



1. GENERAL GOVERNANCE

Palestine is politically under the jurisdiction of the Palestine Authority (PA) government (sometimes called the Palestinian unity government) and the Hamas government in Gaza. Palestine has observer-state status at the UN and its application for membership is before the Security Council. The PA combines parliamentary and presidential systems of democracy. Palestine is governed by a parliamentary democracy, the Legislative Council (PLC). The president, elected every four years, is head of state and appoints the prime minister, who chooses a cabinet of ministers and runs the government. The Palestinian National Authority (PNA), established in 1994, has executive, legislative and judiciary power. The PLC is responsible for enacting laws. The PA rules the West Bank while the Hamas government is the de facto ruler of the Gaza Strip.

There are central, regional and local levels of government. Governorates (16 spread across Areas A, B and C in the West Bank and Gaza Strip) make up the regional level and are managed by governors nominated by the president and supervised by the Ministry of the Interior.

The PA's Labour Law protects workers' rights and prompted the National Tripartite Committee for Labour Affairs. Through the 'Turin Declaration' it has set out a vision for improving industrial relations and labour market governance through social dialogue. Yet the consultation mechanism between social partners on legislation and social policy making is not institutionalised.

2. VET GOVERNANCE

Key roles and functions

The actors in VET governance and policy making are the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and their supervised authorities and bodies including the Higher Council of TVET. A Development Centre should be established in the first part of 2017 to support the Higher Council in the shaping of TVET

policies. The Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC) is in charge of quality assurance in the tertiary education level of TVET. International stakeholders and donors are influential. Stakeholders and social partners like the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and the Palestinian Federation of Industry have become a key player in TVET reform and have seen their role recognised with the inclusion in the revised Higher Council for TVET. The Federation of Chambers of Commerce is also making a big effort to increase its role and expanding its staff to increase capacity. TVET units have been recently established in all regional Chambers.

At the governorate level the Local Employment and Training (LET) councils are non-formal bodies aiming to enhance TVET's relevance to the local labour market and identify skills needs. They are seen as a success, though – private colleges apart – TVET providers have little autonomy to make management decisions or raise extra finance.

Financing

Almost all funding for initial TVET comes from the Ministry of Finance (MoF), which covers fixed expenses like salaries, running costs and development expenditure, and donors, who cover training. There are no employer training levies, while student fees produce limited income. TVET providers have little autonomy over budgets and income. Resources are scarce, so funding is not used to incentivise reform. However, international stakeholders and donors support the TVET system and reform through large-scale aid. They include the EU, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC), the Swedish Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and others. Private community colleges are financed through fees and their owners' patronage.

There is no costing analysis of the TVET system. An attempt to identify how resources were spent, using indicators like cost per student has been attempted in both the MoEHE and MoL, but has brought sustainable results.



Coordination mechanisms for VET policymaking

Legislative or normative orientated mechanisms include the national TVET Strategy, which acts as a strategic framework for reform and aims to provide a model for governance. It also contains detailed action planning for implementation under areas including labour market needs and graduate employability, engaging stakeholders, frameworks for jobs and qualifications, links between TVET and the education system, organisational development of TVET institutions, teaching and learning processes, and quality development and assurance through a national body which it recommends. The strategy is linked to the employment strategy and education strategy, and the new planning document for education as a whole includes a section on vocational education. It has been approved by MoEHE and MoL, while TVET policy makers and international stakeholders believe expanding TVET could counter unemployment. But the MoEHE prioritises access to higher education, and generally TVET gets little attention from policy makers and the education sector in general.

MoEHE and MoL are the key RT governance actors, responsible for VTC, vocational schools and community colleges. A new non-formal TVET management structure has been established as a reference for international initiatives, and includes government representatives as well as international stakeholders.

Looking at institutionalised policy advice orientated mechanisms, public authorities are over-represented in some cases on governance and policy-related agencies and bodies, while others (like social partners) are under-represented or absent. Apart from the ministries, the key governance actor is the Higher Council of TVET, chaired alternately by MoEHE and MoL. It establishes policies and priorities, oversees implementation of the strategy and secures financial resources. The Higher Council for TVET has been re-launched in 2016 and national stakeholders have a lot of optimism that it could play a crucial coordination role for the sector. AQAC heads quality assurance in TVET but doesn't cover all aspects and its functions cover only the technical and community colleges. Also, private sector representation is very limited.

In public-private structure orientated mechanisms, employers' organisations were active and influential

in revising the TVET Strategy, though even here their involvement was ad hoc, not systematic. This is the general trend when it comes to private stakeholders and social partners' role in policy planning. Employers' organisations have limited capacity. Trade union confederations are invited to take part from time to time, but have other priorities. Civil society organisations have a consultative role and implement donor-funded programmes. The Federation of Chambers of Commerce is building capacity to assess skills needs annually.

