

# ISRAEL

**VET GOVERNANCE**  
ETF PARTNER  
COUNTRY PROFILE



## 1. GENERAL GOVERNANCE

Israel is a parliamentary democracy. The president is head of state. Executive power rests with the cabinet of ministers. The 120-member parliament (Knesset) is elected every four years, and it in turn elects the president for a single seven-year term. Legislation is within the Knesset's competence, but the Supreme Court can and does call for legislative change.

Local authorities are municipalities (73), local councils (124), and regional councils (54). They are financed from local taxes, as well as the state budget, and represented by the Union of Local Authorities. The Manufacturers' Association (MAI) is the sole representative body for all industrial sectors, and with 2,000 public and private sector members, it is the largest employers' organisation. The largest federation of trade unions is Histadrut. It takes part in consultations and other activities connected to TVET, but does not have a prominent role and lacks its own infrastructure to develop policy and participation in TVET.

## 2. VET GOVERNANCE

### Key roles and functions

TVET covers technological-scientific education, and other vocational education. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for the first, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services (MoSASS) is responsible for technological vocational training, post-secondary systems through the National Institute for Training in Technology and Science (NITTS), and adult training programmes. Local authorities, education providers, MAI and colleges are also involved in TVET. Technological-scientific education is divided into engineering, technology, and occupational studies. The

engineering track is for students who will go on to university, the technology track is for those who will take programmes at school or college, and the vocational/occupational path is for students who will enter the job market after graduating.

MoE and MoEc are the main actors in VET governance, maintaining and managing the two parallel TVET systems. Education networks are a feature of how groups of schools are organised. The largest (ORT and AMAL) are prominently engaged in discussions about TVET governance and reform, as well as initiatives in teaching, teacher training and funding. Local authorities also have a significant role. They own the schools under MoE's jurisdiction and have some funding responsibilities. Schools are encouraged to take an innovative approach to teaching and learning. But there is little work-based learning beyond apprenticeships. MAI is prominent in a wide range of TVET policy development, implementation and reform. The biggest international donors are from the USA and Germany.

### Financing

Spending on education rose beyond the OECD average between 2005 and 2012. Pupil numbers increased by 15%, so per-pupil spending also exceeded the OECD average. For MoE, sources of finance are the government, local authorities and provider networks. It allocates finance to localities and schools via the districts. Local authorities provide for infrastructure and equipment and add to national allocations. They have considerable powers also to interpret the national curriculum and establish local initiatives and partnerships. Provider networks have their own sources of finance and can fund their schools directly or through teacher training or other initiatives. MoSASS' main sources are the government and provider networks. MoSASS' provision is tied more closely to the labour market and employment, including apprenticeships. Here, the networks and larger employers contribute,

# VET GOVERNANCE

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often to schools based on their own premises, and owned by the networks. There are no taxes or levies on employers, but MAI and its members contribute to skills development programmes and other initiatives. Funding goes to TVET providers on a per-capita basis.

### Coordination mechanisms for VET policymaking

Legislative or normative orientated mechanisms are limited, as the legal framework for TVET is weak beyond the Compulsory Education Act, and the Apprenticeship Act and Youth Employment Act, which establish MoE and MoEc's statutory powers.

In institutionalised policy advice-orientated mechanisms, MoE and MoEc are responsible for strategy and policy development, governance, quality assurance, and teachers' standards and training. Numerous TVET provider networks like ORT and AMAL organise and manage many of the schools. About 40% of vocational students are enrolled in ORT and AMAL programmes, and both organisations are involved in discussions about management, governance and reform of TVET. The networks are national and international organisations that manage networks of TVET provision, so their management activity crosses regional and local boundaries and has a strong impact on TVET in schools, colleges and centres. The districts and local authorities are the intermediate layer of governance between national government and schools and colleges. Schools and colleges themselves are encouraged to start initiatives and partnerships, and respond to local needs. And MAI is involved in policy development and project implementation, as well as teacher training. But a formal system of social partnership does not exist yet.

