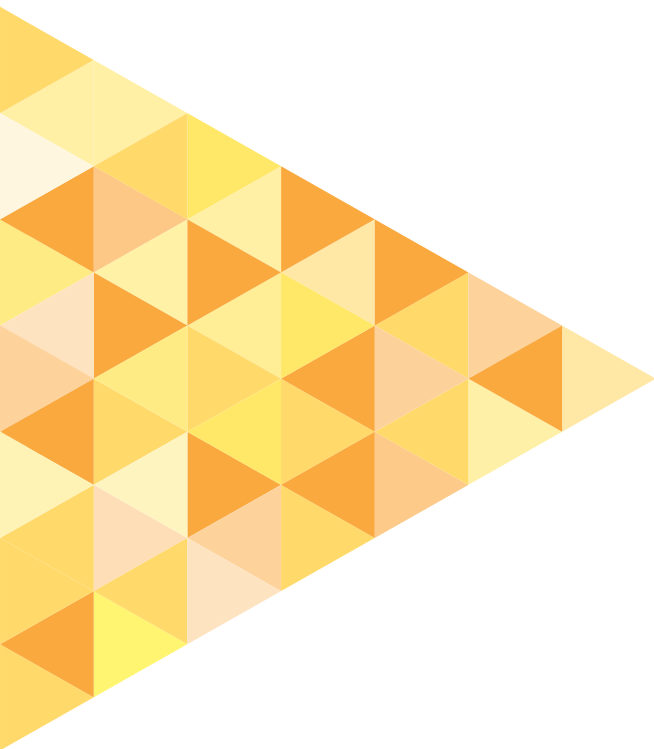


Timo Schnepf

Occupations and Skills Radar

Background Information on Development and Objectives



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Occupations and Skills Radar : Background Information on Development and Objectives

Timo Schnepf*

Abstract:

This report contains background information on the development and objectives of the Occupations and Skills Radar. Five application examples demonstrate the added value of the new data portal for the target group of experts, politicians, researchers, and interested members of the public. The report then shows how the data portal works. It explains how different data is integrated, how the best data for the queries is automatically selected and displayed, and how intuitive user flow and experience are ensured. The report concludes with a market overview and the unique selling points of the portal in a national and international comparison.

* Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)

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Project Webpage:

<https://www.bibb.de/de/170512.php>.

Introduction Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRsyxRAblRs>

Why is the Occupations and Skills Radar (BKR) being developed?

Occupations are dynamic bundles of tasks and change over time. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic had a lasting impact on the way we work. Advances in artificial intelligence offer new opportunities and challenges. The socio-ecological transformation is already changing many occupations and industries. These transformation processes require decisions under uncertainty from those responsible in business and politics, as well as from (future) workers: Which skills and occupations are gaining in importance, and where do occupations overlap in their competencies? What does the current and future labor supply and demand for occupations look like? How are wages and working conditions evolving over time?

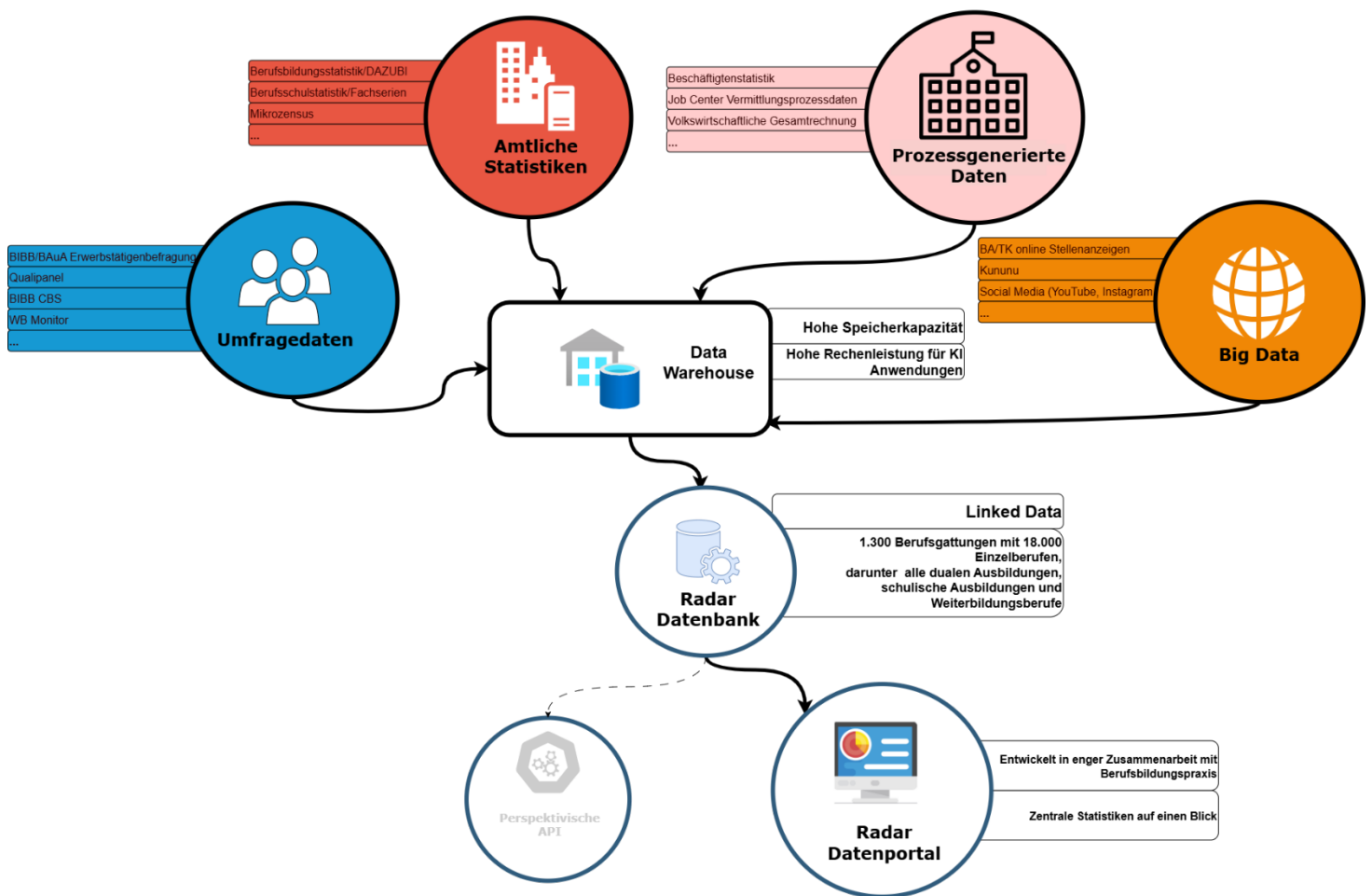
Answers to these and other questions are not yet available without extensive research and data work. Either the data is presented in a table, scattered across scientific publications, or it has not been curated and critically reviewed from research. This means that decision-makers from the professional community and politics currently lack an accessible orientation and decision-making tool for the labor and vocational training market. The Occupations and Skills Radar (BKR) aims to contribute to a fact-based discourse in this area. In addition, the BKR aims to be an understandable information portal for the general public and to contribute to the data and statistics literacy of the population in Germany. The Occupations and Skills Radar has the following objectives:

