

TORINO PROCESS

TUNISIA

DECEMBER 2010



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Tunisia
Self-Assessment Summary

December 2010

Tunisian Republic
*Ministry of Vocational Training
and Employment*
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1. Self-assessment developing in Tunisia

In 2010, Tunisia signed up to the Torino process, which is “a participatory review of progress in vocational education and training policy carried out every two years by all ETF partner countries with the support of the ETF”. It is a process of self-assessment “based on a rigorous methodological approach, defining the scope and content of the review (review framework), usable information sources, the implementation of the process (stakeholder participation) and the expected results”.¹

The various stakeholders in the field of vocational training – government ministries, employers’ and employees’ organisations and subordinated bodies – that are represented on a steering committee have contributed to the drafting of this report with the methodological support of the European Training Foundation (ETF). Working parties were formed for specific topics in the review framework. The initial results of their work were discussed at a plenary meeting during a workshop held at the National Centre for Training of Trainers and Training Course Design (Cenaffif) in Radès on 16 and 17 July 2010. After having been considered in greater depth at the workshop, the review was examined for a second time on 17 September 2010. These deliberations were particularly important in that they coincided with work on the preparation of the implementation plan for the vocational-training strategy and the employment strategy covering the five-year period from 2009 to 2014.

They also coincided with ongoing negotiations on advanced status for Tunisia’s partnership with the European Union. The Tunisian application for advanced status is a strategic choice designed to further the country’s integration into the Euro-Mediterranean framework and cement its ties with the European Economic Area. *“Tunisia has reached a critical stage in its development process. Since the mid-1980s, policy makers have managed to (i) gradually open the economy and deepen integration with Europe; (ii) maintain macro stability in the face of recurrent exogenous shocks; (iii) improve the business climate and (iv) diversify the education system. The country has sustained a 5% growth rate per annum over the last 20 years, provided near universal access to basic socio-economic services (water, electricity, sanitation, etc.) and reduced poverty incidence to the lowest in the region.”*²

In 2006, the President of the Republic ordered a national consultation process on vocational training. 2008 was the Year of Dialogue with Youth. In that same year, a national consultation process on employment, open to all stakeholders in Tunisia, served to identify innovative solutions to the employment problem and to formulate practical proposals for more rapid job creation in all parts of the country and in all areas of economic activity. In connection with the preparation of economic and social development plans, audits were conducted with a view to identifying achievements, obstacles and challenges before the contents of the plan were defined. Self-assessment, then, is a practice which is developing in Tunisia, where reform and modernisation are a constant objective and a continuous process.

Such is the situation with regard to the system of vocational training, where the reform process began in the early 1990s.

Institutional responsibility for vocational training lies with the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, which shares some powers with other ministries and delegates some to various bodies.³ Course design and instructor training are provided by a dedicated institution, the National Centre for Training of Trainers and Training Course Design (Cenaffif). In the sphere of agriculture, INPFCA, the National Institute for Agricultural Education and Continuing Training, based in Sidi Thabet, performs that role in collaboration with Cenaffif. Continuing training initiated by businesses and individuals is a matter for the National Centre for Continuing Training and Career Development (CNFCPP), whose task is to administer funding programmes and instruments. Today’s education and training system is structured as follows:

- Nine years of basic schooling, comprising a first cycle of six years, corresponding to primary education, and a second cycle, lasting three years. Since 2008, this second cycle has been

¹ Tr. from ETF, *Le processus de Turin*, pamphlet in French.

² World Bank, *Development Policy Review: Toward Innovation-Led Growth*, Report No 50847, January 2010, p.9

³ The Tunisian Vocational Training Agency (ATFP), overseen by the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, operates most of the training centres. The Agricultural Extension and Training Centre (AVFA), which is under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, administers 39 training establishments in the realm of agriculture and fisheries. The Tunisian National Tourism Office (ONTT), under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourism, administers eight centres located in the countries’ main tourist areas. The Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Defence also administer training centres.

split from year 8 onwards into two course types – a course of general education, and a course of technical education, from which pupils can move on to vocational training or to general education at the upper secondary level.

