

# NEPAL

The Nepalese National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) is in the process of being developed by the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET) on the basis of the existing National Skills Testing Board (NSTB) certification system.

## 1. CHALLENGES THAT THE NQF WOULD NEED TO ADDRESS

Nepal's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system is in urgent need of reform in order to tackle the many challenges the country currently faces. There is a severe lack of employment opportunities for young people, the majority of whom leave school before Grade Ten. Opportunities for horizontal mobility between general education and TVET are limited. Despite rapid growth since 1951, there are still not enough institutions for technical higher education (Tulhadar, 2011). This is reflected in the fact that only 3 per cent of young Nepalis are currently receiving formal technical education.

At present, 50 per cent of Nepalese children do not complete primary school. Nepal's 10<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan projected that, by 2007, the net enrolment rates in primary, lower secondary and secondary schools should reach 90 per cent, 65 per cent and 45 per cent respectively. Even today, however, this goal remains remote: only about 25 per cent of pupils complete lower secondary education and approximately 8 per cent complete secondary education with a School Leaving Certificate (SLC). Employment oriented skills training in Nepal is equally in need of overhaul. At present there is no overarching system to govern and fund such training, meaning that what courses there are tend to be short-term and donor-driven with little return on investment. Moreover, there is no functioning system for the recognition of skills gained in informal and non-formal settings.

A further challenge concerns the recognition of foreign qualifications, which is not currently governed by any legal framework. Nepalis who have studied abroad often encounter difficulties when they return to Nepal and find that the qualifications they have gained are not recognized in their home country.

Overseas migration for employment has become a prominent feature of Nepal's economy and society over the past two decades. Approximately, 1.9 million Nepalese work overseas, excluding India. About 5 per cent of them are women. At least another 800,000 (undocumented) Nepalese workers work in the private sector in India and about 250,000 in India's public sector in 2005. The highest remittances was from India – 21 per cent followed by Malaysia – 19 per cent, Saudi Arabia – 15 per cent, Qatar – 14 per cent and U.K. – 2 per cent and other countries 29 per cent.

## 2. MAIN POLICY OBJECTIVES

In alignment with the TVET reform agenda, the NVQF aims to:

- create a skilled workforce that is recognized both in Nepal and overseas;

- provide a structured system of vocational qualifications that opens up pathways and possibilities for the individual learner.

### 3. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS AND LEGAL ARRANGEMENTS

The National Skills Testing Board (NSTB) certification system was initiated in Nepal in 1983 by an autonomous body called the Skills Testing Authority (STA). The STA introduced systems for the classification of occupations and the testing and certification of skills in accordance with the guidelines of the Asia Pacific Skill Development Project/ International Labour Organization (APSDEP/ILO).

When the CTVEET was formed in 1989, the STA was replaced by the NSTB. The NSTB was placed under the jurisdiction of the CTEVT, which is the apex body for TVET in Nepal. The NSTB was given responsibility for developing National Occupational Skills Standards/Profiles in 237 different occupations. The NSTB has so far tested 108,000 craftspeople and certified 72,730. Skills Tests are performance-based and require candidates to demonstrate mastery of Occupational Skills Standards for their chosen trade in order to obtain a National Skills Certificate. An Occupational Skills Standard is a written specification of the practical skills, knowledge and experience demonstrated by an individual in a particular occupation.

In 2013 the NSTB and CTEVT signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in which they pledged to work jointly to facilitate the development of Sector Skill Committees as well as the NVQF. An SSC is an informal body comprising representatives from government, employers, training institutions and federations in the industrial sector concerned. To date, one SSC has been formed in the construction sector.

### 4. LEVELS AND DESCRIPTORS AND USE OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Skills Tests are designed with three target groups in mind:

- graduates from pre-employment vocational training programmes who need help in making the transition from training to work;
- experienced workers (employed or unemployed) who lack an official certification;
- workers who have completed an in-service training programme and are seeking an upgrade or additional certificate.

