

Report from the India EU Skills Development Project Conference held on 17 November 2016

1 Inaugural Session

Opening remarks by Shri Rohit Nandan, Secretary MSDE, Chairman NSDA

- Serious skilling as of 2014 was marked by establishing MSDE, National Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Policy 2015, and the National Skill Development Mission
- The EU worked with us since 2012, paved the way and laid down the ground work, in a productive association EU project – NSDA
- India EU project has made significant contribution in National Skills Qualification Framework, National Quality Assurance Framework and Labour Market Information System which was launched on 15th of July 2016
- The EU team has contributed a lot to valuing the NSQF and creating capacities, also in the States
- Considering that India is such a big country, the solutions proposed should be nationally applicable and adaptable to Indian conditions. We are thankful to EU team for their contribution in this regards.
- First time in 67 years we're trying to focus on quality aspects. The NQAF manuals assisted by the project will be ready for the MSDE and the Cabinet approvals, to be rolled out as of March 2017
- Scalability of achievements will be most important
- NSDA will be converted into a more powerful organization with a regulatory function
- We have learnt a lot in the India EU cooperation. Now that the association with EU is coming to a closure, we will see how the learnings can be taken forward.

Address by Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Minister of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship

- We had expected that the association with EU will last longer. The EU project helped in achieving great progress in skilling ecosystem. Back in 2012, there were two frameworks running parallel, NVEQF and NVQF by MHRD and MoLE. With the help of EU project the two were merged in NSQF.
- There are still many challenges that India needs to overcome, for example, skill ecosystem is still not fully understood by partner Ministries, they often see it as 'complicating things'. Compared to that, the engagement by States is better
- Vocational education is not aspirational in India. The aim is to establish credibility of skilling
- Quality assurance is another big challenge for which the EU project has helped by creating a NQAF
- Until recently, MHRD provided no skilling, vocational education was left behind. Millions of drop-outs from the education system need to be skilled
- MSDE is working on ITI/NCVT improvement. Out of 13 000 ITI only 2 000 are really good. The challenge is integration with the education system
- LMIS will become an important tool but it is in a nascent stage of development
- SSCs have come half way in setting up a skill development network
- Every village should carry out skilling
- The bottom levels of population (the poorest) should be uplifted through skilling
- In closing, thanking the EU project for its assistance and results: The collaboration between India and the EU in the area of skills ecosystem has been successful and hopefully we can work further with the EU in this area.

Address by Mr Tomasz Kozlowski, Ambassador of the European Union to India

- India and EU have had a long relationship on investment and trade and skill development is gaining importance in our relationship
- EU has established a very strong cooperation with India and it will only flourish in the years to come. We need to create jobs through increased innovation and provide employment to many people who do not have qualifications.
- Skill development is one of the EU's flagship programmes. In Europe, we also have many similar challenges as faced in India, like high unemployment.

- EU is very pleased to know that the project has brought some positive and productive results. The idea behind such collaborations is not to impose but to assist India in reaching where it wants to. We can also learn many things from India. EU is the largest foreign investor in India.
- There have been many successful outcomes of the project like, NSQF, NQAF and LMIS.
- Moving forward, we would be interested in having a direct collaboration between similar institutions in India. We are very happy with the positive assessment and I look forward to continuing this work and developing this cooperation in future.

Address by Shri Manish Kumar, MD & CEO National Skill Development Corporation

- NSDA needs to get stronger as a regulatory body. There are risks in skilling: private sector vs. artificial market created by regulators
- Skilling market needs to stabilize and lower returns accepted
- Skilling is not visible, evidence is needed on how lives are changing
- A study would be helpful on how quality skilling leads to productivity increase.

