

The European Union's DCI-ASIE Programme for Bangladesh GoB

MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE TVET REFORM PROJECT

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FINAL REPORT

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Table of Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	III
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	III
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION.....	1
3 REVIEW METHODOLOGY.....	2
4 REVIEW FINDINGS.....	3
4.1 SPECIFIC EVALUATION QUESTIONS.....	3
4.1.1 Positive Impact on Target Groups.....	4
4.1.2 Respect for Aid Effectiveness Principles.....	7
4.1.3 Interaction with Other TVET-Related Projects.....	10
4.1.4 The Fellowship Scheme.....	11
4.1.5 Project Management.....	12
4.1.6 Internal Financial Management.....	14
4.1.7 Government's in-Kind Contribution.....	15
4.1.8 Coherence.....	17
4.1.9 Project Visibility, Dissemination, and Communication.....	18
4.1.10 Project Re-design.....	20
4.1.11 Future EUD Country Strategy.....	20
4.2 DAC CRITERIA.....	22
4.2.1 Relevance.....	22
4.2.2 Effectiveness.....	22
4.2.3 Efficiency.....	33
4.2.4 Impact (Including consideration of Examples of Best Practice).....	34
4.2.5 Sustainability.....	45
5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	46
5.1 KEY ISSUES.....	46
5.2 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS.....	47
5.2.1 Recommendations.....	49

ANNEXES:

- Annex 1: Terms of Reference
- Annex 2: Mission Schedule, including Details of Field Visits
- Annex 3: List of Persons and Institutions Met
- Annex 4: List of Documents Consulted and other Key Reference Material.
- Annex 5: Summary Proceedings of a Stakeholder Consultation Workshop convened on 31st January 2011
- Annex 6: PowerPoint Debriefing Presentation: “Draft Findings and Recommendations”

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BEF	Bangladesh Employers Federation
BEHTRUWC	Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (of MoLE)
BNFE	Bureau of Non Formal Education
BTEB	Bangladesh Technical Education Board
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CBT	Competency-Based Training
COEL	Centre of Excellence - Leather
CRP	Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed
CSDC	Chittagong Skills Development Centre
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DAM	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
DfID	Department for International Development, UK Government
DTE	Directorate of Technical Education (of MoE)
EC	European Commission
EC-NSDC	Executive Committee of the National Skills Development Council
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegation of the European Union (to Bangladesh)
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISC	Industrial Skills Council
LCG	Local Consultative Group
MAWTS	Mirpur Agricultural Workshop and Training School
MCCI	Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
MoC	Ministry of Commerce
MoE	Ministry of Education
Mol	Ministry of Industries
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPO	National Productivity Organization
NSDC	National Skills Development Council
NCCWE	National Coordination Committee for Workers Education
NQAF	National Quality Assurance Framework
NTVQF	National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health

PLCE	Post Literacy and Continuing Education
PMCC	Project Monitoring and Coordination Committee
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QAB	Quality Assurance Body
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTP	Registered Training Provider
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SCDC	Standards and Curriculum Development Committee
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDP	Skills Development Project (ADB and SDC-supported)
SSB	Standards Setting Body
STEP	Skills and Training Enhancement Project (World Bank supported)
TA	Technical Assistance
ToRs	Terms of Reference
TTC	Technical Training Centre
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCEP	Underprivileged Children's Education Programs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UoC	Unit of Competency
VTTTC	Vocational Technical Teachers Training College
WB	The World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document comprises the final report of an external mid-term review of the TVET Reform Project undertaken by two international consultants between 23rd January and 14th February 2011. The TVET Reform Project is a project with a value of Euros 16 million: 14 million Euros is being provided in the form of a European Union (EU) grant, complemented with one million Euros from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and one million Euros in kind from the Government of Bangladesh. Implementation commenced in December 2007. Activities, structured in two Phases, are planned to be completed in December 2012.

The purpose or specific objective of the project is "a market-oriented and flexible TVET system which responds to the demand for competitive skills of the modern sector as well as to the needs of youth and under-privileged groups". The project has five major components. Component 1 aims to review and strengthen TVET policies, systems and legislation at the central and decentralised levels. Component 2 seeks to enhance the flexibility, quality and relevance of TVET. Component 3 is concerned with the strengthening of TVET institutions through improved knowledge and skills of managers and teachers. Component 4 endeavours to improve skills development and enhance productivity and competitiveness in key growth and export-oriented industries in the formal industrial sector. Component 5 is concerned with increased access to TVET for underprivileged groups.

Review methodology included study of documents, field visits, participant observation in project events, and a series of stakeholder consultations, individual interviews and focus group discussions, including the convening of a major stakeholder consultation workshop and three debriefing events for validation and sharing of findings. Evidence accumulated and feedback generated led to the following findings and recommendations.

Taking into account the challenges of the development context, the amount that has already been achieved by the project mid-term stage is impressive. This includes the high levels of stakeholder consensus that have been built up and are being maintained, and the abundance and quality of materials generated together with best practices introduced. The project is among the very few development efforts in Bangladesh that exemplify a strong and active partnership among key stakeholders: government, industry, labour unions, civil society, training institutions, and development partners. Indeed, the project is serving as a public private partnership exemplar. The EU, together with its funding and implementing partner, the ILO, has won enormous respect for what it has already achieved with the TVET Reform Project and is now looked upon as a leader in the sector. The project is breaking new ground, including putting a national policy and qualifications framework in place, redefining TVET beyond its traditional boundaries – especially the way it is broadening inclusion; and its reorientation to prioritising industry needs and shifting emphasis from qualifications to competencies.

Component by component achievements are too numerous to list in full, but the following are among the most significant:

Component 1: The National Skills Development Policy that has been formulated and subjected to wide stakeholder consultation processes and which is on the point of being adopted; production of an important "Structure and Coordination" report and the development of a proposal for and current on-going development of the TVET data system.

Component 2: The National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework, on the threshold of becoming formalised; the development of impressive, fit-for-purpose, competency standards; the Standards and Curriculum Development Committees that have been established and which are functioning effectively; the high quality Programme Outlines that have also already been developed in accordance with the new competency standards.

Component 3: the high quality of: training module design; training materials generated; and training delivery observed.

Component 4: the high levels of industry engagement that has been effected; the success achieved in establishing four Industry Sector Councils – the first of their kind in Bangladesh; the establishment of the Centres of Excellence, for Leather and the Agro-food Processing Sector. The progress made with CoEL, in particular, is an exemplar for other sectors.

Component 5: The creative models that are being successfully pursued for social inclusion, including the mainstreaming of the disabled; the high levels of outreach and links that have been developed with other projects, creating a very significant multiplier effect; the groundbreaking nature of many activities challenging many of the stereotypes associated with traditional TVET in Bangladesh.

Inevitably, any project as wide-ranging, complex, and ambitious as the TVET Reform Project will be faced with major challenges. The following are among the most significant: levels of GoB capacity; the attention that needs to be given to a timely strategic review of project spending to identify scope for project fine tuning, and to assist prioritisation and forward planning; inter component cohesion and inter-project coordination; strengthening even further promotion of gender issues; reconciling some professional differences of perspective within the project team regarding Grade 8 entry qualification requirements for some courses; and further visibility and dissemination – especially in view of the fact that the MTR has itself helped to confirm that “there is a story to be told” with many outputs to be shared.

On the basis of all of the above, the following comprise a set of main recommendations:

To the Project Implementation Team:

- The time is now right, to take a major step up in levels of emphasis and efforts regarding visibility and dissemination of the project’s impressive achievements. This is especially in regard to the many “best practice” resource materials and procedures the project has developed and put in place. Crucial in this regard will be an enhanced web presence and capturing best practice training activity electronically. (A set of specific detailed practical suggestions in support of this major recommendation can be found in Section 4.1.10 of this report).
- Revisit the wording of entrance requirements in course/programme documents developed by the project in order that “Grade 8” completion is not misinterpreted as being an absolute barrier to entry in all circumstances.
- Undertake, as a matter of priority, a financial review to obtain a fuller understanding and quantification of anticipated projected spending during the remaining lifetime of the project, in particular to:
 - Assess the scope and appropriateness (if any):

- for transfer of funds between budget lines;
- for support of additional activities and interventions, judged to be priorities (such as the communications and dissemination activities recommended above, as well as the capturing and dissemination on video/DVD of exemplary training practice).
- Assist component advisers in formulating and prioritising further workplans for their own components.

To the European Union Delegation to Bangladesh:

- Lobby government regarding the urgency of needs (e.g. approval of the Skills Development Policy, addressing staffing issues, and setting up of the EC/NSDC Secretariat) and implications of delayed action.
- Help disseminate project outputs, lessons of success, and best international practice (e.g. encourage other projects to visit), and by decentralising Skills Development.
- Consolidate the position of advantage of the EUD in TVET and skills development in Bangladesh and take a leadership role, including the promotion of a future sector wide approach, and by assisting the setting up of the National Skills Development Fund.

To Industry:

- Lobby government regarding the urgency of needs (e.g. approval of the Skills Development Policy, addressing staffing issues, and setting up of the EC/NSDC Secretariat) and implications of delayed action.
- Take note of what has been achieved (e.g. in the leather sector). Inspire other sectors and widen sphere of influence.

To Labour Unions:

- Continue to work with project on strengthening worker groups' appreciation of and capacity to benefit from the projects efforts in TVET reform, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), worker upskilling, etc.

To Government:

- Expedite as urgently as possible:
 - formal approval and adoption of the Skills Development Policy, and its integral National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework.
 - The re-activation of the National Skills Development Council as a vibrant body providing proactive leadership support and guidance to the TVET sector through the new Executive Committee and setting up of its Secretariat.
- Take a strong leadership role in ensuring synergies, coordination, mutual reinforcement and lack of duplication of efforts between the TVET Reform Project, the Asian Development

supported Skills Development Project and the STEP Project supported by the World Bank, and activating the National Skills Development Fund.

- In this regard, the MTR strongly welcomes the proposal made in the 25th January 2011 PMCC meeting to consider constituting a Joint Steering Committee for all three projects. It recommends this course of action.
- Address critical shortages in staffing levels – particularly of BTEB and instructor cadres in training institutions. The project is unable to fulfil its commitment to build capacity without beneficiary human resources being in place. Moreover, it only has a one-time opportunity to do this, determined by the project lifetime.
- Take an active role in disseminating as urgently and widely as possible information about the TVET reforms, through all of the channels at government’s disposal and especially through the national media to the District levels.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The mission to undertake a mid-term review of the TVET Reform Project in Bangladesh, conducted by two international consultants, was formally launched on 10th January 2011. Three days were allocated for home-based study of a comprehensive set of project documents ahead of country mobilisation on 22nd January 2011. Three weeks of field work were there then undertaken, ending on 14th February 2011. Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the Mission are detailed in **Annex 1**.

In what follows, the project background and review methodology are set out briefly: Sections 2 and 3 respectively. Review findings (Section 4) are detailed in relation to a series of specific evaluation questions raised in the ToRs (Section 4.1) as well as the five DAC criteria: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability (Section 4.2). Lastly, the report presents a series of prioritised overall conclusions and recommendations.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

Inadequacies and failings of current TVET provision in Bangladesh in meeting skilled manpower needs are widely documented and agreed. These include: disconnection from the job market; lack of policy and regulatory frameworks; over-centralisation and lack of flexibility; a largely school-based, as opposed to work based, approach, emphasising qualifications rather than competencies; outdated approaches to curricula and vocational standards; limited provision to clientele with Grade 8 qualifications and above, with an almost total exclusion of under-qualified and under-privileged groups; emphasis on the formal economy and largely failing to address the skill needs of informal sectors; lack of engagement of industry; and huge problems of manpower resources – including numbers of management and instructors with attendant professional capacity; and no less significant constraints in terms of the condition of training facilities and the way they are quipped.

