



PARTNERSHIPS FOR GROWTH
**EMPLOYER LED LABOUR MARKET
SECRETARIAT (ELMS)
IMPACT REPORT**

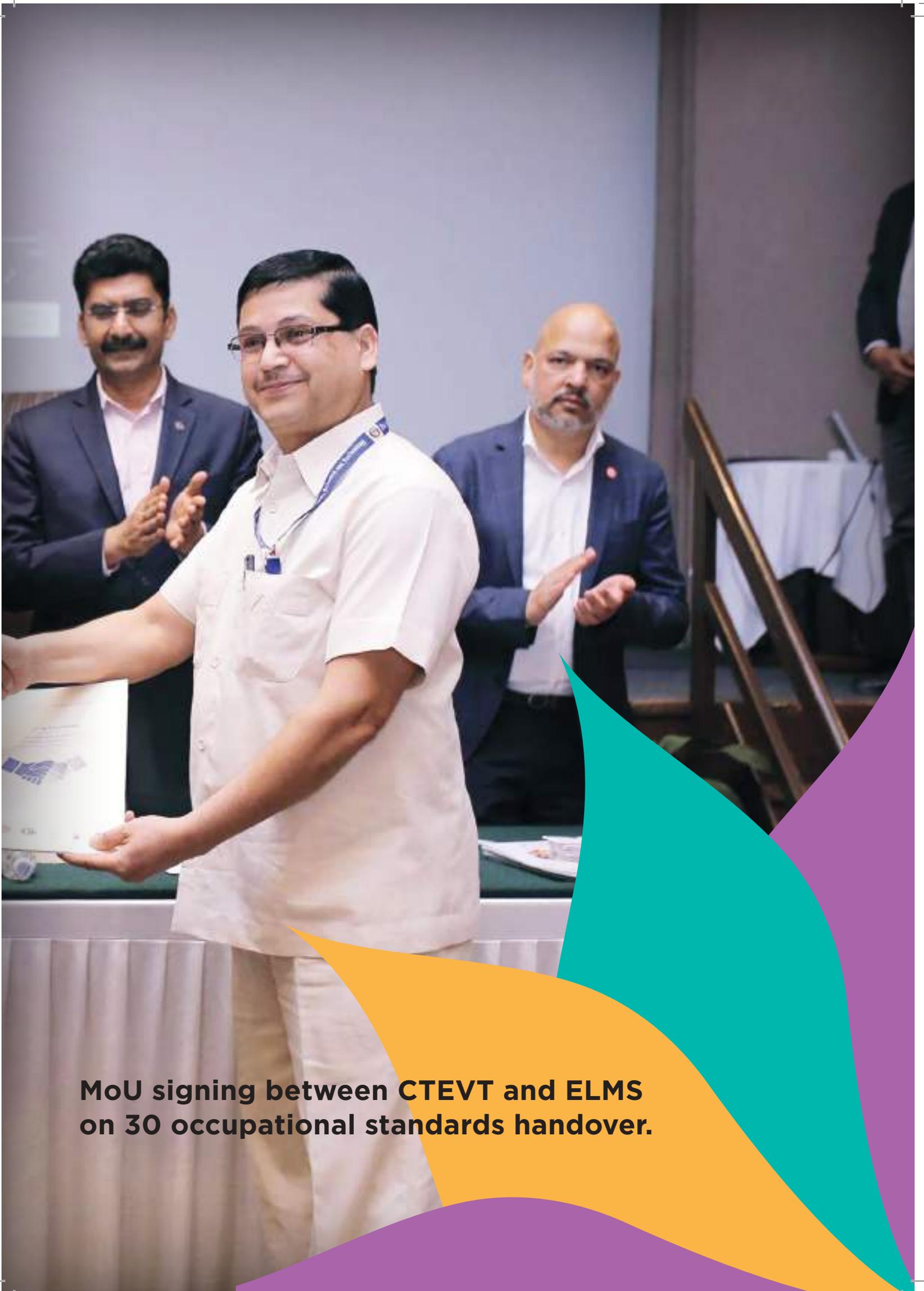
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MoU signing between CTEVT and ELMS on 30 occupational standards handover.



OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

“The training curricula and methodologies to be developed based on the 30 occupational standards created by ELMS will significantly contribute to producing a skilled and market relevant workforce.”

Mr. Jeeb Narayan Kafle, Member Secretary, Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT)

OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

“The 30 occupational standards developed by ELMS reflect the real voice of the private sector employers and business leaders and include both national and international labour market reflections.”

Ms. Shreejana Rana, President, Hotel Association Nepal (HAN)



ELMS – DELIVERING IMPACT

Background

It is undeniable that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes should be designed and developed based on the needs of an employment market which is dynamic rather than static – and that the private sector should therefore have significant involvement in these programmes.

Moreover, the private sector is the main beneficiary of skills training that is matched to need. The needs of the labour market are constantly changing over time which is why they must be regularly and effectively assessed and communicated to training providers and regulatory agencies. On one hand, public agencies are usually inefficient and reluctant to move abreast with the changing needs of the labour market. On the other hand, private agencies are not always willing to trust their confidential information with these regulatory agencies. The role of employers should therefore be decisive for the overall management of the Labour Market Information System (LMIS) to bring greater relevancy to the TVET programmes. Against this widely established assumption, the Nepalese TVET system has mostly remained a supply-driven system for many years where TVET regulatory bodies have been solely responsible to design, manage and regulate TVET programmes.

Although the private sector is represented on the majority of governing bodies of TVET, including the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) and Assembly of CTEVT, the Executive Board of National Skills Testing Board (NSTB), and others, its institutional and formal involvement is still limited. One of the main reasons for such weak implementation is that the private sector was not fully aware of the importance of its role for both the development of TVET sector and enhancing the productivity of the enterprises. The absence of institutional and active representation of employers in the TVET sector has further widened the mismatch of demand and supply of skilled human resources in the labour market. On one hand, a significant number of TVET graduates remain unemployed in the job market without proper technical skills and knowledge as per the requirement of employers. On the other hand, business and industry enterprises lack an appropriately skilled workforce and this results in lower productivity and competitiveness in comparison with other neighboring countries.

Overview of ELMS

The Employer led Labour Market Secretariat (ELMS) Project has been jointly implemented by five umbrella employer associations (EAs) of Nepal. They are: the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI); Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI); Federation of Nepal's Cottage and Small Industries (FNCSI); Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN); and the Federation of Contractor's Association of Nepal (FCAN). It is considered as an exemplary project of a unified and harmonious private sector in Nepal. Moreover, ELMS is the first project of this nature, where five major employer associations of Nepal have worked together to establish the LMIS. The project is funded by the European Union (EU) and managed by British Council with support from Dakchyata: TVET Practical Partnership Project, from November 2020 to December 2021, as per the agreement made between the British Council and the FNCCI.

Project Objectives

The main purpose of the project is to institutionalise the Labour Market Information (LMI) activities under the leadership of the private sector. The specific objective is to create a model for the EAs to conduct harmonised demand side LMI activities.

Other supporting objectives of the project are:

- Development of an effective operational framework and infrastructure to deliver a harmonised employer led LMI
- Development of employers' capacity to design and deliver LMI
- Development of a shared understanding of skills, knowledge and behaviours for identified key job roles in three target sectors (construction, agriculture and tourism)
- Design and delivery of effective employer led LMI.

Status and Achievements

The project formally started its activities in November 2020 and the period extended up to September 2022, with COVID-19 having greatly affected timely implementation of the project activities. The ELMS project had completed its 22 months of operation and several activities and sub-activities have been implemented within this period. The project has accomplished significant achievements as well as result-based outputs that are expected to add some bricks to the development of the TVET and LMI sectors of Nepal. The major outputs and outcomes of the project are summarised as follows.

