NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK (2020-2030)

Part IV- Volume IV

Policy Proposals and Recommended Strategic Activities on Technical and Vocational Education and Training



National Education Commission

December 2021

**Nurturing a**

**Society of Productive, Caring and Patriotic Citizens**

**National Education Policy**

**Framework (2020-2030)**

Part IV- Volume IV

**National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education and Training**



National Education Commission  
**Sri Lanka  
December 2021**

**National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education and Training**

December 2021

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**Preface**

The National Education Commission (NEC), established by the National Education Act No. 19 of 1991, functions as the apex policy formulation body to make recommendations to the President on education policy and a wide spectrum of matters connected with education reforms and development.

The NEC in performing its mandate has commenced the formulation of NEPF- 2020-2030 in October 2020 and the task was completed by the end of November 2021. The composite version of NEPF- 2020-2030 covers 8 sub-sectors of education, namely early childhood care and education (Volume I), general education (Volume II), higher education (Volume III), technical and vocational education (Volume IV), pirivena education (Volume V), special and inclusive education (Volume VI), nonformal education (Volume VII), and international schools (Volume VIII).

Volume IV of NEPF (2020-2030) presents the Policy Proposals and Recommended Strategic activities on Technical and Vocation Education and Training which shall lay the foundation to realize the long-term vision of education – “*A Society of Productive, Caring and Patriotic Citizens*”. Having considered the issues highlighted in the Status Review of the TVET sector given in Section 1, the policy planning team has identified 8 core areas to frame policy proposals and recommended activities. These core areas include, i) Access and Enrollment, ii) Qualification Framework, National Competency Standards, and Curricula, iii) Training Facilities, Learners and Learning Environment, iv) Quality Assurance, v) Human Resources Development and Management, vi) Financing, vii) Regulation and Governance and viii) Data, Information System and Research

The National Education Commission hopes these policy proposals and recommended strategies will facilitate the Ministry of Education, State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research & Innovations, and the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission together with the Department of Technical Education, Vocation Training Authority, and National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority, and the affiliated training institutions to develop and implement reforms and development plans to improve the quality and standards of technical and vocation education and training.

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Chairman

National Education Commission

December 31,2021

**Abbreviation**

ADB : Asian Development Bank

CBT : Competency Based Training

CGCS : Career Guidance and Counselling Center

CGTTI : Ceylon German Technical Training Institute

CSR : Corporate Social Responsibility

DCSS : Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka

DTET : Department of Technical Education and Training

ED : Entrepreneurship Development

ETF : Employees Trust Fund

EPF : Employee Provident Fund

FLM : Flexible Learning Mode

HR : Human Resources

ICT : Information and Communication Technology

ILO : International Labour Organization

ISSC : Industry Sector Skills Council

LMI : Labour Market Information

LMIS : Labour Market Information System

MIS : Management Information System

NAITA : National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority

NITAC : National Industrial Training Advisory Committees

NCS : National Competency Standards

NDES : National Diploma in Engineering Science

NEC : National Education Commission

NEET : Not in Employment, Education or Training

NGO : Non-Governmental Organization

NVQF : National Vocational Qualification Framework

NVTI : National Vocational Training Institute

OCUSL : Ocean University of Sri Lanka

OJT : On the Job Training

PTS : Practical and Technical Skills

PWD : Persons with Disabilities

QIS : Quality Improvement System

QMS : Quality Management System

QA : Quality Assurance

ROI : Return on Investment

RPL : Recognition of Prior Learning

SOR : Scheme of Recruitment

SSDP : Skills Sector Development Programme

TVEC : Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission

TVET : Technical and Vocational Education and Training

TITP : Training Institute of Technology Professionals

SEPI : Self Employment Promotional Initiative

SME : Small and Medium Enterprise

UoVT : University of Vocational Technology

VET : Vocational Education and Training

VTA : Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka

Table of Content

1. STATUS REVIEW 1

1.1. Introduction 1

1.2. Current organizational structure of TVET 1

1.3. Salient features of TVET sector 1

1.4. Current status, issues, and gaps 1

1.4.1 Access and enrollment 1

1.4.1.1 Career guidance and counseling service 1

1.4.1.2 Social marketing 1

1.4.1.3 Trainee support system 1

1.4.1.4 Inclusive TVET programmes for persons with disabilities 1

1.4.1.5 Female participation in TVET 1

1.4.1.6 Introduction of vocational education to the secondary school curriculum 1

1.4.1.7 Building the image of craft occupations and TVET 1

1.4.2 Qualification framework, national competency standards and curricula, and industry foresight 1

1.4.2.1. NVQ 1

1.4.2.2. National competency standards (NCS) and curriculum 1

1.4.2.3. Industry foresight for the progressive development of TVET sector 1

1.4.3 Training institutions and facilities, Types of Training and learning environment 1

1.4.3.1. Establishing new training centers and improving facilities of existing centers 1

1.4.3.2. Use of TVET facilities to provide part-time training for prospective trainees 1

1.4.3.3. Developing flagship TVET centers for a cluster of small feeder TVET centers 1

1.4.3.4. Apprenticeship Training 1

1.4.3.5. Public-private partnerships in TVET Training 1

1.4.3.6. Further training and re-training of industry employees 1

1.4.3.7. Livelihood occupations and gig jobs 1

1.4.3.8. Entrepreneurship development (ED) in vocational training 1

1.4.3.9. Skilling for foreign employment 1

1.4.4 Quality assurance in technical and vocational education and training 1

1.4.4.1. Quality assurance system in TVET 1

1.4.4.2. Issues related to quality assurance in TVET 1

1.4.4.3. Innovations for quality improvements 1

1.4.4.4. Quality Management System and Quality Improvement System 1

1.4.4.5. Competition for Expertise and Excellence 1

1.4.4.6. Skills 1

1.4.4.7. Competition for Excellence among the TVET training centers 1

1.4.5 Human Resources Development and Management 1

1.4.5.1. Deficiencies in the current human resource management practices 1

1.4.5.2. Trainer Training system – needs and shortcomings 1

1.4.6 Financing TVET 1

1.4.7 Regulations and Governance 1

1.4.7.1. Legal Framework Governing TVET Sector 1

1.4.7.2. Issues relating to Regulation and Governance of TVET sector 1

1.4.8 Data and Information, and Research 1

1.4.8.1. Labor Market and Training 1

1.4.8.2. Research in 1

1.5. Conclusion 1

2. POLICY PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES 1

1.1. CORE AREA - TVET - 1: Access and Enrolment 1

1.2. CORE AREA – TVET - 2: Qualification Framework, National Competency Standards and Curricula 5

1.3. CORE AREA - TVET - 3: Training Institutions and Facilities, Learners and Learning Environment 8

1.4. CORE AREA - TVET - 4: Quality Assurance in TVET 13

1.5. CORE AREA - TVET - 5: Human Resources Development and Management 15

1.6. CORE AREA - TVET - 6: Financing Technical and Vocational Education 17

1.7. CORE AREA - TVET - 7: Regulations, Governance and Efficiency 19

1.8. CORE AREA - TVET - 8: Data, Information and Research 21

# STATUS REVIEW

## Introduction

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has become a priority in global development agenda as it prepares the youth with job specific skills for industrial, manufacturing and service sectors, and helps to improve productivity of the workforce and provide marketable skills for the youth.

Formal TVET, as we know of it today, had its beginnings in Sri Lanka in 1893 when the first Technical College was established at Maradana to train skilled workers needed for the development of physical infrastructures such as laying of railway lines and construction of roads.

The period after independence (1948) saw a renewed interest in the development of skills required for achieving the development objectives of a newly emergent nation. Accordingly, actions had been taken to establish many training institutions with mandates for the training of youth and industry employees and apprentices. However, this expansion did not go in parallel in improving the quality and relevance of training provisions. Recognizing the importance of quality and relevance of TVET training provisions, from 1990 onwards attempts have been made to co-ordinate different training institutions to deliver quality and market-relevant training programmes in accordance with a nationally agreed plan. A notable outcome of this plan was the establishment of the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), as the apex regulatory body in TVET sector in 1990, and the establishment of a separate ministry for the TVET in 1994. These progressive developments have led to the formulation and adoption of the National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVQF) which provides guidelines and standards on many TVET functions including curriculum development, competency-based training, assessment, and quality assurance. The NVQF facilitates the TVET trainees to move up progressively from certificate levels training to earn market recognized qualifications such as vocational diplomas and degrees. This upward mobility was further made possible by establishing nine Colleges of Technology and six University Colleges to conduct NVQ Level 5 and 6 National Diploma courses and then establishing the University of Vocational Technology (UoVT) to offer NVQ Level 7-degree programmes. In parallel, the TVEC and TVET institutions have introduced many programmes for upgrading the skills of workers already employed in the industry.

Despite these quantitative and qualitative improvements in the TVET sector, the industrial, manufacturing, and service sectors of the national economy are still suffering from a dearth of skilled workers. On the other hand, there has been rising youth unemployment, and yet many industries to overcome the shortages of skilled labour have resorted to importing workers from India, Bangladesh, and China[[1]](#footnote-1). Therefore, TVET sector is in dire need of reforms backed by well-formulated policies and strategies to address the sector-specific issues including bridging the demand for and supply of craft and middle-level technical and vocational skills.

## Current organizational structure of TVET

At present, the State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Training, and Research and Innovation is mainly responsible for the regulation and development of TVET system in Sri Lanka. The institutions operating under the State Ministry are listed below.

1. **Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC)**

Regulatory, standards-setting, quality assurance, and qualification awarding body of TVET sector.

1. **Public sector training providers with primary responsibility in TVET**
   * **Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET)** with a network of 30 technical colleges conducting NVQ Level 1 to 4 courses and 9 Colleges of Technology conducting NVQ Level 5 and 6 courses including NVQ Level 1 to 4 Courses.
   * **National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA)** with an island-wide network of inspectorates to conduct apprenticeship programmes with 25 district offices and 4 National Level Training Institutions and about 70 apprenticeship training centers.
   * **Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka (VTA)** with a network of about 295 training centers.
   * **Ceylon – German Technical Training Institute (CGTTI)**

Leading Automobile Training Institute of the country.

* + **University of Vocational Technology (UoVT)**

Conduct degree-level programmes (NVQ Level 7) for middle-level vocational qualification holders.

* + **Ocean University of Sri Lanka (OCUSL)**

University conducting marine engineering and aquatic resource technology degree programmes and vocational training programmes in the maritime and aquatic resource sector

* + **Sri Lanka Institute of Printing (SLIP)**

Leading printing training institute of the country

1. **Public sector training institutions operated by other Ministries and Industry lead bodies**

* National Youth Services Council (NYSC) with an island-wide network of TVET centers in parallel to youth development programmes
* Construction Equipment Training Center (CETRAC) of Construction Industry Development Authority
* Sri Lanka Institute of Textile and Apparel
  + Gem and Jewelry Research and Development Authority
  + Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management
  + Schools of Agriculture of the Department of Agriculture
  + Schools of the Animal Husbandry of the Department of Animal Production and Health
  + Mahapola Training Center of the Sri Lanka Port Authority
  + Sri Lanka – German Railway Training Institute
  + National Youth Corp
  + Irrigation Training Centers operated under the Irrigation Department

**d. Private and NGO sector training providers**

There is a large number of private TVET institutions operated on a fee levying basis. However, the majority of them are in the ICT sector. In addition, there is a widespread network of NGO sector-operated TVET institutions.

## Salient features of TVET sector

* NVQ framework with 7 levels of qualifications was established in 2004, and Sri Lanka was the first South Asian country to establish a qualification framework for the TVET sector.
* According to the dashboard of TVEC website[[2]](#footnote-2), (as of 02.04.2021), Sri Lanka has 2,946 training centers registered with TVEC, of which 1,146 centers of valid registration and 1,800 centers with expired registration.
* There are 1,097 public sector TVET centers including 74 NAITA centers, 295 VTA centers, 30 Technical Colleges and 9 Colleges of Technology DTET, and 54 centers of NYSC.
* According to the TVEC Labour Market Bulletin[[3]](#footnote-3), 250,690 trainees have been enrolled in TVET courses in 2019 with 142,906 males and 107,784 females. In the same year, 170,080 have completed the courses with 97,757 males and 78,323 females. The completed number includes the enrollments in previous years in courses with more than 1-year duration. This number includes both training of school leavers as well as skill upgrading training provided for already employed persons.
* The numbers enrolled and completed vocational training in 2019 were approximately 161,000 and 111,000, respectively. This may include part-time short-term training programme too.
* For courses in the construction sector, enrolment of males and female students in 2019 was 29,004 and 5,500, respectively. Corresponding completion numbers were 19,943 and 2,776, respectively.
* For courses of the wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, and motorcycles, enrollment of male and female students was 13,737 and 1,294, respectively. Corresponding completion numbers were 7,649 and 881, respectively.
* In 2019, a total number of 78,007 NVQ certificates had been issued including 5,210 NVQ Certificates to industry employees through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) approach. However, the number of NVQ certificates issued is much less than the number completed because all TVET courses have not been converted to NVQ Framework yet.
* TVEC in cooperation with NAITA and UoVT has developed 278 NVQ Level 1 to 4 National Competency Standards (NCS) and Competency-based Training (CBT) curricula, and 68 NVQ levels 5 and 6 NCS and CBT curricula.

