

JORDAN

VET GOVERNANCE ETF PARTNER COUNTRY PROFILE



1. GENERAL GOVERNANCE

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy. Its constitution has been amended several times since being proclaimed in 1952. The government consists of the Chief of State (the king), the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, and a national legislative assembly with a House of Deputies and Senate. There are 12 governorates across three regions. Jordan has been moving towards a tripartite industrial relations system as part of a national strategy to develop a knowledge economy and society with improved education, training and skills. Social partners are engaged in policy initiatives like the National Employment Strategy. But employers are not yet involved in managing, evaluating and assessing the VET system in areas like planning, setting standards, designing content and testing competencies. Social partners are: official trade unions – the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions; the Jordanian Chamber of Commerce; the Jordanian Chamber of Industry and independent trade unions (not legally recognised).

2. VET GOVERNANCE

Key roles and functions

VET is part of a wider employment, technical and vocational education and training system (E-TVET), managed by the E-TVET Council, under the patronage of the Ministry of Labour (MoL). TVET has three subsectors in government, but no single leading body. At the central-sectoral level, it is managed by the E-TVET Council, Education Council and Higher Education Council. But they do not cooperate enough to support the overall objective of planning and maximising utilisation of Jordan's human resources.

At the middle-institutional level of sector management, many stakeholders are involved: MoL; the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR) and Al Balquaa' Applied University (BAU); the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), the Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC), the Centre of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA), Employment, Technical and Vocational Training (E-TVET) Fund, and NGOs. Coordination here is quite limited. The

same goes for the executive level (VET providers), i.e. vocational schools, community colleges and vocational training institutes.

Social partners have a mainly consultative role in setting objectives and implementing vision and strategy. The institutionalised participation in VET governance bodies is either minor (E-TVET Council) or non-existent (CAQA).

Financing

Finance for TVET comes from the public budget, international donations and loans, and (to a small extent), student fees. VTC is becoming more autonomous and BAU is responsible for public community college budgets and has had to generate a proportion of its income. The E-TVET Fund aims to finance and expand on-the-job training and technical and vocational training from public and private providers. The public budget funds the basic functioning of vocational schools and training centres. Schools indicate their needs for training, staffing, equipment, and materials to the Directorate of Planning and Budget at MoE, via the ministry's Directorate for Vocational Education. The MoE budget is part of the state budget approved by MoF and submitted to parliament and the king. A clear funding gap in VET leaves little scope for innovation. Over 80% of the education budget goes on teachers' salaries. A multiplicity of smaller, specialised institutions means economies of scale are missing, while in several cases infrastructure, buildings and equipment are not used for adult and continuous training. The budget approval process goes through several steps but development funding is scarce, and procedures are rigidly centralised with little if any decision-making devolved to governorates and providers.

Coordination mechanisms for VET policymaking

TVET is mainly delivered in the initial vocational education system (IVET). The vast majority of training is public, consisting of two years' secondary vocational education in upper secondary schools; vocational training for 16-18 year-olds by VTC; and technical education after secondary school in 42 community colleges offering two-year diplomas.



Laws and regulations of the sector's institutions are based on centralisation. This applies to the E-TVET Council, the key legislative actor coordinating VET policy, and CAQA. The E-TVET Council was meant to coordinate the TVET system and public and private provision, but there is no legal provision for engaging MoE, MoHESR and BAU in policy dialogue. Also, the council's affiliation with MoL and consequent lack of independence has made it less effective. It lacks clear efficiency and effectiveness standards that would allow its performance to be measured.

To overcome this fragmentation, the newly adopted HRD strategy 2016-2025 calls for the establishment of a private sector-led body, the Skills development corporation to oversee the whole education and training sector.

CAQA has been an important part of reform. It is tasked with licensing, accrediting vocational training institutions and programmes. It is as well the managing body for the technical and vocational qualification framework (TVQF). CAQA is unusual in its combination of (i) quality assurance functions and (ii) occupational assessment and occupational licensing functions. Occupational testing and Licensing are usually functions provided by industry through professional associations, employer associations, industry training organisations or Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The potential for confusion if the same body is responsible for awarding of occupational licences and awarding of qualifications is recognised.