1 Preparing a conducive environment

As discussed earlier, the Nepalese private sector was neither sufficiently aware nor capacitated to lead the TVET and LMI activities independently. The project then ran capacity development and orientation programmes that directly capacitated and sensitised 1,000 members of the EAs. These capacity development activities included formal training programmes for up to one week on the concept of LMI and TVET, operational procedure to collect, analyse and disseminate LMI, an awareness campaign to employers regarding the benefits of LMI for business development, and the process needed to operationalise, update and use the LMI portal developed by the project, etc. A large proportion of the members of EAs from all seven provinces and major districts benefited from these programmes. Moreover, the spillover effect of these activities is expected to reach out to more than 10,000 employers/business leaders. It includes the sharing of participants with other members of various levels, from local chapter to province level, informal discussions and sharing among friends, and circulation of published materials to a large number of employers who did not directly participate.

These interactive programmes among employers from local to federal levels have prepared the environment for the sustainable operationalisation of ELMS with internal resources.

Presently, all EAs are fully prepared to carry on these LMI activities with their own resources after completing the Dakchyata support stages. Overall, these activities have played a crucial role to form a responsive platform for the development of LMIS under the leadership of employers.

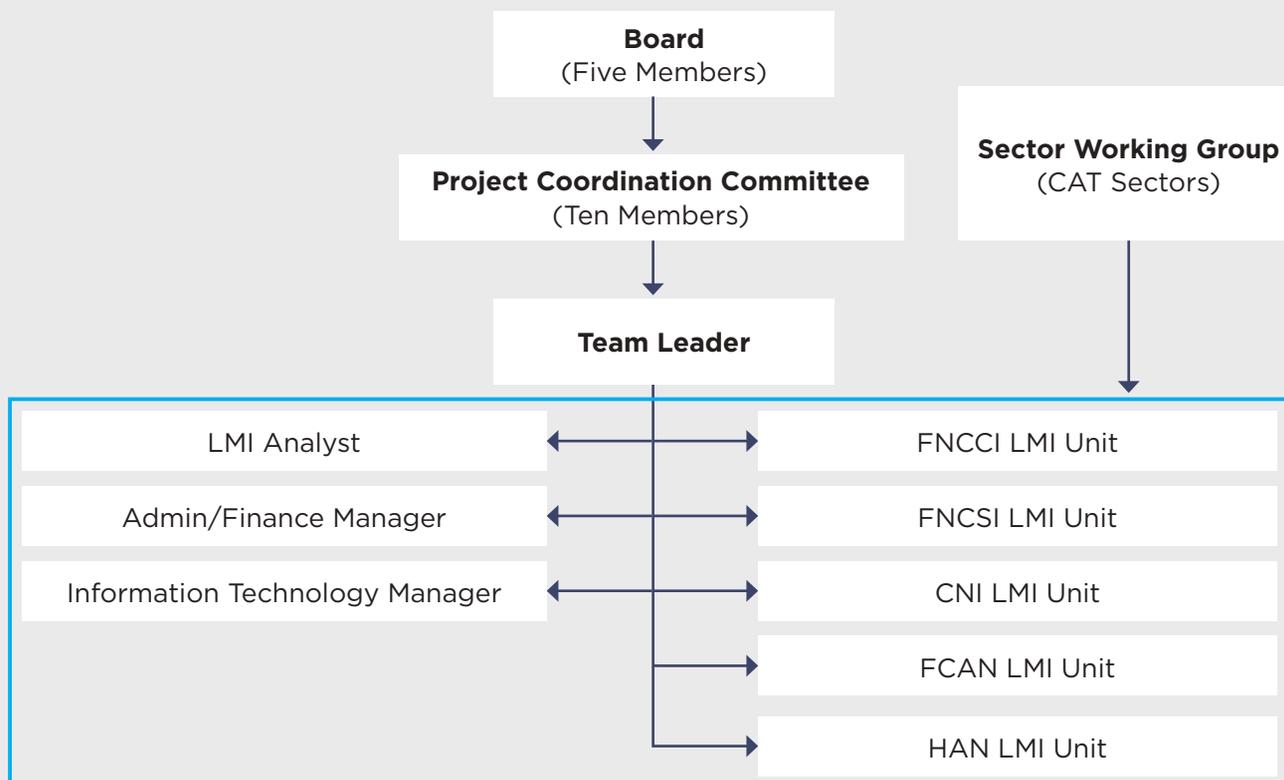
2 Institutional Setup of Secretariat

The greatest achievement of the ELMS project is its success in forming a permanent secretariat to continue the LMI activities initiated during this project with their internal sources. A five-member board, represented by the chairpersons of each of the five EAs, works as a governing body of the secretariat. Similarly, the Project Coordination Committee (PCC) includes the members of the executing body: two representatives from each of these EAs. Three Sector Working Groups (SWG), one each in the Construction, Agriculture and Tourism (CAT) sectors, provide the technical wings of the secretariat.

The secretariat will have five staff under the leadership of the secretariat manager: Communications manager, Admin-finance manager, Labour market information analyst, Information technology manager and an Assistant-level staff to facilitate the team as per the requirement.

Beyond the secretariat structure, five LMI units in the five employers' associations are also working as satellite entities of ELMS led by LMI coordinators. In the preliminary stage, when it was starting implementation of its programmes in wider consultation with related government institutions, ELMS formed the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to provide technical guidelines for the projects. Now ELMS does not have such a permanent advisory committee but it has good networking with related government institutions and other stakeholders.