## Current status, issues, and gaps

The TVET sector as explained above is widely distributed across the country, consisting of State and private sector training providers and a regulatory body, the TVEC. The sector is very diverse in terms of size, resources, the focus of training, target populations or learners, and the standards and relevance of training and the qualifications offered. Therefore, a rational approach is made to describe the sector, and the issues and gaps under 8 themes, namely, i) Access and Enrollment, ii) Qualification Framework, National Competency Standards, and Curricula, iii) Training Facilities and Learning Environment, iv) Quality Assurance, v) Human Resources Development and Management, vi) Financing, vii) Regulation and Governance and viii) Information Management and Research.

### Access and enrollment

Despite having a well widespread network of TVET institutions operated by the State and private sectors, most of the courses offered, particularly by the State-run TVET institutions are operated below the training capacity due to inadequate enrollments and high dropout rates. This phenomenon appears to emanate from many limitations and reasons. Though many interventions, as described below have been put in place to address the issues of TVET, more concerted efforts appear to be required to harness the TVET resource base, and training of school leavers to match the emerging skilled human resource needs of the country.

As shown in Figure. 1, it has been estimated that due to many reasons such as learning difficulties, examination-oriented education, poverty, inadequate guidance, and counseling, well over 245,000 children leave the general education system annually at different points. Out of this group, approximately 72% may join with public and private training system while around 28% may get added annually into the ‘not in employment, education or training (NEET) group. From one perspective, this NEET group is a valuable human resource pool to meet the labour demand of informal system of the economy. However, this group also needs skills to engage in more productive employments in the long run. They are considered as additional potential candidates annually available to absorb into TVET sector to train to cater for the rising labour market demands.

**Figure 1: School leavers at different stages at School (Based on 2004 entry age cohort)**



***Source:*** National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education (2018, p.1).

Many programs and interventions have been attempted during the recent past such as i) provision of career guidance and counseling services, ii) launching of social marketing programs, iii) provision of trainee support system, iv) provision of inclusive training to cater for persons with disabilities, v) programmes to promote female participation in TVET, vi) introduction of vocational education to the secondary school curriculum and vii) building the image of craft occupations and TVET.These are elaborated below.

#### Career guidance and counseling service

One of the interventions initiated to address the under-enrollment into TVET programmes and high drop-out rates was the establishment of a network of Career Guidance and Counseling Centers (CGCCs), covering both the TVET sector and general education. These centers are expected to provide a range of services including career guidance, career counseling, job placement, and provision of information materials. The ministry-in-charge of the TVET (hereafter referred to as the Ministry), in 2004 had issued a Guideline for Institutionalization of Career Guidance and Counseling Services in the TVET Sector.

Accordingly, 52 CGCSs have been established in 23 districts covering all provinces to provide a range of services including career guidance, career counseling, job placement, referral system for further training, access to facilities, and provision of the information material. Parallel to this development, most of the schools also have established similar career guidance and counselling services. Nevertheless, the capacity of the career guidance units/centers is limited as they do not have access to up-to-date labour market information systems, and also the available employment opportunities, skills requirements, and trends, etc. A Career Interest Test was introduced to identify the career interest of youth based on an individual’s aptitude, traits, and preferences. The general education system of Sri Lanka is also expected to provide career guidance and counseling at schools for which there is a policy guideline to deploy a dedicated teacher for all schools with more than 300 students for career guidance activities[[4]](#footnote-4).

All stakeholders have now realized that career guidance and career counseling is an important aspect especially for school children to educate them to become aware of diverse career opportunities available to pursue after leaving the schools. A Study on Career Guidance in General Education in Sri Lanka4 (*NEC* Research Series (2014) – No. 08) has recommended establishing a national level database and mechanism to facilitate career guidance services offered to prospective students and trainees on TVET opportunities. Towards this effort, the TVEC has developed and launched a career guidance and job placement website www.youthjobs.lk/. Further, the TVEC has established a National Committee on Career Guidance, and also it has planned to establish national-level career guidance and counseling service.

#### Social marketing

The Ministry In parallel to the above-mentioned efforts, with the assistance of foreign-assisted projects from time to time, has launched many social marketing programmes using print and television media to promote TVET and to inculcate positive thinking towards the TVET among youth. However, such programmes did not achieve the objective as they functioned only for a short period in adhoc manner and therefore the efforts were not sustained. Therefore, a national level TVET promotional programmes should be a regular activity in TVET development, if at all to have an impact in this regard.

Further, from time to time, the Ministry in cooperation with leading TVET institutions organizes national level TVET exhibitions, and many outreach programmes. Though they are not regular programmes, all these programmes have made some positive impact on the increase of annual enrolment in TVET courses. But, the TVET sector still experiences a very high dropout rate[[5]](#footnote-5), thus making case for further strengthening of career guidance, counselling, and social marketing activities.

#### Trainee support system

The majority of TVET students belong to the lower middle class or poor strata of society[[6]](#footnote-6) and they need financial support to meet their routine expenses including transport costs. Such support for TVET students is further justified by the existence of bursaries and Mahapola payments given to students in the State university system.

Up to the late 1980s, DTET and NAITA had been the two leading TVET institutions in the country. In those early days, DTET did not have a system to pay allowances to trainees but NAITA from its inception in 1971 had paid allowances to all trainees. In the 1970s, a monthly allowance of Rs 180/= had been paid to each apprentice and in the 1980s, it was increased up to Rs 450/=. Compared to the salary structures that prevailed, the apprenticeship allowance was a significant payment. In the late 1990s, NAITA increased the apprenticeship allowance to Rs 1000/= which continued up to 2013 with very high unpaid arrears and NAITA discontinued this programme thereafter. It appears that the following reasons may have influenced the NAITA to discontinue the payment of apprenticeship allowance in 2013.

* NAITA did not get sufficient funds to pay allowance in a timely manner and as such, they were burdened with a continuous accumulation of unpaid arrears.
* Funds received were used to pay the arrears and as such some trainees received the payment after completing their courses.
* By 2013, an allowance of LKR 1000.00 per month was not an attractive incentive for TVET trainees.

Following the discontinuation of the apprenticeship allowance, the NAITA encouraged respective employers to make pay an allowance to the trainees.

The DTET started payment of attendance allowance to trainees in the 1990s and continues to date. The VTA had a course-specific allowance scheme to attract students to courses with high industry demand sans social demand. However, these financial support schemes are not uniformly applied across all institutions. The Budget-2020 had proposed to pay a monthly allowance for students following technical and vocational education and it has now been implemented for trainees following NVQ Level 1 to 4 courses.

During on-the-job training, many employers make some daily allowance to trainees but some do not make any payment to trainees. When the NAITA stopped the apprenticeship allowance to trainees, then the Chairman of the NAITA who was a reputed industrialist said: “that *all trainees in OJT must be paid an allowance by employers and if any employer does not have capacity to pay an allowance to trainees, that employer does not have sufficient work and capacity to provide training too”.*

When international literature is reviewed, it says that trainees in work contribute for production thus for the revenue to the institution. At the same time, trainees are a cost to employers as they may cause some damages to the equipment and material causing a high rejection rate of production. Therefore, many countries have a culture as well as legislation to make some payment to trainees by employers which is usually lessor than the payment to make to unskilled workers. Therefore, it is high time to put in place appropriate legislation to provide OJT and an allowance compulsorily for industries with certain capacities. Some industries argue that training is a cost to them, but they must realize that non-training is also a cost to the industry in the long run.

#### Inclusive TVET programmes for persons with disabilities

As per the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[[7]](#footnote-7) ratified by the Government of Sri Lanka in 2016[[8]](#footnote-8), disability of a person is a combination of impairments of the person and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. In order to minimize the disabling effect on persons with disabilities, barriers should be either minimized or removed by making reasonable adjustments to physical and/or environmental requirements without giving undue advantage to persons with disabilities. When society is sensitized to disability-related barriers, social and attitudinal barriers could be removed or reduced.

Going along in this approach, the TVEC and TVET institutions have carried out several activities to promote training for persons with disabilities (PWDs) as listed below.

* TVEC in cooperation with ILO developed a National Strategy on TVET provision for vulnerable people in Sri Lanka in 2009[[9]](#footnote-9).
* The need of providing training for persons with disabilities was included in TVET policies developed in 2009[[10]](#footnote-10) and 2018 by NEC[[11]](#footnote-11).
* TVEC has implemented a grant scheme for courses for persons with disabilities to improve those courses.
* TVEC addressed the disability issue by introducing Reasonable Adjustments in NVQ Assessment for Candidates with Disabilities and issued the NVQ Circular 01/2021[[12]](#footnote-12).
* NAITA enrolls PWDs for enterprise-based apprenticeship and NVTI Narahenpita enrolls PWDs for selected courses.

However, in the absence of a proper system to compile information on training provided to persons with disabilities, data, and information in this regard is scanty and incomplete.

#### Female participation in TVET

According to the TVET information given in the LMI Bulletin (2019)[[13]](#footnote-13), enrolment and completion of females in TVET courses in 2019 were 43.0% and 43.6%, respectively. Though 43.0% participation of females is not critically low, it is lower than the female percentage of the youth population which is above 50%. Nevertheless, as reported by LMI Bulletin (2019), female participation is still low in courses related to some industry sectors.

* Female participation in Construction sector courses is 16%
* Female participation in courses in wholesale, retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, and motorcycles work is 7.7%.
* Female participation in transport and storage courses is 5.7%.
* Female participation in hotel sector courses is 23.2%.

However, females are mostly concentrated in lower number of courses, and hence they seek employment in a fewer number of occupations. The end result is the lower employability of females and lower female participation in the labour force.

One barrier to increasing female labour force participation is that females are not employed or not willing to be employed in some occupations. The issues here may be cultural, attitudinal, biological, and organizational. When cultural and attitudinal issues are concerned, our society does not expect females to work in some occupations. For example, females are not expected to engage in occupations that require creeping under the vehicles, climbing scaffoldings of high-rise buildings, mining’s, etc. In order to address low female participation in the labour force, females should be encouraged to undertake non-stereotype occupations and also be ready to work under difficult conditions. But this is a large transformation from current conventions and It will not happen in a short time.

Another reason for lower female participation in labour force is the low number of females dominated occupations compared to male-dominated occupations. Therefore, this issue could be overcome only by expanding female attractive or female-dominated occupations[[14]](#footnote-14). For example, there are semi-technical occupations in the interface between technical and non-technical occupations which could be developed to attract females. At present many technical sales assistant jobs in spare parts shops and hardware shops are handled by males. They could well be developed as female-friendly occupations. Further, females should be facilitated to get into semi-technical occupations that may pave the way for them to move into technical occupations. This concept has already been included in the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Framework prepared by the Skills Sector Development Programme (2017)[[15]](#footnote-15) of the Ministry.

Recently validated Vocational Education and Training (VET) plan for electrical and electronics industry sector has estimated about 10,000 production line operators in electrical and electronics industries mostly in Export Processing Zones. A large number of these production line operators are females as employers prefer females for this manual work due to their high hand dexterity and higher precision in repetitive jobs. However, their job span is about 3 to 7 years, and thereafter, they leave jobs for various reasons and get unemployed. But these girls have skills to identify electrical and electronics components. The VET Plan has proposed to train these girls for Technical Sale Assistant (NVQ Level 4) qualification to enable them to find jobs in their home towns. Similarly, VET Plan for the automobile repair and maintenance industry sector has proposed to train females for techno-commercial sale assistants and colour mixer occupations for the automobile Industry. TVEC and NAITA have already developed NVQ Standards and curricula for these two occupations. Further, the SSDP has already commenced the training of females for techno-commercial sale assistant occupations under the Training purchase model.

#### Introduction of vocational education to the secondary school curriculum

According to the age cohort analyses conducted by the NEC in 2017 in preparing the National Policy of TVET[[16]](#footnote-16) only about 19% (out of 2004 school entry age cohort) proceeded for higher education (Figure 1). The traditional pathways of balance 81% of the age cohort who left the school education at different stages could be explained in the following manner:

* About 12% (15 - 19 age group) of them seek direct employments in the Labour Market. Most of them are engaged in low-skilled and short-term jobs, and eventually, some of them end up in the NEET group. According to the Labour Force Survey (2019)[[17]](#footnote-17), the NEET group has accounted for 22% of the youth population.
* Few of them may be fortunate to find formal jobs in the State and private sector.
* Many of them seek and are selected for TVET programmes. Some of them give up the courses due to the mismatches with their interest and end up in informal jobs.
* Some of them may seek TVET opportunities but not all will be selected due to poor performance at school examinations. As NVQ level 3 & 4 courses get sufficient applications from school leavers with good grades, applicants with poor school grades do not get opportunities for courses of their interest. Most TVET institutions do not have NVQ level 1 and 2 courses in popular occupations that could have facilitated the entry of school leavers with poor grades.

