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SKILLS MATCHING FOR LEGAL MIGRATION
IN EGYPT

Cooperazione Italiana allo sviluppo

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper reports on efforts in Egypt to improve skills matching in both local and international labour markets. It also addresses the issue of how Egypt can develop a quality assured process for skills matching and certification. The work forms part of an ETF project which ended in February 2010 to support the efforts of the Egyptian government to improve skills matching for the management of legal migration.

The central argument is that the skills matching and certification process is defined by three essential requirements: reliable assessment procedures; the use of valid standards that reflect international developments in the field; and competent and credible personnel capable of applying quality assurance principles at each stage of the process.

The broader hypothesis advanced is that skills matching has both a local and an international dimension and that the two critical themes are achieving relevance to the local labour market and gaining international recognition and credibility. This suggests that most of the work should be integrated into broader national policies for the reform of education and training systems and the labour market. Since the legal migration initiative will address short-term problems and should be considered from a system-wide perspective, this paper emphasises the link with ongoing reform initiatives, the integration of different systems and the optimum use of capacity available in other departments and in other parts of the education, training and labour market systems.

The report draws on international developments in the management of professional migration and the recognition of skills and qualifications and looks at the shift from unilateral to bilateral and multilateral recognition.

It also looks at the realities of the Egyptian labour market, particularly in three sectors: tourism, construction and agriculture. The main findings are a lack of adequately skilled workers in the labour market (indicating a clear mismatch between education and training, and labour needs) and significant skills gaps among employed skilled workers, as reported by employers. Moreover, most of those employed in these three sectors lack broader competence in the areas of autonomy, responsibility, safety and hygiene. These findings highlight the importance of developing in-service training systems and a robust and quality assured skills certification system.

In its recommendations, the report emphasises that more attention should be given to the following processes.

The management of legal migration. The management of migration can be improved by developing the comprehensive framework described in this report to register, select and assess potential migrants. In this framework, informing migrants about work opportunities and social welfare systems in the recipient countries and providing them with guidance and information about the labour market are important steps to ensuring secure employment for the migrants and better matching between their skills and labour market needs in the recipient country. The framework should also develop methods and approaches to monitor and forecast future skills needs in both local and international labour markets. Close cooperation with the Egyptian Observatory for Education, Training and Employment will further this aim by optimising the use of available resources, information and expertise in this field.

The information system. The information system can be enhanced by improving the capacity of the employment offices to register and screen potential migrants. The validation unit of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (MoME) can also play an important role. Technical refinement of the Integrated Migration Information System (IMIS) database can improve its effectiveness and increase the relevance of the information on potential migrants. This could be done, for example, by setting time limits to ensure the currency and validity of CVs and by making completion of the skills section mandatory. In the long term, integration of the different information systems could substantially boost the capacity of the ministry to match skills in local and international labour markets.

Labour market analysis and occupational profiles. A coherent system for analysing labour markets and developing occupational profiles is needed. There are three main changes that the Egyptian government might consider: adopting and endorsing one of the existing occupational profile formats and consolidating the outcome-based approach; institutionalising the participation of social partners in the process of setting standards; and creating sustainable and transparent mechanisms for labour market analysis and the development and updating of occupational profiles.

For migration purposes, the MoME could adopt the profiles developed by the National Skills Standards Project (NSSP) and adapt others using the methodology proposed by the European Training Foundation (ETF) team. This could be done in cooperation with the Industrial Training Council. Likewise, the MoME could work jointly with the Egyptian Observatory for Education, Training and Employment on the task of forecasting labour demands in Egypt and abroad.

Developing a quality assurance system for assessment, validation and certification procedures. In the short term, in light of the urgent need to begin assessing the skills of potential migrants, quality assured assessment centres suitable for this task could be identified with the help of industry federations on the basis of prior ETF experience. The piloting of the approach adopted through the project provides key elements for further implementation. The past work of the NSSP and of the ongoing Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) project should also be taken into account. This task should be seen as the first step towards modernising the MoME's assessment and licensing procedure for migration. In the long term, quality assurance of the matching process for migrants should be dealt with in the broader context of education and training reforms in general and the accreditation of education and training institutions.

Improving the coordination of donor support. It is suggested that the MoME should assume an active leadership role in coordinating the work of donors. The first level of coordination would involve the overall management and supervision of donor projects, the creation of an integrated and logical framework and the organisation of coordination meetings at ministerial level to improve information sharing and to capitalise on the progress made by different projects.

Developing system-wide approaches. System-wide approaches are essential because the development of a quality assured vocational education and training (VET) system is an important objective of current education reform. Quality assurance procedures for assessing and certifying migrants should eventually link up with other reforms within the Egyptian qualifications system, including the development of a national qualifications framework (NQF), the shift towards a competency-based approach and the development of a quality assurance system. The development of an NQF is particularly important since one of the aims of the NQF is to improve the transparency of the Egyptian qualifications system and enhance its recognition within the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond. The NQF could be a powerful instrument for defining the content of qualifications and establishing their scope, level and relevance to the labour market. The negotiation of bilateral or multilateral recognition agreements will be a necessary preliminary step.

Developing regional cooperation. In the wider context of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, Egypt could use the Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conferences (for example the ministerial conference on employment) to further discussions on qualification recognition. Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco are developing similar legal migration agreements with various European countries. Coordination would help improve the negotiation capacity of the region as a whole, while mutual learning would support the development of each country's national capacity.

1. OVERVIEW

In 2005, Egypt and Italy signed an agreement establishing standards and regulations with a view to managing the flow of Egyptian labour to Italy. Egypt currently has an average yearly quota of 8 000 workers in the Italian labour market. A recently signed addendum affords the MoME a more active role in the assessment and selection of potential migrants, making the ministry responsible for drawing up a list of workers certified as suitable candidates. This list is then made available on the IMIS database. The process of selecting and listing certified workers who fulfil agreed standards is essential to efficient and sustainable skills matching between Italian demand and Egyptian supply. High quality assessment, validation and certification procedures are needed to guarantee potential employers that employees will meet the expectations set by the standards.

This paper reports on the work undertaken in Egypt to improve skills matching in both local and international labour markets and addresses the issue of how Egypt can develop a quality assured process for skills matching and certification.

The report forms part of an ETF project undertaken to support the work of the Egyptian government in the improvement of skills matching in legal migration. The project was implemented between 2007 and 2009 and comprised three components: a programme of capacity-building activities involving technical assistance, study visits and on-the-job training for the various actors in and proponents of the national policy on skills development and migration; the development of a conceptual framework for matching skills to labour market demand in the context of legal migration management; and a survey of skills needs in Egypt in three sectors (construction, tourism and agriculture). Two bodies were appointed to work on this project: a steering committee and a cross-sector working group representing the construction and tourism sectors. The initial plan was that the working group would also include representatives of the agriculture sector. The objectives and structure of the project are shown in Annex 1.

ETF intervention in the field of migration in Egypt is not new. The ETF developed and implemented several projects in cooperation with national authorities and international organisations, including the following:

■ a research project on skills and migration in 2006–08, which covered Albania, Egypt, Moldova, Tunisia and Ukraine and analysed the links between migration and skills, the skill composition of migrants and the impact of migration on skills development (Alquézar Sabadie et al., 2010);
■ a report evaluating the IMIS project for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) which was developed in 2009 and ended in October 2010.

Both the earlier project and this paper build on previous initiatives and on the sound partnership established with the Egyptian stakeholders. The key lesson learned from these initiatives is that skills matching has both a local and international dimension. Another no less important lesson is that matching is a complex process with many components: providing potential migrants with guidance on the labour demand outside their country; providing information on labour and other social issues and policies in the host countries; forecasting labour market needs; and the role played by employment offices.

This suggests that most of the work should be integrated into broader national policies for the reform of education and training systems and the labour market.

Chapter 2 of this report sets out the main factors driving the increased interest worldwide in improving matching of skills to jobs. It describes the impact of global factors on the demand for skills, such as international economic change and crisis, global labour markets and migration. It also discusses the new employment requirements for skilled workers and explores how and under what conditions occupational profiles could facilitate closer matching between the skills being developed and those in demand at national and international levels.

Chapter 3 turns the spotlight on recent developments in legal professional migration schemes, looking particularly at bilateral and multilateral recognition of skills and qualifications. It explores how Egypt, through bilateral and multilateral agreements, is seeking to make its citizens' skills and qualifications recognised and respected abroad.

Chapter 4 looks at the policy responses of the Italian government to skills shortages in the labour market. It looks at the new legal migration schemes established by the Italian government and describes the mechanisms in place for assessing skills needs and for developing sound labour market information systems. This chapter provides empirical data on the Egyptian labour force presence in Italy and briefly discusses its situation in the Italian labour market.

Chapter 5 discusses the ways in which the Egyptian government is working to improve the matching of supply to demand with respect to the skills of migrants. It identifies the potential strengths and difficulties of labour market analysis and the available infrastructure for matching labour supply and demand. An account is given of an ongoing initiative that matches the demand from Italian employers with the supply of skilled Egyptian workers in specific sectors (agriculture, tourism and construction).

Chapter 6 provides a conceptual approach to assessing the skills of potential migrants and developing quality assurance measures. The approach adopted, which was developed with the support of the ETF, describes the assessment methods and the standards used and how these can influence the credibility and final results of the assessment process. The chapter provides key findings and lessons learned from a piloting of the approach developed through the project.

Chapter 7 takes this analysis further and looks at the wider policy lessons learned and the main issues that need to be addressed. It draws some conclusions and makes policy recommendations that address both national and international recognition of the skills and qualifications of Egyptian workers. It emphasises, among other recommendations, the importance of the ongoing reform of both the VET system and the labour market and it notes the growing policy interest in using a national qualifications framework to drive this reform.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF SKILLS MATCHING IN THE LABOUR MARKET

This chapter sets out the main factors that are driving an increased interest in improving labour market skills matching. The chapter gives a brief account of global economic changes and their impact on skills, the identification of occupational standards and the development of labour market information systems. The chapter finishes with an emphasis on the importance of labour market matching for migration and for the employability of migrant workers in a global labour market.

Economic change – international trends

For the past three decades, the world economy has been characterised by rapid change. The manufacturing sector has seen an increase in product ranges as new materials, methods and technologies have become available and consumers have demanded more variety and choice. A broader range of products must now be designed, planned, manufactured and delivered to the customer, reducing lead times for design and production. The use of traditional mass production systems has declined. All production sectors have been affected, including vehicle manufacture, construction, electronics, furniture, clothing and textiles, as well as food production and processing. Every sector is now making and processing a wider variety of products and the range of products changes frequently as the pace of innovation increases.

Similar changes have affected the service sectors. As national wealth increases, customers demand more and better services and similar trends emerge in these sectors. Customer service standards are raised and sales staff have to know more if they are to advise customers and explain the steady stream of new and innovative products manufactured all over the world.

Since competition for customers is now fierce and there is ever increasing international competition, price and customer care have become very important, as has the quality of products and services.

The consequences of this trend are as follows.

- Less low-skilled manual work is needed in industry and more highly skilled employees are required, particularly at technician level.
- The low-skilled and poorly paid jobs that still exist are often rejected by job seekers in developed economies. They are then filled by migrant, often seasonal, labour from less developed economies.
- With advances in technology and the consequent decline in traditional manual skills, more knowledge and conceptual content is required to manage automated, computer-controlled systems and computer systems also affect the service sectors.
- Industries that still rely on mass production systems and employ semi-skilled and unskilled labour tend to be exported to developing economies where labour costs are lower.
- Companies tend to reduce the focus of management to their core business and services are increasingly contracted out to specialised suppliers.
- More multi-skilled workers are needed, workers able to adapt quickly to new skill demands and changing work methods.
- Increasingly, people are becoming more directly responsible for ensuring and improving quality and for controlling their own work activities.
- Employees have more direct contact with customers and clients and customer service standards continue to rise.
- As systems become more complex, coordination of work activities is required at every occupational level and this increases the need for effective cooperation and team work.

Moreover, companies now operate in a larger, often global, labour market and this creates a demand for a high degree of mobility of labour and a more flexible labour market.

Traditional training systems and workers' expectations of maintaining a single job or profession for life must change to meet these new demands. The traditional points of transition, from school to work and from one workplace to another, are now affected by the demand for a mobile and flexible labour force.

As entire industry sectors respond to globalisation and move around the world to maximise strategic and economic advantages, the demand for labour moves away from the immediate locality to the local region, the whole country, other countries within the geographical region and, eventually, to the whole world. Also, as demand varies seasonally and owing to structural changes, skills shortages in local labour markets are increasingly compensated by migrants responding to the fluctuating demand.

This emerging worldwide demand for new skills, new workers and new processes requires governments and institutions to respond and be able to manage the reality of globalisation.

New employment requirements – the skilled worker

Many of the social and economic changes described above require a broader approach to the definition of work activities and the design of programmes for initial and continuing training. In short, since workers are now expected to do more than merely perform narrowly-defined tasks and follow instructions, the concept of what constitutes a skilled worker has changed. Traditionally, a skilled worker was someone who had undertaken a period of structured training in their occupation, in many cases associated with an apprenticeship.

It is possible to develop a description of a skilled worker in a modern, global economy based on descriptions of what skilled workers are expected to be able to do on the job, that is, what outcomes they are able to achieve. This definition is consistent with the current trend towards the redefinition of levels of achievement through comparison with learning outcomes (what the learner knows, understands and is able to do). The most highly developed of these systems is the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)[1], which defines eight reference levels, each of which describes the required levels of knowledge, skills and competence.

Using the descriptors of EQF levels 3 and 4 (the level that best approximates the traditional description of a skilled worker) and drawing on approaches used in the Netherlands, Ireland, Germany, France and the UK, we can create a summary of what a skilled worker is expected to be able to do.

Skilled persons, as defined by Mansfield and Schmidt (2001) are individuals who are able to meet the technical requirements of a defined occupational area (field, occupation or trade) and are also able to:

- identify resource needs and access, gather, analyse, distribute and interpret information and data;
- plan their work to meet the needs of the user, including preparation, determining methods and sequences and meeting quality requirements;
- monitor their own performance for quality, correct any defects and revise working methods;
- solve technical problems that occur within their occupational area;
- make suggestions for improvements in working methods and processes;
- adapt to new and different circumstances by willingly acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities;
- take responsibility for passing on their work to the next stage in the process;
- work cooperatively with their colleagues in a work team;
- communicate effectively with co-workers and those who are affected by their work;
- work in a manner which is safe to both themselves and others in the work environment;
- recognise and work within the framework of social and occupational values and ethics.

Understanding and recognising this pattern of competence is critical to any government that wishes to support the migration of workers to the European Union (EU) as it represents a clear consensus on the demand for a broader range of skills and knowledge.

Within the EU, the changes described above have led to a shift in focus in the way skills are developed, a change needed to meet the demands of the new economy. This shift represents a break with the past, when a single 'injection' of initial training was often sufficient to prepare professionals for employment throughout their working lives, only supplemented by occasional 'top up' training courses to cope with new work methods and technologies. In December 2008, the EU launched the New Skills for New Jobs policy initiative aimed at building stronger bridges between the worlds of education, training and work. The aim of this initiative is to ensure a better match between the supply of skills and labour market demand through regular assessments of future skills and job requirements (European Commission, 2008). Building on this, the European Commission is now preparing a New Skills for New Jobs agenda as a flagship initiative that will help Europe to achieve the employment objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth adopted by the EU in June 2010. The external dimension of the strategy will be fully reflected in the agenda.

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1   For more details on EQF, see http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm

Occupational profiles – a reference tool for dialogue and matching

Human resources development in the EU and other developed economies now tends to be based on a clear description of the levels and types of competence required in employment, which is agreed in close cooperation with the social partners. While these descriptions have various names, including occupational standards and occupational profiles, they all have the common purpose of defining the competence required in work roles and providing a standard or profile that can be used to train personnel and assess their achievement, whether in initial TVET or the further training of adult workers to update or upgrade their skills. The aim is to produce a close match between the skills being developed and those required by the labour market. Annex 2 explains how TVET responds to changes in labour markets.

In each country, the occupational standards or profiles have different components and characteristics as well as different names but they all share a common pattern. All occupational standards or profiles contain three specifications, which are the answers to the three questions shown in **BOX 2.1**.

BOX 2.1 THE THREE COMPONENTS OF AN OCCUPATIONAL STANDARD OR PROFILE

Question	Specification that answers the question
What does an employee need to be able to do in employment?	The employment specification
What does a student need to learn to be effective in employment?	The learning specification (the curriculum)
How shall we know what the student has learned and is able to do in employment?	The assessment specification

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This simple list of questions and specifications produces a standard or profile that is closely linked to the needs of the labour market. The development of such profiles, which is now an international trend, has a profound effect on human resources development.

■ For initial training (TVET) the learning specification (the curriculum) can be designed to meet the requirements outlined in the employment specification.
■ Assessment in TVET moves away from academic exam-based and theoretical assessment towards direct assessment of practical competence as defined in the employment specification.
■ The planning of work-based learning and work placements is facilitated by matching learning opportunities to the subcomponents of the employment specification (the tasks and functions).
■ For adult workers, training and retraining can be designed on the basis of the employment specification, modified to take into account local and company specifics, while practical assessment can take place in the work environment.

This approach also facilitates the recognition and portability of acquired competence across sectors and national boundaries. Firstly, the skills that a person has acquired are easily recognisable (i.e. legible or transparent) to the users, who are mainly the employers, education providers and the workers themselves. Secondly, skills should be recognised as having a real value, for example as affording entry into the labour market or academic or professional advancement (currency). Thirdly, skills should be useful and trusted when a person changes job or decides to migrate to a different area or country (portability). Thus, recognition of skills refers to transparency, currency and portability. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has provided a useful note on the portability of skills that helps to define recognition in a sensible way for this context (ILO, 2007).

