



1. ILO SKILLS 21 PROJECT – EMPOWERING CITIZENS FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH (2017-2024)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BIC	Business Incubation Centre
BEF	Bangladesh Employers' Federation
BNQF	Bangladesh National Qualification Framework
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BTEB	Bangladesh Technical Education Board
CAD	Course Accreditation documents
CBT&A	Competency Based Training & Assessment
CS	Competency Standards
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSE	Centre for Skills Excellence
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DP	Development Partner
DTE	Directorate of Technical Education
EDT	Entrepreneurship Development Training
EQF	European Qualification Framework
EU	European Union
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HQ	Headquarters
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMDC	Instructional Materials Development Center
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMAB	Institutional Management Advisory Board
ISC	Industry Skills Council
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRA	Mutual Recognition Agreement
MTBF	Mid-Term Budgetary Framework
MTI	Model TVET Institute
NCCWE	National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education
NHRDF	National Human Resource Development Fund
NSDA	National Skills Development Authority
NSC	National Steering Committee (for BNQF)
NSDC	National Skills Development Council
NSDP	National Skills Development Policy
NTVQF	National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework

NQAS	National Quality Assurance System
OPD	Organizations for Persons with Disabilities
PMCC	Project Monitoring and Coordination Committee
PMF	Project Monitoring Framework
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (of ILO)
RTAPP	Revised Technical Appraisal of Project Proforma
RTO	Registered Training Organization
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
SWAP	Sector-Wide Approach
SWIFT	Sector Wide Integrated Framework for TVET
TAPP	Technical Appraisal of Project Proforma
TIP	TVET Investment Plan
TMED	Technical and Madrasah Education Division
TP	Talent Partnership
TSC	Technical School and College
TTC	Technical Training Centre
TTTC	Technical Teachers' Training College
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Technical Working Group (for BNQF)
VTTI	Vocational Teachers' Training Institute

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Disclaimer

The views expressed are those of the evaluation team and do not necessarily represent those of the ILO or the governments of the target country

Executive Summary

1. Project Background

This report presents the findings of the Final Independent Evaluation of the project entitled *ILO SKILLS 21 PROJECT – EMPOWERING CITIZENS FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH*. The project was funded by the European Union and jointly implemented by the ILO and the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) under the Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED) of the Ministry of Education (MoE). Skills 21 continued earlier TVET system reforms of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) to increase productivity and employment opportunities for young people through support for the development of an inclusive technical and vocational training system responding to the needs of the labour market. The project had 3 outcomes: a) Improving quality of the TVET System Development; b) Improving access to and equity within the TVET system through TVET model institutions and c) Fostering an enabling environment through improved governance and coordination of the TVET/Skills Development System.

2. Evaluation Background and Scope and Clients

The ILO commissioned a final independent evaluation between 09 April - 10 June 2024. The project, originally planned to be realized from 2017 to 2020, was extended for three times, and is expected to end by 30 June 2024. The objective of the evaluation was to assess the overall performance, impact and potential sustainability of the project. This evaluation also provides insights on partner coordination, achieved results and challenges encountered and identifies unintended effects, lessons learned and good case practices. The extent of addressing transversal themes were addressed - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Tripartism, International Labour Standards and Environmental Sustainability were assessed and strategic recommendations for future skills projects and the EU-funded Talent Partnership project are provided. Clients include the ILO Country Office in Bangladesh, Skills 21 team, ILO constituents and the European Union; it also benefits project partners and ultimate beneficiaries (women, migrant workers, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities).

Methodology

The evaluation is summative, participative, and sensitive to gender and social inclusion. It is also formative and fostered reflective dialogue and learning. It employed a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods and included desk research, review of project documents, and collection of primary data, by following questions provided by the ILO in the Terms of Reference (ToR). The evaluation gathered input from relevant stakeholders to assess the project's alignment with their needs and ensure a comprehensive reflection of achieved results and challenges. It involved face-to-face and online interviews and some focus group discussions with beneficiaries and recipients during field visits to Sylhet, Gaibandha and Bogura. 103 people were met and/or interviewed (27% women). Analysis of primary and secondary data with a gender lense was followed by triangulation and validation of findings during de-briefing meetings with the Skills 21 team, the ILO country director and team and the European Union, and during the validation workshop.

Overall, the project performance is satisfactory and fulfils all the DAC requirements.

Relevance: The Skills 21 project is appreciated by all stakeholders as highly relevant, aligning well with 7th and 8th Five Year Plans of the GoB, national skills policies (NSDP 2022) and various action plans (NSDA and TMED) which prioritize harmonization of skills systems, competency-based training (CBT) and inclusive lifelong learning opportunities for all. The project contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-4, 5, 8 and is consistent with ILO's DWCP and Programme and Budget outcomes, besides holding an important place on the European Union's portfolio nationally and globally. Workers' and employers' organizations consider the project highly relevant for their members, confirm project relevance and highlight their increased interest and willingness to actively engage and shape the skills ecosystem.

Coherence and project design: The project shows high levels of coherence, having built on earlier TVET Reform and B-SEP projects implemented by the ILO and building synergies with similar ongoing ILO implemented projects. The project has made significant progress to strengthen collaboration with external agencies to generate external coherence for larger impact, however, more efforts are required to proactively reach out for potential collaboration. The project was very ambitious for the short 3-year time span. It would have benefited from a more realistic Theory of Change with an overarching results chain with well-defined indicators, which could have highlighted causal effects and could have better communicated higher level impact. The project design and coherence show some inconsistencies regarding impact logic; some outcome and output indicators are not clearly defined, and levels (output-outcome) mixed up. The project is still very much focused on delivering outputs and is weaker on outcome clarity what can be achieved within a defined project period.

Effectiveness: While the project faced several challenges, which slowed down implementation, it is considered effective in achieving outcome and output targets, since it made good progress by achieving significant milestones at policy level (endorsement of BNQF, NSDP 2022 and action plan), professionalizing and enhancing capacities of Technical Teacher Training Institutes (TTTIs) with state of the art competency based training and assessment (CBT&A) at L4/L5/L6 and accelerating digitalization of teaching and learning. The RPL system is further strengthened by developing an E-RPL system (yet to be launched) in response to the request by the government for online enrolment and assessment of migrant workers, which also paves the way for more large scale RPL for skills acquired informally by informal sector workers. Progress was also made at institution level to introduce standards and procedures, quality improvement processes and guidelines and self-assessment tools to prepare these institutes to become Centres of Excellence (CSEs) and in the case of 7 vocational training institutes and polytechnics to become Model Training institutes (MTIs). With the introduction of multistakeholder advisory boards, these TVET institutes got guidance on strategic matters, identification of skills needs, financing, quality improvement, research, introduction of access and inclusion, and greening. Collaboration with the private sector on entrepreneurship training of teachers (start and improve your business-SIYB), setting up of business incubation centers, and holding employment for them, jointly with the local community, led to visible success: more enrolment, more placement, more awareness amongst learners, parents and enterprises. The project also addressed governance and coordination issues at sector level by facilitating multistakeholder planning for policies and Sector Wide Integrated Framework for TVET (SWIFT). It built capacities of officials in budgeting and governance and skills anticipation. It also facilitated the formation of the national steering

committee (NSC) and technical working groups to strengthen the TMED's/MoE's capacities to systematically steer multistakeholder engagement for BNQF and policies and plans development.

Efficiency: The project overall delivered good value for money and was efficiently managed. It benefitted from the three-time extensions and hence could ensure budget spending according to the revised plan, reaching 91% use of resources by 2024. The Skills 21 Project was closely implemented in collaboration with GoB and used the government's steering and coordination mechanisms. Involvement of social partners and other important stakeholders, however, was relatively low, which might have affected impact and sustainability of the project. Skills 21 had a robust centralized M&E system in place, which was built on external reporting and internal learning and supported by regular backstopping and field monitoring. An activity tracker was used, which made reporting and communication within the team and with the steering and monitoring & coordination committees easy. The project benefitted from a strong communication strategy increasing effectiveness of interventions at policy and local levels. More could have been done in knowledge management, impact assessments and systematic documentation of interventions.

Impact: Overall, Skills 21 has created impact, demonstrating higher capacities and ownership of partners in addressing skills policy and implementation challenges and better labour market outcomes for trained and certified graduates. However, aside from three tracer studies on impact created through CBT, entrepreneurship, and RPL on employment status and income of end beneficiaries, the project has gathered some qualitative information, however, has not systematically assessed the impact on 'higher capacities and ownership.' Additionally, the project has not documented the extent to which increased capacities have led to changes in daily practices and behaviour of a) implementation partners in planning and implementing TVET, b) teachers'/trainers' training on CBT&A, c) principals managing TVET institutes more effectively, or d) enterprises showing more interest and ownership. There is a need for systematic impact assessment with clearer conceptual understanding, underlined by more robust data collection and tracking systems.

The ILO is recognized as a lead agency capable of mobilizing the private sector and workers, thus can leverage multistakeholder engagement in TVET system reforms. With the project being held and governed by the GoB, its multi-stakeholder engagement during the project was limited. Despite the growing interest from social partners, their capacity building and proactive involvement were insufficient. It is felt that this could have slowed down expansion of CBT&A through public private partnerships or private sector funding.

Sustainability: The project achieved several milestones within the TVET reform process, which provide a good foundation for sustainability (BNQF, Teacher/Trainer Training L4/L5/L6, IMDC, CSE/MTI management). However, GoB and other stakeholders highlighted that continued technical support is needed to advance institutional mechanisms and capacities so that interventions are institutionalized and scaled. The GoB plans to continue several interventions by either using own funds or integrate learnings in large scale projects (ADB, World Bank, GIZ) to ensure institutionalization and larger roll out. It is crucial that the ILO consolidates and documents learnings from the Skills 21 project experiences so that 'know how to do' and proof of concept are used as a basis for developing a longer-term operational plan and quality assurance. In this regard, sustainability depends on continued technical and financial support from the ILO.

ILO's transversal themes were incorporated into project design and reflected in the implementation of interventions and reporting. Specific GESI and greening TVET that guided interventions were observed and showed promising results for institutionalization at TVET institute level as well as in training and learning materials. While progress was made, there is a lack of systematic follow up regarding progress made towards mainstreaming of these themes as part of institutionalization. Data indicate that the project did not fully address access and inclusion at TTTI and MTI levels for people with disabilities, less educated women and ethnic minorities and returning migrants. A more systematic approach is needed for mainstreaming, underpinned by adequate human resources. Less explicit focus was given to strengthening tripartism as mentioned earlier.

4. Conclusions

The project has achieved significant milestones, ranging from endorsement of a harmonized BNQF to expanding capacities of TVET trainers and assessors (L4/L5) and principals (L6) and strengthening quality of teaching/training through the setting up of digital e-learning campus for instructional materials development (IMDC). The project also successfully tested localized TVET delivery modalities, introduced multi-stakeholder advisory boards, quality improvement mechanisms, employers' forum, career guidance & placement, entrepreneurship and business incubation to ensure stronger private sector linkages in MTIs and CSEs. The project proposed a sector perspective to TVET and facilitated several feasibility studies and thematic workshops, besides providing capacity building on sector specific areas (e.g. financing and monitoring).

It is important to acknowledge that TVET system reforms take decades, as international experience shows. The project's has made progress but remaining tasks include BNQF enactment, establishing the legal basis and mechanism for BNQF rollout, and getting the SWIFT document endorsed to address governance and coordination challenges. It is felt that the team's stakeholder engagement and high-level advocacy efforts directed at MoE and NSDA and the prime minister's office over the years were significant. With all the contribution made through the project it is up to the GoB and other stakeholders to take full ownership and decide the pace of continuation based on country priorities set, and resources and capacities available. This decision is beyond the scope of the project.

The TVET system in Bangladesh is at a turning point, with social partners and key TVET stakeholders keen to participate. Local training provision in MTIs shows promising results if given flexibility and adequate resources for greater autonomy. While the government must provide an enabling environment for TVET, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility, it is crucial to start sharing control over decision making, implementation and funding with key partners. Bangladesh has a dynamic private sector and a large pool of private training providers currently operating mostly outside the formal training system. Mobilizing and intensifying these to ensure training and labour market integration meet standards will require buy-in and a shared vision.

5. Lessons Learnt and Emerging good case practices.

5.1 Lessons Learnt

- Long-term engagement and financing are essential for sustained reform: ILO's support for Bangladesh's TVET reform, backed by strong partnerships with Canada and the EU, has been crucial for achieving quality outputs and ensuring sustainability over several decades.

- Time-bound projects need realistic objectives, strong results chains, well-defined indicators, and risk mitigation measures. Log frames should operationalize intervention strategies, ensuring that milestones are achieved, and long-term monitoring is maintained by all stakeholders.
- The Skills 21 project underutilized its tripartite platform, resulting in weak private sector engagement and limited collaboration, which slowed the expansion of CBT&A.
- While CBT&A has a high impact on employability, it hasn't expanded as expected. Higher-level skills at L3/L4 are needed for long-term employability, but most RTOs and assessment centers can only provide L1/L2 or L3 training and assessment thereof with limited capacities. Engaging the private sector could accelerate CBT&A expansion by developing higher-level competencies and improving training contents and duration.

5.2 Good case practices

- TVET Communication and Campaign: The project worked with government agencies and TVET institutes on a campaign launched in 2022, expanding in 2023 to reach more institutes and the community through targeted messaging and partnerships. Increased government resources supported broader awareness, and since 2024, the project has provided technical support for sustainable campaigns. Continued commitment is expected to boost TVET awareness and enrolment.
- Local Initiatives and Private Sector Engagement: Local initiatives have engaged the private sector as advisors, trainers, and employers, making VTIs dynamic spaces for career guidance, business incubation, and training. Continuous engagement with local industries is essential. The project mobilized IMABs and Employer's forums, strengthening partnerships between TVET institutes and local industries. More autonomy and resources for VTIs, along with capacity building for IMAB and Employer's forums, are needed for sustained efforts.
- Continued multistakeholder process to develop BNQF through a well-planned and inclusive approach, facilitated by a single coordination body (National Steering Committee) and supported by technical working groups, increased visibility, capacities and ownership of stakeholders to take BNQF forward towards building a harmonized qualification system.

6. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The ILO, as the lead agency for TVET system reform in Bangladesh should leverage its convening power to unite social partners and stakeholders, reinforcing their roles in the reform process. To maintain its leadership, the ILO must sustain high-level efforts and secure follow-up funding to support GoB in prioritisation, governance and coordination efforts.

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
ILO Skills 21/CO Dhaka	Very High	Long term	Low

GoB currently sees the ILO as an implementing agency but also values its technical contributions. The ILO should negotiate a more active facilitative role and continue advocating for BNQF enactment, policy dialogue, and implementation and should facilitate the review of the NSDP action plan with stakeholders to enhance clarity and coordination in prioritization and financing. In an advisory role, the ILO should support the GoB in sector planning, monitoring and implementation and support NSDA in strengthening sector performance and monitoring systems by consolidating existing MIS and developing a just-in-time MIS. The ILO should promote closer collaboration with the private sector and social partners.

Recommendation 2: Capitalize learnings, sharpen intervention clarity and consolidate approaches to support GoB preparing for larger scale replication of Skills 21 interventions.

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
CO Dhaka/HQ Skills branch/SRO Specialist	Very high	Short term	Middle

Capturing evidence of promising interventions and documenting lessons learned for dissemination before replication is critical at this point. Ideally, a fourth extension enables capitalization, including examination of both strengths and weaknesses and assessment of the effectiveness of project's initiatives and under which conditions they might continue. Develop proof of concepts, which give clarity to approach and target group served, stepwise implementation plan and monitoring framework, and information detailing required time, human resources and funding requirements. Proof of concepts can guide the government in planning, replication and financing/roll-out. Suggested areas for deeper inquiry could include:

- a) Deeper understanding about strategic approach how to achieve status for CSEs, MTIs, and legal and operational clarity about their future roles as capacity building institutions.
- b) CBT&A Teacher Training, IMDC platform use and expansion of effort by addressing quality assurance and bottlenecks of funding and staffing, is required. Mandating training and use of e-platform by introducing career development plans (CPDs) is required for institutionalisation within DTE.
- c) Learning from international experiences, challenges faced by institutions and candidates with RPL and e-platform performance (usability and accessibility) need to be assessed and finally vetted with the private sector.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen tripartism within the skills development space: this is the core competence and mandate of ILO as stated in the DWCP

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
CO Dhaka/ SRO Specialist	High	Short term	Middle

Increase awareness about benefits of multistakeholder engagement and tripartism in TVET. This can be achieved by developing tailored strategies and capacity-building roadmaps for all, including BEF, NCCWE and GoB partners.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen private sector engagement and social partners as a priority across all levels in TVET system

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
CO Dhaka/HQ Skills branch/SRO Specialist	High	Immediate	Middle

Develop capacity building plans and strategies for each social partner with a longer-term perspective.

Recommendation 5: ILO should continue to support GoB's capacities to systematically expand CBT&A vertically and horizontally (incl RPL) by using a system perspective

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
CO Dhaka/HQ Skills branch/SRO Specialist	High	Immediate	High

Sharpen conceptual understanding of TVET offers (apprenticeships, internships, paid and subsidized attachments, depending on the target groups), deliver more need-based training and assessment responses, which address diversity of skills needs from both private sector and beneficiaries. Continue strengthening the supply side of the TVET system and foster private sector engagement with more clarity where private sector finances, contributes or needs to be incentivized.

Recommendation 6: Address Gender and Social Inclusion and Environmental Practices systematically and integrate indicators into the performance matrix

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Dhaka Team with thematic experts	High	Mid-term	Middle

Mainstreaming transversal issues requires not treating it as an add-on but rather as an integral part of project design, implementation, reporting and M&E practice. It requires a change of culture within the organization. Stakeholders should be trained how to proactively approach transversal issues in all project activities by using an institutional and programming perspective. Resources need to be put aside for capacity building of project partners and to ensure that evidence is provided through monitoring of results and assessment of impact on ultimate beneficiaries. Indicators should be developed as part of performance matrix.

Recommendation 7: Address Talent Partnership by matching skills needs from destination countries with trained and certified workers, by collaborating with employers' and workers' organizations

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
CO Dhaka/HQ Skills branch/SRO Specialist	High	Mid-term	Middle

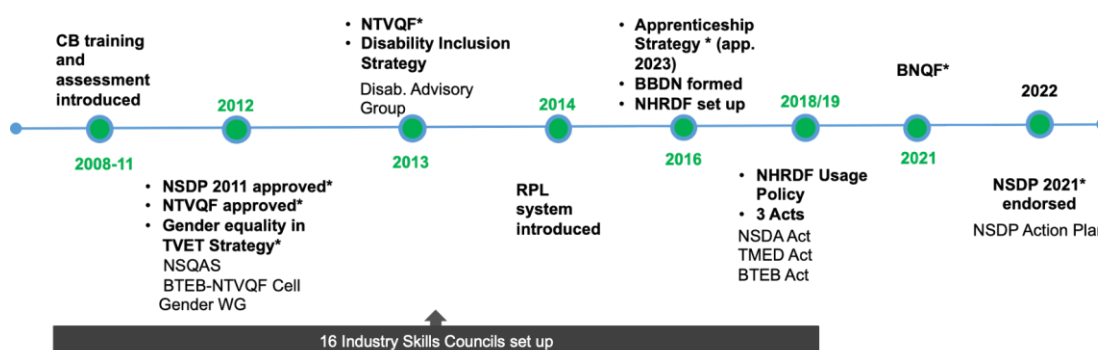
The ILO should maintain its advisory function as a technical agency, which collaborates independently with diverse stakeholders. The project therefore should be situated outside the MoEWOE premises. Leveraging the power of tripartism, by engaging NCCWE and other workers' organizations, and BEF and other employers' associations, is essential in effectively addressing the complexities of skilled and certified circular migration.

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Bangladesh has made significant strides in economic growth and social development over the past decades. Recognizing the potential of its large and growing youth labour force of two million that enters the labour market and another two million low skilled workers who need to be trained annually, the country aims to capitalize on the demographic dividend by fully harnessing their human capital potential (BIDS, 2017).¹ To continue its rapid expansion and development and to remain on track to graduate from UN's Least Developing Countries (LDC) list by 2026, and to address the increasing skills needs faced by the private sector for skilled workers at middle and higher professional levels in Bangladesh and abroad, the government of Bangladesh (GoB) has prioritized skills development in the 8th FYP for 2020-2025 and other policies besides underscoring the critical role of women's economic empowerment in achieving inclusive growth and aligning vision with the SDG 2030 Agenda.

As a result, with the support of technical cooperation projects over the past 15 years, including the EU-funded and ILO implemented flagship project “Technical and Vocational Education and Training Reform Project, 2008-2013”, the Canada government funded “Bangladesh Skills For Employment and Productivity B-SEP project, 2013-2019” and the current EU-funded Skills 21 project (2017-2024). Priority was given to transforming the supply driven TVET delivery into a more private sector driven, competency based and lifelong learning focused skills development system. These projects also focused on expansion by diversifying TVET delivery and enhancing access and inclusion challenges faced by women, people with disabilities and indigenous communities and other groups in climate-affected areas, such as the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Significant milestones² were achieved over these years at policy and institutional level towards reducing fragmentation and improving overall coordination in the skills development system. Some of the milestones, as pointed out in Figure 1, were achieved through the Skills 21 project.

Figure 1: Milestones in TVET Reform Process between 2008 and 2024



The Skills 21 project continues TVET system reform support by strengthening existing institutions and increasing harmonization between Vocational and General Education

¹ About 26.82 mp. youth entered the labour market during the last five years, of which 13.31 million are female, (BBS, 2022).

²See for details unpublished ILO Brief on ILO Contribution in TVET in Bangladesh.

streams by developing a Bangladesh National Qualification Framework (BNQF). Additionally, the Skills 21 project promotes partnerships between industries and training providers to offer competency-based training, especially targeting women and marginalized groups with a focus on transitioning to future skills and a greener economy. It also seeks to improve governance through a Sector-Wide Approach (SWAP) and integrate migration into the skills development system, aiding returning migrants and those aspiring to migrate legally and with a certificate. Furthermore, it addresses skill development challenges among ethnic minorities and climate-affected areas like the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The Skills 21 project has three main outcomes and outputs (see table).

As can be seen in the Figure below, the project implementation has been extended three times; Main reasons were delayed government approval of Technical Appraisal of Project Pro-Forma (TAPP/Revised TAPP) and the COVID 19 pandemic. The initial project got approved in 2018. Adjustments were made following the recommendations in the Mid-term evaluation (MTE) made in 2019/20. Recommendations made (Annex 2) have led to significant revisions within the project and the first request for extension. As highlighted in red, certain outputs were dropped, since they were considered as not realistic to be achieved within the project period. These included dropping the Sector Wide Approach of the TVET System (SWAP) and instead adding an operational Sector Wide Integrated Framework for TVET (SWIFT). The Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA), supposed to build the foundation of mutual skills recognition between the EU member countries and Bangladesh for specific qualifications, was dropped. An additional 3 million top-up funding was made in 2019 to address skills and re-integration needs of 3000 returnee migrants through short term CBT, RPL and entrepreneurship development. The introduction of E-RPL was added during the second extension emanating from a request of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) for the returnee migrants.

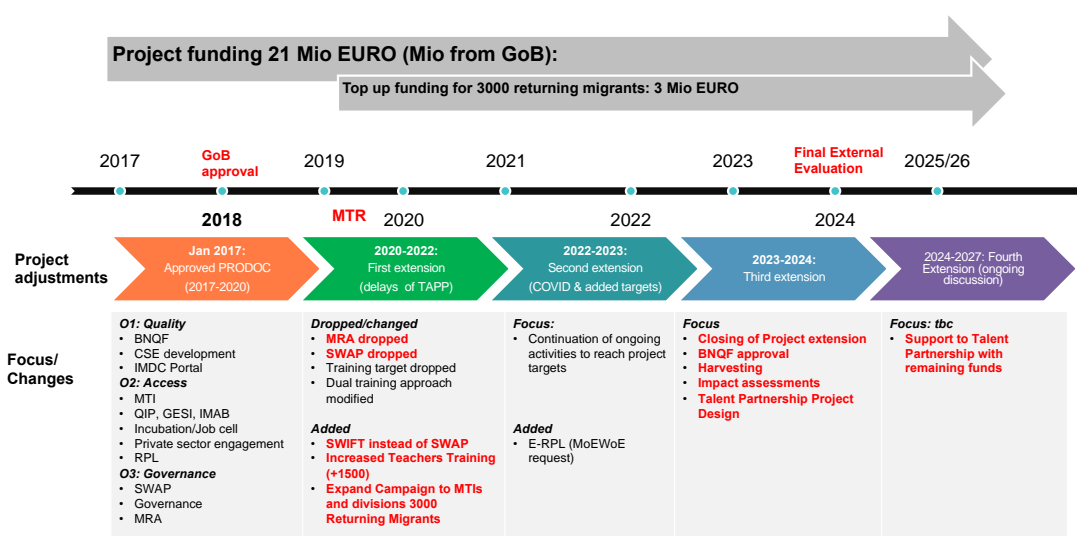


Figure 2: Overview of Skills 21 Project

II. EVALUATION BACKGROUND

With the Skills 21 project coming to an end in June 2024, the ILO has commissioned a final independent evaluation between 09 April and 10 June 2024. The objective of the evaluation is to assess the overall performance and potential sustainability of the project.

A. Purpose and Scope

This evaluation seeks to provide critical insights into the project's alignment with employable skills and beneficiaries' employment needs, the suitability of beneficiary selection processes, the program's outreach, and its coordination with implementation partners. The evaluation is summative, participative and gender and social inclusion sensitive. It also addresses accountability and learnings. This evaluation follows the TOR and seeks to:

1. Understand extent of intended and unintended results achieved and analyzing implications;
2. Evaluate project's achievements, progress toward planned objectives and outputs and identify factors supporting or hindering their achievement;
3. Assess to what extent Skills 21 project was able to contribute to ILO Bangladesh's country outcome priorities (CD 101) for policies & programmes;³
4. Assess the impact and sustainability of project results;
5. Examine consideration of social inclusion (persons with disabilities, specific ethnic groups) and gender equality throughout project design and implementation (GESI);
6. Identify unintended positive or negative effects of project on GESI;
7. Extract lessons learned, emerging good practices, and provide strategic recommendations for strengthening ILO's staff capacities to effectively design and implement similar skills projects;
8. Ensure that the evaluation provides concrete, actionable and operational recommendations for replication and scale and for the next EU funded Talent Partnership project.

The evaluation covers the entire project duration, which includes the extension periods, but has a specific focus from November 2019 onwards. It also assesses the extent to which the findings and recommendations from the earlier MTE (2019/2020) were considered during the remaining phase and to what extent institutional capabilities have increased over time (ANNEX 3).

B. Clients of the Evaluation

The primary clients of this evaluation are the ILO Country Office in Bangladesh, ILO constituents in Bangladesh and the donor European Union. This evaluation should also benefit project partners, recipients of capacity building support – such as Vocational Training Institutes (Polytechnic Institutes, TSCs, TTCs), Teacher Training Institutes (VTI, TTIC); NSDA, TMED, BMET, BTEB, DTE; NGOs and private training providers (OKUP, UCEP, SIYB foundation) and ultimate beneficiaries (women, migrant workers, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities).

C. Methodology and Process

The evaluation is overall summative and formative since it is also considered a reflection and learning opportunity. As participatory and as far as possible a gender sensitive perspective was applied to ensure that relevant stakeholders' views and realities are reflected in the evaluation

³ Under this CPO, the project aims to achieve two indicators: (1) Development and operationalization of a national skills development policy action plan, and (2) Alignment of the Government's TVET system with the recommendations of the ILO Project, including the National Strategy for promotion of gender equality and social inclusion in TVET (TOR p5).

report. The evaluation of the project follows **UNEG Ethical guidelines and utilize the OECD/DAC criteria framework as a reference**⁴ and uses key evaluation criteria outlined in **the ILO's Evaluation Policy**: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation analyses project progress and achievements against defined outcomes and outputs, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

D. Evaluation Questions and Evaluation Matrix

Following the Terms of References (TOR, Annex 1, p. 7-10), the evaluation addressed the general evaluation criteria and specific questions with some adjustments (marked in italics). The detailed Evaluation questions provided by the ILO were based on these criteria and have been adapted by the consultant team in the inception report where required and in agreement with the evaluation manager. The detailed question matrix can be found in Annex 2. The evaluation questions also integrate crosscutting themes of the ILO. A particular focus was put on assessing to what extent Skills 21 could make an impact on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), using ILO GESI and Skills Development (incl. ILO Guidance note 3.1⁵) and other tools, which the consultants have developed and applied for programme design, research, evaluations, and impact assessments.

E. Process

The evaluation closely followed the process and timeline below, with deliverables and milestones that have been set in the TOR. The evaluation used a mix of research methods, starting with

1) a **systematic desk research** and review of policy documents, studies, reports, secondary data, and project documents.

2) The desk analysis was complemented with **qualitative, semi-structured Key Informant Interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGDs)** with the relevant stakeholders, which also created an opportunity for critical reflection and sensitization of stakeholders on explicit and hidden barriers to gage higher commitment.

KIIs and FGDs were held mostly face to face and where not possible, virtually given the limited time available overall and during the mission. Overall, KIIs and FGDs were held with 103 people (27% women, 2 people with disabilities) during this evaluation on- and off-line. The evaluation further benefitted from a large participation of stakeholders during the validation workshop, where people from divisions were added online (see Annex 3).

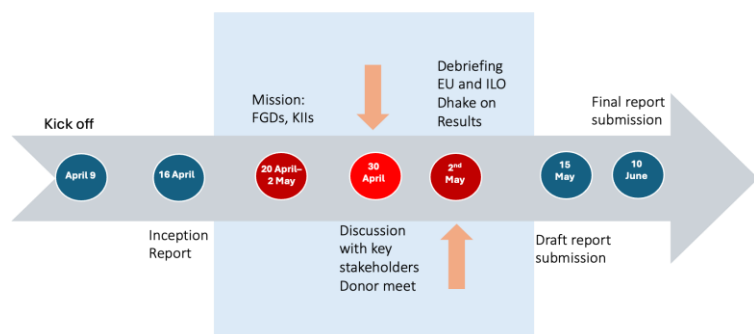


Figure 3: Timeline of End Evaluation

⁴ OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation: Better Criteria for Better Evaluation. Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use (2019)

⁵ [ILO Guidance Note 3.1: Integrating Gender Equality in Monitoring and Evaluation, and the Supplementary Guidance Note: integrating gender equality in ILO M&E \(Nov. 2023\)](#).