Almost all countries, both developed and developing, face similar situations. Therefore, many countries have introduced pre-vocational qualifications to qualify school leavers with poor school grades for TVET courses. Prevocational qualifications are designed to improve the trade-related basic skills of persons with low levels of education seeking entry into the formal TVET system. Many countries including Mauritius, Bangladesh, and England have introduced systems to award pre-vocational qualifications.

Sri Lanka school system has implemented programmes from time to time to provide vocational skills to school children. Technical and vocational subjects had been taught in schools at GCE (O/L) classes at the commencement of free educations in the 1940s to 1960s, but that has not been continued beyond the 1970s. Since 2007 practical and technical subjects (PTS) have been introduced from Grade 6 to 9 classes, but learning of these subjects does not result in any vocational recognition.

In 2017, thirteen-year compulsory education programme was introduced to give 2-year vocational preparation courses for students who perform poorly at G.C.E. (O/L) examination. So far several batches of students have completed the 2-year programmes in schools and some of them have already completed NVQ level 4 programmes in TVET institutions. Nonetheless, this program suffers from the following gaps and issues:

* All students with poor GCE(O/L) performance are not joining with 13-year compulsory education programmes.
* All enrolled students in 13-year compulsory programmes do not proceed into training in TVET institutions.

A study conducted by Suraweera (2019)[[18]](#footnote-18) on the 13-year compulsory education programmehas revealed the following:

* Students coming from different schools do not have uniform learning. As there is no assessment in schools, uniformity in learning is not maintained.
* The dropout rate of trainees coming from 13-year compulsory education programme to TVET institutions was higher than those of the directly enrolled trainees. As explained by the TVET Instructors direct trainees come to TVET institutions after exploring other opportunities in the labour market while the trainees from the 13-year compulsory education programme leave the training to explore other opportunities in the labour market.
* Academic grades are not considered when enrolling students from the 13-year compulsory education programme. However, the poor literacy rate is an issue with students coming into the TVET institutions from the 13-year compulsory education programme.
* TVET Institutions have faced difficulties to arrange OJT for students who come from the 13-year compulsory education programme as most industries particularly ICT enterprises expect the good academic performance of students. As a solution to this issue, many instructors have suggested to include an assessment to 13-year compulsory educational programmes.

This study has also recommended introducing Foundational Vocational qualification (in lieu of pre-vocational qualification) to give recognition to vocational skills provided in schools in junior secondary grades, and 13-year compulsory education programmes. Since lately two-year school vocational training of 13-year compulsory education programme has been amended with some major reforms. Still, the findings of the above study are valid and applicable.

#### Building the image of craft occupations and TVET

The development of TVET policies has become very crucial as almost all industry sectors in the country are experiencing a severe skills shortage. This section discusses the accessibility to TVET as its effects on the number of skilled persons trained by the TVET system to bridge the skill gaps. Similarly, there is an issue on attraction to occupations and TVET courses by youth which is reflected by 20% youth unemployment rate despite severe labour shortage.

Many studies have shown that the influence of numerous socio-economic factors in the creation of skills shortages. And these factors are interrelated and their analyses are very complicated. This phenomenon has been simplified by a concept called ‘Skill Equilibrium,’[[19]](#footnote-19) and its dimensions are listed below (Table 1).

**Table 1: Dimension of Skills equilibrium**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Dimension of Low Skills Equilibrium** | **Dimension of High Skills Equilibrium** |
| Low demand for Skills  Poor Working Conditions  Poor welfare measures  Low wages  Low supply of skills | High demand for skills  Good Working Conditions  Good Welfare measures  Higher wages  Higher supply of Skills |

***Source*:** Wilson, R., and Hogarth, T. (2003).

When these dimensions of equilibrium are not maintained, skills shortages and surpluses will be created as shown in the diagram below (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Skills equilibrium diagram**

High

Demand

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Skills Gaps and Shortages | High Skills Equilibrium |
| Low Skills Equilibrium | Skills Surpluses |

Low High

Supply

***Source:*** Wilson, R., and Hogarth, T. (2003).

In contrast to the present-day situation, in the 1970s and 1980s, there were no reports on any significant skills shortages in any industry sector in the country. During that period, it was a case of low skills equilibrium. For example, in those days, there was no demand for high workmanship from craftsmen. It was a case of low skills, low working conditions, and low wages.

Today quality expectation of the public and industry is comparatively high and they demand high workmanship and training level from craftsmen. But, working conditions become very unsafe (sometimes), and working conditions and workers' welfare are usually poor coupled with comparatively lower salaries. Skill demand has moved to the high side, but skills equilibrium is broken as wages and other dimensions have not been increased. As a result, the skills equilibrium is broken and a skills shortage is created.

There is a similar article published with the title ‘There's no such things as a skills gap’ in a web site[[20]](#footnote-20) and it articulates the following sentiment:

***"When employers say there’s no skilled workers, what they’re often really saying is that they can’t find workers willing to work for the pay they’re willing to pay”***

Though this phenomenon applies in general to the industry, some enterprises do not face this problem because they maintain all dimensions of skills equilibrium.

In 2017, His excellency the President has recognized the skill shortages in the construction industry and requested Secretaries of the Ministry of Skilled Development and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Construction to submit a report to address the issue. The report submitted in this regard has made the following recommendations:

* Increase minimum wages of crafts jobs
* Reduce hardship in vocational jobs by Introducing mechanization and digitalization
* Introduce attractive names for vocational occupations
* Implement payment of EPF and ETF to informal sector employees
* Ensure workplace health and safety and welfare.

Further, it is proposed to explore the possibility of formulating a pension scheme for craft persons in the informal sector through the Sri Lanka Social Security Board.

### **Qualification framework, national competency standards and curricula, and industry foresight**

##### **NVQ** **Framework**

The most noteworthy achievement in the history of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is the development and adoption of NVQ Framework in 2004. It is a unified qualification framework with 7 levels of certificates, diplomas and degree qualification. Sri Lanka is the first South Asian Country to establish a vocational qualification framework and many South Asian countries followed the NVQ system in Sri Lanka to establish similar systems in their countries.

NVQ Framework has earned public acceptance and has reached a non-reversible level within a short time after launching in 2004. Expectations of the NVQ Framework and its achievements and gaps are listed below:

* NVQ is an industry-based qualification developed based on National Competency Standards which specify skills needed to practice in respective occupations in the industry. Therefore, it was expected to award NVQ through all TVET courses in the country. But still, there are many institutions and courses both in public and private sectors awarding non-NVQ qualifications.
* At the development of the NVQF, there was no concern on awarding NVQs through General Education. However, the school system has started a Technology Stream and 13-year compulsory education, and there is now a need to recognize the vocational skills imparted in schools.
* Though NVQF is in operation for nearly two decades there is still a tendency for many employers to specify their job advertisements at the required NVQ level along with the institution from which such training is expected. This suggests that there is still a need for improving the acceptance and recognition of NVQ among employers across the country.
  + To facilitate the vocationalization[[21]](#footnote-21) of higher education qualifications (i.e. by providing skill upgrading training at NVQ 5 or 6 or 7 levels), the diploma and degree holders should be given to opportunity to follow technical and vocational programmes at NVQ 5 or 6 or 7 levels depending on applicants’ choice leading to diploma certificate, graduate certificate or graduate diplomas. This concept is already practiced in many countries including UK, USA, and Australia. (https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-levels).

According to the above analyses, NVQ has a long march ahead. It has operated for well over 16 years clearing many hurdles and challenges by introducing several amendments, affected by the Board of Management of the TVEC on the recommendation of NVQ Steering Committee. Any system needs fine-tuning after a few years of operation and therefore, this is high time for NVQ framework to undergo system review coupled with revised regulations.

##### **National competency standards (NCS) and curriculum**

National Competency Standards (NCS) are developed occupations-wise, and each NCS specifies the skills, knowledge, attitudes required to practice respective occupations in the industry. The currency/unit system is used to denote the competencies is NCS and, they are packaged according to jobs in the industry to form qualifications - National vocational qualifications (NVQ). In this system, one NCS for a given occupation could have different levels of qualifications. For example, the NCS for the mason occupation could have qualifications for the bricklayer, plasterer, tiler, etc.

The curriculum in the NVQ system is designed to impart competencies specified in the NCS and monitor the progressive acquisition of competencies by the trainees for a given NVQ, and therefore it is called competency-based curricula. In this system, assessments are done based on Performance Criteria (performance standards) specified in a given NCS. Therefore, NCSs are the core of the NVQ framework.

According to the TVEC website, TVEC, NAITA, UoVT in cooperation with other TVET institutions and Industry have developed 346 NCS and CBT curricula. Further, the NVQ Framework has introduced a standardized process to develop the NCS and curricula which will ensure all institutions have uniform curricula and thereby consistent course delivery. This was a great achievement compared to the pre-NVQ era before 2005 when institutions used their own curricula developed based on their experiences. Nevertheless, the following gaps and issues have been identified in the area of NCS and CBT curricula development.

* National Competency Standards specify the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to perform the respective jobs in the industry. Though the competencies in diverse occupations are widely used in the industry the relevant competency standards specified in NCS are not widely used.
* Two hundred and seventy-eight NVQ Level 1 to 4 NCS and curricula, and 68 NVQ Level 5 and 6 NCS and curricula have been already developed. But, NVQ certificates have been issued only from 116 NVQ Level 1 to 4 NCS and 25 NVQ Level 5 and 6 NCS2.
* Too many organizations are linked in the development of NCS and curricula and therefore, the development process takes an unreasonably long time.
* At present, NCS and curricula are prepared only for pre-employment training. However, skill upgrading is equally important to have a competent workforce, and it should be facilitated by conducting skills upgrading programmes for industry employees. But it does not happen at the optimum level, and it is primarily due to the non-availability of curricula for skills upgrading programmes14.
* NVQ Framework of Sri Lanka has no levels for pre-vocational qualifications. However, the Bangladesh Vocational Qualification Framework which was developed after learning Sri Lanka NVQ Framework has two pre-Vocational levels to facilitate school children with poor grades to get enrolled in TVET courses [[22]](#footnote-22).

Therefore, policy intervention is required to address the above mention issues and gaps in NCS and curricula development.

##### **Industry foresight for the progressive development of TVET sector**

Ever since Vocational Training commenced ‘off the job’ training centers after the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, there have been continuous dialogues and debates over bridging the gaps between Skills Supply from Vocational Training centers and Skills demanded by the industry. In order to bridge this gap, training centers worldwide have sought industry cooperation to develop curricula and to provide on the job training. Training centers in Sri Lanka also have followed the same development but without uniform practices.

Under NVQ Framework, to bridge the skills gaps, the lead agencies responsible for implementing the NVQ framework such as Ministry, TVEC, and NAITA have decided to seek industry cooperation to conduct the following activities.

* Develop National Competency Standards (NCS) and curricula with industry participation in development committees.
* Validation of the NCSs and curricula by National Industrial Training advisory committees (NITACs) which are comprised of experts of respective industry sectors.
* Conduct compulsory on-the-job training for all NVQ Level 4 courses.

Industry representatives of NITACs are appointed by the NAITA. The TVEC and NAITA decide the matters that need NITAC consultations. This approach however is not in agreement with some of the industry partners as they do not agree with some of the inputs provided by NITACs. Having similar experiences with advisory committees, many countries such as England, Australia, South Africa, and India have formed an industry-led and industry-owned model for industry collaboration with TVET. That is the Industry Sector Skills Councils (ISSC). In India, there are 34 ISSCs for 34 industry sectors. ISSCs are expected to be proactive and provide industry foresight for the development of TVET institutions. Going along in that direction of development, the Skills Sector Development Programmes of the Ministry has already established four ISSCs in Sri Lanka. ISSCs for Construction, ICT, Manufacturing and Engineering Services, and Tourism have already commenced their operations.

It is hoped that ISSCs will work as the TVET’s gateway to industries to organize OJT, curriculum development, NVQ assessment, and labour market analyses to identify skills trends. There are NITAC for 23 industry sectors. ISSCs are established only for 4 industry sectors. Still, ISSCs are in the piloting stage and TVEC and TVET institutions are shouldering the challenge of making ISSCs a sustainable model to obtain industry foresight to develop the TVET sector.

