



Direct

Case Work

Persons in need who are capable of working

Germany

VerBIS: a CMIS for employment-oriented case management

Information system description

The case management information system (CMIS) VerBIS (Vermittlungs-, Beratungs- und Informationssystem, or “Placement, consultation and information system”) was developed by the German Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, BA) in order to replace its previous internal IT systems supporting consultation and job placement with a new, integrated system. It is used in job centers “in joint facilities”¹ for the case management and the in-depth case management² of persons capable of work eligible for the benefit Basic Income Support for Jobseekers (Grundsicherung für Arbeitssuchende), also called ALG II, and their benefit community (henceforth ALG II beneficiaries).³

Initial challenge

When the German national government reformed its minimum income schemes in 2003-2005, the newly created ALG II program came to encompass a much larger target population than its preceding program as well as more complex cases, such as persons who had never been employed. Moreover, some of the internal IT systems used until then supporting consultation and job placement had been in use for over ten years and were increasingly reaching their technical limits.

Results

The CMIS VerBIS was initially developed as a web-based support tool to foster labor market transparency, improve the matching between labor market needs and jobseekers and promote the (re-)integration of the unemployed into the labor market. Over the last two decades, VerBIS has been further developed to include additional features for case work. Today, the CMIS offers numerous features that allow close monitoring of particularly vulnerable cases and information exchange with

¹ Job centers provide cash benefits, consultation and job placement services to persons who are capable of working at least three hours a day, are in need (see footnote **Fehler! Unbekanntes Schalterargument.**) and either have no entitlement to the contribution-based unemployment insurance benefit (e.g., because they have never worked) or whose claims have expired. Job centers “in joint facilities” are joint institutions (*gemeinsame Einrichtungen*) of the Federal Employment Agency and a municipality, town or districts, which thus connect the federal and the local authority level. In Germany there are also so-called *district job centers*, which are run by the district alone. Approximately three out of four job centers are joint facilities. For further details, see section I.1.).

² These two types of case management, i.e., (regular) case management and in-depth case management, differ insofar as in-depth case management implies a closer case monitoring and contact between the operator and the beneficiary and a more comprehensive approach in addressing barriers to employment.

³ The CMIS is also used for case management in public employment agencies, which provide cash benefits, consultation and job placement services to persons who enter unemployment and are entitled to the contribution-based unemployment insurance. However, this case study is limited to the use of VerBIS in job centers in joint facilities, using the Job center Leipzig as a reference. However, this case study is limited to the use of VerBIS in job centers in joint facilities, using the Job center Leipzig as a reference.

selected service providers, and is connected through an interface with other software and platforms, which allow, e.g., to determine entitlement to and size of the ALG II benefit, to monitor the payment process/payout, or to search for information (about, e.g., job openings and labor activation measures).

INTAKE POINT: Direct registration

ALG II beneficiaries are registered in VerBIS by job center operators⁴ in their first interview⁵. Usually, the operator conducting this interview becomes the beneficiary's responsible contact person. In the interview, the operator collects a wide range of information. A first assessment, called profiling, is performed. Those beneficiaries who are identified as not immediately "activable" in the labor market are referred to specialized operators (case managers) within the team, from whom they receive tailored in-depth support to address and solve complex labor market employment barriers before they are sent back to the integration specialists.⁶

LEVEL OF CASE MANAGEMENT: Case work

Job centers provide two types of case management services with different levels of depth: (regular) case management by integration officers and in-depth case management by case managers. In **all** its forms of implementation, these services involve close contact between the operators (integration specialists or case managers) and beneficiaries, developing an integration plan, referral, monitoring, etc. Thus, case management in job centers can be categorized as case work, the most advanced level of integration of services. Case management in job centers is employment oriented. Even when serving beneficiaries with multiple problems, the long-term goal is the sustainable (re-)integration of ALG II beneficiaries into the labor market. Support services are provided following the principle of "help for self-help" (**Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe**), meaning that beneficiaries should be enabled to overcome the need for assistance.

POPULATION GROUP SERVED: ALG I and ALG II beneficiaries

VerBIS supports the case management of unemployment insurance (ALG I) recipients⁷ and the case management as well as the in-depth case management of persons capable of work eligible for ALG II⁸ and their benefit community (henceforth ALG II beneficiaries).

⁴ Usually, the registration is carried out by "integration specialists". The integration specialists are operators who carry out the counselling interviews, refer the beneficiaries to social services and/or providers of labor activation measures, etc. They are responsible for the case management either until the case is closed, (i.e., until job placement with income sufficient to secure the socio-cultural minimum subsistence), or until the case is internally referred to specialized case managers, who are responsible for the in-depth case management. (For further details, see section II. 2. General system workflow)

⁵ The registration of beneficiaries in the IT procedures of the job centers (e.g., VerBIS and Allegro. For further details, see section I. 6.) is not a necessary precondition to access the benefit scheme: any verbal or written declaration of intent by a person stating that he or she would like to receive ALG II benefits is sufficient to start the procedure of eligibility check. The registration in VerBIS rather supports the process of implementing the goals and tasks of the scheme.

⁶ While in some job centers there are multiple integration specialists and one or two case managers in each team, in other job centers there are specific divisions: one responsible for job placement and one for case management.

⁷ This case study does not cover the use of VerBIS for the case management of this target group.

⁸ To be eligible, applicants must have regular residence in Germany and be *in need*, meaning that the income is not sufficient to secure the material means that are indispensable for the physical existence and a minimum of participation in social, cultural and political life. Benefits can therefore also be drawn to *supplement* employment earnings or other state benefits such as disability or old-age pensions. However, ALG II is a *subsidiary and last resort measure*, meaning that is granted only once all other economic possibilities have been exhausted.

CMIS existing and active?	Yes
Year of launch:	2005
Tenants:	301 job centers in joint facilities and 155 public employment agencies
Registered operators (all unique users):	approx. 80,000 ⁹
Beneficiaries supported by the CMIS:	approx. 2.7 million beneficiaries. ¹⁰
Beneficiaries covered by the program:	5.7 million beneficiaries (as of the end of 2020)
URL:	not existing

I. CONTEXT ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE CMIS IN QUESTION

1. Institutional context

Germany's social protection system encompasses two main pillars. The first is the social insurance system, which includes (among others) pensions, health insurance and unemployment insurance. These are granted depending on the payment of contributions and fulfillment of entitlements.

The second is the social safety net system, which comprises three non-contributory, means-tested income support schemes aimed at securing the minimum subsistence level:

1. Basic Income Support for Jobseekers
2. Social Assistance
 - i. Livelihood Assistance Benefit
 - ii. Basic Income Support in Old Age and in the Event of Reduced Earning Capacity
3. Benefits for asylum seekers under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act

The first two target all legally resident population groups at risk in Germany, while benefits of the third scheme are granted to asylum seekers and refugees whose status has not been recognized (yet).

With more than 5.7 million beneficiaries (as of the end of 2020), the **Basic Income Support for Jobseekers**, also known as Unemployment Benefit II/UB II (**Arbeitslosengeld II/ALG II**), or **Hartz IV**, is the largest minimum income scheme. It targets persons in need capable of working with no entitlement to the contribution-based unemployment insurance benefit (Unemployment Benefit I, **Arbeitslosengeld I/ALG I**) or whose claims have expired. Beneficiaries are considered capable of working if they "can work for at least three hours daily and are not prevented from doing so for the foreseeable future by illness or disability."¹¹The family members who share the same household fall into the same benefit scheme.¹²

⁹ This figure refers to the number of registered internal operators, i.e., users in job centers in joint facilities and public employment agencies. In addition, there are about 120,000 external users who access VerBIS externally (e.g., service providers who are granted access. For further details, see section II.2.). Moreover, daily there are up to 60 million page views on *Jobbörse* (job board), the external IT procedure that is interconnected with VerBIS and accessible by service providers as well as registered citizens. (For further details, see section I.6.).

