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**AGREEMENT**

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## Guidelines for dual-based training systems

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## European foreword

This CEN Workshop Agreement (CWA 17953:2022) has been developed in accordance with the CEN-CENELEC Guide 29 “CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreements – A rapid way to standardization” and with the relevant provisions of CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations - Part 2. It was approved by a Workshop of representatives of interested parties on 2022-06-21, the constitution of which was supported by CEN following the public call for participation made on 2022-02-18. However, this CEN Workshop Agreement does not necessarily include all relevant stakeholders.

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## Introduction

The Alpine Macroregion, located in the centre of Europe, is among the richest, most dynamic, innovative and competitive areas in many respects.

EUSALP – EU STRATEGY FOR THE ALPINE REGION is one of the four European Macroregional strategies and aims at fostering transnational collaboration among the Alpine States by joining human passions, natural resources and economic assets, linking cities, plains, valleys and mountains to find solutions to common challenges that can be solved better together.

EUSALP has nine thematic Action Groups. The focus of AG3 is to improve the adequacy of the labour market and of the education and training systems in order to foster increased employment levels, especially in strategic sectors.

The analysis developed by INAPP<sup>1</sup> and published in February 2019 in the framework of the Interreg Alpine Space project "Alp Gov I", "Dual Systems in the Regions of the Alpine Space", highlights the complexity and heterogeneity of the dual training models of the seven EUSALP countries<sup>2</sup>. The profound differences should be brought together in order to identify possible forms and solutions.

Dual training system is a model of professional training that aims at fostering young employability, promoting the match between supply and demand and countering early school leaving. Dual training systems are, in general, characterised by a learning process which develops in a workplace as well as in an educational or training institution. At the end of this process the apprentice/intern gains a qualification or a recognised certificate. The dual training system is generally based on a formal agreement between the enterprise and the apprentice/intern or between the enterprise and the educational institution.

This CWA<sup>3</sup> aims at bringing the level of discussion and dialogue on dual training to a higher level. A constructive and structured debate has been held within the Workshop and all stakeholders belonging to the European countries part of EUSALP had the opportunity to give their contribution, defining a shared and effective strategy for the development of apprenticeship/traineeship.

Thus, the development of a CWA based on the consensus of the parties is the most suitable tool to provide policymakers and all interested stakeholders with a guide, a reference document which can act as a catalyst for further documents, proposals and future European projects.

This CWA presents recommendations not requirements and its character is voluntary.  
of the introduction.

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<sup>1</sup> INAPP (Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche) is an Italian public research organisation, whose main goal is the analysis, monitoring and evaluation of the labour policies and services, education and training and of all the social policies with a direct impact over the labour market.

<sup>2</sup> For further comparison about this issue see also SWORD (School and Work Related Dual Learning), Autonomous Province of Trento, Erasmus+, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> A CWA (Cen Workshop Agreement) is an agreement developed and approved in a CEN Workshop; the latter is open to the direct participation of anyone with an interest in the development of the agreement. There is no geographical limit on participation; hence, participants may be from outside Europe. A CWA does not have the status of a European standard. It involves no obligation at national level.

## 1 Scope

This CWA defines quality criteria and guidelines for an effective dual training. The document aims at simplifying the dual training process for every kind of structure and includes examples of best practices related to different country-specific or sector-specific experiences. It also includes two annexes: the first one will target the code of conducts for enterprises and the second one will define training contract's general principles<sup>4,5</sup>.

## 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### **Dual based system**

Dual based system formally combines and alternate company-based training (periods of practical work experience at a workplace) with school-based education (periods of theoretical/practical education delivered in a school or training centre) and lead to nationally recognised qualification upon successful completion. In case of apprenticeship, there is a contractual relationship between the employer and the apprentice, with the apprentice being paid for his/her work.

### 3.2

#### **Dual system partners**

Refers to all parties involved in the dual systems: VET providers, employers, apprentices, employers' associations, trade unions, the government, student unions, etc. The three main partners are VET providers, employers and trainees or apprentices.

### 3.3

#### **Dual system scheme**

A systematic overview about how dual system provision is designed, delivered, assessed, certified and governed within the overall VET system.

### 3.4

#### **Competence**

Ability to apply knowledge and skill to achieve intended results.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, 3.7]

### 3.5

#### **Host organization**

A legal entity which can be private, semi-public or public acting as the place of work for the apprentices/trainees and responsible for providing practical work based learning experience under the

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<sup>4</sup> This CWA covers dual system mainly referenced to EQF level three and above.

<sup>5</sup> Significant identified good practices have been included in this CWA.

supervision of a professional with a significant background in the field of the experience. Enterprises are usually included in the host organisations.

### 3.6

#### **IPOO Model**

A new theoretical approach to school learning. IPOO is an acronym of Input, Process, Output, Outcome.

### 3.7

#### **Job Shadowing**

Job shadowing is a type of on-the-job training that allows an interested employee to follow and closely observe another employee performing the role. This type of learning is usually used to onboard new employees into an organization or into a new role. Job shadowing may also be used as a learning opportunity for interns or students to gain an understanding of the role requirements and the job tasks.

