



VET

**Vocational Education
and
Training Policy**

དཔལ་ལྷན་འབྲུག་གཞུང་།

ལས་གཞི་ལྷན་ཁག།

Royal Government of Bhutan
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND HUMAN RESOURCES

སྐྱོན་པོ།

MINISTER

Foreword

The importance of vocational education and training has been recognized since mid 1960s. Today, in the wake of youth unemployment problem in the country, skills development merits even greater attention. We look at increasing numbers of school leavers as our asset. Every person should be appropriately trained to get employment and to be a part of the development of Bhutan.

Providing skills development training is not only essential for the enhancement of employability of the job seekers, but also it is critical for ensuring adequate supply of skilled workforce for the private sector development. In an era of globalization, development is increasingly a matter of responding to economic and technological changes. To manage these changes, skills development programmes must change too. This should be encouraged through positive public policies.

The future plans and programmes related to VET will be guided by this policy. Regular monitoring and evaluation will be carried out to assess the success of the policy objectives.

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Tashi Delek!



(Ugyen Tshering)

Minister for Labour and Human Resources

As a service to the VET providers the Ministry will actively promote the development of occupational standards (OS) in close collaboration with industry and institutions. The standards will serve better matching of training offers with industrial manpower demand. In addition, the intended OS system will, by means of its assessment procedures and test items, involve industry in the certification process.

In addition to the occupational standards system that will ensure the outcome of the training, accreditation system will be adopted as an input quality assurance mechanism. Accreditation system will help rate and grade training providers.

Measures and Provisions

In its endeavour to serve the next generation of school leavers, job seekers, young entrepreneurs and employers and to assist all training providers in the country in rendering quality VET in a sufficient scope and magnitude the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources will apply a well balanced set of strategic actions. These will comprise of:

- fostering public-private cooperation schemes in VET;
- promoting smooth co-operation among VET actors;
- involving the private sector to co-determine VET policy matters;
- creating a conducive legal framework for training providers and participants;
- creating awareness among the general public with regard to VET and labour markets opportunities; and
- strengthening the Ministry' internal professional capacities and the others in VET-related matters.

Mandate

“Bhutan 2020 – the country’s vision for peace, prosperity and happiness” in its preface states, “Youth and students of today will become adults in the period covered by this vision document. We hope that they will internalize the vision so that they can contribute to its realization. Their transition from students to workers will occur in this period, and career and employment plans should be made within the context of the economic expansion and social changes described in the vision document.”

The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, has a responsibility for developing the envisaged transition process. In doing so it will,

- ① secure provision of relevant vocational education and training choices
- ② promote expansion of suitable employment and entrepreneurial capacity
- ③ facilitate labour market transactions for job seekers and employers.

Vocational Education and Training (VET), in this context, refers to all measures of preparing for or improving the performance in an occupation.

The Ministry’s scope of services in these areas, shall benefit:

- Bhutan’s citizens who wish to start or improve gainful economic activities as employed workers, self employed and small entrepreneurs.
- Employers in Bhutan, both in the public as well as in the private sector, with an emphasis on the latter group, who are keen to increase the productivity of their workforce and thus expand business.
- Training providers in Bhutan, both public and private, as well as companies who arrange for on-the-job, with an interest in increased relevance and expanded scope of their activities.

Messages

Services to Bhutanese Citizens

Every Bhutanese will have access to quality VET, enabling them to embark on and remain in gainful economic activity

- (1) An increasing choice of vocational education and training programmes will be made available, so that every school leaver and every adult, keen to create or improve their occupational competence and employability, will find an opportunity that fits to their abilities, personal living conditions and preferences. More and more of these programmes will be based upon occupational standards to ensure they are in line with the requirements of the economy in terms of suitable skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Emphasis on acquiring core competencies will ensure occupational mobility, so that graduates from the programmes have greater chances to adapt to change, to climb up the ladder of an occupational career and be safeguarded against unemployment.
- (2) New programmes and courses will be specifically launched in labour intensive growth sectors with attractive employment opportunities, such as the service sector (tourism, trade, media, communication and transport, repair and maintenance of motor vehicles), in the construction sector (buildings, building maintenance, road maintenance and rehabilitation), in the manufacturing sector (new energy-based industries), and in agro-processing industry.
- (3) An expanded array of special training programmes will be offered in rural areas, as to support village-based artisans and crafts. More on-the-job training and apprenticeships will be organised, as to support an early and realistic formation of occupational attitudes. More entrepreneurial programmes will be made available for trainees as to help them start their own small businesses. More training programmes will include live work as a means to better reflect real work conditions and to help public and private training providers generate revenue.
- (5) The following services of the Ministry will be accessible to all training providers in the occupational field in question on a fee-charging base:
 - development of occupational standards in collaboration with expert workers which will define required worker competencies in line with economy and technology.
 - development of assessment procedures and instruments which will be used to test and verify the workers' competencies together with employers.
 - awarding of certificates of occupational competencies on various levels.
- (6) Staff of training institutes and of consulting firms will be invited to become experts in the development of realistic occupational profiles, in test item writing and in the translation of occupational standards into institutional curricula. Such services will later be demanded by the Ministry against honorarium.
- (7) The Ministry will support private training institutes and corporate training initiatives by means of incentives and quality assurance (accreditation).
- (8) The Ministry will support all training institutes in their efforts to identify and project workforce demand in their occupational and geographical areas. It will function as a clearinghouse for such information. In turn, the Ministry will make all its own employment data available to the institutions, so that they can design and launch demand-oriented programmes and courses early on.
- (9) The Ministry will ensure that training providers design their programmes and courses in accordance with the national occupational standards.

