

CAMBODIA

The Cambodian Qualifications Framework (CQF) was established in December 2010 by a committee of ministers following the 6th meeting of the National Training Board (NTB). It was submitted to the 7th NTB meeting in 2011, and was approved at the 8th meeting in February 2012. The CQF is currently awaiting the preparation of supporting documents and guidelines for its implementation. It will then require approval by the Council of Ministers to outline its functions and before implementation can take place responsibilities (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2012).

1. CHALLENGES THAT THE NQF WOULD NEED TO ADDRESS

Cambodia has a population of 14,138,000 with a GDP per capita of \$2,400 and a real GDP growth rate of 6.5 per cent in 2012. In 2007, 31 per cent of the population was below the poverty line and the unemployment rate was 3.5 per cent. The informal sector accounts for 80 per cent of GDP and 90 per cent of employment. 2.1 per cent of GDP expenditure in 2009 was on education, and the 2008 Census indicated an adult literacy rate of 77.6 per cent.

Cambodia is aspiring to become an upper middle income country by 2030 (MoEYS, 2013). In line with the ASEAN integration, which encourages and promotes opportunities for collaboration between institutions in different countries, it is investing in building a competitive human capital and skills development roadmap in order to meet this goal. High quality educational programmes and internationally acceptable certification are a prerequisite for ASEAN integration. The Cambodian government envisages a thoroughgoing reform of the entire education sector in order to provide Cambodia's citizens with quality primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary education that responds to the needs both of young people and of the labour market, and that takes into account recent social and demographic changes.

The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2014-2018 (MoEYS, 2013) consolidates the progress made during the ESP 2009-2013 (MoEYS, 2010) in addressing issues of access, quality and institutional capacity building. It focuses on improving the quality of educational provision in the secondary, VET and higher education sectors, ensuring in particular that VET provision delivers relevant knowledge and skills. The ESP 2014-2018 also proposes reforms to the national assessment and examination systems. The ESP addresses non-formal as well as formal education. It sets out a plan to increase the number of students studying in equivalency programmes from 5000 in 2013 to 7300 in 2018. Supplementary programmes will ensure the certification of non-formal programmes.

2. MAIN POLICY OBJECTIVES

The government intends the CQF to:

- allow nationally consistent recognition of learning outcomes;
- deliver high quality education and training that matches international standards;
- provide mechanisms for credit transfer and for the recognition of prior learning and experience;
- develop flexible pathways to facilitate movement between education and training sectors, as well as between those sectors and the labour market;

- improve access to education and training programmes and to qualifications;
- set out clearly defined avenues for achievement in order to encourage individuals to continue their education;
- provide qualifications that meet the needs of employers as well as learners, thus improving national economic performance;
- facilitate the mobilization of a skilled regional workforce (Kingdom of Cambodia, 2012).

3. LEVELS AND DESCRIPTORS AND THE USE OF LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The CQF has eight levels, as does the TVET sub-framework. The first four of these levels lead to vocational or technical and vocational certificates which are equivalent to secondary education. The remaining four levels cover post-secondary education.

The CQF incorporates level descriptors which are based on learning outcomes. The level descriptors cover the following areas:

- knowledge
- cognitive skills
- psychomotor skills
- interpersonal skills and responsibility
- communication skills
- information technology skills
- numeracy skills

The relationships between the different levels are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Levels for TVET, Higher Education and General Education in Cambodia

Levels	Technical and Vocational Education and Training	Higher Education	General Education
8	Doctoral Degree	Doctoral Degree	
7	Master's Degree of Technology/Business	Master's Degree	
6	Bachelor of Technology/Engineering/Business	Bachelor's Degree	
5	Higher Diploma of Technology/Business	Associate Degree	
4	Technical and Vocational Certificate 3		Upper Secondary Certificate
3	Technical and Vocational Certificate 2		
2	Technical and Vocational Certificate 1		
1	Vocational Certificate		Lower Secondary Certificate

Source: Kingdom of Cambodia, Cambodia Qualifications Framework, 2012.