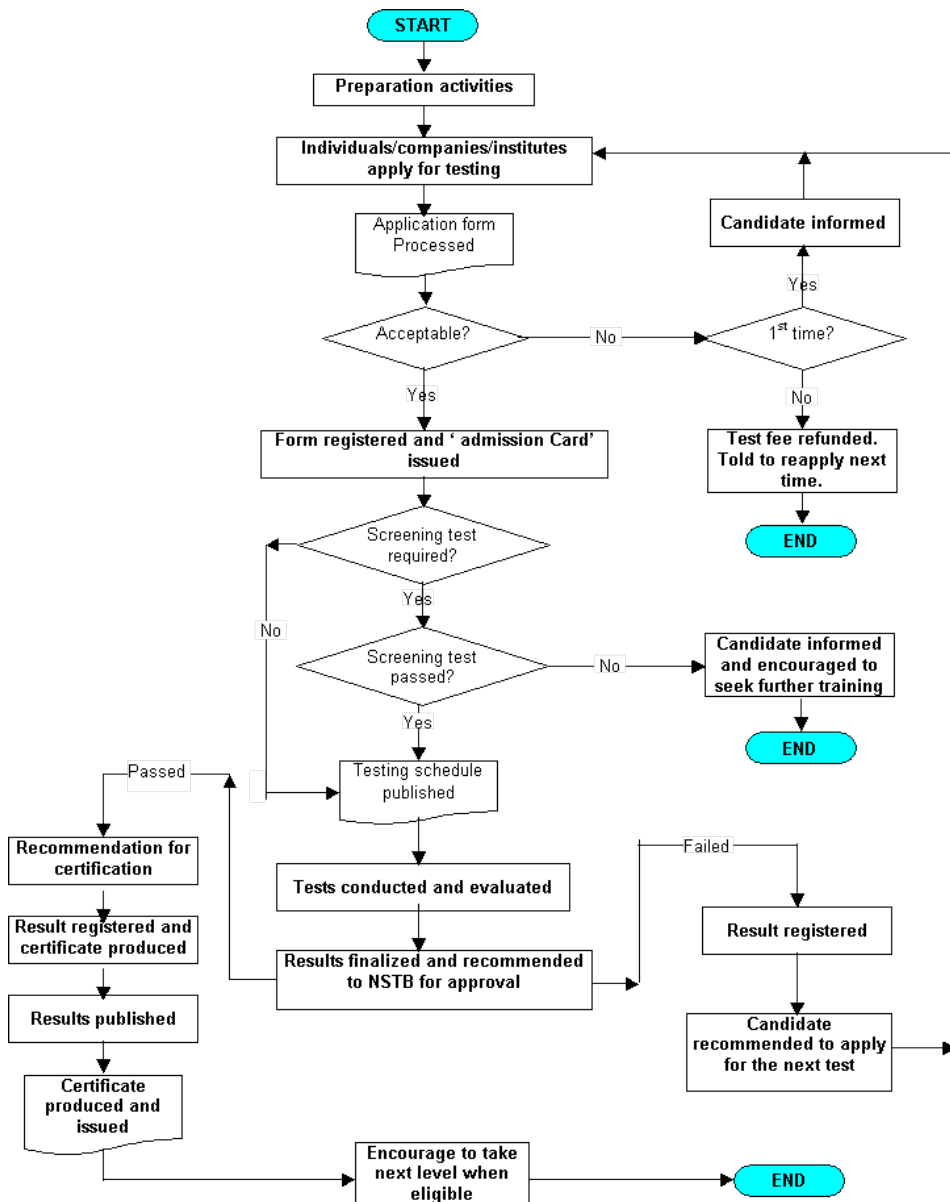
Skills Tests are based on a 5-level certification system, from elementary level to levels one to four:

- **Skill Level – Elementary**
  - Successful completion of 140 hours vocational training in relevant occupation/trade.
- **Skills Test Level-1**
  - Literate with knowledge and skills in the relevant occupation and a minimum of one year's work experience in a related occupation/trade.
  - Or
  - Successful completion of one month (160 hours) of vocational training in a relevant occupation/trade.
  - Or
  - Vocational training with six months' work experience in the relevant occupation/trade.
- **Skills Test Level 2**
  - Literate with knowledge and skills in the relevant occupation and a minimum of three years' work experience in a relevant occupation/trade.
  - Or
  - One year's training (minimum 600 hours theory and 800 hours practical) in a relevant occupation/trade.
  - Or
  - One year's work experience after completion of the Level 1 Skills Test in a relevant occupation/trade.

- **Skills Test Level 3**
  - Literate with knowledge and skills in the relevant occupation and a minimum of five years' work experience in a relevant occupation/trade.
  - Or
  - Two years' work experience and one year's training in a relevant occupation/trade.
  - Or
  - One year's work experience after completion of the Level 2 Skills Test in a relevant occupation/trade.
- **Skills Test Level 4 (specifically for Ophthalmic Assistants)**
  - Three years' experience and one year's training after completion of the Level 3 Ophthalmic Assistant Skills Test.
  - Or
  - Certificate in Health Science (Ophthalmology) or equivalent with three years' experience and one year's training.

Figure 1 below illustrates the skills testing process.