Social partners and employers' associations are more visible at the governorate level. Local Employment and TVET (LET) councils came from this involvement. Based on collaboration between MoEHE, MoL, the private sector, community institutions, youth employment organisations and GIZ, they gather labour market intelligence and set up ways to improve teaching and learning for more demand-led TVET. Four LET councils are being piloted in four governorates.

Civil society organisations have set up the vast majority of the 28 community colleges, which are subject to AQAC and mostly public non-profit.

Focusing on knowledge creation orientated mechanisms, Palestine lacks a coherent VET data policy, and so has no effective labour market information system. Plans were recently put in place for a monitoring and evaluation function, including operational monitoring. But despite monitoring being built into various projects, TVET system monitoring is still insufficient and too dependent on donors, in the case of monitoring reform progress. Local stakeholders, supported by international stakeholders, have started to establish a structured monitoring system, which could help develop a strategy and action plan for a process across the TVET sector.

Country typology

VET governance is centralised, despite initiatives to help decentralise it. The key actors are MoEHE and MoL. While stakeholders and social partners are active and involved in the overall reform of the TVET sector, their practical engagement in VET governance and policy planning is not broad or institutionalised. MoEHE and MoL remain responsible for addressing social and inclusion demand.

Development assessment

VET governance development is structured. Palestine has a clear vision for the VET system and TVET reform is being shaped to turn it into reality. There is constant progress, actors in VET governance have good capabilities and development processes are in place. But too much initiative is with donors and national stakeholders haven't yet shown they can take the lead in reform. The private sector faces a challenge to lead on analysing labour market needs – a role stakeholders and social partners aren't yet ready to play. This will help harmonise TVET and enable multi-level governance. Despite institutional arrangements and strong will for reform, policy delivery is weak and coordination and policy networks are still to be strengthened.

VET governance and reform are affected by lack of financial resources, political instability, lack of ministerial coordination, fragmentation of the system (because NAVET is not yet active), and lack of data policy and policy monitoring, and reform evaluation. More positively, there is a shared vision, an up-to-date strategy and a will to cooperate to reform the TVET system. There is also increasing will to identify skills needs, successful initiatives like LET councils and much support from international stakeholders.

Ongoing work in policy development

The LET councils enhance TVET's proximity to local labour markets to identify specific skills needs. They represent the first attempt at regular, structured cooperation between TVET providers, employers and government at local level. Lack of resources prevent them being active beyond specific international initiatives. But they are good practice towards multi-level governance at regional/local level, since they contribute to developing structured public-private partnerships. The EU TVET support programme challenged TVET institutions to create partnerships with labour market representatives to present proposals for reviewing TVET curricula. Providers responded enthusiastically and the programme received more proposals than it could fund. This is an example of managing VET provider networks. It is felt that TVET directors' motivation could be encouraged again by letting them keep and reinvest funds they raise from providing various services.

The informal three-level TVET management system,

with all actors cooperating closely, is going to be mirrored in the new formal governance of TVET (Higher Council and Development Centre)..

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. Establish the Development Centre and provide it with resources and expertise in order to play a key role in the TVET reform
2. Establish a partnership between the ministries, social partners and civil society associations to review implementation of the TVET Strategy action plan and prioritise reforms.
3. Enact by-laws to implement the new TVET Strategy.
4. Investigate apprenticeships in informal sectors and establish links between formal and informal training
5. Further Strengthen employer federations' and social partners' involvement in VET policy planning and implementation, within the framework of the TVET Strategy.
6. Enable the leaders of TVET providers to take more initiative locally by giving them training and institutionalising providers' autonomy.
7. Enhance HRD and capacity building among public and private stakeholders.
8. Support and expand the LET councils.
9. Emphasise quality assurance, as not all aspects are covered by AQAC.
10. Institutionalise quality assurance across the TVET sector.

Finance and funding

1. Consult stakeholders and VET providers on VET providers' financial autonomy and enact legal provisions based on the results.
2. Support TVET institutions' financial sustainability, allowing the system to become more flexible by devolving some responsibilities to school



management and providing services for the labour market.

3. Encourage TVET providers to develop income-generating activities and let them retain most of the money raised.
4. Legislate financial incentives for private sector involvement in providing TVET.
5. Encourage the private sector to take a leading role in identifying labour market needs and take a stronger role in reforming and updating TVET. Support this with capacity building.

Coordination mechanisms for VET policy making

1. Build on the strong culture of cooperation behind the new TVET Strategy to establish a strategic framework of TVET governance. Then establish more coherent management across sub-systems to realise the shared vision.
2. Coordinate all development activities by donors and develop a coordination mechanism for donor policy.
3. Prioritise education and training for refugees and inclusion of people in Area C, and potentially establish an agency looking exclusively at this.
4. Encourage key actors (mainly the ministries) to work with private stakeholders and civil society associations on governance measures that make TVET more attractive to learners, their families, and employers.
5. Develop a national TVET database and enhance data policy. Prioritise development of a full set of indicators for monitoring the efficiency of TVET and its reform process, and evidence-based policy making.