



**WIFI Austria**

Economic Promotion & Development Institute  
of the Austrian Federal Economic Chambers

**WIFI.** Wissen Ist Für Immer.

# 2024 Annual Report



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## Further education: now more than ever



Without entrepreneurs, there is no continuing education. This simple yet compelling insight was once again confirmed in 2024 by the WIFI Further Education Barometer. On average, the most recent training programmes were 54 percent funded by employers – and in most cases, it was the companies themselves that took the initiative. Over the past year, businesses have shown a growing willingness to invest in the qualifications of their employees in order to foster innovation and adaptability – a highly encouraging trend.

Nevertheless, we must not become complacent. Further education remains the driving force behind innovation and growth, enabling our Austrian companies to successfully shape our shared future. There is still potential for progress however: while around seven in ten surveyed entrepreneurs consider sustainability to be important or very important, only just over half say the same about artificial intelligence. This suggests that the practical applications of AI are still not widely recognised. Yet AI has the very potential to boost efficiency across a variety of business areas and to help companies navigate economically challenging times.

WIFIs are driving forward the development of practice-oriented training programmes that align with the real-world needs of today's businesses. Our mission is to engage with business leaders – even during challenging times – and support them as they pursue new opportunities. By offering practically relevant expertise, we contribute to enhancing their competitiveness. Encouragingly, in 2024, over one in five entrepreneurs planned to increase their investment in further education compared to previous years. A clear sign that the climate for learning and growth is good.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Markus Raml". The script is fluid and cursive.

**Mag. Markus Raml**  
Trustee WIFI Austria

**#lerndichweiter**

# Opportunities and potential through AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a strategic tool offering significant potential for businesses – from optimizing operational processes to unlocking new opportunities for innovation. In areas such as marketing, data analysis, robotics, users and professionals encounter seemingly limitless possibilities – a subject that also engaged the WIFIs over the past year.



Many people still hesitate to use AI tools, as the technology is perceived as complex and risky. A Deloitte study published last autumn revealed that only 13 percent of domestic companies make regular use of AI, while nearly half have no plans to engage with the technology. Furthermore, as of 2nd February 2025, key provisions of the new EU AI Act have come into effect. Since then, companies have been required to ensure that only employees with sufficient AI competence are authorised to work with artificial intelligence.

## AI brings obligations for Companies

Under the AI Act, all employees who use, develop, or operate AI systems must demonstrate an adequate level of AI competence. This includes the ability to use AI appropriately, an awareness of both its risks and opportunities, and a sound understanding of how to prevent potential harm. There was a clear demand for practical, application-focused training that aligns with the requirements of the AI Act and offers legal certainty for businesses.

## Our development: the AI Academy

Our objective was to create a training package that equips entrepreneurs and their employees to meet the challenges brought about by the AI era. The individual modules are tailored to different target groups:

The **KI Führerschein** or AI Licence enables employees to optimize processes, analyse data, and drive innovation through the effective use of AI. Courses for **AI Officers** provide professionals with the expertise needed to implement and manage AI systems within their departments. Acting as internal AI champions, they oversee successful project delivery. For this group, we offer specialised certification programmes with in-depth focus on AI application and governance.

**Executives and decision-makers**, who are responsible for shaping long-term AI strategies, will benefit from targeted seminars being developed for future delivery.

## AI at the WIFIs

We are also embedding AI tools into our internal operations. At present, over 70 percent of our employees actively use AI. The WKÖ has developed comprehensive guidelines for the use of generative AI. One particularly innovative initiative is an AI-powered chat system designed to support communication with participants, staff, and trainers. Many more exciting applications are expected in the coming years.

## Innovative education for Austria's comeback



The future doesn't just happen. We shape it. Our businesses achieve remarkable things, yet their potential is being held back. Bureaucratic hurdles, rising costs, and a persistent shortage of skilled workers are slowing progress. The question is: how do we take our foot off the brake and get Austria back to the top?

The answer lies in remembering what has always set us apart. Austria has long been a country of openness and entrepreneurial ingenuity. Technological advances are opening new doors every day, and we have the tools to walk through them – if we choose to.

Vocational education that goes beyond basic knowledge and traditional skills

provides us with a vital competitive edge on the global stage. Without highly trained professionals, there is neither competitiveness nor an attractive business environment.

For Austria's economic comeback, we need to reward performance but also to invest in an education system that reflects the world we live in now – fast-moving, digital, and full of potential.

The WIFIs are already playing their part. By rethinking what vocational education can be, they're helping to shape the skills that will carry us into the future.

A stylized signature in purple ink.