Improved national and international recognition of qualifications can improve the conditions of emigration and immigration. This is a policy area that has not been given priority until quite recently. For instance, the employment and skills dimension of migration needs to be given a central role to ensure efficient labour mobility. There are two factors that enhance the employability of mobile workers: that they have the right skills and that these skills are visible through recognised qualifications.

This report will address the question of how to improve skills matching by looking at changes in the demands of the labour market. In the next section, we will briefly introduce specific aspects of the skills dimension that are currently the focus of particular interest in the context of legal migration.

Employability of migrant workers – a challenge for all parties

The ETF has recently published a policy briefing on legal migration and its skills dimension (Bardak, 2010). The message of the paper is that labour migration could be turned into a 'virtuous circle' with considerably greater benefits for all parties if it were better managed and if greater attention were paid to the question of skills. The paper asserts that the process of matching the skills of migrant workers to jobs in the receiving countries is the key to efficient labour mobility and a win-win solution for all parties (the sending and receiving countries as well as the migrants themselves). The paper's key recommendation deals with setting-up mechanisms to facilitate the following processes: supply of skills from sending countries that would address the skills shortages of the receiving country's labour market; use of the know-how and experience of returnees to facilitate labour market integration and contribute to local business development; and setting up accessible channels of information on labour migration and support services for potential and returning migrants.

3. LEGAL LABOUR MIGRATION SCHEMES AND THE ROLE OF SKILLS

This chapter explores the complex reality of international approaches to legal professional migration and analyses recent developments in Europe and elsewhere. It also examines approaches to the recognition of skills and qualifications.

As the world population becomes more mobile, it will increasingly be in a country's interest to take advantage of the best talent from around the world. The two main systems currently used to regulate migration are the points-based system and the quota system. The United States and the EU have adopted different solutions and both are described briefly below.

3.1 BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON MIGRATION

Points-based migration schemes

Points-based immigration schemes usually assess skilled individuals using point scores based on such criteria as age, qualifications and past experience. Many of these schemes have proven successful. This system can be called selection by the state (OECD, 2009). Would-be migrants are usually screened for qualities judged important if they are to make an economic contribution to and integrate into the host society. Canada, for example, uses a points-based system to regulate the legal immigration of the workers greatly needed in its economy. Potential migrants are allocated points for their education level (both university and vocational school qualifications), work experience, age, existing job offers and the qualifications of their spouse or partner. They also receive bonus points for speaking English or French. In Europe, the Danish Green Card scheme allows immigrants to live and work in Denmark if they can score enough points based on such criteria as age, language skills, work experience and education. There are, however, several drawbacks to points-based migration. These include a bias towards the selection of high-skilled individuals, which may have a negative impact on the sending country (brain drain) and lead in many cases to over-qualified immigrants doing low-quality jobs in host countries.

Quota system migration schemes

Quota systems are used to ensure that only a certain number of non-citizens become legal permanent residents every year. They are typically based on bilateral agreements between receiving and sending countries. A number of bilateral schemes for labour markets are in place and operating (OECD, 2004). The quota system requires policy decisions and action on the part of both the migrant's country of origin and the host country. Several criticisms have been made of these systems. The first is that they serve as a way for illegal migrants to gain legal status. Other critics point out that, because of the bureaucratic nature of such schemes, they tend to move rather slowly, a factor that can deter would-be applicants and delay timely responses to the emergence of skill gaps in the recipient economy (OECD, 2009).

Italy has signed agreements on labour migration with several countries, including Moldova (6 500), Egypt (8 000), Morocco (4 500), Tunisia (4 000) and Albania (4 500). In 2008, workers from these countries, and countries that signed readmission agreements, benefitted from preferential quotas of entry for work purposes.

Spain has signed bilateral agreements on the management of the legal migratory flows with a number of countries, including Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Morocco, Bulgaria and Mauritania. The Spanish quota system was set up in 2002 to focus on short- and long-term shortages in the Spanish labour market. The quota system was created to attract skilled workers and also entrepreneurs interested in establishing a business in Spain. The system helps many immigrants to gain legal status.

Similar agreements exist between France and some African countries, including Tunisia, Senegal and Benin. France has recently set up a new policy for legal migration, which is reflected in a number of new measures that facilitate legal immigration. The French government has published information on the current skills shortages in specific sectors and professions in France[2]. Some of these professions are open to workers from other EU Member States, while others are also open to non-EU nationals.

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2 See www.immigration.gouv.fr/

Other approaches

EU Blue Card

In May 2009, the European Parliament adopted a measure to address the problems associated with an ageing population and a declining high-skilled workforce (European Council, 2009). Under the new directive, third-country nationals applying for a blue card will need to have a valid job offer and a degree from a trusted education institution or at least five years of experience in the relevant work sector.

In this context, professional qualifications acquired by a third-country national in another Member State are recognised in the same way as those of EU citizens. Qualifications acquired in a non-EU country must conform to the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications (2005), which deals in particular with the regulated professions.

Information on EU labour market supply and demand is available on the EU website (http://ec.europa.eu/eures/). This website provides important information on job opportunities in the Member States and provides access to several tools designed to facilitate mobility. In October 2009, the site registered 650 000 job vacancies, 350 000 CVs and 20 000 employers.

USA Green Card

The Green Card or Permanent Resident Card serves as proof of lawful permanent resident status in the United States. Individuals holding a green card are registered in accordance with immigration legislation and have the right to live and work permanently in the country.

There are various ways to qualify for a green card and applicants may have several choices of ways to apply. They may qualify for a green card through employment or because they have a close relative or family member already living in the United States.

Another way to get a green card is through the annual USA Diversity Visa green card Lottery that in 2009 made 55 000 green cards available to applicants who fulfilled two basic eligibility criteria:

- to be a native of a qualifying country;
- to meet the requirement for either education or training.

Applicants must have a high school education or its equivalent, defined as successful completion of a 12-year course of elementary and secondary education, or two years' work experience within the preceding five years in an occupation requiring at least two years of training or experience. The United States Department of Labor's O*NET OnLine database is used to determine which occupations require at least two years of training or experience.

3.2 QUALIFICATION RECOGNITION IN MANAGED MIGRATION

Recognition of qualifications – basic definitions

Recognition of qualifications can be divided into two main areas: academic and professional. Recognition of academic qualifications allows holders to continue their studies at the appropriate level, while recognition of professional qualifications affords qualified persons the possibility of practising their professional skills in another country.

Professional recognition applies to both regulated and non-regulated professions. Regulated professions are governed by law and in Europe this implies automatic professional recognition (European Parliament and Council, 2005). Non-regulated professions are not governed by any specific process because it is the employers who assess the applicants' qualifications and professional competence. This chapter deals with the recognition of the occupational skills of skilled persons and not with the agreements and processes related to the recognition of academic and regulated professions since the latter are not relevant in the context of this report.

EU and international agreements and processes for qualification recognition

Copenhagen Process[3]

The Copenhagen Declaration was signed in 2002 to enhance cooperation in European VET. Under the Declaration, the Member States, the European Economic Area countries, the social partners and the European Commission have been cooperating on several specific instruments. This has involved agreements on standards, guidance and validation, quality assurance mechanisms and the development of the European credit system for VET (ECVET), a system for the accumulation and transfer of credits within Europe (European Commission, 2005). EU candidate countries are also involved in the Copenhagen Process[4].

EQF[5]

The EQF is a common European reference framework that links countries' qualifications systems and serves as a translation tool, making qualifications more transparent. It has two principal aims: to promote mobility between countries and to facilitate lifelong learning. The EQF describes the expected results of learning, which are called learning outcomes. This term refers to what a person knows, understands and is able to do, rather than time spent studying.

WTO GATS Mode 4[6]

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) covers, among other topics, the temporary movement of service providers. This implies access to the labour markets of other countries and, consequently, recognition of foreign qualifications. The GATS encourages bilateral and multilateral agreements on qualification recognition. Any new recognition agreement should be notified to the WTO Council for Trade in Services so that other Member States can negotiate similar arrangements.

Skills and qualifications requirements in managed migration

We can identify three broad levels of skills and qualification requirements in the process of managed migration:

- low or unskilled workers, usually employed to meet seasonal demands, often in the agricultural sector;
- skilled workers employed either to meet seasonal demands, in the tourism sector for example, or to fill skills gaps in the host labour market;
- highly skilled professionals employed to fill skills gaps in the host labour market.

In the case of low or unskilled workers, there is little need for qualification recognition as the work in question requires only a low level of skill and the tasks, such as crop harvesting and fruit picking, are easily learned. Many host countries have well managed systems for recruitment, basic induction training and employment of these workers.

In the case of highly skilled professionals (i.e. those with higher level, degree-based qualifications), international recognition of qualifications is crucial and is facilitated by such instruments as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) conventions[7] and the components of the Bologna Process[8], as well as other international recognition agreements and associated international professional bodies and institutions[9].

For skilled workers (i.e. those with vocational qualifications), mutual recognition of their qualifications is also important. Employers in host countries need to be confident that vocational qualifications held by migrants satisfy two clear conditions:

- that they represent the outcomes required by the host employer in terms of activities, skills, tasks, work standards and working processes;
- that the processes involved in obtaining the qualification are both valid and reliable, i.e. that the qualification is an accurate reflection of the competence of the individual.

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3   See http://ec.europa.eu/education/copenhagen/index_en.html

4   Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

5   See http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html. The EQF is a tool to compare the levels of qualifications (course certificates, professional certificates, etc.) between the different European countries. The EQF is divided into eight reference levels.

6   See www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/serv_e/gatsintr_e.htm

7   Under the aegis of Unesco, five regional conventions and one inter-regional convention for recognition of higher education studies and qualifications have been adopted. See http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=22124&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

8   The Bologna Declaration was signed in June 1999, aimed at harmonising degree structures and quality assurance procedures across higher education systems, thus forming the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Membership has grown beyond the geographic borders of Europe to include a total of 46 nations.

9   See for the Mediterranean region, the MERIC network: www.unesco.org/en/higher-education/quality-assurance-and-recognition/recognition-of-qualifications/meric-network/

Of course, these conditions also apply to vocational qualifications obtained in the host country and they have been met by a number of reforms across the EU and elsewhere. The skills needed by employers have been identified and defined in a document referred to in previous chapters called an occupational standard or profile. If a profile has been agreed with the employers and the assessment process is seen as valid and reliable, employers will then accept that the qualified individuals are competent because their skills have been recognised, usually in the form of a certificate or diploma and are therefore transferable from one job to another.

Skilled workers were the group primarily addressed in the ETF project (see definition in Chapter 2). However, it is important to note that, in the context of Egypt, this group is not homogenous and its members have different profiles, pathways, education and training backgrounds.

3.3 EXISTING INSTRUMENTS FOR QUALIFICATION RECOGNITION

In a paper explaining how countries recognise the skills and qualifications of individuals leaving or arriving to study or work, the International Labour Organisation considers three types of recognition (ILO, 2007:12-13), which can be described as follows.

- **Unilateral recognition.** This has been the most common form of assessing migrant workers' skills and competencies. The receiving country decides without consultation which skills and qualifications it will recognise. Many recognition schemes have public policy objectives, such as ensuring quality and standards of services and protecting consumer and national interests.
- **Mutual recognition agreements.** These are formally agreed between sending and receiving countries and focus on reciprocal recognition of the certifications and competences of migrant workers. Many such agreements exist, primarily in the area of the regulated professions. According to the ILO, negotiating a mutual recognition agreement tends to be a difficult process, especially when regulations, levels of development, education systems and standards of training, ethics and practice differ substantially between countries.
- **Trade and regional agreements.** These agreements involve multilateral recognition as do regional arrangements, such as those evolving between European countries through the European Qualifications Framework.

While it is helpful to analyse types and examples of recognition arrangements, what remains true is that there are many people who migrate in international labour markets for whom no procedures exist that recognise their skills and qualifications. Unilateral recognition continues to be the most common mechanism used and the ILO makes the point forcibly that this system entails severe disadvantages.

The ETF considers that the most straightforward way to develop a process of mutual recognition of vocational qualifications is to negotiate mutual recognition agreements. This is by far the most effective method and it works well when a good relationship already exists between neighbouring countries and a mutual understanding of training and assessment systems. Such agreements exist between Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and Ukraine. However, without a common framework in the form of agreed profiles or classifications, such protocols are very difficult to negotiate and often take considerable time to agree and implement.

The Arab Labour Organisation with the support of GTZ (German Technical Cooperation), developed a standard classification of occupations for the Arab world in line with the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88). The Arab Standard Classification of Occupations may become an important tool for cooperation in the Arab world because it will facilitate the mobility of people and the creation of common labour market information systems similar to the one already operational in Europe.

In the next section, the discussion will move on to consider the specific case of migration from Egypt to Italy. First, we will look at the situation in the Italian labour market and the contribution of Egyptian workers and then we will turn the spotlight on Egyptian policy, institutions and infrastructure for the management of legal migration.

4. THE CASE OF LABOUR RECRUITMENT IN ITALY

4.1 ITALIAN QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEMS

There is currently no national framework for qualifications in Italy because qualifications and training needs are managed at the regional level. However, the Institute for Vocational Training[10] is working on the creation of a national system that will establish a correspondence with the EQF. The establishment of a national qualifications and certification framework has been the focus of a wide-ranging reform initiative for several years and an important issue for the national institutions. These institutions are currently involved in defining a new structure at the national level to strengthen the link with the needs of the labour market and to improve the integration of the different systems on the basis of professional standards. The political debate between the national and regional institutions being led by the Ministry of Labour concerns the implementation process, that is, the structure and instruments of the national qualifications system (the standards), as well as the governance of the processes, tasks and responsibilities. The national committee (Tavolo nazionale) has been a key player in the development of the Italian NQF. This committee is made up of representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Ministry of Education, University and Research, the Italian Regions and Autonomous Provinces and the social partners.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF SKILLS NEEDS AND ELECTRONIC MATCHING TO LABOUR MARKET DEMAND

In Italy, skills needs are identified through the Excelsior database and sector-specific initiatives[11].

The Excelsior database

Established in 1997 by the Union of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture jointly with the Ministry of Labour and the European Social Fund, the Excelsior database analyses the labour needs of Italian business using occupational profiles. The data is provided by the Chambers of Commerce, other administration systems and direct interviews with employers.

Surveys are based on more than 100 000 sample respondents or businesses located throughout the country. These surveys contribute detailed information about labour market trends and the associated structural changes in terms of emerging profiles and training requirements. The surveys cover all economic sectors and company sizes and the data is broken down by province. The survey technique used is computer-assisted telephone interview.

Once the results of these interviews have been processed, forecasts are made about the number of employees being recruited or made redundant. More importantly, the system identifies the most significant occupational needs and specifies the most relevant characteristics of these profiles.

This system plays a key role in helping provincial, regional and national bodies plan training activities and develop active labour policies and it is also a valuable resource for trade associations and unions. Likewise, it is used by schools, universities and vocational training organisations, which need to develop training programmes based on the requirements formulated by the business sector in order to directly match the future supply of skills to the needs of the labour market. By combining Excelsior employment forecasts and the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat)[12] workforce data, it is possible to obtain valid information about the trends affecting job supply and demand.

Sectoral initiatives and the role of social partners

In addition to the Excelsior database, the role of social partners at sector level is also important. Firstly, social partners intervene at policy level through the collective bargaining process. Secondly, at the implementation level, employers and trade unions create and jointly manage bilateral organisations whose chief role is to identify gaps in skills and training. These organisations are funded by a contribution of 0.30% of the salary budget of the companies and they receive no state support.

In construction, for example, the bilateral organisation is Formedil[13], which identifies skills needs at regional level and designs training programmes grouped into five clusters. Formedil's occupational profiles include the job title, a

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10   See www.isfol.it/

11   See http://excelsior.unioncamere.net/exol.php

12   See www.istat.it/

13   See www.formedil.it/formedil_new/index.php

description of tasks, requirements in terms of knowledge, competence and attitude and any additional indications (e.g. certificates required).

EBIT, the bilateral organisation in the tourism sector, uses the national framework contract as a reference. This framework has grouped the professional qualifications (occupations) required in the tourism sector into 19 distinct clusters. Each description includes a common core of cross-curricular knowledge and competences. Specific requirements in terms of knowledge, competence and attitude are defined for each cluster.

Agriform, the bilateral organisation in the field of agriculture, has made an in-depth analysis of skills and training needs in horticulture, wine and oil processing, flower and ornamental plant growing and animal husbandry. Training needs are matched to the corresponding training opportunities and specific courses are organised as appropriate.

4.3 RECRUITMENT SYSTEM FOR FOREIGN WORKERS AND EGYPTIAN WORKERS' SITUATION IN ITALY

The recruitment of immigrants in Italy is facilitated by the presence in each Prefecture of a one-stop shop for immigration. This office deals with the recruitment of foreign workers and with family reunification.

Employers wishing to recruit foreign workers, under permanent or temporary contract within the annual quotas specified each year by the pertinent decree (the Decreto Flussi issued by the President of the Council of Ministers), apply to the Emigration Office of their local Prefecture. This office issues work permits for the workers selected by the employers. If the employers have not directly identified any candidates, they can consult the lists of foreign workers available for work in Italy. Requests are processed and evaluated by the police (the Questura) and the local labour authority.

Seasonal migrants, who have complied with the requirements of their work permit, including the obligation to leave the country at the end of the contract, benefit by receiving priority treatment in future recruitment cycles.