¹⁰ This figure refers to the ALG II beneficiaries supported by the CMIS. Additionally, the CMIS is used by local public employment agencies to support ALG I beneficiaries as well.

¹¹ Work capability is evaluated from a medical and psychological standpoint. As a general rule, it is assumed that people of working age (from age 15 until the statutory standard retirement age) are capable of working and therefore must apply for the

Because of the very broad definition of work capability, the ALG II scheme is the largest one in Germany. Due to its focus on (re-)integration into work, the German approach can be considered a strongly workfare-oriented one in international comparison.

Recipients of social safety net benefits (2020)

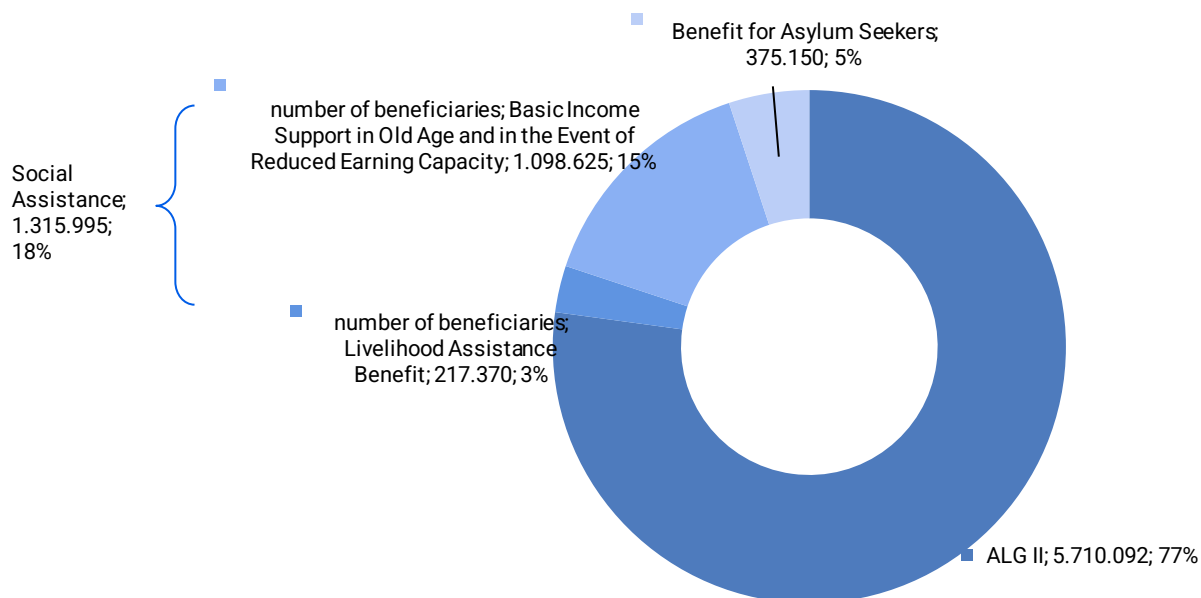


Figure 1: Share of recipients of minimum income schemes in Germany. Source: <https://www.sozialpolitik-aktuell.de/sozialstaat-datensammlung/articles/grusi-systeme-1783.html>, Grundsicherungssysteme in Deutschland

The **Social Assistance** scheme ensures a basic income support to people who are not capable of working through two different benefits: the **Livelihood Assistance Benefit** for those temporarily incapable of work, and the **Basic Income Support in Old Age and in the Event of Reduced Earning Capacity** for those permanently incapable of work, either because they have reached the statutory standard retirement age (in this case mainly granted as top-up payment to pensions), or because of illness or disability.¹³

Both the federal and the district levels of governance are involved in the financing, administration, and disbursement of the ALG II. Due to the federal structure of the German state and the large administrative autonomy, the institutional set-up of the implementing agencies (job centers) differs within the country. As for the CMIS, the agency in charge is the Federal Employment Agency, whose IT

former. Persons with disabilities fall within this rule as well, even though their entitlement to the benefit is less tightly dependent on the fulfillment of conditionalities and they have access to additional benefits and support measures.

¹² In the Basic Income Support for Jobseekers, the applicant, his/her cohabiting spouse/partner and his/her unmarried children under 25 years of age who cannot secure their livelihood form a so-called *benefit community*. The members of the benefit community receive payments in the form of Unemployment Benefit II if they are themselves capable of working, or of Social Allowance if they are not (e.g., children below the working age of 15 years). The Social Allowance differs from the Social Assistance benefits in so far as its reception is dependent on the fulfillment of conditionalities by the entire benefit community.

¹³ Case management in the Social Welfare Offices, which disburse and administer the Social Assistance scheme, varies across Germany, since the implementation of this income support scheme falls under the responsibility of the districts, which have great autonomy from the German Federal State and develop their own standards and procedures. Thus, there is no uniform case management for beneficiaries of the Social Assistance scheme. As an example, the Social Welfare Office of the City of Leipzig strongly relies on paper-based support services for case management instead of electronic case management information systems.

service provider, with its 1,600 employees nationwide, it is one of the largest IT developers and operators in Germany.¹⁴

National level institutions

At the national level, the **Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (FMLSA, Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales)** is responsible for creating a strong framework for more jobs, promoting social inclusion and maintaining stable social security systems. It liaises with the federal states, city states and local authorities when implementing its measures. The FMLSA is also responsible for legal supervision of the Federal Employment Agency.¹⁵

The **Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit)** has different offices with specific tasks. Its headquarters determine the strategy of the Federal Employment Agency, develop products and programs for this purpose and manage the regional directorates. The regional directorates implement the Federal Employment Agency's strategy throughout Germany and manage the local public employment agencies. The 155 public employment agencies with their approximately 600 branches implement the tasks of the Federal Employment Agency onsite and provide cash benefits, consultation and job placement services to beneficiaries of the unemployment insurance. Finally, the Federal Employment Agency also works together with districts throughout Germany within joint facilities.¹⁶ Here it funds the cash benefits for securing subsistence (Unemployment Benefit II, Social Allowance, additional needs), the labor activation measures (counselling, placement, promotion of measures for integration into work), and contributions to the statutory health and long-term care insurance.¹⁷ The Federal Employment Agency provides orientation for the implementation of ALG II through directives and guidelines. However, the responsibility for actual implementation lies with the job centers. The Federal Employment Agency oversees the local concepts and their implementation through regular revision procedures and verifies whether they correspond to the directives of the legislature.

Regional and local-level institutions

The **job centers** are in charge of implementing and administering the ALG II. Due to the decentralized implementation of ALG II in Germany, they develop their own guidelines and procedures, taking into account the local context. For instance, they decide how to recruit their staff and deploy their personnel, choose which labor activation measures¹⁸ and social services to offer and which partners to work with. They also define the local implementation concept of case management, including how to determine which beneficiaries qualify for in-depth case management, how to regulate the incoming and outgoing processes, etc.

Job centers bundle different services into one single office, including eligibility determination, beneficiary enrollment, the disbursement of cash benefits, job placement, advice on professional training as well as other measures of integration into employment and, more generally, activation, and referral to other services and network partners such as debt counseling, addiction counseling or emergency housing assistance.

Most commonly, as in the case of the Job center Leipzig, they are joint facilities that connect the Federal Employment Agency and the local authority level (municipalities, towns and districts), which

¹⁴ Source: interview 24.03.22 and <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/bakarriere/arbeiten-bei-der-ba/it-professionals>.

¹⁵ Sources: <https://www.bmas.de/EN/Ministry/BMAS-at-a-glance/bmas-at-a-glance.html>, <https://www.bmas.de/DE/Ministerium/geschaeftsbereich-bmas.html>

¹⁶ Sources: <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/en/about-us>.