**Dr. Harald Mahrer**

President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

## We must use progress to our advantage now



Digitalization and artificial intelligence are transforming every aspect of our lives – how we live, how we work, and how we do business. We are currently experiencing a fundamental revolution in our way of life, our working world, and our economy. We are amid a fundamental revolution that demands not just adaptation, but initiative. Now is the moment to keep pace with these powerful technological trends and to harness first-mover advantages. To ignite our economic engine and preserve our global competitiveness, we need specialists who drive innovation – and the tools to equip them with the skills of tomorrow. So that employees can use new AI systems

safely and effectively, the WIFIs have developed the AI licence 'KI Führerschein': a practical qualification and essential pillar for Austria's competitiveness and a crucial springboard into our digital future. Another milestone is Higher Vocational Education (HBB). It opens up new opportunities for career advancement, makes knowledge directly applicable in the workplace, and helps both companies and individuals remain competitive. For those with vocational qualifications and several years of experience, HBB opens new perspectives. As Austria's leading seminar provider, the WIFIs are the country's most important qualification partner. They develop the necessary further education and training offers needed to meet the challenges ahead. Because technology alone is not enough – we need people who understand and use it.

A stylized signature in blue ink.

**Mag.ª Mariana Kühnel, MA**

Deputy General Secretary of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

## Continuing education strengthens our resilience



Every experience is a gain. With a positive mindset, we can draw valuable insights from any situation that helps us grow and support us later in life. This is how learning processes begin. It's good to be reminded of this from time to time because the demands we face today are complex. While the need for skilled workers continues to rise, digitalisation is rapidly accelerating. Those who can see these challenges as opportunities – and stay receptive to new ideas – will come through stronger.

This is just as true for us at the WIFIs. The growing demand for innovative and flexible education has sharpened our focus on what sets us apart: practical relevance delivered by experienced trainers, modern learning methods, and consistently high-quality standards. These strengths have helped us remain market leaders – and once again earned us the title of Austria's top seminar provider.

This shows that our daily efforts and ongoing development are valued by our customers. They are the ones who gain varied rich and positive experiences at the WIFIs. Because they continue their education, they equip themselves to navigate change, stay competitive even in a challenging labour market. They secure their futures with in-demand skills.

Companies too – especially in times of economic uncertainty – rely on the innovative ideas that emerge only through continuing education. Besides strengthening professional skills, further education also builds resilience: the ability to overcome challenges with confidence and adaptability.

Further education is, therefore, far more than an individual opportunity. It's a valuable investment in the future – for businesses and the economy as a whole and it opens one of the most enriching and enduring experiences life has to offer.

**Mag.<sup>a</sup> Tatjana Baborek**  
Director of WIFI Austria

## Progress through cooperation

The strength of the WIFIs lies in their nationwide collaboration. Once again, the WIFI network led the way in setting strategic direction last year.



Representatives of the KEBÖ associations with Minister of Education Martin Polaschek.

## Strategy Retreat 2024

WIFI Austria is committed to a strong position of the WIFI network. This also includes enhancing the visibility of vocational adult education as a vital part of the national education system. But where is the journey taking us? At the 2024 strategy retreat, the institute directors set the course for the years ahead. A trend radar provided the foundation for an agenda that focused on key future topics in further education including micro-credentials, higher vocational education, and digital business. The outcome: a clear strategic focus that will shape numerous collaborative projects.

## Strategic Board meetings

Twice a year, the WIFI board convenes for strategic dialogue and exchange. The first meeting in May 2024 centered around artificial intelligence. AI expert and university lecturer Andreas Fraunberger provided fascinating insights into the field of AI and learning. The second board meeting, held in November, turned the spotlight on cybersecurity. Philipp Reisinger from SBA Research delivered an engaging and interactive session that highlighted current challenges and future developments in the field.

## KEBÖ Adult education conference

Together with other adult education institutions, WIFI Austria is a member of the adult education conference Austria (KEBÖ). Last year, the two-year financial agreements were successfully renegotiated – with a total increase of 10 percent. A midterm review with the Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) was also completed. The outcome: the WIFI network not only met but even exceeded its target in key areas such as reskilling, upskilling, and digitalization. A shared demand from KEBÖ was a call for lifelong learning to be firmly anchored in the next national government programme. This was also discussed directly with Education Minister Martin Polaschek.

# Further Education Barometer 2024: investing in the future together

For 85 per cent of companies, further vocational education is essential for driving innovation and growth. This is confirmed by the findings of the annual Further Education Barometer, conducted by IMAS International on behalf of the WIFIs. The survey gathers insights from both entrepreneurs and employees.



## One in five companies plans to increase spending

The high importance entrepreneurs place on further education and training for their workforce is also reflected in their education budgets. Currently, 22 percent of companies plan to invest more in training and continuing education than in previous years – up from just 18 percent the year before.

## Sustainability ahead of artificial intelligence

Sustainability and artificial intelligence top the further education agenda. Around seven in ten entrepreneurs surveyed consider sustainability to be important or very important over the next four to five years. In comparison, just over half say the same for artificial intelligence.

Overall, the demand for training varies significantly depending on the topic. In the area of sustainability and green skills, companies are looking for multi-thematic programmes ranging from energy efficiency to sustainable resources management. For artificial intelligence, the focus is more specific: practical skills related to industry-specific applications and the use of AI tools are in highest demand.