- A four-year upper secondary stage culminating in the *baccalauréat*. There are several course options at this level, including a course of technical education.
- A vocational-training cycle after the end of basic schooling, delivering three levels of certification, namely the certificate of vocational aptitude (CAP), the technician's diploma (BTP) and the advanced technician's diploma (BTS), as well as a certificate of competence (CC) to certify the successful completion of a training course of at least six months' duration provided for jobseekers and targeting semi-skilled occupations.
- A system of higher education which has adopted the bachelor's, master's and doctorate degree structure and which anyone who has obtained the *baccalauréat* can enter by means of a centralised computerised system, based at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, for the allocation of university places. The higher-education system also comprises institutes of higher technological studies (ISETs), which award advanced technicians' diplomas. These establishments were created in 1992 with a view to improving graduate employability.⁴ Following the reforms that introduced the three-tiered degree structure, they have begun to offer applied degree courses in partnership with the professional bodies from the various sectors of the economy.

The initial course of vocational training after completion of basic schooling currently comprises three cycles. The first cycle leads to the certificate of vocational aptitude (CAP), the second culminates in the technician's diploma (BTP), and the third prepares trainees for the advanced technician's diploma (BTS). Statute No 2008-10 provides for a bridge to higher education for BTS holders. Implementation procedures are currently the subject of deliberation by a committee comprising representatives of the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment and of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The statute of 2008 provides for the creation of a vocational *baccalauréat*, but that project has yet to be carried out.

Other courses of initial training are offered by public and private operators, but these do not lead to any of the certificates referred to above. They are commonly known as *formations non diplômantes*, i.e. non-certificate courses.

Training provision is largely in the hands of the public sector, which caters for 95% of all trainees. Most of them are enrolled in the 135 centres belonging to the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, which are run by the Tunisian Vocational Training Agency, while the other trainees in the state system attend eight centres administered by the Tunisian National Tourism Office (ONTT) under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourism, the centres overseen by the Ministry of Public Health or the Ministry of Defence or the 39 centres administered by the National Agricultural Extension and Training Agency on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.⁵ The private sector plays a marginal role, catering for 5% of all trainees on certificate courses.

In-house training (sandwich courses and apprenticeships) is only practised in the public sector, where it applied to 84% of enrolled trainees in December 2009. The total number of learners in vocational training at the present time is almost 139 000, **which represents about 14% of all individuals undergoing education and training in the Tunisian system**. In 2009, the AFTP, the principal provider in the public sector, was responsible for 1 979 trainers and 876 advisers,⁶ not counting supply staff.

⁴ Statute No 92-50 of 12 May 1992

⁵ These centres, in fact, are under the joint supervision of the Ministry of Vocational Education and Employment and the relevant specialised ministry. They account for 9% of all trainees in the state sector.

⁶ Ministry of Education and Training, *Statistiques de l'éducation et de la formation, année scolaire 2008-2009*, information brochure, p. 36.

2. Competitiveness and employability: part of the Tunisian vision of vocational training

The reform process entails complex and multidimensional changes. These changes relate not only to the organisation of the training system but also to instructional methods and the behaviour patterns of players within the system. The purpose of the reforms is to move from a system that is entirely detached from the productive structure to a system that is receptive to its environment through the development of effective partnership with the business world. The training system needs to become highly responsive to the changing skill requirements of economic operators. It has to evolve from an organisation in which initiative, decision-making and responsibility are typically centralised to an organisation in which results-driven management is the norm. The challenge is to create a system which is tuned in to the needs of the economy and in which professional bodies and the players within the training system are involved in every stage of the training process. All of the structures that make up the training system should be able to forge this kind of relationship with the business world and to establish assessment and regulation mechanisms that will meet the challenge of ensuring that the products of the training system will be employable.

3. The economic and social dimensions of the employment challenge

In its 12th National Development Plan, covering the period from 2010 to 2014, the Tunisian Government has made employment its top priority. This period will be characterised by a drive to increase the size of the active population, the annual target growth rate being 2.1%.⁷ The additional demand for jobs over this five-year planning period is estimated at about 400 000, which works out at an average of 80 000 a year, slightly down on the annual figure of 85 000 additional jobs for the period from 2007 to 2009. The labour market is characterised by a growing percentage of women in the active population. The number of economically active women rose from almost 757 000 in 2000 to about 996 000 in 2009, which translates into an average annual growth rate of 3.1%.