Stakeholder	TOTAL	Total incl. Validation Workshop	
Central Government	11 (1 woman)	12 (1 woman)	
VET School Principals	3	9	
Teachers/Instructors/Mastertrainers	13 (2 women)	13 (2 women)	
IMAB Members	10 (2 women, 1 person with disabilities)	10 (2 women, 1 person with disabilities)	TOTAL: 103
Development Partners	4 (1 woman)	7 (3 women)	Women: 27%
Social Partners BEF/Trade Unions	6	8 (1 woman)	2 people with disabilities
Entrepreneurs-Employers	11 (2 women)	11 (2 women)	
Job cell/incubation centre	1	1	
EU -Donor	1 (1 woman)	1 (1 woman)	
ILO Experts/Staff	12 (5 women)	12 (5 women)	
Final Beneficiaries (CBT/RPL/entrepreneurs)	16 (10 women, 1 person with disabilities)	17 (10 women, 1 person with disabilities)	

Table 2: People interviewed

3) Analysis: Where available and possible, the evaluation team made references to secondary data and reports in a disaggregated way to assess intervention effectiveness and potential impact of project on institutional capacities and practice and on beneficiaries/target groups particularly vulnerable to social exclusion or discrimination, including migrant men and women, women, people with disabilities, religious minorities, and other disadvantaged groups. Some **outcome and impact data are discussed by using descriptive statistical methods.**

4) Triangulation of Findings and Validation: While the evaluation covers all geographical project outlined in the proposal, specific priority was given to Dhaka, Sylhet, Gaibandha and Bogura. These areas were visited during the 12-day mission and led to a good understanding of the range and quality of project activities.⁶ Due to the distance within Dhaka and traffic constraints in Dhaka, meetings were also held online with Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF), National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education (NCCWE), Start and Improve Your Business Foundation (SIYB), Ovivashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP), Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP), Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN). **The overall findings from reviews, KIIs, FGDs and data analysis was triangulated and vetted at the end of the mission during the validation workshop** and review of draft evaluation report that enabled critical reflection by stakeholders on the findings and a debriefing with the Skills 21 team.

F. Team Composition and Reporting

The Evaluation team included Sandra Rothboeck (lead evaluator) who was supported by Mohammad Nuruzzaman (national evaluator). The team reported to the evaluation managers Tauvik Muhamad and Pamornrat Pringsulaka. Lotte Kejser, Chief Technical Adviser and Md. Anisuzzaman, National Programme Officer Skills 21, were the focal points during the evaluation.

⁶ Dhaka location gave consultants access to policy makers, and TVET and RPL relevant partners (NSDA, TMED, DTE, BTEB, BMET, BEF, NCCWE, BBDN and others). Visiting the TSC Sylhet has been a priority area to address access for ethnic minorities (Chittagong), while Gaibandha is one of the well performing MTIs with an active private sector engaging and collaborating. In addition Gaibandha has a Migration Cell set up by the project, so that evaluators can assess both interventions (MTI and RPL for returning migrants). Bogura Vocational Teachers' Training Institute (VTTI) is easily reachable by road from Gaibandha.

G. Evaluation Norms, Standards and Ethical Safeguards

The evaluation team took necessary ethical and quality assurance steps to ensure a transparent and participatory process. The process included briefing by the Skills 21 and Evaluation team, along with the consultants and a thorough review of the reports and data, followed by validation of information gathered wherever possible, and debriefing with the stakeholders, the Skills 21 team and ILO country director after the mission. Regular exchange meetings were held with the Evaluation Manager in ILO Jakarta, the Evaluation Officer in the Regional Office in Bangkok and with the Skills 21 team leader and focal point responsible for the evaluation. Interviews held were held independently and were based on informed consent. Where possible women and disadvantaged groups were included. The evaluation team upheld strict confidentiality on sensitive information obtained from self-assessments and participant and stakeholder interviews.

H. Limitations

The evaluation had some limitations when addressing DAC criteria related to sustainability and impact, as some interventions have just finished and up to now, no impact studies or surveys have been made except for two tracer studies assessing training impact on learners for short term CBT courses and one for RPL, which were just about finished. A comprehensive long-term impact assessment of the Skills 21 project is still pending and was initially scheduled for the third extension phase. Up to the time of the evaluation, the project was set to conclude by the end of June 2024, making it unlikely that such studies would be conducted, which is unfortunate given the promising developments that would be valuable to document. However, in late May, the donor began considering another three-year extension to support and complement the planned Talent Partnership, which is an opportunity for impact assessment studies to be carried out.

Other criteria like relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency in the intervention design and potential future interventions will be thoroughly examined in the evaluation, based on the data available. Additionally, with multiple ILO and non-ILO projects being implemented in parallel (e.g., ADB-World Bank projects) that also focus on system impact, it may be challenging to directly attribute certain outcomes and impacts specifically to the Skills 21 project. Finally, the evaluators could not attend one of the PMCC (or PSC) meetings planned for 8 May, 2024 as it got postponed.

I. Structure of the Report

The report follows the outline as suggested in the ILO evaluation guidelines. Chapter I provides the introduction and project background, while Chapter II discusses evaluation background (scope, approach, methods, clients, and limitations). Chapter III includes discussion of project findings and the overall performance using the DAC criteria relevance, strategic fit, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency of implementation, impact orientation and sustainability. It also discusses the extent of application of transversal aspects and unintended results. Chapter IV provides conclusion and Chapter V lessons learnt and selected good emerging case practices. Chapter VI focuses on recommendations.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS

A. Relevance

This section addresses the extent of relevance of the project design and implementation in relation to the national development priorities, ILO's decent work country programme (DWCP), as they were specified in the project document (Annex 2).

The evaluation team confirms findings from the MTE (2019/20), that the Skills 21 project is considered highly relevant. Constituents and other stakeholders (training providers, NGOs, other projects) underscored the pertinent role of the project. The evaluation also affirms the strong alignment and relevance of the Skills 21 project with existing frameworks and priorities, including:

Global frameworks and donor priorities

ILO's Global Skills Strategy for Lifelong Learning (GSPL3) and ILO's P&B Outcomes 3⁷ and 5, which seek to facilitate lifelong learning and effective transitions in the labour market. This also aligns with the global initiatives outlined in the ILO's Human Resources Development Recommendation (No. 195) and the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

Alignment with National GoB and EU Priorities

The project is consistent with the national priorities, including the 7th and 8th Five Year Plans, National employment strategies, skills development policies (NSDP11/22) and action plans (TMED 2018; NSDA 2022-27). Skills development is the 3rd pressing constraint to economic development in Bangladesh and protected migration has been a priority of the government. Skills 21 addresses both training and migration related priorities to support GoB's ambitious goals to train and provide employment related support services to four mio. people each year.

Skills 21 is also in sync with Bangladesh's UNSDCF priorities and actively contributes to the negotiated goals of the DWCP (2021-26), and its priority 1,⁸ "to generate productive employment with improved sustainable enterprises and skills development". This priority is linked to skills and employability indicators (SDG targets 8.2, 8.5, 8.6). It includes technical and advisory support to the government for creating an enabling environment for job creation, combined with inclusive and market responsive skills delivery and labour market insertion services, in Bangladesh and abroad; most importantly for women, disadvantaged groups and (returning) migrant workers.

The project is relevant for the EU's strategic priorities in Bangladesh and aligns with EU Human Capital Development Programme 2021. Relevance of Skills 21 has further been increased by adding skilling and certification to aspiring and returning Bangladeshi migrants. Migration holds relevance from the EU perspective due to existing labour shortages in member states, prompting strategic engagement with countries on fostering protected circular migration arrangements.

Relevance for social partners and implementation partners and ultimate target groups

⁷P&B Outcome 3, 3.1-3.5: Full and productive employment for Just Transitions and P&B Outcome 5

⁸ The project closely aligns with the Country Programme Priorities (BD 101) for policies & programmes to promote full, productive & decent employment through skills development reforms for employability and livelihoods. Under this CPO, the project aims to achieve two indicators: (1) Development and operationalization of a national skills development policy action plan, and (2) Alignment of the Government's TVET system with the recommendations of the ILO Project, including the National Strategy for the promotion of gender equality in TVET (PRODOC, 2017: p. 4)

Interviews with BEF and NCCWE revealed their increased interest and willingness to actively engage and shape the skills ecosystem. They appreciate and confirm the ILO's relevance as a technical agency on skills and labour markets for the TVET reform process. ILO's valuable role as a knowledge provider, offering access to the most current research and global best practices and networks, or capacity building is well appreciated. Appreciated were exposure visits, webinars, thematic regional and national training workshops (e.g., ILO-ITC collaboration on E-Campus, TVET trainings managing, gender equality and social inclusion in TVET Institutes). As particularly relevant rated BEF and enterprises being members of the TVET Institutes' Institutional Management Advisory Boards (IMABs), the Employers' forum and as training enterprises, which led to a grown interest in participating in skills development. The ILO's capacity building efforts for teachers and instructors, institutions, and model training institutes (MTIs) to increase private sector collaboration and to get trained in CBT&A were appreciated and considered as highly relevant by both, the TVET Institutes and the private sector. These efforts deepened understanding on critical topics, such as the need for demand side focused training initiatives.

The project is seen as relevant by ultimate beneficiaries, because it addresses the challenges faced by the disadvantaged groups in accessing high-quality training and post-training support to access employment or into self-employment. Participants who benefitted from entrepreneurship development training (EDT), CBT courses, RPL assessment and career guidance & job placement services confirmed that the project interventions were relevant to them and met their training needs (section on impact orientation will discuss more in details).

B. Coherence and validity of design (internal/external)

This section examines the coherence and validity of the project design taking into account time and resources available; the coherence of the Skills 21 project with ILO's overall goals and components; the Theory of Change, and log frame formulation based on which the team used the Projects' Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework; and whether ILO crosscutting themes have been systematically taken into consideration in the design.

Overall coherence

The project's objective is coherent with ILO's overall Decent Work and Future of Work agenda, EU's priorities – and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. The project's consistency with international norms and standards is high, primarily because of ILO's own role in setting the latter and applying them as its mandate in the delivery of its interventions. This does not come as a surprise, since ILO's overall objectives are broadly formulated, giving space for a range of interventions of different topics and themes. At national level, the Skills 21 project is well embedded in the DWCP's outcome C101 and priority 1, which in turn is closely aligned with the overall United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

However, when addressing the commitment to tripartism, which is the central framework modality and one guiding principle of ILO Bangladesh's DWCP design, implementation and governance, the Skills 21 project, like other ongoing skills projects (e.g., TVET Reform Project, B-SEP), were not able to fully foster the engagement of the private sector overall, and Employers (BEF) and trade unions (NCCWE) in particular, as active actors in the project.

The government's insistence throughout the project to control and govern the Skills 21 project within its own premises and mechanisms and prioritizing on public training providers only, seems unfortunate; despite the fact that national skills policies and strategies acknowledge the

important role of private TVET providers in the skills ecosystem, and on the other hand, the role of the private sector also drive the future skills development agenda so that Bangladesh as a nation successfully graduates and remains competitive with a more diversified economy. Skills 21, which is a continuation of earlier EU funded TVET reform project and the Canadian funded B-SEP, during which private sector was prominently involved, should have emphasized the need that social partners and private training providers continue building their capacities in both governance as well as assuming their role within the TVET sector ecosystem.⁹ Any strong skills ecosystem enables active participation of multiple stakeholders to effectively act and deliver so that training delivery is fit for the future. As will be shown in later sections the project has taken a variety of strategic steps to strengthen private sector engagement (e.g. participation in technical working groups during BNQF development, training of trainers and assessors, participation in Institute Management Advisory Boards and Employers' forum).

Another measure for coherence pertains to the synergies and inter-linkages made by the project with other interventions currently carried out by the ILO in Bangladesh. It was found that projects like the Canada government funded ProGRESS (2021-2025), the SDC-funded migration policy for Decent Work for Migrant Workers, Phase II (2016-2022) and the Canada-Netherlands funded project in Cox-Bazar, ISEC (2022-2025) provide particularly fruitful opportunities for collaboration. They are subsumed under the skills cluster within the ILO Country office to optimize synergies and ensure that lessons learnt are shared and best practices taken forward in these projects. Monthly cluster meetings are held, and joint outcome level reporting is maintained. Similarly, resources are being shared between the projects (e.g., communication, administration/accounting position) for better synergies. As will be shown more in detail, Skills 21 and the Migration project built strong synergies. With the other projects, however, discussions revealed that collaboration has been quite limited and could be intensified.

There is some complementary with other efforts in the sector. Coordination with all development partners is currently facilitated by the EU through the Skills Development Working Group (SDWG), which ensures GoB coordination and dialogue on thematic and technical issues beyond Project implementation. Skills 21 also participated in the labour Migration Technical Working Group (LMTWG) for strategic guidance, coordination and oversight of labour migration efforts, including services for returning migrants. There is also an EU Budget Support to the Education Sector in Bangladesh "Human Capital Development Programme 2021", which focuses on strengthening the education and skills sector of Bangladesh with specific focus on the primary, technical and vocational education and training, including an indicator on the BNQF. To optimize synergies, Skills 21 has also made extra efforts to align with the World bank on the development of the BNQF and has been working very closely with the respective teams to ensure coordination.

The ILO strengthened ongoing national government initiatives and where possible fostered collaboration with social partners and other stakeholders relevant for the skills ecosystem. Examples include the revision of the NSDP and BNQF; however less participative seems to have been the development of the action plans, which could have guided and sharpened the understanding of the stakeholders, about process, funding and coordination as well as for role clarity. **Discussions with donors and partners reveal that the ILO could have more effectively**

⁹ The Skills 21 project governance and project monitoring was integrated within the National Steering Committees, Project steering and project monitoring committees, which is confined to government institutions only. BEF and NCCWE had only consultative role.

leveraged its mobilizing power to facilitate tripartism as a part of the high level TVET reform process it has been leading for the last 15 years. Rather, it operates in a similar manner at project implementation level, instead of supporting the government and social partners in creating the enabling environment for TVET system to thrive, expand and grow.

Some observations on the Scope of the project

The original project design as it stands addresses very broad independent intervention areas with the overarching goal. of *“Increased productivity and better employment opportunities through an environmentally conscious, inclusive, demand-driven, and interlinked skills development system responding to the needs of the labour market.”* Each of these intervention areas require multilevel strategies to mature and result in behavioural change (at least 12 years). A clear vision and road map with milestones, discussed and negotiated with the key stakeholders involved in the project, is missing. System reforms require a series of projects which should contribute towards achieving a defined goal. Given that the project duration was originally 4 years, the expected results were overambitious and, in many ways, unrealistic and not really anchored in a broader perspective. Accordingly, the MTE (2019/20) recommended dropping some of the activities and targets to reduce the pressure made absolute sense; however, this did not solve the challenge that this project was too big for this short time span.

The evaluators suggest, that more efforts are required to pro-actively position ILO’s well perceived and confirmed status as a technical agency that guides government partners and supports them building synergies and avoid duplication. The ILO should continue to establish itself as a serious player in the skills space, who comes across as technically sound to guide constituents in the overall process of TVET reform (see sustainability and recommendations).

Internal project coherence

Regarding internal coherence, the evaluation team found that the project showed significant coherence, by building on earlier projects (TVET Reform and B-SEP Projects) and remaining in the space of policy and TVET reform and the DWCP priority area. The Theory of Change envisaged three intervention areas, Quality of TVET, Access and inclusion, and Governance-Coordination.

Theory of change, results chains and log frame

The project still has a very broad theory of change (TOC) and the Log frame provided has weaknesses. Following suggestions made during MTE (2019/20), M&E framework changes were made and results chains developed to better measure what needed to be achieved during the project. The team developed consistent results chains for each output under each outcome, however, missed to integrate these at the outcome and overall impact levels. **An overarching results chain could inform about interconnectedness and attributions of interventions to outcomes and impact, which can act as a guidance for staff and project steering committees to assess and communicate to what extent changes are emerging.**

Furthermore, too many mini-interventions were introduced, all of which require continuation to achieve the desired changes. It is short-sighted to assume that when an approach is piloted once or twice, it leads to sustainable with lasting impact. For example, while an increased number of teachers have been trained and certified in CBT&A and while they have started utilizing the e-portal for instructional materials (IMDC), it is unclear to what extent teachers have started using these methods and materials in day-to-day practice whether they are able to improve overall learning outcomes.

Formulation or indicators

The consultants also found that too many indicators were used to measure results and that some indicators lack conceptual clarity and definitions to clearly communicate results to be achieved within the project period (see table).

Table 3: Conceptual aspects of definitions of Indicators

Target indicator formulated	Observation
1.3 One IMDC operational by 2023	Lack of clarity what 'operational' involves. Are financial and human resources available in BTEB to continue the portal after the project ends? Is a mechanism in place which provides clarity how the portal will function, be regulated and quality assured?
2.1 7 existing TVET institutions have become model institutions for inclusive, environmentally conscious, quality and labour market - responsive skills development, holding the RTO designation and performing as BTEB assessment centres.	While a process has been initiated to follow quality processes and engage multiple stakeholders and private sector in governance, the capacities of MTIs cannot as yet serve as benchmark or model training institutes for others to learn from. Developing a culture for continuous improvement requires time and institutionalization: <i>Rather- 7 MTIs have reached RTO, BTEB assessment centre status and follow QIP. Need for clarity on the benchmark criteria for becoming a Model Training institute.</i>
2.2 IMAB Established	As there is no legal provision and binding status as yet for IMAB, it is critical that one rather uses terms like IMAB formed.

Terms, like 'operational or established' are used loosely and fail to capture the depth required for behavioural change, which necessitates a more sustained thematic learning process, enactment, quality assurance and monitoring.

Table 4: Comments on definitions

Outputs	Comment
1.1 National Qualification Framework (NQF) is established.	Established is too ambitious. While endorsed, BNQF is not yet enacted, and it will take time to establish a mechanism to roll out BNQF to be established and functional. Suggested wording: <i>endorsed and communicated.</i>
1.3 Better quality learning programmes and materials for participants are available	Requires definition of 'better' and how it is measured and how quality is vetted (evidence).
3.1 A supportive policy environment is in place that supports coherent sector planning and implementation by 2021	Difficult to measure and operationalize. ... from a TVET governance point of view, it is crucial that key partners are involved and empowered in the process... for policy, resource allocation, governance and monitoring and evaluation are required to measure these outputs.

To ensure the indicators are meaningful and appropriate, it's essential to:

- Provide a clear definition of what an indicator measures and wants to communicate;
- Ensure indicators effectively gauge desired results one wants to achieve during the project;
- Apply the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) for indicators to accurately represent the intended outcomes.

Time horizon of Project

Feedback from various stakeholders and skills specialists indicates that achieving the system changes envisioned in Skills21 takes time and requires a broad and long-term vision with different milestones to be achieved. It is critical to have a clarity on what a project of 4 years (with extensions resulting in a total project period of 7 years) can achieve, as this helps managing

expectations. This would contribute to greater internal coherence (see section on impact orientation and sustainability for more details).

Mainstreaming of transversal topics

The project has addressed transversal topic systematically in the design, implementation and reporting (see separate section: cross cutting and transversal themes section).

C. Effectiveness

This section examines the degree to which Skills 21 has achieved the expected results overall and for each specific outcome, highlighting notable observations. These are based on reviews of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) presented in tables, reports and observed during field visits and discussions. It also analyzes the visible changes observed at the outcome level. Both intended and unintended positive or negative effects will be discussed in this section. The more detailed tables with KPI performance for each outcome can be found in the Annex 7)

As mentioned earlier, the project faced unexpected challenges which slowed down the delivery of project activities. Three no cost extensions and the Skills 21 team’s focused contingency planning ensured however delivery of most of the planned activities (Annual Narrative Report 2023). The project is perceived as effective by constituents, stakeholders and participants, and planned targets were either fully or partially achieved.

There are indications of a growing commitment and a deeper understanding of the benefits of a harmonized and unified BNQF, a better governance and coordination mechanism and that Skills Development and assessments should be competency-based. However, awareness across the country about BNQF and CBT&A remains low; however local level pilot initiatives systematically addressing professionalization of training institutes, teacher training, awareness campaigns, linking with the private sector have shown to be very effective and generated good response. Employers engage more in CBT&A and participants are keener to enrol in the training courses and more often use available services (counselling and placement services, entrepreneurship training, migration services and business incubation). Interviews, FGDs and progress reports validate that more enterprises and candidates utilize these services, however evidence through impact studies is yet to be established. There are discussions that for the 4th extension phase, more awareness raising activities about BNQF and CBT&A will be made.

Outcome 1

Outcomes and Outputs relating to Result Area 1 were fully (green) or partially achieved (orange).

Table 5: KPI performance of Outcome 1

Outcome 1: Improved Quality of the TVET / skills development system			
Output 1.1: (BNQF) ensuring harmonization of the qualification pathways across primary, secondary, technical and higher education			
Output 1.2: Expanded delivery of CBT&A for trainers, assessors and managers in education and training institutions			
Output 1.3: Better quality learning programmes and materials available for TVET teachers, students and other participants			
	KPI	Target	Achievement status
1.1.1	Harmonized or unified BNQF structure is finalized and endorsed	BNQF is developed and endorsed by June 2023	<div style="background-color: #90EE90; padding: 2px;">✓ Endorsed</div> <div style="background-color: #FFD700; padding: 2px;">• NQAS Manuals, draft BNQF legislation, draft implementation guidelines sent to DTE.</div>

1.2. 1	Improved service provisions by two CSEs for generating more qualified trainers and assessors	2 CSEs operational by 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TTTC and VTTI implemented QIP and self-assessment, do not yet have status of centres of excellence
		Teacher Training Quality expanded (L4, L5, L6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 3,521 trainers /assessors, 250 master trainers, 20 managers (19% women), 69% certified
1.3. 1	IMDC established with the focus of distance learning programmes	IMDC learning platform operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1,214 trainers trained (14% women) ✓ Modern computer Labs for e-learning, IMCD set up
1.3. 2	Improved training materials are being used in the training	IMDC learning platform operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E- Learning courses for CBT&A L4 on Graphic design, care giver, etc. completed and piloted with BTEB • In process of becoming mandatory in L4, L5, L6 training, incl. e-learning

There are some of the key accomplishments in this Outcome:

Output 1.1: BNQF) ensuring harmonization of the qualification pathways across primary, secondary, technical and higher education:

The GoB reached a significant milestone when the BNQF was launched by the Minister of Education in 2023. The BNQF process benefitted from high level stakeholder engagement with Technical Working groups, government agencies, professional organizations and worker’s and employers’ groups during 93 meetings facilitated by the ILO (planned 47). While published and launched, the effective implementation of the internationally benchmarked BNQF requires a rigorous mechanism, supported by BNQF enactment and more multistakeholder engagement. This would be a central cornerstone for the ILO-EU project at the end of the project. There have been delays in the process. With the limited time available until the closure of the Skills 21 project, it is unlikely that BNQF draft legislation, implementation guide, implementation plan and National Quality Assurance Manual will get government approval.¹⁰ These BNQF documents could not be completed as the Project awaits the government's finalization of the BNQF governance mechanism, a crucial aspect that impacts other BNQF operations outlined in the manuals. After a two-year delay, the government made a decision on the governance mechanism this February 2024. Subsequently, the Project have resumed final consultations and shared the final draft documents with the DTE and TMED. Together with the EU, the Project is pushing for the approval of the BNQF documents.

Output 1.2: Expanded delivery of CBT&A for trainers, assessors and managers in education and training institutions

The VTTI and TTTC improved performance however do not have status of Centers for Skills excellences (CSEs). They completed implementing their QIPs and showcasing good practices. A key achievement was the successful piloting of the CBT&A Level 5 and Level 6 programs for 250 Master Trainers and 20 Principals respectively, alongside training of 3,521 trainers and assessors through the CBT&A Level 4 programs.

- **Professionalizing Teacher Training Institutes/CSEs:** Principals benefitted from the Advisory Board (IMAB) guidance, which addresses cost-saving measures, staffing and quality improvement issues, and systematically promotes gender and disability inclusion. Additionally, the Board supported efforts to reduce waste and address environmental issues on campus, while stronger private sector linkages led to 8 MOUs with local enterprises increasing the institutes’

¹⁰Two approval options have been discussed between ILO/EU/GoB: either through parliament to become legislation or through the Cabinet to be gazetted as a Government order within the Ministry of Education. The first route will take more time. According to TMED, the second route can be completed within another extension period and would fulfil the same practical purpose.

overall visibility. The principals feel more competent as institute managers in addressing quality after implementing their Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and conducting self-assessments. This is an important step towards becoming CSEs. *Despite the progress made, both CSEs are yet to get assurance from GoB to get human and financial resources required to fully act in their role. In addition they can be accredited to be CSEs by BTEB, based on the criteria defined by Skills 21.*

- **Expansion of Training:** The project exceeded its training target, training 3,521 trainers/assessors for L4, 250 master trainers for L5 (19% women), and 16 principals completed level 6 program (no woman). However, only 69% successfully passed the L4 certification, which appears to be due to insufficient motivation of teachers. While revised CBT&A pedagogy for L4 training is made compulsory for new entrants, GoB explores incentives for teachers to upskill and remain relevant by undergoing L4 training and certification. BMET has successfully developed an incentive system for existing teachers/instructors to upskill. This practice could be emulated by DTE. *DTE needs to introduce continuous professional development (CPD) plans and transparent promotion incentives so that expansion within the existing teacher community will continue.*
- **CSEs developed coping strategies** to address perpetual staff shortages (3 permanent staff within VTTI, while the majority is deployed from other training centres or the private sector). VTTI invited industry trainers to obtain the L4 and L5 certification and up-skilling and employs them part time to deliver up to date technical training to teacher with the financial support from the Ministry of Finance. Discussions with the company trainers highlighted that the current technical exposure provided during teacher training is not enough to be competent, given the fact, that most trainers do not have a trade specific background when they are recruited. *Addressing the practical and technical skills gap of teachers needs to be systematically addressed either through industry exposures or by insisting that newly recruited trainers have at least one year industry experiences. It could be further explored whether each teacher training institute can put forward proposals for financing of industry trainer training to HRDF. Systematic integration of these trainers into TTTI faculty could increase performance of training.*

Output 1.3: Better quality learning programmes and materials available for TVET teachers, students and other participants

Accelerated by COVID 19 and the need to continue training of teachers and TVET school activities, the Instructional Materials Development Centre (IMDC) quickly gained momentum and, with the support from ITC-Turin, got set up faster (2021) and was used more extensively than anticipated. 1,214 teachers (14% women) were trained, and 80 teachers learnt how to develop e-learning packages by using the learning platform. They appreciated the participatory co-creation process during development and pilot testing of online courses (Graphic Design, Caregiving, etc.).

The decision that the use of IMDC for L4 training will be mandatory, can accelerate digitalisation of teaching and learning besides pushing for faster expansion of CBT&A. Further IMDC became national. The integration of the IMDC under BTEB is promising but will face challenges due to staff shortages, unless these additionally required resources are anticipated. *Adequate staffing and resources are essential for expanding IMDC coverage and checking quality of content and use of materials is central to its success. The E-Campus platform requires continuous updates and a national learning management system for effective maintenance, teacher capacity building, and material dissemination. Enhancing teachers' e-learning competencies is crucial for the E-Campus's sustainability as a vital TVET platform.*

Observations:

- The Skills 21 team made significant advocacy efforts at highest level to expedite the process of BNQF enactment with cabinet and endorsement of legislation and implementation relevant documents. Some of the delays might also have to do with the existing still unsolved governance and coordination challenges between NSDA/TMED/BTEB for which Skills 21 team as repeatedly requested a meeting with National Steering Committee (NSC). Following an NSC meeting on the governance mechanism, revisions of the NQAS manual, implementation manual and legislation were made in close consultation with stakeholders leading to re-submission in April. The MoE has promised to issue Government Order and push for Cabinet approval to ensure BNQF implementation at earliest. Unless these issues are solved, BNQF roll out could remain stagnant.
- Increased awareness and dissemination of information about the BNQF are needed throughout Bangladesh, especially to reach the private sector, parents, and learners. Stakeholders felt that they by being involved in the process and got a deeper understanding of the benefits of BNQF and competency-based training and assessment to respond closer to labour market needs. ILO's social partners BEF and NCCWE, as well as Industry associations, ISCs, private training providers and civil society organizations can play an active role in outreach and sensitization activities.
- Shortage of qualified trainers with the right technical competences will remain a challenge unless it is addressed in a sustainable way. Similarly, the percentage of female faculty remains low. The public service commission needs to review practices and potential barriers and explore additional ways to expedite training capacity expansion and capacity building.
- While first steps towards quality improvement and expansion CBT&A can be observed in teacher training delivery and improved training and learning materials, it is, however, unclear, how CSE's plan to expand CBT&A practice and ensure that their learning is applied in day-to day practice in the TVET institutes. This requires mentoring and continuous support and resources for quality assurance. While BTEB should audit CBT&A practices as a part of accrediting RTOs and assessment centres, the VTTIs should support and mentor the teachers in TVET institutes and follow up with the training. Teacher Training Institutes, with additional *funding could set up online mentoring cell to remain in contact with the trainers and support them with follow up assignments. More research and follow up from CSEs is required to assess to what extent trained trainers changed and train better than their counter parts. This also applies for assessments.*

Outcome 2

Result Area 2 (Improved Access to and Equity within the TVET / skills development system through TVET Model Institutions-MTIs): All outputs are either fully achieved or partially achieved.¹¹ It needs to be highlighted that the KPIs and Target numbers for 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3 are outcome indicators, resulting from improved access to and equity provided by TVET model institutions.

Table 6: KPI performance of Outcome 2

Outcome 2: Improved Access and Equity within the TVET / skills development system through TVET model institutions		
Output 2.1: 7 TVET institutions (incl. one in CHT) have become model institutions for inclusive, environmentally conscious, quality and labour market - responsive skills development, holding the RTO designation and performing as BTEB assessment centres.		
Output 2.2: 7 inclusive Model TVET institutions serve as benchmark for industry driven, inclusive and environmentally conscious institution-level governance and management		
KPI	Target	Achievement status

¹¹ The evaluators highlight that indicators for Output 2.1 are indicators for outcome 2 level, addressing 'improved access and equity'. However, the existing indicators do not measure 'improved', nor have they a baseline based on which one can show evidence that there was an improvement. The output level 2.1 indicator should indicate to what extent the institutes have achieved MTI status (incl. RTO, assessment centre status) and comply with pre-defined criteria of a MTI.