### **Training institutions and facilities, Types of Training and learning environment**

###### **Establishing new training centers and improving facilities of existing centers**

According to the dashboard of the TVEC website2 www.tvec.gov.lk, there are 1155 training centers with active registration as of April 25, 2021. Among these training centers, there are many small-scale training centers. About 40 % of all training centers have only one course2. Because of the very large number of small centers, the TVET sector does not reflect a good image to attract youth and industry employees for training. Accessibility is not well ensured as there is no uniform course mix across districts. Many courses available in Colombo are not available in peripheral districts. For example, many districts do not have Electrical and Electronics related courses[[23]](#footnote-23). Most of the technical courses follow the same distribution pattern. Therefore, TVET courses and their availability across the TVET institutions and districts need to be further expanded to enable youth in outstation districts to realize their employment aspirations.

Another deficiency in this regard is the inadequate emphasis given to sports and extra-curricular activities for trainees. Most of the TVET institutions do not have facilities for sports and extra-curricular activities.

###### **Use of TVET facilities to provide part-time training for prospective trainees**

Most of the TVET training centers are primarily engaged in providing pre-employment training and these programmes are usually conducted from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. And almost all these centers are free in the evenings and weekends. Therefore, these free times available could be used to conduct skills-upgrading courses for industry employees, and also for livelihood training for the community around centers. Further, the NEET group is a problem in the labour market. School leavers from poor families directly go to low skills short-term jobs in the service sector that require a low level of skills. These jobs employ only young people and many of them get unemployed when they become adults and eventually end up in the NEET group. According to the Labour Force Survey (2019)[[24]](#footnote-24), 21.2 % of youth are in the NEET group. Therefore, training centers should facilitate half-day (morning) courses for youth from poor families to enable them to do jobs in the afternoon and evening. This will provide them opportunities to acquire skills for a stable job while engaging in short-term jobs to make earnings for the family.

###### **Developing flagship TVET centers for a cluster of small feeder TVET centers**

As stated elsewhere, TVET sector is very heterogeneous in terms of size and resource base, and in this heterogeneous system, there are very reputed, well resourceful training centers, and as well as centers without much resource base and hence with less reputation. Centers without reputations have not been able to attract students effectively to follow TVET courses. Therefore, it may be desirable to form networks by establishing flagship centers and feeder centers; in this arrangement, students in feeder centers could move to flagship centers to complete more advanced modules. In order to make these developments, TVET centers need continuous investment. TVEC already implements a grant scheme for private and NGO sector training centers and that needs to be further strengthened.

###### **Apprenticeship Training**

Apprenticeship Training is a strong training methodology as it could develop training up to unconscious[[25]](#footnote-25) competency level in crafts skills. Apprenticeship is an age-old tradition of skills development all over the world including in developed countries. Many developed countries use apprenticeship training as their main skills development strategy with many innovations.

In Sri Lanka, the NAITA is the designated national institute with the mandate for apprenticeship training programmes, and it has added many new features such as special apprenticeship[[26]](#footnote-26) and situational apprenticeship[[27]](#footnote-27) to the national apprenticeship scheme in the 1970s and 1980s, respectively which are not seen or practiced in other countries.

In the new millennium, many countries have modernized apprenticeships to get the benefits of advancing technologies and digitalization. NAITA has an important role to play in strengthening apprenticeships in line with the national trend set by the NVQ Framework and the global development of apprenticeship programmes.

According to the Labour Market Bulletin (2019)[[28]](#footnote-28), the NAITA has enrolled 21,604 apprentices for craft level training in enterprises and out of which 17,941 are in NVQ courses. Apprenticeship has no course limitations, and it could be applied to all occupations in the labour market. Therefore, in Sri Lanka’s full potential of apprenticeship training is yet to be realized. Many large-scale industries are cooperating with NAITA in apprenticeship training. There are many more large-scale industries that are yet to join the apprenticeship training programme.

Enterprise-based situational apprenticeship had 1,171 enrolments in 2019. The situational apprenticeship focuses on emerging occupations and only NAITA is working in this area without any competition from other TVET institutions. Therefore, NAITA could expand this area to all emerging occupations.

###### **Public-private partnerships in TVET Training**

In the TVET landscape, there are public and private, and industry training centers. In addition, there are some public-private partnerships, and a few examples are listed below[[29]](#footnote-29).

* NAITA and Puththalam Cement in public-private partnership have developed and managed a training center in Puththalam
* NVTI of VTA at Narahenpita conducted a beauty/hairdresser course in partnership with a reputed beautician training center of the private sector
* DTET has a partnership with a construction company for the training of construction craftsmen
* A few training centers in rural areas have been supported by private enterprises under their CSR projects.
* Some private training centers had a partnership with public training institutions to get government funds for apprenticeship allowance and instructors’ salaries.

These partnerships have been created on the initiative taken by the private sector institutions. It seems that many private sector institutions are not aware of this possibility yet. Therefore, there should be a clear policy and guidelines need to in place to promote such partnerships. Further, the Public, Private, and industry Training institutions have their own strengths and weaknesses, and therefore when these institutions get together, one’s weaknesses could be suppressed from other’s strengths and thus get a synergetic effect.

###### **Further training and re-training of industry employees**

In the Sri Lankan context, employees need further and continues training while in service in their occupation. Empirical evidence indicates that a majority of the workforce in the industrial sector has not had formal pre-employment training and therefore they acquired skills while working in their assigned jobs. A vast majority of them have skill gaps, especially in the cognitive domain. Therefore, up-skilling of employees is required to bridge the skills gaps thus improving their productivity. In the global context, skilled staff gives a competitive edge to businesses with changing technologies. Further training or up-skilling boosts employees’ motivation with inspiration for lifelong learning.

Under the present trend of technological development, obsolescence of some job categories while opening up new job categories is a world phenomenon of current labour market dynamism. In the liberal market economies, the same is to business enterprises: new businesses are created while some businesses decline. Under both these phenomena, employees who lose jobs need re- skilling to acquire competencies for different occupations.

As a result of the negative impact of Covid pandemic, many enterprises may have to be closed down, but many opportunities may prop up for new business lines. Those new enterprises could absorb a part of the laid-off staff into the new business line. But these recruits need re-training or re-skilling for the new jobs.

**Current Status of Up-skilling and Re-skilling of Industry Employees**: The Sections 80 and 81 of the Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No 20 of 1990 (Part II) specify the functions of further training (up-skilling) and re-training (re-skilling) of industry employees in addition to apprenticeship training. Though legislation on re-training for different jobs is still pending, TVEC and TVET Institutions are implementing and facilitating many skills upgrading programmes for employees in the industry.

The Skill Development Report 2017/2018[[30]](#footnote-30) has a chapter on Skilling Industry employees and those skills upgrading programmes are listed below.

1. NVQ Level 3 and 4 Qualifications through Recognition of Prior Learning
2. Part-time and flexible delivery of modular programmes
3. Part-time delivery of NVQ 5 Diploma Programmes by some Colleges of Technology of DTET
4. Part-Time Delivery of Degree Programmes by the UoVT
5. Mature Candidate Route (MCR) for Industry employees to get NVQ 5 equivalent certificates

The current status, gaps, and issues of up-skilling re-skilling programmes are explained below.

1. According to the Labour Force Survey (2019)17, the country has 1,307,767 craft and related trade workers and 1,375,540 skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery workers of whom only about 20% have skills certification. But so far from 2004 to 2019, only 87,000 NVQ certificates through RPL have been issued. Therefore, RPL has a long way to go.
2. In order to promote skills upgrading of industry employees, Skills Sector Development Programmes (SSDP) of the Ministry and TVEC have introduced modular training with 50% subsidy with the name tag ‘Flexible Learning Mode (FLM)’. It was expected to facilitate flexible hours for industry employees to follow the courses. These programmes are delivered as modular or competency units and participants who are successful at the assessment are awarded Modular Certificates of NVQ which are called “Records of Achievement”. TVEC has issued a circular on implementing FLM, and it is hoped that this programme will further be expanded in due course.
3. Some Colleges of Technology of DTET have commenced delivery of many of their NVQ 5 programmes on a part-time basis. Further, many National Certificate of Technology (NCT) courses of DTET which have been conducted for industry employees on a part-time basis for over 5 decades have been upgraded to NVQ Level 5.
4. University of Vocational Technology (UoVT) has 13-degree programmes with an enrollment of both full-time and part-time students. Almost all of these part-time students are employed persons, and therefore, this part-time delivery of training aims for further skilling of industry employees.
5. There are many experienced people at supervisory levels whose promotional prospects are stagnated due to a lack of qualifications. Further, Public Administration Circular 2/2009 has specified qualification levels for salary levels. In order to facilitate these mature employees to get certificates for their competency levels, the TVEC has introduced a MCR for Industry employees to get NVQ 5 equivalent certificates.

According to the above programmes, systems are in place for skills upgrading of industry employees. However, the numbers of programme and beneficiaries are not enough to make any significant impact on the industry through up-skilling of industry employees. The up-skilling programmes could certainly be expanded as most vocational training centers are inactive in the evenings and weekends, and therefore, the training capacity is not an issue. Therefore, what is needed is funding, coordination, and commitment.

However, no programmes are available in TVET for re-skilling of industry employees. This is the time to commence re-skilling as many employed persons may have lost their jobs due to Covid situation. This is evident from the rise of unemployment in all categories as indicated by the Labour Market/Force Bulletin (2020).[[31]](#footnote-31)

**Funding for Up-skilling and Re-skilling:** In some countries, the employment insurance schemes facilitate funding for the up-skilling and re-skilling of its members. As employment insurance has a liability to look after its members (customers) in case of retrenchment from employment, it funds them for up-skilling to make sure their continuity in employment. In Sri Lanka, Employment Trust Fund (ETF) plays the role of employment insurance for its contributors. It facilitates reimbursement of medical bills for critical illnesses and education scholarships for children of its contributors. But the most vital scheme should be to support the up-skilling and re-skilling of its members. Then they will have prospective careers and increase their potential to make a higher contribution to ETF. Therefore, this is high time for ETF to commence such a scheme to fund its contributors for up-skilling and re-skilling to make them well fit for reviving industries and businesses.

###### **Livelihood occupations and gig jobs**

**Livelihood occupations**: It is well known that a large fraction of society particularly in peri-urban and rural areas survived only by engaging in livelihood occupations. Empirical evidence suggests that a significant proportion of labour force in the informal sector belongs to this category. According to the literature[[32]](#footnote-32), livelihood occupations refer to a category of nonformal, short-term jobs which provide an income just enough to meet their daily needs. These people do not have any skills for a particular job. However, in order to these people to become productive and thereby contribute to the economy, they need to be provided with opportunities to acquire skills in livelihood occupations of their preferences. Therefore, TVET institutions must operate livelihood training divisions to cater to this category of people living in the locality of respective training centres. If in-house trainers are not available, the services of external resource persons could be sought for delivery of such short duration courses.

**Gig Jobs:**  Another category of emerging employment avenue is working on online platforms without an explicit contract for long-term employment, and These jobs are called gig jobs[[33]](#footnote-33). These jobs are flexible, temporary, or freelance jobs, often involving or connecting with clients or customers through an online platform. Therefore, the gig economy can benefit workers, businesses, and consumers by making work more adaptable to the needs of the moment and demand for flexible lifestyles.

The National Skills Development Report- 2018/19 published by TVEC has a section on Gig Work in Labour Market in Sri Lanka. The Indian Skill Report – 2016 has indicated the need of paying attention to expanding gig works in India. Therefore, it is necessary to identify skills needs and other constraints in livelihood occupations and gig jobs and support them to develop their skill profile as there is a vulnerability in these jobs to end them in the NEET group.

###### **Entrepreneurship development (ED) in vocational training**

Many studies have shown some TVET certificate/ diploma holders eventually ended as entrepreneurs running their businesses. According to a tracer study conducted in 2017, among TVET certificate/ diploma holders, 7% of males and 11% of females have ended in self-employment[[34]](#footnote-34).

It is very conceivable most of the youth have some interest to start their own businesses. But, many do not realize their dream as they do not get the required encouragement and support to make the first initiative. Further, it is very conceivable that a person with trade skills has a lower risk to start a business in his/her trained trades, and therefore, many TVET certificate/ diploma holders appear to make their own initiatives to start business ventures. According to a tracer study conducted by NAITA in 1998, about 6% of VT passed out had started their own businesses. It is noteworthy to mention that at that time of the survey there was no entrepreneurship development (ED) programmes in TVET institutions.

Recognizing the importance of entrepreneurship development (ED) in TVET, the ADB assisted Skills Development Project (SDP) from 1998 to 2006 had introduced ED as a project component. The SDP developed an ED sensitization Training Manual (5-day Training Module) and an ED Training Manual (14-day Training Manual) and trained a large number of TVET staff as ED trainers on this aspect - starting a business. In parallel, the SDP established a revolving fund to provide startup investment loan at a subsidized interest rate to TVET certificate/diploma holders after completing 2 weeks of ED training. This two-week training programmes have been revised and now it is delivered within 7 to 10 days. Initially, a loan of LKR 250,000 was provided and this has now been increased up to LKR 500,000. At present, the VTA, NAITA, DTET, and NYSC implement the ED programmes for their trainees in limited training locations.

