



BELIZE

DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET)

Prepared by Ginger SOFRECO December 2024

**Revised by Dr. Paulette Dunn-Pierre
Regional TVET Specialist January 2025**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	3
GLOSSARY	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	8
1.0. SECTION ONE	10
1.1. INTRODUCTION	10
1.2. Background and context	10
1.2.1. The socioeconomic context	10
1.2.2. The TVET context for the policy	14
1.3. Drafting the TVET policy	15
1.4. Rationale and purpose	16
1.5. Target audience	17
2. SECTION TWO	19
2.0. VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES	19
2.1. Vision and mission statements	19
2.2. Values and guiding principles	19
3. SECTION THREE	22
3.0. POLICY THEMES AND OBJECTIVES	22
3.1. Governance, management & regulatory framework	22
Policy statements:	22
3.2. Sustainable financing	23
Policy statements	24
Policy objectives	24
3.3. Labour market information (LMI)	24
Policy statements	25
Policy objectives	25
3.4. Quality assurance & accreditation	25
Policy statements	26
Policy objectives:	26
3.5. Partnership and collaboration	27
Policy statements	27
Policy objectives	27
3.6. Programme development, training & certification	28
Policy statements	28

Policy objectives	29
3.7. Human resources development (HRD).....	29
3.7.1. Training and development of TVET professionals and practitioners	30
Policy statements.....	30
Policy objectives	31
3.7.2. Instructor employment and management	32
Policy statements.....	32
Policy objectives	32
3.8 TVET facilities, equipment and materials.....	32
Policy statements.....	33
Policy objectives	33
3.9 Access, equity, & inclusion.....	34
Policy statements.....	34
Policy objectives	35
3.10 Marketing and promotion	35
Policy statements.....	36
Policy objectives	36
3.11 Monitoring and evaluation (M&E).....	37
Policy statements.....	37
Policy objectives	37
4. SECTION FOUR	39
4.0. CONCLUSION	39
5. APPENDICES	40
5.0. Appendix 1: Proposed structure and functions of a National Training Agency (NTA)	40
Vision and mission statement of the NTA	40
Board of directors	40
Bylaws and governance principles	41
Sector skills councils (SSCs).....	41
NTA secretariat	41
The responsibility of the NTA.....	42

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BBTE	Belize Board of Teacher Education	MoE	Ministry of Education
BEMIS	Belize Education Management Information System	MSME	Micro, small and medium enterprises
BESPlan	Belize Education Sector Plan	NAC	National Accreditation Council
BESRP	Belize Education Sector Reform Programme	NCTVET	National Council for Technical and Vocational Education & Training
BzNVQ	Belize National Vocational Qualifications	NGO	non-governmental organization
Bz NQF	Belize National Qualifications Framework	NOS	National occupational standards
C3, C4	TVET Certificate 3, 4	NQF	National Qualifications Framework
CANTA	Caribbean Association of National Training Authorities	NTA	National training agency/authority
CARICOM	Caribbean Community	NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
CBE	Competency-based education	OJT	On-the-job training
CBET	Competency-based education and training	PCG	Policy Consultation Group
CET	Centre for Employment Training	PDT	Policy Development Team
COL	Commonwealth of Learning	PLAR	Prior learning assessment and recognition
CQAF	CANTA Quality Assurance Framework	PPP	Public-private partnership
CSME	Caribbean Single Market and Economy	QA	Quality assurance
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualification	ROS	Regional Occupational Standards
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council	SIB	The Statistical Institute of Belize
GoB	Government of Belize	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
GS	Ginger SOFRECO	SSC	Sector Skills Council
HRD	Human resource development	THS	Technical high school
ILO	International Labour Organization	TLI	Teacher Learning Institute
ISO	International Organization for Standardization	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ITVET	Institute for Technical and Vocational Education and Training	UB	University of Belize
LMI	Labour market information	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation	WEF	World Economic Forum

GLOSSARY

Accreditation	The process of granting recognition to an institution or programme of study to indicate that it has met or exceeded pre-determined standards (CARICOM 2015).
Articulation	A systematic coordination of programmes between an educational institution and other educational institutions and agencies, designed to ensure the efficient and effective movement of learners among those institutions and agencies while guaranteeing the learners opportunities for continuous advancement in learning.
Assessor	A trained individual, authorized to evaluate or assess competencies of a candidate (person) applying for certification.
Audit	A systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining objective evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled (ISO9000:2015).
Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ)	A regional award that represents the achievement of a set of competencies that have been regionally endorsed as representing the work practices of an occupation and is consistent with the certification levels within the Regional Qualification Framework (NCTVET 2022).
Competency Based Education and Training (CBET)	An approach that moves education from focusing on what academics believe graduates need to know (teacher-focused) to what students need to know and be able to do in varying and complex situations (student and/or workplace-focused). CBET focuses on outcomes (competencies) linked to workforce needs, as defined by employers and the profession (CARICOM 2015).
Disability	The UNCRPD defines persons with disabilities as “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (Article 1). ¹
Discrimination	The practice of treating somebody or a particular group in society less fairly than others ² . The UNCRPD provides a specific definition in relation to disability: Discrimination on the basis of disability means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation ³ .
Evidence-based decision-making	A process for making decisions about a programme, practice, or policy that is grounded in the best available research and informed by contextual and experiential evidence from the field.
External verifier	A person contracted or employed by the Awarding Body to carry out verification activities of the BzNVQ/CVQ provision in an Approved Centre (including equal opportunities, access and health and safety) to ensure that centres approved to offer the awards are consistently judging candidates equally, fairly and against the occupational standards.
Fit-for-purpose	Describes a quality that ensures a product, service, structure or process meets the specific expectations and requirements set by stakeholders, making it capable of performing its intended function adequately. It emphasizes practicality over perfection.
Good governance	Good governance is an overarching concept with 8 characteristics that for TVET could be described as ⁴ :

¹ UN, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol*.

² European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, *Glossary*.

³ UN, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol*.

⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/good-governance.pdf>

	<p>Participatory: Stakeholders, including students, educators, employers, and community members, are involved in TVET decision-making.</p> <p>Consensus-Oriented: Efforts are made to build consensus among stakeholders to address their needs in TVET initiatives.</p> <p>Accountable: TVET providers are accountable for their actions, ensuring they meet stakeholder expectations and deliver quality training.</p> <p>Transparent: TVET processes are open, with accessible information on policies and outcomes to foster stakeholder trust.</p> <p>Responsive: TVET programs adapt to the changing market and community needs, aligning with employer demands and learner aspirations.</p> <p>Effective and Efficient: Governance ensures resources are used efficiently to provide high-quality training and successful employment outcomes.</p> <p>Equitable and Inclusive: Good governance promotes equitable access to TVET for all, especially marginalized groups.</p> <p>Rule of Law: TVET governance follows laws and regulations, protecting stakeholder rights and ensuring legal operation.</p>
Inclusive education	GC4 defines inclusive education as “the result of a process of continuing and proactive commitment to eliminating barriers impeding the right to education, together with changes to culture, policy, and practice of regular schools to accommodate and effectively include all students” (Article 10d) . Inclusive education aims to reform the education system to ensure that policies, cultures, and practices respond to diversity and address the rights and needs of all children, including those with disabilities. All children have the right to an inclusive quality education alongside their peers, delivered in their local community schools.
Income-generating	An investment or business activity that makes money
Income-generating activity	An activity carried out to generate revenues is used to ensure the financial sustainability of an institution or organization.
Indigenous people	Indigenous peoples are distinct social and cultural groups that share collective ancestral ties to the lands and natural resources where they live, occupy or from which they have been displaced ⁵ . Ethnic minorities are non-dominant groups which are usually numerically less than the majority population of a state or region regarding their ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics and who (if only implicitly) maintain solidarity with their own culture, traditions, religion or language ⁶ . Within Belize, the following groups are considered to be indigenous or ethnic minorities: Mestizo, Creole, Maya, Garifuna and Mennonite.
Industry attachment	The umbrella term for industry furloughs is done by instructors, as well as work experience, apprenticeship, and OJT, typically done by trainees.
Internal verifier	An internal verifier (IV) is a person directly responsible for the quality assurance of the assessment process in an approved centre and any of its satellite sites where candidates are assessed, (CARICOM 2015).
Labour market	The availability of jobs and workers in relation to supply and demand. It is the relationship of supply and demand regarding workers and jobs.
Marginalized groups	Marginalized groups are populations that experience social, economic, or political exclusion, often due to systemic inequalities. This includes individuals who are disadvantaged by factors such as disability, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or geographic location.
Migrant	An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common, lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether

⁵<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/indigenouspeoples#:~:text=Indigenous%20Peoples%20are%20distinct%20social,which%20they%20have%20been%20displaced.>

⁶https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary/glossary/minority_en

	within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons ⁷ .
National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)	A local work-based award achieved through assessment and training. An award that represents the achievement of a set of competencies that define the core work of an occupational area, the standards for which are developed at local level following procedures outlined by CANTA.
Occupational Standards (OS)	These are the written descriptions of the industry agreed standards for competent performance in an occupational area. The standards are presented as a number of Units containing elements, each of which has three (3) parts – criteria, range and explanations. Competences which apply to job roles or occupations are given in the form of statements of performance, knowledge and the evidence required to confirm competence.
Performance-based budgeting	It is a way to allocate resources to achieve specific objectives based on institutional capacity, programme goals and measured results.
Public-private partnership	Collaboration between a government agency and a private-sector company that can be used to finance, build and operate projects.
Quality assurance	A planned, well documented administered and systematic process of checking to ensure that a product or service is meeting and maintaining specific requirements (standards) in a consistent manner. The ultimate goal is to improve quality, thereby promoting confidence among stakeholders.
Reasonable accommodation	Reasonable accommodation means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure persons with disabilities and other needs the enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms ⁸ .
Registration	The process of approving an organization or institution to offer TVET. To be registered, the training provider/centre must meet or exceed rigorous standards for quality and effectiveness as defined by the NTA.
Regulatory framework	A set of rules, practices, and processes must be followed when investing in sustainable projects and managing environmental risks. Organizations follow these guidelines to meet regulatory requirements, improve processes, strengthen security, and achieve other business objectives.
Refugees	Refugees are people who have fled their countries to escape conflict, violence or persecution and have sought safety in another country ⁹ .
Segregation	Segregation is a term used to refer to practices where groups of children are purposefully separated from the majority because of difference. For example, children with disabilities can be classified according to their impairment and allocated to a school designed to respond to that particular impairment.
Self-governing	The ability of an institution or group to have control over its own affairs, exercising all necessary functions of regulation without intervention from an external authority.
Social partners	Representatives of management and labour (employers, business sectors and trade unions), and in some contexts, public authorities, that engage in social dialogue.
Trainee	Any individual participating in an organized learning program targeting a particular job or profession
Training fund	A dedicated pool of financial resources outside normal government budgetary channels for the purpose of developing productive skills for work.

⁷ <https://www.iom.int/who-migrant-0>

⁸ UN, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol.

⁹ <https://www.unhcr.org/refugees>

Trauma-impacted students	Students who have experienced trauma. A traumatic event is a frightening, dangerous or violent event that poses bodily or psychological harm or is a threat to a student's life or a loved one. Trauma can disrupt a student's behavior and emotional wellbeing, academic progress and health ¹⁰ .
TVET	Those aspects of the educational process involve, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic life (UNESCO).
TVET Provider	An organization or individual that provides education and training services. This includes organizations specifically set up for this purpose (public , government aided or private organizations or individuals) and employers that provide training as a part of their business activities. It is a broader term than TVET Institutions which specifically refers to formal educational establishments that provide TVET, such as vocational schools, technical colleges, and polytechnics. While all TVET institutions are TVET providers, not all TVET providers are classified as institutions.
TVET systems	Organized educational frameworks informed by labour market intelligence, designed to provide relevant training and assessment experiences underpinned by sound competencies and career planning for various career options. In most instances, these systems include a combination of institution-based and work-based training arrangements.
Under-represented groups	Under-represented groups refer to specific demographics within the broader population that have lower participation rates in TVET compared to their overall numbers in society. This term emphasizes the disparity between potential and actual representation within vocational training systems
Verifier	An individual who monitors the training process and products of a system to ensure that the appropriate training assessment criteria for the competency of skills are consistent throughout all assessment activities.
Workforce	The people engaged in or available for work, either in a country or in a particular company or industry.

