



དཔལ་ལྷན་འབྲུག་གཞུང་། ལས་གཞི་ལྷན་ཁག།  
Royal Government of Bhutan  
Ministry of Labour and Human Resources  
Policy and Planning Division

July 3, 2019

MoLHR/PPD-7/2019-20/ 07

Secretary  
Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat  
Tashichho Dzong  
Thimphu; Bhutan

**Subject: Concept Note for revision of the draft TVET Policy 2013**

Dear Dasho,

As you may kindly be aware that the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR) as an agency responsible for promotion and development of TVET in the country developed TVET Policy in 2013. However, the policy has since then remained in the draft stage. Lack of such policy at the national level has hugely impeded MoLHR in achieving its overall objective of enhancing access, quality and relevance of TVET.

Therefore, realizing the need of an overarching policy document to guide implementation of TVET in the country, the Ministry proposes to carryout revision of the existing draft TVET Policy 2013 and formulate comprehensive National TVET Policy. In this regard, please find enclosed herewith the concept note submitted for your kind approval.

Thanking you,  
Yours Sincerely,

  
Sonam Wangchul  
SECRETARY

Copy to:

1. Hon'ble Minister, MoLHR for kind information
2. Director, DTE, MoLHR for information
3. Director, DOS, MoLHR for information
- ✓ 4. Chief Planning Officer, PPD, MoLHR for follow-up
5. Office copy

P.O. Box 1036, Thimphu; Location: Thongsel Lam, Lower Motithang; Tel: PABX (975) 2-333867/326734;

Website : [www.molhr.gov.bt](http://www.molhr.gov.bt)

Email: [ppd@molhr.gov.bt](mailto:ppd@molhr.gov.bt)

## Concept Note

### Revision of the draft TVET Policy 2013

#### **i. Background**

The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR) is primarily mandated to ensure quality and relevance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the country. It is also responsible for providing timely policy interventions for bringing in TVET reform. Currently, the MoLHR acts as a policy maker as well as the regulator of TVET in the country. In reality, there should have been a separate entity independent of MoLHR accountable for delivering either of these two roles for the reason that delivering of the two roles has hugely impacted MoLHR in upholding its intended objectives. This has further resulted in a weak and rigid system that is not responsive to the changing market dynamics.

Although, the TVET system in Bhutan was introduced in the early 1960's, the need of an overarching document to provide holistic guidance for promoting the growth and development of a robust TVET system in the country wasn't realized until 2006. The Vocational Education and Training (VET) Policy, 2006 was the first of such policies in the country developed for guiding implementation of TVET and its reform processes. However, VET Policy 2006 has now become redundant and doesn't cover important aspects of TVET and skills development. It doesn't provide explicit strategies and action plans needed to initiate the necessary reforms in the national TVET system.

Therefore, realizing the need of a comprehensive and coherent policy at the national level, the Ministry initiated review of the VET Policy, 2006. As result, the draft TVET Policy, 2013 was developed. However, it is still in the draft stage. In absence of such policy, the Ministry initiated development of the TVET Blueprint. However, the TVET Blueprint is a time bound document providing guidance only till 2026 and doesn't provide holistic guidance for development of overall TVET system in the country.

Today, in light of increasing importance placed on the TVET system as key driver of economic growth and development, the need of TVET policy at the national level has become indispensable. In absence of such policy at the national level, TVET programs are being implemented by various agencies and sectors unilaterally in an uncoordinated approach deviating from essential norms which impedes MoLHR from achieving its overall objective of enhancing access, quality and relevance of TVET.

