

KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT – EGYPT 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2021, Egypt introduced the National Structural Reform Programme (NSRP) as an evolution of its 2016 economic reform initiative. This strategy supports sustainable development goals and prioritises economic diversification to boost the GDP contributions from the manufacturing, agriculture and ICT sectors. A significant focus is placed on enhancing the labour market, notably in technical and vocational education. Egypt, the Arab Region's most populous nation, exceeded 104 million citizens in 2021 and is projected to reach 180 million by 2052. As of 2020, 543 900 international migrants resided in Egypt, and this number is now said to be much higher, especially following the political instability in the region, in particular in Sudan. The economic revival commenced in April 2021, but a resurgence of COVID-19 coupled with global shocks affected the pace of growth. However, growth reached 6.6% between mid-2021 and mid-2022. Socially, 30% of Egyptians live below the poverty line. To combat 'the pandemic's effects, a USD USD 6.13 billion stimulus was introduced.

Egypt's 'Vision 2030' underscores a knowledge-based society from an educational perspective. The TVET sector is witnessing substantial growth, with the Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE) reforming technical education. Technological Universities (TUs) have also been established. Despite rising student enrolment, the literacy rate lags behind, at 73%. The tertiary education system shows promising growth, but challenges such as the rising number of NEETs (young people aged between 15 and 29 not in education, employment, or training), especially among women, highlight deeper socioeconomic issues.

Egypt's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system serves around 3 million students in formal and non-formal settings. The larger formal component, IVET, encompasses students from pre-university to tertiary levels. The Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE) dominates, managing around 3 000 technical secondary schools and catering for 2.3 million students. Other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHE), the Productivity and Vocational Training Department (PVT) and the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) offer various programmes. In contrast, non-formal continuing vocational training (CVT) hasn't achieved the same impact. Recent reforms have been aimed at strengthening quality assurance in vocational training.

The country's legal framework for vocational training is evolving, with institutions such as the Egyptian TVET Quality Assurance and Accreditation Authority (ETQAAN) and the Technical and Vocational Teachers' Academy (TVETA) being established. Significant progress in technical education, such as the introduction of over 70 Applied Technology Schools (ATS), has been achieved with international support.

Work-based learning arrangements, including the 'Dual System' and the 'Applied Technology Schools' (ATS) model, focus on quality and industry partnerships. However, challenges in quality assurance persist. In line with Egypt's digital transformation vision, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) launched the 'Digital Egypt' project, emphasising digital skills and jobs. The MCIT aims to expand Egypt's ICT skills pool, partnering with global entities and offering varied training levels, from basic digital literacy to specialised master's programmes. MoETE emphasises green skills in VET through T.E 2.0 reforms, introducing competency-based curricula, green specialisations and teacher capacity-building. Collaborations boost renewable energy, green school projects and employment promotion.

The labour market in Egypt is undergoing significant shifts. An expected rise in the annual increase in the labour force will add pressure, necessitating an employment growth of 2.7% annually and a GDP growth rate exceeding 6%. These new entrants will be highly educated, highlighting a need for quality job opportunities. Recent data showed a drop in the unemployment rate and a rise in the labour force activity rate, particularly for women. However, skill mismatches persist between educational offerings and market demands. The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development has introduced a comprehensive labour market information tool offering insights into current and projected employment trends. The Ministry of Labour, managing labour policies, has been attempting to introduce a new

labour law seeking to balance rights between employees and employers. Various initiatives are under way to address unemployment, with an emphasis on training, entrepreneurship and specialised programmes for young people, women and people with disabilities.

1. KEY POLITICAL, DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Political developments

Egypt launched the National Structural Reform Programme (NSRP) in April 2021 under the auspices of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MPED). The NSRP is the second stage of the National Economic and Social Reform Programme initiated in 2016. It aligns with the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, a national agenda similarly launched in 2016, and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union Commission (AUC): The Africa We Want (OECD et al., 2022).

The main pillar of the NSRP is 'Economic diversification', which aims to enhance the contribution of manufacturing, agriculture and information and communication technologies to GDP.

One of the five main pillars of the Programme directly mentions skills: 'Improving the efficiency of the labour market and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) by developing the TVET system, bolstering the role of the private sector, aligning supply with market demand and empowering women, young people and individuals with special skills.'

Demographics

Egypt is the most populous country in the Arab Region and ranks 14th globally. In 2021, its population surpassed 104 million and grows at an annual rate of 2%. With this growth rate, the population is projected to reach 180 million by 2052, positioning Egypt among the top nine largest populations worldwide (Multiannual Indicative Programme – MIP, European Union (EU) Delegation to Egypt, 2022). Nearly 60% of the total population is under the age of 30, as per the 2022 national data.

By mid-2020, Egypt hosted 543900 international migrants¹. Regarding Egyptian emigrants, their top destination countries were Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, the USA, Qatar, Italy and Jordan. The total number of emigrants in mid-2020 stood at 3.6 million. The total share of international migrants in the population in 2020 was 0.5%, an increase from 2015 when the rate was 0.4%. Of these, 19% were younger than 19, while 46% were female. Net migration (immigrants minus emigrants) in 2019 amounted to -577 000, likely shifting due to the travel restrictions imposed by the COVIDS-19 pandemic to +4 500 in 2020. The estimated net migration in 2022 was -324 000 (Migration Data Portal of the International Office for Migration, 2023).

Key economic developments

By April 2021, economic activity and employment began to resume. However, a resurgence in COVID-19 cases overshadowed the budding economic recovery. Pressure mounted from impacted foreign income sources, such as tourism, goods exports and foreign direct investment (FDI). Nonetheless, remittances, portfolio inflows and external financing sustained international reserves. The World Bank (2021) posits that prioritising macro-fiscal and structural reforms, bolstering social protection and advancing the human capital agenda will be pivotal for a robust recovery.