Outcomes of NSDA collaboration with the India EU Skills Development project team

Dr Sunita Chhibba, Director General NSDA

- The project started in 2012 and had successfully achieved many outcomes under three main components that the project worked for
- Capacity building – module training on NSQF, TNA and workshops for NSDA staff, study visits to UK, Germany, France and Australia
- Implementation of NSQF – Qualification file and register, NQAF, assessment and training manuals
- LMIS and LMA – LMIS concept paper, web portal content paper. LMA studies in automotive, capital goods and logistics sector in which a total of 459 companies were interviewed, out of which 146 were unorganised.

2 Panel Discussion on the National Skill Qualification Framework, chaired by Ms Jyotsna Sitling, Joint Secretary MSDE

Panelists: *Shri Shrikant Baldi (GoHP), Shri Deepankar Mallick (DGT), Tuhina Chatterjee (NSDA), Jean Marc Castejon (Project), John Hart (Project)*

Jyotsna Sitling

- Introduced the panelists
- Importance of NSQF and its implementation
- Quality Assurance and RPL are very important in the skilling space
- Introduced the topics to be spoken by panelists
- Integrating systems and processes for inculcating and infusing the trust is major highlight of the session
- Tools and mechanism attributed to a highly revolutionary NSQF need to be used and understood properly
- Challenge is how the NSQF will be implemented in Indian context
- Expressed thanks to all the panelist and especially to the EU experts for their hard work and continuous guidance in developing the framework.

Shrikant Baldi

- EU supported HP in development of the Skill Policy, which was launched this year
- Major role of the policy is to have a harmonized system of skilling at the state level. There should be a nodal department/organization which will oversee the skilling efforts of the state
- HP has decided to have HP Kaushal Vikash Nigam (HPKVN) which was set up in 2015 to coordinate the skill development system of different departments in the state
- HP has adopted common norms for skill development
- Skilling has to be NSQF aligned
- Taken holistic approach that all the departments need to converge

- Another important component of the policy is to develop self-employment and create jobs
- HP is quite progressive in creation of jobs in sectors like hydro projects, horticulture, tourism
- Planning department allocates resources and it is in a good position to drive various departments
- Regarding NSQF implementation, out of 1700 schools, vocationalisation of school education has been implemented in 900 schools with 35000 students from class 9 to 12
- Worked with SSCs along with HP University to have BVoc courses
- HP University has approved two BVoc courses for Retail and Hospitality and these NSQF aligned courses will be run in colleges from next year
- HPKVN has started implementing NSQF aligned short term courses
- HP has decided on mobility from technical education to general education. An ITI passed student can move to general education just by taking one additional subject
- Challenges- credit and horizontal mobility are not very clear
- Most of the courses which are at level 5 and above are the AICTE courses and it is very difficult to bring AICTE on board
- As most of the universities are approved by UGC, hence UGC should be taken on board. The content has to be linked to NSQF
- CBSE should also be taken on board for alignment
- There should be integration of vocational and general education.

Deepankar Mallick

- Briefed about formation of NSDA and notification of NSQF
- To get further convergence in ITI system, the two verticals of Labour Ministry i.e. DGT and DGET were merged under Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship by cabinet notification dated 16th April 2015
- National Policy on Skill Development, 2009 has mandated that NCVT shall be reengineered
- NSDA was declared as the anchoring agency of NSQF
- Described the levels, advantages, components of NSQF
- DGT has been one of the major beneficiary under India EU project
- In 2015, India EU project has organized a workshop on 12 modules on capacity development of different stakeholders for NSQF implementation. DGT and CSTARI also participated in these modules
- After getting the inputs from the training, CSTARI has revised the curriculum into a competency/outcome based curriculum. They have revised 33 CTS and 83 MES courses
- CSTARI has trained 1028 ITI officials in 10 different States
- All CTS, MES and ATS courses will be aligned to NSQF
- Major challenge is to bring the least opportune children of this country who cannot afford formal training and education to the mainstream education
- RPL is another big challenge in this country
- DGT has signed a MoU with NIOS on 16th July for mobility of ITI passed student to general education
- Another challenge is to align the courses of DGT to NSQF. There are 126 CTS, 259 ATS, 635 MES, 34 craftsmen Inspector training trades and aligning all of them to NSQF is a mammoth task. As a first stage, the popular trades are being considered for alignment
- Capacity building of trainers of ITIs needs to be done.

