SECTOR ASSESSMENT (SUMMARY): EDUCATION

Sector Road Map

1. Sector Performance, Problems, and Opportunities

1. The Tajikistan economy grew at an average rate of 6.8% per year from 2005 to 2013. Despite this relatively high growth rate, poverty incidence remained high at 32% in 2014, with significant disparities among regions and between urban and rural areas. The benefits of growth have not been widely shared. The economic drivers that fueled high growth rates in the past—aluminum, cotton, and remittances from migrant workers—are experiencing shocks from external factors. Remittances are under serious threat as a result of the slowdown of the Russian Federation economy, which hosts over 90% of Tajik migrant workers.

2. In 2013, Tajikistan’s labor force was estimated to be 2.35 million, of which 2.29 million or 97.6% was employed. However, low unemployment rates mask the real picture because official statistics are based mainly on those who register for unemployment benefits. Actual unemployment and under-employment could be much higher, particularly for women and youth. The situation has worsened with the recent return of more than 200,000 migrant workers from the Russian Federation in 2014 due to stringent new work visa requirements, and with another 200,000 at risk of being deported. Combined with an estimated 150,000 new entrants into the labor force every year, the unemployment situation in Tajikistan is quite serious. A comprehensive program of job creation, supported by human resources development, is urgently needed.

3. The capacity of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system to respond to the worsening unemployment situation has been limited by underinvestment in physical and human resources since independence. The public TVET system cannot meet the requirements of the labor market. A severe mismatch has developed between the skills mix of graduates of the education system and labor market demands. The share of students and graduates in higher education has increased, with a corresponding decrease in vocational education and training, while labor market demand—current and projected—is for skilled TVET graduates. The labor market is short of qualified personnel for which reason the demand for technical and vocational training is steadily increasing.

4. The government TVET system comprises 63 primary TVET institutions (now called lyceums) and 30 adult learning centers (ALCs) run by the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment (MOLME). There are also 49 secondary TVET institutions (now called technical colleges), largely managed by different ministries and state-owned enterprises including the Ministry of Education and Science (20); Ministry of Culture (6); Ministry of Agriculture (2); Ministry of Health (15); Ministry of Energy (3); Tajik Aluminium Plant (1); Hydropower Station of Rogun (1); and the Committee for Youth, Sports and Tourism (1). Lyceums offer 1- and 2-year diploma courses designed to produce skilled workers, craftsmen, and operators, while technical colleges offer 3- and 4-year courses designed to develop technicians, foremen and women, and supervisors. ALCs offer short courses of 1-, 3-, and 6-month duration for basic skills training and skills upgrading. Most lyceums also offer a limited number of shorter courses.

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1 This summary is based on the project preparatory technical assistance (TA 8546) final report, available on request.
5. In 2013, the 63 lyceums enrolled 21,593 students (of whom 18% were girls) in more than 60 courses. The new enrollment for that year was 11,600 students (26% girls). During the same year, the lyceums produced 11,103 graduates (38% girls), indicating a higher completion rate for girls than boys. ALCs trained more than 14,505 learners, of whom 20% were girls. No formal study has been conducted on employment outcomes of the graduates. Based on interviews with lyceum directors and staff, about 60% of lyceum graduates are employed (40% domestically in Tajikistan and 20% overseas, mainly in the Russian Federation); 10% pursue further study; 10% join the military; and 20% are unemployed.

6. Technical colleges enrolled more than 48,000 students (63% girls) in 2013 in a variety of courses—business and economics, humanities, engineering, agriculture, health, culture, and sports. About 80% of students were in the regular day program, while 20% were enrolled through distance courses. About 10,700 students graduated in 2013 from the day program (footnote 1). Data on employment of technical college graduates is not available.

7. The National Strategy of Education Development up to 2020 (NSED) clearly articulates the poor state of TVET and the urgent need to rebuild the subsector. The NSED identified the following concerns with primary TVET lyceums: (i) acute shortage of industry training specialists; (ii) low qualification level of teachers; (iii) nonconformity of TVET graduates to labor market requirements; (iv) lack of up-to-date educational and methodical training materials and equipment; (v) employers and other social partners insufficiently involved in the training system; (vi) no mechanism to attract private sector financial resources for vocational education and staff development; and (vii) lack of training in business and job search skills to help graduates ensure they are employed or start their own business.