The TVET Reform Project was designed, and is being implemented, to make an important contribution to strengthening the TVET system and bringing about necessary transformations in some of these areas, as part of a wider set of complementary actions supported by other development partners. The most significant partner initiatives include the Skills Development Project (2009-13; value US\$52 million; Asian Development Bank, with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation as partner) and the World Bank loan funded Skills and Training Enhancement Project (STEP) (2010-16, total value US\$88 million).

The TVET Reform Project itself is a project with a value of Euros 16 million: 14 million Euros is being provided in the form of a European Union (EU) grant, complemented with one million Euros from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and one million Euros in kind from the Government of Bangladesh. Implementation commenced in December 2007. Activities are planned to be completed in December 2013. The ILO was chosen as the implementing agency, along with the relevant government agencies and concerned ministries. A main implementation contribution of the ILO is the provision of technical, capacity-building, expertise.

The purpose or specific objective of the project is "a market-oriented and flexible TVET system which responds to the demand for competitive skills of the modern sector as well as to the needs of youth and under-privileged groups". The project has five major components:

Component 1: TVET policies, systems and legislation reviewed and strengthened at the central and decentralised levels;

Component 2: Enhanced flexibility, quality and relevance of TVET;

Component 3: Strengthened TVET institutions through improved knowledge and skills of managers and teachers;

Component 4: Improved skills development resulting in enhanced productivity and competitiveness in key growth and export-oriented industries in the formal industrial sector;

Component 5: Increased access of underprivileged groups to TVET.

More detailed information on project background can be found in the Terms of Reference (ToRs) detailed as **Annex 1**. It is judged unnecessary, therefore, to repeat this information here.

3 REVIEW METHODOLOGY

Elements of the Review Methodology included the following:

- Study of Key project and other relevant documents and materials;
- Interviews;
- Focus Group Discussions;
- Participation in meetings and events;
- First hand observations of project activities, including field visits;
- Use of workshops, including the convening of a stakeholder consultation workshop on 31st January 2011 and the facilitation of reflection workshop with member of the project implementation team on 1st February 2011.

A list of key documents and materials consulted is detailed as **Annex 2**. A full mission schedule is presented as **Annex 3** and a list of persons consulted can be found in **Annex 4**.

In the presentation that follows, special weight is given to feedback, evidence and findings that has proved to be consistent i.e. emerging from more than one type of source (triangulation). Every effort has been made to ensure that all review activities were conducted in accordance with international best practice and research ethics. The independent nature of the review was stressed on all occasions. Every effort was made to give appropriate weight to positive and negative findings, both in looking for answers to questions raised in the ToRs and in reporting what emerged, with balance and objectivity. The developmental dimensions of the review were also kept to the fore. Wherever appropriate, constructive and practical guidance was offered to those involved in project implementation. Despite all of the above, the limitations of the review methodologies need to be acknowledged. Within the three weeks the mission had in Bangladesh, the MTR may not have succeeded in meeting the complete set of stakeholder representatives. There was also a common risk that stakeholders may have told reviewers what they thought they wanted to hear; or that some stakeholders may have had separate agendas that were not transparent, distorting the feedback they gave. Impressions gained from brief field visits and from participation in a small number of meetings and events may also not have been representative of the project as whole. However, the review team is confident that with careful cross-referencing using multiple sources and drawing from the team's considerable experience of working in Bangladesh, the findings of this MTR reflect a good representation of the actual project's status of progress.

4 REVIEW FINDINGS

4.1 SPECIFIC EVALUATION QUESTIONS

ToRs required the team to provide answers to the following specific questions. The extent to which:

- the project has already had a positive impact on its target groups (DTE, BTEB, BMET, public TVET institutions, polytechnics, private technical schools and centres, NGOs delivering non-certified, (very) short-term training); and on its final beneficiaries (employers' and workers' organisations, the underprivileged, regular TVET students and graduates);
- the project has respected the aid effectiveness principles of government ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results-orientation, and mutual accountability; and to come up with recommendations on how to improve; and
- the project interacts with other TVET-related projects and initiatives in order to avoid overlaps and contradictions.

Where appropriate, in respect of the above, the team was requested to come up with recommendations on how the project can be improved or strengthened during its remaining implementation period so that impact and success can be maximised.

The team was also asked to evaluate:

- the usefulness, for the achievement of the project objectives, of the fellowship scheme and a cost-benefit analysis thereof, if feasible;
- the management of the project and project-internal processes, with a view to yielding optimum results; in particular the number, qualification and use of staff dedicated to the project (at ILO, government and private sector);
- the project-internal financial management;
- the use and estimated amount of government's in-kind contribution;
- the coherence between the project document, the Technical and Administrative Provisions and the government's Development Project Proforma (DPP);
- the communication between ILO, government agencies/ministries and other actors;
- the visibility of the project and its results; and
- the redesign of the project for phase 2, i.e. in how far phase 2 now better responds to the needs and the current situation in Bangladesh.

Again, in relation to these areas, the team was asked to identify where the project could be improved or strengthened during its remaining implementation period so that impact and success can be maximised.

Additionally, the mission was requested to come up with examples of best practice which EU, ILO and/or government may use for similar on-going or future initiatives. During initial briefing with EU delegation staff on 23rd January, the team was also asked to provide pointers for possible relevant priorities for future country strategy, especially with the view of consolidating and building upon the

current investment as well as for skills development and poverty reduction in Bangladesh and the Asia-Pacific region more generally.

Findings in relation to each of these considerations are presented in turn, below, with the exception that examples of best practices are elaborated upon under discussion of 'Project Impact' in Report Section 4.2.4, rather than under Section 4.1.

4.1.1 Positive Impact on Target Groups

A stakeholder workshop, convened on 31 January 2011, brought together representatives from: government, industry, labour unions, training institutions, civil society, development partners, as well as members of the project implementation team. This provided an ideal environment in which to explore, in a systematic way, levels of consensus and perceptions regarding the extent to which the project has already had an impact and in what ways. Moreover, it also provided an opportunity to consider expected future impact during the remaining lifetime of the project and beyond.

The MTR team facilitated a group task, organised in three stages. For the purpose of this particular exercise, groups were organised along homogenous line. In other words, government representatives brainstormed together, industry representatives brainstormed together, and so on. The task was also organised in three stages:

- (a) the identification of key areas of achieved felt impact;
- (b) the identification of key areas of expected further impact; and
- (c) the identification of areas of responsibility where key stakeholders felt they themselves could make a contribution to achieving the desired impact.

Table 4.1.1.1 summarises the results of these deliberations. What comes across strongly is the huge felt impact the project has already achieved across a wide range of areas and also the sense of optimism for further impact as the project progresses. These findings also tended to correlate with feedback obtained through other sources during the course of the mission.

It is encouraging that all categories of stakeholder see ways they themselves can contribute to further project success. The strong sense of common purpose evident was among the striking impressions gained by the review team from the workshop event.

Table 4.1.1.1: Perceived Achieved Impact, Expected Future Impact, and Identified Stakeholder Supporting Roles

	Government (Group 1)	Government (Group 2)	Industry	Training Institutions	NGOs and Civil Society	Development Partners	The Project Implementation Team
Perceived Key Impact to Date	<p>NTVQ framework developed.</p> <p>Public private partnership established.</p> <p>Industry demand driven curriculum developed.</p>	<p>Increased uniformity of skill training in the country – in terms of recognition.</p> <p>Increased coordination between various government and non-government organisations in providing skills training.</p> <p>Development of internationally acceptable certification mechanism for skilled people.</p>	<p>Industry based training initiatives already established through project.</p> <p>Competency based curricula updates already in progress</p> <p>Need for reform now recognised by all stakeholders.</p>	<p>Increased demand for trained personnel.</p> <p>Positive progression.</p> <p>Capacity building in progress.</p>	<p>Awareness creation on TVET system and reform.</p> <p>Resources already partly developed.</p> <p>Systemic approach adopted towards TVET reform.</p>	<p>New modalities of technical support and training delivery.</p> <p>Increased awareness of TVET.</p>	<p>New systems for teacher training, competency based teaching and assessment, and NTVQF.</p> <p>Increased access for underprivileged groups.</p> <p>Stronger industry involvement: PPPs, Industry Sector Councils established, workplace training.</p> <p>Increased national investment in TVET.</p>
Expected further impact by end of Project	<p>Industry – training institute relationships further strengthened.</p> <p>Developed courses nationally accredited and internationally credible.</p> <p>Employment opportunities increased at home and abroad.</p>	<p>Further addition of resources: both qualitative and quantitative.</p> <p>Quick adoption and implementation of the new skills policy.</p> <p>Dissemination of TVET reform throughout the country.</p>	<p>NTVQ framework in place for all major skills.</p> <p>Labour productivity and quality improved.</p> <p>Further development of own brands and designs.</p>	<p>Skilled manpower upgraded.</p> <p>Increased linkages through public private partnership.</p> <p>Dropouts and unemployed given skills, including through placements.</p>	<p>Bridge building between the formal and non-formal system.</p> <p>Industry recognised competency based standards and accreditation.</p>	<p>Recognition of prior learning (RPL).</p> <p>Increased employability of trained persons.</p>	<p>Improved decision making and planning by government and partners through an effective NSDC.</p> <p>Additional: industry involvement and awareness; government commitment to reform; BTEB involvement; industry skills bodies.</p> <p>More coordinated TVET sector.</p> <p>Impact on working children.</p>

	Government (Group 1)	Government (Group 2)	Industry	Training Institutions	NGOs and Civil Society	Development Partners	The Project Implementation Team
Potential Role/Contribution	<p>Motivate the concerned government agencies to adopt the PPP model wholeheartedly.</p> <p>Take steps to ensure the continuity of skills development programmes by extending funding each year and EU funding to 2015.</p> <p>All concerned government agencies to expedite implementation of the project.</p>	<p>Help bring district chambers and associations, local government offices and technical institutions into an overall TVET network.</p> <p>Institutional capacity building.</p> <p>Support to implementation of apprenticeships.</p> <p>Help increase access for physically challenged to TVET institutions through divisional level initiatives</p> <p>Taking a leadership role to promote the coordinated involvement of all important stakeholders.</p>	<p>Support to apprenticeships.</p> <p>Capacity building of BTEB and BMET.</p>	<p>Recognition of standards.</p> <p>Counselling and guidance.</p> <p>Need based training and certification.</p> <p>Assessment on merit.</p> <p>Provision of practical experience.</p>	<p>Capacity building of training institutions.</p> <p>Advocacy and awareness raising campaigns.</p>	<p>Continuous advocacy for GoB commitments.</p> <p>Development of linkages between project and sector players.</p>	<p>More engagement with the ADB SDP * STEP.</p> <p>Access to extra resources (e.g. EQP and STAFF).</p>

4.1.2 *Respect for Aid Effectiveness Principles*

The project is among the very few development efforts in Bangladesh that exemplify a strong and active partnership among key stakeholders: government, industry, labour unions, civil society, training institutions, and development partners. In a departure from the common practice of treating development partnerships as “turn-key” projects, those project partners work together along every step of decision-making processes, from drafting the national skill development policy to agreeing to the detailed curriculum contents for each of the priority occupations under selected project sectors of industry. In contrast to traditional aid projects characterized by one-way flow, much of the work in this TVET Reform Project serves as a good example of true development cooperation, which lies at the heart of the Paris Declaration, calling for greater country ownership, alignment, harmonization, result-orientation, and mutual accountability.