Effective and smooth networking with supply side stakeholders is essential for ELMS to properly use the collected LMI in policy and planning of TVET programmes. The effectiveness of LMI not only depends on how well the LMI is collected but also on how it is disseminated to supply side stakeholders and utilised for curricula and training standard development (ELMS has expanded its networking to province level with the help of province coordinators). In addition, ELMS has provided office equipment as well as other administrative and logistic support to 10 sector specific associations (SSAs) related to these EAs.



COLLABORATION

“It has long been realised that the meaningful involvement of the private sector, specifically employers in the overall TVET system needs to be strengthened. The development of occupational standards and operationalisation of LMIS under ELMS project has catalysed the meaningful engagement of employers in TVET and strengthened relations with CTEVT.”

Mr. Shekhar Golchha, President, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI)





GREEN SKILLS

“By including green skills components within the occupation standards, ELMS has helped to address the existing climate change challenges and contribute towards creation of environmentally sustainable skills”

Mr. Birendra Raj Pandey, Vice President, Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI)

SUSTAINABILITY

“All five employer associations are fully committed to contributing to an Employment Partnership Fund which will secure the sustainability of the ELMS work and allow for collaboration on the long-term development of TVET in Nepal.”

Mr. Rabi Singh, President, Federation of Contractors' Association Nepal (FCAN)



3 Development of the Labour Market Information (LMI) Portal

ELMS has developed an online-based Labour Market Information Portal to collect skills demand information from the enterprise level. This portal is designed to feed the skills demand information from each of the member enterprises of the five employer associations on real-time basis. The real-time data benefits employer associations that use this information for internal policy making and also, public entities: supply side stakeholders, including CTEVT; Ministry of Education Science, and Technology (MoEST); Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE) etc. This data allows them to design appropriate and relevant TVET programmes, helps donor agencies that want to invest in TVET programmes, independent researchers involved in TVET related policy making activities, and job hunters who are looking for gainful employment.

The LMI portal incorporates general information, skills and education related information on existing human resources and future skills requirements of, and for, these enterprises. Member enterprises are both the source of data and immediate users of the portal. They not only feed the data but also use the portal for managing and keeping records of their human resources. The respective chapters of employer associations, from the local to federal level, are responsible for ensuring members supply data and use the portal to get the required information for policy making and planning. Besides these employer associations, external stakeholders including government entities, donor agencies, and freelancer experts can also use the portal for research, planning and policy making.

