



International
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Maldives TVET Assessment 2012

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International Labour Office

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCE:	Centre for Continuing Education
CBT:	Competency Based Training
DHE:	Department of Higher Education
DNP:	Department for National Planning
ESC:	Employment Sector Councils
EDC:	Education Development Centre
ESTP:	Employment and Skills Training Program
HIES:	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HUNARU:	Skills training for employment flagship program, launched by the President of Maldives, which targets 8500 unemployed youth to increase their employability. Period: between 2011-2012.
MHRYS:	Ministry of Human Resource and Sports and Youth
MoE:	Ministry of Education
MQA:	Maldives Qualifications Authority
MVR or Rf:	Maldivian Rufiyaa
SAP:	Strategic Action Plan
TVETA:	Technical Vocational Education and Training Authority
WGI:	Interagency Working Group in TVET Indicators

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I. Introduction

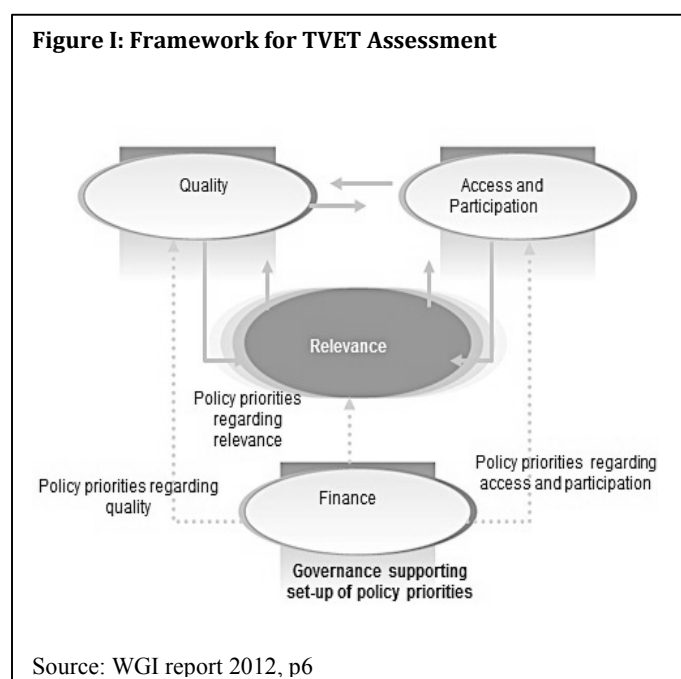
The ILO initiated this assessment study on the current TVET system of the Maldives as a follow up to the Interagency Working Group on TVET (IWG) efforts to coordinate activities of the agencies active in the field of TVET particularly in developing countries. The IWG was established in 2009 and comprises the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank (WB), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the European Commission (EC), the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The IWG developed a framework and proposes indicators for assessment, monitoring and evaluation of TVET system performance in developing countries. These indicators are commonly collected or used by the international organizations and resulted in a recent publication (2012).¹ Five pertinent policy areas define the framework:

1. Access and participation;
2. Relevance;
3. Quality and innovation in TVET;
4. Governance and
5. TVET Financing

The objectives of this document are to

- assess the current TVET system in the Maldives according to the framework and indicators developed by the IWG and
- make some policy recommendations based on the assessment



The assessment uses the framework (Figure 1) and indicators developed by IWG as reference. They act as proxy to describe the functioning of the current TVET system. The framework includes the five interlocking components mentioned above for the evaluation of the TVET system's current policies and performance. It is expected that these components simultaneously can assess the level of priority TVET has in a country as well as be able to take into account the main objective any TVET system has: namely to ensure equal access to continuous learning and to fulfill its overall objective to equip and empowered and skilled labour force to access and secure decent and productive employment.²

This framework takes into account the current widespread limitations of reliable data on training provision, enrolment, finances, quality indicators on training delivery and finally placement for employment. As the indicator list in Table 1 suggests, the authors also added 'desirable' indicators and data to the list, which would more effectively map and monitor the effectiveness of the TVET system.

The IWG understands this as a preliminary list of indicators, a work in progress, which will likely be revised after further consultation and piloting in different countries. It is hoped that through this

¹ See "Proposed Indicators for Assessing Technical and Vocational Education and Training." Interagency Working Group on TVET indicators, 2011. See IWG Report, 2012.

² For more details, see IWG report 2012.

systematic approach, countries would be able to design evidence based policies and strategies for TVET, where operational objectives could be continuously monitored with the framework and indicators used.

Table 1: Suggested IWG indicators used for evaluation of TVET Systems in developing countries

Area	Indicators		
	<i>Fundamental indicators</i>		<i>Desirable indicators</i>
	<i>Data available</i>	<i>Data not readily available</i>	
1. Financing	1.1 Spending in formal TVET	1.2 Total TVET spending by student	1.3 Share of companies providing apprenticeship and other types of training (by size of the company) 1.4 Share of apprenticeship and other types of training spending in labour cost (by size of the company)
2. Access • <i>Access as opportunities</i> • <i>Access as participation</i> • <i>Access as transition</i>	2.1 Enrolment in vocational education as a percentage of total enrolment in the formal education system. 2.2. Enrolment rate by type of TVET program	2.6 Typology of Admission Policies to formal school-based TVET 2.7 Transition rate from upper secondary TVET education to post-secondary non-tertiary TVET education	2.3 Work-based learning participation rate 2.4 Equity 2.5 Unsatisfied demand for TVET 2.8 Policies on articulation with schooling/higher education
3. Quality and Innovation	3.1 Student/teacher ratio in formal TVET and in general programs 3.2 Completion rate in TVET programs and in general programs	3.3 Share of apprentices completing registered programs as a percentage of all apprentices starting registered programs 3.4 Share of qualified teachers in TVET and in general programs	3.5 Relevance of quality assurance systems for TVET providers 3.6 Investment in training of teachers and trainers 3.7 Placement rate in TVET programs 3.8 Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace 3.9 Share of ICT training activities in TVET
4. Relevance	4.1 Employment to population ratio 4.2 Unemployment rate 4.3 Employment status 4.4 Employment by economic sector 4.5 Employment by occupation 4.6 Literacy rate	4.7 Informal employment rate 4.8 Time-related unemployment rate	4.9 Working poverty rate 4.10 Average real earnings 4.11 Number of vacant jobs 4.12 Net job creation 4.13 Youth outside labour force 4.14 Discouraged workers

Source: IWG, 2012, p10

1. *Methods used and data limitations*

Many of the indicators used for this assessment stemmed from the IWG document and served as proxy indicators, which were outlined in the conceptual framework for this assessment. It was however found that the indicators were in many instances not adequate for a comprehensive assessment of a TVET system and its performance, unless the analysis would be complemented with qualitative indicators to effectively encounter these data challenges. Data are often proxies and not timely available, nor detailed enough to be reliable as unique source of information. Further, using proxy data in the absence of reliable training related data to assess training delivery, quality and relevance, suggests some reflection, whether policy conclusions can be made based on these data, as they are not directly linked to training and labour market outcomes. It is therefore highly relevant that qualitative indicators are added to any such assessment, so that policy related aspects as well as institutional maturity of a TVET system can be properly reflected in such a study. This specific assessment consequently suggests an exploratory approach, which includes a mix of initial desk research on data but includes a qualitative assessment with focus group discussions and a fact-finding and validation mission to ensure that the current developments and policy shifts in the country are also taken into account.

In the absence of regularly conducted labour force surveys in the Maldives, there are challenges with the current data available to assess employment and labour market outcomes that are critical for the relevance part of Section V. However, the Census for 2006, the Statistical Yearbook, the recently published Household and Income Survey³ (HIES 2012) and National Employee Registry Survey of 2011 certainly have provided significant, otherwise not available data, which were integrated in the assessment. The different departments are aware of the current data limitations and, according to the Department of National Planning, have planned a Labour Force Survey for the year 2012/13.

Systematic collection of educational statistics has a short history in the Maldives. However, in recent years, there has been a remarkable improvement in the collection, processing and publication of educational statistics; training and employment related data however are still scarcely available in a systematic way. As can be seen in table 2, many of the data outlined in the framework published by WGI are not available and/or not systematically collected. Data collection particularly related to TVET and career guidance has only recently started more or less systematically since the implementation of the ADB funded TVET reform project (2006-2010) and has since then been kept quite minimal. The government clearly acknowledges the relevance for training and labour market related information to ensure effective monitoring of training and employment related developments. Currently existing financial and human resource limitations will need to be overcome however, so that data are collected more regularly and quality and consistency are maintained.

The author undertook several focus group discussions and guided interviews during the meetings with government officials, training providers and employers as complementary source of information.

The report starts with an introductory overview for the Maldives and discusses the current social and economic achievements and challenges (section I). The second section (section II) provides a brief overview of the educational system, current policy directives and priorities in the field of education and vocational training (section III). An overview of TVET (section IV) is followed

³ HIES 2012: the HIES covers a representative sample for 2000 Households within the Maldives. The government has recently decided to undertake a census only every 10 years, therefore replaced the planned census survey by the HIES.

by an assessment of the current TVET system according to the IWG indicators (section V), using five interlocking components – the current policy environment, how TVET is financed, ensures access and how well it can deliver quality and relevance of training and labour market outcomes. The report ends with conclusions and policy recommendations (section VI).

Table 2: List of available indicators in the Maldives

	Comment	Indicator	Comment
1. Financing	Data available	1.1 Spending in formal TVET	Na
	Data not readily available	1.2 Total TVET spending by student	Na
		1.3 Share of companies providing apprenticeship and other types of training (by size of the company)	Na
	Desirable indicators	1.4 Share of apprenticeship and other types of training spending in labour cost (by size of the company)	Na
2. Access <i>Access as opportunities</i> <i>Access as participation</i> <i>Access as transition</i>	Data available	2.1 Enrolment in vocational education as a percentage of total enrolment in the formal education system. 2.2. Enrolment rate by type of TVET program	No distinction between Educ/TVET No systematic collection
	Data not readily available	2.6 Typology of Admission Policies to formal school-based TVET education 2.7 Transition rate from upper secondary TVET education to post-secondary non-tertiary TVET	Na No distinction between Educ/TVET
	Desirable indicators	2.3 Work-based learning participation rate 2.4 Equity 2.5 Unsatisfied demand for TVET 2.8 Policies on articulation with schooling/higher education	Na Na Na In process
3. Quality /Innovation	Data available	3.1 Student/teacher ratio in formal TVET and in general programs 3.2 Completion rate in TVET / general programs	No distinction between Educ/TVET
	Data not readily available	3.3 Share of apprentices completing registered programs as a percentage of all apprentices starting registered programs 3.4 Share of qualified teachers in TVET and in general programs	Na No distinction between Educ/TVET
	Desirable indicators	3.5 Relevance of quality assurance systems for TVET providers 3.6 Investment in training of teachers and trainers 3.7 Placement rate in TVET programs 3.8 Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace 3.9 Share of ICT training activities in TVET	In place Na No systematic collec. Na Na
4. Relevance	Data available	4.1 Employment to population ratio 4.2 Unemployment rate 4.3 Employment status 4.4 Employment by economic sector 4.5 Employment by occupation 4.6 Literacy rate 4.14 Discouraged workers	Available Available Available Available Available Available Available
	Data not readily available	4.7 Informal employment rate 4.8 Time-related unemployment rate	Na Na
	Desirable indicators	4.9 Working poverty rate 4.10 Average real earnings 4.11 Number of vacant jobs 4.12 Net job creation 4.13 Youth outside labour force	Na Na No systematic collection Available Available

II. Context of Maldives

The Maldives is a young democracy, known for its formidable beauty and 1190 low lying coral reef islands in the Indian Ocean. With a current population of around 319,740 the country is sparsely populated and spread over 200 islands. Only 2% of the islands have population over 500.⁴ The country's population was 298,968 in 2006 and continuously rose to 319,696 in 2010 and 320,000 people in 2011, with an additional 100,000 expatriates who lived in the Maldives in 2011 (who are usually not counted in the Census).⁵ As can be seen (Table 3), the annual population growth rate has slowed down during the last decade from 1.7% per annum to remain at a stable 1.3% per annum (Table 4). However, Maldives' population remains relatively young, with 44% being younger than age 14 years and around 60% below 25 years.

Table 3: Population by 5 years age group and sex 2006

Population by age group and sex (last census, 2006)					
	TOTAL	men	women	men%	women%
All Persons	298,968	151,459	147,509		
0-4	26,171	13,362	12,809	8.8	8.7
5-9	29,867	15,352	14,515	10.1	9.8
10-14	36,999	19,111	17,888	12.6	12.1
15-19	39,904	20,155	19,749	13.3	13.4
20-24	34,809	16,933	17,876	11.2	12.1
25-29	24,581	11,915	12,666	7.9	8.6
30-34	20,635	10,022	10,613	6.6	7.2
35-39	18,174	8,780	9,394	5.8	6.4
40-44	15,871	7,828	8,043	5.2	5.5
45-49	13,569	6,872	6,697	4.5	4.5
50-54	7,936	4,147	3,789	2.7	2.6
55-59	5,859	3,046	2,813	2.0	1.9
60-64	5,566	2,852	2,714	1.9	1.8
65+	13,944	7,790	6,154	5.1	
Age not stated	5,083	3,294	1,789	2.2	1.2

Source: Census Data 2006

Table 4: Population growth rate

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Population growth (annual %)	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3

Source: Census *Refers to total local population only. For census years (2000, and 2006 and 2010), ADB estimates.

Similar to other countries in the region, the Maldives too faces the challenges of increased migration towards urban centres, as indicated in the Table below (Table 5). Some argue that economic development in Maldives has so far been biased, with most of the investment, employment and income being concentrated in Male', which led to higher levels of unequal development between urban and rural areas and consequently has attracted the rural workforce in search for employment and business opportunities to urban areas (Behzad, 2011). With over 100,000 people, already more than 30% of the Republic's population, the capital Male is one of the most densely populated cities in the world.

⁴ See UNDP MDG Country Report, 2010.

⁵ http://www.indexmundi.com/maldives/economy_profile.html

Table 5: Maldives Urban Population

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
(% of total)	27.7	28.94	30.18	31.42	32.66	33.9	35.22	36.54	37.86	39.18	40.5

Source: National Department for Planning, 2012

This situation prompted the Government⁶ to heavily invest in local development and decentralization in selected atolls and islands to strengthen local administration and governance, which will play a key role not just in administration of local affairs but also as a focal point for local economic development and employment generation.

1. *The political and economic context*

Between 2000-2010, real GDP growth averaged around 6% per year except for 2005, when GDP declined following the Indian Ocean Tsunami, and 2009 when GDP shrank by 2%, as tourist arrivals declined and capital flows plunged in the wake of the global financial crisis. Falling tourist arrivals and fish exports, combined with high government spending on social needs, subsidies, and civil servant salaries contributed to a balance of payments crisis, which was eased only in December 2009, with a USD 79.3mn IMF standby agreement. However, plans to reduce budget deficits and high public sector expenses have not progressed well enough, which raises major concerns and delayed IMF payments.⁷ Despite its strong growth performance, the Maldivian economy continues to be plagued by rather large budget deficits, which however are reducing. The overall budget deficit was about 22% of the GDP in 2009, and dropped to 16% of GDP in 2010 and to 10% in 2011 respectively. Government expenditure was 41% of GDP against revenues of 30% of GDP in 2011.⁸ Despite the ongoing public sector reform process, the account balance remained high and kept increasing, reaching USD -469 in 2010 from USD -419 (2009 est).⁹

However, the Maldivian economy made a remarkable economic recovery in 2011, with a rebound in tourism and post-tsunami reconstruction, therefore showing a healthy GDP growth of 7.5% for the year 2011, despite the increased political instability that started in June 2011. It is unclear, whether the recent political changes in the Maldives and possibly conflictive political developments could contribute to a higher risk for reduced economic growth for 2012/13, which consequently would be linked to less employment and more unemployment.

Constant economic growth led to a GDP of USD2 billion in 2010 and to a constant increase in per capita income within the Maldives. The per capita income reaching USD 6039 in 2010 (Tables 6 and 7) also reflects that Maldives achieved critical milestones to become a middle-income country.¹⁰

⁶ See Manifesto, Strategic Action Plan 2008-2013.

⁷ http://www.indexmundi.com/maldives/economy_profile.html

⁸ <http://www.careratings.com/Portals/0/Economic/Global%20Update/MaldivesUpdate.pdf>

⁹ These recent large budget deficits have led to a sharp buildup of public debt, prompting the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to classify Maldives as being at moderate risk of debt distress. See <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mv.html>

¹⁰ See IMF estimates 2012.

Table 6: GDP and per Capita growth

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
GDP growth (annual %)	-7.1	21.4	12.1	12.0	-6.5	7.1	6.5
GDP per capita growth (annual %)	-8.4	19.7	10.6	10.5	-7.7	8.4	7.5

Source: Economic Outlook IMF, 2012.

Table 7: Per Capita Income

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
GDP per capita (current USD)	3317.8	4282.6	4976.6	5817.8	5587.4	6039

Source: IMF Economic Outlook, 2012

Sector contribution to GDP growth

As a part of the ongoing economic reform process, the government has put an emphasis on diversification of the economy and envisages a greater role for the private sector, while reforming the public sector with the aim of achieving sustainable economic growth. Four priority sectors, tourism, fisheries/agriculture, social sector and construction remain critical policy focus areas to ensure sustainable growth and employment expansion.

Tourism continues to be the backbone and catalyst of the economy, followed by the fishing industry. More than 931,000 tourists visited Maldives in 2011, and tourism and related services contributed to 30% of the overall GDP. Indirect contributions from tourism are expected to be even higher; Fishing and fish processing remains second important source of revenue in the economy and contributed to 11% of employment and traditionally about 7% to the GDP respectively. However, due to recent drastic reductions in fish catch, the GDP contribution dropped to 4% in 2008 to even 1% in 2011.¹¹ The recent boom in transport and communications is reflected in a contribution of 18% of the GDP, while the construction industry accounts for 8% of the GDP. Manufacturing (4%) has been a critical contributor but has declined, reasons being the expiration of the MFA in 2005 and closure of small manufacturing units.¹²

The sectoral trends (Table 8) indicate that agriculture and industry have significantly decreased over the last ten years, while the share of GDP from services has continuously increased to almost 83% since 2010. The already low production of agricultural produce seems to have further declined after the tsunami inundated several agricultural islands with salt water, contaminating the groundwater. This is a worrisome development, as a further reduction in agriculture will impact the overall food security of the Maldives and further increase dependency on imports of primary agricultural produce and related food.¹³

Table 8: Sector Contribution to GDP

Sector	2000	2005	2010
Agriculture, value added (% of GDP)	8.8	9.9	3.1
Industry, value added (% of GDP)	15.0	30.7	14.5
Services, etc., value added (% of GDP)	76.2	59.4	82.3

Source: World Bank Database, 2012

¹¹ Statistical Yearbook, 2010

¹² ibd.