CAQA standards coverage remains quite partial as in reality they do apply private providers only. Public providers follow their own procedures (Higher Education Accreditation Commission for Community colleges) which generally focus on internal quality control, looking at competence within establishments in terms of inputs, processes and outputs. There is little external quality control or evaluation of the effectiveness of institutions' outputs. Institutions and trainers are not held accountable for training outcomes.

As part of the new HRD strategy, CAQA will move under the responsibility of the Skills Development cooperation and its mandate is expected to be cover all training providers.

VET decision-making is highly centralised. Political instability and general resistance to change has sometimes prevented sector reform. Also, each institution has its own strategic goals and planning

process, so coordination is ineffective and roles are sometimes unclear. While work has been done recently on laws and procedures to enable institutions to meet objectives, their efforts need to be united and aligned.

In terms of institutionalised policy advice orientated mechanisms, policy-setting is split three ways between the E-TVET Council for E-TVET policies, the Education Council for vocational education, and the Higher Education Council for higher and technical education. This hampers coordination. There is also insufficient coordination and cooperation at the middle level of sector management. Consultation and engagement with chambers and social partners at the planning stage has grown, with social partners engaged in developing the National Employment Strategy, for example. But they and employers are not involved in managing, evaluating and assessing E-TVET in terms of setting standards, designing content and testing competencies. There is a clear deficit in terms of social partners' representation on VET institutions, and employers are often seen by government as guests rather than stakeholders. So the E-TVET system tends to be supply-orientated.

For public-private structure orientated mechanisms, government and TVET authorities have taken steps to engage social partners, and the emerging tri-partite industrial relations system has been encouraging. The main recognised social partners are JCC, JCI and GFJTU. Steps to involve social partners more in VET policy could include giving them more strategic and practical input into initiatives and institutional involvement in VET bodies. Employers organisations and GFJTU, meanwhile, could consolidate their own capacity to take part in E-TVET governance.

In knowledge creation orientated mechanisms, VET lacks key performance indicators and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. So the E-TVET Council is now using the Torino Process of annual reporting. However, only public training providers have to report basic administrative data, and it is only occasionally used to assess institutional performance. Data on labour market outcomes are limited to a few skills-related sector surveys or evaluations of specific programmes, and public access to this information is limited. Lack of a coherent data policy hampers evidence-based policy making and effective implementation: public institutions get funds based on previous budgets, not performance; teachers and instructors are paid

the same regardless of competencies or pupil numbers, and have little incentive to innovate as there is no effective performance review system; criteria for allocating budgets are not based on realistic programme costs; and the E-TVET system does not hold training providers accountable.

Country typology

VET governance is centralised. Fragmentation of providers and lack of institutionalised involvement from social partners in policy making and governance affect quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the TVET system. The sector is centralised and top-down, with vocational education, vocational training and technical education having bureaucratic systems that seldom work together to improve relevance, quality or efficiency.

Development assessment

The TVET system has become part of a wider E-TVET system, mainly managed by the E-TVET Council, supervised by the Ministry of Labour. The Education Council sets vocational education policy and the Higher Education Council sets higher education and technical education policy. Lack of coordination affects overall management, with a lot of actors involved. Decision-making, too, is highly centralised. Many actors operate in isolation, governed by different laws and with overlapping mandates, so coordination is not effective enough to support decision-making. The E-TVET Council, responsible for objective setting, should carry out its intended role as the main coordinator for the E-TVET sector. In strategic implementation, the E-TVET Council law has fallen short of the provision that would engage MoE, MoHESR and BAU in a sectoral policy dialogue beyond MoL, the E-TVET Fund and VTC. Implementation in colleges, schools and training institutes is also marked by centralisation and attachment to senior management. Executive managers must have approval from higher management for any training and education matters, so they cannot respond quickly to communities' and markets' needs.

Ongoing work in policy development

There are several relevant government strategies regarding the TVET sector in Jordan. The National Agenda 2007–2017 sets out the development strategy for the period and is the main guiding document for the country's plans and strategies.

The National Employment Strategy 2011–2020

(NES) derives its vision from of the National Agenda, with a 'focus on employment generation: improving standards of living for Jordanians through increased employment, wages, and benefits, and productivity improvements'. (NES strategy, 2007).

