

World TVET Database Republic of Korea

Compiled by
UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for
Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN Campus
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany

Tel: +49 228 815 0100
Fax: +49 228 815 0199
www.unevoc.unesco.org
unevoc@unesco.org

Country profiles are compiled from a variety of national and international sources and have been informed and validated by UNEVOC Centres in the country or other TVET national authorities.

The designations employed and the presentations of material throughout this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

UNEVOC/2012/TVETDB/KOR/1

© UNESCO 2015
All rights reserved

Contents

Abbreviations	4
1. TVET mission, strategy and legislation	5
2. TVET formal, non-formal and informal systems	7
3. Governance and financing	9
4. TVET teachers and trainers.....	10
5. Qualifications and Qualifications Frameworks.....	10
6. Current reforms, major projects and challenges	11
7. Links to UNEVOC centres and TVET institutions.....	12
8. References and further reading	13

Abbreviations

NCS	National Competency Standards
NQF	National Qualification Framework
KRIVET	Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education & Training
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOEL	Ministry of Employment and Labour
HRD	Korea Human Resources Development Service of Korea
KOREA	Korea University of Technology and Education
TECH	
KCCI	Korea Chamber of Commerce & Industry
KLI	Korea Labour Institute
KOPO	Korea Polytechnics
NILE	National Institute for Lifelong Learning

TVETipedia Glossary

Below are listed TVET terms mentioned in this report. Click on a term to read its definitions on the UNESCO-UNEVOC TVETipedia glossary.

Assessment	On-site training
Career Counselling	Qualification
Competency development framework	Quality
Core competencies	Quality Assurance
Curriculum	Retraining
Dropout	Skill mismatch
Employment	Skills
Evaluation	Skills development
Guidance & Counselling	Stakeholder
Informal Learning	Standard
Informal sector	Teacher
Initial training	Teacher In VET
Job	Trainer
Knowledge	Transition From School To Work
Knowledge-based society	TVET
Labour market	TVET institution
Lifelong Learning	Unemployed person
National Qualifications Framework	Vocational competency
Non-formal education	

Republic of Korea

Population:	50,293,000 (2015)
Youth population ¹ :	6,785,000 (2015)
Median population age:	40.6 (2015)
Annual population growth (2010-2015) ² :	0.48%



Data © OpenStreetMap Design © Mapbox

1. TVET mission, strategy and legislation

TVET mission

TVET in Korea has widely been credited for effectively supporting the rapid economic growth in the last 40 years. During the 1960s and 1970s TVET was geared towards providing initial training for large populations of learners to meet rising labour demands. In the 1980s, TVET was upgraded to raise the skills levels of workers. In the 1990s, there was an expansion in the TVET institutions, and this, coupled with the Employment Insurance Act, helped Korea grow out of the Asian financial crisis. Since 2000, the goal has been to streamline the division of roles and responsibilities and strengthen collaboration among TVET stakeholders. To this end, wide-ranging efforts have been made to reform the TVET framework and policies on one hand and to overcome the skills and talent mismatch on the other. The most current item on the agenda is to overhaul the TVET system to allow for the industries who drive the demand for TVET to take greater initiative.

Currently, reform to consumer-led TVET system is progressing. The future direction is to make TVET relevant to the demand of the industries so that it can train and utilise learners with the necessary technological expertise and skills.

TVET strategy

Korea promotes a skills development framework to realise a competency-oriented society. Main context includes skills development throughout working life, skills development as universal right, expansion of a competency-oriented system and culture, maintenance of a TVET advancement system, reinforcement of workplace competency, harmonisation of work and education, and support for 'employment first, university later.'

Moreover, the government introduced 'VISION 2020: Vocational Education for All' to link work, education and life promoting innovation in vocational education system with vision, direction and strategy. The innovation intends to promote an open vocational education system aiming at vocational competency, and effective transition of school to work and work to school.

¹ Population aged 14-25

² All statistics compiled from the United Nation's Population Division's *World Population Prospects, the 2015 Revision* (<http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DVD/>)

TVET legislation

Ministries dealing with TVET are Ministry of Employment and Labour, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Trade, Industry & Energy. TVET in Korea is based on Workers Vocational Skills Development Act, Act on the Promotion of Industrial Education and Industry-Academy-Research Institute Cooperation, Act on the Promotion of Vocational Education and Training and National Technical Qualifications Act.

