

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ALGERIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 National context

Algeria has the third largest economy in the Middle East and North Africa region, according to the World Bank.¹ However, its economy lacks diversification and remains highly dependent on hydrocarbons – its GDP growth is therefore largely dependent on oil prices.

Algeria's population was almost 42.5 million in 2018, 21% of which was made up of young people aged 15 to 24. The country has seen fairly sharp demographic growth rates over the past decade at over 2% per year. The overall participation rate is stable at around 40%, with considerable disparity – at a ratio of one to four – between men and women.

The services sector provided the main source of employment during the period 2010–18, comprising between 55 and 62% of the labour force, far greater than the construction sector (16 to 19%) and industry (14%).

It should be noted that more than one third of the labour force is employed in the public sector.

1.2 Statistics

TABLE 1. PROPORTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE POPULATION

	Population size	Proportion of young people (15–24, %)
2010	35 978 000	28.8
2014	39 114 000	26.5
2018	42 578 000	21.0

Source: National Statistics Office

TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT OVERVIEW (%)

	Employment rate (15+)	Employment rate amongst young people (15–24)
2010	37.6	22.1
2014	36.4	21.0
2018	36.8	18.4

Source: National Statistics Office

¹ www.worldbank.org/en/country/algeria

TABLE 3. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF THE ADULT POPULATION (15+, %)

	Low level	Medium level	High level
2012	72.4	17.9	9.8
2015	68.2	19.3	12.5

Note: Equivalence with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED): low level = ISCED levels 0–2; medium level = ISCED levels 3–4; high level = ISCED levels 5–8

Source: Eurostat

TABLE 4. VOCATIONAL TRAINING PARTICIPATION RATE (%)

	Secondary (ISCED level 3)
2010	10.3

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

1.3 Vocational education and training system

Governance

The Ministry of Vocational Education and Training is responsible for national vocational education and training (VET) policies, whose implementation it tracks and monitors with the cooperation of various organisations.

Those support structures include a number of consultation bodies, including the National Conference on Vocational Education and Training, which is regarded as a framework for consultation on, and coordination and assessment of, the activities of the VET sector in the country. The Partnership Council for Vocational Education and Training is a similar body and is involved in developing and defining national policies and development strategies in VET through its recommendations and opinions. Finally, the Observatory for Vocational Education and Training is tasked with foresight activities in quantitative and qualitative needs in relation to qualifications.

A number of institutes and organisations provide support to the ministry. These include, inter alia, the National Institute of Vocational Education and Training (INFEP), which is responsible in particular for educational engineering, training senior management and the production of methodological guides and studies, the National Office for the Development and Promotion of Continuing Education (Ondefoc) and the National Development Fund for Apprenticeships and Continuing Training (FNAC), which is primarily responsible for the development of apprenticeships and continuous training.

Funding

In 2017, the budget allocated to the education system was nearly 25% of the general State budget and almost 6% of GDP, compared with 1% (1.2% in 2018) and 0.26% respectively as regards the budget allocated to VET. This State funding is also accompanied by apprenticeship and vocational training taxes (which are both fixed at 1% of the wage bill of enterprises and other employers) the proceeds of which are paid into the FNAC in order to provide funding for training and development activities for undertakings which meet the eligibility criteria.

Each year, the institutions draw up their draft budgets which they submit to the vocational training directorate in the wilaya (region/province) under whose responsibility they fall. Those budgets, which are accrued at the level of the wilaya, are consolidated and then communicated to the relevant ministry so that it can prepare its draft budget. That operating budget is then negotiated with the Budgets Directorate at the Ministry of Finance. Finally, the overall budget adopted is published in the finance law adopted by Parliament.

Regulatory framework and development strategy

The organisation of VET in Algeria is based on a body of laws and regulations which set out the general principles of VET as a public service and determine the roles of the different stakeholders. The organisation and development of VET and its delivery, coordination and regulation fall under the control of central government, represented by the decentralised administrations at the level of the executive of each wilaya.

The priority objectives of the action plan adopted by the sector in 2015 are as follows:

1. diversification of vocational training pathways and curricula to meet the demands of businesses;
2. ensuring that training programmes are qualitatively aligned with patterns of economic demand;
3. developing a partnership with industrial firms in order to establish centres of excellence and develop on- and off-the-job training;
4. modernising the administrative, financial and pedagogical management of public training institutions and diversifying sources of funding.