¹⁰ <https://www.apa.org/ed/schools/primer/trauma>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Belize's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) policy is built on universal principles that ensure quality, accessibility, and responsiveness to labour market demands. The policy aims to transform TVET into a world-class sector for skills development, social inclusion and economic growth. To achieve this, the policy focuses on eleven (11) critical thematic areas:

Governance, Management and Regulatory Framework

Effective governance and a robust regulatory framework are essential to ensure coordination, accountability, and alignment of TVET with the needs of the business sector, employers and national development goals. The policy calls for establishing a national training authority (NTA) responsible for oversight of policy, quality, equity, relevancy and efficiency of the TVET system.

Sustainable Financing

TVET sustainability depends on a diversified and equitable financing model. The policy emphasizes the need for an adequate and sustainable financing modality as a crucial prerequisite for the TVET system. This funding should address the challenges facing TVET and ensure appropriate infrastructure, staffing, and programme development resources.

Labour Market Information

Reliable labour market data must inform a responsive TVET system. The policy mandates creating a dynamic labour market information system (LMIS) that provides up-to-date information on skills demand, job-matching systems, labour market needs, and future workforce needs to guide programme development.

Quality Assurance and Accreditation

Quality assurance and accreditation processes are critical for maintaining high standards across all TVET providers. The policy introduces a national training and certification framework for monitoring, assessing, and accrediting TVET providers to ensure that programmes meet industry and academic standards.

Partnership and Collaborations

Collaboration with industry, government, and international organizations is vital to a successful TVET system. Partnerships are necessary to provide relevant insights, support practical training, enhance employability, and drive economic growth. Importantly, partnerships must be forged with the private sector to ensure that TVET maintains its relevance, currency and authenticity. This policy encourages stronger partnerships to align TVET programmes and curricula with industry needs, provide practical training opportunities, and foster innovation in programme delivery.

Programme Development, Training and Certification

TVET programmes must be relevant, flexible, and competency based. The policy promotes the continuous development of programmes responsive to current and future labour market needs. It

also supports national and regional certification systems that recognize, validate and certify the skills acquired by learners.

Human Resources Development

The success of TVET depends on building the capacity of both human and physical resources. The policy emphasizes training and professional development for TVET practitioners and professionals, alongside supporting investment towards the development of the economy.

Tools, Equipment and Materials

By prioritizing and investing in tools, equipment and materials, TVET providers can enhance their ability to provide high-quality, relevant training programmes, ultimately contributing to national economic growth and development. Modern facilities, equipment, and technology ensure high-quality learning and training environments for training providers.

Access, Equity, and Inclusion

Ensuring equitable access to TVET reduces inequality and enhances social mobility. The policy promotes an understanding of community needs, the removal of barriers to participation for marginalized and under-represented groups, including females, people with disabilities, and those from rural areas, migrants, indigenous, trauma-impacted individuals, ensuring inclusivity across all demographics.

Marketing and Promotion

The policy calls for improving the perception of TVET as a viable and valuable educational path. It calls for a national promotion and marketing campaign to rebrand TVET as a high-quality, career-oriented option that offers learners a pathway to employment and entrepreneurship.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation are essential to track the progress and impact of TVET initiatives. The policy outlines a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system that assesses the effectiveness of programmes and partnerships, ensuring continuous improvement and accountability.

In conclusion, this policy provides a strategic and comprehensive approach to advancing TVET in Belize, making it a key driver of economic growth and social development.

1.0. SECTION ONE

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is defined by UNESCO as “those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic life.” These competencies are now recognized as indispensable for meaningful participation in work and life.

TVET is a diverse education and training subsector comprising formal and non-formal learning. It enables people to develop competencies from basic to advanced levels. It occurs across various institutional settings, including schools, public and private vocational and technical institutes, post-secondary and tertiary institutions, community projects, at home, and in the workplace.

TVET is pivotal in Belize’s national development strategy, particularly in addressing employment and productivity challenges. Historically, the sector has been stigmatized and underfunded, with a disconnect between TVET programmes and the needs of the labour market. This mismatch has contributed to a significant skills gap, limiting the country’s ability to compete in key sectors such as tourism, agriculture, construction, and information technology. As Belize moves toward economic diversification and integration into regional and global markets, a modernized, relevant, and well-funded TVET system has become more pressing.

This policy aims to provide a high-level framework for improving the governance, financing, quality, and accessibility of TVET in Belize, enabling the sector to contribute more effectively to national economic growth and development goals. Through enhanced oversight, streamlined funding, and strategic partnerships with the private sector, this policy will ensure that Belize’s TVET system is responsive to the changing demands of the labour market and fosters sustainable economic advancement.

1.2. Background and context

1.2.1. The socioeconomic context

Belize is home to several ethnic groups, each contributing uniquely to the nation’s rich cultural heritage. The country’s identity has been influenced by the ancient Maya civilization, Creole culture and contributions from the Chinese, the East Indians, Europeans, Garifuna, Lebanese, Mennonite and Mestizo communities.

Historically, Belize’s economy was heavily reliant on forest products and, later on, agricultural products such as sugar, citrus products, bananas and farmed shrimps. In the 1990s, tourism witnessed significant expansion, contributing to robust real growth for the following decade. By 2019, tourism accounted for over 40% of Belize’s gross domestic product (GDP).

Today, Belize is classified as an upper-middle-income country with an estimated population of 411,000 (mid-2024).¹¹ Approximately 50 percent of the population are women, and around 64 percent are under 30 years old, making it a country with a young population¹². In 2023, its GDP was approximately USD 3.28 billion, reflecting a 4.7% growth in real GDP compared to the previous year. This growth was driven by tourism, construction, retail and wholesale trade, transport, and business process outsourcing. Belize relies heavily on tourism and agriculture as its main sources of foreign exchange.

The GDP per capita for Belize in 2023 was around USD 6,855, marking an increase from previous years and showing a post-COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery.¹³ Despite the positive economic development, the GDP is still below the average GDP per capita in the Central American Integration System¹⁴ of USD 8,860, which is significantly lower than the average GDP per capita in CARICOM countries of USD 14,771.¹⁵ Recently however, the minimum wage was increased to \$5.00 per hour.

As of January 1, 2025, a new income tax exemption threshold was implemented, raising the threshold from \$26,000 to \$29,000. This change means that workers earning less than \$29,000 annually will no longer be required to pay income tax. As a result, over 3000 employees earning below this limit will benefit from exempt income tax payments, which is a significant advantage for those within this income range.

Tourism is a significant contributor to GDP, reflecting its importance to the economy. It has been a critical driver of growth, particularly following the recovery from the pandemic. As tourist arrivals near pre-pandemic levels, it may be expected that the sector's contribution to the growth in GDP will decline. Although agriculture's importance is declining, it remains the second-largest contributor to Belize's GDP. It is estimated that some 40,000 persons are dependent on the sugar industry alone. Construction, retail and wholesale trade, and transport also make notable contributions.

Belize has a significant number of micro, small & medium enterprises (MSMEs) which comprise approximately 90 percent of the enterprises, with micro-enterprises accounting for more than 70 percent. The MSMEs generate around 50 percent of the country's jobs.¹⁶

In April 2024, the labour force was estimated at 170,853 people. The unemployment rate had declined to 3.4 percent in 2023, with expectations of it remaining stable as the economy

¹¹ Statistical Institute of Belize, <https://sib.org.bz/statistics/population/>

¹² Statistical Institute of Belize, <https://sib.org.bz/statistics/population/>

¹³ IMF Executive Board Concludes 2024 Article IV Consultation with Belize. May 15, 2024.

<https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2024/05/15/pr24163-imf-concludes-2024-article-iv-consultation-with-belize>

¹⁴ Belize's location and history have positioned it as a member of two regional trading blocs: the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Central American Integration System (SICA). Established on February 13, 1991, following the signing of the Tegucigalpa Protocol on December 13, 1991, SICA is a regional organization focused on promoting political, social, cultural, and economic integration among its member states. Its goal is to enhance cooperation and development in Central America and the Caribbean while addressing regional challenges. SICA's eight member states are Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

¹⁵ The calculation is based on data from the World Bank. 2022. "GDP per capita (US\$ current)".

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD> It is essential to note that (i) Montserrat is a British Overseas Territory, and its data is not included, and (ii) the accounting methods used by the World Bank and Statistical Institute of Belize may differ. Even with this in mind, the general differences remain noteworthy.

¹⁶ National MSME Strategy and Roadmap for Belize, BELTRAIDE - UNDP 2022

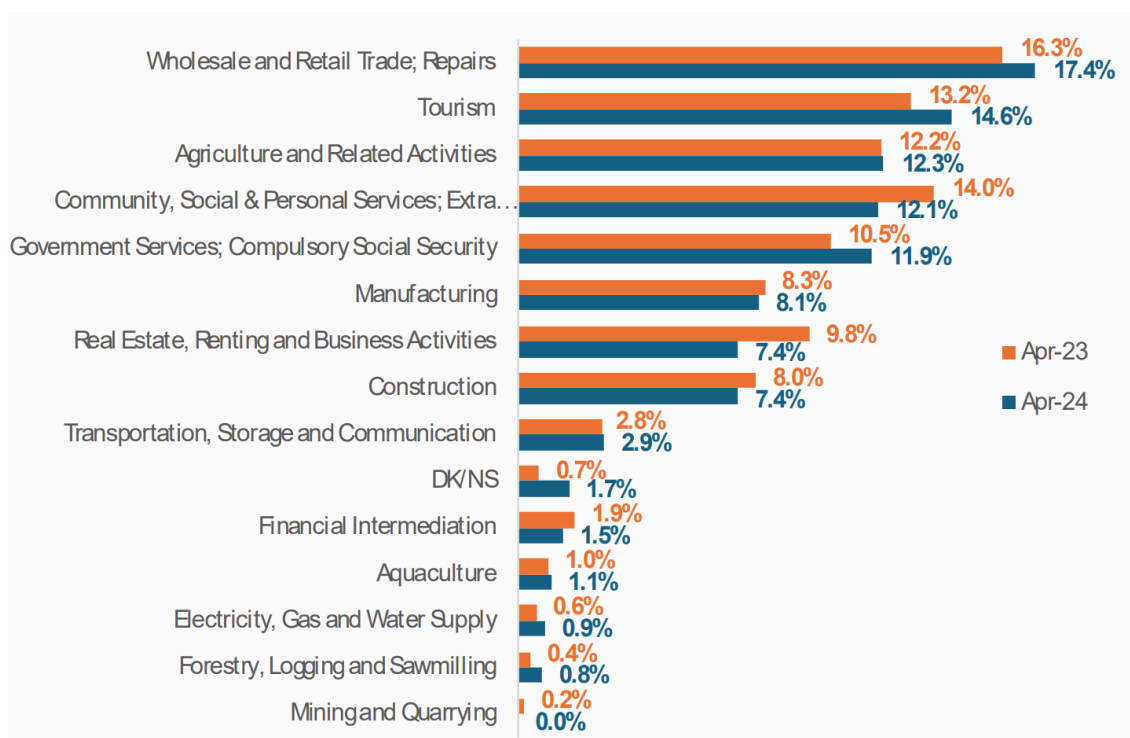
approaches full employment.¹⁷ The overall labour force participation rate stood at 57.4 percent, reflecting a modest decline of 0.7 percent from April 2023.

In April 2024, there were still significant gender gaps among adults (25 and older), with only 48.3 percent of women participating compared to 81.5 percent of men. This gap highlights ongoing challenges for female participation, likely due to domestic responsibilities and family care.¹⁸ To address these gaps, the Government of Belize (GoB) is piloting a subsidized day-care and training programme in the Cayo District to increase female labour force participation. If successful, the initiative will be expanded to other parts of the country, which could have implications for TVET.¹⁹

In April 2024, the labour force participation rate among youth (ages 14 to 24) was 42.3 percent, with significant gender differences: only 34.3 percent of young women participated, compared to 50.3 percent of young men.²⁰

National statistics show that the main sectors contributing to the GDP also employ a significant number of people.