## Further education has gained ground

Why do employees pursue further education? The main motivators include targeted interest in a specific subject (81 percent), positive or beneficial experiences from previous training courses (77 percent), and a general desire to discover something new (77 percent). The importance of further education has clearly taken root: 46 percent of the working population consider lifelong learning to be 'extremely important', while a further 43 percent regard it as 'fairly important'. However, many working individuals face challenges when it comes to putting this into practice. Over the past three years, only 29 percent have been able to pursue their further education plans 'to a great extent', with 48 percent doing so to 'some extent'. The main barriers cited are costs and lack of time.

## Entrepreneurs seek support

The findings clearly indicate that the initiative for further education tends to come from the companies themselves. On average, employers funded 54 percent of the most recent further education undertaken by respondents. One third (32 percent) of employees paid for their training themselves, while around one eighth (13 percent) received government support. An absolute majority of entrepreneurs are in favour of introducing a government-funded education account or would welcome an increase in public funding for further education. The survey comprised entrepreneurs with at least ten employees, as well as 1,012 employed individuals, representative of the general population aged 16 and over.

# New tools for trainers

WIFI trainers know that learning is most effective when it is active and long-lived, in line with the WIFI LENA learning model. To ensure this remains successful in the digital age of learning, we must continue to renew and enhance our tools.



Participants at the kick-off workshop for the revision of the LENA S.P.A.S.S. criteria.

## Further expounding LENA

What are the current challenges in implementing LENA? This question was explored by representatives of WIFI Austria, the regional WIFIs, and the Didactic Innovations GmbH at a workshop in Vienna. The key insight: digitalisation, the growing trend towards self-directed learning (e.g. among career changers), and the increasing individualisation of learning processes all pose challenges for LENA.

## More S.P.A.S.S. – including digital

The S.P.A.S.S. criteria promote a learning-friendly environment that supports self-directed, productive, active, and situational learning in a social context. Workshop participants applied a structured, research-based approach. They analysed studies on teaching and learning, focusing on self-direction, prior experience, constructive engagement with perspectives, and digital tool use. Based on these findings, the S.P.A.S.S. criteria were revised to reflect current challenges. A WIFI learning mission and the LENA readiness check were also jointly developed.

## Trainer campaign with broad reach

The WIFIs aim to motivate individuals to share their expertise with others. This was the focus of the trainer campaign, relaunched in 2024. Successful WIFI trainers served as ambassadors, sharing insights into the professional and personal rewards of their training roles.

## TURNING POINT with LENA magazine



For over a decade, we have demonstrated what our WIFI learning model LENA looks like in practice. The current issue is themed “A new chapter in learning” and explores the questions: what changes lie ahead in how we learn and work? What innovative methods will shape the future of learning? These topics are addressed through case studies, interviews, and a high-profile SOFA talk.

**Download at [wifi.at/lenamagazin](https://wifi.at/lenamagazin)**

## Susi Riegler, a life dedicated to LENA:

Shaping ideas and driving innovation has always been Susi Riegler's passion. As a founding figure behind the WIFI learning model and organiser of the WIFI Congress for Training and Further Education, she played a defining role in shaping further education at the WIFIs. We wish her all the very best for her well-deserved retirement.

# Learning Management & Services: products for a new era of learning

The year 2024 was marked by challenges such as skills shortages, digitalisation, and disruption caused by artificial intelligence. Our courses address the changing needs of domestic businesses and their employees, providing a practical and demand-oriented offering in further education and training.

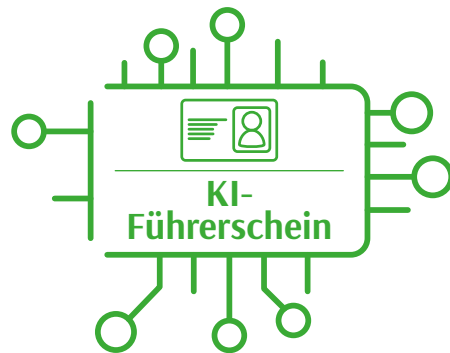


Photo story on the development of an eLearning-programme in the LENA-magazine 2024/25.

## How the AI Academy is transforming working life

The use of artificial intelligence is increasingly shaping the world of work and creating new opportunities for both companies and employees. In response, the AI Academy was established at WIFI Lower Austria in 2018. It was completely revamped last year and is now being rolled out across Austria.

The AI Academy equips participants with the knowledge needed to use AI tools safely and effectively. The AI licence provides users with essential insights into how AI works, including data protection and cybersecurity. Individuals who wish to actively support the introduction and implementation of AI in their organisation can pursue further education and training to become AI coordinators, acting at the interface between management, IT, and operational teams.

The learning concept combines hands-on classroom courses with flexible, practice-oriented eLearning modules. Participants can apply what they've learned directly in their daily work – both within their area of responsibility and in cross-functional projects. The AI Academy empowers individuals looking to expand their career prospects and supports companies in preparing their workforce for the future use of AI.



## Content development in the WIFI ecosystem

The launch of its digital strategy marked the beginning of digital learning content development at the WIFIs. Since then, we have successfully delivered a broad variety of projects – from stand-alone learning paths such as email marketing to explainer videos and animated teasers for all online channels. The greatest strength throughout has been the diversity of topics and trainers across the WIFIs.