¹⁷ Source: <https://www.bmas.de/DE/Arbeit/Grundsicherung-Arbeitslosengeld-II/Organisation-der-Job-center/organisation-der-job-center.html>

¹⁸ E.g., job application trainings, foreign language courses, professional trainings, coaching to start a business, job creation schemes, wage subsidies to employers, start-up subsidies, etc.

covers the costs for housing and heating, the costs for social services (childcare, debt and addiction counselling, psychosocial support), special benefits (e.g. initial equipment for housing, clothing, pregnancy and childbirth, or the purchase and repair of orthopedic shoes) and education and participation benefits (e.g., day trips, group lunch, sports, culture and leisure). Approximately three out of four job centers in Germany are in joint facilities, whereas one out of four is run by the district alone (district job centers). The latter set their strategies independently from the Federal Employment Agency.

Job centers manage the labor market activation as well as the case management and social inclusion component of ALG II, but there are different responsible divisions or staff within the job centers in charge of specific services, such as provision of cash benefits, consultation, job placement, referral to services and in-depth case management (for further details, see section I.3.).

2. Provision of social and labor (and other) benefits and services

There is no national centralized mapping of benefits and services that are provided locally. The software CoSach (for further details, see section I.6.) represents such an attempt, as it allows users to search for labor activation and social integration measures in its database. However, in practice job center operators instead use locally developed knowledge management systems, which may encompass Excel sheets and table overviews and are not interoperable with VerBIS.¹⁹ However, the most important resource of knowledge repository are the integration specialists and case managers themselves, who are expected to have good knowledge of local services and benefits and share the information and contacts within their team. As for social services, centralized mapping is an even bigger challenge, as they are provided locally by the municipalities and thus are not under the responsibility of the federal government and its institutions, such as the Federal Employment Agency. There is no overview of social services throughout the country and, as for labor activation services, job centers develop their own information repositories or rely on knowledge sharing within teams.

The CMIS is sometimes deployed for collecting information about the use of services. This is mainly the case for labor activation services that are contracted and paid for by job centers (for further details, see section I. 5). Providers of these services can create an account to log into specific sections of VerBIS, where they can confirm the participation of beneficiaries in activities and report on the labor market integration progress.

Finally, operators can use the CMIS to record the need for specific labor activation measures and social services. This information is regularly evaluated by the job centers to adjust their strategy and steer the supply of services, e.g., by publishing calls for tenders for specific labor activation services and flagging the needs for social services to local governments.

The CMIS is not used for controlling operators' performance. Operators do not fill out time sheets or monitor the time spent per case. However, the aggregate data allows the Federal Employment Agency and the job centers to analyze the beneficiary population and their work, e.g., the total number of job placements.

3. Provision of Case Management Services

VerBIS was launched in 2005 by the Federal Employment Agency to replace its previous internal IT systems that support consultation and job placement with a new, integrated system.²⁰ It was

¹⁹ For instance, the Job center Leipzig has developed its own Excel overview with sheets listing the financed measures, the providers, and the number of (available) financed slots.

²⁰ Some of the internal IT systems used until then supporting consultation and job placement had been in use for over ten years and were increasingly reaching their technical limits when updates were required, therefore needing to be replaced. (Source: <https://www.presseportal.de/pm/6776/569617>).

introduced both in the public employment agencies and in the newly established job centers in joint facilities, thus encompassing ALG I and ALG II beneficiaries as target groups.

The CMIS was first run as a pilot in some branches and then scaled up nationwide. It was developed in cooperation with the consultancy company Accenture in the frame of the project “Virtual Labor Market” (*Virtueller Arbeitsmarkt*) that aimed to foster labor market transparency and improve the matching between labor market needs and jobseekers at a time of high unemployment. Thus, the CMIS was not developed for the primary aim of case management, but rather as a web-based support tool for operators in public employment agencies and job centers to promote the (re-)integration of the unemployed into the labor market. Later, the CMIS was further developed to include additional features for case management.

At the moment of the introduction of the CMIS, there was already quite extensive experience in case management. However, this experience was mainly to be found in the Social Welfare Offices, which were in charge of the former Social Assistance scheme that was in place until 2005 and targeted employable persons who were not entitled to unemployment insurance or unemployment assistance. At the Social Welfare Offices, case management was applied in its most comprehensive form of case work, providing professional social services with an emphasis on social integration.

With the reforms in 2003-2005, the former “Unemployment Assistance” (a tax-funded means-tested benefit granted for unlimited time to unemployed in economic need after the expiry of the unemployment insurance) and the Social Assistance schemes were restructured into two schemes targeting two groups of beneficiaries based on their work capability: ALG II for persons capable of working, and Social Assistance for those not capable of working. In the wake of this process, the target population of the first scheme became much larger than before and came to encompass more complex cases, such as persons who had never been employed. The newly created job centers recruited its operators from staff who had worked in the implementation of the unemployment assistance as well as in the social assistance scheme.

Today, job centers provide case management services with different levels of depth: (regular) case management by integration officers and in-depth case management by case managers. In **all** its forms of implementation, these services involve close contact between the operators (integration specialists or case managers) and beneficiaries, developing an integration plan, referral, monitoring, etc. Thus, case management in job centers can be categorized as case work, the most advanced level of integration of services.

ALG II beneficiaries are registered in VerBIS as part of the process of enrolling in the ALG II scheme. The registration takes place in a first interview, in which an integration specialist collects all relevant data from the beneficiary. This operator is responsible for the case management until the beneficiary leaves the scheme or is transferred to in-depth case management.

The integration specialist collects information following the so-called 4 phases model, which consists of:

1. Profiling
2. Identification of goals
3. Identification of strategies
4. Implementation and revision (for further details, see section II.2.).

During the profiling, the integration specialist assesses the specific strengths and potentials (qualifications, skills, competences, etc.) of the beneficiary as well as factors that influence the

integration prospects, identifying the key barriers to employment. In a further step, the integration specialist and the beneficiary identify the beneficiary's goal(s), which can be the placement into a job in the regular labor market or the subsidized employment sector, education (e.g., vocational training, university degree, etc.) or the stabilization of the current work situation. Based on the profiling and the identification of goals and in consultation with the beneficiary, the integration specialist develops an individual integration plan with strategies.

According to the directives of the Federal Employment Agency, if three or more barriers to employment are observed in key categories,²¹ the beneficiary is referred to in-depth case management to specialized case managers.^{22,23} Once these barriers are removed, the case is transferred back to integration specialists. Depending on a case-by-case assessment, the beneficiary's benefit community can be referred to the in-depth case management as well.