4 Identification of Demanded Occupation

ELMS has identified the top 30 demanded occupations by selecting 10 from each of the CAT sectors. These occupations have been identified with the help of extensive discussions among sector specific associations (SSAs) and other member enterprises. Each of these five EAs nominated related technical persons to be SWG members (so FCAN nominates only for the construction sector SWG). As the SWG members are the related technical persons, their knowledge and experience were vital for identifying the most in-demand occupations. As a result, huge inventories (253 occupations in the construction sector, 130 occupations in the tourism sector and 112 occupations in the agriculture sector) have been listed, based on the desk review of relevant literature, as well as brainstorming and rigorous discussions among the employers.

At the same time, the project also conducted a sector specific analysis (SSA) of these three sectors by outsourcing to research experts. Both of these activities provided a sufficient platform to triangulate and substantiate the results to each other. A final short list of 30 in-demand occupations (the list is incorporated hereafter) was identified out of a long list of 253 occupations. These identified in-demand occupations have been used to develop occupational standards (OS).

5 Development of Occupational Standards

ELMS first developed an Occupational Standards (OS) template giving high priority to the formation of green jobs and ensuring occupational health and safety of workers. This OS template was drafted by the expert team of ELMS and discussed by, not just employers but other TVET stakeholders. The role of SWGs was also instrumental in discussing and finalising the template.

After approval by the Board, the OS template was applied to develop the Occupational Standards (OS). A Developing a Curriculum (DACUM) Workshop of expert workers (three days) and a two day employers' Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were organised to develop occupational standards for each of the occupations. Based on the information from these DACUM workshops and FGDs, the expert team of ELMS prepared the draft and presented it at TAC, SWG and PCC meetings for discussion. The final draft of the OS was prepared incorporating the genuine comments from each of these discussions and presented to the board for its approval.

List of Occupational standards by sectors

Occupation	Level	Occupation	Level	Occupation	Level
Construction 		Agriculture 		Tourism 	
Construction lab technician	3	Herbal farm technician	2	Hotel maintenance technician	2
Site supervisor	2	Fruit and vegetable processor	2	Inn keeper	2
Electrician	2	Agriculture farm technician	2	Trekking guide	2
Batching plant operator	2	Nursery and landscape technician	2	Tourism guide	3
Excavator operator	2	Dairy processor	3	Tourist vehicle driver	2
Welder	2	Natural fiber and lump crafter	3	Nepalese cuisine cook	2
Scaffolder level	2	Organic certification local inspector	3	Climbing guide	2
Carpentry and interior Decorator	2	Fishery technician level	2	Rafting guide	2
Aluminium fabricator	2	Tea processor	2	Assistant airlines maintenance	3
Plumber	2	Livestock farm technician	2	Spa & wellness masseuse	2

The approved occupational standards have already been formally handed over to CTEVT for preparation of the curricula (Occupational Training Standards) and the OSS (Occupational Skills Standards). In the meantime, a comprehensive MoU has been signed between ELMS (Board) and CTEVT for institutionalising the working relationship between institutions and industries.

6 Labour Market Survey

The LMI survey was designed to collect micro-level data on skills demand from each economic establishment pending development of a fully functional LMI portal. Without a survey with such a broad scope ELMS would have not been able to communicate actual skills needs to governments and CTEVT. This survey could also be used as a baseline document to project skills demand in the immediate post-project period. ELMS had therefore also planned to carry out a comprehensive enterprise survey for skills demand and this is now almost completed.