¹³ http://www.indexmundi.com/maldives/economy_profile.html

Exports of goods and services (% GDP)

Maldives' economy is heavily dependent on imports. With very little agricultural produce, the country is a net importer for agricultural produce and basic food items as well. While Maldives had a merchandise trade deficit of under USD 300mn until 2003, the trade deficit has reached an unprecedented USD 78mn in 2010. The overall exports were USD 120mn, and most of the exports are fish and processed fish products to the major markets that include Thailand, Sri Lanka, Italy, U.K., France. Imports, on the other hand reached a volume of USD 1.2bn and include foodstuffs, petroleum products, transport equipment, construction equipment. Major importers are Canada, Singapore, U.A.E., India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Maldives' economy was helped by a significant upturn in tourist arrivals, which reduced the account deficit to appx. USD 460mn in 2010 but it again jumped to USD 650mn in 2011.¹⁴

Table 9: Exports of Goods and Services

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Exports of goods and services (% of GDP)	49	61	56	59	48	50

Source: World Bank Database, 2012.

The Maldives' total external debt being the sum of public, publicly guaranteed, and private nonguaranteed long-term debt, use of IMF credit, and short-term debt, is high. Short-term debt is little less than half of total external debt, which stood at USD 1,223mn in 2010. The debt percentage of GNI peaked in 2007, exceeding GNI with 102.7%. Since then, the percentage has remained very high but has slightly reduced in percentage of GNI, while continuously increasing in absolute values (Table 10). However, Maldives does have sound access to donor aid from several countries, including the US, India and EU member states, which continue their financial support through UN-funded and infrastructure development programs.

Table 10: Total External Debt Stock

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total (mn USD)	461,496	683,307	1,038,131	1,139,928	1,164,244	1,228,505
External Debt (% of GNI)	63.67	77.84	102.67	94.3	92.07	86.57

Source: World Bank Database, 2012

2. Income equality and poverty

Reducing poverty and inequality for sustainable and equitable growth is one of the central commitments the government of the Maldives has made towards achieving the MDGs and particularly since the Democratic Government was elected in 2008; and continues to be a priority for the current government. In 2008, the then government set out a development plan, a manifesto. A Strategic Action Plan: National Framework for Development 2009-2013 (SAP) followed, which operationalizes the Manifesto and covers five key priority areas¹⁵ of which investments into human resource development for employment is as a priority to progress on quality of life and reduction of existing inequalities.

Significant improvements have been achieved on the demographic and socio-economic front in the Maldives. Within a short period, five of seven of the MDG goals were achieved and the

¹⁴ See IMF, World Bank

¹⁵ Macro Economic Reforms, Public Sector Reforms, Good Governance, Social Development, Climate Change. See SAP.

Maldives have progressed to the status of a middle-income country in 2011.¹⁶ Maldives's 2011 HDI of 0.661 is above the average of 0.630 for countries in the medium human development group and above the average of 0.548 for countries in South Asia. The HDI of South Asia as a region increased from 0.356 in 1980 to 0.548 today, placing Maldives above the regional average.

Indicators such as life expectancy and infant mortality have seen constant improvement (Table 11) over the last decade, which reflects the government's continuous investments in public health for better outreach and delivery. Particularly impressive was the reduction of infant mortality over the last decade, the rate dropping from 37 per 1000 to 14. However, this rate is still relatively high and might be associated with the perpetual challenges of Maldives to effectively reach out to the atolls through public social services.

Table 11: Life expectancy and infant mortality rate

	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	70.4	74.4	74.9	75.4	75.8	76.2	76.6
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	69.7	73.5	74.0	74.4	74.8	75.2	75.4
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	71.1	75.3	75.9	76.4	76.8	77.3	77.7
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	37.0	22.5	20.2	18.4	16.5	15.0	13.6

Source: World Bank Database 2012

Poverty:

According to the recent HIES survey, overall poverty seems to have reduced significantly (Table 12). Extreme poverty of 1.25 USD/day has shown a reduction from 12% to 8%, while for 2 USD/day the poverty has reduced from 39% to 27%. The nation has yet to address however, with greater vigor, the relative poverty issue, which mostly emanates from gender inequity and disparity of incomes that exists between the capital Male' and the outlying islands. Interestingly, poverty has increased in Male, with a sharp increase between 2003 and 2010; in the case of 1.25 USD/day, from 2% to 7% and in the case of 2 USD/day from 9% to 19% respectively.

Using a higher poverty line of 22 Rufiyaa (app. 1.5 USD) consumption expenditure a day as a reference for poverty, the national poverty dropped from 21% to 15%, while using 44 Rufiyaa (app. 3 USD), 55% of the population could be considered poor in the atolls (ibid. 2010). However, even in this case, the poverty incidence has significantly reduced. In the case of Male however, 44% are poor according to this definition, which indicates an increase by 4% during this period.

¹⁶ Fully achieved: Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger, Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education, Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality, Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health, Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases, while the other goals have been on track. For details see Maldives Country Report on MDG (2010).

Table 12: Incidence of poverty in Maldives

Definition	Total		Male		Atoll	
	2003	2010	2003	2010	2003	2010
International poverty line of USD 1.25 (referred to as 1 USD a day poverty line used in MDGs)	9%	8%	2%	7%	12%	8%
International Poverty line of USD 2	31%	24%	9%	19%	39%	27%
Rf 44 (as per Median of Atoll expenditure per person per day for HIEs 2003/10)	66%	51%	40%	44%	75%	55%
Rf 22 (half median of Atoll expenditure per person per day for HIES 2009/10)	21%	15%	4%	12%	27%	16%

Source; HIES 2012, p12

There are indications though, that overall, household incomes have been rising. While household incomes in Male' almost doubled they somewhat increased less (40 %) in atolls between 2003 and 2009/10. According to the HIES 2002/2003 the Gini Coefficient for Republic was 0.38, while for Male' and atolls, it was 0.35 and 0.32 respectively. Similar to the poverty trends, inequality increased in Male, while it overall decreased at national level and on the atolls according to recent findings (HIES, 2012).

III. The Education Context

Universal access to primary and secondary education being a priority for the last 20 years in the Maldives, and the MDG goal, was achieved by 2002. Article 36 of the Constitution of 2008 stipulates that everyone has the right to education without discrimination of any kind. The Right to Education Act was drafted in 2009 to establish a strong legal framework for regulation, where decentralization of school management, quality assurance and standards are supported through the establishment of school boards. Registration of teachers is compulsory. It states that primary and secondary education shall be freely provided by the state. It is imperative on parents and the state to provide children with primary and secondary education. Opportunity for higher education shall be generally accessible to all citizens.¹⁷

Between 1995 and 2009 the educational budget increased from USD 19mn to nine times its value USD 169.4mn well reflects the priorities set by the government to create an enabling environment for an educated workforce. Though fluctuating (Table 13), the budget for education has continuously increased, and peaked at 13.5% in 2011, so much so that the Maldives belong to the group of highest spenders on education in Asia.¹⁸

Table 13: Public Expenditure on Education

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011
% GDP	6.0	8.0	7.8	8.1	10.3	13.5 %
% Government Budget	15.0	11.0	14.8	12.0	16.0	na

Source: World Bank Database, 2012.

1. Literacy levels

Literacy rates are equally high in the Maldives. According to the census 2006, literacy scores an overall 94% for both sexes across all age groups, and a 93% for men and 95% for women respectively. The literacy rate for urban youth (15-24) reached 99%, while it was almost equally high for rural areas, with no difference between young men and women (see Table 14). This certainly indicates a significant progress, however, there are opinions that effective literacy (functional literacy) levels might be lower. As the World Bank suggests, the government of Maldives has not conducted any literacy survey since 1983 to assess the literacy and numeracy levels in the country.¹⁹

¹⁷ See http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Maldives.pdf

¹⁸ See World Bank, Maldives MDG Country Report 2010, p. 37/38

¹⁹ Data on literacy are taken from population census or household surveys where respondents indicate their basic knowledge about reading and writing. Literacy is assumed if a student indicates attendance in secondary school. See World Bank, Maldives MDG Country Report 2010, p. 37/38

Table 14: Literacy Levels for age 15+

Indicator Name	2000	2006
TOTAL 15 and above		
Literacy rate total (% of people ages 15 above)	98.3	99.4
Literacy rate Male (% of people ages 15 above)	98.0	99.2
Literacy rate female (% of people ages 15 above)	98.2	99.4
Rural 15 and above		
Literacy rate rural female (% of males ages 15 and above)	96.4	98.4
Literacy rate rural male (% of males ages 15 and above)	96.2	98.4
Literacy rate rural, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	96.3	98.4
Literacy rate urban 15 years and above		
Literacy rate urban, adult female (% of females ages 15 above)	98.3	99.4
Literacy rate urban, adult male (% of males ages 15 above)	98.0	99.2
Literacy rate urban, adult total (% of people ages 15 above)	98.2	99.3

Source: Ministry of Education, 2012

2. *Enrolment rates of boys and girls into primary, secondary and tertiary education*

The increased expenditure on education, combined with proactive policies have consequently led to expanded enrolment to secondary education for young men as well as women, including better access to secondary schools in the atolls (Table 15).

As shown in Table 15, the universal enrolment into primary school (year 1-7) has been achieved for both boys and girls and enrolment has significantly increased in lower secondary schools. In 2011 the net enrolment reached 87.6 for lower secondary (92.1 female, 83.4 male) and 17.4% for higher secondary (14.8 % female, 13.1 % male) in 2010. Although there is no gender bias for primary and lower secondary schools, there is a bias in favor of boys for upper secondary and tertiary education (MDG, 2010). A decreasing gender disparity can be noticed at all levels, inclusive the tertiary education level.

Table 15: Enrolment Rates into primary and secondary

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Both sexes						
Primary (1 - 7)	100	105.4	99	91.7	95.7	95.5
Lower Secondary (8 - 10)	64.6	70.7	69.2	67.3	77.4	83.6
Higher Secondary (11 - 12)	7.2	8.4	4	5.9	14.1	17.4
Male						
Primary (1 - 7)	100	106.6	97.9	97.5	95.4	95.3
Lower Secondary (8 - 10)	58.8	64.9	65.2	67.5	73.6	81
Higher Secondary (11 - 12)	6.7	8.2	5.1	6.1	14	18.4
Female						
Primary (1 - 7)	100	104.1	100.2	86.3	96	95.8
Lower Secondary (8 - 10)	70.7	76.8	73.5	67	81.4	86.5
Higher Secondary (11 - 12)	6.7	8.7	2.8	5.7	14.3	16.4

Source: Ministry of Education, 2012

Inclusive education

The Government began establishing classes for children with special needs in 2006 and to expand the enrolment efforts to all the atolls since 2007. Overall, the Maldives follows an inclusive education policy, seeing integration into mainstream formal school and vocational training system as the preferable option for people with disabilities. Insufficiently accessible infrastructure, low targeting capacities (there is no comprehensive survey to assess the needs for disabled children across the Maldives so far) and the lack of qualified teachers however pose significant challenges.²⁰ Currently 11 schools across the Maldives accommodate approximately 184 children with special needs. 3 schools are in Male'.²¹

Currently, with a very limited budget of 57mn Rufiyaa for ten years, the government's responsible agency, Education Development Centre (EDC), is focusing on identification of needs of people with disabilities and teacher training courses, and has promoted disability interests across different departments so that regulatory measures are taken (e.g. introduction of quota system) to ensure inclusive education, training and employment policies.

Few students progress to higher secondary or tertiary education

Though increasing, the enrolment rates for students into higher secondary education or even tertiary education remain very low compared to South Asian standards, which raises some concerns. Only a very small fraction of students opt for higher education, while the majority seems to drop out of school at a very early age. Further, while every year approximately 7000-8000 students finish schooling after completing Grade 10, discussions with the Ministry of Education revealed that only about 17% of these graduates further progress to 11-12 or follow 'O' and 'A' level courses. It is generally observed that about half of school leavers get some petty jobs, while others stay unemployed and do not attend any training or school.

According to recent reports, there are several reasons contributing to this phenomenon, limited accessibility for higher education from the atolls being one, particularly relevant for girls.²² Secondly, there seem to be significant shortcomings, when it comes to quality of education. Limited infrastructure and low quality of teachers it is argued lead to low achievements of students and hence limits their access or lack of adequate skills to continue higher education.²³ One out of 4 teachers seem not to have been formally trained.²⁴ The rate of students passing the O-level and A-level examinations dropped from 25% to 20.8% and from 44.4% to 39.4%, respectively between 1999 and 2005 (MOE, 2008 in UNESCO 2010/11). According to an ADB study (2004), the performance of students sitting for the O-level exams needs much improvement. Only about 50% of students pass most subjects, and less than 10% of students pass some of the subjects. Performance is worse for the students educated in the atolls. This is partly attributed to the ineffectiveness of learning materials and lack of qualified teachers. Despite significant improvements during the last years, results of national assessments still indicate low achievement at all levels of education. There is also a significant difference in the quality of education between Male and the atolls (Manifesto 2012).

Further, till recently, there were very limited options for higher education available in the Maldives. The Maldives National University (MNU) has just in 2011 been internationally accredited as an umbrella institution for tertiary education. Due to the lack of options for higher

²⁰ According to EDC, a door-to-door survey of 90,000 households was undertaken in the Maldives to identify children under 18 who are at risk and with severe disabilities.

²¹ Manifesto, 2012, p. 228ff

²² The institutionalization of the Maldives University as the first institution to be accredited to provide tertiary education will certainly have an impact on higher enrolment of men and hopefully women at tertiary level.

²³ For more details see World Bank 2010.

²⁴ Manifesto, 2012, p. 228ff

education in the Maldives, most of the students have pursued higher studies abroad and applied for scholarships and subsidized loans provided by the Ministry of Education. This trend, it is hoped, will reverse in the future, given that an internationally accredited University in the Maldives has now been established.

While low academic achievements contribute significantly to the lower enrolment rates in higher secondary and tertiary education, discussions with people from the ministry also revealed that the strong focus on academics and lack of relevance to the workplace further contribute to the phenomenon. Educational and vocational institutions have not inculcated entrepreneurship or self-employment as a career option or provided appropriate business orientation and support skills for students to opt for business start-ups. According to the ICA survey undertaken in 2006, most schools offer non-vocational subjects such as commerce, administration, tourism and IT related subjects, where the average pass rate is as low as 25%.²⁵ Further, the currently low status of vocational training and education is not attractive and socially acceptable for parents and prospective students, which limits their popularity at a higher secondary school level.

3. Recent policy directions: high quality, workplace relevant and inclusive education

In 2008, the new Constitution bestowed education as a human right and mandated the Government to provide free education up to Class 7 in the Maldives. Both the recently published Manifesto and the Strategic Action Plan clearly reflect the commitment to improve access, quality and relevance of the educational system and thereby the overall educational levels and employability of the labour force. The Government is also well aware of the unemployment problem overall and unemployment of the growing number of higher education graduates. Under the strategic goal of providing a benevolent state (Social Protection), the strategic policy “to facilitate a conducive labour market environment for fair, safe, independent and fulfilling lives free from poverty” (Government of the Maldives, Manifesto, 2012) is very prominently mentioned as a core priority.

However, the provision of appropriate skills for increased employability of most vulnerable groups such as unemployed youth, school dropouts and women remains a challenge. Given the current high unemployment rates of youth and stubbornly low enrolment rates into higher education, the government is currently re-drafting the education policy to increase universal and free education and training up to 18 years.²⁶ Special attention is given to workplace oriented TVET, continuous career pathways and life long learning, as well as the inclusion of people with disability.²⁷

The recently published Manifesto (2012) re-enforces the commitment for employment and human resource development and among its priorities remain the development of the local Maldivian workforce as a skilled, competitive and disciplined, minimizing disparities in employment and implementation of an efficient system to monitor and manage both migrant and local work force. The challenges are in how such an enabling environment can be created which effectively implements such long-term goals most effectively.

²⁵ World Bank 2006. During discussions with training providers and government, the pass out rates might have slightly increased, but the challenges of very limited availability and low quality of vocational courses, remain the same.

²⁶ Department of Higher Education, June 2012

²⁷ Also, with the enactment of the Disability Act in 2010, children with special needs would have access to primary and secondary education. A special Policy on Disability Inclusion has been drafted and EDC expects that it would be endorsed in 2012 (Mr. Atif, EDC, June 2012).

IV. A Baseline of the Current vocational training system

1. General context

The Maldives' vocational skills development efforts go back to the 1970ies when, with ILO and UNDP support, the first Polytechnic was set up. Since then, the Maldives has implemented numerous TVET projects. However, there are indications that overall, with the limited budgets available, greatest emphasis was given more to universal education; initially, focused on primary and later on universal enrolment for secondary level, with the assumption that good education would lead to sustainable employment.

With the increased unemployment rate of school leaving youth and particularly of women however, the government is seeking alternatives to the existing, more academically oriented educational system with TVET and vocational education gaining new relevance. In 2005 the Maldivian Government began a TVET reform project ESTP (Employment and Skills Training Project) with a loan agreement and support from ADB to assist the Government to develop and implement a unified TVET system and to support the implementation of a demand-oriented competency based training in the Maldives.