### 3.8

#### **Knowledge**

Facts, information, truths, principles or understanding acquired through experience or education.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC TS 17027:2014, 2.56]

### 3.9

#### **Mentor**

Any experienced person who provides guidance and support in a variety of ways and acts as a role model, guide, tutor, coach or confidant for a young person or novice (i.e. someone joining a new learning community or organisation).

### 3.10

#### **Qualification**

A formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

[SOURCE: EQF Recommendation, 2017]

### 3.11

#### **Work-based learning (WBL)**

A key aspect of VET directly linked to its goal of helping learners acquire the knowledge, skills and competences with direct relevance for the labour market.

### 3.12

#### **Skill**

Ability acquired through education, training, experience or other means to perform a task or an activity with a specific intended outcome.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC TS 17027:2014, 2.74, modified — The wording in the definition has been reordered]

### 3.13

#### **Skill needs**

Demand for particular types of knowledge and skills on the labour market (total demand within a country or region, economic sector, etc.).

[SOURCE: Cedefop, 2010]

### 3.14

#### **Social dialogue**

Negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between or among representatives of governments, employers and employees, on matters of common interest relating to economic and social policy.

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010, 2.17, modified]

### 3.15

#### **Social partners**

Employers' associations and trade unions forming the two sides of social dialogue.

[SOURCE: Cedefop, 2008, p. 170]

### 3.16

#### **Trainer/in-company trainer**

Employers' Anyone who fulfils one or more activities linked to the theoretical or practical training function, either in an institution for education or training, or in the workplace.

In-company trainers are understood as those trainers fulfilling their training functions in the workplace.

### 3.17

#### **Tutor**

Any experienced and competent professional that offers a learner guidance, counselling or supervision.

### 3.18

#### **VET provider**

Any organisation or individual providing education or training services.

### 3.19

#### **VET teacher**

A teacher is a person whose function is to impart knowledge, know-how or skills to learners in an education or training institution. A VET teacher is a person who works in education and training who aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labour market.

### 3.20

#### **Vocational education and training**

Vocational education and training, abbreviated as VET, sometimes simply called vocational training, is the training in skills and teaching of knowledge related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation in which the student or employee wishes to participate.

Vocational education may be undertaken at an educational institution, as part of secondary or tertiary education, or may be part of initial training during employment, for example as an apprentice, or as a combination of formal education and workplace learning.

[Source: Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2021]

## **4 Governance of the dual systems**

When addressing the governance of the dual-based system we have to take into account national circumstances and several possible parameters. The governance of the dual system is not univocally defined as it refers to different issues.



In general, we refer to governance by considering it a form of collaboration among the different bodies – institutional and non-institutional – involved in the functioning of dual systems.

Considering that this CWA focuses on the dual system's quality criteria, the main emphasis will be on the following statements:

- Involvement of public institutions, social partners, sectoral level and intermediate bodies;
- Definition of the Applicable Legal Framework;
- Sharing costs for mutual advantage of enterprises, VET providers and learners;
- Feedback-mechanism between VET systems and labour market needs;
- Collaboration between VET institutions and enterprises.

#### **4.1 Involvement of public institutions, social partners, sectoral level and intermediate bodies**

The collaboration among different partners and actors is very important for the Alpine region, where an effective and continuous social dialogue among the different levels (national, regional and local), the institutional actors and the social partners involved is highly recommended. The heterogeneity of national, regional and local governance in the Alpine region is however a complex issue. Therefore, it is difficult to define a single perspective, due to the different degrees of decentralization.

In this frame, public institutions should:

- Work at engaging the social partners to design and implement organisation and content of vocational programs by instituting permanent and well organized venues for a better collaboration among the parties;
- Reinforce the networks involved and manage the apprenticeship, activating effective synergies.

In order to involve social partners, public institutions could establish multi-stakeholder Committees focused on the apprenticeships' analysis. A good referring example is the dual system of German speaking countries (Austria, Germany, Lichtenstein and Switzerland), which is shaped as a corporative model, where employees' trade unions and employers' associations are actively and continuously involved in the planning, managing and evaluating phases.

Within this framework, tripartite Committees have been established (or even "quadripartite", given the involvement of representatives from two institutional levels). These Committees are focused on the apprenticeships' analysis: they elaborate and disseminate strategic guidelines for the evolution of the system, both on a national (federal) and regional level. This is particularly beneficial for an effective construction of the dual system's strategy since it helps to establish a permanent collaboration among the partners.

The main tasks of these committees should be:

- The production of regular reports concerning the monitoring and evaluation of apprenticeship systems and specific potential critical sides;
- The identification of corrective measures;
- The introduction of innovation in procedures, tools and rules;
- The introduction and implementation of feedback mechanisms with relevant research institutions.

Committees should include:

- Representatives of governments;
- Representatives of trade unions;
- Representatives of employers' associations;
- Education and training experts.