A substantial rebound before the war in Ukraine propelled economic growth to 6.6% from mid-2021 to mid-2022, double the rate of the previous year. However, various global shocks have recently dampened economic activity, especially due to the rising costs of both domestic and imported inputs. Headline urban and core inflation surged to 13.1% and 13.7%, respectively, on average during March-August 2022, surpassing the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) target (7 +/-2%) owing to global price movements, exchange rate depreciation and domestic supply bottlenecks. By way of a reaction, the CBE elevated key policy rates in March and April 2022 by a cumulative 300 basis points and permitted the exchange rate to depreciate (World Bank, 2022).

¹ This figure may be substantially higher when considering all types of migrants and refugees, especially following the latest developments in Sudan.

The IMF anticipated the real GDP to settle at 4% in 2023 (IMF Egypt office, February 2023).

According to CAPMAS, Egypt's state statistics agency, annual inflation hit 39.7% in August 2023, as the country grappled with a punishing economic crisis. This figure came after a previous record of 38.2% in July 2023 and amid an unrelenting downturn that saw the currency shed half its value against the US dollar since early 2022. Food and drink prices alone rose 71.9% year-on-year.

According to Ministry of Planning and Economic Development figures, the country's external debt bill tripled over the previous decade, rising to a record high of USD 165.4 billion in 2023.

Severe foreign currency shortages also heavily impacted the economy, limiting imports and causing a parallel currency market to surge up to 25% higher than bank rates. Remittances from Egyptians abroad, the country's biggest source of foreign revenue, fell since the crisis began, as people turn to the parallel market to send money home. Between July 2022 and March 2023, the central bank reported a 26.1% drop in remittances – one of the several 'volatile, vulnerable' sources of foreign currency Egypt relies on.

Egypt's foreign reserves slowly inched upwards from the beginning of the crisis, reaching USD 34.9 billion in August 2023, according to the central bank – still USD 7 billion less than before the Ukraine war. Around USD 29 billion of this amount was in deposits from wealthy Gulf allies, according to the central bank.

Key social issues

Social conditions in Egypt remain challenging. As per the Household Survey results from October 2019 to March 2020, approximately 30% of the population lives below the national poverty line, with the highest rates found in rural areas.

To mitigate the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the impoverished, the government announced a stimulus package worth USD 6.13 billion (EGP 100 billion, equivalent to 1.8% of GDP). Prominent measures encompass an exceptional monetary grant for irregular workers and the expansion of existing cash transfer programmes. The latter replaced broad consumer subsidies for energy and food with more targeted poverty and human development programmes (Arab Development Portal, 2023).

Despite strides in narrowing the urban/rural economic divide and the rollout of the national social programme, 'Haiah Karima' (a decent life), aimed at uplifting the quality of life in rural villages, regional disparities linger. Household income and expenditure grew more in urban areas than in rural ones (EU Delegation, 2021).

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 Trends and challenges

Education strategy, provider network and legal framework for education and training

The development of Egypt, as measured by the Human Development Index (HDI), presented a value of 0.732 in 2021. This placed Egypt in the lower range of the middle human development category, ranking 97th out of 191 countries and territories. However, when accounting for inequality, the HDI value drops even further, to 0.519, reflecting a loss of 29.0%. Additionally, the country's Gender Inequality Index stood at 0.443 in 2021, ranking Egypt 109th out of 170 countries (UNDP, 2022).

The 'Egypt Vision 2030' represents a long-term development strategy that sets ambitious targets to achieve sustainable development and improve the quality of life for all Egyptians. One of its core components is prioritising education as a means to achieve a knowledge-based society. In alignment with the 'Egypt Vision 2030', technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has gained significant attention from decision-makers due to political pressure to perform. Although there are many active providers in the TVET sector, it remains somewhat uncoordinated, with previous attempts to establish overarching governing models remaining unfulfilled. However, recent developments saw some steps and initiatives towards greater- coordination – at least bilaterally – among the main providers and stakeholders. For example, the Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE) and the Ministry of Labour (MoL) are negotiating a memorandum of understanding (MoU) where the National Training Fund would support industrial education under MoETE, and the MoL would utilise these facilities for continuing vocational training. Furthermore, MoETE and the **Productivity and Vocational Training Department (PVTB)**, under the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI) have started discussions to find ways to align their curricula according to the competency-based model implemented by MoETE. Additionally, there was a committee established between MoETE and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHE) to come up with an appropriate and smooth transition for technical education students to the Technological Universities using a credit hour system (especially for the 55-year-old students in technical secondary education), and to align the programmes between both levels.

Furthermore, in 2023, serious discussions were held, and a Prime Ministerial decree was drafted to establish the Supreme Council for Education and Training. The Council, among other strategic and policy-related issues at all levels of education and training, will be responsible for the coordination of TVET planning and provision. Although yet to be activated, this would be a positive step towards the right direction for coordination in the TVET sector.

The Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE), serving 2.3 million active students, has been implementing a reform strategy called 'Technical Education 2.0' (or T.E. 2.0) since the end of 2018. This strategy, which has been officially endorsed by the government and is supported by major international development partners², seeks to enhance the quality, relevance and attractiveness of TVET. Furthermore, it aims to transform curricula to competency-based education, bolster teacher capacity, revise the governance model and establish new models of public-private partnerships. T.E. 2.0 has recently been reviewed and updated by the Ministry to reflect new development following 5 years of implementation. Furthermore, MoETE has requested the EU Delegation (EUD) to Egypt to conduct an independent assessment of the strategy. The EUD agreed and has contracted the ETF, which will work jointly with the OECD to conduct this assessment.

In 2019, a law to establish new Technological Universities (TUs) was approved. By September 2022, 10 of these publicly owned TUs had begun operations. These universities offer 2- and 4-year programmes in various specialities such as agriculture, industry, technology and commerce. While

² The main international development partners which support TE 2.0 are the EU, GiZ, KfW and USAID through their various projects.

they are open to students with general secondary school certificates, the law stipulates that the target is for 80% of students to be those who have attended technical secondary schools. Over time, the goal is to set up 27 TUs across all governorates, tailoring programmes to the needs of each respective governorate. Additionally, a private Technological University owned by the El Sewedy family received its licence and began operations in September 2023 in the outskirts of Cairo.