Box 1: TVETA Vision

A TVET that is **demand driven, accessible, beneficiary financed and quality assured** that meets the needs of society for stability and economic growth, the needs of Enterprise for a skilled and reliable workforce, the need of young people for decent jobs and the needs of workers for

Since the inception of the ESTP in 2007, the Maldives has made significant progress on the development of a comprehensive TVET system. TVET pathways were included in the 10-level of the Maldives National Qualification Framework (MNQF). As a part of the ESTP implementation process between 2007-2010, a Vocational Education and Training Vision and Mission was drafted, which highlights the commitments shown in Box 1,²⁸ a well defined multiple stakeholder involvement and procedures for development of national competency standards and assessments. A TVET Authority (TVETA) complements the Maldives Qualifications Authority (MQA) under the Ministry of Higher Education for quality assurance, assessment and certification of TVET and higher Secondary Students. MQA grew out of the Maldives Accreditation Board (MAB)²⁹ and functions since 2011 to further strengthen and improve the delivery mechanism of training. Mechanisms were put in place to strengthen involvement of enterprises, employment sector councils (ESC) for tourism, social sector, construction, transport, fisheries as well as training providers in the development of training standards, assessment and accreditation.

TVETA is integrated in the Ministry of Education and the Education Development Centre (EDC) and Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) are working in conjunction to promote skills development and vocational education and training. Other ministries and departments also provide short-term training in various trades and vocations in response to specific sectoral needs.

TVETA has the overall responsibility for the development and management of a comprehensive, partnership-based TVET system.

²⁸ For Maldives NQF see <http://www.mqa.gov.mv/downloads/MNQF2009withAmmendment1.pdf>

²⁹ The MAB was set up in 2000 and changed into MQA in 2010.

2. Maldives National Qualification Framework (MNQF)

The Maldives drafted its first Maldives National Qualification Framework; a year after the National Accreditation Board (MAB) was established in 2000. The MNQF is mandated to provide learners, employers and education providers with qualifications that are nationally standardized and quality assured.³⁰ Increasingly aware of the relevance of international accreditation of qualifications attained by Maldivians abroad and within the country, and as a part of the ongoing TVET reform project (ESTP) to introduce competency based training with a stronger focus on quality and employability skills, the Government decided in 2005 to reformulate a competency standards based MNQF, initially for vocational skills, but increasingly for the overall educational system.

The revised and strengthened MNQF was formally launched in 2009 and has been fully implemented since 2011. The MNQF was internationally benchmarked, yet adapted to the local requirements of the Maldives. The new MNQF not only reflects the government's priority to expand higher and continuous education but also enables recognition of prior learning and formalization of competencies and skills for its workforce to (re-) enter the training and education system for higher and lifelong learning.

Further, technical and vocational qualifications with less academic focus were integrated and made the MNQF more comprehensive to ensure the government's commitment towards an integrated approach for skills development. The MNQF re-emphasises quality improvement, quality assurance, and spells out the need for private sector participation in post-secondary training and education. MNQF also ensures that students, employers, education providers and the community at large easily understand the learning outcomes involved in various qualifications.

The 10-level qualification framework has the Scottish Credit and Qualification framework as a reference (Figure 2). To ensure a supportive recognition system for returning students with higher educational qualifications, current efforts are being made to further benchmark qualifications with the ones from the Malaysia, Sri Lanka, UK, Scotland, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand etc.

Since its introduction, the government has made significant steps towards the MNQF's effective implementation, which will be discussed in further detail.

³⁰ ibd. pp.3

Figure 2: The Maldives NQF

THE MALDIVES NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (MNQF)	
LEVEL	QUALIFICATIONS TITLES
10	Doctoral Degree/ Higher Professional Certificate/Higher Professional Diploma
9	Master's Degree/ Advanced Professional Certificate/Advanced Professional Diploma
8	Graduate /Postgraduate Certificate/ and Graduate/ Postgraduate Diploma/ Bachelor's Degree with honours
7	Bachelor's Degree Professional Certificate/ Professional Diploma
6	Professional Certificate/ Advanced Diploma Associate Degree/ Foundation Degree
5	Diploma
4	Certificate IV
3	Certificate III
2	Certificate II
1	Certificate I

Source: MNQF, 2009, <http://www.mqa.gov.mv/downloads/MNQF2009withAmmendment1.pdf>

3. *Current stakeholders involved in TVET*

TVETA (Technical Vocational Education and Training Authority)

During the ESTP implementation phase (2007-2010), the TVET division was still integrated in the Ministry of Human Resources, Youth and Sports (MHRYS). In 2011, this unit became TVETA in the Department of Higher Education in the Ministry of Education. Established by the President's office, TVETA has the overall responsibility for the development and management of a comprehensive, demand oriented and partnership based TVET system. The organogram for TVETA can be found in Annex II.

The core functions of a TVET include:

- Development maintenance of inventory of competency standards for vocational competencies approved by Employment Standards Councils and accredited by MQA and Ministry of Education.
- Ensuring stakeholder involvement including support and capacity building to ESC
- Curriculum and learning materials development,
- Develop and maintain an inventory of private sector trainers including enterprises to support the use of approved competency standards within the NQF, in this training.
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Assessments for TVET programs (MQA has designated its authority to TVET to carry out assessments).
- Issue national certificates for competent TVET students.
- Increase status of TVET through awareness and social marketing

- Facilitate the linkages between training providers and industry/enterprises and ensure assessments and certification according to standards approved and accredited by MQA/Ministry of Education.

TVETA's current staff strength is two people who are in charge of overseeing the vision and mandate's current implementation (1 staff and the executive director, who also heads MQA, against the 15 staff approved by the Government in November 2011 as shown in the organizational structure, which suggests, see Appendix II). The current budget of 4mn Rufiyaa (appx. USD 263,157) for the year 2012 is very limited, not providing enough financial resources for training of trainers, capacity building and monitoring of training providers or enterprises to impart quality training. This is particularly challenging, as the current capacities for CBT based TVET provision in the country remains very low and needs to be significantly enhanced to make TVET sustainable.

MQA (Maldives Qualification Authority)

The Maldives Accreditation Board (MAB) was created in August 2000 with the mandate to oversee and enhance the quality of post-secondary qualifications awarded in recognition of educational attainments. Since 2011, MAB became MQA with a mandate to provide learners, employers and education providers with qualifications that are nationally standardised and quality assured.³¹ There have been discussions that MQA becomes an independent institution to ensure more independence and autonomy and thereby building more credibility as a Quality Assurance and Standard setting agency. This would be particularly relevant for international accreditation. Currently MQA has three functions: a) attesting training courses and accrediting training providers and assessors, b) validating (foreign) certificates and c) auditing and monitoring of training delivery.³²

National Career Guidance and Counseling Centre (NCGC)

Established as a career guidance department under the MHRYS in 2003 with the mandate to reach out to youth in 2008, the NCGC expanded the mandate under the ESTP to provide career counseling and guidance and job placement support to the entire working population. Currently, two of the six job centres (two in Male), are active. Recently, NCGC took over the responsibility to revive and manage the job and 60+ youth centres in the atolls. These centres, it is planned, should take on a pro-active role in outreach services in career guidance and placement support to the employment-seeking workforce. These centers are established at different levels, and need to cater to island requirements in order to provide specific youth-friendly services across the nation.

Currently NCGC's core activities are a 3-hour training on career guidance in secondary schools to increase the awareness of students in the 7th and 10th grade in schools about further education and training opportunities. This includes the promotion of continuous career pathways through vocational training. NCGC works closely with principals of schools to further develop their ownership for career guidance and placement support. The current activities are taking advantage of the pool of 92 teachers who were trained as career facilitators who were trained during the ESTP implementation period. Trainings of trainers are being held with counselors in secondary schools. As a part of the 'Yes' campaign in 2007, to raise awareness about employment and training opportunities in priority sectors,³³ an Internet service was launched with data on different vacancies and training opportunities. Currently more than 1600 vacancies

³¹ See <http://www.tvet.gov.mv/downloads/Competency%20std%20Development%20manual.pdf>

³² <http://www.mqa.gov.mv/>

³³ <http://www.yes.mv/>

have been announced but it is not clear how and at what rate job seekers find employment through these services.

The career NCGC is based in Male and has few staff with some specialized training capabilities. The current services include assessment of interest, registration of job seekers and job matching services. A limited budget makes it challenging to systematically collect data on placement and vacancies or to further market and improve the image of TVET and services of NCGC and the local job centres to enterprises and job seekers. NCGC has a keen interest in building its capacities to provide more diversified and comprehensive employment services, which includes career counseling and guidance for further training, aptitude testing, matching and job placement besides building stronger linkages with industry and labor market information. Currently, NCGC as well as other job and youth centres lack both such competencies and infrastructure.

Employment Sector Councils (ESC)

Employment Sector Councils were formed during the implementation of ESTP to ensure industry involvement to identify skills gaps and prioritise skills and training needs and based on these skills and training needs, define competency standards and training programs in collaboration with training providers and the government. Five councils were successfully formed and put in place for the priority sectors (tourism, fisheries, construction, social service and transport). During the project implementation, 58 ESC members had introductory training on occupational skills analysis and competency standards development, which significantly improved ESC performance. According to the final report published by ADB (2012), the ESCs had identified 40 occupations for training programs, compared with the 24 originally planned. Around 26 national competency standards have since been approved by the ESCs and endorsed by Maldives Qualifications Authority (MQA); ESC identified skills gaps and training needs in 10 critical qualifications per sector. The ESCs are mandated to approve the competency standards, but are currently not active.

Training Providers

Currently, there are four higher secondary education institutions run by the government: a) Maldives College of Higher Education (MNU), b) College of Islamic Studies (CIS), c) Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) and d) the Polytechnic. In addition, there are 145 registered and active private training institutions,³⁴ with most of them focusing on higher secondary training and not providing vocational training.³⁵ With the exception of government funded training programs, the majority of training conducted by private training institutions is fee-based, primarily offering more academically oriented programs, or office related administration, HR Management and computer training. Some tourism and hospitality related training is also available.

The main TVET providers with regular MQA approved institution based training programs for Level I-IV vocational training include the Polytechnic, Clique, Center for Career and Technical Education (CCTE), Villa, Focus Education Centre and the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism.³⁶ With the exception of these government institutions, most of the vocational training providers are dependent on flagship program funding from the government (e.g. HUNARU, ESTP, funds from other departments). Some have started to provide tailor made competency based training with co-funding from the industry (e.g. tourism) and some (CCTE) and some enterprise based training.

³⁴ see Ministry of Education, 2011.

³⁵ Discussion with TVETA, staff of Polytechnic, training providers.

³⁶ Discussion with TVETA

Training tends to be small scale and in small numbers, is mostly concentrated in urban areas and focused on particular qualifications. Access to training outside Male is significantly more difficult than in and around Male.³⁷ However, private training providers have started reaching out with short-term training courses to atolls through mobile training provision.

TVETA and some registered training providers have increasingly been successful, particularly in the hotel and tourism industry, to promote EBT and apprenticeship often through CSR funding.³⁸ Till date there is no research-based evidence to assess the contribution of private sector to training and skills development in the Maldives. Industries indicate continuous skills shortages in their enterprises and in some cases have introduced in-company training. According to enterprise survey conducted by the World Bank in 2005, 69% of firms invest into training of their employees to fill the skills gap, which is very high in comparison to other South Asian countries and well in par with the average spending on training for lower-middle income countries (Table 16).

Table 16: Firms offering training, 2005

	Maldives	Sri Lanka	India	China	South Asia	Lower Middle Income country
No of firms providing training to workforce	69%	33%	28%	71%	29%	56%

Source World Bank Enterprise Survey Database 2005

Companies in the tourism industry consider human resource development as critical. Some resort chains in Maldives are also sponsoring training at the faculty of hospitality in the Maldives University as well as overseas (the survey gives some indication of the levels of training in the tourism industry). According to the surveyed companies, external training is particularly high for professional staff and less for semi-skilled and, indeed, many firms do send their employees overseas for training (often to Singapore, *ibid.*).

With the exception a few industries, the practice of in-company training does not seem to be widespread and is mostly informal. According to TVETA, with the exception of Four Seasons' Resort formal apprenticeship training is not offered so far.³⁹ Several studies and statements made by people interviewed indicate that companies are still hesitant to invest in workforce development because of poaching. These figures therefore, seem to be high and perhaps overestimate the incidence of training within the Maldives. Further, many companies have strong apprehensions to hire or train the Maldivians, stating lack of interest and work attitude as the main reasons.

³⁷ Discussions with TVETA, staff of Polytechnic, training providers.

³⁸ The appendix IV indicates current projects under IBT and EBT provided by enterprises and other TVET training providers.

³⁹ Discussions with TVETA staff

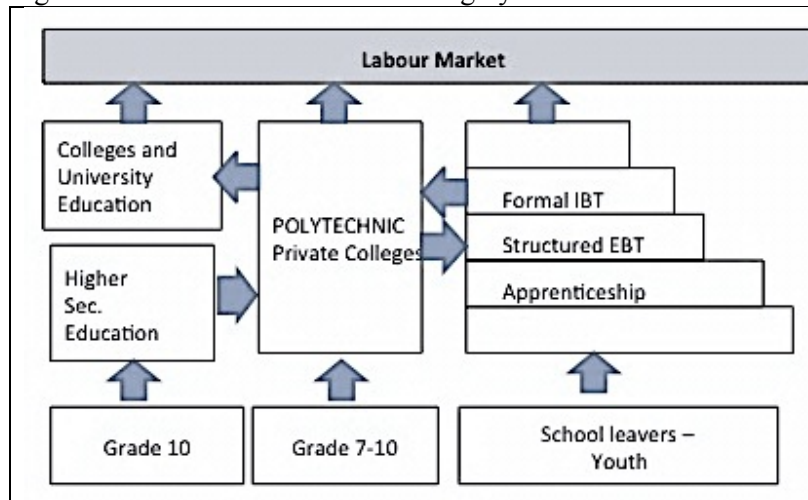
V. Assessment of Maldives' TVET using IWG Indicators

As discussed earlier, the assessment refers to the IWG framework with five interlocking components for monitoring and evaluation of the TVET system's current policies and performance: 1) policy environment and governance, 2) financing, 3) access and participation, 4) quality and 5) relevance. The assessment discusses the indicators suggested by the IWG as mentioned on page 5.

1. *The policy environment and governance of TVET*

Discussions with different stakeholders repeatedly revealed that despite the progress made on setting up a TVET system, a comprehensive skills development framework and skills policy is yet to be developed and effectively implemented to ensure ownership of relevant stakeholders so that the overall TVET objectives are met. The government is making efforts to bring the relevant institutions for higher education and TVET together to ensure coherence and to integrate vocational skills more prominently into the educational system, both at lower secondary and higher secondary level (Figure 3).

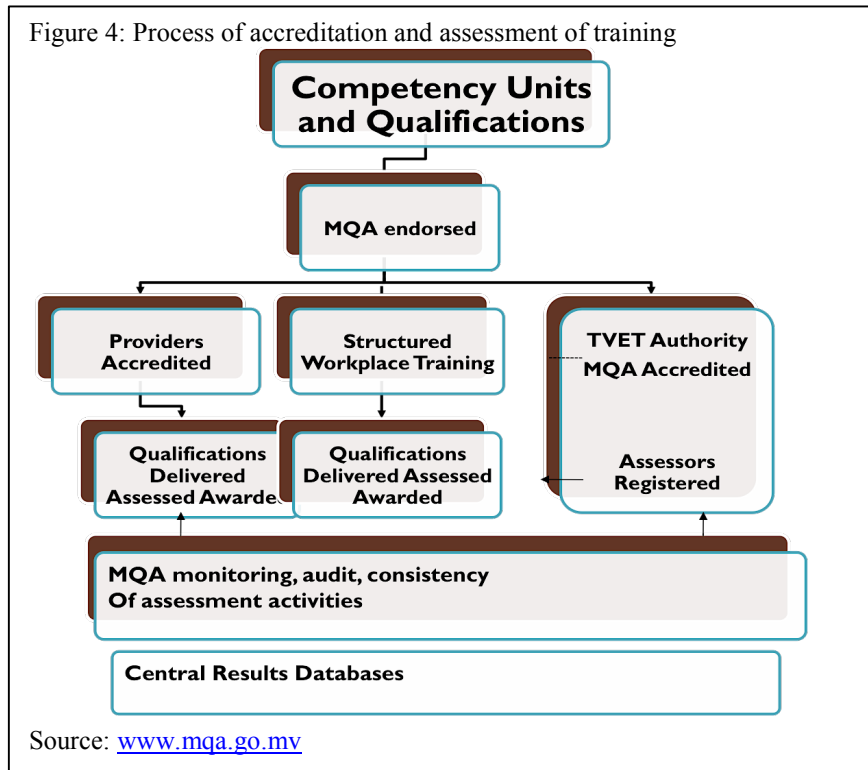
Figure 3: The Educational and Training System in the Maldives



Source: Mariyam Noordeen (2009)

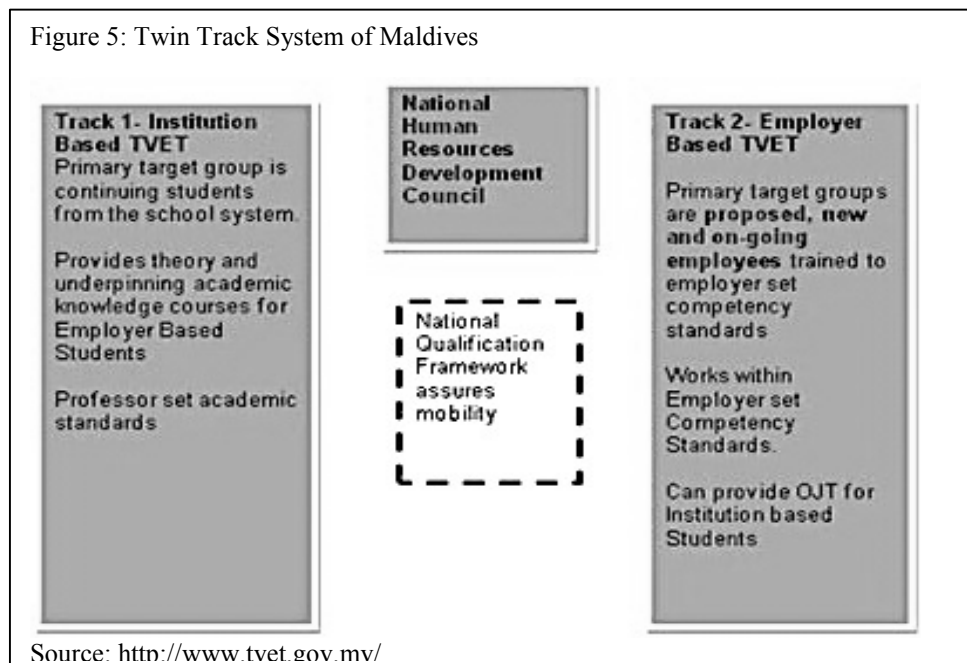
To address the increasing unemployment challenges in the country, TVETA is also promoting the development of an Apprenticeship Act and a regulatory framework to provide incentives to enterprises to get more engaged in TVET for a more responsive and demand oriented skilled development system. While the ESTP project has led to a higher level of awareness in private sector and the Maldivian population towards TVET, further development of the system is required. The workplace related focus of the program to increase employability skills of youth is clearly seen as a strength, if training is need based, involves the enterprises in training and assessment and if it is focused on labour market outcomes.