The job market has come under heavy pressure from the influx of ever-increasing numbers of graduates. In fact, the number of new graduates of institutions of higher education trebled from 21 442 in the 1999-2000 academic year to 65 630 in 2009-2010.⁸

Over the past decade, Tunisia has enjoyed sustained economic growth averaging 5%, thanks to sound economic policies and regular structural reforms. In spite of this robust growth, unemployment remains a persistent problem, registering a fairly high rate of 13.3% in 2009.⁹ The overall rate masks a striking divergence by age, with the youngest age groups in the active population being hardest hit. Unemployment is increasingly affecting the best-educated categories, although low-skilled and semi-skilled workers account for the bulk of the jobless total. The unemployment rate for graduates from institutions of higher education, which was lower than 5% in 1994, has been rising sharply and now stands at 21.9%.¹⁰ This is the most pressing challenge facing the authorities.

The limited expansion of the knowledge-based economy in the process of economic development is tending to create a gap between the supply of well-qualified individuals and the national demand for skills. Economic activities in which knowledge is a major factor accounted for only 6% of all jobs in 2008.¹¹ The predominance of activities with low added value in the formal economy and the existence of an informal economy have been reducing the measurable

⁷ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Development Plan, 2010-2014, Arabic version.

⁸ Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology, *L'enseignement supérieur en chiffres 2009-2010*.

⁹ When revising the methodology for compiling employment and unemployment indicators, the National Statistical Institute (INS) fully adopted the ILO definitions, whereby only persons looking for work may be regarded as unemployed. This revision resulted in a drop in the number of unemployed persons and in the total size of the labour force. Accordingly, the unemployment rate was adjusted downward in 2009 from 14.7% to 13.3% on the basis of the new methodology.

¹⁰ National Statistical Institute, *Enquête Emploi 2009*, 11 June 2010, p. 24 (www.ins.nat.tn).

¹¹ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Tunisian Institute for Competitiveness and Quantitative Studies, *Rapport annuel sur l'économie du savoir 2008*, Tunis, March 2010.

effectiveness of investment in vocational training to the extent that the unemployment rate among holders of diplomas in vocational training had risen to 15.08% by 2009.¹²

Moreover, the education system is not satisfying the needs of the labour market, which is simultaneously producing a surfeit of graduates and a shortage of skilled technicians. Indeed, in 2009 one in four businesses considered itself to be suffering staff shortages, particularly as regards skilled workers and senior technicians.¹³

The education and training system effectively comprises two large self-contained segments if we consider the path along which pupils are led by success at school. This path leads from basic schooling to higher education with an increasingly high risk of jobseeking problems. Vocational training is not an option for successful pupils. Vocational training is for those who give up their schooling because they have no alternative, and successful completion of vocational training is not a pathway to higher education either. It is, in short, an entirely separate segment of the education and training system.

The second segmentation factor is the **absence of a definition of the educational functions of the two components of the education and training system** that would make it possible to identify clearly the specific role of each and the ways in which one complements the other in the process of imparting knowledge and know-how. This breeds not only segmentation between the subsystem of vocational training and the subsystem of academic education but also internal segmentation of the education subsystem into its three stages – primary/lower secondary, upper secondary and higher education. This general structure of the system does not help to channel society's demand for education into vocational training.

In 2009, as part of the effort to promote lifelong learning, continuing training benefited from a new funding scheme for training courses that are initiated by businesses or individuals, a scheme based on training vouchers, tax credits and drawing rights. From the point of view of the federations of professional bodies, the statutory instruments with which these mechanisms were introduced do not reflect the original aim of the reforms, in that the scheme has been difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises, the main elements of the Tunisian economic fabric, to access. Accordingly, these businesses are not sufficiently committed to basic and advanced vocational training in a way that would effectively guarantee the development of the system of lifelong learning.

In general, the absence of clear signals regarding the implementation of sectoral reform programmes has limited the commitment of players to the aims of these programmes and has thereby slowed the reform process to a pace that has not been sufficiently brisk to ensure the integration of Tunisia into the global economy or to increase society's demand for education. All of this has contributed to a low internal and external return on Tunisia's investment in its education and training system, which amounts to about 6.5% to 6.9% of GDP.

Table 1: Education and training expenditure as a percentage of GDP

Year	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Expenditure on primary education, secondary education and training as a percentage of GDP	5.1	5.2	5.1	5	4.8
Expenditure on higher education as a percentage of GDP	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.7
Total	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.6	6.5

Source: www.ins.nat.tn

¹² Finding from a specific analysis of the employment survey by the INS representative on the Torino Process team.