Main training providers

Vocational training is dominated by the public sector. In 2017, private training represented only 4% of the overall supply.

As regards modes of training, learners appear to favour apprenticeships, which were taken up by over 50% of workforce participants in 2017. The overall duration of technical and technological training in addition to theoretical training is determined each year in the Nomenclature of professional disciplines and specialities in vocational training.

Main training programmes

The nomenclature of training offered lists 23 professional disciplines and 478 specialities. That structure is the result of a framework agreement on developing professional qualifications and enhancing the skills of workers, signed by all of the public and private partners in 2014 and updated in 2018.

Organisation of initial training (diplomas and certificates)

The vocational training system awards the following diplomas:

- the specialised vocational training certificate (certificat de formation professionnelle spécialisée – CFPS), which attests to six months of training. Candidates who have completed nine years of schooling may access this training;

- the certificate of professional competence (certificat d'aptitude professionnelle – CAP), which attests to 12 months of training and is offered to young people who have completed less than or 9 years of schooling;
- the certificate of professional mastery (certificat de maîtrise professionnelle – CMP), which attests to 12 months of training and is offered to young people who have completed at least 9 years of schooling;
- the technician's certificate (brevet de technicien – BT), which attests to 24 months of training and is offered to young people who have completed at least 11 years of schooling;
- the higher technician's certificate (brevet de technicien supérieur – BTS), which attests to 30 months of training and is offered to young people who have completed at least 12 years of schooling.

A parallel vocational education route is available to students who have completed a basic education curriculum. In place since 2002, this route has received little interest from those students who have the option of continuing their studies using the post-basic learning/pre-university route, and therefore remains marginal. Initial VET is delivered at a residential course.

The training provided by vocational education fits into two consecutive levels of qualification, each of which is attested by a State diploma. The first level, which takes three years, is open to young people who have been admitted to further education. It is attested by the vocational education certificate (brevet d'enseignement professionnel – BEP). The second level is open to prospective students who hold the BEP as an extension of the pathway they have followed. It consists of a two-year training programme attested by a higher-level vocational education certificate (brevet d'enseignement professionnel supérieur – BEPS).

Currently, neither vocational diploma allows access to university education.

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 General introduction

Quality assurance is essentially regarded as a tool to ensure that training institutions are complying with legislation and regulations, whether this is undertaken by means of an administrative and pedagogical inspection in public centres or accreditation for private centres. The system does not appear to use performance indicators which are linked to the results achieved by those institutions (such as indicators of the employability of graduates or satisfaction amongst young people and employers, for example) in order to monitor their compliance and take remedial action if necessary.

Quality assurance is one of the Ministry of Vocational Education and Training's priorities. A dedicated working group, led by INFEP, has also been set up.

The overall assessment of the system falls to the National Assembly, which has a committee that specialises in VET, the Court of Auditors and the Inspectorate General of Finance, in addition to the Inspectorate General of the Ministry of Vocational Education and Training.

To date, the quality of vocational training has been assessed internally and externally.

The internal assessment is carried out by the body of inspectors who carry out their work either on the basis of an annual programme or in response to an order for an inspection following a management issue or a dispute (in the form of an investigation). They can also conduct internal audits of the directorates of the wilayas and their institutions.

That assessment, which is based on regulations and specific working methods, culminates in the formulation of advice and recommendations regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of the training system. The role of the inspection is to accompany the changes which enable the implementation of reforms undertaken by the sector.

The sector's internal and external performance is assessed by studies undertaken by bodies such as the National Centre for Population Development Studies and Analysis (Centre national d'études et d'analyses pour la population et le développement – CENEAP), the Centre for Research in Applied Economics for Development (Centre de recherche en économie appliquée pour le développement – CREAD) and INFEP. Those studies concern inter alia:

- the integration of graduates from the VET sector into the labour market;
- employer satisfaction with VET graduates;
- the response to socio-economic needs (link between training and employment).