The Vocational Training Act (amended January 16, 1967) initiated the vocational training system. The vocational training was formally under the Labour Standard Act and Industrial Education Promotion Act, but later, the two laws merged. Since then, vocational training was under one law of Vocational Training Act and became a national policy. The Framework Act on Vocational Training (amended December 31, 1976) introduced the Levy of Financial Contribution for Vocational Training which requires companies to select either vocational training operation or financial contribution.

Vocational training was substantially controlled by the Act on the Promotion of Worker Participation in Vocational Training (amended December 24, 1997). The main content of this law were forming a competitive system in the vocational training market and expanding the participation of the private sector. This means relieving constraints of private training sector by abolishing and easing restrictions including mandatory vocational training policy, profit-making corporations' participation in vocational training and graduated financial support based on the output of the training institutes. The Act on the Promotion of Worker Participation in Vocational Training was changed to Workers Vocational Skills Development Act (amended December 31, 2004) formulating the legal ground for Priority Job Training Programme (fixed-term occupations, strategic occupations) enhancing support for disadvantaged group (SMEs, irregular workers).

The Employment Insurance Act was amended in December 27, 1993 to provide the insurant with opportunities to develop and improve their vocational competency throughout their career and to implement skills development policies including unemployment benefit and skills development for job security.

The Act on the Promotion of Industrial Education and Industrial Cooperation Vocational Education System is to train a creative industrial manpower, establish an efficient R&D system and develop, supply, disseminate and commercialise the new knowledge and technology required to develop industry based on the linkage between education and research.

The Act on the Promotion of Vocational Education provides TVET of Korean's aptitude and talent and increases efficiency and quality of TVET, accordingly contributing to upgrade of people's living and development of national economy.

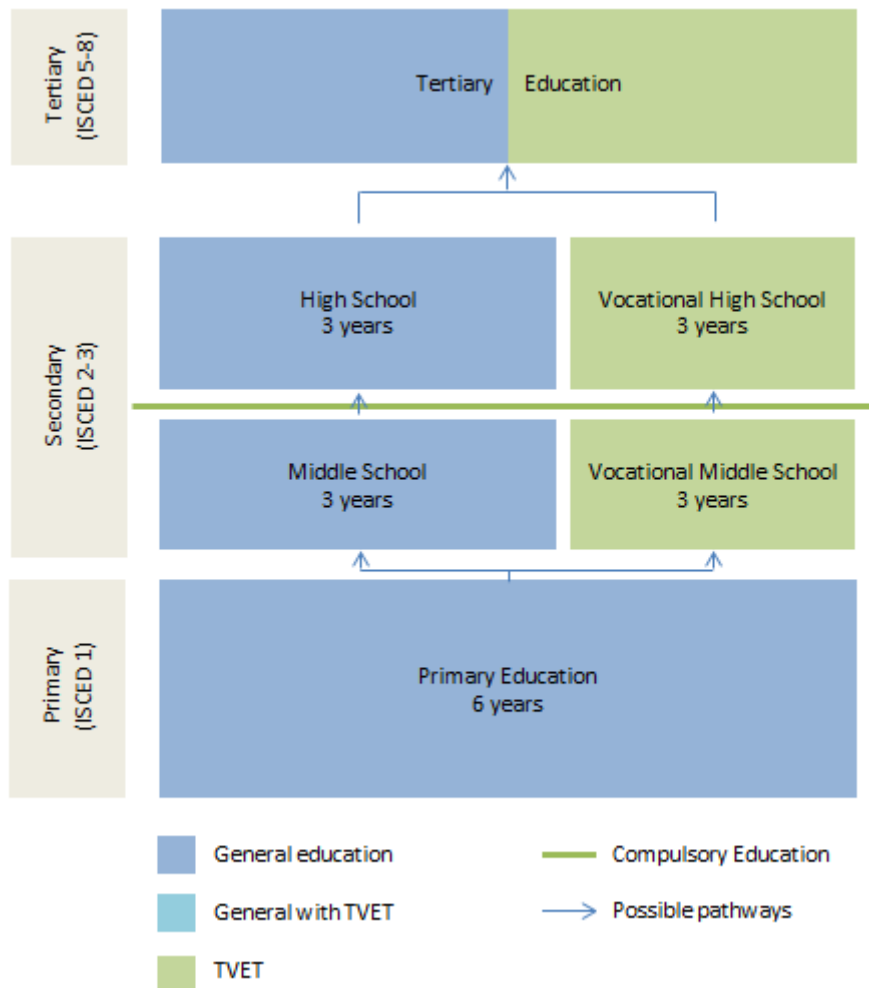
In addition, TVET is closely related to the Framework Act on Employment Policy, the Human Resources Development Act, the Lifelong Education Act and the Higher Education Act.

