



European Centre for the
Development of Vocational
Training

ERO National Research Report 2005

Country:	Austria
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1. LINKS BETWEEN NATIONAL VET/HRD RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AND VET/HRD POLICIES (IN PARTICULAR RECENT REFORMS/INNOVATIONS).

In 2005 and during the first half of 2006 Austrian policy was strongly influenced by the preparation and holding of the EU presidency. In education and training policy some initiatives have been taken which were strongly related to research.

- The ongoing emphasis on quality development and quality assurance (QD/QA) has been reinforced by a European study about good practices in QD/QA in VET and Higher Education (http://www.equi.at/pdf/report%20jgnc%20_10-04-2006_web.pdf) which was also utilised as a basis for a European conference for the exchange of experience. This initiative is embedded in a broad process for QD/QA in the Austrian VET system (<http://www.qibb.at/>) and in the other parts of education and training also.¹ Related to the PISA-results various initiatives have developed in this area, which will be gradually implemented into the systems.
- Another initiative related to higher education has been a study conducted for the directors general in higher education and the European rectors about the relationship of the new proposal for the European Qualification Framework and the Bologna process (<http://www.equi.at/pdf/ihs-duk-ef-lassnigg-vogtenhuber-pellert-cendon.pdf>); a separate piloting study has also been conducted about the EQF/NQF in the area of VET, which will be taken further in the future.
- A third initiative from labour market policy concerned the conditions and barriers which confront disadvantaged young persons in employment and on the labour market. A set of studies has been conducted (or is under way) which has analysed in greater detail the development on the youth labour market in Austria nationally, and as a part of the broader European picture also (national: <http://www.equi.at/pdf/aut-disyouth-de.pdf>; European: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/youth_leaflet_en.pdf). Those studies are giving further insights to the policy development in the youth labour market which has been a main policy priority during the last decade or more.
- A fourth initiative has been the further development and popularisation of a network of professionals in the area of educational guidance and counselling (<http://www.bib-infonet.at/>) which was supported by an international conference. In this policy field the recent OECD reviews about the Austrian practice have been taken up, and several reform issues are under debate for implementation in this area. The further development of guidance and counselling is also related to the initiatives of the public employment service (AMS) to provide information about the labour market (http://www.ams.or.at/neu/1216_458.htm), and follow-ups to the project about the matching of supply and demand have been further developed.

Beneath those initiatives a group of experts and researchers has also been commissioned to develop a more comprehensive lifelong learning strategy for Austria, which will be carried on in the future.

Austrian education and training policy has been also quite strongly related to the Lisbon follow-up process, and a platform for reform priorities has been set up (<http://www.eu-bildung-2010.at/index.php?>) which should contribute to the improvement of Austrian education and training due to the European targets. However, this process is more strongly related to general and academic education than to VET (which nevertheless has its part in the process)

¹ See, e.g., the initiatives in general and academic education: <http://www.qis.at/english/>, and in higher education: <http://www.aqa.ac.at/>)

2. LINKS BETWEEN EU SPONSORED VET/HRD RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AND VET/HRD POLICIES (IN PARTICULAR RECENT REFORMS/INNOVATIONS).

As already mentioned, the EU presidency has clearly contributed to initiatives in education and training policy and research.

Moreover, the following policy areas must also be mentioned:

- policies to develop lifelong learning have been included in the Austrian ESF programme (<http://www.esf.at/html-englisch/start.html>; http://www.esf.at/downloads/publikationen/Ziel3_Programmplanung.pdf).

- policies for the development and spread of IT in education and training (http://www.efit.at/english/titel.asp?Titel=Interim_Assessment)

- the policies for quality assurance and quality development are related to the Lisbon follow-up and to the Copenhagen process (http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects_Networks/Ero/prj_view.asp?theID=416).

