

# IO1 Investigation Research Report

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## **Description of methodological approach of the research**

### Aims of the WBL-Q project

The “WBL-Q: From EQAVET principles (building blocks) to real quality in WBL on business and company level – self-evaluation, audit and continuous improvement” project, herein known as “WBL-Q”, aims to significantly contribute to the quality of work-based learning processes (WBL) in businesses and companies across Europe. The WBL-Q project was financed by the European Commission through the Erasmus + programme, and is implemented by seven European partners, across six countries; Austria, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Slovenia and Spain.

The objective of the WBL-Q project is to address the complex world of business and companies providing different forms of WBL processes, and to ensure that they are correctly reflected with appropriate guidelines and approaches to measure these WBL. To achieve this, the seven partner organisations in the WBL-Q project have identified relevant and appropriate quality criteria which reflects the broad variety of Work-Based Learning opportunities which are currently present in companies and organisations across Europe.

### Research Methodology

In order to significantly improve the quality of Work-Based Learning processes in businesses and companies across Europe, consortium partners analysed one main research objective;

“To identify relevant and feasible quality criteria in work-based learning processes.”

The research methodology of the WBL-Q research consisted of a mixture of desk-based research and field-based research, which enabled consortium members to understand the current state of art of VET provision across Europe and examine whether there are measures in place to ensure the quality of Work-Based Learning programmes within companies across Austria, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Slovenia and Spain. Both the desk-based research and the field-based research were conducted during the period December 2020 until March 2021 across six European countries. In order to reach the expected results for the WBL-Q project, consortium partners interviewed WBL responsible persons in organisations, in-house company trainers, as well as learners, to identify the relevant and crucial quality indicators for measuring quality in Work Based Learning. All participants in this research were known to consortium members through previous experience working with partner organisations as well as experience within the Erasmus + field.

The field-based research was achieved by each partner organisation through interviewing 5 participants; with each organisation choosing from a mixture of Business Owners, HR Professionals, WBL responsible persons, VET providers, VET tutors, and VET learners. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, consortium partners engaged with these external stakeholders through a range of online communication tools including Microsoft Teams, Messenger, Zoom, as well contacting them via telephone. No in-person interviews were



conducted due to national and European restrictions at the time of conducting this research. A list of the questions that were posed to participants during the interviews can be found in Annex 1 of this report.

To augment the results of the interviews, an online questionnaire was implemented with 300+ stakeholders and target group members via Google Forms. All partner organisations in the WBL-Q project contacted Work Based Learning representatives that were familiar to their companies, and asked them to participate in the WBL-Q research. A copy of the online questionnaire that was shared with these representatives can be found in Annex 2 of this report.

## How does the landscape look across Europe?

Over the past two decades, a series of economic shocks, such as the Global Recession of 2009 and the Coronavirus pandemic have fundamentally changed the shape of the education and training landscape across Europe. As a key element of lifelong learning, Vocational Education and Training is now expanding and diversifying across Europe which is enabling citizens from all European countries to acquire and develop the required knowledge, skills and competencies required to succeed in the ever changing labour market.

As economies look to grow and prosper after these economic shocks, increased pressure is being placed on the shoulders of young people, in order to ensure that they have the required skills and knowledge to succeed in an ever changing work. Work-Based Learning is a major driver of ensuring that young people across the continent have the required skills and knowledge, and a key element to this is ensuring that the provision of these training provisions are of high-quality and measurable, both at initial and continuous vocational education and training across Europe (CEDEFOP , 2013)

In this section, a brief overview of the iVET and cVET landscape in general across Europe has been described, as well as an examination of the VET landscape across Austria, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Slovenia and Spain.

### The Initial Vocational, Education and Training (iVET) landscape

Across Europe, iVET usually takes place at upper secondary level and/or post-secondary level, with the aim of providing learners, at an early age, with the knowledge and skills that they will require in their future working lives. On average across Europe, it is estimated that 50% of young Europeans aged 15-19 participate in iVET at this level annually. Students who participate in iVET often do so in a multitude of venues including in a classroom; school-based setting; work-based settings; companies; and training centres (CEDEFOP , 2020 ).

In recent years, economic shocks, the impact of globalisation and modern technological changes have resulted in the need for iVET to respond to these changes and evolve. CEDEFOP has recognised that there is an urgent need to prepare young people with the skills and competences they will need to enter specific occupations and sectors, in order to drive the economy further. Europe is currently witnessing an overall increase in the age of its population. In light of this, iVET across Europe must remain attractive to a new cohort of learners who will become the future workforce (CEDEFOP , ND). Unfortunately, in recent years, iVET has become the ‘second best’ option for learners in upper secondary school according to CEDEFOP, with many learners opting for tertiary education rather than work-based learning. Work-Based Learning at iVET level enables learners to seamlessly transition from full time education to the world of work by providing students with a ‘bridge to the labour market’ (CEDEFOP , 2013) which assists young people in the early stages of their professional development to succeed in the labour market.

However, many challenges are present with iVET. Historically, iVET was established to support the needs of the industrial revolution. In this fourth industrial revolution in which we see ourselves, iVET has had to adapt to the current needs and the predicted needs of the labour market. As a result, major reforms in iVET are being identified in Eastern European countries, such as Hungary and Slovenia. In the coming years, iVET needs to become more flexible and provide better quality and response to the needs and requirements of the labour market to remain attractive and prestigious to iVET learners (CEDEFOP , ND).

### The Continuing Vocational, Education and Training (CVET) landscape

In comparison to iVET, cVET can either occur directly after an individual has completed their initial education and training, or, after having commenced their career (CEDEFOP , 2020 ). cVET enables those in the work force to progress in their careers, develop personal fulfilment and support economic development (CEDEFOP , 2013). Through continuous vocational education and training, workers at all stages of their career can upgrade their existing knowledge, acquire new skills and retrain to new sectors should they wish. cVET enables individuals to further both their personal and professional development through a range of activities including; on-the-job training; job-rotation; exchanges; secondments; study visits; participation in learning or quality circles; self-directed learning; and attendance at conferences, workshops, trade fairs and lectures (CEDEFOP , 2013)

In recent years, the EU has identified a need for governments, individuals and employers across Europe to heavily invest in developing the skill set of workers in order to promote social inclusion at all levels. Through this investment in cVET, it is envisioned that increased competitiveness and economic growth will be seen in companies across Europe (CEDEFOP , 2013). An important element of cVET is to ensure that on-the-job learning enables those to learn-by-doing (CEDEFOP , 2013) in a manner that is flexible, and specific to the needs of the employer and the individuals. In cVET, it is especially important to ensure that for companies that provide workers with education and training opportunities, there are sufficient measures in place to measure the quality of the educational programmes on offer.

### Austria

Work Based Learning as a core approach in initial vocational education and training is of crucial importance in Austria. With thanks to a dual-VET system in place in Austria, learners can avail of two places of learning; within an enterprise and within part-time vocational schools. Approximately 110,000 learners commence their VET training across Austrian countries per annum with 80% of VET training being provided in a work-based setting in a company.

Since 1969, The Vocational Education and Training Act (known as the Berufsausbildungsgesetz) has provided a legal basis and framework for VET provision in Austria. The Act ensures that all trainers in work environments have completed a minimum educational training, in order to provide high quality learning opportunities to iVET learners. Trainers in Austria must complete 40 training units on subject



matters including pedagogic, didactic and psychological needs. In order to ensure that these responsible people have completed their training, they must sit an examination after having completed the 40 units. The Act stipulates that organisations must have one qualified responsible person per five trainees. Additionally, the Act protects the rights of learners by providing them with an employment contract with organisations with whom they are completing their work-based learning.

Although this Act has provided a long and substantial tradition in the Austrian VET and business systems, it is currently becoming outdated. The Act presents some challenges and barriers for modern iVET training in Austria with some of the main challenges of VET in Austria including the need to modernise the VET Training Act and advancements in technology, globalisation, modernisation, digitalisation and economic megatrends. Since the introduction of the Act in 1969, companies are under extreme pressure to ensure they remain competitive, however, due to the increased challenges associated with the provision of training, many organisations across Austria are stopping their work-based VET programmes.

As a response to a decrease in the number of organisations providing WBL training opportunities across Austria, legal representatives and stakeholders have introduced a range of measures, including financial supports for organisations to motivate them to host iVET learners. As of May 2021, this bonus currently stands at €1,000 per organisation per person employed under the iVET system. Furthermore, additional supports are available for companies that hire long-term unemployed such as apprentices. It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic was of global concern at the time of writing this report with work-based training opportunities becoming fragile in Austria, with few opportunities for iVET learners to engage in work-based learning opportunities, due to the closure of many retail, hospitality and craft sectors.

## Germany

A core element of Work-Based Learning in Germany is the Dual VET system which has great prestige and constitutes an educational pathway that is still chosen by more than 50% of young people in Germany, who have completed their full-time studies. Dual VET is a crucial basis of innovation, financial success and economic growth in Germany. During this training pathway that lasts approximately three years, learners are provided with two learning venues; within a company and within vocational schools. All sectors are covered and represented under this dual system, with vocational training being provided to over 329 occupations.

Training places can be offered in both the public and private sector in Germany, with some private households also offering employment opportunities to iVET learners. Enterprises who partake in vocational training must enter into a contract with trainees and are ultimately responsible for the costs of the training and remuneration of the trainee. Collective agreements in Germany stipulate that on average, trainees receive one-third of the starting pay of a skilled worker, which also increases with every year of training completed. This makes the transition from training to regular employment easier, on the one hand, by letting the trainees acquire practical experience in their occupation and allowing them to become familiar with the

world of work and, on the other hand, by providing the companies with sound knowledge about the skills of the trainees. After completion of the training, the companies that have provided training are in a position to hire qualified and skilled workers who can seamlessly transition from the role of an apprentice to that of a full-time member of staff.

The central characteristic of the German dual VET system is the close partnership between employers, trade unions and the Government. The employers and the unions assume responsibility of the dual VET system through co-determining the shaping of the vocational education and training system. The willingness of the enterprises and companies to take responsibility in the VET system could not be realised without co-determination which forms the basis of a working ‘public-private partnership’.

To ensure a qualitative work-based learning, the apprenticeships and other forms of training are highly regulated by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with additional ministries including the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. These regulations are published in regular updates to reflect the changing labour market within the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) of the Ministry of Education and Research and cover the profile of the occupation and the skills, knowledge and competences necessary in order to exercise it, company-based learning and learning at the vocational school – which supplements the learning in the company – as well as youth protection, the examination system and many other standards. The BBiG not only covers initial training but also further training, retraining and vocational training for special groups of persons. Work-based learning is supervised and supported by the chambers of commerce and industry, the chamber of crafts and trades and similar organisations for specific fields such as health.

The German training occupation describes a key element of the training and education system which comprises a vocational education and training standard, occupational characteristics, a training plan of two or three years and a qualification frame. The standard defines the context and time frame of the training courses for the state-recognised occupations, such as training specifications and assessment requirements.

The Federal-Länder Coordination Committee for Vocational Training Regulations / Framework Curricula approves the new vocational training regulation and the framework curriculum that has been coordinated with it. Employers and trade unions jointly formulate the employment requirements for the standard. In the practice of dual VET, all cooperation is based on consensus; no regulations concerning initial or further vocational training may be issued against the declared will of either of the social partners.

Additionally, the BBiG also sets examination requirements. For recognised training occupations these are usually performed in two steps – an intermediate examination and a final examination or extended final examination, which can be repeated twice. Each step has its own regulations for admission which include e.g. a written record of training and for the final examination participation in the intermediate examination. To pass the examination, which is conducted by the examination board of the competent body, candidates are required to demonstrate employability skills. After passing the examination learners receive state-wide

recognised final certificates which state the form, time and aim of the apprenticeship as well as the skills, knowledge, and competences acquired and consist of a chamber certificate, a certificate from the company, and a vocational school certificate. In addition to the formal certificate all learners receive a separate certificate with the declaration that the degree is recognised to the EQF / NQF Level 4.

To be able to function as a training company in Germany, enterprises and their staff need to fulfil certain requirements which are also set out in the BBiG. Among these are appropriate facilities in terms of; premises and machines etc; and an appropriate ratio between training, training places and skilled workers. The staff working with the learners must additionally demonstrate personal and professional aptitude which is measured in appropriate occupational and vocational teaching skills, knowledge and competences (Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude, AEVO). The suitability of the company and the trainers is monitored by the competent body (chamber of crafts /chamber of commerce or similar) and can be sanctioned if rules are breached. If not all teaching lessons can be performed within the company, the enterprise is allowed to supplement its training with lectures from outside of its premises, which is also referred to as collaborative training.

The company and the learner are bound to each other by a mandatory contract which contains rights and obligations for both sides. While the learner is required to learn the necessary competences to be of value for the company, including further training, the teaching staff are obliged to ensure that the learner receives the information and skills required according to plan in due time and in logical order. This also includes the provision with required material and on a more abstract level the forming of character.

To ensure the work-based learning and a stable or even increasing quality a WBL-committee works on administrative and qualitative ongoing measures and the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training reports yearly to the federal government in the form of a training report.

## Hungary

On 1 January 2020, the 2019 LXXX Act on Vocational Education and Training entered into force in Hungary, which fundamentally transformed the Hungarian vocational education and training system. All learners entering vocational training after 1st September 2020 started their studies under this new legislation. From this date, vocational qualifications listed in the National Training Register (OKJ), which states the so-called basic professions, will only be available in the school system, in vocational schools or technical schools. From September 2020, vocational training institutions will operate in technical schools and vocational schools.

The technical school is a place for quality professional education with technical qualifications that provide middle-level knowledge. Courses in the technical school last between five to six years and combine the benefits of grammar school and vocational training. After graduating from high school, learners can apply for the last 2 years of technical training. On the other hand, vocational school lasts three years in duration

and aims to prepare learners for their professional lives. After completing the first year of training, as well as a basic sector exam, which normally takes place at the end of the 9th grade, learners can make their specific career choices. Over the next two years, students are able to acquire professional knowledge at companies and enterprises in the form of dual training.

The new Vocational Training Act centralises vocational practical training across Hungary and provides that it can be implemented primarily in dual training places with a vocational training employment contract. The legal and control tasks of the internship are performed by the regional chambers. Vocational students can receive various cash benefits during their studies, provided they have good academic results, which can include; a scholarship during their school studies and any school workshop. The amount of this cash benefit varies depending on the academic results of the learner. In dual-training, organisations providing practical training offer wages to learners, which is stipulated in their employment contract. Upon completion of their studies, learners who gain employment can receive a once-off start up allowance from the Hungarian government to assist with their development.

In 2019, the Government stated in its Vocational Training 4.0 strategy its commitment to the introduction of a quality management system based on the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET). Rules for the introduction of quality management in vocational education and training have also appeared in legislation, and Parliament has adopted the new 2019 LXXX. Act 12/2020 on the implementation of the Vocational Training Act, issued by the Government. (II. 7.) Government Decree. The quality management system of vocational education and training (MIR) consists of the following elements; a quality policy; the strategic system goal; a self-assessment manual; an external evaluation; and teacher evaluations. The quality policy contains the mission and vision of the institution; the strategic goal system defines the organisational framework of the quality management system; the operation of quality management highlights the regulated processes of the institution in the areas of management, professional training, support and resources; the self-assessment manual issued by the Minister contains the system of expectations, the indicators to be measured, the measurement tools of the partner measurements, and the methodological proposal of the self-assessment; an external evaluation provides the methodological proposal for evaluation of the VET institution and the work of its leader; the teacher evaluation assesses the performance of teachers in vocational institutions every three years.

The transformation of vocational training has significantly changed the training system in Hungary, both in the field of education and practical training. Unlike previous practice, it has centralised vocational training and higher education in the areas of training, practical education and examinations. The development of the quality management system will also be centralised, and ministerial manuals will be developed according to guidelines.

It is important to point out that Hungary is in an economically unstable situation, and with the government being in the process of implementing the new laws, neither the training institutions nor the economic actors are prepared for these changes. With the introduction of the new law, the vast majority of companies that have been engaged in practical training for years do not undertake to organise practical training, and companies grouped under vocational training centres cannot accept the amount of demand that is currently arising. Private trainers from September 2020 cannot start training related to the basic profession, which overburdens existing vocational training centres. At present, the system and curriculum of special training “built on” the basic professions are not fixed in final form either, because the law left the state before the changes in the system that expired until September 2021.

## Ireland

Work-based learning (WBL) is an educational strategy that provides learners with real-life work experiences where they can apply academic and technical skills and develop their employability. Work-based learning in Ireland typically takes place in apprenticeship, traineeships and other courses with work placement and creates a different learning paradigm. There is a longstanding tradition of apprenticeships in Ireland. Considered ‘a second-chance route’, apprenticeships in Ireland have been increasing in popularity in recent years, with 17,500 people registered as apprentices in 2020.

Possibly one of the most significant changes in Ireland’s VET system in recent years relates to the expansion of the formal apprenticeship system. Following a review in 2013, the number of apprenticeship programmes available was expanded from 26 to 43 by November 2018, with an additional 46 in development. Prior to 2016, the vast majority of apprentices in Ireland were enrolled in construction-related occupations (e.g. carpenter, electrician) or engineering (e.g. maintenance fitter, metal fabrication) occupations. However, the expansion of the apprenticeship system, in line with the goals set out in the National Skills Strategy 2025, resulted in the introduction of apprenticeship programmes across a new range of occupations and education levels. The Apprenticeship Council, established by the Minister for Education and Skills in 2014 as part of Ireland’s apprenticeship system reform, has responsibility for identifying new sectors of the economy for which the apprenticeship may provide a suitable solution to addressing the needs of employers and employees. Among other factors, the Council takes into account the findings of the work of the National Skills Council (responsible for the skills needs identification architecture in Ireland). The Council is enterprise-led, and its membership is comprised of representatives from business, trade unions, education

and training bodies, as well as the Department of Education and Skills. Some of these new apprenticeships are aimed at more traditional skills (e.g. butcher, accounting technician, auctioneering services). Others are designed specifically to meet the changes in the workplace brought about as a result of technology. The overarching aim of such changes introduced to the apprenticeship system is to ensure that the education

and training system can equip learners with the skills needs of the economy and employers in the 21st century.

