

# Benchmark data on VET in Colombia

## Status quo

Institutionalisation of the dual model of vocational training and improving the image of VET are considered to be major challenges within the Colombian vocational education and training system. This is due to the fact that training enjoys a far lesser degree of esteem in the country than a university degree.

In statutory terms, training is governed by Ley 789 DE 2002. Training programmes take place at vocational schools and at SENA's inter-company centres. They include a (voluntary) company-based practical placement or involvement in a company project. Duration of training is six, 12 or 24 months.

Three qualifications levels exist for training qualifications:

- operario/auxiliar (6 months/800 hours)
- técnico (12-15 months/1600-2000 hours)
- tecnológico (24 months/3200 hours)

Each company with more than 15 employees is obligated to employ trainees. In addition, all companies are required to pay 2% of wage costs to SENA as a social levy. This is a prerequisite in order to enable a company to set its salary costs off against corporation tax.

The training contract also stipulates that trainees receive a monthly training allowance from the company. As long as the unemployment rate in Colombia remains at over 10%, this allowance comprises 75% of the minimum wage during the period of practice spent at the company and 50% of the minimum wage during theoretical teaching at vocational school. As soon as the unemployment rate falls below 10%, companies are required to pay the full minimum wage as a training allowance. In 2015, Colombia's unemployment rate was 8.2%, the lowest level for 15 years. Unemployment in 2016 was 9.8% (2016 Statistics).

## Characteristics of dual Colombian VET

Dual vocational education and training in Colombia is currently exclusively confined to five pilot projects. It takes place in the automobile sector, the food industry, the textile industry, the aircraft branch and in poultry farming.

Dual VET is a component of SENA's training provisions, for which a separate concept has been developed. The following aspects are regulated.

**Vocational education and training personnel:** Skilled workers at the company are trained at SENA in order to enable them to act as trainers. This training comprises 80 hours, 60 of which consist of classroom teaching. The other 20 hours of training take place outside SENA. Participation and training depend on certain prerequisites.

Available on the website of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) - BIBB imprint: <https://www.bibb.de/de/impressum.php>

**Cooperation between learning venues:** Two learning venues are stipulated in the form of the SENA training centres and the companies. The aim is that these should impart theoretical and practical contents respectively. The company-based training personnel and the training staff at SENA work together to steer the training process. This encompasses the planning and implementation of the training and the examination. Companies provide SENA with evaluation sheets, performance curves and appraisals for monitoring purposes.

**Examination:** The trainee examination takes place at SENA.

**Contracts:** The company concludes a training contract with the trainee. In addition, SENA and the company conclude a contract, in which the company commit to the fulfilment of certain conditions.

- The maximum number of trainees in dual training may not exceed 25 to 30 per company.
- Companies are required to conduct a self-analysis in respect of the competences of existing personnel and expectations of future staff competences.
- Companies are further required to make a learning venue available, including materials and equipment.
- Training for the training staff must be facilitated.
- A joint agreement needs to be reached with SENA on training and company requirements.
- An agreement regarding the duration of training spent at the company by the trainee/trainees needs to be in place. This component must be at least 50%.
- Even at the end of training, companies are not permitted to deploy trainees in productive work for 100% of the time.

## Traditional and dual vocational education and training in Colombia in comparative terms

Dual training (in the pilot projects)	Traditional training
Two learning venues – SENA (acting as a vocational school and inter-company training centre at the same time) and the company	Learning venue – SENA
Duration of training: 6, 12/15 months	Duration of training: 6, 12/15 months; 24 months

Training contract (relevant adaptation of the annex in law still needs to take place)	With or without training contract
Companies may offer dual training programmes on a voluntary basis, i.e. within the scope of pilot projects	Mandatory requirement to provide training for companies with more than 15 employees
	Voluntary basis – company-based practical placement or involvement in a company project
Training allowance of minimum wage	Training allowance of 75% of the minimum wage for the period spent at the company, 50% of the minimum wage for the time at school
Rotation plan for the implementation of cooperation between learning venues	
80 hours of training for trainers in accordance with the SENA concept is mandatory and a prerequisite for providing training	

## Further development of dual VET in Colombia

The aim is for dual training to become regular training and to form a fixed component of the Colombian educational system. The **2015-2018 SENA Strategic Plan** stipulates that the model of dual Colombian VET should be further developed, institutionalised, and firmly established at a national level by 2018. The intention is also for dual training to be integrated into SENA's overall training provision. The extension of the cooperation between BIBB and SENA ensures that BIBB will provide advice and support in this process.

Consultancy services will incorporate the following topics:

- Development of an ordinance, in which SENA's dual training concept is integrated into existing educational provision as a separate programme (Programa especial)
- Expansion of dual training to include the tecnológico qualification level (24-month training)
- Expanded and more detailed VET research
- Structuring of the legal Framework