4.4 EGYPTIAN MIGRATION TO ITALY

Italy is the destination of choice for Egyptians migrating to Europe. In 2008, there were 69 572 Egyptians in the country, accounting for 2.1% of all immigrants[14]. The majority are concentrated in Lombardy (70.5%), followed by Lazio (11.9%). The gender breakdown was 49 080 men (71%) and 20 492 women (29%) and the largest age group was the cohort aged 25-44 years (see **FIGURE 4.1**).

FIGURE 4.1 **EGYPTIANS IN ITALY – DISTRIBUTION BY AGE**

Source: Istat and Ministry of the Interior, 2008

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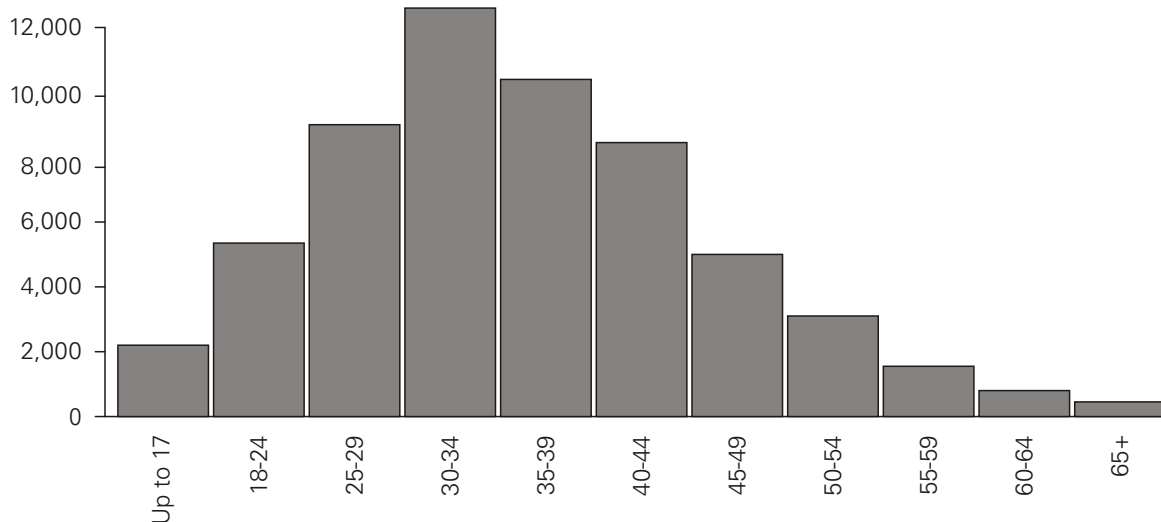
14 Istat, foreigners resident in Italy as of 1 January 2008.

The educational background of immigrants represents all levels of education but a significant proportion hold secondary education diplomas (43%) and higher education degrees (23%) (see **FIGURE 4.2**).

FIGURE 4.2 EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF EGYPTIAN MIGRANTS IN ITALY

None
2%

Primary school
3%

University degree
20%

Lower secondary school
29%

University diploma
3 years
3%

Secondary school
4-5 years
23%

Secondary school
2-3 years
20%
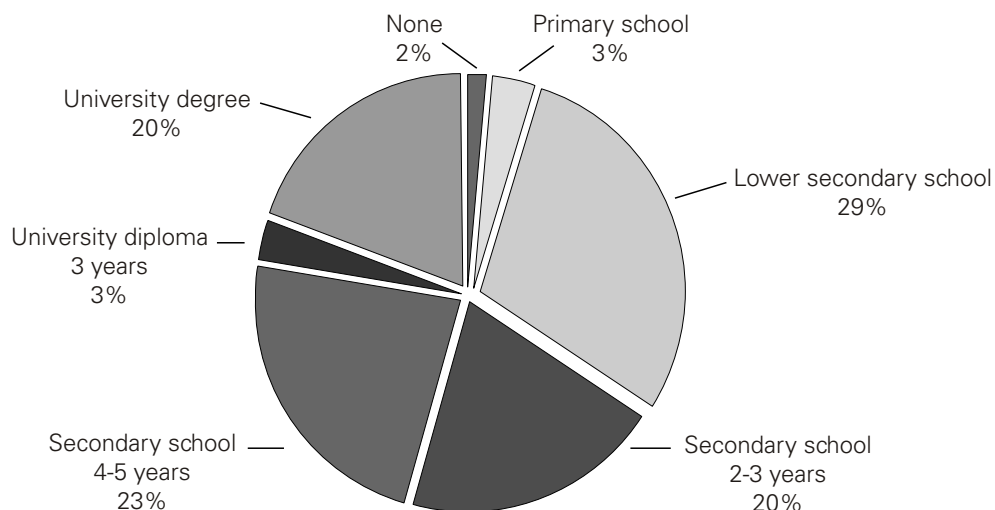
Source: Istat and Ministry of the Interior, 2008

The participation of Egyptian workers in the Italian labour market is quite high, with an employment rate of 64.4% and an unemployment rate of 10.3%. These percentages are in line with those for other foreign workers in Italy. In total, 62% of Egyptian workers have permanent jobs, 34% are self-employed and only 4% have fixed-term contracts. The sectors in which Egyptians are employed are shown in **FIGURE 4.3**.

FIGURE 4.3 EMPLOYMENT OF EGYPTIANS BY SECTOR

Others
14%

Retail
4%

Steel industry
6%

Services for enterprises
12%

Buildings
35%

Hotels and restaurants
29%
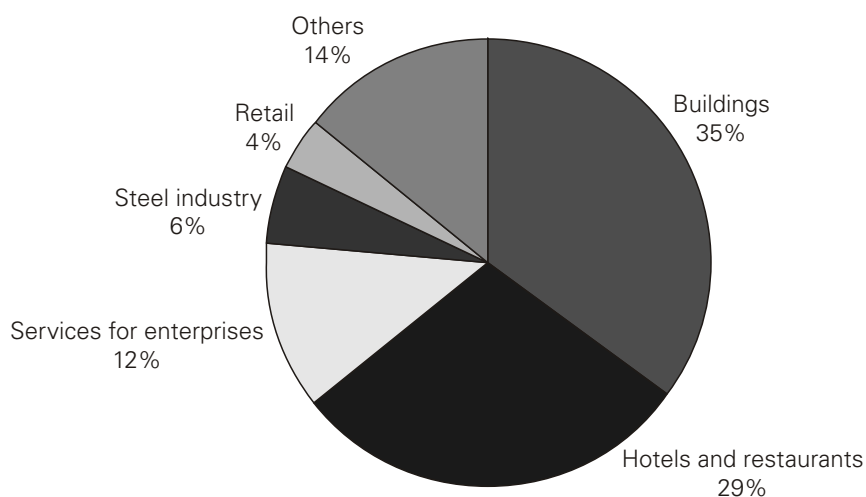
Source: Istat, 2008

Records show that, in 2008, 7 169 Egyptians had started a business in Italy (10.3% of all Egyptian migrants). The most usual areas of activity were construction, trade, personal services, transport and food processing (**FIGURE 4.4** compares the number of entrepreneurs from Egypt with that of other countries).

FIGURE 4.4 EGYPTIAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ITALY
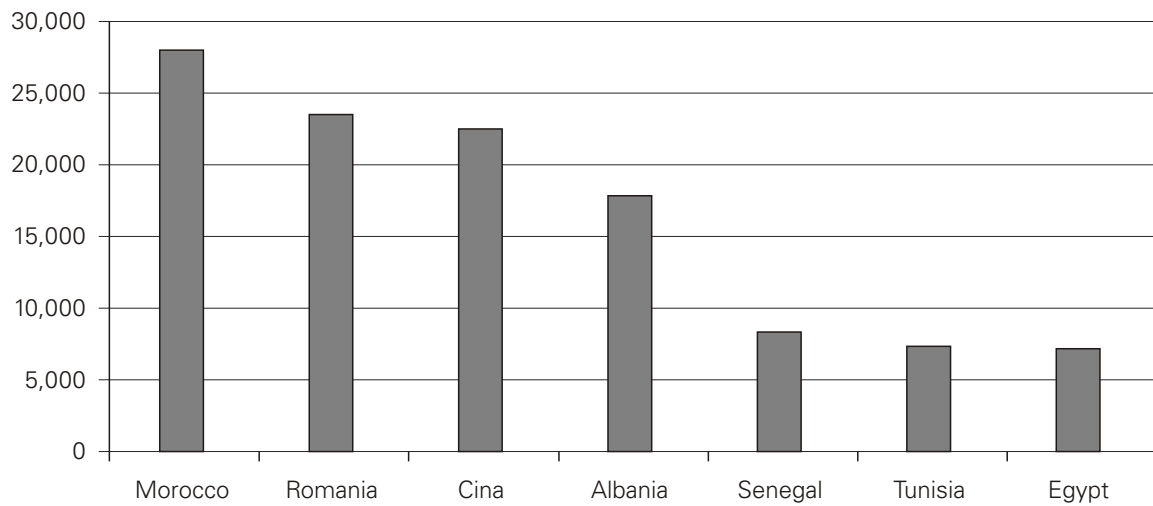
Source: Istat, 2008

5. EGYPTIAN MIGRATION POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL ORGANISATION

5.1 BACKGROUND

Migration policy

In his address to the participants of the Sixth Conference for Egyptians Working Abroad (July 2009), the then Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif said: 'We have to be honest with ourselves, there is no clear strategy for migration in Egypt, which has led to the deterioration of our ability to meet the needs of the international labour market and this includes Gulf countries.' President Nazif attributed the decline to a drop in the quality of education. In her speech, Manpower and Emigration Minister Aisha Abdel Hadi said that protecting Egyptians working abroad and those living in their homeland was one of the government's fundamental responsibilities.

These two comments highlight the difficulties involved in managing a phenomenon dependent on many different factors. There is a general awareness that migration is not the solution to the lack of employment opportunities in the country and that the positive aspects of emigration (e.g. remittances) should be evaluated in the light of the risk that migrants may be exploited. Consequently, there is a move to establish clearer rules on migration to Europe and the Gulf countries and to link migration with development policies. In addition, the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean migration system has led to a greater focus on the prevention of illegal migration and on the creation of mobility partnerships that will facilitate circular and seasonal migration.

There is no single formal strategy or action plan on migration policy in Egypt. However, an evaluation of government policies and public speeches by policy-makers on various occasions reveals the following five key components of Egyptian migration policy:

- encouraging emigration to ensure equilibrium in the domestic labour market;
- maximizing the economic benefits of migration and increasing migrants' remittances;
- fighting illegal migration;
- ensuring the welfare of emigrants;
- meeting the demands of the labour markets in receiving countries.

Legal framework

Emigration in Egypt is regulated by the Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Act, No 111 (1983)[15]. The act contains five chapters and its provisions are applicable to all emigrants, regulating the duration of the stay abroad (temporary or permanent) and the rights of emigrants and returnees. It has two main objectives: to regulate permanent and temporary emigration of Egyptians and to maintain strong ties with Egyptians abroad by providing state services and facilities. Under the provisions of the constitution, the law secures the right of any individual to emigrate and outlines the rules and procedures to be followed. It also stipulates the care and facilities that must be provided for Egyptian emigrants before their departure from Egypt, during their stay in the host country and after their return.

The Egyptian Emigration Act is perceived as the practical formulation of the government's desire to facilitate the mobility of individuals in association with the implementation of an open door economic policy. While the Act has opened the door for Egyptians wishing to emigrate, most of the articles have not yet been implemented. For example, the law also stipulates that the same advantages granted to foreign capital shall be granted to migrants' capital when this is used in investment projects in Egypt but greater effort is needed to attract investment from expatriates and returnees to help create new jobs in Egypt.

Egypt will have to pursue policies that support the contribution of emigrants to national economic development and make the most of the talents and abilities of migrants in a way that will maximise the benefits for the country and the emigrants themselves.

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15 The Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Act No 111 deals with Egyptian emigration from the country and does not cover immigration into Egypt, refugees or foreign workers.

5.2 BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON MIGRATION IN EGYPT

Egypt has several agreements and donor-supported projects in place that aim to improve the country's capacity to manage migration. A short account of these projects and initiatives is provided in Annex 3.

Within the framework of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, migration is described as one of the key priorities for action in the EU–Egypt Action Plan of June 2007. The priorities for action in this plan include cooperation on migration issues, including joint management of migration flows (both legal and illegal), equal treatment and social integration for legal migrants and asylum issues.

During the past decade, the Italian government has established a partnership with the Egyptian government to implement a quota system. This quota has been increased to 8 000 work contracts per year. However, the low levels of skills and qualifications in the Egyptian population have been a major obstacle to fulfilling this quota. Concrete examples of bilateral cooperation on migration are the Integrated Migration Information System (IMIS), the Pre-Departure Orientation to Egyptian Migrant Workers, the Education and Training for Egyptian Youth in Fayoum – Alternatives to Promote Safe Migration, and the Information Dissemination on Migration for the prevention of irregular migration (IDOM) projects. These projects are funded by the Italian government, through the Cooperation for Development office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. They are implemented by the International Organisation for Migration, in cooperation with the MoME, the Ministry of Education and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood.

- The IMIS initiative established in June 2001 is a capacity-building mechanism and technical tool that supports the emigration section within the MoME. The main results of the project include a website for matching potential migrants with employers offering job vacancies abroad and a web portal for Egyptian expatriates.
- The Pre-Departure Orientation project has developed a curriculum and training material and trained some 50 MoME's trainers and teachers for the independent delivery of pre-departure orientation training to Europe-bound Egyptian migrant workers.
- The project Education and Training for Egyptian Youth in Fayoum – Alternatives to Promote Safe Migration aims to support the Egyptian government's efforts to develop youth potential and enhance their employability in local and international labour markets, including through regular labour migration schemes. In this context, the IOM is renovating and upgrading a tourism school (in the Fayoum Governorate), and has undertaken orientation and counselling activities to support vulnerable youth in their transition from school to work. To complement this initiative, the IOM designed and carried out an information campaign – Challenge yourself: do not defy the sea! – with the Italian government's financial support, to raise awareness on the risks associated with irregular migration amongst Egyptian youth and promote safe alternatives, including regular migration.
- The objective of the IDOM project, completed in 2007, was to limit illegal migration and the associated risks. By disseminating information, the project aimed to positively influence the choices of potential migrants from Egypt and afford them a better understanding of the realities of migration. Within the IDOM project, a field survey of 1 552 respondents was carried out in 2006 to research the attitudes of Egyptian youth towards migration to Europe.

Emigration to the nearby Gulf countries is highly regulated and managed by private recruitment companies, more than 500 of which are licensed and monitored by the MoME. In general, migration to the Gulf countries is regulated by a sponsorship system, called *kafala*, in which the employer assumes full economic and legal responsibility for the employee for the duration of the contract. Migrant workers receive an entry visa and a residence permit only when a citizen or an institution employs them. However, this system fails to adequately protect workers against exploitation. Once the sponsor contract is terminated, the worker must leave the host country. The system has been criticised because of the very high vulnerability of migrants at the hands of their employers. Many cases of abuse have been reported but these do not find their way into the courts as the migrants have no legal rights and are not entitled to any protection in the host countries (IOM-ALO, 2010).

A specific agreement with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan regulates migration with that country.

5.3 NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Ministry of Manpower and Emigration

The Ministry for Emigration Affairs and Egyptians Abroad created in 1981 by Presidential Decree No 574 was later merged with the Ministry of Manpower and Training (created in 1996) to become the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (MoME). This ministry is in charge of negotiating and managing labour agreements with different countries. Emigration issues are dealt with by an emigration section.

The MoME is also responsible for drawing up occupational profiles and for providing skills certificates for official purposes, such as identity cards and passports. Testing is benchmarked against the requirements specified in the occupational profiles by an ad hoc committee of three members, one of whom is an external member representing the trade in question. The committee is convened by the governorate when an individual applies for an official license. However, both the design of occupational profiles and the licensing system lack transparency and accountability. The MoME also runs the network of employment offices and a network of training centres located all over the country.

The problem is, however, that all of these different aspects of emigration are poorly coordinated. Consequently, the IMIS database may offer a valuable opportunity to coordinate these diverse activities.

With regard to skills, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Higher Education are the principal competent authorities in the field of education (including technical and post-secondary education), while there are more than 24 ministries and institutions in charge of training in various sectors. Officially the only body in which all these stakeholders are represented, together with representatives from trade unions and the private sector (federations and chambers of commerce), is the Supreme Council for Human Resource Development. In 2008, the executive committee of this body, which had lapsed in 2002, once again became operational. The Minister of Manpower and Emigration, as Chairperson of the Supreme Council for Human Resource Development, is coordinating its activities and there is a strong emphasis on issues related to policy reform, such as the creation of an Egyptian national qualifications system. In parallel, a ministerial committee for human resources development has been created to bring together key ministers in charge of this area regularly to discuss the adoption of new strategies and reforms.

Other institutional stakeholders

The Industrial Training Council was set up by the Egyptian Ministry of Industry in 2006 to supervise all programmes and activities relating to vocational, technical and administrative training in order to ensure their effectiveness and to link them to the needs of the different industrial sectors. This body is also responsible for coordinating important donor programmes, such as the EU TVET reform programme and the World Bank skills development programme to maximise their impact. A Training Council for Building and Construction was set up in 2008 and a Training Council for Tourism is about to start operations.

The National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE) is a new body, established by presidential decree in 2006. It commenced operations at the end of 2007 and is the accrediting body for all levels of Egyptian education (higher education, pre-university and Al-Azhar education). Its aim is to foster quality assurance measures and prepare education institutes for accreditation. It is also a key player in the field of assessment and quality assurance. However, for the moment its mandate is focused on education and higher education.

