



Call for Papers

From Local to Global: Trends and Future Pathways in Vocational Education for Sustainable Development

As an education policy program, Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development (VETSD or BBNE) has gained increasing attention in German-speaking countries since the early 2000s—particularly in design-oriented research and, more selectively, through foundational empirical studies (Rebmann/Schlömer 2020, p. 325). Transformative research has been especially influential; in the BBNE context it is frequently carried out through model projects (Modellversuchsforschung) and has so far shaped the field to a considerable extent. Overall, four major model-project programs focusing on BBNE have been funded to date (see, among others, Hemkes 2021, pp. 450ff.).

Application studies: As time-limited spaces for experimentation and piloting, these model projects aimed to make implementation options for sustainable development in occupational practice visible and to design them so that they connect with existing practical and system structures. The scope of these initiatives ranges from fostering competences for sustainable business practices and professionalizing in-company training staff as change agents, to embedding BBNE in curricula and regulatory/occupational standards, as well as further developing learning venues in a sustainability-oriented way (see Kiepe/Schlömer 2025). The model projects thus provide valuable insights into implementing BBNE; however, they largely relate to the structures and specific features of the VET system in the German-speaking countries.

Foundational studies: Similarly, foundational research on VETSD—currently often taking the form of qualification theses and small-scale studies—is strongly shaped by the German VET system and its institutional framework. Given the urgency of advancing sustainable transformation more decisively, cross-border exchange between different VET systems is becoming increasingly important. Yet within comparative VET research, only a limited number of studies have addressed BBNE to date (e.g., Liu-Schuppener 2022). Strengthening a more comprehensive international exchange therefore requires, as a first step, a systematic mapping of BBNE-related discourses in the respective countries.

Against this backdrop, we invite contributions that review, systematize, synthesize, aggregate, and/or explain the current state of knowledge on sustainability within VET research from Austria, Germany and Switzerland. The aim is to make national findings accessible to an international audience and thereby contribute to ongoing debates on VET for sustainable development. Contributions should be structured in a way that someone who is not familiar with the specific conditions in the German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria and Switzerland) can understand them. We particularly welcome contributions on, for example:

- **Macro level:** Framework conditions and steering (BBNE in the German-speaking countries) At the macro level, the focus is on the political, legal, and programmatic conditions under which BBNE is developed and disseminated in the German-speaking countries. It is central to the topic

how sustainability is initiated and embedded through training regulations/standards, curricula, and funding programs.

- **Meso level:** Institutions and learning venues (Organizational implementation)
The meso level focuses on the learning venues where BBNE must be implemented in practice and anchored over time: companies, vocational schools, chambers, and inter-company training centers. Key issues include how cooperation between learning venues works, which institutional routines and resources enable or hinder BBNE, and how the professional development of educational staff should be designed.
- **Micro level:** Teaching and learning practice and competences (Everyday implementation)
At the micro level, teaching and learning processes take center stage: learning tasks, classroom and workplace training situations, and the development of occupational competences for sustainable action. Crucial questions are how sustainability is translated into typical occupational problem situations, which didactic formats and approaches prove effective, and how related competences can be assessed and evaluated.
- **Methodological level:** Submissions focusing on the methodological aspects could answer the following questions: Which methods are used in the research? Which methodological trends can be identified and how can they be connected to the national and international discourse? How is effectiveness measured? Which methodological gaps can be identified?

Submission process

For better organization of the process, we ask you to submit a short abstract (max. 500 words) to sustvet-research.ew@uni-hamburg.de. The submission process has the following timeline:

15.04.2026	Deadline for abstract submission
15.05.2026	Manuscript invitations/Rejections sent out
30.09.2026	Deadline for manuscript submissions
15.11.2026	Communication of double-blind peer review results
From 12/2026	Publication of the special issue

Do you have a contribution that deals with technology and/or sustainability in vocational education and training, but it does not fit the Call for Papers? Individual contributions can be submitted at any time [via the journal's homepage](#).

The editors

Karina Kiepe, Florian Berding and Julia Pargmann

About SUST-VET

SUST-VET publishes theoretical and empirical papers that focus on sustainability and/or technology in the context of vocational education and training (VET) research. In addition, we continuously publish relevant systematic literature reviews and meta-analyses. What we offer:

- Double-blind peer review for all article types
- Diamond Open Access (no costs incur neither for authors nor for readers)
- DOI for every paper, journal itself has an ISSN
- Indexing planned in i.e., EconStor, SSOAR, VOCED Plus, ERIHPlus, BASE, DIPP, VET Repository

References

- Hemkes, B. (2021). Beruf, Nachhaltigkeit, Transformation und der ganze Rest: Versuch einer Standortbestimmung der Modellversuche für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung in der Berufsbildung. In C. Melzig, W. Kuhlmeier, & S. Kretschmer (Hrsg.), *Berufsbildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung: Die Modellversuche 2015–2019 auf dem Weg vom Projekt zur Struktur* (S. 438–467). Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB). <https://www.bibb.de/dienst/publikationen/de/16974>
- Kiepe, K., & Schlömer, T. (2025). Transformative Forschung zur Berufsbildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung – Bedeutung und Funktion der Wissenschaft. In B. Rödel, H. Ertl, & S. Liebscher (Hrsg.), *Berufsbildungsforschung: Rezeption – Translation – Transfer* (S. 311–325). Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB).
- Liu-Schuppener, X. (2022). *Zugänge zur Berufsbildung für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung: Eine international vergleichende Studie über die Berufsbildung im Einzelhandel zwischen China und Deutschland*. Peter Lang.
- Rebmann, K., & Schlömer, T. (2020). Berufsbildung für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung. In R. Arnold, A. Lipsmeier, & M. Rohs (Hrsg.), *Handbuch Berufsbildung* (3. Aufl., S. 325–337). Springer VS.