###### **Skilling for foreign employment**

Foreign Employment is an important structural feature of the employment market in Sri Lanka. Estimates show that Sri Lanka’s workforce in foreign employment is approximately 1.2 million which is equivalent to almost 14 % of our total number in the labour force. The remittance from the migrant workers in 2019 is LKR 1,200,766 million / USD 6.7 Billion, and this amount was equivalent to 56.3 % of the country’s total export earnings[[35]](#footnote-35). The earning from foreign employment has recorded 12.3 % growth from that of 2011.

Nevertheless, there are many issues confronted by the foreign employment market. A major issue is that departures for foreign employment are much less than vacancies received for most of the foreign job categories. There appear to be many reasons for low departures, as shown in Table 2. and one of the reasons is the unavailability of sufficiently qualified and competent people for the job categories requested by foreign employers.

**Table 2: No of Foreign Job Orders Received & No of Departures for foreign employment in Years 2017, 2018 & 2019**

| **Job Category** | **2017** | | **2018** | | **2019** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No. of Vacancies** | **No. of Departures** | **No. of Vacancies** | **No. of Departures** | **No. of Vacancies** | **No. of Departures** |
| **Total in all Occupations/Sectors** | **328,641** | **68,319** | **377,075** | **66,924** | **495,405** | **69,379** |
|  |  | **20.8%** |  | **17.7%** |  | **14.0%** |

***Source****: TVEC-2020, IS Division*

According to Table 2, only 20 % of foreign vacancies are filled by Sri Lankan workers. The VET plan for the electrical and electronics sector – 2020 has analyzed the foreign employment in electrical and electronics occupations and found that 80 % of vacancies and 80 % of departures are in 20 % of occupations. Therefore, if 20 % of occupations are identified and developed to meet the skills needs of those foreign job categories, 80 % of foreign employment vacancies offered for Sri Lanka could be filled.

### **Quality assurance in technical and vocational education and training**

***Quality assurance system in TVET***

As in any other education sector, quality assurance plays a very important role in improving the quality and relevance of TVET programmes. Recognizing its importance, the TVEC has implemented a Quality Assurance (QA) mechanism for the TVET sector. In this QA mechanism, the quality is expected to be achieved through implementing three regulatory tools; i) registration of training institutions, ii) accreditation of courses, and iii) installation of a quality management system (QMS) in TVET institutions. Both the public and private TVET institutions are required to comply with the above requirements. These regulatory processes should be clearly formulated, unambiguous, and efficiently executed for training institutes to comply with the requirements without undue excessive efforts and time.

***Issues related to quality assurance in TVET***

Though the quality assurance system in operation since 2005, it has experienced the following gaps and issues.

1. According to the dashboard in the TVEC website2[[36]](#footnote-36), www.tvec.gov.lk on 02.04.2021, TVEC has 1146 training centres with active or valid registration and registration of 1800 training centres has been expired.
2. These registered centres have 5,674 courses but only 3,357 courses are accredited as of 02.04.2021.
3. QMS has been installed only in 250 training centres.
4. Skill Competitions were introduced but there not held regularly though it is listed under the objects of the NAITA as per TVE Act no 20 of 1990.

The above-mentioned phenomenon appears to have arisen from several reasons:

1. Inadequate guidelines (Codes of Practice) for registration, accreditation, and QMS.
2. QMS is considered a burden to the training providers/instructors due to complexity of the process.
3. Inadequate public awareness of registered institutions and accredited courses.

Therefore, the above-mentioned issues of the QA processes make a case for re-visiting the existing QA processes and guidelines to make it simpler to implement and easy for prospective TVET providers to follow and to implement in an effective manner throughout the Island.

***Innovations for quality improvements***

As the public expects excellent performance beyond standards level of quality, the TVEC has explored further innovation in quality improvements with the following quality enhancement programmes.

* Design and Introduction of Quality Management System (QMS) for all TVET institutions
* Design and conduct of training programmes to promote quality culture in the TVET sector
* Design and conduct of Quality Improvement System (QIS) with step-by-step star certifications
* Conduct of skill competition programmes among qualification holders and training centers for excellence awards

***Quality Management System and Quality Improvement System***

With the development of the NVQ Framework, The TVEC with the assistance of foreign-funded projects introduced a Quality Management System (QMS) with internal and external quality audits to training centers. This QMS has focused on nine processes listed below.

1. Ensure availability of relevant training equipment, materials, and consumables.
2. Maintain a safe and conducive learning environment and infrastructure.
3. Ensure availability of relevant national competency standards, curricula, and learning materials available for all courses.
4. Ensure appropriate and proper academic staff requirements are fulfilled.
5. Students affairs are well managed and student enrolment criteria are available.
6. Training delivered as per plan and training records maintained.
7. Timely conduct of continuous and final assessments, and issue certificates.
8. Evaluate customer satisfaction by taking feedbacks from students, parents, and the industry.
9. Ensure financial concerns and stability.

QMS has been installed in about 250 training centres but it demanded further innovations with simplification. Therefore, TVEC with the assistance of projects and foreign consultants developed different quality concepts and introduced a quality culture training programme for the staff, and delivered at the University of Vocational Technology. Further, as Training centres considered QMS as difficult and hard work, Quality Improvement System (QIS) with star certification was introduced and launched with the label **‘Quality is Fun’**. The QIS has 15 steps and it starts with kick-off meeting which is done with a lot of fun. It has steps such as quality attitude, happy committee, and critical friend which get a high level of social attraction. It gives 3-star certification before QMS and that motivates the staff to work for QMS and beyond. Eventually, training centers could get 4-star and 5-star certifications as well.

***Competition for Expertise and Excellence***

Registration, Accreditation, QMS, and QIS are explained above to improve the standard and quality of the training centres to achieve quality. In parallel, the Ministry and TVEC introduced competitions to encourage the training centres to achieve desired standards and quality. These programmes are well geared to meet public aspirations as the public expect expert performance from NVQ holders and excellent performance from Training centres.

***Skills*** ***Competition among the TVET certificate holders***

Vocational Training programmes are developed and conducted to provide competencies required for employment. Here, competency means the ability to meet the requirements of relevant standards. but, when the public want technical services, they search for experts in the trade. For example, the public always goes to expert vehicle mechanics or expert hairdressers. This applies to other technical areas too. Therefore, competent people should be led to develop expertise fast.

In 2012 and 2013, the Ministry with the TVEC had conducted a nationwide skill competition for 16 occupations in 2013 and 24 occupations in 2014. Competent people in respective occupations competed at the skills competition and best among competent won. Best among competent persons means experts. If skills competitions are held annually with national, provincial and district competitions, a culture of competitions will emerge and many skills person will endeavor to reach proficiency.

***Competition for Excellence among the TVET training centers***

Many quality measures have been introduced to training centers to achieve expected performance. These quality measures should be ordinary or habitual work in a training center and they become excellent when they perform those ordinary work extraordinarily well. In 2019, in line with the International Youth skill day celebration, the Ministry and TVEC introduced a competition to identify training centers with excellence and it was continued in 2021 too.

### **Human Resources Development and Management**

***Deficiencies in the current human resource management practices***

The TVET Institutions are expected to develop the skills of youth and adults to enable them to find productive employment in the industry. Therefore, staff of TVET Institutions should have a higher level of competencies than those of employees in the industry. But the prevailing situation is completely the opposite. As the salary scale of the staff of the TVET institutions is comparatively lower salary than those in the industry, it is difficult to recruit and retain competent staff and to keep them motivated. Further, trained and skilled trainers have attraction from the industry. Therefore, retaining them and keeping them motivated is a challenge for the TVET institutions. In fact, all TVET institutions experience high turnover among trainers and most leading TVET institutions operate with a staff of lower than 75% of the approved cadre. Because of staff shortages, most TVET institutions do not have the capacity to engage in research and operate and maintain Management Information System (MIS).

Therefore, managerial staff and trainers should be given opportunities for skills upgrading and opportunities to earn higher qualifications couple with an incentive payment to bridge the salary difference. In order to offset the low salary issue, the Ministry with the ADB and World Bank assisted Skills Sector Development Programme (SSDP) has introduced a performance-based incentive scheme for trainers of the TVET Institutions. Accordingly, at present, training managers, trainers of leading institutions are paid a monthly incentive of LKR 5000/= to LKR 8000/= based on their performance: in areas such as maintaining updated course accreditation, involvement in their professional development, maintenance of class capacity, and higher completion rate of students in the course, quality of training delivery, and use of innovative approaches in training. A recent study has revealed that the incentive scheme has made an immense contribution in improving training performance, but it is not sufficient to arrest the turnover of academic staff.

***Trainer Training system – needs and shortcomings***

TVET trainers have a challengeable role in education and training which needs competencies in the following areas:

* Updated technical knowledge in his/her subject area in line with advancing technologies and technology applications in the industry with workplace practices.
* Skills in preparation of training material and planning lessons
* Instructional skills (Pedagogical skills) with updated knowledge in training and education technology,
* Digital readiness to explore new skills and knowledge, to facilitate online delivery of training, and to comply with learning management systems.
* Quality assurance with courses accreditation and adoption of Quality Management System
* Skills in communication and competencies in mother tongue and English language.
* Professionalism in discharging core functions

At the entry-level of trainers, applicants do not have the qualifications or experience to fulfill the above tasks. Recruitment of trainers is done based on a qualification relevant technical skills and aptitude for other skills. Therefore, they should be given an environment and opportunities for continuing professional development to facilitate the acquisition of those skills.

### **Financing TVET**

The TVET institutions in the country usually have poor visibility and image compared with the general education and higher education institutions. There are national schools in almost all cities and they are well recognized in their localities. But the country has very few TVET institutions with national stature and those too are located in Colombo. All TVET centers outside Colombo have a weaker image than the schools in their respective areas. This is a major barrier to attracting school leavers to the TVET system. Therefore, it is still a challenge to develop these TVET centers as attractive alternative tertiary education destinations. Even though there has been an increasing trend in investment in the TVET sector by the government, complemented with donor and loan funding over the last two decades, it is much lesser than the investment in general education and higher education in the same period. When the investments in different education sectors since independence are compared, TVET has been given relatively less priority. The TVET sector in 2021 has received only about 3.8% of the total education budget.

Under the free education policy implemented in treasury-funded training institutions since 2016, no fees could be charged from pre-employment training of youth. However, to complement the limited government funding and compensate the revenue derived from course fees, the TVET centers have the potential to engage in income generation activities. Courses fees could be charged from skills upgrading part-time programmes conduced for industry employees. The CGTTI is a good example in this regard as it offers fee levying part-time programmes in the evening and weekends.

Further, TVET institutions could engage in manufacturing work, provision of technical service, and lending out the facilities without compromising the quality of training provisions. A project funded by GIZ (VTW /1998 – 2004) had introduced a concept of training with production and it was piloted in a number of VTA training centers. It aimed to generate funds while creating OJT environment for Trainees with entrepreneurial skills. Further, Skills Development Project (1998 – 2006) introduced a business arm concept to DTET and piloted at the College of Technology, Maradhana and it was not continued as the financial regulations became a barrier to make payment to staff. Further, though the TVE Act No 20 of 1990 in its Section 83 has specified about Training CESS (Training levy from industry), no attempt has been made so far to implement it. However, many countries use payroll levies[[37]](#footnote-37) as a mechanism to finance TVET.

### **Regulations and Governance**

***Legal Framework Governing TVET Sector***

The legislative enactments passed by the Parliament and service minutes relevant to TVET Institutions provide the framework required to regulate the TVET sector. The TVE Act No 20 of 1990 has two parts; Part 1 for the TVEC and Part II for the NAITA. Part I had been amended in 1999 as the TVE (Amendment) Act No 50 of 1999. The VTA had been established by Vocational Training Authority Act No 12 of 1995. The DTET is currently operated without empowerment through an ordinance, and its staff matters are managed under the Technical Education Services minute.

***Issues relating to Regulation and Governance of TVET sector***

The Acts pertaining to TVET have been more than 20 years old and the sector is facing the following issues:

* The TVE Act No 20 of 1990 expected all training centers to have TVEC registration, but still, many training centers operate in the country without registration.
* Most TVET institutions are not properly empowered to implement their objects and activities.
* Most TVET institutions have no capacity to implement many activities entrusted to them.
* TVET Institutions are not empowered to pilot new concepts such as training with production and use generated funds for further strengthening of the training programmes.
* The TVEC, as well as TVET institutions, have not prepared regulations or revised the existing regulations for a long time

As such, there is a need for reviewing the existing Acts / Ordinances and making appropriate amendments for such enactments to empower the TVEC and other TVET agencies to regulate the TVET sector more effectively.

