

## Evaluation of the waff Careers and Further Education Advisory Centre (BZBW) 2018 in the context of adult vocational education in Vienna: summary

The waff (Vienna Employment Promotion Fund) Careers and Further Education Advisory Centre (BZBW) brings together the pre-emptive labour market policy offerings (information, advice, promotion and programmes) of the waff. Its objective is to contribute to improving the opportunities in the labour market for Viennese employees through upskilling and professional development. On behalf of the waff, prospect Unternehmensberatung has analysed the developments at the BZBW and its services for the years from 2008 to 2017.

Vienna is the only federal state, which has set up an institution (waff) that offers free advisory services alongside its role allocating financial support. The waff has a central position as provider, funding institution and cooperation partner with all of the major relevant authorities in the complex adult education landscape in Vienna. The applied one-stop-shop principle of the BZBW is considered internationally to be good practice.

The services of the BZBW are aimed at various different target groups. Some of what it offers is available to all residents of Vienna, irrespective of their employment status, but the emphasis is on supporting employed persons. Special support is offered to people with no more than the mandatory school leaving qualification, women, those re-joining the labour force, and migrants.

It is not possible with the data available at present to provide an accurate and realistic estimate of the potential customer base of the BZBW. In this respect it is only possible to give an approximation based on the Adult Education Survey, which is well below 325,000 Viennese.

During the evaluated period of time, the BZBW has continuously developed its offering and adapted itself to the changing environmental factors. Between 2008 and 2017 there was a significant rise in the number of customers and level of funding. The BZBW managed well to reach its target groups.

During the period under review, the waff undertook important steps to enhance its performance monitoring processes by means of goals that are set and evaluated annually. The structural and process organisation of the BZBW is aligned to the customer process.

There is extensive scientific evidence of the positive effects of funding for and advice regarding professional development and training. The customer survey carried out as part of this evaluation showed that the main concerns of BZBW customers from 2017 were financial support for specific training courses, further development in their existing occupational area, switching to a new occupational area and improving their chances and position in the labour market. More than half of those surveyed indicated that they had already achieved one goal, which in the opinion of the majority, would not have been possible without the support of the waff. A high level of satisfaction with the services of the BZBW was reported. Advisory service customers felt strengthened and motivated and overall in a better position professionally. Long-term effects were evident with regard to the improvement in specific professional skills, promotion and career prospects, a higher level of job satisfaction and security, and an improved work-life balance. The use of programmes and/or combined services (advisory and financial services) proved to be especially effective.

In future, adult education in Vienna will be faced with changes resulting from many different factors. In order to meet the challenges it will be important to engage with the structural changes to the labour market in Vienna, especially the growth of the service sector, the shift in qualification structures, and the developments in connection with digitalisation. The importance of vocational training and education will continue to grow, especially for people with low qualifications.