2.2 Quality assurance in each of the key VET fields

Statistical data for quality assurance

The Framework law on vocational education and training, adopted in 2008, provides for the establishment of an Observatory for Vocational Education and Training, which is responsible for assessing quantitative and qualitative needs in relation to qualifications and performs the following tasks:

- establish an efficient information system on VET and the labour market at national and regional levels;
- participate, as a policy instrument for the development of VET, in the identification of training and qualifications needs;
- provide a tool to aid decision making in, and the assessment and improvement of, VET systems.

That observatory is not yet operational, which explains the lack of structured and summarised information on labour market needs. A lack of data on the performance of the VET system – in particular in terms of responding to economic needs, one of its main objectives – is also a concern.

Quality assurance and updating of qualifications

The process of developing and updating VET content follows the skills-based approach, which is a three-step process.

- The first step aims to describe the occupation and how it is performed. It involves gathering the information collected when analysing the working environment and on which there is consensus on the part of representatives of the profession.
- The second step aims to identify the list of key skills for future study programmes. The job description and the list of key skills are submitted to representatives in the workplace for approval.

- The third step is developing the programme, which is formulated using operational objectives and is divided into modules. It must present a coherent set of skills to be acquired and include teaching suggestions to facilitate its implementation by trainers. Programmes designed using this approach are subject to review by the validation commission.

Quality assurance at training provider level

Public training institutions appear to have a fairly limited degree of autonomy. Their performance may be appraised by inspectors from the ministry.

Private institutions are subject to regulations which determine the conditions for their creation, opening and review. Trainees at those accredited institutions take exams organised by the VET sector in order to obtain the relevant diploma.

Quality assurance and training for trainers

The overriding rule when recruiting VET trainers is competition based on tests. Professional experience is not required and the qualifications which candidates must have vary according to the teacher. Candidates may be recruited using professional tests in exceptional circumstances, in particular in respect of certain traditional crafts: artisans must be able to prove that they have worked in the field for five years and have the ability to teach that speciality.

New teachers must undertake preparatory teacher training, following which trainee teachers must undergo an inspection before appointment to a permanent post.

Statistics from the ministry show that other categories of teachers provide vocational training in a variety of institutions (workplace preparation, youth employment, contractors). The conditions for recruitment within the framework of those various profiles are not specified.

In an ETF study on continuing vocational training for teachers in vocational training institutions in Algeria, it appears that 30% of female teachers and 20% of male teachers did not undergo any initial training before starting work. As regards the principals of the institutions, 27% of them have never received any training to carry out their role as a director and 30% of them have not had any teacher training.

Teachers are assessed on a pedagogical and administrative level, the sole purpose of which appears to be job progression.

3. NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

New developments

The support programme to harmonise training, employment and qualifications (adéquation formation-emploi-qualification – AFEQ) is a project which is co-funded by Algeria and the European Union. The implementation period for the project is September 2017 to September 2020. Its aim is to strengthen the role of enterprises and economic sectors in the processes of vocational training, university education and helping young people to enter the labour force. Component 2 of the programme targets improving the quality of apprenticeships by developing dedicated tools and work methods.

A new law on apprenticeships was approved in 2018. Its main provisions concern raising the age of apprentices and creating training and apprenticeship centres to replace apprenticeship committees at local level. The law also provides for the establishment of a mechanism for the monitoring and technical and pedagogical assessment of apprenticeships.

Requirements

- Review the policy on quality assurance for the entire VET sector.
- Move towards a VET system which is driven by demand and includes an integrated system of information on the labour market and a transparent information system in respect of the management of VET.
- Strengthen the governance related to quality assurance when developing qualification standards.
- Give greater autonomy to training providers to conduct internal assessments linked to effective external assessment mechanisms.

4. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

The overall assessment of the VET system falls to the National Assembly (which has a committee that specialises in that field), the Court of Auditors, the Inspectorate General of Finance and the Inspectorate General of the Ministry of Vocational Education and Training.

Formal tripartite arrangements are in place. Since 2011, the Partnership Council, composed of representatives of the Ministries, undertakings and social partners, has worked to strengthen governance. An apprenticeship/training tax (National Training Fund) is levied from employers.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ETF	European Training Foundation
FNAC	Fonds national de développement de l'apprentissage et de la formation continue (National Development Fund for Apprenticeships and Continuing Training)
GDP	Gross domestic product
INFEP	Institut national de la formation et de l'enseignement professionnels (National Institute of Vocational Education and Training)
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
VET	Vocational education and training

Where to find out more

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