The Government promotes on-the-job training and enterprise based training as being critical for higher employability. TVETA has increasingly encouraged TVET training providers to include workplace training and on-the-job training into their vocational training.



TVETA has increasingly encouraged TVET training providers to include workplace training and on-the-job training into their vocational training. Already during implementation of ESTP and with the target set by the government to decrease dependency on expatriates, while increasing the employability skills of the Maldives workforce, the government started promoting decentralized training through a two-track system (Figure 4 and Figure 5), namely institution based training (IBT) and employer based training (EBT) to address the training requirements of islands more effectively and to be more responsive, while delivering the local skills and training needs of enterprises.

Both IBT and EBT require at least 3-6 months of on-the-job training in the workplace during the training period. The on-the-job training is being assessed by the training provider and the enterprise shortlisted as a part of the overall assessment and certification.⁴⁰



⁴⁰ <http://www.tvet.gov.mv/>

Since recent, there have been numerous Public Private Partnership initiatives in the field of skills development. The government collaborates with the Tourism Association and the Construction Association (MACI) in the project STAR (Tourism and Resorts) and CITI (Construction). Particularly STAR has shown some good progress.⁴¹ The EBT includes a one-month orientation, followed by on-the-job training for 3-9 months at a resort and a national qualification. Some resorts have been accredited by MQA as training providers and assessors, which illustrates the potential for successful public private partnerships (see Box 2).

Box 2: EBT Training in Four Seasons Resorts

Four Season Resorts has been a MQA registered training partner and is an accredited assessment partner of the Government. Since the inception of STAR Four Seasons has trained and gainfully employed students in the following areas: room attendance, marine mechanic, food and beverages services, food preparation, office and administration. Training is entirely financed by the company and trained youth, after certification are usually employed by the company.

Currently, the Maldivian Government is discussing with international donor agencies for additional technical and financial support for more enterprise based training delivery to ensure that workplace relevance is improved. Ongoing efforts from TVET Authority, with the support of the private sector and training providers are focused on an Apprenticeship Act, although further analysis needs to be made how such a system can be financed and implemented. Capacity building on teacher and mentor training and enterprise monitoring and assessment are also critical areas that require further development.

2. *Current financing of vocational training*

There are 4 IWG indicators assessing current financing mechanisms which should be considered individually:

2.1 Spending in formal TVET,

2.2 Total TVET spending by student

2.3 Share of companies providing apprenticeship and other types of training (by size of the company),

2.4 Share of apprenticeship and other types of training spending in labour cost (by size of the company)

Where reliable data are not available, supplementary information and data have been used to provide empirical evidence.

2.1 *Spending on formal TVET*

The Maldives Government has, as mentioned earlier, set its initial priorities on education and less on vocational training as seen in the budget spending and human resources available. Over the years with the increased importance given to skills development vocational training, the budget has continuously grown. Government training budgets and finances have partially replaced earlier partnership programs with external funding support. However, most of these expenses are earmarked for targeted flagship programs for 2011/12 such as the USD 28mn-training program HUNARU, targeting unemployed youth and women.

With the exception of targeted training programs such as ESTP or HUNARU, the government does not provide any funds for formal training. Most of the costs for training are borne by students or more rarely by companies with assessments and certification usually paid by

⁴¹ http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/up/Maldives_Country_Paper.pdf

employers. With regard to TVETA funding, the budget seems very small and according to staff, is expected to stay small. For 2011, TVETA has a small budget of 4mn Rufiyaa (appx. USD 263,157) to develop and implement standards, facilitate registration of training providers and for conducting capacity building workshops for TVET Trainers. The very tight budget and human resources available make quality assurance and appropriate dissemination and training on CBT and assessment very difficult and sporadic.

Besides the TVET reform efforts of the last 6 years, to establish a demand-oriented and sector needs sensitive TVET system, steps were also taken to ensure that training systems are more sustainable and enterprise financed. Till date however, in absence of a coherent regulatory framework for skills training or apprenticeship, there is no provision to incentivize training or apprenticeship for companies of a certain size, which could, in form of tax for non-compliance (e.g. levies) contribute to the very tight training resources available. Current discussions focus on such financing to ensure sustainability of TVET. The government hopes that government services currently provided for free would be financed by enterprises in the future, including teacher training, assessments and certification.

Under the fellowship program of the Department of Higher Education, there are scholarships (loan and grant) earmarked for students in need who qualify for higher education. There are however no scholarships for certificate TVET courses.

The data for TVET spending by student, share of companies providing apprenticeship and other types of training (by size of the company) or share of apprenticeship and other types of training spending in labour cost (by size of the company) are not available.

3. Access and Participation in Vocational Training

This chapter considers the extent to which various TVET programs promote equity and inclusion and the implications for expanding learning opportunities for excluded groups. Equity indicators assess *access* and *participation* and therefore focus on important social aims of TVET. Equal access to skills development for improved employability has been a priority in the Maldives particularly to respond to the increasingly unemployment challenge and has again been emphasized as critical challenge to be addressed in the recent manifesto as part of universal access to social protection and employment.⁴² The government has taken several initiatives to increase equal access to TVET, while promoting targeted programs, opening admission policies for continuous career pathways, fellowships, to target the most vulnerable: disadvantaged youth and women and to create an enabling environment for continuous career pathways for all.

There are 7 IWG indicators assessing current financing mechanisms which should be considered individually:

- 3.1 Enrolment in vocational education as a percentage of total enrolment in the formal education system.
- 3.2 Enrolment rate by type of TVET program
- 3.3 Typology of Admission Policies to formal school-based TVET
- 3.4 Transition rate from upper secondary TVET education to post-secondary non-tertiary TVET
- 3.5 Work-based learning participation rate

⁴² See Manifesto, 2012.

3.6 Unsatisfied demand for TVET

3.7 Policies on articulation with schooling/higher education

Enrolment in vocational education as a percentage of total enrolment in the formal education system (IWG Indicator 3.1)

As shown in Table 17, the total enrolment of students in higher secondary education remains relatively low and is focused on non-vocational skills. There are no official statistics which distinguish between enrolment of secondary streams and vocational training, however, several training providers and the ministry indicated that enrolment into vocational streams is much more difficult and reflects parents and students preferences for higher education, hence the relatively low status of vocational skills in the country. This provides us with a paradox situation, as on one side only 17-20% of all 10 standard students continue higher education, and on the other side, unemployment is raising, while there are available seats for vocational training.

Table 17: Enrolment of students into higher secondary education (%)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Higher Secondary both	7.2	8.4	4	5.9	14.1	17.4
Higher Secondary Male	6.7	8.2	5.1	6.1	14	18.4
Higher Secondary Female	6.7	8.7	2.8	5.7	14.3	16.4

Source: Statistical Yearbook, 2011

Further, while educational milestones have been achieved in terms of equal access of young men and women to higher education, women are significantly less represented in formal TVET with appx. 30% female enrolment in TVET. The reason for lower enrolment can be manifold and are often reflected by the girls' preference for higher education instead of opting for a vocational training.⁴³

Table 18: Student Enrolment into secondary education

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Secondary education, general pupils	28'646	29'084	29'417	28'164	26'120	24'588
Secondary education, TOTAL	30'588	31'298	31'903	30'815	29'040	na

Source: MoE, 2012

Enrolment rate by type of TVET program (IWG Indicator 3.2)

As shown in Table 19, 4228 students enrolled into vocational training courses but only 51 % of the students enrolled (2175) underwent competency-based training and received a national certificate in 2010 (see section on ESTP). The reason for the small number of enrolment for 2011 is that HUNARU as a project was launched in June 2011, but only started implementation and training since November 2011. The project being the largest in history of the Maldives in TVET, faced some challenges and therefore delivery and coordination delays to meet training targets, as the project team is understaffed, and the capacity of training providers to deliver quality training for larger numbers has yet to be developed.⁴⁴

⁴³ Which is the case in many countries, women tend to be underrepresented in Vocational Training and Education and enroll into much less, very gender stereotyped courses.

⁴⁴ HUNARU; according to the ministry, the project has been stalled and is in the process of revision.

Table 19: No of Students enrolled and certified in 2010/2011:

	2010		
	Men	Women	TOTAL
CAT(1,2,3), FENDAA (1+2), Youth Centres	1201	310	1511
Other IBT	343	33	376
Other EBT	90	38	128
IHDP	16	22	38
TOTAL	1650	403	2053

Source TVETA 2012

*upto end of May 2012

It can further be observed (Table 20) that currently, programmes such as HUNARU predominantly fund training or training is institution based (Table 20). In 2011, the provision of training was quite limited to a few trades which include electricians, front offices, automotive maintenances, IT Technicians, Refrigeration and air conditioning in HUNARU and IBT training, while EBT provides training in IT Technician, Food Preparation and Service, Room Attendance and Front Office. Further, the documents of TVETA confirm that women are strongly underrepresented in vocational training but seem to be more specifically targeted in HUNARU (Appendix IV).

Table 20: No of students certified based on Competency Standards 2011/2012

No of Students	2011-May 2012		
	Men	Women	TOTAL
Hunaru	78	24	102
Other IBT	136	0	136
Other EBT	47	3	50
TOTAL	261	27	288

Source: TVETA, 2012

* 2011 and till end of May 2012

Typology of admission policies to formal school-based TVET (IWG Indicator 3.3)

- ***Admission Policies and Government efforts to promote continuous career pathways***

To achieve an inclusive TVET and educational system that encourages life long learning and continuous career pathways, TVETA, together with MQA, have taken pro-active steps to reach out to training providers to conduct courses that enable school dropouts and people out of work to re-enter the educational system through TVET. Similar efforts are being made to enable students with vocational certificates to continue higher studies, with the Polytechnic being one of the main collaborating agencies.⁴⁵ As a part of the implementation process of the MNQF, where continuous career pathways have been outlined, efforts are also being made through career pathway programs (CPP) and youth focused foundation skills initiatives (GULHUN) to facilitate easy entry for any person with basic education (completion of the 7th year of school) and competencies into the mainstream training process. In collaboration with the tourism industry and selected training providers (e.g. CCTE), trade testing and workplace assessments have been introduced, which allow the workforce to assess and re-assess their competencies and

⁴⁵ See minimum entry requirements as approved in 2011 by MQA in MNQF.

work experience, which is often acquired informally over the years.⁴⁶ Usually, employers finance the fees for assessment.

Training providers, particularly under the programs ESTP and HUNARU have encouraged disadvantaged groups to (re-) enter formal training either through IBT or EBT.

- ***Targeted Programs***

During the implementation period of ESTP (2006-2010), around 6000 youth were trained in courses of high demand and employment potential. Under the ESTP funded mostly IBT and Community Applied Training (CAT), training with clear community focus to reach out to the atolls through more structured training initiatives. Training courses were delivered in collaboration with the registered and strengthened NGO's and ESCs in three identified regions to optimise sustainability. The courses catered to the needs of the tourism, transport, construction, fisheries, agriculture and social sectors, which were prioritised by the government on the basis of high levels of skills needs and employment opportunities.

Despite major progress made, the project faced some challenges, when it comes to labour market outcomes and therefore success of the training initiative itself. According to a tracer study, which was undertaken in 2010, the training as such was well perceived and got positive feedbacks from the participants interviewed and assessed content as good.⁴⁷ The courses however fared relatively low when it comes to employment, particularly for trainees who were unemployed prior to the training, where only 31% could find a job. Lack of relevance and employability skills were mentioned, besides the low capacities of training providers to deliver quality based CBT as the critical shortcomings of the program (MHRYS, 2010).⁴⁸

With the establishment of a women's development fund to support women's skills training and livelihood and employment promotion is planned under the strategic goal to promote a benevolent state and universal social protection within the Maldives (Manifesto, 2012). Till date, there has been no move towards implementation.

The recent self-financed flagship initiative HUNARU launched by the President in 2011 aims to train 8,500 persons in a short period between 2011 and 2012. HUNARU's objectives are to implement the two-track training program to increase employability of unemployed youth within different regions through relevant competency based training (IBT, EBT and on-the-job training) resulting in certification. The focus is clearly set on creation of local semi-skilled and skilled employment in dynamic sectors, while the current skills mismatch is being addressed, employability skills trained and as a result, expatriate labour replaced by a competitive and well-trained Maldivian workforce.⁴⁹ The project is managed and implemented by a small team under the Department of Higher Education (Table 21).

⁴⁶ According to discussions with Mrs Mariyam Nordeen, 18 June 2012 and CTE, employers have agreed to pay a fee for assessment.

⁴⁷ See Tracer Study, Ministry of Human Resources, Youth and Sports, May 2010. There were challenges reaching the students after training. From an initial 700 students who got trained, only 197 could be contacted which amounts to 28% of the total population that got registered by MHRYS. It is therefore not sure, whether these data are representative for the population trained during ESTP.

⁴⁸ See Tracer Study, Ministry of Human Resources, Youth and Sports, May 2010

⁴⁹ HUNARU's multi dimensional initiative addresses 5 components which are managed by different government institutions, however overseen by the Ministry of Education: 1) quality of training: DHE, registered trainers, TVETA, 2) promotion of TVET status and work ethics in the workplace (MMPRC), 3) Career guidance, job matching and placement support (NCGC in MHRYS, employers), Enhancement of capacity of MHRYS for Labour Administration (MHRYS) and enforcement (DHE). See www.Hunaru.gov.mv

Table 21: Project Status of HUNARU as per 23 May 2012

Total Training areas	Target: To be trained	Contracted	In Training	Completed	Placed in Jobs
Construction	2,210	1260	216	113	20
Tourism	3,800	1305	257	69	7
Fisheries & Agricultural	860	350	0	41	6
Transport Sector	700	80	0	0	0
Social Sector	530	110	22	17	13
Cross Cutting sectors	400	400	241	0	0
Total	8,500	3,505	736	240	46

Source: www.hunaru.gov.mv

Due to absence of reliable data currently available on TVET, it is difficult to systematically assess whether current policies and programs were able to increase equal access to formal vocational training. While targeted programs certainly do, it is the question how the overall TVET system has built in processes to monitor inclusion more systematically. During the discussions with government and training providers, the challenges remain high overall to ensure universal access to vocational training in the Maldives, with atolls, women and disadvantaged youth and school leavers and finally people with disabilities being particularly vulnerable. Despite the targeting of particular regions and aiming at 30% women's participation, the programs ESTP and HUNARU have faced significant challenges during implementation to meet these enrolment targets. Distance, lack of local training capacities (infrastructure and human resources), missing linkages with industry and the overall low status of vocational training in the Maldives have been identified as some of the main reasons. Women are strongly underrepresented in TVET and rather opt for more academically oriented streams, or if for vocational training, focus on traditional occupations such as tailoring, nursing, personal care and some courses in hospitality.

As mentioned earlier, only very few of the 145 active training providers registered with the government conduct vocational training in the Maldives. Their priorities lie in higher secondary education. The status of vocational skills is still very low and training providers as well as the government faced challenges with enrolment, particularly in vocations related to construction. Interestingly, occupations, which require licensing to operate as small business units (such as electricians) register a higher demand and retention.

- ***Fellowships for TVET***

Under the Fellowship program of the Department of Higher Education scholarships (loan and grant) were earmarked annual funding for students who qualify for higher education. According to DHE, only very few students took advantage and applied. TVETA has plans to lobby for additional fellowships and as a part of their social marketing efforts for TVET, to increase awareness of bright and aspiring students to take advantage of these opportunities.

The data for work-based learning participation rate, unsatisfied demand for TVET and policies on articulation with schooling/higher education are not available.

4. Quality of TVET

This part addresses the policy options and capacity of the Maldives TVET system to deliver quality training and includes a focus on efficiency of resources utilized so that skills needs within the Maldives are met and trainees are optimally prepared for the labour market. Quality of training covers whether a quality assurance system is in place, but also assesses whether the standards for quality teachers, quality infrastructure and equipment are met. Equally important is the capacity of the system to innovate and respond to changing labour market needs.

There are 9 IWG indicators assessing quality assurance mechanisms and delivery, which should be considered individually:

- 4.1 Student/teacher ratio in formal TVET and in general programs
- 4.2 Completion rate in TVET / general programs
- 4.3 Share of apprentices completing registered programs as a percentage of all apprentices starting registered programs
- 4.4 Share of qualified teachers in TVET and in general programs
- 4.5 Relevance of quality assurance systems for TVET providers
- 4.6 Investment in training of teachers and trainers
- 4.7 Placement rate in TVET programs
- 4.8 Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace
- 4.9 Share of ICT training activities in TVET

Current Quality Assurance Mechanism

The Maldives TVET and educational system quality assurance process is well integrated with the MNQF and coordinated by MQA, the overall authority for quality assurance, accreditation and certification of qualifications and training. Similar to MQA's responsibility to monitor quality of higher secondary education programs, TVETA as a technical agency focuses on the vocational training sector. As mentioned, earlier, TVETA is in charge of the establishment and maintenance of a quality management system in TVET, and is the formal authority to accredit training providers, programs and register assessors. It also has a monitoring and audit function that looks to ensure quality delivery.