3. OVERVIEW OF IMPORTANT ISSUES AND THEMES ADDRESSED IN CURRENT VET/HRD RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

The previous research reports have already shown the relatively small incidence of VET-research, as compared to the high proportion of VET in the overall ET-System in Austria, and also the instability of research themes and the weak documentation and information base. This year the Austrian educational research documentation is not available, thus we have to rely on the ERO-Base and the REFER-Publications-Report.²

The comparison of research areas by ERO-descriptors shows big instabilities over time. Some areas have considerably gained weight (two fifths of publications are in those areas):

- Certification/guidance/career/occupation
- Student/trainee/adult learner
- Vocational education and training (initial and continuing)

Some other previously strong areas have lost weight: economy/labour market/social partners (which is still the second largest category); information technology, general/academic education, and educational institution/enterprise). The research products by areas have become more diverse and more evenly distributed. Interestingly, the distribution of 2005 publications has become in some important areas more similar to the distribution of the Austrian educational research documentation of 2003/04 – so the change might also represent that the publications report has become more representative. Due to this comparison particularly research about the *learners* has gained weight, and research about *teachers/trainer/professionals* has lost weight.

In the ERO-paper base the products of Austrian research are represented to a very low degree only. A search using the descriptor “Austria” provides totally 26 items (including papers dating from 1995-2005), thereof

- 10 are reports from abroad including Austria,
- 9 are Austrian papers from the period 2002-2003 (most of them have been uploaded in 2005),
- 5 have already been mentioned in the 2004 research report
- so *we find in sum two new papers*, one additional paper from 2004 and one paper from 2005.

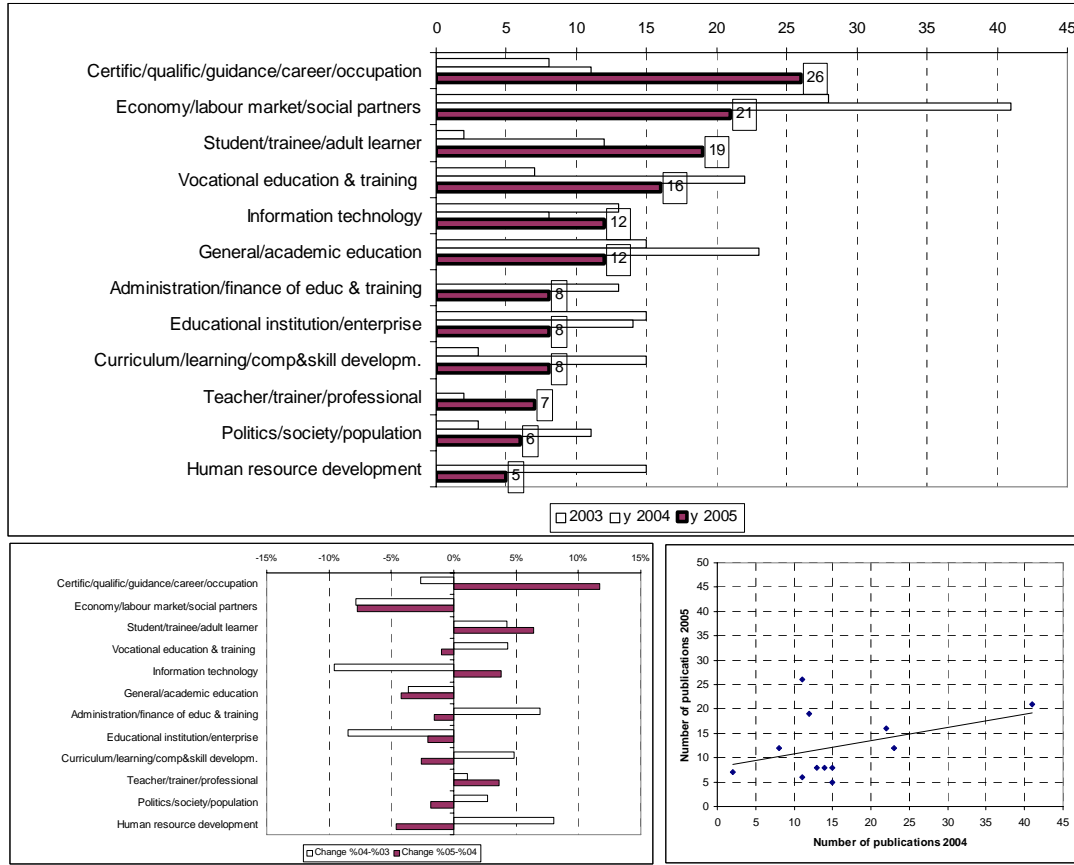
The ERO-project base includes 6 transnational projects coordinated (at least partly) from Austria, and 2 national projects. The research areas covered by those projects differ partly from the areas covered in the publications, however, the priority on issues of *Certification/guidance/career/occupation* (10) is also mirrored in the project base. The topics of *Curriculum/learning/competences and skill development* (9) and overall VET (7) are more strongly represented in the ERO projects.