Education expenditure

The Egyptian Constitution mandates specific allocations of GDP to key human development sectors: health (3%), education (4%), higher education (2%) and scientific research (1%) (UNDP, 2021).

In the light of these obligations, public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was 2.6% in 2019, decreasing slightly to 2.5% in 2020, however much less than the amount allocated to education by the Constitution. Meanwhile, the proportion of public expenditure dedicated specifically to education rose from 11.6% in 2019 to 12.3% in 2022. However with the on-going devaluation of the Egyptian pound and rising inflation, this increase is hardly felt, especially since most of the budget goes to teacher and staff salaries, and even the amount that went to educational investments has been reduced in real terms due to devaluation. MoETE was also able to increase the allocations going to training raw material after implementing the new competency-based curricula in more than 900 schools, which is an important success story, since, otherwise the implementation of the new curricula would not have been effective in achieving the targeted quality improvements in the students' competencies.

Furthermore, until this year, it was very difficult to earmark and define the technical education budget within the overall annual budget allocated to MoETE. However, this will require capacity-building within the technical education department of the minister to better manage their resources. The new EU intervention in TVET, planned to start in 2024, has a component that will support MoETE in developing a robust financial system for planning, as well as innovative ways to ensure sustainability of the current co-funding that happens in some schools as a contribution for the private sector.

Access, participation and early school-leaving

Over the past 10 years, student enrolment in primary, preparatory and secondary schools – including general and technical education – has surged from 15 million to 24.4 million. According to 2019 data from UNESCO UIS, Egypt made positive strides with regard to several key educational indicators. In 2019, the net enrolment rate in primary education reached 97.0%, while secondary education enrolment was 84.6%, up from 76.8% in 2015. Notably, upper secondary enrolment rose from 46.6% in 2015 to 47.3% in 2019. However, the significant increase in enrolment has adversely impacted the quality of education, as infrastructural provisions and teacher training is struggling to keep up with the surge in students. The overall literacy rate is 73%³, below the world average of 87%. Women have a slightly lower literacy rate than men, at 70%, compared to 73%.

Egypt boasts a comprehensive tertiary education system. The gross enrolment rate in tertiary education rose from 38.9% in 2018 to 42.7% in 2019. By 2020, there was nearly equal gender representation, with men at 42.9% and women at 42.5% (UNESCO UIS).

Young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs)

According to World Bank data, the percentage of NEETs (young people aged between 15 and 29 not in education, employment, or training) in Egypt has been rising, from 27.1% in 2018 to 28% in 2019 and then to 30% in 2020, before decreasing in 2021 to 29%. This trend is particularly pronounced among young adult women: they represented 44% of the NEETs in 2020, and this figure decreased to

³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?locations=EG>

43% in 2021, highlighting potential challenges for young women in accessing education and employment.

These statistics underscore deeper socioeconomic challenges, potentially influenced by factors such as access to education, socio-cultural norms and economic opportunities, particularly affecting young Egyptian women.

2.2 Initial VET and adult learning

The TVET system of Egypt serves almost 3 million active students, both in formal and non-formal institutes. This vast system primarily consists of the formal Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) and the smaller non-formal Continuing Vocational and Training (CVT) programmes.

IVET caters to students at various stages: from pre-university and post-secondary to, more recently, tertiary university levels via new Technological Universities introduced in the 2020/21 academic year. The Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE) is by far the largest provider in terms of the number of students, schools and staff, with 2.3 million active students. MoETE manages around 3 000 technical secondary schools⁴, offering 3 and 5-year programmes for the main sectors: industry, agriculture, commerce and hospitality. These programmes are presented through different models such as traditional Technical Secondary Schools (TSS), the 'Dual System', 'School in Factory', the 'Labour System', Applied Technology Schools (including international schools) and the emerging Sectoral Centres of Competences (CoC).

Beyond MoETE, other stakeholders also contribute to formal TVET:

- **Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHE):** MoHE provides TVET in 45 middle technical institutes for 2 years, associated with 8 Technical Colleges⁵. This ministry also oversees four Industrial Education Colleges and 10 Technological Universities which offer 4-year courses and postgraduate degrees.
- **Productivity and Vocational Training Department (PVTD),** affiliated to the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI): This department manages 45 vocational training centres, focusing on a 3-year apprenticeship for the industrial sector. They also supervise over 100 training stations in collaboration with the private sector.
- **Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP):** the focus of MoHP is a 3+2-year programme for nursing and medical technicians across 200 schools⁶ with roughly 46 000 students. This programme prepares students for basic nursing tasks and offers a Technical Diploma in Nursing after 3 years, followed by an Occupational licence after 2 years of practical hospital training.
- **Private Sector Technical Education:** separate from public TVET entities, just under 100 private TVET schools/institutions exist (both secondary and post-secondary). They are overseen by either MoETE or MoHE. A new private Technological University also opened in the 2023/24 academic year.

In contrast, non-formal Continuing Vocational Training is a weaker component of TVET in Egypt. Its quality and impact are not as robust as IVET. Some projects, in partnership with international entities, have been tried, but with limited long-term success and with little mainstreaming and sustainability by national stakeholders⁷. Nonetheless, recent government reforms have integrated CVT institutes, post-secondary technical education and Technological Universities into a new quality assurance authority called 'ETQAAN'. Currently, around 550 vocational training entities, both public and private,

⁴ These include 1 300 stand-alone technical schools, the rest being affiliated classes within other types of schools.

⁵ There are plans to gradually integrate these colleges with the newly established Technological Universities.

⁶ CAPMAS: Annual Bulletin of Education and Training Statistics in Government and Private Sector, 2018-2019.

⁷ Education, training and employment developments 2018, ETF, 2018.

offer short to year-long courses. They are governed by various ministries and cater for approximately 390 000 trainees annually⁸.