The Maldives has a clearly defined process for standard development through a multi stakeholder process. In contrast to higher educational courses, most of the vocational courses follow competency based standards and training. Currently, there are 26 MQA approved vocational competency standards, which have been developed in response to the five sectoral skills needs studies and strategies⁵⁰ and priorities set by the Employment Sector Councils (ESC) during the implementation of ESTP. It is mandatory to involve ESCs into the development and approval of competency standards.

Similarly, MQA has developed a detailed format and guidelines for training providers and their courses to attain course recognition, which includes assessment of the institutional capacity of the training provider and the availability of competent and qualified trainers to deliver the training course, course content, training process and assessment procedures. Most of the TVET courses are CBT based.

⁵⁰ An HRD Strategy for Tourism has recently been drafted 2011 as a part of the UNDP/World bank project 'Employment and Enterprise Development for Women and Youth'. For other sectors see <http://www.tvet.gov.mv/>

Limited financial and human capacities to maintain and assess quality (IWG Indicator 4.5)

While a process for accreditation and assessment is in place, there is limited financial and institutionalised capacity for monitoring of ongoing training delivery. MQA and TVETA approve a training program and register the training provider for a small fee after an internal assessment for capacity and content of the course. TVETA and MQA, during the first batch implementation period are supervising the training, while TVETA provides initial training on CBT. Currently, training providers themselves have limited capacities to monitor their quality of training in a systematic way.

Recently, audits have been introduced to further enforce internal quality assurance processes for training providers and hold them accountable for the effectiveness of their training. It has been common practice that, after registration and an initial supervisory process, the training provider is not regularly checked on the course content and quality or whether graduates would successfully find employment. With the introduction of audits, internal effectiveness of training should improve along with better employability of trainees. However, these audits, which are currently free of charge, are resource intensive and require a financial commitment from employers and training providers.⁵¹

With 14 staff in the case of MQA to supervise secondary and higher education and 2 staff respectively in the case of TVETA, the teams are understaffed and possess very limited technical capacities and financial resources to develop and maintain databases of training providers or assessors and provide the required quality assurance follow-up audits on a regular basis.⁵²

At the TVET level, 92 assessors were trained on CBT based assessment during the implementation of ESTP. Assessors are usually working in other organisations and institutions, public as well as private; therefore assessments have been difficult to arrange. MQA and TVETA also face the challenges that assessors often lack the industry skills and workplace experience required for assessments based on competency standards. Further, there are no resources available to increase internal technical capacity on CBT, while the need for training of trainers and mentors in the workplace on CBT and CBT based assessments is significant.

Other challenges surround the recognition of qualifications issued by colleges or universities abroad. Sometimes it is almost impossible, according to an official of MQA, to attest whether a particular academic institution really exists due to limited information on the Internet and in publications. Validation of certificates is challenging and time consuming.

Completion rate in TVET / general programs rates (IWG Indicator 4.2)

To measure quality and effectiveness of training delivery, it is critical to collect data on a regular basis. Currently, the Maldives government compiles data on formal training courses organized by registered training providers, number of graduates and therefore of assessed as competent students by TVETA, in the case of vocational training and by MQA, in the case of higher secondary education. From the data available however, it is unclear, whether these figures are reliable and accurately reflect the current overall scenario of TVET provision. As can be noticed (Table 21), the number of enrolments into TVET as well as assessments critically dropped between 2010 and 2011/12. TVETA attributes this drop to the fact that funding for vocational training is linked to programmes, which explains the cyclical nature of enrolment and certification (see for instance during ESTP implementation numbers were high in 2010 and

⁵¹ Mrs Asrafa, Director MQA, 17th June 2012

⁵² MQA also struggled with leadership challenges: the past couple of years there have been three different executives to lead the institution.

since HUNARU only became operational in October 2011, the numbers of enrolment and certification were low for 2011).⁵³

What is interesting however is that even during ESTP, the enrolment rate was below 100% with 70% of available seats; indicating that 30% of the seats available were not taken. Further, of the enrolled, 65% of students of overall enrolled students were assessed and competent after the training (Table 21). Higher drop out rates can be noted in agriculture, tourism and construction. On the other hand, tourism and construction, show significant skills shortages. These figures only confirm earlier findings, that the government as well as training providers have challenges with enrolment and retention of students in TVET related courses. Low status of certain TVET courses, the low academic levels of students and the very academic course content could be named as possible reasons. On the other hand, students seem not attracted by the courses, which might also have something to do with the training content and delivery itself.

Table 21: ESTP Results between 2006-2010

Sector	Training completed	Training not completed	% not completed or certified
Social	1981	527	26 %
Agriculture	583	256	44 %
Tourism	513	277	54 %
Transport	290	20	9 %
Construction	1057	479	45 %
Total	4424	1559	35%

Source: MHRYS/UNDP 2011, p. 26

Student/teacher ratio in formal TVET and in general programs (IWG Indicator 4.1)

The student/teacher ratio is often used as quality indicator to assess the effectiveness of TVET. From the discussions with the Government, it appears there is no data on student-teacher ratio, as no such data has been collected for TVET in a central database and separate from the overall secondary and higher secondary education related data. Further, with the introduction of more industry relevant training, trainers are often employed on part time basis, which has complicated the issue. Overall, however, there has been a steady increase of hiring teachers in secondary education, which certainly has, over the last 7 years, reduced the numbers of students/per teacher significantly (Table 23).

Table 23: No of teachers in Secondary education

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Teachers Secondary Educ.	2067	2565	2569	3004	3069	3085
Students sec. educ. overall	30,588	31,298	31,903	30,815	29,040	27,831

Source: MOE, 2012

⁵³ Statistics from selected training providers indicate a drop of at least 60% between 2010 and 2011 too in vocational courses, see CTE

Table 24: Student/Teacher Ratio

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ratio Student –teacher ratio secondary	14.8	12.2	12.4	10.3	9.5	9.1
Ratio only general secondary	13.9	11.3	11.5	9.4	8.5	8.0

Source: MoE, 2012

Quality of teachers and investments into training of trainers (IWG Indicators 4.4 and 4.6)

Overall, there are no data available on number of qualified TVET trainers or on investments into training of teachers and trainers. However, TVETA usually makes sure that during the process of course registration, the teachers and instructors involved in the particular training course are trained in CBT and assessment. They also get mentoring support from the government during the first batch course delivery. Discussions with training providers delivering both IBT and EBT clearly indicate training needs in the field of CBT and often in the technical field. Similar training needs are articulated by mentors who provide vocational training as a part of EBT in the workplace.

Box 3: Case CCTE (Centre for Career and Technical Education)

CCTE is a leading private training provider for CBT in the Maldives. In strong collaboration with TVETA and enterprises, CCTE cultivates strong industry linkages to ensure, through EBT, relevant and authentic training in the workplace for job-readiness and employability at the end of their training. CCTE's training is mostly co-funded, either by enterprises, or in the case of target programmes, funded by the government. To finance some of the training expenses, CCTE operates 3 commercially run workshops, which at the same, serve as on-the-job training centres, during the day. Usually, evening classes conducted by qualified trainers from the industry complement the training.

The current shift from traditional, more academically oriented training towards more facilitative vocational training is perceived as challenging and trainers feel often overwhelmed and not competent for the task. Lack of necessary infrastructure and equipment to deliver relevant training are other obstacles to deliver quality training. This observation is validated by the ESTP tracer study of 2010, where interviewed students felt that instructors did not have the skills required to train.⁵⁴ While some private training providers have internally trained themselves on CBT and taken innovative steps to provide training with a strong workplace exposure and access to relevant equipment (see CCTE in Box 3), public training providers such as the Polytechnic have put forward a proposal for staff development in CBT methodology and assessment. Selected trainers and instructors are increasingly collaborating with private training providers and pro-actively seek workplace exposure.

Post training support and program evaluation of training with employers and students (IWG Indicators 4.7 and 4.8)

With some exceptions, most training providers are more focused on training delivery than on career counseling, after training support and placement. From discussions with key stakeholders, most document enrolment and graduation/certification related information of students but do not systematically follow up on tracking students and their employment status after they join the labour market. Till date, no employer or employee surveys are undertaken to assess the relevance and use of skills acquired during training at work. According to a tracer study undertaken at the end of the ESTP project (MRHSY, 2010), approximately half of the students interviewed used their skills acquired after training at work. Though the government has not undertaken a systematic employer survey, continuous interaction with enterprises has confirmed that more workplace oriented courses such as IBT and EBT are well perceived and appreciated,

⁵⁴ See tracer study report 2010.

and have contributed to a better awareness and appreciation of TVET courses for both, employers as well as students and parents.⁵⁵

There are no official data for apprenticeship available, since the Maldives has only started promoting apprenticeship training as formal training. As indicated by TVETA, with the exception of Four Seasons, no other training provider offers formal apprenticeship. Finally, there are no data on the share of ICT training activities in TVET.

5. *Relevance: Measuring labour market outcomes*

Ensuring that TVET provision in the Maldives is relevant to the needs of industry and employers is a critical but challenging undertaking. A TVET system should, to be relevant, raise skills levels and be able to effectively anticipate and match skills and training needs at all levels and adjust to the continuously changing environment. A well functioning labour market usually relies on strong employment, educational and skills policies and respective support mechanisms, which make school to work transition for young entrants into the labour market smooth and optimize through active labour market interventions, employability of the workforce.⁵⁶ Relevance also entails the mechanisms and available capacity to systematically understand transition from school to work as well as how it is able to capture labour market signals and anticipates emerging skills needs. Whilst the Maldives' vision statement clearly reflects this overall objective, recent efforts to orient TVET to the labour market have slugged.

The related policy area to be considered here are *labour market linkages* and mechanisms, which were put into place to optimise TVET programs and be able to systematically monitor the relevance of TVET, when it comes to training for employability. The discussion here therefore briefly describes a) the current employment scenario, followed by b) the current possible institutional barriers, which might perpetuate skills mismatches and high unemployment and c) current status of the mechanisms to anticipate skills needs and support employment linkages or self-employment.

There are 13 IWG indicators assessing the relevance of the current TVET, which should be considered individually:

- 5.1 Employment to population ratio
- 5.2 Unemployment rate
- 5.3 Employment status
- 5.4 Employment by economic sector
- 5.5 Employment by occupation
- 5.6 Literacy rate
- 5.14 Discouraged workers
- 5.7 Informal employment rate
- 5.8 Time-related unemployment rate
- 5.9 Working poverty rate
- 5.10 Average real earnings
- 5.11 Number of vacant jobs
- 5.12 Net job creation
- 5.13 Youth outside labour force

⁵⁵ Mariyam Noordeen, 18 June 2012; FGDs with ESCs and training providers.

⁵⁶ See WGI, 2012, p. 28

Current labour market situation

The recently published Household and Income/Expenditure Survey (HIES, 2012) provide a comprehensive analysis of the employment and unemployment scenario in the Maldives. The data presented in this section is based on the findings of the HIES and further validated by selected focus group discussions.⁵⁷ As the most actual census, which provides comprehensive employment/population data, took place in 2006, the sample based HIES delivers a more up to date assessment on the current situation. According to HIES, the population above 15 years of age increased by 10% or 20,000 people (see Table 25).

Table 25: Population growth and labour force participation

	2006			2010			%		
	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female
Population above 15 years	193,771	101,972	91,799	213,872	114,050	99,822	10	12	9
LF above 15	117434	64569	52865	136886	74971	61915	17	16	17

Source: HIES, 2012

About 136,886 of an estimated total 213,872 population above 15 years are in the labour force, which results in an increase by 17% or 19,000 people between 2006 and 2010. Overall, the labour force participation increased from 61% to 64%, with a notable growth in Male (from 55% to 65%) during that period (Table 26). The increase of the labour force was higher for women than for men. Despite this development, the Maldives female participation in the labour market is still relatively low with 52% in 2006 to 54% compared to men who increased their participation for the respective period from 71% to 77%.

The HIES survey also revealed that the Maldives has a very young workforce, which enters the labour force more prominently during the last years. As can be seen from the Table 266, the labour force participation is particularly high between 25-54 years.

Table 26: Labourforce Participation Rates in %

	2006			2010		
	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female
Republic	61	70	52	64	75	54
Male	55	68	43	63	77	50
Atolls	64	72	58	64	74	57
15-24 years	50	53	47	55	58	52
25-34 years	73	89	61	76	93	63
35-44 years	74	91	60	78	95	64
45-54 years	75	90	60	77	93	61
55-64 years	66	81	51	59	79	39
65 years _	41	53	27	16	26	6
Not stated	0	0	0	53	44	88

Source HIES, 2012, Table 3.1 p.30.

⁵⁷ Labour Force Participation includes employed, part-time employed, willing to work and unemployed. See HIES, 2012, section

Recent employment trends (IWG Indicators 5.1)

Over the last 5 years, employment opportunities seem not to have grown at the same pace as the labour force. While the population above 15 years grew by 20,000 and the labour force increased by 19,000, there has been a net shortfall of 600 jobs or an overall 1% decrease of employment opportunities in the Republic between 2006 and 2010. This leads us to the conclusion that new entrants in the labour market have no other option than seeking jobs.

Women have experienced a -7% decline in employment opportunities, while employment growth for men was 4% (annual growth of 1% respectively for men, -2% for women, Table 27).

Table 27: Employment Population Ratio

	2006			2010			%		
	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female
Population above 15 years	193,771	101,972	91,799	213,872	114,050	99,822	10	12	9
Employed above 15 years of age	98,941	58,691	40,250	98,393	60,829	37,565	-1	4	-7
Employment/Population Ratio.	51.1	57.6	43.8	46.0	53.3	37.6			

Based on HIES report, 2012

The HIES survey also revealed that more than 78% of the workforce are between 15 years and 44 years old. As can be seen from the Table 28, the labour force employed is particularly high between 35-54 years, which is typical for any economy. Employment opportunities in this age segment seem to have consistently grown during this period, which obviously reflects their retention in employment during the last 5 years. More worrisome seems the negative growth rates of employment for the younger age group between 15-24 years of age (-3%), which is particularly accentuated for young men with a 5% decrease against women with a 1% decrease respectively. This reflects the growing unemployment concern for school leavers at all educational levels in the country. For women, the employment challenge overall is even more prominent, given that only the age group between 35-44 has seen positive growth of employment.

Table 28: Employment Growth in numbers and %

	2006			2010			Average annual growth %		
	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female
TOTAL Republic	98,941	58,691	40,250	98,393	60,828	37,565	0%	1%	-2%
By Region									
Male	37,746	23,684	14,062	39,775	25,657	14118	1%	2%	0%
Atolls	61,195	35,007	26,188	58,618	35,171	23447	-1%	0%	-3%
By Age									
15-24 years	26088	13971	12117	22702	11187	11515	-3%	-5%	-1%
25-34 years	26327	15102	11225	27587	16876	10710	1	3	-1
35-44 years	21039	12917	8122	24338	15600		4	5	2
45-54 years	13591	8712	4879	16632	11692	8738	6	9	0
55-64 years	6648	4259	2389	5127	3856	4939	-6	-2	-12
65 years +	5243	3727	1615	1913	1594	1271	-16%	-14%	-20%

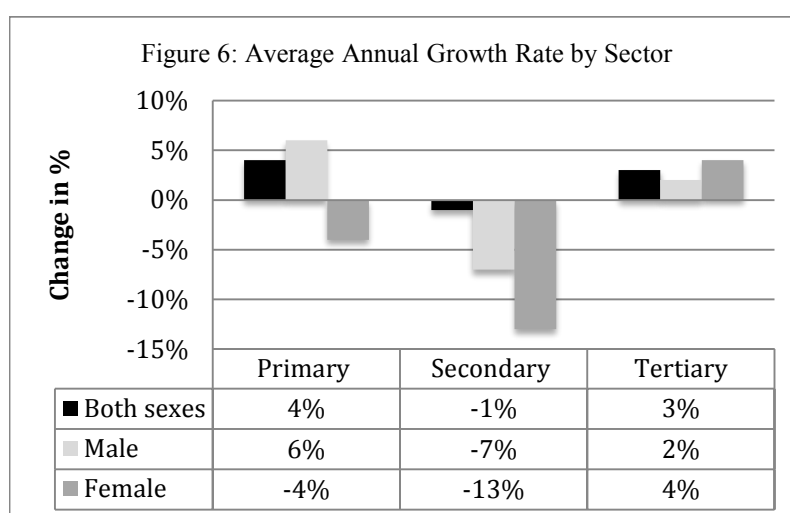
Source: HIES, 2012, p.35

Sectoral employment changes (IWG Indicator 5.4)

The labour market in the Maldives is heavily concentrated and more diversified in and around Male. The Employee Registrar Survey undertaken for Male in 2011,⁵⁸ indicates that wholesale and retail dominate the economic activities in Male and employ with 42%, by far the highest percentage of the labour force. Retail and wholesale is followed by the two sectors construction and hospitality, which on the other hand are dominated by expatriates.

Households living in the outer atoll islands rely primarily on a few activities such as fishing, subsistence agriculture and income generating opportunities around (informal) trade. Expectedly, as shown in Figure 6, employment opportunities in the capital have overall grown by an annual 1% and even showed an annual increase of 2% jobs for men, while it remained constant for women. On the other hand, the atolls clearly show overall negative employment growth of -3%, which is mainly borne by women above 55.

For both, men (-7%) and women (-13%), there has been a significant loss of employment in the secondary sector with an overall decline of job opportunities by 10 % between 2006-2010 (Figure IV.5.5). For men, positive strong employment growth can be registered in the primary as well as tertiary sector. The more detailed analysis of the HIES indicates that employment in manufacturing, the largest employer in 2006, has declined by half in 2012. Most affected seems to be the small-scale home-based



Source: HIES. 2012. p36

manufacturing sector, while construction overall is completely employing expatriate workers. Given that many women are employed in home based, small-scale industries, this somewhat reflects the employment loss for women in this sector. HIES also indicates that there has been a gender shift in favor of male employment since 2006 in agriculture, fishing, electricity, gas and water, wholesale and retail and finally even social work, personal services and construction (HIES, 2012, p.36).

Occupational Employment Changes (IWG 5.5)

The occupational break up indicates net positive growth in professional and skilled occupations, machine operators and assemblers, while it re-affirms the decline of employment of the small scale and craft related manufacturing sector for both men (10%) and women (13%). Women seem to increase their presence in elementary activities but also in professional and administrative occupations; however have clearly less employment opportunities in sales and service related activities (-6%) and in skilled agriculture and fisheries. The data indicate that labour market segregation seems to have further increased, and women tend to crowd in less, often-lower level and more invisible occupations. They seem to have been most affected by the current employment challenges faced by the Maldivian economy (Table 29).