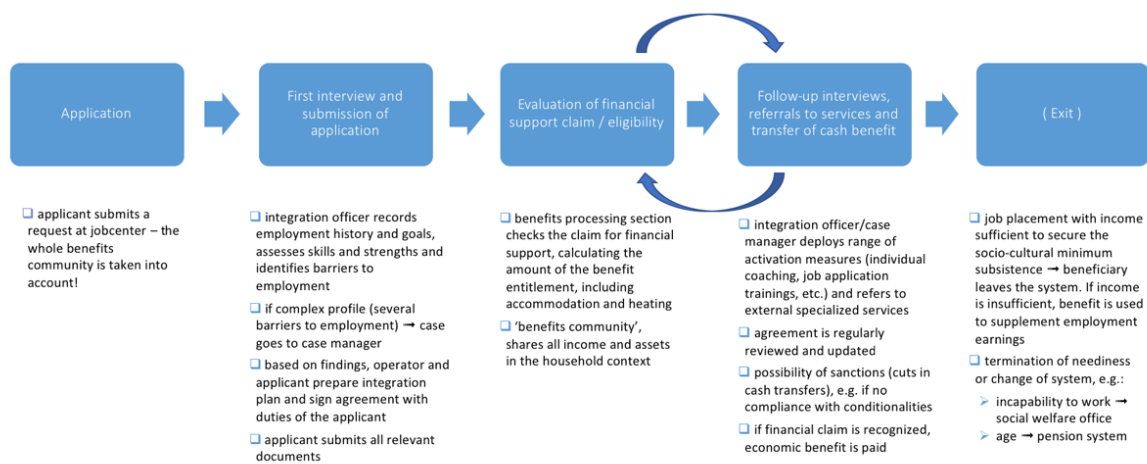


Figure 2: ALG II delivery path

Case managers put the focus of their case work on the improvement and stabilization of the beneficiary's situation rather than on swift placement into jobs.²⁴ Support services are provided following the principle of "help for self-help" (**Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe**), meaning that beneficiaries should be enabled to overcome the need for assistance by entering employment and earning sufficient income. In the shorter run, the main goals of intervention are promoting social inclusion (e.g., through participation in community projects) and independence, and strengthen self-responsibility as well as skills to improve the chances of employability. As a general orientation, the directive issued by the Federal Employment Agency headquarter stipulates a period of two years for this in-depth case management, before the

²¹ The directives define beneficiaries with multiple employment barriers as the main target group for in-depth case management. A particular emphasis is put on factors such as problems in the family (e.g. violence, separation), parenting/car e situation, physical and psychological problems (e.g. illness, anxiety, depression), addiction (drugs, alcohol, medication and online addiction), (risk of) homelessness, delinquency, financial problems (e.g. debt). The directive and local implementation concepts provide an orientation on when beneficiaries qualify for in-depth case management. However, in individual cases integration specialists can deviate from these criteria in consultation with their team leaders (for further details, see section II. 2.).

²² As in-depth case management is a cost-intensive measure, for the transfer from integration specialists to case managers it is essential that there is a positive prognosis that the barriers to placement can be removed and that this can only be implemented with the support of employment-oriented case management.

²³ Depending on the structure of the job center, case managers are either within the same team or a specific division. At the Job center Leipzig, each team has several integration specialists and two case managers.

²⁴ Nonetheless, even for this target group presenting multiple problems, the long-term goal of case management is the sustainable (re-)integration of ALG II beneficiaries into the labor market. Due to this emphasis on (re-)integration into work, the German approach can be considered a strongly workfare-oriented in international comparison.

case is transferred back to integration specialists. However, in practice the duration varies according to the individual needs of the beneficiary and can be extended until deemed necessary. The assignment of the case to in-depth case management is evaluated every sixth months and, if necessary, extended.

To ensure the referral to needs-based, high-quality services, case managers must have good knowledge of and contact with a wide range of organizations. The cases are complex and need close monitoring. As a consequence, job centers strive for a lower case-manager-to-beneficiary ratio than integration-specialists-to-beneficiary ratio. The directives of the Federal Employment Agency define a ratio of 1:75 for case managers and 1:114 for integration specialists. In practice, the number of cases can go beyond 95 for case managers and up to 250 for integration specialists.²⁵

The teams working in job centers are multi-professional and employ staff from various educational degrees and subject areas ranging from economics, to social science and law. Job centers also recruit from the University of Applied Labor Studies, which was founded in 2006 to qualify staff to become guidance experts for education, career, employment and labor market management.²⁶ To improve the quality of service of in-depth case management, job centers promote the possibility of completing a training program and certification as care and case managers.²⁷ The position as case manager requires specific soft skills due to the complex needs of the target group (long-term illness, addiction, debt, family problems, etc.) as well as the capacity to develop and maintain a network of partner organizations that offer labor activation and social services. Here, it is considered particularly important that case managers identify low-threshold services²⁸ based on the needs of the beneficiaries.

4. Supporting Tools for case management services

Most of the case management services are centralized in VerBIS, e.g., registration of cases, assessment, formulation of an integration plan, case monitoring and evaluation. Operators collect relevant information (e.g., contact information, target profession/work, qualifications, skills, competences, etc.) during the personal interviews and record it directly in VerBIS or transfer it into the system after the interview. The catalogue of required information in VerBIS can be used as a guideline for counseling but is not binding. It does not contain predefined questions, i.e., operators are free to follow their own approach and usually collect the information in a conversation during the counselling interviews. The way the CMIS is organized to register, assess, monitor and evaluate cases and formulate an integration plan is uniform for all job centers in joint facilities throughout the country. Next to the CMIS, some job centers develop their own supporting tools for case management based on their needs, e.g., tools to provide information to beneficiaries and make referrals.

VerBIS is connected through an interface with the software CoSach as well as the platform “planet profession” (**planet-berufe**) which allows operators to search for information about job openings, labor activation measures and job profiles for orientation (for further details, see section 1.6.). Conversely, there is no centralized catalogue of social services that are provided at the district level. To keep an overview of available services, job centers usually develop their own information management systems,

²⁵ The cases under responsibility of integration specialists include persons who are temporarily unemployed or who are employed but who need to top up their income through cash benefits to ensure they earn the subsistence level.

²⁶ Source: <http://www.hdba.de/en/university>

²⁷ This program is based on the standards of the German Society for Care and Case Management (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Care und Case Management*). The Federal Employment Agency has developed a corresponding qualification program in its Management Academy (*Führungsakademie*).

²⁸ Services such as drug, addiction and debt counseling may be low-threshold in terms of scheduling (the counseling appointment is arranged immediately during the interview with the beneficiary), location (counseling centers are easily accessible, e.g. integrated in the departments of the facilities), etc.

such as Excel sheets and digital as well as paper-based repositories with information, leaflets, etc., about the services and partners. These systems are not interoperable with VerBIS.

The CMIS allows information exchange with some service providers (health services, coaching, activation measures, vocational trainings), which are usually granted access to VerBIS when they are contracted by the job center. Through the CMIS these partners are informed when operators register beneficiaries for their services, can confirm their attendance and report on the progress. This information can then be accessed by the operator in charge. The information exchange is regulated through strict data privacy regulations. Particularly when it comes to sensitive data regarding health, debt, addiction, etc. beneficiaries must give their written authorization to the transfer of data. In individual cases, the Federal Employment Agency may even develop specific interfaces for data exchange in cooperation with external IT companies according to the requirements of the service providers.

For social services provided by the district level (childcare, debt and addiction counselling, psychosocial support) there is no direct information exchange through the CMIS. For these, job centers develop their own additional tools, such as paper-based referral forms.²⁹ However, direct communication between job center operators and social services is limited.³⁰

5. Collaboration mechanisms (as related to case management)

The mechanisms regulating collaboration between the entities providing services differ across Germany and depend on the type of service that is provided.

Labor activation measures are financed by the job center and mostly outsourced to external providers through public calls for tenders. The selection procedure is carried out by a team that encompasses operators from different divisions, who also represent the communication interface between the service providers and the job center. If contracted, the providers guarantee a specific number of available slots for ALG II beneficiaries. The type of measures is selected based on the needs that the job centers identify locally for their target population. They include job application trainings, foreign language courses, further trainings, professional trainings, coaching to start a business, etc. Another way for job centers to provide labor activation services is to issue a voucher that can be redeemed at private service providers, e.g., private employment agencies.

As for social services, there is no central directive that stipulates a formal procedure or content of cooperation agreements. In other words, job centers develop their own procedures (e.g. information exchange) and sign cooperation agreements with selected partners based on their local needs. The social services are financed by the district government and either provided by the local authorities themselves (e.g., through the Social Welfare Office, the Health Office and the Youth Office), or by non-governmental organizations or even church associations.³¹ Being public, social services are equally

²⁹ The Job center Leipzig, for instance, has developed such a form used for cases with addiction problems. The form is handed out to beneficiaries who are referred to addiction counseling centers. These confirm if the beneficiary has attended the consultation appointment (see attachment 1).

