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NATIONAL REPORT – AUSTRIA

CAREER INFORMATION, GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

SERVICES, DEVELOPMENTS, POLICIES

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I. Introduction

I.1 The status quo

Career information, guidance and counselling are of growing importance.

Changes in the world of labour and employment in general, and the pace of technical and economic developments in particular are often in conflict with concepts of educational pathways and vocational careers that are based on experience of the past and often cannot meet the requirements of future developments.

As a consequence, difficulties at the transition between educational system and the world of work are growing, and problems at reorientation of unemployed persons arise. The same applies to elderly employees, to girls and young women, to those who re-enter the labour market, and persons with disabilities.

By no means, however, is this issue relevant only to people with specific problems: a dynamic world of employment demands from all employed people and those who want to prepare, train and qualify for that goal intensive preoccupation with new educational and qualification requirements under uncertain conditions and the readiness to acquire additional and new qualifications.

What will count in the end, are dynamic competencies and "spirit of enterprise" in its best and comprehensive meaning, i.e. to define goals and objectives, ask the right questions, perceive changes and upheavals (even their first signs) – and to take decisions, reflect them and adjust them, if required.

I.2 Importance of information, guidance and counselling

In order to reach that goal, sufficient, up-to-date, easily accessible and relevant information is required which must be supplemented and supported by adequate measures of counselling, communication, orientation and guidance in personal development.

Within the last few years, many countries have increasingly engaged in this issue on a national level. But also on a transnational level efforts have been made to analyse the situation, describe developments, evaluate best-practice examples, and to communicate and launch new developments.

In the OECD's project "Transition from Initial Education to Working Life – Making Transition Work" especially the transition phase between initial education and entry into the world of work were analysed. It became obvious that this period is getting longer and is turning into a more or less independent system within and parallel to the structures of the education system and the world of work.¹ It seems very likely that the basic findings about this transition

¹ OECD (Hrsg.): Thematik Review of the Transition from Initial Education to Working Life – Final operative Report, Paris 1999

process are not applicable only for the 15-25-year-olds, but for a whole life – in particular from starting initial education to ending active working life.

According to the concept of "lifelong learning" the need of information, guidance and counselling goes far beyond the phases mentioned, it comprises all stages of human life, from education in the family, pre-school and institutionalised education, to information services for senior citizens.

This concept is also the basis for the approach on lifelong learning as stated in the "Länderbericht zum Memorandum zum lebenslangen Lernen" ("National Report about the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning")². "Message 5" of that report expressly demands "rethinking guidance and counselling", which refers to the whole spectrum of career information, guidance and counselling.

Austria has taken the opportunity to join the project "Policies for Information, Guidance and Counselling Services" which the OECD's Education Committee and its Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee prepared in the year 2000, and to cooperate in the process of providing a national survey and in making additional and comparative studies, e.g. through visits by teams of experts.

The objective is to get things straight concerning the status quo of career information, guidance and counselling at home, compare it to developments in other countries, investigate in best-practice examples and possibly make use of them for developments at home, and to evaluate our own national structures as regards availability, accessibility, effectiveness, etc.

Education and qualification are the decisive criteria for economic development in our modern "society of knowledge". They are, however, of even greater importance and affect all spheres of life, social and political shaping of society from the local to the national and transnational levels – the efforts taken in career information, guidance and counselling are in the centre of these developments. Based on preliminary considerations, documentations, and especially on the responses gained through the questionnaire worked out in cooperation with the OECD, the present report will give an insight and overview on the essential findings about scope, type and condition of the individual career information, guidance and counselling services.

² Schneeberger A./Schlögl P.; bm:bwk (Hrsg.): Länderbericht zum Memorandum über lebenslanges Lernen – Zwischenbericht, Wien 2001

I.3 Procedure

In January 2001 the start meeting for the project "Policies for Information, Guidance and Counselling Services" was held in Paris. In the course of that meeting national representatives and experts developed the essential strategic guidelines, and the steps towards their implementation.

The decisive steps to be taken were determined: national surveys based on the jointly created and standardised questionnaire, setting up national reports on the information gained, visits by teams of experts, which finally should lead to mutual reflections and yield an overall account.

There are 12 essential items which also give the structure of the questionnaire

1. Overview of career information, guidance and counselling services
2. Key goals, influences, issues and initiatives
3. Policy instruments for steering services
4. The roles of the stakeholders
5. Targeting and access
6. Staffing
7. Delivery settings
8. Delivery methods
9. Career information
10. Financing
11. Assuring quality
12. The evidence base

I.4 Further preparatory work and meetings, etc.

On 25 January 2001 the first meeting of the steering committee was held at the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (bm:bwk), at which the procedures for the national survey and the allocation of tasks within the steering committee were defined (see supplement), for virtual communication an internet platform (bibaustria@egroups.de) was established.

The second, revised version of the OECD questionnaire was sent to the members of the steering committee (5 March 2001) to include their remarks and suggestions into the questionnaire (deadline: 16 March 2001).

By that time the names of the participating countries had been laid down: Australia, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom (10 in all).

On 20 March 2001, the Austrian steering committee (Krötzl, Neumüller, Nöbauer, Härtel) met in Vienna to discuss further procedures concerning the questionnaire, management, etc.

Further Steps

- It was agreed upon drawing up a concise version (Version Light) in addition to the overall version of the OECD's questionnaire in order to facilitate the central institutions' gathering additional information from regionally responsible persons, from people working in counselling and information, and from other persons responsible for information, guidance and counselling "on the spot", and thus make the information of the overall version even more convincing (Version Light created by Härtel by mid-April)
- For clarifying and communicating terms – e.g. information, counselling, orientation, support, guidance, etc. – Härtel/Krötzl will draw up material providing definitions (early in April)
- When the final version of the questionnaire will be drawn up, Mr Härtel (in coordination with Mr Neumüller) will provide a translation of it (preparatory translation of the current second draft version) – clarification by mid-April; translation to be finished late in April/early in May
- At the same time, the area co-ordinators will be asked about further desires concerning, for instance, specifically Austrian issues (by mid-April)
- The Light Version of the questionnaire will be tried in a pre-test with persons concerned with the issue (Härtel – by the end of April)
- Härtel/Krötzl/Nöbauer will draw up explanatory notes and an accompanying text to the questionnaire

- When the contact persons and area co-ordinators will have received the material (late in April/early in May by Mr Krötzl), all area co-ordinators will get an inquiry call (Härtel/Nöbauer/Krötzl); the deadline for returning the questionnaires is the end of June
- A meeting with the area co-ordinators is planned for 6 June 2001
- During July/by mid-August the first draft version of the overall report will be drawn up (Härtel)
- In August/September the feedback as well as suggestions of complements and modifications to the draft version of the overall report will be gathered
- During October/November the paper will be finally proved and then sent to the OECD
- The area co-ordinators should meet again before the report will be released

II. Questionnaire

1. Overview

In Austria there is a wide range of national institutions for career information, guidance and counselling. Such institutions exist on all levels of the school education system, as well as on the post-secondary and tertiary levels, in adult education, in employer and employee organisations (social partners), in associations and organisations, as private and company initiatives, and on the national, regional and local levels.

On the national level, it is above all the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture which provides career information, guidance and counselling services in the sectors of school, universities, Fachhochschul-courses and adult education, and the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour responsible for the Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich [Public Employment Service Austria] (AMSÖ) which, since in 1994 the Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz [Employment Service Act] (AMSG) came in force, has been a public-law service enterprise and autonomous legal entity outside immediate federal authority, and is responsible for the execution of government labour market policy which also includes providing various career information, guidance and counselling services.

Moreover, the Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations provides various information services for young people, concerning apprenticeship and vocation, school and study, holiday jobs and support programmes. Information and counselling on the integration of persons with disabilities into working life is offered by the Bundessozialämter [Federal Social Welfare Offices] falling into the province of this ministry which also provides special information for women, families and senior citizens.

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Environment and Water also provides information and counselling services, not only on agricultural education and professions, but also on the special situation in rural areas.

These services are co-ordinated and adjusted among the ministries in various ways (e.g. cooperation of the Berufsinformationszentren – BIZ [Vocational Guidance Centres] under the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour with schools, universities, etc.). These cooperations are often institutionalised – e.g. in the form of study groups – or organised as projects.

On the provincial level, additional career information, guidance and counselling services are provided in the individual provinces and/or regions, e.g. activities for young people outside school, special girls advisory centres, institutions for disabled and disadvantaged persons. Depending on the allocation of duties in the individual Austrian provinces, the Departments of Economic Affairs and Labour Market, School and Education, Social Services and Youth Welfare, etc. are responsible for these services.

Furthermore, in the communities additional information and counselling services adapted to the respective needs and circumstances are offered.

Beside institutionalised information, guidance and counselling services, there are numerous projects with different reach and running time which meet special requirements of career information, guidance and counselling.

The following will give a structured overview on service providers, starting with the formal education system – schools, universities, etc. – followed by institutions for labour market and employment policy, by the social partners, adult education, associations, organisations, and private providers and companies.

Schools

First of all it must be noted that the **Zielparagraph** [paragraph on goals and objectives] of the **Schulorganisationsgesetz** [School Organisation Act] states that young people shall be taught and educated with their future careers in mind, which is also expressed by appropriate teaching principles as "preparation for the world of work". Thus, beside imparting knowledge and skills to the students and developing their personalities, it is all schools' job to turn constant attention on career information, guidance and counselling.

Starting with **secondary school level, students' counselling** is an integral part of the school system. It is held by specially trained teachers in addition to the normal lessons. Specific counselling provided by these staff members covers counselling on personal and interpersonal problems connected to school (problem counselling), but to a great extent it is guidance on the continuation of the student's educational career (information counselling). A special feature of **students' counselling** is the option of individual counselling and guidance.

As students' counselling is a specific service provided by specially trained persons, and as it offers opportunities which cannot be provided in this specific combination by other information or counselling institutions, students' counselling is considered an irreplaceable part of the school system.

As regards the contents of the present survey, students' counselling is mainly focused on information, guidance and counselling on how qualification and quality can be acquired. So students' counselling is more or less education counselling. For careers guidance – an also obligatorily service but offered in a different framework – the priority is in the vocational perspective (on how qualification and quality can be applied).

The **Schulpsychologie – Bildungsberatung** [school psychology – careers counselling departments] fulfill various counselling and guidance tasks. Out of the activities of these departments, individual careers counselling on a psychological basis, producing relevant information brochures, and activities in training counsellors for relevant services at school (students' and careers counsellors) are of special interest for the present questionnaire. In order to

fulfill their duties, the school psychology – careers counselling departments cooperate with other counselling organisations. School psychology – careers counselling is an integral part of the school system. The school psychology departments fall into the province of the federal school authorities within the individual provinces (Landesschulräte [Regional Education Boards]).

Students' counselling at pre-vocational schools is of special interest, as this school type at the transition between compulsory school and further educational pathways – including in particular dual, on-the-job training – fulfills an overall guidance and preparatory task with a focus on careers counselling, also as regards career pathways suitable for individual interests and aptitudes. Following the general principles of students' counselling, information is expressly viewed as a way of guidance and preparation for decision-making. Thus school students and parents can be informed about the local apprenticeship situation, and – on the basis of careers guidance lessons – they can be informed on and prepared for relevant information events, practical training sessions in companies, careers fairs, information days at the Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut (WIFI) [Institute for Economic Development], at Berufsförderungsinstitute (BfI) [Vocational Training Institutes], etc.

For grades 7 and 8 of **all school types (secondary academic schools – AHS, lower secondary schools – HS, general special needs schools – ASO)** the subject "careers guidance" is mandatory. It can be taught as a separate subject or can be integrated into several subjects. The subject "careers guidance" supports the students in reflecting their likings and interests, their aptitudes and leanings, their ideas about shaping their future personal and career lives. It also provides for actual contact to real working life, e.g. through practical training sessions in companies, meetings with people from the world of work, etc.

There are two options to implement **careers guidance** at **secondary academic schools – AHS** (compulsory since the year 1998/1999) and at **lower secondary schools – HS**: as subsidiary subject "careers guidance" 32 hours per year for grades 7 and 8, or as decided autonomously by the individual school. The latter option offers the possibility to teach careers guidance from grade 6, with 1 – 4 hours a per week.

At the **upper-secondary vocational and technical schools** there are also specially trained teachers working as educational counsellors. These counsellors play a special role, as, on the one hand, at vocational and technical schools students have already made a first decision about their vocational career in the technical, economic, social or other fields. On the other hand, these schools also provide for a good, all-round education, which at schools offering the "Reifeprüfung"-certificate leaves the whole spectrum of further careers open to the students. Therefore, careers counselling and guidance at these schools always integrates more intensive reflections on the preliminary career decisions made.

At **part-time vocational schools for apprentices** in the framework of dual vocational training, the demand for careers counselling and information is not very high, as the students already made a decision when starting apprenticeship. Some provinces (Burgenland, Styria,

Vienna) provide students' counsellors at these schools who offer counselling also on personal questions including choosing a career, dual apprenticeship, changing the apprenticeship trade, further career after apprenticeship.

So, for instance, all five central vocational schools for apprentices in Vienna have so-called communication centres at which apprentices are offered counselling on social, school and personal matters. Most provinces have psychological services for students of vocational schools for apprentices dealing with personal, but also career issues.

Tertiary sector

In the **Tertiary Sector**, most universities offer **Psychologische Beratungsstellen für Studierende** [Psychological Advice Centres for Students], which fall into the province of the **bm:bwk**, to support students at the **choice of a degree** and at **coping with studying**, and the **Berufsplanungszentren** [Career Planning Centres] of the universities. The Austrian Student Union provides information, counselling and other services at which students, staff of the University Representation groups and of the individual faculties work as counsellors, there are tutors for university entrants offering information about studying, and centralised academic advisers for school leavers who often act as "mobile advisers" visiting schools in person.

The **bm:bwk** maintains a **university information service** which publishes various information brochures and CD-ROMs, provides telephone information, and legal aid for students, and organises **careers fairs**.

The biggest of them being the **BeSt – Die Messe für Beruf und Studium** [The Job and Education Fair] held every spring in Vienna in cooperation with the **Public Employment Service Austria**, and every second autumn in Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Leoben and Salzburg (in Salzburg together with the **BIM – Berufsinformmesse** [Careers Information Fair]). All spheres of education and many vocational spheres – hundreds of exhibitors – contribute to this fair. The March 2001 BeSt in Vienna alone was visited by more than 70,000 school and university students.

In Linz the **SIM – Studium-Info-Messe** [Studies Info Fair] is organised by Linz University.

Studies information brochures, e.g. about universities and academies, are drawn up by the **bm:bwk** and handed out to all school students preparing for their "Reifeprüfung"- exams [A Level equivalent]. They can also be fetched under www.bmwf.gv.at (e.g. "Weiterbildung an Universitäten" [further education at universities]).

Many universities also have special drop-in centres for **career planning** after graduation, and for information and guidance of graduates starting their vocational careers. Such centres can be found, for instance, at the University of Economics in Vienna, or at Graz University (Jungakademiker-Service), or other universities (in the form of Career Planning Centres, Career Services, etc.).

In the sector of the **Fachhochschul-courses**, information and counselling are provided at all locations of "Fachhochschul"-courses (currently 23). In cooperation with the Fachhochschule Council detailed information material ("Fachhochschulführer" – a guide to Fachhochschul-courses, "Dualer Studienführer") is published (bm:bwk, IWI, CCC).

Adult education

In the area of **adult education**, career information, guidance and counselling are increasingly seen as an essential educational task of this sector. This has become obvious in the establishment of comprehensive "education databases" (www.erwachsenenbildung.at; www.eduvista.com, and education databases in all Austrian provinces), in the formation of a national platform for education counselling, and the arrangement of inter-institutional education information and counselling services acting independently from the service providers (e.g., in Burgenland, Upper Austria, BIBER Salzburg).