⁵⁸Employee Registrar Survey was undertaken in 2011. This is the first survey, which was carried out in Male, by the Ministry of Human Resources Youth and Sports with the collaboration of the Department of National Planning. The main objective of the survey was to assess current economic activities and type of establishments.

Table 29: Employment Changes by Occupations

	2006			2010			Average annual growth %		
	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female	TOTAL	Male	Female
TOTAL Republic	98,941	58,691	40,250	98,393	60,828	37,565	0%	1%	-2%
Legislators senior officials and managers	6,222	5,301	921	8,186	7,092	1,094	8%	8%	5%
Professionals	9,335	3,658	5,677	10,988	3,911	7,077	4%	2%	6%
Technicians & associate professionals	10,239	5,728	4,511	13,345	7,727	5,617	8%	9%	6%
Clerks	8,101	3,432	4,669	10,675	4,683	5,992	8%	9%	7%
Service workers and shop/sales	10,655	6,534	4,131	9,473	6,405	3,067	-3%	0%	-6%
Skilled agriculture & fishery	12,028	9,185	2,843	11,902	9,435	2,467	0%	1%	-3%
Craft and related trade	23,654	11,124	12,530	12,732	6,829	5,903	-12%	-10%	-13%
Plant and Machine operators	4,040	3,857	183	6,260	6,001	259	14%	14%	10%
Elementary occupations	8,292	5,607	2,685	9,885	4,922	4,963	5%	-3%	21%
Armed forces	1,884	1,748	136	2,312	2,187	125	6%	6%	-2%
Not stated	4,481	2,517	1,964	2,636	1,636	1,000	-10%	-9%	-12%

Source: HIES, 2012.

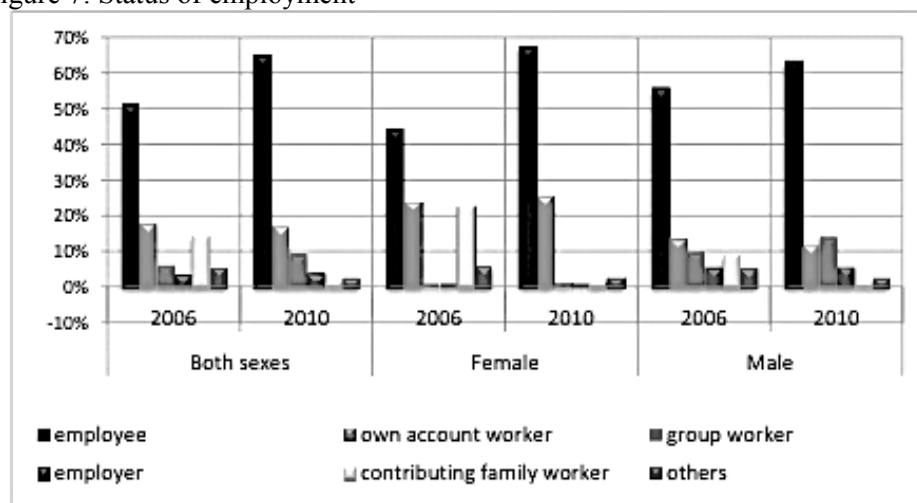
Status of Employment: Ability to create quality employment (IWG Indicator 5.3)

The status of employment is a critical indicator to assess possible changes of how the Maldives economy and labour market was able to improve the quality of employment over time. Interestingly, as shown in the Figure below, the Maldives has noticed an increase in salaried work between 2006 and 2010 from 55% to 65%. Particularly high is the increase of salaried women from 30% to 37% during this period.

The second most frequent employment category is own-account workers, who represent the status of self-employed and often include informal sub-contracting business and often home-based activities of women. Interestingly, however, home-based, more informal sector activities however, seem to have drastically declined from 39% to 19% in 2010, which is a counterfactual trend to the global trend of women's employment. Women seem to be increasingly inclined to take up work outside their homes and are more inclined to opt either for wage/salaried work or their own-account business, as can be seen from the significant decrease of their contribution as family workers. Another reason, according to HIES might be that women's home-based production activities have recently been statistically included in manufacturing (p. 41), where informal home based work (piece rate or daily wage work) is subsumed under wage work or salaried work.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ There are not data available on informal sector work, which could further provide helpful information on whether employment quality has deteriorated or not.

Figure 7: Status of employment



Source: HIES, 2012.

Interestingly, there has been an increase of group work related employment, which is particularly accentuated for men who become part of the team to carry out small sub-contracts. According to a recent study on employment, there appears to be a trend among the youths in Maldives who are skilled as welders or electricians to start a joint business where risks and workload are shared. This could be a category, which may eventually grow in future as possible contractors or entrepreneurs.⁶⁰

The unemployment challenge and unutilized employment (IWG Indicator 5.2)

For any country, the rate of unemployment and underemployment is a serious concern and usually acts as a critical indicator how effectively the labour force and human resources are integrated and able to contribute productively to the overall economy. Economic growth, therefore, is more sustainable if it is inclusive and able to create productive employment. As mentioned earlier, the healthy economic growth of the Maldives has not been matched with respective employment gains for Maldivians willing to work, which is a matter of concern.

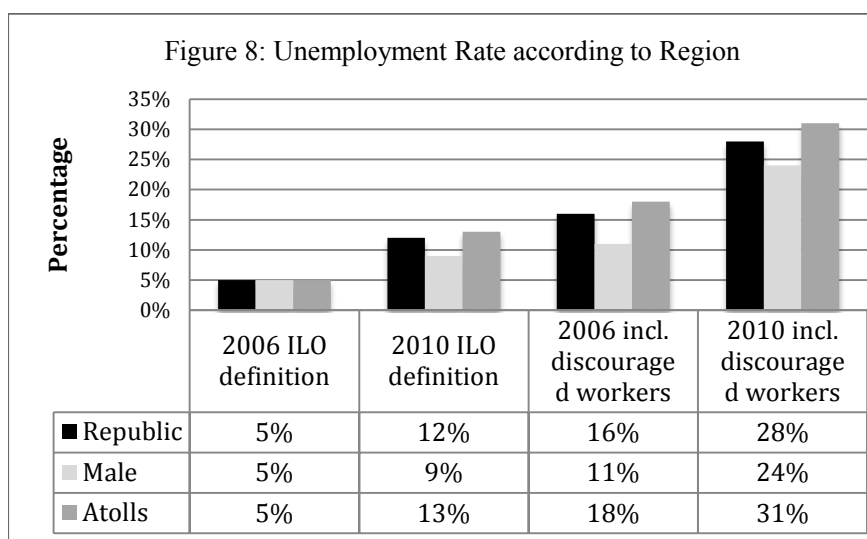
Table 30: Rate of unemployment according to definitions

	2006			2010		
	TOTAL	Male	Atoll	TOTAL	Male	Atoll
Unemployed Population (ILO)	5'220	2'174	3'046	13'033	3'006	9'027
Unemployed Population broad definition (including discouraged workers)	18'393	4'801	13'692	38'493	12'378	26'115
Unemployment rate (ILO)	5.0%	5.4%	4.7%	11.7%	9.2%	13.3%
Unemployment rate broad definition (including discouraged workers)	15.7%	11.3%	18.3%	28.1%	23.7%	30.8%

Source HIES, 2012.

⁶⁰ UNDP/MHRSY: Integrated Employment framework, 2012, p. 32

The recent HIES report used two definitions for the assessment of unemployment: the ILO's unemployment definition, which is usually assessing unemployment as 'not working, actively seeking work and not working during the current period of time', while a broader definition also includes discouraged workers into the definition. Both concepts clearly indicate a significant increase in unemployment in the Republic between 2006 and 2010. Unemployment increased by 20,000 (7%) affecting overall 38,493 people or 12% of the labour force, if the ILO defined unemployment rate is taken as reference. If discouraged workers are taken into account for the broader definition, unemployment increased even more from 16% to 28% between 2006 and 2010 (Table 31). The increase in unemployment was particularly serious in the atolls for both men and women of all age groups. Overall, women have been particularly affected across all age groups.



Source: HIES, 2012, p41

28% between 2006 and 2010 (Table 31). The increase in unemployment was particularly serious in the atolls for both men and women of all age groups. Overall, women have been particularly affected across all age groups.

Youth unemployment has been one of the biggest social challenges in the Maldives. The labour market has been unable to absorb the growing number of increasingly more educated school leavers in recent years. Particularly the younger age groups (15-24) had challenges to access employment opportunities and their employment rate dropped from 9% to 5.3%. Consequently, this age group is with 45% particularly vulnerable with a worrisome 62% of young men facing unemployment. Together, the (15-34) year age group accounted for 69% of overall unemployment in 2010, while it is 76% in the case of men. Given the limited job opportunities in the atolls, predictably the situation is worse. Unless systematically addressed, the social costs of a lost generation not being productively integrated into the economy will be massive.⁶¹

Table 31: Employment and Unemployment by sex and age group

	Employed population			Unemployed population			Labour force		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
15 - 24 years	23%	18%	31%	45%	62%	34%	28%	24%	32%
25 - 34 years	28%	28%	28%	24%	14%	31%	27%	26%	29%
35 - 44 years	25%	26%	23%	15%	9%	19%	23%	23%	22%
45 - 54 years	17%	19%	13%	10%	7%	12%	15%	18%	13%
55 - 64 years	5%	6%	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	6%	4%
65 years +	2%	3%	1%	2%	4%	0%	2%	3%	1%

Source: HIES 2012.

⁶¹ Some attribute the increased incidence of drug use and delinquency to the current unemployment challenge.

Possible institutional and cultural barriers, which might perpetuate skills mismatch and high unemployment

With employment growth being more or less constant, labour force participation and unemployment at all educational levels growing, it is intriguing to notice that the expanding industries continuously indicate skills shortages for all skills levels, while we also notice that the local semi-skilled and skilled workforce is not getting absorbed through employment.⁶² Further, studies by the World Bank indicate that firms in all sectors surveyed ranked the availability of skills and education as one of their biggest constraints. On the other hand, one needs to recall that vocational training providers face difficulties enrolling students for vocational courses. To review the relevance of current training interventions and prioritise the same are therefore critical, as training can help enhance skill levels, increase labor productivity, and facilitate the adaptation or introduction of new technologies.⁶³

There are several developments, which suggest that this increased demand for salaried workers by the industry has for almost a decade been met by a growing expatriate labour force. Therefore, from a labour market efficiency perspective, jobs and vacancies are available but not matched by local workers, which is a serious concern as unemployment is therefore structural and persistent in nature. The rapid growth in the number of expatriate workers since 2003, from 33,765 to 80,839 in 2008, reflects a preference for expatriates over local labour to fill the skills gap. Further, though the number of expatriate workers has slightly decreased due to the global slow down in 2009, the last two years already show a increases in recruitments again with 79,777 salaried workers in 2011 (Appendix IV). With only 98,000 Maldivians employed, the number of expatriate workers has almost reached the equivalent with an 80% total employment available in the Maldives! 40% of the expatriate workforce belongs to the professional category, while 60% are semi-and unskilled (Manifesto, 2012). Some argue that there are economic and social implications of such a large contingent of expatriate workers, which will affect the Maldivian economy as well as society adversely in the long run. These include labour substitution between locals and expatriates and to the outflow of resources through foreign remittances as well as socio-cultural differences that are at odds with local customs.⁶⁴

Relevance and effectiveness of educational system and current labour market mechanisms

With the current employment and unemployment trends as a background, there are critical questions to be asked to what extent current educational and training interventions and employment related policies and mechanisms had been able to address this skills mismatch and unemployment in an effective way. Recent policy interventions seek to provide, through quotas, an enabling environment for local employment with the vision to replace semiskilled and highly skilled expatriate workers by the local labour force. Employers seem still not very favorable of local workers and mention the lack of work interest and attitude besides limited work experience and employability skills as reasons for non-hiring local workers. The situation seems complex, and there are several possible reasons, which could be responsible for the lack of demand as well as supply-side related aspects, which probably led to this outcome. With the particular purpose of this analysis in focus, the next paragraphs will discuss to what extent the TVET system and related labour market institutions are able to fulfill their role as facilitating agencies for skills needs identification, delivering of quality and relevant training and after training support, so that students and the workforce can enter and stay as well trained and productive workforce in the labour market.

⁶² Detailed skills needs studies were made in preparation of the ESTP and recently for the tourism sector.

⁶³ World Bank, 2006

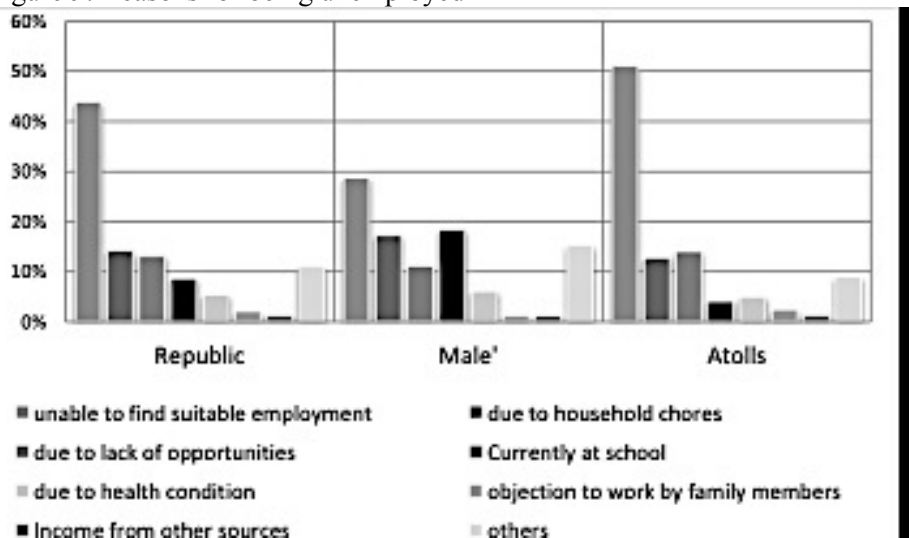
⁶⁴ UNDP/MHRSY (2011): Integrated Employment Framework.

Missing interest of parents and job seekers in vocational training and blue collar employment

According to the HIES survey, the dominant reason for the status of being unemployed amongst unemployed youth (men and women) is ‘unable to find suitable employment’ besides ‘lack of employment opportunities’. More prominently for young men, employment opportunities available do not match either job-seekers’ expectations, or they feel that they do not have the right skills for jobs available. There seems to be a mismatch between expected employment and available competencies and work experience, which result in lower interest of job seekers to take on employment. Lack of exposure to career counseling or to the world of work during their schooling might be one reason why choices and effective employment opportunities seem to be far apart.

A recent rapid assessment⁶⁵ and discussions with MHRYS and TVETA officials, ESCs and other employers confirm the findings that overall the Maldivian jobseekers have often unrealistic preferences for well paying, white collar professional jobs, and would therefore, rather be unemployed than employed in less attractive occupations. Their expectations however do not necessarily correspond with their skills and competency levels acquired in school or the potential employer’s expectations of a young person who has just graduated and does not have any working experience.

Figure 9: Reasons for being unemployed



Source: HIES, 2012

The lack of interest in non-white collar vocational jobs well reflects the currently low levels of enrolment and retention in vocational training for youth not pursuing further more academically oriented studies. From the discussions with training providers and government, parents too are not really inclined to see their children opting for vocational training and encourage them to further study or seek employment instead. It seems that the low awareness levels about the government’s current efforts to increase career options through TVET are further contributing to the low image of TVET. As a part of their social marketing efforts, the government has taken initial steps to more effectively reach out to parents and students and explores vocationalisation for secondary education to ensure some basic workplace related exposure before students graduate or opt for higher education.

⁶⁵ UNDP/MHRYS (2011): Integrated Employment Framework

c) Mechanisms to anticipate skills needs and support employment linking

A well functioning labour market relies on strong employment and skills policies and respective support mechanisms, which make school to work transition smooth, ensure that any person willing to study or work can re-enter the training and labour market, and finally optimize employability of the workforce. For a relevant TVET, it is also imperative to regularly monitor training quality and labour market outcomes, ensure effective after-training and counseling/placement support and skills needs anticipation. For this to happen, it is critical that employment and skills related institutions are well coordinated and collaborate.

During the last years, as a part of the ESTP program implementation, TVETA was the lead agency located in MHRYS, where as a part of the project, 6 job centres were set up and some placement related activities started. The program also ensured industry involvement through the establishment of ESC who would not only be involved in standards development, but increasingly in training and assessment as well. The link between training and employment/labour market outcomes was therefore established through the development of this multistakeholder engagement, in which MHRYS (TVETA, National Centre of Career Guidance), ESCs and Training providers collaborated. An LMI database that documents training and employment outcomes was initiated during the ESTP project implementation, but due to time constraints could not be set up completely.

The ongoing HUNARU program has the ambition to further refine the process and more effectively reach out to youth and women through a large scale, self-financed training intervention that builds on earlier learning and experiences from ESTP. The design of HUNARU itself, clearly emphasizes on the improvement of TVET status through social marketing, strengthening linkages with industry through EBT and IBT with strong workplace exposure as well as stronger collaboration with counseling and career planning and after training support services through strengthened job centres and employment services. The involvement of multiple ministries only reflects the emphasis for more integration (MoE, MHRYS, TVETA, Employers).

The implementation process of this ambitious 1-year, time bound program however, has been more difficult than expected, due to lack of capacities of the very small team, which in contrast was fully functional and well staffed during ESTP. The size of HUNARU certainly has the potential to take TVET into a new direction in Maldives, however, discussions with stakeholders involved indicate that the project implementation was problematic and lacked well conceptualized implementation strategies and procedures. Other shortcomings include limited fund allocations for capacity building of staff within the ministries, or teacher training. Further, only little money has been earmarked for monitoring and evaluation for the enforcement of a quality assurance within training. Further, it was also stated that due to lack of time, the stakeholders ECS have not been invited in the planning and implementation of HUNARU, which is worrisome, as it undermines and weakens the existing link with industry to systematically anticipate and assess training needs, involvement in training and finally placement. Finally, till date, there is no monitoring mechanism in place, which either assesses or systematically documents quality of training delivery or labour market outcomes in the case of placement. Currently, the HUNARU has come to a stand still, and the next few months will show how improvements can be made in HUNARUs implementation. With regard to relevance of TVET, there are certain areas which need to be highlighted and could be taken into account when HUNARU is being modified.