## **4.2 Definition of the Applicable Legal Framework**

Establishing a clear *legal framework*, aiming at defining the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of quality dual systems is a key element when addressing apprenticeship in the Alpine region. Its main goal is to guarantee mutual rights and responsibilities, paying a special attention to the following functions<sup>6</sup>:

- Setting the standards for the main training and skills development requirements in order to ensure the learning content and quality of the programme;
- Providing a clear outline of the rights, roles and responsibilities of all relevant parties and, in some cases, institutionalizing the specific role of key actors, notably the social partners;
- Specifying the status of the trainee;
- Outlining the basic terms and conditions, including (where applicable) entitlement to remuneration and other benefits;
- Determining the (minimum) duration of the training as well as the distribution of time between school- and work-based training;
- Specifying quality assurance mechanisms;
- Defining the agreement arrangements between the educational institution, employer and trainee, usually reflected in a training agreement, and conflict resolution mechanism<sup>7</sup>;
- Setting the minimum qualifications and length of previous professional experience for trainers both at the educational institutions and within the enterprises.

A further level of recommended involvement is with sectoral bodies, whose members belong to trade unions and employers' associations. Since they directly operate on the field, they can be extremely useful for the production of qualifications, assessment criteria, accreditation of enterprises and quality assurance for on-the-job training.

The regulatory framework should:

- Recognize the unique status of the trainee as a learner and secure his/her right to high quality training with strong transferable elements;

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<sup>6</sup> This scheme was defined in 2013 by the European Commission, *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU27: Key Success Factors A Guidebook for Policy Planners and Practitioners*, European Commission, December 2013. , pp 14-15.

<sup>7</sup> Over the years some countries established specific research institutes with the aim of monitoring and evaluating the dual systems (e.g. BIBB in Germany, ibw and öibf in Austria or SBFI in Switzerland). They played and play a key role in the design and the improvement of the dual systems thanks to their contribution, among others, on individuating the main labour market trends, on collecting training regulations and teaching materials and producing annual apprenticeship monitoring reports.

- Safeguard the rights and responsibilities of the main partners (see Annex A on Code of Conduct) while leaving questions of trainee content, assessment and certification to be agreed upon by employer and employee representatives<sup>8</sup>;
- Support governments in focusing on facilitating and regulating the overall processes;
- Facilitate accreditation procedures for enterprises and workplaces that offer traineeship and/or other quality assurance measures<sup>9</sup>.

#### 4.3 Sharing costs for the mutual advantage of enterprises, VET providers and learners

The final report *Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union* by the European Commission<sup>10</sup> identifies two main financing models when addressing apprenticeships:

- The first model is based on having the *public sector* as the central source of finance, with national and several European public funds.
- The second model, instead, offers a kind of shared financing with different actors and parties (enterprises, public sector, families and learners) involved. In the second case the enterprises play a key financial role.

It is hard to identify a unique and more effective financing model in the Alpine region. It is necessary to ensure a strong motivation among all the partners (enterprises, VET institutions and students) in order to engage them the best.

According to national regulations and practices the State should have the responsibility of financing the off-the-job training activities; the enterprises should take in charge the costs of the enterprise-based part of training, such as – among others – staff, on-the-job trainers, administration, assessment and certification costs. The narration of especially positive students' apprenticeship experiences might help overcoming the stereotypes and preconceptions usually connected to vocational training.

In some regions of the Alpine area apprentices have reduced salaries during the training period, thus co-participating to the overall finance sharing system, as explained above. Different kinds of systems ask for different kinds of cost-sharing.

Each stakeholder carries out different costs and benefits, both on the financial and non-financial level. A considerable amount of time should be considered when talking about apprenticeships' benefits and costs, since the positive impacts of training are not evident in a short time (certainly not the apprenticeship's duration), also considering that some benefits can be non-monetary. Often enterprises perceive the costs of promoting apprenticeships higher than the benefits: above all SMEs outweigh the costs and do not have enough time and resources to invest in good-quality apprenticeships.

Nevertheless, long-term benefits should be seen as a real and strategic opportunity for the enterprises of the Alpine regions above all considering that an apprentice can be a talented and motivated person to involve directly in the enterprise as an employee, thus sparing time and further energies in searching new staff. Moreover, the enterprise's specific skills can be trained more quickly and effectively during the apprenticeship's experience. The enterprise can then save time reducing the new hired people's adaptation period. Hiring a person who already knows the enterprise and its functioning is a further significant advantage for the enterprise.

A quality apprenticeship has the following pros:

8 Steedman, H. 2012, *Overview of Apprenticeship Systems and Issues ILO Contribution to the G20 Task Force on Employment*. International Labour Organization. [http://www.ilo.org/moscow/information-resources/publications/WCMS\\_345485/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/moscow/information-resources/publications/WCMS_345485/lang--en/index.htm).

9 Council Recommendation of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships. *Official Journal of the EU*, 2018/C 153/01, page 6.

10 European Commission. 2012. *Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union. Final report*. <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/apprenticeship-supply-in-the-member-states-of-the-european-union--pbKE3012434/>.