In July 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Ireland launched the July Jobs Stimulus package, which aimed to support those who have been affected by the pandemic the most, to get back to work. As part of the July Jobs Stimulus, the Government of Ireland has set ambitious targets of helping young people in particular to retrain, develop new skills or find new employment opportunities. To do this, 35,000 additional courses have been made available in both further and higher education; 12,500 places have been funded for short term skills training; and 10,000 additional places in apprenticeships and work placement schemes, specifically for individuals who have been unemployed for over six-months.

Finally, in April 2021, the Government of Ireland announced The Action Plan for Apprenticeships which sets out a five-year strategy to deliver 10,000 new apprentice registrations per year by 2025. The plan provides a roadmap to a single apprenticeship system and new supports for employers and apprentices. It will also do the following: create a new National Apprenticeship Office to drive reforms; provide a new grant for employers, with a top-up grant for areas of identified national skills needs and/or targeted recruitment of underrepresented groups such as female apprentices, or lone-parents, people with disabilities, or members of the Travelling community; offer non-financial supports targeted to SMEs in areas such as recruitment and supervision of apprentices; set targets for the public sector to take on apprentices and to create cross-sector apprentices and examine the potential development of new cross-border apprentice programmes and support apprentice engagement in international programmes such as Erasmus.

## Slovenia

Work based learning (WBL) has been included in the Slovenian education system since 1996 when the dual system of education started following the example of the German regulation on apprenticeship. In 2004 the system of VET changed but regulation maintained good practice of social partnerships. Social partners are very important in the preparation of national vocational standards, which are mandatory for the planning and development of educational programmes. They are used by all partners involved in the preparation of VET programmes, the Institute of Vocational Education of the Republic of Slovenia and the Council of Experts which determines the professional content of VET programmes.

Responsibility for the administration of education is divided among national authorities, local authorities and schools in Slovenia. The Ministry of Education, amongst others is responsible for: allocating funds; implementing laws and administrative decisions relating to pre-primary institutions, compulsory, upper secondary and higher vocational colleges. In Slovenia, other ministries are generally not involved in initial VET policy planning.

Close relations between the labour market and education and training have been established by law for all levels of VET but shared responsibilities for learning outcomes are typical for learners on level 4 and level



5 of the European Qualification Framework (EQF), with level four constituting as three years of upper secondary vocational education, and level 5 constituting as short-cycle secondary vocational education courses which are normally provided by higher vocational colleges. However, it should be recognised that since 2017, Slovenia is trying to re-establish apprenticeship in upper-secondary vocational education.

With regards to the overall length of practical training in Slovenia, practical lessons in school and work-based learning are defined according to the type of educational programme offered. There are four main educational programmes within the Slovene VET system, including; short vocational upper secondary education; vocational upper secondary education; technical upper secondary education; and vocational technical education. Over two years, 35 - 40% of the educational programme in short vocational upper secondary education is intended for practical training, of which four weeks or 152 hours is dedicated to work-based learning within companies. In comparison, 40% of the educational programme in vocational upper secondary education is intended for practical training, of which between 24 and 53 weeks is dedicated. Education programmes in upper secondary vocational education programmes are implemented as either school-based or apprenticeships. Learners can enter into individual agreements with work-based learning providers to provide them with a minimum length of maximum training, however, this term must never exceed 53 weeks in duration.

On the lower end of the scale, technically upper secondary education of four years in duration provides between four to eight weeks of work-based learning in companies. At most, 15% of these educational programmes are intended for practical training, with the remaining time dedicated to general subjects and professional theoretical subjects. Vocational technical education provides learners with two weeks' work-based learning within companies, and 10% of the programme is dedicated to practical training. Within technical upper secondary education and vocational technical education, the main goal for learners is professional socialisation in the work environment. This results in Work-Based Learning mentors facing additional pressure in order to find suitable working opportunities for learners, as often, their learning outcomes are not specified.

Irrespective of the path chosen, secondary vocational education programmes are equivalent. Students participating in these programmes develop practical skills provided by their employment. For learners who enter through VET, they receive 24 weeks of in-company training, versus the 56 weeks that those who enter through apprenticeships can receive. Companies providing work-based learning opportunities must ensure that minimum conditions are met, including; a workspace environment; equipment for students and competent in-company trainers.

The role of mentor is more important in apprenticeship with at least 50% of the educational programme being provided as WBL with an employer, and at least 40% being conducted by a school. WBL may be provided by one or more employers, within the framework of international mobility programmes for the purpose of practical training.

To ensure high-quality Work Based Learning provision across the country, a catalogue for practical training and an apprenticeship plan have been developed to support mentors and teachers in planning and implementing the curriculum. The catalogue for practical training identifies the skills that the learner should be educated on when participating in work-based learning. Additionally, the Apprenticeship Plan defines and aligns the goals of practical training with the apprentice's work with the goals and scope of school education in accordance with the educational programme; prepares a timetable for apprenticeship training and school education (cyclical, recurrent), with the apprentice taking into account the technological processes specific to the profession for which the apprentice is trained; the ways and forms of mutual communication of the apprentice's fulfilment of obligations, absences, violations, educational measures and other circumstances relevant to the apprenticeship; manner of participation in the completion of the final examinations.

## Spain

In Spain, the concept of WBL refers to the phase of practical training in a company that the student has to carry out after completing their VET studies, which can either be made up of iVET or CVET, which includes dual training.

Students who participate in work-based learning through iVET in Spain are enrolled in regulated education. iVET in Spain is characterised by a practical training phase within a company and is developed through the professional module of Working Centre Training. This training phase does not constitute an employment nature, and there are no scholarships associated with it. Learners can only pass and conclude their training phase within an organisation when they are deemed to have passed all of the professional modules that are associated with the training cycle. In order for learners to obtain their vocational training degrees, as a general rule, they must complete an internship which equals 400 hours at both intermediate and higher grades.

As part of the 'work-based learning' concept used in the active employment policy of the European Union, learners in cVET in Spain can avail of two different contracts: one type of contract for learning and training, and the other type of learning contract for internships. It should be noted that both of these contracts differ

in their nature and objectives, with the Learning and Training Contract being specifically aimed at young people with primary and secondary studies who cannot access an internship contract. With this contract, the time duration should not exceed two continuous or discontinuous years. On the other hand, the Internship Work Contract is specifically intended for those with intermediate or higher VET studies and university students. These contracts are aimed at people under 30 years of age (Law 3/2012), but in practice they are often extended to 34-year-olds. The objective of the Internship Work Contract is to obtain the worker's professional practice appropriate to the level of studies completed. Through this contract, learners



acquire experience in a specific job that is related to their studies, so that there will be a seamless transition between the educational/training system and the labour market.

Both the Learning and Training Contract, and the Internship Contract, have undergone significant developments in recent decades in Spain, and proof of this is the legislation and reforms that have been developed to improve and promote the employment of young people and promote youth employment. The aim is to advance towards greater collaboration and participation of companies in professional training systems, following the logic of “learning by doing” and close to the productive sectors. The idea is that companies learn more about the learning process of young people, as well as young people learning by doing with the company simultaneously becoming an organisation that learns continuously.

In 2007 the Apprenticeship and Training Contract was the contract of first choice for only 24% of young people. Learning and Training contracts and Internship contracts have increased since the 2012 labour reform, which has been sold as a success across Spain. In 2015, there were 244,424 young people with these types of contracts of which

68% were Learning and Training contracts and 32% were Internships. Across Spain, Learning and Training Contracts represent 3.2% of the total of temporary contracts. There were 23% of contracts offered under Apprentice and Training in 2015.

However, in reality, this “success” currently hides the rise in low-wage jobs, or “the fake trainees”. In other words, these statistics do not correspond to what is expected of a transition contract between school and work. For the group of young people who have undergone apprenticeship and training contracts, only a small few have managed to stabilise their professional trajectory and find secure employment. It seems that of those young people, it is not until they have reached 30 years of age that they manage to find security, which is in contrast to the aims of the contract in the first instance. For those who receive employment under the Apprenticeship and Training contract, it can be considered that this is their first job placements, as many companies use this contract in lieu of temporary contracts, in order to corrupt their legislative requirements. Across Spain, this practice is on the increase, with organisations being warned against the fraudulent and wrong use of learning and training contracts to obtain cheap labour.

The same trend is observed for internship contracts, which have not changed between 2007 and 2015. For most young people it is also one more employment contract and only for 17% it represents their first employment relationship in 2015. A very high proportion of individuals across Spain favour the successful transition from education to employment of young people who have obtained either vocational or university education. In comparative terms, there is more of an appeal of Internship Contracts rather than



Apprenticeship and Training  
Contracts, as there are more optimistic prospects of individuals with thanks to their educational background.

## Policy Analysis on a European Level

In these challenging and unpredictable times, the EU has introduced a range of measures and policies in the hope of encouraging individuals from mandatory schooling into a desired lifelong learning environment. Through providing learners at both iVET and cVET levels with the requisite skills necessary to succeed in the modern workplace, the European Union envisions that youth employability will increase in the coming years.

However, in order to ensure that learners and educators involved in both iVET and cVET provisions are provided with the requisite skills to succeed in modern society, it is imperative for policy makers across Europe to ensure that high quality vocational education and training services are available to all stakeholders (CEDEFOP , 2021). Learners and educators must be provided with high quality iVET and cVET in order to enable young people to unlock their full potential. Well-trained and motivated teachers, trainers and educators who constantly support learners to master new challenges that they are presented with will ensure the continued success of both iVET and cVET in future years.

To do this, the European Union has pledged to ensure that there is active participation in iVET and cVET across Europe (CEDEFOP , ND). In recent years the European Union has introduced a wide range of policies and changes which aim to improve the global competitiveness of countries. Some of these policies include; the ECVET Credit System Overhaul; the EU Skills Agenda; the EU Youth Strategy; and the EU Green Deal.

### The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training

In order to facilitate mobility within the vocational education and training sector, the European Commission introduced the European Credit System for Vocational Education (ECVET) (The European Union , 2015). The ECVET tool enables learners at both iVET and cVET to have their qualifications recognised across institutions and across nations. Adopted in 2009, the ECVET tool enables those in formal, non-formal and informal learning in their home country and in host countries, to have their studies assessed and validated through a structured European tool.

Although the aim of the ECVET tool was to allow individuals to have their courses accredited and validated across countries, in reality, across EU countries, there are many stakeholders. It has proven challenging across all European nations and with the stakeholders within to ensure that high quality education and training is provided at all levels. For this reason, the ECVET system is currently under review.

## The European Skills Agenda for Sustainable Competitiveness, Social Fairness and Resilience (2020 - 2025)

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for businesses and service providers to become more resilient in the face of crises that are faced on a global level. The European Skills Agenda highlights that an investment in skills is needed in order to succeed in light of economic shocks that have been faced in the past two decades (European Commission, 2021).

Over a five-year period, the European Skills Agenda aims to provide lifelong learning and training opportunities for all individuals across Europe, with a specific focus on ensuring that individuals can avail of these when it suits them. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is envisaged that young people in particular will find it extremely challenging to access the future labour market. For this reason, the European Skills Agenda aims to implement four major strategies, including a need a work collectively; ensuring that individuals have the rights skills for the jobs of the future; implementing tools, initiatives and supports for individuals in their lifelong, continuous learning pathways; and the development of a framework which will enable unlocking investments in skills (European Commission, 2021).

Over the next five years, an estimated 2 million jobseekers will have a recent learning experience which is an increase of 82% on current trends (European Commission, 2020). With this ever-increasing desire of the European Union to ensure that people continuously partake in learning opportunities and develop their skills, it is crucial to ensure that there are high quality measures in place to ensure that VET remains an attractive option for workers of the future.

### The EU Youth Strategy

Young people across Europe face many uncertainties and challenges, in terms of discrimination, social exclusion, disinformation and fake news. With young people across Europe at risk of being less-well off than their parents (European Commission, 2018), a range of supports needs to be provided to encourage young people to become active citizens within their communities.

The EU Youth Strategy (The European Union , 2020 ) aims to provide these supports and promote the involvement of youth in issues that affect them the most. Working across three core pillars, the EU Youth Strategy endeavours to engage, connect and empower young people to become active citizens in their communities by encouraging them to engage in democratic life, connect with others to develop their intercultural skills and support youth empowerment.

In order to help mitigate against social exclusion across Europe, the strategy will encourage dialogue between young people across Europe and connect them with youth exchanges through the Erasmus + programme. Young people will be agents of change in the issues that their community face. Through the EU Youth Strategy, young people across Europe will gain exposure to the key transversal skills needed for

the future in order to meet the challenges that will be presented with environmental and technological changes (Council of the European Union, 2009).

## EU Green Deal

By 2050, the European Union aims to achieve ambitious goals of having no net emissions of greenhouse gases. To ensure climate and environmental challenges are met, the Osnabrück Declaration 2020 set out targets to ensure that future-orientated VET provisions across Europe support the digital and green transition (The European Commission & The European Social Partners , 2020 ).

The EU Green Deal aims to support healthier forms of transport and ensure that the buildings in which we live and work are more energy efficient. In the coming years, there will be an emphasis on work-based learning mentors to ensure that learners are provided with the necessary skills to adapt to this EU Green Deal. With the support of the Osnabrück Declaration 2020, the EU will be able to transition to a more sustainable, greener and digital economy which creates a myriad of jobs which can support economic recovery and avoid a skills obsolescence.

## Key findings of interviews implemented

This section presents the key findings for each country, Austria, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Slovenia and Spain. Interviews were conducted between December 2020 and January 2021, through telephone interviews and online communication tools, such as Zoom. All partners interviewed five members of their local stakeholder forums.

### Austria

The interviews conducted highlighted major concerns and challenges that currently exist in Austria in relation to Work-Based Learning. Although WBL providers feel there is a need to implement Quality Measures that will ensure the high quality of WBL provision across Austria, WBL learners do not feel that there is a need and a relevance for this. At present, quality management, quality assurance and improvement are not considered in the same regard as other quality benchmarked processes, such as ISO 9001. Overall, in Austria, most companies are using company-specific tools to measure and document the quality and the WBL experience. This research has highlighted that smaller companies in Austria tend to use informal methods when providing feedback to learners, especially oral feedback. However, larger companies use a wide range of methods such as observational questionnaires; 360-degree feedback; weekly and monthly reports.

A wide range of challenges currently exist between learners, WBL providers and government officials in Austria. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, one learner engaged in WBL activities identified feeling ‘ignored by our government and feeling like second-class citizens in political discussions’. Learners, feel that especially those in smaller organisations, are not able to influence the training offering and have no voice in creating their own futures. With regards to organisations reviewing their WBL processes, stark contrast can be identified between small and larger organisations, with small organisations only reviewing their policies as necessary, and larger organisations doing so on an annual basis.

The main challenge faced by organisations who offer WBL in Austria find it difficult to find and attract suitable candidates to their roles, which seems to stem from a lack of knowledge and the wrong assumptions being made by the learner, with regards to WBL. Although the rights of apprentices are protected under Austrian law, companies are highly critical and careful of the candidates that they hire. Recruitment of the candidate has therefore become an urgent need to be addressed in Austria, to ensure that there are relevant quality measures in place to ensure the correct candidates are chosen for their role. Additionally, once recruited, WBL representatives have highlighted a growing concern for the need to match the candidate to the roles, as often, the job profile is highly generic.

The interviews highlighted that this lack of knowledge stems from a lack of budget and resources being made available to both companies and schools, therefore knowledge on what is expected from learners is not provided to them. Additionally, some organisations in Austria feel that WBL provides ‘cheap labour for a limited time’ which results in the overall quality and outcomes and outputs from learners. Companies need to invest heavily in supporting the development of their trainers in order to provide high quality learning experiences to WBL participants.

Another growing issue has been highlighted in relation to intergenerational challenges that occur within companies offering WBL opportunities. This research highlighted that there are current challenges in relation to companies not providing learners with modern day learning practices, through outdated teaching methods and equipment that is available in companies. Furthermore, due to age demographics and different generational cohorts within organisations at present, challenges can occur for the WBL responsible person. To counteract these issues, interviewees highlighted a need for ‘transparency’ between all partners involved in the WBL process to influence a high quality WBL process. Through active listening and dedicating sufficient time to the learners, high quality learning outcomes could be achieved, however, this is not the case at present.

Austrian interviewees highlighted a skills difference between WBL participants from urban and rural communities. Companies involved in this study recognised higher satisfaction rates with learners from rural areas who have had previous working experiences compared to those from urban areas that are ‘only focused on virtual and digital challenges’.

## Germany

Research in Germany highlighted that the aims and goals of the WBL-Q project are worthwhile, and it is necessary to pursue them. The majority of interviewees identified quality in WBL as the most important criteria for a functioning and ongoing learning experience. However, two interviewees mentioned doubts, that all companies would participate in such a tool and expected only those who already put effort into their quality management to engage. To ensure that companies would participate in using quality management tools, one interviewee suggested mandatory participation in using the tool.