Sources:

Webpage of the Ministry of Government Legislation.

UNESCO-IBE (2011). World Data on Education VII Ed. 2010/11. Republic of Korea. Geneva: UNESCO-IBE.

2. TVET formal, non-formal and informal systems



Scheme compiled by UNESCO-UNEVOC from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2011). Share Our Vision for Co-prosperity. Seoul: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Formal TVET system

Korea's education system is divided into two tracks: formal education of elementary school, middle school, high school and college/university; and TVET. TVET is again divided into two categories: one is vocational education from vocational high schools to vocational colleges; the other is vocational training from vocational training institutes of private/public sector and training centres within companies. Formal vocational education institutes include specialised high schools and vocational colleges such as Korea Polytechnics. The vocational training institutes belong to the informal sector and do not award degrees.

Vocational training begins after high school; major vocational training institutes are Korea Polytechnics, which confer industrial bachelor's degree, HRD centres of The Korea Chamber of Commerce & Industry and private vocational training institutes.

Korea Polytechnics focus on training intermediate technicians (multi-skilled technicians, master technicians) in advanced industry and national key industry where private sector is not capable of implementing such training. Students of Polytechnics include school-dropouts, unemployed people, and disadvantaged groups.

Korea University of Technology & Education (Koreatech) is fully funded by the Ministry of Employment and Labour with the purpose to foster skilled engineers and TVET teachers possessing industrial competencies; train HRD professionals; and work as the hub of retraining in industries. Besides the formal education courses, Koreatech carries out projects on industry-academia cooperation, retraining engineers (vocational training consortium of SMEs, training employees of large enterprises, providing support in developing core competencies in SMEs) and have HRD courses in Koreatech HRD Institute (education for skills development, training new technologies, training for new leading businesses).

Human Resources Development Service of Korea (HRD Korea) was established with the purpose to foster industrial human resources and efficient management of supply and demand by supporting lifelong education for workers; conduct training programs for skills development; authorise qualifications; implement skills development projects; and promote employment.

The Korea Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) is an economic organisation with a worldwide business network. Major activities of KCCI are conducting research on current economic issues; management consulting for members; international cooperation for promoting international trade and expanding interaction among the private sector; office work-related national qualification authorisation; and supply technical engineers for industrial fields. Some of the smaller projects are TVET for engineers and technicians, TVET for skills development, vocational training consortium of SMEs, distance TVET and international support related to TVET.

Vocational education starts at the high school level. High schools are classified into general high school, vocational high school and schools specialising in languages, science, arts and physical education. Vocational high schools respond to rapid changes in knowledge-based industrial society and aim at fostering skilled human resources. Vocational high schools provide vocational and technical education in technology, agriculture, commerce, maritime, housework and so on.

Vocational colleges offer 2~3 year courses at higher education level. The main purpose of vocational colleges is to develop professionals with expertise and practical experience. Major curricula are technology, agriculture, nursing, maritime, health, industry, housework, arts and physical education. Among the diverse majors, nursing, clinical pathology, physiotherapy, radiological treatment, fisheries, aviation and engine technology are 3 year courses.

Sources:

Cheol Hee Kim et al. (2012). Research on Promotion Strategy for TVET Development and Cooperation. Seoul: Korea International Cooperation Agency.

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2011). Share Our Vision for Co-prosperity.
Seoul: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

3. Governance and financing

Governance

Vocational training is under the governance of the Ministry of Employment and Labour (MOEL). Skills Development Policy Division, HRD Division and Skills Development Assessment Division under Skills Development Policy Bureau of Employment Policy Office are in charge of the related tasks. HRD Korea, Korea Polytechnics, Korea University of Technology & Education (Koreatech), Korea Employment Agency for the Disabled (KEAD) are some of the agencies under the umbrella of the MOEL, and Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET) and Korea Labour Institute (KLI) conducts related research. In the private sector, vocational training is provided through designated/undesignated training facilities based on the Act on the Vocational Competency Development of Workers.