2.1.1	# training completers in the reformed skills development system (gender segregated)	13,000 completers (80% certified) 20% women	✓ Beyond target (13,000), 18,356 completers (40 % women) 80% certified
2.1.2	#training completers in the reformed skills development system (disability segregated)	No target for persons with disabilities	✓ 186 persons with disabilities (1.4%) benefitted from CBT training, EDT and RPL; 50 of them are in jobs (27%)
2.1.3	% of programme completers (students) gain employment (wage & self)	70% employed/ self-employed within 6 months after training	✓ 60% employed (38% women) ✓ 61 % EDT trainees self-employed
2.2.1	Guideline developed for IMAB; Number of IMAB established and operationalized	Guideline and criteria to form IMAB by 2018; 7 IMABs established with Model TVET Institutions by 2019; 7 IMABs are operational by June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guideline and criteria for IMABs developed but not institutionalized within MTI • 7 IMAB set up and active in engaging business, but lack formal status; not established • Incubation centres and Employer's forum set up and active but lack formal structure and capacity building ✓ Partnership with enterprises, leading to 60% employment of learners

Output 2.1: 7 TVET institutions (incl. one in CHT) have become model institutions for inclusive, environmentally conscious, quality and labour market - responsive skills development, holding the RTO designation and performing as BTEB assessment centers.

The Skills 21 project strengthened seven public TVET schools, supported them in adopting a QIP and self-assessment, which was followed by a BTEB audit. It also institutionalized gender equality and social inclusion policies, improved labour market linkages by establishing placement cells, and engaged with the local private sector (143 enterprises) to address skills gaps. The project facilitated endorsement of the MTI Guidelines which outlines assessment and awarding procedures and requirements by the BTEB and trained 30 officials for the assessment process. *Within the project period, all 7 MTIs became RTOs and were accredited as assessment centers by BTEB, however do not qualify as MTIs.*

To gain MTI status, according to DTE, additional human resources and modern equipment are required to support other TVET institutes. All 7 MTIs suffer from permanent staff shortages (average 50% less staff available than required). Skills 21 financed additional staff to fill the vacancies for career guidance, entrepreneurship training, and linkages with the private sector. Additional responsibilities like focal points for gender and disability inclusion, environmental concerns were added to the already existing busy schedules of the few overworked TVET teachers. *Addressing both staffing shortages and equipment needs is essential for these institutions to qualify as Model Training Institutes and to continue existing efforts beyond the project period.*

Performance of KPIs 2.1.1 – 2.1.3

The Skills 21 project **has surpassed its target of 13,000 (20% women) by serving 18,356 youth, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, women, workers, and returning migrants seeking skills training, RPL and entrepreneurship support. 40% were women.**¹² No specific target was set for disability inclusion, however, 186 (1.4%) people with disabilities benefitted from the project. This figure appears low considering the national target of 5% for disability inclusion

¹² 18,356 training completers included 6,791 youths (34% women), certified 4,593 (15% women) skilled/semi-skilled workers undergoing RPL assessments, 3,498 (46% women) potential and existing entrepreneurs capable to start their own businesses. 3,474 migrant workers and their family members received skills and entrepreneurship development training for economic reintegration.

and the project's emphasis on addressing disability inclusion in a systematic way within MTIs and CSEs. 3,474 migrant workers and their family members received specialized skills and entrepreneurship development training, facilitating their reintegration into the workforce. A total of 4,593 skilled/semi-skilled workers (15%) underwent assessment through RPL. 80% of completers were certified overall, with the same rate achieved for RPL assessments.

Skills training, career guidance, placement support, entrepreneurship training and enterprise linking led to promising results; however short from the anticipated 70%. According to the tracer study results (2024), **60% of all graduates got employment (38% women) and 61% entering self-employment.** Similarly, RPL supported certification led to increased employability and higher wages. These are good results, particularly after COVID19, which had a significant negative affect on the jobs and enterprises.

Output 2.2: 7 inclusive Model TVET institutions serve as benchmark for industry driven, inclusive and environmentally conscious institution-level governance and management.

Similar to CSEs, the introduction of IMABs has transformed the culture in MTIs. Principals and their quality assurance teams feel supported by IMABs, which include representatives from local government, business associations, active enterprises, disability advocates, and women's organizations. This support aids their efforts to become more accessible, environmentally conscious, and aligned with local industry needs. The project's focus on supporting local governance and combining the same with the setting up of employers' fora and localized TVET campaigns with the support from BEF has led to good results. Similarly, TVET institutes are becoming spaces for exchange for business ideas and as shown in the case of TTC- Gaibandha, chamber of commerce used the location for entrepreneurship training in the digital space. Moreover, the project established two migration cells for migration-related information and advice. *Prospective candidates interested in enrolment into courses and services have multiplied, however target group specific enrolment is needed to ensure more access to marginalized groups.*

Observations:

- Employers and participants highlighted the benefits of CBT&A in short courses. The majority emphasized the necessity for courses at Level 2 or preferably Level 3, with an extended period available for practical internships. More focus should be put on soft skills and professional attitude. Certification was widely valued by both parties and seen as a valid filter for employers when selecting candidates for interviews. Obtaining certification was also associated with higher wages, empowering workers to negotiate better terms with their employers.
- There have been challenges with the target groups, particularly reaching out to candidates with low educational background, and groups otherwise marginalized, including women, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities. The tracer study for CBT courses revealed an enrolment bias towards educated graduates (HSC diplomas, bachelor & master degrees), who were in search of employment and self-employment opportunities. *The Skills 21 project should have been aware of this bias and sought alternative solution for this group, while at the same time address access and social inclusion barriers for candidates originally defined.*
- While still at the beginning, there are interesting developments, which indicate enterprises' and local industry interests in expanding and actively engaging in TVET. To become a benchmark, as stated in the outcome indicator above, however, is a long way to go. A benchmark serves as a minimal standard that is a reference for training providers to achieve MTI status. Neither CSEs nor the 7 MTIs have achieved this status, given that they are severely underfunded, lack

equipment and remain understaffed. IMAB still need a formal status and business plans initiated by the project should be further explored. QIP should be made integral for RTO registration and Assessment centre accreditation. This however cannot be achieved during the project period but should be continued. *The project could still ensure that case studies for all 7 MTIs and CSEs are made and shared during knowledge sharing events are made, so that experiences are consolidated and existing guidelines, standards for MTIs get contextualized. Based on the exchange and learning, a benchmark can be developed.*

Outcome 3

Result Area 3 (An enabled environment through improved Governance and Management of the TVET/ skills development system): All outputs have been completed, however, await final approval from the government.

Table 7: KPI performance of Outcome 3

Outcome 3: Governance and coordination			
Output 3.1: A Sector Wide Integrated Framework for TVET (SWIFT) investment developed for TMED			
Output 3.2: Increased capacity within the key TVET / skills development institutions and bodies for the dialogue, implementation, monitoring and review of TVET / skills development policies			
	KPI	Target	Achievement status
3.1	Improved compliance to policy led changes in skills development system	A supportive policy environment is in place that supports coherent sector planning and implementation by 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SWAP dropped in 2020 ● SWIFT for TMED developed and put forward but put on hold ✓ Performance monitoring plan approved ✓ NSDP 2022 and Action plan approved and published
3.2	Improved coordination mechanism and management capacity are in place within TVET/ skills development governance structure and made operational	A supportive policy environment is in place that supports coherent sector planning and implementation by December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review of sector financing mechanism ✓ MTBF training of 172 officials, ✓ Governance training of 151 officials through TMED ✓ International Benchmarking capacities built of NSDA/BTEB, DTE ✓ Capacity building plans for TMED, BTEB, DTE, TTTIs and MTIs ● Sector studies (RMG, ITC) to be launched ● MTBF and governance training modules and guidelines submitted to TMED/DTE

Output 3.1: Improved compliance to policy led changes in skills development system

Achieving a unitary qualifications framework like the BNQF necessitates cohesive governance structures and streamlined coordination mechanisms. ILO assisted the government in several governance and coordination related aspects, including a feasibility study of a SWAP, which was however dropped as an option and replaced by a Sector Wide Integrated Framework for TVET (SWIFT) and a monitoring framework and a monitoring framework which was endorsed. Similarly, the ILO has successfully facilitated a multistakeholder process for the review of the revised Skills Development Policy (NSDP 2022) under NSDA, which was approved by Cabinet along with the action plan. However, the SWIFT is yet up for approval.

Output 3.2: Improved coordination mechanism and management capacity are in place within TVET/ skills development governance structure and made operational

ILO assisted the government in several governance and coordination related aspects, including a feasibility study of a SWAP, which was however dropped as an option and replaced by s Strategic Workforce Implementation Framework and Training (SWIFT) document. Additional efforts to

improve coordination within the TVET sector included review of Management information systems (MIS) and the joint development of a monitoring framework and implementation plan geared towards implementing National Skills Development Action plan. While the monitoring framework for NSDA coordinating 62 departments and ministries was endorsed, the SWIFT is yet up for approval. The Project also supported several training and capacity building initiatives to increase government staff capacities in financing and budgeting (MTBF), governance and assessing institutional capacity building needs of government officials. To strengthen skills anticipation, NSDA has conducted sector studies for RMG&T and ICT through stakeholder consultation workshops in 2023.

Observations:

- Despite these efforts, coordination between relevant ministries, departments and agencies involved in Skills/TVET remains scattered and weak. Coordination among relevant ministries, departments and agencies working on Skills/TVET on the implementation of the National Skills Development Action Plan is extremely poor.
- Lack of clarity of mandates and roles and overlapping mandates between NSDA, TMED and BTEB let to delays endorsing and enacting Skills Policies, and BNQF. The recent decision that NSDA will focus on short term competency-based training courses, while BTEB under TMED continues focusing on existing level long-term training seems problematic, as it does not solve the overall governance problems and the conflict of interest within NSDA (standard development, training and assessment and registration of institutes).
- NSDA as the responsible agency must step up to fulfil its mandate, however, is poorly resourced and must develop mobilizing capacities to do so. Implementation of the full scope of the findings of the institutional capacity assessments as well as the sector skills demand analysis studies will require further GoB planning and budgeting.
- NSDA felt the action plan was too ambitious and lacking operationalization strategies. Stakeholders echoed this concern and highlighted that they were not sufficiently involved and consulted and the action plan was lacking implementation clarity.¹³ Discussions with NSDA revealed that the action plan might need revision and will bring in multiple stakeholders to validate and improve the plan with concrete solutions.

D. Efficiency

This section discusses how well human and financial resources have been utilized strategically so that they led to the desired results at output and outcome level. It also addresses, to what extent the results framework was realistic for the time proposed and whether the project received enough political, technical and administrative support from its partners, technical experts.

Realistic goals, timeframe and timely delivery

The coherence section has already underscored that with a timebound projects and a short duration of 4 years, the anticipated outcomes appeared ambitious and, in many respects, unrealistic. This concern was previously acknowledged in the MTE 2019/2020 and led to project adjustments and dropping of interventions like MRA and the SWAP as a part of the review of the targets and interventions in 2020. TVET reforms and associated policies and legislation require significant time to materialize and may not fit into predefined timelines, given their dependence

¹³ See Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Gap Assessment (forthcoming).

on political support and government approvals at the highest levels. These are realities which are largely beyond the project's direct influence.

The evaluation team found that financial resources were used quite unevenly during the project period (table). This is easily explained by the fact that the project faced several delays due to the challenges highlighted earlier. Just as the project was gaining momentum, it was slowed down by the COVID pandemic, necessitating quick adjustments and responses in a completely new context. Despite these challenges and with the 3 extensions approved, the project was able to speed up project delivery from 20% at time of the Mid-term evaluation (Dec 2019), and in April 2024, spent overall 91% of the budget to achieve most of the outputs planned to a satisfactory level and beyond. 2.032,192.2 mio. Euros remained unspent as of April 2024, partly due the reprioritization during the 3rd cost extension, as resources were re-focused towards BNQF enactment and the preparation of the new EU-ILO Talent Partnership project.

While this is understandable, the evaluators suggest that some remaining resources should be allocated to harvesting, conducting

Expenditure heads	Budget	Actual Expenditure	% spent
HR costs	7,860,818.34	7,668,183.24	98%
Office Administration	514,028.00	441,601.39	86%
Programme cost	14,625,153.66	12,858,023.18	88%
Outcome 1	4,387,546.10	3,857,406.95	88%
Outcome 2	8,775,092.19	7,714,813.91	88%
Outcome 3	1,462,515.37	1,285,802.32	88%
Total	23,000,000.00	20,967,807.80	91%

Table 8: Budget spending up to April 2024

impact assessments and consolidating some interventions piloted during Skills 21. These efforts would provide empirical evidence of the project's impact and offer valuable insights for guiding government planning on how these learnings can be used in future projects and for collaboration with funding partners and development banks.

Project coordination and governance

The Skills 21 Project is closely implemented in collaboration with GoB and through the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) under TMED. Several coordination and oversight mechanisms are in place: The Project Steering Committee (PSC), chaired by the secretary of TMED, was scheduled to convene every 6 months but met less regularly than anticipated. Similarly, the Project Monitoring and Coordination Committee (PMCC), chaired by the DTE, was intended to meet quarterly but also met less often than anticipated. However, these bodies function effectively when meetings are convened. The 8th PSC meeting scheduled for May 8, 2024, too was postponed due to the lack of time available to the newly appointed TMED secretary. Governance of these steering and monitoring meetings has been heavily government-oriented, focusing on optimizing internal coordination and synergies within the TVET and skills sector. As a result, external participation has been limited to BEF and NCCWE.

Management Structure, Competences of Human Resources and Backstopping support

The evaluation team found that the programme has generally used human and financial resources well to achieve the expected results. Similar to the previous TVET reform project funded by the EU (2007-2013), the current project initially planned for 5 international staff and 11 national staff, including 1 international team leader and 1 deputy team leader, who, along with another international expert,

	Y-2017		Y-2018		Y-2019		Y-2020		Y-2021		Y-2022		Y-2023	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
International Staff	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1		2		2		2
National Staff	9	4	9	4	9	4	9	4	9	4	8	2	5	1
	16		16		16		15		15		12		8	
Women %	31 %		31 %		31 %		33 %		33 %		33 %		37 %	

Table 9: Staff composition of Skills 21 project

would act as technical advisors. Although the staff structure appeared adequate with its flat hierarchies and reporting mechanisms, given the complex and ambitious mandate ahead, 2 international positions (communication and procurement) were transitioned to national roles to enhance internal efficiency.

The composition of staff between international and national roles decreased over time, eventually settling at 2 international positions (see table). National staff numbers remained stable until 2022 but decreased afterward due to adjustments made as a result of no-cost extensions and the integration of tasks, such as communication and accounts, with the ProGRESS project following its approval by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) in 2023. The proportion of women in the project team consistently hovered around 30% throughout its duration.

Overall, it was felt that the staff was very committed, qualified, and competent in carrying out their roles. They also remained in very close contact with the government and their project partners to support them in delivering results. Initially, the team received significant support from the subregional skills specialist until 2020 (1 week per month), and subsequently, they received partial backstopping and thematic support on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion from the thematic expert at headquarters. Additionally, the team received occasional support from sub-regional enterprise and gender specialists as required.

Project Quality Assurance and Monitoring of Results

Skills 21 has a robust centralized M&E system in place, which is built on external reporting and internal learning. An activity tracker facilitated documentation of progress made during the project. The M&E system was managed by a dedicated M&E specialist who closely collaborated with field staff, VTIs and implementation partners. Regular field visits were organized together with government officials to monitor progress. An integrated Management Information system was set up to have required access to partner specific performance data, including student information on enrolment-retention, drop-out, graduation, certification, obtained from partner training institutes and other service providers. The partners started delivering reports by disaggregating data (gender, ethnicity and disability). The project intended to further strengthen the centralized data management within DTE, which was developed in joint collaboration with the World Bank, however, did not get access to the data. This is unfortunate, since the partner institutes have significantly improved data quality collection and reporting in their VTIs so that the overall system could have benefited from these newly built capacities.

The project produced quality reports discussing progress made for indicators agreed to the GoB monthly, updated PMCC every 3 months and PSC every 6 months, and the donor EUDEL yearly. The M&E ensured regular tracking and quality with locally present staff and bi-monthly team meetings were held to reflect on data evidencing progress made or challenges encountered.

Exploring the potential of a just-in-time database even at project level, leveraging available technologies would have provided immediate insights into institute performance and could have enabled policymakers, principals, or the project to better appreciate the importance of data to be able to make informed intervention adjustments. The existing project level M&E system had loads of data which were not used in a systematic way. This is unfortunate, as they could have provided deeper insights into why interventions work or do not work.

Internal knowledge exchange, knowledge management and external visibility

The Skills team held bi-monthly meetings to discuss program issues and progress. Monthly cluster meetings with other projects like ProGRESS and ISEC in Cox Bazar aim to enhance ILO internal synergies. While progress reporting is of good quality, there's room for deeper reflection whether interventions were able drive behavioural change at the outcome level. This guiding question could have helped ILO's strategic positioning and prioritising of interventions for more impact focus instead of being too caught by reporting at activity level.

With the support of ITC-Turin and to quickly adapt to COVID 19, online meeting and knowledge exchange has become a common and regular tool for exchange with all implementation partners. The project facilitated cross learning events between teachers, government officials to create learning content and materials. Similarly cross learning events were facilitated between principals to accelerate learning process. Finally, field visits and monitoring efforts regularly gathered qualitative information from teachers, principals, enterprises and other stakeholders involved to assess quality and effectiveness of interventions. Case studies were gathered to substantiate and communicate impact on beneficiaries. However, the evaluation team observed that most efforts remained qualitative, and efforts in knowledge management and in-depth analysis on effectiveness of interventions and capacity building remained quite limited. Except for 3 tracer studies (NTVQF courses and RPL), follow up studies to assess effectiveness of interventions and capacities build, have been limited. Impact assessment on Teachers and Assessors training programs have been planned for the second half of 2024 and an Outcome Harvesting (OH) Study by the ILO Country Office is planned. It is highly recommended that these studies are done, if possible, during a further extension.

Studies with control groups, as done for RPL tracer study, could have validated assumptions made during interventions, like the effectiveness of trained and certified teachers on higher quality teaching and entrepreneurship training, leading to increased employability of CBT-trained and entrepreneurship graduates. Findings from impact studies and satisfaction surveys could have fed back to guide the government in further strengthening ongoing efforts in a) upskilling teachers and principals, b) strengthening MTIs, and c) enhancing private sector engagement. Similarly, satisfaction surveys for enterprises could have shed more light on relevance and quality of training provided and whether training and certifications led to higher productivity as stated in the outcome and impact statement of Skills 21. With outcomes and impact being so ambitious, some evidence should have been established through studies.

Communication and Visibility

The Skills 21 project has put a well-designed communication strategy and action plan in place, which was transversally implemented in the project to raise TVET awareness locally and nationally and support overall visibility of TVET and the Skills 21 project. All information, education and communication materials, reports and publications are well rooted in the local context. The well-executed and cost-effective communication strategy has significantly increased the project's visibility and led to higher enrolment rates in TVET institutes. The success of the campaign led to closer collaboration with other ongoing TVET projects (ADB-World Bank-GIZ) and the requests from the government for additional technical support, while own resources were made available by the government (2 Cr Taka) for targeted and localized campaigning and national roll out (see more detailed in section good case practice).

E. Impact orientation

The impact section assesses the project's the extent to which project interventions have influenced behavioural change in partner organizations. It explores the presence of mechanisms for assessing the impact on partners' and institutions' capacities to deliver better and more accessible services. Ultimately, it highlights any positive changes in the lives of the project's ultimate beneficiaries. An outcome harvesting section highlights some initial findings of the impact earlier ILO projects and Skills 21 were able to generate on the TVET system and outcome level over the last 15 years (see Annexe).

Impact on overall goal: increased productivity and employment opportunities

Drawing conclusions about the project's impact on enhancing productivity and employment opportunities through an environmentally conscious, inclusive, and demand-driven skills development system is challenging. The objective is too broadly defined, positioning TVET and skills development as subsystems of economic, industrial, and labour market policies that must align for success. Productivity increase and enhanced employment opportunities result from various factors such as technological advancements, enterprise development, trade policies, which enable private sector development and job growth. A TVET system can contribute to addressing emerging skills gaps, however, cannot create jobs. Up-skilling can increase productivity in enterprises, but rarely without addressing modernization and upgrading.

Have interventions influenced behavioural changes in partner organisations?

The project has yet to operationalize outcome indicators and conducted a study to assess behavioural change or higher capacities which could be attributed to the project. It could be feasible to gather base line data and conduct an impact study to assess impact created through Skills 21. The evaluation team noted that the project shows high potential for positive impact, despite the absence of systematic evidence which could measure 'behavioural change'. Qualitative indications gathered from discussions suggest that many capacity-building interventions have contributed to institutional strengthening and the professionalization of staff.

- **Teacher Training and assessment L4 and L5:** has increased teachers' capabilities for CBT training modality, which is likely to be used for short term courses in day-to day practice. Similarly, trainers received training on entrepreneurship, gender equality, disability inclusion and greening of TVET, for which some trainers took on additional responsibilities. *With the given staff shortages and overburden, it is unclear whether teachers will continue assuming this role or apply teaching and learning materials in the long-term skills-based courses. Further, there is no systematic follow up by CSEs to assess application or quality of training in MTIs.*

- **Principal training and assessment L6:** indicated deeper understanding of TVET school management, HR leadership and continuous improvement. The principals interviewed are likely to continue applying QIP and newly acquired competences as part of school improvement process and push forward for more accessible (gender and ethnic minority sensitive and disability friendly) and environmental conscious TVET schools.
- **Capacity building of DTE and 2 CSEs and MTIs:** led to an increased capacities and feeling of more autonomy to deliver more demand-oriented training and after training support (counselling, linking, entrepreneurship, etc.), resulting from active IMAB, enabling multi-stakeholder and private sector engagement, QIP implementation, introduction of business incubation cell, career guidance and placement cell, employers' forum, and campaign support. Most capacities for training, assessment and RPL are for L1 and L2, and less for higher level skills, which is usually demanded by the private sector. *While improved institute, teaching and testing performance has been mentioned in many instances none of the TTIs are about to achieve CSE status. The "vision" and ultimate goal of a model institute has not been sufficiently anchored in the management of the institutes – strategic thinking is not sufficiently developed and needs to be reinforced. DTE feels that it takes more time and equipment and the assurance for staffing for CSEs and 7 MTIs to achieve CSE/MTI status.*
- **BBDN:** capacities increased through the project to engage local specialized organizations (OPDs) to represent the interests of persons with disabilities in the governance of MTIs and provide additional support during and after training. *However, barriers remain and deeper understanding of barriers for people with disabilities is required for need-based solutions offered to be more effective.*
- **BTEB:** indicated to have gained increased capacity by expanding assessment capacities for L1, L2 and increasingly L3, including L4, L5, L6 for teachers, instructors, and principals of VTIs. The CSE/MTI guidelines were adopted, systematic QIP audits undertaken for MTIs and CSEs, leading to their registration as RTOs and accredited assessment centres. The handover of the e-learning campus (IMDC) and development of e-RPL have been well appreciated interventions contributing to the capacity development of BTEB. While all these interventions have been pilot tested, it will be central that BTEB gets access to enough and rightly qualified staff and resources to continue and institutionalize these initiatives. *Further, it is crucial to evaluate and assess the impact of the pilots and monitor application before they get institutionalized.*
- **SIYB Foundation in Bangladesh:** could build and expand its capacities for trainers, resulting in 11 master trainers obtaining licenses and 70 trainers to be certified. *It is, however, crucial to assess the impact of their work on whether training institutions are able to incubate enterprises and to what extent enterprises formed can sustain after one or two years.*
- **BMET, OKUP, UCEP and selected VTIs provide RPL services and entrepreneurship training, also reaching out and delivering services to prospective and returning migrants:** they appreciated ILO's intervention to address challenges faced by prospective and returning migrants and their families, and to what extent existing migration mechanisms can extend their services to this target group. 2 migration cells were set up within public training institutes under BMET, to provide migration services, RPL services, training and entrepreneurship training were considered very effective. MTIs too offered short-term courses and services for assessment through RPL. *All the implementation partners highlighted the positive learnings from the initiative, but also indicated their challenges to reach out to returning migrants with an RPL offer or entrepreneurship training support. Existing services and training activities will continue with funds provided by the government and in the case of RPL, be financed by workers.*

Have there been any positive changes in the lives of the project's ultimate beneficiaries?

The project currently assesses impact by monitoring employment status (employed, self-employed, further training, not active) resulting from training and additional services, but this seems unclear and ambiguous. In countries with a large informal economy and limited employment prospects, self-employment typically serves as a fallback option due to the scarcity of formal employment opportunities. In that case, people are also self-employed even without skills training or certification. *To better assess impact of interventions, measuring increased income, more working days, or improved work quality and improved wellbeing should be considered.*

Tracer studies for entrepreneurship, CBT and RPL highlight that 60% of certified graduates are successfully employed and 61% self-employed (after entrepreneurship training) and benefitting from income increase. Similarly, the tracer study for RPL established a clear relationship between an RPL certification and higher income and better employment opportunities, including higher income for both men and women.

As mentioned earlier (efficiency section), short CBT courses, originally targeting marginalized, disadvantaged women and people with disabilities or returning migrants, tended to attract unemployed graduates with higher education backgrounds (74% HSC level and above), potentially crowding out the difficult to access candidates who would have needed training L1 or L2 and other services most. *The low turnout of persons with disabilities in training reflects that despite infrastructure adjustments made for people with disabilities and sensitization of teachers, barriers remain. A deeper understanding of the barriers should lead to better results.*

Similarly, the profile for RPL candidates tested did deviate from the target group earlier defined by the project. The tracer study indicates that over 40% candidates came from regular wage employment without migration background. Similarly, data and some interviews with OKUP indicated that more family members of returning migrants benefitted from training and RPL services, while most returnee migrants interviewed opted for entrepreneurship training to start their small informal business. *This confirms earlier studies published by the ILO and SDC, where returnees were not willing to continue as certified wage workers in their trade. Tracer studies suggest that returning migrant workers do not opt for these occupations due to the low salary they are getting in Bangladesh. Consequently, migrants staying in their trade opt to migrate again or start their own business, by using the saved remittances. The evaluation team suggests that more in-depth analysis is done to understand barriers and behaviours of returnees. BMET, MOEWOE and private service providers need to be guided how to more effectively reach out to returning migrants and their families with adequate services, so that they can benefit from their skills acquired abroad.*

TOR Questions related to Outcome Harvesting

The ILO country office plans an outcome harvesting study to uncover the most significant changes, both intended and unintended, within the TVET/skills development ecosystem over the last 15 years. It is expected to communicate contributions made in engendering positive changes in the skills sector in Bangladesh resulting from ILO implemented projects. Findings should inform future project and programme design and develop more impactful and sustainable partnerships with public private institutions going forward; as well as create an evidence base for supporting and influencing major policy formulation and policy decisions by the government in the skills development space. The evaluation team was asked to offer preliminary impressions as part of their inquiry. The source of information is limited to ILO's reports and discussions and does not

entail a systematic analysis of earlier projects such as TVET reform or B-SEP or other projects. These observations are briefly summarised in Annex 4.

F. Sustainability

This section answers to what extent the Skill 21 project has contributed to build stakeholders' capacities to continue efforts beyond project duration, which mechanisms were set up and whether the current policy/regulatory environment is conducive for interventions to be systematically anchored and upscaled; assess ownership of stakeholder, including the private sector to continue, govern and monitor progress of interventions. Further, whether exit strategies are in place, whether synergies ensure continuation and replication and whether funding mechanisms was made available, which could possibly finance continuation of ongoing efforts.

Contribution of Skills 21 towards building capacities and framework conditions for sustainability

The Skills 21 project results offer good prospects for a sustainable change in Bangladesh's TVET system. The graph below tries to visualize the various degrees of sustainability to be achieved to ensure long lasting change.

Table 9: Sustainability frame

Grade of Sustainability (only indicative)	L 1 Sharpen understanding commitment	L 1 Policy Strategy integration Steps taken	L 2 Piloting and test an idea/status	Additional Scope for ILO	
				L 2 Proof of Concept Operationalisation, setting up mechanism, plan for scale	System Roll Out and full institutionalization (incl. budgeting): outside ILO scope
BNQF	Understanding of Social Partners, GoB Exposures,	Endorsed BNQF NQAS Manual developed Draft legislation, guidelines	Limited to centre Not yet enacted Limited awareness	To do: Set up mechanism, enable enactment; Plan and support roll out, Private sector support	
CSE + IMDC E-portal	Government, Industry experts, Teachers, Master trainers, ICT experts	CSE guidelines, QIP audit BTEB accreditation/ L4-L6 IMDC transfer to BTEB	IMAB: Involvement of Industry experts and Teachers; e-campus	No Follow up in VTIs, Mechanism for IMDC/ training/CDP	WB-Asset, GIZ, ADB-SICIP
Quality in MTI and RTO	GoB, local gov. private sector, teachers, principals, gender & disability organizations	MTI guidelines, QIP audit,	BTEB accreditation RTO/ Assessment centre, 7 IMABs	No MTI status; IMAB to be enacted; QIP to be integrated in accreditation manual,	WB-Asset, ADB-SICIP
Career Guidance Cell/Entrepreneurship	Training of teachers/trainers, principals, employers, BEF, NCCWE, Career guidance & placement cell	Career guidance and placement cell	Career guidance/ placement and entrepreneurship cells with project resources	No impact study, No clarity about funding/HR in MTIs.	WB-Asset, ADB-SICIP
TVET outreach/ campaign	TMED, DTE, principals, local private sector, chambers	National Strategy and action plan, Participatory campaign strategy, social marketing plan,	Tested in pilot areas with employers forum/ job fairs	No impact study but good response, plan for replication, need for more support, engaging social marketing firm	Other projects
Mainstreaming GESI /environment	Training of teachers/trainers and principals, BEF/ employers, NCCWE	GESI policies & guidelines in TTTIs/VTIs;	GESI focal points: Green campus; Integration into curricula/ training materials	No impact assessment, No dedicated resources for continuation	Other projects
Local Private sector engagement	Training of teachers and principals, social partners, local chambers, employers	IMAB, Employers' forum	Business incubation centre, Empl. Forum, job fairs with BEF	Very early stage, good response from local stakeholders, needs formalization, strengthening	
RPL/e-RPL	GoB, private training providers, social partners, migration organizations,	Strengthening RPL mechanism for L1-L3, E-RPL Portal	Outreach to returnees and families, E-RPL tested	Very early stage, good response, needs impact assessment, more resources and capacity building of BTEB, BMET, VTIs, NSDA for institutionalization and QA	WB-Asset, ADB-SICIP
Governance/SWAP	Social Partners/GoB Exposures,	SWIFT Draft, NSDP and action plan support	Relevant stakeholders' engagement	Need for enactment of policies Support in multistakeholder engagement	GoB
	Webinars, Exposure Training, Policy dialogue	Technical Guidance Sharing best practice	Technical / Managerial Guidance	Facilitate consolidation, prioritization, costing	Other agencies

While this is indicative,¹⁴ the evaluation team observed that most of Skills 21's contributions have addressed first levels of sustainability (L1 dark blue and L2 middle blue) and usually do not go beyond the area marked in red for the following reasons:

¹⁴ There are three levels of sustainability generated: Dark blue areas address the foundation step for sustainability, including a strong conceptual understanding, stakeholder commitment, action planning and policy formulation/integration. Middle blue marks implementation of policies through pilot projects, building of institutional capacities to deliver, and establishing the right framework conditions, which is the basis for the light blue area to prepare a replicable proof of concept. This includes a deep understanding of the approach, costing, human and financial resources, and step-by-step documentation for monitoring. Level 3 (grey) focuses on full system uptake, large-scale rollout, and implementation, progressing toward sustainable funding sources.