Ownership

Of the afore-mentioned 5 Paris Declaration principles for aid effectiveness, the concept of ownership is arguably the most widely debated. Intended to measure how a developing nation is able to set its own strategy for reducing poverty, improve its institutions and tackle corruption, its interpretation ranges from seeing it as the rights to control funds and resources (often from the point of view of recipient governments) to seeing it as an indicator of responsibility, such as the existence of country leadership (often from a donor’s point of view, either to reassure themselves of proper management of tax payers’ funds or to avoid being accused of imposing their own agendas on host nations). Unfortunately, as was discovered by the formal evaluation of the Paris Declaration in 2007-2008¹, the idea of country ownership is often misinterpreted by seeing it as the purview of only central government players. Significantly, all partner countries involved in the evaluation reported serious capacity constraints in fulfilling their ownership responsibilities, both because of built-in limitations in their national systems, institutional structures and regulations, and because of the ways they deploy their resources. The evaluation further found that this narrow focus on central government ownership has restricted participation and responsibility-taking by other key stakeholders in the country, such as sector or sub-national players (provincial and local authorities), the private sector, and civil society.

The TVET Reform Project has been exceptional in its ability to garner active involvement by its key stakeholders in the activities of the various components, through which government, industry, civil society partners, government and non-governmental training institutions, and experts gather and openly debate their varying perspectives and interests, work through differences, and arrive at common grounds with a shared commitment to working towards the project purpose. The project team has been able to serve as both a technical input provider and a dialogue facilitator. The degree of consensus among all key stakeholders was clearly manifest at the MTR stakeholder consultation workshop. Another verifiable indicator of active ownership witnessed by the MTR team was the extraordinary scene in which senior government officials and industry representatives sat through discussion sessions for the entire Friday and Saturday – weekend in Bangladesh – to discuss curriculum standards of priority occupations in the selected project sectors.

¹ Wood, B; Kabell, D; Sagasti, F; Muwanga, N. July 2008. *Synthesis Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration*. Copenhagen: Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Danish Institute for International Studies (serving as Paris Declaration Secretariat). Available at: http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Subweb/paris_evaluation_web/files/pdf/eng/ENG-Report-chap1-5.pdf

Particularly noteworthy here is the strong ownership by the private sector, which the country depends on to employ TVET graduates. The establishment of Industry Skills Councils and new Centre of Excellence for Leather, along with plans to pilot various on-the-job training and apprenticeship models through the project, are all being carried out with enthusiastic zest. The industry not only feels the urgent need for skilled workers to become more productive and stay competitive in the global market, but also clearly sees the necessity of competency-based, large-scale job creation for a sustainable growth in Bangladesh.

Despite the strong appreciation by the evaluation team regarding levels of partnership and ownership of the project, there is still more that can be achieved. An ideal to strive for could include the future evaluation of achievement in terms of ownership using more concrete forms and evidence: such as the revised workplan, or mandate of DTE, BTEB, or BMET, with government's own financing.

Alignment

This concept measures how well the project aligns with the country's strategies, systems and procedures. As is the case in most other countries, it is reasonably easy to align project activities with Bangladesh's country strategies, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). It is much more difficult to achieve alignment with systems whose need to change forms the very basis for the project in the first place. The existing systems are saddled with procedures that are no longer able to respond to the pace of needs and demands. Challenges identified as rationale for the design of this project include: a centralized TVET system constrained by rigidity, thereby preventing flexible responses to emerging and specific needs in the job market; absence of a coherent policy, regulatory framework, or a quality assurance mechanism; lack of labour-market information; and exclusion of a large section of society who could both benefit from TVET and help fill the job market needs, such as underprivileged youths and women.

The MTR found severe staff shortage among public sector institutions in the TVET system in Bangladesh. Efforts are being made to seek support from none other than the Prime Minister to expedite approval of updated recruitment rules so that TVET teachers can be appointed at key institutions: the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Bureau of Manpower Employment & Training (BMET) and Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB). However, staff shortage is endemic throughout the entire education sector, and as a matter of fact, the whole public service in Bangladesh. Therefore, the project would be better advised if it were not to rely solely on the public sector TVET system. Alternative avenues need to be explored to diversify the channels through which project results can be delivered. Several stakeholders have pointed out that private training institutions account for over 80% of TVET service providers in the country. Further strategic partnerships are encouraged to complement the institutional capacity strengthening work being done among government institutions. Current project activities, such as training of mixed groups of trainers from government colleges, private training institutions, and industry, can be expanded and developed in more creative ways to meet the huge and pressing demands within a relatively small window of opportunity.

Harmonisation

Meeting the criterion of harmonisation requires development partners to coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication. Within the project, streamlining procedures of the EC and the ILO – both large bureaucracies – does pose occasional challenges, especially in terms of financial management. These are, however, ably dealt with by management teams of both offices with a good spirit of cooperation.

The MTR team sees the need for harmonisation more at the sub-sector level, where major investments have also been made by the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, with more development partners expected to join in. Currently, the EC-supported TVET Reform Project, the ADB and SDC-supported Skills Development Project (SDP), and the World Bank-supported Skills and Training Enhancement Project (STEP) each operates independently from each other, without any active mechanism for coordination. The TVET Reform Project, having progressed furthest in implementation, has been pro-active in keeping the other two projects up-to-date with invitations to various project activities and sharing of reports and project resources. However, there has been little sign of mutual engagement coming from the other two projects. While this may be attributable to either the state of progress or management arrangements in SDP and STEP, harmonisation is unlikely to happen in the future without someone taking a strong leadership role to ensure that coordination does happen at all levels, and that information is shared among all projects in the skills sub-sector. The newly appointed Acting Director General at DTE clearly sees the need for such coordination and sharing, and makes great efforts in ensuring up-to-date communication among the three projects. The EC can also play a facilitative leadership role in coordinating development partners who are interested in skills development in Bangladesh, possibly through a re-activated Education Local Consultative Group (ELCG) Working Group on Skills, together with SDC (which currently holds the chair of the Working Group), the DG-DTE, and leaders from industry. The EU Ambassador to Bangladesh is also happy to play a part in coordinating heads of missions among member states and advocating skills development at the highest level of government.

In the long run, however, complete harmonisation will require a Bangladesh Skills Development sector plan. The MTR team recommends that all key project stakeholders get together and do some forward thinking about such a plan and issues of harmonisation, as soon as the National Skills Development Policy is formally approved. The team also recommends that the EC considers playing a leadership role through its next Country Strategy Paper, building on the achievements of this project and the lessons learnt from it.

Results-orientation

The project has been designed to be result-oriented. Each of its 5 components is expected to produce specific, practical outcomes. Combined, the 5 components form a comprehensive package to move the TVET system in Bangladesh to become more relevant and capable of responding to market demands.

The whole idea of moving from an obsession about certificates and qualification to being able to prove one's competence is in fact the very essence of result-orientation. In the MTR team's view, this aspect is the most straight-forward principle for the project, since the consequences are simple and direct: a skilled worker who can demonstrate her or his ability to perform required tasks on the job will be employable. Those who cannot will remain jobless regardless of how many diplomas they possess.

Mutual Accountability

The notion that both donors and host country partners are accountable for development results is probably the most neglected item among the 5 Paris Declaration principles, everywhere. Possibly as a side effect of the common misinterpretation of country ownership, and the donors' tendency to tiptoe around the issue of host nation's responsibility for accountability due to potential political sensitivity, information flow tends to be a one-way street: from those implementing the project to the perceived "primary owner" of the project, which privilege is conventionally assigned to the central government of the host country. This project is not exempt from this now well-established convention. Project Steering Committee (PSC) and Project Monitoring and Coordination Committee (PMCC) meetings for the TVET Reform Project, albeit more interactive, normally consist of presentations of updates by the

project implementation/TA team, followed by a question and answer period. Likewise, progress reports are prepared by the technical advisory team and sent to government counterpart agencies and donors, accounting for what the TA team has done towards achieving project results.

If project partners are serious about this principle, then it is only natural that all key institutions involved should account for their respective progress towards project objectives. With all three main government agencies represented, the PMCC is an ideal venue to start this practice of mutual accountability. DTE, BTEB, BMET are all involved in various activities across the 5 components. It would be good to hear about the achievements by government partners, beside those carried out by the project's TA team, in those meetings. In the future, other key stakeholder groups, such as industry, NGOs, and training service providers, can also be invited to report on their respective progress under each result area they are involved with. Such a model can gradually be introduced at the Steering Committee level. When this practice of mutual accountability becomes a comfortable habit, it is likely that good indicators for ownership, alignment, harmonisation, and result orientation, can also become more easily achievable.

4.1.3 *Interaction with Other TVET-Related Projects*

The success the project is having, interacting with other TVET related projects and relevant initiatives, is one of its noteworthy features creating a considerable multiplier effect. Component 5, for example, includes on-going collaboration with the ILO's Urban Informal Economy (UIE) project for working children; with UNICEF, for out of school youth through Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC) project; with UNDP projects in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and with Dhaka Ahsania Mission and another team of ILO advisors in urban locations in support of the Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction (UPPR) project. It has also pro-actively sought partnerships with NGOs and industries, such the pilots involving UCEP, the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed, Interfab and Marks and Spencer, to model inclusion of physically challenged workers into mainstream workforce.

However, achieving further synergy with the other two major skills projects – STEP and SDP, is what will be of paramount importance for the maximisation of impact. There is a degree of risk that aspects of these projects will become parallel, competing, initiatives unless the strongest forms of coordination are developed and maintained, and an even greater risk of efforts being unnecessarily duplicated.

GoB, through the NSDC, and senior officers of relevant ministries, and staff of the DGTE, BETB and BMET, is in the best position to ensure this strong coordination, and is actively encouraged to do more in this regard. The MTR welcomes a suggestion made in the 25th January 2011 PMCC meeting to consider setting up a combined Project Steering Committee providing overview guidance for all three TVET projects and believes that this can only help to further strengthen inter-project synergies.

It is vital that senior officers of all three projects prioritise sufficiently their attendance at coordination meetings of their partner initiatives. The MTR was impressed that the Chair of the 25th January PMCC meeting insisted on ensuring that relevant officers were present.

At the level of individual component advisers, considerable professional interchange reportedly takes place. The MTR team was impressed to observe, for example, an SDP consultant attending throughout a January/February 2011 CBTA training programme as a participant observer.

It is at the project strategic management level where greater interaction would be especially beneficial. Chief Technical Advisers and respective development partners could try to meet more regularly, either as two discrete groups and/or as a combined forum. At present, however, a STEP counterpart is not yet in post. STEP is also coordinated from a regional office in Delhi, making liaison more challenging.

The TVET Reform Project, because it has already achieved so much, compared to its two partner projects, also now enjoys considerable first mover advantage. The MTR team believes that it is important to exploit this strongly and has more to say on this issue under visibility and communication below. The more that the TVET Reform Project resources, policy and frameworks, competency standards and curricula and ways of doing things are broadcast with a degree of urgency, the less likely it is that these will be overlooked, the less likely that efforts will be duplicated, and the more likely it will be that other projects and initiatives will use and build further on these achievements. As also noted in Section 4.1.6, there may possibilities for closer collaboration to solve some of the resource challenges that are anticipated with regard to upgrading and supplying equipment for programme trials and pilot activity.

The MTR also acknowledges that the TVET Reform Project, for its part, makes considerable efforts to ensure that interested stakeholders are kept informed and involved with developments. One donor representative interviewed, reported receiving more information from the TVET Reform Project, in which that representative was not directly involved on the Project Steering Committee by an invitation from the EC, than from another project concerning which that representative was a co-financier Steering Committee member.

4.1.4 *The Fellowship Scheme*

It was agreed between the EC Task Manager and the MTR Team at the first briefing at the Delegation that Undertaking a full cost benefit analysis of fellowship activity was not the intended expectation in the ToRs, as it would be judged impractical, both within the time constraints of the mission and methodologically. Initially, as a compromise, it was intended to use a structured questionnaire instrument that focussed, among other things, upon behavioural changes and application of new knowledge and insights. Indeed, an instrument of this kind was designed. However, upon finding out more about the nature of the fellowships, the plan to use a questionnaire was abandoned. The principal reason was to do with the fact that it was learned that a number of fellows were selected from the highest levels of government and it was judged that use of a questionnaire would neither be politic nor yield much response.

