

Connecting Viet Nam's VET sector with international quality standards

As part of VET Toolbox, the British Council delivered two short-term interventions in Viet Nam with a focus on quality assurance and supporting the international benchmarking of VET colleges, as well as a mentoring partnership, all in close collaboration with the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training in Viet Nam.

Intervention one: internationalising Viet Nam's VET sector

Aim: to improve the relevance and quality of VET in Viet Nam by strengthening college evaluation and self-assessment in line with international standards and good practice

Partners: British Council and the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training in

Results:

- An in-depth evaluation of four VET colleges
- Improved systems and processes for self-evaluation and continuous improvement in the participating colleges
- New self-assessment tools and guidance for VET colleges

As part of its drive to improve the global competitiveness of Viet Nam's labour force, the Vietnamese government set out a long-term strategy to raise the quality of its VET system, by bringing it in line with international standards. This strategy includes a goal for ten Vietnamese colleges to meet these standards by 2030.

In 2018, the British Council set out to support this ambitious goal, by helping to strengthen a crucial part of the quality improvement and quality assurance process: evaluation.

With only two of Viet Nam's 85 colleges having been evaluated prior to 2018, this initiative to boost evaluation self-assessment processes in the country helped to lay the groundwork for future internationalisation of the VET sector.

Supporting evaluation and self-assessment

After working with the Vocational Education & Training Accreditation Agency (VETA) to identify four local colleges, a three-day evaluation was conducted in each college by an international expert, who looked at the robustness of current quality assurance mechanisms, areas of good practice and areas for improvements.

These evaluations provided feedback for further development, including preparing for formal inspections, self-assessment, peer reviews, observations and other quality assurance mechanisms.

To ensure their effectiveness, the evaluations were as participatory as possible, including consultations with deans and heads of faculty, academic teaching staff and students, as well as observations of in-class learning and directed learning situations and visits to local employers.

To support continued improvement, the colleges were also equipped with a new comprehensive self-assessment tool, which included a self-assessment guide and new approaches to complete the self-assessment process.

Implementing real change

The findings from these evaluations were disseminated at a workshop in Da Lat, attended by representatives from the European Union, the Ministry of Labour, the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training, GIZ and the four participating colleges. Participants got to hear about the real change being implemented as a result of the evaluations and the establishment of new self-assessment processes.

Da Lat Vocational College, for example, developed a new quality assurance system and accompanying action plan for quality improvement, to be reviewed yearly. They also developed an information and data system to continually reflect on quality improvement, and strengthened college governance, by organising more meetings with teaching staff to reflect, innovate and improve the quality of teaching, backed up by capacity building support.

On the learning side, the college initiated approaches to attract new students, such as holding experiential lessons for high school students and inviting former students and

www.vettoolbox.eu

representatives of the industry to explain training programmes to students. They also set up an orientation process for new students, to reduce dropout rates.

As a result of these changes, Da Lat has seen higher staff retention, an improved enrolment rate and a lower dropout rate.

Speaking on the success of the intervention, Dr Do Nang Khanh, Deputy Director General of Department of Vocational Education and Training, said: *'the inspection helped the colleges benchmark their quality to UK standards and improve their self-assessment process in order to raise their quality standards. Recommendations from the UK experts steer the colleges to develop strategies to overcome identified limitations and improve the quality of training, employer engagement and employability opportunities for students after graduation.'*

Intervention two: benchmarking qualifications

Aim: to benchmark VET qualifications against international standards, in order to raise quality and recognition

Partners: British Council and the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training (DVET) in Viet Nam

Results:

- Benchmarking of five qualifications in five VET colleges
- A new toolkit to support VET providers in the design and review of internationally benchmarked qualifications
- Policy recommendations for the internationalisation of VET in Viet Nam

In 2021, the British Council further supported the internationalisation of Viet Nam's VET system, by providing a quality framework for colleges to benchmark qualifications against international standards, supporting the process of raising the quality of qualifications and gaining international recognition.

After working directly with five VET colleges to assess five qualifications, a toolkit was developed to support the benchmarking of qualifications against international reference points for quality and standards – notably the UK Regulated Qualification Framework and

the European Qualification Framework – and a set of quality assurance principles aligned with the European Quality Assurance Framework for Vocational Education and Training.

This represents a significant step in helping Viet Nam's VET sector align its qualifications and quality assurance system with high-quality education systems internationally.

Speaking at the closing event, which brought together a wide range of VET stakeholders in Viet Nam, Dr Nguyen Quang Viet, Director of VETA said: *'after project completion, VETA and DVET will continue to implement outreach activities in the national TVET system, combining with relevant strategies and national priorities to enhance project outcomes, bringing positive and long-term impacts in VET development in Viet Nam.'*

Mentoring partnership: enhancing private sector engagement

Aim: to help VET colleges improve the relevance of their offer through private sector engagement

Partners: Hertford Regional College in the UK, and Hanoi Industrial Vocational College, Hue Tourism College, Kien Giang Vocational College and the Viet Nam-Korea Vocational Technology College of Bac Giang in Viet Nam

As part of a VET Toolbox mentoring partnership supported by the British Council from 2019 to 2021, Hertford Regional College built the capacity of staff in Vietnamese VET colleges in the areas of private sector engagement and quality assurance, with the aim of increasing the relevance of their training offer to employers' needs.

On the success of the partnership, Elisabeth Watson, Partnerships and Projects Manager at Hertford Regional College, said: *'the workshops served to challenge participants thinking on self-assessment as part of quality assurance, and equipped them with knowledge and methodologies they can apply in their college contexts. The colleges are now considering impact on the learner as the key measure when evaluating if something is effective and fit for purpose.'*

About VET Toolbox

VET Toolbox is a partnership of leading European development agencies – British Council (UK), Enabel (Belgium), Expertise France (France), GIZ (Germany), LuxDev (Luxembourg)

www.vettoolbox.eu

and AFD (France). It is co-funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The consortium is led by Enabel.