- it supports the school-to-work transition of young people, thus enhancing their employability<sup>11</sup>;
- it gives the learners the opportunity to evolve transferable and new skills and competences;
- it creates an effective bridge with the labour market, thus helping the learner to gain his/her qualification;
- it might lead to higher earnings in the future, depending on the type of occupation and sector.

A work-based experience for many young people is seen as a quite effective learning environment compared to school classroom<sup>12</sup> and is considered a good solution against high youth unemployment.

In case of scarce apprenticeship opportunities, governments may be forced to intervene with more financial incentives<sup>13</sup>.

#### 4.4 Feedback-mechanisms between VET systems and labour market needs

Formal feedback-mechanisms between VET system (VET providers, school boards and others) and labour market organisations (social partners, enterprises, chambers of commerce and others) exist in almost all the Alpine regions. Their goal is to allow the continuous renewal of VET provisions, by creating new qualifications or updating curricula<sup>14</sup>.

Four kinds of mechanisms have been selected as mainly widespread in Europe:

- Model A: *liberal*: it relies on an ideal type education market of (individual) “sellers” and “buyers”, where VET providers respond to the needs of market directly. The State’s role is quite circumscribed: it ensures quality by external agencies and sets rules for co-funding and competition;
- Model B: *statist*: a key role is played by the State, with the Ministry of Education in particular, who establishes and coordinates boards, committees and temporary working groups for the design and development of new curricula and/or educational standards. The social partners only play an informal role;
- Model C: *participatory*: it is the mostly widespread in Europe and, although similar to the previous one, sees a predominant and institutionalised role of social partners. The State remains responsible for curricula and examinations;
- Model D: *coordinated*: Employers co-fund it and social partners manage it. The last ones also determine curricula and examinations. Innovative actions typically come from (or are mediated by) employer organisations and trade unions. These proposals are then discussed with government representatives and eventually approved<sup>15</sup>.

The most suitable model for the Alpine area depends on the specific national and regional regulations of the dual training system in compliance with the participation of the main local actors and stakeholders and, at the same time, in compliance with the heterogeneity of needs and territorial differences existing in the Alpine region, adopting the bottom-up approach to updating curricula.

<sup>11</sup> CEDEFOP, *Apprenticeship schemes in European countries. A cross-nation overview*, Luxembourg, 2018, page 16.

<sup>12</sup> ENQA-VET – European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training, *Study on quality assurance systems in work-based learning and assessment in European VET. Selected cases on quality assurance in apprenticeship programmes. Final report*, , 2009, page 82.

<sup>13</sup> A good example of equitable cost sharing between employers and public authorities come from France where enterprises are entitled to pay an “apprenticeship tax” equivalent to 0.68% of their gross pay bill. 77% of the funds collected are destined specifically for apprenticeship training.

<sup>14</sup> Markowitsch Jörg, Hefler Günter, *Staying in the loop: formal feedback mechanisms connecting vocational training to the world of work in Europe*, IJR/VET (International Journal for Research in Vocational Education and Training, 2018, page 285.

<sup>15</sup> A good example is represented by the Austrian feedback mechanism. In order to renew occupational profiles a tripartite Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship coordinates the activities. It is made up of representatives of social partners, employers’ and employees’ associations, VET teachers selected by the Austrian Ministry of Education. New proposals are collected by subcommittees and/or social partners’ educational research institutes. These innovative ideas are then evaluated by the employer associations. Once reached the consensus, the proposals are submitted to the Austrian Ministry of Economy for final approval.

## 4.5 Collaboration between VET institutions and enterprises

An important pre-condition for a high-quality dual system is a continuous dialogue between VET schools – or training centres – and enterprises. In order to create the conditions for an effective apprenticeship/traineeship and the individuations of product standards the criteria should stem from the above mentioned dialogue among the parts: as a matter of fact the legal and regulatory frameworks alone are not sufficient.

A functional collaboration between VET institutions and enterprises should envisage, among others, the following aspects:

- Planning of the training;
- Organisation and management of the learning process;
- Monitoring;
- Adjustment of the path;
- Intermediate and final evaluation of the learning results<sup>16</sup>.

Being the systematic collaboration as significant as challenging for Alpine regions – since the real occasions of exchange are in reality quite rare – it is recommended to establish permanent occasions of meeting. This might help evaluating the general process of the system experience and pointing out potential problems thus pinpointing possible solutions. VET schools should organise regular visits to the enterprises during the apprenticeship/traineeship, generating a benefit for the apprentice/trainee, the teacher and the enterprise. These visits might facilitate the mutual knowledge, the prompt individuation of potential critical issues or difficulties on both sides and guarantee an opportunity for assessing intermediate and final learning results. Examination boards should be made up of people belonging to both sectors (enterprises and VET schools).

The collaboration between enterprises and VET schools should not only be intended in connection with the apprenticeship/traineeship itself. It can also have further goals, such as, among others:

- Implementing common projects;
- Establishing working groups on shared subjects of interest;
- Coordinating learning and educational plans;
- Ideating lecturers from business in schools;
- Making job shadowing for teachers;
- Planning full-time student visits in the work place (beyond apprenticeship);
- Planning lessons in the advanced laboratories of enterprises;

Promoting the value of vocational education and training and promoting young employability and social cohesion<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> INAPP, *Dual systems in the Regions of the Alpine Space*, Final report, February 2019, page 94.