### **Data and Information, and Research**

1. ***Labor Market and Training*** ***Information***

The planning process for the TVET sector is hampered by not having regular labour market information (LMI) and information on national and regional skills needs. It is well-conceived that identifying sources of information for TVET planning is a fundamental requirement in designing and offering demand-driven courses for a wide variety of TVET seekers. There is no timely and accurate information about the current demand for skills and available training opportunities. Moreover, no regular studies track competencies achieved, and thus, it is not possible to evaluate the performance of TVET institutions and TVET certificate holders directly.

Though the government has strengthened the systems in place for the collection and compilation of human resource data, there are still some gaps. For example, the LMI Bulletin of TVEC encompasses data provided by many stakeholders such as the Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau, and public and private training institutions, but this data has not been effectively converted to useful information for the purpose of planning and making management decisions, and also for the use of career guidance and counseling services. Therefore, it is important that this fragmented data and information should be pooled and subjected to Big Data Analyses by experts to generate insight from large volumes of data for deciphering market trends, correlations, customer preferences, hidden patterns, etc. The capacity of a suitable central institution, such as the Department of Census and Statistics or Department of Labour must be strengthened to develop a labour market information (LMI) system that is demand-driven and of a multipurpose nature. This proposed LMI system should produce regular, timely, and relevant labour force, employment, and human resource information to meet the needs of a wide variety of users of both public and private sectors.

Besides, there are many shortcomings as regards even the use of the available data by the TVET officials and other concerned parties. Though the TVEC maintains a database and it carries much useful information for decision making, the evidence on whether senior TVET officials use them is not available. Further, there is no evidence as regards whether any discussions are held regularly on critical information provided in the Labour Market Bulletin of TVEC. It is noted that in the annual VT Analysis Reports produced by the TVEC, in liaison with the SSDP since 2014, the targeted institutions had not made effective use of information provided in such reports to improve their systems. Though almost all leading TVET institutions have established MIS, they still collect and collate data manually on enrollment, assessment, and certification. As such the MISs are not capturing all relevant data as real-time data entry is not facilitated. Therefore, there are deficiencies in data management, and hence the critical analyses of data to produce management information are not effectively possible. Moreover, in order to find out the employability of TVET passed-outs, they must be tracked after completing the courses. But it is not effectively happening.

1. ***Research in*** ***TVET***

In many countries, the TVET sector receives directions from a strong research arm to provide a better information base, critical analyses, cost effectiveness, and varied perspectives to ensure a better understanding of education and training processes. These inputs are useful to propel the TVET sector to a higher profile. Having identified the need for research, all legislative Acts relevant to TVET sector have included research as one of the mandatory functions of institutions. Nevertheless, many institutions of TVET did not have the capacity to make any research initiatives. Therefore, an ADB / SDP (1998 to 2006) had created a project component to promote research culture in TVET institutions. Accordingly, about 50 training managers and officers were trained on research methodologies and they completed about 30 research papers. Those papers were presented at a 3-day research convention held in BMICH in 2006.

Thereafter, TVEC established a research cell drawing members from each leading TVET institution and got a budget line from the Treasury to fund the research proposal submitted by trainers in different TVET institutions. TVEC held a mini-research convention annually in the early days. Though the research programmes are still operated, the research conventions are not held on a regular basis.

## **Conclusion**

The TVET sector has the role to develop a skilled workforce to enable people of the country to realize their employment aspirations and for the industry to have a skilled workforce. As highlighted in the status review the TVET sector is confronted with many issues related to access, qualification framework, training delivery and physical resources, quality assurance, human resources, financing, governance and management, information management, and research. Accordingly, 23 policies with recommended strategic activities addressing the issues and gaps identified are formulated and presented herewith. We earnestly hope that the Ministry, the TVEC, and the relevant TVET institutions will give due consideration to the policy proposals and recommended strategies detailed in this document in designing and implementing sector-specific development activities.

# POLICY PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Having considered the issues highlighted in the Status review given in Section 1, the policies and recommended strategic activities relevant to 8 core areas, namely i) Access and Enrollment, ii) Qualification Framework, National Competency Standards, and Curricula, iii) Training Facilities and Learning Environment, iv) Quality Assurance, v) Human Resources Development and Management, vi) Financing, vii) Regulation and Governance and viii) Information Management and Research are detailed below.

## ****CORE AREA - TVET - 1: Access and Enrolment****

**Policy context**

The TVET is primarily meant for school leavers, unemployed youths, and adults to acquire skills and become competent in preferred occupations which have demand in the labour market. It also offers opportunities for skill upgrading and re-skilling for those who are already employed. Unfortunately, many of the intended beneficiaries, particularly the youths in poor segments of the society and rural areas do not seek this avenue of training as they are unaware of opportunities in TVET and labour market. Even after receiving information, many cannot explore training opportunities due to financial constraints and the unavailability of training opportunities in proximity. Though the TVET sector is fairly widespread in the country it does not provide many opportunities for youths with disabilities or special education needs. Moreover, the attraction of the TVET sector for females is still not at the desired level because of the social and cultural barriers. In addition, the medium of instruction and minimum wages are two other factors that affect access to TVET.

**Directive Principles**

DP 1: The State assures the accessibility of all youth and adults to TVET irrespective of school performances, gender, ethnicity, social status, disability, geographical locations, and any other differences.

DP 2: The State is committed to providing incentives to attract and retain potential youth for training in TVET.

DP 3: The State is committed to inspiring prospective youths and adults to TVET by offering an attractive minimum wage policy and social security benefits for employees in the informal sector.

**Policies and Strategies**

**Policy – TVET – 1.1:** **Prospective trainees for TVET programmes should be reached through resourceful career guidance and counseling programmes**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The National Career Guidance Steering Committee (NCGSC) of the TVEC shall function as a national level catalytic unit to liaise with leading the TVET institutions and Ministry of Education to reach out to the wider group of the target group to educate them about training opportunities in TVET and career prospects for TVET certificate and diploma holders.
2. The NCGSC shall review available career guidance material and tools (career interest test etc.) and develop a set of standardized career guidance materials in collaboration with career guidance arms of TVET institutions, Department of Education, Department of Man Power Planning, and Employment, and career guidance units of provincial councils with benchmarking international practices.
3. The NCGSC shall work in collaboration with the Information System Division (ISD) of TVEC and ensure the updated information on TVET programmes, career opportunities for different NVQ qualifiers is made available on a regular basis to all career guidance arms of TVET institutions, Department of Education, Department of Man Power Planning, and Employment, and career guidance unit of provincial councils.
4. All leading TVET institutions and career guidance service providers (Department of Education, Department of Man Power Planning, and Employment, and career guidance unit of provincial councils) shall take steps to revamp and expand the existing career guidance network by providing required human, physical resources, and career guidance materials.
5. The NCGSC shall liaise with the Ministry of Education and Provincial Education Ministries to promote the establishment of career explores clubs in schools to facilitate long-term deliberation on choosing a career or employment-linked training course by school pupils.
6. The NCGSC of the TVEC should catalyst the establishment of ICT enabled career information system for job placement with the improvement of the current job placement website.
7. The TVEC in cooperation with TVET institutions and the NEC to conduct research for analyzing labour market dynamics to predict future jobs, occupational roles, and labour market trends in the local and foreign employment-related labour market, and the reason for dropouts.
8. Career Guidance Units of TVET institutions are required to counseling for dropout students and encourage them to continue the same or different programmes.

**Policy – TVET – 1.2:** **Provide financial and logistical support to attract prospective TVET trainees**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The TVEC in cooperation with leading TVET institutions prepares and approves eligibility criteria for trainee allowance payment, amount, and selection criteria.
2. The Ministry and all TVET institutions must ensure timely payment of approved allowances to trainees.
3. The National level TVET institutions which accommodate trainees from all regions of the country shall take steps to provide adequate accommodation facilities for needy trainees.
4. All leading TVET institutions shall work collectively to explore the possibilities to obtain training allowance for trainees from enterprises during the apprenticeship and On-the-job Training.

**Policy – TVET – 1.3: All TVET institutions shall facilitate inclusive TVET programmes for vulnerable people**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The TVEC shall set up a steering committee on inclusive TVET education to promote TVET institutions to open up TVET programmes for person with disabilities(PwDs).
2. The TVEC to take steps to transform TVET programmes conducted for persons with disabilities by the department responsible for social services and Non-governmental Organizations into the NVQF with appropriate adjustments.
3. The TVET institutions shall facilitate training centers to have staff trained for handling students with different types of disabilities who could work as shadow trainers[[38]](#footnote-38) for students with disabilities.
4. The TVET institutions must train career guidance officers to identify persons with disabilities and direct them to appropriate courses.
5. The TVEC must monitor and ensure the implementation of reasonable adjustments in the NVQ Assessment for candidates with disabilities as introduced by the NVQ Circular 01/2021.
6. The TVEC to arrange specialized training programmes for trainers and assessors for serving PwDs.
7. The TVEC while assessing training centers for registration must monitor the compliance of facilities to be provided for PwDs.
8. The MISs of respective TVET institutions must facilitate the compilation of enrollment and other relevant information on PwDs in the TVET system.

**Policy – TVET – 1.4:** **Promote female participation in TVET programmes**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. All TVET institutions must promote enrollment of females in all technical and vocational courses.
2. TVEC to expand female-friendly occupations with NCS, Curricula and training courses.
3. The Ministry and the TVEC must include a component in future projects to assist training centers and private enterprises which provide on-the-job training to develop logistical facilities required for females.
4. The TVEC and the TVET institutions shall provide skills upgrading and skill diversification courses targeting particularly females to wider their career options.

**Policy – TVET – 1.5: The TVET institutions shall recognize pre-vocational qualifications/achievements at the school level and extend cooperation to conduct technical/vocational education in schools**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The TVEC in liaison with the Ministry of Education shall design and introduce an appropriate mechanism to recognize technical/vocational skills imparted under the 13-year guaranteed education programme, under the NVQ framework.
2. The TVET institutions provide services of career guidance officers, trainers, and training centers to schools which offer vocational education and training(conventional vocational training programmes, 13-year compulsory education, G.C.E. (A/L) Technology stream of education).
3. The TVET institutions actively enroll students of the 13-year compulsory education programme into relevant training courses.

**Policy – TVET – 1.6: Enhance the social image of the TVET institutions and centers, courses, and occupations**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The TVEC shall work with the Wage Board of the Department of Labour to facilitate the introduction of NVQ-based wage structure with an attractive minimum wage.
2. The TVEC shall work with the Department of Labour to take steps to facilitate the implementation of EPF and ETF payment policy for informal sector workers and freelance workers.
3. All TVET institutions should facelift buildings of training centers and their facilities to attract youth.
4. All TVET institutions should develop trainers as role models for trainees to follow them.
5. The TVET institution and centers together with the industries should minimize dimensions of 3D occupations (Dirty, difficult, and dangerous occupations) by integrating with technologies, improving health and safety, and by improving working conditions.
6. The TVET curriculum developers (i.e. TVEC, NAITA, and UoVT) shall introduce modules on balancing income and expenditure and to prevent them from engaging in unethical practices such as drugs and alcoholism, and to make trainees aware of social security systems such as EPF, ETF, and pension scheme of Sri Lanka Social Security Board.
7. The TVEC together with Industry Sector Skills Councils (ISSC)shall take steps to promote the social image of practicing craftspersons.

**Policy context**

## ****CORE AREA – TVET - 2: Qualification Framework, National Competency Standards and Curricula****

The TVET system has developed and implemented a National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVQF) in 2004 and it has outlined how to identify the skills needs of the industry, development of curricula and deliver training programmes and conduct assessments. This has been executed as a unified qualification framework to be adopted by all TVET institutions in the country through an executive order signed by the Hon Minister of Vocational Training and Skills development in accordance with the mandates given by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No 20 of 1990. Though NVQF has been well-rooted in the TVET sector, the expectations of the NVQF have not been fully realized. There still exist some vocational training centers awarding non-NVQ qualifications. The full implementation of the NVQF requires the active participation of the industry in the development of competency standards and curricula, and to conduct assessments. Further, with the increased social demand, the NVQF faces new challenges such as recognizing vocational skills provided in schools and mapping and mutual recognition with foreign qualifications framework, etc.

**Directive Principles**

DP 1: The TVEC shall execute its mandate in regulating the quality and relevance of TVET by strict implementation of NVQF and quality assurance system.

DP 2: All TVET institutions (both public & private) are expected to comply with NVQF and its quality assurance achieved through National Competency Standard (NCS), competency-based training curricula and assessments, and course accreditation.

DP 3: The Industry Sector Skills Councils (ISSCs) are expected to provide the direction with industry foresight on skills development to the TVET institutions.