Despite this context, the MTR team feels it has accrued a good understanding of both the benefits and shortcomings of interventions of this kind and crucial elements that can affect their impact. This has been through studying fellowship evaluation reports (including those completed by individual beneficiaries), talking to members of government and other stakeholders, the project implementation team, as well as to beneficiaries themselves.

On the plus side, fellowships have been instrumental in changing attitudes and broadening horizons, particularly showing what can be possible. They have also resulted in a number of key benefits that would have been taken as pre-requisites in other contexts but which are part of the challenges of development. These include: creating access to key “gatekeepers” that the project would not otherwise have enjoyed, and winning their interest and good will in the project; allowing these “gatekeepers” the chance to get to know each other, and in a sense creating a set of “batch mates” who become project champions. This kind of influence won through fellowships is immense. The

MTR team also notes that feedback from beneficiaries on the value of their experience, both in face to face interviews and in project evaluation reports, is highly positive.

On the minus side, by far the greatest frustration that has been felt relates to the significant number of occasions when those who have benefited from fellowship experiences are transferred from their posts. Their new insights and/or enhanced capacities and influence are then lost to the project. The project EC has made efforts to imposed conditionalities on fellowship participation by demanding a minimum six-month stay on the job upon return from an overseas visit. However, with the high status level of those who are involved, these are difficult if not impossible to enforce on all occasions. A further concern is that sometimes beneficiaries are nominated by government with greater weight given to seniority (including length of service) and power, rather than on the degree of potential to benefit from the experience and scope to apply new knowledge and insights gained. In other words, political considerations can and do sometimes over-ride those of a technical nature.

With regard to best practice (and acknowledging that the challenges described above are not exclusive to Bangladesh) the MTR team is especially pleased to be able to draw to attention the fellowship “Portfolios” developed and used by the project. These provide a comprehensive framework for each fellowship experience and include background documentation, well-articulated explanations of the purpose of the fellowship and what is expected, including observation and question guidelines and checklists and other useful proformas. Such a tool plays a very important part in helping to ensure that fellowships are as effective as they can be.

The project has tried hard to promote female participation in fellowship experiences. Despite these efforts, females have so far represented just 12% of total participation (10 out of 83 beneficiaries) and even greater efforts, possibly including stronger conditionalities, are recommended to try to raise this percentage level higher.

In summary, the MTR concludes that fellowship elements of the programme have played an important part in contributing to project success. It is difficult to see how the benefits could have been assured by other means in the development context in which the project resides. For the most part, the project design and the project implementation team appear to have done as much as is reasonably possible to ensure that maximum benefit results from them.

4.1.5 Project Management

ToRs included a specific requirement “to evaluate the management of the project and project-internal processes, with a view to yielding optimum results; in particular the number, qualification and use of staff dedicated to the project (at ILO, government and private sector); the project-internal financial management”. The in-kind contribution of government and internal financial management are examined separately below. This sub-section of the report will be confined to comment on observations on project management and internal processes.

Overall, the MTR is impressed with project management. There is no doubt that its quality is the greatest single determinant of what has been achieved so far. In particular, and with implications for lessons learning it is wished to highlight the following observations.

- Technical staff are of very high calibre, with appropriate experience and expertise for the roles they are expected to perform. Staff are extremely committed and hard-working – with a culture of working very long days and into weekends. This is almost to the point of concern,

and the MTR has encouraged the team to make more time for recreation and team-building social activities to avoid early “burn out”. There is no doubt that the EU and the beneficiary government gets enormous value for money from the TA investment.

- With a view to possible lessons learning for future projects, the management structure appears to work very well. National and international experts complement each other well in positions of mutual respect and learning, and the project appears to have achieved an ideal balance of experience and youth. Senior Bangladeshi team members play a critical role, in view of the respect in which they are held within the system, as interlocutors, creating access, interpreting the political context - and providing guidance as to how this should best be negotiated.
- The ILO, by virtue of its position within the UN family and its long standing role in labour market matters, commands special respect, credibility and prestige. There is no doubt that its reputation, coupled with its genuine technical comparative advantage and organisational strength (from back-stopping to its worldwide network of resources and “know how”) contributes very significantly to project success. In Bangladesh it enjoys a long history working with labour unions. Through this project, industry has also begun to appreciate the advantage of associating themselves with a brand that symbolizes internationally acceptable workplace standards. It is proving to be a very strong project partner.
- The team operates as a responsive and reflective manner. The MTR was impressed to learn of the internal self-evaluation workshop the team had found time to organise. The external stakeholder consultation workshop convened on 31 January 2011 as part of the Review, revisited the team’s own assessment of strengths weaknesses opportunities and threats. While it became clear that changes have occurred over time, particularly with regard to increased strengths and reduced weaknesses, the event helped to confirm the perceptiveness of the team’s own original assessment and the appropriateness of the actions and strategies it subsequently adopted.
- The extent to which the project, through its management, has been able to engage industry, civil society, and other private sector interests in project involvement is one of the most exceptional project findings and deserves to be flagged as an important example of international best practice.

While it is pleasing to be able to find so positively, there are always areas where future improvements can be made. Consequently, and with a view to priorities that could potentially yield the greatest positive effect, the MTR has encouraged project management to:

- Step Up Visibility/Dissemination Efforts. (For further elaboration and justification, see Section 4.1.10).
- Give greater prioritisation to forward financial planning. (For further elaboration and justification, see Section 4.1.6).
- Seek even greater opportunities and means for promoting further inter-component cohesion, including through the following:
 - Refine pilot activity and monitoring and evaluation approaches, to the extent practicable, to ensure maximum learning on pilot effectiveness and, in particular, key variables (e.g. differences in impact/performance between government and private institutions, resource rich and resource deprived environments, and the significance of pedagogical as opposed to skills based capacity development).

- Make time for experience sharing, staff meetings, social events and recuperation periods.

These become the basis of specific recommendations in the concluding section of this report.

4.1.6 *Internal Financial Management*

The project's financial system operates along standard ILO lines, with all the checks and balances in place that apply to ILO financial operations across the globe. There is every reason to be confident, therefore, of its robustness and safeness. If anything, the strong procedures in place can and do create some challenges for project implementation in that the "ILO way of doing things" does not always mesh completely with the requirements and needs of an EC funded project. For instance, both the EC and the ILO have different standard and mandatory budget lines and this does not make reconciliation for reporting purposes at all straightforward. Flows of funds from the EC to the ILO are triggered in the project contract when certain disbursement levels of previous tranches have been expended. However, the time this has taken has, on at least one occasion, impacted upon implementation by constraining further spending until funds arrived. These issues are flagged for the sake of record and completeness, but it is accepted that they are constraints that the project in all likelihood will need to continue to work under, as no easy solutions present themselves. Nevertheless, they are issues that should be revisited in the long term with a view to streamlining future cooperation.

The MTR has observed that heavy burdens of responsibility fall on both the Chief Technical Adviser and component advisors, for financial matters. This may not be the best use of their professional skills and development expertise. Technical staff are clearly heavily stretched in addressing their workplan priorities. The ILO backstopping team may wish to consider whether means can be made available to provide further support from a finance expert, especially in view of the observations made below regarding the importance of an urgent strategic review of project spending.

The project has provided the MTR team with data on project expenditure patterns to date. These are summarised in the table below. On the basis of these data, levels of expenditure appear fairly commensurate with elapsed and remaining time of project implementation. This is especially so, taking into account the fact that major procurement of equipment (a large spend) has still to take place. The significant amount of expenditure is an expected correlation with the high levels of activity that have been achieved and the outputs that have already been delivered. This momentum is expected to continue and may even accelerate. Consequently, there is unlikely to be reason for concern that the project will under-utilise its available budget by the time of project completion.

Table 1: Planned Expenditure Compared to Actual Expenditure

	Planned Expenditure	Planned Expenditure as % of Total Budget	Planned Expenditure by Dec-10	Planned Expenditure by Dec-10 as a % of Total Budget	Actual Expenditure by 24 Jan-11	Actual Expenditure By 24 Jan-11 as % of Total Budget
Dec-08	€ 1,848,190	12.7%	€ 8,254,970	56.9%	€ 5,728,227	39.5%
Dec-09	€ 2,615,318	18.0%				
Dec-10	€ 3,791,462	26.1%				
Dec-11	€ 2,904,057	20.0%	<i>Additional Funds already committed to 31.12.11 = €1,188,960</i>			
Dec-12	€ 2,430,442	16.8%				
Dec-13	€ 910,531	6.3%				
TOTALS	€ 14,500,000	100.0%				

Rather, there is cause for flagging an early warning of a mismatch between what the project would still like to do, and is committed to do, with what the remaining budget can support unless appropriate strategies are identified and corresponding actions are taken. One issue, flagged by the implementation team, relates to the cost of equipment judged necessary to support piloting of competency based training for various trade modules. Initial project assumptions were based on an upgrading of existing resources: in other words, that the project would only be supplying additional equipment. However, some of the pilots relate to new skill areas that have been highly prioritised from needs assessments. Courses in these areas will need to be resourced from a zero equipment base. One solution here, may be to explore the possibilities of financial contributions to equipment resourcing from other means, including, for example, the World Bank funded STEP and the Asian Development Bank Skills Development Project, in areas of complementarity. Soundings from these projects suggest that this could be an avenue worth exploring further. However, since these other projects are still in their preliminary stages of preparation, any complementary contribution they might be able to make will unlikely to be in time to meet the immediate needs for this project's pilot initiatives.

At the time of the review, the project was not in a position to provide the MTR team with detailed projections against budget lines with regard to: further expenditure envisaged; where there is a strong risk of overspending; and where savings could be made or under-spending is envisaged. Information of this kind could be used to develop a case for requesting EC approval of movement of funds from one budget line to another and regarding which the review team would have been willing to take a position. Therefore: it is strongly recommended that an exercise should be undertaken, as a matter of priority, to generate the data required to take a strategic overview of project spending based on the implications of any findings.

Ideally, the data should also be disaggregated by component. Component advisors have expressed a strong need for prior information of this kind for forward planning and prioritisation purposes. Currently, component advisors do not have a sufficiently clear idea of what further resources are available to them to support their remaining planned activities.

4.1.7 Government's in-Kind Contribution

Government's in kind contribution includes its commitment to, ownership of, and involvement in the project. Many senior and other staff give many hours of their time to participate fully across all areas

of project activity including outside of their normal working hours. This occurs to such a high degree that it deserves to be acknowledged as a distinctive element of what is being and has been achieved. The number of very senior government officials who have spoken on camera expressing their support of project objectives as part of promotional videos and the numbers of high level staff who have been observed at weekends and late evenings participating in competency standards development and other committees are all testimony to the role that government plays in contributing to the TVET Reform process.

What has also been a striking MTR impression is the level of realism and openness on the part of government officers regarding the capacity of government to play a stronger role, despite the degree of personal commitment of individual officers. In particular, government staff themselves are among those who are very ready to acknowledge, including in public, that a number of key project assumptions, documented in the project logical framework, regarding government capacity, are at best unsafe. These flawed assumptions should be considered as a project design issue rather than a project implementation issue, as it is clear that the project implementation team as well as involved government officers have done their best to manage risks.

Critical challenges are two-fold and relate to speed of decision making, partly explained by the number of ministries with a direct interest in skills development, and resource issues, including staffing levels and, the physical condition of infrastructure, and condition and availability of training equipment and consumables. The Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) and the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) all face severe staff shortages in fulfilling the role expected of them in implementing TVET reform. At the level of the training institutions themselves, there are critical shortages of TVET teachers and this is a significant barrier for the on-going implementation of the project. While the project was budgeted on the assumption of needing to upgrade equipment presumed to have existed in government training institutions, their condition or complete absence in reality has required purchase of new equipment. This has put considerable pressure on the project's precious financial resources, for which planned activities have already had to compete. The MTR team is obliged to flag these concerns as they will remain a critical determinant of just how far the project will be able to go in delivering further success, lasting impact, and replicability beyond the achievements already documented.