Tuhina Chatterjee

- Qualification framework can be considered as a currency for exchange of skills and it gives power to move across sectors, domains, geographical regions, nations
- 180 qualification frameworks exist in the world
- India in last 2 years has expedited the process of developing the qualification framework
- NSDA's intervention in developing qualification framework- took capacity building programmes with the EU experts, understanding concept of the learning outcomes, level descriptors, etc.
- A qualification file emerged for justification of a qualification to be NSQF aligned
- In the one and half years journey, NSDA consultants have visited about 25 states and conducted workshops, given handholding support to understand the concept of qualification files. Today, there are 1633

qualifications aligned to NSQF, 116 are the NCVT qualifications and 91 are from the central Ministries. The States have also started submitting their qualifications.

John Hart

- India has made a significant progress in very short time
- Every framework is revolutionary
- Qualification Framework is conceived to be an integral part of the Quality Assurance Framework.
- The official notification was announced on December, 2013 and NSDA has been given the task of implementing the framework
- A proposal submitted before the National Skill Qualification Committee regarding what the qualification register will look like, what will be the process of approval, what will be the criteria of approval and a common template called qualification file was presented to the committee. This template is developed to gather all the required information for NSQF
- The submitting body needs to justify the NSQF levels through this template
- NSDA has put in place a workable Qualification File in less than 2 years
- NSDA has started from scratch and been able to approve over 1600 qualifications in these two years
- Another important aspect of the quality process would be the development of credit system.

Jean Marc Castejon

- Key common objective of all the existing frameworks is to restore trust between the world of training/education and the world of work
- All the systems and programmes must be quality assured. Quality Assurance can be compared to the rule of gravity (works top down)
- There is a need to create a common language of qualification framework for people to understand
- Capacity building of the stakeholders is the key to implement the framework
- NQF is no quick fix. It takes time and short cuts are not the solution
- In India, the NSQF was result of strong political will
- A regulatory, standard setting body is required
- Qualification frameworks have changed the purpose of existence. Initially, they were to improve the delivery of qualifications in countries. But gradually it became a device for comparing qualifications across nations
- It is possible because all the qualifications are outcome based
- International recognition is made feasible through Qualification Frameworks
- The EU "New Skills Agenda" opened the EQF to third countries.

Questions and Answers

Q: As NSQF is not based on a credit system, how are levels established within the system?

A: Levels are defined in two ways in a framework. One is by describing the outcomes, kinds of skills that student possesses, and to some extent by describing the level of inputs. Levels are entirely defined by the level of complexity, skill, knowledge and responsibility. Credit is not closely linked with levels.

Q: As regards vocationalization of school education, is it compulsory for a student to take up any vocational subject or is it optional? If it is optional, how many students are taking up? What is the entry level for BVoc courses?

A: Every student has to take up 5 subject in secondary education, they can choose one vocational subject within these 5 subjects. Earlier mobility was not there from general to vocational education system. Now, any person who is taking up vocational subject may go to general education at college level. Nearly 30 % of students are opting for vocational subject. BVoc is a degree recognized by the university. There is a complete vertical mobility in a sector along with a degree that is recognized by a university.

Q: How do we target the people who are working already to acquire qualifications? How do we make sure that the qualification framework reaches down the state level or district level?

A: In future, RPL will be the tool to certify and recognize the skill of the people already working. NSQF is already engaging with the states to bring their qualifications through the qualification files and similarly a mechanism has been established for engaging with the central ministries as well to increase the gamut of the qualification framework.