Vocational education is under the governance of the Ministry of Education. HR and Competency Policy Division, Lifelong Education Policy Division, Career Education Policy Division and Secondary Vocational Education Policy Division under Lifelong and Vocational Education Bureau are responsible for related work. Korea Educational Development Institute (KEDI) and KRIVET are research institutes related to vocational education.

Financing

Finance for vocational training can be divided into public financing and private financing. Public funds are composed of funds from MOEL, related ministries and municipal governments. Private funds are composed of budget of skills development project from Employment Insurance paid by the business owners. The Employment Insurance forms the largest part of the private funds and a certain portion of this employment insurance is paid by both owner and employee.

Vocational training funds consist of the general account of MOEL and the budget for skills development projects from the Employment Insurance fund. The Employment Insurance fund provides vocational skills development training cost for workers in companies that are registered in the Employment Insurance Fund or for people who had worked in such companies. The general account supports training costs for people who are not in that category.

Funds invested in training institutes including vocational high schools, vocational colleges and industrial colleges are mostly borne by the students, government and companies. In vocational colleges, support from the government is relatively low, as more than 90% of them are private colleges and the government tends to focus its support on the public sector. Organisations in charge of TVET financing include related ministries, municipal/provincial offices of education and TVET institutes. The Ministry of Education plans vocational education policies and executes financial policies to implement them.

Sources:

Webpage of the Ministry of Employment and Labour.
Webpage of the Ministry of Education.

4. TVET teachers and trainers

General teachers are trained in universities of education or colleges of education within universities; TVET teachers are trained in Koreatech. TVET teachers for vocational high schools and vocational colleges in the vocational education track are trained through general teacher training courses according to the Act on the Primary and Secondary Education and the Act on Higher Education.

TVET teachers are defined as teachers with role of academic/practical curriculum development for TVET related industries; training based on the training standards; training performance evaluation; employment counseling; and career guidance in TVET institutes and industries. TVET teachers are classified into cluster training teachers (professional teachers, general teachers) and on-site training teachers.

Koreatech was established by the Act on Vocational Competency Development of Workers and Human Resources Development Service of Korea Act. Koreatech aims to implement education and research on fostering TVET teachers, HRD experts, practical and engineering technicians required in high level knowledge industry; lifelong competency development TVET for workers; education on employment and labour for government officials and teachers; and job training for workers in administrative organisations related to employment and labour.

Sources:

Webpage of the Korea University of Technology and Education.

Young Hoon Oh et al. (2008). A Study for Employment Survey and Institutional Reform of TVET Teachers. Seoul: Ministry of Labour.

5. Qualifications and Qualifications Frameworks

The National Technical Qualifications Act (amended December 31, 1973) was established to clarify the standards and to develop the qualification system. The Framework Act on Qualifications (amended Mar 27, 1997) divides qualifications into national and private ones, and defines the basic articles of the qualification system. The national technical qualification framework consists of 5 levels, 27 job fields, 180 job types and 556 items; the 5 levels are craftsman, industrial engineer, engineer, master craftsman and professional engineer.

Currently (May 2013), a total of 91 private qualifications are officially recognised by the ministries; 28 of them are recognised by the Ministry of Education, and 18 by the Ministry of Science, ICT & Future Planning.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The national qualifications framework (NQF) is a comprehensive system demonstrating the equivalence of education, training, qualifications and work experience based on the amount and level of learning.

The government has focused on the 'Creation of a competency-oriented society through the establishment of a lifelong education system', and is promoting related policies. With this

agenda, the government is preparing a development plan and management strategy of NQF based on the National Competency Standards (NCS).

National Competency Standards

The National Competency Standards (NCS) is a newly introduced HRD infrastructure to help the development of strong human resources for the 21st century. It is a concept which identifies the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to perform tasks in workplaces depending on the field and level of industry.

In 1996, the Measures for Education Reform, promoted a restructuring of the qualification system to strengthen the links between TVET and the labour market. In 2001, the relevant ministries agreed to introduce the NCS and NQF with the Office for Government Policy Coordination having a co-ordinating role. Since then, the NCS has been implemented by the ministries, academia and research institutes.

