

TVET Country Profile

Lao P.D.R



June 2020

Compiled in collaboration with SEAMEO VOCTECH

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TVETipedia Glossary

In case of further clarification and definitions of terms contained herein, please refer to UNESCO-UNEVOC’s online TVETipedia Glossary, which provides definitions and background information from various trustworthy sources on terms commonly used in the area of technical and vocational education and training. Find out more at www.unevoc.unesco.org/l/68.

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UNEVOC Network in Lao PDR

The Vocational Education Development Institute represents Lao PDR in the UNEVOC Network.

Statistics¹

General information

Category	Indicator	Statistics
Demographic	Total population ²	16.3 million (2018)
	Population growth (annual %) ²	1.4 (2019)
	Median age of population ²	25.6 years (2020)
	Population aged 15-24 years (%) ²	17.8 (est 2019)
Socio-economic	GDP growth (annual %) ³	2.3 (2020)
	GDP per capita (current US\$) ³	1,510 (2018)
	Unemployment rate (%) ⁴	0.67 (2019)
	Youth literacy rate, population 15 years and above, both sexes (%)	92 (2015)

Participation in education by level and by programme orientation (2018)

Category		Gross enrolment ratio (%)		Gross enrolment ratio Female (%)	
Primary education (ISCED 1)		102.4		100.4	
Secondary education, all programmes	Lower secondary (ISCED 2)	67.4	77.1	65	75.2
	Upper secondary (ISCED 3)		54		51.1
Tertiary education, all programmes (ISCED 5-8)		15		15.5	

Indicator	Both sexes (%)	Students who are female (%)
Percentage of students in post-secondary non-tertiary vocational education (ISCED 5)	-	40.7 (2017)
Percentage of students in Vocational Secondary Education	-	44.9

Education finance

Category	Indicator	Statistics
Expenditure	Expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure (%) <i>(Includes both operating and development expenditures)</i>	2.16 (2018)

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all statistics have been gathered from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). <http://uis.unesco.org/>