It is also the task of adult education to provide qualification services for persons working in careers counselling. To that end, for instance, the course "Bildungsberatung. Eine praxisbegleitende Fortbildung" [Careers Counselling. An in-service course] was established at the Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung St. Wolfgang in Strobl [Federal Institute for Adult Education in St. Wolfgang/Strobl].

The so-called "**Infotage für Weiterbildung**" [information days for further education] are a special service initiated by the bm:bwk and summarise information and counselling opportunities at the beginning of the autumn term on the national and provincial levels.

In 7 provinces the Förderungsstellen des Bundes für Erwachsenenbildung [Federal Centres for the Promotion of Adult Education], which fall into the province of the bm:bwk, offer education information and counselling. In addition to that, there are several information centres established in cooperation with other bodies (e.g. BIFI/Vorarlberg). All these centres are online.

Moreover, especially major organisations for adult education often provide their own counselling services, e.g., the Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut [Institute for Economic Development], the Berufsförderungsinstitut [Vocational Training Institute], the Volkshochschulen [Adult Education Centres], church institutions for adult education, the Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut [Institute for Further Education in Rural Areas], and others which – especially on the local level – often also provide counselling beyond information on their own services. Special projects (e.g. Career Coaching in Styria) complete the information, guidance and counselling services in the area of lifelong learning.

Labour market

A key player in career information, guidance and counselling is the **Public Employment Service Austria (AMS)** consisting of a federal organisation, 9 provincial organisations, and regional organisations. It is a service provider under public law with legal entity and as an agency for implementing labour market policy of the government provides a great variety of information and counselling services, often in relation with its central task of job placement.

The heart of AMS careers counselling services are the **Berufsinfozentren (BIZ)** [Vocational Guidance Centres] at 52 locations throughout Austria. They provide comprehensive information about careers, their substances and requirements, the pathways, especially educational pathways that lead to the careers, about the labour market, further training and education, and job opportunities. Self-service computers allow interactive search for information on apprenticeship and jobs. Computer information programmes offer all interesting facts about apprenticeship trades, and about training and educational pathways for school leavers with the "Reifeprüfung"-certificate [A Level equivalent]. Job interest tests help to gain self-knowledge. For many careers and vocational areas videos are available. In cooperation with other educational and counselling bodies, the AMS realises information, guidance and counselling measures related to the labour market, and also contracts out counselling and support tasks related to the labour market. The AMS publishes job dictionaries about all relevant levels and areas of occupation, also containing the training pathways to be taken. These dictionaries are also available as easily searchable on-line fulltext database systems, as state-of-the-art tools of our information society.

Social partners

All organisations of the **social partners**, both **employers** and **employees**, maintain institutions for career information and counselling. The **Wirtschaftskammern** [Economic Chambers], which are also responsible for the **Lehrlingsstellen** [Apprenticeship Centres], focus counselling on commercial-vocational training as well as on job-related further education – also in connection with their Institutes for Economic Development. Such counselling centres can be found not only in the provincial capitals (e.g. BIWI – Vienna, Careers Counselling – Upper Austria, AHA – Salzburg) but also on a regional level.

The express objective of the Vocational Guidance Centres of the Economic Chambers and the "Bildungsberatung" [Careers Counselling Centres] of the Institutes of Economic Development of the Economic Chambers is objective information; they give advice on all educational pathways relevant to the economy. Careers counselling by the economic sector can be regarded as an interface between those making a career decision and decision-makers in the economy, such as training and personnel managers, and also offers communication forums.

The **Arbeiterkammern** [Chambers of Labour] as the legal representative body of the employees in Austria, which in close cooperation with the trade unions represent the social, vocational, economic and cultural interests of the employees, also see themselves as service or-

ganisations, and in this context they offer, among other things, free career guidance and counselling.

In the provinces of Upper Austria, Styria, Tyrol, and Vienna these services are united in special institutions which offer information about educational pathways in schools, the second educational pathway [A Level standard through evening classes], the TVE-exam and (further) vocational training, re-taking of apprenticeship final tests, and information about returning into work. Specific measures in careers guidance and education counselling are also taken by the Berufsförderungsinstitut (BFI) [Vocational Training Institute] of the Chamber of Labour.

The representative of the interests of the rural population – the **Landwirtschaftskammern** [Chambers of Agriculture] – and the Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut [Institute for Further Education in Rural Areas] predominantly provide counselling and guidance services in rural areas, which are, however, not confined to the rural population.

Other associations and institutions

As education facilities of the economy, the Austrian **Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaften** [National Economy Societies], which are represented in all provinces, consider careers guidance a continuous task at the transition between the education system and the world of work. The measures taken in careers guidance comprise training of "multipliers" – e.g. by giving careers guidance teachers the opportunity to get an insight into real working life by offering them practical experience in companies – as well as the organisation of events, workshops for school and university students (e.g. self-marketing training, economic planning games, and training firm projects).

Internationalisation

With the development of a **European Economic Area**, obviously followed by a **European Education Area**, orientation about **international career opportunities** has been gaining importance. Various institutions are offering such services, e.g. the national agencies for European education programmes (as agencies for the implementation and organisation of the programmes LEONARDO DA VINCI, SOKRATES), the Österreichischer Austauschdienst (ÖAD) [Austrian Exchange Service] – Agentur für internationale Bildungs- und Wissenschaftskooperation [Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Science], Büro für akademische Mobilität [Bureau for Academic Mobility]. These two institutions are financed by the bm:bwk, and are granted support by the European Commission – Directorate-General for Education and Culture – for special services and projects.

EUROGUIDANCE (National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance – NRCVG) is a special institution for Europe-oriented career information which – similar to other European networks, e.g. EURYDICE, EURES which fall into the province of the Public Employment

Service – provides information, counselling and orientation services focused on European career pathways.

Special service providers

There are numerous additional providers involved in **special social matters** of career information. Examples for gender-specific careers counselling are the **girls advisory centres** in all provinces and many regions (Mädchenberatungsstelle Sprungbrett, Vienna; Mädchenzentrum Klagenfurt; Mädchenberatungsstelle Mafalda, Graz; Mädchenzentrum Amazone, etc.). Comparable information and counselling services are offered for **persons with disabilities**. Apart from central drop-in centres there are many – often only temporary – regional projects in this service sector.

Summary

In general, it can be stated that in Austria, especially on all levels of the public education system, there is a reliable basis as regards continuity, regional structure and legal provisions for fulfilling the task of career information, guidance and counselling. Character and intensity of these services, however, can differ.

The structure of the adult education sector is more subtle. Many approaches and counselling services are offered which can be specific for the individual institutions or overlap with those of other institutions.

The social partners run their own information and counselling centres which offer information, counselling and orientation services affecting society beyond the organisations' members.

Initiatives in the fields of internationality and special social issues, such as gender-specific career issues or counselling persons with disabilities, have been started but their services are not available everywhere.

Additionally, there are services provided by private, often for-profit organisations that are sometimes specialised in niches and cannot be described exhaustively in their general structure.

2. Key goals, influences, issues and initiatives

2.2 Key goals – differences – legislative basis

In general, there is agreement in all sectors providing career information, guidance and counselling services that social and economic developments, especially in the area of information, and changes in the world of work and the education system, necessitate a growing need for career information, guidance and counselling which have to be met by adequate services.

Deciding timely on educational pathways that meet individual leanings and aptitudes as well as career developments has become ever more important. Therefore, and due to increasing importance of lifelong learning, the demand on career information, guidance and counselling on all levels of the education system and in all phases of life has been growing.

The mutual interest of nearly all institutions to offer information, guidance and counselling services which support the clients in moving independently in their respective educational or vocational environment according to their individual concepts of life, their leanings, aptitudes and interests, and in making well-prepared and well-reflected decisions, is, however, pronounced in different concrete objectives, depending on the specific orientation of the organisations or their responsible bodies, the respective levels of education or on vocational fields, etc.

For the **school sector**, the **Ministry of Education** builds on the basic educational obligation of Austrian schools (§ 2 Schulorganisationsgesetz – SchOG [School Organisation Act]) which defines the preparation of young people for their future jobs as an educational task. In §3 of the School Organisation Act the school's task is formulated "to counsel the students, especially in the grades 4 and 8, and before they leave a certain school type, on further educational pathways that are recommendable for the student according to his/her interests and performance". This is the basis for the key objectives of the relevant services and bodies established for that purpose at schools and authorities:

The objectives of the **Schulpsychologie – Bildungsberatung** [school psychology – careers counselling departments] – relevant to the present study – are:

- Support in acquiring the educational basis for making career decisions by means of psychological counselling and guidance and by contributing to qualification measures within the school system.
- Psychological support by experts (diagnosis, consultation, psychological care) for school students of any age and school type on difficult career-decision questions.
- General information on career-decision processes and on educational opportunities within the school system.

- Training, further education and professional support for counsellors at school (students' and careers counsellors).

The key objectives of **students' counselling** (starting on Secondary Level I) are:

- Ensuring information of all secondary school students on career opportunities after leaving school, and
- individual support of the students and their parents in career-decision questions.

The educational task of the compulsory subject "**careers guidance**" provided at all school types (secondary academic school / lower secondary school / special needs school) for grades 7 and 8, is defined by the key objectives:

- Development of the students' decision-making skills based on a strong self (self-competency), the knowledge of and the skill to analyse the world of work (competency of the subject, methodical competency).
- Recognising the growing importance of social competency in the world of work and becoming aware of one's own strengths in social competency.
- Careers guidance is intended to make an essential contribution to the personality development of students. The focus is laid on developing and strengthening hope, willpower, decision-making skills, determination, diligence, willingness to be efficient, staying power and social skills.
- Careers guidance is also intended as an opportunity to reconsider traditional opinions and prejudice concerning career pathways, and thus opening a new selection of career options especially for female students.

The objectives of the work of **careers counsellors** at secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges is defined by a decree which also points out the great variety of opportunities in the training and education system of the upper secondary level requiring intensive and efficient counselling. In this area too, counselling is regarded as part of the schools' educational task which is not confined to the careers counsellors, but is also a duty of the heads and teachers of the individual schools. The specially trained careers counsellors support this counselling activity. In this context, the necessity of cooperation between head, teachers and careers counsellors, as well as the consideration of the questions of school students and parents must be pointed out.

In the **tertiary sector, psychological advice for students** is regulated by the Studienförderungs-gesetz [Studies Promotion Act] according to which at each university – also at Fachhochschul-courses – Psychological Advice Centres for Students can be established to support them at choosing a degree and at studying matters (Studien-Förderungs-gesetz 1992 – StudFG § 68 a [1]). The services of these advice centres can also be extended to the students of the colleges for teacher training, and other post-secondary institutions.

The objectives of counselling and guidance are focused on

- support in choosing a degree and guidance of freshmen,
- coping with performance-related, social and personal requirements and problems in the course of studying,
- decisions on changing a degree or dropping out,
- promotion of personal and social competencies, and
- the issue of graduating and entering a vocational career.

The objective of the Information Service and the Job and Education Fairs – BeSt is:

- Providing objective information on training and education opportunities, and on the relevant labour market through appropriate media (brochures, face-to-face talks, new media)

As a member of the European network of National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance, EUROGUIDANCE aims at the promotion of mobility in Europe, and at supporting the implementation of the European dimension into the national counselling systems. In particular, EUROGUIDANCE pursues the following goals:

- Promotion of the European dimension in national careers counselling and information systems.
- Promotion of the European dimension in education and training in cooperation with the national careers counselling and information systems.
- Contribution to mobility in education and training within Europe by collecting, processing and exchanging high-quality information on educational and mobility opportunities.
- Raising awareness and cooperation among the counselling centres in the the EEA-countries and the associated countries.

This activity was given an express legislative basis in the council decision on the second phase of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme (Council decision of 26. April 1999 establishing the second phase of the Community vocational training action programme "Leonardo da Vinci" O.J. L 146 of 11 / 6 / 99).

Further legal provisions concerning information, guidance and counselling on the tertiary level are included in the Universitäts-Studiengesetz [University Studies Act] which allows tutorials for university entrants (covering ca. 50% of the freshers) to help them in coping with performance-related, social and personal challenges in the first time of study. There are special information and counselling services for persons studying as a sideline to their jobs, for students with disabilities or chronic diseases, services concerning social issues, grants and other supports, and for senior citizen students.

As a kind of "**meta-counselling**" the 160-page "Wegweiser durch das Dickicht der Beratungsinstitutionen" [Guide to the jungle of counselling institutions] which is published in relation with the BeSt – The Job and Education Fair – provides information about the often confusing variety of counselling centres, information material, orientation opportunities, etc. Find further information under www.bestinfo.at.

In the adult education sector, the platform "Bildungsberater/innen im Netz" [Careers Counsellors in the Web] (www.bib-infonet.at) initiated by the bm:bwk is aiming at establishing a forum of contact and an information platform for cooperation and networking of all persons responsible for and working in information, guidance and counselling in the further education and training sector.

Another objective of this network is that everybody seeking advice can have access to relevant institutions in his/her region. The main subjects reach from job and social counselling, labour market, job orientation, educational guidance, practical training and tests to the second educational pathway. Searching for counselling institutions can be focused on special target groups, which guarantees maximum accuracy.

These activities are based, for instance, on the Bundesgesetz über die Förderung der Erwachsenenbildung und des Volksbüchereiwesens (1973) [Promotion of Adult Education and Information Libraries Act] which established the legislative basis for funding relevant measures, thus preparing the ground for a great number of nationwide services (e.g. in-service further education "Careers Counselling" BIFEB).

In addition to the nationwide information network there are other services in the individual provinces. Electronic information systems aim at giving a comprehensive and transparent overview of all the services offered in the further education and training sector and to track them down with the help of a variety of search and selection methods. The electronic systems are complemented by counselling centres acting either supra-institutionally or in the framework of organisations providing further education. They pursue different objectives.

Some examples for service centres are Bildungsberatung Burgenland, BIBER Salzburg, services in Upper Austria and Vorarlberg which function as neutral counselling and information centres informing about education services and courses of education providers, and about services in other Austrian provinces. At these centres the clients are offered consultation on their personal and job situation, and individual career objectives are worked out.

In Vorarlberg the BIFO counselling service helps the client to find out the types of further education appropriate for him/her, his/her career objectives, interests and strengths, and the options of realisation and decision-making. In contrast to Bildungsberatung Burgenland, the service in Vorarlberg is not fully free of charge.

The counselling concept of "Career Coaching" in Styria is based on regional networkers who address clients directly, and – in cooperation with companies, institutions for further education, regional bodies, etc. – promote a dynamic interaction of demands on education and the supply of further education. This service is a job- and economy-oriented part of an overall careers counselling project still in development.

All these services are also regarded as essential in the context of the growing importance of lifelong learning and of developments concerning flexibility on the labour market.

In Upper Austria and Salzburg, too, individually developed career information services have been established.

In addition to that, especially major organisations provide their own counselling services, e.g. WIFI Career Information at the Institutes for Economic Development of the Economic Chambers, and the counselling centres at the Adult Education Centres, etc. which primarily inform about their own education services but can also provide counselling and orientation on other options of further education and jobs.

Some counselling objectives of the Vocational Training Institute (BFI) are, for instance,

- improved qualification of employees
- employee-oriented training and further training and education
- assistance at re-entry into the labour market
- elimination of unemployment through qualification, orientation and delivery of supportive measures
- personality development

Depending on the providers and the concrete orientation of the educational institutions, counselling services on further training and education differ between institutions.