In defence of the project, but unfortunately also to flag how intractable the difficulties are, it is also only fair to point out that the issues are not project-specific. To the certain personal experience of members of the MTR team, staffing issues of this kind have constrained project implementation and success throughout the education sector since the 1990s. A huge sector-wide approach, together with multi development partner advocacy, in the form of the Primary Education Development Programme – Phases One and Two – has been able to make very little headway on similar issues over the past decade. Capacity issues of the kind referred to are also not confined to the Education Sector – being just as critical in the Health Sector, for instance. Nor, to further contextualise the development challenges, are they peculiar to Bangladesh. For instance: a 2010 Capacity Assessment of the Directorate General of Employment and Training in India, the nodal agency for skills development in that country, in the context of project formulation for a planned EU Supported Skills Development Project, highlighted similar staffing and related institutional challenges likely to be crucial determinants of project success.

None of the above, representing lessons for future project design, should create an excuse for not continuing to do everything possible to make further progress addressing capacity constraints of government. Indeed, it is imperative that further progress is made recruiting instructors to support pilot

activity. However, the project will not be able to rely on a radical early solution to many of the broader capacity related issues.

Nevertheless, there are incremental, easier, ways in which government's in-kind contribution to the TVET reform process and project success can be further strengthened. These include: the urgent expedition of approval of the new Skills Development Policy; playing an even stronger leadership and coordination role among the three major TVET projects so that human and material resources can be efficiently shared to their optimum; encouraging greater involvement by NGOs and private sector; and facilitating even stronger, two-way communication. This last mentioned suggestion includes two-way communication between projects, but also using PMCC meetings not just for the Project Implementation Team to report on what it has achieved in contributing to the TVET Reform process, but for Government itself to provide updates on what it also has been doing as part of its own in-kind commitment and contribution to Reform. This will help to set the technical assistance in a context that is not regarded as something that is merely "outsourced" by government, but is seen even more as a genuine partnership activity in the spirit of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. All of these more-achievable suggestions are reformulated into specific recommendations as part of the conclusions of this report.

4.1.8 *Coherence*

The project scores well on coherence. A large contributing factor is a very strong project design and conceptualisation. Each of the five components had the potential to be a project in its own right, but the fact that they all form part of an integral whole is the project's main strength.

It is helpful to take an example from general education, and specifically teacher training, to underscore the importance of coherence and a holistic approach. So often, teacher training in isolation has very little impact on transforming teacher behaviours in the classroom. Typically, post training, teachers either continue to "teach to the test" or, if they do not do that, teach from the textbook or from their notes, which might be in the form of a syllabus or curriculum to follow. For teacher training to have impact, this is far more likely to occur if it is connected to corresponding interventions: reforming examinations, reforming textbooks, and reforming curriculum – ideally attacking change on all of these fronts.

TVET Reform is more complicated, but the parallels hold. Instructor practice in the classroom is more likely to change, post training, when policy is transformed to bring a shift from an emphasis on qualifications to an emphasis on competencies, curriculum and standards are transformed, assessment methods are changed, including new tools such as portfolio methods of assessment, recognition is given to prior learning, and new relationships are formed with industry. The TVET reform project has all of these ingredients.

The five components all draw on each other's resources, expertise and achievements. The project is also coherent in the sense that it resides well within the policy objectives of the Government of Bangladesh – including addressing the specific issues raised in the Government Technical Assistance Project Proposal (TPP), and the Country Strategy of the EU. It is also complementary in the way it relates to other development projects and in particular SDP and STEP.

Nevertheless, there is always scope to strengthen coherence further. One way to achieve this could be to promote occasional inter-component field visits. As mentioned elsewhere in this report there are challenges to strengthen even further inter-project coordination between the three major projects and there is a role for both the Government of Bangladesh in performing its own leadership and

coordination function and also a role for representatives of the development partners to communicate frequently to ensure that their support is fully synergised. These observations lead to specific recommendations in the final section of the report.

4.1.9 *Project Visibility, Dissemination, and Communication*

The project has made considerable efforts with commensurate levels of success, promoting visibility. Beside its exemplary engagement of key stakeholders, the project keeps other players in the skills sector informed. Everyone consulted by the MTR reported having received reports and information that keep them up-to-date on project progress. The project has also been credited with raising TVET's profile and public awareness in the country through a series of promotional activities. Especially noteworthy are:

- The production of project videos, a number of which capture representatives from the highest level of government and industry acknowledging the importance of TVET reforms and expressing their support for them and all aspects of what the project is trying to do.
- The production and dissemination of an attractive set of posters communicating a range of project messages.
- A high profile TVET Week in 2009, including a Skills Fair, seminars, and media campaign in the national press in which a wide range of topical and project related articles was sponsored. Following this event, the National Project Director reported an immediate jump in enrolment at government Technical Training Centres. Interestingly, most of the new applicants were notably high achieving students who could have qualified for university education.

Despite these achievements, the time is now right to take a major step up in levels of emphasis and efforts regarding visibility and dissemination of the project's impressive achievements. It is necessary to shift the focus somewhat from raising public awareness to disseminating the practical tools with which TVET reform can be supported and accelerated. This is especially in regard to the many "best practice" resource materials and procedures the project has developed and put in place. One avenue that is central in this respect is the further development of a Project Website with a different host. Continued use of project web pages only under the umbrella of the ILO is an insufficient and inappropriate means to capitalise on the huge opportunities the worldwide web has for maximising project impact.

An intermediate step may need to involve the creation of a dedicated TVET Reform Project Website with its own domain. However, the longer term objective should be for as much as possible to reside within the web pages of Government ministries and departments. Further discussion will be required to determine what is best housed where, and how material should be linked. The PMCC may wish to consider constituting a task force to consider and report on this issue. In the interim, time should not be lost in boosting web visibility and access to resources through this means.

In the development of a further Internet presence, special consideration should be given to:

- Ensuring as much information and as many resources as possible are made available in both English and Bangla.

- Recognising the huge extent to which NGOs active in the TVET sector can potentially benefit from project resources (especially in support of training), but where materials in Bangla could well be of greater value and benefit to these development actors.
- Recognising the potential wider international interest in project achievements, resources, and lessons. (In particular, the up-coming EU funded Support to Skills Development Project in India could benefit greatly from TVET Reform Project resources and “know how” to give it a head start in project implementation.)

Setting up a web presence in such a way that “page hits” and numbers of downloads of which types of resources, etc, can be monitored. Such data will contribute greatly to future assessment of project impact and outreach. Disseminating and sharing products from the project through the world-wide web is certainly the most efficient in terms of time and finance. It also exemplifies what is possible in the country’s aspiration for a Digital Bangladesh. However, it is important to recognize that at present, not everyone who can benefit from those resources in the country has the means or habit to access the internet. A range of options, including print media, should be explored – through an audience analysis – to make access to these materials as easy as possible for a widest range of potential beneficiaries.

For example, as a further dissemination and visibility strategy, the project is strongly advised to consider the further, low-cost, impact potential of capturing on video, DVD, Youtube, and other means such as graphic course modules and port-folios of photographs, elements of the exemplary CBTA training that the project is providing. This may best be achieved through simulation, where a Bangladeshi actor or counterpart is filmed modelling the behaviours and inputs of the international expert, with a simulated group of “trainees”. The potential benefits of such a course of action are manifold:

- it will not only allow the project to strike out far wider in its outreach beyond the 500 or so trainers it plans to train (through low-cost dissemination of DVDs and through the Internet).
- It can reduce the risk of transmission loss and dilution of quality in any cascade training planned as part of the project. Bangladeshi trainers can use the videos to support their teaching and training.
- It is recognised that elements of the competency based training and assessment approach the project is championing have far wider relevance across all areas of the education system. For instance, videos produced could potentially be important resources for any pre-service teacher training institution (inside and outside Bangladesh): helping to give the project a huge, unplanned, multiplier effect.

If any or all of the practical suggestions made above are to be acted upon it may be appropriate to consider the financial scope (see Section 4.1.6) for outsourcing or recruiting to the team technical expertise in the areas of IT (to support website development) and communications (to take the lead in up-scaling visibility and dissemination efforts).

It is worth noting here that the most challenging part of communication in most organizations is internal communication, that among the various parts within the same organization. As the impressive achievements by each component have become increasingly clearly visible, it is also high time for the project team to consolidate their collective efforts and demonstrate that the whole is indeed greater than its parts. Towards this end, concerted efforts should be made to maximize effective

communication among the components, such as regular staff meetings – both formal and informal; joint activities; and focused discussions on specific themes, such as strategic financial planning and staff development needs analysis.

4.1.10 *Project Re-design*

A revised project logical framework was approved as part of a contract amendment. In accordance with the specific request in the Review ToRs, the original and revised logical frameworks were examined and compared. No issues arise from this exercise. Minor revisions to results (e.g. adding a result under Component 4: “formal apprenticeship system improved and supported”; and specifying the informal economy as an area of capacity building under Component 5) broaden and clarify scope.

Adjustments made to indicators and sources of verification have not diluted the ambition of the project. They have made results easier to measure and evidence more precise and practical. Refinements to activities are minor and for the most part simply further elaborate necessary tasks based on increased understanding through the experience of project implementation.

It is noted that adjustments were also made to assumptions and risks: the most significant revision being the addition of “Lack of implementation capacity by government” as a project risk. In view of observations made under Section 4.1.7, this reflects an appropriate degree of realism and will require careful ongoing risk management. As part of the risk management process, it may be appropriate to consider adjusting achievement targets. Comment is made in Table 4.2.2.1 as to where some logical framework indicators might prove too ambitious. Additionally, emphasizing and expanding private sector involvement can also be a positive strategy to help ameliorate challenges of government capacity.

A number of cross-cutting themes, particularly increased access to TVET and employability for women and people with disabilities, are placed under the intervention logic for Component-5 in the logframe. While the Skills Development Policy does mention including the above underprivileged sections of society, and certain efforts are made by some members of the project team, the onus of ensuring their inclusion should not be born alone by Component 5. For example, satisfying the indicators of ensuring gender and disability-sensitivity of curriculum contents and meeting the quotas set for female and disabled instructors and trainees are best managed by Components 2, 3, and 4, respectively as well as Component 5. It is advisable for project management to make the sharing of this responsibility clear by way of an explicit project policy statement on social inclusion, and a required element by which all components account for their progress.

4.1.11 *Future EUD Country Strategy*

Interest is growing in TVET. Not only have the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank made major commitments, the UK’s DFID has recently completed a scoping study with a view to a major investment in skills development. What is still lacking, and is thus a major development priority, is a sector plan that will allow for a coordinated sector wide approach.

The EU, together with its funding and implementing partner, the ILO, has won enormous respect for what it has already achieved with the TVET Reform Project and is now looked upon as a leader in the sector. In order to consolidate and build upon both its initial investment and its comparative advantage and position of influence it would make strong developmental sense for the EUD to

consider taking the lead for coordinating efforts to develop a sector wide approach for skills development and TVET in particular. Such a role would likely call for planned technical assistance.

With regard to the possibility of committing to a continuing involvement in the sector, there are manifest needs and priorities. Specific consolidation of the current investment is one option, through a further phase of funding. This could have two obvious strands: (a) replicating current achievements in new, priority, industrial sectors; and (b) extending achievements in sectors covered in the current TVET reform project to further geographical outreach – i.e. going to greater scale;. These two approaches need not necessarily be mutually exclusive.

With regard to other possibilities, the success that the project has had in engaging with industry confirms that this is an especially fertile area for development impact. There is thus a strong case to be made for further promotion of public private partnerships, informal apprenticeships and work-based training through future developmental assistance.