¹³ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Tunisian Institute for Competitiveness and Quantitative Studies, *Rapport annuel sur la compétitivité 2008*, Tunis, October 2009, p. 52.

4. Partnership between the training system and the productive structure: a new strategic focus of vocational-training policy

Since 1996, partnership agreements have been signed with the sectoral federations of professional bodies. These agreements have served as a framework for dialogue focused on training projects. The main innovation introduced in the framework of this public-private partnership has probably been the principle of delegating the role of main contractor¹⁴ for the activities defined by these agreements to professional bodies. This innovation, supported by the French Development Agency, is designed to enable these bodies to contribute systematically to efforts to attune the training structure to real business needs. The expediency of constructing or restructuring any public training centre has become the subject of close cooperation between the Ministry of Vocational Education and Employment and the relevant specialised ministries and federations of professional bodies. The aim is to involve all stakeholders, so as to ensure that the training courses provided by a centre match the skills required by the national economic strategy.

The creation of training-support units within professional bodies serves to capitalise on their involvement in the channelling of the training system and to promote partnership between businesses and vocational-training centres.

The culture of partnership that is being developed in this way continues to grow in strength and to spread into the various sectors of economic activity – industry, agriculture and the service sector – on the basis of an action plan. It is beginning to spread to universities through the joint establishment of degrees in applied disciplines.

As part of the implementation of the President's electoral programme, the Ministry established development contracts in 2010 for partnerships between the training system and professional bodies in the various areas of economic activity. These contracts focus on the practical involvement of the federations of professional bodies in the training process. They are the prelude to the introduction of results-driven management.

5. Strengthening public-private partnership and promoting results-driven management: two challenges on the way to more internally and externally effective vocational training

The partnership model in which the representative bodies of trades and professions play a primarily advisory role has reached its limits. It is observable that the professionals are reluctant to show any more commitment to the present partnership model as long as their role in establishing and applying the rules for the organisation and management of training centres is not more clearly defined. The centralised administration of these training facilities is at the root of two problems:

- the reluctance of the representative bodies of trades and professions to become more heavily involved in the training process, and
- the low educational value of sandwich courses in practice, which is due to training centres having neither the organisation nor the resources to develop their relations with businesses.

In a parallel move, the Ministry is pursuing its policy of reforming the system of goal-based budgetary management, the aim of which is to replace a resources-driven approach with a results-driven approach. Its aim is to increase the effectiveness of the system in terms of its social and economic impact by rationalising and optimising the use of public resources. The

¹⁴ The *Maître d'Ouvrage Délégué* or 'delegated main contractor' is the term used to designate a body commissioned by the Ministry to implement projects funded on its behalf by the French Development Agency. Each training project has several delegated main contractors, namely the Tunisian Vocational Training Agency (ATFP), the National Centre for Training of Trainers and Training Course Design (Cenaffif) and the bodies representing the relevant trades and professions in Tunisia (Financing Agreement dated 23 April 2009 between the French Development Agency and the Tunisian Republic – CTN 124 01 A).

Ministry wishes to provide itself with a budgetary system covered by a full set of numerical quantity and quality indicators. These indicators will have to reflect the changes that are expected as a result of the budgetary breakdown into programmes and actions. A taxonomy of indicators has been devised for this purpose, based on the various structures of the training system; these indicators will be used to monitor the implementation of the vocational-training strategy for the period from 2010 to 2014.

6. Breakthrough in the reform of instructional practice

The reforms also changed the way in which training programmes are designed and delivered. In 2009, 61% of specialisations were covered by target outcomes defined in accordance with the skills-based approach with the aid of methodological support provided through international cooperation. A total of 84% of trainees are undergoing in-house training in the form of sandwich courses or apprenticeships.¹⁵

The National Centre for Training of Trainers and Training Course Design (Cenaffif) can boast a full spectrum of course-design resources, ranging from assistance in the formulation of a skills requirement to audits of training centres and including the compilation of curricula and of various organisational and assessment guides for training staff as well as instructor training, training and coaching of management teams and training of in-house tutors.