8. Similar problems are identified in secondary TVET technical colleges: (i) physically obsolete training facilities; (ii) lack of modern textbooks and visual and learning aids, especially in local languages; (iii) uniform training programs not developed for every occupation; (iv) lack of opportunities for teachers to improve their teaching skills and knowledge through industry experience; (v) shortage of teachers and low level of their qualifications; and (vi) nonconformity of training programs to labor market requirements.

9. ALCs offer training programs similar to those in the lyceums and technical colleges, with one major difference: the ALCs are more flexible given their focus on short courses, especially for the jobless. Training programs offered in all three institutional settings should follow industry standards although most of which have yet to be developed. This will be achieved progressively through the development of competency-based training (CBT). About 260 private training providers and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) registered with the Ministry of Education and Science train over 100,000 students, primarily through short courses. The participation of these institutions in the development of the TVET system needs to be mobilized.

10. The governance structure also needs to be addressed. The TVET subsector is fragmented. Different groups of providers—public and private TVET institutions, enterprise training centers, and NGOs—operate independently of each other. Even within the same groups, coordination is limited. Linkages with employers exist in some institutions, but in general engagement between the TVET system and the private sector is very weak. Managed by

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4 No formal performance monitoring is in place for private training providers, some of whom provide quality training in specialized fields.
different ministries, agencies and private organizations, no central mechanism coordinates subsector work to respond effectively to the needs of individual students and the labor market. No established mechanism links TVET courses to market signals to guide course planning and delivery, as well as to monitor performance.

11. The expansion of basic education to year 11 makes it possible for the curriculum to focus on technical and vocational skills, as most of the academic subjects will be already taken up in year 10. This change opens up the opportunity to rethink lyceum training programs so that they focus on technical and vocational skills. Lyceums and technical colleges can then be better coordinated or even merged and rationalized, to create integrated learning pathways from initial training to mid-level skills development. Programs do not need to be 1 year (or more) long, or be fully based within training institutions. Internationally, new and more flexible modalities are delivering graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to become high-performing workers. These improvements are appropriate for Tajikistan.

2. Government’s Sector Strategy

12. The National Development Strategy to 2015 outlines sustainable economic development and poverty reduction by achieving three strategic development objectives: (i) ensuring food security, (ii) achieving energy sovereignty, and (iii) overcoming the country’s communications blockages. The strategic priority sectors—agriculture, energy, transport, and communications—will help establish the resource base for stable economic growth and reduce poverty levels.

13. Development of the education sector has been identified as the priority social policy to meet these strategic objectives. Recognizing a well-functioning TVET system as an important element for economic development, cohesion, and social inclusion, the government has increased budget allocations for the TVET subsector starting from 2012, although they remain at a low level—below 0.1% of gross domestic product (2013).

14. In the 2014 analysis of the Torino Process in Tajikistan, the European Training Foundation (ETF) endorsed the government’s commitment to improving the TVET system. It noted that significant progress has been achieved since 2010 in the formulation of the policy on development of the TVET system, taking into consideration needs of the economy and of the labor market. The ETF indicates that in the TVET system, which involves continuing professional education, some results have been achieved through the expansion of ALCs and in improvements to their material and technical equipment. Nevertheless, many activities outlined in the state program of Adult Vocational Training development for 2011–2015 remain unimplemented because of limited financial and human resources. In primary TVET, insignificant progress was observed.

15. The 2014 ETF analysis identifies the following three priority tasks to improve TVET: (i) implementation of a mechanism for more demand-oriented TVET provision; (ii) support for economic growth and higher investment in viable sectors to lead to job creation in the domestic labor market, in addition to self-employment (entrepreneurship) and improvement of the business environment, to help reduce high outflows of labor migrants from Tajikistan to the

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7 Government of Tajikistan. 2012. State Program for TVET Development to 2020. Dushanbe. This is low compared with 0.25% of gross domestic product in Armenia (2006), 0.21% in Kazakhstan (2006), and 0.42% in Kyrgyzstan (2006).
Russian Federation over the medium term; and (iii) further formulation and implementation of the legal basis for social partnership.

3. **ADB Sector Experience and Assistance Program**

16. The proposed project is the first Asian Development Bank (ADB)-financed project for TVET in Tajikistan. It is aligned with ADB’s interim 2015 country partnership strategy and is consistent with ADB’s education sector policy and the Midterm Review of Strategy 2020 and subsequent Action Plan. The project supports Tajikistan’s National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the Period to 2015, which targets the development of higher-quality labor resources.