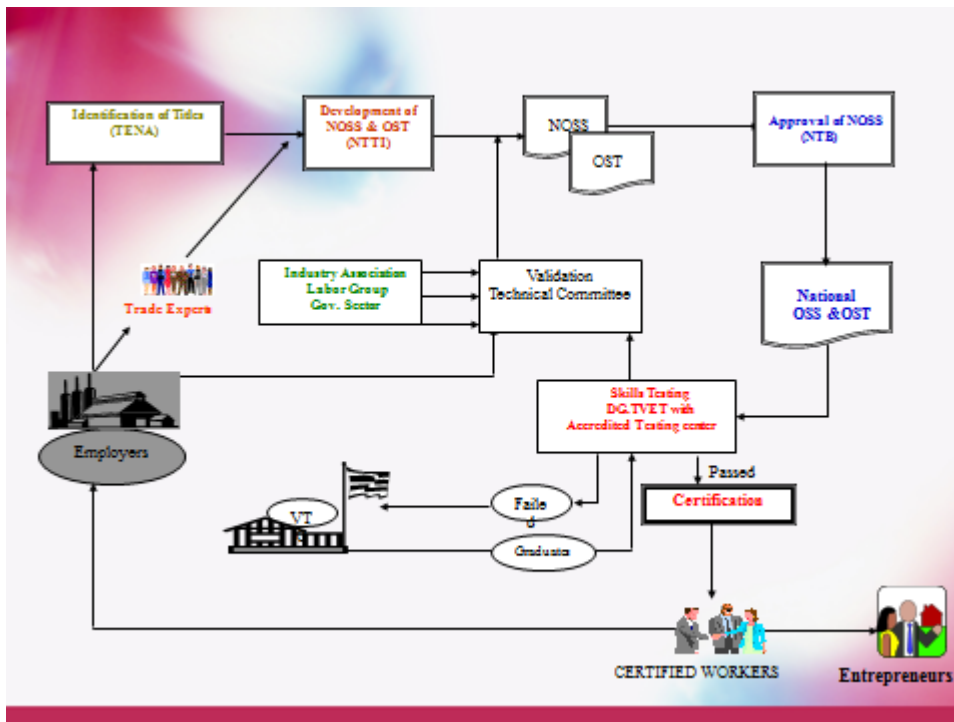
4. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS AND LEGAL ARRANGEMENTS

The ministry in charge of education and the accreditation of institutions is the Secretariat of the National Supreme Council of Education led by the Prime Minister. The Council is composed of high officials with experience in education, politics, economy, science, technology and culture.

Stakeholders' roles and responsibilities are defined through a consultation process. Those consulted include representatives from the Ministry of Labour and other ministries involved with education and training, as well as representatives of employers and employees.

Cambodia has developed a framework of National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) and a Testing and Certification system involving numerous stakeholders and institutions (see Table 2 below). As well as utilizing existing institutions such as technical institutes, it has also created a range of new organizations for testing and certification, including Sector Councils, Industry Advisory Groups and Technical Committees for Accreditation and Testing.

Table 2. Framework of NOSS and Testing and Certification organizations



Source: Directorate General TVET, 2011

5. PROGRESSION PATHWAYS AND RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING:

The CQF will support inter- and cross-sectoral linkages between the different types and levels of qualifications, allowing individuals to progress in a wide variety of ways and tailor their educational programme to their needs and interests. Mechanisms will be put in place for the recognition of prior learning, whether acquired through formal, non-formal or informal means, and for the accumulation and transfer of credits. In this way, Cambodia aims to remove boundaries between education and training sectors and establish alternative entry and exit pathways that will increase access to higher qualifications (Kingdom of Cambodia, 2012).

For example, skills bridging (SB) programmes are being introduced to allow young people not currently in school to access the two year diploma programmes in skills development. After completing the SB programme an assessment of performance is made at certificate level 1 which is equivalent to grade 9 of general education. The programme also incorporates advice and support on employment possibilities for those seeking to work rather than remain in training after the SB programme.

Equivalency tests that allow reentry to formal education for non-formal education learners, fall under the authority of MoEYS in line with the policy of the National Supreme Council of Education. Article 26 of the Education Law stipulates that, in line with Cambodia's commitment to ensuring the quality of educational provision, examinations shall be conducted in a fair and impartial manner.

There are also progression possibilities for teachers. The Education Law encourages primary and lower secondary school teachers who have obtained bachelor degrees at any age to take an examination in order to become secondary school teachers. The Law also encourages primary school teachers who have not completed secondary school to take an examination in order to obtain a certificate of secondary school equivalency. The Law provides teachers with the opportunity to study at bachelor and post-graduate level, with the aim of raising teacher salaries.

Article 22 of the Education Law stipulates that educational institutions must fulfil obligations relating to national education and training standards. Both public and private educational institutions are asked to establish internal assessment procedures and to monitor and assess the quality of their educational provision.

6. LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE PLANS

The government sees the CQF as part of a broader system-wide reform of Cambodian education. This overarching reform, which will be implemented in a focused and time-bound manner, will involve all stakeholders and result in an education system that is more responsive to the needs of individuals and the labour market (UNESCO, 2012).

The government recognises that not all education and training providers will be able to comply with national standards immediately. Once introduced, the CQF quality assurance mechanisms will require substantial support from all stakeholders in order to make it easier for providers to comply.

As well as allocating a sufficient budget for the CQF's development and implementation, the government intends to complement it with other policy measures, such as improving the quality and governance of teacher training institutions and involving social partners (employees' and employers' associations) in the development of training institutions. Measures will also be introduced to upgrade Provincial Training Centres and schools so that they meet accreditation requirements (UNESCO, 2012).

Other plans for reform include:

- developing a regulatory framework for TVET;
- promoting equal access to education for disadvantaged groups;
- improving skills and competences;
- developing Quality Assurance and Accreditation;
- creating jobs in rural areas; and
- increasing agricultural and industrial productivity.

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