Finally, in 2001 the government set up the NSSP to develop skills standards for more than 100 professions in three sectors (manufacturing, tourism and construction), including responsibility for assessment specifications and processes, development of curricula and trainer training. This project, developed in cooperation with the private sector, has yet to find its way in terms of implementation at the national level, although skills standards are widely used in the tourism sector by the Human Resources Unit of the Egyptian Tourism Federation and in the construction sector by Arab Contractors and the Ministry of Housing training centres. At present, the NSSP represents one of the most serious attempts to align Egyptian qualifications with international standards. The project is being extended to the manufacturing sector. The existing skills standards are being revised and implemented under the Industrial Training Council with the support of the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Higher Committee for Migration

Article 4 of the Emigration Act established a Higher Committee for Migration chaired by the Minister of Manpower and Emigration. The members of this committee are representatives of the ministries and other entities concerned with migration. The tasks of the committee include considering the establishment of vocational training centres, organising specialised courses for potential migrants and providing services and facilities for migrants before their departure, during their stay abroad and after their return to Egypt. In practice, the activities of this body have been very limited. However, like the Supreme Council for Human Resource Development, it could potentially play a coordinating role.

Sector stakeholders

Based on Egyptian priorities for economic development while taking into consideration the priorities set by the work agreement with Italy, this analysis focuses only on three key economic sectors: construction, tourism and agriculture.

Construction

The Egyptian Federation for Building and Construction Contractors is one of the main authorities with a mandate to meet the skills needs of the construction sector. A board of trustees with an executive training council has been established to coordinate the supply and demand for skills in the sector.

Tourism

The main stakeholders in this sector are the Ministry of Industry, the Egyptian Tourism Federation and its affiliate associations, the Egyptian Tourism Authority, the Trade Union for Tourism Occupations and the Ministry of Education (which supervises the public and private schools that deal with this field).

The Egyptian Tourism Federation is composed of selected industry members from the five tourism-industry business associations. It has established a human resource development unit charged with enhancing the qualifications of the sector's workforce.

Agriculture

Some of the main stakeholders in this sector include the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, the Union of Producers and Exporters of Horticultural Crops, the Horticultural Export Improvement Association and the Desert Development Centre of the American University in Cairo.

The Union of Producers and Exporters of Horticultural Crops, affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture, is the largest association in the field of agriculture in Egypt. Membership currently exceeds 3 500 members and it has nine branches throughout the country. Its main objectives include the improvement of the Egyptian horticultural industry and its exports and the creation of new employment opportunities. The services this association provides to its members include training, equipment, pesticides, packing materials, transportation, export facilitation activities and marketing information.

5.4 LABOUR MARKET SKILLS MATCHING FOR MIGRATION IN EGYPT

Labour market skills matching – interplay between local and global markets

Egypt has only limited experience with modern labour market skills matching tools in general, not only for migration purposes. Conventional skills forecasting methods are either non-existent or not sufficiently reliable owing to the poor quality of the available data. Moreover, the speed of economic transformation and the presence of a large informal sector are additional complicating factors, making skills identification even more difficult. Experience demonstrates that skills needs analysis in partner countries is often limited to ad-hoc donor initiatives, which remain at pilot level and are not implemented regularly. In this respect, Egypt is no exception. The ETF has been actively supporting Egypt in developing a skills analysis function through an observatory hosted by the Information and Decision Support Centre under the auspices of the Office of the Prime Minister. The challenge now is to make this function self-sustainable and fully integrated into the system.

The challenges discussed above are complex and cannot be resolved in the short term. They do, however, have a substantial impact on the quality of the Egyptian labour force with respect to both the international and the domestic labour markets and should therefore be taken into account when labour migration schemes are implemented.

Local labour market mismatch in Egypt – evidence from empirical data

Within the framework of the migration project led by the ETF with the support of North-South Consultant Exchange, a research project was undertaken to analyse labour market mismatch by collecting employers' views on the skills, training and qualifications of their employees. The same methodology was used in three sectors: construction, tourism and agriculture.

The research covered several issues, including the relevance of available skills, the quality of training courses and the measures taken by employers to train staff for specific occupations. A detailed report will be produced. The following section presents the methodology used. It examines both skills shortages and skills gaps in the three sectors and reports key findings. In this research, skills shortages were identified through the existence of hard-to-fill vacancies in organisations, which point to a manifest lack of workers in the labour market with the appropriate skills for those jobs. A skills gap was defined as the situation that occurs when employers consider some of their staff to lack some of the skills needed to properly meet the requirements of their jobs.

Research methodology

Two methods were used to carry out the research: a survey of companies and a series of focus group discussions. The survey involved interviews with 450 employers in the three sectors (150 per sector). The sample was designed to be sufficiently representative in terms of location or region and company size. A number of preliminary meetings were held with local organisations working in the targeted sectors in March and April 2009. The aim of these meetings was to explore sector mechanisms and key players in the local context.

The aim of the focus group discussions was to complement the field survey by providing up-to-date information on skill trends. The companies selected to attend had a human resources development policy clearly focused on the skills they were seeking. Other relevant stakeholders were included, such as sector ministries and federations (the Egyptian Federation for Contractors in the construction sector and the Horticulture Export Improvement Association in the agriculture sector). Each focus group comprised eight to twelve participants. The average duration was an hour and a half. A total of five focus group discussions were conducted (two each for the tourism and agriculture sectors and one for the construction industry).

The following sections give a brief account of the jobs available and the education and training situations in each sector and discuss the key findings of the survey.

Tourism

Tourism is a significant component of the Egyptian economy with a contribution to the GDP of 3.5% and to employment of 12.6%. Investment in the sector in 2006/07 amounted to EGP 4.13 billion, of which 83.5% came from the private sector. The sector is expected to soon double its demand for labour, given the number of rooms under construction (156 000) compared to those already in existence (190 200).

The Egyptian Tourism Federation has adopted a structured approach to solving the problem of the lack of skills in the sector. As mentioned above, the federation set up a human resource development unit. This unit is currently playing a major role in using the results of the NSSP, providing training in the tourism sector and coordinating the activities of different donors. In tourism, 50 occupations have been identified by the NSSP at levels 1–3 and an additional 25 at levels 4–5 (vocational non-academic). Instead of creating specific vocational centres, the Egyptian Tourism Federation has organised mobile units of experts. Since 2005, following a donor-supported pilot scheme, the Ministry of Tourism has assumed responsibility for human resources development in this sector. As a result, more than 59 053 participants have been enrolled in training courses. Most courses relate to the hotel and restaurant sub-sectors (47 065 and 5 994 trainees, respectively). Other courses cover tourist goods and travel agencies. Training is based on internationally recognised sector profiles and the final examinations are based on tests endorsed by the American Hotel and Lodging Association. Successful candidates are awarded a certificate featuring the logo of the Egyptian Tourism Federation, the Ministry of Tourism and the American Hotel and Lodging Association.

At the secondary level, there are eight schools running three-year tourism courses and 23 running five-year courses. There are also three schools for housekeeping and 17 private schools. Curricula, which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, were last updated in 1997. An analysis of skills needs in the sector has recently been carried out as part of the TVET project.

The ETF survey indicates that the picture with regard to both skills shortages and skills gaps is still critical. Employers report shortages of skilled applicants in all occupations. For example, the proportion of employers who declared skills shortages[16] was 76% for waiters, 73% for room attendants and 56.6% for front desk and reception personnel. While most employers report skills gaps, the proportion of all employees not fully skilled in their jobs according to employers is highest among waiters and room-service staff (49.3% and 54.7%, respectively). These occupations involve providing a direct service to customers and this employer dissatisfaction reflects a lack of communication and service skills.

Construction

The Egyptian building and construction sector is very dynamic, contributing 8.6% to the GDP and employing almost 20% of the labour force in 2006. According to the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the number of workers in this sector increased from 957 000 in 1995 to around 1.65 million in 2005.

The NSSP has drafted and recently updated 28 occupational profiles for the construction sector but these are currently applied only by Arab Contractors (one of Egypt's largest construction companies). These profiles were prepared on the basis of the opinions of sector experts rather than on a specific training needs analysis. Recently a memorandum of understanding was signed between the EU-funded TVET project and the training council to train young people willing to

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migrate to Europe in 20 professions related to the construction industry based on the NSSP deliverables[17]. The 20 professions will be accredited after review by the National Housing and Building Research Centre[18].

Egyptian construction companies have frequently complained of the serious lack of skilled workers. TVET providers, meanwhile, complain of the difficulties their graduates face getting employment. The construction sector opinion is that young graduates do not satisfy their professional requirements, whereas the TVET providers maintain that companies prefer to hire unskilled workers and exploit them through informal and highly unprotected labour relations.

Based on the ETF survey, construction companies face shortages of skilled workers in several occupations as follows: carpenters (57.3%), plasterers (50.7%) and bricklayers and blocklayers (48.6%). At the same time, most employers identify skills gaps among their employees. The proportion of staff not fully skilled, according to employers, is highest among bricklayers (37.3%), plasterers (34%) and carpenters (30.7%). It was also confirmed by almost 96% of respondents in this survey that there is a widespread need for skills unrelated to any specific task, including autonomy, responsibility and personal and workplace safety.

Agriculture

The agriculture sector contributes roughly 16% to Egypt's GDP, although this share has declined in the last two decades and is expected to continue to fall in the future. Similarly, the number of Egyptians employed in the sector has fallen from about a third of the labour force in the early 1990s to just over a quarter in 2006. This situation may change in the future according to recent labour market projections (Assaad et al., 2010) by the Egyptian Observatory for Education, Training and Employment. This body found that jobs in agriculture, fishing and non-specialised farm work, are the occupations that will absorb the largest share of total employment at the macro level in the Egyptian private sector by the year 2011/12: 25.5%, 12.1% and 10%, respectively.

In the agricultural sector, there are 120 technical agricultural secondary schools, 50 of which are located in Upper Egypt. The United States Agency for International Development has implemented a project in Upper Egypt aimed at updating curricula and teaching methods. However, the focus has been mainly on the inclusion of soft skills and management skills. Curricula in the agricultural sector, which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, are outdated (dating from 1991).

The training department of the Ministry of Agriculture has 8 000 employees. This ministry has the most extended network of local offices throughout Egypt, with branches in 4 751 villages. These include: four development support communications centres – fully equipped with attached accommodation – although these offer only short courses; 200 branch offices in villages that provide advice on agricultural issues; and 60 rural development centres dealing with food industry, dairy health and environmental issues. Training is provided at the request of the government.

The ETF survey provides some evidence of the labour market mismatch in this sector. Survey respondents did not seem to focus particularly on difficulties in recruiting employees. Nonetheless, shortages in skilled horticultural workers were reported by 43% of respondents. Also, 33.1% of employers interviewed identified shortages in pruners and 32.4% in green house workers. Most employers identified skills gaps in their workforce. The proportion of staff not fully skilled, according to employers, is highest among skilled labourers in pruning (37.3%), horticultural workers (33.4%) and to a lesser extent specialists in the maintenance of farm machinery (19.3%).

Conclusions

While highlighting the structural differences between the three sectors under consideration, the analysis reveals a similarity in employers' views regarding the skills mismatch. It suggests a few specific areas where Egyptian skills provision strategies need to be improved. Two key points emerge.

■   There is a manifest lack of adequately skilled workers in the labour market. This indicates a clear mismatch between labour market needs and education and training. TVET should develop more systemic approaches to the assessment of skills needs and the development of curricula and training programmes more relevant to the needs of the labour market.
■   There are important skills gaps among employed skilled workers. Moreover, most staff in the three sectors analysed lack the broader competences expressed in terms of autonomy, responsibility, safety and hygiene. This finding highlights the importance of developing in-service training systems and a robust and quality assured skills certification system.

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17   See www.ndp.org.eg/youth/Topics/ViewTopicDetails.aspx?TopicID=3427

18   See www.housing-utility.gov.eg/markazeskan.asp

5.5 MATCHING GLOBAL LABOUR MARKET NEEDS: THE IMIS EXPERIENCE

In 2001 the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration created an Integrated Migration Information System (IMIS) through funding from the Italian government and assistance from the IOM. The scope of IMIS is to support the MoME to manage regular migration flows from Egypt, improve the social status of Egyptian migrants in receiving countries and channel human and financial resources resulting from migration. The first phase of the project ended in 2005 and a follow up one (IMIS Plus) was launched in 2008 and ended in 2010. The project's third phase, IMIS III, is under discussion with the Italian-Egyptian Debt Swap programme. It will build upon existing initiatives to strengthen the Egyptian government's capacity to manage labour migration and harness its development potential.

IMIS covered the setting up of the website (www.emigration.gov.eg) and data centre, as well as strengthening the skills of the MoME in language, information technology, management and research. IMIS Plus fine-tunes the integrated information system set up in Phase I in addition to strengthening socio-economic ties with Egyptians abroad and promoting the more effective management of Egyptian labour migration.

As of 9 February 2010, there are 233 712 CVs in the database. This system is parallel to the employment database, managed by the MoME's public employment offices, which consists of some 2 million CVs.

The IMIS Plus data collection system is very detailed in terms of both personal and skills information. The registration procedure is easy if the applicants are computer-literate but, if this not the case, assistance is required. In this case, there should be two target groups of clients: those who are self-sufficient and those for whom a specific procedure should be put in place, to help them in the data entering process. The self-sufficient users can use the web access as it is right now. For the others, the regional network of employment services or the newly established migration centres under the Aeneas project could potentially serve this purpose.

Once the data are inserted into IMIS, the validation unit within the MoME checks if the compulsory information is filled in. This so-called 'validation' does not verify the correctness or truthfulness of the data or guarantee quality. If there is missing information, the unit's staff will try to reach the applicants by phone in order to invite them to complete the data. Given the amount of CVs in the system and the fact that there are only six people working in the unit, this extremely time consuming exercise becomes almost impossible. One way to resolve the situation would be the introduction of an automatic filter that does not allow registration to be completed until all relevant information is entered.

The structure of IMIS is very detailed and there are seven electronic sheets to be filled in. The sections referring to the skills of the potential migrant are based on the ISCO-88 classification of the occupational profiles but there is no match between the declared qualifications of the applicants and the profiles. Furthermore, the information about skills in the system is not compulsory, which in the end is what the employers are interested in. It is therefore crucial for these electronic fields to be made obligatory.

The current state of development of the employment services does not allow for the introduction of new systems like Flexy or any other similar system[19]. The Aeneas project is just starting and the migration centres are still to be put together. The project envisaged introducing the EuroAccess platform[20] which is another electronic tool, with no links to IMIS.

At the moment, there is no quality assured assessment and certification of potential migrants linked to IMIS. However, there are a number of practices and initiatives in Egypt which conform to, or have the potential to meet some of the quality assurance criteria.

The next section will propose an approach for structuring the process of selection and assessing the competences of potential workers to meet the demand from foreign employers. The proposed approach is based on the ongoing ETF support. This approach, while taking into consideration international trends and developments in this field, is based on the Egyptian national context, institution and good practices.

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19 The Flexi system is currently being used by the Italian public employment services and is accessible on the web page of the Italian Ministry of Labour (www.lavoro.gov.it/flexi/en). This new tool is being piloted in Tunisia and the idea is to then transfer it to Egypt.

20 See www.euro-access.org/

# 6. A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO MATCHING THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF SKILLS

The ETF has been working with the Egyptian government to develop a comprehensive method of matching the supply of skills to the demands of the Italian labour market and ensuring the quality of the certification process. The term 'certification' as used in this report, describes the processes involved in the assessment of candidates and the validation and public recognition of their competence in the form of an official certificate.

The aim of ETF intervention was to develop the infrastructure needed to support the management of legal migration schemes. This infrastructure could be described as a sequential chain of processes: information and guidance, assessment, validation, certification and follow-up support. This sequence depends on the development of a combined occupational profile that is fundamental to the whole process. In the following section, the overall approach is presented in detail and examples are given of each stage. These examples are taken from the ongoing Egyptian-Italian initiative in order to situate the conceptual framework in the Egyptian context. The term occupational profile refers to a group of standards that defines a particular occupation.

The overall approach may appear complex as many elements interact with others. To simplify the description for the purposes of this report, we will base our discussion on the three distinct stages in the matching process used to manage legal migration. The first of these involves selecting candidates for migration and preparing them for assessment. The second involves matching the potential migrant to a possible job, a task that depends on the existence of clear standards for each occupational profile. The third stage is the assessment and certification process. **FIGURE 6.1** illustrates this process.

These three stages are further developed and explained below.

1. **Selecting, informing and advising potential migrants.** This is a broad area covering all aspects of registering and selecting individuals, producing and distributing information on the demand for migrant labour, as well as the interaction between potential migrants and advisers, counsellors and other significant actors involved in the process. This is an ongoing process that could be based on voluntary registration. It could also be a more focused process in which registration would be based on specific demand from abroad. It is essential to note that, while orientation is never complete, there is a point when the activity begins to focus more on the assessment of the individual's actual competences.
2. **Defining and combining occupational profiles.** Occupational profiles are a key factor in assuring the overall quality and credibility of the matching process. The assessment of skills is not feasible without a clearly defined and agreed reference. However, the notion of a combined Egyptian/Italian occupational profile depends on the existence of an Egyptian occupational profile which the different parties can rely on and which can be matched to international profiles.
3. **The quality assurance of assessment and certification of the competence of potential migrants.** This covers the methods and processes used to establish the extent to which a potential migrant has attained the level of competence defined in the profile. Quality assurance involves understanding the requirements and standards and carrying out the established assessment procedures. Validation and certification is the most obvious end point of this stage.