1) Skills 21, like most of ILO's interventions dealt with foundational elements of sustainability, including capacity building, technical support in policy dialogue and formulation of policies, strategies, framework documents and implementation guides.

The Skills 21 project achieved a major milestone with the adoption and launch of the BNQF in 2023, following a participative process. Despite these advancements, the TVET system still struggles with fragmentation and coordination, hindering enactment and approvals of BNQF and Skills related policies and implementation plans (Table). The lack of coordination between all GoB ministries and agencies involved, development partners, private sector and other stakeholders, including workers' and employers' associations, and civil society in general, still undermines the implementation of the BNQF. NSDA is in the process of establishing itself, the endorsement of the sector wide monitoring plan and the SWIFT are positive developments. Further that NSDA is communicating the need for review of action plan through a multi-stakeholder process, is encouraging.

As the handover of the Skills 21 Project is scheduled for the end of June 2024, the continuation of ongoing policy work and creating the right framework conditions remains uncertain. Unless addressed, the overall reform process, including BNQF implementation and further expansion of CBT&A through CSE teacher training and MTI application could get affected. The ILO has been pivotal in TVET System Reforms for 15 years, yet financing for critical tasks, such as addressing governance and coordination as well as to establish enabling framework conditions for a unified TVET system remains unclear. Current ILO projects, such as ProGRESS focusing on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, and the Cox Bazar project prioritizing livelihood and emergency responses to the regional refugee crisis, only partially address policy-related work.

Table 10: Steps required to progress on sustainability

Area	Status	To do
BNQF	Endorsed and launched	Need for enactment, approval of Draft Legislation Adoption of QA Manual Awareness amongst population, workers and industries
NSDP 22	Endorsed	Published through gazette in 2023
NSDP Action Plan	Shared, awaiting approval	Need for review with multistakeholder engagement. To be published and disseminated Implementation
SWIFT	Awaiting endorsement	To be published and disseminated Implementation

2) Skills 21 piloted initiatives are integral to technical assistance projects, however, require enough time and several testing cycles and consolidation.

Most pilot projects took place within a short time span between 2019 and 2022, not allowing multiple testing rounds and refinement of the various pilot approaches. Many interventions generated positive response from implementation partners and final beneficiaries and generated expectations for continuation. The government has stepped up in several instances to mobilize finances through own GoB budgets¹⁵ or by integrating learnings into larger projects (see table below). A good example is the communication campaign which started locally and supported the effective building of a locally rooted TVET sensitization event, combined with private sector and local government initiatives. The response led to GoB to replicate the same at national level.

¹⁵ It was agreed that respective GOB offices (DTE, TMED, BMET, NSDA, MoEWOE) shall develop annual budgets and plans to ensure the consolidation and sustainability of the project results in terms of teachers training, CBT&A training of youths, replication of MTI to other TVET institutes, TVET Awareness Campaign, improvement of the database on returning migrant workers and their re-integration into the economy through skills training.

Other interventions show signs for continuation (table), which however, unless they address their mostly human resource shortages and financial requirements, are unlikely to continue. In the case of CSEs and MTIs, more clarity of their future role is required and how these institutes can sustain, have adequate equipment and human resources to be able to support other VTIs (see more details in Annex 5).

3) Project interventions have yet to be consolidated. A proof of concept is fundamental for governments to replicate and scale pilot initiatives. This includes guiding constituents to a) deeply understand the approach (e.g. what all it includes to deliver CBT&A), b) ensure that capacity building needs required for each partner are met, c) regulatory aspects are addressed, d) human resource and cost estimation is done and e) clear programme details, including steps and milestones are defined to achieve results and impact. It also requires the setting up of adequate M&E systems with well-defined measurable indicators. If the Skills 21 team is given the opportunity with an additional extension of the project, several interventions could be prepared for well-planned larger scaled implementation.

Limited Ownership from government and social partners

The project has provided extensive support to GoB to expedite approvals but the responsiveness of the GoB has been slow due a variety of other factors: Bureaucratic delays in enacting and approving key documents (such as TAPPs, extensions of projects, NSDP, BNQF approval, and SWIFT document), irregular steering and monitoring meetings (with the 8th PSC planned for May 8, 2024, recently cancelled), and limited available staff to ensure project implementation (due to staff turnover or shortages in training institutes). These factors highlight the need for stronger government ownership and prioritisation. *Continuous advocacy efforts by the Skills 21 team are required to address these bureaucratic impediments and human resource related challenges to reinforce government ownership to sustain the results achieved.*

Ownership from social partners has been relatively low due to the limited involvement in the project steering (PSC, PMCC) and capacity building, however showed promising results in the advisory boards of training institutes (IMAB). Lack of social partners' involvement beyond small consultative roles at policy level could affect the sustainability of Skills 21. *Discussions with social partners and other stakeholders highlighted the need for substantially more support and engagement to ensure more ownership from the private sector and hence contribute to sustainability of project results. This needs to be considered for later projects.*

Has not fully explored synergies and partnerships to sustain and expand initiatives

Although collaboration between Skills 21 and other projects have been reported to the evaluators, limited cooperation has been identified, the main contacts with other development partners relating primarily to the development of the BNQF, SWAP, SWIFT, NSDP Policy and Action Plan. The Skills 21 Team made several attempts to intensify collaboration with ADB or World Bank projects, however interest from the other partners remained limited. Skills21 has collaborated with existing ILO projects to optimize synergies: with the SDC funded Migration Policy implementation for decent work project¹⁶ and to a certain extent with the Canada funded ProGRESS and Canada-Netherlands funded ISEC project, since they started at the end of Skills 21.. To a certain extent ProGRESS continues to promote and built institutional capacities of Social Partners, government institutions and other stakeholders to achieve gender equality and social

¹⁶ Application of Migration Policy for Decent Work of Migrant Workers Programme Phase II.

targets by supporting the government in implementation policies and existing action plans. The close collaboration with the migration project strengthened the training/ assessment and protection link for prospective and returning migrants. Courses developed under the migration projects were used in MTIs.

However, challenges persist in establishing win-win partnerships. It is felt that for the ILO it was easier to convene and retain visibility when it chaired the Development Partners Skills Development Working Group (DP SDWG) in Bangladesh¹⁷. Throughout interviews with stakeholders and with social partners in particular, more efforts should have been made by the ILO to re-assume the facilitative and a more strategic role in the skills ecosystem with the backing from the constituents.

Exit Strategy and Sustainability Plan developed but not yet endorsed

Responding to the recommunication of the Mid Term Evaluation (2019/20) and with the inputs from a sustainability workshop in 2023, the project has devised an exit strategy and sustainability plan in collaboration with the host GoB departments (DTE/TMED) and put it forward for approval. Sustainability plans were jointly developed to support GoB annual planning and budgeting and to ensure a) continuation of achievements during the project, b) that results which require finalization and integration would be achieved by each of the GoB office involved (DTE, TMED, BMET, NSDA, MoEWOE) to be able to plan and finance follow up actions which were implemented and piloted during Skills 21 project.

G. Cross-Cutting issues (GESI, Environment, Tripartism, Standards)

Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)

The evaluation confirms that GESI was prominently integrated in project design and implementation and reporting specific progress made and by disaggregating data. Skills 21 clearly built on work done during earlier ILO implemented projects and made significant progress in gender equality mainstreaming. GESI was introduced in the NTVQF implementation manual, in teacher training materials (L4) and as VTI policies and action plans. GESI focal points were appointed in the VTIs, a pool of trained gender equality trainers was developed and representation in IMABs was ensured. To progress on disability inclusion, BBDN was engaged to support local organisations (OPDs) to support the VTIs in addressing disability inclusion more systematically. GESI responsive Entrepreneurship programmes and placement support resulted in higher placements in enterprises for internships and employment (40% female enrolment, 186 people with disabilities graduated, out of whom, 50 persons are in jobs).

Except for places like Sylhet, where local companies train women in non-traditional trades due to lack of skilled men available (migration related), women still cluster in 'typical' female training courses, including care work, tailoring, food processing. More enrolment (50% women) could be registered in computer operations and graphic design, choices which enabled them to continue higher academic studies or to be able to operate as entrepreneurs from home. *It is critical to evidence to what extent women have really been able to change their social and economic position in the labour market. An in-depth gender sensitive assessment of services is needed which potentially indicates to what extent teaching and career guidance have cemented gender stereotypes. In terms of*

¹⁷ Development Partners Skills Development Working Group (DP SDWG)

disability inclusion and ethnic minorities, VTIs and their staff lack sufficient exposure to address specific needs, resulting in access issues and enrolment falling below targets.

Women migrant workers are particularly susceptible to exploitation, forced labour and trafficking and have special needs in all three phases, pre-departure, while on migration, and on return. While private training providers like UCEP provided additional services for their trainees ready to depart, the pre-departure preparation provided by VTIs seemed very short and not sufficient. *Future projects need to consider women's specific needs and perspectives when mainstreaming gender in policies and programmes and include specific measures, which protect them at point of departure.*

GoB's challenges to reach the 20% women target in TVET Teaching and management remains. This needs to be urgently addressed in the Public Service Commission, how working conditions and incentives can encourage women to join in TVET. Without allocated human and financial resources it remains open whether efforts on GESI introduced by Skills 21 will be continued, given the current staff shortages in TVET institutes. Being focal point means an added responsibility to the already full teaching schedule in an understaffed environment.

International Labour Standards

The integration of International Labour Standards (ILS) into ILO projects, especially ILO Recommendation 195 (2004) on Human Resource Development and the Century Declaration for the Future of Work (2019), is satisfactory. The project's focus on skills development to foster school to work transition also ensures that skills development interventions are linked to employment policies. Skills 21 also addresses ILS on combatting non-discrimination and social inclusion of vulnerable groups (women, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, migrants, and returnees) and at risk of being left behind. *However, the evaluators feel that not enough work has been done on labour rights and responsibilities in training courses, which prepare trainees for the world of work and even more so for overseas employment. It was also noted that some employers are hesitant to pay for internships (in fact expect payments) and it is unclear whether graduates getting employed have formal contracts and decent work through Skills 21. More needs to be done in this area to systematically follow up on quality of work during internships and later at work.*

Green Skills

The evaluation explored the extent of integrating environmental sustainability (ILO Environmental Sustainability Policy, 2016 and ILO Strategic Frameworks),¹⁸ which mandates the ILO to progressively mainstream environmental sustainability in its results-based management frameworks, policies and programmes, DWCPs and projects. The Skills 21 project focused on mainstreaming green skills in L4 competency standards, teaching materials and curriculum design. The greening of TVET institutes saw the active implementation of institute-specific green task forces, action plans by showcasing sustainability practices such as waste management, energy efficiency, and green plantation. The institutes embraced the green culture, demonstrating self-sustainability, and a documentary highlighting these green practices was developed. According to principals, these activities are likely to continue.

Tripartism

Tripartism is integral to the ILO's governance structure with a mandate for global and national capacity building of constituents. The ILO's privileged access to tripartite partners, including in skills development, is a key feature of successful TVET systems like those in Switzerland and

¹⁸ See ILO Policy Guidelines 2020: [LINK](#)

Germany. Unfortunately, Skills 21 could not foster tripartite governance and capacity building of social partners enough. The project's control was with GoB, inviting BEF and NCCWE to meetings as needed but not to co-own the project. While Skills 21 expanded stakeholder participation in policy dialogue, it was mainly consultative. To make tripartism effective in skills system governance and implementation, systematic capacity development plans are needed for all constituents to ensure proactive and competent engagement.

Unintended Developments (positive/negative)

- **Unforeseen challenges leading to delays:** including COVID 19 pandemic and 1.5-year delay of TAPP government approval, and frequent changes within TMED and NSDA complemented the significant shortage of teaching and management staff at all levels slowed down implementation. **Despite diligent stakeholder engagement and follow-up, bureaucratic impediments persisted, necessitating a renewed focus on reinforcing government ownership.** Enacting BNQF legislation is crucial, given its significance in implementing substantial alterations and overcoming stakeholder resistance. The persistent delays in approving critical national policies like the BNQF, NSDP, and SWIFT underscore the need for strengthened government ownership and sustained advocacy efforts, alongside comprehensive sector-wide standardization and harmonization.
- The **strategic move to focus on professionalizing teaching and learning** by building capacities for future skills (L4/L5/L6 training, assessments, GESI, green skills, and e-learning) led to high potential for expanding CBT&A across the skills sector. **It is however unclear whether trained and certified teachers put their learnings into practice.** It would have been beneficial to establish a follow-up mechanism from the start to ensure that teachers in TVET institutes continue to integrate CBT&A and e-learning skills into their daily practice.
- **75% of candidates enrolled in L1/L2 or a few L3 CBT courses possessed higher qualifications but lacked relevant employability skills.** Most opted for courses unrelated to their qualifications. This type of training underutilizes their talents, which could be better developed through targeted practical and soft skills interventions. On the other hand, reaching out to school dropouts or people with disabilities proved more challenging. A deeper understanding of the target group's needs is required

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The Skills 21 project is appreciated by all stakeholders as highly **relevant** by all, addressing pressing issues faced in the TVET system in Bangladesh. The project shows high levels of **coherence**, having continued similar TVET reform projects implemented by the ILO and systematically addressing reform needs highlighted in development plans and strategies. Overall, the project was very ambitious for the time span available and the log frame and formulation of outcome and output indicators showed weaknesses. The project would have benefited from a more realistic Theory of Change and an overarching results chain with well-defined indicators, which could have highlighted causal effects and could have better communicated higher level impact.

Effectiveness: The project faced several challenges, which slowed down progress; however, by the end, it is considered effective in achieving outcome and output targets, since it made good progress at policy, quality and teacher training delivery level by achieving significant milestones policy level (endorsement of BNQF, NSDP 2022 and action plan), professionalizing and enhancing capacities of CSEs with state of the art competency based training and assessment training at

L4/L5/L6 and accelerating digitalization of teaching and learning. Progress has been made through institutional development to prepare TTTC and VTTI to become Centres of Excellence and 7 TSCs, TTCs and Polytechnics to become Model Training institutes. With IMABs guiding the institutes on strategic matters, financing, quality improvement, access and inclusion and greening, they increasingly reach out to the private sector and local community with visible success: more enrolment, more placement, more awareness. The project further supported GoB to address governance issues, built capacities of officials in budgeting and governance and skills anticipation. It also facilitated the formation of the national steering committee (NSC) and technical working groups to strengthen the TMED/MoE capacities to steer the systematic multistakeholder engagement process for the development of the BNQF. It also provided the knowledge base and various options for the government to take informed decisions towards strengthening the governance and coordination mechanism.

Efficiency: The programme overall delivered good value for money and was efficiently managed. It benefitted from the multiple time extensions and hence could ensure budget spending according to plan, reaching 91% use of resources by 2024. The Skills 21 Project was closely implemented in collaboration with GoB and used the government steering and coordination mechanism. Involvement of social partners and other important stakeholders was relatively low, which might have affected impact of the project. Skills 21 had a robust centralized M&E system in place, which was built on external reporting and internal learning and supported by regular backstopping and field monitoring. An activity tracker was used which made reporting and communication within the team and with the steering and monitoring committee easy. The project benefitted from a strong communication strategy increasing effectiveness of interventions at policy and local levels. More could have been done in knowledge management, impact assessments and systematic documentation of interventions.

Impact: Overall, Skills 21 has created impact, demonstrating higher capacities and ownership of partners in addressing skills policy and implementation challenges; and better labour market outcomes for trained and certified graduates. However, aside from three impact studies on impact created through CBT, entrepreneurship, and RPL on employment status and income of end beneficiaries, the project has not systematically assessed the impact on 'higher capacities and ownership.' Additionally, the project has not documented the extent to which increased capacities have led to changes in daily practices and behaviour. There is a need for systematic impact assessment with clearer conceptual frameworks and more robust data collection and tracking systems.

The ILO is recognized as a lead agency capable of mobilizing the private sector and workers, thus can leverage multistakeholder engagement in TVET system reforms. However, its effectiveness during the project was limited. Despite the growing interest from social partners, capacity building and proactive involvement were insufficient. The GoB's stance on limiting external participation has affected the private sector and other stakeholders' willingness to engage, potentially reducing chances of faster expansion of CBT&A through public private partnerships or private sector funding. The ILO must sharpen and position its unique role as a technical and facilitating agency, which is distinct from other international partners and mobilize workers, employers, and other stakeholders so that more actors can engage in expanding the TVET ecosystem.

Sustainability: The project achieved several milestones within the TVET reform process, which provide a good foundation for sustainability. However, GoB and other stakeholders highlighted that continued technical support is needed to advance institutional mechanisms and capacities so that interventions are institutionalised and scaled. The GoB plans to continue several interventions by either using own funds or integrate learnings in large scale projects (ADB, World bank, GIZ) to ensure institutionalization and larger roll out. It is crucial that the ILO consolidates and documents learnings from the Skills 21 project experiences so that ‘know how to do’ and proof of concept are used as a foundation for operationalization, replication and scale.

TVET system reforms take decades, as international experience shows. The project’s remaining tasks include BNQF enactment, establishing the legal basis and mechanism for BNQF rollout, and getting the SWIFT document endorsed to address governance and coordination challenges. These mechanisms need urgent attention to prevent policy implementation and BNQF rollout from stalling. The TVET system in Bangladesh is at a turning point, with social partners and key TVET stakeholders keen to participate. Local training provision in MTIs shows promising results if given flexibility and adequate resources for greater autonomy. While the government must provide an enabling environment for TVET, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility, it is crucial to start sharing control over funding and implementation with key partners. Bangladesh’s system has a dynamic private sector and a large pool of private training providers currently operating mostly outside the formal training system. Mobilizing these to ensure training and labour market integration meet standards will require buy-in and a shared vision.

It is felt that the team’s stakeholder engagement and high-level advocacy efforts directed at MOE and NSDA and the prime minister’s office over the years were significant. With all the contribution made through the project it is up to the GoB and other stakeholders take full ownership and decide the pace of continuation based on country priorities set, and resources and capacities available. This decision is beyond the scope of the project.

Finally, ILO’s transversal themes were incorporated into project design and reflected in the implementation of interventions and reporting. Specific GESI and greening TVET guided interventions were observed and show promising results for institutionalization at TVET centre institutional level as well as in training and learning materials. While progress was made, there is a lack of systematic follow up regarding progress made towards mainstreaming of these themes as part of institutionalization. Data indicate that the project did not fully address access and inclusion at TTI and MTI levels for people with disabilities, less educated women and ethnic minorities and returning migrants. A more systematic approach is needed for mainstreaming, underpinned by adequate human resources. Less explicit focus was given to strengthening tripartism as mentioned earlier.

V. LESSONS LEARNT AND EMERGING GOOD CASE PRACTICES

A. Lessons Learnt

- **Long-term engagement and financing are essential for sustained reform process:** ILO’s strong presence supporting Bangladesh’s TVET reform process is well acknowledged, resulting from systematic technical support and capacity building of ILO’s constituents, government agencies, the business sector and private implementation partners over several years. Strong and trustworthy partnerships with Canada and the EU and their commitment towards system reform

have been instrumental in this success. Such collaboration is crucial for achieving quality outputs and ensuring the sustainability of this long-term process, which spans several decades.

- **Time bound projects require realistic objectives, strong results chains and well-defined indicators measuring outputs but also results and impact.** Potential risks and mitigation measures should be included. Log frames should reflect intervention strategies how they (e.g. 'establishing MTIs/CSEs' or 'developing mechanisms') get operationalized, which includes resourcing and monitoring. This ensures that at the end of the project, agreed milestones are achieved and continuation is ensured. Full operationalization calls for long term and strong monitoring and follow up by multiple stakeholders, including the government, implementing agency, donors and tripartite plus partners.
- **The Skills 21 project, unlike the earlier Skills Reform project and B-SEP, did not make optimal use of its tripartite platform to foster private sector engagement.** This is unfortunate. The lack of strong social partner involvement and limited collaboration with the private sector, including private training institutes might have limited learning and exchange of experiences and contributed to the slowdown of the expansion process of CBT&A through the project. Despite these limitations, as mentioned earlier, the project encouraged social partners and private sector in a variety of initiatives incl. policy development, BNQF, IMAB and local initiatives.
- **CBT&A modality shows high impact on employability yet does not expand as expected. Both students and enterprises emphasized the need for higher-level skills at L3/L4 and longer duration for internships.** L1/L2 seems not to be sufficient for long term employability, since industry demands at least L3/L4 qualifications to meet skills needs. Today, most RTOs and assessment centres have capacities to provide training and trade assessments for L1/L2, or at most L3; and this with limited capacities. The private sector is willing to collaborate in design, provision of industry trainers and assessors and might also contribute financially for the development of higher-level skills. Content, length, and modalities of CBT&A L1 and L2 need to be reviewed and higher-level competencies developed. By engaging the private sector where they are willing to engage can accelerate CBT&A expansion.

B. Emerging Good Case Practices

- **TVET Communication and Campaign:** The project collaborated with government agencies and local TVET institutes for a successful campaign launched in 2022. Expanded in 2023, it reached more TVET institutes and the local community with targeted messaging and by partnering with development organizations, BEF and through the Employers' Forum. The campaign's success led to increased government resources for broader awareness efforts. Since 2024, the project has been providing technical support for sustainable TVET campaigns, with ongoing publication and dissemination efforts. If this GoB commitment and funding is sustained, it is expected that awareness and enrolment will increase and potentially lead to higher TVET enrolment rates.
- **Local initiatives show promising results for better labour market outcomes,** more engagement with the private sector as advisors (IMAB), trainers (L4 instructors and assessors), and potential employers for internships and work. Offering VTIs as space for career guidance/placement, business incubation, training and upskilling as well as one-stop shop for migration and return has led to more dynamism in the VTIs, where facilities start to be used by the private sector and awareness is increased in over time. The limited awareness among local industries emphasizes the importance of continuous engagement with local industry. Mobilizing IMABs and Employer's forums to organize events and meetings by supporting BEF in outreach has been the Project's key strategy. These efforts strengthened partnerships between TVET institutes and local

industries, associations and the business community, fostering awareness about the project interventions and promoting collaboration. Aspects like more autonomy of VTIs to generate additional funds to use the resources for customised training and service provision for a broader population base need to be addressed. More time is required to strengthen these efforts, formalization and capacity building of IMAB and Employer's forum so that VTIs delivering more contextualised and relevant training and remain connected with the labour market.

- ***Continued multistakeholder process to develop BNQF through a well-planned and inclusive approach, facilitated by a single coordination body (National Steering Committee) and supported by technical working groups, increased visibility, capacities and ownership of stakeholders to take BNQF forward towards building a harmonized qualification system.***

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following seven recommendations offer practical guidance to sustain the progress initiated by Skills 21, considering the current political landscape and challenges within Bangladesh TVET system. One recommendation highlights how the EU-ILO Talent Partnership project could leverage the achievements and lessons learned from the Skills 21 and the Migration Policy Implementation for Decent Work Project, which ended in 2022.

Recommendation 1: The ILO, as the lead agency for TVET system reform in Bangladesh should leverage its convening power to unite social partners and stakeholders, reinforcing their roles in the reform process. To maintain its leadership, the ILO must sustain high-level efforts and secure follow-up funding to support GoB in prioritisation, governance and coordination efforts.

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
ILO Skills 21/CO Dhaka	Very High	Long term	Low

The ILO should not act as an implementing agency but use its unique capacity to mobilize constituents and actors. Currently, GoB treats the ILO as an implementing agency, however, also values its technical contribution. The ILO should negotiate its role with the GoB to be a technical and facilitating agency, to support the government in multistakeholder engagement and in a technical advisory role at TVET sector level (including Development Partner Skills Development Working Group, etc.). The ILO could help solve Skills Governance and Coordination challenges supporting GoB in the implementation of the SWIFT. Similarly, ILO can facilitate prioritization of initiatives, help negotiation on additional financing with other departments (see NHRDF) and provide strategic advice and monitoring support across the sector for better coordination and implementation of loan and grant financed projects.

ILO needs to continue advocacy work for BNQF enactment and policy dialogue and implementation. Similarly, ILO can facilitate review of NSDP action plan in close collaboration with stakeholders for more clarity on delivery, approaches and coordination. ILO can continue its support to NSDA to strengthen sector performance and monitoring system by consolidating existing MIS, and developing just-in time management system. Finally, ILO can bring forward private sector and social partners and negotiate closer collaboration.

Recommendation 2: Capitalise learnings, sharpen intervention clarity and consolidate approaches to support GoB preparing for larger scale replication of Skills 21 interventions.

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
CO Dhaka/HQ Skills branch/SRO Specialist	Very high	Short term	Middle

Capturing evidence of promising interventions and documenting lessons learned for dissemination before replication is critical at this point. Thoroughly examine both strengths and weaknesses and assess the effectiveness of project's initiatives and under which conditions they might continue. Clarity about target groups and their needs and how responses are delivered and institutionalized is the key. This fosters a deeper understanding of interventions and allows for refinement to enhance outcomes in future endeavours. The Skills 21 project extensions from 2022-23 and 2023-24 highlighted plans for such studies; however, most are yet to be realised:

- Three (3) tracer studies assessing impact of CBT&A and RPL on employment/self-employment and income: finished.

- Lessons learnt on business incubation centres and shared with DTE/BMET and partner TVET institutes for scaling up.
- Migration cell best practices were to be documented for BMET to adopt. It also included guidelines for operationalization of migration cells in the institutes.
- Good practices of IMAB and employers' forum and operational guidelines to be shared with DTE and TMED to ensure continuation.
- Early signs of impact assessment on EDT programme be documented and lessons learning be shared with DTE/BMET. Linkages between DTE/BMET and SIYB foundation for continued capacity building of the institutes for EDT programmes was to be explored.

Interventions need to be consolidated and proof of concepts developed. Latter include clarity to approach and target group needs, stepwise implementation plan and monitoring framework, and information detailing required time, human resources and funding requirements. Proof of concepts can guide the government in planning, financing and replication/roll-out.

Some of the priority areas to consolidate for larger scale replication could include:

- Deeper understanding about strategic approach how to achieve status for CSEs, MTIs, including legal and operational clarity about their future roles as capacity building institutions. Financial, staffing and legal bottlenecks are to be addressed. Their financial sustainability is to be explored. Consolidation of this intervention will require additional funding, strategic long-term vision and phased implementation.
- CBT&A Teacher Training, IMDC platform use and expansion of effort by addressing quality assurance and bottlenecks of funding and staffing, is required. Mandating training and use of e-platform by introducing career development plans (CPDs) is required for institutionalisation within DTE.
- Learning from international experiences, challenges faced by institutions and candidates with RPL and e-platform performance (usability and accessibility) need to be assessed and finally vetted with the private sector.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen tripartism within the skills development space: this is the core competence and mandate of ILO as stated in the DWCP

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
CO Dhaka/ SRO Specialist	High	Short term	Middle

Currently, social dialogue within the TVET sector is marginal and narrowly defined, highlighting a crucial gap in effective multistakeholder governance within the TVET ecosystem. With ILO's mandate to promote tripartism, it is imperative to enhance awareness about benefits of tripartism and multistakeholder engagement in TVET governance by sharing best practices and encouraging active involvement of employers and workers in planning, decision-making and monitoring processes. This can be achieved by developing tailored strategies and capacity-building roadmaps for all, including BEF, NCCWE and GoB partners.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen private sector engagement/trade unions as a priority across all levels in TVET system

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
CO Dhaka/HQ Skills branch/SRO Specialist	High	Immediate	Middle

- **BEF seeks a strategy for private sector engagement** in TVET reforms at all levels and stages, including policy design, implementation, financing, and monitoring.
- **Strengthen ISCs** to assume its role for anticipation of skills needs, standard development, training and assessments and in mobilisation capacities.
- Emphasize PPP and foster collaboration with ISCs, which are essential strategies for facilitating industry participation in TVET initiatives. Furthermore, consolidating insights gained from IMAB's, MTI's engagement with the private sector, the experience of business incubation centres are critical steps towards aligning TVET programs with industry requirements.
- **Capture and disseminate lessons learned from private sector** linkage efforts with VTIs during Skills 21 can inform future collaboration plans.
- **Document and share experiences of private sector trainers serving as trainers in TTTIs and VTIs** can enrich teaching and assessment quality, training delivery and curriculum development.
- Developing **incentive systems to encourage private sector involvement** in internships, apprenticeships, and workplace-based training, RPL, and overall TVET programs is essential for fostering sustained engagement and addressing skill gaps effectively.