Figure 1: Share of employed persons by main sector (April 2023 – April 2024)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize. Labour Force Survey Release for April 2024. Published On: June 26, 2024.

¹⁷ IMF Country Report No. 24/124, May 15, 2024. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2024/05/15/Belize-2024-Article-IV-Consultation-Press-Release-and-Staff-Report-549008>

¹⁸ Statistical Institute of Belize. Labour Force Survey Release for April 2024. Published On: June 26, 2024. https://sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/LabourForce_2024-04.pdf

¹⁹ IMF Country Report No. 24/124, May 15, 2024. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2024/05/15/Belize-2024-Article-IV-Consultation-Press-Release-and-Staff-Report-549008>

²⁰ Statistical Institute of Belize. Labour Force Survey Release for April 2024. Published On: June 26, 2024. https://sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/LabourForce_2024-04.pdf

Note: DK/NS means Do not know/Not stated.

In April 2024, 56,259 people were in informal employment, representing 33.9 percent of the employed population. The most significant shares of informal employment were in 'Agriculture and related activities' (21.6 percent) and 'Wholesale and retail trade' (19.6 percent). These two sectors continue to be the leading employers in Belize, whether in formal or informal employment.²¹ However, many of the key crops in the agricultural sector depend heavily on migrant workers from neighbouring countries.²² Notably, and linked to the high number of MSMEs, 57.8 percent of informally employed individuals were 'self-employed,' while 33.6 percent were categorized as 'employees.'²³

Educational attainment is a key indicator of workforce skill and competitiveness. According to the Statistical Institute of Belize (2021), less than 2 percent of the labour force had completed TVET training, which proportion has remained unchanged compared to previous years. 13.5 percent of individuals in the labour force had not completed any education, 38.2 percent had at least a primary education, and 21.6 percent had attained tertiary education. However, Belize loses many of its citizens as it suffers from brain-drain. The UN reports that the current net migration rate for 2025 is 2.478 per 1000, a 3.35% decline down from a figure of 2.564 per 1000 population in 2024. Like many countries in the Region, the diaspora makes a significant contribution to the economy. Remittances in Belize increased to 149.70 USD Million in 2023, up from 140.10 USD Million in 2022.

Linked to labour force participation rates, individuals with tertiary education had the highest participation at 79.8 percent, compared to 55 percent for those with only primary education.²⁴ This indicates the significant potential for TVET and the institutionalization of schemes for recognizing prior learning.

Other studies conducted by the Statistical Institute of Belize indicate that 26.4 percent of the population live in households experiencing multidimensional poverty, as measured by the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). TVET-related MPI indicators such as unemployment, underemployment, years of schooling, youth not in employment, education and training, and informal employment contributed 18.7 percent to the overall MPI. A low female and less educated labour force participation level hinders efforts to reduce poverty and contributes to a constrained labour market.²⁵

Mayans are disproportionately self-employed and more likely to experience poverty, highlighting structural disparities in employment and poverty outcomes.²⁶ Households headed by individuals

²¹ Within the sugar industry alone the "total direct employment is about 4,800 persons alongside the more than 5000 registered sugar cane farmers. It is estimated that some 40,000 persons are dependent on the industry". Sugar Industry Research and Development Institute <https://www.sirdi.bz/about/industry-information/>

²² Miguel Macias, 'A sector selection and value chain analysis in Belize' ILO 2024.

²³ Statistical Institute of Belize. Labour Force Survey Release for April 2024. Published On: June 26, 2024. https://sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/LabourForce_2024-04.pdf

²⁴ Statistical Institute of Belize. Labour Force Survey Report, September 2021. https://sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/LFS_Report_2021-09.pdf

²⁵ Statistical Institute of Belize. Multi dimension poverty index, MPI Release for: September 2023. Published on: March 27TH, 2024. <https://sib.org.bz/statistics/poverty-statistics/>

²⁶ World Bank in Belize. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/belize/overview>

of Maya ethnicity experienced the highest level of multidimensional poverty at 60.2 percent.²⁷, while the figure for Creole-headed households stood at 9.1 percent, Garifuna at 15.4 percent and Mestizo/Hispanic at 25.6 percent.²⁸

The socioeconomic situation illustrates that the TVET policy is framed by the following:

- Economic dependence on key sectors: Belize relies heavily on tourism and agriculture. The TVET policy should ensure that the TVET system aligns training programmes with the specific skills required in these and emerging sectors, such as business process outsourcing.
- Youth and gender participation gaps: With 64% of the population under 30 and significant gender disparities in labour force participation, a targeted TVET policy should recognize the need for increasing youth and female participation through target initiatives.
- Low TVET completion rates: With less than 2% of the labour force having completed TVET training, there is a critical need for a robust framework that boosts enrolment, completion rates, and the quality of training.
- Low educational attainment and informal employment: Given the labour force's low education and training levels and the reality that a large portion of the workforce is in informal jobs, TVET should be made more attractive, and schemes for recognizing prior learning should be prioritized in the TVET policy.
- Addressing multidimensional poverty: A well-structured TVET policy can alleviate poverty by equipping individuals with marketable skills and improving employment opportunities, especially for marginalized and under-represented groups.

1.2.2. The TVET context for the Policy

TVET is recognized as a crucial element in Belize's socioeconomic development. It equips Belizeans with the competencies to become employable workers and technicians, contributing significantly to the nation's economic growth and workforce development. Acknowledging the importance of TVET, the Education Sector Strategy 2011 – 2016 included strategic activities to address identified TVET challenges. Despite these efforts, many challenges were not addressed, which is why the Belize Education Sector Plan 2021-2025 (BESP) addresses similar challenges.

The TVET Policy takes its point of departure from the BESP, which highlights the need to address challenges within four educational domains and their key result areas, namely:

<p>1. Reforming the system of education:</p> <p>1.1. Ministry of Education Reform: Becoming Fit for Purpose</p> <p>1.2. Education Finance Reform: Getting Value for Money</p> <p>1.3. Governance Reform: Strengthening the Foundations</p>	<p>2. Transforming teaching and learning:</p> <p>2.1. Curriculum Transformation: Learning What Matters</p> <p>2.2. Assessment for Learning: Measuring What Counts</p> <p>2.3. Teacher Development: Elevating the Profession</p>
---	--

²⁷ Mayans predominantly live in the Toledo district, with approximately 38,000 people, nearly 86% of whom live in rural areas

²⁸ World Bank in Belize. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/belize/overview>

<p>3. Prioritizing underserved sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Early Childhood Education: Starting Strong 3.2. Student Welfare: Reducing Vulnerability 3.3. Special Education: Taking Everyone Along 	<p>4. Maximizing human capital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. TVET: Meeting the Needs 4.2. Higher Education: Raising the Bar 4.3. Adult Education: Educating for Life
---	---

In addressing these domain challenges, Belize is committed to achieving national, regional, and international objectives within TVET, aiming to enhance access, equity, and the quality of the TVET offered. These commitments include the National Development Framework for Belize (Horizon 2030), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS) 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. To facilitate the achievement of these objectives, the BEBP has established key result areas within the four domains linked to these guiding documents for education development.

Despite these educational development ambitions, the TVET system remains challenging.²⁹ Several national strategies and international reports related to TVET have highlighted similar challenges.³⁰ This indicates that educational and TVET modernization is very slow, pointing to a potential resistance to change within the system, a lack of political will to tackle the challenges, frequent changes in political leadership that hinder reform efforts, or a combination of all three factors. As a result, improving access, relevance, and quality of TVET remains a top priority on the education agenda.

1.3. Development of the National TVET Policy

On September 4, 2024, the GOB and the U.S. Government's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) signed a grant agreement referred to as the MCC – Belize Compact. The MCC–Belize Compact consists of two projects – the Education Project and the Energy Project – both of which will be implemented by a new Belizean entity called the Millennium Challenge Account-Belize (MCA-Belize).

The Education Project's objective is to equitably increase the number of post-primary graduates with competencies relevant to current and anticipated labour market demands. This will be achieved by transforming teaching and learning, promoting access to and progression through secondary education, and strengthening the TVET system's capacity, legal, and institutional framework

One of the key achievements of the Education Project is the formulation of a TVET policy that has gained recognition and support among key TVET stakeholders. A widely accepted TVET policy provides the foundation for a new TVET Act and supports realizing the policy's ambitions for the future TVET system.

The TVET policy results from an intense and inclusive development process, with critical stakeholders directly involved in a Policy Development Team (PDT) and a Policy Consultation

²⁹ The MoECST's annual technical reports for 2021 and 2022 show that development within TVET is progressing slowly, indicating a need for more robust strategies and interventions to enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of TVET systems.

³⁰ See, for example, plan 'Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS), 2016-2019, Belize's Medium-Term Development Strategy 2022-2026', 'Challenges and Opportunities in the Belize Education Sector' Inter-American Development Bank, 2013 or 'Skill to Shape the Future,' Inter-American Development Bank, 2020.

Group (PCG). Assisted by Ginger SOFRECO's team of regional and international experts, the PDT contributed to the preparatory work, including a TVET situation analysis, preparation of discussion notes and organizing consultation meetings for the PCG. Over two months, the eleven key TVET stakeholders of the PCG convened through a series of online and face-to-face meetings to discuss critical issues relevant to drafting the TVET policy.

Several TVET documents, including the Abstract of Educational Statistics, refer to TVET as the five Institutes for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ITVET) and the Cayo Centre for Employment Training (Cayo CET)³¹. However, the situation analysis and discussions within the PCG established that TVET in Belize includes all formal or informal training to build participants' vocational competencies. The TVET policy addresses both formal and informal TVET which leads to a nationally recognized certificates within the CARICOM qualification framework, regardless of level or type of institution. Consequently, regarding the TVET policy, it is not the institution, its name, or its ownership that defines TVET, but the content of the programmes and whether a nationally recognized certificate is awarded upon successful completion corresponding with the Regional Vocational Qualification Framework (RVQF). Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), an integral aspect of qualification frameworks, should also support workers in the informal sector by providing them with the opportunity to have their skills assessed and officially recognized.

This TVET policy covers nationally recognized training programmes and courses corresponding with the RQVF, including adult education offered by ITVETs, high schools and tertiary institutions, as well as other public and private training providers. Companies participating in internships and/or apprenticeship schemes or offering in-service training to their employees are also included in this TVET policy, provided the training leads to a recognized certificate.

1.4. Rationale and purpose

The TVET Policy for Belize seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Strengthen the governance, management, and sustainable funding mechanisms for TVET;
2. Expand access to quality TVET programmes for all Belizeans, including marginalized and under-represented groups;
3. Align TVET programmes with national, regional, and global labour market demands;
4. Foster collaboration between educational institutions, the business sector, and other stakeholders;
5. Enhance the quality and relevance of TVET through curriculum reform, infrastructure investment, and training for TVET professionals;
6. Promote lifelong learning and upskilling for continuous workforce development;
7. Incorporate emerging technologies and green and 21st Century skills to meet the needs of future industries.

³¹ ITVET will refer to the five ITVETs and the Cayo Centre for Employment Training unless otherwise specified.

The TVET Policy aims to enhance the country's human resource development by equipping citizens with the necessary competencies for the labour market. The policy is structured to address critical challenges, promote lifelong learning, and underpin national development goals.

The policy will position TVET as a central component of Belize's education and training sector and provide strategic direction for its development, modernization, and expansion in response to national and regional labour market demands.

This policy aims to close the gap between current TVET offerings and the demands of Belize's labour market by establishing a structured, sustainable, and equitable system that enhances the relevance of TVET programmes. By addressing the historical under-investment and fragmentation of TVET, this policy will provide a coherent framework for enhancing quality assurance, sustainable financing, and business sector engagement.

A key objective of this policy is to align training programmes with industry standards, improve the employability of graduates, and ensure that Belize's workforce is prepared for the economy's future demands. In doing so, the policy will contribute directly to the development ambitions expressed in Horizon 2030 related to economic growth, poverty alleviation, and realizing the Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) and Horizon 2030 goals.