A draft report of this survey was prepared. The purpose of the survey was to understand the skills needed by private sector employers under CAT sectors and to identify the gap in the available skills in the market. The survey adopts both quantitative and qualitative approaches in its methodology. Under the quantitative approach, the survey was carried out with the selected member enterprises of the five employer associations referred to previously. The quantitative data collected from the enterprise survey is the major source of information for analysis. Similarly, a literature review, FGDs and key informant interviews (KIIs) were also conducted to collect qualitative information. The collected qualitative data and information were triangulated with, and substantiated by, the findings of the quantitative data analysis.

The survey covered 29 districts from all seven provinces. Altogether 2,972 enterprises were covered, selecting 1186, 755 and 1031 enterprises respectively from the Construction, Agriculture and Tourism sectors. Altogether, 27 supervisors and 47 field researchers were mobilised for the field work. For the quality assurance of the data, activities including sensitisation programmes to member enterprises, orientation to supervisors and field researchers, monitoring of field work from various levels were carried out.

Compatible computer software was designed and used to collect the data. The same computer software was used for basic level analysis whereas advanced statistical programme Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) were used for more disaggregated and advanced level analysis.

7 Support Activities

Apart from the above mentioned, some other vital activities were carried out through the project. The activities, brief process, purpose and impact are mentioned below.

Capacity development/orientation

Various levels of capacity development activities have been conducted throughout the project period and these targeted various groups of internal stakeholders. Staff (EoU, LMI Unit and SSA) were capacitated and oriented on LMIS procedure and technical matters. Employers were oriented on the importance of LMI and overall economy. Altogether, these capacity development activities have reached 50 people. In the same vein, orientation programmes have directly reached almost 1,000 employers, representing all provinces. Instead of face-to-face programmes, and to avoid risks related to COVID-19, some webinars were carried out.

Bulletin and Documentary

Three issues of the LMI Bulletin have been published by ELMS. They presented the importance of LMIS for mitigating the skills gap in the labour market and informed a large number of employers about the activities carried out by ELMS that enable an environment to operate ELMS sustainably in the post-project period. A visual documentary that gives short information on ELMS' activities and the importance of LMI is under preparation.

Strategic and Operation Plan

A technical team is working to develop the documents needed for the sustainability of ELMS. This includes (a) the Operational procedure of ELMS with the organisation structure, (b) the Strategic Plan and Annual Plan. Both documents are expected to be ready by the end of September 2022 and are vital to operating ELMS sustainably in the post-project period.

8 Project deliverables

The following tangible products have been prepared throughout the project period as major project deliverables:

- Occupational standards for 30 occupations
- Comprehensive report of LMI survey (with micro-data of enterprise survey)
- Computer software for LMI data portal
- Set of hardware equipment to operate LMI data portal
- Well-furnished office set up with necessary laptops and desktop computers to staff
- Strategic and operational plan for ELMS for the next two years
- Sector Analysis Report of CAT sector.

Next steps

As briefed earlier, a team is working to develop a strategic plan and operational plan for ELMS. ELMS will mainly carry out the following five activities in the post-project period.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ | Begin to develop occupational standards for the most in-demand occupations identified by the LMI Survey |
| ✓ | Identify in-demand occupations based on the qualitative approach based on the discussion with SSA (Sector Specific Association) |
| ✓ | Conduct coordination meetings with CTEVT (at least three meetings in a year) |
| ✓ | Publish LMI Bulletins annually covering major developments in the private sector |
| ✓ | Operationalise the LMI portal and HR information for at least 200 enterprises |

STATED ELMS BOARD MEMBERS



Mr. Shekhar Golchha
President, FNCCI



Mr. Vishnu Kumar Agrawal
President, CNI



Mr. Umesh Prasad Singh
President, FNCSI



Mr. Rabi Singh
President, FCAN



Ms Shreejana Rana
President, HAN

For more information, visit the Dakchyata website: <https://www.dakchyata-nepal.org/>

Dakchyata: TVET practical partnership is a skills development programme, funded by the European Union and delivered by the British Council in partnership with the government of Nepal, to realise the potential of young people who - equipped with the right skills - can contribute to national economic success in the agricultural, tourism and construction industries.

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