Strategic and legal framework for initial VET and adult learning

As previously mentioned, MoETE is advancing its reform strategy called 'Technical Education 2.0'. This strategy has led to the establishment of several key institutions, namely:

- The 'Egyptian TVET Quality Assurance and Accreditation Authority (ETQAAN)' was formalised by a law in October 2022, and a decree to form its first board of directors was drafted in mid-2023. It should be operational very soon.
- The 'Centre for Enhancing Quality Assurance in Technical Education (CEQAT)' was recognised through a Ministerial Decree in 2021, and this MoETE internal entity will support technical schools prepare for accreditation by ETQAAN.
- The 'Technical and Vocational Teachers' Academy (TVETA)' was introduced via a Governmental Decree in 2022 as a part of the new MoETE structure.

While MoETE is responsible for initiating and operating both CEQAT and TVETA, ETQAAN is an independent body that will be set up by the Prime Minister's office and will report directly to the Prime Minister. With goals in place, the Ministry is optimistic about achieving them and looks forward to the support of various development organisations in Egypt, including contributions from the new European Union intervention in TVET planned to start in 2024.

VET governance and financing arrangements

In November 2021, agreements were signed with primary international development partners such as TVET-Egypt and USAID's Workforce Egypt (WFE) project, and in 2022 the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MPED) assumed responsibility for coordinating the foundation and oversight of the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) via their proposed umbrella organisation. The MPED is tasked with creating legislative measures to facilitate the formation of this umbrella organisation and, subsequently, the SSCs. It will also ensure its funding for an initial 5 to 10 years.

Simultaneously, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) consistently offered technical assistance to the Chamber of Engineering Industries in founding a related SSC. The sub-sector concerning electrical equipment and cables has already completed its pilot phase. Furthermore, the EBRD pledged to set up the Tourism SSC. For this, agreements involving the Ministry of Tourism and the Egyptian Federation of Tourism are already in place. An inaugural workshop took place in October 2022, with attendees including the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the MPED, MoETE, the Egyptian Federation of Tourism, private sector representatives and international development partners (ETF, 2023). Additionally, the WFE project is aimed at launching three SSCs, with potential sectors including information and communications technology (ICT), food processing, the chemicals industry and retail services.

By mid-2023 and with backing from the WFE project and coordination with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) who have been piloting two SSCs in the industrial engineering and tourism sectors, the MPED secured Cabinet approval to form the SSC umbrella entity as a department under the National Wage Council. On 26 October 2023, the Board of Directors headed by the Minister of Planning and Economic Development formally approved the establishment of the SSC umbrella, ensuring for the first time in Egypt the structured and institutionalised engagement of the private sector in skills development.

An integral aspect of the MPED's function is to steer and assist in making the labour market information system functional. This system will pinpoint relevant occupations and skills, which will then guide occupational standards.

⁸ CAPMAS: Annual Bulletin of Education and Training Statistics in Government and Private Sector, 2018-2019.

Qualifications, validation and recognition

In October 2022, the Law of the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education (NAQAEE) was amended. A significant component of this legislative overhaul is the endorsement of the Egyptian National Qualification Framework (NQF) development, which grants NAQAEE the authority to initiate and oversee the NQF. Establishing a dependable labour market information system to determine essential skills and shape occupational standards is vital for the effective operation of both the NQF and its qualifications register (ETF, 2023). Since the amendment of the law and the appointment of the new NAQAEE president in mid-2023, a new unit has been set up to overlook the implementation of the NQF. Furthermore, the ETF has recommended that the new EU intervention in TVET should include activities to support NAQAEE pilot the implementation in two sectors.

Once fully rolled out, the NQF in Egypt will encompass:

- level descriptors articulated across three learning domains: knowledge, skills and competencies;
- learning pathways guiding towards the qualifications (still under development);
- a National Register of Qualifications, which, while not yet in place, is slated for the upcoming phase of NQF evolution;
- a credit system that adopts an outcomes-based methodology, alongside a credit transfer system (still in its infancy, with progress ongoing);
- a structure for acknowledging prior learning, covering both formal and non-formal education.

The intended users of the NQF in Egypt span a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the education and training sectors, including employers, industries, organised labour forces, educational and training providers, jobseekers, workers and students (ETF, 2021).

Quality and quality assurance

Following the government's decision to establish the three institutions described above, the EU-funded TVET-Egypt programme, alongside other development partners, was designated to aid MoETE in launching ETQAAN, CEQAT and TVETA. For ETQAAN to function effectively, it is crucial to have access to relevant labour market information. This is essential for crafting the necessary occupational standards, which subsequently will guide the quality assurance and accreditation of programmes. The Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) have been legally tasked to serve this purpose at the sectoral level of the Labour Market Information System (LMIS).

The legislation grants ETQAAN the autonomy to appoint or contract entities as Conformity Assessment Bodies whose role is to audit schools and programmes on behalf of ETQAAN. SSCs are distinctly recognised by the law as potential participants in this field. This provides SSCs with a significant opportunity to ensure programme relevance and quality. Moreover, it could be a consistent revenue stream, ensuring their sustainability (ETF, 2023).

In recent years, significant progress has been recorded within the technical education administered by MoETE:

- over 80% of technical education curricula have been reviewed and converted into competence-based formats with the participation of the private sector;
- training has been provided to more than 70 000 teachers and staff on this new curriculum;
- the Teacher Training Academy (TVETA) was formerly established and will soon be operational;
- laws and decrees governing institutions such as ETQAAN and CEQAT, responsible for ensuring technical education quality, have been ratified;

- over 70 Applied Technology Schools (ATS) were established by October 2023 and their curricula developed in collaboration with the private sector. This is an increase from 3 ATS in 2018, with the target being 100 ATS by 2030, according to T.E. 2.0.
- partnership between MoETE and the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI) has been established to increase the number of Applied Technology Schools, with five schools opening in the academic year 2023/24. Another partnership agreement was signed between MoETE and the Presidential Initiative called EBDA or 'Start' which will also establish internationally quality assured technical schools following the ATS model, two such schools opening in the academic year 2023//24;
- more than 70 000 apprentices entered the dual training system or other work-based learning modalities, representing a significant increase from the 45 000 in 2018;
- the concept of Centres of Competence (CoCs) began its pilot phase. These represent flagship technical institutes that support a broader network of technical schools;
- two SSCs underwent piloting, engaging the private sector throughout – from identifying skills and occupational standards to competence assessments. This has notably heightened the regard and demand for technical education.