So in sum, the data sources do not give a very clear picture of the priorities in Austrian VET research. Rather we can observe some *topics which are more or less left out from research* in Austria:

- this is, first and foremost *Human resource development*, so that we can solely speak about VET research
- second, the area of *Politics/society/population* is also covered by a low degree:
- the areas of *Teachers/trainers/professionals*, *Curriculum/learning/competences and skill development*, and *Educational institutions/enterprise* can be less clearly rated, as there are some differing signals.

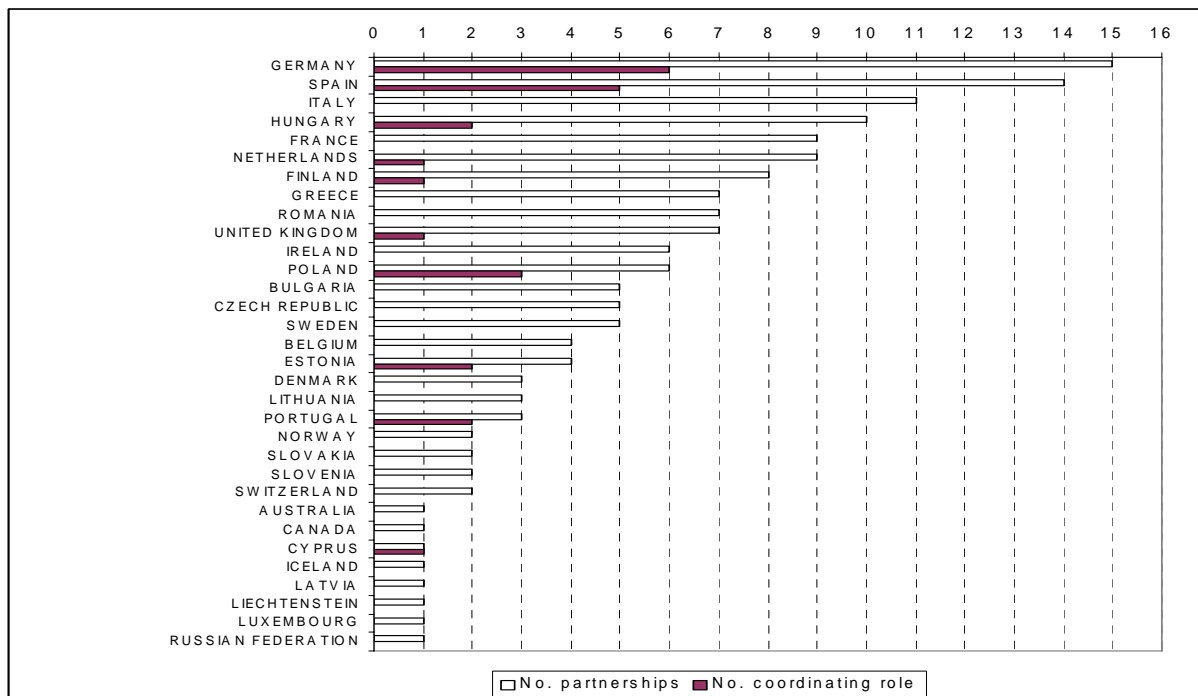
Figure 2 shows the distribution of partnerships by partner countries. 32 countries are involved, about half of them more frequently (at least 5-6 partnerships), clearly the strongest cooperation is established with Germany and Spain, followed by Italy and Hungary. Some neighbouring countries are only seldom involved in project cooperation.

Figure 1: Number of Austrian publications by ERO-descriptors 2003-2005, absolute number of publications, change distribution 2004-2003 and 2005-2004, and scatter number 2005 x 2004



Source: REFER-Publication-Reports 2003-2005

Figure 2: Partnership countries in project not coordinated by Austrian partners (ERO-project-base)



ANNEX: SELECTION OF ERO BASE PROJECTS.