3 Panel Discussion on Quality Assurance, chaired by Shri Bhwnesh Kumar, Secretary, Department of Vocational Education and Skill Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh

Panelists: *Gayathri Kalia* (Formerly DDU-GKY Program), *Inder Gahlaut* (Capital Goods Skill Council), *Prabal Bhardwaj* (NSDA), *Isabel Sutcliffe* (Project), *Tarun Girdhar* (Mettl)

Bhwnesh Kumar

- Quality assurance in skill development is a complex issue and it is not clearly understood by all stakeholders
- A quality assurance system is needed in all States. The curriculum and assessment strategies of training programmes have to be quality assured to provide quality trained people
- This system will result in greater productivity in industry and the workers would be able to demand better wages.

Gayathri Kalia

- Quality assurance in DDU-GKY followed an inclusive approach
- The vision of skilling the rural India focused on elevating the quality of the existing set up
- Leadership at MoRD was very committed to achieving quality assurance in the system
- Focus should not be only on action and vision but also on the process of how quality assurance can be implemented
- Skilling is looked down upon as education and career path. Quality assurance can help in making it more glamorous and aspirational
- For effective implementation of quality assurance (QA) in DDU-GKY, processes and standards of QA were formulated. An effort was also made to involve all stakeholders especially the employers
- To make the system self-sustaining, a system for skilling is required which will make self-evaluation and self-regulation possible. This can only be achieved when people are motivated to be skilled with quality.

Prabal Bhardwaj

- NQAF provides a common framework on how skilling can be done with quality in States and Ministries. There are eight NQAF manuals, which primarily focus on conceptualization of qualification and how these qualifications can be delivered with quality
- Registration of NSQF Qualifications: It details the process of filling and approval of qualification files
- Accreditation of Training/Education Institutions: It provides information and guidance about the four levels of NQAF accreditation- provisional accreditation level and NQAF Accreditation, Skill India Accreditation, Centre of Excellence
- Accreditation of Assessment Bodies and QA in assessment: The Manual is the key document for monitoring and guiding the assessment for NSQF qualifications
- NQAF Auditor's Manual-to assist auditors with the process of auditing Training/ Education Institutions and Assessment Bodies
- NQAF Risk Assessment Framework Manual- A risk assessment approach helps to reduce the audit burden for competent bodies and reward Training/Education Institutions and Assessment Bodies that are committed to providing high quality services through fewer audits
- Quality Assurance of Industry Led Bodies (Sector Skill Councils)- The manual covers the quality assurance aspects of Sector Skill Councils role in developing NSQF qualifications and the implementation of the NSQF within their particular industry sector
- Quality Assurance for National and State-level Bodies- Processes, roles and responsibilities to be followed by various stakeholders at National and State Level
- Out of these, four have been approved by NSQC and rest are being developed. The manuals encompass an inclusive framework and it is important that Ministries and States start adopting them. These manuals have been made keeping in mind the best practices in the World and have been customized according to Indian context.

Inder Gahlaut

- Quality in SSCs is maintained both in development curriculum and its delivery. This is ensured by engaging industry in development of QP/NOS and conducting regular training of trainers in curriculum of the qualifications
- There is a need to develop model assessment guides to carry out assessment of training. This would ensure there is common ground on parameters of assessment, thereby bringing about quality assurance in the system.

Isabel Sutcliffe

- Training and assessment go hand in hand and therefore qualifications should not only focus on training but also on assessment
- Existing expertise in India with respect to skilling such as DGT, SSCs and NSDC should be utilized for achieving quality in the system
- Recognition to assessment by trainers would ensure accountability on the part of assessment bodies
- In NQAF, the level of accreditation of assessment bodies should be kept high. This will ensure high quality in assessments
- Assessment bodies should have a representation in NSQC
- Collaborations with international assessment bodies would help in bringing new perspectives and expertise
- Trainers are also assessors. Capacity and competence of trainers should be built by giving them proper training in assessment.

Tarun Girdhar

- Status of assessment bodies in training process: currently assessment bodies are functioning as an outsourced arm of SSCs and are not given due importance
- ensuring quality in assessment is difficult as it involves huge investment for assessment bodies. Also, payout on assessment is not good and sustainable assessment processes need to be taken into account.