The objective of the counselling centres established by the **Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour** in the framework of the **Public Employment Service Austria (AMS)** – the Vocational Guidance Centres in particular but also the counselling services related to job placement – is to contribute to a comprehensive, economically sensible and lasting balance of supply and demand on the labour market as part of the full-employment policy of the Federal Government in order to prevent and eliminate unemployment and to safeguard social and economic principles for the purposes of active labour market policy. Thus the supply of the economy with labour and the employment of all persons available on the Austrian labour market shall be guaranteed. This also includes securing economic survival during unemployment by law. The legislative basis is "Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz § 29 Par. 1" [AMS Act]. Moreover, the AMS has the legal obligation to provide special support to underprivileged groups of people having special problems in finding or not losing their jobs. Thus the AMS is trying to establish equality of opportunities. It is also obliged to counteract gender-specific division of the labour market and the disadvantages faced by women on the labour market (§ 31 AMSG).

In meeting these demands the AMS also has to provide services aiming, for instance, at counteracting confusingness of the labour market and providing for information on the labour market and in the world of work, as well as counselling on choosing a job.

The **social partners** also provide career information, guidance and counselling – especially in the provincial chambers and regional offices. By way of example, the BIWI-Berufsinformation der Wiener Wirtschaft, is a service provided by the Vienna Economic Chamber, and in cooperation with the Apprenticeship Centre has the objective to help persons facing career decisions by means of practice-oriented support. The clients are persons who have completed compulsory schooling, persons who prepare for their "Reifeprüfung"-certificate, but also adults who plan some vocational re-orientation.

The main objectives of careers counselling provided by the Chambers of Labour are:

- free, confidential, anonymous, unbureaucratic and easily accessible personal counselling
- overview on training and further educational opportunities but also background information
- aiming at pointing out cheap, efficient, acknowledged educational and training pathways appropriate for the situation of the client
- "AK – Bildungsberatung" [Chamber of Labour – Careers Counselling] is supra-institutional, i.e. the clients are not talked into the services of the Chamber of Labour

The Chambers of Agriculture also provide counselling and information focused not only on special questions of agricultural education and the rural world of work, but also consider the special situation in rural areas.

In addition to that, there are numerous private, non-profit and for-profit counselling providers which – depending on their particular orientation – offer educational and especially vocational information, careers counselling, often combined with job markets, application trainings and other services. Examples are the websites www.stvg.com/jobwolke and www.career.at. Their goals and objectives vary according to the special services they offer.

The legislative basis (extract)

Schulorganisationsgesetz (SchOG) [School Organisation Act] §2, § 3 and others

Bundesschulaufsichtsgesetz [Federal School Inspectorate Act] § 11(5)

Erlass "Aufgaben und Struktur der Schulpsychologie – Bildungsberatung" [Decree on "Tasks and Structure of the School Psychology – Careers Counselling Departments"]

Grundsatzlerlass: "Bildungsberatung an berufsbildenden mittleren und höheren Schulen" [Decree on "Careers Counselling at Secondary Technical and Vocational Schools and Colleges"] (Circular No. 93 / 94, GZ. 17. 100/26-II/5/94)

Bundesgesetz über Berichte der Bundesregierung betreffend den Abbau von Benachteiligungen von Frauen [Federal Law pertaining Government Reports on the Reduction of Disadvantages Faced by Women] (Fed. Law Gazette 837/1992)

Verbindliche Übung "Berufsorientierung" [Compulsory Subject "Careers Guidance"] (Federal Law Gazette No. 60 and 61 of 26 February 98)

Studienförderungsgesetz [Studies Promotion Act] § 68a

Verordnung der Bundesministerin für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur über die Psychologische Studentenberatung [Regulation of the Federal Minister of Education, Science and Culture on Psychological Advice for Students], Federal Law Gazette No. 384/2000

Nationaler Aktionsplan für Beschäftigung LL6 – verstärkte Berufsorientierung für Mädchen / Frauen [National Action Plan for Employment LL6 – focus on careers guidance for girls /women]

Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz [AMS Act] § 29 Abs.1

Council Decision of 26. April 1999 - "Leonardo da Vinci"

Other regulations released by the

Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour

Federal Ministry for Social Security and Generations

2.3 What are the major social, educational and labour market influences that are currently shaping national policies for career information, guidance and counselling services ?

The influences on national policies vary depending on tasks and competencies.

In **school education** the objective of highest possible perviousness in a specially structured school system requires – as far as possible independent from the interests of the individual school – relevant and personal information, guidance and counselling on choosing an appropriate career pathway. So it is useful to provide also general information on education and training opportunities, e.g. through information brochures valid throughout Austria. The grades 4, 8/9, and 10 to 12/13 are of special interest in this respect, as at these system interfaces decisions in view of career objectives and personal skills and abilities are made (including in-company training).

The far-reaching changes in the **tertiary sector** – establishment of the Fachhochschul-courses, three options of university education, tuition fees, etc. – have been a special challenge to fulfilling information and counselling tasks, especially in view of the comparatively high rate of university drop-outs in Austria.

The growing importance of **further education and training** in relation to the changes in the world of work (e.g. within the last three years about ninety new apprenticeship trades were established) provokes increasing efforts in information and counselling tasks in the sector of further education and training. Moreover, the changes of society in general, the development of the European labour market, and the growing number of decisions to be taken on an ever-more mobile labour market – which are always in the context of further education and training – have increasingly determined national policies for information, guidance and counselling.

2.4 What are the most important issues facing policy makers in the organisation, management and delivery of information, guidance and counselling services?

The following issues were stated most frequently.

- Unclear and sometimes not sufficiently co-ordinated spectrum of career information, guidance and counselling institutions and services.
- Another impression is that the services provided by the government are insufficient as regards both capacity and finances.
- New situations due to e.g. budget cuts, tuition fees, changes on the labour market, and international comparability of education and training systems have provoked further problems in the information and counselling sector.
- For some special issues – e.g. females in technology, persons with disabilities – sometimes a lack of sensitivity, and insufficient conditions have been stated.

New challenges, such as obtaining IT-qualifications or atypical forms of employment ("New Self-Employment") also put information and counselling to the test, especially in view of counteracting possible developments towards "digital divide" in a digitalised economy.

2.5 Recent initiatives and changes

As examples of important initiatives and changes within the last five years the following items were stated.

- Introduction by law of the compulsory subject "careers guidance" for grades 7 and 8 of all school types.
- Introduction of a curriculum for the training of careers guidance teachers at lower secondary and pre-vocational schools. Courses are organised by Pedagogic Institutes (or by colleges for teacher training) and consist of 10 modules – including in-company practice.
- Reform of the pre-vocational year laying the stress of grade 9 on careers guidance and preparation for careers.
- Implementation of guidance and decision-preparing activities in the framework of NAP – Jugendausbildungssicherungsgesetz [Federal Law Guaranteeing Youth Training].

- Embodiment of the universities' obligation to provide information during the introductory phase of studies in the Universitätsstudiengesetz [University Studies Act] – Uni-Stg. 1997 § 38 –, provision of pre-university counselling, obligation to extensive relevant legal information of students, etc.
- In the Governmental Programme of the Federal Government of January 2000 exhaustive career information and counselling – extension and improved implementation of careers guidance at all school types is expressly put down.
- Moreover, further education and training as well as the promotion of females throughout education and training is expressly demanded.
- In the course of the establishment of the Fachhochschul-courses sector new information and counselling services have been drawn up (e.g. "Fachhochschulführer").
- Development and implementation of professional concepts for career information fairs (BeSt – The Job and Education Fair).
- Networking counselling bodies and counsellors in a common Internet platform (www.bib-infonet.at), and attendant training courses at the Federal Centre of the Promotion of Adult Education as a government initiative.
- Complementary activities in the individual provinces and region-specific extension of counselling and information services (e.g. STAP – Steirischer Aktionsplan für Beschäftigung des Wirtschaftsressorts des Landes Steiermark [Styrian Action Plan for Employment of the Department of Economy of the Province of Styria]).
- Making exhaustive use of new communication technologies and the Internet, e.g. switching from telephone information services for further education (EBIS – Erwachsenenbildungsinformationssystem [Information System for Adult Education]) to electronic info services (provincial networks, meta search engine www.eduvista.com).

Specific developments

A significant element of the developments in the last five years was the exponentially growing use of the medium Internet and electronic media such as CD-ROMs, etc. which have become common in practically all areas of career information, guidance and counselling services.

Within the last five years, education and school networks were established in all provinces, databases for further education and training were created, and – also in cooperation between bm:bwk and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour with the AMS – electronic information and orientation services were drawn up, e.g. the CD-ROM "Berufsorientierung auf neuen Wegen" ["New ways of career orientation"], and the CD-ROM "Karrieremesse" ["Careers Fair"] aimed at 13-15-year-olds to plan their future.

Within the last five years the AMS established a network of Vocational Guidance Centres covering nearly all of Austria. Apart from folders and brochures they also offer videos, computer-supported information systems and test programmes, and access to the Internet.

Relevant information and documentations have been summarised as government reports, e.g.

- Federal Ministry of Science and Transport: Hochschulbericht 1999 [University Report 1999]
- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs: Berufsbildungsbericht 1999 (and previous years) [Vocational Training Report],

etc.

In the wake of budget consolidation an increasing shortage of funds has been felt in some areas; at the same time new organisational structures are being developed mainly affecting the Public Employment Service (AMS) which was transferred from the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs into the province of the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

According to the "Goals and Objectives for 2001", counselling and information services are regarded as an integral part of the strategies leading to the attainment of the global objectives of labour market policies including such important elements as qualification, equality of opportunities and transparency on the labour market. One of the quantitative objectives is, for instance, an increase of females in the working force to over 60%. Moreover, up-to-date management instruments are intended to be introduced, and the outcome of services shall also be evaluated as regards their costs.

Apart from the transformation of the AMS into a limited liability company there are plans to reduce barriers for private employment agencies and promote their cooperation with the AMS; the development of the AMS as an up-to-date information platform taking full advantage of the Internet is under way.

At the same time there are complementary counselling initiatives on the provincial level (e.g. in Burgenland).

In the framework of the Job and Education Fairs major companies, banks and insurance companies have been increasingly encouraged to provide information and orientation on training opportunities and vocational developments in their respective spheres; and companies make regular and active use of this opportunity.

In addition to that, numerous client-oriented major businesses have developed their own information and guidance activities for young people which they provide by means of brochures, CD-ROMs and other media (including the Internet), and often in direct cooperation with educational institutions, youth organisations, etc. (e.g. CD-ROM "ready – study – go" by Raiffeisen Bank, and similar activities provided by Bank Austria, savings banks, etc.).

Since Austria's entry into the European Union in 1995 the significance of information about career opportunities throughout Europe has been essentially growing. Some important initia-

tives are: growing exchange and mobility activities promoted by the Ministry of Education and Science, establishment of information and counselling centres concerning the programmes SOKRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI, the Austrian Exchange Service (ÖAD) – the Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Science, and the Bureau for Academic Mobility. As an information platform and as a mediator and multiplier of career information EUROGUIDANCE is part of the European network of National Resource Centers for Vocational Guidance in the context of which various studies have been drawn up and published, conferences and experts meetings have been held.

Special measures and activities have been realised for the promotion of equal opportunities for females within the sector of school and adult education (Action Plan 2000 – "99 Maßnahmen zur Förderung der Gleichstellung im Bereich von Schule und Erwachsenenbildung" [99 Measures for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities in School and Adult Education], bm:bwk; continuation: Action Plan 2003 – "Gender Mainstreaming und Frauenförderung in Schule und Erwachsenenbildung [Gender Mainstreaming and Promotion of Females in the Sectors of School and Adult Education]). Numerous complementary activities have been launched and promoted (e.g. "Projekt FIT – Frauen in the Technik", TU Graz, UNI Linz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt and Salzburg, "MIT – Mädchen/Frauen in die Technik", etc.).

3. Policy instruments for steering services

3.1 Legislation for steering information and counselling services

In the province of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture the Schulorganisationsgesetz [School Organisation Act] – which can be amended only by qualified majority vote of the National Council – already in §3 defines the express obligation of the educational system to provide career information and counselling: "Students and parents have to be informed on the tasks and requirements of the various school types, and, especially students in the grades 4 and 8 and final-year students of a certain school type, have to be advised on the kind of educational pathway recommended for the student on the basis of his/her interests and performance."

Thus the great importance of legislation as a steering instrument for career information and counselling services is underlined. Further legal regulations are laid down in the Schulunterrichtsgesetz [School Education Act] which provides for individual counselling and personal talks between teachers and parents about the kind of educational pathway recommended for the student (SchUG § 62). The subject "careers guidance" at lower secondary schools and the lower level of secondary academic schools has its legal basis in curricula decrees. Further provisions are included in relevant decrees on students' and careers counselling regulating the information and counselling tasks of students' and careers counsellors at schools. In the decree "Aufgaben und Struktur der Schulpsychologie-Bildungsberatung" [Tasks and Structure of the School Psychology – Careers Counselling Departments] psychological counselling is stated as an important task at planning a school career. The financial basis is regulated by Salary Acts on the payment of counselling and information services by students' and careers counsellors.

In the tertiary sector, the *Universitätsstudiengesetz* (Uni StG) [University Studies Act] provides for regulations on the universities' obligation to inform; the *Studienförderungsgesetz* [Studies Promotion Act] regulates psychological advice for students, in the *Hochschülerschaftsgesetz* [Student Union Act] information and other services are regulated.

As regards further education, "information and counselling on education and training" are to be promoted according to the *Bundesgesetz zur Förderung der Erwachsenenbildung* [Adult Education Promotion Act] of 1973. The same applies to training and further education of people working in adult education and of information librarians. In order to fulfill these tasks, e.g. in-service further education services have been established by the Federal Institute for Adult Education.

Numerous national legal standards that fall into the province of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, such as *Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz* (AMSG) [AMS Act], *Arbeitsmarktförderungsgesetz* (AMFG) [Labour Market Promotion Act], *Arbeitslosenversicherungsgesetz* (ALVG) [Unemployment Insurance Act], *Sonderunterstützungsgesetz* (SÜG) [Special Support Act], *Arbeitskräfteüberlassungsgesetz* (AÜG) [Temporary Employment Act], *Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz* (AuslBG) [Foreign Labour Act], *Jugendausbildungssicherungsgesetz* (JASG) [Federal Law Guaranteeing Youth Training], all include essential regulations on career – particularly vocation-related – information, guidance and counselling. Moreover, international legal standards such as the EU Treaty, the regulation on freedom of movement for workers within the Community, the regulation on the European social fund, and the ILO Agreement provide a framework for information, guidance and counselling activities.

Other legal regulations, particularly gender-specific careers counselling as well as counselling of young people and adults with disabilities, fall into the province of the Ministry for Social Security and Generations; counselling on agricultural and rural career issues is regulated by legislation in the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

A wider framework is provided by the *Auskunftspflicht-Grundsatzgesetz* [Right to Information Act] (Federal Law Gazette 1987/287), and the *Bundesministerienengesetz* [Federal Ministries Act] which regulates the portfolios of the individual ministries and thus allowing conclusions to the respective target groups.

Furthermore, there is a broad legislative basis for the training of teachers and counsellors – in the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, as well as of the Public Employment Service and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, respectively. So the activities of personal and social counsellors, for instance, are a trade requiring certification, which is laid down in a regulation falling into the province of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour.

As there is no consequent regulation of responsibilities in the area of further education and training, numerous legal provisions on counselling and guidance are regulated on the provincial level and cover responsibilities in the fields of education, labour market policy and social policy.

3.2 Other instruments for the political steering and of monitoring the implementation of information, guidance and counselling services

In schools the information and counselling tasks are supervised by the responsible head and the federal school authorities (e.g. head of the Regional Education Board, regional inspectors). For quality improvement and controlling the subject matters, regular – sometimes obligatory – further education is provided in the area of students' and careers counselling. Due to particular developments in the school system, information, guidance and counselling services have gained great importance, with the "outside-school" component – preparation for further vocational developments – having an ever-growing significance.