**Figure 1. Skills testing procedures**



Source: CTEVT, 2013

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

One of the NVQF's major goals is to provide educational opportunities for young people who lack access to institution-based TVET provision. At present, TVET leading to diplomas and certificates is available only in institutions (which include technical schools and training centres, affiliated technical colleges and institutes and the so-called 'annex schools'). However, plans are underway to make the TVET pathway more attractive to young people by embracing all forms of training: formal, non-formal and informal.

There are many good reasons for attempting to attract more young people to TVET. Numerous studies have shown that TVET graduates are more likely than graduates of academic programmes to find employment. Moreover, TVET is an effective pathway to jobs in the international market. Foreign Employment Surveys have shown that skilled workers such as plumbers, carpenters, civil engineers and mechanics earn higher wages than unskilled workers. A plumber in a Middle Eastern country is likely to earn a monthly salary of about Rupees. 40,000, whereas the same worker would earn only about Rupees 10,000 per month in Nepal. Countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia, the UK and other European nations offer attractive incentives such as residence and work permits for foreign workers with technical and vocational skills. Promoting international worker mobility is therefore an important priority for the NVQF.

Particular emphasis is placed on facilitating the school-to-work transition for school leavers and the pathway from general education to TVET for early school leavers. The NSTB certification system is intended to help these transitions run smoothly. Figure 2 shows the entry and exit points from the general education system to the TVET system. The two most critical points are after completion of primary education and after completion of lower secondary education.

**Figure 2. Entry and exit points from general education system to TVET**

Educational Level	School completion rate of the enrolled	National Skills Testing Board (NSTB) Certificate System	Skills training; livelihood training
Tertiary		4	Skills training; Livelihood training
Higher Secondary		3	Skills training
Secondary	45 per cent	2	Skills training
Lower Secondary	65 per cent	1	Skills training
Primary	90 per cent	Basic Level	Non-formal education, Adult Literacy

Source: SDC, 2013

This structure allows qualifications at each level to be acquired in either a linear or a modular fashion.<sup>1</sup> Training may be delivered in a variety of ways, including long-term residential courses, modular short courses, flexible morning, evening or weekend classes, etc. Providers may offer any possible combination of centre-based and work-based learning, including on-the-job training, internships and apprenticeships in public and private enterprises, outreach programmes, real-life projects, etc. The reforms to the TVET system under the NVQF will also cover non-formal education and adult literacy programmes, which play an important role in improving individuals' work performance and employability and promoting lifelong learning.

## 6. REFERENCING TO REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

<sup>1</sup> Candidates may choose either to sit one all-encompassing test or to accumulate credit points by the successful completion of individual modules.

As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Nepal strives to create a competent and qualified workforce comparable with those of other countries in the region and across the world.

## 7. LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE PLANS

The CTEVT is confident that the NSTB certificates will become increasingly popular and widely recognized in both domestic and foreign labour markets. In the long run, the CTVEVT plans to link the NVQF to a more comprehensive overarching NQF which will encompass all sectors of education rather than just TVET. This broader NQF will create greater coherence between TVET and general education, making Nepalese qualifications further adapted to the changing needs of today's global economy.

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- CTVEVT. 2009. *A Glimpse of Technical Education and Vocational Training in Nepal*. Bhaktapur, Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training CTEVT.
- CTVEVT. 2013. *National Skills Testing Board*. Bhaktapur, Council of r Technical Education and Vocational Training  
(<http://nsthb.org.np/skilltesting.php?page=Skill%20Test%20flow%20chart>)
- International Labour Office. 2010. *Labour and Social Trends in Nepal 2010*. Geneva, Universal Copyright Convention.
- Nepalese National Planning Commission. 2002. *The Tenth Plan 2002-2007*. Kathmandu, Government of Nepal
- Tulhadar, G. 2011, *Status of Education in Nepal and Development Plan*. [http://web.isc.ehime-u.ac.jp/ice/6-1@Gangala%20Tuladhar\\_text%208p.pdf](http://web.isc.ehime-u.ac.jp/ice/6-1@Gangala%20Tuladhar_text%208p.pdf) (Accessed 11 February 2013).
- Usage, T. & Phyla, K. 2009. *TVET and Secondary School Education in Nepal A case study of Heated, Makwanpur* [http://www2.ipcku.kansai-u.ac.jp/~tkusago/pdf/japdf/reseach/final\\_nepal\\_tivet\\_report\\_flnal.pdf](http://www2.ipcku.kansai-u.ac.jp/~tkusago/pdf/japdf/reseach/final_nepal_tivet_report_flnal.pdf) (Accessed 11 February 2013).
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). 2013 *Vocational Pathways. Conceptual framework for Education. Vocational Training and Learning for Nepal*. Berne, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.