

What is a “sustainable learning venue”?

The term “learning venue” may be used to refer to the company providing training, a (vocational) school, or an inter-company training centre. Certain learning/teaching environments (such as classrooms or apprentice workshops) constitute learning venues. From the perspective of lifelong learning, every opportunity that encourages learning is a learning venue. This concept also extends to include areas such as a customer counter or desk. The ecological, economic and social aspects of sustainable learning venues make sustainability tangible. The aim is to enable learners to assume responsibility by regularly thinking and acting in the interests of sustainability.

Why become a “sustainable learning venue”?

Sustainable development is one of the greatest societal challenges of our age. Climate protection, fair working conditions and responsible neighbourliness are all examples of what may emerge in the company. These are concepts which need to be learned. Initial and continuing vocational education and training is a central link between company performance and achieving sustainability requirements. Young people choose to take an increasing responsibility for the preservation of the environment and mankind within the scope of their occupation. They take these aspects into consideration when selecting an employer or a company where they would like to complete their training. Creating sustainable learning venues would support the development of skilled workers and secure their loyalty. At the same time, employees are the most important multipliers for company activities.

Various approaches to establishing sustainable learning venues are listed below. These have been developed and successfully piloted into practice via projects undertaken within the scope of “Vocational education and training for sustainable development” (Funding Line II) and their scientific supervision (f-bb).

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Latest information on vocational education and training for sustainable development:

www.bbne.de

Sustainability in training practice:

www.foraus.de/bbne

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Sustainable learning venues in vocational education and training

Possible approaches and guidelines for implementation



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There are many ways for companies and organisations to develop into (more) sustainable learning venues.

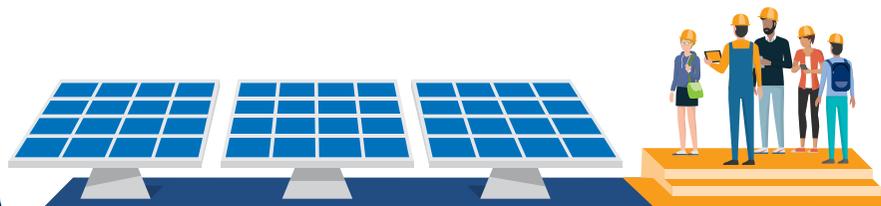
Sustainability strategies and objectives established by the company management help to create a culture enabling all employees to address this topic. Everyone in the corporation or organisation should be involved in the development of such an approach.

The sustainability of business procedures and **teaching/learning environments** (e.g. workshops) should be examined and evaluated to activate initial learning procedures. A good starting point would be to initiate innovation projects with trainees and staff.

This will achieve new sustainability-related competencies for VET staff. Qualification measures will provide trainers with content-based and didactic assistance, enabling them to teach, demonstrate or enact sustainable development within their own specific departments. Trying new and innovative **teaching/learning settings** will help to foster new competencies for all participants.

Sustainable development requires staff and students to review and analyse their own activities. This process should be supported by the corporation providing space and time for reflection and action, in areas specially designated for this purpose, all staff and **learners** in the work environment.

The participants involved in initial and continuing vocational education and training, i.e. businesses, vocational schools and inter-company training centres, should find a way to support one another by engaging in cooperative agreements and networks where they will exchange ideas on “best practices” and pursue joint implementation of the innovations they created for sustainable development.



1st level – the entire company as a learning venue

Key issue – what can sustainability mean within an individual company?

- ▶ Identify **company processes and procedures** which could be organised in a (more) sustainable way (e.g. the products which you manufacture or trade in, your CSR activities or CSR reporting)
- ▶ Encourage **company executives** and senior management on board as stimulating and driving force
- ▶ Acquire further **multipliers** for change processes such as the works council or training heads

3rd level – teaching/learning environments

Key issue – how can sustainability be taught as a topic, and how can skills having a positive impact on sustainability be promoted?

- ▶ **Train** your VET staff to act as role models who incorporate sustainability into their daily working routines (e.g. via awareness programmes or experiential approaches)
- ▶ Offer (continuing training) formats which encourage workers to **reflect and evaluate** their own sustainability actions (e.g. keynote presentations, workshops)
- ▶ Foster competencies for sustainable development specific to your sector (further information can be found in the BIBB flyer on “Sustainability in commercial occupations”)

2nd level – teaching/learning environments

Key issue – where and how can sustainability within the company be made tangible for employees and trainees?

- ▶ Analyse your **work and company procedures** with a view to pinpointing possible learning opportunities in sustainability (e.g. energy acquisition, production, supply chain management, logistics, etc.)
- ▶ Exploit **areas of potential** offered by existing teaching/learning environments (e.g. fact-finding activities by trainees which will take aspects of sustainability into account)
- ▶ Launch **initial change projects** to make your own experiences (e.g. evaluate the sustainability of your suppliers)

4th level – learners

Key issue – who actually learns within this process?

- ▶ Encourage all staff to undertake a **personal examination** of the impact their actions and activities have on sustainability (e.g. 5-minute meetings)
- ▶ Offer your employees **time and space to reflect** on sustainability and encourage discussion amongst colleagues on the topic (e.g. a special “Green Monday” or sustainability-themed lunch)
- ▶ Create **opportunities** for staff to become more involved in the changing corporate policies to make the company more sustainable (e.g. in innovation teams)

Vocational school

Inter-company training centre