Public-private structure orientated mechanisms exist through employers' frequent involvement, through MAI, in developing TVET policy, and in implementation and reform. Among other

things, MAI aims to get more students into the TVET system through sponsorship and by getting employers involved in improving TVET programmes. MAI is represented on the subject committees related to MoE's curriculum development, and trains representatives who do this work. But it believes more formal and systematic partnership arrangements would improve on the more ad hoc current arrangements.

Knowledge creation-orientated mechanisms exist mainly in the ministries, which are responsible for qualifications, the curriculum and exams. MoE has specialist committees for professions. Academic representatives, MAI, the relevant trade union, other ministries and teachers' representatives also serve on these committees. They are responsible for quality assurance for the curricula and for developing curriculum requirements. The National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education (NAMEE) creates and administers assessment of student achievement, pedagogy and the school matriculation exam. The ministries and MAI are working to get employers more involved in deciding the knowledge and competencies TVET should foster. But the mechanisms for doing this haven't yet been worked out.

### Country typology

TVET governance is centralised, with some functions devolved. School curriculum and textbooks, national assessments and exams for matriculation, and the inspection system are all centrally controlled by ministries. This is meant as a public guarantee of quality, irrespective of the type of school. In other significant respects, the local authorities, provider networks and the TVET providers themselves have considerable management flexibility and autonomy.

### Development assessment

TVET governance development is targeted. While some elements of the system, like exams

and assessments, the curriculum, textbooks and inspection are under central control, other stakeholders can run their own initiatives. So education networks, local authorities and training providers have significant decentralised authority. Governance is fragmented at central level, with MoE and MoEc managing and financing two different systems. Local authorities have a significant role in TVET organisation as owners of MoE schools. Employers also have a positive role, through MAI's prominent part in developing TVET policy, as well as implementation and reform. Government often calls on it to engage in training issues, it has built up its own organisation to deal with TVET, and it has a considerable presence on national forums. Histadrut is less active. Also, while collaboration between ministries, MAI and other stakeholders is extensive, it is also ad hoc.

### Ongoing work in policy development

Management of VET provider networks is seen in education networks' mediation between national and local levels of provision, and between public and private stakeholders. This brings flexibility and innovation to TVET governance. But there are doubts about whether regulations covering different stakeholders' activities are fit for purpose, and a review could help resolve them.

The Entrepreneurship Centre established by the Amal education network was made possible by a multi-level governance process that lets local actors feed lessons back into the policy cycle. It is an example of managing public-private partnerships for VET and skills provision. Also, Google has signed an agreement which will see ORT manage its training and implementation in Israeli education. ORT has planned and executed two programmes for the Google Academy for Teachers.

The New Horizon reform is an example of formulating a national policy framework. It aims to break the link between students' socio-economic status on entering the system, and their potential

status after graduating.

## 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. Consult all stakeholders, then draft and adopt a VET law, reflecting the existing comprehensive vision, as well as regulating VET governance and the system.
2. Enhance training and continuing professional development of TVET teachers and school leaders, for better management and teaching in a rapidly changing TVET environment.

### Finance and funding

1. Examine ways to improve TVET financing and make the funding methodology more widely understood.
2. Improve TVET financing.
3. Find ways to use the funding of providers to further encourage or incentivise innovation in teaching and learning, and other aspects of local activity like engaging with industry and forming partnerships.
4. Offer businesses and employers financial incentives, such as tax exemptions, for contributions to VET.
5. Consider public-private partnerships as a way to support the financing and governance of TVET, and then develop financing partnerships with the business community to develop TVET.



## Coordination mechanisms for VET policy making

1. Strengthen the governance system by establishing a coordinating council or committee to make recommendations on strategic and operational issues. And put dialogue and partnership with social partners, particularly with employers, on a more formal and systematic footing.
2. Further develop MAI and the trade union confederation's capacity for handling TVET issues at all levels, and through the stages of the policy process.
3. Engage local authorities, social partners and other community organisations in local initiatives and networks that help meet local labour market skills needs and make disadvantaged groups more employable.
4. Develop a labour market information system to help develop the skills needs analysis that TVET planners and managers need to help them anticipate skills needs.