Recommendation 5: ILO should continue to support GoB's capacities to systematically expand CBT&A vertically and horizontally (incl RPL) by using a system perspective

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
CO Dhaka/HQ Skills branch/SRO Specialist	High	Immediate	High

Sharpen conceptual focus to deliver need-based training and assessment responses

Strategic clarity can significantly enhance expansion of competency-based training and assessment within the Skills and TVET system. GoB is mandated to establish framework conditions across all potential levels of the TVET system. Engaging the private sector, particularly at Levels 1 and 2 (L1-L2), may pose challenges. A differentiated approach for higher-level skills and competencies, where the private sector signals readiness to invest and address skills shortages, is essential. Firms address skills gaps in manufacturing by importing expensive foreign experts or by investing into on-the-job training. Actively negotiating with specific industries for apprenticeships (L4/L5) or workplace-based training solutions, particularly to support job-seeking unemployed graduates, holds significant potential and should be pursued as Public-Private Partnerships (PPP).

On the other hand, current capacities for CBT&A and RPL in Bangladesh primarily focus on lower entry levels (L1 and L2, see table). These serve as important entry points for vulnerable candidates seeking formalization informally acquired skills to enter higher-level training.

These labour market insertion programs require government or CSR funding since they may not directly meet private sector skill demands. Nevertheless, they play a pivotal role to engage low skilled workers in the process of lifelong learning.

To rapidly expand TVET programs in alignment with industry demands, **collaborative efforts such as extended CBT courses and dualization** at advanced levels, and longer internships or attachments for shorter courses is vital.

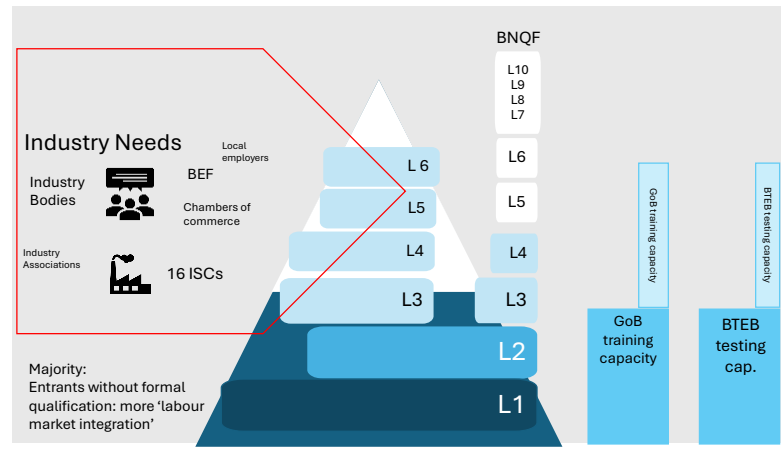


Figure 4: Skills needs and potential private sector responses

Promote economic benefits (ROI) of CBT and apprenticeships at higher skill levels is crucial for gaining private sector support and acceptance of certificates. Involving private sector instructors/trainers and assessors will facilitate closer alignment between academia and industry, fostering collaboration and sustainability in TVET programs.

Additionally, promoting the further expansion of existing green occupations, developed under the B-SEP initiative (such as waste collection & segregation, compost production, organic vegetables production, mushroom cultivation, and eco-tour guiding), offers a unique opportunity to address emerging skill needs in Bangladesh's evolving labourmarket landscape.

Continue strengthening the supply side of the TVET system

- **Technical support is essential to support GoB in operationalizing process for VTIs towards achieving MTI status.** This entails costing and planning processes with pre-defined milestones to streamline the transition smoothly. Exploring funding opportunities from the **National Human Resources Development Fund (NHRDF)** could ensure the continuity of activities aimed at enhancing VTIs, ensuring that they achieve MTI status to support other VTIs to meet the evolving needs of industries and job markets.
- **Additionally, targeted responses are imperative to address existing gaps in CBT&A and workplace-based training.** Longer structured internships can bridge these skill gaps, aligning training programs more closely with industry demands and ensuring graduates are equipped with the necessary skills to succeed in the workplace.
- **Integration of competency-based teaching and assessment, QIP, greening practices, gender and disability inclusion policies into implementation guides for RTO and Assessment Center status** is crucial to institutionalize Skills21 experiences. This integration should be closely linked to audits conducted by the BTEB, ensuring compliance with established standards and a culture for continuous improvement in training delivery.
- **Moreover, institutionalizing Teacher Training at higher levels (L4/L5/L6), along with the implementation of CPD and QA mechanisms** within TTTIs and VTIs, is paramount. These measures will not only enhance the competence and effectiveness of educators but also ensure that training programs remain relevant and responsive to industry needs.

- **Intensify trainer and assessor training with a focus on enrolling industry experts at higher levels (L4/L5/L6)** to address the evolving skill demands across various sectors. Funding of positions in all the TTIs and VTIs needs to be ensured.
- **Establish mechanism for IMDC and create a comprehensive database for certified trainers and assessors under the oversight of BTEB** are critical steps to further strengthen quality assurance and accountability in TVET programs.

Recommendation 6: Address Gender and Social Inclusion and Environmental Practices systematically and integrate indicators into the performance matrix

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
Dhaka Team with thematic experts	High	Mid-term	Middle

- Up to now mainstreaming transversal were addressed through sensitisation of partner organisations, training staff and introducing policies in TVET institutes. **It requires not treating GESI as an add-on but rather as an integral part of design, implementation, reporting and M&E practice. It requires a change of culture and practice in the organisation.**
- **Multiple barriers must be considered** when designing and implementing projects.
- **Resources need to be put aside to ensure** that evidence is provided through monitoring of results and assessment of impact on ultimate beneficiaries. Indicators should be developed as part of reporting the performance matrix.
- **Low level of involvement of social partners needs to be addressed separately as part of strengthening capacities.** This requires additionally earmarked resources, with clearly defined milestones and monitoring efforts, which at this point of time have not been made available.
- **Similar institutionalisation is required for greening TVET.**

Recommendation 7: Address Talent Partnership by matching skills needs from destination countries with trained and certified workers, by collaborating with employers' and workers' organisations

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of Resources
CO Dhaka/HQ Skills branch/SRO Specialist	High	Mid-term	Middle

The ILO should maintain its advisory function as a technical agency, which collaborates independently with diverse stakeholders. The project therefore should be situated outside the MoEWOE premises. Leveraging the power of tripartism, by engaging NCCWE and other workers organisations and BEF and other employers, is essential in effectively addressing the complexities of skilled and certified circular migration. Mobilizing and organizing migrant workers is key to safeguard their rights and well-being throughout the migration cycle at country of destination and source. Likewise, recognizing employers as potential employers for returning workers is crucial for creating sustainable migration pathways.

- Focus on **circular migration, with specific attention given to the unique needs of each target group, especially semi-skilled women throughout the process.** Learn from practices and projects within Bangladesh and abroad (Korea, the Philippines and India) for valuable insights about migration process, risks, organizing and legal aspects.
- **Prioritize skills development and certification** for the Talent Partnership defined by its scope is paramount. Strengthen ongoing efforts within institutions such as MoEWOE, BMET, TTCs/DTE

TSCs, NSDA, and BTEB. Enhance quality assurance and build capacities within BTEB and NSDA for assessment through RPL, especially at higher levels (L3/4/5).

- **Continue efforts to streamline skills certification, administration, protection, and organizational needs both domestically and internationally** for seamless and customer-focused mechanism. Support BMET, MoEWOE, and VTIs in delivering need-based skills training for L3/L4, with a strong emphasis on migration-focused soft skills, legal support. Training and sensitizing implementation partners and registered recruitment agencies abroad and in Bangladesh on legal, contractual, banking and cultural aspects specific to each target group are vital for ensuring the protection and well-being of migrant workers.
- **Organize migrant workers at both source and destination** with support from entities such as the NCCWE, CBOs and embassies is critical for fostering a supportive environment. Establishing and financing local focal points for legal and other support services is necessary to provide assistance to migrant workers throughout their journey. Anticipate needs of returnees in a systematic manner for effective support mechanisms upon their return. This could include facilitation of saving groups, while abroad so that when they return they have access to finances to start their own business (learning from Philippines and other countries).
- **Address GESI needs to respond to the specific vulnerabilities** faced by women as workers and professionals abroad. Both local and international partners should be sensitized to cultural/religious nuances and the unique requirements of women migrant workers. Identify and remove potential barriers and prejudices within partner organizations and recruitment agencies that may hinder women's migration opportunities. Additionally, women should be provided with necessary support measures, such as contact points and legal protection, to ensure their safe and equitable migration experiences.
- Learning from Skills21, **the needs of returning migrants need to be better understood and provisions need to be made to address their requirements** in a holistic way (e.g. why do they opt for entrepreneurship and less for RPL. And if they opt for entrepreneurship, address loan and access to micro finance).
- **Build the capacities of partners for quality assurance**, monitoring, and evaluation (M&E), and reporting is crucial for ensuring the success and sustainability of migration initiatives.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ILO Internal Evaluation Guides

- [ILO Evaluation Guidelines and Support Guidance Documentation](#)
- [ILO Policy Guidelines for results-based evaluation, 2020](#)
- [Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO: Practical tips on adapting to the situation](#)
- [SDG related materials](#)
- [Code of conduct for evaluation/ Code of conduct form \(Signed by the evaluators\)](#)
- ILO EVAL Gender [Guidance Note 3.1 on integrating gender equality and non-discrimination](#)
- ILO EVAL Social Dialogue [Guidance Note 3.2 on Integrating social dialogue and ILS in monitoring and evaluation of projects](#)

Other information: Reports, links

- Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for Bangladesh
- [ILO-GoB \(2017\): Project Document \(with Annexes\), 2017; Dhaka](#)
- Activity tracker
- Semester and Annual Reports Skills 21
- Logical Framework (original and revised versions 2022/23)
- Skills 21 Inception Report
- M&E documents (guidelines, Results Framework)
- Minutes of Meetings of PMCC and (PSC)
- Technical Assistance Project Proforma/ Proposal (TAPP) for Skills 21 Project
- Revised Technical Assistance Project Proforma/ Proposal (RTAPP) for Skills 21 Project
- ROM Report Follow-up Action Plan EU (2019)

EU Strategic documents: EU-GoB Cooperation Agreement, EU-ILO agreements

Annexes

1. Terms of References (ToR)
2. Interview Question Matrix
3. Recommendations (Mid-term Evaluation, 2019/20)
4. Outcome Harvesting Table
5. Some promising examples which indicate steps towards sustainability
6. Lessons Learnt and Emerging Good Case Practices
7. List of people interviewed/ participating in FGDs, and participants of Validation Workshop
8. Overview of KPIs
9. List of communication materials (hyperlinks made)
10. List of Tools, Implementation Guides, Publications under Skills 21
11. List of projects currently implemented in Bangladesh (Source NSDA-EU List of projects)

Annex-1: Terms of references for the Final Evaluation of: Skills 21 Project – Empowering citizens for inclusive and sustainable growth



Post Title	Team Leader for the Final Independent Evaluation of the ILO Skills 21 Project in Bangladesh and Team member (Bangladeshi national consultant)
Project location	Bangladesh
Application deadline	25th March 2024
Type of contract	External Collaboration (EXCOLL) Contract
Expected duration	08 April 2024 to 06 June 2024 (in which a field mission will take place between 20 April to 2 May 2024)
Contract Supervisor	Evaluation Manager
Languages required	Proficiency in written and spoken English and for national consultant – also local language

The ILO is seeking expressions of interest for a qualified **Evaluation Team Leader and Bangladeshi national team member** to undertake a final independent evaluation of the Skills 21 project – Empowering Citizens for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth funded by the European Union (EU). More information is in the ToR¹.

Candidates/teams intending to submit an expression of interest must supply the following information:

- 1) A description of how the candidates' skills, qualifications, and experience are relevant to the required qualifications of this assignment (See Pages 18 to 19 in the TOR).
- 2) A list of previous evaluations/work relevant to the context and subject matter of this assignment.
- 3) A statement confirming the availability of the candidates to conduct this assignment and the daily professional fees expressed in US dollars.
- 4) A copy of the candidates' CVs (which must include information about the qualifications held by the candidates) and the name and contact address of at least two references.
- 5) A statement confirming that the candidates had no previous involvement in the delivery of the Skills 21 project – Empowering Citizens for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

Please indicate the position you are applying to. Please note that special consideration will be given to applications from a team of consultants as opposed to individual applicants.

The **deadline to submit an expression of interest** for undertaking the evaluation is 5:00 pm Bangkok time, **25th March 2024**. Please send an e-mail with the subject header: Final Independent Evaluation of the Skills 21 project – Team Leader or Team member to the Evaluation Manager, **Tauvik Muhamad**, E-mail: tauvik@ilo.org and a copy to **Ms. Pamornrat Pringsulaka**, E-mail: pamornrat@ilo.org

Terms of Reference

Final Independent Evaluation of Skills 21 project – *Empowering Citizens for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth*

1. Key facts

Title of project being evaluated	Skills 21 project – Empowering citizens for inclusive and sustainable growth
Project DC Code	BGD/16/04/EUR
Type of evaluation	Independent
Timing of evaluation	Final
Donor	European Union (EU)
Project timeframe and duration (months)	January 2017- 30 June 2024
Administrative Unit in the ILO responsible for administrating the project	ILO Country Office for Bangladesh (CO-Dhaka)
Technical Unit(s) in the ILO responsible for backstopping the project	SKILLS, DWT New Delhi & ROAP (various specialists for skills, labour migration, gender, green jobs, enterprise etc.)
P&B outcome (s) under evaluation	P&B Outcome 3: Full and productive employment for Just Transitions (3.1 to 3.5) Priority 1 – Inclusive and sustainable economic development and decent work creation
SDG(s) under evaluation	SDGs Goal 4: Provide quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all. SDGs Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
Project Budget	Total EUR 24.00 million <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22.50 million from EU (including 3 million Euro top-up) • million from GoB (in-kind) • 0.50 million from ILO
Evaluation timing	April to 30 June 2024
Evaluation manager	Tauvik Muhamad , Resilient, Inclusive and Responsible Supply Chains (RISSC) Project Coordinator, ILO CO for Indonesia and Timor Leste

2. Introduction

This Terms of Reference concerns a final independent evaluation of Skills 21 project, which is planned between April to June 2024. The independent evaluation of the project should be conducted as systematically and impartially as possible to examine the extent to which the project's outcomes were achieved. The final evaluation will be managed by an independent certified ILO Evaluation Manager, who has no previous involvement with the Skills 21 project and it will be conducted by a team of independent evaluators.

The evaluation will address the evaluation's objectives that address the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria including relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the programme, and ILO evaluation criteria and concerns, including gender equality and non-discrimination, promotion of international labour standards and social dialogue. The evaluation will provide strategic recommendations, lessons learned for future projects of similar objectives.

The evaluation should apply theory-based approach and employ multiple and mixed methods

– both qualitative and quantitative. Given the wealth of M&E data and M&E products produced by the Programme, desk review of the Programme documents, Programme data and other secondary data will constitute the main study method. The evaluation team will propose possible methods to gather evidence and verify the findings from

secondary sources. The evaluator will determine appropriate research methods, considering the situation on the ground during the actual timing of the evaluation. These will be done in close consultation with the evaluation manager and the ILO team.

The evaluation complies with the United Nations Evaluation Guidelines (UNEG) Norms and Standards, ILO policy guidelines (4th edition). Key stakeholders, including the donor, ILO- Dhaka Office, and ILO technical backstopping unit, will be consulted throughout the evaluation process.

3. Background of the project

3.1. Overview of the project

Bangladesh has undergone significant development in the past decade. Various statistics reflect considerable progress, indicating a transition from a lower to a middle-income country, as outlined in Bangladesh's 7th National Development Plan, which emphasizes the need for rapid economic growth.

However, sustaining this increased economic growth requires the creation of more jobs, with a particular focus on enhancing the employability of workers, especially women, through support for vocational education and training.

To enhance employability and leverage demographic advantages, approximately four million people need to be trained annually in Bangladesh. This training target encompasses two million young people entering the labour market each year and two million individuals undergoing advanced skilling and upskilling initiatives within the job market.

Skills development emerges as a significant challenge in the economic development of Bangladesh. Skilling and upskilling many new entrants and workers in the labour market are crucial for enhancing labour productivity and facilitating industrialization, trade, and economic growth.

Given the importance of labour migration in the Bangladesh economy, the project aims to create adequate opportunities and integrate a migration focus into the skills development system. It also aims to assist in implementing policies for skilling and reintegrating migrant workers returning from destination countries, as well as those aspiring to migrate legally with the skills needed in those countries.

Addressing skill development challenges faced by Indigenous and other groups, particularly in areas affected by climate change such as the Chittagong Hill Tracts, is part of the project's targets.

The Skills 21 – Empowering Citizens for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth project, funded by the EU, builds upon the success of previous EU-funded projects focused on establishing a new system for skills development in Bangladesh, including reforms in the formal TVET system. While the project contributed to developing the National Skills Development System, further strengthening is required.

The current EU-funded SKILLS 21 project aims to evaluate and further strengthen the NSDS by continuing to reform the system and develop the National Qualification Framework (NQF).

The overall objective of the SKILLS 21 Project is to increase productivity and improve employment opportunities through an environmentally friendly, inclusive, demand-driven, and interconnected skills development system that responds to the needs of the labour market.

The project has three major and interrelated outcomes, including (1) improved quality of the TVET/skills development system, (2) improved access to and equity within the TVET/skills development system through model institutions, and (3) an enabled environment through improved governance and management of the TVET/skills development system.

Project Outcomes

Outcome 1 (one) of improved quality TVET/ skills development system, the project will contribute to improving the quality of the TVET infrastructure, textbooks, learning materials and teaching, in addition to linking skills development and the labour market, and between skills and TVET competencies.

This covers three (3) outputs:

Improving the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

Expanding the delivery of Competency Based Training and Assessment (CBT/A), and

Making available better quality learning programmes and materials.

Outcome 2 (two) of improved access to and equity within the TVET/ skills development system through TVET model institutions. This outcome is set to address significant challenges of dropouts and low participation of girls and young women in TVET, in addition to occupational gender bias. The outcome covers two outputs:

Seven existing TVET institutions of model institutions for inclusive, environmentally conscious, quality and labour market responsive skills development, holding the RTO designation and performing as BTEB assessment centres.

Seven inclusive Model TVET institutions serving as benchmarks for industry driven, inclusive and environmentally conscious institution-level governance and management.

Outcome 3 (three) of enabled environment through improved governance and management of the TVET/ skills development system.

This outcome aims to enhance the governance and management of TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) by improving independence, accountability mechanisms, coordination of TVET with relevant ministries responsible for education and skills development, and its capacity to align with the local labourmarket while focusing on training quality. This will contribute to supporting mechanisms leading to the development of SWAP (Sector Wide Approaches) and expanding the underlying institutional framework, as well as developing the related critical capacities of TVET. It underscores commitment to gender equality, inclusion of persons with disabilities, and the necessity to develop recognized competencies, training, and qualifications in fields essential to the growth of the green economy in Bangladesh.

Two outputs under Outcome-3 as below:

The mechanism and elements for a SWAP in the TVET/ skills development sector are developed.

Increased capacity within the key TVET/ skills development institutions and bodies for the dialogue, implementation, monitoring and reviewing of TVET/ Skills Development Policies.

It is important to note that a mid-term independent evaluation of this project was conducted in November 2019. This evaluation provided a thorough assessment of the project's progress and effectiveness. The main findings and recommendations from this mid-term evaluation can be found in Annex 1.

3.2. Project alignment with the DWCP, CPO and SDG

Link to DWCP and CPO:

This project contributes to the achievement of Priority 1 (one) of the DWCP for 2022-2026 generating productive employment with improved sustainable enterprises and skills development.

The project closely aligns with the Country Programme Priorities (BD 101) for policies & programmes to promote full, productive & decent employment through skills development reforms for employability and livelihoods. Under this CPO, the project aims to achieve two indicators: (1) Development and operationalization of a national skills development policy action plan, and (2) Alignment of the Government's TVET system with the recommendations of the ILO Project, including the National Strategy for the promotion of gender equality in TVET.

This project is intended to contribute to significantly and directly three of ILO's cross-cutting policy drivers: international labour standards, social dialogue, and gender equality and non-discrimination. Furthermore, it supports a just transition to environmental sustainability through targeted actions. Synergies and complementarities with other active ILO projects and specific links to SDG targets and indicators:

While the project is primarily rooted in SDG 4 of Quality Education and Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All, and SDG 8 of Promoting Sustained, Inclusive, and Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment, and Decent Work for All, strong linkages will be established with other SDG targets/indicators. This is consistent with the DWCP 2022-2026, particularly Country Priority 1, which focuses on Generating Productive Employment with Improved Sustainable Enterprises and Skills Development. This priority is linked to skills and employability indicators (SDG targets 8.2, 8.5, 8.6) and analytical studies related to skills and employment.

3.3. Project management

The project is to be implemented through the ILO Country Office for Bangladesh in Dhaka and managed by the Chief Technical Advisor, Ms. Lotte Kejser, who is responsible for overall project management, supervision, monitoring, and liaising with other ILO Projects and related activities. The team consists of four international staff members handling TVET and Skills Development, Policy Development Governance and SWAP, Procurement, and Communication. Additionally, there are six national professional staff members responsible for policy development, governance, SWAP, NQF, TVET, CSE, M&E Finance, and Communication, along with five administrative support staff members covering procurement, program assistance, project secretary, and driver. Mr. Saif Moinul from the ILO Dhaka Office provides program backstopping support.

In light of the project's extended duration, there have been significant amendments to the project's targets and implementation structure. The project is extended until 30 June 2024

4. Purposes, scopes and objective and clients of the evaluation

This project is funded by the European Union with a small contribution from the Government of Bangladesh. The evaluation of this EU-funded project (with a budget of USD 24 million and a duration of more than 24 months with extension) as recommended by EVAL, is required to be conducted by an independent evaluator.

4.1. Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is primarily to facilitate organizational learning and to assist the organization, including staff members, in supporting the realization of Decent Work. The evaluation also aims to enhance decision-making processes and generate knowledge within the organization.

The focus of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and impact and sustainability of the "SKILL-21" Project during its various phases, with a particular focus on after mid-term evaluation conducted in November 2019.

4.2. Objective

The objective of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and impact of the "SKILL-21" Project during entire duration of the project with a particular focus on the phase after the mid-term evaluation conducted in November 2019.

The objective of the SKILL-21 Project final evaluation is to focus on the outcomes of the project's strategies and the likelihood that they will achieve their aims as per the following:

- To promote accountability and learning and aims to understand why – and to what extent– intended and unintended results were achieved and to analyse the implications of the results.
- Assess the project achievement towards achieving its planned objectives and outputs and identify what factors supporting or hindering the project achievement.
- Assess the impact and sustainability of the project's results.
- Assess the extent to which gender equality/mainstreaming and empowerment of women has been considered throughout the project design and implementation.
- Identify unintended results (positive and negative) or unanticipated effects of Skills 21 on gender equality.
- Identify lessons learnt and good practice and strategic recommendations that can be applied to similar endeavours in future.

4.3. Scope

The scope of the evaluation will cover the complete project duration from project initiation, but the focus should be from Nov 2019 until the time of this evaluation. Geographically, the evaluation will focus specifically on Dhaka and Chittagong, which is the focus of the project's interventions, and the place where the relevant stakeholders are located. This evaluation seeks to provide critical insights into the project's alignment with employment needs, the suitability of beneficiary selection processes, the program's outreach, and its coordination with implementation partners. The evaluation must be conducted with gender equality as a mainstreamed approach and concern. This implies (i) applying gender analysis by involving both men and women in consultation and evaluation's analysis; (ii) inclusion of data disaggregated by sex and gender in the analysis and justification of project documents; (iii) the formulation and/or analysis of gender-sensitive strategies and objectives and gender-specific indicators; (iv) inclusion of qualitative methods and utilization of a mix of methodologies; (v) forming a gender-balanced team, and (vi) assessing outcomes to improve lives of women and men. Thus, analysis of gender-related concerns will be based on the [ILO Guidance Note 3.1: Integrating Gender Equality in Monitoring and Evaluation, and the Supplementary Guidance Note: integrating gender equality in ILO M&E \(Nov. 2023\)](#).

5. Evaluation criteria and questions

The evaluation will follow the key evaluation criteria defined by the ILO's Evaluation Policy: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The following evaluation questions are based on these criteria. The evaluator could adapt the evaluation criteria and questions, but any fundamental changes should be agreed upon with the evaluation manager and reflected in the inception report. The evaluation questions should integrate the crosscutting themes of ILO at the inception phase. These are International Labour Standards, social dialogue and tripartism, gender and non-discrimination (e.g., people living with disabilities), and fair transition to a sustainable environment.

5.1. Evaluation questions

Within the above purpose and scope of the evaluation, the following check list of questions are to be addressed by the evaluator. These questions seek to obtain relevant information on the project's evaluation criteria covering relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and/or impact.

Coherence (how well does the intervention fits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The extent to which other interventions and policies support or undermine the Skills 21 project, and vice versa. ▪ How well is the Skills 21 project aligned with other ILO interventions in Bangladesh, as well as with the activities of other international development partners, Government, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and national development frameworks?
Relevance (Is the intervention doing the right things?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are the needs addressed by the project relevant to the national context and employment needs of Bangladesh? ▪ The extent to which the Skills 21 project objectives and design respond to the need of Bangladeshi's tripartite constituents, partners institutions, and beneficiaries?
Effectiveness (Is the intervention achieving its objectives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The extent to which the Skills 21 project achieved or is expected to achieve its objectives and its results, including any different results across groups (examine equity issues and results for groups that have been marginalized). ▪ What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the project objective?
Efficiency of resource usage/implementation: (How well are resources being used?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent were the project's resources (funds, expertise, and time, etc) were utilized to deliver interventions and its intended results in an economic and timely way? ▪ Was the results framework realistic, given the timeframe, project budget and partner capacity?
Effectiveness of management arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent did the management arrangement (human resources) of the project in place support the results/achievements?
Impact (What difference does the intervention make?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One of the long-term goals of the ILO through this project is increased productivity and better employment opportunities through an environmentally conscious, inclusive, demand-driven, and interlinked skills development system responding to the needs of the labour market. In what ways did the project contribute to this long-term goal? ▪ To what extent did the project interventions contribute to sustainable development changes? ▪ The extent to which (social, economic and environmental effects) the Skills 21 project has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects?
Sustainability of the intervention (The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent the project involves stakeholders, including social partners (workers and employer organizations) for the project intervention/ implementation?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have the stakeholder's taken ownership of the project activities? ▪ What would be an effective exit strategy and next step for the ILO after the end of the project? ▪ What funding opportunities could the ILO pursue to support the assistance indicated in the points above? ▪ What development partners might be interested in supporting work that has been accomplished in Bangladesh on its National Skills Development System? ▪ What is the impact of the project on other projects, and to what extent does the project contribute to building stakeholder capacity and sustainability?
ILO Cross-Cutting Themes: Gender, disability, and non-discrimination; tripartism and social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The extent to which the project integrated gender equality, disability, and non-discrimination as a cross-cutting concern throughout its deliverables, including periodic reports. ▪ The extent to which the project enhanced social dialogue and tripartism and promoting ILO labour standards

dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The extent to which the project mainstream environmentally related issues in its project approach and activities ▪ The extent to which the project intervention addresses the issues of gender and discrimination (including disabilities). The extent to which the project included sex-aggregated data and gender related strategies.
ILO OH (outcome harvesting) questions (kindly refer to the OH substantiation plan for more details)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Since 2018 has the Government of Bangladesh improved its capacity to adapt the Bangladesh National Technical Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF) to mainstream competency-based training, learning and assessment systems for TVET/Skills Development? ▪ Since 2018, have Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment systems in Bangladesh enabled skills recognition and contributed towards promotion of employment mobility and decent work opportunities in formal jobs markets? ▪ Since 2018 have Disadvantaged group persons (DGP) including Women, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) increased their gain of jobs in the job market as a result of employable skills and employment support services, including employment linkages? ▪ Since 2018 has the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system in Bangladesh significantly expanded access to skills and lifelong learning opportunities, concurrently empowering training providers, instructors, and learners with essential digital competencies to ensure a high-quality training delivery system?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From 2018 – 2023 has youth in Bangladesh benefited from market-demand driven skills, relevant on-the-job training and direct employment opportunities in formal enterprises? ▪ Since 2021 has TVET Institutes (TVET Providers) improved capacity to provide quality of teaching, including pedagogy to contribute towards fostering a modernized and market relevant skills delivery system? ▪ Since 2022, has the skills governance ecosystem strengthened its ability to meet current and future labour market demands, through improved TVET management, budget allocations and policy delivery capacity? ▪ Since 2022, has awareness of the income and employment benefits of TVET training increased among youth, parents and employers, due to the increased capacity to undertake awareness-raising campaign by TMED, DTE and BMET at central and TVET institute level?

6. Proposed methodology

The evaluation will comply with UNEG evaluation norms, standards and follow ethical safeguards, as specified in ILO's evaluation procedures. The evaluation should address OECD/DAC and UNEG evaluation criteria and concerns. The proposed methodology for the evaluation will be in line with the ILO's guidelines for evaluation (4th edition, 2020). The evaluation will use mix of evaluation approaches and ensure triangulation of information using available information like current results achievements, annual reports of the project, research studies, currently available data sources etc.

The evaluation process adheres to confidentiality and other ethical considerations throughout, following the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines and Norms and Standards in the UN System. Confidentiality related to sensitive information and feedback obtained during individual and group interviews is maintained. To mitigate bias during the data collection process and ensure maximum freedom of expression for implementing partners, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders, project staff will not be present during interviews.

The evaluators should review data and information that is disaggregated by sex and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve the lives of women and men. Furthermore, the evaluation should follow non-discriminating factors that allow for a balanced view of the project's performances. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and evaluation report. To

the extent possible, data collection and analysis should be disaggregated by sex as described in the ILO Evaluation Policy Guidelines and relevant Guidance Notes (Annex 5).

Both qualitative and quantitative evaluation approaches should be considered for this evaluation. Core project stakeholders, including government and social partners (employers' and workers' organizations), as well as other relevant stakeholders, should be involved as early as possible in designing and implementing the evaluation, while considering gender and discrimination issues.