Without a coordinated sector plan, it is difficult to point with absolute confidence to where need gaps will be most acute. However, the TVET Reform project has been transformational in the way it has promoted the message that TVET should not be the exclusive privilege of secondary or primary school graduates. Other obvious priority areas therefore include further emphasis on mainstreaming the disabled; and increasing TVET coverage and provision to rural areas. TVET has tended to impact on the formal economy, yet the informal economy in Bangladesh has huge importance, while at the same time faces major skills challenges. More than 80% of TVET training is delivered through the private sector: for profit and not-for profit, rather than through government. The capacity of these providers is also in dire need of strengthening. Depending on the planned commitments of other development partners, all of these could be worthwhile areas for EU support, befitting its technical comparative advantage, and in line with its poverty reduction agenda.

As the EUD begins to prepare the next Country Strategy Paper, an opportunity exists for the EC to build on this strong foundation and maximize its investments in the skills sector, which encompasses both education and employment/income generation. Beside the above suggestion for consolidation and expansion of the TVET Reform Project, two other areas will require attention:

- (i) Encourage a greater interaction and sharing of experience, lessons, resources and strategies among on-going and planned EC projects working in the same sector and/or with the same stakeholder groups, e.g. Integrated Support to Poverty and Inequality Reduction through Enterprise Development (INSPIRED); Rural Employment Opportunities for Public Assets (REOPA); Poverty Reduction through Inclusive and Sustainable Markets (PRISM); and Supporting the Hardest to Reach through basic Education (SHARE).
- (ii) Ensure coherence in implementation of the Skills Development Policy and the National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework with the Education Policy, the Non-Formal Education Policy, and the Equivalency Framework currently being developed for Non-Formal Education by the Bureau of Non-Formal Education with the support of UNESCO.

4.2 DAC CRITERIA

It was also a requirement of Terms of Reference that the project should be reviewed against the five DAC criteria¹ of: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Observations against each of these criteria are presented in turn below.

4.2.1 *Relevance*

It is manifest that the project is highly relevant. It is consistent with, and supportive of, the policy and programme framework within which the project is placed, in particular the EC's Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme, and the development policy of the Government of Bangladesh. On the basis of policy and strategy documentation, stated project objectives correctly address identified problems and social needs. They are clear and internally consistent. Problem analysis, the project's intervention logic, and the logical framework matrix – including its objectively verifiable indicators of achievement – are also appropriate and consistent.

The analysis of strategic options, the implementation strategy being adopted, and management and coordination arrangements are all sound. There is manifest realism in the choice and quantity of inputs – including financial, human and administrative resources.

The project has been flexible and responsive and adaptive to changes in context. Revisions to the logframe that have taken place appear well grounded. Stakeholder participation in the management and implementation of the project, and the level of local ownership, is impressively high, though absorption and implementation capacity raise some cause for concern as discussed in Section 4.1.7 above.

Recommended monitoring and evaluation arrangements are sound, though the project is encouraged to use these more, to the extent practicable, to try to build an even stronger “lessons learning culture” especially regarding cost-effectiveness, and what works best and why in the project pilots and programme trials: by trying to understand and measure the significance of key variables. As noted in Section 4.1.7, arguably the most critical observation to make concerning project relevance is that some key project assumptions about government capacity to support implementation and build upon project achievements have proven to have been overly-optimistic.

4.2.2 *Effectiveness*

In this Section of the report consideration of effectiveness is made principally with reference to progress against logical framework indicators. Table 4.2.2.1 provides a commentary in relation to evidence of progress made, draws attention to outstanding achievements, and also flags any issues of concern.

¹ Criteria conventionally used in evaluations conducted by the EC and known as the ‘DAC evaluation criteria’; ‘DAC’ being the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Table 4.2.2.1: Progress Against Logical Framework Objectively Verifiable Indicators: MTR Commentary

Overall Programme objective	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Progress Against Indicators: MTR Comments
Overall Programme objective	The project will aim at supporting the pro-poor growth agenda of Bangladesh's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper by creating more employment opportunities for the poor and strengthening the capacity to tackle the competitive challenges of the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased employment rate and reduced unemployment rate 	Evidence only likely to emerge post-project.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased productivity of manufacturing sector 	Major evidence only likely to emerge post-project. However, productivity increases already documented in leather sector as a result of KAIZAN training.
Programme Purpose	A market-oriented and flexible TVET system which responds to the demand for competitive skills of the modern sector as well as to the needs of youth and under-privileged groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A national policy framework for demand-driven TVET implemented 	Policy developed; pending approval.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A system of modular and competency based training and qualifications introduced through policy and organisational changes 	Significant progress made, commensurate with time elapsed of project.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 20% of all BTEB affiliated courses meet reformed quality assurance standards by the end of the project 	Too early to assess with confidence, though there is a risk that indicator is too ambitious.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of female learners and disadvantaged groups attending BTEB affiliated courses more than doubled over five years 	Indicator may prove over-ambitious. Good progress made in creating access to disadvantaged groups in Component 5. Indicator is ambiguous over percentage of female participation increase (would have been better disaggregated). Increasing female participation rates will remain a challenge and stronger strategies may be needed.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment rate of graduates from BTEB affiliated courses increased by more than 50 % by the end of the project 	Evidence only likely to emerge post-project.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public-private partnerships in TVET established in at least four priority industry sectors by the end of the project. 	Already achieved. A major project success.

	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Progress Against Indicators: MTR Comments
Results	Component 1: TVET policies, system and legislation reviewed and strengthened at the central and decentralised levels		
	1.1 Improved TVET policy and implementation mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TVET policy and mechanisms for its implementation are drafted by the end of 2009 with a planned implementation by the end of the project. 	Skills Policy developed (major project achievement); pending approval.
	1.2 Improved legal and regulatory environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An account of national TVET laws and regulations compiled and reviewed by the end of 2009. 	Research study comprising an Overview of TVET legislation, policy & regulations completed.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal on the improvement of TVET laws and regulations developed in 2010. 	Report on Development of a proposal for legislation & regulatory reform completed. Decisive action by GoB, in response, has still to occur.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft revised TVET laws and/or regulations developed in 2011. 	See above.
	1.3 Improved structure and coordination of TVET system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure of the TVET system, functions and coordination between agencies involved (DTE, BTEB, BMET) reviewed and report prepared in 2010. 	Research report completed, comprising a Review of National Structure & Coordination of TVET and Skills Development in Bangladesh. Decisive action by GoB, in response, has still to occur.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timebound plan for the TVET system structural reform developed and delivered to government in 2010. 	See above.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanisms for stakeholder participation in TVET introduced in 2011 	Part of 2011 workplan.
	1.4 Improved monitoring of resources and outputs and improved accountability in TVET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational handbook for TVET institutions drafted in 2011 	Part of 2011 workpan.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal for national TVET data system developed in 2010 	A research report comprising: A proposal to strengthen TVET and skills data in Bangladesh has been completed. Decisive action from GoB, in response, is still pending.

	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Progress Against Indicators: MTR Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National TVET data system in place in 2011 	Progress against this indicator will be largely dependant on GoB activation of the NSDC.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability framework for TVET system proposed and implemented in 2011 	Progress against this indicator will be largely dependant on GoB activation of the NSDC.
	Component 2:		
	Enhanced flexibility, quality and relevance of TVET		
	2.1 Developed National Qualifications Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF), proposed in 2009 and introduced in 2010 	Framework developed; pending approval. A major project achievement.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation manual available in 2011 	Part of 2011 workplan.
	2.2 Developed or revised competency standards for occupations in selected economic sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competency standards developed for priority occupations in at least four economic sectors in 2010 	Strong progress made. Work at an advanced stage.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual on development of competency standards and national TVET qualifications available in 2011 	Strong progress made. Work at an advanced stage.
	2.3 Developed courses and curricula based on the competency standards (for selected economic sectors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courses and curricula for priority occupations in at least four economic sectors developed and published in 2011 and in use in institutions by the end of the project 	Strong progress made. Work at an advanced stage.
	2.4 Enhanced quality-assurance mechanisms in TVET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Assurance mechanisms proposed in 2010 and introduced in 2011 	Strong progress made. Work at an advanced stage.
	Component 3:		
	Strengthened TVET institutions through improved knowledge and skills of managers and teachers		

	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Progress Against Indicators: MTR Comments
	3.1 Improved capacity of TVET managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational handbook for TVET institutions drafted in 2011 	Draft handbook prepared, finalisation subject to, and will be informed by completion/confirmation of the new TVET quality framework.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TVET manager qualification at the certificate or diploma level developed in 2011 and introduced by the end of the project 	Development of program on track. Delivery of first program to 25 managers due to commence in March 2011.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 100 TVET managers complete new manager qualification by the end of the project 	On track, with 3 cohorts of 25 managers each commenced in 2011 and the last cohort of 25 to commence Feb 2012.
	3.2 Improved TVET instructor training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New instructor training system proposed in 2010. 	Program proposed and high quality teaching and learning materials developed.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New instructor training system tested in 2011. 	High quality training currently being implemented.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 500 instructors from public and private TVET providers complete new instructor training program and technical updating by the end of the project 	This may be an over ambitious target and it may in any case be better to assess the outcomes of pilots before going to greater scale on instructor training. The pilot experience will likely reveal need for further refinements to the training approach. A key priority is training those teachers who will have the opportunity to apply their new skills within a reasonable period of time. Training teachers too far in advance of when they have the opportunity to apply /implement might not be the most effective use of project resources. Emphasis should also be placed on training master trainers in a position to sustain the program post project.
	3.3 Enhanced capacity of training NGOs and private TVET institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 10 NGOs and private institutions participate in TVET leadership and management development courses by 2012 	On target - Part of 2011 workpan.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational handbook for TVET institutions drafted in 2011 	On target - Part of 2011 workpan.
	3.4 Enhanced management, governance, flexibility, effectiveness, and efficiency of TVET institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational handbook for TVET institutions drafted in 2011 	On target - Part of 2011 workpan.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model management structures for TVET institutions proposed in 2010 	Final decisions regarding managment structures delayed until the end of 2011 and will be informed by finaalisation of quality assurance framework being developed under Component 2.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater managerial and academic powers are devolved to TVET institutions in 2011-2012 	On target - Part of 2011 workpan.

	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Progress Against Indicators: MTR Comments
	<p>Component 4:</p> <p>Improved skills development resulting in enhanced productivity and competitiveness in key growth and export-oriented industries in the formal industrial sector</p>		
	4.1 Employers' demands for higher skills raised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping of growth industry sectors and demand analysis completed in 2008 	Achieved.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased demand for skills training for workforce by end of 2011 	In the sectors in which the project is working employers are reporting and showing increased interest in the types of graduate the new system will produce.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers recognize skill development of the workforce as a business growth strategy by end of 2011 	Extremely difficult to quantify, but it has been clear from consultations that some employers are already taking such an enlightened view.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers recognize NTVQF qualifications as part of their HRD practices 	Development of NTVQF has been strongly supported by employers during the consultation process. They have been actively engaged.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers participate in development of competency standards and curriculum starting in 2009-2010 	The extent to which this has occurred, evidenced among other things by employer participation in SCDC meetings, is one of the outstanding achievements of the project. Four ISCs were fully involved in developing relevant competency standards in respective sectors. This involvement continues with accreditation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry-led bodies promoting skills development (e.g. Industry Skills Councils, Center of Excellence) established by 2009 in at least four priority industry sectors with their own initiative, advice and support from TVET reform project 	A major project achievement; ground-breaking for Bangladesh. Four ISCs are already functioning strongly. Two industries have established Centres of Excellence (Agro Food and Leather).
	4.2 Improved linkages between TVET and enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers' and workers' representatives participate in committees working on the national TVET policy and system reform by end 2009 	Achieved: see 4.1 above.