³⁰ This is for several reasons. For instance, ultimately it is the beneficiary who is seen as responsible for making use of the services that he or she is referred to and later informing the job center operator about the progress according to the principle of empowerment. Another reason is data privacy: For any type of communication between the job center and social service providers, beneficiaries need to sign a confidentiality release.

³¹ Sometimes, social services can also be physically situated *within* the job center, with the aim of bringing together different services in one place and lowering the threshold of access. This is the case, e.g., of the job center in Nuremberg, which hosts its debt counselling services in its buildings.

open to all citizens. Only seldomly is there a quota which is reserved for referrals from the local job center. However, there is regular exchange between the job center and the local authorities, in order to ensure that the service supply matches the needs of ALG II beneficiaries.

6. Information and technology

Despite recurrent debates in Germany to introduce a digital identity system (which could be then used for CMIS users as well), to date the country does not have such system out of data protection requirements and multi-level governance arrangements.³² However, when first registered in VerBIS, citizens receive a unique ID number which remains assigned to them even if they disenroll from the program.³³ With this ID number, job centers throughout Germany can access the citizen's data set, for instance when the beneficiary moves to another city.³⁴

Case management services provided by job centers in joint facilities are almost exclusively carried out using the CMIS VerBIS. However, VerBIS has an interface with other platforms or IT procedures developed and provided centrally by the Federal Employment Agency, such as:

- ALLEGRO (**Arbeitslosengeld II Leistungsverfahren Grundsicherung Online**, or "ALG II benefit procedure for basic security online"), an internal software application used by job centers in joint facilities for determining entitlement to ALG II benefits, calculating the benefit size and monitoring the payment process/payout;³⁵
- CoSach (**Computergestützte Sachbearbeitung**, or "computer-based case processing"), an internal software application provided by the Federal Employment Agency to local public employment agencies and job centers in joint facilities to search for job openings as well as labor activation measures.³⁶ (including the booking) in its database, with the possibility of filtering by region;
- Jobbörse (Job Board), Germany's major online job vacancy board that allows users to search for matching job positions or even traineeships in the country.³⁷ This is connected with VerBIS through a button and can also be accessed by citizens on <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/jobsuche/> (for further details, see below);
- Kursnet, a portal with an extensive database with vocational training and further education courses. This is connected with VerBIS through a button and can also be accessed by citizens on <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/kursnet>;
- planet-beruf.de (planet profession), an internet portal for career orientation for youth, parents and teachers, which is connected with VerBIS through a button and can also be accessed by citizens on <https://planet-beruf.de/>.

³² For instance, Germany has discussed the possibility of using the tax ID number as a unique ID number that citizens can use to connect to a citizen portal to access services provided by different social security agencies at the federal, district and municipal level. However, this would require the linking of data used by the different agencies and at the various levels, which would violate the data protection regulations in force. Moreover, in Germany there is a very clear and constitutionally binding division of responsibilities between the different governance levels, which is seen as under threat if a unique system connecting the different services is introduced.

³³ This ID number is used for VerBIS both by the local public employment agencies, when citizens apply for unemployment insurance, and by the job centers in joint facilities, when citizens apply for ALG II.

³⁴ This information sharing is possible only between job centers in joint facilities or between these job centers and the local public employment agencies, where as it does not work with district job centers.

³⁵ Integration specialists and case managers can access information provided by ALLEGRO via an online interface on the "customer data" page in VerBIS. Source: https://www.beispielklagen.de/IFG074/ALLEGRO_Handbuch_2014_11.pdf.

³⁶ To a lesser extent, CoSach is also used to search for and book social integration measures.

³⁷ Source: <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/en/job-board>.

Additionally, job centers may develop their own programs or information overviews.³⁸

VerBIS is mainly used by job center operators. However, beneficiaries themselves as well as third parties providing services (activation measures, coaching, health services) can access some sections of the CMIS and modify information.

Through the citizen's portal of the Federal Employment Agency <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/> (Figure 3) ALG II beneficiaries can access the online mailbox linked to the ALG II benefit, communicate changes regarding their personal and financial circumstance and other information collected in VerBIS (e.g., CV information, skills, know-how, etc.), apply for an extension of the ALG II benefit and access the job search tool, which can also be directly accessed on the webpage <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/jobsuche/> (Figure 4). The changes made by beneficiaries need to be confirmed by the responsible operator before the case data is saved in VerBIS.³⁹



Figure 3: Citizen's portal, Federal Employment Agency

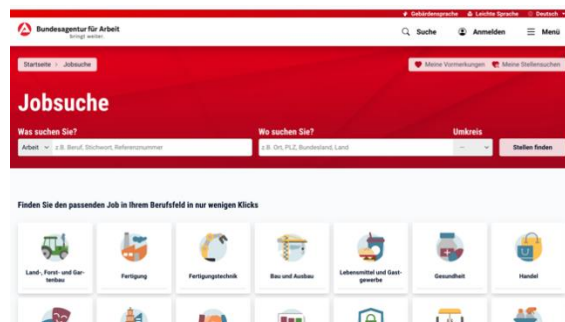


Figure 4: Job vacancy board, Federal Employment Agency

Third parties can access selected information from the data records in VerBIS after being granted access by the local job center. This usually happens after a contract is awarded. They log into the system through the webpage <https://jobboerse2.arbeitsagentur.de/verbis/login>. The access rights (read or write) are strictly regulated and summarized in written manuals⁴⁰. These manuals are put together by the Federal Employment Agency and provide information on how to insert and/or change information in VerBIS.

There is a strict legal framework regulating data security and privacy in VerBIS and, more generally, in case management services provided by job centers as well as other services provided by third parties. This encompasses the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the German Privacy Act (**Bundesdatenschutzgesetz**, BDSG), which provides for general rules and requirements for data processing in the public as well as in the private sector, the Social Codebooks I, II, III and X (e.g., §35 SCBI Social secrecy and §67a SCB X Collection of social data) and specific directives of the Federal Employment Agency, which regulate the flow of information between the Federal Employment Agency, the job centers and the beneficiaries. Transmission of data collected in VerBIS, including between job centers or to third parties, is only permitted if it is clearly regulated by law. In these cases, transmission may also be automatized. If, instead, there is no legal norm in place, the beneficiary must be informed which data will be passed on, to whom and for what purpose, and must explicitly agree to this in written form. The consent can be revoked at any time.

³⁸ For instance, the Job center Leipzig developed an Excel-based document with sheets listing activation measures and support services with the number of available places.

³⁹ These e-services are only accessible to beneficiaries who have already been registered in VerBIS by job center operators. Conversely, for persons applying to ALG I, the citizen's platform allows them to insert detailed information (e.g., on work experience, skills, know-how), book appointments, etc. even if they have not yet been registered in VerBIS by operators in their local public employment agency.

⁴⁰ For instance, service providers offering job coaching, job placement, etc. have read access to the personal and contact data, saved job vacancies and job recommendations, and write access to the sections with the CV, strength analysis and job wanted notices.

When it comes to particularly sensitive data, e.g., the use of social services (debt and addiction counselling, psychosocial support), the information exchange process between the job center and the service providers is not automatized and organized differently in each job center.⁴¹

II. VerBIS AND ITS CORE MODULES

1. Core features / modules of VerBIS at a glance

Standard modules/features	VerBIS	Short description
Tenancy	Multi-tenant	301 job centers in joint facilities and 155 local public employment agencies are the tenants.
Operational modality	Online only	VerBIS does not operate offline.
Device compatibility	PC, smartphones and tablets	
User management	Internal	
Logging and auditing of user actions	Logging of user actions	The CMIS tracks any action/changes made by operators for the purpose of logging actions. The tracking is not used for controlling operators' performance.
Notifications (email, SMS)	External: basic, if activated by beneficiaries Internal: yes	Email or SMS to remind beneficiaries of appointments. Notifications of internal referral from integration specialist to case manager; operators can set task reminders.
Case management level	Advanced	Case work
Screening	Out of scope	
Profiling	Yes	In-depth assessment (individual level) for all beneficiaries capable of working.
Assessment	Out of scope	Profiling already covers an in-depth assessment.