In the tertiary sector, some quality evaluations of information and counselling services are under way. Moreover, regular supervision and further education are obligatory for psychological students' advisors. In the area of further education and training, the use and evaluation of information services are partly promoted by increasing the use of electronic information services.

The Public Employment Service (AMS) falls into the province of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour which defines the objectives in labour market policy – including measures concerning career information, guidance and counselling. An administrative board including representatives of the social partners is responsible for allocations. In addition to that, the AMS has defined internal quality standards by which the outcome of guidance measures, for instance, is evaluated according to placement rates, duration of unemployment, or successful careers.

3.3 Relations of government regulation and funding – provision of information, guidance and counselling services

Within the school system, basic legislation and funding are mainly federal affairs, i.e. regulation, funding and provision of resources in this sector are closely related.

For AMS legislation, funding and the provision of information and counselling services are also regulated together. The budget including funds for careers counselling and information but also for other measures concerning active labour market policy is determined on the federal level.

3.4 Mechanisms for co-ordinating services

Most of the information, guidance and counselling services are co-ordinated on regional and local levels, e.g. in co-ordination of Regional and District Education Boards with the provincial and regional offices of the Public Employment Service, in cooperation of schools and local bodies on the local level, in the framework of territorial and regional employment alliances, and in specific campaigns and projects – which proved particularly successful. Some examples of initiatives promoting cooperation are: STAP (**S**teirischer **A**ktions**P**lan für **B**eschäftigung [Styrian Action Plan for Employment]) which has developed numerous specific regional and local information, guidance and counselling projects (e.g. BerufsFindungsBegleiter/in), and the cooperative initiative EQUAL which especially promotes co-ordination by means of development partnerships.

Positive examples of approaches to cooperation are the careers information fairs at which naturally co-ordination of all institutions concerned in information, guidance and counselling issues is guaranteed. Beside major fairs (e.g. BeSt) there are numerous regional and local activities, e.g. careers fairs in individual districts or schools.

Barriers to co-ordination and networking

While on the formal level much bureaucracy is involved in networking and co-ordination, on the operative and inter-institutional level more and more co-ordination measures are taken and cooperation is increased – especially on the regional and local levels. Information and counselling tasks as defined by law do not always correspond with the provision of resources, e.g. in further education. However, increasingly nationwide initiatives covering several areas have been started and paid (e.g. Infotage zur Weiterbildung). Co-ordination and networking are often hampered by specific institution characteristics or sometimes by staff structures.

4. The roles of the stakeholders

4.1 The role of the employer organisations

As the structure of social partnership in Austria to a great extent is regulated by public law (Economic Chamber, Chamber of Labour, Chamber of Agriculture) the roles of these important stakeholders have been described partly in Item 1 as "National Institutions".

Beside these public-law bodies – all of them providing numerous local and regional information and counselling services on the national and provincial levels – the Industriellenvereinigung [Federation of Austrian Industrialists] as a private employer organisation is integrated in the national and provincial structures – e.g. in the executive board of the Public Employment Service on the national level, the boards of directors of the Public Employment Service on the provincial level, and the regional advisory boards on district level.

Employer organisations are always involved in the survey of bills, in opinion-forming and in raising awareness.

4.2 Initiatives of employer organisations

Employer organisations operate their own career information centres, particularly on the provincial level (Economic Chambers), they contribute to careers information fairs or organise their own fairs (e.g. Economic Chamber of Upper Austria), organise careers information weeks (Economic Chamber of Lower Austria), support educational and training institutions of the economy in their cooperation with information and counselling services provided by schools (National Economy Societies), develop and evaluate career information and guidance instruments (Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft [Institute for Research on Qualification and Training of the Austrian Economy]), and produce information material about developments in the fields of education and labour, and about individual economic branches and areas (Economic Chamber, Federation of Austrian Industrialists).

Beside information and counselling for their members, some private organisations – Federation of Austrian Industrialists – also take other initiatives mainly in the form of projects.

A special task is fulfilled by the Lehrlingsstellen [Apprenticeship Centres] of the Economic Chambers in the individual provinces. They are responsible for apprenticeship management within the dual system, and at the same time are involved in information and counselling on finding an appropriate apprenticeship – in co-ordination with the Economic Chamber and the Institute for Economic Development.

These Apprenticeship Centres also employ training counsellors for companies which train apprentices. They also act as canvassers for these companies in order to create additional training opportunities.

4.3 Employer involvement

Seldom (1), regular (5) : statements, average : 2,2
Local (1), national (5) : statements, average : 1,8

The involvement of companies and employer organisations is classified as fairly occasional and as emphasising the local/regional level, with the information and counselling services (e.g. of the Economic Chambers) being assessed as sustainable.

(It is expressly pointed out that the basis of this survey is not representative, neither in quantity nor quality.)

4.4 The role of the employee organisations

Chambers of Labour and trade unions are involved in information and counselling as they are represented in counselling and co-ordinating bodies – in the Provincial Project Groups for the Implementation of the Law Guaranteeing Youth Training, in the bodies of the Public Labour Service on the national, provincial and regional levels, and they are involved in manifold co-operation and promotion of counselling and information activities on the national, provincial and local levels.

Just as the employer organisations, the employee organisations are actively involved in the survey of bills, in opinion-forming and in raising awareness.

4.5 Initiatives of employee organisations

The employee organisations – especially the Chambers of Labour – are involved in careers information fairs, fund their own counselling centres, produce information material, and commission studies and surveys. In some provinces (e.g. in Tyrol, Upper Austria) careers information fairs – e.g. for 10-14-year-olds – are organised in cooperation with employer organisations.

The Chambers of Labour are in charge of the project "Arbeitswelt und Schule" [World of Work and School], provide free and confidential counselling services and support education networks – WAFF Wiener Arbeitnehmer/innen-Förderungsfonds [Vienna Employees Promotion Fund].

Just as the employer organisations, the employee organisations are also involved in the survey and creation of curricula.

4.6 Involvement of employee organisations

Seldom (1), regular (5) : statement, average : 3,25
Local (1), national (5) : statement, average : 3,5

The involvement of employee organisations is classified as slightly higher than occasional, and as tending towards national activities rather than to local ones.

(Also in this context it is expressly pointed out that the basis of this survey is not representative, neither in quantity nor quality.)

4.7 Other stakeholders

Parents offer their services and experience as regards career information and counselling in various ways, e.g. in school community committees, in parents' associations, at careers orientation events at schools.

At many schools and universities or faculties there are alumni organisations which make use of the experience that former students have gained on their further career pathways.

These activities, however, often depend on personal or institutional initiatives, and are not at all general or exhaustive.

5. Targeting and access

5.1 Priorities and target groups for information and counselling services

The definition of target groups and priorities for information, guidance and counselling services depends on the legislative basis, the orientation of the respective institutions and specific objectives (see also 2.2).

Within the school system information, guidance and counselling services are generally targeted at all students, but, the higher the grade of the students, tend to shift from services addressing the parents to services addressing the students directly. The obligation to inform is directed to all areas of the school system. The subject "careers guidance" is compulsory for all students at grades 7 and 8. Students' and careers counsellors are primarily responsible for students and their parents at a certain school location, but they also offer counselling services

for students and parents outside school, e.g. for students of lower grades, or students who want to transfer to/from another school. The school psychology – careers counselling departments are responsible for students, parents and teachers in general, the services offered to parents being always in relation to school matters concerning their children.

A special guidance services is offered to young people by the pre-vocational schools at the end of compulsory schooling, mainly at the interface of compulsory schooling and dual job training at grade 9.

Counselling services on the tertiary level are focused on students but also on persons who plan to start a degree, e.g. persons holding a "Reifeprüfung"-certificate, or 11/12/13-grade students. But there are also special gender-specific (counselling for girls and young women), age-specific (e.g. senior citizen students) services.

In the sector of further education and training, services are generally offered to the public at large, with the priorities depending on the orientation of the respective providers and projects and ranging from job-related (e.g. Career Coaching) to generally educating subjects (e.g. the Second Educational Pathway offered by the counselling centres in Burgenland, Upper Austria and Salzburg).

The counselling priorities of the Public Employment Service (AMS), which are primarily focused on jobseekers and unemployed, on apprenticeship-seekers and young people facing a career decision, are defined by the AMS' legal obligation concerning labour market policy. But the Vocational Guidance Centres also address adults who for different reasons seek re-orientation on the labour market, and are principally open to everybody but are frequently and intensively used by schools. In the framework of the AMS' legal obligations, special services and projects are offered to specific target groups, e.g. to persons re-entering employment, people with placement problems, long-term unemployed, etc. In addition to that, there are activities and counselling services pursuing proactive and preventive strategies (e.g. qualification needs counselling for companies).

The AMS also turns to companies which have a manpower shortage or intend to release employees, thus trying to create and secure jobs by means of information, guidance and counselling.

On the one hand, the services of the social partners provide information and counselling for their members, on the other hand, they also centre their work on areas that are in the interest of their members or institutions, e.g. on apprenticeship-seekers (Economic Chambers – Apprenticeship Centres), on schools in general (Economic Chambers, Chambers of Labour), on school and university students, and – e.g. through electronic media – on the public in large.

Some providers stress especially the European dimension of their work (e.g. EUROGUIDANCE). They offer both direct services for people seeking counselling (e.g. information about European education, training and counselling systems) and services for multipliers in other educational sectors fulfilling counselling and guidance tasks.

5.2 How are such priorities and targets expressed

Where there is a legislative basis (see also 5.1), the definition of priorities and target groups derives from the legal obligation. Within a certain range, however, priorities can be established according to regional situations, temporary challenges or other interests.

The definition of priorities/target groups by law is of special importance within the school and university sectors, for the Public Employment Service and for the public-law bodies of the social partners. Other priorities are established by global tasks such as the challenge of reducing gender-specific imbalances in the world of work, the creation of opportunities for persons with disabilities, the integration of persons with non-Austrian nationality, etc.

In addition to legal regulations, in many areas priorities are established through defined goals and objectives (e.g. stated by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour for the AMS in the context of labour market policy).

5.3 Active steps to ensure access to services for target groups

In the school sector teaching activities for information and counselling – e.g. the compulsory subject "careers guidance" – are basic active measures reaching all school students in the grades 7 and 8.

Additional measures – services of students' and careers counselling and of the school psychology – careers counselling departments – are free of charge and principally voluntary. Students' and careers counsellors have office hours which have to be announced at the school in an appropriate manner and do not require appointments. For counselling at a school psychology departments usually an appointment must be made by phone. Apart from providing voluntary and individual counselling, the students' and careers counsellors and the school psychologists also conduct in-class projects involving all students of a form.

In addition to that, students are informed through brochures, and information and counselling services are specially pointed out to them. There are information and counselling services targeted at parents – mainly at schools, e.g. informational evening meetings with the opportunity of subsequent personal counselling. Such meetings are organised by schools, parents' associations or other educational institutions.

The services of the Psychological Advice Centres for Students are also open and free for persons who are faced with deciding on a degree.

The Job and Education Fairs (BeSt) are an active and free-of-charge measure to provide services for all target groups – persons seeking information about schools or universities, or having other career-related questions. These fairs are actively promoted by advertisements on TV, on the radio, on posters, in newspapers, etc., are supported by a platform on the Internet and exhaustive brochures – both covering the entire range of services and focusing on individual ones.

In labour market policy the Vocational Guidance Centres – BIZ – provide easy access for all target groups. Information and counselling, also self-testing, etc. are anonymous if desired. For in-depth guidance and more intensive counselling, or for participating in orientation measures or courses sponsored by the Public Employment Service in most cases registration is required (at the AMS computer department).

In addition to that, numerous information and orientation services on the Internet provide open access to everyone ready and capable for using this electronic information medium.

Active steps are especially taken in areas that focus on specific tasks, as the promotion of measures and projects for female school students in the framework of the initiative "MIT – Mädchen/Frauen in die Technik", information campaigns for girls at upper secondary schools, promotion of further training courses for teachers titled "Geschlechtssensible Berufsorientierung" [gender-sensitive careers counselling], etc. Active steps are also expressed in – mainly provincial or regional – initiatives for groups of persons having special needs, as persons with disabilities and long-term unemployed (e.g. "Alpha Nova Steiermark").

By means of nationwide events, open days, impressive public appearances of education and training institutions, etc., the annual (since 1999) "Infotage zur Weiterbildung" [Info days on further education and training] – initiated by the Ministry of Education, realised by the Promotion Centres for Adult Education in the provinces and by institutions for further education and training, and held at the beginning of the winter semester – are aimed at making people aware of the importance of further education and training, on the variety of services offered, and on the options of information, guidance and counselling.

5.4 Different methods used for different target groups

Depending on the legislative basis, the frameworks of the individual institutions and organisations, there are various methods to provide services for different target groups.

At school the subject "careers guidance" is intended to help the student in developing a reliable basis for deciding on a career pathway through intensive and continuous guidance in information, orientation, preparation and decision-making processes. This process is started not later than in the 7th grade with focused analysis of individual identity, of strengths and development potentials, interests and views of life, is continued by structured, well-prepared, guided and subsequently reflected contact to real-life work and employment situations – e.g. in the form of practical experience days –, and is probably finished in grade 9 (in the pre-vocational school) by concrete preparation for a vocation and decision-making in the search for an apprenticeship.

In addition individual and targeted counselling – by students' and careers counsellors, school psychology – careers counselling departments – provides the opportunity to receive personal and individual information and counselling on questions concerning this process. In any case appropriate measures for information and counselling of parents are offered.

In the tertiary sector the major information and orientation events (fairs) are addressed at the public in large, a special focus, however, is laid on young people facing a career decision and on their parents.

From the year 2002 onwards the fairs will also centre on another target group – persons of any age and educational level interested in further education and training.

Numerous and comprehensive measures are taken by many educational institutions – especially schools – to prepare, support and reflect visits to these fairs and thus increase their informative value.

The services of the Psychological Advice Centres for Students in the area of careers counselling are focused on personal and psychological counselling methods to support analysis of information and decision-making processes.

Apart from their own activities the Public Employment Service has commissioned external contractors with providing a wide spectrum of counselling and guidance services, e.g. for persons re-entering employment, for elderly and disadvantaged persons, and qualification counselling for businesses.

Depending on the respective task, face-to-face talks, group information and group counselling are provided for persons re-entering employment, information meetings for businesses, job markets and visits to companies are organised, and psychological testing methods are applied by in-house psychologists to find out individual interests and aptitudes.

For some well-defined tasks for specific target groups labour-market-related counselling and guidance institutions are commissioned to implement measures for target-group-oriented vocational guidance and preparation, realise coaching measures, provide assistance at work, etc.

Specific methods are applied for special target groups – as girls and young women – and are often a combination of personal continuous orientation and preparation, contact to the real world of work and mutual and individual reflection with complementing individual counselling, e.g. careers orientation courses including in-company practice, application trainings and gender-specific conversation and counselling services, etc.

In addition to that private institutions and businesses – banks, insurance companies – address special target groups, especially young people, and provide information and counselling services through company-organised youth clubs, through distribution of CD-ROMs, through events or sponsoring of school activities.

5.5 Do examples exist in which individuals were required to take part in counselling and guidance

In the school sector parents' interest in timely and efficient career information and counselling of school students has been growing. This is often one of the reasons why in the course of school development processes career information and guidance have gained increasing importance.

Many degree course schemes have a legislative basis for the mandatory "university entrance phase" including essential orientation tasks.

If an individual problem on the labour market cannot be solved in the framework of general client services, the client is sometimes required to participate in more intensive counselling and guidance measures.

But as a whole all stakeholders endeavour to create general and target-group-oriented measures in such a way that the affected clients can make use of them when they need them without major problems.