	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Progress Against Indicators: MTR Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industries appoint representatives to lead the development of competency-based vocational qualifications for selected trades by end 2010 	Industries actively participating in all Component 4 committees.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry representatives appointed to governing bodies in at least 10 public TVET institutions by end of 2011 	Part of 2011 workplan.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 20 customized training programs delivered by public TVET institutions at the request of industry by end of project 	Twelve priority occupations identified by the four industry sectors and over 20 competency based training courses are being developed and will soon be piloted in mostly public institutes.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 50 industry instructors deliver programs at public TVET institutions by end of project 	Evidence only likely to emerge towards the end of the project.
	4.3 Modern work practices facilitating the utilization of skills and skills-productivity linkages in industry introduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprises in at least four sectors introduced productivity improvement practices (through leadership and management training, and other tools such as KAIZEN, SCORE, etc.) by end of 2010 	Achieved.
	4.4 Learning at work supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 master trainers/assessors trained in four priority sectors by end 2011 	Part of 2011 workplan. Approximately 25 instructors from the four sectors trained in Phase One Master Trainer Assessor Foundation Course.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least eight enterprises in priority sectors adopt structured training plans to support workplace learning by end 2011 	Part of 2011 workplan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of certified workers in companies surveyed by the project in 2008 increased by at least 20% by end of project 	Evidence only likely to emerge towards the end of project and post-project
	4.5 Formal apprenticeship system improved and supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative framework concerning apprenticeship revised in 2011 	Part of 2011 workplan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set of apprenticeship procedures established and agreed with government by end of 2011 	Part of 2011 workplan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry body is identified which supports and monitors apprenticeship training by end of 2011 	Part of 2011 workplan

	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Progress Against Indicators: MTR Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of formal apprenticeship contracts increased to at least 500 by the end of the project 	Evidence only likely to emerge towards the end of the project.
	Component 5:		
	Increased access of underprivileged groups to TVET		
	5.1 Community-based training mainstreamed into TVET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 50 TVET institutions are capable to provide community-based training by the end of the project 	One of the areas in which the project is ground breaking. Component 5 has carried out a research study on CBTrEE, conducted many field visits, and developed a new CBTrEE manual, as well as a new set of tools (bilingual). These tools have been field tested in 2 locations. Several training workshops have been conducted with key stakeholders. This methodology will be extensively piloted in the ILO – UPPR cooperation agreement, which is soon to be signed.
	5.2 Increased access of working children to TVET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice and technical support provided to specialist agencies involved in delivering opportunities for working children to acquire a trade during the life of the project 	The amount of outreach to other projects and initiatives is one of the component's major achievements, producing huge multiplier effects. This includes on-going collaboration with the ILO's Urban Informal Economy (UIE) project for working children; with UNICEF, for out of school youth; with with UNDP projects in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and in urban locations in support of the Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction (UPPR) project.
	5.3 Informal apprenticeships improved and supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model for improving informal apprenticeships developed 	A new informal apprenticeship model is already developed, as well as a formal model. Component 5 has implemented the competency skill log book concept and also the portfolio system. The informal model is about to be piloted within the UPPR project cooperation agreement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of practice developed for informal apprenticeships 		Completed.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least twenty informal businesses in at least four sectors include informal apprenticeships through linkage with public training institutions by the end of 2011 		About to commence piloting. Provided the UPPR agreement is signed soon, hundreds of informal apprenticeships will be conducted. If not, a contingency plan is to pilot informal apprenticeships within Component 5 activities.	
	5.4 A system for recognition of prior learning (RPL) developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System for recognition of prior learning designed in 2010 	The new RPL system has been developed, including tools such as the portfolio based evidence of learning. Formal adoption is dependant on endoresment of the skills policy.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RPL system introduced into at least four industry sectors 	As above.

	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Progress Against Indicators: MTR Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 25 persons trained and certified as RPL assessors by the end of the project 	Srtongly linked to the timing of skills policy will be endorsement.
	5.5 TVET extended to people with low education levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NTVQF containing two pre-vocational levels available for people with lower educational levels proposed and tested 	Achieved. There are 2 levels in the NTVQF: Pre Voc 1 and Pre Voc 2.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National trade qualifications aiming at people with lower educational levels produced and tested through TREE & Informal Apprenticeship pilots by December 2011 	Due to be completed with the upcoming pilots: CRP/Interfab Garments, AMDA/Dutch Bangla Industrial bags and UCEP motor cycle apprenticeship. Component 5 apprenticeships are NTVQF level 2. They involve no Grade 8 entry requirements.
	5.6 Enhanced capacity of key agencies (e.g. DTE, BTEB, BMET) to support skills development in the informal economy and for under-privileged groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A need for extending public training capacity to under-privileged groups and people in the informal economy is recognized in the national TVET policy statement 	Several capacity building workshops already conducted on CBTrEE, Informal Apprenticeships, RPL, Persons with Disabilities, and inclusion of the low educated.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training workshops conducted for key agencies. 	Achieved.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two pilot programs are jointly implemented with key stakeholders by December 2011. 	Part of 2011 workplan.
	5.7 Access of females to TVET and employability increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New TVET policy aims to increase participation of females in TVET programs 	Appropriate statements of intent incorporated within policy document. E.g . Section 5g 10. All Component 5 activities emphasise female participation and the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. Only 10 out of 83 fellowship beneficiaries (12%) have been women. More efforts, such as developing an affirmative action policy, will need to be made to encourage women's participation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum documents are gender-sensitive 	Gender sensitivity observed in project documents examined, but this is an area that needs continued and strengthened emphasis. A gender specialist national professional is now included within the project team. Gender awareness training is a compulsory element in all informal apprenticeship induction training activity.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of female instructors increased by 20% by the end of the project 	Priority recruitment of female instructors incorporated as part of Skills Development Policy: Section 5g.11.Evidence of impact is only likely to emerge towards the end of the project. This may be a difficult target to reach, as not entirely within the control of the project to determine. The target is also partly linked to the success of the pilot replication process.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff of public TVET are aware of learning needs of female learners 	Part of induction process for all industry, apprentices and instructors who will be involved in the Compent 5 informal apprenticeship & CBTrEE training and pilots.

	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Progress Against Indicators: MTR Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 20 % of public TVET students are female by the end of the project 	Appropriate statements of intent incorporated within policy document. I.e. Section 5k 3. Evidence of impact is only likely to emerge towards the end of the project. This may be a difficult target to reach, as not entirely within the control of the project to determine. The outcome will also depend on how quickly the Government training institutes can implement any new courses that have been shown to increase female participation as well as upgrade existing facilities such as washrooms and toilets.
	5.8 Access for people with disabilities to TVET and employment improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New TVET policy aims to increase participation of people with disabilities in TVET programs 	Appropriate statements of intent incorporated within policy document. I.e. Section 5k 4 on Persons with Disabilities. All Component 5 pilots will prioritise have female participation and the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum documents are inclusive of the needs of people with disabilities 		Strong progress made. Component 5 conducted a fellowship to Sri Lanka for CBTrEE and Persons with Disabilities. As a result of that fellowship and corresponding capacity building and training, there has now developed a strong commitment with regard to inclusion on the part of BMET & DTE.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New instructor training program includes modules on “students with special needs” by end of 2011 		Part of 2011 workplan.	

4.2.3 Efficiency

All five project components, and the activities within them, are well designed and being well implemented to transform available resources into intended results – in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness. Despite some delays at start-up, what has been achieved compares well with what was planned, and especially comparing progress made in contemporary projects facing similar developmental challenges.

The quality of day-to-day management is very high, benefiting from ILO institutional strength. Operational work planning and implementation is robust.

As noted in Section 4.2.1 above, flexibility has been demonstrated in response to changes in circumstances. The project makes strong efforts in its relations and coordination with local authorities, institutions, beneficiaries, other donors. The quality of information management and reporting, and the extent to which key stakeholders have been kept adequately informed of project activities is something that key stakeholders have been especially appreciative of in their feedback to the MTR team.

As also noted elsewhere in this report (see for example Section 4.1.5), technical assistance is proving strong. It is helping to provide appropriate solutions and develop local capacities to define and produce results.

For both day-to-day management and reporting purposes, the implementation team may wish to consider using GANTT chart formats that show visually both what has been PLANNED and what has been ACHIEVED: as in the following notional example. Such a format makes it far easier to see, at a glance, what has been achieved on time, what is ahead of schedule, and where slippages are occurring or have occurred. The reviewers themselves would have found information presented this way especially helpful, when studying progress reports.

**Table 4.2.3.1 Example GANTT Chart
Showing Activities and Outputs “PLANNED” and “ACHIEVED”**

Activity:	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	Comments:
1 Training Centre Refurbished													
1.1 Repairs to Roof	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				(insert any relevant comments/explanations here about implementation progress)
Status to Date:	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
1.2 Interior Decoration				X	X	X	X	X	X				E.g. Installation of equipment delayed, due to late delivery, following delayed POC approval.
Status to Date:				X	X	X	X	X	X				
1.3 Installation of Equipment					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Status to Date:					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1.4 Etc							X	X	X	X	X	X	
Status to Date:							X	X	X	X	X	X	
2 Training Course for Teachers													
2.1 Course materials developed	X	X	X	X	X								
Status to Date:	X	X	X	X	X								
2.2 Course Materials printed			X	X									
Status to Date:			X	X									
2.3 Trainers identified				X	X								
Status to Date:				X	X								
2.4 Etc				X	X	X	X	X	X				
Status to Date:				X	X	X	X	X	X				

The project also scores well under “Efficiency” in that there are a number of unplanned outputs that have arisen from activities so far – creating a significant multiplier effect. Especially noteworthy in this regard are: the demand and interest from the Tourism Sector within Component 4 activities; and the cooperation achieved with, and technical support supplied to, a wide range of other projects under Component 5.

Sections 4.1.5 and 4.1.6 have discussed project management and project financial management in some detail and Section 4.2.1 has also made specific observations on project monitoring and project assumptions: all of which relate to some extent to project efficiency. It is judged unnecessary to repeat the same observations here.

4.2.4 Impact (Including consideration of Examples of Best Practice)

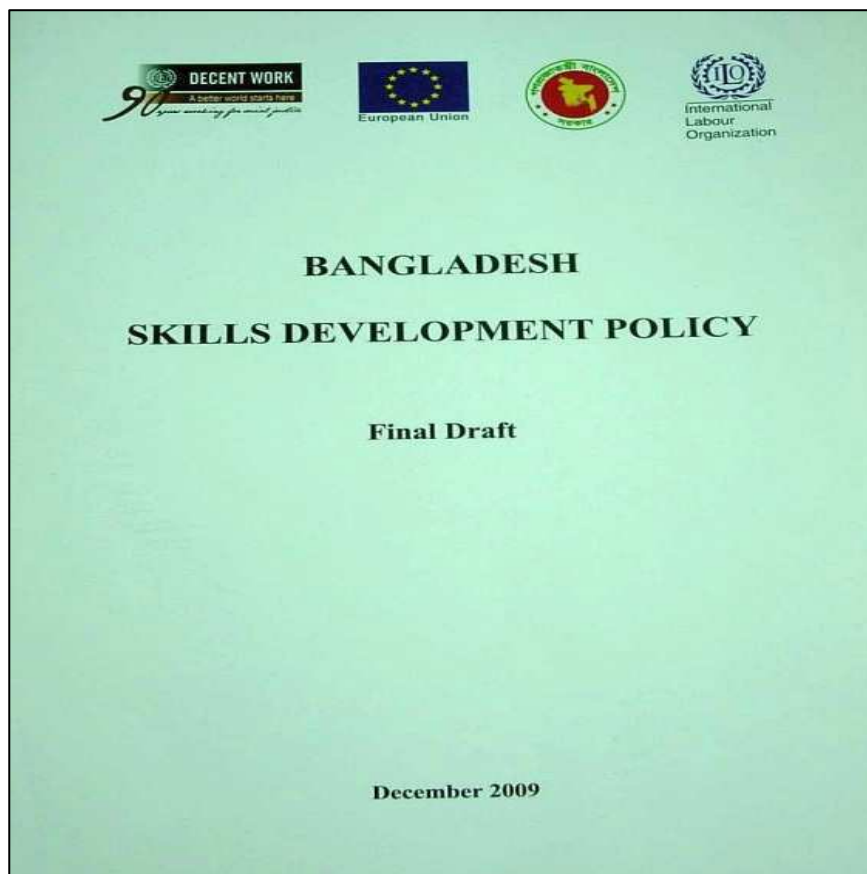
Project Impact was raised as a specific evaluation question and addressed in Section 4.1, where a tabular summary of perceived project impact from the perspective of different groups of key project stakeholders was provided. This was in relation to impact already felt and expected impact over the remaining project lifetime. The same information will not be repeated here. Rather the opportunity will be taken to present some visual evidence of the transformations the project is bringing about using photographs supplied by the implementation team, as well as those taken by the MTR during the course of interactions and field visits.