<sup>17</sup> The Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, in Italy, has an effective cooperative system among the partners that helps developing and updating the List of regional qualifications. This facilitates VET providers in planning learning and trading programmes, clearly connected to the labour market needs and innovations.

## 5 Clause title, e.g. Dual system partners

Dual system and other forms of work-based learning (WBL) play an extremely important role for jobs and active citizenship. Through the gaining of skills and competences people's employability and employment opportunities of the Alpine region increase significantly.

In order to create the better conditions for a quality dual based system all the actors involved should cooperate on the overall process, as already mentioned.

Apprentices/trainees, enterprises and VET institutions should work together to develop and strengthen the design, quality, effectiveness and assessment of the on-the-job training experience.

The following paragraphs deal with roles, responsibilities and duties of the partners connected with the dual system.

## 6 Learner

"The combination of practical experience and theoretical learning is now well recognized as an effective approach to provide relevant skills, facilitate the application of theoretical knowledge and improve the transition of students into the labour market"<sup>18</sup>.

Before approaching a work-based experience potential apprentices/interns should become aware of activities and commitment required in order to reduce the possible mismatch between the learners' expectations and what the training programs offer. In particular, the apprentice/intern-to-be should be responsible of:

- Gathering information about education, training opportunities and potential employment opportunities to be aware of the real possible future career choices;
- Understanding the distinctions of the different training pathways;
- Recognizing the obligations expected by the enterprise.

Once started the on-the-job training, learners should:

- Learn their job with care and consciousness;
- Remember to have responsibilities just like other workers;
- Attend consciously off-the-job and on-the-job training once scheduled;
- Engage completely gradually taking on responsibilities as the training advances;
- Take care of their own health and safety and that of others in the workplace;
- Follow their supervisors and trainers' instructions, providing they are reasonable and lawful;
- Create good working relationships both with enterprise trainers and teachers in the VET institution;
- Be diligent, honest and not troublesome;
- Develop soft skills like team work, problem solving and flexibility;
- Regularly complete assignments and undertake any outstanding off-the-job training assessments;

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<sup>18</sup>INAPP, *Dual systems in the Regions of the Alpine Space*, Final report, February 2019, page 94.

- Return on-the-job phase results on time.

It is worth to be aware of employment options after completion of the training.

## 6.1 Entry requirements

The entry requirements for an effective dual-based training in the Alpine regions are:

- Age (depending on the national reference and regional regulation);
- Qualification required and/or educational level;
- Take into account relevant informal and non-formal learning <sup>19</sup>;
- The accomplishment of preparatory programs<sup>20</sup>.

## 7 Enterprise

This clause deals with general recommendations for the Alpine Regions' enterprises intending to hire apprentices or to start an internship program:

- In some countries enterprises are not sufficiently engaged in providing apprenticeship/internship opportunities: it is then necessary for the Governments to encourage them in starting these programs both at financial and not financial level. Gratiified apprentices/interns can be a very positive advert for the enterprise since, thanks to their word of mouth, they get *ambassadors* of their own job<sup>21</sup>. This can have positive effects on the enterprises in engaging further potential apprentices and interns, who know which kind of skills and competences can evolve in that enterprise and context;
- The personal technical and pedagogical qualifications of the enterprise trainers are the most important quality criteria for most learners: it is in charge of the enterprises to raise the trainers' skills and qualifications in order to ensure the most appropriate and adequate supervision to learners;
- Enterprises should guarantee health and safety conditions to any apprentice while on the job-training;
- Giving the apprentice, and in case of remunerated internships to the intern, the appropriate wage according to the standard sets;
- Respecting the regulations for young people at work;
- Protecting the learners from any form of abuse;
- Being inclusive, guaranteeing a sufficient number of places for potential apprentices/interns with learning difficulties, problems and limitations;
- Filling possible vacancies in the enterprises enhancing young people's fresh and flexible thinking;

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<sup>19</sup> European Commission. *Recommendations Council of 15 March 2018 on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (2018/C 153/01)*.

<sup>20</sup> In France young learners who want to participate in an apprenticeship have the chance to attend a pre-apprenticeship course, especially when not sufficiently equipped with the knowledge and skills required by the apprenticeship program. They can also have the possibility to access an enterprise as *watchers*.

<sup>21</sup> INAPP, *Dual System in the Regions of the Alpine Space. Final Report*, p.85.

- While giving feedbacks to the VET institutions about the learners' conduct enterprises should mainly pay attention to the learning development process and collaborate in the analysis of skills, training gaps and needs in their territories.

