

# IMPROVING TVET POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: KEY FINDINGS FROM DAKCHYATA'S ANNUAL TVET POLICY REFORM REVIEW 2018

## Summary

A well-functioning, market-relevant Technical Vocational and Education Training (TVET) system contributes to increased economic growth and national prosperity. The Government of Nepal is committed to investing in skills development and creating employment opportunities to reduce poverty.

The TVET policy 2012 is a step towards this effort by the Government, setting the foundation for better TVET expansion and access, relevance, quality, and sustainability through the establishment of a comprehensive fund sharing mechanism. Progress is beginning to happen but extensive, coordinated support from the relevant ministries, the private sector and development partners is required to ensure a cohesive and effective TVET system that delivers high quality, labour market-relevant training across Nepal.

The Government is committed to TVET reform. However, TVET interventions need to be monitored, to ensure that progress 'on the ground' is documented. Through the TVET Annual Reform Review, the Dakchyata programme supports the Government in taking stock of progress made on an annual basis in policy implementation and providing recommendations that can be applicable for wider TVET stakeholders.

This policy brief presents the findings of the 2018 review, the first of these Annual Reform Reviews. It finds that, while there has been significant improvement in policy implementation, extensive support is still required to create a coordinated and effective TVET system which ensures both quality and relevance, and effective private sector engagement within TVET in Nepal.

For this, regular monitoring of progress of TVET reforms - policy implementation status, relevancy, quality assurance, curriculum relevancy, the role of private sector, recognition of prior learning and capacity development, is essential.

The next annual review will be undertaken in 2019, following which a comparative analysis will be conducted. A final review will take place in 2020, providing an overview of the previous three years of TVET reform efforts and provide consolidated recommendations for wider TVET stakeholders.

The findings from the study provide useful recommendations that can be generally applied to support TVET policy reform.

# Key Findings

## Limited progress in translating policy into action

A Government-led series of policy dialogues has been effective in disseminating information on TVET policy and collecting feedback for policy reform. This has promoted collaboration, facilitated coordination and helped to identify policy gaps. However, without a strong policy implementation plan, and mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on policy implementation, there has been limited progress in translating policy into action.

While most stakeholders are aware of TVET policy, it can be argued that not all employment sectors have the same level of understanding, particularly at the local level. However, Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) and Inter-ministerial Technical Committee, previous coordination mechanisms led by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, were considered effective in paving way for coordinated planning and implementation of TVET policy.

## Minimum use of data and evidence by TVET institutions to strengthen relevance and improve their offer

Developing a Labour Market Information System (LMIS) has been a priority of the government for some time, to bring uniformity in capturing data. However, the current management information system (MIS-TVET) is only designed to provide supply information. As such, many skills development programmes are operating with limited or unreliable data on human resource needs or graduate information (via tracer studies), limiting the effectiveness of such programmes to train individuals to meet the skills needs of the job market.

CTEVT often uses sector-specific surveys of labour market needs, rather than surveys providing an overall understanding of skills demands, leading to complaints from industry that despite the high number of skills training programmes, demands are still unmet.

## Potential for greater involvement from business and industry – robust private sector engagement required

Private sector representatives are already involved in various aspects of TVET such as curriculum development, the development of occupational standards, and provision of on-the-job placements. However, those within the private sector often voice concern that their inputs are often limited to superficial consultations and they usually have

very little engagement in implementation. Similar concerns have been noted regarding their role in TVET policy making. However, private sector involvement in the previous Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) was a positive attempt which encouraged many to take part in TVET events. Typically, private sector inputs are restricted to the supply side rather than addressing demand, and many see ample scope for more extensive and meaningful engagement.

## Standards and classifications are inconsistently developed and used

Occupational competency standards are not widely accepted and do not directly connect with curricula or assessment. Further, the National Classification Standard of Occupations has not been updated in over three decades and does not relate to competence, skills and training standards, which are set according to international norms.

## Constraints in approaches to learning

Whilst there are national curriculum frameworks for both formal and informal TVET courses, the latter is not consistently followed, and there are varying degrees of involvement in revisions from training institutions, business and industry, and government. Training institutions often focus more on theory which makes it difficult for graduates to enter the workforce with the competence and confidence expected by employers. Some sectors provide on-the-job training and apprenticeships, but this is not the norm across all industries.

## Limited flexibility in pathways to vocational qualifications

Informal learning, such as the inheritance of skills and knowledge from generation-to-generation, has a long history in the Nepali context but the Recognition of Prior Learning certificate is not yet widely accepted. More broadly, there is no system for transferring credits, although the Skills Sector Committee is currently working with two sectors (construction and hospitality) to change this. This results in limited flexibility for trainees in accessing different pathways to vocational qualifications.