² World Population Prospects UNDESA <https://population.un.org/wpp/>

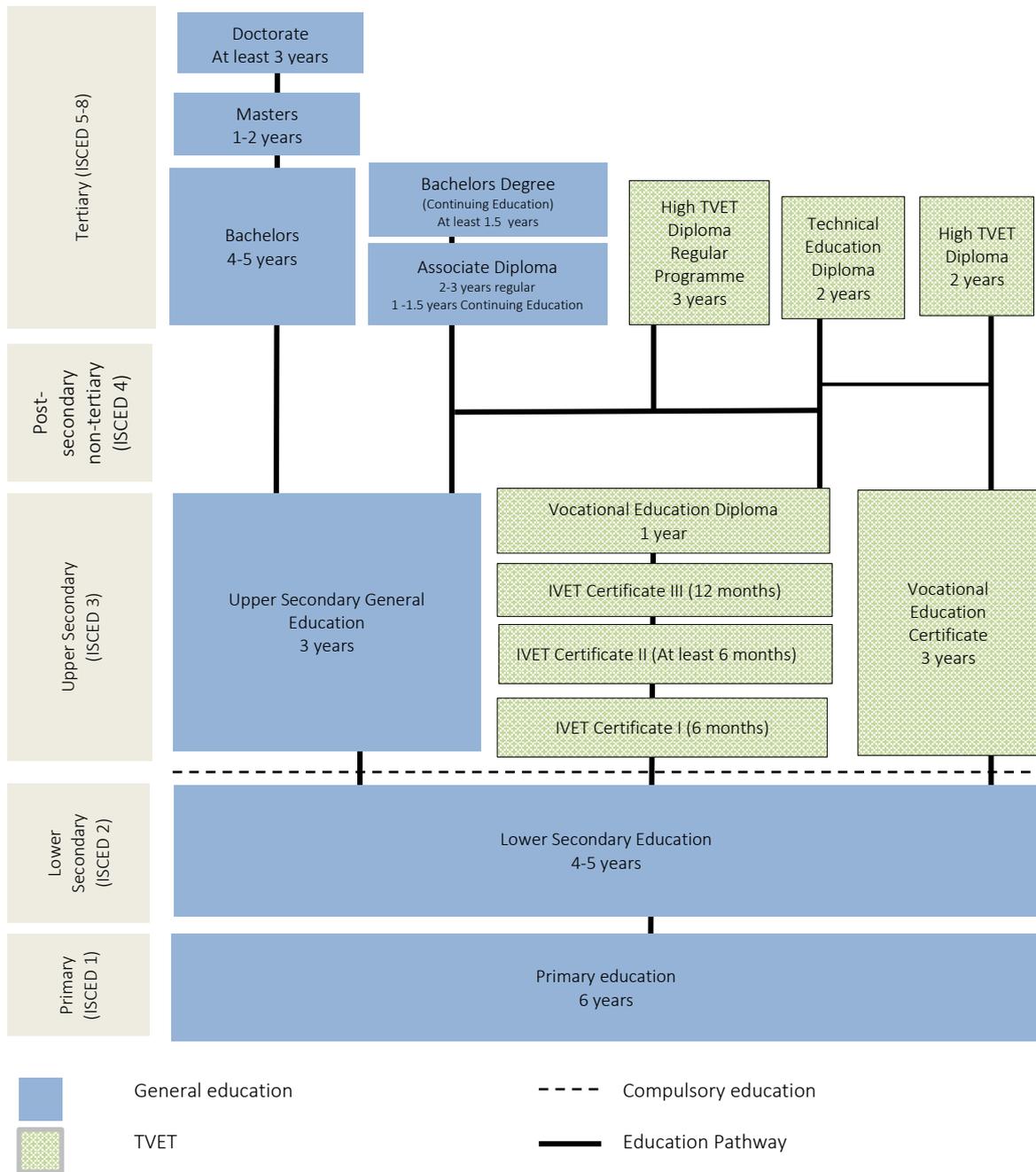
³ Asian Development Bank – Asian Development Outlook April 2020 <https://www.adb.org/countries/>