Trainee assessment is thus based on an assessment guide which is one of the tools used to establish the skills-based approach in training centres. Some centres have managed to capitalise on their know-how with regard to the practice of sandwich-course training and in particular to institutionalise it.¹⁶ They play a very active developmental role, which enables them not only to provide young trainees with placements but also to organise frequent activities in the field of continuing training. The creation of a National Quality Standard for Vocational Training (*Référentiel National Qualité de la Formation Professionnelle – RNQFP*)¹⁷ as a national quality benchmark for vocational-training establishments has served to encourage training centres to improve the quality of their services on the basis of precise and transparent criteria.

Under the Vocational Training Act 2008,¹⁸ the system of vocational training and all of its components in the public and private sectors are now the subject of periodic internal and external assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to measure objectively what trainees have learned, how training staff are performing against the relevant educational, administrative and technical standards and how efficient training establishments are when measured against quantitative and qualitative indicators. The supervision and coordination of these assessments will be the responsibility of a national committee for assessment and quality assurance in vocational education, which is to be established in 2011.

Training standards are currently being defined on the basis of a general reference framework published in August 2010, the starting point for which were the descriptors of qualification levels listed in the national classification of qualifications.¹⁹ Every public or private training establishment wishing to provide a training course in a specialisation for which standards have been defined must obtain the authorisation of the ministry responsible for vocational training, which takes its decision after consulting the Permanent Coordination Committee for Vocational Training. The certification must be based on a framework that ensures the transparency and educational effectiveness of the course.

¹⁵ Ministry of Education and Training, *Statistiques de l'éducation et de la formation*, session 2008-2009, p. 32.

¹⁶ Fifteen centres have ISO certification.

¹⁷ Sixty centres under the supervisory authority of the Ministry of Vocational Education and Employment, representing about 45% of all training centres, have a conformity level of 70% or higher.

¹⁸ Statute No 2008-10 of 11 February 2008.

¹⁹ Decree No 2139 of 8 July 2009

7. Optimum grasp of educational concepts and methods by the maximum number of stakeholders – a challenge still being faced

The establishment of these curricula in training centres, however, is patchy. The high percentage of trainees on sandwich courses is often achieved at the cost of the educational quality of in-house training. Most trainers have not grasped the educational concepts and methods underlying the skills-based approach and are not sufficiently involved in course design. Accordingly, they cannot embrace the idea that the work of a trainer should now be performed at both the training centre and the place of work rather than solely within the training centre. Continued adherence to centralised administration of the training system has not encouraged managers to devote time and effort to the assimilation of the concepts and methods of the quality-based approach.

The multidimensional changes heralded by the reform of vocational training take account of the international development of knowledge in the fields of teacher training, corporate administration and human-resources management. These changes require operators in the training system to alter the ways in which they perform their training or managerial duties.

Consequently, strengthening the capacity of players and structures to assimilate the concepts underlying the reforms will be one of the strategic priorities of the next stage in the development of vocational training. It is a matter of improving the practical ability of those operating in the various sectors of the economy to express their sectoral skill requirements and the ability of the training system to ensure that training organised jointly with businesses is delivered in an educationally sound manner. Operators must be professionals, which means that they must diagnose the specific needs of learners and companies and devise appropriate responses to those needs. At the same time, more decision-making responsibility must be transferred to training centres in order to enhance their initiative and their responsiveness. These efforts must be accompanied by parallel moves to focus funding instruments in the realm of training on results and innovation.

The mobilisation of international cooperation²⁰ in this field serves a strategic purpose. The most innovative form of support for this transformation process is the local expertise that is made available to Tunisian operators with the aid of the country's overseas cooperation partners. This support consists in establishing long-term contacts between these operators and foreign counterparts who are well versed in public-private partnership, the implementation of the skills-based approach and the educational practice of in-house training in the form of sandwich courses and apprenticeships. Thanks to this local provision of expertise, the reform programmes have become a veritable 'academy of change'.

8. A long way to go in widening the range of routes to employability

The image of vocational training in Tunisian society does not yet reflect the achievements in that field over the last decade, and its status is lower than it should be in a society that aspires to develop a competitive economy.

In Tunisia, the determination of the subjects taught to any pupil is regarded as a planning instrument. The allocation of pupils to courses is based on examination results and the number of places available in subject classes. There is no such thing as a system of careers information and advice enabling pupils to learn how to make career choices. Pupils are allocated to vocational training only if they have dropped out of school, and there is often a time gap between school and training. In fact, more than half of all vocational trainees enrolled in 2008 had dropped

²⁰ Particular emphasis has been placed on the development of local expertise in cooperation with the French Development Agency, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the European Training Foundation (ETF).

out of school between one and five years before.²¹ This makes them difficult to teach, especially for trainers with inadequate training in instructional technique.