Some of the most challenging elements mentioned by learners who participated in this research included the connection between vocational school and the company training; the timeframe of the apprenticeship to be a fully equipped worker after finishing their exams; and specific situations within their learning experience. Experts who defined their role as head of apprentices or coordinators respectively or as auditor were found to be concerned with similar tasks such as marketing, recruiting, selecting and onboarding, supervision and assessing and grading of learners. All three mentors mentioned challenges in terms of determining the performance of the apprentices and securing the quality of their learnings. Too often it



cannot be achieved, and learners fail their final exams. In addition, recruiting and matching the candidate to the work-based placement has become more difficult. With the recent pandemic in mind interviewees also mentioned the difficulty of face-to-face training and the availability of remote work as challenges.

A variety of important factors for the quality of the work-based learning experience were mentioned. Most often it was the connection between the vocational school and the training company, that should complement each other and support each other's content with additional input. Just as important seemed to be having a direct contact person for the learners that accompanies them throughout their whole learning experience. The climate within the company, including the significance and involvement of the learner were mentioned multiple times. Furthermore, according to the interviewees, the teachers need to have a high interest and aptitude in imparting knowledge. Lastly, quality needs to be developed through feedback and changed processes in the eyes of the interviewees.

However, with regards to the frequency of feedback given, a variety of different answers were provided. One has feedback meetings every 2 weeks, one every 3-4 months, others only when requested. However, an open feedback procedure was mentioned several times with the chance for learners as well as teachers to voice their opinion and optimize their work accordingly. Quality issues as a reason for such talks were mentioned specifically, however, no other measures or documents were used. Only once was a checklist and a detailed reporting of every step of the learning process mentioned. Within their own companies all but one interviewee described the process as hardly detailed and difficult without quality checks from the company. The wish for a simple, preferably online tool was mentioned several times.

A wide range of time frames was identified in terms of reviewing the WBL process. From no set dates via every couple of weeks to every other week or even weekly each participant gave a different answer. Additionally, the obligation for a review varies as well. For some it is mandatory to have a feedback meeting every time a new chapter in the learning process starts (or even after every two weeks), others have to actively request it while again others only review when they are triggered by some action. Only once was an internal benchmark mentioned which corresponds to an entire review process with specific obligations for the learner and the teacher. These obligations are voiced together with wishes and offers from the very first day of the WBL experience.

In determining the quality of the WBL process, German interviewees selected eleven out of the fourteen options to be important. Most often they chose the regulations and legislation guiding WBL (here defined as the Vocational Training Act (BBlG) and trade and crafts code (HwO)) because it allows quality control especially in smaller companies according to certain set criteria. Despite its legally binding role, interviewees nevertheless aim to do more than mentioned in the regulations. Just as often as the regulations, interviewees opted for the skills developed by the learner since this is the essential ongoing process of WBL, ensures further development and motivation and demonstrates the personal development. The last factor on the top rank is the "support and supervision for the learner, namely through the teaching staff". A reliable, trustworthy contact person who is in charge and embedded within the company culture is very



important in the eyes of the interviewees. The culture of the business or hosting organisation itself was mentioned often as well, as it seems to be more important than earning a lot of money for the learners and a question of forming a learner into a future colleague for the company. The same rank received the management and administration of the WBL process within the VET (here within the daily practice within the company), the matching of the candidate to the work-based placement as the WBL would otherwise be a waste of time and the support and coaching for the person responsible for WBL in the company as it is seen as a reward for good work and furthers - in combination with the company culture - good WBL. As previously mentioned, the relationship between the VET Institution and the company is considered important. However, right now it does not always function well, according to some interviews. The same weight is given to the recognition of WBL as an important element in vocational education, future skills strategies and opportunities for young people in Europe as it seems to become more and more difficult in Germany to enthruse qualified pupil to enter into WBL. It has a shrinking reputation although its qualifications become more and more important as practical base for future learning according to the interviewees. If the reputation rises so will allegedly the quality of the WBL. Understanding of the expectations, limitations and opportunities for all parties in the WBL process as well as recruitment of the candidate where only mentioned occasionally.

## Hungary

All five interviewees in the Hungarian study highlighted that the aims of the WBL-Q project are excellent and needed especially in light of the transformation of vocational training at present. Currently, vocational training is undergoing a transformation in Hungary, which can change weekly or monthly. Respondents felt that there is a centralised regulatory environment within Hungary that requires compliance, and that practitioners and trainers need to adapt to the changing legal and training environment in which they work. In this environment, interviewees highlighted that the provision of training with an existing institutional and training background is more important than quality education in practice places.

In the early 2000s, there was a government program to introduce quality management processes in kindergartens and primary schools, called Comenius2000. However, it has yet to be implemented in vocational training due to a change of government and has been on hold ever since. For years, the entire training sector has been struggling with a shortage of teachers, with institutions working with outdated facilities and unqualified trainers. The current legislation does not oblige trainers to have a pedagogical qualification in vocational training.

This transformation has also resulted in the expectations regarding internships and exam requirements to also change. In the case of the vocational qualifications listed in the National Training Register (OKJ), the so-called basic professions, there are few curricula in which no corrections had to be made within a school year. The interviewees mostly mentioned the semester and annual evaluation of the internship diary. There

is one place where they have the semester evaluation questionnaire for the students and for the internship leader. The evaluation sheet is not suitable for qualitative differentiation or for assessing the personal performance of different practical subtasks.

In terms of some of the most important factors to consider in relation to the quality of work-based learning, Hungarian interviewees highlighted that there is currently more effective dialogue between the school, the Chamber, and the practical training place than has been the case so far. The Chamber should better support vocational training institutions and practical training places with continuous information, a network of experts and focus group mentoring. It would be necessary to react immediately with a telephone number to which you can get immediate help with questions related to practical training and apprenticeship contracts. The Chamber should open a digital communication channel between the parent - student - school - practical training place. In addition to the ongoing review and maintenance of curricula, it would be good to ensure the flexibility of curricula framework. Currently, there are trainings that doesn't have a final developed curriculum.

The research highlights that Continuous Professional Development is needed for both teachers, practice leaders and chamber professionals, depending on who has a role and task, what methodological and evaluation aspects should be applied in the learning outcomes-based approach. Occupational diaries and work diaries should be made available online. This makes it clear to practice leaders the level and complexity of knowledge and professional skills that learners need to acquire during practical training, what are the areas for development that the preparation focuses on.

A description of the learning outcome-based requirement is not currently provided, although this would allow for a more accurate assessment. With this, the participants of the education would be aware of the expectations, the purpose of the education would be clearer, how to learn the subjects closer to quality work, what the trainers expect from the student, what tasks they will be able to perform at the end of the learning.

To determine the overall quality of WBL processes, some of the most important elements that were highlighted by interviewees in Hungary include; the investment and incentives in WBL in your country; support and supervision for the learner; support and coaching for the person responsible for WBL in the company; the skills developed by the learner (industry-related and meta-skills). Learners who participated in this study felt that the COVID-19 negatively impacted up their studies as both of them missed out of internship opportunities in Italy due to the pandemic. The pandemic has brought to the forefront of their minds the necessity to be provided with skills in securing English language capabilities, being adaptable, and the need for training places in Hungary to be flexible.

### Ireland

Based on the interviews conducted, overall the aims and objectives of the WBL-Q project were positively received with a number of caveats expressed in relation to the validity and usability of the stress-test tool,

especially in relation to the quality assurance framework of QQI as set out in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

When asked to consider the quality dimensions of work-based learning all interviewees agreed that for quality to exist within WBL the following must be present: a pro-WBL culture within the business or hosting organisation; an understanding of the expectations, limitations and opportunities for all parties in the WBL process; the recruitment and matching of the candidate; time and resources for support and supervision for the learner; opportunities for the students to develop skills both industry-related and meta-skills; and finally the range and diversity of employers acting as host organisations as this provides the widest potential for successful matching and placement.

In relation to the WBL-Q stress-test tool, from the perspective of VET professionals there were questions as to its validity within the Irish QQI system in that for it to be considered and recommended it would need to meet the quality assurance requirements of QQI. There was also a concern about the reliability of the data outputted and how this could be used by the college to assess and award marks for the WBL placement. For the student, it was seen as an opportunity to document their WBL experience and potentially build and store their WBL portfolio and have it validated by the employer. For the business owners, their requirements were rather clear, in that it needed to support their ongoing work and processes, reduce the administrative burden already on them and it must be easy to use and be cost-effective (free).

## Slovenia

All interviewees in the Slovenian research agreed that it is worthwhile to invest efforts in creating a digitised structured system with quality indicators, that will be harmonized or adapted to the processes within the individual organisation. This digitised system should address the challenges of WBL, and should be useful for all levels of VET, however, it should not add to the workload of businesses.

Representatives of this study highlighted that there is a need to provide documentation to both learners and WBL professionals which state the expected skills needed by learners whilst participating in WBL opportunities. Students have identified a desire to know more about what is expected from them in their place of employment, whereas VET representatives have expressed a desire for flexible guidelines for the implementation of in-company training. One interviewee highlighted that in their experience, when documentation has been created that state these expectations and guidelines, a higher level of satisfaction can be seen.

Additional challenges are faced by mentors specifically, as they find it difficult to teach professional theory which is connected with the technical processes within the organisation. In order for learners to gain the most from their WBL periods, some mentors have expressed challenges in circulating the trainee to learn as much as possible in a short period of time, especially seasonal work.

Some of the most important factors in determining the quality of WBL process in Slovenia include; the culture of the business or hosting organisation; the recruitment of the candidate; matching of the candidate to the work-based placement; support and supervision for the learner; and the range and diversity of employers acting as host organisation. In order to provide high quality work-based learning, some of the most important factors to consider include a safe working environment in which learners can practice their skills and well-trained mentors. To ensure that there is a match between the needs of the employer and the employee, Slovenian representatives highlighted that it is important to integrate young people aged 15 years into the working environment at a young age, so that they can learn about the real-life working conditions and the complexity of working life. Along with this integration, it is crucial that there is a matching between the motivations of the learners and the desires of the WBL provider, so that both parties can work collaboratively on achieving the same goal.

Once matched, to ensure that the WBL experience is of high standard, students complete a journal, in the form of a daily or weekly report which is mandatory for students completing 3-year VET programmes. Learners must document what they have learned each day or week, and their in-house mentor tracks their achievement of these learning outcomes. Mentors are also provided with evaluation documentation from the sending institution and are expected to provide feedback on the knowledge, skills and behaviour of the learner at the end of their studies. The professionals interviewed as part of this research highlighted that they review their WBL processes on a weekly basis, however, this could be different to national standards.

## Spain

Research undertaken in Spain highlighted that in many cases, internships in Spain and WBL practices in general, are a ‘mere procedure for the student to obtain a certificate and for the company to have free labour’. There are unclear guidelines in Spain as to what the company must do when hosting WBL participants, how they should behave, how the company can benefit from the experience and how the trainee can also benefit.

A wide range of challenges were experienced by all individuals in the WBL procedure in Spain. For the person in charge of WBL in the company, the most challenging thing is to ensure that the learner gains enough knowledge, skills and competences in order to face a real-life scenario in a workplace. For them, they have identified that the least challenging elements is ensuring that the learner has acquired the technical competencies the learner is supposed to have acquired. Another mentor who was interviewed identified, “the students do not correspond to the profile I need. The profiles are not adequate, or what they tell you (the level of the students) does not correspond to what we demand. We cannot decide or make suggestions. It is the training centre itself who selects the students who send us”.

One of the major concerns highlighted by an apprentice was that “the organisation of the internships (WBL) was not procedural and there was no reception by the company or accompaniment by the tutor of the training centre, the company did not know exactly the training curriculum they had and the internship time was scarce’. Additional challenges faced by the expert included establishing the boundary between labour

and non-labour training practices, in terms of what the VET learner was supposed to do in order to receive their salary.

WBL managers identified the need for the learner to acquire “security and self-confidence at the job, not so much the theoretical issues, but the attitude towards work”. Furthermore, they expressed concern that the profile between the organisation and the individual must match. The interviewee recommended that the training centre could intervene to support this match, however, it rarely happens and there is no prior contact or interview between the hosting organisation and the trainee. Although there seems to be a lack in communication between the trainee, the training centre and the organisation, for apprentices, “communication and close relationship between the training centre and the company is essential” in order to that all parties are aware of the tasks, duties and responsibilities of the apprentice, such as the working hours and the tasks to be carried out.

Interviewees highlighted that within VET in Spain, a range of official procedures must be followed by organisations who issue professional certificates. Upon receiving confirmation of an apprentice, an organisation must complete the following documents (a) an internship agreement stating the working hours of the apprentice, their location of work and the contact details of their tutor, which must be signed by the student, the company and the training centre, (b) an optional union representation sheet, (c) an attendance control document (timesheet) to be filled in daily by the apprentice, (d) an evaluation sheet completed by the company tutor. There are no in-house documents to be completed by organisations to measure the quality of the Work-Based Learning services that they provide.

## Weighted quality criteria list for measuring quality in WBL in companies

In order to develop an online self-assessment tool that can be used in companies to measure the quality of work-based learning (WBL) systems against relevant and credible criteria, a questionnaire was developed. Consisting of 51 questions, this questionnaire enabled the WBL-Q consortium to gain input into the key quality indicators upon which the self-assessment tool should be designed, and the opinion of relevant stakeholders on the assignment of a relevant weighting to the indicators based on their experiences of work-based learning practices.

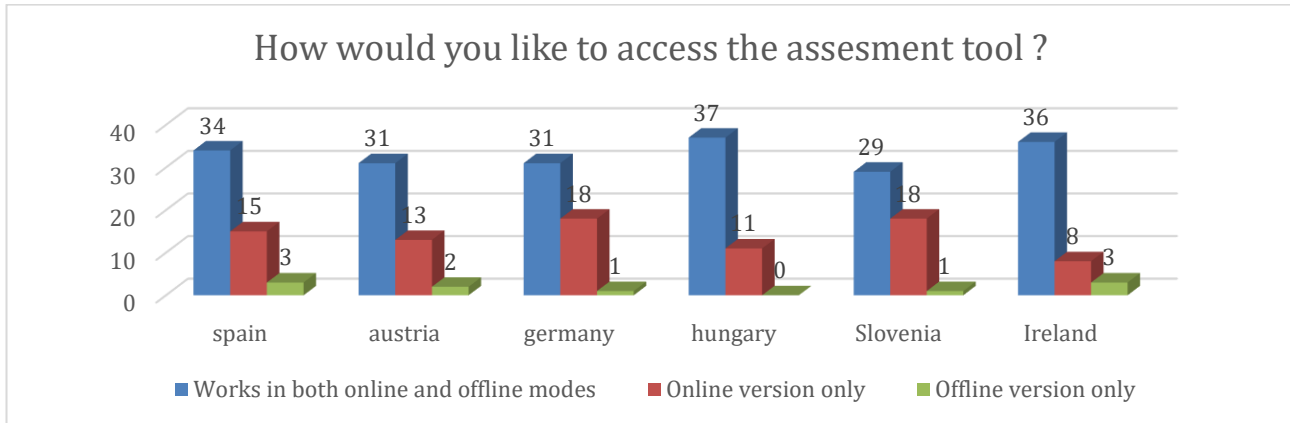
The questionnaire was divided into four main sections; Plan, Do, Check and Act:

1. The PLAN section presented a series of potential quality indicators that could be used to measure the contribution of Management Culture & Leadership and Quality Management to WBL.
2. The DO section presented a series of potential quality indicators that could be used to measure the contribution of Supporting Staff and Learners to WBL.
3. The Check section presented a series of potential quality indicators that could be used to measure the contribution of Self-assessment to WBL.
4. The ACT section presented a series of potential quality indicators that could be used to measure the contribution of Involving Stakeholders to WBL.

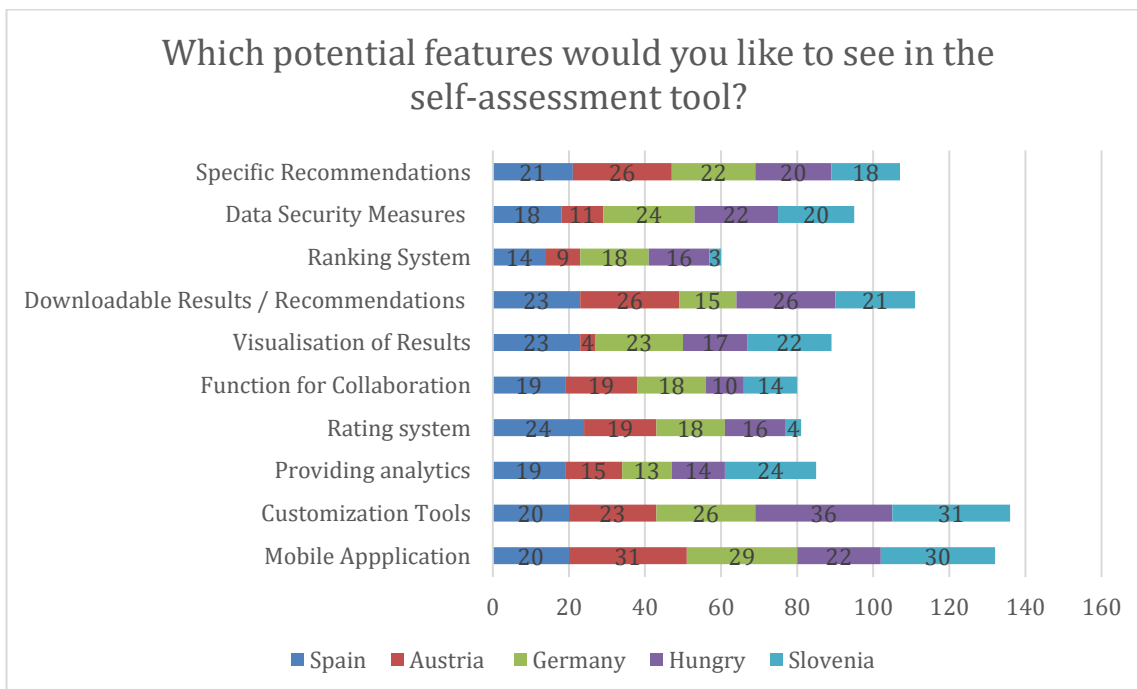
The WBL-Q Online Questionnaire was completed by 300 respondents across six European countries. The following table presents a breakdown of sectors of those who participated in the study:

Country	Business Owners (etc.)	VET Providers	Learners
<b>Germany</b>	23	9	15
<b>Austria</b>	42	6	4
<b>Hungry</b>	28	9	11
<b>Slovenia</b>	31	16	4
<b>Spain</b>	19	28	5
<b>Ireland</b>	26	15	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>48</b>

## The Self-Assessment Tool



In order to gain a clear understanding of how the WBL-Q self-assessment tool could be developed, all questionnaire respondents were asked *how would you like to access the WBL-Q self-assessment tool*. The results from the questionnaire highlighted that the most popular answer across all partner countries was that the tool should “*work in both online and offline modes*, as 198 respondents provided this answer. The second most popular answer with 83 responses was *online version only*. The least favourite result provided by questionnaire respondents was *offline version online*, with 10 responses. Therefore, the online self-assessment tool should be made available in both online and offline modes to allow companies to measure the quality of work-based learning systems against relevant and credible criteria.