- 1) To compile scientifically established indicators at the (vocational) occupational level,*
- 2) To harmonize the data, where possible, to a common population, and*
- 3) To make frequently requested statistics easily accessible to the public in a curated online data portal.*

Figure 1 shows the various subcomponents of the project. Data from surveys, official statistics, process-generated data, and online data (“big data”) are combined using the Federal Employment Agency's standard occupational classification system, “Klassifikation der Berufe 2010” ([KldB 2010](#)). In the section below on “Linking different data types,” you will find further information on the data sources used and their indicators. The core of the BKR is a modern data warehouse system that follows the FAIR principles and allows local processing of large amounts of data. Based on a comprehensive and ongoing target group analysis, the BKR ensures that it offers added value for experts, politicians, companies, and the interested public. To this end, key and frequently requested statistics are

continuously prepared in a way that is understandable to the public and made freely available on an information portal.

Figure 1: Data flowchart



Five use cases

Use case 1: Association for Sanitary Professionals identifies new, green skills

The Professional Association for Sanitary, Heating, and Air Conditioning wants to evaluate current figures on changes in the profession of sanitary mechanics to respond to changing industry requirements. For example, with training and further education campaigns. To do this, the association uses the BKR's search function to quickly find the profession of interest. After selecting the occupational category "Specialist for Sanitary, Heating, and Air Conditioning Technology," the association can obtain a quick and constantly growing overview of the changes in competency requirements under the "Competency" tab. Figure 2 ("Kompetenzprofil") shows an example of the changes in competencies in the profession over time. It is immediately apparent that physical strength has declined and skills such as knowledge management (e.g., researching information) and working with computers have increased. In addition to these changes, the association sees in the next indicator that plant mechanics are increasingly important players in the ecological transformation. Figure 3 shows with the indicator "Ökologische Transformation" ("Ecological transformation") that every third online job advertisement mentions technologies such as solar systems or renewable energy. This gives the association a further direct statistical impression of the changes.