## Learning complex technical skills with eLearning support

In collaboration with trainers and workshop supervisors at WIFI Lower Austria, we developed supportive, nationally standardised learning paths for the preparatory courses leading up to the final apprenticeship exams in electrical and metal engineering. These digital

modules are used alongside the well-established WIFI preparation courses. Learners are required to absorb and review a large volume of material in a short period of time.

A particularly challenging aspect is mastering the operation of complex machinery. This is supported through eLearning in the form of step-by-step video guides that demonstrate how to produce a specific workpiece. Naturally, operating the machine cannot be learned solely through digital content. However, these learning paths allow participants to familiarise themselves with the machine's requirements and to revisit key settings and work steps even after the course has ended.

The learning paths are clearly structured, based on the latest didactic principles, and aligned with the core values of competence-based learning as outlined in the LENA model.

### Contemporary presentation of anatomy and physiology

With technological progress, health and wellness topics are becoming increasingly important. This is especially true in the fields of beauty therapy and health & wellness, where new career opportunities continue to emerge. This trend is also reflected in the growing variety of available courses.

A recent development is the introduction of digital learning paths in anatomy and physiology. These offer modern, digital content while allowing us to use resources efficiently to create a sustainable, future-focused learning experience. The learning paths were developed across departments to ensure they can be flexibly integrated into a range of further education and training programmes, meeting learners' diverse needs.

### A new chapter for higher vocational education

Skilled workers who already hold vocational qualifications should have access to more educational opportunities and formal qualifications than before. One of the aims of the new Act on Higher Vocational Education (HBB), which came into effect on 1 May 2024, is to ensure they receive appropriate social recognition. New qualification titles have been introduced at three levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Where many previously saw their educational journey end after completing an apprenticeship, new pathways are now available – for example, through a Higher Vocational Qualification (HBQ), a Professional Diploma (FD), or an Advanced Professional Diploma (HFD).

Qualification aligns with the HBB descriptors and corresponds to the following qualification levels	Qualification titles (each with an additional reference to the specific subject area of the qualification)	English qualification titles (each including a subject-specific reference related to the qualification)
NQR 5	Higher Vocational Qualification	Extended Professional Qualification
NQR 6	Specialist Diploma	Professional Certificate
NQR 7	Advanced Specialist Diploma	Advanced Professional Certificate

WIFI Austria's primary task is to work jointly with the WKÖ's Department for Education Policy, as well as sector and professional organisations, on the development of pilot qualifications. Our goal is to become a central hub and coordination point for new qualifications. The first HBB pilot qualification in the field of 'Technical consulting for energy efficiency technologies' is in development and is expected to be available from autumn 2025. The WIFIs will offer corresponding preparatory courses for this qualification.



“The programmes offered by the WIFI network play a crucial role in the further education and training of individuals. They provide practice-oriented courses and training that meet the needs of learners as well as those of today’s working world and economy.”

**Mag.ª Sonja Lengauer, MBA**  
Lead WIFI Learning  
Management & Services

# WIFI International: operating worldwide

Training made in Austria: Austrian expertise continues to be in high demand internationally. Over the past year, WIFI International collaborated with numerous international partner organisations. These initiatives not only help develop skills but also build valuable bridges for Austrian businesses abroad.



WIFI International in Washington, D.C.

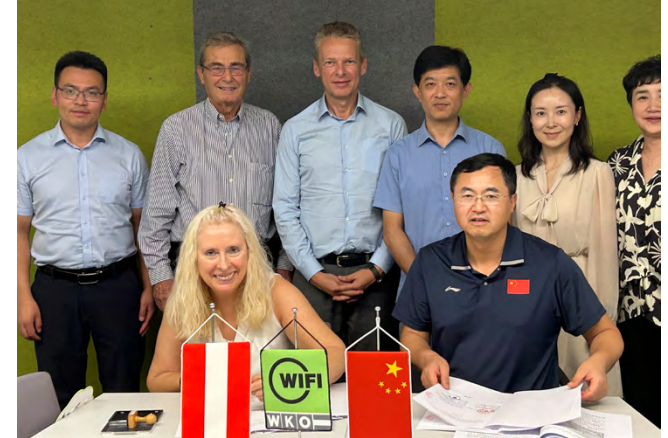
## Major project in Indonesia

Last year, Indonesian professionals once again received training in welding technology based on Austrian standards. The company KIP conducted specialist training courses at the newly established training centre in Makassar. These skilled professionals act as multipliers – they strengthen not only the Indonesian economy but also business relations with Austrian companies.

## WIFI International in the USA

Dual education is a widely regarded model of success. As a result, Austrian perspectives on the further education and training of skilled workers attract international interest. The Austrian Embassy in Washington, D.C. hosted the 'Transatlantic Talent: Austrian Perspectives on the Future of Apprenticeship Training' event, where WIFI International was able to showcase its expertise – and successfully engage seven Austrian companies with operations in the United States.