⁴ ILO Estimates 2020 ilostat.ilo.org

⁴ World Development Indicators data.worldbank.org

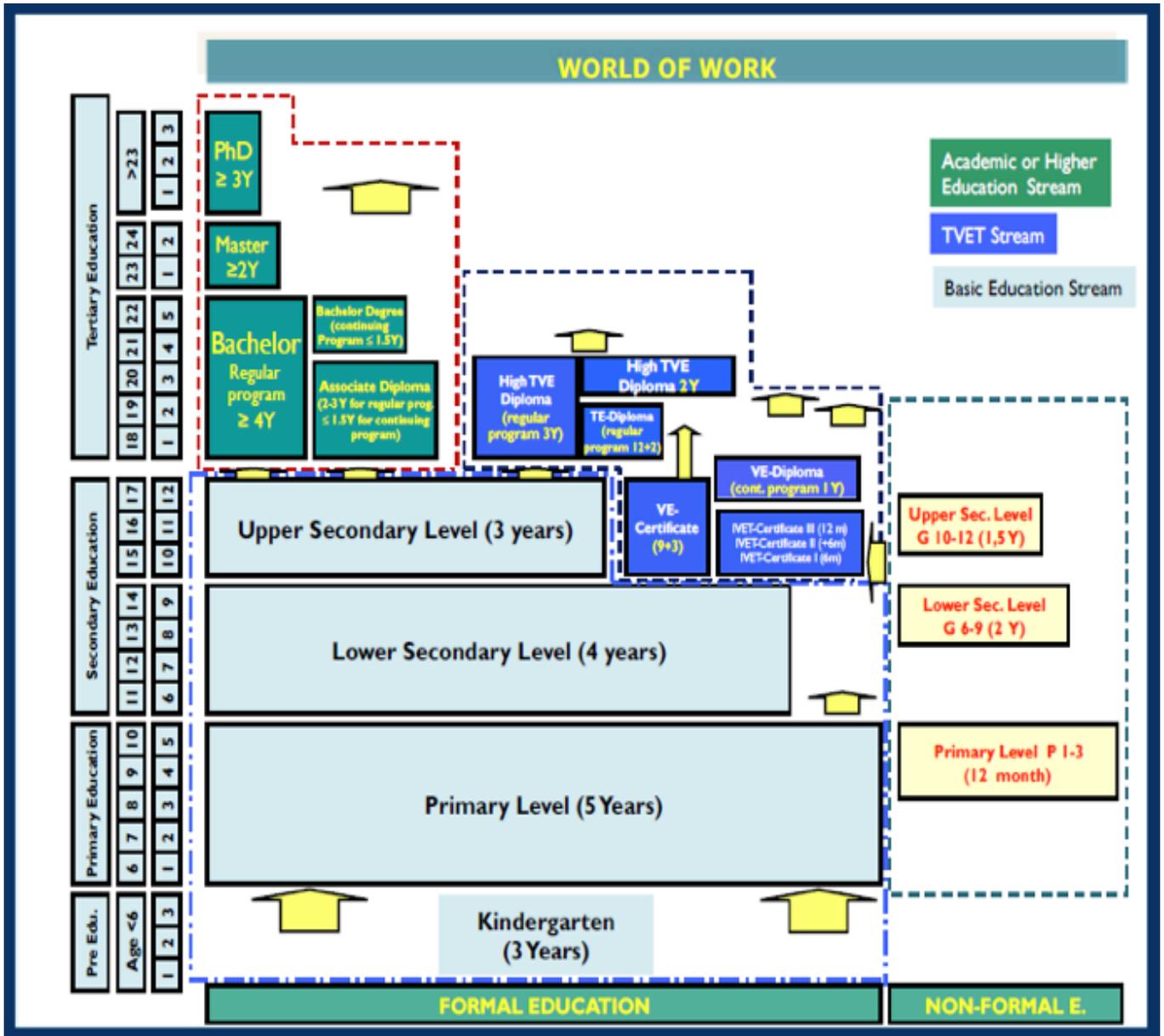
1. TVET Systems

TVET in Lao P.D.R Education System



¹³ Compiled by UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre. For a detailed overview and exact mobility between various programmes, please see page 6

EDUCATION SYSTEM LAO



Source: <https://sea-vet.net/lao>

Formal TVET system

The formal TVET system in Lao PDR is structured as follows:

TVET programmes are initially offered at the upper secondary education level (ISCED 3).	
Duration:	3 years
Admission requirements:	Completion of lower secondary education
Taught in:	Vocational Upper Secondary Schools
<p>After the completion of lower secondary education, students have the choice of continuing to upper secondary general education or of entering upper secondary vocational training programmes offered by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). The students can either complete three successive initial TVET Certification courses (Certificate I for 6 months, Certificate II for at least 6 months) and Certificate III(12 months), or they can access the labour market after completing each certificate.</p> <p>Alternatively, the students can also enrol in a Vocational Education Certificate Course for a duration of 3 years.</p>	
Technical and Vocational Diplomas are provided at the tertiary education level (ISCED 5).	
Duration:	2-3 years
Admission requirements:	Completion of General Upper Secondary Education, Vocational Upper Secondary (Holding Certificate III), or the Vocational Educational Diploma
Taught in:	Polytechnics and Technical Institutes
<p>There are three main diplomas offered for the technical and vocational track at the tertiary level. The shortest transition track to the labour market is offered through the Technical Education Diploma, which lasts for two years for students that have completed secondary education or the Vocational Education Certification at ISCED 3.</p> <p>Students who have completed general upper secondary education can enrol in the High Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) Diploma in a regular cycle lasting 3 years. Alternatively, students who have completed the Vocational Education Diploma can also enrol in the High TVE Diploma, in a continuing education cycle lasting 1 year. Students who have obtained a Vocational Education Certificate can also enrol in the Higher TVE Diploma for a duration of 2 years before accessing the labour market.</p>	