## 7.1 Workplace requirements

In order to guarantee an effective dual-based training experience enterprises should meet at least the following criteria:

- *Structural capacity*: spaces to allow the internal training and, in case of students with disabilities, the overcoming and removal of any architectural barrier;
- *Technical capacity*: availability of tools and machinery for the on-the-job training, pursuant to applicable rules;
- *Training capacity*: ensuring the availability of one or more on-the-job tutors (instructors)<sup>22</sup>.

In addition, enterprises should start processes of certification and accreditation at sectorial level in order to develop the better training environment for their future learners.

## 7.2 Work, health and safety conditions

There should be clear and written agreements about the duration of the apprenticeship/internship (hours, months, days) that shall include the following requirements:

- Apprentices/interns shall work on activities, tasks and responsibilities included in the contract/agreement;
- Working hours should not exceed limits specified by national legislation and collective agreements. They shall never exceed the 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week;
- Enterprises shall guarantee the apprentices/interns' legal rights as to the working conditions;
- The enterprise shall provide and ensures decent work conditions for apprentices/interns;
- The enterprise shall respect the regulations signed in the contract/agreement (hours per week, rest times, maximum overtime, compensation and others);
- Apprentices/interns shall have (paid) vacations, where appropriate;
- The workplace shall meet all the prescribed standards on health and safety at work, as defined in national legislation or other binding documents.

## 7.3 Enterprise trainers

Trainers/tutors are the persons in the enterprise who are responsible for training and supporting the apprentices/interns during their on-the-job experience. They shall be able to guide young people in their learning process playing a mentoring role. They shall have a relevant work experience and specific pedagogical skills to interact with the learners correctly.

In SMEs trainers/tutors might add the training duties to their primary job tasks while in large enterprises they work full time on apprenticeship/internship training<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> INAPP, *Dual System in the Regions of the Alpine Space. Final Report*, p.46.

<sup>23</sup> In some cases, e.g. in Germany, enterprises have special training centres where learners can spend their first periods as apprentices/interns before entering the manufacturing processes.



For an effective dual-based training, trainers/tutors shall respect the following requirements:

- A significant work experience in the area in question;
- Being constantly updated about the necessary training-related competences to supervise the learning process properly;
- A certificate of attendance of a training course aiming at sharing information on the apprenticeship/internship legislative framework and offering pedagogical skills for youth training.

## **8 VET institutions**

Teachers, trainers/tutors and learners shall cooperate suitably to guarantee the quality of dual-based training learning programs.

Building up a proper contact between teachers and trainers requires resources (time and competences) to ensure that every apprentice/intern gets the same level of support.

Enterprises shall have in practice teachers while VET institutions shall have trainers, thus increasing the understanding of the different contexts and constraints.

The top-management in VET-institutions should be more involved in contact with the enterprises in order to create an atmosphere of openness and mutual interest. A possible tool to reach this goal can be the use of a review schedule with fixed dates and agendas for the meetings.

### **8.1 Improvement of training programmes**

A systematic collaboration between VET institutions and enterprises can help adjusting training programmes to the needs of the current labour market and creating a strong bridge between the real needs of the enterprises and the VET system, thus capitalising the advantages of dual learning.

Transnational mobility in the Alpine region can be a good chance to improve the quality of the training and learning results. Being the differences among countries and territories of the Alpine regions quite remarkable, the transnational mobility is still undersized. Due to its numerous positive effects, it is highly recommended to pursue it.

### **8.2 Strengthening the educational institutions capability of designing high quality dual training**

In order to design high quality dual-based training the training programmes addressed to teachers of vocational schools shall be innovative.

Some of the main topics to pay attention to should be, among others:

- Competence-based teaching approach;
- Monitoring and assessment of the learning outcomes;
- Inclusion of disadvantaged students;
- Digital technology innovation and its applications;
- Realisation and dissemination of operational tool sets to understand, support and assess the learning process;
- Enhancing recommendations, guidelines and examples of best practices supporting the training of teachers.

The introduction of these innovative teaching methods and technologies involves a change in the role of teachers, who become learning facilitators. VET institutions and schools/training providers should have appropriate equipment and machines. An effective promotion of information and experiences exchanges among trainers and the dissemination of best practices is a further important issue to put into practice. As a consequence, training programmes become more flexible and customisable, aligning – moreover – the skill needs and the production times of enterprises with the educational programmes and the timetable at schools. This could also help limiting the school drop-out phenomenon thanks to a more personalized training approach. Regions in the Alpine Space shall continue to work for the implementation and the updating of qualifications, tools and mechanisms ensuring the usability of the acquired skills<sup>24</sup>.

### 8.3 Supporting the development and updating of school teachers' skills

A key factor to enhance the attractiveness of dual-based training experience in the Alpine regions is the improvement of teachers' capabilities in educating and a more effective collaboration with enterprise trainers.

VET teachers should:

- Work as a team with the colleagues in order to develop a better ability in planning and reflecting on their own way of teaching;
- Assume a “facilitator” teaching approach towards the students, guaranteeing them a more individual guidance and a business awareness;
- Attend regularly education and pedagogical courses in order to be updated about the labour work innovative needs and obtaining formal VET qualifications.