Looking ahead, WIFI International will offer online instructor's training for future apprenticeship trainers. Discussions are currently underway regarding a training alliance in the fields of mechatronics, electrical engineering, welding, and plastics processing.



CNC machine operation and welding projects in Chengdu.

## Projects in China: Nantong and Chengdu

The cooperation continues: a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed with the Jiangsu Province Nantong Industry & Trade Technician College in Nantong, China. Following this, the skills of 34 CNC machine operator trainees were assessed, and 50 Chinese technicians successfully qualified as certified CNC machine operators. Training in this area is set to continue, with the goal of preparing skilled professionals for companies located in the China-Austria Su Tong Science and Technology Ecopark.

In addition, a new collaboration was agreed with the Chengdu Vocational Technical College of Industry (CVTCI). Several Austrian companies are also based in Chengdu and stand to benefit from well-trained specialists in the field of welding.

## Fit4Austria continues

As in previous years, both online and in-person training courses were successfully held in cooperation with chambers of commerce and companies in Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Moldova. Benchmarking events with Austrian companies in the same industries were coordinated in partnership with Advantage Austria.

## 奥地利联邦经济商会经济发展研究所 WIFI International

### 双元职业教育联盟单位 Dual Vocational Education Alliance Unit

Training alliance for mechatronics, metal engineering and plastics processing in Shanghai.

## Training alliance in Shanghai

The companies Alpla, Engel and Stiwa are already working successfully with the Taicang Secondary Vocational School in the fields of mechatronics, metal engineering and plastics moulding, as highlighted on an information board. This training alliance lays the foundation for a long-term partnership and will continue to develop. Blum will join the initiative next.

## EU projects

In 2023, two new EU-funded projects were secured, bringing the total number of ongoing initiatives to six. Looking ahead, further project proposals will continue to be submitted, focusing on emerging trends in education.

- **Erasmus+ project 'EntreComp4Transition'**  
Topics: Entrepreneurship, green skills;  
duration: 3 years
- **Erasmus+ project 'Cyanotypes'**  
Topics: Creative industries and entrepreneurship;  
duration: 4 years
- **Erasmus+ project 'The Urban Shift'**  
Topics: Strengthening green and digital skills, connecting theory with professional practice;  
duration: 3 years
- **CoVE Erasmus+ Excellence Project Eurochambres 'EULEP'**  
Topics: Digitalisation, AI, VR, social innovation;  
duration: 4 years
- **Erasmus+ project 'S.E. VET'**  
Topic: Social entrepreneurship; duration: 3 Jahre
- **Erasmus+ project 'Skills4Retail'**  
Topics: Development of training programmes for current and future retail professions, with green, digital, and resilience skills elements;  
duration: 4 years

## Additional Erasmus+ project submissions in 2024

- **CoVE Erasmus+ Excellence Project 'Hospitality4Excellence'**  
Topics: Digitalisation and green jobs in the tourism sector; duration: 4 years
- **CoVE Erasmus+ Excellence Project 'D-VET'**  
Topics: Drone-driven innovation in further education and training, with applications in agriculture, public safety, and transport;  
duration: 4 years
- **COSME Project 'SMOOTH'**  
Topics: Further education and training for SMEs in the social economy, focusing on management, digital, and operational skills;  
duration: 3 years



“We don’t just follow trends – we set them. WIFI education reaches across the globe, through EU and client projects alike, from Europe to Indonesia, China and the United States. Because education knows no boundaries.”

**Mag.ª (FH) Claudia Neumann**  
Lead WIFI International

# Valuable certificates of highest quality

Demonstrating and maintaining skills: that's the purpose of the standardised programmes developed by the WIFI/WKÖ certification body. In 2024, certification programmes were further expanded and updated with great success: more individuals than ever before obtained a certificate.

## Unrivalled number one with 9,000 personal certificates

A new all-time high was achieved: 9,000 certificates were issued under the EN ISO 17024 standard for personal certification in the fields of welding technology, quality management, process management, energy technology and services. In addition, 26 procedural inspections and 17 product certifications were carried out.

This confirms the WIFI/WKÖ certification body's position as the number one provider of personal certification in Austria. Alongside the master craftsman examination board and the apprenticeship office, it forms the third key pillar in the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber's system for assessing individual competence.

## Updated programmes

In 2024, we continued to expand our offer. Together with SRM Consulting & Coaching, we developed new certification programmes focused on resilience. The 'Certified Resilience Expert' and 'Certified Resilience Manager' programmes aim to establish standards for various aspects of organisational resilience.

As the number of certification programmes has steadily increased in recent years, numerous updates became necessary. Older certifications were brought up to date, e.g.: Certified Motor Vehicle Damage Assessor, Certified E-Commerce & Social Media Expert, Internal Auditor, Certified Adult Education Trainer, Certified Trainer, Coach and Consultant for New Work, as well as International Food Standard Manager.

## Certification in line with highest standards

Over the past year, we subjected our activities to several audits. Our accreditations as an inspection body and personal certification body were successfully confirmed through surveillance audits and remain in place. For example, material testing may only be carried out by accredited laboratories. Using a European Accreditation guideline, we secured accreditation for tensile testing, which gives us a unique position in Austria. Our management system requires regular staff training. To support this, group sessions were held via MS Teams, encouraging cross-border collaboration and strengthening team cohesion. Around 50 assistants took part in these sessions.