Such accomplishments stem from robust political backing and the belief that, with a clear vision, effective implementation is possible, thanks to the diligent leadership of MoETE and a unified group of development partners that encourage dialogue and coordinate efforts. The main collaborators include the European Union, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the German Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as primary benefactors. The European Training Foundation (ETF) has also emerged as an instrumental technical cooperation ally. The ETF routinely conducts a 'Torino Process' to evaluate the status of the Egyptian technical education system and has lent support to the EU Delegation in identifying new programmes (EU Delegation, 2023).

Work-based learning arrangements

Egypt boasts a variety of work-based learning (WBL) schemes. Although some have undergone pilot phases, they were not sustained. According to a UNESCO report on WBL by Ahmed El-Ashmawi (2018), these schemes encompass:

- the Informal/Traditional Apprenticeship System;
- the 'Dual System' under the jurisdiction of MoETE;
- Productivity and Vocational Training schemes overseen by the Ministry of Trade and Industry;
- an Integrated TVET Scheme, a collaborative effort of MoETE with both public and private entities, commonly referred to as the 'School in Factory';
- Applied Technical Schools (ATS);
- the Alternance Training Scheme, introduced by the EU-funded TVET Reform Programme;
- the Apprenticeship Programme of the Ministry of Manpower, namely 'El tadarrug El-Meheni';
- private-sector driven technical institutions such as the German Hotel School in El Gouna;
- the Industrial Modern Adult Apprenticeship Scheme, piloted by the Industrial Training Council under the Ministry of Trade and Industry;
- the 'Oumal System' or the 'labour system', which is essentially 'Schooling from Home' targeted at students above 18 years affiliated with an employer;
- several non-formal schemes conducted by NGOs.

A noteworthy development is the establishment of ATS and IATS by MoETE. These institutions were envisioned as an extension to the ‘Dual System’ backed by GiZ. In 2018, MoETE embarked on the creation of what is dubbed as ‘a new brand of schools’, the Applied Technology Schools (ATS), which function under a public-private partnership model.

The guiding principles of the ATS model include: upholding quality via alliances with international awarding entities; prioritising Work-Based Learning (WBL) by striking a balance between classroom instruction and practical, hands-on training; ensuring demand-responsiveness through employers’ unwavering commitment; centring the student to yield productive and competitive professionals; advocating genuine change by fostering a culture where strong work ethics and productivity are standard; reinforcing industry partnerships through a novel competency-based framework. These, in essence, will substantially contribute to sculpting a workforce capable of positioning Egypt as a prominent global manufacturing hub.

As of October 2023, a total of 70 ATSS were operational with agreements signed with private sector partners. Among these, 10 international ATSS have the support of USAID (MoETE, 2023).

Quality assurance, for the majority of WBL schemes, has posed a challenge, as highlighted by Ahmed El-Ashmawi in his UNESCO report (2018). However, the expectation is that this will be addressed with the creation of the new quality assurance agency, ETQAAN.

Digital education and skills

In line with ‘Egypt Vision 2030’ and the ‘Digital Transformation’ strategy of the country, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) has initiated the ambitious project known as ‘Digital Egypt’. This holistic vision aims to transform Egypt into a digital society, in recognition of the growing challenges and opportunities a digital economy presents, as highlighted by the National Forum on the Future of Work⁹.

The foundation of ‘Digital Egypt’ consists of several significant pillars, one of which is ‘Digital skills and jobs’. MCIT is committed to preparing citizens for the digital transformation era. The right human resources – with the appropriate expertise and numbers – are critical for realising a digital society. MCIT’s broader goal encompasses expanding the ICT skills pool of Egypt and building the capacities of diverse society segments, including students, professionals, women, people with disabilities and young individuals from Arab and African backgrounds.

To solidify its commitment, MCIT has unveiled various initiatives aimed at training young individuals for national and international labour markets. This is in pursuit of creating a broad foundation in ICT-related domains, further promoting a digital society rooted in science and technology. MCIT’s approach leverages partnerships with leading tech companies and global universities, combining traditional and digital learning methodologies. Their multi-tiered training strategy includes:

- basic digital literacy programmes;
- intermediate technology training programmes;
- advanced tech training programmes targeting skilled technicians;
- at the pinnacle, a specialised practical master’s programme serving thousands annually through the Digital Egypt Builders Initiative (DEBI);
- MCIT’s curriculum offers a diverse range of courses, from communications to software development. The ministry also offers diplomas and resources to ensure continuous learning for ICT trainees.

Complementing this national initiative, MoETE has integrated technology into the educational framework. This led to the inception of ‘Education 1.1’ in 2018: a modernised secondary school system that promotes digital literacy, supported by the Egyptian Knowledge Bank – one of the most

⁹ <https://egyptfow.com/materials.html>

extensive digital libraries globally. Furthermore, with aid from GiZ and KfW, MoETE is preparing for a EUR 41 million Digitalisation Fund, facilitated by the German government, focusing on bolstering the digital capabilities of technical schools. This has started with GiZ commissioning a consultancy firm to support MoETE in developing its Digitisation Strategy for Technical Education. The consultants are currently working with MoETE to develop this comprehensive strategy.

