

VET and skills development in Uzbekistan

INTPA VET training – practical training
about VET and employability
opportunities

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Uzbekistan: Context

Key-data on TVET, education, labour market

- 60% of the population under the age of 30 (36 million population)
- Skills development system composed of TVET for secondary general education graduates
- Until 2017, a fixed 3-year TVET program was compulsory and free for Grade 9 general education graduates; and 1,064,028 students (48.1% girls)—87.0% of Grade 9 graduates—were enrolled at 1,423 technical and vocational educational institutions (TVEIs).
- COVID-19 pandemic has severe socioeconomic consequences for Uzbekistan.
- The number of unemployed people rose sharply from 1.4 million in 2019 to 1.9 million by June 2020, resulting in a rise in the unemployment rate from 9.0% in 2019 to 13.2%; and one out of five youth (aged 16–30) were unemployed.
- Labor market interventions were urgently needed, including skills development and employment services, especially for youth and unemployed job seekers.



Uzbekistan: TVET reforms

Main elements in TVET reforms in the past 5 years

- The education sector reform, initiated in 2017, replaced the previous 12-year compulsory education (9 years of general education plus 3 years of TVET or 3 years at academic lyceums) with 11-year compulsory education (students who finish Grade 9 can continue to Grade 11 or choose to pursue 2 years of TVET, although TVET in general is not compulsory).
- New enrollment of students at TVEIs was suspended from 2018. The TVET sector reform has been formalized since 2019. TVET is no longer compulsory and the reform aims at transforming TVET into a market-relevant skills development system.
- A new national strategy for 2020–2026 was approved in January 2022. The themes relevant to the TVET sector in the 2017–2021 strategy are also prioritized and strengthened in the new strategy;
- In 2022, funding for implementation is covered under the state budget, the national fund for reconstruction and development, funds of executing agencies and banks, and loans and grants from international donor funding agencies. Two bodies have been established to manage the strategy: the Republican Commission for the Implementation of the Development Strategy of the New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026 and a working group.
- The Uzbekistan national qualification framework (NQF) was approved on 15 May 2020. It is linked to an educational qualifications framework and an occupational competency standards framework
- In accordance with the new program structure, TVET students will come from grade 11 on a voluntary basis. For the TVET system and the local TVET college to get updated and have current information of the demand from employers, establishing sector skills councils (SSC) would be very useful
- SSCs are platforms of cooperation in which at least two types of stakeholders are involved: public authorities, social partners (the representative organizations of employers and employees); and education, TVET institutes, and research institutes. The European experience has clearly shown that SSCs work in a structured and continuous way. SSCs existence reflects the shared will to reform TVET to better meet labor market needs.



Uzbekistan: EU responses

EU intervention (programmes), ongoing or planned and interventions by others development agencies:

- EU-UNESCO - Skills Development for Employability in Rural Areas of Uzbekistan (2020-24, EUR 9.6M) project supports skills development in agriculture sector focusing on TVET policy implementation reform, modernize governance arrangements, and strengthen agriculture and irrigation sectors to serve the needs of the labor market.
- EU-ETF - Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia (DARYA, 2022–27) - project supporting young people in Central Asia through measures fostering inclusion and labour market skills
- World Bank - Strengthening Social Security Project (2019–23, \$50M) - on social protection and labor market policies improvement to strengthen the social security system in the country
- UNDP Promoting Youth Employment in Uzbekistan (2019–21, \$1M) – UNDP Trust Fund for Development to promote youth employment through active labor market policies and support youth entrepreneurship skills development and business start-ups, particularly among university and college graduates, young women, returning migrants, and other vulnerable groups.
- KOICA - Professional Training Centers (2012–19, \$18.9M) - three PTCs established in Tashkent, Samarkand, and Shakhrisabz cities (total cost: \$18.9 million). Two additional PTCs to be built in Fergana and Urgench cities. PTCs train unemployed job seekers with the skills needed by employers in the areas of machinery engineering, automotive production and repair, electrical engineering, and ICT.
- Swiss Development Cooperation - Skills Development Project - supports the reform of the vocational education sector in Uzbekistan through the development of synergies between the educational process and labor market demands, including improved cooperation between key ministries and agencies in the cycle “Demand-Training-Job Placement” for water-sector professions, and adoption of training programs for two professions of the water supply sector is adopted and required specialists trained in both the secondary specialized education system and the adult further