⁴¹ The Job center Leipzig, for instance, has developed a paper-based referral form used for cases with addiction problems. The form is handed out to beneficiaries who are referred to addiction counseling centers. These confirm if the beneficiary has attended the consultation appointment.

Intervention Plan	Yes	Intervention plan design, objective setting (including tasks to be completed by beneficiaries, time frame and support given to them by other services providers), timeline, and signing of the Integration Agreement.
Meetings Management	Yes	Operators can set meetings with beneficiaries and get reminders.

Evaluation:

Referrals	Yes, intermediate	Referrals to labor activation measures (external providers can access VerBIS); in individual cases, the Federal Employment Agency develops interfaces for data exchange interoperable with VerBIS according to the requirements of the service providers; referrals to social services not possible through VerBIS.
Tickets, ticketing	Yes	Operators are supported by a user help desk service with technical inquiries about VerBIS and other IT procedures of the Federal Employment Agency.
Catalogue of benefits and services	Partly	Catalogue of selected benefits and services (mainly labor activation) accessible through an interface with other platforms or IT procedures (CoSach, Jobbörse, etc.).
Upload of documents	Yes	Upload by operators and service providers possible.
Online training material	Yes	User manuals, video tutorials, e-learning modules.
Help desk	Yes	Dedicated phone help desk for operators to receive IT-support.
FAQs	Yes	

Other standard functions:

Beneficiaries' portal	Yes	The portal has an interface with VerBIS that allows beneficiaries to access and change some information. Some job centers developed apps that are compatible with smartphones and tablets.
Multilanguage support	Partial	VerBIS has no Multilanguage support. The citizen's portal displays part of the content in English and Arabic
Data warehouse	Yes	
Dashboard	Yes	

2. Core features/modules of VerBIS more in detail

System Architecture, tenancy and users

VerBIS is a multi-tenant web application. Tenants are the public employment agencies as well as job centers in joint facilities.

Operational modalities

VerBIS is a browser-based software that works only in online mode (with an active internet connection). It works on PCs as well as other devices, such as tablets and mobile phones. In the case of ALG II, job center operators work from their desktop or laptop at their office desks and beneficiaries attend the pre-assessment or subsequent monitoring appointments in person (during the COVID-19 pandemic, operators worked from home, providing counselling by phone, via email or via digital channels such as the citizen's portal and contact forms).

General system workflow

To apply for ALG II, any verbal or written declaration of intent by a person stating that he or she would like to receive ALG II benefits is sufficient to start the procedure of eligibility check. This can be done, e.g., by submitting an online request or by going in person to the responsible local job center. In both cases, applicants fill out a form with personal data, including information about their financial and employment situation, and are then invited to a personal interview. Cases are assigned to teams and specific operators within those on the basis of locally agreed distribution keys. This assignment takes place based on criteria such as belonging to a special group of people (e.g. young people under 25, severely disabled, etc.), address, name or final digit of the beneficiary's identification number. The applicant is then invited to a personal counseling interview with an integration specialist, who registers the applicant in VerBIS and either directly inserts the required information in the CMIS during the consultation or transfers the information afterwards.

Beneficiaries are registered individually, i.e. a case is opened for each person capable of working, even in families.⁴² To connect the information of beneficiaries belonging to the same benefit community, cases are linked through a common identification number in VerBIS.⁴³

⁴² Information about family members who are not capable of working (e.g., children, partners with serious illnesses) is instead mainly recorded in comment fields during the identification and assessment of needs and conditions of the beneficiary capable of working.

The CMIS allows the registration and management of several data, which is organized into different sections.

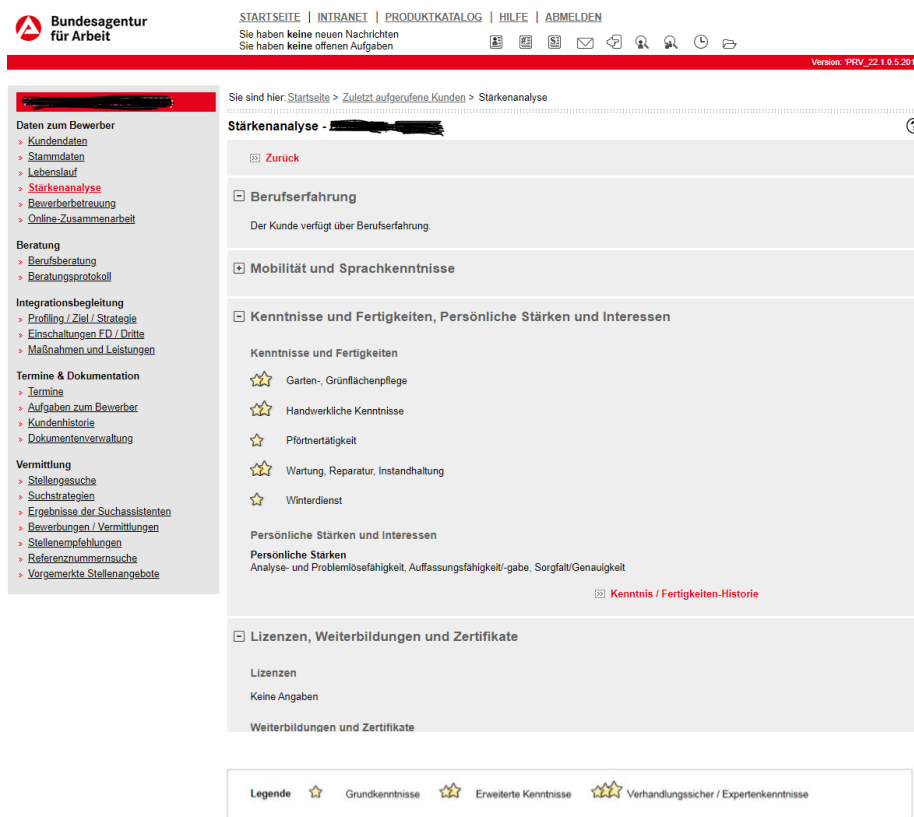


Figure 5: Section “strength analysis” in VerBIS

In the section “applicant data”, the job center operator registers the beneficiary’s personal and contact information, residency status, information on educational background and certificates, work experience, skills, know-how, personal strengths and interests, leadership competencies as well as the participation in trainings and labor activation measures.⁴⁴ For each work experience declared, VerBIS suggests a list of skills and know-how related to the specific job that the integration specialist can select from, indicating the level of expertise (Figure 5). The section applicant data also indicates the responsible job center and operator (either an integration specialist or case manager) and provides the contact data (team and phone number) through a hyperlink.⁴⁵ The section “counselling” bundles information on career counselling and allows to record counselling minutes. The section “appointments and documentation” allows to manage appointments with the beneficiary, relevant documents and tasks

⁴³ While in some job centers members of one family are followed by the same responsible operator, in order to promote a holistic activation of the whole benefit community, other job centers do not have this systemic approach (one family may have several responsible operators) or leave the decision up to the benefit community.

