

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION AND POLICY REFORM TVET IN NEPAL 2017-2020

Introduction

The *Dakchyata: TVET Practical Partnership* programme, funded by the European Union and delivered by the British Council, has undertaken annual progress reviews on the status of TVET policy implementation in Nepal on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) since 2017.

On completion of the fourth and final Dakchyata-led annual review in 2020, a comparative analysis of the findings from across the four years was developed to provide insights and understanding by identifying patterns of progress over the years from 2017-2020.

Dakchyata engaged a team of experts in TVET to undertake these annual assignments in coordination with the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) division of Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT).

This Information Brief provides a digest of the team's final report and highlights headline findings of comparative analysis over 19 key performance areas ranging from TVET policy implementation, to effective coordination mechanisms in TVET.

Main findings from the comparative study

TVET Policy Implementation: Awareness building on policy implementation stalled after 2018, which may be explained by a refocusing at MoEST on the policy revision process. New guidelines for effective implementation of TVET policy were developed in 2019 and there has been progress in addressing issues around expansion, access, relevancy, and inclusion. However, there has been little progress in securing sustainable TVET funding mechanisms and the planned establishment of a national TVET fund.

Supporting actions: Functional roles and responsibilities of authorities of central, provincial, and local government should be made clear through the TVET Act.

National TVET Strategy and Roadmap: Following the ADB supported strategy and roadmap development in 2018, there has been very little progress. Further, CTEVT had no strategic plan after 2018 and there was no national level strategic plan. The situation has improved since, with TVET policy revisions, the development of a 2020-24 strategic plan drafted by CTEVT and MoEST, and preparations underway for drafting a 10-year TVET Sector Strategic Plan to implement the integrated 2019 Education Policy. Enforcement of the policy will promote policy dissemination and development of the road map and strategic plan.

Supporting actions: Development of strategic plans, supported by detailed action plans, should be mandatory for all agencies responsible for TVET. Also, MoEST's TVET division should activate the inter-ministerial coordination and technical committee strategic plans to ensure coordinated planning and M&E.

Federalisation: All stakeholders have made efforts to develop more federalized approaches, including giving responsibility for training centres to provincial governments, and by expanding access at a provincial level. Also, CTEVT is expanding TVET access with the strategic objective of implementing all activities in the municipalities, both rural and urban, over the next five years. However, lack of progress in approving the drafted TVET Act amendment is ultimately limiting a federal approach.

Supporting actions: New laws and regulations are needed to promote the spirit of federalism and decentralise power and authority.

Establishment of TVET institutions: There appears to be some common criteria for establishing TVET institutions and promoting equitable access and inclusiveness in TVET, but TVET implementers lack similar strategies and there is no commonly accepted national system.

Also, despite the impressive speed of TVET expansion, there is a need to balance geographical coverage and TVET access and programme selection with employment demands in all provinces.

Supporting actions: Local need should be mapped before new programmes are established; and the selection of TVET programmes and decisions to create new training institutions should be founded on appropriate research and analysis.

Training on demand: Previous methods of collecting labour market information (LMI) data lacked continuity and job portals were not effective. Also, existing LMI systems are loaded with supply-side information, and information from employment service centres is not linked to the central LMIS. The Employer Led Labour Market Information Secretariat (ELMS) project operated by leading business and industry associations and supported through Dakchyata, is working to address some of these issues by establishing LMIS based on demand-side information.

Supporting actions: A National Planning Commission or CTEVT mainframe is needed to collect both supply and demand information using an LMIS; MoEST/CTEVT should have a legal mandate to coordinate the system, and trained professionals should strengthen the Employment Information and Support Centre under MoLESS (Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security).

Tracer studies: The overall picture of tracer studies has not seen satisfactory progress: whilst some institutions have conducted tracer studies, others are unaware of the concept and there is still no legal obligation to conduct them on a regular basis. Further, reports of studies which have been conducted in the past are not publicly available and the information they contain is not linked to the LMI system or used for curricula improvement. However, there is a realisation of the significance of tracer studies among TVET implementers and CTEVT has made it mandatory in its institutions in 2020.

Supporting actions: Tracer studies should be made mandatory in all TVET institutions and data should be used to influence programme selection, curriculum revision and inform switching of training programmes to newly emerged areas of employment.

Nepali classification of occupations: The existing National Standard Classification of Occupations (NSCO) is incomplete and, until recently, there have not been any significant initiatives to standardise the NSCO. The ELMS project is however planning to develop Industrial Occupational Skills Standards (IOSS) through at least 10 occupations in agriculture, tourism, and construction each. This work should be scaled up and developed into a complete NSCO fully owned and endorsed by business and industry including employers in the public sector.

Supporting actions: Employers should be supported to classify and analyse occupations, and information on labour market demands should be collected. Also, employer-endorsed national occupation classifications and corresponding occupational standards should be developed.

Occupational skills standards and skills training standards: The reviews have shown that there is relatively good private sector involvement in the development of occupational skills standards, though further initiatives are required to increase the institutional ownership of business and industry in the process. However, a better connection between occupational standards, training standards and employment outcomes needs to be developed.

Supporting actions: Stakeholders and beneficiaries should be educated or informed about National Occupational Skills Standards and their development process for employers' wider acceptance.