## 9 Monitoring and evaluating tools for the dual-based training experience

In order to design monitoring and evaluation procedures, target groups and stakeholders need to be clarified, which also involves defining the exact purposes of each procedure. This means that there shall be clarification beforehand of who is supposed to use the results and to what end, and whose perspectives should be included in the evaluation procedure or monitoring mechanism. It is likely that different players will have different priorities and interests when assessing the quality and performance of work-based learning<sup>25</sup>.

For most countries in the Alpine regions the following indicators, among others, are required:

- Number and profile of students enrolled;
- Dropout and completion rates;
- Number of students remaining in the training enterprise after completion of dual education;
- Number of students that pass the final assessment for dual education profile;
- Number and kind of enterprises (large or SMEs) offering training places;
- Percentage of enterprises with certified in-company trainer/mentor;

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<sup>24</sup> INAPP, *Dual System in the Regions of the Alpine Space. Final Report*, p.93.

<sup>25</sup> Various authors, *Monitoring and evaluating work-based learning in vocational education and training*, ETF European Training Foundation, 2021, page 12.

- Student-teacher relationships;
- Financial resources invested (by the Government and by Enterprises) both in terms of costs and benefits.

The general framework recommended for both monitoring and evaluation is the IPOO (Input Process Output Outcome) model. “Input” relates to all the arrangements preceding the implementation and the resources necessary for the process. The “process” factors are directly related to the intervention and the production of the targeted goods or services. The “output” cover the results in terms of goods or services produced, e.g. the knowledge, skills and competence imparted to the learners. The “outcome” finally is connected with the medium- and long-term effects achieved through the use of the output.

From the apprentice/intern point of view an important tool to use is the training diary.

Through its compiling, the learner can measure the skills acquired, and the social competences evolved.

The in-company trainer should compile a monitoring report with the learners’ different stages of the training process, evaluating the skills they acquire and develop during their stay in the enterprise.

## **10 Final examination: mid-term evaluations and final assessment criteria**

At the end of the training period in the enterprise, a leaving examination should be scheduled, with the aim to check that the expected learning outcomes have been properly acquired. The examination should be both practical and theoretical. It should deal with the job specific skills, general knowledge and key competences.

The apprentice/intern is required to keep a training book constantly reporting the tasks performed at the enterprise. The activities described shall be checked and validated by the trainer and signed by both parties. The diary shall also contain knowledge and topics taught by the vocational school. Its assiduous completion is a pre-requirement to the examination admission.

An important suggestion for an effective dual-based training experience is to include a mid-term evaluation (both formal or informal). As well as for the final examination, it is suggested to involve both the enterprise and the vocational institution. Constant monitoring and feedback of the learners’ performances can endure appropriate interventions when problems emerge before the certification process.

The final examination should:

- Be coherent, clear and transparent in terms of learning outcomes (indicated in the Qualifications Index) and expectations;
- Correctly involve the learners in the assessment process;
- Try to guarantee the highest homogeneous standard to learners in spite the several differences present in the different enterprises;
- Be impartial: External applicants with recognised and certificated experience should be part of the Assessment Board; Internal trainers and teachers should not evaluate “their” learners;
- Be as realistic or authentic as possible. The use of multiple evaluation tools is highly recommended (project or case studies, case presentations, simulation and skills demonstrations);
- Take place directly in the host enterprises, when possible, or in simulated working environments.

After the dual-based training experience is over apprentices can receive three different kinds of certificates:

- The examination certificate of the competent body, or the qualification certificate as a skilled worker;
- The certificate of the vocational school;
- The references issued by the enterprise.

While interns receive:

- The certificate of the vocational school;
- The references issued by the enterprise.

## **11 Flexible pathways and transnational mobility of the learners**

The number of qualifications which is possible to achieve through a dual-based training experience can be quite wide in almost all the Alpine Regions. This amount of different qualifications can create obstacles when a young person has to start his/her own professional career. In order to avoid an excessive rigidity on the young people's professional training pathway the trend to aggregate more qualifications into a broadband one is highly recommended<sup>26</sup>.

It could be useful to give apprentices/inters the opportunity to acquire a more definite degree of technical specialisation in the final part of the dual-based training experience.

As already mentioned in chapter 8 transnational mobility can be a particularly effective training opportunity to foster young people's skills and competences.

Thanks to transnational mobility the following goals can be reached:

- Extending the learners' cultural horizons;
- Evolving their technical-professional competences;
- Evolving their cross-sectorial skills, which are more and more needed in the actual labour market;
- Improving the development of their social skills (psychological, relational and communicative abilities);
- Improving their language skills (communication and relational skills).

The number of young people who practice transnational mobility in the Alpine area is quite low. In order to reduce this gap, the following actions are recommended:

- Developing and enhancing transnational networks among schools, vocational institutions, employers' associations and trade unions to promote mobility;
- Facilitating the certification of the skills developed by apprentices during their periods abroad and the relevant recognition for achieving the qualification;
- Enhancing the language skills of apprentices and trainers;
- Providing support services to training institutions, for the design and the implementation of mobility projects for apprentices;

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<sup>26</sup> This process has already successfully started in the past few years in Germany.