Moreover, the National Council of Bhutan has also flagged lack of TVET Policy as one of the significant issues constraining Bhutan's TVET system. This clearly illustrates the need of an overarching policy document at the national level. Thus, it is timely for the Ministry to carryout revision of the draft TVET Policy, 2013 and formulate a comprehensive, inclusive and holistic National TVET Policy that clearly articulates all aspects of TVET development starting from access to governance and financing. The proposed policy should serve as an umbrella framework and sets strategic direction and guidance for all TVET reform initiatives in line with the need of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

Further, the revision of draft TVET policy, 2013 will also ensure alignment of its provisions and statements with the important policies and documents such as; Economic Development Policy, National HRD Policy, National Employment Policy, Bhutan Education Blueprint, TVET Blueprint, Bhutan Vocational Qualifications Framework, Bhutan Qualifications Framework, Tertiary Education Policy, National Policy on Persons with Disabilities, National Workforce Plan,

## Concept Note

### Revision of the draft TVET Policy 2013

Construction Development Policy, National Education Policy, and other important policies and documents.

#### **ii. Critique of current policy options and approaches:**

While the draft TVET Policy, 2013 covers most aspects of TVET system, it does not provide coherent long-term strategic guidance, approaches and action plans to initiate the necessary reforms for TVET development in the country. The overall structure of the draft policy requires significant revision to conform to the important aspects of TVET Blueprint and the 12<sup>th</sup> FYP. There is also need to rework on the policy objectives and the policy statements in order to ensure proper alignment, clarity, focus and foresight. The rationale, scope and purpose of the policy will also require major refinement and sharpening.

Further, the draft policy does not adequately articulate on the Bhutan Vocational Qualifications Framework and its related prerequisites including creation of linkages between TVET and Tertiary education and provisions of credit transfer which as a result has constrained seamless transition between School education to TVET to Tertiary education.

Though the policy recognizes importance of establishing linkages between TVET and Industry, it lacks clarity on providing platform between the two to progress farther. This has resulted in poor institute and industry linkage, meagre industry participation in TVET planning and delivery and ultimately affecting employability of TVET graduates.

Most importantly, the draft Policy lacks clarity on the crucial aspects like financing, governance and institutional arrangements which is very critical for bringing sustained transformation in the TVET system. Lack of or inadequate governance and institutional mechanism has resulted in management of TVET by different Agencies thereby compromising quality of TVET and its associated standards.

In light of the above, the need for a comprehensive National TVET Policy has become very urgent to guide the transformation of the TVET system in the 12<sup>th</sup> FYP and beyond.

#### **iii. Policy Recommendations**

Currently, there are 113 registered TVET providers in the country (*as of June 14, 2019*) mostly constituting of private and single proprietorship. These institutes are mostly dependent and sustained on government initiatives and incentives. This can be reasonably attributed to the improper coordination among the sectors and agencies involved in TVET delivery, poor funding mechanism and indistinct governance framework including uncertain mandates of the regulatory and implementing agencies.

However, such issues shall be addressed through the National TVET Policy which shall have clear delineation of financing, governance and institutional arrangements. Each policy statements shall be translated into strategies and action plans in order to ensure that significant issues are addressed timely and appropriately.

The National TVET Policy shall be comprehensive and inclusive providing strategic and long-term guidance to the TVET implementing agencies in order to ensure coordinated approach in TVET delivery. The policy shall also be aligned with the relevant policies and documents in order to ensure achievement of the shared objectives and targets.

## Concept Note

### Revision of the draft TVET Policy 2013

The National TVET Policy shall clearly outline the Governance and Administrative structure and its roles and responsibilities. Therefore, cost in terms of human resource development and establishment of independent institutions may arise. Additionally, the qualifications, knowledge and skills of the TVET instructors shall be upgraded in order to enable them deliver market relevant quality trainings. Most importantly, the TVET institutions shall be equipped with the industry relevant and state-of-the-art technologies. This will enhance employability of the TVET graduates as well as promote self-employment.

Essentially, the comprehensive TVET Policy will focus on five key objectives of (i). Enhancing increased and equitable access to TVET, (ii). Improving quality and competence of the TVET system, (iii). Strengthening the alignment of TVET programs to the needs of the economy, (iv). Transform TVET through effective Governance and leadership and (v). Promoting stable and sustained financing for TVET.