There is, moreover, some confusion between the educational function of schooling in technical and technological subjects and that of vocational training. Technical classes in school do not prepare pupils for a particular trade but provide them with a basic range of generic technical knowledge and skills that are needed in several trades. The role of vocational training is to build on these basic skills and to focus on other very specific skills that are required for a particular trade. The reform of vocational training is based on this principle of complementary educational inputs. The confusion between the two types of learning poses linkage problems between the school system and the system of vocational training.

One of the structural problems of the education and training system is its self-containment, in the sense that the only point of entry is at the base of the pyramid and that any decision to opt out of the system is necessarily final.²² The possibility of leaving the system with the prospect of being able to develop towards the top of the qualifications pyramid, for example by combining employment with further study, is still a very difficult route to map out. Besides, an individual's right to receive training is not framed in employment legislation in terms that promote lifelong learning. Accordingly, lifelong learning is not yet part of the institutional structure of the education and training system. Nevertheless, the Ministry responsible for vocational education has established a National Classification of Qualifications and has also launched a pilot project in preparation for the creation of a scheme for the validation of occupational experience as an element of the vocational-training system.

Only five to six per cent of trainees enrolled on certificate courses attend vocational-training establishments operated by the private sector. The policy of reform in the realm of vocational training recommends promotion of the private sector but has not provided it with a clear vision of its role in the reform process or of its position in relation to the public sector. Vocational training delivered by the private sector should be more vigorously encouraged, particularly in areas where it is obviously able to respond more quickly to satisfy a wider range of demand from businesses and young people.

The number of companies holding training courses for their staff and the number of individual course participations rose in the period between 2003 and 2008. However, the average number of individual participations²³ in continuing-training courses per company fell sharply over the same period.

Table 2: Development of continuing training

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of companies (a)	1 708	1 699	4 497	3 832	4 891	5 756
Number of individual participations by staff (b)	121 587	102 265	171 772	166 356	186 823	191 963
Average number of participations [(b) ÷ (a)]	71	60	38	43	38	33

Source of figures (a) and (b): www.cnfcpp.nat.tn (archives in Arabic)

9. A new economic strategy to meet the employment challenge

Integration into the global economy and technological innovation are the two strands of the economic strategy adopted for the period from 2010 to 2014 with a view to achieving a higher level of growth and a greater wealth of skilled jobs.

²¹ With the support of the GTZ, an information and management system for vocational training, known as Simform, is being tested. The date of departure from the education system and the date of enrolment in vocational training are among the collected data.

²² National Consultation on Employment, 2008: report by Committee No 3 on education, training and employment, pp. 21-23 (in French).

²³ The available statistical data give the total number of participations in continuing-training courses. Individuals are counted more than once if they attend more than one course.

An industrial strategy for the period up to 2016, entitled *Tunisia, the Euromed Valley*, has been adopted. It reflects the ambition to make Tunisia a pivotal element of the Euro-Mediterranean economy and to shift the focus of Tunisian businesses towards more wealth-creating activities. This strategy is based on the following three growth areas:

The first area is the **upgrading of Tunisia's historical industries**, namely textiles and clothing, leather and footwear, farming and food, mechanical engineering, construction materials and phosphate production. At the same time, efforts are being made to **diversify Tunisia's industrial fabric and foster the emergence of new industries**, that is to say industries which have only begun to develop in Tunisia in the last ten to fifteen years, such as the electronics industry, vehicle and aircraft components, technical plastics, pharmaceuticals and the paramedical industry. This category also includes business services, such as information and communication technology (ICT) and service centres. Finally, there is a need to pave the way for the next wave of industries and businesses that will regenerate the economic fabric of Tunisia by promoting the creation of **cross-fertilisation nodes** between two or more Tunisian industries, one such example being mechatronics, which incorporates both mechanical and electronic engineering.

At the same time, Tunisia is preparing to liberalise services and to develop service exports. Its ambition is to become a global trade and service centre by developing its competitiveness and appeal in two service categories:

- structural services such as transport, tourism and trade;
- services with high added value such as health care, higher education, design, telecommunications, information technology and industrial, personal and family services.