1.5. Target audience

The target audience for this policy includes a broad range of stakeholders; it is intended for use by various persons, agencies, and institutions and the general public, including those listed below.

Government bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government ministries ○ Government agencies ○ Education officials ○ Policymakers
Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Business and industry personnel ○ Business sector and industry organizations ○ Employers and employees ○ Entrepreneurs
Education and training providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education and training institutions ○ Trainees, learners and graduates ○ Teachers/instructors/trainers ○ School/institution boards ○ TVET administrators ○ Standards officers ○ Curriculum developers ○ Guidance counsellors
Non-governmental organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Church ○ Community groups ○ Youth organizations ○ Marginalized groups

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Under-represented groups ○ Teacher associations ○ Parent associations ○ Professional bodies ○ Staff associations ○ Trade unions
Regional and international agencies and development partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development organizations ○ Caribbean Association of National Training Authorities (CANTA) ○ Caribbean Community (CARICOM) ○ European Union (EU) ○ International Labour Organization (ILO) ○ United Nations Agencies ○ Lending agencies

By addressing the needs and contributions of these diverse groups, this policy seeks to build a collaborative, cross-sector approach to TVET reform, ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged in developing a robust, dynamic, and responsive TVET system for Belize.

2. SECTION TWO

2.0. VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1. Vision and Mission Statements

Vision: *A responsive and inclusive TVET system that is nationally, regionally and internationally acknowledged for promoting and facilitating the development of a competent and adaptable workforce that drives economic growth, social progress, sustainable employment, and national development.*

Mission: *To create a modernized, high-quality, and accessible TVET system that fosters lifelong learning, aligns with industry needs, supports innovation and entrepreneurship, and promotes equity and inclusion for all Belizeans across all sectors of the economy and society.*

2.2. Values and guiding principles

The success of Belize’s TVET system hinges on some fundamental values and principles. Indeed, the TVET policy prioritizes the following:

- **Lifelong learning:** Lifelong learning is vital to national development, contributing to:

Economic growth	Social development	Human development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Increased productivity and competitiveness○ Improved workforce adaptability to technological changes○ Enhanced innovation and entrepreneurship○ Better skilled workforce○ Reduced unemployment and poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Social cohesion and inclusion○ Improved health and well-being○ Increased civic engagement and participation○ Better-equipped citizens for democratic participation○ Reduced social inequalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Enhanced individual capabilities and empowerment○ Improved quality of life○ Increased life expectancy and health○ Better education and skills development○ Personal growth and fulfilment.

Lifelong learning ensures that TVET graduates are not limited by the scope of their initial education and training but are provided with ongoing opportunities to adapt, grow, and meet new challenges in the workplace. This principle supports the vision of a flexible, adaptive workforce that can navigate an increasingly dynamic economic landscape.

The TVET system must be designed to support continuous skills development throughout Belizeans' lives. This principle recognizes that the labour market is constantly evolving and that individuals must reskill and upskill to remain employable and competitive.

- **Collaboration:** Strong partnerships between key stakeholders, including the government, business sectors, employers, and TVET providers, are essential for decision-making, programme planning and implementation within the TVET system. A collaborative framework that encourages active participation by business sectors, employers, and institutions must exist in the TVET system. The framework must ensure that TVET, at all aspects and levels, from design to certification, benefits from the input (tangible and

intangible) of the business sector, meets the needs of employers, and is influenced by emerging market trends.

- **Equity:** The TVET system must ensure equal access to learning opportunities for all individuals regardless of gender, age, religion, economic status, or ethnic background. Special consideration must be given to vulnerable members of society, including marginalized and under-represented groups, females, people with disabilities, and those from rural areas, migrants, indigenous, trauma-impacted individuals, persons with disabilities (PwD), and indigenous peoples. Equitable access to TVET is crucial for bridging the skills gap and promoting social justice. The TVET system in Belize has a moral obligation to address systemic inequalities and promote fairness. TVET programmes must be physically and financially accessible to these marginalized and under-represented groups of learners.

Accessibility and Inclusiveness: Accessibility in TVET is vital for inclusive economic growth, addressing labour market skills shortages and meeting all Belizeans' employment expectations. These provisions, including funding the church-state education and training system by the GoB, ensure that persons of diverse backgrounds, including marginalized groups and persons with disabilities, are afforded opportunities to acquire relevant competencies that enhance their employability and contribute to sustainable development. Barriers to TVET access must be identified and addressed through inclusive policies. By addressing general obstacles – such as financial constraints, underserved areas, lack of recognition of prior learning, biased enrolment requirements, systemic discrimination, and inadequate infrastructure – Belizeans, regardless of their background, race, or gender, should benefit from inclusive TVET programmes that provide clear pathways to employment and personal advancement for all learners, particularly those disadvantaged. Furthermore, promoting accessibility in TVET aligns with global commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize the importance of inclusive education.

- **Responsiveness:** Responsiveness in TVET refers to the ability of TVET systems, institutions, programmes, and policies to adapt to changing labour market demands and industry needs, respond to the evolving skills requirements of employers, address the training needs of diverse learners, including those with disabilities, foster partnerships with stakeholders and continuously improve and update curricula, teaching methods, and assessment practices. The TVET system in Belize must be responsive to the needs of the labour market, trends in TVET delivery, and quality assurance. This involves adapting to the evolving competency requirements set by employers, addressing the diverse training needs of learners, including marginalized and underrepresented groups, and fostering partnerships with stakeholders.
- **Sustainability:** TVET programmes must prioritize environmental sustainability and social responsibility. Sustainable TVET practices ensure a viable future for generations as Belize

moves towards a more sustainable economy that considers and integrates the gains derived from blue and green economy initiatives into TVET programmes to promote environmentally friendly technologies, practices, and jobs. This value ensures that the TVET system responds to current industry demands and proactively prepares for future economic shifts, particularly in areas like renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and ecotourism.

- **Adaptability:** Adaptability in TVET refers to the ability of the TVET system to adjust to changing labour market demands and industry needs, respond to emerging technologies and trends, accommodate diverse learner needs and abilities, evolve with shifting economic, social, and environmental contexts, foster resilience, flexibility, and innovation. Adaptable TVET providers foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and resilience and help learners develop skills to navigate uncertain futures. The reformed TVET system in Belize will adapt to the labour market's needs.
- **Quality:** Quality in TVET refers to how TVET programmes, institutions, and services meet established standards, requirements, and stakeholder expectations. The critical dimensions of quality in TVET include alignment with industry needs, labour market demands and societal requirements. Quality also includes achieving intended learning outcomes, graduate employability, optimal use of resources, streamlined processes, and continuity, which is the seamless progression of learners from one level of education to the next. The TVET system in Belize must prioritize continuous improvement and evaluation to maintain high standards of quality, relevance, and effectiveness to ensure competent graduates are equipped for the workforce.
- **Relevance:** TVET systems must remain relevant at all times. Relevance refers to how TVET programmes, curriculum, and training align with labour market demands and industry needs, emerging technologies and trends, national and regional development priorities, learner interests and career aspirations, and societal requirements and challenges. Relevant TVET prepares learners for emerging challenges and opportunities, and relevant TVET curricula integrate cutting-edge technologies and practices. This also extends to governance and management practices, which must reflect regional trends and requirements.
- **Accountability:** Ensuring transparency and effectiveness in delivering TVET services is fundamental to building public trust and ensuring the system's sustainability. This principle advocates for establishing transparent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that track the performance of TVET providers, assess trainees' learning outcomes, and measure employer satisfaction with graduates.

Accountability mechanisms will also ensure that funding is allocated and utilized efficiently and effectively and that stakeholders – including government, business sectors, and trainees – are all accountable for achieving the system's objectives.

3. SECTION THREE

3.0. POLICY THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

The following themes represent the core areas around which the policy's values and guiding principles will be operationalized.

3.1. Governance, Management and Regulatory Framework

TVET governance will allow stakeholders' knowledge and insights to be leveraged, which is essential for delivering relevant and quality TVET. Establishing fit-for-purpose and accessible governance structures is a prerequisite for enabling TVET stakeholders to participate in decision-making processes easily.

The regulatory framework for enabling governance structures and sustainable funding mechanisms must be in place and maintained. This framework must allow TVET governance at all levels the necessary flexibility to address present and future needs. This means that the regulatory framework should not constrain TVET governance but instead enable it.

Reforming the governance structure is essential for strengthening the TVET system in Belize, ensuring that quality TVET is relevant, inclusive, and aligned with demands. TVET systems should be governed through active public-private partnerships based on good governance principles and fit-for-purpose governance structures at national and TVET provider level.

Policy statements:

Policy statement 3.1.1: The Government of Belize shall ensure that a TVET-enabling legislative and regulatory framework is in place to achieve the objectives of the TVET system, including the operationalization and sustainability of an autonomous NTA.

Policy statement 3.1.2: Good governance principles that characterize TVET shall be applied in all aspects and levels of the TVET system.

Policy statement 3.1.3: A National Training Authority (NTA) shall be established with Skills Sector Councils (SSCs), employer and industry representatives and other relevant stakeholders as part of its structure.

Policy statement 3.1.4: The NTA shall have full responsibility and authority for planning, setting and updating of standards for quality, equity, relevancy, effectiveness and efficiency in the governance of the TVET system. The NTA's responsibility will include setting standards for regulations for increased equity, efficiency and effectiveness in the governance, management and administration of TVET institutions, including inclusive governance guidelines to ensure equitable representation of women and marginalized and under-represented groups.

Policy Statement 3.1.5: The NTA shall have the authority to award Vocational Qualifications through the implementation of the Belize National Qualification Framework (BzNQF) and the Regional Vocational Qualification Framework (RVQF).

Policy statement 3.1.6: The NTA shall be responsible for developing and promoting the use of national occupational standards, standardised curricula, competency-based training, assessment and certification and the accreditation and quality assurance of TVET providers and programmes.

Policy statement 3.1.7: The MoE and the NTA shall monitor and support the TVET providers as is applicable.

Policy statement 3.1.8: The NTA shall foster collaborative governance between and among government and non-governmental organisations, the business sector, employers, and other key stakeholders, ensuring their involvement in the governance of the TVET system.

Policy statement 3.1.9: TVET providers shall operate as self-governing entities in alignment with the regulations, standards and requirements set by the NTA, NAC and GoB, in order to enhance accountability, transparency, innovation, responsiveness, and program quality.

Policy statement 3.1.10: As part of good governance, the NTA shall report annually on its performance-based outcomes with audited financial statements attached.

Policy objectives

The GoB, and the NTA shall:

1. Utilize a regulatory framework that enables effective and inclusive governance at all levels of TVET, including operationalizing the NTA, SSCs, the NAC and TVET providers.
2. Implement and promote sound governance structures that apply good governance principles throughout the TVET system.
3. Align the TVET governance structures at all levels with the CARICOM Regional TVET Strategy and foster regional and international cooperation.
4. Promote evidence-based decision-making and transparency at all levels of TVET.
5. Strengthen institutional capacity at all levels of the TVET system to promote effective and relevant governance.
6. Ensure governance sustainability as a core component of the TVET system.

3.2. Sustainable financing

A sustainable financing model is a crucial prerequisite for Belize's TVET system to fulfil its development ambitions. It is acknowledged that TVET is currently underfunded, as government allocations and the revenue generated by TVET providers, mainly through fees, are insufficient and represent unsustainable funding sources. Inefficiency in the use of current funds is an additional burden. Furthermore, a significant injection of funds is necessary to effectively address the challenges facing TVET, including a backlog of equipment and maintenance needs. Consistent and diversified funding strategies for achieving cost effectiveness through potential partnership arrangements with the private sector will help to mitigate these challenges. Revenues generated by TVET providers shall not compromise equity, access to TVET, or the achievement of learning objectives.

Policy statements

Policy statement 3.2.1: The GoB shall ensure adequate and sustainable financing of the TVET sector through the introduction of a TVET levy and/or budgetary commitments, **along with** other potential means, with the revenue flowing directly into a Training Fund that is managed by the NTA in accordance with relevant finance and accountability laws and regulations, including the Finance and Audit Act.