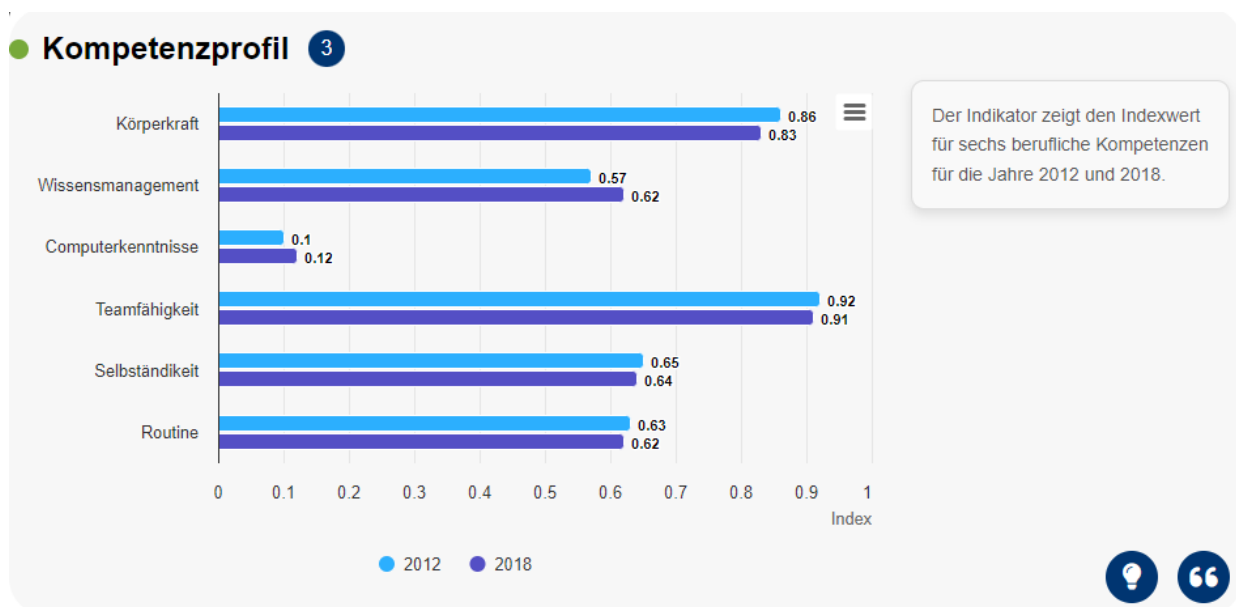


Figure 2: Competency profile for plant mechanics

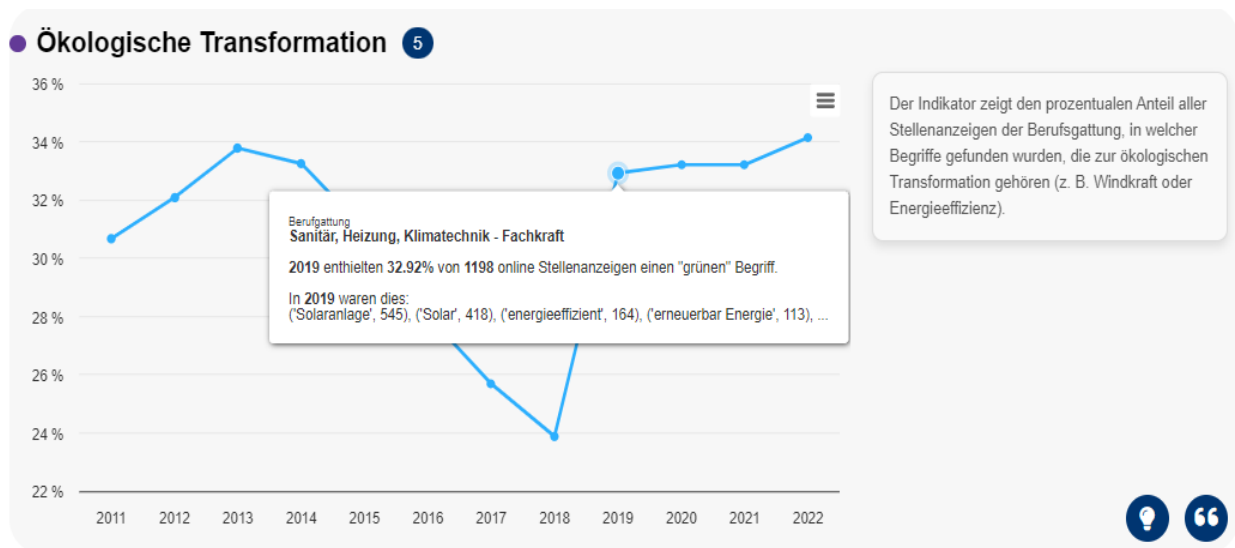


Figure 3: Ecological transformation Plant mechanics

Use case 2: Chip manufacturer seeks information about skilled labor supply

A chip manufacturer is looking for workers in microtechnology and wants to gather information about the skilled labor supply. Initially, the company can review the development of apprenticeship numbers (Figure 4 “Anzahl Auszubildende”) as well as employment figures (indicator not shown). If the chip manufacturer is interested in more detailed analyses of apprenticeship statistics, these can be directly accessed through the indicator's info box. Furthermore, the chip manufacturer can use the BKR to access online job advertisement analyses. The indicator in Figure 5 „Alternativberuf“ (“Alternative Occupation”) shows which specific occupations are most frequently listed in job ads for the occupational type by KldB 2010. This allows the company to see that other employers, in addition to microtechnology and semiconductor engineering, have also listed machine and plant operators as well as chemical-technical assistants as alternative occupations. This can help the chip manufacturer identify workers with similar competency profiles in the event of labor shortage.