Non-formal TVET system

Non-formal TVET is implemented under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Sports in IVET schools and training centres. Vocational training is also offered at more than 300 Community Learning Centres across the country. These offer short training courses on basic vocational skills in wood processing, construction, chicken, frog and fish raising, mushroom cultivation, cooking and beauty.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare also runs some skills development centres offering short and long term training courses in IT, auto repair, carpentry, furniture, garment, electronics, electricity, hospitality and construction, mainly for school drop-outs and unskilled adults. The number of these institutions and the enrolments are not known.

In addition to the training schools and centres under the ministries, some private-sector associations and companies have their own training centres, and other SMEs provide training on their own premises. For instance, some handicraft SMEs provide workers with training in special and traditional weaving techniques. They have their own training facilities and have experts to provide the training. The training aims to improve the quality of the products. Previously, it was aimed at teaching people how to preserve their culture and heritage, and involved passing on the traditional expertise.

2. TVET strategy and key policy documents

The main strategy and policy documents guiding Lao P.D.R in the context of skills development and TVET are as follows:

Name of document	National TVET Development Plan 2016-2020
Date entered into force	2016
Website link	Link not available
<p>Key points and objectives</p> <p>The TVET Development Plan has been built based on specific guiding principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with the TVET Strategy 2006-2020 but taking into account socio-economic evolution in Lao PDR; • Alignment with the 8th NSEDP (National Socioeconomic Development Plan) 2016-2020; and • Alignment with the targets of the ESDP 2016-2020 (Education and Sports Sector Development Plan). <p>As part of this, the implementation actions include a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkages to the economic and social priorities as well as national and local needs analysis; • Either a sectoral approach (examples: hospitality, financing, agriculture, garment, wood processing) or transversal approach (curriculum development, qualification system) but with applications through pilot projects and subsequent dissemination; • Various financing sources: government, private sector, foreign donors and international organizations, and individuals when possible; • Involvement of the Provinces for increasing roles in the local implementation of TVET schemes and better alignment with Department of Technical and Vocational Education (DTVE); • Adaptation of the TVET system to the needs of employers based on labour market information system and in the absence of it, based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signals from employers gathered by the National Training Council (NTC) and strengthened Trade Working Groups (TWGs); • Improved relations between the management of the TVET schools and provincial stakeholders; and • Information from tracer studies. • Increased focus on learning outcomes through dissemination of competency based training, DCT; and • Focus on high demand sectors: construction, mechanics, hospitality, electricity, furniture, automotive and agriculture. 	

Name of document	Lao Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2016-2020
Date entered into force	2016
Website link	https://t1p.de/t0zo
<p>Key points and objectives</p> <p>The Education Development Plan was developed with the overarching objective of building on and reinforcing the policies and strategies of the government to enable the Lao PDR to be eligible to graduate from the ranks of the least developed countries by 2020. In doing so, particularly in the context of TVET, the ESDP has two main objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage more students who have completed general education to enrol in vocational education • To ensure that vocational graduates from both public and private sectors have skills that are acceptable to employers. <p>To achieve these objectives, the ESDP targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing at least one technical centre and vocational school in each province. • Expanding vocational education and training access to reach 60% of students who have completed general education, especially females. <p>There are three main strategic actions that are pursued under this strategy. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening vocational education schools/vocational training centres as well as providing learning equipment for good teaching-learning, and offering courses that are responding to industrial requirements; • Fostering partnerships between the public and private sectors in vocational education and training development through sector councils and career group units; • Upgrading educational qualifications for vocational education teachers and staff in both quantity and quality, to improve their pedagogical competencies to teach in the relevant fields. 	