Policy statement 3.2.2: Revenues generated by TVET providers shall not compromise equity, inclusion, or access to TVET programmes and services.

Policy statement 3.2.3: MOE and NTA shall utilize performance-based budgeting, allocation, and monitoring measures across all types of revenues and TVET providers to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of budgeting and fund management.

Policy objectives

The GoB, and the NTA shall:

1. Increase and diversify TVET funding by exploring the creation of new funding streams **possibly including** a TVET levy paid into a TVET Training Fund managed by the NTA.
2. Introduce efficiency measures to enhance the effectiveness of TVET funding.
3. Enhance transparency and accountability in financial operations at all levels.
4. Direct TVET providers to become income-generating centres to supplement budgetary allocations from the MoE and the TVET Training Fund. Such generated funds shall not compromise equity, inclusion, or access to TVET.
5. Support the management and staff of TVET institutions to develop and execute sound financial management, including transparent budgeting, efficient resource allocation, regular auditing, financial reporting and stakeholder engagement.

3.3. Labour market information (LMI)

Labour Market Information (LMI) is crucial for effectively delivering TVET. It provides essential insights into the labour market's current and future competency needs. By utilizing LMI, TVET can align curricula with business sector demands, ensuring graduates possess the relevant competencies employers seek. This alignment enhances graduates' employability and addresses the skills mismatch that often leads to underemployment and unemployment.

Moreover, LMI enables policymakers to make informed decisions regarding resource allocation and programme development, fostering a more relevant TVET system. It also helps identify priority sectors for skills training, thus supporting economic growth and development. By conducting regular labour market needs assessments and updating LMI, TVET programmes can remain agile and responsive in light of technological advancements and market dynamics. Integrating LMI into TVET planning is vital for creating a competent workforce that meets the economy's needs, contributing to sustainable development and social equity.

Policy statements

Policy statement 3.3.1: The NTA shall collaborate with relevant stakeholders to enhance LMI and TVET data with mechanisms that provide access to accurate data on the labour market, economic demands and TVET systems performance, thus enabling better planning and alignment of TVET programmes with immediate and future needs.

Policy objectives

In collaboration with the MoE, the Ministry of Labour, the Statistical Institute of Belize, and TVET providers, the NTA shall:

1. Develop a well-established Labour Market Information System (LMIS) that mandates the systematic engagement of employers, their associations, and other public-private partners through the sector skills councils to create dynamic, demand-driven TVET programmes that align well with evolving national market trends.
2. Ensure that LMI and TVET data delineate the needs of the workforce's under-represented groups and create pathways for their integration into the labour market.
3. Design a robust LMIS that facilitates well-established alliances among TVET stakeholders to support LMIS.
4. Support data collection processes at the TVET provider level to ensure a comprehensive and robust LMI system.

3.4. Quality assurance & accreditation

CARICOM's Quality Assurance (QA) Framework provides a structured approach to quality assurance and accreditation, ensuring that the certificates issued in its jurisdiction are accorded the value for recognition and portability. The CANTA Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) provides a clear benchmark for the QA criteria that must be followed to achieve this. Given Belize's desire to participate fully in the Caribbean Region in this respect and to benefit from the increased quality, consistency and workforce mobility that close system alignment affords, this policy aligns with these requirements.³² It covers mechanisms reflecting the CQAF and parameters for the transparent evaluation of qualifications and programmes guided by the National Qualification Framework (NQF).

This will standardize TVET programmes and provide a transparent and consistent framework for employers and practitioners at TVET providers to interpret, benchmark, and align qualifications with private sector needs, regional standards, and other qualifications issued in Belize. It will also establish a systematic approach for transfers across institutions, articulation, regional recognition, and qualification portability. To uphold quality, TVET providers must undergo regular quality audits

³² These include standards and curriculum development, training delivery, assessment, certification, leadership and management, instructor competence, facilities, tools and equipment, customer service and communication, trainee outcomes, equity, monitoring, and continuous improvement.

and assessments to ensure compliance with applicable legislation and standards. Aligning with these regional benchmarks will enhance the credibility, trust, value, and recognition of the entire TVET system, thereby improving its overall image.

Policy statements

Policy statement 3.4.1 The NTA shall be responsible for the accreditation and quality assurance of TVET providers and training programmes in the system.

Policy statement 3.4.2: The NTA shall enhance the quality of TVET training by implementing a comprehensive QA framework aligned to regional and international standards to ensure national recognition and portability across borders.

Policy statement 3.4.3: In collaboration with the NAC, the NTA shall create a transparent and standardized accreditation process for implementation to ensure that all TVET providers and programmes meet national, regional and international standards.

Policy statement 3.4.4: The NTA shall implement a comprehensive quality assurance framework to assist programmes, institutions, and TVET professionals meet established standards of excellence.

Policy objectives:

The NTA, shall:

1. Develop accreditation standards for all TVET programmes and institutions to ensure consistency, quality, and recognition nationally and regionally.
2. Collaborate with the National Accreditation Council (NAC) to design a recognized and credible comprehensive QA system that parallels CANTA's QA requirements for TVET programmes and enhances the employability and mobility of TVET graduates.
3. Obtain and maintain approval from CANTA for authorization to award the CVQ.
4. Obtain and maintain approval from the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)³³ to implement CVQs in the THSs for certification by that awarding body.
5. Operationalize the appropriate quality assurance systems to enhance the value of the BzNVQ and continue its issuance as the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ).
6. Ensure all TVET providers adhere to the standardized accreditation process, and issue accreditation certificates, letters, or authorizations to institutions that meet the requirements.
7. Enhance the quality, consistency, and continuous improvement of the delivery of TVET programmes, assessment, and certification practices by establishing rigorous monitoring

³³ CXC is the body approved by CARICOM to issue CVQs in schools across the Caribbean.

and evaluation mechanisms, including regular audits, reviews, verification, and alignment with evolving industry standards and technological advancements.

8. Strengthen the TVET system through continuous professional development and other modalities to ensure robust quality assurance mechanisms are in place for TVET providers.
9. Create a standardized process to guide decisions for registering and awarding centre approval or accreditation to TVET providers who have met the requirements by establishing and implementing QA systems in their institutions.
10. Monitor and evaluate the efficiency and quality of TVET training using clearly defined indexes.

3.5. Partnership and collaboration

Partnerships and collaborations with business sectors, employers, social partners, and other key TVET stakeholders are essential for a contemporary TVET system to achieve its objectives. These partnerships do not develop independently; they must be nurtured through measures that facilitate collaboration.

Successful partnerships are built around entities that have clear relevance to the objectives of the collaboration. Establishing clear objectives and aligning expectations will advance these partnerships. For formal partnerships, it is essential to outline each partner's role, responsibilities, and contributions, ensuring a mutual understanding of the commitments involved. Formalizing the partnership helps solidify the relationship and provides a framework for accountability. Open dialogue, ongoing communication, feedback, and a management style that facilitates smooth engagement for stakeholders are vital for sustaining partnerships.

Through these initiatives, TVET decision-making can gain legitimacy and soundness by directly leveraging stakeholder experience, knowledge, and access to networks that may otherwise be difficult for TVET actors to access. Such partnerships and collaborations will enhance TVET systems' ability to deliver on their objectives.

Policy statements

Policy statement 3.5.1: The NTA as well as the TVET providers shall partner with business sectors, employers, social partners and industry stakeholders to enhance TVET relevance and quality.

Policy statement 3.5.2: The NTA shall engage in regional and international partnerships and collaborations to enhance TVET relevance in Belize.

Policy statement 3.5.3: The NTA shall develop public-private partnerships (industry, TVET, and government) to ensure the achievement of TVET objectives.

Policy objectives

The NTA shall:

1. Ensure that TVET stakeholders at all levels of TVET engage effectively in governance and management structures established by the TVET Act.

2. Implement initiatives and procedures that enable partnership and trust, allowing for the leveraging of stakeholders' knowledge, experience, and networks.
3. Celebrate successes and share outcomes to inspire further engagement, strengthen relationships and showcase the value of a collaborative culture within the TVET system.

3.6. Programme development, training & certification

TVET programmes should provide trainees with the competencies that meet the occupational standards established through direct business sector engagement. Such TVET programmes must be available for youth entering into secondary education, adults, and up-skilling employees.

Where appropriate, mechanisms should be adopted for prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR). PLAR not only focuses on the knowledge and skills that individuals have acquired in previous training and through work experience but also enables their entry to higher levels of education and training. PLAR caters to those citizens who are less likely to gain formal recognition of their competencies, thereby limiting their employment prospects.

Guided by the NTA, accredited TVET programmes and courses should address local and national training needs regarding skills and levels offered. The provision should be coordinated to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of all TVET programmes and courses. Collaboration with the private sector through the SSC and individual local employers must form the basis for developing a rolling TVET programme master plan to be reviewed annually. The master plan should guide TVET providers on relevant programmes and courses facilitate practical access to TVET, especially for marginalized and under-represented groups. Financial incentives, accreditation and QA measures may be used to facilitate the implementation of the master plan.

The NTA should develop career guidance guidelines to facilitate enrolment, address dropout challenges, and facilitate graduates' transition to employment with the assistance of career guidance counsellors.

Policy statements

Policy statement 3.6.1: The NTA shall develop and maintain an up-to-date TVET programme master plan that guides TVET providers on offerings, including those targeting under-represented groups and prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR).

Policy statement 3.6.2: The NTA shall collaborate with business sectors, employers and industry experts to develop occupational standards, curriculum, instructional materials and other learning resources.

Policy statement 3.6.3: The NTA shall ensure seamless programme alignment and articulation arrangements within the relevant qualification frameworks, ensuring enhanced employability and smooth progression to higher levels of certification within the TVET system, nationally and regionally.

Policy statement 3.6.4: The NTA shall develop career guidance policy guidelines and provide career support materials as a central component of the TVET system.

Policy objectives

The NTA shall, in collaboration with relevant partners:

1. Develop and maintain a TVET programme master plan ensuring that local and national training needs are met regarding vocations and levels offered.
2. Integrate access and equity considerations in a TVET programme master plan to address the needs of the marginalized and under-represented groups.
3. Develop and implement PLAR policies and mechanisms to support the achievement of the TVET objectives.
4. Develop career guidance policies and guidelines, materials and learning resources that facilitate enrolment, address dropout challenges, and facilitate transition to employment.
5. Promote diversified training modalities for the delivery of TVET.
6. Promote research, innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity in the delivery of TVET.
7. Develop and implement assessment, recognition and certification mechanisms and frameworks.
8. Develop relevant standards, programmes, curricula, and learning resources for implementation in the TVET system based on labour market needs.
9. Promote the integration of TVET courses within secondary school curricula.
10. Using the BzNQF, develop pathways for seamless transitions between TVET and higher education, facilitating horizontal and vertical movement between academic and TVET programmes to post-secondary and higher-level degrees.
11. Promote and approve dual certification programmes where trainees can earn both vocational and academic qualifications.

3.7. Human Resources Development (HRD)

Trained and qualified professionals and practitioners are essential for a quality TVET system, ensuring improved teaching quality and effectiveness, enhanced industry relevance and partnership, increased student learning outcomes and employability, and better institutional management and leadership. The roles of trained and qualified TVET professionals and practitioners include:

- instructors and teachers
- industry trainers and mentors
- curriculum developers and specialists
- assessors and quality assurance specialists

- career guidance and counseling professionals
- institutional managers and leaders
- researchers and innovators
- entrepreneurship and business development specialists
- industry partnership and engagement specialists
- policy and regulatory framework developers

3.7.1. Training and development of TVET professionals and practitioners³⁴

The training and professional development of TVET professionals and practitioners are crucial to the success of the TVET system in Belize, where skills shortages need to be addressed, the employability of graduates improved, and the demands of rapidly growing business sectors met. The NTA, MoE, higher education institutions and other relevant partners should ensure that TVET professionals and practitioners are trained, certified, highly skilled, industry-relevant, and capable of providing quality training to trainees.

Policy statements

Policy statement 3.7.1.1: The NTA shall develop and oversee a comprehensive training policy for TVET professionals and practitioners and periodically conduct training needs analyses to assess their training and development status.

