



International
Labour
Organization

Skills 21 Empowering citizens for inclusive and sustainable growth

Every year almost two million people enter the Bangladesh workforce, however the capacity of the system to provide skills training is limited. A pressing need therefore exists to help the country provide equitable and quality technical education capable of skilling and up skilling large numbers of women and men to meet market demand, at local and global levels.

This requires qualified teachers and assessors, up-to-date institutional facilities and a market driven, competency-based inclusive skills system. These steps are crucial for enhancing labour productivity as well as facilitating industrialization, trade and inclusive economic growth.

The European Union-funded Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Reform Project was implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) from 2007 to 2015. It successfully carried out reforms in the formal TVET system and put in place the foundation for a National Skills Development System (NSDS) in Bangladesh.

To successfully address the needs of the country's growing workforce, the skills system needs further strengthening and promotion as well as adoption,

adaption and replication by stakeholders.

Skills 21 – Empowering citizens for inclusive and sustainable growth is an ILO/ EU skills development programme that runs from 2017 – 2020 and builds on the achievements of earlier ILO/EU initiatives to modernise the TVET system in Bangladesh.



Working for a stronger skills system

Skills 21 addresses following priority areas:

- Strengthening the quality of the TVET/skills development system, including development of a National Qualification Framework (NQF) to harmonize qualification pathways across technical and formal education.
- Creating model TVET institutions which are inclusive, environmentally conscious, high-quality and labour-market responsive.
- Establishing a framework for a more conducive legislative, regulatory and institutional Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) in the TVET/skills development sector to improve skills governance.



Areas of emphasis

Links with private sector – Skills 21 aims to support collaboration between companies and relevant training providers to develop and implement demand-driven education and training programmes, therefore creating better employment opportunities.

Skills for migrants – Given the importance of labour migration in the Bangladesh economy, Skills 21 will help integrate migration into the skills development system. It will assist in implementation of the policy for skilling returning migrants to support their reintegration as well as those aspiring to migrate so they are able to secure better paid work.

Inclusivity – Skills 21 works to make access to TVET open and accessible to all. This means improving access to skills training for women, persons with disabilities as well as indigenous and tribal peoples.

Business Incubation – The project will establish incubation centres inside or near the model institutions to nurture business start-ups for local entrepreneurs.

The 'Green economy' – Skills 21 will help pave the way for the transition to a greener, more sustainable economy by providing skills for emerging occupations in green industries and mainstreaming environmental sustainability into the overall national skills development system.

Introducing a Sector Wide (SWAP) approach – Skills 21 will carry out the ground work for the introduction of a Sector Wide approach to the development of the Bangladesh skills sector. This will help ensure coherence and efficiency relating to sector development and donor support.



How will Skills 21 benefit Bangladesh?

Lack of skills and education are recognised as major constraints for the economic development of Bangladesh. Skills 21 will catalyse system-wide change by focusing on broader policy frameworks, key institutions and recognition of skills for overseas employment. Model training institutions which are inclusive, environmentally conscious and integrated with local economies will provide a basis for future development of the sector. Meanwhile, the capacity of partners will be built towards establishing a Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) which will help streamline and drive efficiency of efforts to develop the skills sector.



Implementing partners

Skills 21 is funded by the European Union (€19.5 million) and implemented by the ILO in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh as well as employers and workers organisations.