FIGURE 6.1 A SKILLS MATCHING FRAMEWORK FOR POTENTIAL MIGRANTS USING A QUALITY ASSURED PROCESS
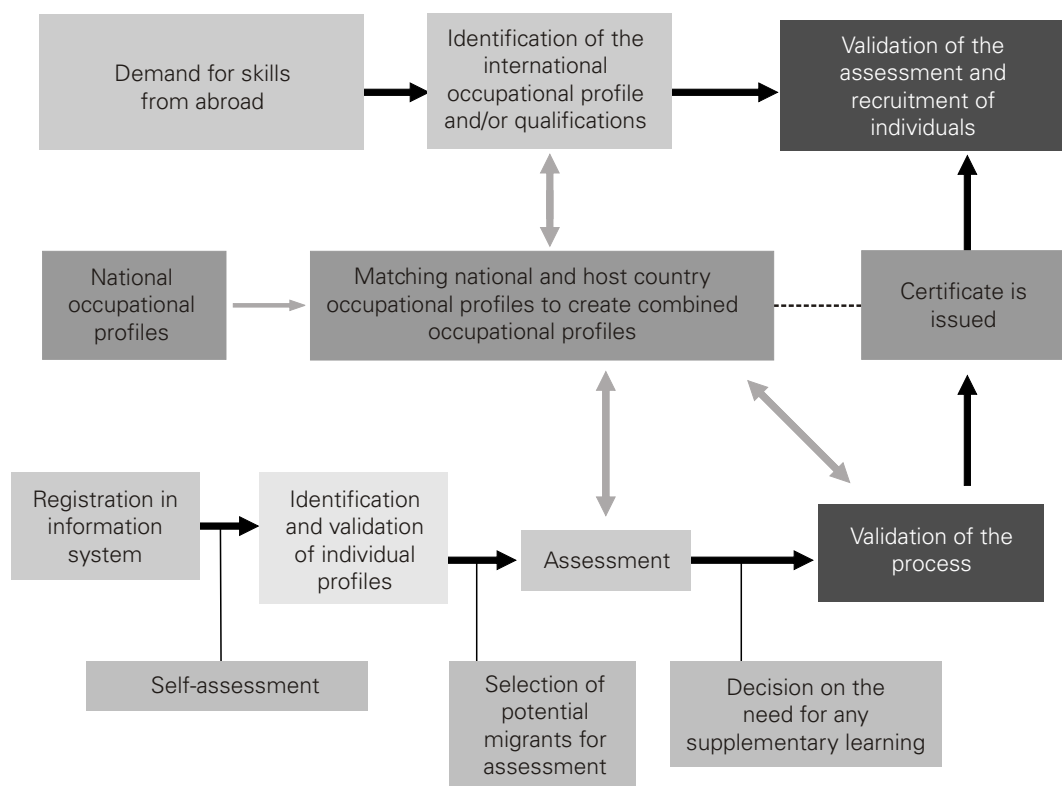
6.1 SELECTION, INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE OF POTENTIAL MIGRANTS

This report has already emphasised the complex nature of the matching process. Instruments that facilitate the process of selecting, informing and orienting potential migrants are crucial in matching skills. Chapter 5 briefly introduced the IMIS project, which is playing an important role in developing a reliable information system for legal migration that includes the registration of detailed information about potential migrants. However, as discussed above, the current system does not match the declared qualifications of the applicants to profiles.

In this context, several aspects of the process warrant greater attention:

■ the delivery of individual and/or group career management services;
■ guidance for potential migrants concerning labour demand abroad;
■ information on labour and other social welfare policies and issues in the host countries;
■ information on schemes for labour migration for individuals, including support services for potential and returning migrants.

Career guidance is a policy area that until quite recently has not been given high priority. An ETF supported initiative highlighted the need for a strategic, integrated approach to career guidance development in Egypt. The outcome was a proposal for introducing career guidance in Egypt. This proposal considers that career guidance could contribute to the achievement of a number of public policy goals relating to education, employment and social equity. It could, for example, make education and labour market systems – and their reforms – more efficient and effective as the result of a better match between individual interests, talents and qualifications on the one hand and the skills and qualifications demanded by employers on the other.

The proposal establishes two key prerequisites for the success of such a career guidance system: a critical mass of career guidance delivery agents and a comprehensive career information system (web and print-based), with information

about all education and training opportunities as well as information on employment opportunities and the formal and informal labour market. In addition to the domestic labour market, the proposal emphasised the need for information on the global labour market.

Occupational profiles – definitions and roles in skills matching for migration

By focusing on occupational profiles, the ETF intervention put the spotlight on the fundamental question of the needs of the labour market. Occupational profiles are the underlying reference for assessment, validation and certification. The quality of this profile is therefore crucial to the quality of the certification process.

As described in Chapter 2, an occupational profile includes the classification and description of the requirements of a job. Derived from the logic of the job itself, the profiles focus on what the employees need to be able to do, how they will do it and how well they do it. Occupational profiles are written as outcomes: the successful results of work activity. At the international level, there are different methods for devising and presenting such profiles.

Profiles influence matching practices in two main ways. Firstly, the dialogue between the stakeholders depends on these profiles and how they are defined and interpreted. Secondly, the profile may also influence the credibility of the assessment process. Assessment that refers directly to the standards specified in a profile defined and supported by the relevant stakeholders will greatly increase acceptance among all the users – the national and international employers and the individuals assessed.

The situation in Egypt

One important finding of the ETF research is the diversity of approaches in Egypt to setting standards and developing profiles. A number of examples and formats have been developed by different ministries, agencies and other organisations, often with donor support. The processes put in place very much reflect the structures and traditions of the ministries and the influence of international trends in the field. This has inevitably resulted in duplication, a degree of overlap and the potential for confusion owing to the range of different methods, formats and approaches used to develop the profiles. Moreover, there is little evidence at this stage of any move towards a common national framework. There is also evidence that the occupational profiles that have been developed are not being used in the curricula of the education institutions, particularly those under the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, the institutions show little interest in using them. The NSSP standards are a case in point.

In the following paragraphs, we will very briefly examine three of the systems currently in use: the occupational profiles developed by the MoME; the skills standards developed by the NSSP; and the ongoing work of the EU-funded TVET project. All three systems have the distinct advantage that they have been developed in Egypt, albeit with external consultancy support and are Egyptian products.

Annex 4 gives a more detailed analysis of the different approaches used.

MoME occupational profiles

Around 350 occupational profiles developed by the MoME are currently being used to certify employees in their professions and occupations. There are at least three different versions and formats of the MoME profiles, depending on when they were drawn up. Many, it is acknowledged, are outdated and some are very complex, with as many as 120 pages of requirements. However, the most recent MoME profiles do conform to a consistent pattern and have been developed with a clear reference to real job requirements.

The need for new profiles is assessed by the regional employment offices at the request of the governorates. An ad hoc committee of four members is set up to design and review each profile. The committee is made up of two ministry representatives, one representative of the vocational centres and one representative of public or private companies. Every year, the MoME develops 10 new profiles and revises and updates 20 existing profiles.

It is important to note that the occupational profiles managed by the MoME are used solely for licensing purposes and are not reflected in the education system.

NSSP standards

The NSSP was implemented between 2000 and 2004 by the Egyptian Social Fund for Development with the support of the British Council in Egypt and the technical support of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). National skills standards with associated assessment systems were developed for a number of sectors. The skills standards were developed in close cooperation with employers and, where they are still in use, appear to have a high level of credibility. The NSSP standards are now administered by the Industrial Training Council and are used in a number of training institutions. There are plans to update and extend the scope of the NSSP standards with the support of the SQA.

The TVET project

The EU funded TVET project is using a Develop a Curriculum (DACUM) approach to develop occupational profiles in a number of sectors. Functional sector maps will be used to create complete occupational profiles that comply with a format agreed with the Egyptian Organisation for Standards and Quality.

6.2 MATCHING OCCUPATIONAL PROFILES

A common standard comprising both the Egyptian and the Italian profile (a combined occupational profile) is seen as a valuable asset for developing understanding and trust. Combined profiles could be of great importance because potentially they provide a way to match the content of occupations and subsequently qualifications, between different countries. These combined profiles usually consist of subcomponents that identify key activities and tasks and allow them to be easily compared.

The matching of occupational profiles described in the previous section has been carried out by the ETF-Egyptian team on the basis of Egyptian and Italian profiles. This section will give a detailed account of the methods and sources of information used. It will also draw conclusions regarding the pilot project.

Rationale

The primary purpose of the Egyptian/Italian Combined Profile (EICP) is to demonstrate to foreign consular officers and employers that the person applying for the job is competent in the occupation. The employer will need to offer some additional training, such as induction into the procedures and rules of the company and the specific standards of the establishment. However, in general, employers should expect the prospective employee to have experience in a specified range of activities and to have demonstrated competence in them.

The central idea is that profiles from the two countries are compared and, where possible, matched. A combined profile is then produced that can be used to assess people who want to migrate to the host country. This makes it possible to recognise the skills of potential immigrants, which are now portable to the host country. The comparison considers the similarity of the two profiles, establishing whether the occupation in question covers the same technical area in both countries. Annex 5 provides examples of a number of profiles in the construction and tourism sectors from both Italy and Egypt.

Process

The EICP can be explained by describing its two main components. First, the title and content of the EICP should match the overall classification, content and principal duties specified in the foreign (Italian) profile, which represents the labour market demand in Italy.

In the case of Italy, most of the Italian profiles are divided into subcomponents, that is, duties or activities. These are equivalent to the units and skills standards in the NSSP standards and most result in a direct match. Since they already exist in Egypt, it is recommended that the NSSP standards be used whenever they are available.

The team based its pilot work on the NSSP occupational profiles for several reasons. Firstly, the NSSP occupational profiles have been developed in close cooperation with the business sector. They share a clear, uniform format and have been developed through a transparent process in accordance with international practice. A further advantage of using the NSSP profiles is that they have, in general, clear performance requirements and already include an assessment specification. Finally, there is an established process for updating and amending these standards.

The MoME profiles are another option. However, as the performance requirements are presented in the form of a list and have not been analysed and grouped into subcomponents, considerable work would be required to reformat these

profiles. Therefore, unless no equivalent NSSP skills standards exist for the occupation, the use of the MoME profiles is not recommended because of the work that would be required.

We can also include the essential knowledge specification in the EICP. In this case, the knowledge will be used as part of the assessment process. The test has two purposes:

■ It can be used to increase confidence in a person's competence by asking 'what if ...' questions to cover many variations in context.
■ It can act as a substitute for direct performance in cases where actual performance would be dangerous or unlikely to occur in a working environment.

Outcomes

This approach is being piloted for Egyptian workers who wish to migrate to Italy. The method is viable in this case because the format and content of the Egyptian and Italian profiles are sufficiently similar to allow for a valid comparison. Moreover, most of these NSSP profiles closely matched the Italian profiles. Annex 6 provides a detailed account of the combined profiles created with ETF support.

Nevertheless, the EICP will require an assessment specification backed by a quality assured assessment process. Foreign employers and consular officials (in this case Italian) will want the assurance that the applicant has been tested (assessed) against specific performance requirements across the range of duties and activities in a real or realistic work environment. Likewise, they will want to be confident that the candidates have the essential knowledge base underpinning the skills qualification and have been tested and found to be fully competent. Furthermore, they will be even more confident if they know that the candidate has been assessed by a professional (i.e. trained) assessor who is external to the candidate and the training institution, someone who is not their teacher, tutor or supervisor. This suggests that potential migrants will need an official certificate, preferably one that identifies each of the activities in which their competence has been tested. A general description of the profile in a passport (the method currently used) would not be seen as sufficient.

Annex 7 contains a proposal for developing such a certificate and an example of a possible format.

6.3 OVERALL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Internationally, there are marked differences in the quality assurance of assessment, validation and certification in terms of regulation and autonomy. In Europe, the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework has established a definition of quality assurance based on the four-stage quality cycle that includes goal setting and planning, implementation, evaluation and review. This tool is also applied more broadly to all of the processes in the development, delivery and certification of VET. The EQF also provides a common set of principles for EU Member States concerning the important elements that all quality assurance systems should include. These are as follows:

■ clear and measurable objectives and standards;
■ guidelines for implementation, including stakeholder involvement;
■ appropriate resources;
■ consistent evaluation methods that include self-assessment and external review;
■ feedback mechanisms and procedures for improvement;
■ widely accessible evaluation results.

The EQF also provides common principles in relation to the external monitoring of institutions and their quality assurance systems. According to the EQF, quality assurance should include regular evaluation of institutions, their programmes and their quality assurance systems by external monitoring bodies or agencies. Likewise, the external monitoring bodies or agencies carrying out quality assurance should also be subject to regular review.

If we turn to the quality assurance methods and approaches, the most important dimension that must be examined is the extent to which the assessment and validation processes leading to certification are systematically and transparently quality assured.

Taking into consideration these wider principles, the overall quality assurance should monitor three levels:

■ the centres that assess candidates on behalf of the awarding body;
■ the body that issues certificates (the 'awarding body');
■ the body that quality assures the awarding body.

The quality assurance methods will vary and may include:

■ standardisation of processes, outcomes of assessment, documents and test items;
■ inspection and evaluation visits;
■ self assessment;
■ peer assessment;
■ stakeholder assessment (this could include both employers and candidates).

With respect to the assessment process itself, the most comprehensive quality assurance arrangements involve a number of key criteria and participants.

Key criteria

■ Validity: assessment processes and methods must be valid (i.e. clearly related to the aspect of competence being tested).
■ Reliability: assessment processes and methods must be reliable (i.e. the methods used to collect and judge evidence must be fair and repeatable).
■ Cost-effectiveness: assessment processes must be cost-effective and designed within the budgetary constraints of the institution, prioritising resources to assess the most critical aspects of competence. Overly complex systems that add little value to the information obtained from assessment add to the cost but provide very little value and threaten the long-term sustainability of the assessment system.

Key participants

■ Assessors who are attached to each assessment centre and must be occupationally competent, properly trained and assessed as competent assessors;
■ Internal verifiers who quality assure the assessments made by assessors, usually on the basis of sampling;
■ External verifiers who are agents of the awarding body and who quality assure the judgements of verifiers and assessors and the procedures of the assessment centre.

To summarise, the system would have four levels of quality assurance. Taken together, these would demonstrate, in the words of the European Common Quality Assurance Framework, the 'existence of a well-described assessment system and a systematic evaluation strategy' and the 'use of a consistent and accountable methodology for both assessment and evaluation'. These levels are:

■ the overall assessment system: the awarding body, the body that accredits the awarding body and the assessment centres;
■ the key participants of the assessment process: the assessors and the internal and external verifiers;
■ the key criteria that apply to the assessment process and methods: validity, reliability and cost-effectiveness (a classification of assessment methods is shown in Annex 8);
■ the quality criteria that apply to the evidence of competence: authenticity, currency and sufficiency.

These quality assurance principles and criteria can be presented as an evaluation framework, as shown in **BOX 6.1**.

Quality assurance in Egypt

The scope of ETF intervention does not include a remit to review the overall situation in Egypt. There is evidence that quality assurance principles in assessment are emerging from a number of projects, institutions and initiatives in Egypt and this phenomenon will contribute to the development of the TVET system and its relevance to the labour market. (See Annex 9 for a brief account of these programmes and initiatives.)

In the long term, taken together, these initiatives may be capable of developing quality assured assessment systems throughout the Egyptian TVET system and for the certification of competent workers already in jobs. However, based on this limited study of Egyptian practice, the project team suggests taking inspiration from the practices and processes adopted by Arab Contractors developed as a result of this company's experience with the NSSP, a programme that focused primarily on the building and construction sector. Their compliance with quality assurance practices is shown in **BOX 6.2**.

BOX 6.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Quality assurance component	Commentary
Quality assurance applying to the overall system	
Is there an overall certificating and quality assurance organisation that accredits the awarding bodies (the organisations that offer certification)?	
Is there an awarding body or are there awarding bodies that are accredited to offer certification?	
Do awarding bodies accredit and continuously quality assure the assessment centres using competent and qualified external verifiers?	
Quality assurance applying to individual assessment centres	
Do assessment centres have competent and qualified assessors?	
Do assessment centres have competent and qualified internal verifiers?	
Are the assessment methods and the process used valid?	
Are the assessment process and methods used reliable?	
Is the evidence used to judge competence valid?	
Is the evidence used to judge competence current (up-to-date)?	
Is the evidence used to judge competence sufficient?	

BOX 6.2 EXAMPLE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE EVALUATION OF ARAB CONTRACTORS' TVET INSTITUTION

Quality assurance applying to individual assessment centres	
Do assessment centres have competent and qualified assessors?	Yes, all assessors have been trained by NSSP staff to standards approved by the SQA. However, the training was undertaken some time ago and there is no facility for updating and no opportunities to train additional assessors.
Do assessment centres have competent and qualified internal verifiers?	Yes, senior assessors act as internal verifiers. However, the caveats applied to assessors also apply to the internal verifiers.
Are the assessment methods and the process used valid?	Yes. A variety of methods of assessment are used which are clearly related to the type of skills or competence being assessed. Assessment methods include skills tests both on and off the job, examination of real work, oral and written testing. Sophisticated, computer-administered assessment test banks have been developed.
Are the assessment process and methods used reliable?	As far as we are able to judge, there is a verification process but this is undertaken by training centre staff and we are not aware of any processes designed to increase reliability (e.g. assessor meetings, benchmarking, etc.).
Is the evidence used to judge competence valid?	Yes. Evidence is obtained from the training centre during initial training and from sites (i.e. examples of real work) following initial training.
Is the evidence used to judge competence current (up to date)?	Yes. Assessment in the training centre is continuous and site training and assessment is undertaken during a six-month initial placement that involves both continuous and end testing.
Is the evidence used to judge competence sufficient?	Yes. It is a principle of the NSSP standards that all aspects of competence (i.e. all the performance requirements and all the underpinning knowledge) are fully assessed.