Skills Needs anticipation and industry involvement

In absence of regular labour force surveys and labour market information systems, which could provide some indications about employment trends and related skills needs, regular and systematic inputs from training providers, industry partners and ESC becomes more critical. While ESCs have been involved in the initial development of competency standards and training curriculum, the review of these are yet to be made on a regular basis to ensure they remain relevant. Changing industry demands need to be reflected in training and assessment to ensure relevance is maintained and that trainees can optimize their employability after training. With some exceptions, training providers have limited interaction with the industry, and tend to respond to the clients (here students) requirements to offer commerce subjects. The World bank (2006) found only an average pass rate of 25%.⁶⁶

TVETA's efforts to increase employer involvement in training through IBT and EBT training provision is a critical step away from a supply driven, towards more relevant demand driven training. The mandatory 1 months training exposure, and through an internship of 3-6 months before students graduate and are certified as competent will surely contribute to higher relevance and employability of students.

To systematically monitor the effectiveness and relevance of the training system however, it is critical to regularly document training effectiveness and labour market outcomes and interact closely with the trainers and employers in this field. Employer and employee surveys, which assess whether the content and capacities acquired during training are relevant in the workplace are critical and need to further assess whether training matches the skills needs of the industry. These regular feedback processes however, are not taking place.

Employment Service capacity, career guidance and post training support

NCGC in MHRYS has the mandate to provide career guidance, identify and disseminate vacancies and facilitate placement and training opportunities of jobseekers throughout the country. NCGC has the challenging task to provide a smooth transition for school and training graduates into the world of work. The Male based NCGC has recently expanded its career guidance activities in secondary schools and plans to include job and youth centres in all the provinces to improve outreach and access (Table 32). As a part of the Yes campaign⁶⁷ to raise awareness about employment and training opportunities in priority sectors and provide career guidance,⁶⁸ a webpage has been launched with data on different vacancies and training opportunities.

Table 32: NCGC Activities and outreach

	2009	2010	2011	2012 up to May
Atoll Awareness Events	1970	243	2268	–
Career Planning Training	120	99	651	344
NCGC Services	106	735	1313	475
Youth Challenge	–	680	378	510
Thematic session	311	124	118	22
Stream selection	3102	1744	–	–
Collabration events	1051	–	25	–

Source MHRYS, 2012

⁶⁶ World Bank 2006

⁶⁷ Between 2006/2007 a systematic career development program was implemented during the campaign under ESTP. 78 high school teachers, social workers, and youth workers were selected from around the country and trained (through a 110-hour certificate course) in the "Yes...for Career Choices" methodology. See <http://www.comminit.com/global/taxonomy/term/4082>

⁶⁸ <http://www.yes.mv/>

However, given financial and HR limitations, progress towards improving the status and awareness of TVET is likely to require additional efforts and funding for capacity building of teams as well as expansion of employment service related activities and infrastructure. Though career guidance training is being provided, few trained teachers pro-actively integrate these sessions into the class.⁶⁹ Ownership from principals as well as incentives for teachers to take career guidance and exposure to the world of work seriously seem critical, as currently, these courses only create additional workload to the current work for teachers. As mentioned earlier, a recent assessment indicates that the levels of awareness about vacancies and job information provided by the government are still very low amongst youth. Further, reaching out to parents to raise their awareness about TVET and its benefit seem another challenge.

Of the established six job centres during ESTP, three are active of which two are located in Male. NCGC, due to limited capacities of staff and absence of testing infrastructure, can only provide very limited services to the job centres and jobseekers. There are no services beyond registration and few placements, which could further benefit employers and job seekers to take advantage of the service and leverage their employability. With the exceptions of some selected programs with the tourism industry, linkages with industry and employers are still weak. This probably explains the low rate of annual registrations and placement over the last three years in the Dhaftharu registrar amounting to 986, of which during the last three years, 189 got employed.

Table 33: Number of registered job seekers in NCGC per year

	2009	2010	2011	2012 up to May
Number of registered jobseekers in NCGC	280	233	267	212

Source MRHSY: 2012

NCGC does not have strong linkages with industry and employers, who are critical to indicate their labour demand so that NCGC can pro-actively communicate the employment needs to training providers and job seekers.

First steps have been taken with UNDP funding to develop an online database on job vacancies. It is expected that the established webpage would be reactivated. The role of private employment services is currently limited to the placement of expatriate workers, a labour market completely delinked from the local labour market. The ministry is exploring how through the introduction of employment regulations, a stronger linkage can be made.

⁶⁹According to discussions with NCGC, 1 school in Male has integrated career guidance into the curriculum.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

The vocational training system of the Maldives has during the last ten years made progress towards fulfilling its vision of a demand-oriented, beneficiary financed and quality assured system. Loan and grant funded projects supported the establishment of a comprehensive TVET system, which includes a CBT based National Qualification Framework, the establishment of Employment Sector Councils and a Quality Assurance Process. Some significant milestones have been achieved through multi stakeholder involvement.

There are challenges ahead to ensure that these achievements resulting from these projects result in more broad-based and effective implementation, which requires a strong commitment from the state and stakeholders to scale finances and human resources. The ADB final project report suggests further discussions with the government to determine how to ensure the long-term sustainability of project activities: “In this regard, five issues should be addressed: (i) increase the capacity of the TVET Authority to serve as the lead agency for sector oversight; (ii) increase the capacity of the ESCs to develop and update competency standards; (iii) increase the capacity of the NCGC to perform its functions and duties related to career guidance and social marketing; (iv) sustain what has been achieved in changing attitudes of communities, parents, students, employers, and institutions towards demand-driven skills training programs and make them acceptable to all; and (v) develop and monitor training courses for quality assurance.”(ADB, 2012, p 15)

1. Training policy and governance

Vocational Training is well integrated into the MNQF and has a strong presence in the upcoming Education Bill and Manifesto, which acts as a strategic plan for the social and economic development of the country. Although skills development and employment creation have been stated as priority areas in the development plans during recent years, skills development and training seem fragmented, requiring a more integrated strategy and regulatory framework to provide an enabling environment for training and local employment to expand and be promoted in the same way as economic growth as a whole.

Despite significant progress made, there are challenges for both the higher education and TVET sectors to fulfill the overall responsibility to effectively cater to the needs of enterprises for a skilled and reliable workforce. While overall employment opportunities have marginally grown, the local workforce seeking employment is not able to take advantage of these opportunities, with the consequence that even though overall unemployment increased, enterprises keep employing a growing contingent of expatriate workers, particularly in expanding sectors and industries.

A focus on school to work transition to address the worrisome youth unemployment problem is critical, given the growing number of increasingly better and higher educated school leavers entering the labour force each year. With 80% not opting for higher education or vocational training, this is too big a number to be neglected and deserves priority attention. The Maldives can ill afford to have them underemployed or unemployed, since there are major social and economic costs involved on account of wasted employment.

Recommendation 1: Training alone never creates jobs - promote policy coherence and linkages between economic growth, creation of quality employment and skills development.

The Maldives in recent years has made continuous attempts to diversify its economic activities to ensure that the overall dependency on tourism reduces. Key sectors were identified and actively promoted and supported. However, most of the sectors address employment targeting and related skills development only marginally and not systematically. The development strategy overall seeks to provide an enabling environment for expansion and economic growth but seems to only marginally address employment creation and skills development related to economic growth within these sectors.

Further, in 2009, former President Mohamed Nasheed outlined a plan for the Maldives to become the world's first carbon neutral country, having net zero carbon dioxide emissions, by 2020. Investments to address the challenges of climate change will create new employment opportunities with new skills sets and competencies required to support the tourism industry to be sustainable. This chance should not be missed out and reduce the carbon footprint, if an emphasis could be set on local economic development. The Maldives and its tourist sector are with some exceptions entirely dependent on imported goods and products, which could be good employment creators for small enterprises if effectively enabled or promoted locally. Sector development could emphasise and enable or strengthen backward linkages and supply chains and encourage local Maldivian businesses to be actively integrated as contributors so that economic benefits can be better retained within the local economy. The Third Master Plan of Tourism suggests community-based tourism to expand village participation and better integration of the local population into the supply chain.⁷⁰ Solutions should be explored to (re-) introduce sustainable and organic agriculture and poultry/livestock production and fishery on atolls and build supply chains and market linkages with the hotel industry and the local markets. Such activities do not need to be limited to inhabited islands but could take advantage of unutilized land too. Local economic development requires area based integrated development strategies and financing, besides training and enterprise promotion. A critical aspect for effective local economic development to be effective and sustainable includes local labour market development and skills development. Similar to national and sectoral growth targets, targets should be developed and monitored for enterprise development, skills and employment to ensure the social impact of the program. It is critical to link economic targets and extrapolations to number of quality jobs created and what skills sets and competencies are required and have been trained and able to access these jobs. The link is often missing, which leaves the training sector and employment departments isolated from the development process.

A skills and training strategy therefore should be integrated into economic and sector development strategies and linked to regulations and labour market interventions, which ensure effectiveness and relevance of training and clearly favour local employment and income generation. More, a regulatory framework would also ensure that skills development overall receives a more prominent status, where departments are empowered, with allocated finances, trained human resources and binding mandates to effectively implement their outcomes.

Recommendation 2: Establish an independent national skills development corporation or expand TVETA.

Though TVETA is overall responsible for vocational training, several other departments are independently conducting training, which creates avoidable inefficiencies and duplications. The question however arises, under which ministry TVET should be located so that effectiveness and relevance are optimized. Having TVETA under the ministry of education poses pertinent

⁷⁰ See Maldives Third Tourism Master Plan, 2007.

questions, how the outcome of training for employability and its so much needed link to after training support through employment services can be optimally established. Today, training and skills development embrace a wide spectrum of learning across disciplines and life spans, at work and in school, to contribute to lifelong learning and continuous career pathways, as it is outlined in the MNQF. Further, training and employment regulation are critical to set the required enabling environment for enterprise-based training such as internships and apprenticeship so that private sector and industry are more involved. While sector-specific training has been initiated, the critical mass is yet to be reached so that overall enterprise based training and stronger linkages with the industry have a systemic impact on the current educational and vocational training system. It is unclear at this stage, whether and if so, which role the industry and ESCs are going to play, as they need to be revived.

The establishment of an independent national skills development corporation or council directly under the Prime Minister similar to the case of India, might therefore be explored. Skills development needs the buy in and ownership from the industry and private sector, which should co-fund training and consequently take responsibility for employability of the workforce too. Another option might be that TVETA takes on the role of such an agency, albeit with strong holding of Industry. Such a direction would certainly reflect a different signal of the government's commitment towards skills development in the country. Such an independent multi-departmental body would also ease and simplify the implementation of the overall objective achievement of the objective to follow an integrated approach for lifelong learning and employability overall.

As part of current decentralization process, strengthening of local government institutions to capacitate local job centres, secondary schools and training providers to better reach out to people seeking training and employment opportunities might also be pursued.

2. TVET Financing

Currently, some flagship programs (ESTP and HUNARU) are the main financial source available to the government to incentivise and deliver training through its training partners on a relatively large scale. With the exception of a few government institutions, vocational training is beneficiary or employer funded, which leaves TVETA, the overall agency in charge of TVET, with a limited role for standard development, training and monitoring of quality of TVET.

Recommendation 3: Make employment and skills development a real priority in policy, budgets and capacity building.

Achieving the ambitious TVET development goals will require a substantial increase of resources available for TVET. Assuming that public spending will not keep pace with the growth of resource requirements, Government will need to set spending priorities. It will need to embark on a process to develop a comprehensive, integrated and costed sub-sector financing framework. Such a framework would include cost projections, a detailed plan of envisaged government spending, and an outline of mechanisms to raise additional resources from other sources, including (costed) strategies to implement these mechanisms and estimates of income from these sources (e.g. levies and taxation of enterprises).

The TVET delivery mechanism is severely understaffed and underfunded with limited capacities to sustain earlier program efforts and further refine TVET as a whole. Improved regulatory, supervisory and supportive functions of the TVET system do not come for free. In particular the establishment and maintenance of occupational standards and the related assessment and certification structures require substantial initial but also long-term recurrent resources. Low budgets and capacities of staff for TVETA and MQA will have little impact and it is unclear how TVETA ensures quality and monitors of the overall training process, or further enables and

builds the capacity of the training and assessment sector as a whole to deliver CBT based training with high success rates in employment. The vision and understanding within MQA and TVETA and training providers is well developed and complemented with a clear understanding on what needs to be done, but additional resources are required to ensure stronger delivery with higher enrolment, better training and after training support that finally results in higher employability.

Recommendation 4: Establish a training fund.

Establishment of a training fund might be explored, which could be financed from various departments and various tax sources to support innovative pilot projects or co-fund ongoing initiatives to get a better buy in from private sector and finally training for specific target groups. The expansion of ETB or apprenticeship related pilots are further examples, where, as a public private partnership initiative, TVETA puts aside finances for training of mentors and supervisors and supports the implementation process. Such a fund also provides finances for capital investments and capacity building of TVETA to effectively run and provide an enabling environment that is conducive for high quality TVET. A contribution to the training fund from taxes collected from dynamic industries such as Tourism, Fishing and Construction⁷¹ might be explored so that training, which is specifically catering to the industry, can be financed and well monitored. Such a tax could further contribute to the provision of welfare to specific workers within the sector.

Further, despite existing budget deficits, the government needs to expand TVETA financial and human resources and capacities and commence to reach out and establish local training and employment hubs in the atolls. Investment into modernised equipment and infrastructure will necessitate substantial recurrent expenditure in the future to ensure the investments' sustainability. Partnerships could be explored.

Recommendation 5: Promote performance based budgeting within the government and the respective projects.

As a part of Training providers' capacity building process, performance criteria for the provision of a training license or financing training for instance through the HUNARU project need to be linked to quality and relevance of training measured by number of people successfully trained and certified and more to labour market outcomes, which include a) students placed and retained in gainful employment (measured through tracer studies and follow up interviews) or b) number of students successfully engaged in income generating activities from productive activities as an enterprise.

Linking financing and accreditation of training provision with training effectiveness and relevance will certainly have an impact on the overall quality provision of TVET. While institution-based funding would need to be linked to enrolment numbers and location/occupation-specific determinants, possible indicators to be included in performance contracts might be for example number of students placed and retained in jobs or whether the learning content has been applied in the workplace.

3. Access and participation

The current TVET system has taken several steps to ensure accessibility to training and increase enrolment, particularly of women. These include targeted programs, provision of scholarships and collaboration with training providers to ensure re-entry of school drop outs or graduates with low academic achievement and their continuous career options within the TVET stream.

⁷¹ India collects a CESS tax at the rate of 1% of the Building project costs at the state level to provide welfare and training to its informal sector workforce in the construction industry.

ESTP and HUNARU funding further encouraged better outreach to the atolls. School campaigns and social marketing efforts were made to increase awareness about employment and career options through TVET and to change the mindset of parents and students about TVET; however, the status and attractiveness remain low and consequently result in a low enrolment and retention in TVET courses.

According to surveys, career aspirations of young school leavers and entrants into the labour market are not linked to vocational courses and blue-collar jobs. There seems to be an information gap and neither students nor parents are aware of the employment opportunities and career opportunities that are given through vocational training. Cultural factors further contribute to women not opting for vocational courses outside the few traditional female trades. TVETA, along with NCGC and now other government agencies need to develop a strategy to communicate and promote how vocational education and training can improve employability and provide meaningful career pathways.

Recommendation 6: Increase awareness about benefits of vocational training and continuous career pathways.

Awareness campaigns in schools and through other channels about TVET and how training can increase employability can be a first step. Integration of vocational education as well as pre-vocational skills into the secondary school curriculum might certainly be a good and highly relevant initiative, but requires well-coordinated professional career counseling services and mentoring. Short-term training classes for teachers and counselors will not be sufficient; but an enabling culture needs to be created within schools, which facilitates students in their decision to think and start engaging with the world of work. There are many attractive ways how vocational career pathways can be promoted and exposure to workplaces, invitations of professionals could be some of them.

Enabling easier transition from lower to higher secondary education through quality improvements of teaching and learning in primary as well as lower secondary schools is critical and further emphasis needs to be put to monitor and improve better learning outcomes and pass rates, particularly in the atolls.

Vocational training programs targeting vulnerable groups such as HUNARU need to increase the emphasis on quality of training delivery and relevance to ensure overall higher employability after training. Non-formal training provision needs to improve so that TVETA can register training providers and assessors to formalize their training efforts and provide students with the respective certificate if they are deemed competent. Through a technical and financial support of grassroots organisations outside Male, the civil sector can be strengthened and better outreach can be ensured.

Finally, to ensure that continuous progress is made on access and participation of vulnerable and excluded groups, it will be critical to regularly document and evaluate the socio-economic status of the people enrolling into the courses.

4. Quality

Quality assurance is an important and critical part of TVET to ensure that the students get optimally prepared for the world of work on one side, while training provision as a whole is able to effectively use existing resources available to deliver training which finally results in employability. Investments into teachers and mentors, interaction with industry as well as ensuring that training process and delivery are of standards required so that at the end students get certified as competent is critical.

Recommendation 7: MQA to be independent from government.

Currently, MQA is a semi-autonomous authority under the ministry of education. First steps have been made to make MQA an overall independent body with industry as representatives in the board as well. An independent regulatory authority should be created by an Act of Parliament outside the government, which accredits and issues certificates; this will not only increase credibility of accredited training and educational institutions and their certification but also the buy in from industry in a more effective way.

Recommendation 8: Expand budget and build human resources.