⁴⁴ The section “applicantdata” has different sub-sections. The sub-section “customerdata” provides basic information about the beneficiary at a glance, including personal data, the responsible job center and job center operator and published job wanted advertisements. The sub-section “basedata” contains the beneficiary’s personal and contact information (e.g., birth date, birthplace, address, etc.), user account information, and residence title of immigrated beneficiaries. The sub-section “curriculumvitae” bundles key information on the educational and professional background, work experiences as well as participation in trainings and labor activation measures. The sub-section “strengthanalysis” lists information on work experience, skills, know-how, personal strengths and interests, leadership competencies, certificates, etc.

⁴⁵ In this way, external service providers that have been granted access to VerBIS (for further details, see section I.6.) can take up contact with the responsible operator.

linked to counseling. In the section “placement”, all the information and tasks concerning job placement (job advertisements, submitted applications, successful job placements, etc.) are registered. Finally, the section “integration support” bundles detailed information about the main steps implemented to (re-)integrate the beneficiary into the labor market. It is therefore the most relevant as well as the most used CMIS section for case management.

The process of (re-)integration is oriented at the so-called 4 phases model, which guides the first and follow-up interviews. The four phases are:

1. Profiling
2. Identification of goals
3. Identification of strategies
4. Implementation and revision

Through profiling, the integration specialist assesses factors that influence the integration prospects and identifies the barriers to employment (**Handlungsbedarfe**, also known as **Vermittlungshemmnisse**). These factors are divided in four key categories:

1. Qualification (e.g., educational background, professional qualifications and experience, language skills)
2. Capability (health problems, social and professional behavior, intellectual performance)
3. Motivation (self-initiative/work attitude, willingness to learn and get further education)
4. Environmental factors (e.g., personal conditions, local mobility [ability], housing situation, family situation and care, financial situation)

Based on this assessment and the evaluation of the labor market conditions (demand for target occupation, demand for occupational field), beneficiaries are divided into two profile groups depending on whether a (re-)integration into the regular labor market within 12 months is considered likely (profiles close to the labor market) or not (complex profiles).

In a further step, the integration specialist and the beneficiary identify the beneficiary’s goal(s), which can be the placement into a job in the regular labor market or the subsidized employment sector, education (e.g., vocational training, university degree, etc.) or the stabilization of the current work situation.

Based on the profiling and the identification of goals and in consultation with the beneficiary, the integration specialist develops an individual integration plan, selecting strategies (**Handlungsstrategien**) for each of the identified barriers to employment.⁴⁶ from a default catalogue in VerBIS.⁴⁷ Further details in additional comment fields outline the specific strategy. For each strategy, a time frame is selected.

⁴⁶ E.g., address psychological or health issues, improve the housing situation, tackle problems in the family, overcome motivational hurdles, develop specific personal or technical capabilities through trainings, etc.)

⁴⁷ As this information is standardized, job centers can evaluate the data, in order to get an overview of the structure of the served population and set strategic priorities.

Profiling - [REDACTED]

Speichern | Beratungsvermerk erstellen | Maßnahmefinder in COSACH aufrufen | planet-beruf aufrufen
Abbrechen

Ziel **Goal**

Ziel *
Aufnahme Tätigkeit jenseits 1. Arbeitsmarkt

Zielberuf/-tätigkeit

Zielberuf/-tätigkeit
Altenpflegehelfer/in

Art der Beschäftigung *
Arbeit/ Künstler

Schlagwortsuche nach Zielberuf/-tätigkeit
Zielberuf ändern

Integrationsplan **Integrationplan**

Barrier	Handlungsbedarf	Handlungsstrategie	Strateg	Von	Bis	Aktionen
FM	Finanzielle Situation	Finanzielle Situation stabilisieren		16.03.2022		[edit] [HS] [HS] [X]
FM	Wohnsituation	Wohnsituation stabilisieren		16.03.2022		[edit] [HS] [HS] [X]
FM	Arbeits- und Sozialverhalten	Arbeitsverhalten und Sozialverhalten stärken		16.03.2022		[edit] [HS] [HS] [X]
FM	Vermittlungsrelevante gesundheitliche Einschränkungen	Leistungsfähigkeit fördern		16.03.2022		[edit] [HS] [HS] [X]

Handlungsbedarfe und Handlungsstrategien bearbeiten | Übergreifende Handlungsstrategie erfassen

Kommentar/ zusätzliche Erläuterung zu Handlungsbedarfen
*erheblich eingeschränkte psychische Leistungsfähigkeit-> Diagnosen wurden bereits gestellt, aber noch unbehandelt-> will sich erst um Wohnraum kümmern und dann sich mit Behandlungsmöglichkeiten auseinandersetzen

Figure 6: Profiling in VerBIS

According to the directives of the Federal Employment Agency, if three or more barriers to employment are observed in the key categories capability and/or environmental factors and it is unlikely, based to the result of the profiling, that the beneficiary can be integrated into the labor market within 12 months, the beneficiary is referred to specialized case managers...⁴⁸ VerBIS supports this decision-making process by sending a task notice that flags the beneficiary as a candidate for case management to the operator conducting the interview.⁴⁹ The CMIS allows integration specialists to select a case manager from their team. In this case, the responsible case manager is informed through an automated task notice. The job center's local implementation concept sets out whether and to what extent members of the benefit community are referred to case management as well. In the absence there of, the referral is decided on a case-by-case basis.

⁴⁸ Depending on the structure of the job center, case managers are either within the same team or a specific division. At the Job center Leipzig, each team has several integration specialists and two case managers, to ensure a smooth referral of the beneficiary from integration specialist to case manager.

⁴⁹ In individual cases, integration specialists can refer to case management even if these formal admission criteria are not met, e.g., if the beneficiary shows serious behavioral problems or is going through a crisis situation. In these cases, the referral into case management needs to be approved by the responsible team leader and the reasons need to be documented in VerBIS.

Case managers carry out a second in-depth assessment in one or more comprehensive interviews, in which the information collected by the integration specialist is further complemented and more detailed questions are asked. This information can be recorded in VerBIS only with the beneficiary's consent due to the sensitivity of data, and is saved in a separate section of the profiling accessible only to the responsible case manager and his/her replacement. The integration plan is more detailed as well: for each strategy, case managers can select from specific strengths of the beneficiary (assessed in the strength analysis) that are helpful for implementing the strategy, indicate network partners (e.g., social service providers) and formulate sub-targets/activities (Figure 7). These can be further specified, a deadline and listing the responsible actor for each planned activity (case manager, beneficiary or external service providers), in order to better coordinate the delivery of support services, as well as creating tasks with reminders (Figure 8), which are then displayed in the case manager's calendar.

Figure 7: Strategy setting in case management

Figure 8: Strategies, sub-targets and activities

To promote a participatory approach, the beneficiary is usually asked to review the strength analysis, the profiling information, and the integration plan, and receives a printout of the latter. Phases 1) to 3) result in an integration agreement that outlines the objectives of integration (e.g., into employment, vocational training or further training), the services provided by the job center as well as the beneficiary's own efforts and duties.⁵⁰ In its in-depth case management section, VerBIS allows to transfer the information of the integration plan into the integration agreement.

The implemented strategies are regularly reviewed throughout the integration and placement process and tailored to changing needs. Operators monitor the case through regular counselling appointments, in which the progress of the integration plan is evaluated. Operators can use VerBIS to support monitoring by setting reminders and tasks for each beneficiary and planned activity. In such cases, activity deadlines are flagged in the operator's calendar. However, the CMIS does not provide a list of all upcoming deadlines for the different beneficiaries bundled in one general overview.

⁵⁰ These are conditionalities that the beneficiary and his or her benefit community need to comply with in order to receive the benefits. Non-compliance can be sanctioned through cuts in the cash transfers.

The case is closed in case of job placement with income that is sufficient to secure the socio-cultural minimum subsistence.⁵¹ However, the case number remains assigned to the beneficiary even after disenrollment from the program, in order to retrieve the data in case of future enrollment.