Services to Bhutan's providers of Vocational Education and Training

Every VET provider in Bhutan can obtain the Ministry's support for designing, organising and marketing training courses geared to raise employability of the citizens.

- (1) The Ministry will develop competences in fields such as:
 - instructional design / curriculum development
 - instructional skills / training of trainers
 - assessment and testing
 - course identification and course marketing
 - resource management for training institutes
 - employment and labour market services.
- (2) The Ministry will conduct staff development, capacity development and awareness/advocacy activities in these areas. These will be open to participants from other training providers for which fees will be charged gradually. Such courses will be open to teaching and managerial staff from other public, and from private institutes (commercial as well as non-profit) as well as from companies that take part in co-operative training schemes.
- (3) The Ministry will encourage training providers to offer shorter courses, or series of short courses, which would provide upgrading, updating, specialisation and re-training opportunities. With this approach the overall capacity of the country's VET system can be enlarged as to reach out to a higher number of job seekers, employed workers and persons aspiring self-employment.
- (4) The Ministry, in recognising the country's ever increasing population and the demand originating from school leavers, will continue to expand the capacities of its own training institutes in the years to come. It will do so in co-ordination with existing and emerging private training providers, so that an optimum of occupational and geographical coverage can be ascertained.
- (4) The provision of training in the 13 traditional Bhutanese arts and crafts (Zorig Chusum) will be promoted, and the programmes will be opened up also for interested persons who seek a short introductory training, which would enable them to appreciate the respective art or craft and perform some elementary tasks. Apprenticeship (traditional) schemes will be considered as an additional mode of training in these arts and crafts.
- (5) All vocational education and training will, apart from imparting occupational competencies, offer the young participants educative elements as to keep alive Bhutanese language, culture and heritage, and to develop environmental concern, health care habits and work ethos.
- (6) Young candidates for vocational education and training, as well as their parents and teachers in schools, will have access to career guidance, counselling and job information. Such services will be made available by most training institutions and supported by publications and electronic media on a country-wide basis. Career guidance and counselling at schools will continue jointly with the Ministry of Education. Career guidance will improve the esteem of craftsmanship and promote jobs and career avenues in the private and corporate sector.
- (7) As supporting instruments towards proper career choices and training decisions the Ministry will commission the edition and regular updating of a comprehensive "Bhutan's Vocational Education and Training Directory", and of a "Career and Occupational Dictionary".
- (8) Certificates of occupational competence will be issued in an increasing array of occupations, starting with economically important ones. Certificates may be obtained by graduating trainees as well as experienced workers who pass the relevant assessment. Tests (practice and theory) will be conducted with an increasing participation of employers (expert practitioners) to ensure a high labour market value of the certificates

- (9) More opportunities will be created to enrol in shorter vocational training programmes as a means to enter into a job early on, with an option to continue the training later by means of upgrading courses. Re-training courses will be offered for those who are threatened by retrenchment. Tests will be conducted and certificates issued at the end of a course.
- (10) All occupational standards, testing and certification will be embedded in the Bhutan Vocational Qualifications Framework (BVQF), which will cover an increasing number of occupations from semi-skilled, to skilled persons up to supervisors and overseers. In addition, the ministry will create opportunities for further advancement through higher-level certificates and a bridging arrangement into higher education.
- (11) All participants graduating from training courses as well as other job seekers are entitled to use the Ministry's employment promotion services. These will make information available on job openings, on further training opportunities, on business start-up possibilities, and will bring job seekers and potential employers into contact. This will include job opportunities abroad. These services will be offered by most training providers with support from the Ministry by means of regular publications and electronic media on a country-wide basis.
- (12) Initial training for school leavers will be provided free of charge as a matter of principle. However, skills enhancement training for already employed people will be provided against cost-covering fees.

All these VET-related services will be available to every Bhutanese citizen. The Ministry will encourage and support an increasing number of private institutions and agencies to render these services, especially in the area of vocational training, testing, counselling and in job placement. The Ministry will, in the interest of the citizens, guide private training institutions to maintain a high quality of their services. It will inform the public about availability and quality of private training programmes and related services, so that all citizens are able to make the right choice for themselves.

Services to the Business Community in Bhutan

Every employer in Bhutan shall be able to find and attract competent, confident and competitive Bhutanese workers in order to boost the companies' productivity and profitability.

- (1) An increasing number of competent workers will graduate from the country's various public and private training institutions, as well as from co-operative programmes, which are jointly conducted by a company (on-the-job training) and by a training institution (classroom- and lab-based).
- (2) An increasing number of job seekers will hold nationally recognised certificates of competence, which are based on occupational standards and a corresponding assessment system. Occupational standards define, what a person is required to do in that occupation and how well. Employers will have a major influence in the definition of occupational standards as well as in the execution of the testing within the Bhutan Vocational Qualification Framework.
- (3) Employers will be assisted by the Ministry to gradually substitute foreign labour by suitably qualified nationals. Skilled foreign workers (approved by the Ministry) will be required to undergo testing and to obtain certification in their occupation.
- (4) Standards for nationally desirable working conditions (especially in terms of occupational health and safety, fair remuneration and adequate social benefits) will be worked out and their implementation advocated. This shall strengthen the acceptance of private sector jobs for Bhutan's next generations of workers and evoke private sector careers equally attractive as public sector employment.
- (5) Job placement services will be operated by most training and testing institutions; they will be available to employers for screening and recruitment of job applicants.
- (6) The Ministry will encourage and assist those employers who are keen to organise their own company-based training in conjunction with institutional training (e.g. in the form of apprenticeship or internships). The Ministry will promote corporate training efforts, which will go beyond the companies' own recruitment necessities and thus render a service for the economy at large.

In developing its services for the business community, the Ministry will invite the co-determination of employers on various levels.