Figure 3 a: ERO Project base, descriptor Austria (status Sept 2006)

	2004	2005	Change
Total number of projects, beginning in 2002	51	73	+ 22
Operational (in year)	24	32	+ 8
Austrian coordinator	5	6	+ 1
National Austrian project	4	2	- 2
Austrian partners	15	24	+ 9

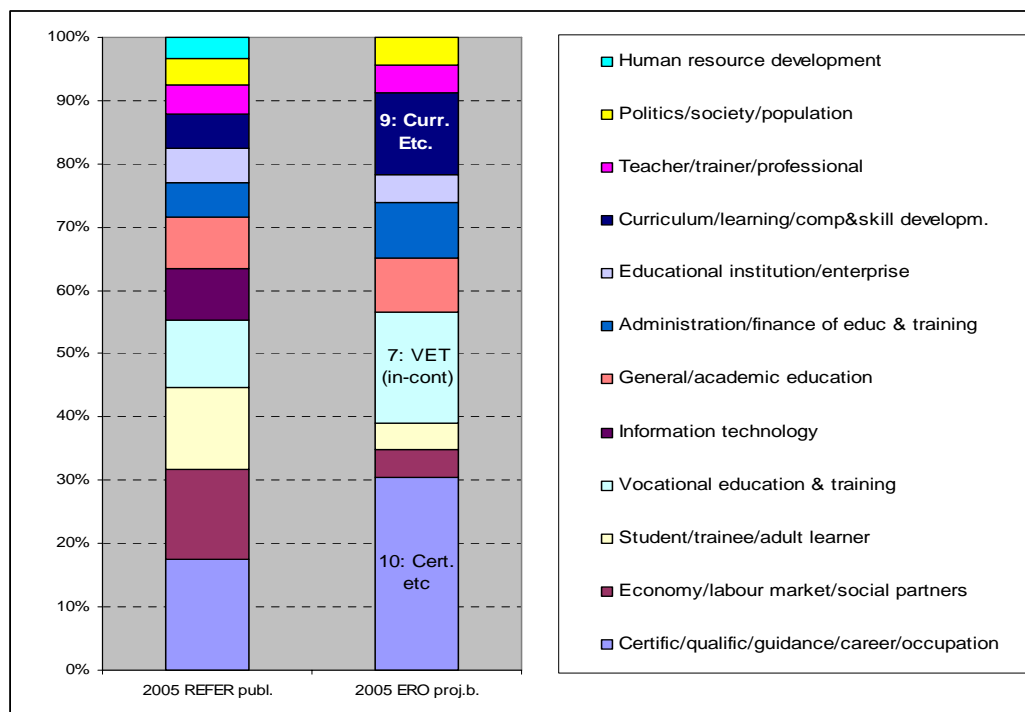
Figure 3 b: Items in ERO paper base 2005

	ERO descriptors
Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft (collective author), Evaluation of the Austrian pupil grant system (2004)	4,6
Zdrahal-Urbaneck Julia / Thum-Kraft Monika, Self guided self assessment an improvement of vocational and career counselling skills: new standards and tools for counsellors developed in the LdV project MEVOC. (2005)	9,10

Figure 3 c: ERO Projects 2005, Austrian coordinator or national project

	ERO descriptors
Austrian coordinator	
Wroblewski Angela, Eurostudent 2004/05 (2003-2005)	11
Paier Dietmar, Neumayer Andreas, Girls crack it! Girls and Young Women in non-traditional Occupations (2002-2005).	2,3,5,7,10
Schlögl Peter, Basic skills for young people without vocational education (2003-2006)	7
Zdrahal-Urbaneck Julia, MEVOC – Quality manual for educational and vocational counselling (2003-2006)	4,6,9,10,12
Messerer Karin, Markowitsch Jörg, Vocational Qualification Transfer System (2003-2006)	7,9,10
Zdrahal-Urbaneck Julia / Thum-Kraft Monika., DYNOT – Dynamic online tool for guidance (2005-2007)	7,10
Austrian projects	
Kanelutti Erika, National Information-Network for Educational Guidance and Counselling (2000-2006)	10
Wieser Regine, Kanelutti Erika, Role Models and virtual mentoring for and from handicapped people (2004-2005)	10

Figure 3 d: Descriptors in ERO-projects 2005 as compared to REFER-publications 2005



4. MAJOR INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN VET/HRD R&D IN YOUR COUNTRY.

There have not been major changes in the institutional framework of VET research., except an ongoing reform of the institutions of teacher training which should more strongly be involved in research. The assessment of the 2004 report can be held up.

About 75 Institutions fulfil at least one of the five descriptors for the selection of VET research institutions, which should represent contributions to VET research and visibility at the national and European level: member of abf-Austria core group, member of the AMS research network, representation in at least one of the three research documentations, member of the adult education research network, representation in VET-INSTIT database.