17. The proposed project will involve representatives of industries and industry advisory groups in identifying occupational areas that are in demand, and in developing competencies for the market-demanded occupational areas. The private sector will work with the project TVET institutions to develop modular, competency-based curricula and learning materials. From discussions with the private sector and employer representatives, models of structured industry-based training have yet to develop in Tajikistan. The project will support the development of training programs for workers in key economic sectors such as agriculture, energy, transport, and infrastructure, in which ADB is already investing. It will also provide support to migrant workers through walk-in certification and training. The trained and certified migrant workers will then be better positioned for wage employment or self-employment opportunities in the domestic and overseas labor markets.

18. The proposed project will support the development of new technical and vocational qualifications (and their competency standards) to be identified by industry. These qualifications and standards will provide a tool for acquiring and recognizing competence in the workplace. The standards can be used for a range of human resource applications: (i) staff recruitment, selection, and succession planning; (ii) training needs analysis and the design of company training programs; (iii) promotion of a learning environment to support business growth; (iv) staff motivation; and (v) staff performance measurement and development. The new national TVET qualifications will be developed jointly by industry and government, and made available to all training institutions, including NGOs and private sector providers. Access to the new industry-led TVET qualifications is expected to be a significant incentive for the private sector to enter the TVET training market in Tajikistan, as evidenced in other countries.

19. The project design has taken into account lessons from previous ADB TVET projects, including (i) institutionalizing the mechanism for engaging employers and other social partners in the TVET system, (ii) mainstreaming TVET system reforms sustainably as regular activities in MOLME, (iii) involving key stakeholders from project design throughout implementation to foster a strong sense of industry ownership, and (iv) ensuring that the legal and regulatory framework supports TVET system reform. ADB’s future support in the TVET sector will help the government develop TVET to enhance the quality of the labor force and meet Tajikistan’s long-term social and economic objectives. ADB envisages strong coordination of assistance with other development partners through the proposed project.

Problem Tree for Education

**Effects**
- Continued shortage of skilled workers in domestic and overseas labor markets reducing national productivity and competitiveness increasing the costs of doing business, and decreasing migrant overseas labor incomes
  - Limited number of graduates and low skill levels do not meet the requirements of labor markets
  - A larger number of unemployed and underemployed, and new entrants to the labor force remain unserved and unemployed

**Problem**
- TVET system ineffective, inefficient, and unresponsive to labor market needs

**Causes**
- Course offerings and curriculum structure and contents are outdated and do not match requirements; not linked to national strategic priorities
- Experienced teachers have emigrated and it is difficult to find qualified replacement; outdated TVET pedagogy
- Most buildings in state of disrepair, with little and obsolete training equipment dating to the former Soviet Union
- Limited enrollment relative to general secondary education and higher education
- Lack of unified governance framework and quality-assurance system
- National TVET system has little or no linkage with industry at the national and international levels
- Salary scale of TVET teachers and masters (practical training instructors) very low
- Inadequate recurrent financing and minimal capital investment in TVET facilities since independence
- Low social status of TVET and lack of access to youths in rural areas
- Poor coordination between multiple agencies responsible for TVET system
### Sector Results Framework (Education, 2015–2020)

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<th>Country Sector Outcomes</th>
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<td>Skilled workforce to meet the demand of labor market in national priority economic sectors and the key international labor market</td>
<td>Employer satisfaction with TVET graduates improves by at least 10% by 2020 (2015 baseline will be obtained through a survey to be conducted as part of the first TVET project in 2015)</td>
<td>TVET reforms and rehabilitation, including training for disadvantaged groups, to make it more relevant to labor market</td>
<td>All 63 TVET lyceums rehabilitated by 2020 Teaching staff of TVET lyceums trained more frequently (at least once in 2 years)</td>
<td>Planned key activity areas: TVET sector system development (100% of funding) Pipeline projects with estimated amounts: Strengthening in TVET ($32 million; 2016–2021) TVET Development Project ($20 million; 2017–2022)</td>
<td>Planned key activity areas: CBT and independent competency assessment system implemented Access to quality TVET programs improved Physical learning facilities of TVET institutions upgraded</td>
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**ADB = Asian Development Bank, CBT = competency-based training, PPTA = project preparatory technical assistance, TVET = technical and vocational education and training.**