Concluding remarks

Gayathri Kalia:

- Quality should be brought about in jobs and qualifications. NSDA has to play a major role in this by generating the required data and putting it to appropriate use
- To ensure quality in skilling, required investment has to be made. Currently funding is majorly focused on trainers, it has to be extended to assessors as well
- All stakeholders in the system should collaborate to elevate it and ensure ease in doing business of skilling in industry.

Questions and answers

Q: What is the interface of SSC with DDU-GKY?

A: Currently connect between Ministries and SSC is not well established, SSCs are only serving as arms of one ministry but not reaching out to other ministries. An intermediary buffering is required between SSC and Ministries. SSCs need to focus on privileging skill development and have to take initiative to reach out to ministries. Role of SSC is to leverage quality in skilling.

Q: Internationally two to three ministries are involved in skill development but in our country 23 Ministries are involved in skilling. Isn't this a fragmented approach?

A: This is not a fragmented approach. Principles, policy and procedures for a particular programme are set by the respective Ministry. This ensures that required expertise and specialized approach is followed in development of programmes and procedures.

Suggestions from audience

- It was suggested that a holistic view of quality should be taken into account. Every trainer and assessor should have continuous assessment. There is a need to build trainers and assessors as respectable professions; this would help in ensuring quality.
- Retention of trainers and assessors is very important, so that they stay in and effectively contribute to the system. MSDE should start programmes and schemes for their retention and capacity building.

4 Panel Discussion: Training & Labour Market Information, chaired by Sher Verick, Deputy Director, ILO

Panelists: *Shri Inder Gahlaut* (Capital Goods Skill Council), *Shri TS Ramanujam* (Logistics Skill Council), *Anand Kumar* (NSDA), *Akanksha Saluja* (Project), *Alexander Siboni* (Project), *Ratnesh Sinha* (Innovision Ltd)

Inder Gahlaut

- Learning from India-EU Project: training of trainers - moving from input based teaching method to outcome based
- While Designing LMA it is very important to know what information we want to make/seek out of it. Some critical aspects of it being:
 - o Supply demand gap
 - o Mapping Quality of training
 - o Regular interaction between training promise & Industry
 - o Hiring & Retention practices of organization
 - o Working on different ways of extracting information like having investment plans.
 - o Understanding of NSQF
 - o Curriculum Development
 - o Assessment

TS Ramanujam

- Training of trainers program provides standardization mechanism
- With changing environment, there is need to develop high end skills
- People are core to skills ecosystem
- Some of the interesting findings of LMA exercise done for Logistics SSC:
 - o There is shortage of 38% skilled manpower out of which 20% is in hands on skills
 - o Previous work experience counted in 89% companies
 - o 56% depend on educational qualification
 - o Majority of job recruitment depend on word of mouth
 - o Poaching is one of the major reasons for attrition in the companies
 - o There are more than 900 job roles in the sector
 - o 52% of employees are permanent in companies
 - o There are more vacancies in smaller companies when compared with larger ones.

Ratnesh Sinha

- Training of trainer's module was an international learning experience
- One of the major problems is that supply is not responding to industry needs as it should be.

Anand Kumar

- NSDA has started the process of developing aggregated platform for LMIS
- There are 10 robust repositories
- National Career Service Portal has been integrated in the LMIS
- Data of about 65 lakh certified/trained candidates
- LMIS changing integration with National career service portal under M/O labor Employment

- Data for 4 GoI ministries has been integrated
- Scale is very important aspect
- Comprehensive analysis of all existing systems is required for the country.

Alexander Siboni

- For ToT conducted, training needs analysis (TNA) is the first step
- For the implementation, they first trained the co-facilitators
- To get result of ToT conducted, a follow-up survey of 82 respondents was done. The results show great impact of ToT on students
- Complete training pack is available on the project website
- Next steps of ToT are:
 - o Working group
 - o Network of trainers
 - o SSCs as a critical point to take it forward
- The entire exercise was a good self-learning experience.