- abf-Austria has been built by 5 research institutes as partners of the REFER-net as a core group of VET research in Austria

- the AMS research network provides a platform for labour market and VET research

The following table summarizes the 29 research institutions which carry at least *two of the five* descriptors. The majority (15) are private or semi-public research institutes, six are university institutes or affiliated to universities, and six are teacher education institutions. The VET-INST data base does not include several research institutions.

Figure 3: Major institutions involved in VET research

5	abf	ams	edr	eb	v-inst 214	3s Unternehmensberatung GmbH	Vienna
5	abf	ams	edr	eb	v-inst 130	Institut für Höhere Studien (IHS) - Research Group equi (employment – qualification – innovation)	Vienna
5	abf	ams	edr	eb	v-inst 142	Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft (IBW)	Vienna
5	abf	ams	edr	eb	v-inst 132	Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung (ÖIBF)	Vienna
4	abf	ams	edr		v-inst 212	Zentrum für Bildung und Wirtschaft (ZBW)	Graz
3		ams	edr	eb		Sozialökonomische Forschungsstelle (SFS)	Vienna
3		ams	edr	eb		Synthesis Forschung GesmbH	Vienna
3		ams	edr		v-inst 129	Institut für Berufs- und Erwachsenenbildungsforschung an der Universität Linz (IBE)	Linz
3			edr	eb	v-inst 118	Donau-Universität Krems (DUK)	Krems
2		ams	edr			abif – Analyse, Beratung und Interdisziplinäre Forschung	Vienna
2		ams	edr			AMS Österreich – Arbeitsmarktforschung	Vienna
2		ams	edr			Institut für Arbeitsmarktbetreuung und –forschung Graz (IFA)	Graz
2		ams	edr			KMU Forschung Austria	Vienna
2		ams	edr			L&R – Sozialforschung	Vienna
2		ams	edr			Prospect Unternehmensberatung GesmbH, Vienna, Graz	Vienna, Graz
2		ams	edr			SORA - Institute for Social Research and Analysis	Vienna
2		ams	edr			Universität Klagenfurt - Institut für interdisziplinäre Forschung und Fortbildung (IFF)	Klagenfurt
2		ams	edr			Zukunftszentrum - Kompetenzzentrum für Arbeit- und Lebenswelten der Zukunft	Innsbruck
2		ams		eb		Universität Klagenfurt - Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft und Bildungsforschung	Klagenfurt
2		ams			v-inst 162	Österreichisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (WIFO)	Vienna
2		ams			v-inst 133	Zentrum für Soziale Innovation (ZSI)	Vienna
2			edr	eb		Universität Graz - Institut für Erziehungs- und Bildungswissenschaften	Graz
2			edr	eb		Universität Wien - Institut für Erziehungswissenschaften	Vienna
2			edr		v-inst 124	Berufspädagogische Akademie des Bundes Steiermark	Graz
2			edr		v-inst 140	Pädagogische Akademie der Diözese Wien	Vienna
2			edr		v-inst 99	Pädagogische Akademie des Bundes in Niederösterreich	Baden
2			edr		v-inst 102	Pädagogische Akademie des Bundes in Steiermark	Graz
2			edr		v-inst 104	Pädagogische Akademie des Bundes in Tirol	Innsbruck
2			edr		v-inst 98	Pädagogische Akademie des Bundes in Wien	Vienna

Legend:

abf = member of abf-Austria; Internet: <http://www.abf-austria.at/> (22.9.2005)

ams = member of AMS research network; Internet: http://www.ams.or.at/neu/1212_1805.htm (22.9.2005)

edr = represented with projects from the main VET-research descriptors in the Austrian Education Research Documentation 2003/04; Internet: http://www.bmbwk.gv.at/medienpool/12753/bifodok2003_04.pdf (21.9.2005) and/or in the refer publication report 2004; Internet: <http://www.abf-austria.at/docs/abf%20InfoDoc%201-2005.pdf> and/or ERO papers/projects; Internet:

http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/projects_networks/ero/base.asp

eb = member of the Adult education research network

V-inst = represented in the VET-INST database, simple search Austria; Internet

http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/Library/Vetinstit/simple.asp

5. FUNDING FRAMEWORKS AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES.

Austrian VET research is mainly done by non-university institutions, which often focus on applied research and development. A strong base in the university system does not exist so far. Some steps have been taken in the university sector to strengthen adult education research by the establishment of a specialised department for research in continuing education and educational management at the Donau Universität Krems (<http://www.donau-uni.ac.at/de/studium/department/wbbm/index.php>), and by the further development of the department for adult education and vocational education at the University of Klagenfurt (<http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/ifeb/eb/>).