5.6 Comprehensive approach versus targeted approach; both?

In the education sector (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture) information and counselling policy basically promotes both approaches, and supports the respective institutions and measures.

The services of the compulsory subject "careers guidance" – which is mandatory but non-assessed – are basically targeted at the whole age group of school students in the grades 7 and 8 and at their parents. The services of the students' and careers counsellors and the school

psychology departments are also open to all students but are mainly used of those who actually need them.

The same applies to the careers fairs (BeSt) which are intended by the bm:bwk as an instrument to provide access to education for all but also to reach special target groups.

Due to its legal obligation, labour market policy primarily promotes information and counselling services addressing people with special needs (unemployment, placement problems, etc.). On the other hand, preventive measures are taken (e.g. qualification counselling for companies) and generally accessible activities are supported (fairs, etc.).

Moreover, increasing attention is being paid to measures for target groups who are confronted with special problems or are in special need (girls and young women, persons re-entering the labour market, disabled persons, etc.). These tasks are often taken over by specialised institutions.

There are still potentialities both in targeting of target-group-specific measures and in the efficiency of generally accessible activities.

5.7 Gaps in the provision of services, if any, e.g. for special groups and needs

In the school sector gaps in understanding, experience and time are stated especially for counselling disadvantaged pupils in integrated classes.

Students completing compulsory education at a school other than a pre-vocational school are sometimes not provided with sufficient career information and counselling services. The same applies to drop-outs of secondary academic schools (AHS) and secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges (BMHS).

Teachers at the upper level of secondary academic schools state a gap in (mandatory) counselling and guidance on Secondary Level II, especially in the final grades, which often results in insufficient orientation, for instance, in the choice of a university degree.

In labour market policy the needs of persons who are not threatened by unemployment are not fully met. Deficiencies are also stated for career information facilities for adults and for counselling services outside population centres.

In-company education and careers counselling – especially in SME – is also a field for further improvement.

5.8 Services for adults

The creation and extension of adult education databases including all education services of acknowledged adult education providers (sometimes even more) are primarily targeted at adults, but these databases are naturally accessible to everyone. A meta-search engine (www.eduvista.com) commissioned by the bm:bwk allows quick and simultaneous searching in all Austrian further education databases.

The Federal Centres for the Promotion of Adult Education have the legal obligation to inform and counsel adults, which they fulfill depending on their capacities. In the individual provinces further measures for adults have been taken – some funded by the government, some funded by the provinces – (e.g. Bildungsberatung Burgenland, Bildungsberatung Upper Austria, BIBER Salzburg, Career Coaching Steiermark, BIFO Vorarlberg). These initiatives maintain independent provider-neutral counselling centres and counselling projects in different regions of the respective province and are also mobile – they "go to the client". The counselling services of the social partners (Chambers of Labour, Economic Chambers) are also targeted at adults. In the framework of labour market policy the measures taken by the Public Employment Service – apart from training and placement of young people – are predominantly focused on adults.

Most institutions for adult education offer information, guidance and counselling predominantly but not exclusively in the context of their own education and training services.

At schools (e.g. secondary academic schools or secondary technical and vocational colleges) that offer services for working people (evening classes) information and counselling are often provided in the framework of these services. The same applies to senior citizen students and for counselling on services such as TVE-Exam, obtaining an Apprenticeship Leave Certificate, educational leave, etc.

6. Staffing

6.1 Types of staff employed to provide information and counselling

In schools all teachers in Austria – ca. 120,000 – are engaged in career information, guidance and counselling tasks, as the general obligation of Austrian schools to provide education, and the teaching principles and tasks of the individual school types require this service by law.

In practice, particularly students' and careers counsellors as teachers with additional qualifications, careers guidance teachers as fully or partly qualified teachers for the subject, and

school psychologists (psychologists with additional qualifications) are involved in information, guidance and counselling tasks. According to a study on secondary academic schools, the respective teachers of grades 7 and 8, especially those teaching the subjects geography and economics, German, history and social studies, religious education and handicraft are specially involved in careers guidance tasks.

On the tertiary level, the Psychological Advice Centres for Students employ psychologists and psychotherapists with special competencies for counselling students and people interested in studying, and individual office assistants with additional qualifications. At the Career Planning Centres university graduates with individual additional qualifications fulfill counselling tasks, as do students with information competency within the framework of the Austrian Student Union (ÖH).

In the labour market sector, there are specially trained careers advisers, psychologists with specific careers counselling competencies, and persons with different functional responsibilities in various general or target group-specific facilities and projects (some functional designations are: e.g. trainer for careers guidance, trainer for job coaching, women's adviser, social worker, resources pool mentor, etc.).

In further education institutions persons with relevant competency and experienced in further education, as well as staff members with relevant additional training take over information and counselling tasks.

At the institutions of the social partners, staff members with different educational – in most cases academic – background having relevant additional qualifications and on-the-job training are employed for information and counselling tasks.

In the framework of fairs and other information events, it is often persons with different backgrounds and functions but with relevant communicative skills that take on the tasks for information and orientation.

6.2 Number of staff; by type or category; information on age, gender and ratio m/f

According to the legal obligation of schools (general task of schools, teaching principle, etc.) all ca. 120,000 teachers are involved in career information and guidance tasks as part of the general education tasks of Austrian schools (m: 25% / f: 75%).

In all, 2,351 persons act as students' counsellors with relevant additional qualifications, out of them at

lower secondary schools:	1,197
special needs schools:	335
pre-vocational schools:	172
secondary academic schools:	605

As prescribed by law, at secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges (BMHS) at least one careers counsellor must be employed; larger BMHS must have 2 or more careers counsellors (in all ca. 300 schools in Austria).

At the Austrian school psychology departments in all 148 school psychologists are employed.

Moreover, ca. 500 careers guidance teachers with relevant additional qualification are employed at the pre-vocational schools.

External institutions (e.g. Schul- und Ausbildungsberatung SAB [School and Training Counselling], Styria) employ additional ca. 30 persons.

On the tertiary level, at the Psychological Advice Centres for Students 37 psychological students' counsellors work at ca. 30 established posts; at the info service and the legal advice department for students provided by bm:bwk 7 persons are employed, 2 of them working full-time, there are 6 agents for disabled persons, and 20 persons working at the grants departments who are also specialised in counselling. Additional ca. 150 – 250 persons are involved in information and counselling tasks (mainly as a sideline besides studying or another job) at the Büro für Auslandsbeziehungen [International Relations Office] and at the Austrian Exchange Service (ÖAD).

The Public Employment Service has a staff of ca. 4,200 throughout Austria, out of them at the key date 1/5/2001, 2,460 persons were employed in the area of counselling and placement services, 1,518 females, 952 males.

In the area of adult education, at the 7 Federal Centres for the Promotion of Adult Education in the provinces ca. 20 persons are involved in information and counselling tasks, these tasks, however, are only one part of their jobs. In the framework of relevant institutions an (estimated) number of 500-600 persons throughout Austria are – sometimes only occasionally – engaged in information and counselling tasks. The vast majority of these persons fulfill this task besides other educational or organisational functions, and only comparatively few persons (ca. 40-50) are exclusively engaged in information and counselling tasks, mainly at relevant counselling centres (Bildungsberatung Burgenland, BIBER Salzburg, Bildungsberatung Upper Austria, BIFO) or at careers counselling projects (e.g. Career Coaching, Styria).

At the institutions of the employer and employee organisations another ca. 70-80 persons are involved in information and counselling tasks, in most cases, however, also besides other tasks.

Sample studies about careers counsellors at BMHS showed that the majority (ca. 55%) of them are aged between 40 and 49; only 15% of careers counsellors are younger; 56% are males, 44% females.

Out of the careers counsellors working at the Chambers of Labour (ca. 20), 50% are females and 50% males, most of them aged between 35 and 50.

Where no data are available (e.g. for further education institutions), it can be assumed that the share of female advisers is higher (see also Public Employment Service).

6.3 Education and training qualifications

		Level of Education and Training					
		Teaching qualification	University degrees in psychology	Special diplomas in guidance & counselling	Post-graduate qualification	In-service courses	Other
Type of staff position	Information librarian					X	
	Careers guidance teacher	X		Teacher training certificate			
	Students' and careers counsellor	X Teacher training certificate			X	Training curriculum X	Detailed knowledge of Austrian education system; moderation and co-ordination methods; Internet experience
	Counsellor in government agency	X	Degree in the main subject psychology		X Only qualified clinical and health psychologists are entitled to counselling at Psychological Advice Centres for Students	Qualification course for higher school-psychological service	Students' adviser: qualification as psychotherapist
	Counsellor in private agency					X	
	Other						

In compulsory schooling careers guidance teachers are prepared for their task – in addition to their pedagogical and specific basic qualifications – by additional qualifications: the additional course "careers guidance" or elementary modules of it; in the secondary academic sector there is neither a relevant teacher training certificate nor an additional degree. Due to the fact that in this sector relevant lessons are held in the special form of compulsory sessions, only very few teachers have a relevant qualification.

Students' and careers counsellors at secondary schools (lower secondary schools, pre-vocational schools, secondary academic schools, secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges, special needs schools) – apart from their pedagogical and specific basic qualifications – are obliged to acquire further training which is set up, co-ordinated and provided with expert support by the bm:bwk in cooperation with the school psychology – careers counselling departments, and is realised at the colleges for teacher training in the individual provinces.

For the sector of pre-vocational schools (PTS), the diploma in "careers counselling and life studies" is part of the teacher's qualification for this school type. The curricula and teaching plans for the PTS sector lay a special focus on teaching basic and key competencies. For PTS teacher trainees in-company practice for all subjects of study and an in-company practice analysis are mandatory .

At the school psychology – careers counselling departments all staff members involved in information and counselling tasks are university-educated psychologists with an additional qualification in careers counselling.

The Public Employment Service provides internal training, most of the counsellors hold a "Reifeprüfung"-certificate. New staff members are provided with basic training, in addition to that internal further training is offered, for instance, to ensure the development of professional counselling competency (conversation methods, client-oriented counselling methods) or concerning working techniques (communication skills training, time and self-management, etc.) or in the context of special tasks. These services are constantly updated.

For the sector of employer and employee institutions and of organisations for further education, staff members involved in information and counselling usually receive internal training, sometimes also for and in cooperation with other institutions.

In the tertiary sector, the Psychological Advice Centres for Students employ persons holding a degree in psychology and have an additional qualification in clinical psychology and psychotherapy, moreover they have to do training on the job, a five-week fundamental training course, in-service supervision and individual further training and education. At the Career Planning Centres – mainly university-educated – persons trained on the job and with individual further education, mainly as regards communicative and methodical competencies, are employed. Persons working at the counselling services of the Austrian Student Union just have their own experience and some introductory training; university entrants tutors are offered relevant seminars.

In the wide spectrum of institutions and tasks within the sector of adult education, the individual staff members have totally different qualification backgrounds. The in-service further education course "Careers Guidance" at the Federal Institute for Adult Education in St.Wolfgang/Strobl is a qualification service offered to this rather heterogene target group. The curriculum is shaped according to the professional needs of careers counsellors and is subject to constant evaluation as regards its practicability.

Excepting the school sector, less formalised qualitative types of training and further education and training often provided by the respective institution (AMS) prevail and are focused on trade-, education-, vocation- and client-specific tasks especially as regards communication competency, counselling behaviour, methodical skills, personal characteristics, and understanding of the respective field of education or vocation.

6.4 Typical competencies – knowledge and skills – of counsellors

		Competence					
		Communication skills	Group facilitation skills	Individual and group assessment skills	Labour market knowledge	Knowledge of career development theory	Other
Type of staff position	Information librarian	X		X	X	X	
	Careers guidance teacher	X	X	X	X	X	
	Students' and careers' counsellors	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Counsellor in government agency	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Counsellor in private agency	X	X	X	X	X	
	Other	X		X			

Further remarks

		Competence					
		Communi- cation skills	Group fa- cilitation skills	Individual and group assessment skills	Labour market knowledge	Knowledge of career development theory	Other
Type of staff position	Information librarian						
	Careers guid- ance teacher						Knowledge of regional education and training opportuni- ties Moderation, ICT know- ledge, Inter- net, open- ness ...
	Students' and careers coun- sellors						
	Counsellor in government agency	Are expected of all coun- sellors with client contact	Useful for working with groups of school students at the Voca- tional Guid- ance Cen- tres (BIZ)	"Assess- ment" of clients must often be made quickly and without adequate competency	Is expected of all coun- sellors at the AMS	Is expected of all AMS counsellors, especially of BIZ staff	Media com- petence and information management skills, espe- cially as regards career in- formation
	Counsellor in private agency						
	Other						

In addition to the competencies given in the upper grid, other skills that were stated are: being open to and showing interest in other people, empathy and honesty, ability to motivate clients, but also the ability of keeping one's distance.

At school, communication skills with regard to age and development phase of the students on the respective educational levels are important, whereas at target-specific counselling commitment and interest in the respective task and target group are in the focus, e.g. at girls advice centres, counselling services for persons with disabilities.

In labour market-oriented counselling, diagnostic skills – assessment of special situations and problems of persons seeking advice – are regarded as very important. The same applies to

knowledge of the Austrian training and further education system, as well as to knowledge of current and future developments on the labour market, the latter being regarded as having shortcomings.

Other skills expected of the counsellors are the ability to consult, i.e. to understand concerns and problems in the context of career decisions, to provide information and to support its individual analysis, to cooperate with different partners, and to motivate clients to take matters into their own hands. Another aspect viewed as important is the growing necessity to know how to make efficient use of electronic media especially the Internet and the information it supplies.

6.5 How are competencies and skills of those providing career information, guidance and counselling changing?

Also under this item the importance of information and communication technologies is pointed out, both as a means for supporting and accompanying information and guidance activities and with regard to their effects: upheavals within economy and world of work and ensuing consequences concerning qualification requirements and relevant training and education activities. Moreover, the importance of political and legislative ambitions to safeguard and extend counselling services has to be mentioned.

6.6 Opportunities for information, guidance and counselling service staff to update their knowledge and skills

In the school sector, continuous updating of counselling knowledge through seminars and conferences is obligatory in the curricula for training and further education in the field of students' counselling. To that end, special study groups organise conferences which must be attended in addition to regular mandatory training seminars. School psychologists are also obliged to attend internal training programmes.

The internal training programme of the Public Employment Service comprises a great number of general courses on counselling and organisation, but also vocational studies courses and lectures on labour market/future trends. The staff members also have the option of external further training and education.

At the Federal Institute for Adult Education in Strobl in-service further training courses on career information and counselling are held which are attended by persons from all Austrian provinces. Within the individual provinces regional further training is provided for by experts meetings, workshops, etc.

The Internet platform of counsellors for further education and training www.bib-infonet.at is aimed at quick dissemination of up-to-date information and at providing interactive use of it.

Employer and employee institutions, and institutions for further education and training organise internal training measures as well as public lectures, discussions, etc. on their own authority – sometimes in cooperation with other providers.

In the framework of Europe-wide initiatives and programmes (e.g. CEDEFOP Study Visits) further education and training opportunities are also offered on a European level.

6.7 Policies to systematically make use of groups – alumni, parents, employers – in delivering services

In the context of the subject "careers guidance" and of students' and careers counselling, schools often cooperate with parents, alumni, representatives of higher educational institutions or employers. This is a basic task of the school community – detailed or binding regulations in this respect do not exist. However, in individual school initiatives for school development and quality management (QIS – Quality in Schools, school model, school programme, ...) the integration of the school environment also in career orientation activities is often expressly stated.

In the BMHS (secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges) cooperation with the relevant economic environment is common, e.g. through the establishment of boards of trustees, or in the form of – often compulsory – practical experience weeks, or through cooperation at dissertations, etc. – through activities that give an immediate insight into the business world and the students' future jobs.