## Limited Public-Private Sector coordination in Human Resource Development (HRD) system in TVET

Big industries often do have a system of Human Resource Development (HRD) but do not tend to be well-coordinated, while small industries/businesses in Nepal are usually centred in family holdings, leading to limited public-private sector coordination

in HRD. This problem is exacerbated further by the easy access of skilled workers from across the border. The private sector needs to coordinate better and understand the value of investing in HRD. Effort must be made from both public and private sectors to build a robust system that addresses both quality and demand of skilled workers.

### **Broad concern for the quality of TVET programming**

Key stakeholders understand that the focus on the expansion of TVET programming and adaption of supply-driven approaches has undermined building strong, systemic quality assurance mechanisms. Industry involvement in TVET is limited and human resources generally lack efficiency, effectiveness and delivery capacity.

## **Recommendations**

### **Revise the TVET policy in line with the constitution through a collaborative process**

CTEVT should recommend to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, to update the TVET policy to reflect constitutional intentions. Awareness, advocacy and debating activities are key elements of policy formation and should continue so that all key stakeholders are aware of the changes and are able to access the right information at the right time. CTEVT, with support from other TVET providers, needs to be able to better explain to private sector the benefits of investing in skills development and training, to inspire them to invest in human resource development (HRD). Donor support for HRD should be institutionalised, rather than existing as a present on a project-by-project basis.

### **Finalise TVET governance structures**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should finalise the overall TVET governance structure so that municipalities, provinces and federal states are clear on their responsibilities. Each province should have its own CTEVT office and a TVET council with representation from key stakeholders at that level, including business and industry. The government should be encouraging development partners to support provincial and local-level development of TVET.

### **Develop a roadmap to translate policy into action**

A roadmap should be developed so everyone involved in strengthening TVET policy understands their role and responsibilities in implementation and to ensure a coordinated effort to achieve this. The roadmap should include a plan to separate formal TVET programmes from other education streams in schools.

### **Gather and manage TVET information to bridge gaps in knowledge sharing**

CTEVT should take responsibility to gather both supply and demand information (including information on other TVET providers), managed through the information management system. This will also require strengthening the Labour Market Information System (LMIS) at a provincial level so it better connects with municipalities and employers and is of more use to jobseekers.

### **Standardise tracer studies**

Government should be allocating resources for annual tracer studies, and CTEVT should make tracer studies mandatory for all training providers to be able to show the impact of their programmes. Support must be provided to ensure all training providers are able to conduct tracer studies to an agreed standard and with relevant information that can be uploaded to the Labour Market Information System.

### **Update and align standards with the contemporary labour market landscape**

CTEVT, with support from the private sector, should monitor labour market trends and ensure that the Classification of Occupations and the Occupational Competency Standards are both continually updated to meet the evolving needs of business and industry. Curriculum development and competence, skills and training standards should also be revised in line with this in order to keep pace with international good practice. These key resources should be shared with TVET stakeholders and updated on a regular basis.

## **Establish a nationally-agreed quality assurance framework**

A quality assurance model should be developed and implemented in an integrated manner, with accompanying manuals for training key stakeholders. This framework should strengthen the quality of TVET programming and complement a performance-based incentives and rewards scheme for institutions, trainer licensing, accreditation, a competency assessment system and follow up tracer studies. In addition, there should be regulation to support partnership with business and industry to promote work-based learning for trainees.

## **Enable greater mobility amongst vocational students with clear, streamlined pathways**

Agreement between key stakeholders on horizontal and vertical mobility requirements should be sought, and then used as the basis for designing and developing a system which allows trainees to transfer and accumulate credits to meet qualification requirements. As part of this, CTEVT and NSTB should also develop assessment standards for Recognition of Prior Learning in order to provide further options for mobility.

## **Match the rate of TVET sector expansion with strengthening the capacity to deliver quality technical and vocational education and training**

To sustain efforts to strengthen and improve the TVET sector in Nepal will require developing sectoral leaders and training professionals with TVET specialisation. The focus should be on government training institutions and ensuring quality instruction for trainers to deliver high-quality training. Government and development partners should consider supporting universities to develop and run degree programmes in occupational and technical vocational areas.

## **Greater private sector involvement in TVET**

Strengthened guidelines and coordination mechanisms for private sector participation in TVET are needed. Further clarity is required to specify the role of private sector in TVET policy. Additionally, mechanisms for partnerships, incentives and fora for frequent dialogues to increase private sector involvement should be prioritised. Models of public-private partnerships that offer incentives for partnership in skills with business and industry and promote work-based learning are imperative. This will also pave the way for inputs in the much-needed TVET PPP policy guidelines. Joint monitoring by CTEVT and private sector should be initiated in order to identify and address gaps. Finally, sector skills committee should be given further support to operate more effectively.

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This Policy Brief is based on a qualitative review study that gathered information on the status of TVET policy implementation, its relevance to labour market demands and quality assurance mechanisms, employer engagements and governance conducted by Dakchyata in 2018. The study reviewed relevant documentation, including research studies, and supplemented this understanding with key informant interviews from stakeholders in relevant ministries, the private sector, training providers and development partners.

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