To verify the quality of our test reports and assessments, we participate in proficiency testing annually. The Institute for Proficiency Testing – one of Europe's leading institutions – awarded us certification for successful participation. This confirms that our results meet quality standards and are delivered with proven expertise. As a result, companies such as Rheinmetall, Österreichische Schiffswerften AG, and Scheuch have chosen us as their inspection body.

## Certification as assessment procedure in the context



**Apprenticeship Office**



**Master Craftsmen Examination Board**



**Certification Body**

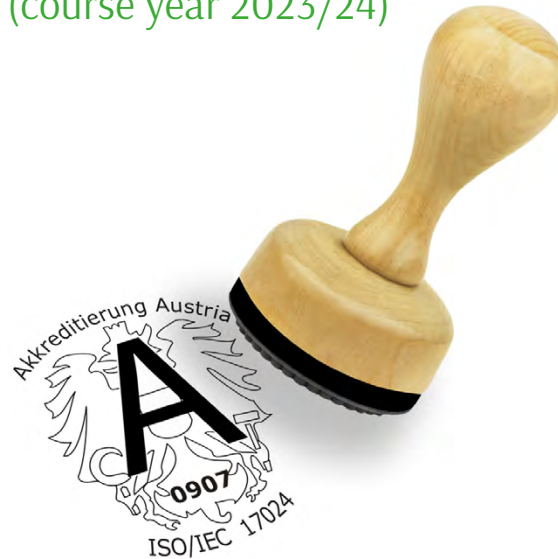
## Successful projects

The WIFI/WKÖ certification body continues to act as a positive representative of the wider organisation. Several certification examinations were held at the Viennese Haus der Wirtschaft, including the 'Profiler' certification programme. Participants came from both the human resources sector and public administration. During feedback sessions, the examination process and overall organisation were frequently praised. Last year, we communicated the benefits of certification not only through discussion but also via a professionally produced video, which is now widely used in training courses. Our involvement in the KMU.DIGITAL initiative, which is led by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy (BMAW), made it possible for businesses to receive advisory funding in the area of digital skills – provided that their consultants held recognised certifications. We supported this initiative particularly through the Certified E-Commerce & Social Media Expert certifications. In addition, certification exams for members of the advertising and market communication trade association are administered directly by our office.

## Looking ahead

As the primary point of contact for certification within the Austrian Federal Economic Chambers, we continued to align our programmes with the needs of member companies. We are currently rolling out the AI Coordinator certification programme in response to growing demand. For the past three years, fitness centres in Upper Austria have been certified according to EN 17229, in close collaboration with the relevant trade body. Initial discussions have now taken place with representatives of the Lower Austrian fitness association to explore a similar partnership. In cooperation with the national paper industry association, we are also in talks with the training centre of the Austrian paper industry in Laakirchen. These discussions aim to result in a formal cooperation agreement.

## The certification body in figures (course year 2023/24)



9,000  
Personal certifications in total

26  
Procedure validation tests

17  
Product certifications



“For the first time in our 30-year history as the WIFI certification body, we awarded a record number of 9,000 personal certificates this year. These certificates serve as formal proof of individual competence and are highly regarded both in Austria and internationally. They are in strong demand among both companies and certification candidates.”

**Mag. Dietmar Schönfuss**  
Director WKÖ/WIFI-Certification Body

# Communication & Marketing: staying curious

Stay curious! has been the guiding theme of WIFI's communication and marketing since 2023. The concept was successfully continued across traditional and digital media, in public spaces, and within the institutes.



The teams from WIFI Austria, creative agency DMB, and media agency HAVAS are delighted to have secured third place.

## Innovative communication

With its 'At the office, you're the AI-king,' campaign WIFI Austria impressed the jury and secured third place in the 'online' category at the AD STANDARD advertising awards. The campaign takes a witty take on how artificial intelligence and further education come together in the modern workplace.

## Stay curious: the umbrella campaign

Our shared communication goal is clear: WIFI is a reliable learning partner – whether through in-person, online, or blended learning. This is the focus of our annual umbrella campaign. It speaks to a broad audience, from apprentices to academics, emphasising that curiosity drives personal growth and a willingness to learn. This was reflected in our updated visuals and campaign materials, featuring topics like motor vehicle mechanics, sustainability, bartending, and AI. The campaign gained visibility across TV, online banners, info screens, and City Lights. A full homepage takeover on derStandard.at earned us the AD STANDARD – Quarter 2 award.

## Diverse initiatives to strengthen the WIFI brand

To maintain the strength and visibility of the WIFI brand, a range of initiatives were implemented over the past year, including advertising tracking, an image analysis, and the collection of key focus data. The brand's visual identity also underwent a redesign: the WIFI logo was refreshed and a new corporate typeface introduced. All updates have been documented in the revised corporate design (CD) manual, which is now applied across all materials – from promotional items

to WIFI certificates. Originally introduced in 2008, the CD manual has been comprehensively updated, with layouts modernised and refreshed. The new WIFI CD manual has been in effect since March 2024 and is already in full use.