3. Governance and financing

Governance

The TVET Development Plan (Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development Plan 2016-2020) is implemented by TVET institutions managed by the Department of Technical and Vocational Education (DTVE) in partnership with other organizations, particularly the MoLSW and Center for Education Quality Assurance of the MoES.

Decree No. 036 on Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Skills Development, the current legal reference for TVET, distinguishes between the functions of the MoES, responsible for TVET, and the MoLSW, responsible for skills development, certification, and testing. By separating TVET and skills development, however, the decree has led to some confusion and duplication of efforts, with, for example, the two ministries working on developing standards for the same occupation (ILO 2016, p. 12).

The current legislation distinguishes between short-term skills development training (less than 12 months) falling under MoLSW jurisdiction; and continuous training of more than 12 months, called TVET, which falls under MoES jurisdiction. The two ministries are, therefore, the main departments in charge of TVET in the country. However, some skills development and vocational training is also provided under other line ministries such as the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) and the Ministry of Health (MoH). (ILO 2016, p. 15).

The National Training Council (NTC) is an inter-ministerial organization and tripartite body with 35 members including representatives of youth, women, unions, employers, and different ministries. Its main constituents are the MoES, MoLSW, and Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI). Its president is from the MoES, and its vice-presidents are the vice-minister of Labour and the president of the LNCCI. The NTC's members are not technical experts but rather high-level representatives. The NTC's budget (for salaries, equipment, and other items) comes from the MoES, but its mandate is above the MoES. The NTC is the umbrella organization for all TVET in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and it plays the role of an advisory body regarding skills development issues. (ILO 2016, p. 15)

Public-Private Partnership

Currently, public-private partnership in TVET is being achieved through two modalities. One is the participation of employers in policy-making and implementation, mainly through the National Training Council (NTC) and Trade Working Groups (TWGs). The other modality involves the supply of TVET by private providers.

Most employers in Lao PDR are small and medium-sized businesses. Except for in a few booming industries such as mining and hydropower, a large number of employers are still relying on recruiting unskilled workers. Thus, it cannot be said that there is currently a strong employer interest in skills development.

Associations in the garment, furniture, handicraft and hospitality sectors have established their own skills development centers. For example, the Skills Development Centre of the Lao Garment Industry Association provides short courses of up to 35 days to workers following the ASEAN Common Competence Program (ACCP) developed by the ASEAN Federation of Textile Industries and using industrial equipment.

Financing

The overall share of TVET within the MoES budget was planned to double from 2.7% in 2015/16 to 4% in 2019/2020. The budget for TVET increased mainly due to the high cost of equipment. Lao TVET development is still dependent on foreign assistance, although the Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (ESDP) noted that the current international assistance for TVET is already relatively high in comparison to the assistance pledged to other education subsectors (12%). TVET donors support in order to improve the infrastructure and system elements, as well as build sustainable capacity.

4. TVET teachers and trainers

Candidates for a pre-service teacher training programme apply at VEDI, which will send the application to all TVET institutions. These, along with the provincial authorities, select the

appropriate candidates and submit their appraisal to the ministry department for approval. Approved candidates can then be enrolled in the programme.

After completion of the teacher training programme, the graduated teachers go back to the TVET institution they were selected by before. For in-service courses announced by the VEDI, the TVET institutions can select and nominate candidates.

Formal requirements as set out by a government decree are not directly linked with a teacher training degree. Rather, the decree stipulates that the candidate must possess a certificate at least one level higher than the level of the course to be taught. Within this frame, types of qualifications are considered in the context of the needs of the TVET institution.

Responsibility for pre- and in-service teacher training is in a phase of transition. In the past, there were some specialized TVET institutions (mainly colleges) offering programs in areas such as Hotel and Tourism, Construction and Agriculture, Automotive and Electric, Accounting, Mining, etc. Currently, the Vocational Education Development Institute (VEDI) at Faculty of Engineering of the National University of Lao PDR will be responsible for both pre- and in-service teacher training. VEDI will then be in charge of curriculum development and certification. Quality assurance is overseen by the Education Quality Assurance Center (EQAC), which was established by the Ministry of Education and Sports.