Currently, out of 331 standards, 288 are from the Ministry of Employment and Labour, 22 from the Ministry of Education, and 12 from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

Quality assurance

Since the enforcement of the Act on the Promotion of Worker Participation in Vocational Training in 1999, vocational training has formed a competition structure by expanding the participants and areas of VET, thus seeking improvement of its quality. The Centre for Evaluation of Skills Development Policy in KRIVET evaluates training institutes dividing them into two categories depending on the forms of training: cluster training and distance training.

The evaluation includes performance of training in the labour market, experts' evaluation on executive ability of training institutes, survey on trainees' satisfaction, and assessment of training institutes under the control of local labour offices.

Sources:

- Cheol Hee Kim et al. (2012). Research on Promotion Strategy for TVET Development and Cooperation. Seoul: Korea International Cooperation Agency.
- Hyang Jin Jung (2013). NCS's Practice Issues and Promotion Strategy. The HRD Review, May. Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training.
- Jeong Yoon Cho (2013). NQF's Directions to Introduce and Promotion Strategy. The HRD Review, May. Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training.

6. Current reforms, major projects and challenges

Current reforms and major projects

The 21st century international environment is characterised by the processes of globalisation, intellectualisation and informatisation. In this context, Korean TVET is developing its role of fostering highly-skilled experts with the competencies to work and compete in a global environment as well as providing continuous TVET to upgrade their skills further. To sustain

economic development, strategies are being developed to effectively nurture, allocate and utilise human resources in a way that continuously creates employment and high value-added.

Infrastructures for bridging learning and work need to be built to alleviate the mismatch of skills needs and labour supply, while effort should also be made to establish a lifelong learning system. One important initiative that can contribute to bridging learning and work is the National Competency Standards described in section 5.

Other recent TVET programmes and initiatives are the following:

Neilbaeum Voucher System

The Neilbaeum Voucher System aims to assist unemployed people and workers in small businesses to promote their autonomous participation in skills development by issuing vouchers that financially support the cost for TVET. Vouchers are provided to people who are recognised by the employment centres as being in need of training. To receive the voucher, applicants must have at least two job seeking activities, and exploratory activities for finding job training.

Employment Success Package

The Employment Success Package is a comprehensive support programme to assist disadvantaged job seekers with low income in accordance with their individual plans for employment. This systematic programme includes research on the actual condition and path planning; enhancement of motivation and competency; and intense job searching service. The job seekers who have succeeded in finding a job are given employment success allowance to enter the labour market.

Meister High School (Specialised Vocational High School)

The meister (i.e. master) high schools are customised high schools that respond to the demands of particular industry sectors. The purpose of the meister high school is to operate curricula that directly link with the industry demands to enhance professional vocational education. It develops meisters-to-be using education based on high level technology. The graduates of the meister high schools are given the opportunity to enter notable companies, serve military duty related to their specialty and attend higher education while working.

Sources:

Webpage of the Ministry of Employment and Labour.
Webpage of the Ministry of Education.

7. Links to UNEVOC centres and TVET institutions

UNEVOC Centres

- [Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training \(KRIVET\)](#)
- [HRD Korea Global HRD Cooperation Bureau](#)

- [Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, Life-Long Learning and Vocational Education Policy Division](#)

TVET Institutions

- [Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development](#)
- [Ministry of Employment and Labour](#)
- [Ministry of Education](#)

8. References and further reading

References

Cheol Hee Kim et al. (2012). Research on Promotion Strategy for TVET Development and Cooperation. Seoul: Korea International Cooperation Agency.

Hyang Jin Jung (2013). NCS's Practice Issues and Promotion Strategy. The HRD Review, May. Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training.

Jeong Yoon Cho (2013). NQF's Directions to Introduce and Promotion Strategy. The HRD Review, May. Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training.

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2011). Share Our Vision for Co-prosperity. Seoul: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

UNESCO-IBE (2011). [World Data on Education VII Ed. 2010/11. Republic of Korea](#). Geneva: UNESCO-IBE.

Webpage of the [Korea University of Technology and Education](#).

Webpage of the [Ministry of Education](#).

Webpage of the [Ministry of Employment and Labour](#).

Webpage of the [Ministry of Government Legislation](#).

Young Hoon Oh et al. (2008). A Study for Employment Survey and Institutional Reform of TVET Teachers. Seoul: Ministry of Labour.