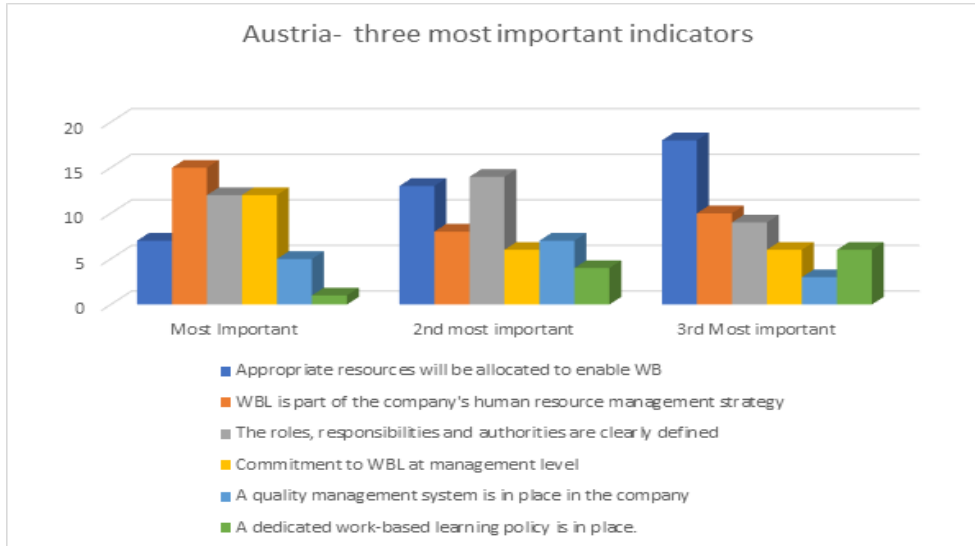
Respondents were invited to identify popular features and functions that they would like to see as part of the self-assessment tool. The most popular choices were that it be presented as a mobile application, with customisation tools, and have downloadable results and recommendations. The least popular answers included a ranking system, a function for collaboration and providing results.



## Austria

The section below identifies the key results provided by Austrian respondents.

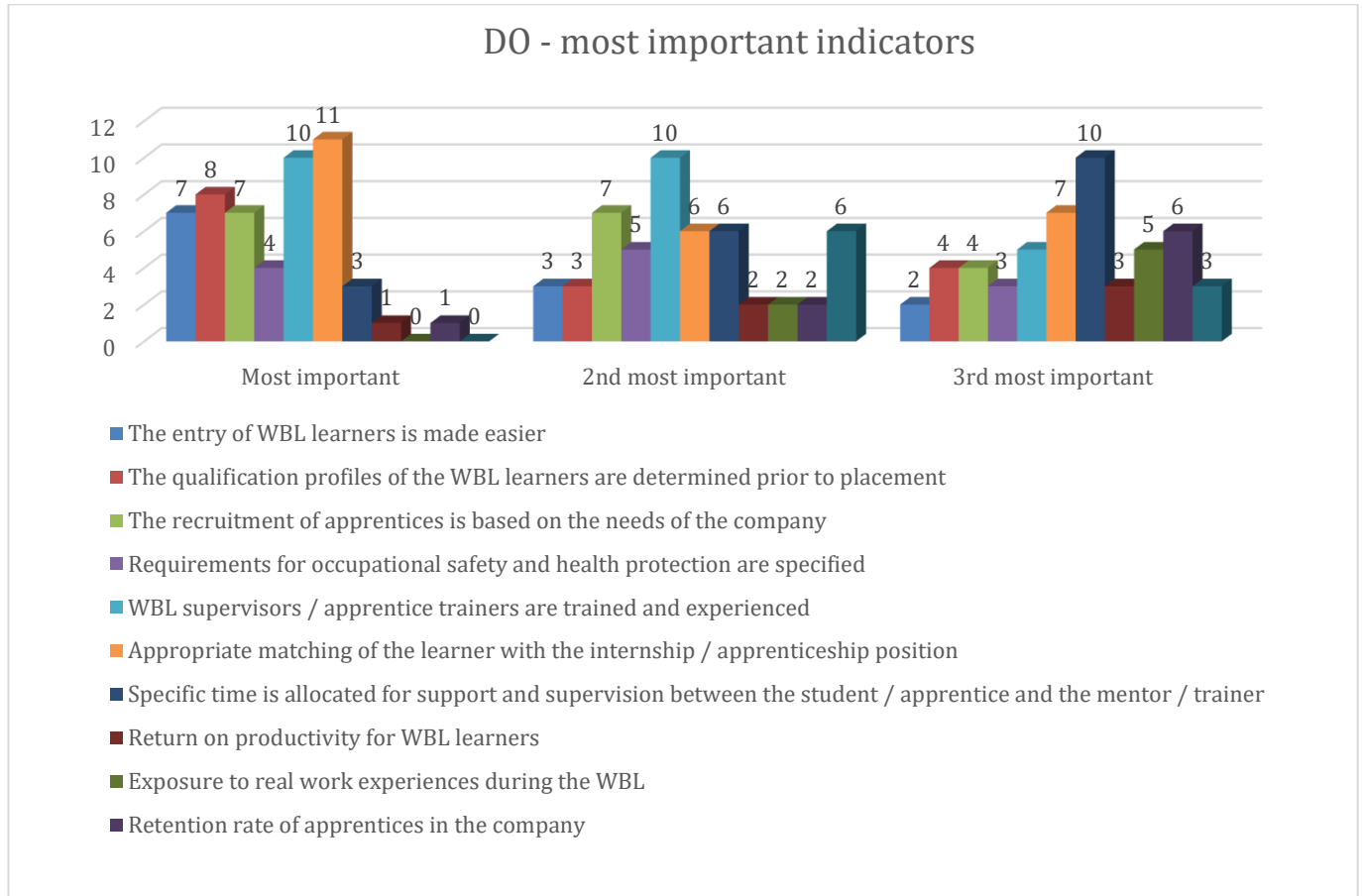
### Quality Indicators for PLAN



When asked to identify the three most important indicators that could be used to measure the contribution of Management Culture and Leadership and Quality Management to WBL, Austrian respondents identified the three most important indicators to be;

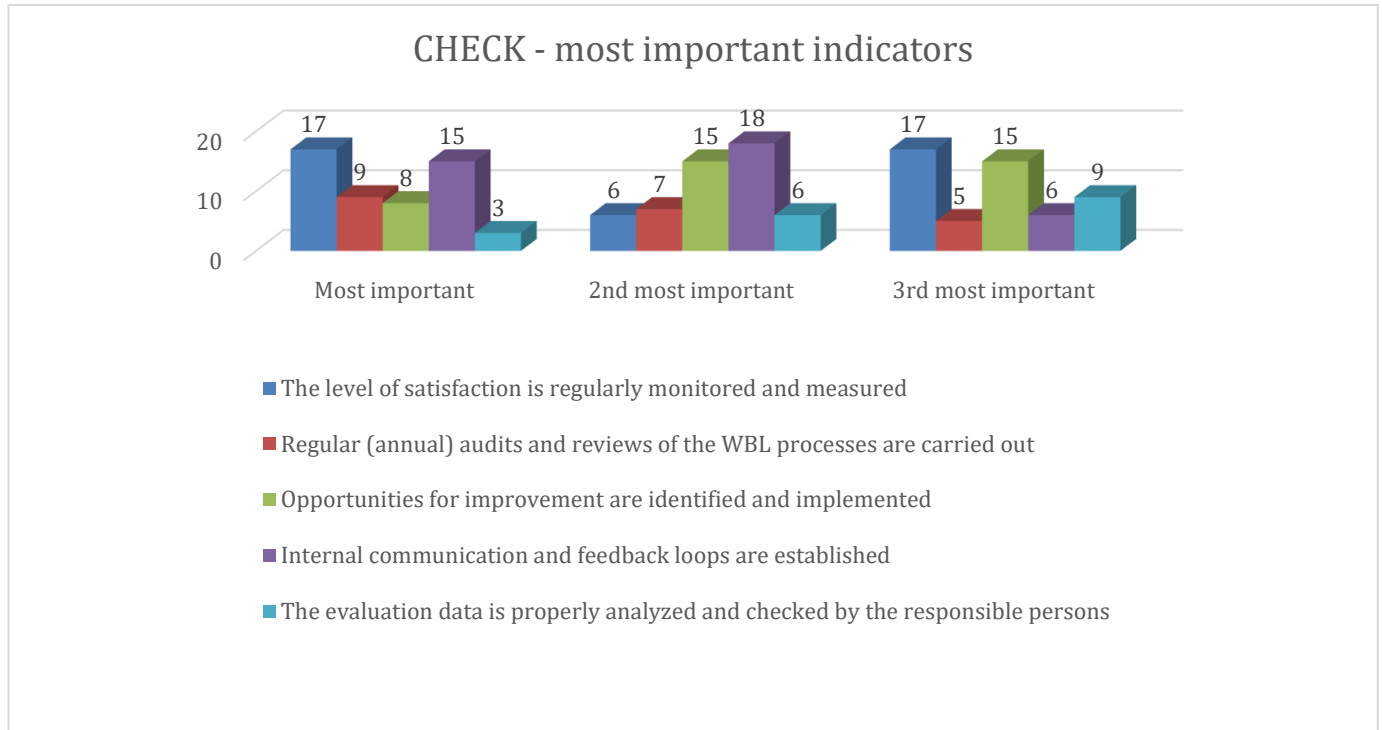
1. *WBL is part of the company's human resource management strategy,*
2. *Appropriate resources will be allocated to enable WBL and the roles,*
3. *Responsibilities and authorities are clearly defined.*

The results highlight that a dedicated work-based learning policy was the least popular indicator to contribute to management culture and leadership and quality management within WBL.



The chart above highlights that most of the indicators relating to contributing to the support of both staff and learners in WBL were deemed to be relevant. The most important indicators include:

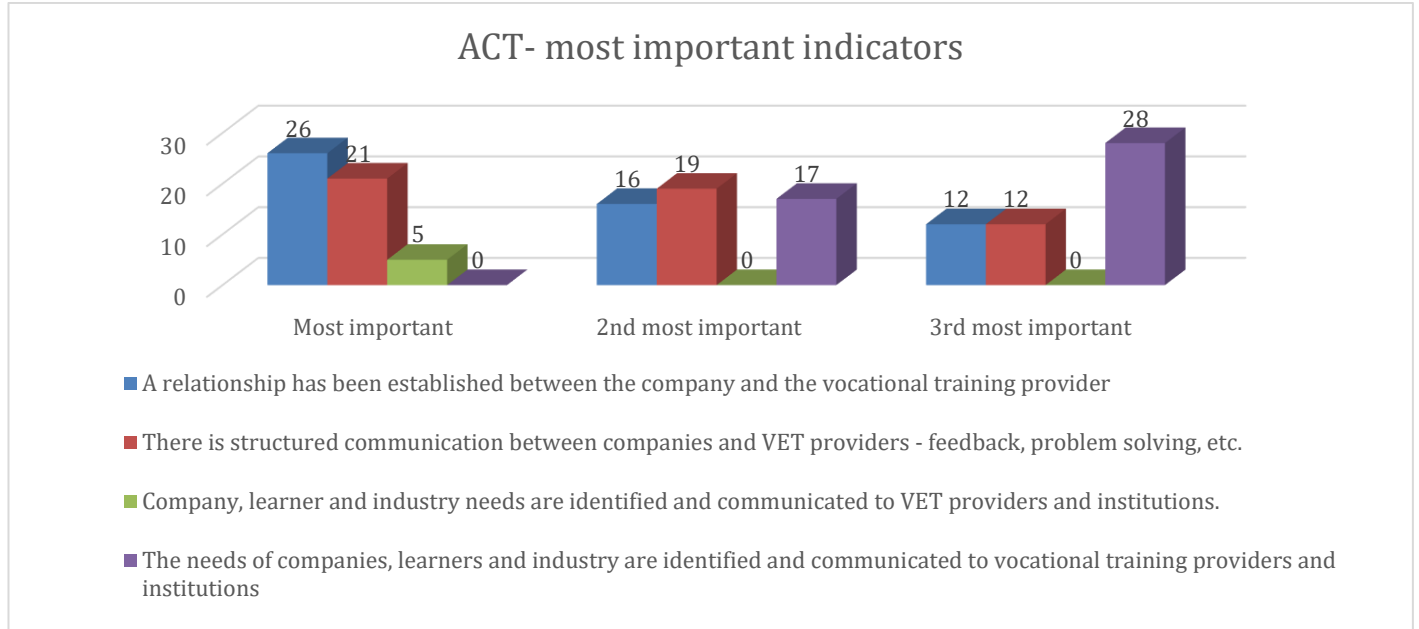
1. *Appropriate matching of the learner with the internship / apprenticeship position;*
2. *WBL supervisors' / apprentice trainers are trained and experienced;*
3. *Specific time is allocated for support and supervision between the student / apprentice and the mentor / trainer.*



In order to measure the contribution of self-assessment to WBL, the three most important indicators from the Austrian survey included;

1. *The level of satisfaction is regularly monitored and measured;*
2. *Internal communication and feedback loops are established;*
3. *Opportunities for improvement are identified and implemented.*

The least important factor, according to over 30 respondents included *the evaluation data is properly analysed and checked by the responsible person.*



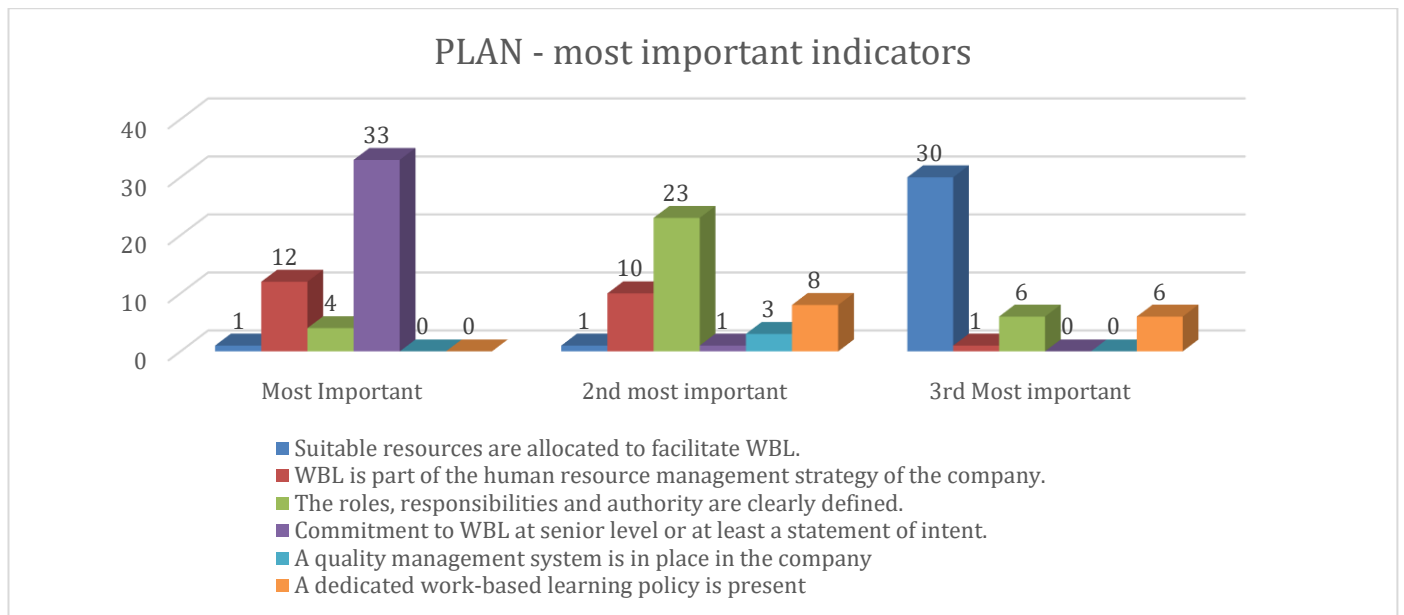
To assist in determining the quality indicators that could be used to measure the contribution of involving stakeholders to WBL, respondents identified *a relationship has been established between the company and the vocational training provider* as the most important indicator. Additional popular responses included *there is structured communication between companies and VET providers – feedback, problem solving, etc.*

This section highlighted the importance of communication as a key pillar to providing quality WBL systems in companies.