Green skills in VET

As part of its T.E. 2.0 reform strategy, MoETE has initiated several important measures to emphasise the development of green skills among VET students. This focus aims to increase awareness of these skills, preparing students for green jobs in the future. The main initiatives include:

- Within Pillar 2 of the reform, MoETE is transitioning existing curricula to competency-based education. It is also introducing new specialisations in energy and the green economy in partnership with private sector employers and International Development Partners. As of now, the Ministry has introduced new and updated specialisations in areas such as renewable energy, power electronics technician and bio-technology industries technician. These programmes are now offered in 17 schools across 9 governorates in Egypt.
- Through the Transition to Employment Units, MoETE is incorporating career guidance and entrepreneurship into the new competency-based curricula, ensuring students are informed about opportunities in green jobs.
- In Pillar 3 of the reform, MoETE is dedicating resources to provide comprehensive capacity-building for teachers. This focuses on the new curricula and specialisations in the energy sector and benefits from the support of International Development Partners such as the EU, GiZ and USAID.
- Pillar 4 of the reform sees MoETE rolling out a EUR 51 million flagship project in association with the KfW and the EU, centred on the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Sector. The first component of this project will establish three Sectoral Centres of Competence (CoCs) in the renewable energy and green sectors located in Aswan, Sharkia and Menia governorates. Developed in collaboration with the private sector, these CoCs are designed to function as knowledge hubs for a network of schools in the sector. The second component will upgrade 20 technical schools, which includes the installation of solar panels.
- Also under Pillar 4, MoETE is in the process of setting up 10 International Applied Technology Schools. These are envisioned as GREEN SCHOOLS and are being developed in collaboration with the Workforce Egypt Project funded by USAID. The aim is to establish pioneering 'Green' and Smart schools to bolster awareness about energy efficiency among teachers, students and the broader community.
- MoETE and GiZ have reached an agreement to launch a new phase of the Employment Promotion Project (EPP 4). This will ensure the Green transition is embedded in the technical education reform. Scheduled to begin in July 2023, this phase will focus on refining the 'Dual System' to prioritise the Green transition in economic sectors. It will also introduce gender-responsive strategies to enhance employment opportunities in the Green Economy and provide labour market demand-driven career advisory and counselling services. These services will cater to technical education students, those considering technical education and parents, offering insights into the employment potential within the Green Economy.
- Many of the new Technological Universities introduced by MoHE have renewable energy and energy efficiency programmes.

3. THE LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Trends and challenges

Labour market characteristics

The net annual increase in the labour force is expected to rise from 575 000 per year during 2020-2025 to 800 000 in 2030-2035. This will exert additional pressure on the job market. The new entrants will primarily be more educated: 50-60% with secondary or post-secondary education and around a third with university or higher education. To accommodate this labour supply growth and absorb existing unemployed and discouraged workers, employment growth should reach 2.7% per year. This would necessitate GDP growth rates exceeding 6% annually. The job quality offered by the Egyptian economy must also be raised to meet the higher aspirations of these educated entrants, especially given the rising discouragement rates among female entrants (Ragui Assaad, 2020).

The unemployment rate decreased to 7.2% by Q2-FY2020/21, rebounding from 9.6% 6 months earlier. This improvement coincided with a gradual return to economic activity and ongoing megaprojects during the crisis. However, labour force participation and employment rates, at 43.5% and 40.4% respectively, still lie below their potential (World Bank: Egypt's Economic Update IBRD-IDA – April 2021).

The labour force activity rate increased in 2020 and 2021, from 41.6 to 43% . However, women's rates remain just under half that of men, which stands at 69.1% (ETF, Statistics annex).

Similarly, the employment rate for women rose significantly, from 11.8% in 2020 to 12.9% in 2021 (ETF, Statistics annex).

Statistics on the labour market and employment

MPED is responsible for the operationalisation of the labour market information system, which supports the identification of relevant job- and skill-sets for occupational standards. This system is aligned with the initiatives of the National Forum on the Future of Work (FoW).

The inaugural National Forum on the Future of Work (FoW) took place in March 2022. It was graced by the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, the Ministry of International Cooperation, the Ministry of Education and Technical Education, the Ministry of Manpower and the head of the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics. Organised by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German government, it also received technical support from Dr Ragui Assaad, Dr Caroline Krafft and the Economic Research Forum.

The aim of the National Forum on FoW is to offer a platform for major stakeholders to engage in discussions about evidence-based developments and predictions for Egypt's labour market. Emphasis is placed on knowledge sharing and crafting recommendations for understanding labour market trends, especially the skills needed for the future, with a spotlight on technical education graduates. Key topics from the First Forum covered areas such as the 'Demand for skills in Egypt' and 'Work arrangements in the informal sector' and 'Egypt's gig economy'.

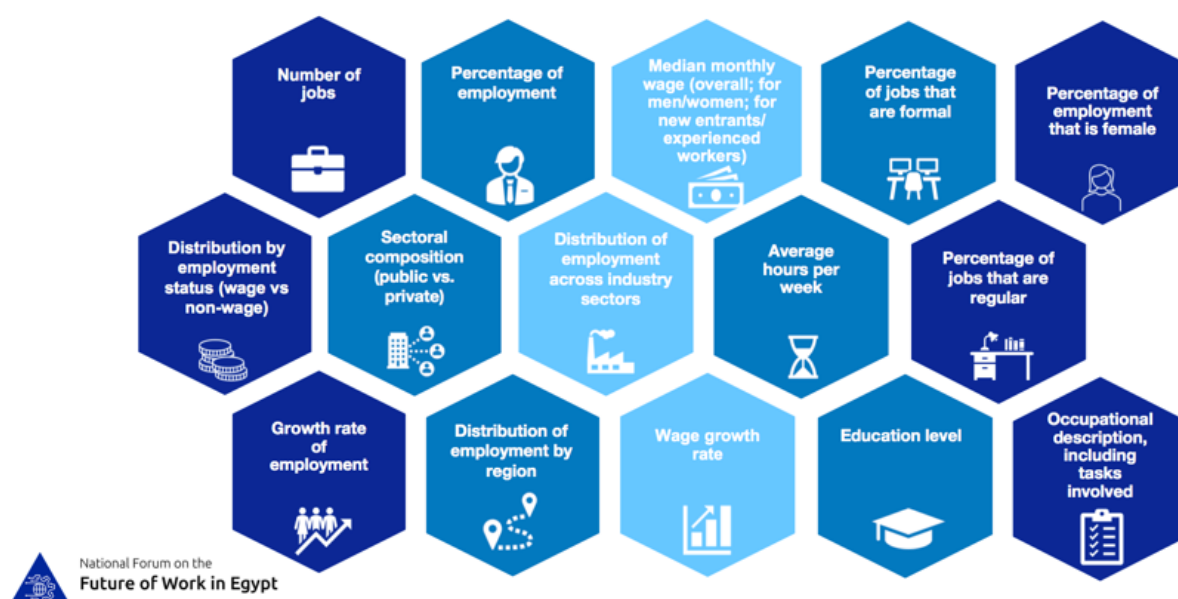
A pivotal takeaway from the Forum was the collective realisation of the need for collaborative efforts among all relevant national stakeholders and developmental partners to consistently deliver accurate and timely labour market information. Particularly vital is the demand-side data of the labour market, including skills demand, to ensure that preparations for Egypt's future of work are evidence-based and align with global trends and the evolving work landscape¹⁰.