**Policies and Strategies**

**Policy – TVET – 2.1:** **Review and revise the NVQF and make provisions to benchmark against the international best practices**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The TVEC shall review NVQF to add the following features:
   1. Accommodate Foundational Vocational levels to recognize achievements in vocational skills by school children.
   2. Facilitate offering higher-level modular certificates at NVQ levels 5, 6, and 7 and diplomas at NVQ level 7.
   3. Facilitate offering higher-level graduate certificates and graduate diplomas beyond level 7 for graduates.
2. The TVEC shall take steps to do the mapping and mutual recognition with regional or global qualification frameworks widely accepted in regions where Sri Lankans seek foreign employment and higher education opportunities.
3. The TVEC shall promote NVQ-based recruitments in the public sector, private sector, and foreign employment in liaison with the Ministry of Public Administration, Wage Boards of the Labour Department, and the Foreign Employment Bureau.
4. The TVEC shall seek recognition for qualifications offered under the NVQF for higher education opportunities in local and global higher education systems.
5. The TVEC shall explore Competency-Based Training and Assessment for different modes of education and training while being sensitive to the cost of training and assessment.
6. The ISSCs shall facilitate the engagement of industry representatives in assessments at least 50% level.

**Policy – TVET – 2.2: Review NCS and curricula development processes periodically to reflect skills demanded in the industry, effective learning, and training process**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The TVEC and the NAITA together shall review the methodology of development of NCS and curricula in cooperation with industry to reflect those competencies that are used in the industry.
2. The TVEC and UoVT together shall review the methodology of development of curricula to facilitate learning of competencies specified in relevant National Competency Standards with compulsory modules for all technical skills, soft skills, underpinning knowledge and underpinning skills, and optional modules for regional variation in relevant competencies.
3. The TVEC, NAITA, and UoVT together shall review and improve institutional capacities, human and other resources, and procedures to complete the development of NCS and curricula within a reasonable time frame.
4. The TVEC shall develop a system including industry and district TVET fora to Identify priority occupations and industry/technology sectors with demand for skills in the industry to develop NCS and curricula.
5. The TVEC shall implement a rationale mix of NVQ level 1 – 4, 5 & 6 and 7, NCS and curricula to facilitate qualification progression.
6. The TVEC, NAITA, and other NCS and Curricula developers to ensure the implementation of newly developed NCS and curricula.
7. The TVEC and NAITA shall introduce standalone units and modules to facilitate skills upgrading and career development in respective occupations.
8. The TVEC shall conduct research and innovation of NVQF to explore alternative applications of competencies.
9. The TVEC and NAITA and Foreign Employment Bureau shall incorporate skills needs for foreign employment in relevant NCS and curricula.

**Policy – TVET – 2.3:** **Industry collaboration should be further strengthened to bring industry foresight to develop and deliver training programmes**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The Ministry and TVEC jointly review the existing industry collaboration models and decide on appropriate reforms and financing for sustainability.
2. The TVEC and TVET institutions shall explore industry collaboration through the ISSCs and also through the National Industrial Training Advisory Committees (NITAC) which play a complementary role to get direction for TVET development.
3. The ISSCs should continue to provide inputs to TVEC, NAITA, and other TVET agencies to develop National Competency Standards, curricula, and assessment tools.
4. The ISSCs shall extend cooperation to TVET institutions to conduct assessments, facilitate apprenticeship and OJT in industries with advanced technologies, industry trend analyses, prepare industry-related career guidance tools, and nominate members to NITACs.

**Policy Context**

## ****CORE AREA - TVET - 3: Training Institutions and Facilities, Learners and Learning Environment****

Traditionally the capacity of the TVET sector is estimated based on the training opportunities available for pre-employment training through institutional training and enterprise-based apprenticeship. Many training courses are run under capacity and therefore, the TVET institutions are struggling to enroll students to full capacity. But, all youth and school leavers do not seek training opportunities in TVET institutions. Instead, they directly enter the labour market as unskilled workers.

As a large number of youths directly enter the labour market without pre-employment training, they have skills gaps especially in the knowledge domain. Therefore, the TVET has a role to provide further training and re-training to the employees with skills gaps[[39]](#footnote-39) and also to further improve the completion rate of TVET trainees to enable them to realize their full potential. Further, the training system needs reforms to address advanced skills, skills for livelihood occupations, entrepreneurship, and skills for foreign employment.

Therefore, it is very conceivable that there is an urgent need to rationalize the existing network of TVET centers by establishing new centers if required and to improve existing centers with economically viable size, good social image, and uniform course mix in each district to ensure greater accessibility for prospective trainees and to meet the skills needs of the industry.

**Directive Principles**

DP 1: The TVET institutions are expected to establish training facilities with a uniform course mix with uniform geographical distribution and facilitate all social groups to have access to TVET programmes of their choice.

DP 2: The NAITA is expected to explore the full potential of apprenticeship training with a wider number of occupations and enterprises with advanced technologies.

DP 3: The TVET institutions are expected to facilitate skills for up-skilling in advanced technologies, skills in livelihood occupations, entrepreneurship, and foreign employment.

**Policies and Strategies**

**Policy – TVET – 3.1: Rationalize and strengthen the TVET center network to broad-base the training provisions and enhance the access**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The Ministry with all TVET institutions review the existing network of TVET centers and introduce reforms to ensure rational distribution of training centers and courses in all geographical locations to facilitate uniform course mix in each district with adequate human and physical resources including the provisions to deliver them in languages that are in demand.
2. All TVET Institutions should improve the social image of training centers by improving and maintaining physical resources (i.e. well-maintained buildings and pleasing surroundings, name boards, billboards, etc.), training resources (i.e. training workshops, laboratories, IT facilities, library, etc.), and study areas and restrooms with changing facilities, recreation facilities, etc., to make a positive impression on the public and attract potential trainees.
3. All TVET institutions shall take steps to modernize existing training programmes/courses, to make them attractive to the youth.
4. All TVET institutions should provide course mixes covering a wider number of trades/occupations to enable youth to select courses according to their choices including the provisions of foundation courses/programmes, and NVQ level 2 courses, particularly to attract school leavers with poor grades.
5. All TVET centers shall conduct regular Training Needs Assessments surveys by covering wider stakeholder groups - industry employees, community involved with livelihood occupations, those involved or aspiring to join overseas employment markets, etc., and design and offer short-courses/programmes offered on part-time and fee levying basis
6. All TVET centers shall establish facilities for co-curricular activities to promote and facilitate the holistic development of trainees.
7. All TVET Institutions, particularly the flagship institutions (such as CGTTI and other national institutes) should cooperate with smaller centers/feeder centers to establish mutually beneficial and synergistic linkages, and also promote the progression of TVET trainees to higher level NVQ qualifications.
8. The TVEC is expected to strengthen the existing grant schemes offered to private and NGO training centers and facilitate commercial banks to provide loans with subsidized interest rates for the development of private training centers.
9. The TVEC shall formulate and issue regulatory directives, making it compulsory for any institution/person to seek prior approval from the TVEC for setting up new training centers.

**Policy – TVET – 3.2: Review and expand apprenticeship training programmes**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The NAITA is required to expand apprenticeship-based training for a wider range of occupations available in the labour market in compliance with the NVQ Framework.
2. The NAITA needs to explore and use modern methods of workplace learning with relevant theory and practice in par with the international benchmarks.
3. The NAITA needs to get the cooperation of large-scale industries including BOI and Export Processing Zones Industries to expand apprenticeship to provide training in advanced technologies.
4. The NAITA is required to strengthen inter–enterprises cooperation (between large and medium scale enterprises) to facilitate quality training in all modules of an occupation in a number of organizations. When inter-enterprise cooperation is not possible, apprenticeship should be supported by supplementary training inputs by instructors with appropriate quality assurance.
5. The NAITA is required to review situational apprenticeship to identify emerging occupations in the industry.
6. The NAITA could enroll employees in informal (short-term) jobs in the formal sector for apprenticeship programmes and facilitate them to earn an appropriate NVQ certificate.
7. The NAITA is required to encourage industries to provide a training allowance to apprentices.

**Policy – TVET – 3.3: Promote public-private training center partnership to explore the synergetic effect on training capacity and industry relevance**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The TVEC and State TVET institutions shall explore and establish public-private training center partnerships to deliver programmes that require high human resource expertise and advanced technological inputs.
2. The ISSCs, TVEC, and TVET institutions should explore the partnership between TVET centers and industry to deliver training in specialized areas with advanced technology and to explore innovative training modes.
3. The Ministry and TVEC must consider provisions of projects and donor funding for start-up capital to encourage partnerships with a feasibility study and risk analysis.
4. The TVEC should establish collaborations with local and overseas TVET agencies in order to build the capacities of TVET institutions and TVET teachers /trainers.

**Policy – TVET – 3.4: The TVET centers besides providing pre-employment training for youth, shall provide further training and re-training for industry employees**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The TVEC, NAITA, and other institutions with delegated authority for recognition of prior learning (RPL) mode of assessment shall expand NVQ certification for industry employees without formal training/certification.
2. The TVET institutions shall provide technical assistance to the industry for the promotion of firm-based training and skill upgrading courses for industry employees with a record of achievement certificate (RoA) under the NVQF.
3. The TVET institutions shall develop and conduct advanced skills modules in the occupations which are in demand in foreign employment markets.
4. The TVEC and TVET institutions shall take steps to develop online learning modules and make them available to the public through social media channels.
5. The Ministry and TVEC consider offering subsidies for further training of industry employees when the formulation of new skills development projects.
6. The TVEC and ISSCs to explore funding from Employee Trust Fund (ETF) for skills upgrading of industry employees who contribute to ETF.
7. TVEC and TVET institutions to facilitate re-training of industry employees who have lost their jobs due to any reason.

**Policy – TVET – 3.5: All TVET centers shall have a livelihood training arm to provide skills for nearby communities to enable them to engage in livelihood works effectively**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. All TVET institutions shall take steps to establish a separate section/unit to organize programmes/courses to cater to the skills needs of community, livelihood, and gig job holders for the effective performance of their jobs in cooperation with public and private industry lead bodies.
2. The TVEC and TVET institutions shall take steps to research to explore the scope and dimensions of livelihood and gig occupations.

**Policy – TVET – 3.6: Promote entrepreneurship development (ED) among TVET trainees and TVET certificate and diploma holders**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. All TVET institutions shall offer module/s to all TVET trainees to create awareness on entrepreneurship and this should be a pre-requisite for registration of training centers by the TVEC.
2. The TVET institutions under the guidance of the Ministry, and the TVEC shall develop occupation-specific ED programmes and deliver them to certificate holders in respective occupations.
3. The Ministry should monitor the implementation of the self-employment promotional initiative (SEPI) loan scheme with periodic revision of regulations and make sure availability of funds in the SEPI revolving fund to disperse loans.
4. The TVET institutions shall establish ED promotion unit to offer advisory services to the SMEs established by TVET passed outs.
5. The TVEC to make periodic studies to evaluate progress and weaknesses of ED programmes and propose actions to mitigate weaknesses and to propagate best practices.

**Policy – TVET – 3.7: Skills needed for foreign employment shall be included in courses delivered under the NVQ framework and bridge the skills gaps of existing qualification holders for foreign employment**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The TVEC and Foreign Employment Bureau shall identify key occupations covering a wider range of vacancies in foreign employment markets.
2. The TVEC shall revise the NCS and curricula to include the skills needs for foreign employment markets.
3. The TVEC shall link with qualification authorities of labour destination countries and map Sri Lanka NVQ with vocational qualifications of those countries.
4. The TVEC, Foreign Employment Bureau, and TVET institutions shall develop modules on advanced skills for foreign employment and deliver to experienced craftspersons to realize foreign employment aspirations of craftspersons and the country.

**Policy Context**

## ****CORE AREA - TVET - 4: Quality Assurance in TVET****

Quality Assurance (QA) in education provisions has been considered as one of the effective tools of ensuring the quality and standard of education processes and outputs. This indeed has become an important tool in enhancing the quality and standards of TVET provisions as the sector is being served by many TVET providers – public, private, and NGO sector providers. As the first step towards the establishment of a quality assurance system for TVET, the Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No. 20 of 1990 has introduced compulsory registration of training centres and courses. Thereafter, the Tertiary and Vocational Education (Amendment) Act No. 50 of 1999 has mandated TVEC to establish and maintain systems for quality assurance in technical and vocational education and training including standards in respect of occupational skills, training programmes, testing, and quality management system. Accordingly, the TVEC has introduced training standards for course accreditation in the late 1990s. Thereafter, with the development of the NVQ framework in 2004, actions were taken to strengthen the registration of training centers and accreditation of courses to meet the requirement of NVQF. However, the desired outcome in this regard is yet to be realized as the concept of quality has not yet been institutionalized within the training centers, and also not internalized among the staff. In order to achieve this goal, the Ministry and the TVEC have introduced many advanced features into the QA system such as Quality Management System (QMS), Quality Improvement System (QIS) with star certifications, skills competitions, and excellence awards. Though many quality assurance programmes have been launched by the TVEC, there still exist many training centers operating with expired registration and accreditation. One of the factors contributing to this situation appears to be the perceived notion that the quality assurance mechanism is too cumbersome to adopt.