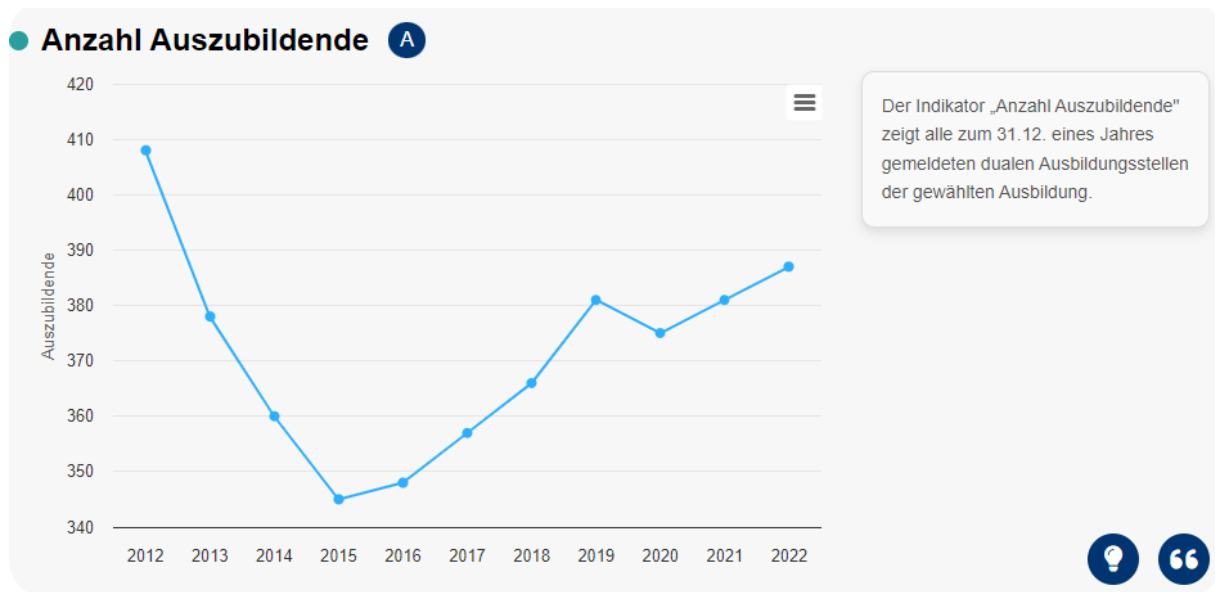


Figure 4: Number of apprentices in microtechnology

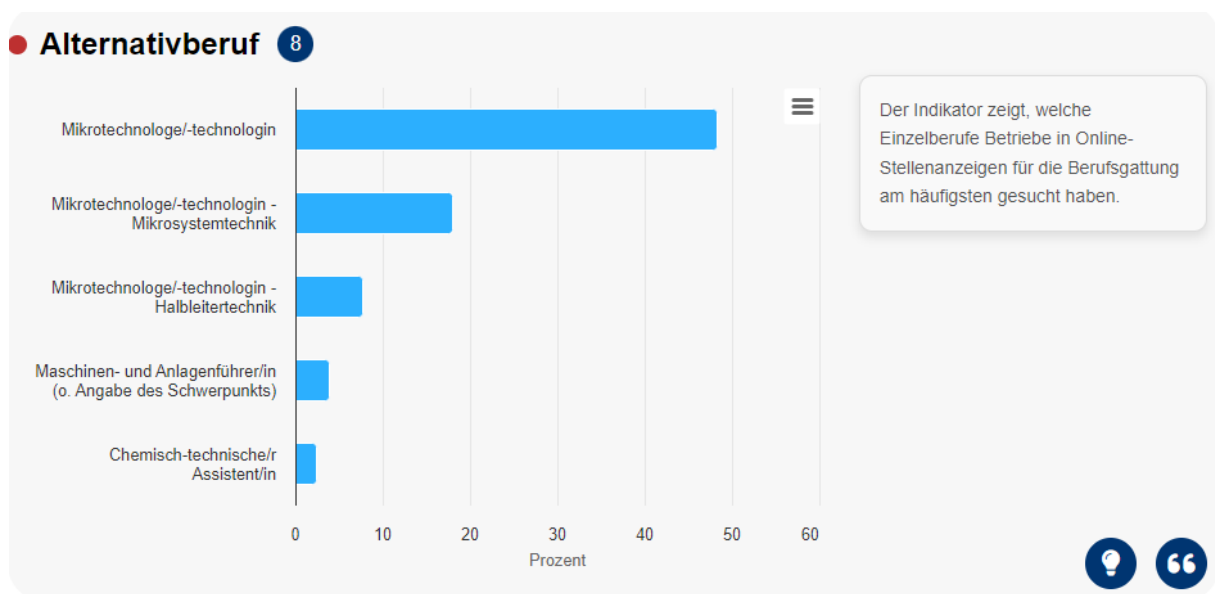


Figure 5: Alternative Occupation in Microsystems Technology – Skilled Worker

Use case 3: German government plans new funding program

As part of the ecological transformation, the German government plans a funding package for small and medium-sized enterprises in the trades sector. Policymakers can use the BKR, for example, to get a quantitative sense of how many businesses are currently involved with ecological technologies, services, and processes. Evaluations for the occupation category 'Sanitary, Heating, and Air

Conditioning Technician – Skilled Worker' show in Figure 3 (above) that the proportion of job advertisements related to the ecological transformation is high (around 30 percent of all job ads in this occupation category), but it steadily declined after 2014. A turnaround was observed in 2019 and a closer examination of the charts tooltip reveals that this was triggered by the term 'energy efficiency.' A brief search shows that on January 1, 2019, the investment program "[Energy Efficiency and Process Heat from Renewable Energies in Industry – Grants and Loans](#)" from the BMWK came into effect, with a maximum funding amount of €10 million per (small and medium-sized) company. The fact that the term 'energy efficiency' appeared in job advertisements at the same time as the funding program is likely not a coincidence. This example demonstrates how the BKR can be used to monitor the impact of political measures on the economy.

Use case 4: Care Association obtains information about developments in wage and working conditions structure

Decision-makers in the field of elderly care want to monitor the development of working conditions and wage structures. These are important factors for the occupational attractiveness and are therefore closely related to skilled labor development. Previously, professional associations needed specialized knowledge about valid sources. Additionally, research had to be conducted for each indicator to determine if the information was available at all. The BKR now provides a clear and scientifically valid insight into occupations. Based on Figure 6 and Figure 7, it is evident that wages for elderly care professionals have significantly increased and have come much closer to the average gross earnings across all occupations. At the same time, it is apparent that working conditions have not changed significantly between 2012 and 2018 and continue to show high values for physical strain, work intensity (e.g., working under time pressure), and irregular working hours. The BKR data is continuously and promptly updated, so that by 2025, with the release of the BIBB/BAuA Employee Survey 2024, current figures will also be available here.