The quality assurance team of the Maldives government is severely understaffed and underfunded and consequently does not have the capacity to ensure internal or external quality so that training is effectively delivered. Regular re-assessment and updates of competency standards, training material and curricula should be encouraged. TVETA and MQA are aware that most of the training providers, after an initial assessment by MQA for registration do not apply internal quality standards to ensure that training is relevant and effective. There is no sanctioning mechanism in place for low quality training delivery. However, at the time of registration, there is a rigorous process till MQA accredits an organization to take training. Regular audits of programs on delivery and quality should be undertaken and financed by the training providers.

Recommendation 9: Training of trainers and assessors.

Further, qualified assessors and TVET instructors with relevant industry experience and skills to facilitate TVET are hard to come by, which is a serious shortcoming of the current training delivery and quality assurance. Once being exposed to CBT does not make an instructor/trainer an expert in CBT based training and calls for additional mentoring and training support to make CBT training pedagogy effective and part of the system. Mentors in the workplace, who are supposed to facilitate enterprise-based training, need to be trained and coached too. Similarly, the Maldives keeps lacking highly specialized technical experts for standard development, training delivery and assessment, which have to be brought in sometimes from abroad. Professional Tutors and mentors from the industry should be invited, so that teacher training happens with industry and enterprise involvement at the highest possible levels.

Recommendation 10: Introduce quality management systems and build capacity building for training providers.

MQA took first steps towards regular audits for approved training processes; however the progress is slow as human and financial resources are limited. Consequently, TVETA should make the introduction of a Quality Management System for training providers mandatory and a part of the accreditation process. Such a step will increase the overall standards of training and allow continuous improvement and finally, a benchmarking with international standards also for vocational courses and training.

Charging fees for regular audits could provide TVETA with income to finance the expanded audit and quality monitoring procedures. The quality assurance mechanism also needs to be further developed so that all stakeholders are responsible and contribute to overall quality delivery. Student feedback, MQA quality assurance, standards and internal quality must be a priority for training providers to ensure that the needs of industry/enterprises are well reflected and that available resources and training are optimally utilized.

Currently, it is difficult to establish, by empirical evidence, whether training providers deliver quality training, invest and train their teachers and instructors or ensure that industry linkages are established. Teachers and instructors should have regular opportunities to get industry

exposure and have access to high quality coaching on competency based training and assessment.

To implement an effective internal-external quality assurance mechanism for TVET providers must document training and employment by collection of data through feedback from employers and students. Training providers as well as MQA need to develop a database and should be trained in collecting, processing and analyzing such data. The database should include records on student teacher ratio, numbers of students enrolled, graduated, assessed and finally certified by gender and subject, per head expenditure, no of trained teachers and trainers as well as a database with enterprises and placements. Finally, systematically investing and documentation of training of trainers and the collection of employer and student's feedback, whether content learnt was relevant and could be applied in the work place should be collected and be the basis for regular improvement of the curriculum.

Such data collection should be compulsory for any registered training provider to be handed in to TVETA, where a centralized database could be established and data can be used for regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure that over time, enrolment, graduation, assessment and finally certification are increasing. Good practices might be awarded or made public to the training audience. It is finally absolutely critical that TVETA statistics are collected or at least processed separately from the statistics for higher secondary education usually collected by DHE.

5. *Relevance:*

The strengths and weaknesses of any TVET system are finally measured by how meets the needs of the labour markets and how it prepares students for the world of work and for decent and productive employment. The Maldives economy is under tremendous pressure to address increasing unemployment, which co-exists with skills mismatches and a growing and more educated labour force. The current response of the private sector, to meet skills needs and fill vacancies with a growing expatriate labour force is not sustainable and could cause a massive long term loss for the Maldives society unless effectively addressed. The paradox that whatever new employment opportunities are created, the local employment opportunities are shrinking is worrisome. There is an overall perception that the Maldivians do not have the attitude nor the competencies for the work required, while on the other hand, employment opportunities seem to not attract the Maldivians, or are paid too less.

While regulatory provisions have been put in place over the years to protect both the local as well as the expatriate labour force, progress on enforcement and effective implementation of the Employment Act will be critical. Further, policies enacted to discourage enterprises to hire expatriates need to be accompanied by increased efforts in the quality and relevance of the educational and vocational training system, particularly at semi and hire skills levels, as they have certainly a role to play when it comes to training, counseling and placement support.⁷²

⁷² In the hotel industry, as a disincentive to increase expatriate workforce, the Government has imposed a 50% ceiling on expatriate staff employed in a resort or hotel. Another strategy recently used to reduce expatriate employment is a clause in the bid document for resort development that provides additional points for greater localisation of staff. Recently awarded resort lease contracts have included the requirement as part of the contract. See Tourism Master Plan (2007).

Recommendation 11: Explore sectors with strong employment potential and backward linkages for training for self-and SME development.

The Maldives, like many of the South Asian countries is challenged by a large informal labor market. While there is still scope to meet the high skills demand from the industry with skilled local labourforce, an increasing percentage of the labour force faces difficulties to access formal and regular employment. Entrepreneurship consequently could be promoted as an option, be closely linked to sector development initiatives and relevant mentoring and skills development how to run an enterprise. As mentioned earlier, the setting up of strong value chains in high quality fish and organic agriculture produce within the Tourism industry could have tremendous potential.

Recommendation 12: Expand on-the-job training and apprenticeship.

Educational and training outcomes in general need to be addressed and stronger linkages to the workplace established to make education and training delivery more relevant to the world of work. Introducing on-the-job training into any higher secondary education should be made compulsory and workplace relevant training (IBT, EBT and apprenticeships) through partnerships with the industry further incentivized and promoted. The planned Apprenticeship Act and efforts to integrate the same in the Employment Act of 2008 is a first step towards enforcing training and employment goals, which, if well implemented could have a significant impact on relevant and demand oriented training and consequently employability.

Recommendation 13: Expand Employment Services.

Current and planned efforts by NCGC to expand career counseling and introduce workplace exposure into secondary education need to be further intensified but should also ensure that such services are of the quality required to be effective. MHRSY should revive and re-define the mandate of Youth and Services Centre in Male' and job centers in Baa, Dhaal, Lhaviani and Laamu atolls. Establishment of job information kiosks to provide employment exchange services for employers and employees and employment advice to job seekers is another option. NCGC and the local job and youth centres also need to expand their support to secondary schools and training providers to link them with employers and industry. Further, job centres should also encourage entrepreneurship and be equipped to coach and link aspiring entrepreneurs with the relevant financial and training institutions where required. Career counselors in schools should get the support from principals, infrastructure and space needs to be provided besides being trained and exposed to professional counseling. Counselors should also introduce students into employment and career counseling and provide them with the information of learning opportunities and further education. Ideally, counselors are able to assess student's individual aptitudes and interest and introduce them into the process of lifelong learning; they are updated about labour markets and establish industry linkages in the vicinity of the school so that students have exposure to the world of work and employability skills from early on.

Recommendation 14: Revive and strengthen industry involvement.

As mentioned earlier, improving links between the education and training system and the labour market is the crucial effort to be made, with ministries required to more closely collaborate with each other and with ECS. TVETA needs to collaborate more closely with NCGC and strengthen the currently weak linkages with industry and job and youth centres across the country. Sector associations and councils are critical stakeholders and need to stay involved at all stages of training. Such collaboration can be particularly effective at the local level in the atolls. Current decentralization efforts should prioritise training and employment creation at local level of decision-making.

Recommendation 15: Effective feedback systems, data collection and monitoring.

To effectively address the current skills mismatch, the Maldives needs to strengthen existing linkages with industry and put a regular feedback mechanism in place that enables continuous quality improvement through affective training provider-industry exchange. Standards and training materials should be continuously improved and the government should regularly consult industry on skills need changes for key professions and occupations. Occupational analysis as a tool might be applied and collaboration with ESC should be revived.

Monitoring training effectiveness and relevance without evidence is challenging and skills and employment planning difficult without labor market information systems. A centralized database, which collects training data and employment, related information regularly requires dedicated funding and human resources, which are currently not available in the government. Many countries introduced employer and employee surveys on a regular basis which complement existing labour force surveys. Such undertakings are expensive but certainly effective; however, these surveys never replace regular dialogue between key stakeholders involved.

Changing labour market trends, skills needs and occupational analysis ought to be effectively communicated to students, schools, and employment service providers as well as training providers. A well-linked mechanism and communication process between industry/ESC-TVETA-NCGC and training providers needs to be developed and effectively implemented.

Recommendation 16: Expand Research Capacities on TVET and labour market linkages.

The TVET research section on needs to be established with staff who have expertise in interpreting the labour market information produced by various departments, organizations, statistical or other agencies operating in the Maldives. This could be done under an independent Skills Corporation or with the support of the department of national planning within MHRSY. The cell could also be responsible for the conduct of industrial sector-wide studies of occupational requirements, holding of forums and seminars with key industry leaders to interpret the impact of labour market issues for TVET, develop background papers for labour market/TVET seminars and so on. Research results should be made available to job centres and training providers in the atolls.

Recommendation 17: Explore expansion of current private employment services, which service expatriate labour force and local job seekers.

The role of private employment agencies needs to be effectively utilised to serve local employment generation. However, this requires regulatory mechanisms, as according to the ILO conventions, employment agencies are not supposed to charge workers for the placement and recruitment services. Usually, employment agencies are well connected with Industry and employers, as well as well aware with international standards and qualifications. Taking advantage of their often-effective job placement delivery could strengthen local local job placement centres, if they collaborate with each other.

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VIII. APPENDIX

I. List of people met

Name	Organisation /Function	Contacts
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APPENDIX III

Skills Training Program (HUNARU) 2011 - 2012

Occupational areas and available training

#	Economic Sector and Identified Occupational Areas	Available Training Programs and Level	Certificate Level	Expected Duration (months)
1.0	Construction Sector			
1.1	Construction Technician	Mason Shuttering Carpenter Tiller Plumber Bar bending Painter	C- III C- II C-II C-II C-II C-II	3-6 months 1-2 months 1-2 months 1-2 months 1-2 months 1-2 months
1.2	Carpenter	Furniture Carpenter	C- III	3-6 months
1.3	Welder	1. Arc Welder 2. Gas Welder	C- III C- III	3-6 months 3-6 months
1.4	Electrician	1. Electrician 2. Electrician	C-III C-IV	3-6 months 12 months
1.5	Operator (Heavy vehicle)	Heavy vehicle Operator	C-II	1-2 months
1.6	Ref & AC Technician	Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Mechanic	C-III	3-6 months
1.7	Drafting (AutoCAD)	1. Residential Drafting 2. Introduction to AutoCAD	C- IV C- III	12 months 3-6 months
1.8	Bar Bender	Bar Bending	C- II	1-3 months
1.9	Aluminum Fabrication *	To be developed		
1.10	Quantity Surveyor *	To be developed		
1.11	RE system Installation	RE System installation and maintenance	C-III	3-6 months
1.13	Mechatronics *	Mechatronics	C-IV	12 months
2.0	Tourism Sector			
2.1	Cook/ Waiter/waitress	1. Food Preparation 2. Food and beverage services personnel	C-II C-II	1-3 months 1-3 months
2.2	Steward/Host/Hostess	1. Food Preparation 2. Food and beverage services personnel 3. Front Office	C-II C-II C-II	1-3 months 1-3 months 1-3 months
2.3	Guide (Tour)	Tour Guide	C-III	3-6 months
2.4	Housekeeper	Room Attendant	C-II	1-3 months
2.5	Butler *	To be developed		
2.6	Public relations officer	Front Office	C- II	1-3 months
2.7	Baker/Pastry Cook	Pastry and Bakery Chef	C-II	1-3 months
2.8	Gardener *	To be developed		
2.9	Therapist	Local/Overseas		
2.10	Instructor (Diving)	Diving Instructor	PADI	3 months
2.11	Actor/Entertainer/Animator*	Overseas		
2.12	Water Sports Instructor *	To be developed or overseas		
2.13	Security Systems Operator *	To be developed		
2.14	Security Guard *	To be developed		
3.0	Transport Sector			
3.1	Driver (LEVEL C)	Transport Authority License		

3.2	Automotive Mechanic	Automotive Mechanic	C- III	3-6 months
3.3	Driver (lorry)	Transport Authority License		
3.4	Boat Builder *	Wooden and Fiberglass Boat Building	C- III C-IV	3-6 months 12 months
3.5	Coastal Navigation	Coastal Navigation	C-III	3-6 months
3.6	Coastal Skipper *	Coastal Skipper	C-III	3-6 months
3.7	Marine Mechanic	Marine Mechanic	C-II	1-3 months
3.8	Marine Engineering	Marine Engineering Marine Operations	C- IV C-III	12 months 3-6 months
3.9	Driving Instructor			
4.0	Social Sector			
4.1	Nurse	Nursing	C-IV & C-V	12 months
4.2	Pharmacist Assistant	1. Pharmacy 2. Pharmacy 3. Draft Competency Standard	C-III C-IV and C-V C-III	3-6 months 12 months 3-6 months
4.3	Instructor (GYM)/Coach (Fitness & Sports) *	Fitness Instructor Training National Athletics Coaches	C-I C-II	1-3 months 1-3 months
4.4	Social Workers *	Social Worker	C-III C-IV	3-6 months 12-months
4.5	Screen Printing	Screen Printing	C-II	1-2 months
4.6	Animation	To be Developed		
4.7	Jewellery Making*	To be Developed		
4.8	Qur'an Teacher (30)			
5.0	Fisheries and Agriculture			
5.1	Mariculture	To be Developed		
5.2	Aqua Culture	To be Developed		
5.3	Fish Processing Quality Control	Fish Processing Quality Control	C-III	3-6 months
5.4	Fisherman Certification (standardization) (Pole and Line)	To be developed		
5.5	Farm Management	To be developed		
5.6	Horticulturist or Agronomist	To be developed		
5.7	Pest Management	To be developed		
5.8	Nursery Management	To be developed		
5.9	Agri Business Management	To be developed		
5.10	Food Processing	To be developed		
5.11	Organic Farming	To be developed		
5.12	Virgin Coconut Oil Processing Longline Fishing	Fisheries Ministry		
6.0	Cross-Cutting			
6.1	Accounts Technician	CAT Business Accounting, Accounting Accounting CIMA AAT	C- III, C-IV C- V C-III C-IV C-V and C-VI	12 months
6.2	Sales person	Retail Services Customer Service	C-I and C-II C-III	1-3 months 3-6 months

Source: Ministry of Education, 2011

Appendix IV

No of students enrolled, certified based on Competency Standards

No of Students	Course	2011-May 2012			
		M	F	M	F
Hunaru				78	24
	Electrician	72	4		
	Front Office	6	20		
Other IBT				136	0
	Automotive Maintenance	12			
	IT Technician	9			
	Electrician	84			
	Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Mechanic	31			
Other EBT				47	3
	IT Technician	9	2		
	Food Preparation	10	1		
	Food and Beverage Service Personnel	11	0		
	Room Attendance	15	0		
	Front Office	2	0		
TOTAL		261	27	261	27

Source: TVETA, 2012

* 2011 and till end of May 2012

APPENDIX V

Expatriate Employment by Industry and Sex, 2010-2011

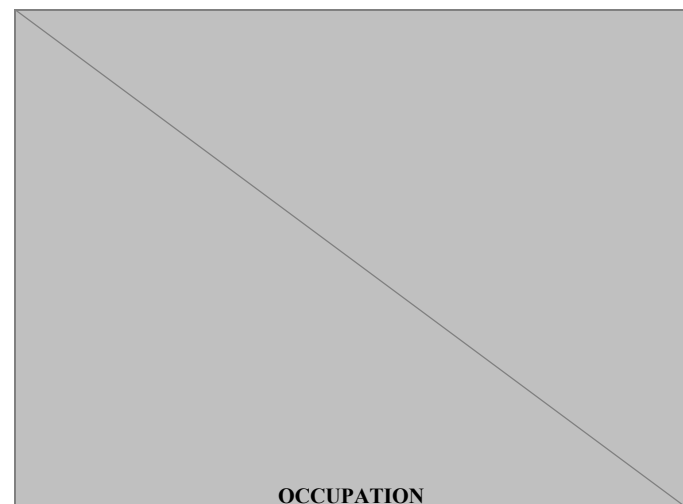
INDUSTRY	2010	2011	Difference
TOTAL	73,840	79,777	5,937
Agriculture and Forestry	520	543	23
Fishing	1,002	1,103	101
Manufacturing	2,413	2,563	150
Electricity, Gas and Water	94	104	10
Construction	31,866	34,260	2,394
Education	2,545	2,114	-431
Hotels and Restaurants	4,321	4,595	274
Wholesale and Retail Trade	1,943	2,194	251
Tourism	11,747	13,488	1,741
Transport, Storage and Communication	1,814	2,004	190
Financing, insurance, business and real estate	6,299	6,860	561
Other community, social and personal services	9,276	9,949	673

Note: All data are aggregate figures

Source: Ministry of Human Resources, Youth and Sports

EXPATRIATE EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATION , AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2011

INDUSTRY



	AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY	FISHING	MANUFACTURING	ELECTRICITY, GAS AND WATER	CONSTRUCTION	EDUCATION	HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS	WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE	TOURISM	TRANSPORT, STORAGE AND COMMUNICATION	FINANCING, INSURANCE, BUSINESS AND REAL ESTATE	OTHER COMMUNITY, SOCIAL/ PERSONAL SERVICES	TOTAL
TOTAL	543	1,103	2,563	104	34,260	2,114	4,595	2,194	13,488	2,004	6,860	9,949	79,777
Legislators, senior officials and managers	0	4	17	4	100	12	24	19	880	36	417	35	1,548
Professionals	4	43	11	3	304	2009	20	24	658	105	637	1208	5,026
Technicians and associate professionals	2	11	63	0	77	41	14	35	1428	537	369	1301	3,878
Clerks	0	0	2	0	6	0	0	6	101	3	15	0	133
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	10	25	31	0	138	0	3547	90	4257	64	543	338	9,043
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	69	1	0	0	12	0	3	0	311	0	7	8	411
Craft and related trades workers	7	24	1094	2	16988	0	18	41	912	69	1356	52	20,563
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	1	4	154	9	152	1	25	74	33	204	353	234	1,244
Elementary occupations	450	991	1191	86	16483	51	944	1905	4908	986	3163	6773	37,931

Note: All data are aggregate figures

Source: Ministry of Human Resources, Youth and Sports