## Germany

The section below identifies the key results provided by German respondents.

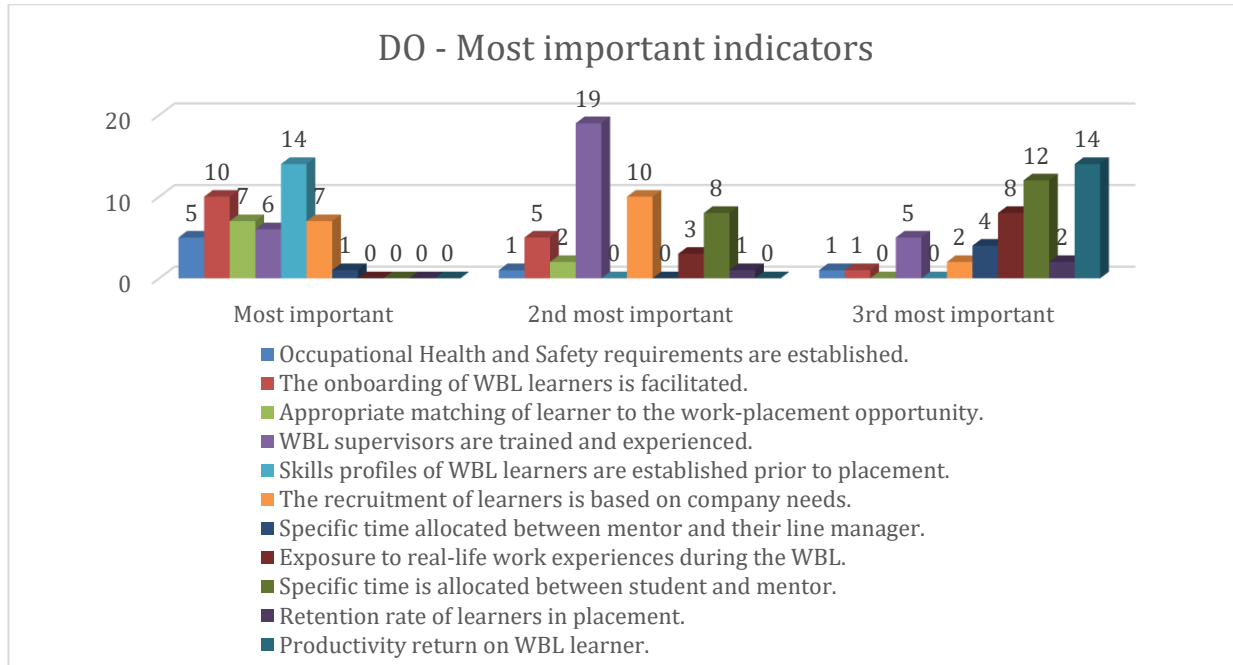
### Quality Indicators for PLAN



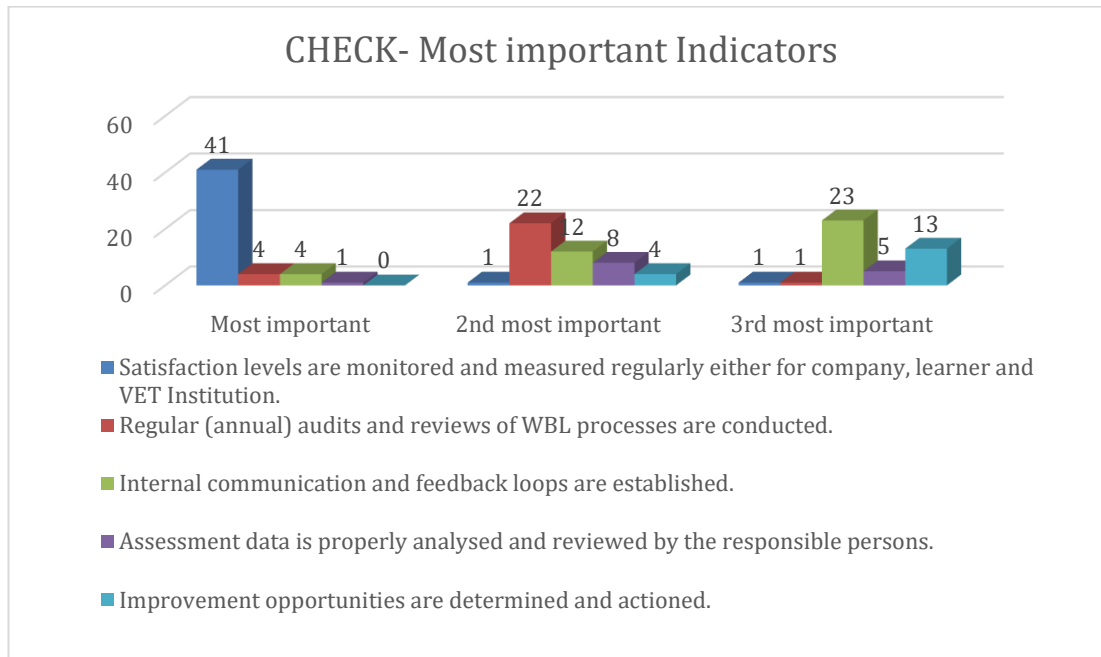
The German results show a striking similarity between respondents who believe that the three most important indicators which could be used to measure the contribution of Management Culture & Leadership, and Quality Management to WBL include:

1. *Commitment to WBL at senior level or at least a statement of intent;*
2. *The roles responsibilities and authority are clearly defined;*
3. *Suitable resources are allocated to facilitate WBL.*

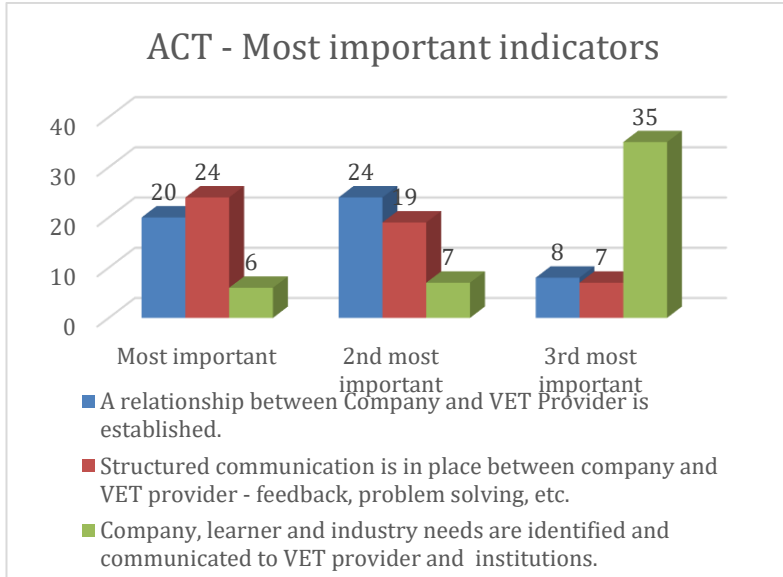
The least important indicator according to participants was the need that a quality management system is in place in the company, with only 3 people suggesting that it was somewhat important.



According to the German results for ‘Do, there was a mixed opinion on what was the most important indicator to measure the contribution of supporting staff and learners to WBL. The most important elements included *skills profiles of WBL learners being established prior to placement; WBL supervisors are trained and experienced; productivity return on WBL learner*. Respondents deemed *retention rate of learners in placement* to be the least important factor.



Clear evidence on the important indicators to assess the contribution of self-assessment to WBL in Germany include *satisfaction levels are monitored and measured regularly either for company, learner and VET institution; regular (annual) audits and reviews of WBL processes are conducted; and Internal communication and feedback loops are established.* More than 30 respondents feel that *assessment data is properly analysed and reviewed by the responsible persons.*



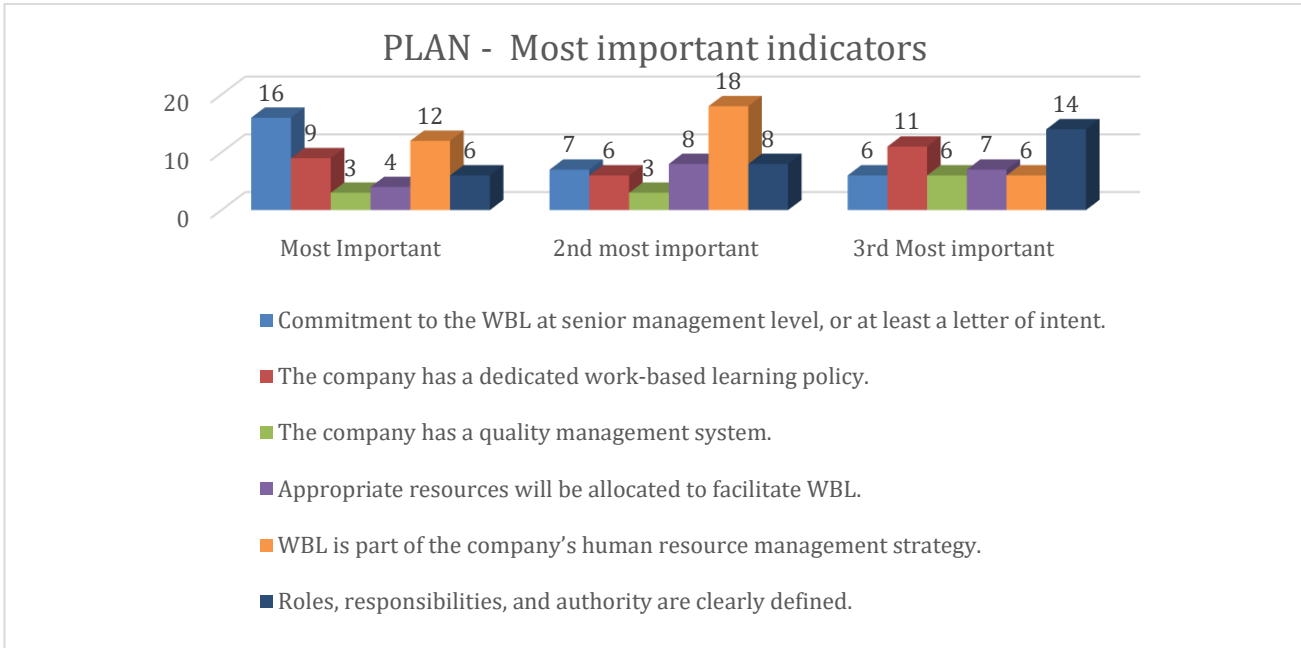
A clear indication can be seen from the above chart which highlights that *a structured communication is in place between company and VET provider – feedback, problem solving*, is an important element to measuring the contribution of involving stakeholders in WBL.



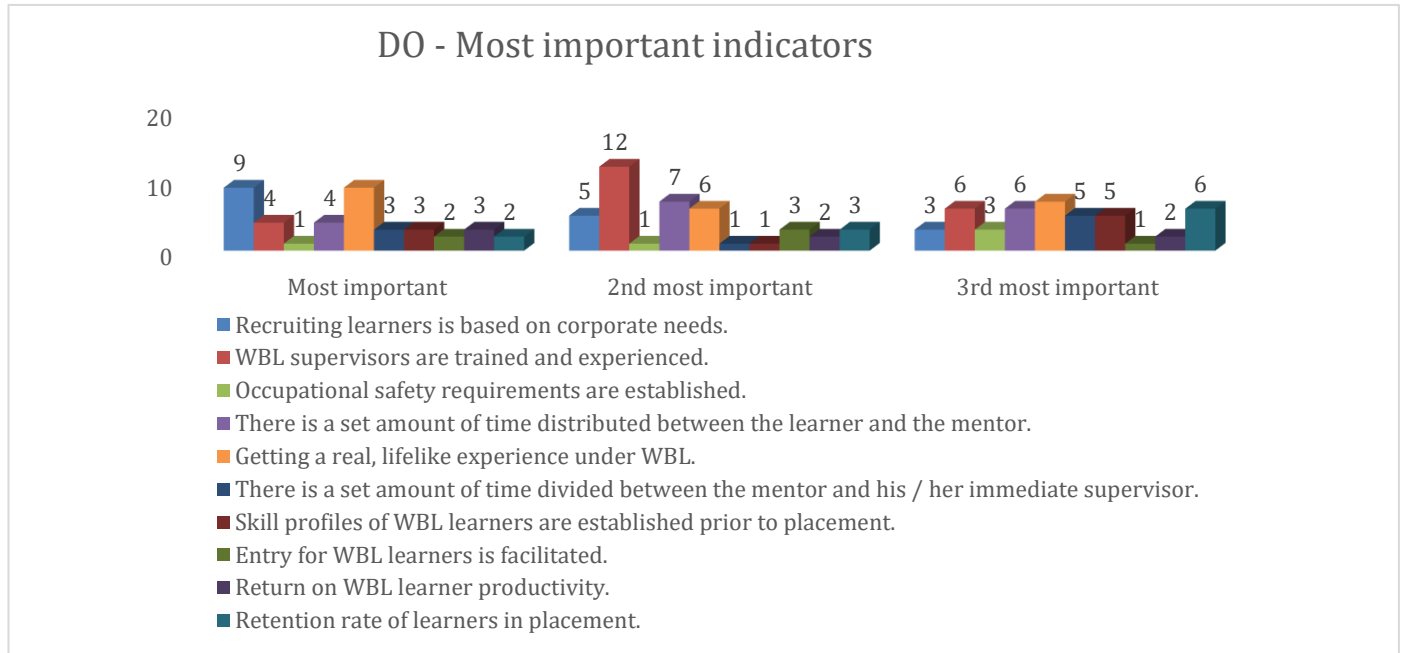
## Hungary

The section below identifies the key results provided by Hungarian respondents.

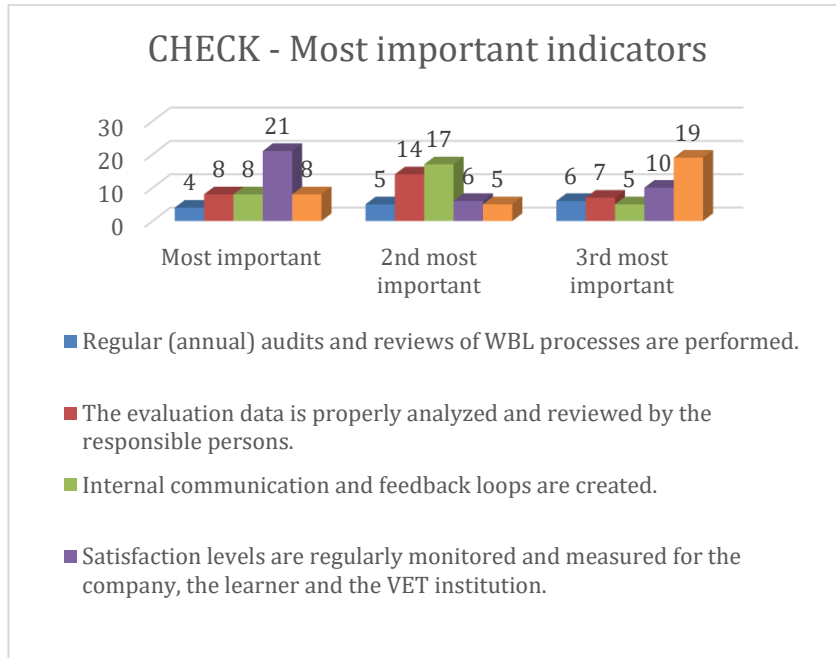
### Quality Indicators for PLAN



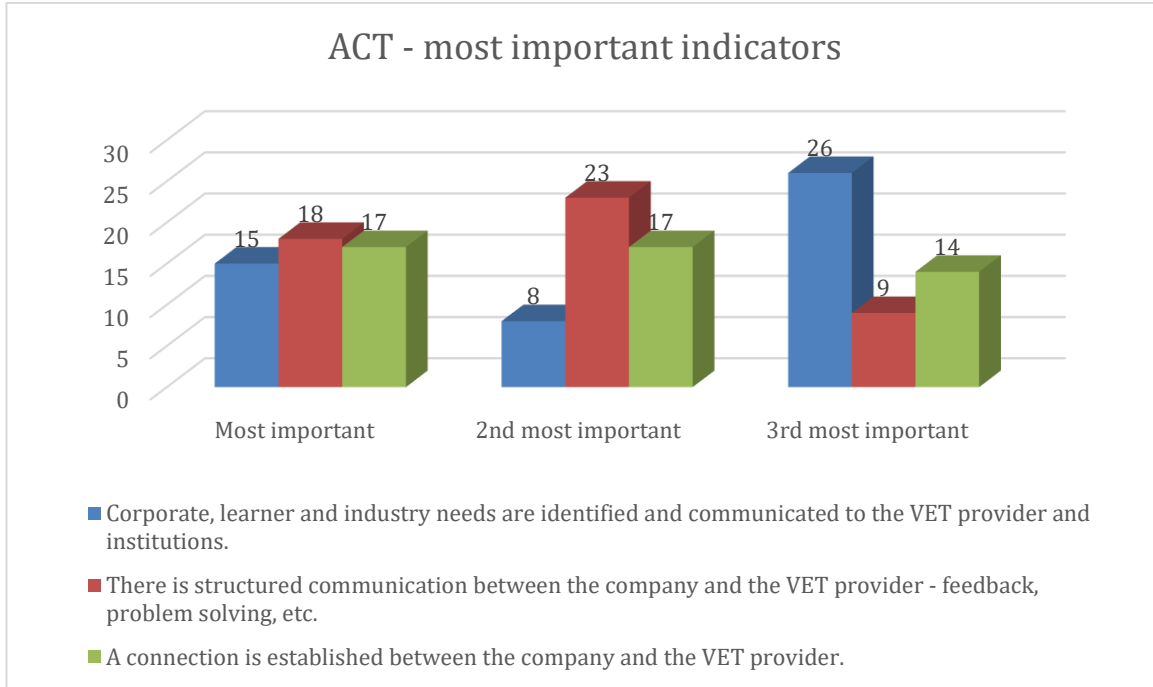
The most important indicators identified by the respondents in Hungary included; *Commitment to the WBL at senior management level, or at least a letter of intent*. The least important element was that *the company has a quality management system* in place.