A new focus on careers orientation and co-operation with employers has been laid by the initiative "Unternehmen-Bildung" [business-school] by the bm:bwk.

As a rule, businesses, higher educational institutions, etc. are involved in career information fairs, and parents are addressed specifically .

Many schools have alumni associations which provide feedback on their experience with the application of knowledge and skills acquired at school.

Some – mainly vocational – schools have companies as "mentors" for individual classes which throughout one school year (sometimes even longer) provide the students with concrete information and counselling services and concrete vocational preparation.

School partnerships between schools and companies, or companies as sponsors for a whole school are further types of systematic cooperation – also in the field of information and counselling.

Close cooperation with the relevant vocational environment has become common especially in vocational institutions of further education as a means of education and training.

In some innovative projects counselling goes the other way round: young people interested in apprenticeship trades set up manuals and presentation material in project work and present them to employers, thus informing them about new ways of training and contributing to the creation of new apprenticeships in promising vocations (National Economy Society).

7. Delivery settings

Schools

7.1 Careers guidance lessons as part of the school curriculum

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Grade 13
Required?	yes – HS/AHS	yes – HS/AHS	at pre-vocational schools (PTS), special needs schools (preparation for a vocation)				
Hours	32 (dropped at ca. 1/3 of AHS)	32	ca. 80 (only PTS)				

In addition to that many schools offer voluntary "non-assessed options".

Moreover, in the framework of school-autonomous priorities, careers guidance lessons can be integrated in the curriculum – even as a compulsory subject.

7.2 Integration of careers guidance into other subjects

In principle, careers guidance in grades 7 and 8 may either be taught as a separate subject or may be integrated into different other subjects.

Anyway, the substance of the curriculum must be imparted to the students in 32 hours per year.

Moreover, the School Organisation Act and relevant decrees provide the legislative basis for the general obligation to regard preparation for the world of work and careers guidance as an integral task of all subjects, especially at the interface between different school types and before finishing a school type.

This applies to all school types, at secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges, however, at which vocational orientation is in the centre of the school lessons, specific measures providing guidance in relevant professions are taken.

Careers guidance in the grades 7 and 8 at secondary academic schools is mainly taught as an integrated subject, i.e. it is integrated into other subjects, while at lower secondary schools the variant of a separate subject "careers guidance" is chosen more frequently (at more than 40% of lower secondary schools).

The core task of the 9th school grade at pre-vocational schools is to provide in-depth orientation and preparation for a vocation, and relevant basic vocational training. So the objective of this school type in general is to prepare the students for starting further – usually vocational – training.

About 22% of the school students choose a pre-vocational school for their 9th grade; the 9th grades of other school types usually do not offer comparable in-depth guidance services.

Several schools – especially lower secondary schools – lay a focus on careers guidance initiatives affecting the curricula of all subjects.

As a province-specific service the so-called "Realschulen" [comparable to junior high schools] have been founded as independent 6-year (grades 5-10 in Styria) school type on the basis of the Privatschulgesetz [Private Schools Act] at 20 locations of lower secondary schools. The main objective of this school type is to provide high-quality orientation and guidance for subsequent vocational training.

7.3 Work experience as part of the secondary school curriculum

In the 9th school grade pre-vocational schools offer the opportunity of practical experience days and weeks which are expressly designed to contribute to orientation on future jobs and the respective vocational environment and to support the students in making a career-decision. These practical experience days and weeks amount to ca. 40-120 hours for each student and have been implemented at practically all pre-vocational schools.

In the secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges, practical experience days and weeks in technical professions and service-oriented professions are obligatory. They are part of vocational training but also offer an insight into the world of work and contribute to orientation on future career decisions. In secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges at which practical experience weeks are not obligatory they are at least recommended and the school can provide help in finding an appropriate place for practical experience. As a rule, practical experience days and weeks are held from the 11th to the 13th school grades and in the holidays in between, respectively.

7.4 Other types of career information, guidance and counselling – for school students

As repeatedly mentioned above, other career information, guidance and counselling services offered for school students are the services provided by the students' and careers counsellors at each school, the school psychology departments, the regularly held careers fairs on the federal, provincial and regional levels, information services on the internet (e.g. www.learn4life.at), information material in the form of brochures, folders or CD-ROMs, the organisation of visits to Vocational Guidance Centres, of meetings with external expert persons, of excursions and vocation-oriented visits to companies, cooperation and Trial Apprenticeships with the social partners (e.g. at the workshops of the Institutes for Economic Development), and seminars and courses complementing school lessons (e.g. application trainings of the National Economy Societies), cooperation with institutions of the Public Employment Service, the Chamber of Labour, the Economic Chambers, the National Economy Societies, etc. By most school types these activities are considered to be beneficial and constructive.

The Public Employment Service

7.5 Information, guidance and counselling services provided by the Public Employment Service

The Public Employment Service (AMS) holds the view that individual counselling and guidance, and job placement are closely related and mutually conditional. Successful individual counselling and guidance are a prerequisite for a successful and lasting placement process, so the functions of personal counselling and guidance and job placement cannot be separated but are integrated in an overall coaching process, with the objectives of counselling and guidance activities resulting in successful and lasting placement.

These activities of the Public Employment Service are centred on persons who are on welfare due to unemployment – e.g. receivers of unemployment benefits – or are registered as seeking work. In addition to that, persons threatened with unemployment and those having specific placement problems are offered guidance and support. Moreover, counselling activities for businesses, inplacement and outplacement programmes (foundations), and activities in the framework of socio-economic businesses are supported. The Vocational Guidance Centres (BIZ) organised by the AMS are open to everybody but are visited particularly by school students and their parents seeking information and advice. In addition to that, the Public Employment Service provides career information, guidance and counselling services in various cooperations, e.g. with schools and universities, with institutions of the social partners, at careers fairs, etc.

Tertiary education

7.6 Services in the tertiary sector

The final year at technical and vocational colleges (grades 12 and 13 – ISCED 4), and the colleges providing school leavers of secondary academic schools with the technical and vocational part of BHS education (ISCED 5) are at the interface of the secondary and the tertiary sector. Students of these institutions are entitled to use the services of careers counsellors and of the school psychology – careers counselling department.

Other non-university post-secondary institutions are, for instance, the colleges for teacher training which are currently being transformed into academies for pedagogic professions and usually provide internal counselling services for students. They are aimed to offer orientation especially for entrants on the aptitude for being a teacher, and to show vocational options

apart from teaching to students finishing their studies – also in cooperation with other institutions, e.g. the AMS.

In the university sector, the Psychological Advice Centres for Students are a standard service regulated by law. Their main tasks are to support students in coping with matters of studying, with performance-related and personal problems during studying but also to provide help when they are faced with making career decisions or changing a degree. These objectives are fulfilled through personal counselling, psychological and psychotherapeutic counselling and guidance, often in connection with aptitude testing and trainings.

The Psychological Advice Centres draw up scientific studies focused on psycho-social developments and specific problems of school leavers and university students, examine the relation of these issues to current social developments in career matters. Moreover, they publish papers on theoretical aspects and practical forms of personal and psychological counselling and on focused psychotherapeutic care.

The information service for study programmes information sources is involved in the drawing up and regular updating of information materials, brochures, etc. and their distribution.

In addition to that, Centres for Vocational Planning at many universities support students in planning and deciding upon a career, in applying for a job, sometimes they also offer job placement and graduate recruitment services. This task is fulfilled through providing information, personal counselling and guidance and through participation in careers fairs.

The Austrian Student Union fulfills its legal obligation to provide for information on the individual degrees, sometimes also on vocational areas, mainly through information and counselling services and in the context of entrants' tutorials.

At many faculty institutes additional orientation and job placement services are offered through contacts to businesses and the world of work.

The dynamic development of the Fachhochschul-courses sector in Austria within the last few years proved an exceptional challenge to information and orientation on new career pathways in the tertiary sector. Relevant services are provided by the government but also by the – mostly private – founder and parent organisations of the Fachhochschul-courses and by the Fachhochschule Council which in cooperation with the IWI [Institute for Industrial Sciences] annually publishes a guide to all Fachhochschul-courses including special information on in-service further courses of studies.

There is a special situation in the sector of Fachhochschul-courses, as due to the special course recognition procedure by the Fachhochschule Council which also includes requirements and acceptance analyses on career opportunities and interests of prospective students, an aspect of information and orientation is already anticipated at the implementation of a Fachhochschul-course. Thus, as a rule, with the decision on a special Fachhochschul-course

the career paths of a student are clearly defined. Close links to the business world and practical experience semesters additionally support career orientation.

Special information and counselling services in the tertiary sector are also offered in a European dimension – e.g. students exchange programmes, semester abroad, etc. –, on supports and grants for students with disabilities, and on special requirements, e.g. for senior citizen students.

Some universities and Fachhochschul-courses have structured cooperations with lower educational institutions (schools), and with partners in the organisation of information and orientation events (e.g. AMS – Careers Information Fairs).

In general, it can be expected that in the wake of the university reform for increased autonomy and priority definition the demand for information, guidance and counselling on studies and related career opportunities will increase.

Private (for-profit) sector

7.7 Services provided by the private sector

Management consultants – especially in the recruiting sector – are increasingly offering counselling services which are in most cases related to personnel recruiting of businesses but are sometimes offered directly also in combination with often extensive psychological testing, and are often computer-based. Depending on the scope of testing, fees charged for a counselling unit can range between ATS 800,- (EURO 58,14) and ATS 3.000,- (EURO 218,02).

Major personnel recruitment enterprises increasingly fulfill some sort of guidance function by bringing together companies with flexible vocational needs and persons seeking a job. These services, however, are focused on company- and vocation-specific areas.

For students and university graduates executive search firms and human resource development firms tend to gain importance, especially in the "high potential sector", in which increasingly active marketing is pursued.

Moreover, there are more or less intensive measures for persons in need of information and guidance before finishing a degree, which is met by relevant institutions and projects (Jungakademikerservice – "Step In", Graz University).

In the context of job markets and private careers counselling, there is a great number of Internet platforms, some of them providing links to interactive counselling services (www.career.at; www.stvg.at/jobwolke, etc).

7.8 Steps taken by the government to encourage private organisations

There is a tendency by government to remove barriers hampering private organisations in providing counselling and guidance services, including job placement – especially on the executive and expert levels. There are, however, no binding guidelines, quality criteria, etc.

Numerous measures concerning info-media, counselling and careers guidance are realised by public contract (e.g. Federal Government, provinces) or put into practice by the AMS without the involvement of private organisations.

Both on the federal and provincial levels, private organisations are often commissioned with carrying out public contracts including career information, guidance and counselling services by the authorities – also by the Public Employment Service.

Other organisations

7.9 The role of other organisations in providing information, guidance and counselling services

In the context of public contracts (see Item 7.8), there are other organisations serving as mediators for information, guidance and counselling services, e.g. by drawing up electronic databases and internet platforms (e.g. WAFF – Vienna Employees Promotion Fund, National Economy Society, BIFO Vorarlberg), by the implementation of the Federal Law Guaranteeing Youth Training (besides institutions of the social partners e.g. "Jugend am Werk"), youth centres and youth advice centres (Vienna, individual provinces), as well as by special projects on the regional level (BerufsFindungsBegleiter, National Economy Society); the Wiener Integrationsfonds [Vienna Integration Fund] provides school counselling for immigrants (SIM), the City of Vienna Association of Youth Centres provides a counselling service for unemployed young women and those threatened with unemployment, the Alpha Nova Society develops new approaches on counselling and guidance of persons with disadvantages (Styria), Mafalda draws up special services for girls and young women (Graz).

7.10 Government attempts to increase the role of other organisations

Apart from federal regulations – e.g. in the school and labour market sectors – there is a growing tendency to define the services required on the national level but to leave their implementation to the individual provinces with regard to the respective needs (Example: National Action Plan – Law Guaranteeing Youth Training, implementation of project groups in the provinces which have to co-ordinate responsible use of the funds with regard to the respective needs on the regional level).

In the adult education sector, the Federal Ministry of Education has supported the creation of electronic networks, internet platforms and counselling services on the provincial level, their survival and maintenance, however, are a provincial responsibility and are co-ordinated, for instance, by provincial study groups or conferences for adult education.

The course "Careers Counselling" at the Federal Institute for Adult Education in St. Wolfgang/Strobl is offered on a nationwide and non-institutional basis and can be regarded as another contribution of the public authority (Ministry of Education) to improve significance and quality of careers counselling in adult education.

More or less the same applies to the management of the Public Employment Service for which national legal regulations are provided, but the Provincial Directors are responsible for the regional implementation of the measures, at which they make use of various services of private providers.

Co-ordination and harmonisation among different providers, however, are not always satisfactory; there are attempts now to ensure improved co-ordination and to create synergies, e.g. through territorial and regional "employment alliances", and by the institutions of the regional management body or of regional development associations.

8. Delivery methods

8.1 How have government policies influenced delivery methods for career information, guidance and counselling services in the last five years?

Apart from the implementation of legal regulations, such as the implementation of the compulsory subject "careers guidance" in the school grades 7 and 8, the embodiment of students' counselling, also in pre-vocational schools, and respective developments in the tertiary and further education sectors, in labour market policy (Nationaler Aktionsplan zur Beschäftigung [National Action Plan for Employment]), which have also been described in Items 2.5 and 3, the following relevant developments must be mentioned.

On the school level – in addition to the structures of personal information and counselling services and of guidance services offered in the context of school classes – electronic information services have been massively extended, they comprise school networks in all provinces (e.g. Education Highway/Upper Austria; Steirisches Schulnetz/Styria, etc.) providing information on all options of school-based education, on priority programmes, admission requirements, etc., but also relevant career-oriented services (e.g. www.learn4life.at, www.berufsorientierung.at, etc.), and the creation and publishing of CD-ROMs which are frequently distributed in the framework of careers fairs.

In addition careers fairs (e.g. BeSt) have been especially promoted on the national, provincial and regional levels. The compulsory subject "careers guidance" and other school activities provide adequate preparation and reflection to the visit of a fair and thus contribute to an efficient use of the information services and to a long-term effect.

Through quality improvement in the educational sector promoted by the Ministry of Education (e.g. Q.i.S. – Qualität in Schulen [Quality in Schools]) as well as through several provincial initiatives ("Steirische Schulentwicklung"/Styria), in addition to the general educational task of schools, orientation on qualification requirements of the individual vocational areas and of higher educational institutions have been promoted. One of the objectives of the initiative "Unternehmen-Bildung" [business-education] by the bm:bwk targeted at all educational sectors is to contribute to structured contacts between economy and school in order to better co-ordinate vocational developments and educational standards.

In the tertiary, especially the university sector batteries of psychological tests have been developed, a telephone information and counselling service has been established, CD-ROM-based self exploration and job-search packages have been developed, and the organisation of careers fairs and exhibitions has been promoted. Due to the high drop-out rates at Austrian universities, there is a challenge to intensify cooperation with lower educational institutions (e.g. secondary academic schools) in order to allow a target-oriented and lasting choice of studies.

For further education, information platforms have been drawn up in all provinces – often with the backing of the bm:bwk – and are maintained with the support of the individual provinces. These information platforms include nearly all further education services open to the public – also in connection with face-to-face counselling services (e.g. Bildungsberatung Burgenland, Upper Austria, Styria, Salzburg) and are designed to facilitate access to further education.

Since Austria's entry into the European Union in 1995, a special emphasis has been laid on the "European Dimension", and relevant institutions (SOKRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI National Agencies; Austrian Exchange Service – ÖAD; EUROGUIDANCE) were founded which organise relevant information and counselling services with regard to educational developments throughout Europe and make these services available to the target groups through various cooperation with other institutions.

The objective of providing equal career opportunities to girls and women has been taken into account by the establishment of girls and women advice centres, moreover, this concern has also been considered by other, more general activities – e.g. careers fairs – and by concrete relevant initiatives ("99 Measures for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities within the Sectors of School and Adult Education" – Ministry of Education).