## 360-degree communication in WIFI green

Our message is communicated not only through the umbrella campaign. We maintain a strong presence at events, within the WKO network, and beyond. We collaborate with media partners to reach our target audiences with precision.

Our content—from the Further Education Barometer to the WIFI learning model LENA—features in both trade and consumer media. Online, our presence is equally strong in signature WIFI green, across our comprehensive website, blog, and social media channels.



“Our team develops creative campaigns for the WIFI network to further

enhance the visibility and success of our educational programmes.”

**Christoph Jordan, MSc**  
Lead WIFI Team Marketing & Communication

# Event-highlights from the WIFI world



Pepper goes ChatGPT.

## Robot NAO goes eDay

Young people live and learn in digital worlds – as demonstrated at eDay in May, where WIFI participated with its own stand for the second time. Students from HTL Spengergasse presented their use case ‘NAO goes ChatGPT,’ showcasing a Pepper robot that had been trained and enabled to communicate. Both staff and visitors were impressed by the demonstration.



WIFI at educate 2024 in Saarbrücken.

## Crossing borders at educate Saarbrücken

What challenges is the European further education landscape currently facing? In July we had the opportunity to explore this question together with businesses and education experts from Germany and Austria. During the session ‘Crossing Borders’, we presented our approaches to tackling these challenges – including our collaboration with Didactic Innovations in the field of proactive education marketing. Our conclusion: meaningful exchange and collaboration lead to more sustainable, efficient solutions – and ultimately, greater success.



Tatjana Baborek and the WIFI education voucher winner at the JW Summit.

## Looking to the future at the JW Summit

In September, young entrepreneurs gathered at the JW Summit hosted by Junge Wirtschaft for a day of knowledge sharing, networking, and inspiration. Under the motto “The Future of Success”, attendees enjoyed high-level keynote speeches. WIFI Austria took part with a dynamic, innovation-driven stand. A spin of the prize wheel offered the chance to win a €500 education voucher, while memorable giveaways helped leave a lasting impression on the next generation of business leaders.

## Learning democracy at the KEBÖ conference

How can democracy be learned? This was the central question addressed at the annual conference of the Conference of Adult Education Austria (KEBÖ). Highlights included keynote speeches by political scientist Kathrin Stainer-Hämmerle and journalist Ingrid Brodnig, a high-profile expert discussion, and a meeting with Federal Minister Polaschek.



## Academic ceremony: celebrating success

At the academic ceremony held at the University of Klagenfurt, 61 graduates of the Business Manager university programme completed their part-time further education with the academic title Master of Science. The master's programme has been delivered successfully across Austria by the WIFIs in cooperation with the M/O/T® School of Management, Organisational Development and Technology at the University of Klagenfurt – an enduring partnership that has now lasted more than 20 years.



## New dimensions in further education

In May 2024, the WIFI Congress for Training and Further Education took place at WIFI Vienna under the theme “Learning Today and Tomorrow: Skills and AI – Complement or Replacement?” The event opened with a panel discussion exploring the question: ‘Is the human factor in education becoming obsolete? What role remains for trainers in the age of AI?’ Renowned AI entrepreneur Mag.a Carina Zehetmaier (pictured) delivered a keynote on the transformative power of artificial intelligence in education. Participants then chose from six in-person short trainings and a selection of online workshops. The hybrid congress format allowed for flexible participation, with all materials and networking opportunities made available via task cards on the dedicated congress platform. More at: [wifi.at/trainingskongress](https://wifi.at/trainingskongress)



## Honoured at the Austrian Cycling Summit

For many years, the WIFIs have been cooperation partners in various klima:aktiv initiatives, particularly in the field of mobility. One example is the training programme for bicycle mechanics, developed in partnership with klima:aktiv and the Association of Austrian Sporting Goods Retailers. The goal: to promote e-mobility and climate-friendly tourism in Austria. As part of the Austrian Cycling Summit, we were proud to support Federal Minister Gewessler as co-presenters during the official awards ceremony.