The main financial sources are still invested by the labour market authorities, and therefore there is no clear separation between VET research, research about occupational development and labour market research. Main players are the research branch of the public employment service (AMS), and the administration of the VET system based in the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The AMS has set up a research branch, and is hosting a research network. The ministry supports abf- Austria, and has set up a series of edited books about "Innovation in VET" (<http://www.studienverlag.at/index.php3>). The recent analysis of publications might indicate a slight reduction in the weight of the labour market research.

The main funding resources are provided via commissioned research projects, and by European sources.

Funding institutions are the AMS (public employment service), the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture and the Federal Ministry for Economics and Labour, and the institutions of social partnership.

The LEONARDO DA VINCI Nationalagentur (<http://www.leonardodavinci.at/>) provides a support structure for the participation in European projects.

The amount of resources is not known because of the scattered structure of financing mechanisms.

6. PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATIONS AND NETWORKS.

The key associations to facilitate the collaboration are abf-Austria and the AMS research network. Those initiatives have further consolidated, and the development of a network for adult education research is still going on.

- abf-Austria (<http://www.abf-austria.at/>) provides the contributions to the REFER-net, and holds contact to a wider community of institutions related to VET research. A yearly national meeting is organised, and a national conference is under planning. The first conference will take place in 2007. Its main objective is the further professionalisation of Austrian VET research.

- The AMS research network (http://www.ams.or.at/neu/1212_1805.htm) organises workshops to specific topics, and provides a web page for information about projects and events.

- The network for adult education research aims at the development of a common research agenda, which should contribute to the development and implementation of an Austrian lifelong learning strategy.

7. BRIEF REVIEW/ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT R&D ACTIVITIES AND INDICATION OF FUTURE ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED. THIS SECTION SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY A RESEARCH EXPERT.

7.1

Status, effectiveness and impact of current VET/HRD R&D activities in your country (brief comment).

Status.

VET research in Austria is conducted in a strongly policy related manner by a set of mainly small institutes which are competing for project commissions. We have also seen that HRD-research hardly does exist, and as far as it exists in business universities, it is separated from VET research. A shortcoming in Austrian VET research is that it is hardly institutionalised in the university system. Some steps have been taken recently to set up departments in this area.

In this competitive structure resources for the public good of documentation and coordination are lacking to a high degree. The European programmes have given some support for internationalisation of research, however, it is still low as compared to other small countries.

Effectiveness:

There are strong indications that research is not much used for policy development and change, and, moreover, that many projects are under resourced. So it might be efficient in economic terms (relatively much value for too little money), however, it hardly can be effective under these conditions.

Impact.

We do not have a sufficient overview about what is done, not to mention about impact.

7.2

Issues that need to be addressed by R&D in the future (brief comment).

The issues which need to be addressed have not substantially changed since the last report, rather those might be underlined more strongly:

- Overview and coordination should be visibly improved. An important step would be to improve the documentation of what is done. A kind of lock-in seems to exist, where each of the players are lacking resources, and as far as none provides information the others have not incentive to do this. A more professionally oriented research policy could be a step.

- More continuity and follow-up, and more basic research would be another improvement. Cooperation of the players could bring more communication and more strength of research. The establishment of a yearly VET research conference, and more inclusion in European and international activities could be steps in that direction.

- To give VET research more resources in the university system would be another strategy for more sustainability. A more systematic and transparent programming and funding of VET research would be feasible.

- In certain areas more cooperation between the funding institutions might be feasible, e.g., in the area of anticipation of future skill needs, or in the area of development of lifelong learning.

- There are still particularly two areas where more research should be done:

- The first is economics of education. Too little is known about internal and external efficiency of education and training.

- The second area where more research should be done is adult and continuing education. The attempts to establish a research network, and to identify an agenda among the researchers might be a first step. To include research in the lifelong learning strategy could be another step.