5. Qualification system and quality assurance

A national qualifications framework (NQF) is currently under development, with the most recent draft proposing an 8 level structure.

As stated in Section 1, there are a wide range of formal, non-formal and informal curricula, certificates and diplomas available from many institutions and organizations. Some are for short courses varying from one week to one year. Others are for skills development courses offered under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW), Dual Cooperative Training (DCT) and other vocational and technical courses. Employers, training institutions, students, and parents do not have any reliable way of assessing the value of any given certificate for instance their value in terms of personal ability to do the job or proceed to further levels of education.

Quality assurance

The quality assurance system for TVET institutions including standards, procedures and training model has been developed and implemented gradually through self-assessment reports and internal assessment. It is managed by the Center for Education Quality Assurance (CEQA) and includes 10 standards and 42 indicators. Workshops on quality for TVET institutions and assessors trainings are regularly held.

CEQA is the leading organization supporting quality improvement in the education sector. Its capacity has increased from 9 to 25 staff in 3 years but the scope of its work is very broad and covers all education institutions in Laos PDR. The 'Quality Assurance Manual for TVET Institutions' provides a basis for improvement of TVET institutions and it is used in TVET sector, particularly when it comes to supporting the preparation of school development plans.

Schools regularly prepare development plans for 3 or 5 year periods, but the templates used are not consistent. There is an overall perception that training offered by the school is not geared towards the needs of provincial economies. Strengthening TVET (STVET) and Vocational Education in Laos (VELA) projects will support the development and implementation of plans taking into account the local context and skill needs of the provinces.

6. Current reforms and policy discussion

Following the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development Plan 2016-2020, actions implemented should be based on:

- Linkages to the economic and social priorities as well as national and local needs analysis;
- Either a sector approach (examples: hospitality, financing, agriculture, garment, wood processing) or transversal approach (curriculum development, qualification system) but with applications through pilot projects and subsequent dissemination;
- Various financing sources: government, private sector, foreign donors and international organizations, and individuals when possible;
- Involvement of the Provinces for increasing roles in the local implementation of TVET schemes and better alignment with Department of Technical and Vocational Education (DTVE);
- Adaptation of the TVET system to the needs of employers based on labour market information system and in the absence of it, based on:
 - signals from employers gathered by the National Training Council (NTC) and strengthened Trade Working Groups (TWGs);
 - Improved relations between the management of the TVET schools and provincial stakeholders; and
 - Information from tracer studies.
- Focus on high demand sectors: construction, mechanics, hospitality, electricity, furniture, automotive and agriculture.

Based on the TVET Strategy and Master Plan, training providers are encouraged to target several groups, including new labour market entrants (school leavers), existing workers, young people, older adults, and disadvantaged groups (e.g. the poor, the populations of remote rural areas, and ethnic groups). The government is providing incentives for disadvantaged groups to participate in TVET, through voucher schemes and scholarships.

Challenges

According to the [SEAMEO-VOCTECH](#), the key challenges facing TVET in Lao PDR are as follows:

Low investment and support in TVET

Absence of suitable financing assistance schemes for TVET. Insufficient financial support to improve TVET school's infrastructure and facilities to accommodate increased number of trainees and students.

Persisting skills mismatches

Mismatching between TVET students produced and labour market demand and needs, thus highlighting insufficient integration of TVET with market needs. This is also a result of

the insufficient training materials and out-of-date machines and tools for practical training of students. The low quality of training (due to poor quality of infrastructure, machines and equipment) and inadequacies of the teaching staff who lack teaching skills and industrial experiences also perpetuates the skills mismatches.

**Limited appeal of TVET
vis-à-vis general
education**

Some people value only higher education (university) which causes the low enrolment in TVET. Structured guidance to students on the learning opportunities and the prospects of TVET is also limited.

7. References and further reading

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