



ILO Regional Office for Arab States

Partnership for Improving Prospects

Terms and References for a consultancy to review existing testing and certification practices and propose an upgraded version for adoption by DGTVET/NEO and line ministries in Lebanon.

Background

The testing and certification process confirmed that if a learner completed a learning process through a regulated training programme and passed the required assessments. Testing/assessment is conducted by collecting information/measurements to establish a trainee's competency/qualification (i.e., knowledge, skills, and attitude). The successful learners are awarded the qualification based on his or her acquired competencies. The testing and certification process documents who the person is and what they know and can do. It is a passport for entering the labour market for employment. Therefore, the quality-assured testing and certification system provides a visa for TVET graduates to enter the job market with relevant skills as per the industry's need. In Lebanon, the national strategic framework (NSF¹) for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was approved in 2018. The main aim of the NSF 2018 is to reform the Lebanese TVET system to enhance the employability of youth and boosting the labour market and broader national economy. The NSF for TVET is established to guide to build a quality-assured TVET system in Lebanon for promoting the employability of all residents and improve their competencies and qualifications, which will ensure equal opportunities for all, including marginalized populations, women, youth, minorities and persons with disabilities.

The reformation of the testing and certification system of the TVET programme in Lebanon has been given stress in the NSF 2018 (NSF-building block-3). It is highlighted in the NSF that the existing formal examinations are conducted to test the theoretical knowledge only and there are few practical assessments organized to test competencies against occupational standards. It is also mentioned that the employers are not involved in the assessment design and implementation process. Therefore, a quality assured competency-based assessment and certification system involving all relevant parties needs to be in place to ensure the quality of TVET graduates with relevant competencies as per the labour market demand.

In this connection, the ILO has taken the initiative to recruit an individual national consultant under the PROSPECTS funded by the Kingdom of Netherland to conduct a study to review the existing testing and certification of the TVET programme under DGTVET, Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), National Employment Office (NEO) and other relevant ministries. The consultant will propose a revised quality-assured testing and certification approach for the formal TVET system in Lebanon.

Purpose of the study

This study aims to review the existing testing/assessment and certification systems of the accredited TVET programmes offered by public, private and NGOs run TVET providers under the DGTVET and other ministries. This study will identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing testing and certification system of TVET programmes and propose a quality assured competency-based testing/assessment and certification system for the DGTVET-MEHE and other ministries the National Strategic Framework (NSF) for TVET in Lebanon.

Key responsibilities of the consultant

¹ Ministry of Education and Higher Education (2018) National Strategic Framework (NSF) for TVET in Lebanon.

The key responsibilities of the consultant will be to:

- Review existing regulations/policy supporting testing and certification system of formal and non-formal TVET programme under DGTVET- MEHE, NEO, NVTC, MOA and other relevant ministries/ in Lebanon;
- Review accreditation procedures and quality assurance frameworks considering testing/assessment and certification;
- Analyse the cost of assessment and certification processes (rooms, materials, technical equipment, certification fees, assessor fee, training programmes for assessors);
- Review existing appeals/rectifications system for trainees;
- Interview the key stakeholders at the system level (national/regional policy levels) and the intermediate/institutional level (such as two quality assurance managers of TVET providers, two TVET inspectors, four trainers and four assessors);
- Interview the employers (Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Agriculture - CCIA) and key business leaders (Association of Lebanese Industries-ALI), private sector associations (5 associations) and Workers Associations (CGTL and FENASOL) to what extent they are involved in the existing assessment and certification process of TVET graduates and how they would like to contribute to improving the system;
- Conduct a focus group meeting with DG-TEVT officials , NEO, NVTC and MOA (at least 4 officials from the relevant Department of DGTVET, 2 officials from NEO and 2 NVTC, 2 Officials from MOA) to assess the current testing and certification process followed for accredited public and private TVET providers, critical gaps in policy and implementation and recommendations for the future;
- Organise a focus group meeting with the public and private TVET providers and private sector (10 participants) to evaluate the quality assurance mechanisms they have in place and the critical gaps and challenges they face in ensuring the quality of the testing and certification system;
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing testing and certification process about the quality assurance related to testing and certification system;
- Conduct a half-day consultation meeting to share the data with the stakeholders gathered through interviews and collect additional data from the stakeholders;
- Organize a validation workshop to finalize the report;
- Submit the final report outlining the proposed assessment and certification system.

Methodology

- Conduct a literature review of testing and certification for TVET graduates globally and in the Arab states to provide the background context for this assignment and examples of best practice²;
- Collect quantitative and qualitative data through face-to-face/online/telephone interview and focus group discussions using a semi-structured questionnaire on the existing testing and certification process of accredited TVET programmes;
- Analyse collected data, share the findings and recommendations with ILO and relevant stakeholders in a half-day workshop and collect additional information from the stakeholders;
- Synthesize the results and prepare the first draft report by analyzing the data collected through interviews and FGDs to present before ILO, DGTVET, NEO and other relevant stakeholders in a validation workshop.
- Prepare and submit the final report after incorporating relevant comments and feedback gathered in the validation workshop.

Deliverables

1. An inception report including the methodologies, timeline/work plan, interview plans, questionnaire, literature review including draft outline of the report acceptable by the ILO;
2. Draft report of the assignment based on findings through literature review, stakeholder face-to-face interview, FGDs and workshops to the satisfaction of ILO; and a power point presentation for the validation workshop.

² ILO (2015) Manual on Skills Testing and Certification: Jordan, ILO Regional Office for Arab States.

3. Submit the final report incorporating feedback from the validation workshop to the ILO (**the overall length, excluding executive summary, list of index, and annexes, should be maximum 25-30 pages**).