Relevant information and counselling initiatives have been created for new developments in the educational sector, e.g. for the TVE-Exam as a new third column of the Austrian "Reifeprüfung"-system, for the Fachhochschul-courses (97 new courses within the last 6 years), and for new apprenticeship trades in innovative vocational areas (ca. 90 new vocations within the last 3 years).

For all major areas, information material, brochures and, as a rule, electronic information (CD-ROMs, Internet) have been produced.

In order to provide up-to-date practical experience in relevant vocational areas, practice-oriented services and the co-ordination agencies for finding workplaces for practical experience, holiday jobs, etc. have been specially promoted, both through the introduction of compulsory practical experience for students of individual school types (schools for service professions) and through practical experience programmes for teachers involved in careers guidance tasks (in-company practice for teachers, Pedagogic Institutes – National Economy Society), through job markets and call-centres for finding holiday jobs.

8.2 Recent/current initiatives to develop Internet-based information, guidance and counselling services

As mentioned in Item 2.5, intensive use of Internet-based information (and other electronic media) has become one of the most significant trends in career information, counselling and guidance.

The creation of school networks in all provinces and relevant initiatives by the bm:bwk ("e-learning"; "Technology Billion") have further supported these approaches. Thus the inclination of young people to use the Internet as a source of information and communication can be utilised for improved information, guidance and counselling.

Besides establishing student-targeted information databases (www.learn4life.at, www.berufsorientierung.at) and the distribution of CD-ROMs (e.g. "Choice"), relevant activities for careers guidance teachers, counsellors and multipliers (e.g. establishment of internal Internet fora for networking counsellors in the school sector <http://www.schule.at> and in the adult education sector <http://www.bib-efonet.at/>) have been started and relevant aids for web-based information search have been drawn up (e.g. Internet guide for students' counselling <http://www.schulpsychologie.at/intguide.htm>).

The ibw – Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft [Institute for Research On Qualification and Training of the Austrian Economy] has established an occupational guidance service (BIC – Berufsinformationscomputer [Occupational Guidance Computer]) which is accessible at www.berufsinfo.at.

Currently the ibw is developing an interactive self exploration test for persons starting an apprenticeship commissioned by the bm:bwk (www.berufsinfo.at/selftest/index.htm).

All tertiary sector study programmes information brochures are available on the Internet (www.bmwf.gv.at); the Fachhochschule Council as well as each provider organisation of Fachhochschul-courses maintain Internet-based information, sometimes also counselling services.

The AMS offers a wide range of information platforms (www.ams.or.at) including job markets, apprenticeship vacancies, downloads of all brochures on careers information, and a database which currently is being extended to an exhaustive further education database with an integrated courses database including numerous e-learning services.

For jobs requiring a "Reifeprüfung"-certificate the "McJob-Online – Berufsinfosystem" [careers info system] has been drawn up which includes descriptions of about 900 education and training opportunities, ca. 700 professions, and answers to over 150 questions related to career decisions. In addition ca. 2000 addresses – including numerous links – are available. A module "technical and vocational schools" addressing a younger target group will be included soon (www.ams.or.at/b_info/index.htm).

8.3 Examples of screening tools to match types of client needs to types of services provided

In the school sector, all school development and quality management programmes (see also Q.i.S – Qualität in Schulen www.qis.at) include elements of "client feedback" also as regards counselling and information services; these instruments, however, are not yet obligatory.

There are individual studies investigating this topic. So, for instance, the bm:bwk, commissioned the ÖIBF [Austrian Institute for Vocational Training Research] to make a study on students at secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges (for results see Item 12) with the objective to improve counselling services and to determine the need for further education.

For pre-vocational schools, in two nationwide studies (1998/2000) which were carried out by the Pedagogic Institute of Styria and the Styrian National Economy Society on behalf of the bm:bwk, the effect of the pre-vocational school reform on orientation and preparation for the next career phase was surveyed (find results in the Annex). In the framework of the The Job and Education Fairs (BeSt) visitor questionings deliver information on visitors types, target group reaching, assessment of the information services available, suggestions, desires and complaints. The objective of these questionings is to adapt the fairs concept of the organisers to the desires and needs of the visitors and exhibitors, and if required to altered needs.

9. Career information

9.1 The public sector's role in producing career information

As explained in Item 3, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (bm:bwk) and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour (BMWA) are the main responsible authorities for career information, guidance and counselling, the focus of the services is laid on the educational and labour market sectors, respectively, but they overlap in many areas.

As described above, other tasks fall into the province of the Federal Ministry for Social Security and Generations, and of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, especially as regards agricultural affairs and rural regions.

As the Republic of Austria is a federal state, essential responsibilities of careers information are realised on the provincial level – both by federal authorities (Regional Education Boards) and by indirecte federal administration (e.g. Apprenticeship Centres). The Public Employment Service is organised on the provincial and regional (districts) levels, maintains provin-

cial and regional offices which organise additional career information services depending on the respective needs – e.g. in co-ordination with the regionally implemented Vocational Guidance Centres.

Compulsory schooling is basically a provincial responsibility. Usually, these schools are maintained by the individual communities which due to local circumstances and bonds are often highly interested in region-specific information and counselling of school students and their parents.

Information materials and brochures are drawn up both on the national (study programmes guides, guide to Fachhochschul-courses, Wegweiser für Information und Beratung [Guide to Information and Counselling] – BeSt, vocational dictionaries – AMS) and provincial levels ("Bildungsberater" [Careers Guide], etc.) with funding being either in the national or provincial responsibility.

For the tertiary sector, which generally falls into the province of the Federal Government, information and counselling services are principally funded on the national level. Some information services at universities are co-ordinated with regional authorities, which in a way is also true of electronic and Internet-based services, in this area, however, regional initiatives can have supraregional effects.

9.2 Forms which career information typically takes

Generally all common and innovative media are applied for career information, guidance and counselling – from information brochures, education services and information sheets, over videos and films, to CD-ROMs, interactive computer services (e.g. self exploration tests), and databases on further education and job markets.

Depending on the respective distribution strategy, these information media can have general and supraregional, target-group-oriented or regional, supra-institutional or institution-specific forms.

For the co-ordination of production and application of media and brochures for career information a co-ordination platform has been implemented at the Ministry of Education.

A comprehensive overview on material available is provided by the Vocational Guidance Centres and at the careers fairs (especially BeSt).

9.3 Typical client groups aimed at

In the school sector, the target groups are mainly students, parents and multipliers, and – through special activities – specific target groups, as girls, students with non-German mother language, or young persons with disabilities.

In general, the target groups are defined by the portfolio of the ministries as stated in the Federal Ministries Act, by the educational task of the respective institution – e.g. on the tertiary level – and by the task of labour market policy (Public Employment Service).

In general more and more people have become aware of the importance to receive career information, guidance and counselling in the course of a career (see also Message 5: "Rethinking careers counselling – Memorandum on Lifelong Learning"). Progressive and lasting information strategies, however, should be preferred to selective measures (see also Question 5).

9.4 What methods are used to gather information

Information is gathered within the individual provinces of responsibility (ministries, etc.), from external information sources (vocational research, Economic Research Institutes, etc.), and from primary surveys in the individual areas of responsibility.

Education data are regularly updated; the further education databases are updated either constantly or every semester in co-ordination with the respective institution. Two different strategies can be observed: 1) centralised data collection according to a common pattern, and centralised maintenance and updating (e.g. WAFF and Burgenland); 2) decentralised maintenance by the individual institutions and access to a common platform (Styria, Upper Austria).

Career information media of the AMS are produced centrally at the Abteilung Berufsinformations- und Qualifikationsforschung [Department for Careers Information and Qualifications Research] at the Federal Office of the Public Employment Service Austria, or are created and designed by external contractors on behalf of this department. These contractors are either research institutes involved in relevant activities or expert individuals.

The brochures to the careers fairs are published annually as is the accompanying brochure "Wegweiser durch das Dickicht der Beratungsinstitutionen" [Guide to the Jungle of Counseling Institutions]. The Vocational Guidance Centres of the Public Employment Service are also regularly supplied with up-to-date material – brochures, electronic material, films, etc.

9.5 Steps to ensure that information is accurate and timely

In the school sector, there is an obligation of schools to deliver relevant information to the central authorities. Information material is mainly drawn up on the basis of these reports. In some specific areas additional studies are made.

In the school sector as well as in other areas – particularly in the further education and labour market sectors – the increased use of on-line databases and electronic services allow continuous updating. Therefore in the future, print media will be increasingly based on database data or can be derived from them.

Successful interaction and cooperation among different protagonists in the area of career information, guidance and counselling contribute to timely updating and co-ordination of data material.

It is above all the major cooperation platforms – e.g. fairs, BeSt – and the production of accompanying brochures which induce the exhibitors and co-operation partners to update and adapt information in time.

European and transnational institutions and activities (CEDEFOP; OECD – Education at a Glance, EUROGUIDANCE, etc.) can also help to provide timely access to international data (www.leonardodavinci.at/euroguidance).

9.6 Steps to ensure that services are user-friendly and adapted to user needs

The assessment of services by target groups as regards user-friendliness and satisfaction of needs is surveyed both by the documentation of the take-up rate (quantitative development) and by evaluation of the services (qualitative survey). To that end, data from longitudinal analyses on the use of Internet-based services, from visitors statistics of careers fairs, and from take-up rates of services provided by the Vocational Guidance Centres are analysed (quantitative survey), but also data from questionings (at fairs), from relevant reflection and discussions of counsellors and careers guidance teachers (e.g. in the framework of study groups), and from questionings of parents in the framework of school development processes (qualitative analysis). Depending on the judgement of the providers and on the funds available, the knowledge gained from these surveys is used for further development of career information and counselling services.

9.7 How are services distributed?

As repeatedly mentioned above, information and counselling services are offered at all relevant institutions, projects, organisations, schools, education facilities, counselling centres, etc. It is important to state that in a progressive process of career information, guidance and counselling none of these services is isolated but always in the context of previous, parallel or subsequent services, e.g. initial information with subsequent personal counselling; personal counselling with further testing or further information services; careers guidance lessons in relation with practical experience days or weeks at companies. All these measures are aimed to enable the respective clients to take matters into their own hands and to support them in making conscious and independent decisions with a successful outcome.

9.8 The role of the private sector

In the private sector basically three different levels have to be considered.

- Firstly, the sector of privately organised education providers (often associations) which as not-for-profit institutions also provide career information, guidance and counselling services, and in close cooperation with the public sector – sometimes supported by, sometimes commissioned by the public sector – develop and realise relevant measures.
- Secondly, private for-profit enterprises increasingly provide career information and counselling services or support relevant activities (e.g. careers fairs). Among these companies are banks, insurance companies and other major client-oriented enterprises, and as a rule the measures they take in careers information are not the core competence of these companies but must be seen in the context of useful marketing strategies. The basic interest in these services has been increasing, and there is a growing number of cooperations both on the national and regional levels – often at school sites.
- Thirdly, there are private providers which offer careers counselling and guidance services as a company object – e.g. management consultants – and make profit of them. This especially applies to job placement on the executive and expert levels, several providers are increasingly concentrating on university graduates while on the school level these providers are of minor importance.

Especially among private providers of the first and second group and public-law institutions there are numerous cooperations – with Federal Ministries, Regional Education Boards, the Public Employment Service, etc. Thus the scope and platform of information and counselling services can be extended.

9.9 Efforts of the government to increase the role of the private sector in providing career information

As mentioned above, the government makes increasing use of the private sector by contracting out services and through cooperation in national and regional activities. At this the government sees to it that the objectives which are binding for the public-law sector are fully met.

9.10 Ways in which labour market data is included in career information

The facts given in Items 9.4 and 9.5 on gathering and updating of materials also apply to including labour market data in career information. The following types of data are of special significance

- nationwide unemployment statistics
- regional unemployment statistics
- labour-market forecasting
- qualifications development studies / for branches and vocations
- evaluation studies on client measures
- vocational information material provided by the AMS (including income developments and new qualification requirements)

Furthermore, international comparative surveys – e.g. on labour demand in specific areas such as information technology and communication technology – are of great importance.

But apart from orientation on qualification requirements and career opportunities, individual abilities and characteristics, leanings and interests of a person must be considered, as career information, guidance and counselling processes can only be successful, if these criteria are brought together.

10. Financing

10.1 Government methods to fund information, guidance and counselling services

In the school sector, information, guidance and counselling services are mainly funded in the form of teachers salaries and allowances.

Due to the general obligation of Austrian schools to provide information and counselling a considerable share – which can hardly be quantified – of the total education budget expenditure is spent on information, guidance and counselling tasks.

Where information, guidance and counselling services are provided in a well-defined framework – e.g. within the compulsory subject "careers guidance" in grades 7 and 8 – the respective teachers salaries can serve as a measure for government funding.

So the costs for providing the compulsory subject "careers guidance" – either as a separate or integrated subject – are equivalent to teachers salaries of about ATS 180 million (EURO 13.081.110,15). However, the subject was designed in such a way that the government provides no additional means.

Careers guidance lessons at pre-vocational schools in the 9th grade amount to 1,350 hours per year corresponding to ca. 65 posts of teachers and costs of ATS 36 million (EURO 2.616.222,03).

As regards students' and careers counselling, information and counselling services are paid as allowances in addition to the salaries of the teachers.

The legal task of providing information and counselling services at schools is basically financed by the government. In some areas which to some extent are in the responsibility of the individual provinces – e.g. part-time vocational schools for apprentices – the provinces provide additional funds.

In the tertiary sector the basic tasks of information and counselling are also met by government funding.

In the area of further education and training, the bm:bwk provides information and counselling services by using Objective 3 funds of the ERDF. But most of the expenditure on information, guidance and counselling in this area is borne by the further education and training organisations themselves or in the framework of projects and measures financially supported by different bodies – Federal Government, Provincial Governments, communities, Public Employment Service, etc.

In labour market policy the essential tasks of information, guidance and counselling are financed by the government – sometimes by using funds from European programmes, e.g. ESF, the realisation of specific measures and projects is often contracted out e.g. in the form of project assignments.

For major career information and counselling events – e.g. careers fairs – the basic funds are provided by the government through the Public Employment Service or regional authorities (provinces, communities) but there are also private sponsors – banks, insurance companies, etc. – which cofinance these events. An exact percentage of the contributions, however, is hard to determine as it is not only money that is provided but also material services, the opportunity to dispose of rooms, staff, know-how, etc.

It can be assumed, however, that by far the biggest share of the funds for these events is raised by government or other public-law bodies – including the institutions of the social partners.

Information, guidance and counselling activities with a European dimension – e.g. EUROGUIDANCE – are often basically funded in the framework of Europe-wide programmes (e.g. Leonardo da Vinci) and cofinanced by the bm:bwk.

10.2 Client contribution to government services

In all areas in which career information, guidance and counselling services are financed mainly by government funds access for clients is free.

In the school sector all public information and counselling services are free of charge. Also in the tertiary sector – apart from general membership fees for the Student Union – , in the further education and training sector, and in the Public Employment sector the use of publicly funded information and counselling services is free.

Sometimes a production cost contribution is charged from clients ordering large quantities of information material.

10.3 Cost and expenditure data on the relative cost of different methods

In all relevant areas of the school system – school lessons, students' and careers counselling, school psychology department – information, guidance and counselling are regarded as an integrated service, and "extracting" costs covering only career information seems quite impossible. Providing information is always a part of counselling, and both are included in a

process of guidance and preparation for personal and career pathways to which information and counselling services and relevant media can contribute.

For the Psychological Advice Centres and the Centres for Vocational Planning in the tertiary sector, cost accounting and controlling are carried out.