Policy statement 3.7.1.2: The NTA in collaboration with NAC and the Belize Board of Teacher Education (BBTE) shall develop guidelines and procedures for accepting credentials earned through prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) for admission of instructors into existing tertiary education programmes, including teacher education degrees, towards a competent and qualified TVET instructor workforce.

Policy statement 3.7.1.3: The NTA shall set standards for the training and continuous professional development of TVET instructors.

Policy statement 3.7.1.4: TVET professionals and practitioners shall be trained and certified in relevant professional development CVQ qualifications as stipulated by CANTA for training, assessment, and award of the CVQ.

³⁴ TVET professionals and TVET practitioners share similarities but have distinct roles and responsibilities. The TVET Professional typically holds a degree or advanced diploma in education, training, or a related field, expertise in TVET policy, planning, management, and leadership, focuses on strategic planning, curriculum development, and quality assurance, and may work in administrative or leadership roles and is responsible for overseeing TVET programmes, institutions, or systems. The TVET practitioner typically holds industry-recognized certifications, diplomas, or degrees, expertise in specific technical or vocational areas (e.g., electrical engineering, culinary arts), focuses on teaching, training, and assessing trainees, works directly with trainees, providing hands-on instruction and guidance and is responsible for delivering TVET programmes, mentoring trainees, and maintaining industry connections.

Policy statement 3.7.1.5: The NTA shall set standards and provide support for industry attachments, internships, and communities of practice (CoPs) for TVET instructors in their vocational areas to enhance instructor industry relevance, expertise, and teaching practices.

Policy statement 3.7.1.6: The NTA shall set standards for the inclusion of content related to inclusive teaching and learning in all pre- and in-service TVET teacher/instructor training programmes.

Policy statement 3.7.1.7 The BBTE shall ensure that standards for content related to inclusive teaching and learning are included in all approved pre- and in-service TVET teacher/instructor training programmes.

Policy statement 3.7.1.8 The GoB, and the NTA, shall establish guidelines for the remuneration of TVET professionals and industry practitioners.

Policy objectives

The GoB, through the MoE (Belize Board of Teacher Education (BBTE), Belize Teaching Services Commission (BTSC) and the NTA, shall:

1. Develop national standards for TVET instructor qualifications and ensure these standards are integrated into the NAC's accreditation and quality assurance requirements.
2. Provide industry-specific training for instructors who do not possess the relevant technical skills.
3. Matriculate industry personnel with PLAR credentials in skill areas into existing tertiary level programmes.
4. Train instructors without teacher education qualifications, in modern, learner-centred teaching methodologies, including differentiated instruction, experiential learning, and competency-based education.
5. Upskill existing instructor corps to enhance their expertise with specialized skills to support the TVET planning, programme design and implementation.
6. Conduct specialized training for TVET instructors through industry-education partnerships.
7. Develop a national TVET professional and practitioners' certification programme.
8. Collaborate with the industry and higher education institutions to develop degree programmes for TVET instructors.
9. Facilitate continuous professional development and provide opportunities for instructors to update their competencies to deliver up-to-date training.
10. Access CARICOM-approved CPD training programmes for instructors who deliver the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQ).
11. Use prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) to assess instructor skills and prescribe training.
12. Provide resources for curriculum enhancement, teacher training, and industry collaboration.

13. Develop national guidelines for industrial attachment and CoPs in TVET.

3.7.2. Instructor employment and management

Historically, the variation in engagement approaches in Belize has adversely affected the instructor corps and the system's capacity to model HR practices that promote security through tenure, standardization in engagement practices, and commitment to personal and professional development. In order to strengthen the TVET system, industry practitioners will be required to undertake training in training delivery methodologies.

Policy statements

Policy statement 3.7.2.1: The NTA shall ensure that accredited TVET providers employ individuals with the requisite requirements set out in the NTA standards and guidelines for recruitment, contracting, appraisal, and remuneration of TVET staff.

Policy statement 3.7.2.2: The NTA shall set standards for employment policies, practices, and instruments that apply to TVET instructors, including, but not confined to, educator standards, licensing, recruitment, probation, appointment, appraisal and performance management, and secondment to and from the business sector.

Policy statement 3.7.2.3: The NTA in collaboration with the BBTE shall equate TVET instructor qualifications with the relevant NQF levels to guide TVET providers on the qualifications that meet the requirements for instructors to be employed to deliver TVET programmes.

Policy objectives

The NTA and the MoE shall:

1. Recruit and retain qualified TVET instructors to support TVET planning, programme design and implementation at the TVET providers.
2. Review and re-define the qualification profile of the instructor corps and support services personnel.
3. Develop an appropriate employment model for TVET providers to ensure a transparent and consistent approach to hiring instructors regardless of the type of TVET institution.
4. Incorporate employment arrangements that accommodate seasonal, part-time, temporary and secondment through stronger linkages between TVET providers and the business sector.

3.8 TVET facilities, tools, equipment and materials

Upgrading and modernizing tools, equipment and materials are crucial for enhancing the relevance, and effectiveness of TVET training programmes. Quality tools, equipment and materials enhance practical training and hands-on experience, develop industry-relevant competencies, improve employability and job readiness, and foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and effectiveness.

Policy statements

Policy statement 3.8.1: The NTA shall support financing of modern and specialized tools and equipment for accredited and demand-driven TVET programmes through the National Training Fund, based on relevant cost-benefit analyses.

Policy statement 3.8.2: The NTA and training providers shall facilitate industry partnerships to support tools and equipment donations, sponsorship, and access to expertise.

Policy statement 3.8.3: The NTA shall monitor and enforce compliance with established health and safety regulations as part of the requirements for institutional and programme accreditation of TVET providers.

Policy statement 3.8.4: The NTA shall support the development of a Facilities Management and Maintenance Plan for TVET providers which is continuously updated to ensure currency and relevance.

Policy statement 3.8.5: TVET providers shall undertake an annual equipment audit and a needs assessment to identify the most relevant tools, equipment and material that address current and future labour market needs.

Policy objectives

The NTA and the MoE shall:

1. Establish and implement national TVET tools, equipment and material standards.
2. Upgrade existing tools and equipment to industry standards.
3. Partner with employers for tools and equipment donations and expertise.
4. Develop inventory management systems for tools, equipment and materials.
5. Enhance staff capacity for tools, equipment operation and maintenance.
6. Expand tools, equipment and material resources and integrate industry 4.0 technologies³⁵ into TVET programmes.
7. Develop simulation-based training facilities and virtual and augmented reality training capabilities.
8. Foster international partnerships for equipment and expertise exchange.

³⁵ 4.0 technologies, also known as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), refers to integrating advanced digital and physical systems to transform industries and economies. These technologies include artificial intelligence (AI), internet of things (IoT), cyber-physical systems (CPS), blockchain, 5G networks, cloud computing, big data analytics, robotics and autonomous systems, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR). 3D printing and additive manufacturing

9. Develop and implement national health and safety guidelines for TVET providers aligned with national occupational health and safety laws and international standards and conduct continuous health and safety training for all TVET staff and trainees.
10. Develop and implement a comprehensive facilities maintenance framework for all TVET providers, including clear preventative, corrective, and predictive maintenance guidelines and assessments.

3.9 Access, equity, and inclusion

Equity, access, and inclusion are fundamental principles that underpin a successful and sustainable TVET system. Unfortunately, many programmes lack focus on these critical values, and some clients often remain underserved, limiting the system's overall effectiveness.

This TVET policy promotes equal opportunity, ensuring everyone can access training programmes regardless of background. This is particularly crucial in addressing social inequalities that often limit the participation of marginalized and under-represented groups such as women, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and those from low-income families. Notably, an inclusive TVET system goes beyond simply admitting diverse trainees; it must ensure that all trainees feel valued, have their needs met and are sufficiently equipped to transition into the world of work or access further training opportunities. This could involve adapting curricula to be socially and culturally relevant, providing resources, promoting gender balance in traditionally male-dominated sectors and eliminating stereotypes to create more diverse workplaces, ultimately contributing to national socioeconomic growth and development.

A TVET system emphasizing access, equity, and inclusion and lifelong learning is better positioned to develop, reskill or upskill a workforce that can quickly adapt to global market changes and reflects society's diverse composition. By ensuring that all individuals, particularly those from marginalized and under-represented groups, have the opportunity to acquire skills and training, TVET systems can help address skills shortages, increase productivity, and foster innovation across industries. When the labour market includes a broader range of people, the nation benefits from all its citizens' talents, perspectives, and experiences. Moreover, by embracing these principles, TVET systems contribute to more inclusive economic growth, addressing social disparities while building a skilled, diverse, and adaptable workforce.

Policy statements

Policy statement 3.9.1: The NTA shall develop guidelines on making TVET programmes equally accessible to all Belizeans regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, language, political affiliation, socioeconomic status, gender, disability, or geographic location.

Policy statement 3.9.2: The NTA shall advise the GOB to align the national TVET legislative framework with international policies, conventions, and targets concerning access and equity and build on a twin-track model that includes a mainstreaming and targeted approach.

Policy statement 3.9.3: The core principles of TVET policy and practice shall include equity, access and inclusion at all levels of the system.

Policy statement 3.9.4: TVET providers shall provide assisted learning technologies and supportive learning environments for diverse learners.

Policy statement 3.9.5: BEMIS data collection and reporting shall be extended to gather data on access to and completion of TVET programmes in high school, ITVETs, tertiary institutions and other institutions and transition into employment. The BEMIS data must be disaggregated by gender, location, disability, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, migration/refugee background and TVET level (ITVET, High Schools and Post-secondary institutions).

Policy objectives

The GoB through the NTA and supported by the MoE shall:

1. Document a policy position to guide the development, continuous review, and revision of TVET-related policies that accord with various conventions related to discrimination and disabilities acts, ensuring compliance and relevance.
2. Create an inclusive TVET system that promotes equitable access for marginalized and under-represented groups.
3. Ensure the national TVET plan includes guidelines and strategies on access, equity and inclusion to create pathways for marginalized and under-represented groups to obtain training and gain employment.
4. Retrofit TVET providers with the required resources, assisted learning technologies and design considerations for physical accessibility of facilities, learning materials, and resources.
5. Develop and implement comprehensive training on disability awareness, diverse teaching methodologies and strategies, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles for TVET professionals to appropriately equip them to accommodate persons from marginalized and under-represented groups in TVET training programmes.
6. Implement inclusive processes for recruitment, admission and support services.
7. Formulate a mechanism to obtain feedback and communicate directly with persons from the marginalized and under-represented communities.
8. Advocate for changes to the legislation to require the business sector and public buildings to meet standards for accommodating persons from marginalized and under-represented groups in employment and access to essential services.
9. Design mechanisms to involve stakeholders from marginalized and under-represented groups in inclusive development processes, ensuring necessary representation and advocacy arrangements are in place to ensure their voice is heard in policymaking.

3.10 Marketing and Promotion

Despite its importance, TVET suffers from long-standing stigmatization, often viewed as a less desirable alternative to traditional academic education. This negative perception undermines the potential of TVET to contribute to individual career development and national progress. The policy must address the challenges of TVET stigmatization and propose strategies for rebranding TVET to increase enrolment, improve public perception, and elevate the prestige of TVET in Belize.

Rebranding TVET is a long-term and complex task that the NTA, the MoE and TVET providers cannot accomplish without collaboration and public buy-in. To effectively change the image of TVET, it is essential to enhance both the relevance and quality of the TVET programmes offered. In addition, dedicated initiatives to showcase modernization efforts and achievements within the TVET sector will be crucial.

This rebranding endeavour requires the full engagement of the private sector, making it a national initiative aimed at projecting a positive and contemporary image of TVET. By collaboratively highlighting the advancements in TVET and demonstrating its relevance given current labour market needs, stakeholders can work together to reshape perceptions and elevate the status of TVET in society.

The NTA is uniquely positioned to lead this collaborative effort. By actively involving various stakeholders—including businesses, industry leaders, educators, and community organizations—the NTA can orchestrate initiatives highlighting the value and relevance of TVET in today's economy.

Policy statements

Policy statement 3.10.1: TVET programmes shall be promoted as equal, valuable pathways to successful and rewarding careers, emphasizing their alignment with national development goals.