#### **iv. Integration of GNH and cross cutting issues**

TVET is an integral part of the socioeconomic development and Bhutan's development is guided by the philosophy of GNH. The cross-cutting issues are also inevitable and it is very important to integrate into developmental plans and policies. Therefore, the National TVET policy shall ensure equal access to every person irrespective of their age, gender, level of qualification, ability to learn and status in the society. The policy shall specifically cater to the needs of persons with disabilities, vulnerable groups and promote lifelong learning for all. This will specifically help in poverty reduction.

The policy shall be inclusive as well as responsive. It shall promote the concept of Green economy through ideation of Greening TVET with focus on transforming TVET for the growth of green economy to help Bhutan transition to low-carbon economy. The policy shall also allow TVET institutions to diversify their programs in line with the principles of green economy including integration of disaster resilient features and enhancing eLearning prospects.

The National TVET Policy shall also articulate promotion and development of traditional arts and crafts for sustainable livelihood.

#### **v. Process and indicative timeline**

Since the work includes revision of the existing draft TVET Policy, 2013, the National TVET Policy will be developed internally through formation of Internal Working Group within the MoLHR. However, in order to ensure coherence with existing national policies and documents, extensive consultations will be carried out with the relevant sectors and agencies. The tentative timeline is as indicated below:

SI. No	PROCESS	TIMELINE	REMARKS
1	Conduct 1 <sup>st</sup> Internal Working Group (IWG) Meeting	July	Discuss on the internal review findings, structure, theme, way forward, and prepare for the 1 <sup>st</sup> stakeholder's consultation meeting
2	Conduct 1 <sup>st</sup> stakeholder's consultation meeting	1 <sup>st</sup> week of August	

## Concept Note

### Revision of the draft TVET Policy 2013

3	Prepare 1 <sup>st</sup> draft of the Policy	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> week of August	Review/incorporate feedbacks and comments of the 1 <sup>st</sup> stakeholders meeting and prepare 1 <sup>st</sup> draft for submission to the Ministry
4	Share 1 <sup>st</sup> draft policy with the stakeholders for further comments/feedbacks	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of August	
5	Present 1 <sup>st</sup> draft to the Ministry	1 <sup>st</sup> week of September	To receive feedback and directives of the Ministry
6	Prepare 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft of the Policy	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of September	Review and incorporate feedbacks and comments of the Ministry
7	Share 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft Policy with the stakeholders for further comments/feedbacks	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of September	
8	Conduct 2 <sup>nd</sup> stakeholder's consultation meeting	4 <sup>th</sup> week of September	To receive further feedbacks and comments
9	Prepare 3 <sup>rd</sup> draft and submit to the Ministry	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of October	For further comments
10	Conduct 2 <sup>nd</sup> IWG	4 <sup>th</sup> week of October	To finalize the draft policy
11	Submit draft policy to GNHCS	1 <sup>st</sup> week of November	

**List of stakeholders who will be consulted while developing National TVET Policy are as follows:**

1. Ministry of Education
2. Ministry of Works and Human Settlements
3. Ministry of Economic Affairs
4. Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
5. Ministry of Information and Communications
6. Ministry of Finance
7. Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat
8. Royal Civil Service Commission
9. Tourism Council of Bhutan
10. Khesar Gyelpo University of Medical Sciences
11. Royal University of Bhutan
12. Construction Development Board
13. Farm Machinery Corporation Limited
14. Construction Development Corporation Limited
15. TVET Special Committee of National Council of Bhutan
16. Public and Private TVET providers
17. Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
18. Industry Associations

## **Concept Note**

### **Revision of the draft TVET Policy 2013**

#### **vi. Major impediments or risks foreseen in the development of the policy.**

Followings are some of the risks foreseen while developing National TVET Policy:

- i. Poor participation from the stakeholders
- ii. Inadequate information