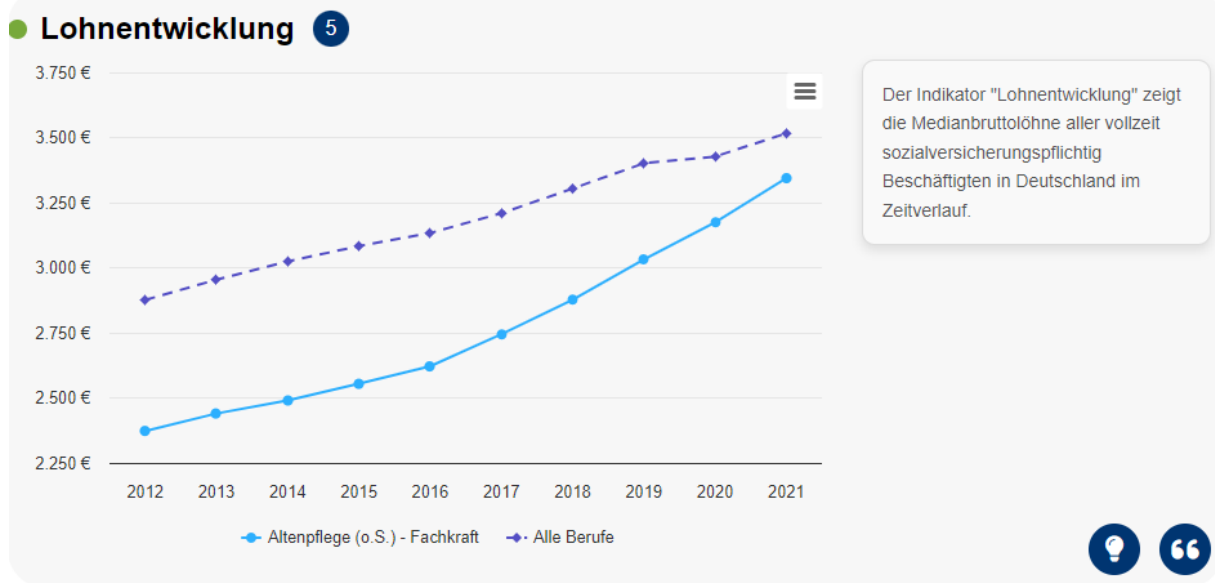


Figure 6: Wage trends in elderly care

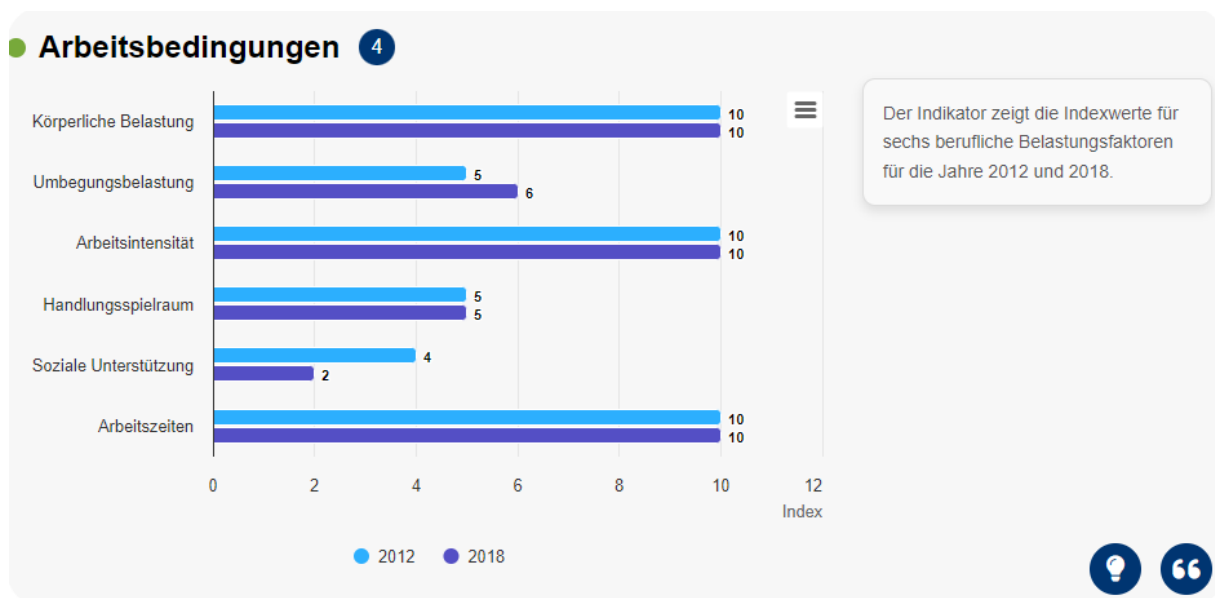


Figure 7: Working conditions in elderly care

Use case 5: The press and interested members of the public obtain information about current topics

In the wake of [subsidy cuts](#), 2024 farmers went on strike in Germany. During this period, there was public interest for this occupational group. The BKR provides a reliable overview for the press and interested members of the public. Figure 8 shows that in 2020 there were around 400,000 people

employed in agriculture nationwide (blue line) and around 464,000 people with a vocational qualification in this occupational group (green line). Other indicators show at a glance (not depicted here) that wages in 2021 were below average, but that farmers scored very high in terms of professional autonomy, i.e., working independently. The BKR helps to quickly find information about occupations.

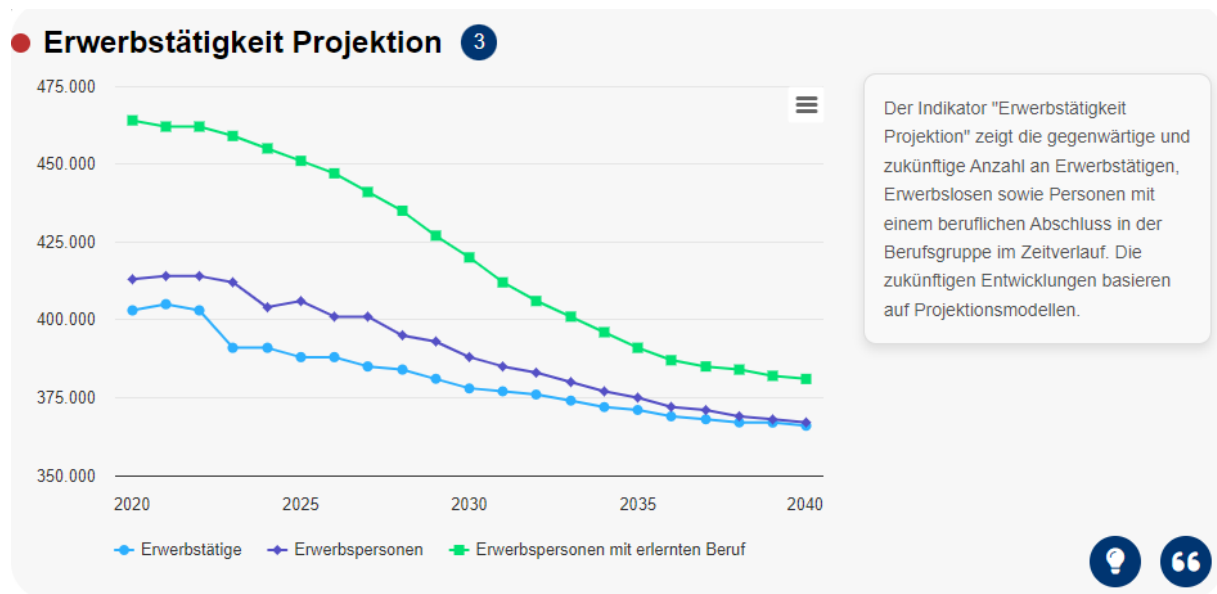


Figure 8: Employment - Agriculture

How does the Occupations and Skills Radar work?

Data linkage

The central linking unit/key is the occupational type of the KldB 2010 (so-called '5-digit'). This aggregation level provides a good compromise between data detail and linkage to further data sources. Starting in 2026, occupational categories will be gradually unlocked, with a theoretical maximum number of 1,300, which will include 18,000 individual occupations. These cover occupations at all qualification levels: from helper occupations, school-based/dual vocational training occupations, to technicians/master craftsmen and academic professions. The occupational categories are linked to about 320 dual vocational training occupations, which are further separated by specialization. School-based training occupations are also part of the dataset to represent the full breadth of German vocational education. In the future, continuing education and further training occupations will also be included.

As shown in Figure 1, the BKR links data from a wide variety of sources. On the one hand, the BKR draws on survey data, such as the [BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey](#), in which around 20,000 employees are comprehensively surveyed about their professional situation every six years. Online data, or “big data,” is mostly text corpora such as the BIBB job advertisement corpus with around 90 million job advertisements collected since 2011. The advantage of this source of information compared to surveys, is that it is theoretically available on a daily basis and, due to the volume of data, is also meaningful for smaller occupations. In 2026, comprehensive indicators on the skills requirements of companies are to be added from this source. Official statistics include, for example, the [vocational training statistics](#). This is a complete survey of all persons completing dual vocational training in Germany. Finally, the BKR combines process-generated data. Examples include statistics on unfilled training places or unplaced applicants from the Federal Employment Agency. This data is collected during the Federal Employment Agency's placement process and made available to the BIBB at the training occupation level as part of the [survey “Newly concluded apprenticeship contracts as of 30.09”](#).