Further examples are being developed. The most advanced is the assessment system in the tourism sector currently being implemented by the Egyptian Tourism Federation in cooperation with the American Hotel and Lodging Association.

6.4 MOVING FROM DESIGN TO IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter has presented the state of progress of the ETF work in supporting the efforts of the MoME to develop a quality assured certification process. The components of this process have been presented and discussed. The most useful tools are now available for three main sectors: construction, hospitality and agriculture. These tools are the combined occupational profiles, the assessment methods and processes and a proposal for validation and certification mechanisms and mapping of available capacities.

In the final validation workshop of the ETF project which took place in Cairo on 28 February 2010, many participants emphasized the importance of implementing the conceptual framework and piloting the developed methodology and tools. While the ETF project didn't include a pilot phase, there was an intensive consultation with the Egyptian government, national stakeholders, the Italian cooperation in Egypt and the IOM to explore possibilities for piloting.

A testing phase was launched in the framework of the IOM IMIS Plus project at the request of several national stakeholders including the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Federations of Construction and Tourism, the MoME and the Social Fund. A core team of three local consultants was selected by the IOM and entrusted with the implementation of the pilot phase in the construction and tourism sectors. They were able, in turn, to train and lead a network of local experts to adopt the international methodology for developing occupational profiles and for competency-based assessment in the framework of the NSSP. The candidates for the assessment participated in the exercise on a voluntary basis. They were selected among the CVs recorded in the IMIS database. The report of the pilot exercise suggests that the design of the test items, the training of assessors and the assessment process were carried out in line with international standards for quality assurance.

Implementation process

During the IOM pilot phase, independent assessors were identified to undertake the skills testing through examination of both theoretical and practical skills in the tourism and construction sectors. The following profiles were assessed:

■ waiter profile in the tourism sector,
■ scaffolder profile in the construction sector.

Two vocational training institutions for construction and tourism were audited and approved as assessment centres. Participants were assessed as per the framework of skills matching for migration. A pool of test item writers (17 vocational teachers and instructors) were trained to develop assessment instruments according to international standards. The test was extracted from the NSSP and the Egyptian/Italian Combined Profile.

The following results were achieved.

■ Two assessment centres were identified and audited for the two combined profiles – waiter and scaffolder.
■ The assessors and verifiers were identified and trained on the NSSP assessment and verification methodology.
■ Assessment criteria for each profile were developed.
■ Assessment methodologies and materials were adapted to international standards.
■ The Egyptian Tourism Federation and applicants' syndicate were identified as an awarding body for the two combined profiles.

Findings

Tourism sector – waiter

Some 80 candidates were selected from the IMIS database and invited to attend the theoretical test. Out of these candidates, 43 people showed up for the test (54%). Four participants only (11%) passed the theoretical exam successfully – getting more than 70% – while the others failed. Some 15 candidates (34%) got marks between 50% and 70%. In the practical assessment, 14 candidates out of 30 passed the assessment successfully while 14 failed. Two candidates failed in one module only. The assessors for the waiters test were certified from the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) and they conducted the assessment according to the Egyptian national skills standards. The assessment was conducted at Flamenco Hotel in a real working environment.

Construction sector – scaffolder

Some 39 candidates took part in the theoretical assessment. Six candidates out of 39 were illiterate; they were able to read but had writing problems. The training centre provided administrative staff to assist them in writing. All participants failed the theoretical exams. None of the candidates got more than 70%; one only got 70% and one only got more than 60%; 11 got more than 50%. The other 26 candidates got marks below 50%. The results of the practical assessment were totally different: 26 candidates (67%) passed the test successfully; 7 candidates (18%) failed the test; and 6 candidates (15%) dropped out.

Measures of success

The significance of these pilot exercises is threefold. First, the implementation was led mainly by Egyptian expertise which eliminates the need for heavy international technical assistance in this field in the future. Secondly, the conceptual framework proved to be operational and feasible in the Egyptian context. This constitutes a considerable added value and a major asset for the country's future management of legal migration. Thirdly, the key stakeholders (government, industry federations, etc.) were involved at all stages in the pilot initiative. This enhances trust in the assessment results and the overall approach in general.

There are other characteristics of this project which need to be taken into account for future development in this field. The most significant is that these pilot exercises are first, genuine initiatives of learning outcomes-based approaches, where individuals are assessed according to their level of achievement (the learning outcome) rather than the duration and type of training they experience. This is in line with the shifts to learning outcomes introduced in Europe and other regions. It is also in line with the vision of the national qualifications framework supported by the ETF and led by NAQAAE.

However, three further conditions need to be met before this local methodology can have any sustained added value. First, the experience developed by the project team requires some form of official endorsement. At present, the only body authorised to endorse profiles is the Ministry of Manpower and Migration. On the other hand, the Industrial Training Council is now responsible for the NSSP standards which are being revised, updated and extended with the support of the SQA. However, we take the view that these profiles, which have been developed by accredited DACUM practitioners and conform to an internationally recognised methodology, represent the best practice available in Egypt and that there are no technical reason for approval to be withheld.

Secondly, the results of the assessment process have no value unless they are supported by a form of certification. This is essential if the profiles are to provide the basis for certifying potential migrants. At present, only the Ministry of Education has the power to issue certification and, under present rules and norms, the assessment process which has been developed cannot be recognised.

Finally, in this model, the quality assurance of the institutions will be further enhanced if they are accredited by an external quality assurance agency. NAQAAE would be an ideal source of expertise to advice on this process.

These three conditions are hampering progress in the development of a robust and quality assured assessment system. It appears that there may still be some confusion about the role of such assessment systems. It is not a case that this form of assessment is designed to compete with or to replace current arrangements in initial TVET delivered through full-time programmes in government-funded vocational schools. Rather, the intention is to provide a service to Egyptian citizens who have acquired skills though work experience but who do not have formal accreditation.

The credibility of any assessment process depends on the provision of a robust system of quality assurance. As already noted, the matching and combination of profiles requires intensive labour and is time consuming. Luckily, there exists in Egypt an expertise which offers an excellent opportunity to assess people with existing levels of competence.

Mismatch issues

In Section 5.4 we introduced some results of the survey of employers in the construction and tourism sectors. The key finding was that there is a clear mismatch between employers' expectations and the skills and competencies of TVET graduates. Results of the pilot assessment illustrate further and confirm this point, highlighting the inadequacy of normal education and work experience and the difficulties faced by most candidates in terms of theoretical and practical skills. The gap between the required skills and the skills actually acquired is one of the main challenge of the Egyptian system. This gap can be overcome by setting a relevant labour market information system, developing relevant occupational standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning processes including better content, quality teachers and better infrastructure.

Complementary training

Taking into account the results of the pilot initiative, the need for supplementary learning seems to be important in some cases to enhance the underpinning knowledge (construction) and in other cases for both theoretical and practical training. European and international experiences emphasize the importance of establishing a relevant training scheme for those who are in need of supplementary learning, and the importance of informing and guiding them through the process.

Funding issues

The average cost of assessment ranged between EGP 250 and 350 and the ministry has to consider who will cover that cost in the future in a quality assured assessment model: the candidate himself, the in-service training funds, potential employers, or other third parties supporting human resources development in Egypt. The same applies to the cost of supplementary learning.

7. LESSONS LEARNED, ISSUES AND MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Improving the management of legal migration

In recent years, the MoME has worked to put in place key building blocks for the management of legal migration, including agreements with Italy, occupational profiles and a labour market information system. However, at present, as the Prime Minister himself has stressed, the government does not have a clear emigration policy and the MoME has no comprehensive approach to managing the overall process of legal emigration. Specifically, the ministry lacks a clear process for providing information and guidance to potential migrants and has no quality assured assessment, validation and certification system. The ministry also lacks the capacity to forecast the present and future skills needs of the labour markets in Egypt, Europe and other recipient countries.

In order to improve its ability to negotiate new agreements with other countries and to provide effective services to potential migrants and a quality assured certification process that will gain the confidence of potential international employers, the MoME should develop and set up a comprehensive framework (described in this report as a chain) to deal with the registration, selection and assessment of potential migrants. Also needed are systems for monitoring current skills needs and forecasting future needs in both local and international labour markets. Close cooperation with the national observatory could improve the use of available resources, information and expertise in this field.

Improving the information system

Various information systems are playing an intermediary role in respect to both local and international labour markets. However, the current state of development of these systems does not allow them to achieve their established objectives. Moreover, there is a serious need for better coordination, harmonisation and integration among these different systems.

In the short term, the MoME might consider developing the capacity of the employment offices to register and screen potential migrants. The MoME's validation unit could play an important role in this respect. Technical improvement of the IMIS database could improve the effectiveness of that system and increase the relevance of the information it provides on potential migrants. For example, time limits should be used to ensure the currency and validity of CVs and completion of the skills section should be compulsory for registration.

In the long term, integration of the different information systems could substantially improve the ministry's ability to deal with skills matching for local and international labour markets.

Setting up a coherent system for labour market analysis and the development of occupational profiles

One of the important findings of the ETF in Egypt is the diversity of approaches being used by different institutions to design occupational profiles and the lack of mechanisms for harmonised skills identification, anticipation and monitoring. The methods being used in each case clearly reflect institutional structures and traditions as well as the influence of the international donors and/or government institutions funding the project. The fact that many Egyptian occupational profiles are outdated and not based on real labour market needs is an obstacle to matching the skills of migrants with the demands of European (including Italian) labour markets. Although attempts have been made to modernise occupational profiles (for example, the NSSP standards) and to set up mechanisms for labour market analysis (for example, the Observatory for Education, Training and Employment), implementation has been limited and coordination is lacking.

There is no single formula for analysing skills needs. However, what has proved useful in the experience of EU Member States is a holistic approach, that is, a combination of qualitative analysis (e.g. case studies and focus group discussions) and quantitative data (including surveys, skill audits and econometric models).

There are three main changes that the government might take into consideration in order to further develop occupational profiles:

■ adopt and endorse a single version of the existing occupational profiles, thus consolidating the outcome-based approach;
■ institutionalise the participation of social partners in standards setting;
■ set up sustainable and transparent mechanisms for labour market analysis and for developing and updating occupational profiles.

For migration purposes, the MoME could adopt the available occupational profiles developed by the NSSP and adapt the others using the methodology proposed by the ETF team. This could be done in cooperation with the Industrial Training Council. For forecasting labour demand in Egypt and abroad, the MoME could also work jointly with the Egyptian Observatory for Education, Training and Employment.

Developing a quality assurance system for the assessment, validation and certification processes

There is evidence that quality assurance principles are being incorporated into a number of projects, institutions and initiatives. Taken together, over the long term, these may evolve into quality assured systems for the entire Egyptian TVET system and for certification systems for competent workers already employed. However, there are currently few institutions that could be said to be meeting international standards for the quality assurance of assessment, validation and certification processes. One institution that stands out in this respect is Arab Contractors in the building and construction sector, which has sustained and built on its experience with the NSSP.

In the short term, taking into account the urgent need to assess the skills of potential migrants, quality assured assessment centres for this purpose could be identified with the help of sector federations based on prior ETF work in this field. The piloting of the approach adopted through the project provides key elements for further implementation. Previous work done by the NSSP and the ongoing TVET project should be also taken into account. This task should be seen as a first step in the modernisation of the MoME's assessment and licensing procedure for migration.

In the long term, quality assurance of the matching process for migrants will have to be considered in the wider context of education and training reforms in general and from the broader perspective of accrediting education and training institutions.

Improving coordination of donor support

Migration is a field in which several donors are active in Egypt, particularly in the area of developing databases for potential migrants and building the capacity of the employment offices to deal with migration. This poses a serious risk of overlap and non-sustainable improvements.

Consequently, it is very important that the MoME should assume an active leadership role in donor coordination. The first level of coordination involves various tasks: the overall management and supervision of donor projects; the creation of an integrated and logical framework; and the organisation of coordination meetings at ministerial level to improve information sharing and to capitalise on the progress made by different projects.

Developing system-wide approaches

The absence of an overall integrated strategy for human resources development in the country will have a critical impact on the success of any reform initiatives in Egypt. In addition, the traditional separation between education and training, in terms of conception, roles, policies and institutions, gives rise to a dispersion and multiplication of functions and roles in different institutions. (In the area of national qualifications, standardisation and accreditation, for example, there are at least six or seven major initiatives in place implemented by different ministries and bodies.) This fragmentation is a major permanent issue that can be only overcome by a lifelong learning strategy that integrates all of the components involved.

Legal migration is being managed on an ad-hoc basis. Summative assessment makes acquired competences visible but does not improve them; it is only by acting on initial, continuing and experiential learning that we can improve the employability of Egyptian workers in both national and international labour markets.

The various actions undertaken to improve the management of legal migration will help to address short-term problems and should be considered from a system-wide perspective. Previous recommendations have emphasised the link with ongoing reform initiatives, the integration of different systems and the use of the capacities available in other departments and other parts of the education-training-labour market systems.

The development of a quality assured VET system is an important objective of the current reforms. Quality assurance processes for assessment and certification of migrants should evolve and eventually link up with other reforms in the Egyptian qualifications system, such as the development of a national qualifications framework, the shift towards a competency-based approach and the development of an overall quality assurance system.

One of the current reforms worthy of careful consideration is the development of an NQF. The NQF in Egypt is at the design stage (see ETF, 2010). A concept paper was prepared by a national task force set up by the executive committee of the Supreme Council on Human Resource Development (SCHRD) and made up of all the key stakeholders. The concept paper was presented during a round table organised by the ETF in late October 2009 and attended by decision makers from the government and the ruling party as well as social partners and other relevant stakeholders. The proposal was submitted to the Prime Minister's Office early in 2010. The NQF is also part of the recently adopted TVET strategy (August 2009). Part of the NQF agenda is to improve transparency and to promote improved recognition of the Egyptian qualifications system in the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond. The NQF could be a powerful instrument in promoting understanding of the content, scope, level and relevance to the labour market of the qualification and it is a prerequisite to the negotiation of bilateral and multilateral recognition agreements.

Developing regional cooperation

In the wider context of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, Egypt could use the Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conferences (for example the ministerial conference on employment) to further discussions on qualification recognition. Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco are developing similar legal migration agreements with various European countries. Coordination would help improve the negotiating capacity of the region as a whole, while mutual learning would support the development of each country's national capacity.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. ETF PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE

Background

The ETF project was undertaken at the request of the Directorate-General for Justice and the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (MoME) to follow up on the work already done on the ETF Egypt migration profile in 2006–07.

The availability of information on Egyptian labour market needs (both structural and temporary) in different sectors, occupations and geographical regions is crucial to the ethical recruitment of migrants by receiving countries. Information is needed concerning the skills available in Egypt at all levels (low-, medium- and high-skill workers) together with an assessment of the impact of migration on local labour market needs in order to prevent brain drain. A detailed understanding of the structure, level, content and quality of Egyptian education and training systems is also essential. Moreover, policies and tools that promote the transparency and recognition of qualifications will become an important issue (for both the EU and Egypt).

The ETF and the MoME launched a joint project on migration and skills in Egypt in 2008, which finished in 2010.

Project objectives and scope

The objective of the project was to support the efforts of the Egyptian government to improve skills matching for the management of legal migration. The project focused on three sectors: construction, tourism and agriculture and the main activities are listed below.

■ Reviewing the existing capacities of the Egyptian institutions involved in the assessment of competences and skills, including technical schools, vocational colleges, vocational training centres and, where relevant, universities and public employment services. This work was carried out in close cooperation with the activities of other donor programmes.
■ Researching practices in EU Member States, starting with Italy, which could enhance the value to their home countries of skills gained abroad by migrants.
■ Identifying policy recommendations and programme options that Egypt could implement, including the possible use of transparency tools to enhance the recognition of skills. The approach had to be consistent with the recommendations of the NQF task force.
■ Providing policy recommendations to the Egyptian government for defining a methodology for occupational classifications in accordance with international standards and also for a skills assessment methodology in line with modern practice.

Project structure

The project took the form of a network of relationships between the various actors and proponents of national policy on skills development and migration. A steering committee and a cross-sector working group were appointed (one for construction and the other for tourism) to develop this network. Initially, it was also foreseen that the cross-sector working group would include members from the agriculture sector.

The make-up of both the steering committee and cross-sector working group reflects the importance of the key role players in the field of skills development for migration at national and sector level. This organisational structure meant that problems could be addressed and solutions found at both policy (steering committee) and operational level (cross-sector working group). It also meant that the actors involved in the different phases of the project would actively participate in the process, further developing their own capacity to instigate and implement similar approaches rather than simply being the recipients of a transfer of expertise from the ETF team.

Steering committee

In order to effectively transfer expertise and the capacity to carry out similar projects, the steering committee was made up of members from the MoME, the Ministries of Education, Tourism and Housing, the Federation of Tourism and the

Federation of Construction and Building Contractors (see list of members below). The group mission was to supervise the progress of the project discuss the methodological proposals of the ETF expert team, define the key actors, establish the cross-sector working group, facilitate access to information and participate in the validation and endorsement of the project deliverables.

Cross-sector working group

A cross-sector working group of 14 members (from ministries and the relevant industry federations) worked together with the support of the ETF expert team to review existing initiatives and select a number of occupational profiles relevant to both the domestic and international labour markets. The cross-sector working group (see list of members below) contributed to the development of the methodology, collected and verified information, benchmarked the occupational profiles and developed the combined occupational profiles. They then presented the results to the steering committee. The work undertaken to build the Egyptian team's capacity to analyse occupational profiles and to develop combined Egyptian-Italian profiles targeted both short-term (understanding the methodology and experimentation) and long-term needs (developing the capacity to implement the methodology for other profiles).