¹⁰ <https://egyptfow.com/materials.html>

In the second edition of the National Forum on the Future of Work, held in March 2023, the Egyptian 'Occupational Outlook' portal was unveiled. Hosted on the website of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, the portal serves as a comprehensive labour market information tool with the occupation as its focal point. Information on employment trends, wages and working conditions across occupations is vital for jobseekers, career counsellors and curriculum designers. The portal, featuring an interactive user interface, offers insights into 147 occupations that encompass 98.2% of Egypt's employment, excluding minor occupations with less than 20 observations annually in Labour Force Survey microdata. The portal also projects future employment growth rates and anticipated job openings up to 2030.

Egypt Occupational Outlook

For each occupation, the information includes:



Leveraging the 'big data' methodology, the ETF is spearheading efforts to consolidate reliable labour market information regarding essential skills, sourced from online job listings.

3.2 Employment policy and institutional settings

Strategy and legal framework in the employment policy field

As delineated in the labour law 12/2003, the Ministry of Labour (MoL) oversees labour policy, managing the equilibrium between labour supply and demand, enhancing labour force employability and keeping an eye on market demand. This ministry governs a network of over 300 employment offices. Many of these offices suffer from inadequate development, staffing and resources, limiting their functions to issuing work permits and registrations.

For years, the MoL has been attempting to promulgate a new Labour Law to replace the existing one (12/2003). However, the private sector, led by the Federation of Egyptian Industries, has been opposing the new draft, demanding numerous amendments. As stated by Abu Shoqa, the Senate's deputy speaker, there is an imperative need for Egypt to devise a new Labour Law compatible with the 2014 Constitution. It should also harmonise with directives set by the new conventions of the Supreme Constitutional Court and the International Labour Organization. This revised law seeks to resonate with the dynamic economic and labour conditions both in Egypt and globally. It aims to strike a balanced rapport between employees and employers, introducing rights such as paid maternity leave

and more comprehensive rights for workers. This new directive also prohibits the employment of children under the age of 18, while permitting training for up to 6 hours daily for this age group¹¹.

Initiatives to boost employment

Curbing high unemployment, particularly among women and young people, remains on top of the agenda for the Egyptian government. While macroeconomic policies and structural reforms target job generation, an assortment of ongoing and nascent active labour-market policy initiatives are being driven by multiple stakeholders, often backed by donors.

In Egypt, Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) are dispensed by a diverse array of entities, ranging from governmental bodies, quasi-governmental organisations collaborating with international donors, to civil society entities buoyed by local or international donors and the private sector. From 182 surveyed ALMPs featured in the Youth Employment Inventory dataset, 66% primarily offer skills training; 24% champion entrepreneurship; 8% employment services and 2% subsidised employment. 13% of these programmes are national, and a significant number (47%) are deployed in urban metropolitan zones. Despite young women facing significant hurdles in the Egyptian labour market, a mere 9% of these initiatives are tailored for them. Only 5% address the needs of disabled young people. However, a job fair organised by The Ministry of Labour on 7 March 2023 in Cairo, offered 1 500 job openings for disabled individuals across 74 private sector enterprises in diverse sectors.

The government is also strategising specialised training initiatives for young people and is keen on inaugurating job intermediation schemes. The transition from academia to the workplace is under the spotlight, especially via the inception of school-to-work transition and career-guidance units within the relevant ministries. Entrepreneurship is also being promoted, with 2019 observing a surge in incubators and initiatives focusing on innovative startups. In the same vein, in 2019, MoETE pioneered an entrepreneurship curriculum for technical secondary education. After gaining approval in 2020, this curriculum is now being integrated across all technical secondary schools.

On the international front, organisations such as GiZ are actively running projects in various employment sectors. Recent examples include the Private Sector Development and Innovation (PSI) and the Labour Market Access Project.

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¹¹ <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/461037/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt%E2%80%99s-Senate-gives-final-approval-to-new-Labour-.aspx>

EGYPT: Statistical annex

This annex includes annual data from 2010, 2015, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 or the last available year.

	Indicator	2010	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	
1	Total population (in thousands) ⁽¹⁾	87252.4	97723.8	105618.7	107465.1	109262.2	110990.1	
2	Relative size of the youth population (15-24 age group and denominator age 15-64, %) ^{(1)C}	31.7	29.0	27.7	27.5	27.4	27.3	
3	GDP growth rate (%)	5.1	4.4	5.6	3.6	3.3	6.6	
4	Gross value added by sector (%)	Agriculture	13.3	11.4	10.7	11.2	11.4	10.9
		Industry	35.8	36.6	35.8	32.4	31.2	32.7
		Services	46.2	53.2	50.8	52.0	52.5	51.4
5	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	3.5	3.9	2.6	2.5	M.D.	M.D.	
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	11.3	11.9	11.6	12.3	M.D.	M.D.	
7	Adult literacy (%) ^C	72.0	72.4 ⁽⁶⁾	71.2 ⁽⁷⁾	M.D.	73.1	M.D.	
8	Educational attainment of total population (aged 15+) (%) ^{(4)C}	Low	55.7	53.9	51.6 ⁽²⁾	49.1	49.6	M.D.
		Medium	32.3	34.3	35.4 ⁽²⁾	37.2	36.1	M.D.
		High	12.0	11.8	12.8 ⁽²⁾	13.3	14.0	M.D.
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%)	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
		Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
10	NET enrolment rates in secondary education (ISCED level 2-3) (%)	M.D.	76.8 ⁽³⁾	84.6	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	50.7	46.6 ⁽³⁾	47.3	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
12	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)	Reading	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
		Mathematics	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
		Science	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
13	Activity rate (aged 15+) (%) ^C	Total	49.4	47.0	42.2	41.6	43.0	M.D.
		Male	74.9	70.5	67.3	67.5	69.1	M.D.