A detailed overview of the BKR's data sources and indicators can be found in *the table in the appendix*.

Automated queries

The Occupations and Skills Radar has been designed so that automatically curated data for the selected occupation is provided (see also the Appendix on *Data Structure of Occupational Profiles*¹). It solves three common challenges when working with data related to (T)VET and the labor market:

1) *Linking Dual/School Vocational Training to Employment*

The BKR database works with an internal link between both dual and school-based vocational training occupations and employment occupations based on the KldB 2010. Some vocational training occupations are ambiguous and relate to multiple occupational types, for instance due to their specialization (“Fachrichtung”). This is the case, for example, with the dual vocational training occupation 'IT Specialist.' In this case, multiple occupational types are assigned to a single training occupation, depending on the specialization of the training. For instance, the IT Specialists specialization 'Data and Process Analysis' corresponds to the occupational type 'Business Informatics – Skilled Worker' (KldB 2010: 43112), while the specialization 'System Integration' is assigned to the type 'Informatics (general) – Skilled Worker' (KldB 2010: 43102). Here, the BKR separates the training by specialization and assigns it to the related occupational type. This is also the case when temporal gaps cause vocational training occupations to be ambiguous (e.g., due to restructuring procedures/changes in responsibilities).

Conversely, it may happen that multiple training occupations belong to a single occupational category. For example, the dual vocational training occupations 'Farmer' and 'Agricultural Service Specialist' belong to the same occupational type 'Agriculture (general) – Skilled Worker' (KldB 2010: 11102). A user-friendly solution is provided by implementing a dropdown menu that allows users to specifically select the desired training occupation within the respective occupational type.

2) *Automatic higher aggregation in case of data gaps*

Survey data in particular often does not provide sufficient information for smaller occupations, i.e., there are not enough respondents to obtain statistically significant information about the occupation. The BKR offers an automated solution for this. For example, there are not enough respondents for the occupational type “specialist in sanitary, heating, and air conditioning technology” to derive meaningful information about the development of working conditions. Therefore, the indicators only show up, if there are at

¹ Entity relation diagram of the database structure available upon request.

least 50 respondents. If there are fewer respondents, the portal automatically falls back on the next higher occupational aggregate, in this case the occupational group (3-digit) “Plumbing, heating, air conditioning.” If there are still not enough respondents, the next higher occupational aggregate is used, i.e., the occupational main group (KldB 2-digit) “Building and supply engineering occupations”, and so on. In the data portal, a blue icon next to the indicator title shows the level of detail of the data. This ensures data quality while providing a user-friendly experience.

3) *Automatic selection of the optimal data source*

The data sources may vary depending on the selected occupation. For example, if the user selects an occupational category where training is primarily school-based rather than dual, the statistics displayed for the number of apprentices will not be based on the vocational education statistics/DAZUBI but on the data sheets from the statistical report of the Federal Statistical Office („Berufliche Schulen und Schulen des Gesundheitswesens – Berufsbezeichnungen“, Tabelle 21121-14). Conversely, if the user selects an occupational category related to the new vocational occupation of 'Nurse,' the database will refer to the Nursing Education Financing Regulation Statistics (see both [here](#)). This selection occurs in the background and ensures a curated selection of statistics. Users can always see which data source was used through references provided with the data and indicators, as well as the citation note. This ensures transparency and prevents any confusion among users.

Intuitive and easily understandable user experience

The user experience (UX) and user interface (UI) were developed in line with the premise that “the bait must appeal to the fish, not the angler.” Many existing information portals are designed for a small group of experts, but offer only limited benefits for a broader target group. This is often due to the presentation style (tables instead of graphics) or overloaded dashboards. In the user survey, this was often summed up with the question “*How do I read this?*”. The challenge was to reduce complex data so that it could be useful in a simple form and flexible in its application. To this end, the BKR uses various approaches:

- 1) A short info text explains what is being shown as concisely as possible. The tooltip (box that appears when you move the mouse over the graphic) provides additional information. Further information on the data sources and the indicator can be accessed via an icon at the bottom

right. In addition to the information, there are links to more in-depth analysis options (further offerings from BIBB and external providers) and more comprehensive documentation.

- 2) All statistics include reference groups. These can take two forms. Either the statistics are presented as time series, which allows for a comparison of the figures over the years, or/and they are related to the overall average. For example, the measured value of 6.36 for the societal prestige of “nurses” in a survey has little interpretive value if there is no information on how high the average prestige is for all occupations at the skilled worker level (5.53)
- 3) Where possible, the number of cases is given. Particularly with information such as wages and training allowances, it makes a difference whether the average values are based on 100 or 100,000 respondents. This is not possible for all statistics. For example, working conditions are currently based on multi-level estimation models, which only allow cases to be named indirectly.
- 4) The axes are only decoupled from the zero point where it is content-wise unproblematic. For example, we decided not to start the Y-axis for apprenticeship numbers at zero, as this would obscure almost all trends. However, for other indicators, we have fixed the Y-axis to the minimum and maximum values. This way, we avoid giving the impression, for instance, with wage data, that the wages for the selected occupation and the average are always perceived as maximum, even though this would simply be due to the automatic assignment of the extreme values of the axes.
- 5) Particularly “creative” data visualizations are deliberately avoided. Most descriptive relationships can be easily represented using line and bar charts. Maps are planned as a third form of visualization for spatial distributions. This makes the information accessible even to people with lower “[data literacy](#)” skills.

The design and the header intends to convey that there are always people behind the statistics. For this, fictional portraits of workers of all ages, genders, and backgrounds were created using charcoal and pastels. The images were then photographed and digitally isolated. The backgrounds (“scribbles”) were created using a mix of watercolor and acrylic painting (lines and color splashes) and digital techniques.



Figure 9: Painting the images for the headers

Unique selling points compared to other information portals

The following section draws on a market analysis to explain why the BKR has the following unique selling points.

- 1) The BKR uses only scientifically reliable and, as far as possible, “high-resolution” data at the occupational level. The FAIR criteria are taken into account.
- 2) The BKR integrates classifications at both the employment occupation and dual/school-based vocational training occupation levels (“Linked Data”)
- 3) The BKR data is interoperable across a wide range of applications.
- 4) The BKR focuses on user-friendliness and comprehensibility.