There are no specific evaluations available for the Public Employment sector, as allocation of costs in this area would be too complex and would require extensive calculation.

10.4 Best available estimates of the cost to governments of providing information, guidance and counselling services

In the school sector, careers guidance in the levels 7 and 8 (HS/AHS/special needs school) and in the 9th level (pre-vocational school) costs approximately ATS 216 million (EURO 15.697.332,18) – see also 10.1.

In addition, for allowances, etc. in the area of students' and careers counselling annual personnel expenses of ca. ATS 30 million (EURO 2.180.185,03) arise plus annual administrative expenses of ca. ATS 5 million (EURO 363.364,17).

At the school psychology – careers counselling departments the estimated annual share of personnel costs for careers counselling is about ATS 15 million (EURO 1.090.092,51), for administrative expenses about ATS 3 million (EURO 218.018,50) per year.

(The estimated administrative expenses cover expenditure on printing and forwarding counselling material, and costs for further education and training events.)

The project resources annually allocated by the bm:bwk in the framework of Objective 3 amount to ATS 8 million (EURO 581.382,67), personnel and administrative costs for the Federal Centres for the Promotion of Adult Education and for the Federal Institute for Adult Education not included.

Personnel and administrative expenses (see also Item 6.2.) for direct or indirect information and counselling services in the tertiary sector can be roughly estimated at ca. ATS 50 million (EURO 3.633.641,71) per year.

In the labour market policy sector, personnel expenses for information, guidance and counselling services can only be "guesstimated".

10.5 Statutory salaries of information, guidance and counselling service workers

In the school sector, salaries for teachers working in the area of careers guidance correspond to the general salary scheme for teachers employed by the Federal or Provincial Governments.

Additional allowances are regulated by individual provisions; the allowance for one working hour amounts to ca. ATS 185,-- (EURO 13,44). The number of working hours paid and the amount to be paid as allowance depend on the size of the school (number of classes and students provided with the services). The seniority principle does not apply for paying teachers working in careers guidance.

There are special legal provisions regulating the remuneration structure for school psychologists.

The salaries for employees of the AMS working in the area of information, guidance and counselling are regulated by a special collective agreement.

In other sectors, e.g. further education or tertiary sectors, there are regulations adapted to the respective framework, or there are no collective agreements at all.

11. Assuring quality

11.1 Steps taken by the government to maintain and increase the quality of information, guidance and counselling services

In the school sector – especially for students’ and careers counsellors – there is a national, legally defined standard. It includes a standard description of tasks, provisions on screening techniques, a standard training curriculum, and the obligation to further education and training. The head of the respective school is responsible for the execution of the tasks. The same applies to the competent school authority which also evaluates if all teachers fulfill their obligation to provide information according to §3 of the School Organisation Act.

The school psychology – careers counselling departments provide expert support.

The school psychology – careers counselling departments are also based on statutory and organisational provisions (in the framework of public administration), they have well-defined responsibilities, are supervised and provide internal further education and human resource development measures.

An important contribution to analysis, evaluation and reflection of information, guidance and counselling services is provided by relevant studies commissioned by the bm:bwk. Only recently was the study "Bildungsberatung an berufsbildenden, mittleren und höheren Schulen – Tätigkeitsprofil und Szenarien der Weiterentwicklung" [Careers counselling at secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges – job profile and scenarios for further developments] published. It provides exhaustive evaluation of the activities of careers counsellors and recommendations for further developments.

This study also laid a focus on questioning those concerned, i.e. especially the students.

A concrete contribution to the documentation of results and effects of guidance measures at school has been provided by the study "Berufsüberleitung an Polytechnischen Schulen" [Transition to working life at pre-vocational schools] which was carried out by the Federal Pedagogic Institute in Styria and the Styrian National Economy Society on behalf of the bm:bwk and surveyed the effects of the pre-vocational school reform in 1998 and after two years in 2000.

Also for AHS and HS empirical surveys on the implementation of measures for careers guidance were carried out.

In the tertiary sector, efficiency studies were carried out on the activities of the Psychological Advice Centres, but also questionings of visitors and exhibitors at the Job and Education Fairs – BeSt.

Also further education and training of staff at counselling institutions (e.g. BIFEB) is subject to constant evaluation.

In the further education and training sector, the Federal Institute for Adult Education and the Network of Careers Counsellors have been working on measures for quality assurance and enhancement.

Other forms of reflection and evaluation are conventions and conferences, e.g. the May 2001 conference "Qualifikation von Beraterinnen und Beratern in Bildung und Beruf" [Qualification of vocational and careers counsellors], which was organised by EUROGUIDANCE in cooperation with the Institute for Research on Qualification and Training of the Austrian Economy and at which – with international participants – quality assurance and developments in the area of information and counselling were discussed. In the course of the conference ethical standards of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), and the Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) were presented and discussed.

11.2 Standards for the delivery of information, guidance and counselling services

In students' counselling and at the school psychology – careers counselling departments internal standards are determined by uniform organisation and tasks descriptions, and by uniform qualifications and continuing education of the counsellors. These standards are also applied for defining further education subjects and thematical activity priorities.

In the tertiary sector, internal standards and comparative features are developed and applied.

In the further education sector, "seals of quality" are being established on the provincial level basically specifying the quality standards for the respective institutions but also including criteria for information and counselling services. Information, guidance and counselling are also elements of quality development processes which are considered in the certification according to ISO 9001 – e.g. as currently for the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Bildungshäuser [Association of Austrian Adult Education Institutes].

On a nationwide platform organised by the bm:bwk, criteria for quality development in the further education sector are developed which also include elements concerning information, guidance and counselling.

Annually, labour market policy objectives are formulated for the Public Employment Service which define aspects to be observed. On the basis of these indicators it can be stated to which degree the objectives have been reached. The federal organisation supports the provincial organisations in reaching their objectives. So, for instance, a best-practice database was drawn up to which all staff members have access. Moreover, there are feedback loops with standardised controlling; systematic specialist supervising is just being implemented.

The results of the numerous evaluation reports that are drawn up are examined and to a great extent determine further procedures. In this context, elements of career information, guidance and counselling, apart from successful job placement, play an important role.

11.3 Standards for the competencies required by information, guidance and counselling staff

In the school sector, relevant nationwide decrees by the bm:bwk regulate standards, for example, for employment requirements, qualification requirements, etc. in the areas of students' and careers counselling and of school psychology – careers counselling departments.

All students' and careers counsellors must be teachers at the respective school; teachers at BMHS are usually university graduates, most of them have practical experience in the target areas of vocational training, and therefore are qualified to provide information and counselling; in-service further training is obligatory.

At secondary academic schools (AHS), there are no standards for teachers working in the area of careers guidance.

11.4 Formal requirements

For students' counselling and for school psychology – careers counselling staff formal requirements exist (see 11.3); the only formal requirement for teachers working in careers guidance at AHS is their general teaching qualification. In-service further education provided by the Pedagogic Institutes varies among the individual provinces.

The same applies to the further education and training sector and other areas in which information, guidance and counselling are provided.

11.5 Standards for tertiary sector, etc.

Currently supra-institutional consultations to formulate and identify such standards are under way in all areas, at which different models – ISO, EFQM, etc. – serve as basis for further developments.

11.6 Details of groups etc. of information and counselling services workers

Students' and careers counsellors: they are organised in "study groups" according to school location and school type (district and provincial levels). In each province there are study groups for students' counselling at compulsory schools, AHS and BMHS. Information is exchanged with the responsible bodies at the bm:bwk at least once a year through conferences, conventions, etc.

It is also the task of the study groups on the regional level to plan the obligatory conventions and in-service further training events (in cooperation with the responsible school psychology – careers counselling departments), and thus they contribute to quality improvement of the information and counselling services provided by their members.

School psychology – careers counselling departments: networking of the school psychologists is organised on the regional level through periodical consultations, interventions, study groups and in-service further training. Networking and opinion-forming on the national level are provided through meetings of provincial referees, through study groups and relevant further education and training conventions.

In addition there are special internal Internet-based platforms for information and discussion both for students' and careers counsellors and for school psychologists (<http://www.schulpsychologie.at>; <http://www.schule.at>).

11.7 Involvement of careers counselling professionals in the development of policy

Students' and careers counsellors as well as school psychologists are involved in policy development through annual conferences with representatives of the responsible bodies in the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture at which current issues are discussed and new policies are developed.

In the sector of further education and training, the platform "Bildungsberaterinnen im Netz" (www.bib-infonet.at) provides a virtual network for information, on-line discussion and exchange of ideas. Though this network is no association of careers counsellors, it is an approach to develop synergies and a strategic basis for future challenges.

EUROGUIDANCE, for instance, is involved in numerous initiatives on an international level which also include policy-development components.

12. The evidence base

12.1 Information about the extent to which information, guidance and counselling services are used

As students' and careers counsellors work directly at schools, all students of the respective school have access to their services irrespective of social status, gender or background.

Also for the services offered by the school psychology – careers counselling departments free and unconditional access for all students and their parents is guaranteed.

Within the last few years the frequency of utilisation of these services has been continuously growing .

In the year 2000, for example, in Austria more than 100,000 persons (79,240 through in-depth counselling, more than 22,000 through brief counselling or telephone information) – ca. 15,000 out of them in the context of career decisions – were given direct support by the school psychology – careers counselling department. Additional about 400,000 students, parents and teachers per year are supported with information at important career decisions.

In the academic year 99/00, the Psychological Advice Centres supported 7,670 students and persons interested in studying in ca. 30,000 counselling contacts. About 50% of the questions were related to choosing a degree, ca. 11% to changing a degree, dropping out and graduation.

The level of utilisation of information and counselling services in the framework of the most recent BeSt – The Job and Education Fairs (bm:bwk 1999-2001) was measured by means of visitors and exhibitors questionnaires.

The results of the questionings at the fairs over three years showed that $\frac{3}{4}$ of those seeking information were school students (50%) and persons holding a "Reifeprüfung"-certificate (28%); 9% were university students, 4% parents, 2% teachers and 1% apprentices – 6% others. 59% of the questionnaires were filled in by AHS students or leavers, 30% of BHS students and leavers, and 11% attended other school types. Figures did not change significantly within the three years.

Further explanations about information behaviour and its consequences are provided for example by the empirical study "Gründe und Ursachen für die langen Studienzeiten in Österreich" [Reasons for extended lengths of studies in Austria] (Institute for Statistics at Vienna University, 1999), which includes data on the use of sign-in counselling services (29.5%), careers fairs (22.5%), information at school (90.9%) and school leavers counselling of the Austrian Student Union (11%).

Additional information is provided by the documentation of the access rate to electronic information services (longitudinal analysis www.eb-stmk.at as example included in Annex), and by regularly updated and published statistics by individual institutions (e.g. SAB – Schul- und Ausbildungsberatung Steiermark [School and Training Counselling, Styria]).

12.2 How is the level of need and demand for information, guidance and counselling services established

For the services of school psychology – careers counselling departments waiting lists are analysed. Depending on the month, clients have to wait for just some days or for several weeks. In some provinces case statistics are analysed, and sometimes client questionings are carried out.

Need and demand for information and counselling services in the framework of the Job and Education Fairs – BeSt – are determined through questionnaires. 86% of the target-groups members surveyed found or were given the information desired, only 12% could not be satisfied.

School students and holders of "Reifeprüfung"-certificates used in particular printed material (90%) and electronic information (25%), but also sought personal contact to exhibitors (69% of school students and 62% of holders of "Reifeprüfung"-certificates).

Nearly one third of the school students and 22% of holders of "Reifeprüfung"-certificates did interest tests. The results – hints on possible improvements – have always been reflected and considered at the organisation of subsequent fairs.

In the further education and training sector, development schemes have been drawn up on the provincial level (e.g. Forum Erwachsenenbildung Niederösterreich – FEN [Forum for Adult Education in Lower Austria]) which also include surveys on need and demand for information and counselling services. In most cases, a need or deficit of careers information (at least from subjective points of view) are stated. Moreover, the need for careers counselling has been determined by research projects as regards quality (Accompanying Research on Bildungsberatung Burgenland by Graz University) and by surveys on the need for further education and training as regards quantity (Fessel 98 commissioned by the bm:bwk, QGM 97 in Burgenland).

The Public Employment Service regularly conducts surveys on client satisfaction with and assessment of information and counselling services, at which relations are established between client expectations before and assessment after using information and counselling services.

12.3 Criteria to judge the benefits and outcome of information, guidance and counselling services

Students' counsellors usually receive feedback from the students on the results of decision-making processes, as at school they are in contact with each other. Some school leavers provide feedback even after a longer period of time, or the students' counsellors are informed in other ways about further career paths of the students and their satisfaction with the career decision made (especially at lower secondary schools in rural areas), but such processes are by no means formally structured.

The school psychology – careers counselling departments aim at a mutual reflection of client satisfaction with the counselling results, immediately after counselling and/or after some time. Another indicator for the benefit of information services is the concrete demand for them, e.g. number of repeat orders of information brochures, evaluation of access to relevant Internet-based services.

At pre-vocational schools, benefit and outcome of information, guidance and counselling processes but also of preparation for a vocation are evaluated by the actual rate of students starting vocational training (see also the study "Berufsüberleitung an Polytechnischen Schulen – Wege der Absolventinnen" [Transition to working life at prevocational schools – pathways of school-leavers]).

The activities of the Psychological Advice Centres for Students are continuously evaluated by means of questionings as regards outcome, benefit and contentment.

12.4 Details of a recent study

Calculations based on "Kenndaten des österreichischen Schulwesens" [Key data of the Austrian school system] have shown that even if only minimum effects of students' and careers counselling are assumed, they are responsible for a cost reduction of at least ca. ATS 200 million (EURO 14.534.566,83), the economic benefit for the nation amounts to at least ATS 140 million (EURO 10.174.196,78). This does not include immaterial effects – personality development, averting the experience of failure or psychological breakings in the development of young people. Qualitative surveys have shown that the actual effect is even higher than the figures show.

Clear quantitative and qualitative effects of career information, guidance and counselling are provided by the studies "Berufsüberleitung an PTS – Wege der Absolventinnen nach der Schule" commissioned by the bm:bwk (1998 and 2000) on a nationwide basis, and are supplemented and confirmed by relevant surveys on the provincial level (Styria, 1997 and 1999). Such surveys have provided detailed evidence for the strong effects of targeted and structured progressive measures in careers orientation and preparation for a vocation in combination with real contact to vocational and business environments as an organised development process (for details see Annex).

12.5 Details of initiatives or pilot projects covering the impact of career information on individual career choices

No data available

12.6 National research centre specialised in career information, guidance and counselling services

There is no national research centre specialised exclusively in information and counselling services; the Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft (ibw) [Institute for Research On Qualification and Training of the Austrian Economy], however, is regularly involved in career information and counselling matters and carries out relevant studies, research projects, etc.; moreover, the ÖIBF (Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung [Austrian Institute for Vocational Training Research]) is also active in this area (often in cooperation with the ibw).

Occasionally, also other institutions carry out relevant studies (e.g. National Economy Society).

12.7 How useful is the work of these research centres?

As no such national research centres exist, usefulness cannot be evaluated.

12.8 Government steps to increase the evidence base for information, guidance and counselling services through support for relevant research centres

Government support is mainly provided through commissioning relevant institutions (ibw, ÖIBF, Further Education and Training Department, Faculty of Educational Sciences at Graz University, etc.), which is also aimed to broaden the evidence base for information, guidance and counselling services as such.

For increasingly important priority areas – e.g. the interface of compulsory schooling and vocation – strategic master plans are in development which are also aimed to provide comprehensive and well-structured surveys on function and relevance of information, guidance and counselling services. But as a rule, individual studies contracted out are more common than permanent commissions. More or less the same applies to the labour market policy sector and other areas where information, guidance and counselling services are offered.