Policy statement 3.10.2: All stakeholders, including government, business sectors, employers and educational institutions, shall work together to effectively combat TVET stigmatization and ensure that TVET programmes are accessible and appealing.

Policy objectives

The GoB, through the MoE, the NTA, and media communication and public relations specialists, shall:

1. Develop a national rebranding strategy, in collaboration with business sector representatives, to raise TVET's overall profile and elevate its status as a critical economic and social mobility driver in Belize. Efforts must be made to reach underrepresented groups.
2. Raise the awareness of employment opportunities of learners and graduates from the TVET system.
3. Work towards shifting societal attitudes toward TVET by emphasizing its importance and the successful outcomes of TVET graduates.
4. Position TVET as an integral part of the broader education system, removing the notion that TVET is a “last resort” option.
5. Promote and market the products and services of the TVET sector to all stakeholders and the general public.

3.11 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

M&E is an essential component of TVET, assessing the effectiveness and impact of educational programmes. Effective M&E practices enhance graduate employability by evaluating in-demand skills, allowing TVET providers to adjust curricula and training methods accordingly.

M&E also provides a framework for assessing TVET delivery performance, identifying system strengths and weaknesses, and informing strategic planning for improved outcomes. Quality assurance is another benefit, ensuring high standards and effective training initiatives.

Data from M&E systems inform policy decisions and resource allocation, helping stakeholders prioritize improvements and invest in successful programmes. M&E processes promote accountability through regular performance reporting, building trust in TVET.

Additionally, M&E facilitates continuous improvement by identifying best practices and areas for innovation, ensuring TVET systems remain responsive to labour market and societal needs. Finally, M&E supports evidence-based policy development, guiding strategies to enhance TVET's relevance and quality.

Policy statements

Policy statement 3.11.1: The NTA shall implement a comprehensive M&E framework that regularly assesses the effectiveness and impact of the TVET system. This framework will include performance indicators to evaluate the quality, equity, relevance and efficiency of the TVET system.

Policy statement 3.11.2: TVET providers shall implement M&E mechanisms that regularly assess the effectiveness and impact of TVET programmes offered by their institution. These mechanisms will include, among other areas, performance indicators to evaluate curriculum relevance, teaching methodologies, and graduate employment rates, ensuring that all programmes remain aligned with labour market demands.

Policy statement 3.11.3: The NTA shall utilize data generated from M&E processes to inform policy decisions and resource allocation. This approach will prioritize continuous improvement and investment in programmes that demonstrate successful outcomes, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency and relevance of TVET.

Policy statement 3.11.4: The NTA shall require all accredited TVET providers to maintain transparency in their M&E practices by regularly reporting performance outcomes to the GoB and the general public. This commitment to accountability will foster trust and ensure that resources are used responsibly to achieve educational goals.

Policy statement 3.11.5: The NTA shall maintain transparency in their M&E practices by regularly reporting performance outcomes to the GoB, TVET stakeholders, and the general public.

Policy objectives

The NTA shall:

1. Implement a structured M&E framework within the TVET system, incorporating specific performance indicators to assess curriculum relevance, teaching effectiveness, and the employability of graduates.
2. Develop standardized data collection and analysis protocols for all TVET providers to ensure consistent and accurate reporting of programme outcomes, enabling informed decision-making and resource allocation.
3. Ensure that TVET providers publish M&E results annually as per the NTA guidelines, to ensure stakeholders can access performance evaluations and resource utilization reports.
4. Cultivate a culture of continuous improvement through annual training and workshops for TVET staff on best practices in M&E and continuous improvement strategies, aiming to enhance responsiveness to labour market changes and learner needs.
5. Establish a dedicated unit to support policy development through evidence-based insights and to analyse M&E data and generate evidence-based recommendations for policy development, ensuring that at least two major policy revisions are proposed annually based on M&E findings to enhance the relevance and quality of TVET.

4. SECTION FOUR

4.0. CONCLUSION

Implementing a comprehensive TVET policy brings numerous benefits, both to individuals and to the broader economy. One key advantage is the alignment of education and training with labour market demands, ensuring that graduates possess the competencies required by employers. This leads to higher employment rates, as graduates are better equipped to fill in-demand positions across various sectors. Additionally, TVET policies that promote competency-based learning allow for more authentic learning experiences, making graduates more productive and adaptable in the workplace. For individuals, this means improved job prospects, opportunities for upward mobility, and the ability to pursue entrepreneurial ventures.

On a national level, a well-implemented TVET policy fosters economic growth by addressing skills gaps and increasing workforce competitiveness. The TVET system will also better position the country to attract foreign investment, as industries can rely on a pool of competent workers. Furthermore, TVET policies that focus on inclusivity and equity help bridge the educational divide, providing opportunities for marginalized and under-represented groups to access quality training opportunities. This contributes to social cohesion, reduces unemployment, and enhances overall productivity, creating a more inclusive and resilient economy.

5. APPENDICES

5.0. Appendix 1: Proposed structure and functions of a National Training Authority (NTA)

An NTA shall be established by a TVET Act as an autonomous not-for-profit TVET regulating agency. The TVET Act should establish the NTA as a statutory agency having full autonomy over the responsibilities given to the NTA by the TVET Act.

Vision and mission statement of the NTA

Within the frame of the TVET Act, the NTA's board of directors should create its vision and mission statements that will guide the development and operation of the NTA. The directors may be guided by the proposed vision and mission statements.

A proposed vision of the NTA is:

To be the leading national TVET body in Belize that promotes and facilitates the development of a competent and adaptable workforce that can drive economic growth, social progress, and national prosperity.

A proposed mission of the NTA is:

To regulate and harmonize a relevant and efficient TVET system to empower Belizeans with continued employable competencies, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship to underpin sustainable socio-economic development.

Board of Directors

The NTA should be governed by its Board of Directors consisting of up to 11 directors, appointed for two-year terms by the GOB on the recommendation of relevant TVET key stakeholders. The Board of Directors composition:

Three (3) public sector representatives:

- One (1) from the Ministry responsible for education and training
- One (1) from the Ministry responsible for labour and employment; and
- One (1) from the Ministry of Finance.

Four (4) private sector representatives drawn from the main economic and employment-relevant sectors including sectors that have operational SSCs, capable of representing the broader sector rather than individual employers. Based on the current situation, the four private sector representatives should represent:

- Economic and employment importance sectors;
- High-growth sector;
- Micro, small & medium enterprises (MSME); and
- Other sectors through the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI).

Two (2) TVET provider representatives:

- One (1) representing publicly owned and managed TVET providers; and
- One (1) representing privately owned and managed TVET providers, including faith-based and NGO institutions.

(N.B For the first term, this can be extended to 3 TVET providers (instead of 2) as the ITVETs and THS currently operate differently under different systems).

Two (2) trade union representatives:

- One (1) representing the major trade union (in terms of member numbers) for TVET staff, including managers, instructors, and other TVET personnel; and
- One (1) representing the major trade union relevant to the private sector.

All directors should be given a mandate by the organization they are representing to make binding decisions.

Bylaws and governance principles

The NTA should craft bylaws based on key principles, in accordance with the TVET Policy, including:

- Reflecting good governance;
- Ensuring representation of the private sector and government on the board;
- Selecting the Chair and Vice-Chair from either sector, with balanced representation between them;
- Establishing clear guidelines for meeting notices, agendas, and decision-making procedures;
- Providing clarity on proxy representation for board members;
- Requiring a quorum of five (5) members, including the Chair or Vice-Chair and at least one (1) public and one (1) private sector representative;
- Providing the option to invite non-voting stakeholders or experts by simple majority;
- Prioritizing transparency and accountability in all NTA operations.

Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)

The TVET Act should establish SSCs within the NTA governance structure, **with each SSC reporting directly to the NTA Board**. The number of SSCs to be formed will depend on factors such as the complexity of the sector, the number of companies within it, the proportion of companies that are members of a sector association (employer organization density), the association's resources, and its specific goals and objectives. In accordance with the TVET Act, the NTA should be responsible for establishing the SSCs and ensuring the appropriate number of councils are formed.

Each SSC should consist of a number of members reflecting the sector's occupational complexity. The NTA should have at least one technical staff member on each SSC, while the remaining members should be appointed by the NTA based on recommendations from relevant TVET key stakeholders, ensuring that the majority of the members represent employers/employers' associations within the sector.

Each SSC will operate based on the guidelines established by the NTA Board's bylaws. (See note on SSCs on p. 45)

NTA Secretariat

Establishing an effective secretariat is crucial for the effective functioning of the NTA.

An Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer (CEO) would lead the NTA's daily operations. This individual is responsible for executing the board's directives and overseeing the management of the organization's staff. The NTA Board appoints the Executive Director or CEO, who remains directly accountable to the Board for his/her performance and the NTA's operational outcomes.

The NTA may appoint and employ officers, employees, and agents as it deems necessary for properly performing its functions, with remuneration and terms set at its discretion.

Under the guidance of the NTA Board, it is the responsibility of the Executive Director or CEO to ensure that the secretariat operates in accordance with the following principles:

- Define a clear organizational structure with well-delineated roles and responsibilities.
- Determine reporting lines to ensure accountability and effective communication.
- Ensure evidence-based operations by using data analytics for policy decisions and performance monitoring.

- Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess TVET programmes effectiveness and regularly report findings to stakeholders.
- Foster collaboration with stakeholders, including industry, educational institutions, government, and community organizations.
- Create a communication strategy to inform stakeholders about the NTA's activities and achievements.
- Implement quality assurance strategies to ensure compliance with established standards.
- Manage financial, human, and physical resources efficiently.
- Align budgets with strategic priorities and ensure transparent financial reporting.
- Encourage knowledge sharing and best practices to foster a learning culture.
- Uphold ethical standards, promoting integrity, transparency, and accountability.
- Implement policies to address conflicts of interest and encourage ethical behaviours.

The secretariat should have the necessary capacity to effectively support the Board of Directors and the SSCs. This can be achieved by investing in staff professional development in key areas such as policy analysis, stakeholder engagement, and quality assurance. Furthermore, the secretariat must remain engaged and informed about private sector practices and trends in TVET delivery.

Responsibility of the NTA

A. Policy development and implementation

The NTA should be responsible for formulating technical and vocational education training (TVET) skills development policies. Using regional guidelines (CARICOM/CANTA), this should include setting national standards, policies and guidelines to ensure consistency and quality across training institutions. The authority should work closely with government bodies, private sector stakeholders, and educational and training institutions to align TVET programmes with national development goals and labour market needs.

The responsibilities should include the following:

- Formulating and implementing policies, strategies, and plans for the TVET sector in Belize. The TVET plans should provide concise and coordinated recommendations on the management and financing and quality outcomes of TVET providers. The plans should ensure alignment, relevance, quality, and inclusion based on national TVET development objectives.
- Aligning TVET programmes with national development priorities.
- Ensuring that TVET programmes are accessible to all Belizeans. This includes developing and monitoring equitable and inclusive policies and strategies to be applied at all levels of the TVET system.
- Maintaining procedures for regularly reviewing the TVET policy, strategy, and implementation plans.
- Undertaking periodic audits to support the revision and updating of the TVET policy and Strategic plan. This should be based on sound labour market information and TVET data analysis.

B. Develop and maintain national occupational standards (NOS)

The NTA should be responsible for developing and maintaining occupational standards that define the competencies in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for effective workplace performance. The standards must specify what a person should know and be able to effectively perform the functions of a particular job.

Standards are to be the agreed minimum best practice in an occupational area. Each established sector skills council (SSC) will be supported by a Technical Officer from the NTA.

Standards are to be reviewed every five years to ensure relevance.

The NTA would be responsible for hosting and overseeing the BzNQF, linking standards to qualifications. The NTA should ensure that the NQF aligns with the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs) so that NTA-awarded certificates are recognized by all relevant Caribbean countries, organizations and authorities.