5) The BKR data is well documented and freely accessible.

There are currently various information portals on career and skills development. These differ from the BKR in several ways. Firstly, in terms of the *data type*. The best known information portal about occupations is [BerufeNet](#) (Federal Employment Agency). The biggest similarity to the BKR is that it provides a comprehensive database at the individual occupation level. The biggest difference is that BerufeNet provides qualitative information in text form, curated by subject matter experts. The information is therefore not “measurable” (i.e., quantitative). This portal is therefore less suitable for fact-based orientation and decision-making assistance.

Many portals are characterized by the fact that they provide a general overview of *specific topics*. Although this gives users quantitative insight into the labor market and career developments, this information is not usually available at the “high-resolution” level of occupations and is therefore unusable for professional associations or other decision-makers.

Data is often available in article form (e.g., (former) Arbeitswelt-Portal (BMAS), [Data Stories](#) (Federal Statistical Office)) or in dashboards (e.g., [Dashboard Deutschland](#) (ibid.), [Pendleratlas](#) (State Statistical Offices) or [Einkommensverteilung](#) (IW Cologne)). In contrast, the BKR offers data at the lowest possible level that meets scientific and data protection requirements. It thus also provides an overview of how good the current data situation is on specific occupation, vocational training, and competence-related topics.

Secondly, the BKR differs from other portals in that it *combines data* (“linked data”). Many portals do show various indicators (for example, on the [degree of digitization](#) (IAB) or [job advertisement analyses](#) (Bertelsmann Stiftung)), often at a high level of detail. However, the data is not available in a consolidated form. A good example of this are [various dashboards](#) from the Federal Employment Agency. This means that it is not easy to gain a quick overview of occupations and training. If one wants to further work with the statistics, one currently has to manually collect data and hope that the different sources use the same occupational classification. A limitation of the manual approach is that the KldB 2010 occupational classification is not directly compatible with training occupations. This means that, until now, information on employment could not easily be linked with information on the corresponding training occupations. The BKR performs this linking work.

The third unique feature of the BKR is its *connection to common classification systems* (interoperability). The portals [Skills Intelligence](#) from CEDEFOP, [Skills Map](#) from Nesta, and [Choice Lab](#) offer a number of indicators that are combined at the occupational level. However, the data is not (easily) interoperable, as it is not based on KldB 2010 or other classifications (e.g., ISCO).

Fourthly, the BKR was created in close cooperation with its future users (“Inside Community”). The development was preceded by a comprehensive user research report. The aim is to simplify access to information and everyday life for people interested in data, and to present statistics in a way that is as understandable and comprehensible as possible. Finally, the BKR differs from commercial offerings in that the publicly funded data is freely accessible. Many FAIR criteria are not taken into account on [Statista](#). In addition to a lack of interoperability and transparency, data sources are hidden behind a paywall. The same applies to Lightcast's [job ad analysis dashboard](#).

Appendix

List of indicators

	Integrated into portal
	Indicators prepared in database
	in progress/planned

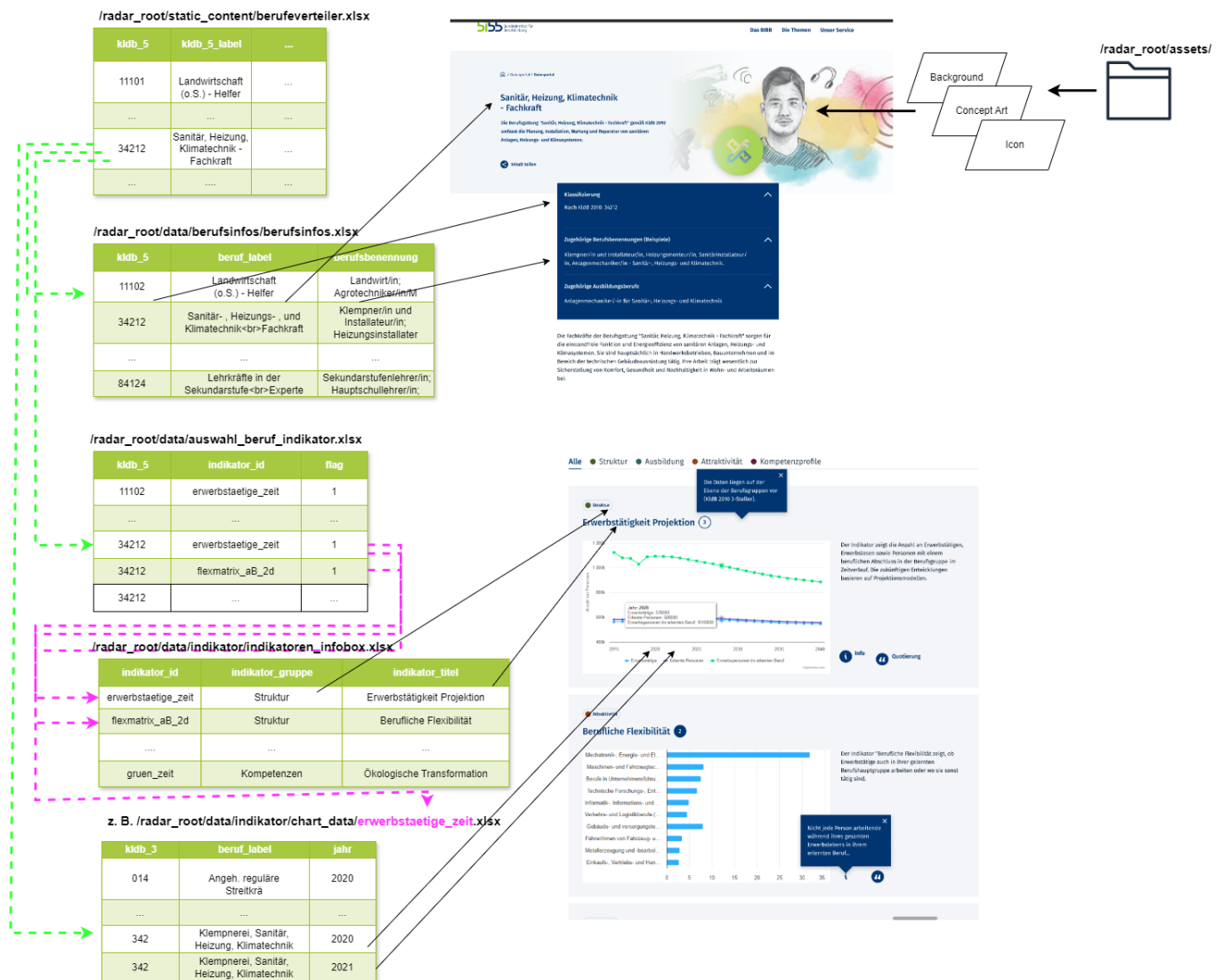
RADAR-Indicator list	Datensätze
Incomes	BA-Statistik
Most important work tool (Günturk-Kuhl et al. 2019)	ETB 18
Professional prestige scale (BAS, Ebner/Rohrbach-Schmidt 2022)	ETB 18/BiD
Working hours	
Working hours	MZ
Full-time/part-time	MZ
Marginal employment	MZ
Employment status	
Gender	MZ
Age groups	MZ
Migration background	MZ
Self-employment	MZ
Fixed-term	MZ
Company characteristics	
Company size	MZ
People in management positions	MZ
QuBe competency classifications (Krebs/Maier 2021)	
Physical strength	ETB 12/18
Dexterity	ETB 12/18
Reading/writing skills	ETB 12/18
Mathematical skills	ETB 12/18
Gathering/evaluating complex information/facts	ETB 12/18
Creativity/problem solving	ETB 12/18
Services/assistance	ETB 12/18
Teaching	ETB 12/18
Sales/Influencing	ETB 12/18
Machines (excluding information and communication technology)	ETB 12/18
Information/communication technology	ETB 12/18
Teamwork	ETB 12/18
Management/coordination	ETB 12/18
Legal	ETB 12/18
Independence	ETB 12/18
Routine	ETB 12/18