The methodology will include an assessment of the intervention logic or theory of change of the project, which links between various levels of the results framework such as DWCP and P&B, and country program outcomes, to help refine and/or finalize the evaluation questions. Proposed methods of data collection include, but not limited to the following:

6.1. Data collection and analysis

1. Desk review

A desk review of all relevant documents to the project. This includes project documents, work plan and budget, progress reports, activity reports, publications, research, and study report, DWCP, UNSDCF, NAP for 2030 Goals which are to be made prior to the interviews.

2. Interview

Interview (face-to-face and virtual interviews through MS Team or Zoom) with the project team in Bangladesh and relevant ILO staff who are backstopping the project (ILO CO Dhaka, ILO ROAP in Bangkok, and HQ in Geneva, if any) as well as the Evaluation Manager who resides in Jakarta, Indonesia.

3. Survey

The evaluator may use surveys to collect quantitative/ qualitative data for the evaluation from the target groups, if applicable.

4. Direct onsite observation/ Field visit

During field visit/mission, the lead international and local consultants will undertake a number of meetings and consultations with relevant stakeholders, consisting of the government, employers and worker organizations (target beneficiaries). This includes bilateral meetings, brainstorming sessions and stakeholder workshops to present findings, and a draft of the evaluation report for feedback from relevant stakeholders. If the budget permits, the Evaluation Manager will also join in the selected bilateral meeting and stakeholder meeting.

5. Data analysis

Based on the data and information gathered from desk review, interviews, field visit/mission, the evaluator will review the data and make an analysis.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the collection and analysis of data, as well as the findings presented and discussed, conclusions and recommendations will be formulated. The conclusion will offer a summarized assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluated intervention. This conclusion should be fair, impartial, and grounded in evidence. Recommendations will propose ways to enhance the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of the development intervention.

7. Generating good practice and lessons learnt.

For evaluation purposes, it is essential to generate insights into good practices and lessons learned. This process is crucial for enhancing project performance and impact.

Lessons learned will illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of interventions, facilitating the improvement of delivery quality and the incorporation of previous experiences into the design of future development projects.

Good practices entail proven, tangible results and benefits identified by the evaluator for potential replication and scaling up in future endeavors.

8. Reporting and disseminating result of the evaluation.

The draft evaluation report will be prepared and shared with stakeholders to offer them opportunities to clarify and provide feedback before the project's final evaluation report is completed. The evaluator must strictly adhere to the guidelines outlined in the ILO's Evaluation (2022), which emphasize respecting the confidentiality of the draft evaluation report. The report should strive to stimulate readers' interest, be well-structured, clear, and concisely written.

9. Deliverables

Deliverables expected from the independent evaluator are the following:

Deliverable 1: Inception Report and workplan (not more than 20 pages excluding annexes)

The Inception Report will include the details on how the evaluator understands what is being evaluated including the evaluation questions. The inception report must elaborate the methodology being proposed in the TOR, with changes if applicable, including proposed methods, data sources, and data collection procedures. The report shall also include selection criteria or sampling methodology for the selection for individuals for interviews or group discussions, and selection of target area or enterprise to be visited, and list of stakeholders that will be included in the evaluation. A detailed timeline / workplan along with a detailed methodology should clearly state the limitations of the chosen evaluation matrix methods, including those related to representation of specific group of stakeholders. A detailed timeline / workplan will also be part of the inception report.

Deliverable 2: Presentation of initial findings (PowerPoint presentation to be submitted by the evaluator and delivered during a face-to-face workshop or online meeting)

A presentation should be prepared for the ILO, its key partners and KOICA on the evaluation's initial findings. The Evaluation Manager will organize and coordinate with the Project team for the list of stakeholders for the workshop/online meeting. On this activity, the evaluator will present the initial findings to validate information and data collected through the various data collection methods.

Deliverable 3: A first draft of the evaluation report (not more than 35 pages excluding annex) The draft evaluation report will have to be written in English and should adequately cover the evaluation criteria and questions as finalised in the inception report, along with the recommendations, lessons learned, good practices, technical recommendations for the key stakeholders. The draft evaluation report should be in the format of the ILO https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf

Deliverable 4: Final Evaluation Report including an Evaluation Summary in standard ILO format (not more than 35 pages excluding executive summary and annexes)

The final evaluation report will be submitted to the evaluation manager. The Evaluation Manager has to ensure that all comments from the Project team and the Project's key stakeholders are integrated. The Report's annexes shall include the questions matrix, tools used during data collection, field work schedule, a list of interviewees, list of documents analysed, lessons learned template and emerging good practices standard template. The template will be provided to the evaluators in due course.

The quality of the report will be determined based on quality standards defined by the ILO Evaluation Office as per Checklist 4.9 Rating of an Evaluation Report [wcms_746818.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#).

The final evaluation report approved by ILO may be converted to a document that will detail brief summary of the evaluation methodology and findings. This can be in the form of an executive summary document or infographic.

The report and all other outputs of this evaluation must be produced in English. All draft and final reports, including other supporting documents, analytical reports and raw data should be provided in electronic version compatible with Microsoft Word for Windows.

The approval of the final evaluation report might take a couple of weeks as it must proceed through three ILO internal control layers (evaluation manager, regional evaluation officer and EVAL). Additionally, it is imperative to consider the following key areas as integral components of the evaluation and its presentation:

- *Lessons Learned Documentation:* A compilation of valuable insights drawn from project experiences. This documentation aims to capture the knowledge gained and outline practical lessons for future endeavors.
- *Recommendations and Action Plan:* A well-defined set of actionable recommendations based on the evaluation's findings. This action plan outlines steps for enhancing project implementation and performance.
- *Qualitative Stories and Testimonials:* Human stories and testimonials reflecting the impact of the project on its beneficiaries. These narratives offer a qualitative perspective on the project's outcomes and benefits.
- *Visual Aids and Infographics:* Enhanced data visualization materials designed to make complex data more accessible and understandable for a broader audience.
- *Presentation Materials:* Materials tailored for stakeholder presentations, facilitating effective communication of key findings, insights, and recommendations to diverse audiences.

These deliverables collectively form a comprehensive and multifaceted evaluation package that not only assesses the project's status, but also paves the way for a more effective and impactful future.

The gender dimension will be considered throughout the methodology, deliverables, and final report. Data will be disaggregated by gender where possible, addressing diversity and non-discrimination issues. The ILO EVAL Guidance Note 3.2 on integrating social dialogue and ILS in monitoring and evaluation will also be followed to

assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes.

The evaluator will follow EVAL's Guidance material on methodologies, including the ILO Guidance Note, namely, the [ILO EVAL Guidance Note 3.1 on integrating gender equality and non-discrimination](#); and the [ILO EVAL Guidance Note 3.2 on Integrating social dialogue and ILS in monitoring and evaluation of projects](#).

All deliverables and outputs will be in English. All deliverables will be assessed against ILO relevant Evaluation checklists. All deliverables will be quality reviewed by the evaluation manager and Regional Evaluation Officer whether they meet the requirement of the ToR and of the quality standards as per ILO evaluation guidelines. Several revisions may be expected if ILO is not satisfied with the quality of the deliverables before the payments can be made. The final evaluation report will also be reviewed and approved by the Evaluation Office in Geneva before the final payment can be made.

B. Management of the evaluation Evaluation Manager

The evaluation will be managed by an internal independent evaluation manager. Mr. Tauvik Muhamad, Programme Coordinator, RISSC Project, ILO Country Office for Indonesia and Timor-Leste is appointed as the Evaluation Manager and is responsible for overall project coordination. Regional Evaluation Officer based at ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific will provide oversight and quality assurance support to the evaluation. ILO Evaluation Office will approve the final evaluation report.

The ILO Evaluation Manager, in close consultation with the Regional Evaluation Officer (REO) is responsible for:

- Reviewing the draft TOR and providing input.
- Contracting a consultant for conducting evaluation.
- Providing the consultant with the project background materials and documents.
- Assisting the implementation of the evaluation methodology, as appropriate (i.e., participate in meetings, review documents).
- Reviewing the inception report, initial draft final report, circulating it for comments and providing consolidated feedback to the evaluator on the inception report and the final report.
- Reviewing the final report.
- Coordinating with the ROAP Evaluation Focal Point and ILO Evaluation Office for the clearance of the final report and submitting the relevant documentation.
- Disseminating the final report to stakeholders.
- Coordinating follow-up as necessary.

1. Project Manager/ CTA

Ms. Lotte Kejser, the SKILLS-21 CTA and her team will provide logistical support, and Ms. Pamornrat Pringsulaka, Regional Evaluation Officer, ROAP Bangkok, will provide technical support and oversight including:

- Finalizing the ToR with input from ILO colleagues and other stakeholders.
- Providing project documents and background materials, including studies, previous project phase evaluation reports, analytical papers, reports, tools, publications produced, and any relevant background notes.
- Providing a proposed list of stakeholders.
- Participating in the preparatory briefing prior to the assessment missions.
- Scheduling interviews and focus group discussions.
- Ensuring necessary logistical arrangements for the missions.
- Reviewing and providing comments on the initial draft report.
- Participating in the debriefing on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- Providing translation for any required documents: ToR, PPP, mid-term evaluation report, executive summary of the mid-term evaluation report, summary of lessons learnt and emerging good practices, etc.
- Making sure appropriate follow-up action is taken including filling out the management response matrix.

C. Project Team

The SKILL-21 project team will provide logistical and administrative support including making contractual agreements with international and local consultants. This includes providing relevant documents and lists of stakeholders, and organizing consultative meetings, field visits, and the workshop during the process of evaluation. The selection process for the consultants will be handled by the EVAL Regional Office for Asia Pacific

in Bangkok.

The National Project Officers / Component Leaders are responsible for providing necessary documentation, information and the lists of contacts/ stakeholders/constituents/ beneficiaries and provide technical support to the M&E Officer and the consultant within the scope of the assignment, when necessary.

The Finance and Admin Officer & Administrative Assistant are responsible for making sure if the expenditures are realized in accordance with the approved budget, and in compliance with the ILO's financial rules and regulations. They will provide administrative and financial support, which includes, but not limited to, preparation of financial documents and following up on payments to the consultant.

D. Consultant/ Evaluation Team (Team Leader/ Member)

The evaluation team will consist of an international independent consultant and a Bangladeshi external independent consultant. The international consultant will lead the evaluation and has the final responsibility for accomplishing the evaluation deliverables. The Bangladeshi consultant will support the team leader with the evaluation. The international consultant will report to the evaluation manager, while the national consultant will report to the international consultant. The evaluation manager will be responsible for coordinating the evaluation process with support from the project team. This includes preparing a term of reference (ToR), commissioning the inception, and the evaluation final report.

The consultant is responsible for conducting the evaluation according to the ToR as per the following table:

Team Leader	National Consultant/ Team Member
<p>The team leader will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the ToR and propose any refinements to the evaluation questions and methodology during the inception phase. Review project background materials (e.g., project documents and progress reports). Prepare an inception report (including Evaluation Questions Matrix (EQM), data collection instruments, and a list of stakeholders to meet/interview, work plan and others). Develop and implement the evaluation methodology (i.e., conduct interviews, review documents) to answer the evaluation questions. Conduct preparatory consultations with the evaluation manager prior to the evaluation mission. Conduct key informant interviews and collect information according to the suggested format. Analyse findings from the desk review, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Present the preliminary findings. Prepare an initial draft of the evaluation report with input from ILO specialists and constituents/ stakeholders. <p>Prepare the final report based on the ILO, donor and other stakeholder feedback on the draft report.</p>	<p>The national consultant will support the team leader in conducting a participatory and inclusive evaluation. Specifically, the national consultant will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review programme documents and other related documents. Assist the team leader in developing evaluation instrument and drafting inception report. Pro-actively provide relevant local knowledge and insights to the international consultant. Take part in the interviews with key stakeholders and assist in note taking during interview. Undertake a field visit in the country they are based in. Together with the relevant country teams, set up meetings with national stakeholders.

E. Reporting lines

The consultant will communicate and report to the ILO Evaluation Manager. The estimated time frame, tasks, and responsibilities of the evaluation will be as follows:

F. Timeframe, tasks, and responsibilities

No.	Task	Timeframe/ Deadline	Responsibility
1	Selection of consultants/ contractual agreements	04 April 2024	ILO
2	Discussion (MS Team) on Skills-21 Project and ToR	08 April 2024	ILO & Consultant

3	Desk review (project document, workplan and other relevant documents)	09 to 14 April 2024	Consultant
4	Submission of inception report (design, method and instrument of evaluation)	15 April 2024	Consultant
5	Feedback on inception report	16 to 17 April 2024	ILO
6	Finalization of the inception report	18 April 2024	Consultant
7	Field mission (Data collection, meeting/consultation, debriefing and validation)	20 April to 02 May 2024	Consultant
8	Submission of evaluation report draft	10 May 2024	Consultant
9	Review the evaluation report draft	11 May to 24 May 2024	ILO and stakeholders
10	Consolidate input and feedback, and finalize the report (PDF and table version form)	25 to 28 May 2024	ILO Evaluation Manager
9	Finalisation of the evaluation report	29 to 31 May 2024	Consultant
10	Review final report for quality assurance	02 to 05 June 2024	ILO Evaluation Manager and REO
12	Submission of the final report to EVAL	06 June 2024	Consultant

The evaluation time frame will cover 29 days (for the international consultant) and 23 days (for the national consultant) as per the following:

No	Activities	Workday	
		Team Leader	National Consultant
1.	Desk review and inception report	5 days	3 days
2.	Field mission for data collection	12 days	12 days
3.	Debriefing, Validation workshop and preparation	2 days	2 days
4.	Report drafting	8 days	4 days
5.	Finalizing a final evaluation report (including incorporating feedback and reporting)	3 days	3 days
	Total	30 days	24 days

1. Resource

Skills 21 project will cover the cost of the evaluation as follows:-

- ✓ professional fee
 - Proposed professional fee's terms of payment:-
 - 20% upon the approval of the inception report;
 - 50% upon submission of the quality draft evaluation report as per agreed ToR/inception report and ILO evaluation report checklist
 - 30% upon the approval of the final evaluation report by ILO Evaluation Office
- ✓ travel and DSA where relevant and applicable

The evaluation time frame will cover 29 days (for the international consultant) and 23 days (for the national consultant) as per the following:

No	Activities	Workday	
		Team Leader	National Consultant
1.	Desk review and inception report	5 days	3 days
2.	Field mission for data collection	12 days	12 days
3.	Debriefing, Validation workshop and preparation	2 days	2 days
4.	Report drafting	8 days	4 days
5.	Finalizing a final evaluation report (including incorporating feedback and reporting)	3 days	3 days
	Total	30 days	24 days

G. Resource

Skills 21 project will cover the cost of the evaluation as follows:-

- ✓ professional fee

- Proposed professional fee's terms of payment:- -
- 20% upon the approval of the inception report;
- 50% upon submission of the quality draft evaluation report as per agreed ToR/inception report and ILO evaluation report checklist
- 30% upon the approval of the final evaluation report by ILO Evaluation Office
- ✓ travel and DSA where relevant and applicable

H. Qualifications for consultant for final independent evaluation

The expected qualifications for the consultants should be to fulfil the criteria of professionalism, impartiality and credibility, and abide by the Code of Conduct for an evaluation in the UN system (UNEG 2008). The consultants must have the following competencies:

Team Leader

1. Have no previous/ current involvement of prospective employment in an ILO project under evaluation, and
2. Have no personal links to the people involved in managing the project/ programme.
3. The external evaluator should adhere to the highest level of technical and ethical standards (Code of Conduct for evaluation in the UN System (UNEG 2008)
4. A minimum of ten years of international experience in conducting programme or development project evaluations.
5. Technical knowledge on applying qualitative and quantitative data collection/research methodologies.
6. Experience in evaluating Skills/TVET projects/programme of the similar size will be an advantage.
7. Understanding ILO tripartism and social dialogue is an advantage.
8. Experience and ability in conducting gender mainstreaming and non-discrimination evaluation.
9. Experience in conducting M&E using outcome harvesting methods would be an advantage
10. Excellent analytical, communication skills.
11. Excellent report writing skills (in English).
12. Working in Bangladesh/a South Asian country would be an advantage.

National Consultant

1. Have no previous/ current involvement or offers of prospective employment in ILO project being evaluated.
2. Have no personal links to the people involved in managing the project/ programme.
3. The external evaluator should adhere to the highest level of technical and ethical standards (Code of Conduct for evaluation in the UN System (UNEG 2008).
4. Be a Bangladeshi national with a minimum of two years of experience in undertaking evaluations.
5. Knowledge of local context and target area and beneficiaries where the project is to be implemented.
6. Experience in conducting M&E using outcome harvesting methods would be an advantage
7. An understanding of ILO work, including skills development, tripartite constituents and local and government institutions will be an asset.
8. Fluency in English (spoken and written) and Bangla.

I. Legal and ethical matters

The evaluation will be carried out in adherence with the ILO evaluation policy guidelines, UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance. Ethical considerations will be considered in the evaluation process. As requested by the UNEG Norms and Standards, the evaluator will be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs, and act with integrity and honesty in relationships with all the stakeholders.

The evaluator(s) shall respect the people's right to provide information in confidence and make participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality, while ensuring that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source.

Ownership of data from the evaluation rests exclusively with the ILO. All raw data files, consent forms and relevant documentation must be returned to ILO before the release of final payment. The copyright of the evaluation report will rest exclusively with the ILO. Use of the data for publication and other presentations can only be made with the written agreement of the ILO. All deliverables will be paid for on satisfactory completion and certification by ILO evaluation manager and in line with the ILO Evaluation report checklist.

J. Annex1

1. Relevant ILO guidelines on Development Project Evaluation/ Website EVAL portal on manging and conducting evaluation (all guidance notes, checklist, templates, etc.)
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_853289.pdf
2. ILO Policy Guidelines for results-based evaluation, 2020
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_571339.pdf
3. Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO: Practical tips on adapting to the situation
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_744068.pdf
4. SDG related materials <http://www.ilo.ch/eval/eval-and-sdgs/lang--en/index.htm>
5. Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for Bangladesh
https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/organigramme/program/dwcp/WCMS_856932/lang--en/index.htm
6. Code of conduct for evaluation/ Code of conduct form (To be signed by the evaluators)
http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206205/lang--en/index.htm
7. ILO EVAL Gender [Guidance Note 3.1 on integrating gender equality and non-discrimination](#)
8. ILO EVAL Social Dialogue [Guidance Note 3.2 on Integrating social dialogue and ILS in monitoring and evaluation of projects](#)
9. Protocol to collect evidence on ILO response to COVID-19
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_757541.pdf
10. UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation
<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/548>
11. Writing the inception report https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746817.pdf
12. Checklist 4.3: Data collection method https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746722.pdf
13. Checklist 4.1: Validating methodology https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746807.pdf
14. Checklist 4.2: Preparing the evaluation report https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf
15. Checklist 4.9 Rating the quality of evaluation reports
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746818.pdf
16. Guidance Note 4.5: Stakeholders engagement https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746724.pdf

Annex 2: Interview Questions Matrix

The ToR outlines the guiding questions to be addressed during the evaluation, for each OECD/DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact and sustainability) which were addressed by the evaluation team. Summarized, additional tasks of the evaluation included: The additional questions are highlighted in *italics for each evaluation criteria*. The consultants also suggested to start with relevance as the first criteria, given that relevance had to deal with how a project was designed, how it was embedded in the national context and priorities, which has then been followed by coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Relevance & strategic fit of the project

Question	Source of information	Addressed to
Does the project address needs relevant to the national context and employment needs of Bangladesh?	Reports/KIIs/FGDs	Constituents Project Partners Team, Other projects
To what extent do the Skills 21 project objectives and design respond to the need of Bangladeshi's tripartite constituents, partners' institutions, and beneficiaries?	Reports/KIIs/FGDs	Constituents Team
<i>Are the project interventions relevant to the achievement of ILO Dhaka Country Priorities (CD101)</i>	DWCP/KII	Constituents Team
<i>To what extent do skills development interventions ensure matching of labour market needs and learner aspirations and needs (e.g., human-centered approach, GESI responsive approaches)?</i>	Impact data, reports, KIIs	DET/BMET/BTEB Team Partners (TTCs)

Coherence (internal and external):

Question	Source of information	Addressed to
To what extent does the Skills 21 project design consider synergies and fit with national policies and initiatives and other donor-supported projects? (external coherence) and does not overlap with or duplicate other initiatives?	Reports/KIIs/FGDs	Constituents Project Partners
How well is the Skills 21 project aligned with other ILO interventions in Bangladesh, with the activities of other international development partners, Government, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and national development frameworks?	Reports/KIIs/FGDs DWCP	ILO Team Programming (outcome level in CO), M&E
<i>Are the project design (objectives, outcomes, outputs, activities) and its underlying theory of change logical and coherent? (internal coherence)</i>	Reports, TOC, results chains, LOGFRAMES	ILO Team M&E
<i>To what extent did the project build on knowledge and learnings of ILO projects implemented earlier;</i>	Reports/KIIs/FGDs	ILO Team Constituents
<i>How well does project integrate and build capacities of constituents and development partners on ILO's cross-cutting issues (e.g. gender equality, environmental aspects, standards and tripartism, non-discrimination, etc.)</i>	Reports/KIIs/FGDs	ILO Team Constituents

Effectiveness

Question	Source of information	Addressed to
To what extent is the Skills 21 project expected to achieve its objectives and results, including any different results across groups (examine equity issues and results for groups that have been marginalized)?	Reports, logframes, FGD/KII	ILO Team M&E
Have there been any unintended positive or negative effects resulting from the implementation?	FGD/KIIs Reports	ILO Team
Do the government, social partners and project partners (e.g. Training providers) demonstrate an increased capacity as a result of the programme?	Reports, KIIs	ILO Team, Constituents, Partners
What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the project objective?	Reports, KIIs	ILO Team, Constituents, Partners
Do the results reflect the various categories of individuals that were intended to be impacted by the project?	Reports, KIIs	ILO Team M&E

Efficiency of resource usage/implementation

Question	Source of information	Addressed to
How well were the project's resources (funds, expertise, and time, etc.) utilized to deliver interventions and its intended results in an economic and timely way, taking into account the 3 project extensions?	Financial Reports	ILO Team
Has the project been able to achieve its goals within the established timelines and budget?	Financial Reports	ILO Team
Was the results framework realistic, given the time frame, project budget and partner interest/priorities and capacity?	Financial Reports	ILO Team M&E
Did the project receive adequate political, technical and administrative support from its partners?	KIIs/ FGDs	ILO country office ILO Team Constituents
To what extent has the project achieved efficiency in implementation by collaborating and creating synergies (within and outside ILO)?	KIIs/ FGDs	ILO CO/Team Constituents Other projects
Efficiency of Management Arrangement:		
Were available human resources of the project adequate and competent to support achievement of results?	KIIs/ FGDs	ILO Team Constituents
Did it receive adequate support from the ILO DC work team and HQ units	KIIs	ILO CO/Team
How efficient are the management structure, reporting mechanism and administrative procedures to deliver timely and adequate results?	KIIs/ FGDs	ILO Team Constituents
Would the current staffing structure of the project able to implement larger scale interventions? Are capacities of staff under-utilised?	KIIs/ FGDs	ILO Team Constituents

Impact

Question	Source of information	Addressed to
In what ways did the project contribute to this long-term goal "increased productivity and better employment opportunities through an environmentally conscious, inclusive, demand-driven, and interlinked skills development system responding to the needs of the labour market."?	Reports, log-frames, FGD/ KII	ILO Team Constituents Partners M&E
To what extent did the project interventions contribute to behavioural changes in partner organisations?	Reports, log-frames, FGD/ KII	ILO Team Constituents Partners, M&E
To what extent (social, economic and environmental effects) will the Skills 21 project generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects? Are there mechanisms in place which assess impact on partners' and institutions' capacities and delivering them better, more accessible and more impactful services? Is there evidence of outcomes and impact on final beneficiaries (e.g., have they been able to find employment or increase income)?	Reports, log-frames, FGD/ KII	ILO Team Constituents Partners M&E

Sustainability

Question	Source of information	Addressed to
Partners' capacities and enabling environment:		
To what extent has the project contributed to building stakeholder capacity and sustainability of interventions?	Analysis, KIIs	ILO/Team Stakeholders
What systems and approaches have stakeholders put in place to measure results, to improve transparency of data processing and analysis, and to improve accountability for results?	M&E and reporting System	ILO Team M&E
Is policy/regulatory environment conducive for system anchoring and upscaling of interventions?	Reports/KIIs	ILO Team, Constituents, Partners
Ownership:		
To what extent has the project involved stakeholders, including social partners (workers and employer organizations) in project and intervention design/ implementation and monitoring and governance?	Reports/KIIs	ILO Team Constituents Partners

Have the stakeholder's taken ownership of the project activities? What evidence is there of the commitment of partner organisations to continue efforts beyond project?	Reports/KIIs	ILO Team Constituents Partners
How likely is it that Project partners continue M&E and data analysis beyond the project?	Reports/KIIs	ILO Team Constituents Partners, M&E
To what extent has private sector as key players been addressed and takes ownership in this project?	Reports/KIIs	ILO Team, Con-stituents, Partners
Exit Strategy:		
To what extent have the activities led to other initiatives and synergies/ uptake or scaling of initiatives (multiplier effect?)	Reports/KIIs/workshop	ILO Team
What would be an effective exit strategy and next step for the ILO?	Reports/KIIs/workshop	ILO Team, Con-stituents, Partners
What mechanisms should be in place to ensure that the results of the activity will be sustainable? What needs to be done to enhance the sustainability of the project?	Reports/KIIs/workshop	ILO Team, Con-stituents, Partners
Which development partners might be interested and should be further supported so that work that has been accomplished in Bangladesh on its National Skills Development System will continue?	Reports/KIIs/workshop	ILO Team, Con-stituents, Partners
What funding opportunities could the ILO pursue to strengthen the assistance indicated in the points above?	Reports/KIIs/workshop	ILO Team

Annex 3: Recommendations from the Mid Term Evaluation 2019

Recommendation MTE	Was it done?	Details
Undertake a results analysis of each activity implemented until now	Done/ adjusted	A results analysis done
Improve the Performance Measurement Framework in defining realistic impact indicators reflecting what has actually been achieved	Partially done/ adjusted	Sector Performance Monitoring Framework (SPMF) and the reporting mechanisms are related to each other. <i>Observation: SPMF however still misses outcome performance and interconnectedness between outcomes.</i>
Consider extending the project for 8-12 months and define clear priorities for the remaining time of implementation; this is shorter than the 18 months extension expected by the project team and requires the preparation of detailed roadmaps for all components aiming at maximizing outputs and results by December 2021 at the latest.	Partially done	A clear roadmap for the development of BNQF, including formation of Steering Committee and arrangement of regular meetings of the steering committee, staffing plan of training institutes, etc. ready during first extension and signed by the Ministry leading to launch of BNQF in 2023. A strategic roadmap for the completion of the 'model approach' was created for further dissemination to other institutes, defining objectives, etc. were achieved within the extended time. A sector wide integrated framework for TVET (SWIFT) developed for TMED by Skills 21 project for coherent sector (skills development /TVET) planning and implementation. <i>Observations: road maps were not detailed enough to highlight milestones to be achieved so that overall outcome results are achieved.</i>
Increase Government commitment and engagement	Partially done	Government commitment and engagement has been increased; GoB reviewed NSDP 2011, developed NSDP 2022 Action Plan (NSDP 2022 published on 16 January 2023); prepared SWIFT for TMED with results areas; developed Sector performance monitoring framework; reviewed Sector financing mechanisms, etc. This also includes BNQF, RTOs, quality & relevance of CBT courses, RPL, industry engagement, IMAB, EDT, green TVET, placement & career guidance, CSEs, E-campus, etc. <i>Observation: GoB commitment and approvals remain relatively slow. Yet to be approved are NQAS manuals, Implementation guideline of BNQF, Legislation, Advocacy and Capacity Building, Talent Partnership- Skills Needs Analysis, Training Need Analysis, Draft Talent Partnership Models, etc.</i>
Engage more intensively with the private sector	Partially done	Private sector participation in governance – IMAB for guidance to bring together institutes and industries to promote work based learning; business model – offering services to government and private sector to contribute to sustainability; industry engagement – employers' forum established to increase job opportunities and reduce skills mismatch; institute-industry linkage to ensure quality and relevant training delivery; job portal and employment services; green TVET and employment – green campus, promote skills for green jobs and enterprises, etc. <i>Observation: Systematic engagement of private sector beyond consultative involvement at policy level remained limited.</i>
Consider June 2021 as the final date to achieve Outcome 1 in i) reviewing the sequence of activities regarding the development	Done; but,	Sequences were reviewed and 3 extensions made it possible to achieve overall project goals.