A mixture of results was provided by the Hungarian respondents, identifying that there are no clear indicators that could be used to measure the contribution of supporting staff and learners to WBL. That being said, some of the important elements that have been highlighted include *recruiting learners is based on corporate needs*; *WBL supervisors are trained and experienced*; *retention rate of learners in placement*.



In terms of checking the measure of the contribution of self-assessment to WBL, respondents identified two main considerations; *satisfaction levels are regularly monitored and measured for the company, the learner and the VET institution; and internal communication and feedback loops are created.* The least popular indicator in this section highlighted that *regular (annual) audits and reviews of WBL processes are performed.*

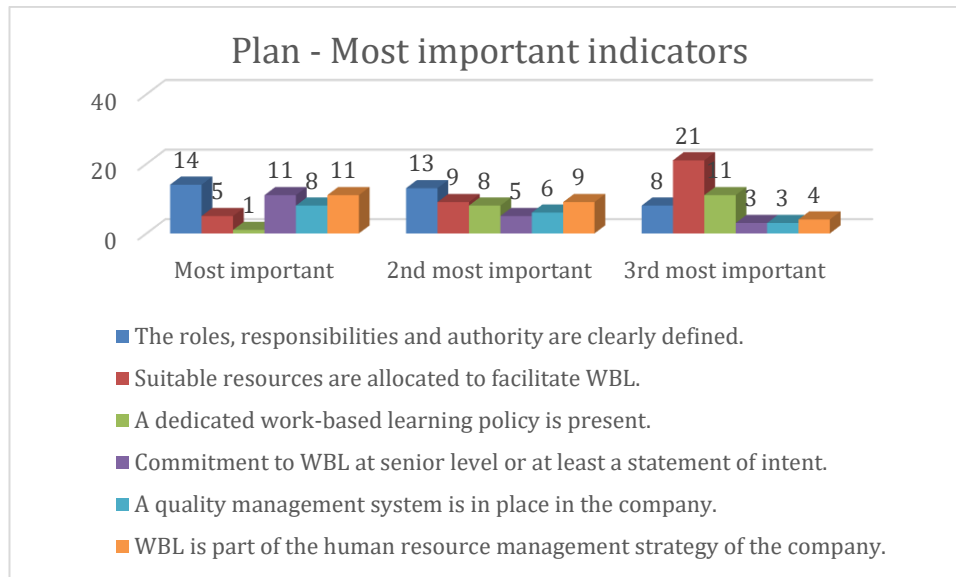


There was a general consensus amongst Hungarian respondents that all three statements seen in the graph above were of importance when measuring the contribution of involving stakeholders to WBL. It can be easily recognised through these results that communication is an important element in involving stakeholders to WBL.

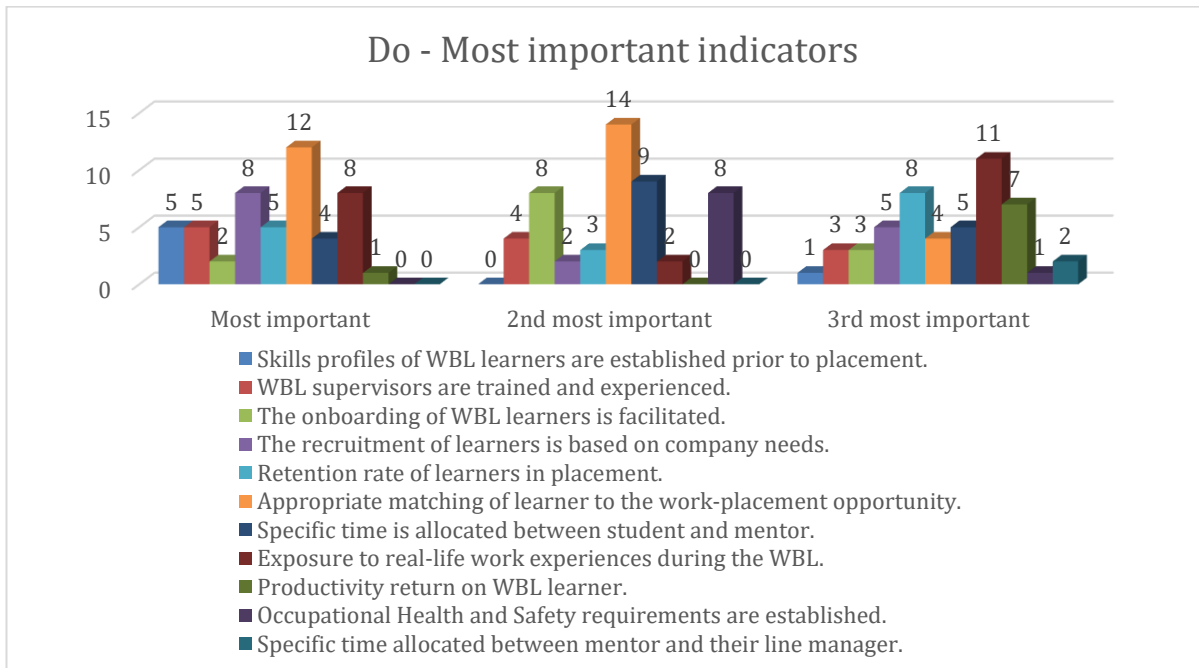
## Ireland

The section below identifies the key results provided by Irish respondents.

### Quality Indicators for PLAN

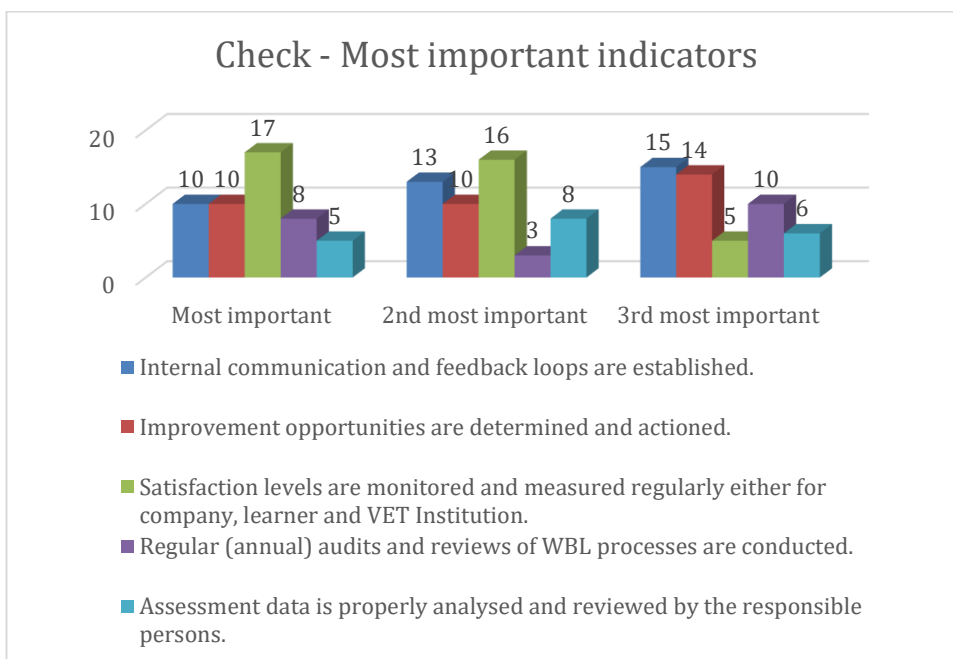


The most important indicators identified by the respondents in Ireland included; *The roles responsibilities and authority are clearly defined*. The least important element was that *the company has a quality management system* in place. A result that was common across most countries.



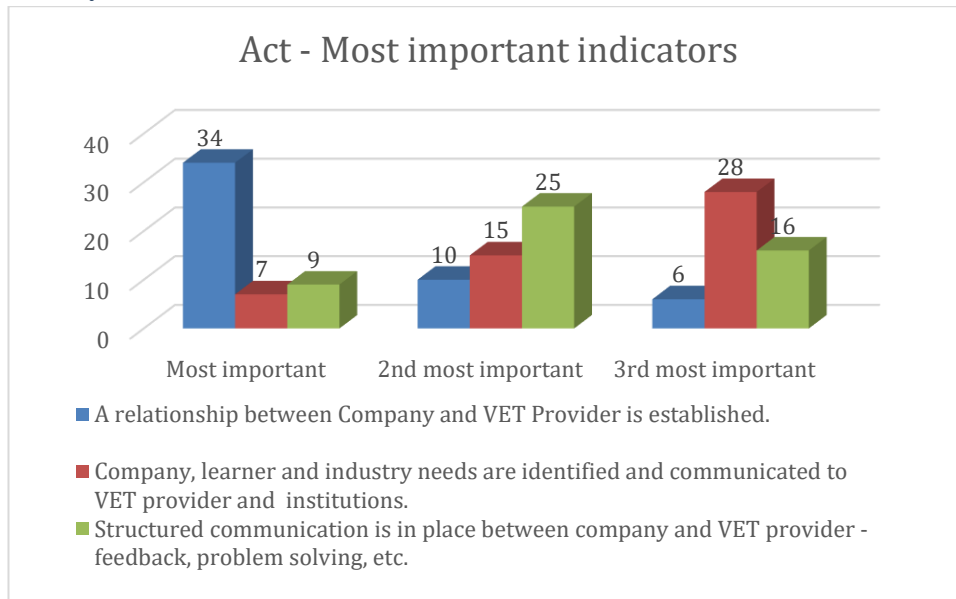
The most important indicators identified by the respondents in Ireland included; *appropriate matching of learner to the work-placement opportunity* followed equally by the *exposure to real-life work experiences during the WBL* and the *recruitment of learners is based on company needs*.

### Quality Indicators for Check



In order to measure the contribution of self-assessment to WBL, the three most important indicators from the Irish surveys included; *the level of satisfaction is regularly monitored and measured; Internal communication and feedback loops are established; opportunities for improvement are identified and implemented. This was the same result as Austria.*

### Quality Indicators for Act



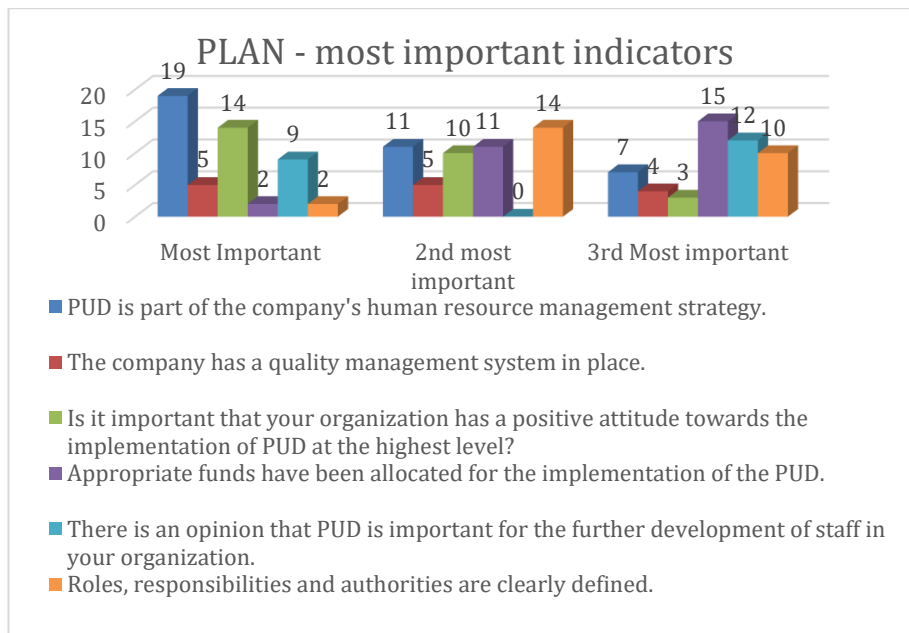
A clear indication can be seen from the above graph which highlights that *a relationship between company and VET provider is established – feedback* is an important element to measuring the contribution of involving stakeholders in WBL.



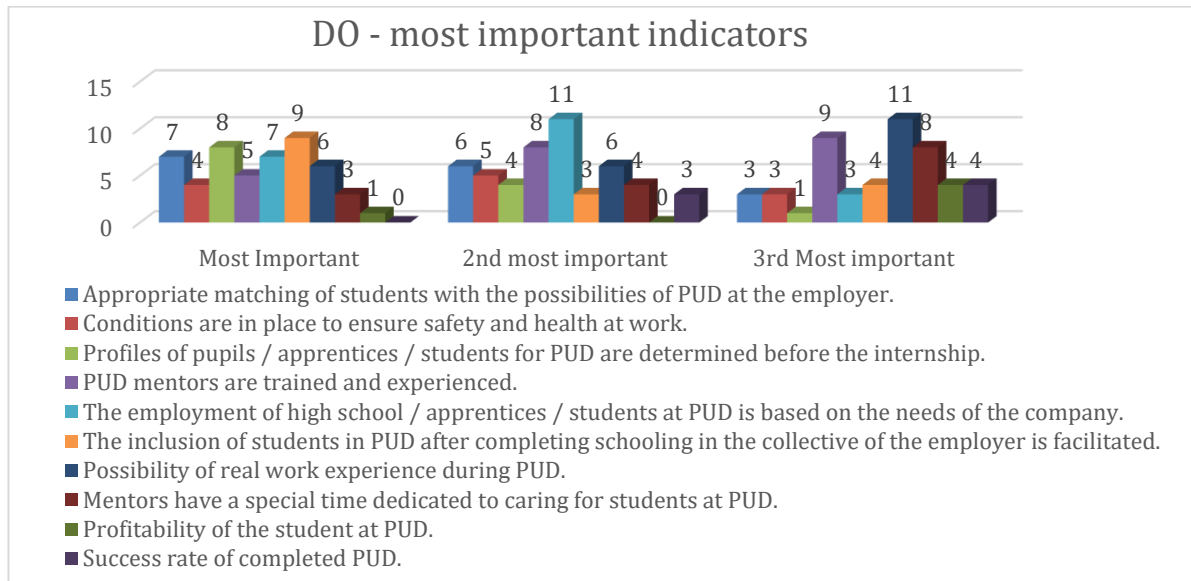
## Slovenia

The section below identifies the key results provided by Slovene respondents.

### Quality Indicators for PLAN

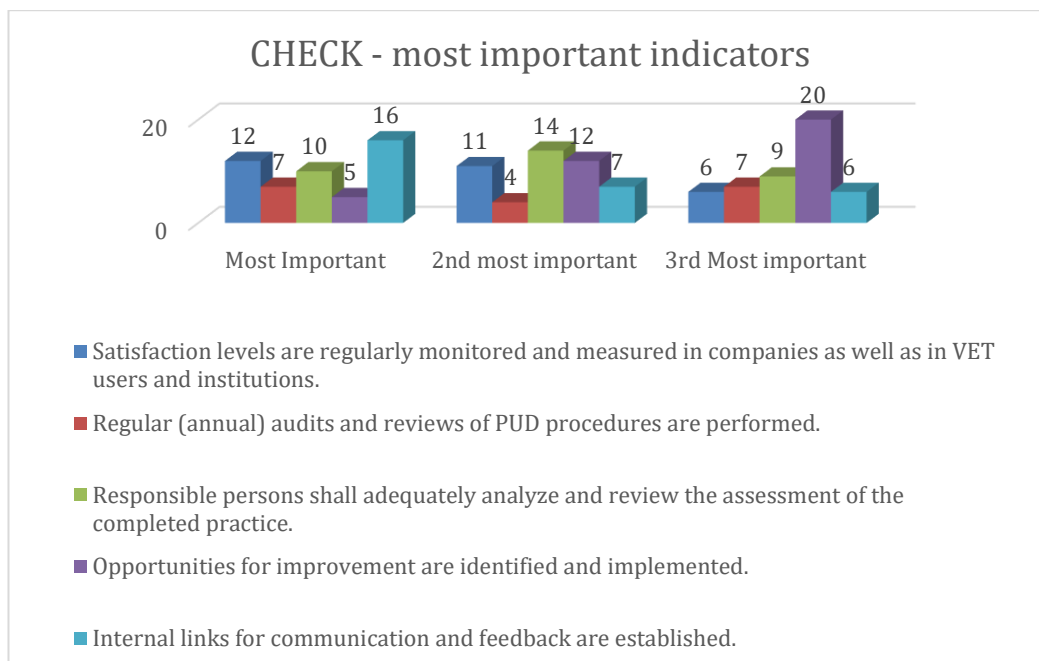


The results from the Slovene study showed country specific information that is a could be used to measure the contribution of Management Culture & Leadership and Quality Management in WBL in Slovenia. The most important indicator highlighted is that *WBL is part of the company's human resource management strategy*. Additional responses include *roles, responsibilities and authorities are clearly defined; and appropriate funds have been allocated for the implementation of WBL*. (PUD stands for *prakticno usposabljanje z Delom*, meaning work based learning in vocational upper secondary programmes).



