

# PAKISTAN

Pakistan's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) forms part of the country's National Skills Strategy 2009-2013 (NSS). The NQF aims to bring together all national qualifications under one coherent system (NAVTEC, 2009).<sup>1</sup>

A project called the TVET Reform Support Programme is currently being implemented in Pakistan by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (German Agency for International Cooperation and Development) in cooperation with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC, previously known as NAVTEC) and the provincial Technical Education and Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTAs). The project is co-funded by the European Union, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany, and is scheduled to run for five years from April 2011 until 31 March 2016. A draft of the NQF has been approved for the testing phase by the NAVTTTC (GIZ, 2013). As the NQF is a part of the TVET Reform Support Programme, it focuses on the TVET Sector, and is called NQF/TVET or NVQF (National Vocational Qualifications Framework).

## 1. CHALLENGES THE NQF WOULD NEED TO ADDRESS

Pakistan currently faces enormous socio-economic challenges. The country is in a state of economic and financial crisis due in part to the ongoing conflict with the Taliban and the large internally displaced population. Literacy rates are low (65 per cent of men and 42 per cent of women). As a result there is a shortage of skilled labour to trigger the necessary industrial growth to make Pakistan globally competitive. Domestic industry needs to be made more efficient, so that foreign remittances sent back to Pakistan can be more effectively used (NAVTEC, 2009). The Federation of the Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) recently drew attention to the challenges presented by the rapidly changing nature of the international job market, emphasizing that new programmes are required to equip workers with the new types of skills being demanded.

The TVET sector faces challenges in a number of areas, including access, quality, relevance and equality. More specifically, the main challenges are:

- the limited capacity of the training system to provide training to the growing workforce comprising more and more young people.
- the lack of connection between the world of education and the world of work, which makes it difficult for employers to find workers with qualifications suited to their needs;
- the fragmentation of TVET provision between several federal and provincial bodies;
- the absence of national skills standards<sup>2</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> Other policy documents have also supported the development of an NQF in Pakistan in the past. The Draft National Educational Policy (April 2008) proposed the development of an overarching NQF, encompassing all qualifications in the country, both academic and vocational/technical.

<sup>2</sup> At present each institution issues its own certificate, which is sometimes recognized by the Province. There is no national recognition of these standards. This reduces the economic value of training,

- limited participation in TVET (in 2009 there were only 315,000 students enrolled across 1,522 technical and vocational education and training institutes in Pakistan (NAVTEC, 2009);
- the limited number of existing occupational profiles, which at present only partially address the demand present in the economy;
- limited learning pathways from upper secondary education to TVET and from TVET to post-secondary and higher education;
- the small numbers of Pakistani workers who have acquired technical skills through the TVET system (6 per cent) or who receive on-the-job training in the formal sector (2.5 per cent);
- the huge numbers of Pakistani workers who have received their training in the informal sector, mainly based on the so-called Ustad-Shagird System (the traditional apprenticeship system).

## 2. MAIN POLICY OBJECTIVES

In the context of the National Skills Strategy (NSS) 2009-2013 (NAVTTTC 2011), the Government intends the NQF to:

- coordinate qualifications under a single body;
- structure existing and new qualifications;
- establish relationships between qualifications and allow progression between different levels;
- provide greater transparency and make it easier to compare different qualifications;
- reform the apprenticeship training system;
- combine academic and vocational education, promoting mobility between the two.

## 3. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS AND LEGAL ARRANGEMENTS

The National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) is the main authority that works with provincial Technical and Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTAs) to develop and implement the NQF. The NAVTTTC was created following the Act XV of 2011 by the President of Pakistan on 25 June 2011. The Act empowers the NAVTTTC to 'provide for an autonomous organization for regulation, coordination, and policy direction for vocational and technical training and for matters ancillary thereto or connected therewith'. Many functions of the NAVTTTC involve Labour Market Information (LMI): for example with regard to vocational career guidance and counselling, the development or modification of occupational standards, and the assessment of the quality and labour market relevance of TVET training, especially on the basis of information on school-to-work transitions.

The NQF/TVET is based on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), and was developed in consultation with public and private stakeholders. It defines levels, level descriptors and rules for equivalencies, and makes allowances for credit transfer, assessment, and recognition of prior learning (RPL). The Pakistani NQF/TVET consists of 6 vocational levels and 2 prevocational levels, and is valid for all parts of the Pakistani TVET system. The testing phase, which started in summer 2013, involves working with government departments and ministries to facilitate broad implementation of the TVET/NQF.

The GIZ-TVET Reform Support Programme (GIZ, 2013) has contributed substantially to the development of the NQF in the TVET sector. The NQF forms the foundation for competency-based standards, curricula and assessment packages. Together with the NAVTTTC, the GIZ-TVET Reform Support Programme has set out guidelines for the development of curricula, including a standardized template. Most relevant stakeholders were involved in the design phase. The major steps were/are as follows:

- Industry practitioners participate in DACUM (Development of a Curriculum) workshops. They define job tasks and duties, required equipment, and other features of a job.

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provides little transparency and confidence to employers in selecting and hiring, and creates limited incentives to raise the quality of training.