Akanksha Saluja

- Project delivered concept paper and web portal content proposal for LMIS
- LMA was conducted for
 - o Automotive sector in Maharashtra with 145 companies
 - o Capital goods sectors in Maharashtra with 105 companies
 - o Logistic sector in Tamil Nadu with 207 companies
- Objectives were
 - o Tested methodology of collecting data on skills
 - o Access skill demand & human resource management
 - o Collected information on 2 job roles for curriculum development
- Important findings
 - o It is a useful study for policy makers
 - o LMA on demand side should be complemented with LMA on supply side.

Suggestions from audience

- Engagement in LMIS of only 4 ministries out of 23 shows how fragmented the system is
- Separate job search from LMIS
- Curricula as repacked QPs are not sufficient.

5 Session on the Way Forward, chaired by Dr Sunita Chhibba, DG NSDA

Presentation on Sustainability of the Project Outcomes

Vaclav Klenha, Team Leader, India EU Skills Development Project

Karen Adams, Key Expert, India EU Skills Development Project

- Project resources fall into categories
 - o Regulatory documents developed with project support and owned by NSDA
 - o Handbooks and Guidelines
 - o Conceptual Proposals and Policy Papers
 - o Reports
 - o International Linkages and Memoranda of Understanding
- Sustaining project resources by ensuring access and maintenance
- NSDA to mainstream the use of resources and outputs with stakeholders
- India-EU experts continuing to work with NSDA consultants
- Find all of the resources here: www.india-euskills.com/project-materials.html

Presentation on Capacity Building from a Policy Learning Perspective

Soeren Nielsen, Expert in Capacity Development, India EU Skills Development Project

- Key challenge in donor projects: How to balance our understanding of the importance of a modern and effective skills system with your own understanding among policy-makers
- The three criteria for successful reform and reform assistance:
 - o Local ownership
 - o Embeddedness (or institutional fit), and
 - o Sustainability
- We must avoid
 - o Policy copying
 - o Policy taking
 - o Policy shadowing
 - o Quick fixes
 - o Policy bi-lingualism: "Global speak" versus "Local speak"
- Effective policy learning: A deeper understanding of policy problems and processes than what is provided by simple search for "best practice". It is about
 - o The ability to learn from past experiences
 - o The ability to learn appropriately from other countries
 - o The ability to learn from local innovation
- Therefore the principal role of donors would be to enable a skills reform learning process
- The India EU project acted as
 - o Connectors, globally and locally, to the best sources of knowledge, to donor, content and delivery partners, and to agents of change
 - o Created global electronic learning platforms in NSQF field
 - o Fully interlinked with NSDA staff and built strong collective capacity through mentoring, peer learning and joint problem solving
 - o Developed a unique "cluster of competence" in NSDA
- Recommendations
 - o Keep the NSQF simple and employer-friendly
 - o Build on self-regulating mechanisms but ensure quality control and trust (NSDA)
 - o Treat the collective "Clusters of Competence" well to catalyze institutional change to achieve skills agenda – they are India's future
 - o Keep looking over the garden fence to learn from abroad

Conclusions and recommendations

Dr Sunita Chhibba, DG NSDA

- NSQF is in place, but work to continue in the States and Ministries
- Challenges are
 - o Credit system
 - o Informal sector
 - o Gender and social equity
 - o Involvement of the education system
- Assessment and training need to be seen together
- Heartening to see the interest of stakeholders in quality assurance and the self-evaluation approach
- Challenges for quality are
 - o Endorsement of NQAF at the State level
 - o Numbers and quality of trainers and assessors
- LMIS should focus on skills supply and demand, with all other Ministries included, and reaching down to State and district levels
- Sustainability of the wealth of resources to be achieved through
 - o Websites
 - o Networks of trainers and assessors
 - o NQAF taken forward through the manuals
 - o Planned World Bank project
 - o Stakeholders to take the achievements forward

- Thanks to the India EU Skills Development project for the results achieved.