The responsibilities should include the following:

- The NTA should be the custodian of the National Occupational Standards, which must be made accessible to the general public.
- The NTA Board should ensure that occupational standards relevant to each sector that are developed, are endorsed and reviewed every five years by the relevant SSC.
- The NTA should establish standard development and maintenance procedures to be applied by the SSCs.
- The NTA is responsible for maintaining the TVET-specific qualifications within the NQF and advising the relevant authorities on needed adjustments to the NQF, ensuring consistency and portability of TVET qualifications.
- The NTA is responsible for ensuring that NTA established standards are aligned with the requirements of CARICOM and CANTA.

C. Curriculum design and development

Based on the occupational standards, the NTA should oversee the design and development of competency-based curricula for TVET programmes. This involves collaborating with TVET providers and private sector experts to ensure that the training content is relevant, and is reviewed every five years, and aligned with the needs of the different sectors of the economy.

The curricula must include work-based learning elements either as internships, work attachments, school-based training³⁶, school-based income generating activities etc. making up a significant part of the lessons.³⁷ Due consideration should be given to each sector's capacity to host trainees for work-based learning initiatives.

The responsibilities should include the following:

- Developing competency-based training TVET programmes, models, and modular curricula for initial TVET, adult training, and the specific needs of different sectors.
- Ensuring that the curricula facilitate equity and inclusion.
- Mandating private sector engagement in all aspects of curricula development through the relevant SSC.
- Awarding national and regionally recognized NVQs, CVQs and Unit certificates for TVET and related programmes.
- Developing and maintaining curricula competency-based development and review procedures.
- Developing a structured process for internships, and work-based learning programmes aligned to the occupational standards.

D. Assessment and certification

The NTA should be guided by the Training, Assessment and Certification framework established by CARICOM/CANTA. The assessment and certification process must ensure that graduates possess the required competencies for employment in accordance with developed occupational standards. The NTA should manage assessment and certification processes for trainees who have completed accredited TVET

³⁶ School-based training is a form of practical work-like training that takes place at the TVET provider rather than in a company. This allows trainees to learn the practical skills required in their chosen profession by using the school's facilities and equipment at work-like projects.

³⁷ The relevant technical officers of the NTA, in association with the SSCs should establish the minimum number of lessons to be offered as work-based learning (work attachments, internship, school-based training, school-based income generating activities etc.

programmes or courses. This involves ensuring that an assessment framework is in place, and certifications are issued and recognized by employers and possible relevant authorities. The relevant SSCs should be involved in the development, maintenance, and implementation of assessment and examination procedures and tools.

The responsibilities should include the following:

- Development and maintenance of assessment tools and certification procedures that satisfactorily align with the established occupational standards.
- Engagement of each SSC in the development of assessment and certification procedures, which may include consultation with TVET and private sector experts.
- Conducting competency-based assessments including the work-based learning approaches as part of the assessment and certification process.
- Ensuring that the SSC identify and capacitate private sector representatives who can participate in the practical assessment of trainees' competencies.

E. Labour market information and TVET data analysis

The NTA should be responsible for gathering, analysing, and publishing TVET-relevant LMI and TVET data necessary for identifying present and future labour market needs within different sectors. The NTA should ensure that procedures and practical tools are in place for regularly gathering, analysing, and publishing LMI and TVET data. These procedures should be based on a sector approach, directly engaging the SSCs and other stakeholders in the entire LMI and TVET data collection and analysis process.

The NTA should ensure that the LMI and TVET data is used for the steering and planning of TVET, such as:

- Creating TVET programme master plans to guide the TVET system;
- Assessing TVET periodically to inform TVET policy revision and development of associated policies and procedures;
- Promoting on-demand TVET programmes or courses;
- Participating in the review of accreditation criteria;
- Ensuring that active TVET programmes or courses are accredited;
- Developing or reviewing occupational standards and developing curricula.

The responsibilities of the NTA should include the following:

- Participating in the structured collection, analysis, and publishing of sector-relevant TVET LMI and data that can facilitate TVET steering, planning, accreditation, occupational standards, and curriculum development.
- Engaging each SSC and other stakeholders in the entire TVET LMI gathering, analysis and utilization of LMI data.
- Gathering, analysing and publishing TVET data from accredited TVET providers.
- Developing and maintaining procedures for collecting, analysing, and publishing TVET LMI and TVET data.

F. Advise on all matters related to the regulatory framework governing TVET

The NTA should ensure that the regulatory framework governing TVET remains relevant and provide advice to the GoB on possible legal adjustment necessary for a relevant and quality TVET system.

Policy integration in TVET should involve ensuring coherence across different policy domains, such as education, labour and employment, self-employment/entrepreneurship, tax, economic development etc. This facilitates avoiding contradictions and promotes synergies between TVET and other policies that affect competence development and employment.

The NTA should provide advice where appropriate, to the MoE, on policy areas relevant to TVET and its development. This should be done to ensure policy integration and promote and facilitate TVET and its development.

G. Accreditation and quality assurance

The NTA will have responsibility for accreditation of TVET providers and programmes in the system. Accreditation is a crucial process for ensuring quality, and the NTA will develop the mechanisms to assess and approve the TVET provider's learning and training procedures and outcomes, institutional capacities, facilities, and overall quality to ensure that it formally meets predetermined criteria and standards. The quality of TVET providers and their programme delivery is a critical function of a relevant and quality-focused TVET system.

Development of accreditation criteria and standards development along with the quality evidenced by the necessary monitoring system, should facilitate the attainment of CVQ accreditation via CANTA.

The responsibilities of the NTA should include the following:

- Conducting regular monitoring and evaluation activities to maintain the quality and relevance of TVET programmes and facilities. The NTA must have both internal and external capacities to undertake regular monitoring and evaluation that meets CANTA's requirements;
- Ensuring that TVET instructors and managers competencies are an integrated part of the assessment and quality assurance requirements.
- Accrediting programmes which would be valid for five years, with the possibility of an additional five-year extension following the conduct of a re-evaluation exercise.
- Developing and maintaining accreditation criteria and standards for TVET providers and TVET programmes. This should include providing criteria and standards for management and administration of TVET providers
- Developing criteria and standards to guide TVET providers regarding delivery and assessment of practical tasks and exercises.

Review and audit of training provider's physical facilities, which may include:

- Suitability and adequacy;
- Health, safety, and security;
- Learning environment;
- Continuous improvement;
- Supportive services.

Ensuring that the accreditation and quality assurance criteria and procedures align with the requirements of CANTA. This includes developing, maintaining, implementing, monitoring and advising:

- Accredited TVET providers and TVET programmes.
- TVET quality assurance standards and procedures.
- Accreditation capacity building.

6.0 A Note on Sector Skills Councils

The following is extracted from the CARICOM-approved Regional Occupational Standards (ROS) Manual developed by the Caribbean Association of National Training Authorities (CANTA) (2024)

SECTOR SKILLS COUNCILS

The Sector Skills Councils (SSC) or Sector Advisory Committee (SAC) is an advisory committee comprising of institutions and industry representatives for a particular sector or cluster of occupational areas whose focus is on workforce development, through education and training.

The National Training Agency (NTA) and or TVET Councils partner with industry to facilitate workforce development initiatives in the various sectors of the economy, through the establishment of SSCs.

Role of the SSC in providing labour market information:

1. To provide industry intelligence and advice to government, and enterprises on workforce development and skills needs;
2. To actively support the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of high-quality training and workforce development products and services, including the nationally endorsed Occupational standards;
3. To provide independent skills and training advice to enterprises, including matching identified training needs with appropriate training solutions;
4. To provide contemporary intelligence on industry skill needs, trends, barriers and implications which provides a shared understanding of what industry wants and why
5. To provide broad analysis of current and emerging skill gaps
6. To identify other issues impacting on workforce development that may require attention, such as specific skill shortages, skills needs, and regional requirements
7. To provide impact and usage of existing Occupational Standards and their qualifications
8. To provide future directions and short to medium term priorities for endorsed Occupational standards.

Benefits to Stakeholders

Benefits to Employers

Employers will enjoy the following benefits as a result of the setting up of SSC/SAC:

1. A guaranteed competent workforce
2. Reduced costs in recruiting and selecting the ideal candidate, reduced costs in internal training programmes and lower staff turnover rates.
3. Clearly defined occupational standards ensure fairness in such practices as recruitment, promotion and compensation
4. Improved market share and to provide greater security for their employees and for their future.

Benefits to Training Providers

Training Providers will enjoy the following benefits as a result of the setting up of SAC:

1. Alignment of training programmes to current occupational practices in the workplace
2. Alignment of the supply of trainees to the demand for labour in the workplace
3. An integration of on and off the job provision
4. The development of a consistent curriculum across the spectrum of training providers
5. A framework for monitoring and evaluating the career progress of graduates

Benefits to Employees

Employees will enjoy the following benefits as a result of the setting up of SAC:

1. Development of a framework for self-assessment and the conduct of performance review
2. A basis for information/advice for people entering a first career/job
3. Identification of common and potentially transferable skills in different careers/ occupations
4. Creation of a framework for career planning and review

Establishment and function of the Skills Sector Advisory/ Sector Advisory Committees

Selection criteria

1. Sector employers, educators and trainers
2. Government Agencies/departments
3. Professional associations
4. Trade unions
5. Bodies responsible for industry regulations
6. Trade Associations
7. Senior management within their sectors or defined occupational groups
8. Existing bodies which already play a role in this regard can form the nucleus of the SACs in their relevant sectors.
9. A clearly defined group of employers with similar business objectives in a definable economic activity or related activities
10. An occupational group where there is no clear industry base but a clear occupational demand.
11. Accrediting /licensing bodies
12. Research Organisations
13. Other key stakeholders on shared education and training issues

Steps in establishing the SSC/ SAC

1. Identify members (Organisations) to serve on SSC/ SAC
2. Contact relevant persons: letters, phone
3. Send SSC/SSAC Terms of Reference to companies for review and buy in
4. Draft MOU for Industry
5. Send MOU to companies for review
6. Collate feedback on MOU
7. Make amendments to MOU as necessary
8. Get sign off by members
9. Have official launch of SSC/SAC

Terms of reference of the SAC/SSC

1. To promote, review and endorse Occupational Standards and training delivery resources for the sector
2. To provide insight, on a periodic basis, on current and future skills needs and trends for the sector
3. To monitor and provide feedback on the progress of programme development and implementation initiatives for the sector.
4. To monitor and provide feedback on issues pertaining to quality assurance and certification of various training programmes within the sector.

5. To provide a forum for the exchange of views between all stakeholders in the sector to influence and inform national education and training policies and programmes.
6. To provide support for developing curriculum and instructional material

Functions of the SAC/SSC

1. To recommend occupational areas for development.
2. To endorse, review and implement the Occupational Standards of Competences for the sector, industry or occupational group.
3. To monitor emerging trends and changes in the Labour Market and recommend changes to the OS.
4. To take the lead in encouraging companies in the sector to facilitate increased employee involvement in training and certification
5. To monitor and implement changes to Occupational Standards to factor for emerging trends and changes in the Labour Market.
6. To assist the Sector Development Specialist in nominating and selecting individuals to form the Lead Body in the respective occupational areas
7. To review and comment on activities to increase employer and apprentice/trainee/worker participation in apprenticeship programme, PLAR etc.
8. To facilitate the Programme Development and Management department in developing curriculum and instructional material.

LEAD BODIES/GROUPS – Sub Committee of SSCs

Definition

The Lead Body is a group of industry experts in a specific occupational area whose focus is the development of the technical content of the Occupational Standards. The Lead Body consists of subject matter experts with the requisite qualifications and experience in the respective occupational area and assists in ratifying the contents of the occupational standards.

These Lead Bodies are established on an ad-hoc basis for the duration of the development or review of the Occupational Standards. Lead Body meetings are facilitated by standards' developers from the NTAs/TVET Councils.

Criteria for selection

Committee members should be selected on the premise that his/her qualifications and experience in the Occupational area would be of significant assistance to the development of the occupational standards for the required area.

The Lead Body should comprise:

1. Persons representing large, medium-sized small and 'micro' organisations and even the self-employed in order to have a committee that is representative of the sector/industry.
2. Persons from both the private and public sector
3. Persons performing within the level of the occupational area for at least 5 years
4. Persons performing at a level above the occupational area
5. A training provider/ persons from institutions

Ref. CANTA Manual on Regional Occupational Standards Rev 2024.