	Indicator		2010	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022
		Female	23.1	22.7	15.6	14.4	15.3	M.D.
14	Inactivity rate (aged 15+) (%) ^c	Total	50.6	53.0	57.8	58.4	57.0	M.D.
		Male	25.1	29.5	32.7	32.5	30.9	M.D.
		Female	76.9	77.3	84.4	85.6	84.7	M.D.
15	Employment rate (aged 15+) (%) ^c	Total	45.1	40.8	38.9	38.3	39.8	M.D.
		Male	71.3	63.9	64.1	63.5	65.2	M.D.
		Female	18.0	17.0	12.2	11.8	12.9	M.D.
16	Employment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) ^{(4) c}	Low	38.4	34.3	25.1	31.0	32.0	M.D.
		Medium	49.7	44.8	52.8	42.2	44.7	M.D.
		High	63.1	59.4	M.D.	53.6	54.0	M.D.
17	Employment by sector (%) ^{(5) c}	Agriculture	28.2	25.8	21.1	20.3	19.2	M.D.
		Industry	25.3	25.1	28.5	28.4	28.2	M.D.
		Services	46.3	49.1	50.1	50.9	52.1	M.D.
18	Incidence of self-employment (%) ^c		37.8	37.5	28.9	27.3	27.4	M.D.
19	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%) ^c		23.1	25.5	19.5	18.4	23.6	M.D.
20	Unemployment rate (aged 15+) (%) ^c	Total	8.8	13.1	7.9	8.0	7.4	M.D.
		Male	4.8	9.4	4.8	6.0	5.6	M.D.
		Female	22.1	24.8	21.7	17.8	16.1	M.D.
21	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%) ^{(4) c}	Low	3.9	5.7	2.6	4.5	3.6	M.D.
		Medium	12.5	16.7	11.1	7.3	7.0	M.D.
		High	18.5	21.6	M.D.	16.1	15.3	M.D.
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%) ^c	Total	24.3	31.6	19.3	17.4	17.6	M.D.
		Male	14.3	28.5	12.2	12.5	12.9	M.D.
		Female	53.4	38.3	49.5	43.6	42.5	M.D.
23	Share of young people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%)	Total	33.1	27.6	28.0	30.2	28.7	M.D.
		Male	15.6	19.8	16.4	17.2	16.8	M.D.
		Female	51.4	35.8	40.3	43.9	42.2	M.D.
24	Participation in training / lifelong	Total	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
		Male	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.

	Indicator	2010	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022
	learning (% aged 25-64) Female	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.
25	Human Development Index	0.675	0.706	0.735	0.734	0.731	M.D.

Last update: 07/09/2023

Sources:

Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7: the World Bank, World Development Indicators database.

Indicators 7, 10, 11: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics.

Indicators 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23: ILOSTAT-LFS.

Indicator 25: UNDP.

Notes:

(1) Estimation.

(2) Applies to 2018.

(3) Applies to 2014.

(4) Low = Basic (ILOSTAT) + Less than basic (ILOSTAT), Medium (ILOSTAT), High (ILOSTAT)

(5) Sometimes the totals do not add up to 100% because of undefined features, e.g. sectors and education levels.

(6) Applies to 2013.

(7) Applies to 2017.

Key:

C = ETF calculations

N.A. = Not applicable

M.D. = Missing data

KEY DONOR PROJECTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

- GiZ – see: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/319.html> covering several projects in the field of employment and skills

The 'Employment Promotion Project' (EPP) with the following main objective: Egyptian young people receive support to find suitable and decent employment. A reform of technical education has increased the employability of young people.

Technical Support for the Comprehensive Technical Education Initiative with Egypt (TCTI): Objective: the framework conditions for dual vocational education have been improved in accordance with the national reform strategy, Technical Education 2.0.

- USAID – <https://www.usaid.gov/egypt/our-work>, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00ZCGR.pdf

Objective 1: to transform the quality and market relevance of TVET institutions and programmes in line with the Egyptian labour market and its needs.

Objective 2: to strengthen private sector participation in workforce development through supporting private sector-led institutions such as the SSCs to set occupational standards, support work-based learning models and recommend skills needed in the labour market.

Objective 3: to strengthen the Egyptian legal framework for labour market reforms to improve the environment for skills development and employment.

- KfW
- Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (Agenzia italiana per la cooperazione allo sviluppo, AICS)

ABBREVIATIONS

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies
ATS	Applied Technology School
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CoC	Centre of Competence
EPP	Employment Promotion Project
ETQAAN	Egyptian TVET Quality Assurance and Accreditation National Authority
FoW	Future of Work
GiZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDSC	Information and Decision Support Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ITEC	Integrated Technical Educational Cluster
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
LMIS	Labour-market information system
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoCIT	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
MoETE	Ministry of Education and Technical Education
MoL	Ministry of Labour (previously named Ministry of Manpower and Migration – MoMM)
MoMM	Ministry of Manpower and Migration (now renamed as Ministry of Labour – MoL)
MoPED	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
NAQAAE	National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education

NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NSRP	National Structural Reforms Programme
NQF	National qualifications framework
PVTD	Productivity and Vocational Training Department
SSC	Sector skills council
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TSS	Technical secondary school
TU	Technological University
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
TVETA	Technical and Vocational Teachers' Academy
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET	Vocational education and training
WBL	Work-based learning

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