The Slovene respondents identified a mixture of elements which could be considered as important when measuring the contribution to supporting staff and learners in WBL. The above graph highlights some of the most important elements, however, it should be noted that a *success rate of completed WBL (PUD)*; and *profitability of the student at WBL (PUD)* are not of crucial importance.

### Quality Indicators for CHECK



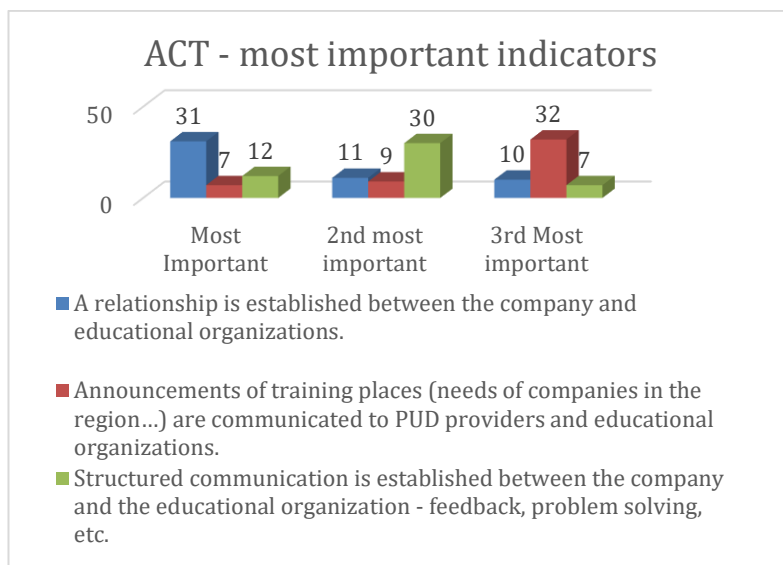
Slovene

respondents

identified some of the most important elements when measuring the contribution of self-assessment to WBL to include *internal links for communication and feedback are established; responsible persons shall adequately analyse and review the assessment of the completed practice; and opportunities for improvement are identified and implemented.*

*Regular (annual) audits and reviews of PUD procedures are performed* was deemed to be the least important with only 18 people suggesting this as their most important indicator.

### Quality Indicators for ACT

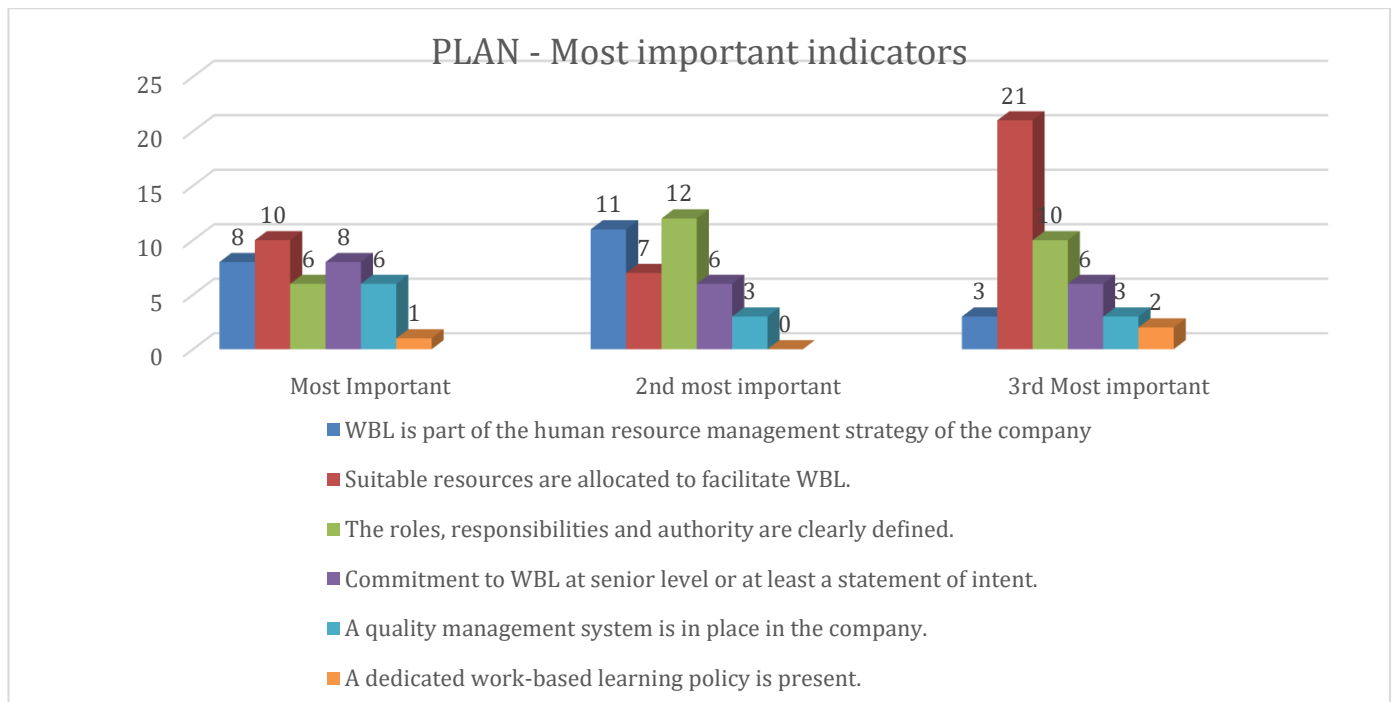


The most important quality indicator which could be used to measure contribution of involving stakeholders to WBL include having an established relationship between the company and educational organisations.

## Spain

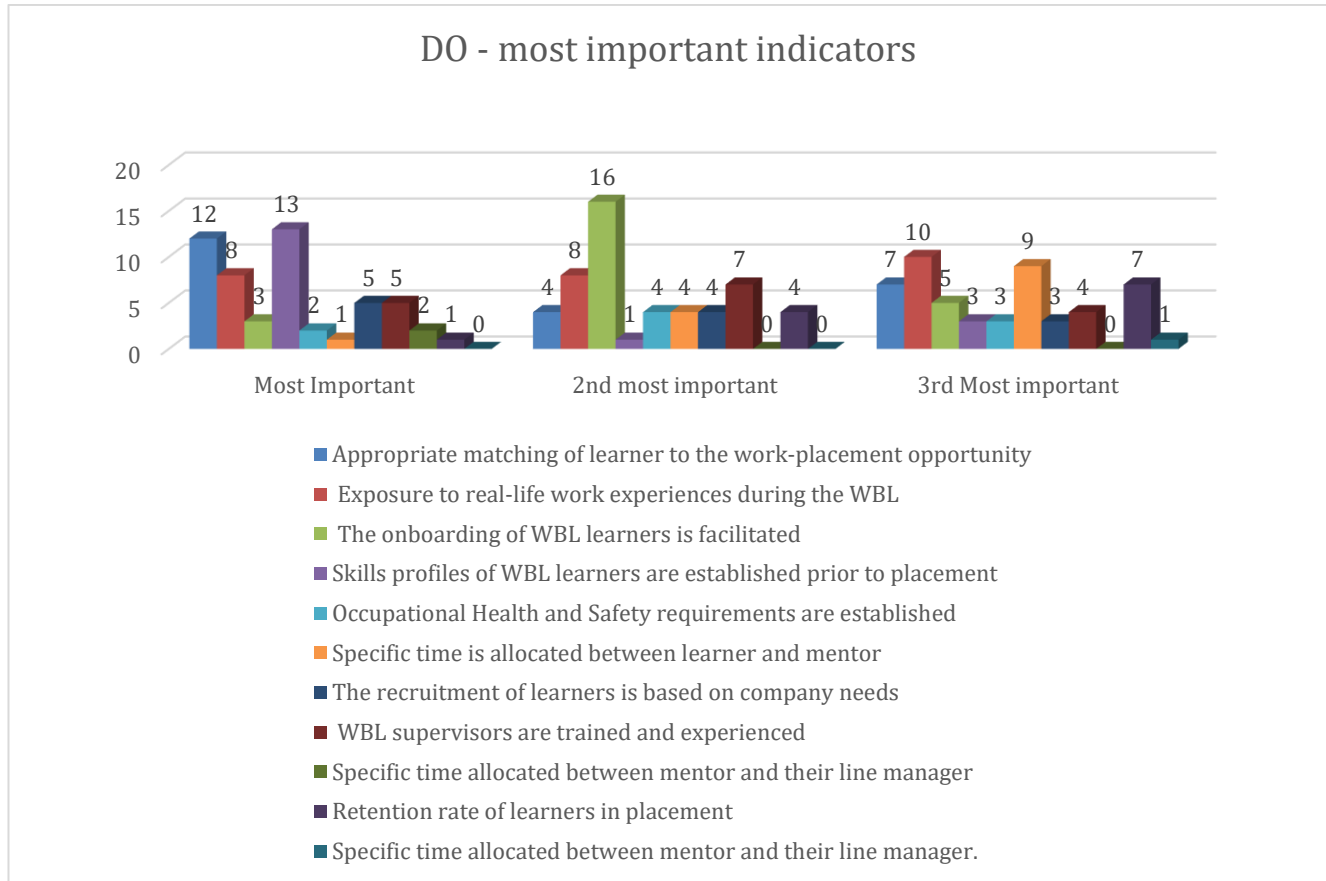
The section below identifies the key results provided by Spanish respondents.

### Quality indicators for PLAN

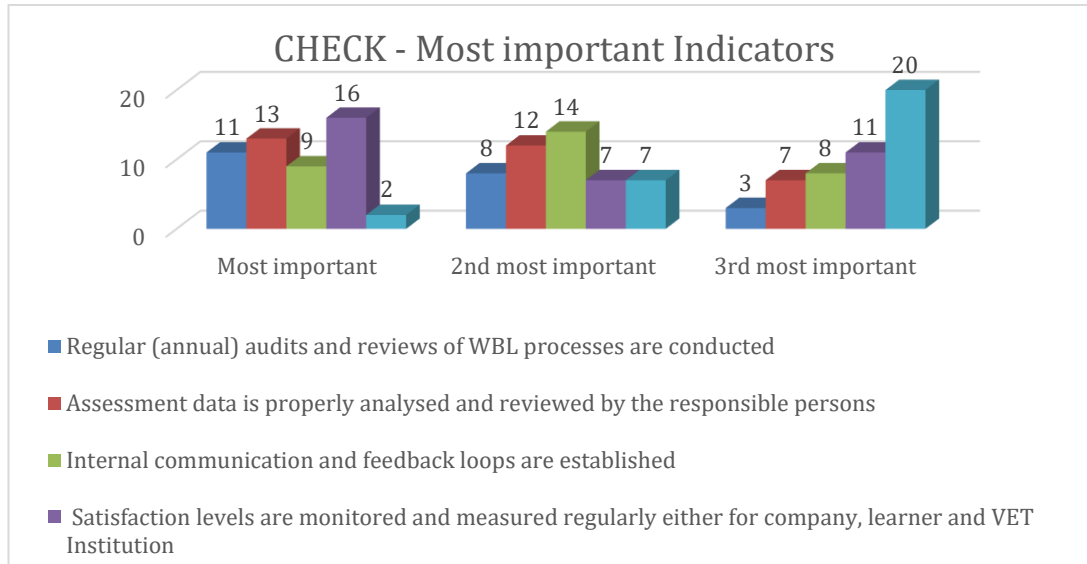


Spanish respondents had a variety of responses in relation to the important quality indicators which could be used to measure the contribution of Management Culture & Leadership and Quality Management to WBL. The top three which can be seen in the graph above are the same as identified by Austria namely; *suitable resources are allocated to facilitate WBL; the roles and responsibilities and authority are clearly defined, and commitment to WBL at senior level or at least a statement of intent.*

Similar to Austria, the Spanish results identified that *a dedicated work-based learning policy is present* is deemed to be the least popular answer as it has the fewest results across all three sections.

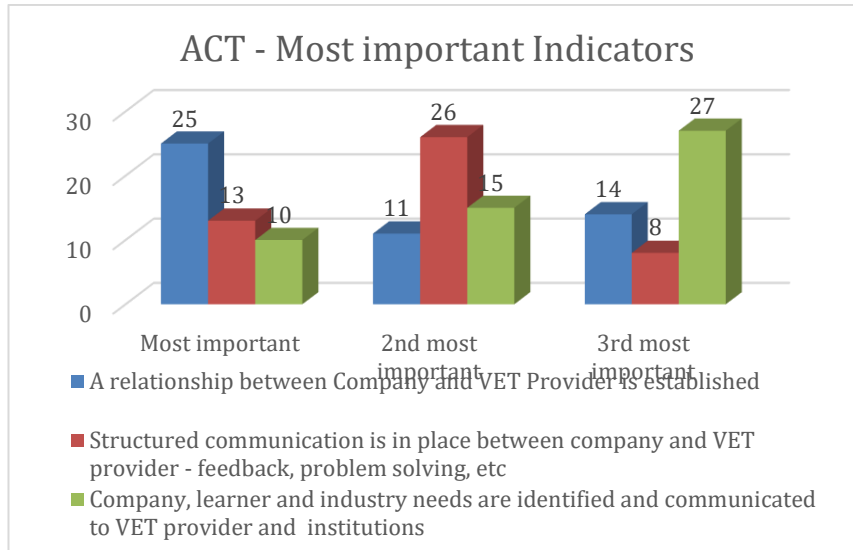


A mixture in opinions were identified in relation to measures that could be used to measure the contribution of supporting staff and learners to WBL. Some of the most important and influential answers include *skills profiles of WBL learners are established prior to placement; the onboarding of WBL learners is facilitated; and exposure to real-life work experiences during the WBL.*



Similar to the results from Austria, Hungary and Germany, the Spanish respondents identified the most important indicator to measure the contribution of self-assessment to WBL to be *satisfaction levels are monitored and measured regularly either for company, learner and VET institution*. Following in line with the responses from Hungary, Spain also deemed the second most important element to be *internal communication and feedback loops are established*.

Although scoring high in the initial examination, overall, *regular (annual) audits and reviews of WBL processes are conducted* received the fewest votes.



Once again, *a relationship between the company and VET provider is established* was the most important indicator in this section. All these results were clear and not contested by any other choices.

### Recommended Indicators for Plan, Act, Do, Check

When the results of the 300 online surveys are assessed and considered, the following set of 20 indicators have been identified by the respondents as the most important under the four headings as follows:

<b>Plan</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commitment to WBL at senior level (statement of intent)</li> <li>2. Roles, responsibilities and authority are clearly defined</li> <li>3. Resources allocated to facilitate WBL</li> <li>4. WBL is part of talent management strategy</li> <li>5. Work-based learning policy present</li> </ol>
<b>Do</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Appropriate matching of student to the work-placement</li> <li>7. Skills profile of WBL students established prior to placement</li> <li>8. Recruitment of student based on company needs</li> <li>9. Productivity return on WBL student</li> <li>10. Onboarding of WBL students facilitated</li> <li>11. Retention rate of students</li> <li>12. Exposure to real-life work experiences</li> <li>13. Time allocated for support and supervision (between student and mentor)</li> </ol>
<b>Check</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Monitor and measure satisfaction levels (Company, Student and VET)</li> <li>15. Internal communication and feedback loops established</li> </ol>

	<p>16. Opportunities for Improvements</p> <p>17. Conduct regular (annual) audits and review of WBL processes</p>
<b>Act</b>	<p>18. Relationship between Company and VET Provider established</p> <p>19. Structured communication in place between company and VET provider - feedback, problem solving, etc.</p> <p>20. Improvement opportunities determined and actioned</p>

### **Deductions for the development of the self-evaluation and stress test tool as well as the handbook for WBL responsibilities (IO2 and IO3)**

The main findings in the research undertaken by the WBL-Q consortium highlight that, overall there are many similarities in terms of the tool that should be used to assess the quality of work-based learning practices in organisations. All countries strongly agree that the tool should be made available both online and offline, especially in Ireland as there are challenges presented for those living in rural areas in trying to access high quality broadband. This was represented in over 50% of respondents across all countries voting in favour of having the tool both online and offline.

Additionally, the results from the questionnaire highlighted that partners would like to see common elements in the self-assessment tool, including, operating as a mobile application; have customisation capability; for users to be able to download their results; and for users to be able to receive specific recommendations from the app. The least favourite element highlighted was ‘the ranking system’.

In order to ensure sustainable use of the self-evaluation and stress test tool, the research conducted highlighted a need that the tool should not require additional time from the companies. This element was reinforced throughout the interviews conducted. It is important to consider that organisations may not use this tool unless there was mandatory participation, therefore, the benefits of the tool may need to be sold to organisations. However, of utmost importance is to ensure that the content within the tool is relevant and applicable to all organisations.

During the conducted interviews, the issue of successful matching between organisations and candidates appeared frequently. To examine the organisations ability to succeed in future endeavours, it would be interesting to include a section where companies could upload a biographical piece on their organisation in order to successfully attract candidates to their company.



To meet the demands of the workplace, interviewees highlighted a concern that mentors and apprentices were not aware of each other's schedules. Occupational diaries should be made available through this online tool. Furthermore, this issue extended to mentors being unaware of the duties and tasks of the apprentice. A section containing useful documentation such as employment contracts which are provided by organisations in most countries in this research would be helpful to alleviate some of these concerns.

A final section which is country specific should direct mentors to opportunities for Continuous Professional Development within their communities.