**Directive Principles**

DP 1: All TVET institutions and programmes irrespective of the type of ownership should operate only with valid quality assurance certification.

DP 2: Quality assurance programmes should be easy to understand and comply with.

**Policies and Strategies**

**Policy – TVET – 4.1: Quality Assurance processes must ensure quality in design and development, delivery, and assessment of training programmes in TVET**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The TVEC shall take steps to review current quality assurance tools; registration of training centers, pre-registration approval, accreditation of courses, Quality Management System (QMS) and Quality Improvement System (QIS), continuous improvement and make them simplified but without compromising effectiveness.
2. The TVEC and the UoVT shall take steps to review the training programme for the promotion of quality culture and plan them deliver all trainers and managers including the private sector within the next 5 years.
3. The TVEC and all TVET institutions shall promote the institutionalization of best practices and standards in the TVET system where all stakeholders including managers, trainers, trainees, and parents are committed to achieving quality.
4. The Ministry and TVEC shall take steps to hold skills competitions and excellence awards to training centers regularly to promote expertise among competent persons and also to institutionalize the quality culture.
5. The TVEC shall take steps to promote public awareness on the importance of quality of training institutions and their programmes, so as to encourage the public to demand quality educational services from training centers.

**Policy Context**

## ****CORE AREA - TVET - 5: Human Resources Development and Management****

The TVET system consists of many sub-functional areas such as education and training, curriculum development, training and assessment management, research, ICT, buildings and equipment repair and maintenance, procurement, accounts and auditing, etc. All these functional areas need proficient and motivated staff to manage the TVET system to attract youth and industry employees for skills development programmes to enable them to realize their employment aspirations and to meet the skills needs of the local and foreign employment markets.

In Sri Lanka, all TVET institutions recruit staff based on technical qualifications and aptitude for teaching and other skills. Aptitudes are not skills, but they display the potential for skilling. Therefore, the staff should be provided with continuous in-service training to develop the required skills.

**Directive Principles**

DP 1: The TVET system should be supported by well-qualified and adequately remunerated teaching staff.

DP 2: The TVET staff must remain abreast with continuing advances in technology and technical education.

**Policies and Strategies**

**Policy – TVET – 5.1: Review and revise human resource development and management system to have competent and motivated staff at all levels in the TVET system**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. All TVET institutions shall have cadre profiles/positions with the appropriate mix of permanent, contractual, and visiting staff.
2. The Ministry in consultation with TVET institutions shall review the existing salary structures and schemes of recruitment and propose attractive salary structures for different categories of TVET employees and a unified scheme of recruitment applicable to all types of TVET institutions to attract and retain the best talent.
3. All TVET institutions adopt merit-based promotional schemes supported by an effective staff appraisal system.
4. The UoVT shall introduce suitable post-graduate study programmes for managerial staff in the TVET system.
5. All TVET institutions should conduct a periodic HR audit to identify staff with excellent performance and best practices and take steps to propagate such best practices across all TVET institutions.
6. All TVET institutions shall take steps to internalize relevant international best HR practices.

**Policy – TVET – 5.2: Technical and teaching competencies of the TVET training staff must be continually upgraded**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The Ministry, TVEC, and UoVT should take action to develop a central dedicated trainer training institution with accommodation facilities for participants with a network of trainer training centers across the country. This institution should provide training in the following area but not limited to:
   * Pedagogical training and teaching competencies considering changing teaching, training, and learning practices,
   * Skills development programmes in par with technological advancements and changing work practices in the industry and introduction to modern facilities in the industry.
   * IT skills to develop and deliver courses, and
   * Communication skills and English Language skills.
2. The TVEC and UoVT shall periodically review and revise the trainer qualification (i.e. NVQ Level 5 for training and assessment) by benchmarking against the international practices and facilitate all trainers to have NVQ Level 5 trainer and assessor qualification or higher.
3. The TVEC shall issue circular instructions making it compulsory for all recruits into the academic staff to undergo induction programmes to ensure a smooth transition to their workplace, and their roles and responsibilities.
4. The UoVT and TVEC shall take steps to establish linkages with national and international higher education institutions to provide opportunities for further professional development.
5. The TVEC together with TVET institutions shall take steps to introduce a scheme to provide periodic industry attachment to trainers and technical teachers to stay abreast with recent advances in technology.
6. The TVET institutions shall take steps to establish a system to employ relief trainers/instructors to conduct classes when trainers take short-term and long-term leave.
7. The TVEC together with TVET institutions shall develop and offer an online learning portal for skills upgrading of all TVET staff.

**Policy Context**

## ****CORE AREA - TVET - 6: Financing Technical and Vocational Education****

In Sri Lanka, the government plays a central role in the provision and financing of TVET courses. Many social groups make repetitive complaints about low budget allocation to the education sector in the country. In general, the TVET sector receives the lowest allocations from the total budget of the education sector despite the significant contribution to the national economy that it makes by providing skilled human resources to the local manufacturing and industrial sector and foreign employment.

**Directive Principles**

DP 1: The State assumes the responsibility for providing adequate funding for TVET.

DP 2: The TVET institutions must explore the potential for income generation to complement the treasury allocation.

**Policies and Strategies**

**Policy – TVET – 6.1: State to provide adequate funding for State TVET system while providing conducive environment for private sector investment into TVET sector**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The Ministry to take steps to enhance the annual Treasury allocation to meet the recurrent and capital expenses of maintenance and development of the TVET system.
2. The TVET institutions shall take steps to ensure investment decisions are made on the basis of effectiveness and efficiency criteria to ensure the rational use of the allocated funds.
3. The TVEC to assess Return of Investment (RoI) including inward remittances from foreign employment of NVQ certificate holders and per students cost to justify the enhanced funding for the TVET sector from the Treasury.
4. The TVEC and TVET institutions do effective project innovations and prepare realistic estimates and budgets for public and donor funding.
5. The Ministry and the TVEC shall ensure that donor funds are disbursed for needy reforms of the TVET sector decided based on the risk and RoI analyses.
6. The Ministry and the TVEC shall take steps to provide project-based funding to develop private and industry TVET institutions in subject areas/fields where public TVET institutions are not performing effectively.
7. The TVEC shall negotiate with banks to facilitate loans scheme for private TVET institutions with subsidized interest rates.

**Policy – TVET – 6.2: Facilitate TVET system to generate funds to complement the Treasury allocation**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The TVEC and TVET institutions shall explore income generation projects such as fee-levying part-time training and training with production without compromising the quality of training.
2. The Ministry and the TVEC in consultation with the Treasury shall develop and issue the Circular instructions to facilitate retaining of funds for working capital and disbursement of incentives from generated funds.
3. The Ministry, TVEC, and employer organizations to explore funding from the ETF for up-skilling industry employees.
4. The TVEC and TVET institutions shall explore Cess and payroll levy as specified in the TVE Act No. 20 of 1990, and introduce new legislation to get industry contribution for TVET sector development.

**Policy context**

## ****CORE AREA - TVET - 7: Regulations, Governance and Efficiency****

All public sector organizations have been established based on legislative enactments passed by the parliament of Sri Lanka. Those legislations give the legal mandate as well as the direction for those institutions to move forward. Under a fast-changing social, political, and economic environment, any legislation cannot be static and it also should be reviewed and revised periodically to meet challenges in changing environment.

Usually, many legislations are drafted and passed with very ambitious objects. These legislations have been enacted at different times and as a result, there are overlapping mandates given to different institutions. The mandates given to the TVET providers have not been revised as per the changing needs of the current and the future labour market requirements resulting in overlapping and duplication of TVET delivery. Therefore, any legislation should be refined sometime after its enactment. Further, TVET should establish an effective planning and monitoring culture.

**Directive Principles**

DP 1: All TVET institutions while exploring their full mandates must take steps to update legal framework periodically to meet the challenges of the changing socio-economic environments.

DP 2: All TVET reforms should be supported by revised legislation.

DP 3: All TVET agencies and centres must have effective planning and monitoring mechanism.

**Policies and Strategies**

**Policy – TVET – 7.1: The TVET regulatory agencies and the institutions should be empowered with legislative enactments which are reviewed and updated periodically**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. Review the mandates of the TVEC and the TVET institutions enacted by respective acts of parliament periodically and align them to suit changing requirements of the TVET provisions with special reference to the following:
   * Provision for strengthening the regulatory mechanism
   * Functions and powers
   * Provision for the public, private, NGO, and industry-based training
   * Provision for industry collaboration with the TVET sector
   * Provision for income generation through industry services
   * Provision for collaborative TVET programmes with local and foreign institutions in areas of high labour market demand.
   * Provision for empowering of staff of respective intuitions to execute the powers vested by the acts.
   * Provision for empowering respective institutions to take legal action against violators of the provision of the acts.
   * Provision for effective implementation of NVQF and quality assurance.
2. The TVEC shall take steps to work in collaboration with Divisional Secretariats to identify unregistered institutions and promote compliance with regulations.
3. The Ministry must review and monitor the implementation of full mandates of Acts at a periodic interval.

**Policy – TVET – 7.2: The TVET sector as specified by the TVE Act No. 20 of 1990**

**shall be directed by a long-term strategic development plan prepared in accordance with the National TVET policy framework**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The Ministry and the TVEC in cooperation with leading TVET institutions shall prepare a 5-year national TVET development plan in keeping with the National Policy Framework on TVET and it should be reviewed and updated annually.
2. The TVEC by the middle of each year shall prepare a macro level forecast of annual training demand for the ensuing year, and all the TVET institutions shall prepare and adopt annual training plans to meet the demands of the projected forecast.
3. All Training centres should have a 5-year development plan and annual implantation plan, and the TVEC should consider its availability and effectiveness in implementation for renewal of registration of training centres.
4. The TVEC as directed by the TVE Act No. 20 of 1990 shall develop and implement vocational education and training plans for industry sectors and provinces.
5. The Ministry and the TVEC should monitor the effective implementation of the above plans and ensure the development of the TVET sector as per policy directions.

**Policy context**

## ****CORE AREA - TVET - 8: Data, Information and Research****

In order to make informed decisions, training and labour market data need to be collected and collated to produce information and make the right and timely interpretation. That needs continuous research and documentation too. To facilitate this process, the TVEC with the assistance of three consecutive foreign-funded projects has taken steps to build institutional capacities to collect and analyze training and labour market information. The TVEC analyses labour market demand by analyzing vacancies published in newspapers and demand for foreign employment and other relevant data in the Labour Force Survey. Further, the TVEC collects and collates all supply-side training data continuously. They publish Labour Market Information bulletin twice a year with labour market and training information. Though, this is a quite satisfactory system it suffers from the following shortcoming and issues:

* Absence of real-time data entry leads to inaccuracies in information and reports
* Delays in collecting and collating training information

In order to overcome these issues, the TVEC and foreign-funded projects have made many attempts to develop MIS and LMIS. As a result, the VTA, NAITA, and DTET have a computer-based system to collect and collate training data and TVEC has a computerized system for registration, accreditation, and assessment with relevant databases. However, they have not succeeded to achieve the required outcomes.

Routine data collection and collation alone cannot enlighten critical issues in TVET. It needs research, and the TVEC has a programme to promote institutional-level research among TVET staff. In addition, the TVET sector needs a few national-level researches to test national-level hypotheses.

**Directive Principles**

DP 1: The management decision by the higher senior officials of the TVET sector must be based on labour market and training information and research findings.

DP 2: The TVET sector must be fostered through a vibrant research and innovation system.

**Policies and Strategies**

**Policy – TVET – 8.1: The TVET sector shall be directed through informed decisions derived from real-time analyses of the labour market and training information, and research findings**

**Recommended Strategic Activities**

1. The Ministry and the TVEC shall take determine effort to strengthen the existing MIS system with extensive linkage with the network of the TVET Institutions.
2. The TVEC must coordinate and support all training institutions and centers to have transaction support MIS with operational and financial information with real-time data entry.
3. The TVEC through the central MIS should maintain a graduate tracking facility to estimate the employability of NVQ certificate holders.
4. The TVEC and all the public TVET institutions must compile reports on management information annually to support decision-making by the management of respective institutions, regulatory bodies, and the Ministry and the policymakers.
5. The TVEC shall take steps to identify sources and capture, and map data relevant to demand and supply of skills in the labour market.
6. The TVEC together with TVET institutions shall strengthen the research and innovation programme in the following lines:
   * Enhanced the Treasury allocation to support research and innovation undertaken by the staff of the TVEC and the TVET institutions
   * National-level research on identified issues and themes of national importance
   * Obtain a cadre for full-time research staff
   * Annual research symposium with the publication of proceedings

**Acknowledgements**

The National Education Commission wishes to acknowledge with sincere gratitude the following personnel for their dedicated and committed services rendered towards the successful formulation of the National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

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