At the end of the project, the cross-sector working group worked alone to produce new combined profiles for two occupations: a fast-food steward/waiter in the tourism sector and a scaffolding assembler in the construction sector.

MIGRATION AND SKILLS PROJECT – WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Organisation	Member	Department
MoME	Yasmine Mamdouh Hassan Mohamed Mansour	Engineer, Central Department for Vocational Training
	Ghada Samir Hassan	Senior Training Engineer, General Department for Training Follow-up
	Hossam Mahmoud Moftah	Senior Information System Developer, Emigration and Egyptians Abroad Sector
	Ibtisam Abdel Fatah Mohamed Baraka	Senior Engineer, Vocational Training, Central Department for Vocational Training
	Mervat Dessouky Abdel Moniem El Shabasy	Senior Researcher, Vocational Training, General Department for Planning
	Medhat Mohamed Fouad	Senior Researcher, General Department for Employment and External Representation
Ministry of Education	Farag Awad Sayed Fatouh	Curriculum Expert in Commercial Education, General Department for Curriculum and Books
Federation of Building and Construction	Mohamed El Naggar	Head of Training Unit
Construction Skills Development Council	Mohamed Abdel Fatah El Sayed	Central Unit for Building and Construction – Trade Training and Master Trainer
Egyptian Tourism Federation – Human Resources Development, Training & Studies Unit	Nahla M. Helmy	Researcher and Training Coordinator/National Skills Standards Specialist
Ministry of Tourism	Aly Negm	Director of Research, Planning and Training
Social Fund for Development	Samir Radwan	National Skills Standards Project
TVET Reform Programme – ETP Buildings	Farouk Fahmy	ETP Buildings Director
TVET Reform Programme – ETP Hotels and Restaurants	Hany Bakry	ETP Hotels and Restaurants Director

MIGRATION AND SKILLS PROJECT – STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS*

Organisation	Member
Italian Cooperation for Development – Cairo Office	Piera Solinas
MoME	Mohamed El Fateh, Advisor to the Minister on workforce development and training
	Soheir Abdel Rahman, Migration Section replacing Magdy Osman, First Undersecretary and Head of the Migration Section
European Training Foundation	Natalia Papova and Francesco Panzica, Migration Team + Bob Mansfield, International Expert + Ghada Amin, Local Expert
	Elena Carrero Perez, Country Manager for Egypt
World Bank	Amira Kazem, Consultant
Building and Construction Sector	Anis Zakhary, Federation for Building and Construction
	Hisham Bolteya, Executive Director of Construction Skills Development Training Council
Tourism Sector	Hussein Badran, Executive Director of Human Resources Development Unit of the Federation of Tourism
Agriculture Sector	Afaf El Saghir, Director of Export Service Department, Union of Producers and Exporters of Horticultural Crops
	Hassan Mohamed Saleh, Under-Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Education	Ali Ahmed Sayed, Counselor to the Minister of Education for International Cooperation and Director of Mubarak-Kohl Initiative
International Organisation for Migration	Luigi Carta, Project Manager, Integrated Migration Information System (IMIS Plus)

(*) Updated in February 2009.

ANNEX 2. HOW TVET RESPONDS TO CHANGES IN THE LABOUR MARKET

In response to changes in the international economy and the new demands for competent employees, many countries have reformed their TVET systems. The type of reform varies but common patterns can be identified. The table below shows examples of the changes that have been made in many countries.

CHANGES IN TVET SYSTEMS

Change	Commentary
Broader descriptions of occupations	For training purposes, occupations tend to be clustered into broad occupational groupings or families rather than considered as narrowly defined occupations or jobs. The emphasis is on broad-based training in relatively stable occupational skills because such training can be adapted as the content and structure of jobs change.
Broader descriptions of work activities	Because the content of jobs and work tasks changes so rapidly, the current trend is for work activities to be expressed as functions or outcomes, which allows for changes in technology and work organisation.
Development of occupational standards or profiles	Occupational standards or profiles are developed in close cooperation with the social partners, specifying the current and future requirements of the occupation. The standards are then used to develop and update the TVET curriculum and serve as the basis for the assessment of competence.
Core or key skills	Core skills represent skills the skilled person needs to have in addition to technical skills. They include numeracy, communication, problem solving, decision making and learning to learn skills.
Flexible learning design – modules	Curricula and qualifications are broken down into modules or units that can be combined in different ways, thereby increasing the flexibility of course design and accreditation. Combinations of modules can be developed to meet local, company, sector or national needs.
Flexible learning delivery – open/distance learning and work-based learning	Open and distance learning is encouraged by the development of computer technology. Work-based learning, combining vocational education with on-the-job training becomes more important as technologies change so rapidly that vocational schools and colleges are unable to keep pace with the rate of change.
Flexibility in the development of TVET standards	TVET standards have, in the past, been inflexible and slow to respond to changes in labour market requirements. Mechanisms are needed to ensure that standards are updated quickly.
Analysis of labour market needs in terms of the content of occupations	While accurate statistical information is critical to TVET planners, it is important to review and update the content of occupations to inform TVET curriculum design. The traditional processes of TVET design, focused on curriculum, may be too slow for periods of rapid change.

ANNEX 3. DONOR-SUPPORTED PROJECTS IN EGYPT

The European Union (EU) co-funded Education – Assistance to the reform of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Egypt

With a total budget of EUR 66 million, of which EUR 33 million financed by the European Commission, this programme started at the end of 2005 and has to date initiated five enterprise and training partnerships in different sectors (ready-made garments, building materials, food processing, engineering and woodworking). Seven more enterprise and training partnerships are about to be launched, including service sectors. The project develops curricula and training packages, experiments with models of practical training and trains trainers, teachers and masters. The programme also has a mandate to contribute to the design and implementation of a national TVET strategy in cooperation with other relevant programmes.

The Aeneas project – Capacity building of governmental and non-governmental agencies to manage emigration in Egypt

This project is funded by the EU and the Greek government. The EU programme Aeneas 2006 is the main source of funds for this project implemented by the European Perspective Development and Education Centre, the Greek Employment and Manpower Organisation and the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training. The counterparts in Egypt are the Egyptian Social Fund for Development and the MoME Migration and Workforce Sector. The overall budget is EUR 1 120 000. The EU contribution was EUR 784 000.

The main objectives of this project are to improve the conditions for qualifying emigration from Egypt to the EU and to discourage illegal migration.

The project, with a planned duration of two years, started in May 2009 by opening Emigration Information Bureaus (EIB) in six large cities across the country. The next step was to train the bureau staff to use the EuroAccess system. Also planned is the creation of a database of CVs of potential migrants and support for the specific matching of labour supply and demand in cooperation with several EU Member States based on the Europass and EURES formats. Capacity-building initiatives for government and non-government organisations are also planned. Specific workshops will be organised as well as field visits to Greece and Germany.

The ILO project

With a view to boosting employment in general and youth employment in particular, the Italian Cooperation for Development has financed with USD 1 million an ILO project aimed at strengthening employment services. The MoME has around 300 employment offices throughout Egypt. The role of these offices is to help identify jobs for job seekers and also to respond to the needs of employers, in addition to other routine tasks, such as providing work permits to those who have already found a job for presentation to their employer. However, due to the poor performance of these offices, job seekers and employers have become reluctant to use their job matching services. The low capacity of public employment services and of related institutional and administrative infrastructure precludes the design and implementation of the active labour market policies and programmes that are required to facilitate market-oriented economic reform.

The ILO project will operate in five pilot employment offices: Alexandria, Fayoum, Edfu in the Aswan Governorate, Baiadia in the Luxor Governorate and 6th October in the Giza Governorate.

Canadian International Development Agency 2001–06

The aim of the CAD 4.7 million Canadian project was to support the creation of an effective job matching service for both employers and employees by creating accessible and fully functional employment centres in all of Egypt's 26 governorates. The design of these centres was an adaptation of the Canadian model. In addition to matching up job seekers and employers, the centres were intended to provide counselling services and job-related databases for the use of job seekers, employers, trainers and Egyptian government agencies.

United States Department of Labour 2001–06

In addition to the Canadian project, the MoME designated a further 40 employment offices to receive assistance from the United States Department of Labour based on the Canadian model.

Mubarak-Kohl Initiative Vocational Education, Training and Employment Programme 2007–11 (Phase 1)

The aim of the Mubarak-Kohl project, which has a budget of EUR 5.7 million, is to improve the interactive employability of young people in Egypt by developing training and labour market institutions. The project stakeholders are the MoME, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of International Cooperation (the lead executing agency), as well as the private sector and civil society. The emphasis is on improving the capacity of the institutions in three pilot regions (Qena, Dakahlia and Greater Cairo) to provide human resources development services and counselling, labour market information, matching and placement relevant to the labour market while taking into account the demand for gainful and acceptable employment.

ANNEX 4. THE EGYPTIAN OCCUPATIONAL PROFILES

There are several examples of occupational profiles in Egypt and a number of formats. These have been developed by various ministries, agencies and other organisations, often with donor support. Inevitably, this has resulted in a degree of overlap, duplication and potential confusion owing to the range of different methods, formats and approaches used.

To avoid unnecessary further duplication and confusion, we have chosen to examine just two of the Egyptian formats currently in use: the profiles developed by the MoME and the skills standards developed by the NSSP. Both have the distinct advantage that they were developed in Egypt and, despite external consultancy support, remain clearly Egyptian products.

The MoME profiles

The initial aim of the project was to review, evaluate and compare the 350+ profiles developed by the MoME and used to certify employees in their professions and occupations. However, this posed a number of methodological problems.

Firstly, there are at least three different versions and formats of the MoME profiles, depending on when they were developed. It is acknowledged that many are outdated and some are of such complexity – comprising more than 120 pages of requirements – that a straightforward comparison with the summary statements in the Italian profiles would be extremely difficult.

However, the most recent MoME profiles do have a consistent format and have been developed with a clear reference to employment requirements. They have the following components:

1. the title of the occupation at one of two levels – low-skilled worker or skilled worker;
2. a description of the occupation, including a summary of the main duties;
3. a description of the knowledge and skills required;
4. a description of the performance skills (or performance requirements).

The performance requirements are consistently phrased as instructions, for example, 'operate and maintain chopping tools and equipment'. The methodological problem is that the knowledge, skills and performance requirements cover the entire profile at each level (i.e. they are not subdivided into subcomponents, such as separate activities, tasks and standards) so that there are long lists of requirements – as many as 60 in some profiles – and in many cases the items are not listed in any sequence or logical order.

In our view, it would be possible to use the MoME profiles for comparison purposes but each profile would require a further stage of analysis to convert it to a format suitable for comparison. An outline methodology for converting the MoME profiles has been developed.

NSSP standards

The National Skills Standards Project (NSSP) was implemented by the Social Fund for Development with the support of the British Council in Egypt and the technical support of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) between 2000 and 2004. National skills standards and associated assessment systems were developed in a number of sectors using a format developed in the UK. The skills standards were developed in close cooperation with employers and, where they are still in use, appear to enjoy a high level of credibility. The NSSP standards are now administered by the Industrial Training Council and are still in use in a number of training institutions. There are plans to update and extend the scope of these skills standards with the support of the SQA.

The NSSP standards are grouped into Egyptian vocational qualifications at three different levels, conforming to the SQA/UK level framework. They contain the following components:

■ the title of the trade (or profile);
■ a list of units and individual skills standards;
■ for each unit, the title of the unit, a description of the main duties, the titles of the individual skills standards and an assessment specification;
■ for each skills standard, the title of the skills standard, the range of variations, a list of practical competences (performance requirements) and a list of knowledge requirements.

There are some minor inconsistencies in the phrasing of the performance requirements. Most have an evaluative phrase, such as 'place all items on each table in an hygienic manner according to the set-up plan'. However, some merely describe the task or activity, for example 'select and obtain manual and mechanical tools'.

ANNEX 5. COMPARISON OF SELECTED ITALIAN AND EGYPTIAN OCCUPATIONAL PROFILES

Italian occupational profiles

The organisation Italia Lavoro has identified five profiles for each of the three sectors that represent the current Italian labour market demand for migrant labour: tourism, construction and agriculture.

Tourism

■ Hotel front desk clerks
■ Fast-food steward/waiter
■ Room attendant
■ Pastry processer (pizza maker)
■ Chef-cook

Construction

■ Earthmoving – heavy equipment operator/bulldozer and loader operator
■ Joiner
■ Bricklayer/stonemason
■ Plasterer
■ Scaffolder

Agriculture

■ Farm worker, animal husbandry
■ Greenhouse worker
■ Skilled pruner
■ Operator, agricultural machinery (including maintenance)
■ Horticultural worker

The Italian profiles generally follow a consistent format, the only exception being the profile for front desk clerks. The common format contains the following components:

■ the title of the occupation;
■ classifications using the Italian Istat and ATECO classifications, plus the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO);
■ a summary description of the main duties;
■ two sections describing the working environment;
■ a section described as 'work delivery modality', which describes working hours and other demands;
■ optional requirements, an outline of the qualifications and experience required;
■ attitude, combining physical attributes (e.g. dexterity), behaviours (e.g. communication and listening) and personal characteristics (e.g. adaptability);
■ competence, a list of performance requirements, knowledge and skills; in most cases the overall profile (e.g. 'waiter') is divided into smaller components (such as 'prepare the dining room and set tables').

For the purposes of matching occupational profiles to Egyptian examples, the most important components are the performance requirements, which describe the outcomes the person is expected to achieve. These vary in format. Some use what is called an evaluative phrase to set the standard required, for example 'arrange the layout of tables and chairs according to client reservations'. The evaluative phrase is 'according to client reservations'. The waiter has to decide how to lay the tables depending on the number and type of reservations that have been made.

Some requirements do not contain an evaluative phrase but rather simply describe a task or activity, for example 'welcome customers and escort them to their tables'.

The knowledge section is quite limited and sometimes very general, for example, basic gastronomy.

The skills section is usually more detailed and often contains items that could be incorporated into the performance requirements or specified as a significant variation (usually referred to as the range of variations, or just the range). For example, the skill specified as 'apply all rules concerning hygiene and food safety' could be incorporated into the performance requirements with the statement 'check the condition of tableware and cutlery for cleanliness and hygiene and return unclean items for washing'.

In an attempt to provide a common format for the Italian profiles for the purposes of comparison, we have summarised the Italian profiles, taking into account the performance requirements and adding additional specifications from the knowledge and skills sections where appropriate. The following are examples of room attendant and scaffolder profiles.

ITALIAN PROFILE FOR A ROOM ATTENDANT

Main duties

- maintain the condition and cleanliness of rooms and public areas of hotels, motels and resorts;
- make beds;
- change sheets;
- distribute clean towels and toiletries;
- clean and disinfect the rooms, bathrooms and public areas;
- take note of and replace any mini-bar items consumed;
- report to the housekeeper any maintenance problems in the rooms and public areas;
- maintain the health, safety and hygiene of the working environment;
- comply with the instructions of the housekeeper.

ITALIAN PROFILE FOR A SCAFFOLDER

Main duties

Set up, assemble, dismantle, remove and maintain scaffolding of any type, both on or off the building site. Scaffolding may be standard metal or self-propelled.

Set up, modify and dismantle scaffolding includes:

- read and interpret working drawings, specifications, job documents and specific technical project documentation;
- identify the scaffolding type required for the gradient and layout of the site and the location where the scaffolding will be set up (building site, road, asphalt-paved area);
- estimate the quality and quantity of tubes, wood and other materials needed for the job;
- erect, dismantle and modify scaffolding indoors and outdoors;
- dismantle and adapt scaffolding structures for fairs, concerts and other similar events;
- erect and dismantle the scaffolding based on specific needs or specifications;
- use safety equipment for person protection;
- apply safety procedures on the building site;
- work cooperatively as a member of a team.

Comparing profiles

The following table summarises and compares the components of both profiles.

OCCUPATIONAL PROFILES' COMPONENTS

Component	Name or location of the component		
	Italian profiles	**MoME profiles**	**NSSP standards**
Name/title of the profile	Title, e.g. room attendant	Occupation, e.g. scaffolder	EVQ title and code, e.g. housekeeping attendant T1 1HA
Classification	Istat/ATECO and ISCO-88	None in the translated materials	Code from the SQA/EVQ framework
Levels	None	Two: limited skills, skilled	Three levels consistent with UK/SQA levels
Main duties	Yes, summary paragraph	Description of occupation	Description in each unit
Working hours and other demands	Working environment, organisational context	None in the translated materials	None
Qualifications and experience	Modality of delivery	None in the translated materials	None
Attitude	Yes, summary list	Embedded in performance requirements and knowledge	Embedded in performance requirements and knowledge
Subdivisions of the profile	In most cases	No, complete profile	Subdivided into units and each unit into elements/ skills standards
Performance requirements	Competence list	Description of performance skills	Practical competences
Range of variation	Embedded in competence list	Embedded in performance skills	Yes, separate category
Knowledge	Yes, list of knowledge	Description of knowledge skills	Knowledge requirements
Skills	Yes, list of skills	Embedded in performance requirements and knowledge	Embedded in performance requirements
Assessment	None	None	General assessment specification for each unit

ANNEX 6. COMBINED OCCUPATIONAL PROFILES

To facilitate valid comparisons between Egyptian and Italian profiles, an agreed combined profile for each occupation must be drawn up. These are called Egyptian/Italian Combined Profiles (EICPs). The important issue is not, however, merely to demonstrate that there is a match between Egyptian and Italian profiles but rather to define the purpose of the EICP.