Work requirements (Seegers/Ehmann)	
Problem-solving skills	ETB 12/18
Autonomy	ETB 12/18
Work intensity	ETB 12/18
Activity dimensions (Kirchner et al. 2020)	
Production work	ETB 12/18
Knowledge work	ETB 12/18
Service work	ETB 12/18
Non-routine/routine tasks (Seegers/Ehmann 2021)	
Routine components	ETB 12/18
Routine components (cognitive)	ETB 12/18
Routine components (manual)	ETB 12/18
Non-routine components	ETB 12/18
Non-routine components (analytical)	ETB 12/18
Non-routine tasks (interactive)	ETB 12/18
Non-routine tasks (manual)	ETB 12/18
Satisfaction with ...	
Income	ETB 12/18
Career advancement opportunities	ETB 12/18
Working hours	ETB 12/18
Work environment	ETB 12/18
Direct supervisor	ETB 12/18
Type/content of work	ETB 12/18
Skills to be applied	ETB 12/18
Further training/learning	ETB 12/18
Professional position	ETB 12/18
Physical working conditions	ETB 12/18
Overall	ETB 12/18
Job exposure matrix (JEM, Meyer/Siefer 2021)	
Physical stress	ETB 12/18
Environmental stress	ETB 12/18
Work intensity	ETB 12/18
Scope for action	ETB 12/18
Social support	ETB 12/18
Working hours	ETB 12/18
Apprenticeship	
Apprenticeship Remuneration	DAZUBI
Number of Dual Apprentices	DAZUBI
Number of School-based Apprentices	Schulstatistik
Number of Nursing Apprentices	Pflegestatistik
Unplaced Applicants	NAA 30.09.
Unfilled Apprenticeship Positions	NAA 30.09.
Supply-Demand Ratio	NAA 30.09.
Job advertisement analyses	
Ecological transformation (technology/services/processes)	SteA

Alternative occupations	SteA
Digital technologies	SteA
Work equipment	SteA
Employers' demand for skills	SteA
Number of job advertisements	SteA
Job profiles	
Manufacturing, production of goods and commodities	ETB 12/18
Measuring, testing, quality control	ETB 12/18
Monitoring and controlling machines, systems, and technical processes	ETB 12/18
Repairing, maintenance	ETB 12/18
Purchasing, procurement, sales	ETB 12/18
Transporting, storing, shipping	ETB 12/18
Advertising, marketing, public relations, PR	ETB 12/18
Organizing, planning, and preparing work processes	ETB 12/18
Developing, researching, designing	ETB 12/18
Training, teaching, instructing, educating	ETB 12/18
Gathering information, researching, documenting	ETB 12/18
Advising and informing	ETB 12/18
Entertaining, accommodating, preparing meals	ETB 12/18
Caring for, looking after, healing	ETB 12/18
Securing, protecting, guarding, monitoring, directing traffic	ETB 12/18
Working with computers	ETB 12/18
Using the Internet or processing emails	ETB 12/18
Cleaning, waste disposal, recycling	ETB 12/18
Career transitions/pathways	
Transitions from School to Vocational Training	QuBe
From Two-Year to Three-Year Apprenticeships	QuBe
From Vocational Training to Employment or Higher Education (Further Education/University)	QuBe
Occupational Flexibility Matrix (2-Digit)	QuBe
Occupational Flexibility Matrix (3-Digit)	QuBe
Supply-Demand Ratio of Vocational Training	
Successful Completion of Apprenticeships	DAZUBI
Apprenticeship Contract Signings	DAZUBI
Retention Rates	DAZUBI
Contract Termination Rate	DAZUBI
Unemployment Rates (by Target Occupation)	BA-Statistik
Supply-Demand Ratio of the Workforce	
Number of Employed Persons	MZ/QuBe
Mismatch	MZ/QuBe
Skilled Labor Development	MZ/QuBe
Shortage Indicators	MZ/QuBe
Job Vacancies	IAB-SE
Data on Higher Vocational Education	
Advanced Vocational Training	FB-Statistik
Continuing education	

Continuing education/opportunities in occupations	AES/CVTS
Continuing education opportunities	WB-Monitor
Economic data (time series data)	
IFO Business Climate Index, Consumer Price Index, electricity feed-in, etc.	GWS

Data structure of occupational profiles



An entity-relationship diagram detailing the structure of the database is available upon request.