- Putting in place communication activities on best practices addressed to enterprises, for the mobility abroad of apprentices and facilitating the experiences exchange;
- Promoting agreements with other countries, to facilitate the development of mobility.

### **11.1 Promote permeability between VET and other educational and career pathways**

Traditionally, education and training systems have separate sub-systems (general, vocational and academic/higher education) related to one another in a strict hierarchy (primary, secondary and tertiary level). This works well as long as learners follow a predefined route in their chosen area and subsystem. However, this segmentation creates institutional barriers that can restrict the learners' options when moving vertically to higher levels of learning or moving horizontally to study a different subject at the same level. Hence, learners in VET often have to specialise at an early age making it difficult for them to switch to or combine with academic studies later on<sup>27</sup>.

In order not to perceive dual-based training as a “dead end” governments should:

- Foster an easier permeability among the training paths by integrating VET into education systems;
- Broaden the access to higher education, facilitating more people to enter tertiary education;
- Make VET an attractive alternative for young people;
- Enrich the curricula, at all levels of VET, with general knowledge and transversal skills;
- Make “higher VET programmes” at tertiary level more visible and preferable;
- Improve VET graduates’ formal access to higher education by:
  - Opening the examination systems to all secondary students;
  - Adding preparatory courses or exams for VET students (bridging programmes);
  - Acknowledging equivalent vocational qualifications for academic study courses (credit transfer arrangements).
- Introduce specialised vocational-oriented courses at tertiary level;
- Validate all prior learning (both at a formal and informal level);
- Enhance transparency and parity of esteem between VET and higher education<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> European Commission, *High-performance apprenticeships & work-based learning: 20 guiding principles*, 2017, page 37.

<sup>28</sup> A good example of permeability between dual system and higher education is the new Austrian initiative “Lehre mit Matura”. It allows students to prepare for the exams while on-the-job training and to obtain a qualification which allows them to have access to tertiary education.

## **Annex A**

### **(informative)**

### **Code of conduct**

#### **A.1 Introduction**

The Code of conduct is intended to assist apprentices and trainees to understand their duties and responsibilities relating to the experience in the enterprise.

#### **A.2 Expectations from the learners**

Every learner should consider that:

- Everyone is kept safe and treated with respect;
- Everyone has the best opportunity to succeed.

#### **A.3 Learners' responsibilities:**

Every learner should:

- Work for the enterprise to the best of one's own ability and in accordance with the employer's policies and procedures;
- Show the commitment, determination and maturity to succeed and achieve agreed objectives, ensuring attendance, punctuality and positive attitude;
- Communicate effectively at all times and inform the enterprise, and the VET institution, within a reasonable time frame, if unable to be present at a workplace;
- Behave at all times in a safe and responsible manner and in accordance with the requirements of health and safety legislation relating to the learner's role and responsibilities;
- Ensure that all learning elements identified in the learning agreement are achieved within the timescales set;
- Contact the VET as soon as possible, if for any reason the learner has to leave his/her employment earlier than scheduled;
- Inform the employer and Vocational Trainer of any absence (also in the assessment visit) due to sickness, appointments and holidays.

#### **A.4 Enterprises expectations:**

Every enterprise should:

- Behave well and respect all;
- Be punctual at all appointments;

- Carry out self-directed study;
- Meet deadlines and manage time effectively;
- Drive for achievement to enable progression;
- Review and set targets which stretch and challenge employees.

### **A.5 Enterprises' responsibilities:**

Every enterprise should:

- Provide access to the appropriate equipment tools and resources to facilitate the required assessments for the on-the-job training;
- Identify a supervisor for the learners;
- Ensure that good learner progress is maintained;
- Regularly review the learners' performance and progress in both the workplace and in training on a regular basis in conjunction with VET institutions;
- Provide the experience, facilities and training necessary to achieve the learning and skills specified in the Learning Agreement;
- Undertake legal and contractual responsibilities for the health and safety of the learner;
- Provide a fair and safe working environment, complying with employment legislation for equal opportunities and safeguarding;
- Partake and to have input in the learners' regular progress reviews and assessment visits;
- Inform a member of the VET institution as soon as possible, if, for any reason, a learner leaves the employment earlier than scheduled.

## **Annex B**

(informative)

### **Training contract**

Formal contracts reinforce and form part of the regulatory framework. They enable the different stakeholders to know what the responsibilities, rights and obligations of each party are.

The contract should contain the following information:

- The identity of the owner (full name) and address and occupation; if applicable, the name and address of the enterprise and the identity (full name) and quality of (the) legal representatives;
- The identity of the apprentice (full name), date of birth, place of birth and address;
- The job being taught to the apprentice;
- The objectives and training methods required for the occupation;
- The date of signature, the starting date and the duration of the contract;
- The rights and obligations of the signatories;
- Annual holiday entitlement;
- Hours of on-the-job training;
- Incremental remuneration;
- The place of learning;
- All other conditions agreed between the parties concerning (housing, food, others).



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