- Public and private sector practitioners as well as TVET teachers are involved in subsequent standards development.
- Based on the defined tasks, duties and standards, national curricula are developed for different NQF levels.
- Industry experts are tasked with endorsing the new curricula or suggesting revisions before they are forwarded to and approved by the National Curricula Review Committee (NCRC). The NCRC is a standing committee consisting of representatives from NAVTTC and the TEVTAs, as well as selected TVET experts. Special validation workshops are performed for industrial endorsement. Final approval is given by the NAVTTC.
- Curricula in more than 20 fields (e.g. hospitality, IT, agriculture, renewable energy and housekeeping) were developed or are in the process of development, more than 30 per cent of which are suitable for women.
- TVET institutes are currently being identified to introduce Competency-Based Training (CBT) programmes based on the newly developed curricula. These will include the training of TVET instructors in order to develop their technical, methodological and pedagogical skills. For example, the Chenab training institute in rural Punjab is participating in a competency-based training course for housemaids, based on the curricula developed and implemented by the GIZ-TVET Reform Support Programme. From the 50 participants who started the training, 43 completed the course and were assessed as 'competent' at the end.

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) is actively participating in technical and vocational curriculum development. In consultation with its affiliated Chambers and Associations, the FPCCI prepares recommendations for skills development according to current industry requirements.

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

At present there are four levels of technical and vocational certification. These are: GIII (basic level), GII, GI, and Diploma. These levels will be correlated to the NQF/TVET.

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

The NQF is designed to accommodate all kinds of TVET, whether formal, non-formal or informal, and from both public and private providers.

Formal government-provided training takes place in Government Vocational Institutes (GVIs), Government Polytechnic Institutes (GPIs), Vocational Training Centres (VTCs), Apprenticeship Training Centres (ATCs), Government Colleges of Technology (GCTs) and Government Technical Training Institutes (GTTIs).

Private sector training can be both formal and non-formal, and includes in-company training under the Apprenticeship Training Ordinance of 1962 as well as other in-company training programmes, donor agency-sponsored training programmes and training programmes in Private Vocational & Technical Training Institutions under the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) Scheme.

The traditional 'Ustad-Shagird' training system, a type of informal apprenticeship, is also used in the informal economy.

The NQF/TVET is designed to promote linkages and pathways between programmes in TVET and general education. The Skilled Worker Certificates Grade 1 to 3, for example, provided in vocational institutes, can also be awarded at Secondary School level, and successful candidates can achieve a Secondary School Certificate (Vocational).

The NQF/TVET provides equivalencies between the three-year Diploma programmes in polytechnics and colleges of technology and the Higher Secondary Certificates (HSC/Intermediate Certificate) which are required for entry to higher education courses (engineering degrees or Bachelor (Pass) degrees). The Diploma awarded in the field of engineering is known as the Diploma of Associate Engineers (DAEs).

The Bachelor of Technology (Pass Degree) can be attained through one year of industrial training followed by one year of institution-based training. The Bachelor of Technology (Honours) is a two-year course following the award of the Bachelor of Technology (Pass degree). The Bachelor of Technology (Honours) is considered comparable to an Engineering degree (BSc Eng) and combines higher education with practical training in industry. Further linkages and pathways between programmes in TVET and general education will be developed during the testing phase of the NQF/TVET.

Registered apprenticeship training is conducted in around 610 establishments including many state-owned utilities such as railways and airlines. Registered apprenticeship training is highly competitive, the entry requirement effectively being the Secondary School Certificate (Vocational), even though training is at trade level. Apprenticeship schemes are based on guidelines in the Apprenticeship Training Ordinance of 1962, which is now under review. The Germany-Pakistan Training Initiative (GPATI) has developed a workable approach to cooperative training in which theory is taught at two private training institutes and on-the-job training provided by ten German and three Pakistani companies.

There are several short term (3 month to 1 year) courses conducted by vocational institutes, for which the entry requirement is a Class 8 pass. These lead to the grade of skilled worker, but are recognized only at provincial level (through TEVTA), not at federal level. It is envisaged that these courses will be accommodated in the NQF at entry level. At present, non-formal learning initiatives such as these (including the distance learning programmes offered at open universities and through the Islamic education system, or via competence testing in the workplace) run parallel to the mainstream system. To incorporate these diverse learning initiatives into the NQF/TVET will be a challenge.

## **6. IMPORTANT LESSONS AND FUTURE PLANS**

The government of Pakistan is committed to developing an NQF for the TVET sector, and to embedding the NQF in broader reform initiatives, notably those concerned with the apprenticeship system, vocational education in schools, accreditation of technical institutions, the setting up of a labour market information system, national skills standards, and so on. In the long run, such a strategy is expected to make existing policies more coherent, and strengthen existing institutional capacities.

Pakistan is developing its NQF incrementally and phasing its implementation over a period of five years, as time is needed to discuss, negotiate, dispel misunderstandings, reach agreements, and develop trust between stakeholders.

Another lesson learned is the importance of strong private sector involvement. The NQF and its various components have been extensively discussed with chambers of commerce and industry across the country, in order to make them more effective and relevant to private sector and industry needs. The next steps are:

- to involve private sector and civil society institutions, as well as other stakeholders, in order to extend the resource base for TVET;
- to provide technical assistance in order to build capacity for public-private partnerships, making private sector representatives more engaged and willing to share their resources and expertise;
- to extend the management, monitoring and evaluation capacities of central and provincial level organizations in order to deliver improved TVET;
- to create employment avenues in vulnerable areas, bolstering conflict resolution efforts;

- to incorporate the feedback of users of the NQF/TVET into the current draft at the end of the testing phase;
- to support the NAVTTC in leading the Project Steering Committee (GIZ-TVET Reform Support Programme, 2013).

## **MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

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