Recommendation MTE	Was it done?	Details
<p>of the BQF for which indicators need to be adjusted; and ii) providing Human resources to VTTI and TTTC to allow them to achieve their objective to become CSE by June 2021 in line with a clear vision/strategy on how CSEs will contribute to improving TVET/Skills after closure of the project.</p>	<p>“High priority – Additional human resources required for VTTI & TTTC” is not mentioned/ addressed</p>	<p>i) MOE officially launch the BNQF in 2023. The project facilitated extensive stakeholder engagement through consultation workshops and bilateral meetings with Technical Working Groups (TWGs), government agencies, professional organizations, and workers' and employers' groups. This led to development of key BNQF documents, including manuals for the draft National Quality Assurance System (NQAS) for TVET and Skills Sector, a draft Legislation paper, and BNQF implementation guidelines. The Project will try to obtain decisions from upcoming NSC meeting to finalize the NQAS manuals. Looking ahead to 2024, the project aims to finalize the implementation guidelines and draft legislation.</p> <p>ii) The VTTI and TTTC improved performance however do not have status of Centers for Skills excellences (CSEs). They completed implementing their QIPs and showcasing good practices. A key achievement was the successful piloting of the CBT&A Level 5 and Level 6 programs for 250 Master Trainers and 20 Principals respectively, alongside training of 3,521 trainers and assessors through the CBT&A Level 4 programs.</p> <p><i>Observation: key shortcomings remain unsolved recruitment and staffing shortages in the entire public TVET provision. Frequent staff deployments, transfers and perpetual shortages cause slow down and risk discontinuation of good practices after project ends.</i></p>
<p>Specific recommendations for Outcome 2: Adjust achievement indicators for training to match values proposed for October 2021 and provide support to the GoB to define a vision/strategy for the 7 model institutes which will include own sustainability and further dissemination of their model status to other TCs (Sustainability plans should include plans to raise funding either from government and/or from self-revenue generating activities - further DP interventions should not be considered as suitable sustainability options). Sustainability strategies should also consider developing partnership models with both public and private institutes and developing synergies with other projects focusing more on the private sector, in particular the SUDOKKHO project.</p>	<p>Partially done</p>	<p>Developing vision and sustainability plans, including income generating activities and PPPs for MTIs to operate more independently could not be achieved. Autonomy of TVET institutes is a new concept in Bangladesh and lacks legal foundation and backing. Decentralisation of TVET delivery is required but will take time and an overhaul of the current TVET system towards more decentralized delivery.</p> <p>The project in collaboration with the BEF, local CCIs and CSOs, forged strategic partnerships with the private sector to enhance OJT & employment and apprenticeship opportunities for TVET institutes, and finding out ways for continuation of the programmes after closure of the project, and partnering with the industry associations (IAs) in order to co-manage the MTIs at the end of the project.</p> <p><i>Observation: Recommendation, while relevant was too ambitious given the time available to test local interventions.</i></p>
<p>Specific recommendations for Outcome 3: assign the leadership of establishing a SWAP to the GoB (and not to the project team) in requesting the GoB to designate a government official as SWAP mediator/coordinator (to be supported by the ILO team). The appointed coordinator should define what can be achieved within a time frame of 8-12 months beyond December 2020 and adjust the indicator of “SWAP in place” to “SWAP modalities defined and agreed by all parties, ready to be implemented by</p>	<p>Adjusted (development of SWIFT in place of SWAp)</p>	<p>i) SWIFT and action plan was developed and submitted to TMED and DTE in 2020, and SWIFT with results areas was prepared for TMED. Sector performance monitoring framework was developed and recently endorsed by government after HCDP 21 event.</p> <p>ii) Sector financing mechanisms were reviewed and based on the MTBF Training for 172 and Institutional Governance Training for 151 TMED and DTE officials were developed and conducted; capacity building assessments and plans developed for TMED, DTE, BTEB, TTTC, VTTI and TVET institutes; studies conducted on Skills</p>

Recommendation MTE	Was it done?	Details
<p>the GoB". For Output 3.2, review activities which need to adjusted and/or deleted: Activity 3.2.1 (delete), Activity 3.2.10 (reformulate in replacing the objective of having MRAs in place by a more realistic objective hinting towards cooperation agreements on information exchange or similar). Indicators in general should be more qualitative and results-oriented (e.g. besides the number of policy dialogues completed, it would be of added value to have an indicator on what these dialogues have achieved).</p>		<p>Demand Analysis on the Ready-made Garments & Textile (RMG&T) and ICT sectors. (MRA is dropped) MTBF and Institutional Governance training modules and training guidelines submitted to TMED/ DTE along with reports and documentation for the 6 training batches conducted; SPMF endorsement done; Implementation of the full scope of the findings of the institutional capacity assessments as well as the sector skills demand analysis studies will require further GoB planning and budgeting for having a clear overall exit strategy. <i>Observation: Governance and coordination mechanism, despite capacities built has yet to be strengthened. Clarity on Governance, roles need to be ensured.</i></p>
<p>Define a clear overall exit strategy for the project</p>	<p>Partially done</p>	<p>Exit and sustainability strategy was jointly developed with DTE and submitted for approval.</p>
<p>Ensure higher gender and disability inclusion</p>	<p>Partially done</p>	<p>Action plans were developed on social inclusion (including persons with disabilities) and gender mainstreaming. The project has also assisted the IMAB in developing a measurable and results-oriented action plan for inclusion of gender and persons with disabilities in TVET. Appointing of OPDs in IMABs and for outreach led to higher enrolment. Their proactive efforts included community and industry-level engagement to enhance employment opportunities (both self- and wage-employment) for women, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities. <i>Observation: While progress has been made, barriers remain and should be more proactively addressed. Sustainability of efforts should be assured by GoB, by expanding budgets and financing fully dedicated staff as focal points in TVET institutes.</i></p>

Annex 4: Observations made during evaluation for questions relevant to Outcome Harvesting

Q1: Since 2018: Has GoB improved its capacity to adapt the Bangladesh National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF) to mainstream CBT, learning and assessment?

To a certain extent- The capacities of the government to adapt NTVQF has continuously increased and steadily been expanded and expanded to L4/5/6 for professional skills upgrading for teachers and principals. Up to now, 235 competency standards have been developed. Acceptance for CBT&A is high for its effectiveness amongst the private sector, government and training providers; however, awareness and outreach remain low. There are 16 ISCs to represent the private sector side and guide GoB in decision making, however, they remain underfunded and weak. Additionally, there are concerns regarding the lack of genuine representation from industry stakeholders. In some cases, the government still maintains control over the councils, leading to a lack of confidence in their effectiveness. At GoB level, the structural underfunding of TVET sector, combined with massive staff shortages across departments, training and assessment centres, limits expansion of training overall, which also includes CBT as well. NSDA's capacity is weak and understaffed. Private sector is just starting to pick up on CBT. At this point of time, not more than 20% of TVET courses are competency based, which shows that the system needs time and more focussed initiatives.

Q2: Have RPL assessment systems in Bangladesh enabled skills recognition and contributed towards promotion of employment mobility and decent work opportunities in formal jobs markets?

Experience from Skills 21's tracer study for RPL highlights the positive impact RPL had on a) employment, b) reduced unemployment and c) income. The study however does not highlight whether jobs obtained stem from formal sector. However, the findings of the impact study suggest that RPL that in the case of women garment workers, RPL had a benefit for job mobility and income. More in-depth and follow up work needs to be done to assess impact of RPL.

Q3: Have disadvantaged groups, including Women and persons with disabilities, benefited from increased job opportunities as a result of employable skills and employment support services, including employment linkages?

All projects, including TVET Reform, B-SEP and Skills 21, had targeted initiatives at policy and VTI levels to support change framework conditions for women, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities to access training, after training support and employment linkages. Interventions needed additional effort to sensitize employers about the benefits and business cases to train and hire disadvantaged groups. There are still many stereotypes, which guide decisions and yet good practices could be collected by all the projects (see also Gender Gap and Social Inclusion assessment 2024). While significant progress has been made for women enrolment into TVET, target is met for short term courses, but not yet for long term TVET offers. For people with disabilities and ethnic minorities, more effort needs to be made to reach targets of 5 %. It is important to highlight that DTE's centralized MIS system has limited capacities to track these target groups and disaggregate data to effectively intervene.

Q4: Has TVET system in Bangladesh significantly expanded access to skills and lifelong learning opportunities, concurrently empowering training providers, instructors, and learners with essential digital competencies to ensure a high-quality training delivery system?

GoB has big plans to expand TVET and up-skilling to meet future needs, address upskilling, social inclusion and women's empowerment and has expanded budget to build additional infrastructure and training capacities at upazilla level, with the support of ADB and World Bank loan funding. There seems to be evidence that stipends provided to disadvantaged students, particularly women, has increased enrolment in government training institutions. However, enrolment of persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities remains low. ILO's Skills 21 project was requested to address digitization to provide the foundation for accelerated training and expansion of TVET institutes, training capacities and training and assessment and supported the development of IMDC and e-RPL, besides supporting online training at scale during the COVID pandemic.

Skills 21 had limited opportunities for collaboration outside government run institutions (TTTIs, TSCs, TTCs) with only UCEP as participating as a private training providers, which account for 87% of the overall training and up-skilling requirements. Most of the private training providers operate outside the formal TVET system and are not registered training providers. Weak capacities of NSDA and BTEB to register STPs (697) and RTOs (624), and

assessment centres (552-NSDA and 624-BTEB), as of May 2024, hinder the process of fast expansion. Underfunding of the sector, minimal private sector engagement, which could leverage funding needs through public private partnerships, hinder fast expansion.

Q5 From 2018 – 2023 has youth benefited from market-demand driven skills, relevant on-the-job training and direct employment opportunities in formal enterprises?

While all ILO implemented projects had their own M&E systems and MIS, through which data on enrolment, training, graduation, and certification is collected and analyzed together with implementation partners, there is limited evidence available on labour market outcomes in TVET. DTE does not systematically assess impact on labour market outcomes of its graduates. Donors' usually finance tracer studies on ad hoc basis, not taking into account latest IT tools which would make it easier for training centres to remain in touch. The impact studies show positive results; however, no distinction is made between formal and informal enterprises employing youth. The B-SEP project, the DIFID funded project Suddhoko (2015-2021) and other industry focussed skills development projects might have such evidence.

Q6: Since 2021 has TVET Institutes (TVET Providers) improved government's capacity to provide quality of teaching/ training, including trained instructors and pedagogy to contribute towards fostering a modernized and market relevant skills delivery system?

Efforts to strengthen teacher training, curriculum development, training institutes' capacities and labour market insertion and entrepreneurship support has been the priority for the last 15 years, however, Skills 21 has with its targeted capacity building interventions in the 2 CSEs, systematically strengthened training capacities, including training of 3,521 L4 teachers, including industry instructors. The IMDC online training effort contributed to the modernization of teaching and learning materials. CSEs have taken pro-active steps to get industry trainers for technical training in their TTTIs (e.g. Bogura). At this point of time, no impact studies have been made. Therefore, evidence cannot yet be established to what extent the learnt content and methodology is being applied by the trainers. Assessments need to be made to what extent trained teachers have improved learning outcomes and hence employability of learners.

Q7: Since 2018: Has the skills governance ecosystem strengthened its ability to meet current and future labour market demands, through improved TVET management, budget allocations and policy delivery capacity?

Yes and no. With the enactment of NSDA as the coordination agency for all government departments delivering Skills development programmes, an umbrella organization was officially put in place. However, there are open questions about overlaps, coordination and governance, since TMED, BTEB and NSDA have in some ways similar mandates. At this point of time, the fragmentation remains. Further, the systematic exclusion of private training providers, specialized agencies, weak ICS and marginalization of the private sector are indications that the ecosystem functions under the tight control of the GoB, which limits functioning and expansion. Skill needs anticipation is not systematically integrated in the TVET system and ISCs with this mandate are too weak to deliver. Government funding remains small, even though there has been a continuous increase.

Q8: Has awareness of the income and employment benefits of TVET training increased among youth, parents and employers, due to the increased capacity to undertaken awareness-raising campaign by TMED, DTE and BMET at central and TVET institutes level?

Skills 21 has a very well designed and executed communication strategy and visibility plan in place, which is locally rooted and well anchored at national level. TVET campaigns were localized and targeting different groups, including enterprises, youth, women, disadvantaged people, parents, communities. MTIs were supported by good communication, to organize Employers for job fairs, which led to good attendance at events, and increased application rates for courses. While no impact studies were made on impact of campaigns, there are many incidences, which indicate increased awareness about quality training, benefits of TVET and opportunities offered in Training Institutes. Similarly private sector has responded well, and an increased number of enterprises engages at local level.

Annex 5: Some promising examples which indicate steps towards sustainability

Intervention	Current Challenge	Steps to be taken or already taken by GoB towards sustainable impact
Professional Training for Teachers/trainers and Principals	Shortage of qualified trainers and assessors leading to hiring temporary staff.	Address root causes for slow expansion: low budgeting Public service commission changes to address staff bottlenecks requires additional technical assistance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Career development plans to institutionalise L4/L5/L6. ✓ GoB has allocated additional funding for TTTIs and expanded recruitment. ✓ Funding through WB-ASSET project; ✓ Upcoming project on TVET Teacher development: ADB-TTF
IMDC	E-Learning platform at this point at pilot stage, has potential to be integrated into L4 training process.	IMDC transferred to BTEB. No commitment for additional staffing and funding to sustain and assure quality of dynamic platform. Requires more funds and continuous technical assistance.
TVET Campaign	Localized campaigns show promise and are used as basis for national replication and roll out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ GoB co-finances national roll out and requests technical assistance from ILO. At this point of time, no GoB cell established for awareness and communication.
MTIs	Limited funding for training activities through GoB budget in MTIs. Limited commitment to QIP. Lack of funds to finance focal points for GESI/environment/placement cell or entrepreneurship. There is willingness to continue with IMAB, focal points, employer fora, business incubation and career guidance cell within MTIs.	GoB needs to allocate adequate funding to MTIs for equipment and fill existing staffing gaps and ensure continued ownership for existing initiatives. IMAB requires formal status and can assume stronger role for awareness building outside the VTI
MTI and CSE status	BTEB commitment to endorse MTI and CSE guidelines and assessment tools, besides conducting audits. Plan to use guidelines for replication in other TVET institutes	BTEB accreditation on hold The "vision" and ultimate goal of a model institute needs more strategic thinking. Clarity about sustainability of CSE, MTIs and their mandate required Operational plans to be developed and technical support required to strengthen CSEs and MTIs in outreach activities.
RPL	Interest from Private sector for certified workers. However, at higher levels. Awareness about benefits low. Consistency & quality assurance remains weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continues to be funded by GoB ✓ More focus on quality assurance, expediting e-RPL will require further technical assistance and project support
M&E	Sector performance monitoring framework under HCDP 21	Is integrated in HCDP 21 since 2020



ILO SKILLS 21 PROJECT – EMPOWERING CITIZENS FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH (2017-2024)

Project DC/SYMBOL: BGD/16/04

Name of Evaluator: S. Rothboeck, M. Nuruzzaman

Date: 10 June 2024

The following lessons learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	<i>Long-term engagement and financing are essential for sustained reform process</i>
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	ILO's long term, strong presence as a lead agency in the TVET reform process is well acknowledged across the skills ecosystem in Bangladesh. This sustained effort is crucial for quality outputs and long-term sustainability, as any TVET reform process spans several decades. Strong, trustworthy partnerships with Canada and the EU, along with a commitment to system reform, have been instrumental in achieving the milestones upto now and is required to continue.
Context and any related preconditions	Building a well governed skills system requires a unified vision and a stable environment, combined with a political will, that can focus on a mid-to long term development process. The Vision 41, 7 th and 8 th FYPs, Skills policies and action plans highlight commitment and prioritization of GoB to utilise Skills Development as an effective means to address productivity increase and social inclusion needs. Funding agencies have been critical in supporting GoB to transition into a more demand oriented and future-fit Skills Development System. While this process has been successfully initiated, it requires long term multi phased funding, clearly envisioning long term goals and milestones, and clarity on how this will be achieved. A harmonised, well-coordinated system that ensures private sector involvement at all levels must be ensured to sustain reforms and ensure that supply and demand sides are well aligned. Time bound projects need to be well-embedded into the implementation process. Funding opportunities from the National Human Resources Development Fund (NHRDF) could be explored to ensure continuity of skill training activities in the TVET institutes, meeting the evolving needs of industries and job markets.
Targeted users /Beneficiaries	GoB (NSDA, TMED/DTE, BTEB, BMET, MoEWOE, other depts. involved in Skills Development, local government public TTTIs, public TSCs/ TTCs), BEF, NCCWE, Private training providers, local chambers of commerce, entrepreneurs, specialised CBOs (BBDN; OPDs, UCEP, SIYB Foundation, etc.), end beneficiaries: NEETs, unemployed graduates, low skilled women/men; returning migrants, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Absence of long-term perspectives in time bound TVET projects, which are time bound to 3-4 years can be counterproductive, particularly in fragmented systems, where governance and coordination remains weak. Donor funded projects might overlap and even contradict themselves, not leading to a unified system; where funding, roles and delivery mechanisms are to be clearly defined and transparent. In addition, implementation of pilot projects often requires longer than one project cycle; but they are left unfinished and hardly tested. Longer programming cycles ensure continuation and deepening of reforms to reach the required milestones.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Long-term, well aligned funding with strong technical advice and capacity building, combined with a well aligned coordination and governance of TVET, leads to coherence, clarity of roles and increased capacities of constituents, assuming their roles and continuously improving performance of interventions. Efforts are better channelled and voices from bottom-up are directly reflected in the continuous improvement of interventions.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Continue support to Government in governance and coordination of Skills Development/TVET system reform process. Support GoB in facilitation of multistakeholder engagement processes. Develop ILO DWCP level programmatic perspective with mid-term outcomes, milestones and clear results chain and an overall road map for each social partner jointly with constituents. Form project steering and monitoring & coordination committees involving social partners and central private implementation partners. Staff capacity building required: deepening in technical areas, programming and monitoring and evaluation. Set up a well-defined and elaborate M&E system, and allocate required resources to mentor and support field staff in monitoring, evaluation, data collection and reporting.



ILO SKILLS 21 PROJECT – EMPOWERING CITIZENS FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH (2017-2024)

Project DC/SYMBOL: BGD/16/04

Name of Evaluator: S. Rothboeck, M. Nuruzzaman

Date: 10 June 2024

The following lessons learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	Strengthening tripartism by involving constituents and systematically building their capacities, pays off
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The Skills 21 project, unlike the earlier TVET Reform and B-SEP projects, did not make optimal use of its tripartite platform to foster private sector engagement. This is unfortunate. The lack of strong social partner involvement and limited collaboration with the private sector, including private training institutes might have limited learning and exchange of experiences and contributed to the slowdown of the expansion process of CBT&A through the project.
Context and any related preconditions	<p>GoB to transition into a more demand oriented and future-fit Skills Development System requires a well-functioning ecosystem where relevant actors share the vision and actively engage in reforms, governance, implementation and financing. Tripartite partners need to be given the space to engage in policy dialogue and programming, and to have institutional capacities to assume their roles. They need to be in the positions where they see value in collaboration to achieve the overall goal of a trained and skilled workforce. The following preconditions are the basis for a strong tripartism: The government should realize its main responsibility to provide enabling framework conditions for Skills Development so that 3 objectives are met: (i) to ensure quality and accountability of training and certification, (ii) enable enhanced national productivity through skills development and (iii) to address access and social inclusion;</p> <p>The government should be ready to share control over TVET and seek active participation from the private sector;</p> <p>The government should be ready to facilitate tripartite governance and steering structures;</p> <p>Employers need to realize rights and responsibilities in skills development. Investing in training leads to greater productivity in the workplace, less attrition, and more resilience to absorb changes in market conditions;</p> <p>Trade unions need to realize that quality training and continuous learning contributes to more professional growth and workers' adaptability to change;</p> <p>The government and private sector need to understand that financing of TVET is a joint responsibility and investments need to be made in skills for higher productivity, future skills as well as in ensuring social inclusion.</p>
Targeted users /Beneficiaries	<p>GoB (NSDA, TMED/DTE, BTEB, BMET, local government public TTTIs, public TSCs/ TTCs), BEF, NCCWE, Private training providers, local chambers of commerce, entrepreneurs, specialised CBOs (BBDN; OPDs, UCEP, SIYB Foundation, etc.).</p> <p>End beneficiaries: NEETs, unemployed graduates, Low skilled women/men; returning migrants, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities.</p>
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Limited involvement of non-government sector at this stage, lack of trust between state and non-state actors can lead to slow down or lack of effectiveness of training and placement of candidates. Core problems to reduce skills mismatches can only be solved through collaborative and forward looking efforts.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Strong tripartism and multi-stakeholder involvements, where each of the constituents is capable of assuming its roles and continuously improves performance of interventions, can re-enforce each other, as efforts are well channelled and voices from the ground are directly reflected in the continuous improvement of interventions.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Develop joint programmatic perspective with mid-term outcomes, milestones and clear results chain and an overall road map for each social partner. This helps the donor support within the project cycle specific milestones to be achieved; ensure minimum resource commitment for at least 6-year period, which is basis for prioritization together with constituents. Form project steering and monitoring & coordination committees involving social partners and central private implementation partners. Staff capacity building required: deepening in technical areas, programming and monitoring and evaluation. Set up a M&E system and allocate required resources to mentor and support field staff in monitoring, evaluation, data collection and reporting



ILO SKILLS 21 PROJECT – EMPOWERING CITIZENS FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH (2017-2024)

Project DC/SYMBOL: BGD/16/04

Name of Evaluator: S. Rothboeck, M. Nuruzzaman

Date: 10 June 2024

The following lessons learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	CBT&A shows high impact and is attractive for employers and learners. However, still not widespread (20%) and biased towards educated persons; neither is it mainstreamed in longer courses nor in higher level skills.
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The capacities of GoB to adapt NTVQF has continuously increased and steadily expanded, resulting in the endorsement of BNQF, the recognition of CBT for short courses L1-L3 and due to Skills 21, expanding to L4/5/6 for professional skills upgrading for teachers/trainers and principals and digital learning platforms (IMDC). Acceptance for CBT&A has increased amongst the private sector, government and training providers; however, awareness and outreach remain low. Private sector is just starting to pick up on CBT. At this point of time 20% of TVET courses are competency based, most of them at low skills levels (L1, L2), which shows that the system needs a lot of time. CBT&A needs to address higher skills needs articulated by private sector and learners. Higher level training and assessment capacities need to be developed. At GoB level, the structural underfunding of TVET sector, combined with massive staff shortages across departments, training and assessment centres limits expansion of training overall, which also includes CBT as well. NSDA's capacity for fast roll out is weak, so is DTE's and BTEB's to provide enough certified trainers for large scale and quality assured assessment.
Context and any related preconditions	GoB needs to actively engage the private sector and trade unions, and encourage private training providers to adopt CBT. NSDA should focus on creating an enabling environment and an incentive system for enterprises to invest in training, rather than direct implementation. Expanding CBT&A requires transparent mechanisms for registering partner organizations and accrediting assessment centres, alongside robust quality assurance to gain industry recognition. GoB should invite private sector and trade unions to participate in this process. Another related pre-condition is to create pools of trained and certified trainers and assessors for both the public and private sectors by NSDA/BTEB.
Targeted users /Beneficiaries	GoB (NSDA, TMED/DTE, BTEB, BMET, local government, TTTIs, public TSCs/ TTCs), BEF, NCCWE, Private training providers, local chambers of commerce, entrepreneurs, specialised CBOs (BBDN; OPDs, UCEP, SIYB Foundation, etc.). End beneficiaries: NEETs, unemployed graduates, Low skilled women/men; returning migrants, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Lack of clarity on governance within GoB (between NSDA-DTE and NSDA-BTEB for training and assessments, including accreditation), which spearheads CBT&A has slowed down expansion. Existing coordination challenges and lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities between NSDA/TMED/BTEB/BMET. NSDA, VTIs, TTTIs and BTEB capacity challenges (HR and finances) limit expansion and quality assurance. A strategy and guideline is required for large and systematic roll out of CBT&A across system, for private provisions and at higher levels as well. Shortages of teachers and trainers need urgent addressal; CBT&A L4 certification needs to be mandatory and part of a CPD plan. IMDC use needs institutionalisation and continuous mentoring support. Vision for Professional Development of TTTIs/MTIs needs to be strengthened, with deeper understanding for private sector linking and technical skills training for teachers or more exposure visits to workplaces. Current system does not closely monitor effectiveness of learning outcomes on employability. Impact assessments are not conducted without external funding. An M&E system needs to use data for continuous improvement of training and assessment services within TTTIs, VTIs.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Positive response from employers, learners about effectiveness of CBT courses and assessments; however, longer duration of the courses is required focusing on higher level of skills. 3521 teachers/trainers/industry instructors, 250 master trainers and 20 principals have benefited from professional CBT&A training (L4/L5/6) and 1214 from online learning platform of IMDC. A momentum has been built, which can be leveraged through follow up, creating a COP and by institutionalising collaboration. The Shift of IMDC to BTEB, together with a more strategic perspective, creates an opportunity to accelerate expansion.

ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	<p>Sharpen conceptualisation of skills needs and adapt existing courses to local requirements (longer internships, more practical aspects during industry-based training).</p> <p>Explore higher level CBT&A, dualization and mainstreaming CBT in long-term training.</p> <p>Explore specific high-in-demand occupations (also for talent partnerships) and pilot effectiveness of these occupations (courses of talent partnership) in close collaboration with private sector.</p> <p>When piloting, closely monitor impact and quality to improve relevance, effectiveness of training.</p> <p>Support GoB in setting up M&E system and allocate required resources to mentor and support field staff in monitoring, evaluation, data collection and reporting.</p>
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ILO SKILLS 21 PROJECT – EMPOWERING CITIZENS FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH (2017-2024)

Project DC/SYMBOL: BGD/16/04

Name of Evaluators: Sandra Rothboeck; Mohammad Nuruzzaman

Date: 10 June 2024

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Well planned localized TVET awareness campaign enforces local TVET initiatives and gets leveraged for national rollout
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The project collaborated with DTE to jointly conceptualize a targeted TVET campaign, ensuring participation from local TVET institutes, IMAB members and Employers' Forum (BEF), leading to a successful launch by the Education Minister in Sylhet in 2022. Expanding in 2023, the campaign targeted diverse stakeholders and built synergies with development partners like the World Bank, ADB, DFID, GIZ, and NGOs like BRAC, UCEP. Capacity-building workshops, job fairs, engagement with employers, career counselors, and a UN joint mission visit showcased successful practices. The government's repeated requests for technical support and allocation of resources beyond project areas indicate the campaign's effectiveness. Since 2024, the project has been providing technical support for a sustainable TVET campaign with resource allocation by TMED.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Participatory planning with local stakeholders is a key for a successful communication campaign on TVET. Further, well targeted communication materials are very effective. Collaboration with local VTIs, local government, schools and CBOs and using other channels including private sector networks (members of IMAB/BEF) is required. Joint events (e.g., Employers' forum, job fairs and campaigns) lead to effective and visible impact, leading to more enterprises participating, more job seekers attending and more interested potential learners enrolling in courses. It requires an active business sector seeking skilled people for continuation of skills training followed by gainful employment.
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	If a communication strategy is well planned and rooted in local contexts, jointly developed with local stakeholders and targeting specific groups, and if the private sector is in need for skilled employees and local associations are willing to engage, then a communication strategy can increase awareness about the benefits of TVET and entrepreneurship, and can attract more applicants from various backgrounds to join training, while more enterprises are willing to actively participate in training, OJT/internships and employment.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Increased # of candidates or parents aware about the TVET centers and course offers and benefits of TVET Increased # of enterprises participating in job fairs and employers' fora and ready to hire interns or employees
Potential for replication and by whom	TMED/DTE has already earmarked 2 Cr Taka for a national TVET week in 2024 to replicate campaign at national level. ILO Supported the planning and launch of the campaign. To sustain initiative, it requires that GoB sets up communication cells with dedicated professional resources.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	DWCP) Outcome 1; ILO's P&B Outcome: - 3: Full and productive employment for Just Transitions: Focus areas: 3.1 to 3.5 - 5: Skills and Lifelong Learning, to facilitate access to and transition in the labour market: Focus areas: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 The Project contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4, 5, 8
Other documents or relevant comments	Communication Strategy and action plan for Skills 21 was vital to guide the communication stream to increase effectiveness of Skills 21 project as transversal support; similarly, systematic planning with DTE for localized communication. Impact of campaign could be assessed systematically to see to what extent all target groups felt approached and who potentially was left out.



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Name of Evaluators: Sandra Rothboeck; Mohammad Nuruzzaman

Date: 10 June 2024

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Local level engagement of Private Sector leads to increased ownership and active contribution in MTIs/TTIs. TVET institutes can have a catalyzing role in fostering collaboration
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Localized initiatives show promising results with MTIs reaching better labour market outcomes due to increased private sector engagement as advisors, trainers, and employers. Increased recruitment/temporary hiring of certified industry trainers and assessors for teaching & training, and assessment strengthens delivering training and conducting assessment in the MTIs and TTIs. MTIs offering comprehensive services, including career guidance and placement, entrepreneurship and business incubation support, have become more dynamic, but continuous industry engagement is needed to raise awareness. Strengthening partnerships through IMABs and Employers' Forums have promoted collaboration, while granting VTIs more autonomy and resources is essential for delivering relevant training and maintaining labour market connections. Role of BEF, NCCWE, CBOs and local government can be further strengthened, and IMAB, Employers' Forum should get formal status and get professionalized.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Funding and enough human resources need to be made available for TTIs and MTIs and certain autonomy needs to be provided from the center so that MTI management, guided by IMAB, can use funds to expand and diversify activities for more demand driven services and better results. Ideally, along with RTO/AC status provision, QIPs are internalized and IMAB has formal structure for oversight and governance. A business plan for TTIs and MTIs should be linked to the QIP to be put forward to National Human Resource Development Fund (NHRDF) for funding of (a) expansion of industry trainers'/assessors' services, (b) delivery of additional services and income generating activities provided by the MTIs and (c) providing tailor made training and upskilling or certification offers relevant to both local enterprises and candidates (unemployed graduates, informal sector workers, employees seeking upskilling and RPL).
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	If framework conditions are provided towards more autonomy in TTIs and MTIs (IMAB, business plan, autonomy to raise and use funds), and if adequate availability of trained and certified teachers/trainers to fully assume their functions and responsibilities, more focus can be put from the TTIs and MTIs on reviewing performance and effectiveness of courses and services, quality of private sector engagement and outreach by building partnerships with specialized organizations and delivering well targeted training and support services to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Increased # of enterprises and their employees participating as instructors or assessors Increased # of enterprises graduates as hiring interns or employees (more women and other disadvantaged groups too); In increased # of candidates seeking enrolment into training
Potential for replication and by whom	Public and private training providers, counseling & entrepreneurship providers, RPL service providers, BEF, local government. DTE/NSDA/BMET/BTEB for specific strategic operationalization for roll out.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	DWCP Outcome 1-ILO's P&B Outcome: - 3: Full and productive employment for Just Transitions: Focus areas: 3.1 to 3.5 - 5: Skills and Lifelong Learning, to facilitate access to and transition in the labour market: Focus areas: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 The Project contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4, 5, 8
Other documents or relevant comments	Autonomous TVET institutes require legal autonomy, which is a much bigger legal and constitutional process that is required, which also is beyond the scope of any TVET project-initiative.