Experiential learning with business and industry:

The practice of experiential learning with business and industry has gradually increased in the form of On-the-Job Training (OJT) since the last decade. Most TVET providers now understand the value of experiential learning in making training programmes more responsive to the labour market, and OJT and internship programmes have been made an integral part of many TVET curricula. Engineering, Health and Tourism institutions in particular have been providing TVET training in close collaboration with business and industry.

Supporting actions: An Apprenticeship Act should be developed in consultation with business and industry with provision to provide workspace, machinery/equipment and 50% salary by industry and 50% by government or government-related projects to TVET trainees under Work Based Learning.

TVET quality assurance: Despite minimal efforts to maintain programme quality identified in 2017, TVET programme quality is now recognised as an important focus by all stakeholders and significant progress has been made across many areas impacting on Quality Assurance (QA). However, employers are still not satisfied with the quality of TVET graduates due to a continuing mismatch between demand and supply.

Supporting actions: A quality assurance framework should be endorsed by the CTEVT Board; TVET personnel should be given QA training/support; and the competency assessment system should be focused to assess curricular outcomes through a reliable system of assessing learners' outcomes.

Private sector involvement: Throughout the period assessed, there has been evidence of private sector involvement in a number of programmes, such as conducting research studies, developing curricula and occupational standards, and providing facilities for OJT, apprenticeship, and internship training. However, the private sector needs to be significantly more involved in programme selection and curriculum development processes, and institutionalisation of the part played by employers is essential.

Supporting actions: Policy support to offer incentives for skills training programmes including work-based learning under partnership with business and industry should be developed.

Current curricula development plans: There is a well-accepted and well-practised system of curriculum development in CTEVT, and CTEVT has a standardised format and process of curriculum and occupational skills standard development. However, whilst some recent progress has been made, multiple ministries are offering skills training outside of the CTEVT system which in some cases has resulted in the duplication of effort, waste of resources and quality variations.

Supporting actions: Private sector and CTEVT should work together to upgrade and update Nepal's occupational standards, and sector skills committees should be given legal powers to secure employer involvement.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): Findings from the 2019 report states that by that point RPL had become a fully institutionalised concept within NVQF with qualification levels L1-L8. The information of 30,000 RPL (test) seekers have now been collected and individual portfolios are being prepared and relevant HR staff trained. The RPL desk has been established and is ready for the assessments of 5,000 recipients this year.

Supporting action: A large scale campaign is needed to promote the significance and value of RPL to everyone who has acquired skills informally.

Learning for credit and credit transfer: The concept of credit transfer in TVET has only been introduced very recently in Nepal. The CTEVT/ NVQ project has prepared guidelines for RPL and credit accumulation and transfer. The guidelines were widely discussed among TVET and education experts and feedback was collected to finalise the guidelines in 2020.

Supporting actions: A clear and precise credit transfer system needs to be developed and a National Vocational Qualifications Framework which facilitates horizontal and vertical mobility and the credit transfer system, should receive a legal mandate.

Human resources development (HRD): Industries are expected to consider HRD as an investment rather than a cost but are still reluctant to invest in human resource development. There are few university places to develop TVET professionals and those who are trained are often moved to irrelevant positions.

Supporting action: Networking and collaboration is needed to help share information about business and industry HRC needs.

Capacity development of TVET: Despite scattered efforts in capacity development of TVET professionals at the individual level as well as within institutional and organisational development, there is still not a national capacity development plan although strategic plans are now available in MoEST and CTEVT. To address this gap, Dakchyata at the behest of MoEST developed a Competency Framework tool addressing the capacity development requirements of roles across the sector.

Supporting actions: Universities should be encouraged to offer degrees in occupational education or TVET and organizational capacity should be enhanced to produce quality human resources.

Resource management: Resource management was a key focus of the TVET Policy (2012) but the ambition of achieving consolidated one-door TVET financing has never been realised. However, the integrated National Education Policy 2019 recognises this need and MoEST is now preparing a 10-year strategic plan which includes a focus on sustainable and coordinated TVET financing.

Supporting actions: There should be legal provision for a TVET fund and an increased TVET budget.

Effective coordination mechanism in TVET:

There is a coordination mechanism at policy level, and coordination between government agencies, but business and industry are not coordinated in a developed system and better coordination at province and local level is required. There is also a need to review the effectiveness of the MoEST technical committee's coordination function.

Supporting actions: Use accountability assessments of TVET institutions and providers as a basis for making funding decisions.

Challenges and opportunities of COVID 19: The construction and tourism industries have been particularly severely affected by the impact of the global pandemic and, even if vaccines are effectively rolled out, it will take years to return to a situation considered 'normal'. There have been positives however, with development of virtual programmes and e-learning and food production amongst industries which have flourished.

Conclusion

There have been a large number of positive developments in most policy areas and good progress in TVET expansion and access over the four-year period assessed. However, a range of important issues remain. A better balance between supply and demand is needed and private sector involvement at policy levels needs to be institutionalised. Better geographical mapping, capacity development and mobility within TVET programmes are also needed. More fundamentally, the issue of sustainable finance has not advanced in a meaningful way during this period and the expected increase in government investment has not materialised.

do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

More Information

The full TVET Annual Review 2020, as well as the Comparative Study of TVET Annual Reviews 2017-2020 can be found on the [Dakchyata website](#).

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