## Summary and

## Conclusions

To ensure high standards and quality within WBL across Europe, that is standardised and accessible to all, all partner countries identified that the aims of the WBL-Q project are extremely relevant and much needed.

There is an urgent need across all partner countries to commit to WBL practices at senior management level. The self-assessment tool as proposed by the WBL-Q project consortium is an excellent mechanism in which this can be accomplished. Educators must be well-trained, such as through the system currently provided in Austria, and motivated in order to ensure that they can deliver high-quality training opportunities to learners at both iVET and cVET levels. Intergenerational concerns within the labour market will need to be addressed by WBL providers to ensure that young, tech savvy learners are supported and mentored throughout their placements.

It is imperative for hosting companies and organisations across Europe to be provided with a learner profile, such as through curriculum vitae, in order to correctly match them to the position and to assign tasks and duties within their skill set that contribute to the companies. Structured interviews and regular meetings with learners when they are in-house will improve the overall quality of WBL practices.

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Available at: [https://europa.eu/youth/strategy\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/strategy_en)

1. What is your initial opinion of the aims and objectives of the WBL-Q Project and what it is trying to/setting-out to achieve? Do you think it is possible and worthwhile?
2. What is your role within the Work-based Learning (WBL) process and what is the most challenging aspect of your role?
3. In relation to the quality of the work-based learning experience for both the learner and the company, what do you think are the most important factors to consider?
4. Are you using any measurements, documents or processes to assess the quality of the WBL in your company/organisation at present?
5. How often do you review your WBL processes and what approach do you take?
6. Which of the following factors do you think are most important in determining the quality of the WBL process or experience and why?:
  - a) The regulations and legislation guiding WBL in your country
  - b) The investment and incentives in WBL in your country
  - c) Culture of the business or hosting organisation
  - d) Understanding of the expectations, limitations and opportunities for all parties in the WBL process
  - e) Recruitment of the candidate
  - f) Matching of the candidate to the work-based placement
  - g) Support and supervision for the learner
  - h) Support and coaching for the person responsible for WBL in the company
  - i) The relationship between the VET Institution and the company
  - j) The skills developed by the learner (industry-related and meta-skills)
  - k) The retention rate of learners in the WBL process
  - l) The range and diversity of employers acting as host organisations
  - m) The management and administration of the WBL process within the VET institutions and the companies
  - n) The recognition of WBL as an important element in vocational education, future skills strategies and opportunities for young people in Europe.
7. Which of the following definitions best describe quality within WBL for you and why?
  - a) Quality is the degree to which an object (entity) [e.g., process, product, or service] satisfies a specified set of attributes or requirements [source: EQAVET]
  - b) The quality of something can be determined by comparing a set of inherent characteristics with a set of requirements. If those inherent characteristics meet all requirements, high or excellent quality is achieved. If those characteristics do not meet all requirements, a low or poor level of quality is achieved. [SOURCE: ISO 9000, 9001, and 9004 Quality management definitions]
  - c) Quality is a multi-faceted concept. The dimensions of quality that are considered most important depend on user perspectives, needs and priorities, which vary across groups of users [Source:

ESS

Quality

Glossary 2010 Developed by Unit B1 "Quality; Classifications", European Union, 2010.]

8. As part of the project, we are developing an online tool to assist stakeholders in the WBL process to manage the WBL process – what would you hope that this online tool might achieve? What should we avoid?
9. Are you aware of similar projects working in this area or on this topic? Can you make any recommendations that we could follow-up with?

## **Annex 2 : Questionnaire for WBL professionals and learners : Measuring quality in work-based learning: views of stakeholders**

1. Please choose your country from the list below:
  - a) Austria;
  - b) Germany;
  - c) Ireland;
  - d) Spain;
  - e) Slovenia;
  - f) Hungary.
2. Which of the following roles best describes you:
  - a) Business owner / HR professional / WBL responsible;
  - b) VET Provider;
  - c) Learner.
3. Which statement best describes your involvement in work-based learning:
  - a) Currently hosting work-based learning students;
  - b) Previous host of work-based learning students;
  - c) Interested in becoming a host for work-based learning students;
  - d) Teacher / trainer in the field of VET;
  - e) Responsible for placing students in work-based settings;
  - f) Student undertaking work-based learning at present;
  - g) Previous student of work-based learning;
  - h) Other
4. If other, please specify:

Quality Indicators for PLAN : In this section we will present a series of potential quality indicators that could be used to measure the contribution of Management Culture & Leadership and Quality Management to work-based learning (WBL). You are asked to consider these indicators and select their level of importance to measure the quality in work-based learning from your point of view.

5. Commitment to WBL at senior level or at least a statement of intent. (This indicator measures whether or not WBL is part of the culture of the company – is it a strategic objective.) \*

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

6. WBL is part of the human resource management strategy of the company. (This indicator measures how far WBL is integrated into the internal HR policies and strategies.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

7. The roles, responsibilities and authority are clearly defined. (This indicator defines whether or not responsibility for WBL has been assigned at senior and operational level).

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

8. A quality management system is in place in the company. (This indicator accesses whether quality management is a formalised systems within the company.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

9. A dedicated work-based learning policy is present. (This indicator measures whether dedicated policies and procedures for WBL are developed and available in the company.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

10. Suitable resources are allocated to facilitate WBL. (This indicator measures whether there are sufficient resources allocated to WBL in terms of staffing, specific staff time, training budgets, etc.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

11. Is there any other indicators that we should include and consider as part of this section? Please state:

12. Please select the three most important indicators from this section in your opinion starting with the MOST IMPORTANT:

- a. Commitment to WBL at senior level or at least a statement of intent;
- b. WBL is part of the human resource management strategy of the company;
- c. Roles, responsibilities and authority are clearly defined;
- d. A quality management system is in place in the company;
- e. A dedicated work-based learning policy is present;
- f. Suitable resources are allocated to facilitate WBL.



13. Please select the three most important indicators from this section in your opinion now with the SECOND IMPORTANT:

- a. Commitment to WBL at senior level or at least a statement of intent;
- b. WBL is part of the human resource management strategy of the company;
- c. The roles, responsibilities and authority are clearly defined;
- d. A quality management system is in place in the company;
- e. A dedicated work-based learning policy is present;
- f. Suitable resources are allocated to facilitate WBL.

14. Please select the three most important indicators from this section in your opinion now with the THIRD IMPORTANT:

- a. Commitment to WBL at senior level or at least a statement of intent;
- b. WBL is part of the human resource management strategy of the company;
- c. The roles, responsibilities and authority are clearly defined;
- d. A quality management system is in place in the company;
- e. A dedicated work-based learning policy is present;
- f. Suitable resources are allocated to facilitate WBL.

Quality Indicators for DO: In this section we will present a series of potential quality indicators that could be used to measure the contribution of Supporting Staff and Learners to work-based learning (WBL). You are asked to consider these indicators and select their level of importance from your point of view.

15. Skills profiles of WBL learners are established prior to placement. (This indicator whether there is a strategic fit of the learner's skills profile within the company's HR strategy.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

16. Appropriate matching of learner to the work-placement opportunity. (This indicator measures whether expectations are balanced and managed on both sides: learner and company.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

17. The recruitment of learners is based on company needs. (This indicator measures whether recruited WBL learners provide added value to the company.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

18. The onboarding of WBL learners is facilitated. (This indicator measures whether learners are made to feel welcome and part of the team as this may have a positive/negative impact on retention.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

19. Occupational Health and Safety requirements are established. (This indicator measures whether legal requirements and basic minimum standards are provided in the company.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

20. WBL supervisors are trained and experienced. (As the skills and experiences of WBL mentors have a significant impact on the WBL placement quality, this indicator is established.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

21. Specific time is allocated for support and supervision between student and mentor. (This indicator measures whether time for regular support and supervision is provided as a contributing factor to WBL quality.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

22. Specific time allocated for support and supervision between mentor and their line manager. (This indicator measures if the mentor has sufficient time to communicate with his/her superior to receive support and supervision to increase motivation and commitment.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

23. Retention rate of learners in placement. (This indicator measures the drop-out rate of WBL learners in a company.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

24. Exposure to real-life work experiences during the WBL. (This indicator measures the value and authenticity of the work experience for the learner.)

not  
4 5 very important

important 1 2 3

25. Productivity return on WBL learner. (This indicator measures the contribution of the learner's efforts to the company's bottom line.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

26. Is there any other indicators that we should include and consider as part of this section? Please state

27. Please select the three most important indicators from this section in your opinion starting with the MOST IMPORTANT:

- a) Skills profiles of WBL learners are established prior to placement.
- b) Appropriate matching of learner to the work-placement opportunity.
- c) The recruitment of learners is based on company needs.
- d) The onboarding of WBL learners is facilitated.
- e) Occupational Health and Safety requirements are established.
- f) WBL supervisors are trained and experienced.
- g) Specific time is allocated between student and mentor.
- h) Specific time allocated between mentor and their line manager.
- i) Retention rate of learners in placement.
- j) Exposure to real-life work experiences during the WBL.
- k) Productivity return on WBL learner.

28. Please select the three most important indicators from this section in your opinion now with the SECOND IMPORTANT:

- a) Skills profiles of WBL learners are established prior to placement.
- b) Appropriate matching of learner to the work-placement opportunity.
- c) The recruitment of learners is based on company needs.
- d) The onboarding of WBL learners is facilitated.
- e) Occupational Health and Safety requirements are established.
- f) WBL supervisors are trained and experienced.
- g) Specific time is allocated between student and mentor.
- h) Specific time allocated between mentor and their line manager.
- i) Retention rate of learners in placement.
- j) Exposure to real-life work experiences during the WBL.
- k) Productivity return on WBL learner.

29. Please select the three most important indicators from this section in your opinion now with the THIRD IMPORTANT:

- a) Skills profiles of WBL learners are established prior to placement.
- b) Appropriate matching of learner to the work-placement opportunity.
- c) The recruitment of learners is based on company needs.
- d) The onboarding of WBL learners is facilitated.
- e) Occupational Health and Safety requirements are established.
- f) WBL supervisors are trained and experienced.
- g) Specific time is allocated between student and mentor.
- h) Specific time allocated between mentor and their line manager.
- i) Retention rate of learners in placement.
- j) Exposure to real-life work experiences during the WBL.
- k) Productivity return on WBL learner.

Quality Indicators For CHECK: In this section we will present a series of potential quality indicators that could be used to measure the contribution of Self-assessment to work-based learning (WBL). You are asked to consider these indicators and select their level of importance from your point of view.

30. Satisfaction levels are monitored and measured regularly either for company, learner and VET Institution.

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

31. Regular (annual) audits and reviews of WBL processes are conducted.

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

32. Assessment data is properly analysed and reviewed by the responsible persons.

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

33. Internal communication and feedback loops are established. (This indicator measures whether identified issues can be escalated, discussed and resolved - linking back to the management and leadership section.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

34. Improvement opportunities are determined and actioned. (This indicator measures the commitment to quality improvement.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

35. Is there any other indicators that we should include and consider as part of this section? Please state:

36. Please select the three most important indicators from this section in your opinion starting with the MOST IMPORTANT:

- a) Satisfaction levels are monitored and measured regularly either for company, learner and VET Institution;
- b) Regular (annual) audits and reviews of WBL processes are conducted;
- c) Assessment data is properly analysed and reviewed by the responsible persons;
- d) Internal communication and feedback loops are established;
- e) Improvement opportunities are determined and actioned.

37. Please select the three most important indicators from this section in your opinion now with the SECOND IMPORTANT:

- a) Satisfaction levels are monitored and measured regularly either for company, learner and VET Institution;
- b) Regular (annual) audits and reviews of WBL processes are conducted;
- c) Assessment data is properly analysed and reviewed by the responsible persons;
- d) Internal communication and feedback loops are established;
- e) Improvement opportunities are determined and actioned.

38. Please select the three most important indicators from this section in your opinion now with the THIRD IMPORTANT:

- a) Satisfaction levels are monitored and measured regularly either for company, learner and VET Institution;
- b) Regular (annual) audits and reviews of WBL processes are conducted;
- c) Assessment data is properly analysed and reviewed by the responsible persons;
- d) Internal communication and feedback loops are established;
- e) Improvement opportunities are determined and actioned.

Quality Indicators for ACT: In this section we will present a series of potential quality indicators that could be

used to measure the contribution of Involving Stakeholders to work-based learning (WBL). You are asked to consider these indicators and select their level of importance from your point of view.

39. A relationship between Company and VET Provider is established. (This indicator implies that such a relationship allows input from all parties to the WBL quality assessment process.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

40. Structured communication is in place between company and VET provider - feedback, problem solving, etc. (This indicators measures the mechanisms for dialogue and support.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

41. Company, learner and industry needs are identified and communicated to VET provider and institutions. (This indicator measures the level of future proofing of WBL and industry skills requirements.)

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

42. Is there any other indicators that we should include and consider as part of this section? Please state:

43. Please select the three most important indicators from this section in your opinion starting with the **MOST IMPORTANT**:

- a) A relationship between Company and VET Provider is established;
- b) Structured communication is in place between company and VET provider - feedback, problem solving, etc;
- c) Company, learner and industry needs are identified and communicated to VET provider and institutions.

44. Please select the three most important indicators from this section in your opinion now with the **SECOND IMPORTANT**:

- a) A relationship between Company and VET Provider is established;
- b) Structured communication is in place between company and VET provider - feedback, problem solving, etc;

c) \_\_\_\_\_ Company,  
learner and industry needs are identified and communicated to VET provider and institutions

45. Please select the three most important indicators from this section in your opinion now with the **THIRD IMPORTANT**:
- a) A relationship between Company and VET Provider is established;
  - b) Structured communication is in place between company and VET provider - feedback, problem solving, etc;
  - c) Company, learner and industry needs are identified and communicated to VET provider and institutions

Self-Assessment Tool: Features and Usability: In this final section, we are seeking your input into the initial design features of the WBL-Q self-assessment tool

46. How important is it for you that your performance in delivering quality WBL is measured against an external benchmark?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

47. Which potential features would you like to see in the self-assessment tool: Tick all that apply

- a) Mobile Application
- b) Customisation possibilities
- c) Data Security Measures
- d) Provide Analytics
- e) Rating System
- f) Ranking System
- g) Collaboration features
- h) Specific recommendations
- i) Visualisation of results (graphs & diagrams)
- j) Downloadable results/recommendations
- k) Other:

48. If other, please specify

49. How would you like to access the WBL-Q self-assessment tool: tick all that apply.

- a. Online version only
- b. Offline version only (downloadable template)
- c. Works in both online and offline modes
- d. Other

50. If other, please specify

51. How important is it for you that the self-assessment tool provides concrete deductions and recommendations for improvement under the 4 levels - Plan, Do, Check and Act



### Annex 3: Profile for Interview

Category of Interviewee (business owner, learner, VET professional)	Name of Organisation or Company	Short profile of the interviewee
<i>Austria</i>		
Business owner/WBL responsible	AVL List	Head of HR department, responsible for all WBL learning activities including apprenticeship training.
Business owner / WBL responsible	TDK Deutschlandsberg	Head of WBL training department.
Learner	TDK Deutschlandsberg	WBL trainee in the field of mechatronics.
Learner	KAGES Steiermark	WBL trainee in the field of office management and administration.
WBL expert / VET professional	Self employed	Long lasting experiences in WBL planning and implementation for different companies in Styria, Austria.
<i>Germany</i>		
Head of VET	Barnimer Busgesellschaft mbH	Head of VET, responsible for the whole process from marketing and recruiting until evaluation and release.
VET professional	IHK Ostbrandenburg	Auditor for apprentices in retail.
Learner	BMW	Apprentice in mechatronic engineering.
Learner	Moses Fürstenwalde GmbH & Co. KG	Apprentice in retail.
Head of Staff Development/Apprenticeships	E.DIS Netz GmbH	Responsible for staff development and apprenticeships
SME business owner	Legjobb vagyok Nonprofit Kft.	Training provider. The owner is an expert in talent management for adults, coaching and career

		orientation. The company is currently hosting VET learners for practice.
Vet learner	Belvárosi Szakképző Budapest	VET learner in adult education (office assistant)
Vet learner	Belvárosi Szakképző Budapest	VET learner in adult education (office assistant)
<b>Spain</b>		
WBL responsible person	EDE	Non formal VET trainer; he receives apprentices to mentor them in how to teach and deliver classes.
WBL responsible person	Montajes Ezkur	Responsible of WBL in a company; he receives apprentices at the company.
WBL learner	--	Apprentice in FFE (VET degree in Business and Administration)
WBL learner	--	Apprentice in Aspace (VET degree in socio-sanitary)
VET expert	Employment department in Diputacion Foral Bizkaia (Regional Public Administration)	Working in the VET field (public and private sector) for more than 25 years.
<b>Slovenia</b>		
Responsible for training	Metrel d.o.o.; Ljubljanska cesta 77, 1354 Horjul	mentor, responsible for training, Supervisor of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia for conducting intermediate tests for apprentices; skills assessor in final examinations
Human Resources Officer, mentor organiser in a SME	Brinox d.o.o.   Sora 21   SI-1215 Medvode	mentor organizer: Supervisor of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia for conducting intermediate tests for apprentices; skills assessor in final examinations
Senior consultant for the professional field	Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training, Ljubljana	National expert in VET responsible for: methodological guidance in the preparation of

		VET programs, advising schools and social partners in the implementation of VET programs
Student	SGGOŠ Srednja gradbena, geodetska in okoljevarstvena šola, Ljubljana	VET student
Student	SGGOŠ Srednja gradbena, geodetska in okoljevarstvena šola, Ljubljana	VET student of upper secondary VET, adult VET student of Higher Vocational College, VET teacher for practical skills