Strong Stakeholder Engagement



Draft National Skills Development Policy – Briefings & Consultations

Discussing Program Trials & Pilots at BMET



Documentary Outputs





Functioning Committees, Well Run Meetings





A skilled worker, a productive resource

Productivity



Before and After Project 'KAIZAN' Training

International Workplace Standards, International Quality Products



ISC and Centre of Excellence, Leather



Very Able “Disabled”



4.2.5 Sustainability

The prospect of the TVET Reform Project having its impact sustained is higher than most other projects in Bangladesh. For a start, the Skills Development Policy alone will have an enormous impact and leave a lasting legacy in the country's socio-economic growth. The conceptual shift from qualification to competency-based training and assessment can be expected to yield far-reaching benefits in the way human resources are developed and utilized in the country.

The emphasis on a highly experiential approach to every project activity has resulted in significant changes that have evolved from knowledge and attitude to behaviour among those who have most actively participated in project implementation. The modelling effect that has been witnessed in this MTR not only introduces many good practices, but also further reinforces those positive changes as they prove to be feasible and replicable within local contexts of Bangladesh.

As has been demonstrated by some of the project's achievements, success breeds further success. The degree of interest in the project among all stakeholders indicates that the project's objectives are something everyone considers worthy of their investment with their energy, funds, and time.

The project also benefits from a more-direct-than-usual effect of the law of natural consequences. The improvements of skilling a productive workforce are tangibly felt in a very concrete manner, with immediacy. Successful business leaders understand that what the project attempts to do – the creation of a skilled and productive workforce in a conducive workplace and regulatory environment – is imperative for Bangladesh to stay competitive in the global economy. The pilots and program trials planned for the near future should point to the most attractive options for up-scaling.

It is possible that once the benefits of these reform efforts become wider and even clearer, the activities can be expected to become self-sustaining eventually. Meanwhile, the achievement of the project's objectives still needs strong support from all stakeholders, so that it can be consolidated and expanded.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General conclusions comprise the summation of the main issues that have arisen in findings presented above as well as main achievements. Each category of finding is presented in turn and this leads to the formulation of a set of main recommendations. Recommendations are addressed, respectively to: Government, Industry, the Project Implementation Team, and the EUD.

5.1 Key Issues

Inevitably, any project as wide-ranging, complex, and ambitious as the TVET Reform Project will be faced with major challenges. The following are among the most significant:

- Levels of GoB capacity. While capacity challenges justify the need for, and relevance of, the project, limited capacity also serves as a break on the speed and extent of what the project is able to achieve. A number of key project assumptions about the present capacity of GoB to contribute to system reform have proved unsafe.
- Urgent attention needs to be given to a strategic review of project spending to date, among other things to identify scope for project fine tuning, and to assist prioritisation and forward planning.
- Inter component cohesion, while considerable, could also be further strengthened.
- The visibility and dissemination efforts and successes of the project are acknowledged. However, visibility and dissemination levels need to be raised further – especially in view of the fact that the MTR has itself helped to confirm that “there is a story to be told”.
- While successes achieved in inter-project coordination are recognised, there is a challenge to strengthen this further.
- TVET is a sector that is extremely inequitable with regard to gender: in terms of access as well as stereotyping. The project is making considerable efforts in this regard, but continued and increased emphasis is required at every opportunity if gender related project indicators are to be achieved.

All of the above have been explored in some detail in discussion of findings. It is judged sufficient simply to underscore the importance of issues here, as part of general conclusions, rather than re-explain them.

However, one other issue sufficiently important to highlight, but not lending itself to discussion under specific ToR questions or the five DAC criteria, relates to a difference of position within the project team regarding course entrance requirements in a number of draft programme documents. One perspective is that in some cases Grade 8 should still be included in order to help the programmes to be internationally credible. A contrasting perspective is informed by the commitment made in the skills policy document that: “The Grade 8 prerequisite is removed from formal courses and replaced by course specific entry requirements and challenge tests that are more closely aligned to the level of training being delivered”.

Both perspectives are well intentioned and have professional validity. Nevertheless it is important to stay true to one of the major tenets of the TVET Reform process – i.e., the vision of a shift from

emphasis on qualifications to emphasis on competence. Making reference to a Grade 8 educational background as an indicative level of expected educational competence (and especially with regard to functional numeracy and literacy) can still be useful but it should not be used as a barrier to entry.

Wherever “Grade 8” appears in course entry requirements, the following rider could be included:

Grade 8 is stipulated to provide an indication of the background level of education typically judged necessary for a candidate to have a strong chance of benefiting from the course and achieving success. Nevertheless, freedom is given to course providers to recognise prior learning (RPL) or to use other forms of competency based or aptitude assessments¹ to determine the suitability of candidates for course admission, or to introduce bridging courses.

5.2 Key Achievements

Positive, evidence based, impressions relate to:

- The amount that has already been achieved to the project mid-term stage.
- The abundance and quality of materials generated.
- The high levels of stakeholder consensus that have been built up and are being maintained.
- The degree of hard work and dedication of the project team combined with impressive levels of technical excellence.
- The modelling effect the project is achieving.
- The reflective culture & responsiveness to be found within project management.
- Strong stakeholder consultative processes.
- Effective Liaison with other projects.
- Team Balance: including the exemplary, respectful and complementary working relationships between international and national staff, and a blend of younger and experience professionals.
- The high degree of International Best Practices to be found already within the project.

Project Achievements are too numerous to list in full, but the following are among the most significant:

Overarching:

- The “Trailblazing” nature of the project and the way it is breaking new ground, including putting a national policy and qualifications framework in place, redefining TVET beyond its traditional boundaries – especially the way it is broadening inclusion; and its reorientation to prioritising industry needs and shifting emphasis from qualifications to competencies.

¹ The MTR drew to the attention of the Implementation Team, the interesting and apparently successful use of aptitude tests by the CLR Cluster Development Initiative in India, working in similar skills fields to the TVET Reform Project. CLR aptitude tests, using simple apparatus and practical tests, focus on such things as manual dexterity and speed, hand-eye coordination, and spatial awareness: very important, for example, in the garment and leather sectors.

- The project's first mover advantage and influence – setting the standards, both literally and metaphorically.
- The success being achieved in raising TVET awareness, profile and status.
- Successful integration of good labour practices (e.g. Occupational Safety and Health).
- The way the project is serving as a public private partnership exemplar.
- Impressive external consultative processes.

Component One:

- The National Skills Development Policy that has been formulated and subjected to wide stakeholder consultation processes and which is on the point of being adopted;
- Production of an important "Structure and Coordination" report.
- The development of a proposal for and current on-going development of the TVET data system.

Component 2:

- The National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework, also on the threshold of becoming formalised.
- The impressive, fit for purpose, competency standards, that have already been developed.
- The Standards and Curriculum Development Committees that have been established and which are functioning effectively.
- The high quality Programme Outlines that have also already been developed in accordance with the new competency standards.

Component 3:

- The quality of training module design.
- The quality of training materials generated.
- The quality of training delivery observed.

Component 4:

- The success achieved in establishing four Industry Sector Councils – the first of their kind in Bangladesh.
- The establishment of the Centres of Excellence, for Leather and Agro-food Processing. Progress made in respect of the former is a particular exemplar for other sectors.
- The high levels of industry engagement that has been effected.

It is important to acknowledge that industry was not even part of the TVET sector at all, at the time of the project start up. This is a situation that is now totally changed.

Component 5:

- The creative models that are being successfully pursued for social inclusion, including the mainstreaming of the disabled, models for strengthening informal apprenticeships and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- The high levels of outreach and links that have been developed with other projects, creating a very significant multiplier effect.
- The groundbreaking nature of many activities challenging many of the stereotypes associated with traditional TVET in Bangladesh.

5.2.1 Recommendations

On the basis of all of the above, the following comprise a set of main recommendations:

To the Project Implementation Team:

- The time is now right, to take a major step up in levels of emphasis and efforts regarding visibility and dissemination of the project's impressive achievements. This is especially in regard to the many "best practice" resource materials and procedures the project has developed and put in place. Crucial in this regard will be an enhanced web presence and capturing best practice training activity electronically. (A set of specific detailed practical suggestions in support of this major recommendation can be found in Section 4.1.10 of this report).
- Revisit the wording of entrance requirements in course/programme documents developed by the project in order that "Grade 8" completion is not misinterpreted as being an absolute barrier to entry in all circumstances.
- Undertake, as a matter of priority, a financial review to obtain a fuller understanding and quantification of anticipated projected spending during the remaining lifetime of the project, in particular to:
 - Assess the scope and appropriateness (if any):
 - for transfer of funds between budget lines;
 - for support of additional activities and interventions, judged to be priorities (such as the communications and dissemination activities recommended above, as well as the capturing and dissemination on video/DVD of exemplary training practice).
 - Assist component advisers in formulating and prioritising further workplans for their own components.

To the European Union Delegation to Bangladesh:

- Lobby government regarding the urgency of needs (e.g. approval of the Skills Development Policy, and addressing staffing issues) and implications of delayed action.

- Help disseminate project outputs, lessons of success, and best international practice (e.g. encourage other projects to visit).
- Consolidate the position of advantage of the EUD in TVET and skills development in Bangladesh and take a leadership role, including the promotion of a future sector wide approach.

To Industry:

- Lobby government regarding the urgency of needs (e.g. approval of the Skills Development Policy, and addressing staffing issues) and implications of delayed action.
- Take note of what has been achieved (e.g. in the leather sector). Inspire other sectors and widen sphere of influence.

To Labour Unions/Groups:

- Continue to work with project on strengthening worker groups' appreciation of and capacity to benefit from the projects efforts in TVET reform, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), worker upskilling, etc.

To Government:

- Expedite as urgently as possible:
 - formal approval and adoption of the Skills Development Policy, and its integral National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework.
 - The re-activation of the National Skills Development Council as a vibrant body providing proactive leadership support and guidance to the TVET sector through the new Executive Committee.

It is important to flag that failing to take these recommended actions will greatly undermine the potential success of the project. Implementation time lost, supporting planned further capacity development in relation to the above, cannot be replaced. The Mission highly appreciates the extensive consultations that in part explain the approval delays. It also recognises that such consultations have played a vital part in ensuring the widest possible sense of ownership among all major stakeholders, which will augur well for the future. Nevertheless, prompt decisive action now is absolutely imperative.

- Take a strong leadership role in ensuring synergies, coordination, mutual reinforcement and lack of duplication of efforts between the TVET Reform Project, the Asian Development supported Skills Development Project and the STEP Project supported by the World Bank.
 - In this regard, the MTR strongly welcomes the proposal made in the 25th January 2011 PMCC meeting to consider constituting a Joint Steering Committee for all three projects. It recommends this course of action.
- Address critical shortages in staffing levels – particularly of BTEB and instructor cadres in training institutions. The project is unable to fulfil its commitment to build capacity without

beneficiary human resources being in place. The government could also benefit more if they were able to consider more robustly the recommendations made by the project in areas like innovations in TVET financing, and gender equality. Moreover, it only has a one-time opportunity to do this, determined by the project lifetime.

- Take an active role in disseminating as urgently and widely as possible information about the TVET reforms, through all of the channels at government's disposal and especially through the national media.

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