ILO SKILLS 21 PROJECT – EMPOWERING CITIZENS FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH (2017-2024)

Project DC/SYMBOL: BGD/16/04

Name of Evaluators: Sandra Rothboeck; Mohammad Nuruzzaman

Date: 10 June 2024

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Multistakeholder based collaborative effort to develop BNQF leading to widespread support and ownership by the government to ensure access to education and lifelong learning.
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The project collaborated with TMED/DTE and the Ministry of Education to jointly plan and execute the stepwise development process of a national harmonized Bangladesh National Qualification Framework (BNQF), integrating general education and technical vocational education frameworks. The BNQF process benefitted from high level stakeholder engagement with Technical Working groups, and involvement of more than 45 agencies including various government department, academia, educational institutions, industry associations, professional organizations, NGOs and worker's and employers', industry bodies, during 93 meetings which were facilitated by the ILO. Higher education institutions began implementing the accreditation manual immediately after the approval of the BNQF, based on which all universities are now developing and accrediting their courses. Similarly, the new curriculum framework for general education was developed and a new curriculum is taught to more than 3 million students/year. There is felt ownership for the BNQF from ILO's social partners and the TVET community involved. More efforts need to be made to raise awareness amongst the vast training provider community, private sector and workers/students to understand the benefit for lifelong learning and aim for BNQF relevant services (training and assessment/certification).
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Readiness and vision from top level government, to address fragmentation of education and skills development systems through harmonization. Prioritization of lifelong learning opportunities for all, through a qualification system which is permeable. Understanding that lifelong learning and skills development is NOT a government responsibility but requires private sector, trade unions, NGOs to take ownership of process so that training is need based, inclusive but also increases employability and hence, productivity in the workplace. Clearly committed funding and technical support from specialized agency to facilitate time intensive multistakeholder engagement, which is supported with active academic research and engagement with private sector. Ideally, there is one facilitating lead agency in place in the government, which facilitates the process and can mobilize variety of stakeholders. The BNQF is not an end in itself but needs, after endorsement, be enacted and implemented. This is a long-term process for which long term funding and human resources are to be committed.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	If the government recognizes the importance of lifelong learning and permeability within general education and vocational education and training, and if funding is made available to finance process, which includes capacity building of stakeholders, technical background studies and regular reviews and engagements, then the basis is laid for a joint vision and ownership of a BNQF to be developed and taken forward for implementation.
Indicate measurable impact & targeted beneficiaries	Awareness levels, commitment of stakeholders, inc. private sector, social partners & NGOs Ideally: # of training providers offering CBT&A, that is aligned to BNQF should increase. Ideally: # certified candidates according to BNQF should be more actively recruited.
Potential for replication and by whom	BNQF roll out requires funds, further capacity building of all departments involved and coordinated by NSDA, but also awareness campaigns and collaboration with BEF, NCCWE and CBOs/NGOs.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	DWCP) Outcome 1; ILO's P&B Outcome: - 3: Full and productive employment for Just Transitions: Focus areas: 3.1 to 3.5 - 5: Skills and Lifelong Learning, to facilitate access to and transition in the labour market: Focus areas: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 The Project contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4, 5, 8
Other documents or relevant comments	Develop a capitalization case study highlighting the multistakeholder process, intersection between coordination and technical working group inputs and fostering of dialogue as part of capacity building.

Annex 7: List of people interviewed or participating in FGDs, and participants of validation workshop held on 30 April, 2024

Women are highlighted italics and bold

SI No.	Name	Designation/ Organization
ILO Country Office for Bangladesh		
	Mr. Tuomo Poutianien	Country Director
	Mr. Gunjan Dallakoti	SME and Enterprise Specialist, ILO CO-Dhaka
	<i>Ms. Lotte Kesjer</i>	Chief Technical Advisor, Skills 21
	<i>Ms. Ligaya Dumaoang</i>	TVET and Skills Development Specialist, Skills 21
	Mr. Md. Anisuzzaman	Programme Officer (TVET and Centre of Skills Excellence), Skills 21
	Mr. Towhidur Rahman	Programme Officer (National Qualification Framework), Skills 21
	<i>Ms. Tanjilut Tasnuva</i>	Senior Programme Officer, ILO CO-Dhaka
	Mr. Saif Mohammad Moinul Islam	Senior Programme Officer, ILO CO-Dhaka
	<i>Ms. Farhana Alam</i>	Communication Officer, ILO Skills Programmes
	Mr. Mehbub ur Rahman Khan	Finance and Administration Officer, Skills 21
	M. Tamid Arif	Former M&E Specialist, Skills 21
ILO Regional and International Offices		
	Mr. Kishore Kumar Singh	Former CTA, Skills 21
	Mr. Tauvik Muhamad	Skills 21 Final Evaluation Manager, ILO-Jakarta
	<i>Ms. Pamornrat Pringsulaka</i>	Chief Evaluation Officer, RO Bangkok
	<i>Ms. Christine Hoffmann</i>	Skills and Employability Specialist ILO HQ, Geneva
	Mr. Gabriel Borado	Skills 21 Backstopper, ILO Delhi
Government of Bangladesh (GoB) Agencies		
	Dr. Md. Serajul Islam	Additional Secretary (Development), TMED, Ministry of Education
	<i>Ms. Fatema Jahan</i>	Joint Secretary (Development), TMED, Ministry of Education
	SM Bashir Ullah	Deputy Secretary (Development), TMED, Ministry of Education
	Dr. Jahangir Hossain	Director (Skills Standards and Curriculum), NSDA
	Mr. Pallab Kumar Hazra	Director (Planning & Industry Linkage), NSDA
	Engr. Aktaruzzaman	Director (Planning and Development), DTE
	Mr. S M Shahjahan	Deputy Director (Course Accreditation) Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB)
	Mr. Md. Shah Alam Chowdhury	Course Specialist, Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB)
	Mr. Salah Uddin Ahmed	Director (Training Operations), BMET
	Mr. Md. Rafiqul Islam	Deputy Director, BMET
Development Partners EU		
	<i>Ms. Jui Chakma</i>	Programme Manager–Education and Human Development, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh
Skills 21 Programme Partners		
	Mr. Md. Saidul Islam	Additional Secretary General, Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF)
	Mr. Joha Jamilur Rahman	Head of Training, Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF)
	<i>Ms. Aziza Ahmed</i>	Head of Operations, Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN)
	<i>Ms. Rubaiya Sultana</i>	Senior Program Officer, BBDN
	Mr. Shakil Akhter Chowdhury	Member, NCCWE; General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)-Bangladesh Chapter
	Naimul Ahsan Jewel	Member, National Coordination Committee for Workers Education (NCCWE)
	Mr. Shariful Islam Sabuj	Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP)
	Mr. Ferdous Ahmed	Member & former CEO, SIYB Foundation
Sylhet TSC (including IMAB and Employers' Forum)		
	Engr. Santush Chandra Debnath	Principal, Sylhet Technical School & College (STSC)-Sylhet
	Mr. Abdul Haque Qureshi	Former Job Placement and Career Guidance Officer, STSC

Sl No.	Name	Designation/ Organization
	Ms. Sarnalata Roy	IMAB: Representative, Sylhet Women Chamber of Commerce
	Mr. Md. Saleh Ahmed	Representative, Platinum IT
	Mr. Md. Monirul Haque	IMAB: Representative, Sylhet Welding
	Mr. Kamrul Hasan	Representative Hasan Trading International
Sylhet TSC – Ex-Students		
	Mr. Pradip Goala	Working in Tea Garden
	Mr. Md. Abdul Mukit	Self-employed Entrepreneur, ‘My Store Welding’
	Mr. Md. Rafiqul Islam	Trainer, RAC, and Entrepreneur
TTC Gaibandha (including IMAB and Employers’ Forum)		
	Mr. Md. Abdur Rahim	Principal, Technical Training Centre (TTC), Gaibandha
	Mr. Saiful Islam	Chief Instructor, Electrical, Gaibandha TSC
	Mr. Asif Ahmed Tomal	IMAB member, and Representative, Bangladesh Restaurant Owners’ Association
	Ms. Sahara Khurshid	IMAB member, entrepreneur, ‘Ghoroa enterprise’
	Ms. Shahnaj Begum	IMAB member, entrepreneur, ‘Shahanaj Boutique’
	Mr. Aktar Hossain	IMAB member, Disability Affairs Officer, JPUF, Gaibandha (a person with disability)
	Ms. Asma Khatun	IMAB member, entrepreneur, ‘Poshaki’
	Mr. Alamgir Hossain	Project Engineer, Prophan Group, Gaibandha
	Mr. Saidul Islam	Member of Employers’ Forum; CEO, HTS Computer and Metal
	Mr. Rejaul Karim	Tohura Engineering Workshop
	Mr. Aminur Rahman	Member of Employers’ Forum; Day Night Technical Service Center
	Mr. Ferdous	A One Tailors
	Mr. Touhidur Rahman	Member of IMAB and Employers’ Forum; Senior Vice President, Chamber of Commerce, Gaibandha
Gaibandha TTC – Ex-students		
	Mr. Md. Shakib	T.T.C, Gainbandha
	Mr. Md. Farid Mia	T.T.C, Gainbandha
	Mr. Md. Shaheen Mia	T.T.C, Gainbandha
	Ms. Ruby	T.T.C, Gainbandha (a person with disability)
	Mr. Abdul Motaleb Sarkar	T.T.C, Gainbandha
	Mr. Hadid Mia	T.T.C, Gainbandha
	Mr. Rahul Sarkar	T.T.C, Gainbandha
	Mr. Soaibur Rahman	T.T.C, Gainbandha
	Mr. Humayun Kabir	T.T.C, Gainbandha
	Ms. Mousumi	T.T.C, Gainbandha
	Ms. Shammi Aktar	T.T.C, Gainbandha
	Ms. Salma Aktar	T.T.C, Gainbandha
VTTI – Employers/ Entrepreneurs		
	Mr. Md. Rifat Islam Towfik	Entrepreneur, Rifat Engineering Workshop, Fultola, Bogura
	Mr. Md. Deluar Hossain	Entrepreneur, Nakta Engineering Workshop, Bazura, Bogura
	Mr. Md. Hasan Mahmud	Entrepreneur and Trainer of Hasan Computer Training Center, Latifpur, Bogura
VTTI – Trainers/ Instructors		
	Mr. Zinder Ali	Principal, Vocational Teachers’ Training Institute (VTTI), Bogura
	Ms. Mst. Rafia Sultana	Trainer, Automotive Trade, TTC, Bogura
	Mr. Md. Jahangir Alam Shemol	Trainer, Electrical & Online Platform, Zoba Unnayan, Bogura
	Mr. Md. Asrafal alam Sohag	Crafts Instructor, Electronics Technology, Kishorganj Polytechnic
	Dr. Md. Serajul Islam	Additional Secretary (Development), TMED, Ministry of Education
	Ms. Fatema Jahan	Joint Secretary (Development), TMED, Ministry of Education
	Mr. SM Bashir Ullah	Deputy Secretary (Development), TMED, Ministry of Education
	Engr. Aktaruzzaman	Director (Planning and Development), DTE
	Mr. Md. Ayub Ali Sarkar	Senior Specialist, TVET &SD, UCEP

	Engr. Joy Prakash Barua	Deputy Director, Programme & Innovation, UCEP
	Mr. Shakil Akhter Chowdhury	General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)-Bangladesh Chapter; General Secretary, BEF
	Mr. Naimul Ahsan Jewel	Member, NCCWE
	Mr. Pulak Ranjan Dhar	Member, NCCWE
	Mr. Md. Saidul Islam	Additional Secretary General, BEF
	Mr. Shariful Islam	Project Manager, OKUP
	Mr. Nymul Alam	Beneficiary
	Dr. Md. Rezanul Islam	Deputy Secretary, TMED, MoE
	Mr. Abul Baker Md. Touhid	Deputy Secretary, TMED, MoE
	Engr. Md. Faruk Reza	Curriculum Specialist, BTEB
	Dr. Indira Dhar	Deputy Inspector, BTEB
	Ms. Aziza Ahmed	Head of Operations, BBDN
	Ms. Rubaiya Sultana	Senior Program Officer, BBDN
	Mr. Md. Rafiqul Islam	Deputy Director, BMET
	Ms. Ismat Jerin Khan	President, SIYB Foundation of Bangladesh
	Mr. Md. Mustafizur Rahman	SIYB Foundation of Bangladesh
	Mr. SM Shahjahan	Deputy Director (CA), BTEB
	Mr. Prettom Chakraborty	Assistant Director, NSDA
	Mr. Md. Enamul Haque	Vice President, SIYB Foundation of Bangladesh
	Ms. Tanjilut Tasnuba	Senior Programme Officer, ILO CO-Dhaka
	Mr. Saif Mohammad Moinul Islam	Senior Programme Officer, ILO CO-Dhaka
	Ms. Sandra Rothboeck	International Consultant, ILO
	Mr. Mohammad Nuruzzaman	National Consultant, ILO
List of participants who attended online in the validation workshop		
	Mr. Zinder Ali	Principal, Vocational Teachers' Training Institute (VTI), Bogura
	Engr. Santush Chandra Debnath	Principal, Sylhet Technical School & College (STSC), Sylhet
	Mr. Moniruzzaman	Former Coordinator, STSC
	Mr. Kamruzzaman	Principal, Jamalpur TSC
	Mr. Abdul Matin	Bangladesh Sweden Polytechnic Institute (BSPI), Kaptai, Rangamati
	Mr. Pradipta Khisa	Feni Polytechnic Institute (FPI), Feni
	Mr. Md. Abdur Rahim	Principal, Technical Training Centre (TTC), Gaibandha
	Mr. Ziaul Haque (In-charge)	Institute of Marine Technology (IMT), Bagerhat, Khulna
	Mr. Lutfur Rahman	Bangladesh Korea TTC (BKTTTC), Dhaka
	Mr. Niamul Shahin	BKTTTC, Dhaka
	Mr. Md. Nuruzzaman	BKTTTC, Chattogram

**Total no. of interviewees/ participants of FGDs, and participants of validation workshop
= 103 (27% women)**

Another 10 participants were online during the validation workshop.

Annex 8: ILO Skills 21 – Performance Tables of KPIs

OUTCOME ACHIEVEMENT					
Indicator	Baseline	Target (end of project goal)	Result achieved	Was target met	Details
Outcome 1. Improved Quality of the TVET / skills development system					
Output 1.1. A Bangladesh National Qualification Framework (BNQF) ensuring harmonization of the qualification pathways across primary, secondary, technical and higher education					
Harmonized or unified Bangladesh National Qualification Framework (BNQF) structure is finalized and endorsed	No unified national qualification framework ; NTVQF is in place	Harmonized or unified BNQF developed and endorsed by GoB by June 2023	Partially achieved	Partially	On track; MoE published and launched BNQF; Bangladesh Accreditation Council finalised and implemented BNQF Accreditation manual for Higher Education; BNQF National Quality Assurance System (NQAS) Manuals for TVET, draft BNQF legislation, and draft implementation guidelines developed and submitted to DTE. <i>Pending: Enactment, adoption of legal framework, NQAS Manual and other implementation guides</i>
Output 1.2. Expanded delivery of Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBT&A) for trainers, assessors and managers in education and training institutions					
Improved service provisions by two CSEs for generating more qualified trainers and assessors	No CSEs in place	Two CSEs operational by 2023	Partially achieved	Partially	Two teachers' training institutes (VTTI and TTTC) started to perform as CSEs; they completed implementing their QIPs. 3,521 trainers/ assessors, 250 master trainers and 20 managers (19% female, certification 69%) were trained and certified using the improved CBT&A Level 4, 5 and 6 teacher training programmes respectively <i>Pending: Formal status as CSE through BTEB</i>
Output 1.3. Better quality learning programmes and materials available for TVET teachers, students and other participants					
IMDC established with the focus of distance learning programmes	None	One IMDC operational by 2021	Partially achieved	Partially	The Instructional Material Development Centre (IMDC) is operational with modern facilities (equipment and software); IMDC trained a total of 1,214 trainers who developed better quality learning materials; trained teachers are conducting training in e-learning at their institutes for other teachers. <i>Pending: Assurance for HR and financial allocation Mechanism and quality assurance</i>
Improved training materials are being used in the training	None	One IMDC operational by 2022	Partially achieved	Partially	The development of e-learning courses on CBT&A-Level 4 on Graphic Design, Care Giver, etc. are completed and piloted with BTEB; the e-learning concept has now been included in the national qualifications of Level 5 & 6 and was recommended for e-Campus as tools. <i>Pending: Evidence for use and application beyond pilot cohorts.</i>

Outcome 2. Improved Access to and Equity within the TVET / skills development system through TVET model institutions					
Output 2.1. Seven existing TVET institutions (including one in CHT) have become model institutions for inclusive, environmentally conscious, quality and labour market - responsive skills development, holding the RTO designation and performing as BTEB assessment centres					
Number of training completers in the reformed skills development system (gender segregated information)	None	13,000 training completers by June, 2023 (20% women) 80% of the programme completers got certificates by June, 2023	Achieved	Overachieved	18,356 training completers consisting of 6791 youths including 2312 females (34%) improved their capacity through national skills certificate programme, 4593 (686 in 2023) skilled/ semi-skilled workers including 701 females (15%), and 3498 including 1628 female (46%) potential and existing entrepreneurs become capable to start their own businesses, because of entrepreneurship development training (EDT). 3474 migrant workers and their family members received skills and entrepreneurship development training for economic reintegration
Number of training completers in the reformed skills development system (disability segregated information)	None	No target for persons with disabilities	Partially achieved	Partially	186 persons with disabilities increased their employability after they received different skills trainings (NTVQF), RPL and EDT programmes; 50 of them are currently in jobs; this was due to project's capacity building and advocacy supports to the partner TVET institutes for their training and partnerships with OPDs. <i>Pending: access barriers could only be partially addressed</i>
Percentage of programme completers (students) gain employment (wage & self)	None	70% gained employment or self-employment within 6 months of completing training by June 2023	Partially achieved	Partially	Around 60% not 70% of training completers are in employment until June 2023 (38% female employment); 61% of EDT completers are in businesses or in the process of starting their own businesses.
Output 2.2. Seven inclusive Model TVET institutions serve as benchmark for industry driven, inclusive and environmentally conscious institution-level governance and management					
Guideline developed for IMAB; Number of IMAB established and operationalized	3 Pilot IMAB established under TVET Reform Project	Guideline and criteria to form IMAB by 2018; 7 IMABs established with Model TVET Institutions by 2019; 7 IMABs are operational by June 2023	Partially achieved	Partially	Seven MTIs continued to engage in partnerships with their existing private sector industries that has borne fruits, with an outcome of 60% of the trained youths in gainful employment; Seven IMABs, Employers' forums and OPDs are active in the institutes to manage relevant activities such as industry coordination meetings, industry visits, job fairs, enrolment of persons with disabilities, on the job training and employment. <i>Pending: IMAB legal status, Employers' forum legal status MTIs have RTO/Assessment centre status but not MTI status</i>
Outcome 3. An enabled environment through improved Governance and Management of the TVET / skills development system					
Output 3.1. A Sector Wide Integrated Framework for TVET (SWIFT) investment developed for TMED					
Improved compliance to policy led changes in skills development system	None	A supportive policy environment is in place that supports coherent	Partially achieved	Partially	A sector wide integrated framework for TVET (SWIFT) developed for TMED by Skills 21 project for coherent sector (Skills development /TVET) planning and implementation.

		sector planning and implementation by 2021			<i>Pending:</i> Endorsement and implementation
Output 3.2. Increased capacity within the key TVET / skills development institutions and bodies for the dialogue, implementation, monitoring and review of TVET / skills development policies					
Improved coordination mechanism and management capacity are in place within TVET/ skills development governance structure and made operational	None	A supportive policy environment is in place that supports coherent sector planning and implementation by December 2022	Partially achieved	Partially	<p>NSDA submitted NSDP 2021 for cabinet approval;</p> <p>TMED introduced institutional governance training programme and improved the capacity of 151 TVET officials with Skills 21 project's technical support;</p> <p>DTE is developing sector performance monitoring framework under HCDP 21 project;</p> <p>Training on budgeting</p> <p>In 2021, NSDA, BTEB, DTE developed their capacities on skills qualification and teachers' qualification benchmarking with destination countries;</p> <p>All these capacity development measures are contributing to the improved coordination mechanism.</p> <p><i>Pending: clarity of roles and responsibilities and coordination flow between NSDA, TMED, DTE, BTEB</i></p>

Annex 9: Skills 21 communication and visibility materials list

- [Project Web page](#)
- [Project brochure](#)
- [ILO-EU contribution in Skills Development in Bangladesh](#)
- [Infographics Skills 21 project](#)
- [Model TVET Institutes](#)
- [Centre for Skills Excellences- SWIFT](#)
- [Roadmap of SWIFT and BNQF](#)
- [BNQF pathways](#)
- [BNQF structure](#)
- [Launching of campaign strategy](#)
- [Webinar on RPL](#)
- [International Skills conference 2019](#)
- [Skills 21 Launching event 2018'](#)
- [Signing of Skills 21](#)
- [Approval on pro doc](#)
- [Policy dialogue](#)
- [Career guidance training](#)
- [Consultation on MIS review](#)
- [Roundtable discussion on 8th five-year plan](#)
- [Skills Conference](#)
- [MoU with Ministry of Expatriate](#)
- [Online class- New normal](#)
- [NSDP revision](#)
- [World youth Skills day](#)
- [ILO supports the Government of Bangladesh for skills development for professional caregivers](#)
- [ILO organized an online webinar on the professional development of TVET managers in Bangladesh](#)
- [Awareness campaign to rebrand technical education in Sylhet, Bangladesh](#)
- [GoB with ILO developed an awareness-raising campaign strategy for the TVET institutes](#)
- [First-ever Level 5 Competency-Based Training and Assessment training for Master Trainers](#)
- [TVET institute organises "Bootcamp" for incubating start-ups](#)
- [Capacity building of TVET officials on mid-term budgetary frameworks \(MTBF\) and budget analysis](#)
- [Capacity assessment of Industry Skills Councils \(ISCs\) for better skills need analysis](#)
- [ILO supports the Ministry of Education to build the capacity of their TVET officials on institutional governance](#)
- [ILO supports the Ministry of Education to introduce awareness campaign for TVET enrolment](#)
- [The Government of Bangladesh launches the Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework \(BNQF\)](#)

Publications

Skills Matter BNQF report BNQF Brochure Increasing public awareness through comics TVET awareness campaign materials Greening TVET guideline Greening TVET brief Career dictionary Facilitators notes (Career Guidance) Student's workbook Brief on TVET delivery management Brief on issues related to overseas employment on NSDP	Brief on policy actions t improve teachers quality Recommendations on develop industry's role Brief on NSDP through gender lenses COVID-19 response plan for TVET Webinar report on RPL NSDP recommandations from dialogue Skills 21 Occupational Needs analysis IMAB Guidance QIP MIS Review Report TVET Situation Analysis
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Annex 10:

List of Tools, Implementation Guides, Publications under Skills 21

Criterion	Publication name
Policy	National Skills Development Policy 2022 and action plan 2022-27
Report	BNQF Report
	COVID-19 Response Plan for Bangladesh TVET sector
	Webinar report on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Migrant workers in Asia
Manual	Quality assurance manual
Guideline	Draft Implementation guideline
Training packages	Qualification packages (Competency standards, CBLM, and Assessment tools) for assessor, trainers and master trainers
	Qualification packages (Competency standards, CBLM, and Assessment tools) for Caregiving and Driving
	Revised qualification for three occupations (welding, R&C, sewing machine operation) incorporating green elements
	E-learning package for 1) trainers, 2) caregiving, and 3) graphic design
	Learning materials on green business for entrepreneurs
Guideline (MTI and CSE)	Model TVET institutes and Centre for Skills Excellence
	Quality Improvement plan
	Assessment tools
	Guideline for Institutional Management Advisory Board (IMAB)
Toolkit (Career guidance and job placement)	Career guidance and job placement manual for career guidance officers
	Facilitators notes
	Student workbook
	Career dictionary
	Flipchart on career path
	Learning cards
Greening TVET	Greening TVET guideline
	Institute specific action plan
Social Inclusion	Gender mainstreaming strategy and action plan
	Disability inclusion action plan
Skills Gap analysis	Occupational Skills Needs Analysis Report
	Study on skills gap analysis in ICT and RMG-T
	Situation Analysis of Bangladesh TVET Sector: A background work for a TVET SWAp
	Sector-Wide Integrated Framework for TVET (SWIFT): Synergies in Skills Development
Strategy	TVET awareness campaign strategy and action plan for TVET institutes
Tools for campaign (All the tools are kept in DTE website for customise according to their needs)	Poster- three types of posters (Youth, Employer and parents) Comic book in TVET myth buster Booklet on TVET information Sticker Leaflet with enrolment information Three Video documentary for campaign Influencers videos (15) Pool of career experts
Study	Research on comparability of TVET trainers' and assessors' qualifications of Bangladesh, with EU countries
	Tracer study on EDT, RPL and NTVQF

Annex 11: List of projects currently implemented in Bangladesh (NSDA_EU Skills Development Partner Working Group)

No	DP	Title	Period	Status	Modality ¹	Budget	Budget in BDT Crore ²	FundingSource	GoB Partners ³	Non-GoB Partners
1	ADB	Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program	10/5/2023-6/30/2029	Ongoing	RBL	USD 300 million	3,300.0	ADB, GoB	MoF	
2	ADB	TVET Teachers for the Future	10/29/2024-10/28/2029	Pipeline	RBL	USD 150 million	1,650.0	ADB, GoB	TMED	
3	EU	Human Capital Development Program for Bangladesh 2021 (HCDP-21)	7/1/2018-6/30/2025	Ongoing	Budget Support	Euro 79million	940.1	EU	ERD, TMED, NSDA	
4	GIZ	INTEGRATE	10/1/2023-9/30/2027	Ongoing	TC	Euro 4.8million	57.1	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development(BMZ)	MoSW,DSS, KCC, RCC, Satkhira & Sirajganj Municipality	
5	GIZ	Digital Skills to Succeed in Asia (DS2S)	1/1/2023-12/31/2026	Ongoing	TC	Euro 6.5million	77.4	GIZ		Univ.

Modality: RBL = Results Based Lending; TC = Technical Cooperation

Currency Conversion: 1 USD = 110 BDT; 1 Euro = 119 BDT; 1 Swiss Franc = 126 BDT; 1 CAD = 86 BDT

³ BPMI = Bangladesh Power Management Institute; BSREA = Bangladesh Solar and Renewable Energy Association; BTEB = Bangladesh Technical Education Bureau; DSS = Department of Social Services; DTE = Directorate of Technical Education; ERD = Economic Relations Division ; KCC = Khulna City Corporation; MEFWD = Medical Education and Family Welfare Division; MoC = Ministry of Commerce; MoE = Ministry of Education; MoEFCC = Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; MoEWOE = Ministry of Expatriate, Welfare and Overseas Employment; MoF = Ministry of Finance; MoHFW = Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; MoI = Ministry of Industry; MoSW = Ministry of Social Welfare; MoYS = Ministry of Youth & Sports; MPEMR = Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources; NSDA = National Skills Development Authority ; RCC = Rajshahi City Corporation; SREDA = Sustainable And Renewable Energy Development Authority; TMED = Technical & Madrasah Education Division

No	DP	Title	Period	Status	Modality ¹	Budget	Budget in BDT Crore ²	FundingSource	GoB Partners ³	Non-GoB Partners
6	GIZ	Higher Education and Leadership Development for Sustainable Textiles in Bangladesh (HELD)	1/1/2021-12/31/2024	Ongoing	TC	Euro 7.78 million	92.6	GIZ	MoE,SHED	ILO
7	GIZ	Skills Development for Sustainable Energy Solutions(Skills4SE)	3/1/2023-2/28/2026	Ongoing	TC	Euro 5million	59.5	GIZ	MPEMR,SREDA, NSDA, BTEB, BPMI	
8	GIZ	Professional Education for Industrial and Environmental Safety (PRECISE)	1/1/2025-12/31/2028	Pipeline	TC	Euro 7million	83.3	GIZ	tbd	tbd, industry, assoc., ISC...
9	GIZ	Skills training and employment promotion for women workers in Bangladesh	4/1/2024-3/31/2027	Pipeline	TC	Euro 8million	95.2	GIZ	NSDA	Skills Training Providers,CSOs
10	GIZ	Vocational Training in the Field of Renewable Energy (TVET4RE)	3/1/2025-2/28/2028	Pipeline	TC	Euro 5million	59.5	GIZ	MPEMR	
11	CAN	Promoting gender responsive TVET education in Bangladesh	3/31/2021-3/31/2026	Ongoing	Project	CAD 20 million	164.0	Canada	TMED	
13	ILO	Skills 21 – Empowering citizens for inclusive and sustainable growth	1/1/2018-6/30/2024	Ongoing	Project,TA	Euro 24million	285.6	EU	TMED, NSDA, DTE, BTEB, BMET, MOEWOE, 9-TVET Institutes	
14	JICA	The Project for Improvement of Equipment for Technical Education	3/13/2023-4/30/2025	Ongoing	Grant Aid	BDT 74.4 million	7.4	JICA	TMED	
15	JICA	The Project for Improvement of Technical Education for Industrial Human Resources Development	3/1/2019-6/30/2024	Ongoing	TC	BDT 15.4391 million	1.6	JICA	TMED	

No	DP	Title	Period	Status	Modality ¹	Budget	Budget in BDT Crore ²	FundingSource	GoB Partners ³	Non-GoBPartners
16	KOICA	Better Employment with competency-based Skills Training (BEST)	7/14/2019-12/31/2024	Ongoing	Project	USD 8.5 million	93.5	KOICA	MoEWOE, TMED	
17	WorldBank	Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET)	5/20/2021-12/31/2026	Ongoing	Project	USD 500 million (IDA-US\$ 300 million, GoB-US\$ 200 million)	5,500	WB, GoB	TMED, DTE MoEWOE, MoI, MEFWD, MoHFW	
18	UNESCO	ICT enabled Integrated Literacy and Livelihood	10/1/2023-4/30/2024	Ongoing	Project	USD 0.1 million	0.01	UNESCO, National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan	LSDS, MoYS	CSOs
19	UNIDO	Integrated Approach Towards Sustainable Plastic Use and Marine Litter Prevention in Bangladesh	2/22/2023-10/31/2025	Ongoing	Project	BDT 342.6 million	34.3	Norway Government	MoEFCC	Department of Environment
20	UNIDO	SWITCH to Circular Economy value chains project (SWITCH2CE)	1/1/2023-11/30/2025	Ongoing	Project, Global Project (multi country-multi sector)	Euro 4.56 million	54.3	Government of Finland	MoC	H&M and BEST SELLER (EU MNCs), Chatham House, Circle Economy Foundation, EIB and BGMEA
21	WinrockInt'l	Ashshash: for men and women who have escaped trafficking (Phase 2)	6/1/2023-5/31/2027	Ongoing	Project	Swiss Franc 9 million	113.4	SDC		