3. Interaction with beneficiaries

ALG II beneficiaries cannot directly access VerBIS. However, through the citizen's portal <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/>, which has an interface with VerBIS, they can access and modify some information about their case (e.g., overview of work experience, skills and know-how including the level of expertise. For further details, see section I.6.), activate e-mail notifications to be informed about new notifications and mailbox messages in the citizen's portal by email, get an overview of upcoming appointments and enable SMS notifications for automatized reminders.

4. Data warehouse

VerBIS is connected to a data warehouse housed in the Federal Employment Agency. VerBIS data are sent to the data warehouse daily, where they are anonymized for micro-data analysis or are aggregated and used for national as well as regional labor market analysis and reporting. Interactive visualizations are also available. The main findings are presented monthly in the labor market press conference of the Federal Employment Agency.

5. Dashboard(s)

Local public employment agencies and job centers in joint facilities can access the statistics of the Federal Employment Agency through an internal dashboard. This monitors indicators such as the unemployment rate, participation in labor activation measures, successful placements into employment, etc. In addition to the internal dashboard, VerBIS data, via the data warehouse, feeds an external dashboard that can be accessed online on <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/>. Interactive visualizations are available in both the internal and the external dashboard (Figure 9).

⁵¹ If the income is insufficient, beneficiaries keep receiving cash transfers to supplement employment earnings, but counselling through operators is less common.

Arbeitslosigkeit von Frauen und Männern: Diagramme

Region: Deutschland
Gebietsstand: Mai 2022
Berichtsmonat: Mai 2022

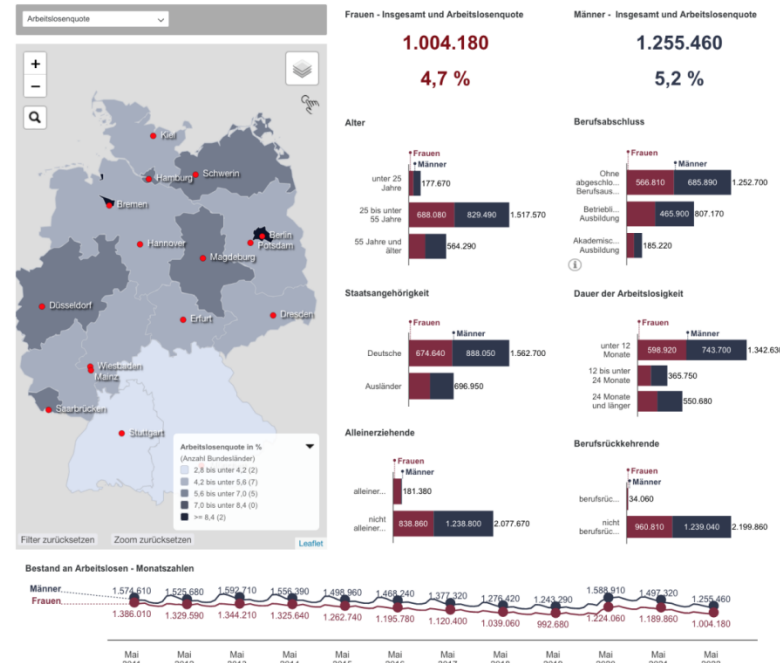


Figure 9: "Unemployment of women and men". External dashboard of the Federal Employment Agency. Source: <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/DE/Navigation/Statistiken/Interaktive-Statistiken/Frauen-und-Maenner/Frauen-und-Maenner-Nav.html>

6. Help desk functions and tutorials

There is a dedicated phone help desk for the CMIS, where VerBIS users receive IT support. This system works with a three-level approach, in which the problem, if unsolved, is forwarded to an upper level of advice. Additionally, in every job center some operators participate in trainings to gain in-depth knowledge of the IT system. They provide local support, inform the local team about the latest updates and new features. This specialized staff is rewarded through financial benefits.

Moreover, there is a wide range of operational manuals, FAQs, self-learning programs on the digital platform BA Lernwelt ("Learning World of the Federal Employment Agency") and a knowledge database in which topics can be searched through keyword search. Most of these are written materials, but video-based formats such as tutorials are increasingly used.

7. What does the CMIS not cover

Application process, eligibility check, payment process, direct referral to social services.

8. Glossary

Basic Income Support for Jobseekers:

Largest minimum income scheme in Germany. It targets persons in need capable of working with no entitlement to the contribution-based unemployment insurance benefit (Unemployment Benefit I) or whose claims have

Federal Employment Agency:

National level institution. Its headquarters determine the strategy and develop products and programs for this purpose. The regional directorates implement the strategy throughout Germany and manage the local public

expired. To be eligible, applicants must have regular residence in Germany and be in need, meaning that the income is not sufficient to secure the material means that are indispensable for the physical existence and a minimum of participation in social, cultural and political life.

Benefit community:

Consists of at least one person capable of work eligible for ALG II, his/her partner, and the unmarried children under 25 years living in the household. Children are considered as part of the benefit community only if they cannot meet their requirements through their own income or funds themselves.

Capable of working:

People are considered capable of working if they can work at least three hours a day and are not prevented from doing so for the foreseeable future by illness or disability. Work capability is evaluated from a medical and psychological standpoint. As a general rule, it is assumed that people of working age (from age 15 until the statutory standard retirement age) are capable of working.

Case management (regular and in-depth):

Encompasses case management services with different level of depth: (regular) case management by integration officers and in depth case management by case managers. These differ in so far as in-depth case management implies a closer case monitoring and contact between the operator and the beneficiary and a more comprehensive approach in addressing barriers to employment.

Employment barriers:

Are obstacles to successful placement. They encompass factors such as problems in the family (e.g., violence, separation), parenting/care situation, physical and psychological problems (e.g., illness, anxiety, depression), addiction (drugs, alcohol, medication and online addiction), (risk of) homelessness, delinquency, financial problems (e.g., debt). They determine when a case is

employment agencies. Finally, it works together with the district level within job centers in joint facilities, funding the cash benefits for securing subsistence, the labor activation measures, and contributions to the statutory health and long-term care insurance. It also provides orientation for the implementation of ALG II through directives and guidelines.

Integration specialists:

Job center operators in charge of regular case management. They usually carry out the first interview with the applicant and are responsible for the case either until it is closed, i.e. until job placement with income sufficient to secure the socio-cultural minimum subsistence, or until the case is internally referred to specialized case managers.

Job centers in joint facilities:

Joint institutions (**gemeinsame Einrichtungen**) of the Federal Employment Agency and a municipality, town or districts, which thus connect the federal and the local authority level. In Germany there are also so-called “district job centers”, which are run by the district alone. Approximately three out of four job centers are joint facilities.

Job center operators:

Carry out the counseling interviews, refer the beneficiaries to social services and/or providers of labor activation measures, etc. and are in charge of the case management. They can be divided into integration specialists, who are responsible for the regular case management, and case managers, who are in charge of in-depth case management.

Labor activation services:

Measures that are intended to improve the chances of ALG II beneficiaries to get a job. They include job application trainings, foreign language courses, further trainings, professional trainings, coaching to start a business, etc. Another way for job centers to provide labor activation services is to issue a voucher that can be redeemed at private service providers, e.g., private employment agencies.

transferred from regular to in-depth case management.

Social allowance:

Benefit that members of an ALG II benefit community receive if they are not themselves capable of working (e.g., children below the working age of 15 years).

Public employment agencies:

Implement the tasks of the Federal Employment Agency at the local level and provide cash benefits, consultation and job placement services to beneficiaries of the unemployment insurance.

Case managers:

Specialized job center operators in charge of in-depth case management. They are responsible for a case from the point in which this is transferred to them from integration specialists until the case goes back to the integration officer.

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