8. VET/HRD CONTACT PEOPLE.			
Full name	E-mail address	Function	Particular expertise related to VET/HRD research
Lassnigg, Lorenz	lassnigg@ihs.ac.at	Institution: equi - Employment-Qualification-Innovation, Institut für Höhere Studien (IHS); Senior researcher, head of research unit, Personal web site: http://www.equi.at/	Vocational education and training (initial / continuing) Curriculum / learning / competence and skill development Teacher / trainer / professional
Markowitsch, Jörg	markowitsch@3s.co.at	Institution: 3s Unternehmensberatung GmbH, Managing Director, Personal web site: http://www.3s.co.at/	Politics / society / population Economy / labour market / social partners Administration / finance of education and training General / academic education Vocational education and training (initial / continuing) Curriculum / learning / competence and skill development Certification / qualification / guidance / career / occupation
Mayr, Thomas	mayr@ibw.at	Institution: Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft (IBW), Director, Personal web site: http://www.ibw.at/	Economy, labour market, social partners Vocational education and training (initial/continuing) Administration / finance of education and training
Paier, Dietmar	dietmar.paier@zbw.at	Institution: Zentrum für Bildung und Wirtschaft, Forschungs- und Beratungsges GmbH, Manager, Personal web site: http://www.zbw.at	Information Technology Economy / labour market / social partners Educational Institution / enterprise Vocational education and training (initial / continuing) Human resources development
Schlögl Peter	peter.schloegl@oeibf.at	Institution: Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung, Managing Director, Personal web site: http://www.oeibf.at	Politics / society / population Economy / labour market / social partners Administration / finance of education and training Vocational education and training (initial / continuing) Certification / qualification / guidance / career / occupation
9. REFERENCES TO VET/HRD RESEARCH RESOURCES.			
Publications:			
Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur (2005) Bildungsforschung in Österreich 2003-2004. Vienna (Education research documentation 2003-2004); Internet: http://www.bmbwk.gv.at/medienpool/12753/bifodok2003_04.pdf			
Lassnigg L (2003) VET-research in Austria – short description. Contribution to REFER-net (research report 2002) InfoDoc 3 / 09-2003; Internet: http://www.abf-austria.at/docs/abf%20InfoDoc%203-2003.pdf			
Lassnigg L (2004) VET-research in Austria - National research report 2003. Contribution to REFER-net (unpublished manuscript)			
Schlögl P / Miljevic K (2005) Berufsbildung und Lebenslanges Lernen Einschlägige Veröffentlichungen aus Österreich im Jahr 2004. abf InfoDoc 1 / 06-2005; Internet: http://www.abf-austria.at/docs/abf%20InfoDoc%201-2005.pdf			
Internet sources (22.9.2005):			
Arbeitsgemeinschaft Berufsbildungsforschung Austria (abf-Austria) http://www.abf-austria.at/ (22.9.2005)			
AMS-Forschungsnetzwerk (AMS research network) http://www.ams.or.at/neu/1212_1805.htm (22.9.2005)			
Information Base of the European Research Overview (ERO Base): http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/projects_networks/ero/base.asp			
Cedefop-Datenbank Ausbildungsinstitutionen (VET-INSTIT): http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/Library/Vetinstit/simple.asp			

10. ABSTRACT.

First, VET research is strongly related to policy, and has got some impetus by the Austrian EU-presidency. Several inputs have been developed at the research level, which might be taken up for implementation. Several policy fields have been identified, which are related to educational R&D to some degree: policies to improve quality and efficient use of resources; policies to support the inclusion of young people; policies to assess the supply and demand match on the labour market, and to anticipate the demand for qualifications and competences; the development of an effective system of guidance and counselling.

Second, the information base for the analysis activities and institutions in Austrian VET research is still weak. As VET research is not institutionalised as a research area so far, the borders to other research areas (labour market research and more general educational research) are not clear. Steps have been taken to improve coordination of research, funding is mainly provided in a scattered way for individual projects, there are only very few topics under research during longer periods of time, and there is no overview about financial means. Austria has been founded as a core group of institutions in VET research. The documentation of activities in VET research can be improved, and funding should be made more coordinated and sustainable.

Third, some ideas for improvement are given (e.g., to provide a better overview and to make activities more visible), and two areas are identified where more research should be done:

- economics of education, and
- research about adult and continuing education.

ANNEX

Figure: Distribution of Publications 2003-2004 (Austrian Sources and REFER-Publications Report)

