changes in a timely manner**. Although there are many chamber-organised quality initiatives for training companies in Germany (e.g. PrimaQ) that complement the courses based on the AEVO, these are often not free of charge.
- Furthermore, the peers observed that apart from the success rate of the apprentices in the exams, **there are neither KPIs nor a review and evaluation phase of the in-company training** and the trainers at the provider/company level. When trainers take their (one time) certification exams, they only know whether they have passed or failed and are not aware of what aspects/skills they need to improve at that time or even in training practice. While large companies might appreciate the value of an in-company trainer, the anchoring and quality development in small and medium-sized companies may not yet be well enough developed. Although there are some requirements for the assessment and accreditation of sites for the provision of in-company training, the final decision is at the subjective discretion of the chamber auditor.

>>> A quality initiative for in-company trainers should be considered, especially for those companies with a proven poor training performance. This should include supervision of in-company trainers and taking specific measures to prevent and resolve phenomena such as poor or no communication between the apprentice and the in-company trainer when such an incident occurs.

- The certification of in-company trainers has **no expiration date**; this does not encourage in-company trainers to update their competences in line with current technological, social and economic challenges and trends in the field of vocational education.

>>> Peers suggested to consider a qualification with limited validity and mandatory updates. Systematic and mandatory refresher training could be beneficial and a means to address this issue.

Example from Spain

In Spain, trainers are obliged to undergo compulsory retraining every 6 years. They have to justify a number of hours of training related to their training activity. The training is free of charge. If they do not prove that they have been retrained, they do not receive the monetary compensation that this entails.

Example from Greece

Adult trainer certification lasts 10 years. After this period, adult trainers, including in-company trainers, should either re-take training or prove a certain experience (150h). If the evidence is not provided, adult trainers will be withdrawn from the registry of certified adult trainers.

Example from Portugal

In the past, company trainers had to review their qualifications every 5 years. This requirement has been abolished; however, they are expected to refresh their knowledge on topics that they feel need updating.

- The peers also noted that the system is **not explicitly linked to the EQAVET indicators**. Indicator 2 in particular could be relevant.

- Peers also noted that while apprentices and trainers are required to **report on their work**, it is unclear how this input is used to improve training.
- The peers further **missed a clear and solid link or relationship of the AEVO framework** with the corresponding **framework for the trainers of target groups with special needs**.

3. Peer Feedback to topic 2

Against the backdrop of current challenges such as digitalisation, heterogeneity, demographics and sustainability:

From your perspective, how do we need to support and qualify in-company training personnel in order to actively shape the transformation issues?

Can you give us best-practice examples?

With regard to supporting the transformation process, the peers made the following suggestions:

- The **framework plan** could be **further enriched** with competences related to **sustainability** and **digitalisation** aspects.
- **Courses and training materials** need to be **updated** regularly to add the necessary topics.

Example from Czechia

In Czechia, online materials from the national pedagogical institute are available for teachers and in-company trainers who can complement them to reflect legislation developments and new aspects such as sustainability and digitalisation. Schools or companies can complement these online materials with sections reflecting their needs, in coherence with respective fields of education (e.g. chapter on special education needs). They are hence responsible for updating the materials.

Schools could perhaps support those who offer courses for in-company trainers in updating the content. At least in Czechia, digitalisation (digital skills development) and green topics (education for sustainable development) are cross-curricular topics that need to be integrated into all school education programmes. Schools could pass on this knowledge. Non-governmental organisations could also play an important role in this regard, as they very often offer different types of courses or workshops, e.g. training for dealing with migrants and other vulnerable groups.

Example from Portugal

In Portugal, too, there are co-operations between schools and trainers in companies. For example, the latter are supported in implementing distance learning, which is legally possible for special needs learners.

Example from Austria

In Austria, training regulations (including those that have been recently revised) are translated in a practical, easy-to-understand language for in-company trainers for

different professions. These training guides ('Ausbildungsleitfäden'⁵) contain information on training content and objectives and training tips from experienced trainers and are enriched with best practices for training. Currently, such training guides for 93 apprenticeships are available free of charge. In addition, occupation-specific training documentation is provided. This is also created in accordance with the training regulations for easy recording of the apprentices' progress.

- **Workshops** (one to two days; free of charge) could be organised and the **exchange of good practices** could be promoted at different levels (e.g. other in-company trainers could act as speakers in the workshops to share and explain their own experiences). Meetings could be organised for trainers to share their experiences. This could help to inspire in-company trainers not to be afraid of new topics and priorities and encourage them to change their mindset.
- Consideration should be given to generating a **system-wide web link where digital tools and didactic resources** that exist and support in-company trainers can be uploaded.
- **Developing and issuing micro-credentials** for specific focus topics (e.g. digitalisation, sustainability, etc.) could help in-company trainers to acquire all the required competences in a visible, structured way, which would also increase motivation to participate in the training process. This is especially true for older in-company trainers, for whom it is difficult to acquire all the competences in a 'one-off' training process.
- The development of **additional support structures** for in-company trainers is recommended, such as contact points that offer immediate support for urgent requests.
- To enable in-company trainers to work more actively with **people from specific target groups** (e.g. people with special needs or refugees), these target groups **should be made more visible**. Trainers need to have more information about the context and problems of these groups in order to be able to support them appropriately. Short courses could be organised to sensitize them. The peers considered that it is not always necessary to follow a long training course to obtain the necessary information to better address a person belonging to a specific group, but for an 'informal in-company trainers' it is enough to have access to micro-trainings or to be able to participate in thematic workshops to improve his or her training activity.
- Peers assumed that **digitalisation** happens automatically in innovative companies. However, some **institutional support or tools** for in-company trainers (electronic timetables, communication systems for trainers - trainees - teachers - parents) may be required. Digital learning platforms can also improve the process.
- In terms of **sustainability**, peers believed it is crucial to be convinced of the need for a **change in mentality at all levels of the company**, including (but not only) in-company training. The production process must be transformed, from the purchase of materials to the distribution of the finished product and customer service. There is no point in training employees in sustainability if the company itself does not believe in it and is not making sustainability-oriented changes. Therefore, training employees in sustainability must go hand in hand with implementing measures within the company to make it more environmentally friendly. For example, incentives could be created for recycling and digitalisation as well as for the humanisation, reorganisation and cleaning

⁵ <https://www.qualitaet-lehre.at/ausbilden-im-betrieb/ausbildung-gestalten/ausbildungsleitfaeden-dokumentationen/>

of rooms and workplaces. In terms of sustainability, clear career and development opportunities are needed, which larger companies can of course offer. It is worth considering that small and medium-sized enterprises could work together to develop career paths to make training in these professions more attractive.

Other suggestions from the peers included:

- Before accessing certification, interested parties should be **informed with an action protocol** to ensure that future in-company trainers are clear about what expectations and tasks they will face.
- Those who are certified as in-company trainers should be involved and can help mentors in companies to promote CVET. It is important to **combine the efforts of all the programmes/projects that are currently being developed** and incorporate the results of one into the development of the others.
- In order to make the presence of women in male-dominated sectors, people with disabilities, people with migrant background, etc. more visible in companies, **professionals with these profiles could be encouraged to become in-company trainers**; their participation in training could even be actively promoted. In this case, trainees with such backgrounds might feel more welcome if they take their first steps in the company with someone they can better identify with and in whom they can see a role model.