The primary purpose of the EICP is to demonstrate to Italian employers and consular officers that the person applying for work is competent in the specified occupation. Employers will still have to offer some additional training, such as induction into the procedures and rules of the company and the specific standards of the establishment. However, in general, the employer should expect the prospective employee to have experience in a specified range of activities and to be competent in them.

EGYPTIAN/ITALIAN COMBINED PROFILE – PROPOSED STRUCTURE

Components	Origin
Title of the profile	Italian title and classification
Summary of main duties	'Main duties' section of the Italian profile
Titles of the subcomponents of the profile	NSSP standards matched to the main duties in the Italian profile
For each subcomponent	
Performance requirements	NSSP standard(s)
Range of variations	NSSP standard(s)
Essential knowledge	NSSP standard(s)
An assessment specification	NSSP standard(s)

Shown below is an example of the EICP structure applied to the Italian profile for a 'room attendant', matched to the NSSP standards for a 'housekeeping attendant'. The profile has two components. The first is the profile itself and the second is a mapping document, that is, a working document that shows precisely how the duties specified in the Italian profile are matched to the NSSP skills standards.

EGYPTIAN/ITALIAN COMBINED PROFILE – ROOM ATTENDANT

Components	Origin
Title of the profile	Room attendant: National classification of professions Istat 2001: 5.2.2.3; ATECO: H-55.10 – Hotels; ISCO-88 – 5123
Summary of main duties	From the Italian profile 1. Maintain the condition and cleanliness of rooms and public areas of hotels, motels and resorts 2. Make beds 3. Change sheets 4. Distribute clean towels and toiletries 5. Clean and disinfect the rooms, bathrooms and public areas 6. Take note of and replace any mini-bar items consumed 7. Report to the housekeeper any maintenance problems in the rooms and public areas 8. Maintain the health, safety and hygiene of the working environment 9. Cooperate with the instructions of the housekeeper

Titles of the subcomponents of the profile	Drawn from the NSSP standards (titles of units and skill standards)
	
	T1/I/1 Carry out routine servicing of guest accommodation
	    T1/I/1.1 Prepare for work and complete end-of-shift duties
	    T1/I/1.2 Enter guest room and prepare accommodation for servicing
	    T1/I/1.3 Make the bed
	    T1/I/1.4 Clean balcony and accommodation and provide room supplies and guest amenity items
	    T1/I/1.5 Vacuum the carpet
	    T1/I/1.6 Provide the evening service
	T1/I/2 Carry out non-routine cleaning
	    T1/I/2.1 Clean and shampoo carpeting
	    T1/I/2.2 Strip and repolish floors
	    T1/I/2.3 Clean upholstered and non-upholstered furniture
	    T1/I/2.4 Clean glazed area, lamps, light fittings, walls, ceilings and window coverings
	    T1/I/2.5 Treat stains on fabrics and surfaces
	T1/I/3 Carry out routine servicing of en-suite bathrooms
	    T1/I/3.1 Prepare the bathroom for servicing
	    T1/I/3.2 Clean bathroom and provide supplies and guest amenities
	T1/I/5 Routine servicing of public area
	    T1/I/5.1 Carry out routine servicing of public area
	T/X/2 Maintain a safe and secure working environment
	    T/X/2.1 Maintain personal health, hygiene and sanitation
	    T/X/2.2 Carry out specified procedures in the event of an emergency
	    T/X/2.3 Maintain a safe environment for customers, staff and visitors
	    T/X/2.4 Maintain security in the work environment
	T/X/3 Create and maintain an effective working relationship
	    T/X/3.1 Establish and maintain working relationships with other members of staff
	    T/X/3.2 Develop the trust and support of direct supervisor

MAPPING DOCUMENT – ROOM ATTENDANT

Activity from the Italian profile		Equivalent NSSP unit/skills standard	
1. Maintain the condition and cleanliness of rooms and public areas of hotels, motels and resorts	T1/I/5	Carry out routine servicing of public area	
		T1/I/5.1	Carry out routine servicing of public area
	T1/I/2	Non-routine cleaning	
		T1/I/2.1	Clean and shampoo carpeting
		T1/I/2.2	Strip and repolish floors
		T1/I/2.3	Clean upholstered and non-upholstered furniture
		T1/I/2.4	Clean glazed area, lamps, light fittings, walls, ceilings and window coverings
		T1/I/2.5	Treat stains on fabrics and surfaces
2. Make beds 3. Change sheets 4. Distribute clean towels and toiletries 5. Clean and disinfect the rooms, bathrooms and public areas 6. Take note of and replace any mini-bar items consumed 7. Report to the housekeeper any maintenance problems in the rooms and public areas	T1/I/1	Carry out routine servicing of guest accommodation	
		T1/I/1.1	Prepare for work and complete end-of-shift duties. (Note: this includes reporting maintenance problems – Item 7)
		T1/I/1.2	Enter guest room and prepare accommodation for servicing
		T1/I/1.3	Make the bed
		T1/I/1.4	Clean balcony and accommodation and provide room supplies and guest amenity items
		T1/I/1.5	Vacuum the carpet
		T1/I/1.6	Provide the evening service
	T1/I/3	Carry out routine servicing of en-suite bathrooms	
		T1/I/3.1	Prepare the bathroom for servicing
		T1/I/3.2	Clean bathroom and provide supplies and guest amenities
8. Maintain the health, safety and hygiene of the working environment	T/X/2	Maintain a safe and secure working environment	
		T/X/2.1	Maintain personal health, hygiene and sanitation
		T/X/2.2	Carry out specified procedures in the event of an emergency
		T/X/2.3	Maintain a safe environment for customers, staff and visitors
		T/X/2.4	Maintain security in the work environment
9. Cooperate with the instructions of the housekeeper	T/X/3	Create and maintain an effective working relationship	
		T/X/3.1	Establish and maintain working relationships with other members of staff
		T/X/3.2	Develop the trust and support of direct supervisor

At this level of detail, the performance requirements, knowledge, skills and assessment specifications are not shown as these are detailed in the individual skills standards.

ANNEX 7. CERTIFICATE PROPOSAL

The EICP is quite a complicated document and would be used primarily to plan the assessment process and for auditing and quality assurance purposes. For implementation, a less complicated document in the form of a certificate would be required for presentation to Italian employers and consular officials. An example of the certificate for a room attendant is shown below. The section on the activities assessed is a summary of the performance requirements.

EGYPTIAN/ITALIAN CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE

Certificate of competence for a room attendant (Italy)/housekeeping attendant (Egypt)
National classification of professions Istat 2001: 5.2.2.3; ATECO: H-55.10 – Hotels; ISCO-88 – 5123

Activities assessed

- Routine servicing of guest accommodation, including preparing for work and completing end-of-shift duties, preparing accommodation for servicing, making beds, cleaning the accommodation, providing room supplies and guest amenity items and servicing en-suite bathrooms
- Non-routine cleaning including cleaning carpeting, stripping and repolishing floors, cleaning upholstered and non-upholstered furniture, glazed areas, lamps, light fittings, walls, ceilings and window coverings and treating stains on fabrics and surfaces
- Maintaining a safe and secure working environment
- Creating and maintaining effective working relationships

The holder of this certificate has been assessed as competent in all of these activities in a realistic working environment.

ANNEX 8. ASSESSMENT METHODS AND APPROACHES

Assessment tools

According to the EU guidelines for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (Cedefop, 2009), assessment tools can be classified as follows.

- *Debate:* this tool offers candidates an opportunity to demonstrate depth of knowledge as well as communicative skills.
- *Declarative methods:* these are based on the individuals' identification and recording of their own competences, normally signed by a third party to verify the self-assessment.
- *Interviews:* these can be used to clarify issues raised by the documentary evidence presented and/or to review scope and depth of learning.
- *Observation:* this involves extracting evidence of a person's competence while they perform everyday tasks at work.
- *Portfolio method:* this involves using a mix of methods and instruments in consecutive stages to produce a coherent set of documents or work samples showing an individual's skills and competences in different ways.

It is now possible to extend the classification to encompass some assessment methods that are common but not easy to classify using the five categories above.

- *Presentation:* can be formal or informal and can be used to check the ability to present information in a way appropriate to the subject and audience.
- *Simulation and evidence extracted from work:* in this case individuals are placed in a situation that fulfils all the criteria of the real-life scenario and their competences are assessed.
- *Tests and examinations:* the identification and validation of informal and non-formal learning through or with the help of examinations in the context of a formal assessment system.

As this is a broad classification, while some categories may overlap slightly, others can be further differentiated. Some specific assessment processes may make use of more than one of these approaches to achieve greater validity, reliability, cost-effectiveness and fitness for purpose of results.

New trends in the evaluation of non-formal and informal learning

In the assessment of adults in particular, there is a growing interest in a range of evidence relating to the individual's prior experience. Rather than being concerned with the methods and administration of assessment (such as examinations and tests), according to this paradigm the focus is on collecting evidence of competence, which is then judged by a qualified assessor. In other words, competence is not demonstrated indirectly by answering questions or taking tests but rather by collecting direct evidence from a number of valid sources.

For Mansfield and Andersson (2004), this evidence includes the following elements.

- The examination of products resulting from work activities; this is further subdivided between products produced at work as part of normal work activities or products produced at work as part of test projects or assignments.
- Observation of work activity by a qualified assessor or other observers who are in a position to report on the activity of the candidate (often referred to as 'witnesses' and 'testimony'). In certain cases the candidate can be their own witness.
- Examination of products produced during simulated activities outside of the work environment.
- Observation of simulated activities outside of the work environment.
- Oral questioning of the candidate, which can take place in the workplace or elsewhere.
- Testing based on multiple choice answers to set questions.
- Examination of written answers to open set questions.
- Examination using multi-dimensional simulations or case studies, usually involving the completion of a report. (This can include a project or assignment.)

The outputs of these assessments are referred to as 'evidence of competence'. As a whole these outputs must conform to the following criteria.

- The evidence must be authentic (i.e. produced by the candidate).
- The evidence must be current (i.e. recent and up-to-date).
- The evidence must be sufficient (i.e. enough evidence of sufficient quality to form the basis of a reliable judgement regarding competence).

This leads to an assessment process in accordance with the following principles:

1. identifying the evidence needed to demonstrate competence (as per an assessment specification from a recognised occupational standard or profile);
2. setting standards (criteria) for the quality of the evidence (validity, reliability, authenticity, currency and sufficiency);
3. planning the collection of evidence (selecting from the eight sources cited above);
4. collecting the evidence;
5. comparing the evidence to the assessment specification;
6. deciding whether the evidence meets the requirements;
7. confirming that the standard has been achieved (if the evidence meets the requirements);
8. collecting more or better evidence (if the evidence does not meet the requirements).

A final characteristic of this model is suggested by stages 7 and 8 in the assessment process. Competence-based assessment is based on the 'go/no go' principle (i.e. the evidence presented by the candidate either demonstrates competence or it does not) rather than on the grading or marking procedures used in traditional forms of academically-oriented assessment. Candidates do not fail; they merely fail to provide sufficient valid and reliable evidence that they are competent, thus leaving open the option of providing additional evidence in the future to demonstrate their competence.

ANNEX 9. CURRENT INITIATIVES IN EGYPT WHICH COULD SUPPORT A QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

There are a number of practices and initiatives in Egypt that conform to some of the quality assurance components described above or have the potential to meet them.

Example 1: Egyptian National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency

Following a Presidential Decree, Law 82/2006 established the Egyptian National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency with the mission of ensuring high quality continuing development and efficient performance by Egyptian

education institutions, their systems and programmes based on internationally recognised evaluation mechanisms implemented by means of an independent, neutral and transparent framework.

The National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency will also establish a system for reviewing institutions with the objective of accrediting those that satisfy published criteria.

The agency has worked extensively with higher education institutions and is currently planning to extend its activities to the technical education sector. Draft quality assurance standards are being developed for this purpose.

Of particular interest are the following statements on the assessment of students (albeit in higher education) contained in the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Handbook for Higher Education in Egypt, published in 2004:

> **Student assessment**
>
> 'There is an appropriate range of assessment methods that enables the students to demonstrate the attainment of intended learning outcomes.
>
> The students are well-informed on the criteria by which they are assessed and given appropriate, structured feedback that supports their continuing learning.'
>
> **Student achievement**
>
> 'Levels of students' achievements are maintained with due regard to the use of external reference points, moderation and evaluation of achievement.'

These are important statements that have a direct impact on the principles of validity, reliability and external verification and they are to be commended. However, despite the welcome introduction of critical aspects of quality assurance, the statements will have no immediate impact on technical assessment in vocational schools or on the assessment of existing competence.

Example 2: The TVET project

The TVET project has produced a very useful manual for assessment and certification. It identifies all of the key principles of quality assurance outlined in the report and it also contains a useful flow chart showing how the process would be implemented with respect to the key stakeholders.

While this is a welcome contribution to efforts to achieve overall quality assurance, it remains a proposal and has yet to be implemented.

Example 3: The NSSP

The NSSP was intended to do more than merely develop national skills standards and associated qualifications. The intention, with the support of SQA, was to implement a fully quality assured assessment system involving the development of clear assessment specifications and the training and accreditation of assessors and verifiers.

A cadre of assessors/verifiers were trained in the tourism and construction sectors to the standards set by SQA for their own assessor and verifier staff. Some of these assessors and verifiers are still in place but they are affected by the fact that currently there are no accredited external verifiers to complete the quality assurance circle. More importantly, with the completion of the project, training has now ceased, so there are no new assessors and verifiers to replace existing staff as they near retirement.

The Industrial Training Council is now responsible for the NSSP standards, which are currently being revised, updated and extended with the support of the SQA. It is understood that the SQA was to start considering the assessment process towards the end of 2009.

Example 4: The Mubarak-Kohl Initiative

The Mubarak-Kohl project offers training in some 24 trades based on the German dual system model.

Example 5: Arab Contractors

Arab Contractors uses the NSSP standards for its training programmes and associated assessment systems. Seyfried (2008) describes the organisation in the following terms:

'Arab Contractors is one of the biggest state-owned companies in Egypt, employing over 50 000 workers. It runs a large training institute of its own, which provides training in technical and managerial areas.

The Arab Contractors' Training Institute has put in place a highly functional and sophisticated quality management system that can be qualified as a good practice example.

The quality management system consists of a three-level system with an internal quality cycle, continuous approval by company headquarters and external certification according to ISO standards. The first ISO certificate was awarded in 1996 and the current certificate was valid till 2009.

The internal system reflects and applies all the elements that form part of an ideal quality cycle:

■ a preliminary analysis of training needs, forming the basis for an annual training plan;
■ continuous adaptation of curricula and training of trainers according to new demands;
■ pre-assessment of students so as to customise training provision;
■ final assessment of students in compliance with curricular demands;
■ assessment of training quality and usability in the workplace by student follow-up surveys;
■ ongoing cooperation with external customers including customer satisfaction surveys;
■ continuous review and organisation of change;
■ incentives for trainers and other staff in the form of rewards for activities leading to good results.

In accordance with ISO standards, all processes are described and related with tasks and individual responsibilities and results achieved are regularly documented, evaluated and compared over time.'

The above description suggests that Arab Contractors could serve as a model for an assessment centre meeting the criteria described above and is likely to provide a level of quality assured certification that would be credible to the Italian partners.

Other initiatives

There are a number of other initiatives that will undoubtedly make a contribution to overall quality assurance in Egypt. In brief, these include:

■ the NQF project, which should offer a coherent qualifications system to which overall quality assurance models could be applied;
■ various pilot programmes for the reform and updating of vocational schools, involving the United States Agency for International Development and others; these programmes include curriculum design (and presumably assessment) in their project plans;
■ a small-scale pilot programme that has been developed by Traintex, the technical implementation arm of the national programme for reforming the TVET system. This involves the training of master trainers.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DACUM   Develop a Curriculum

EICP   Egyptian/Italian Combined Profile

EQF   European Qualifications Framework

ETF   European Training Foundation

ETP   Education and Training Partnership

EU   European Union

GATS   General Agreement on Trade in Services

GDP   Gross domestic product

GTZ   Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)

IDOM   Information Dissemination on Migration

ILO   International Labour Organisation

IMIS   Integrated Migration Information System

IOM   International Organisation for Migration

ISCO   International Standard Classification of Occupations

MoME   Ministry of Manpower and Emigration

NAQAAE   National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education – Egypt

NQF   National qualifications framework

NSSP   National Skills Standards Project

SQA   Scottish Qualifications Authority

TVET   Technical vocational education and training

Unesco   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

VET   Vocational education and training

GLOSSARY

Accreditation of education and training providers

A quality assurance process through which accredited status is granted to an education or training provider indicating that the provider has been approved by the relevant legislative or professional authorities as having met predetermined standards.

Awarding body

A body competent to issue qualifications (certificates, diplomas or titles) formally recognising the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competence) of an individual following an assessment and validation procedure.

Certification

The processes of assessment, validation and public recognition of competence in the form of an officially endorsed certificate.

Quality assurance

An integrated set of policies, procedures, rules, criteria, tools, verification instruments and mechanisms whose collective purpose is to ensure and enhance the quality provided by any vocational institution.

Occupational profile

A group of related standards (statements of tasks and activities) that describes the requirements of employment in an occupation.

Validation of learning outcomes

Confirmation by a competent body that the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competence) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed using predefined criteria and that the outcomes comply with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification.

Egyptian/Italian Combined Profile (EICP)

A profile that compares and matches Egyptian and Italian profiles used to assess people who want to migrate from Egypt to Italy.

Skill shortages

A situation identified through the existence of hard-to-fill vacancies in organisations, which point to a manifest lack of adequately skilled individuals available in the labour market.

Skill gaps

A situation that occurs when employers consider some of their staff to be not fully proficient in their ability to meet the requirements of their job.

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