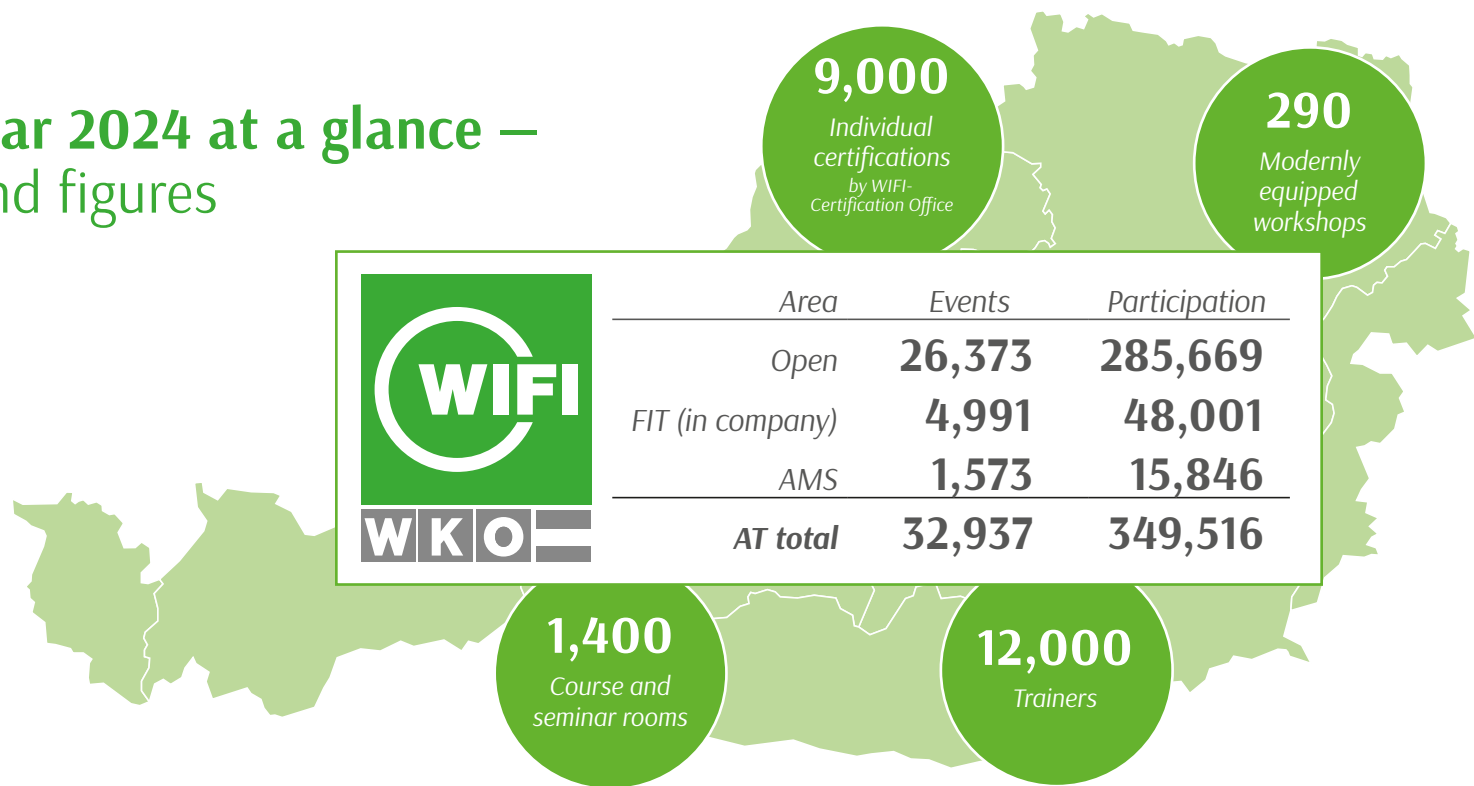
## Networking at the HR Inside Summit

The HR Inside Summit, held in Vienna's Hofburg, is the largest human resources event in the DACH region. HR professionals and talent development managers gather to network between inspiring keynotes, workshops, and expert talks. Once again this year, the WIFI network was on site, producing its own podcast and broadcasting live via LinkedIn. The mobile WIFI nail studio attracted strong interest – the WIFI-green nail polish became the must-have item of the event.

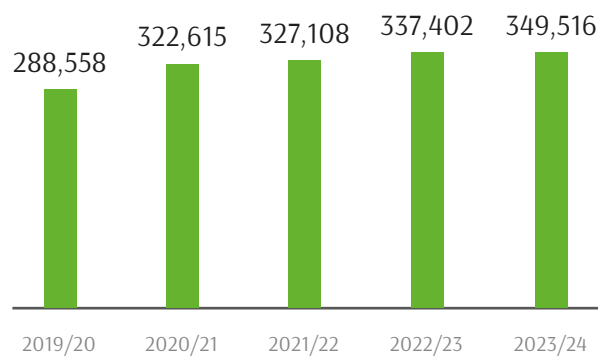


Podcast

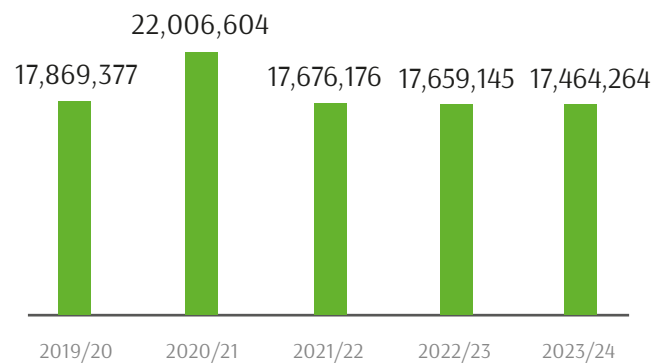
# WIFI Year 2024 at a glance – Facts and figures



Participants by course year



Participant hours by course year



Sources: internal survey 2024

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