The aim of the employment strategy is to create 415 000 jobs over the period from 2010 to 2014, which represents an annual average of 83 000, and so reduce the unemployment rate by one and a half percentage points.

Success in this ambitious economic and social challenge will depend to a great extent on the capacity of all components of the system – primary, secondary, vocational and higher education – to develop human resources so as to create an effective, efficient and fair system that serves the cause of economic and social development.

To this end, the vocational-training sector needs to initiate a new stage in the reform process in order to perform its supporting role in the implementation of this economic strategy, which is heavily dependent on the quality of human resources, and particularly in order to transform economic opportunities into job opportunities, thereby creating a link between the economic dimension of development and its social dimension.

10. The presidential electoral programme: showing the way to overcome challenges and advance to a new stage in the development of vocational training

The strategy for the implementation of the President's electoral programme focuses on the achievement of the following five specific mutually complementary objectives, which are designed to support the national employment policy and increase productivity:²⁴

First objective: Enhancing the capacity of economic sectors to formulate their skill requirements. The development of the business community's receptiveness and its ability to identify skill requirements will make it possible to keep updating the national strategy for the development of human resources with due regard to the new national and international context. To ensure that the best possible match is made between companies' skill requirements and the output of the training system, tools will be developed or improved; these measures will include compiling sectoral directories of occupations, steering the regional training effort and establishing training-support units within professional bodies. These tools will underpin the pursuit of 'the development of training in new and promising sectors and the modernisation of training centres'.

²⁴ Speech delivered by Mohamed Agrebi, Minister of Vocational Training and Employment, at a regional workshop held by the French Development Agency (AFD) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in Tunis on 18 and 19 October 2010 on the sustainable and effective development of technical and vocational skills.

Second objective: Guaranteeing that learners' acquired skills satisfy corporate demand. The creation of a regulatory framework based on a training system firmly rooted in occupational reality will have a key role to play in the implementation of the training process. The dissemination of the quality-based approach will be ensured by the growing number of centres fulfilling the RNQFP – the National Quality Standard for Vocational Training. Trainers' skills will be developed through the adoption of international standards, through greater receptiveness to skills that exist in other countries and through the inclusion of occupational experience in the employment criteria for trainers.

Third objective: Improving the quality of company in-house training. Apprenticeship as a form of training will be promoted, and the capacity of centres to arrange courses with companies will be enhanced. The commitment of vocational-training centres to a quality-based approach will be developed at the rate indicated in the following table:

Table 3: Development of the number of centres involved in the process of ISO certification and RNQFP conformity

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Centres with ISO 9001 certification	20	25	30	35	40
Renewal of ISO certification after three years	4	3	8	9	8
Centres achieving 70% conformity with the National Quality Standard for Vocational Training (RNQFP)	60	70	75	80	85
Training centres involved in the process of achieving RNQFP conformity	80	85	90	95	100

Source: MFPE, DGNE: establishment of the quality-based approach – implementation of the President's electoral programme, December 2009 (in Arabic).

Fourth objective: Adapting the governance of the vocational-training system in response to national and international economic trends. This strategic objective will be achieved by organising the system in such a way as to ensure that it can respond to the economic environment and by introducing the concept of public-private partnership. The establishment of a system of integrated management and assessment of vocational training will help to improve the governance of the vocational-training system.

The task is to establish institutional mechanisms to promote a more uniform set of rules with a reformist rationale so that players within the system can influence vocational-training policy, resource allocation and service provision. A system providing precise, reliable, continuously updated and sufficiently detailed information will be established, so that effective use can be made of incentives designed to improve the results of vocational training.

Fifth and last objective: Raising the status of the vocational-training option and promoting lifelong learning. To this end, provision has been made for several measures, the aims of which are as follows:

- Making vocational training an attractive option, particularly by creating an engineering option within the vocational-training system, centres of training excellence and a careers information and guidance system.
- Guaranteeing, from the lower secondary level, more effective and flexible linkage between the general system of technical and technological education and the vocational-training system. In pursuit of this objective, it is intended to establish a system of careers information and guidance and to improve the quality of technical education at the lower and upper secondary levels with a view to making it educationally complementary to vocational training.
- Linking initial training and continuing training so as to ensure the effective development of the system of lifelong learning. A new pathway will be created to provide for the validation of qualifications and of knowledge and skills acquired through practical experience.

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