Plus raw data and regulations collected, transcript of the focus group discussions

For further details on deliverables and outputs, see Annex 1 - workplan and budget template.

The consultant will take the lead in reaching out to the stakeholders; ILO will provide support and networking when and where needed. A support letter will be provided in advance of the assignment. An initial list of participants can be communicated at the onset of the assignment, and the consultant may propose other stakeholders as deemed necessary.

Timeframe

This work would be implemented within a maximum 2 months period (to be completed by latest before 10th of December), including the preparation phase, fieldwork, data collection and analysis, final report and completion of all deliverables.

Payment schedule

First payment:

20% of the overall budget upon submission of the inception report specifying the methodologies, work plan, interview plans, questionnaire, literature review with references and draft outline of the report acceptable by the ILO.

Second payment:

50% of the overall budget after submitting the draft report based on findings through literature review, stakeholder face-to-face interviews, FGDs and workshops acceptable quality to the ILO plus reports of the FGDs and workshops, including PowerPoint Presentations.

Third payment:

30% of the overall budget after submitting the final study report to the ILO's satisfaction.

Supervision

The consultant will work closely with the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), and in close coordination with the Skills Development Officer and the National Project Coordinator.

Consultant Profile

Education

The consultant must have an advanced graduate degree (MSc, MA, or Ph.D.) in education/economics/statistics/social science with expertise in data analysis and reporting.

Experience

The consultant must have:

- At least 5 years of relevant experience in TVET Education/Skills Development, quality assurance, testing/certification in Lebanon and Arab states
- A strong background and expertise in skills development and competency-based testing/ certification system.
- Experience in undertaking research studies and writing reports, including conducting workshops and focus group discussions.

Core Competencies

The consultant must have demonstrated a high level of proficiency in:

- Working with multi-disciplinary teams in Lebanon;
- Analyzing labour market and/or economic data and producing reports;
- Consulting with various stakeholders (including governments, business/employer and labour/employee organizations);
- Developing and delivering reporting;
- Excellent command of spoken and written English including Arabic.

Selection process and selection criteria

The ILO invites technical and financial proposals from qualified national consultants who have relevant experience delivering similar services, as mentioned in this Terms of Reference (TOR). One national consultant technically responsive and financially viable will be chosen following ILO procurement rules/procedures on evaluation by an ILO team of professionals.

The cumulative evaluation method will be applied for this procurement exercise and the contract will be awarded to the highest scorer(s) - 70% of the score will be from the technical proposal and the financial 30% from the financial one. Any candidate that scores less than 70% in the technical evaluation shall not be considered further. The technical proposals will be evaluated as per the criteria stated below:

1.	Personal CV , indicating candidates' qualifications and relevant experiences/expertise from similar assignments, the candidate's contact details (email and telephone number) and at least three (3) professional references.
2.	Maximum two pages concept note specifying the understanding of the assignment and relevant costs.
3.	Experience of conducting workshops, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) evident by previous experience/reports.

Proposal submission procedure

Interested bidders must submit their proposal in **scanned/PDF signed copies by email on or before 30 September 2020 to Mr. Ali Nasser, Project Assistant Skills at nasseral@ilo.org**. The required content of the proposal is listed below. The technical and financial proposals should be attached to the email as separate documents. The bidder will receive in return an email confirming receipt from Mr. Nasser.

The subject of the email should mention "**Ref. No.: Consultancy to review existing testing and certification practices and propose an upgraded version for adoption by DGTVET/NEO and line ministries in Lebanon**". Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered for evaluation.

Recommended presentation of technical and financial proposals

Interested individuals must submit the following documents/information:

- a) **Personal CV**, indicating candidate's qualifications and relevant experiences from similar assignments, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the candidate and at least three (3) professional references;
- b) **A maximum two pages concept note** on the assignment, specifying the understanding of the consultant on the task and proposing the most suitable methodology to conduct the assignment and also attach sample(s) of accredited publication(s), consultancy report(s);
- c) **Financial proposal**, specifying the professional fees for this assignment. The proposal is to be submitted through the attached standard template. The candidate must not include the cost of workshops and meetings in his/her financial proposal.

The cost of preparing a proposal and negotiating a contract, including any related travel, is not reimbursable as a direct cost of the assignment.

Questions and Answers from bidders

Query and questions from potential bidders on any section of this TOR are welcome and please send relevant questions to the following contacts of ILO ROAS: Mr. Ali Nasser at- nasseral@ilo.org. The **ILO will provide feedback** on your queries **by the latest 25 September 2020. All answers will be sent to all potential bidders.**

The ILO promotes equal opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive employment in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

Output	Provisional Time frame	# of days	Daily rate	Total budget	Outputs
1.	Inception report including literature review with references and methodology including developing the focus group questions and presentations in preparation for consultations with DGTNET/NEO, public and private TVET providers, employers and workers and draft outline of the report.				
2.	Meetings with DGTNET/NEO officials /line ministries and the ILO and desk review of ILO materials for this assignment Output: discussion guide/questionnaire and minutes of meetings				
3.	Conduct field research-focus group meetings with DGTEVT/NEO/other line ministries (one FGD) Output: Discussion guide and transcript of discussions				
4.	Conducting focus group meetings with accredited public and private TVET providers, employers and workers (one FGD) Output: Discussion guide and transcript of discussions				
5.	Draft report based on the field research and FGDs with recommendation of proposed competency-Based testing/certification system				
	Organise a half-day workshop to share the information validate with key stakeholders Output: summary of points to be discussed, list of participants and minutes of meeting				
6.	Conduct a validation workshop for the endorsement of proposed competency-based testing/certification system Output: Power point presentation and executive summary				
7.	Final report after validation by stakeholders Output: final report incorporating all feedback from ILO and validation workshop				
	Total				