NES promotes amongst others the gradual replacement of foreign workers with (skilled) Jordanians, gives more attention to structural unemployment, and the upgrading of the TVET system.

The National E-TVET Strategy is the national policy most closely related to TVET. The first E-TVET strategy covered the 2008–13 period and the second one 2014–20. The new E-TVET strategy is based on the following acknowledgement:

'An effective, efficient, competitive, flexible and responsive E-TVET sector – as part of the broader system of human resources development – will re-shape the skills of the labour force and contribute to the development of Jordan's human capital, address mismatches between supply and demand for labour, provide more employment opportunities for the Jordanian workforce, and support the values of inclusion and opportunity for all Jordanians, particularly youth and women.' (E-TVET Council, 2014)

In September 2016, the government adopted a new Human Resources Strategy to 'enable the country to meet its goals for sustainable development, which includes the development of the nation in economic, cultural, social, and environmental terms. It will ensure current and future generations develop the skills and capabilities they need to live happy and fulfilled lives, and collectively realise the ambition of a prosperous and resilient Jordan'. (HRD strategy, 2016).

The role of CAQA promotes the governance function of evaluating and reviewing VET policies. CAQA prepares and develops TVET standards, licenses and accredits TVET institutions, and conducts vocational tests and issues licences to practice. It also supervises development of a series of sector-based occupational standards.

Focusing on the function of managing public-private partnership, private sector involvement in VET governance and management needs to be stepped up. But there have been encouraging steps, including social partners' engagement in initiatives like developing the National Employment Strategy. Also, linking providers with employers through



joint training programmes, like the public-private partnership developed by VTC, could help get employers more involved as stakeholders.

Although there is no national strategy for entrepreneurship skills, initiatives do promote sharing skills for lifelong learning between schools. They include an annual conference associated with the Queen Rania Awards for School Excellence, which recognises excellence in entrepreneurial learning. UNESCO supports entrepreneurial learning in lower secondary education, and it is being integrated into upper secondary education. Also, donors fund and support initiatives, for example Economic Opportunities for Jordanian Youth, supported by the NGO INJAZ, which funds partnerships between the private sector and education introducing young people to entrepreneurship and employment options beyond the public sector.

3. POLICY POINTERS^(*)

Policy makers may wish to consider the following points for reflection, with a view to working towards their implementation in line with national priorities and in the context of national, regional, and local needs.

Overall planning and management

1. Make the E-TVET Council more effective and operational, resolving legal, staffing and finance issues.
2. Clarify roles and functions for ministries and agencies, so coordination can progress from ad hoc to systematic.
3. Create an effective guidance service for young people and others to enter employment or plan the move from training and education to work.
4. Develop and promote continuing training to upgrade skills. Research the links with training and apprenticeship in the informal sectors of the labour market.
5. Empower governorates and local authorities to form public-private partnerships, including training providers in urban areas, and in economic development zones.

6. Support private sector involvement in governance and practical management of VET needs.
7. Strengthen links between VET providers and the labour market.
8. Empower social partners with more strategic and practical input into VET initiatives.
9. Help recognised social partners find ways to increase their capacity to deal with national and local VET initiatives.

Finance and funding

1. Base budget allocation on a coherent, sector-wide quality assurance system with monitoring and evaluation systems for performance-based budgeting.
2. Put alternative funding plans in place to meet the needs of the various strategies. Some requiring multiannual funding plans aren't covered by the annual budget.
3. Decentralise financial authority to promote efficiency and development at schools and training centres.
4. Increase funding opportunities for practical workshops.

Coordination mechanisms for VET policy making

1. Strengthen the E-TVET Council and enable it to play its role as coordination body for the TVET sector.
2. Activate the Higher Council for Human Resources Development as a coordinating organisation to facilitate collaboration between E-TVET, higher education and education and engage social partners.
3. Help employers' organisations and the GFJTU consolidate their capacity to be social partners in VET governance.
4. Draw civil society and third sector agencies into partnerships wherever possible.
5. Help recognised social partners communicate with each other in a more institutionalised way.

(*) Currently, a new Human Resource Development Strategy (HRD) is discussed for adoption. Thus, some of this policy pointers might be further revised. These are in particular: pointer 1 (Overall Planning and management) and pointers and pointers 1 and 2 (Coordination Mechanisms for VET policy making)