



Synthesis Workshop

School-to-Work Information Bases in Selected Developing Countries of Asia and the Pacific and the Role of the UNEVOC Network

23 – 26 August 2011
Column Hotel (tentative)
Bangkok, Thailand

CONCEPT NOTE

I. Context

1. *Thematic study on School-to-Work Information Bases in Asia-Pacific*

A school-to-work (S-t-W) information base refers to a set of policies and practices that collect and provide information related to the skills needs of employers and the labour market situation of school leavers. These information systems seek to enhance the relevance of technical and vocational education (TVET) and ultimately increase the employability of TVET graduates.

With the cooperation of the UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO-UNEVOC), UNESCO Bangkok is currently conducting a thematic study on the information infrastructure supporting education-to-work transition in selected developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The rationale for the study is underpinned by the importance of accurate and reliable information as the starting point of successful TVET policy. For this study, UNESCO Bangkok has developed a questionnaire survey—"Questionnaire Survey on School-to-Work Information Bases in Selected Developing Countries of Asia and the Pacific"—to collect more refined data at the country level in order to better understand different country cases and draw policy lessons.

Using the combined financial support of UNESCO Bangkok and UNEVOC Bonn, national experts of following countries have been commissioned to participate in the study: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. To consolidate the country results, an expert meeting will be convened and attended by all of the national experts involved in completing the questionnaire.

2. Strengthening of UNEVOC Network in the Asia-Pacific region

The UNEVOC Network of specialized technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions is a unique platform for the sharing of knowledge and experiences regarding all aspects of TVET. The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for TVET (UNESCO-UNEVOC) located in Bonn is the hub of the UNEVOC Network. UNESCO-UNEVOC has taken various actions¹ to promote and foster collaboration in developing and improving TVET through a worldwide network of UNEVOC Centres, strengthen UNEVOC National Centres into an inclusive and effective network providing various forms of assistance to vocational education leaders and practitioners and share best innovative practices.

As UNESCO's work is increasingly focusing on activities at the country level, the UNEVOC Centres are gaining importance as national TVET institutions involved in the fields of planning, research, development and delivery of TVET with a broad range of profiles and strengths. Thus, the UNEVOC Network Centres are being mobilized in the implementation of the UNESCO Strategy for TVET with particular reference to enhancing the effectiveness of the UNEVOC Network in advisory services at the country level through establishing coherent and cooperative multilateral approaches. Also, it is anticipated that the result of the present thematic study will feed into the knowledge that the UNEVOC Centres already have and, as a result, enable them to play a more important role at the national level for the development of TVET policy.

3. Joint synthesis workshop and UNEVOC Network meeting

In light of the foregoing, a joint workshop will be organized combining an expert meeting to synthesize the country studies and a network meeting to explore ways to strengthen the cooperation among UNEVOC Centres in the region. During the expert group meeting, national experts will be invited to present and discuss the preliminary findings and progress of this policy research on school-to-work information bases. In addition, UNEVOC Centre representatives from the participating countries will also attend the meeting to develop a comprehensive understanding of the main findings of the study and to contribute in proposing more effective ways of implementing relevant TVET policies. The synthesis workshop will engage the UNEVOC Centres in more effective ways of deriving policy implications through a more effective coordinating mechanism that will enable them to better carry out their activities in the sub-region (e.g. coordinating activities such as the school-to-work transition project, new Green skills, region-specific themes etc).

II. Objectives of the workshop

- a) To present the consolidated key findings from the country case studies and validate the preliminary mapping results
- b) To deepen our understanding of country-specific situations regarding school-to-work information bases
- c) To identify common and unique challenges that developing countries in Asia-Pacific currently face in improving school-to-work information infrastructure

¹ Details on these and the profile of the UNEVOC Centres can be found in the online UNEVOC Network database at www.unevoc.unesco.org/network.

- d) To develop a set of actionable and evidence-based policy recommendations to address critical areas of concern
- e) To establish a framework for the future work of the UNEVOC Network which is aimed at implementing these policy recommendations at the national level through the UNEVOC Centres
- f) To review and clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of UNEVOC Centres in the region, and update information related to their specificity
- g) To define clear governance agreements by setting objectives, identifying functions and defining membership in a sustainable manner
- h) To identify ways and means of better coordinating the activities of the UNEVOC Centres in the sub-region (possibly via a coordinating mechanism with one or more cluster/thematic leaders)

III. Participants

Country experts from academic institutions, government ministries and research institutions and representatives from UNESCO Bangkok, UNEVOC Bonn and UNEVOC Centres.

- Countries represented: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam

Please note that there are two groups of participants attending the workshop:

GROUP 1: Country experts participating in the School-to-Work Transition study

GROUP 2: Representatives from UNESCO Bangkok, UNEVOC Bonn and UNEVOC Centres.

Group 1 participants will attend Days 1 and 2 only. On the other hand, Group 2 participants will attend all the four days of the workshop.

Group 1 participants are welcome to stay on and attend the remainder of the workshop, but only the first two days of their participation will be funded by UNESCO and UNEVOC Bonn.

IV. Organization of Workshop and Objectives of Each Session

DAY 1

Session 1: Presentation

1 hour

Background of the Study

- a) To provide background information on the School-to-Work Information Bases study and present major findings from preliminary desk research

Session 2: Presentation and Moderated Plenary Session

1.5 hours

Presentation on Preliminary Mapping Results

- a) To help national experts understand the specific situation of each country in comparison to other participating countries through the presentation of the initial mapping results (these mapping results are derived from the consolidated key findings from the country case studies)
- b) Based on the reports about each country's specific situation, concrete discussions on specific topics and aspects will follow in Session 3

Session 3: Moderated Plenary Session

4.5 hours

Highlights from Country Policies, Issues and Practices related to each aspect of StW information base

- a) To provide a platform to exchange country experiences and discuss commonalities and differences in policies based on the results of initial mapping and country reports, for each of following topics:
 - Part I: *Tracking Skills Needs* (1.5 hours)
 - Part II: *Tracking Labour Market Situation* (1.5 hours)
 - Part III: *Employer Engagement* (1.5 hours)
- b) Throughout the session, there will be discussions on these issue areas:
 - Major country-specific challenges related to school-to-work information bases
 - Policy measures introduced to improve school-to-work information infrastructure
 - Examples of best practices in addressing school-to-work information bases policy issues

- c) During Day 1, there will be discussions for Parts I and II. Part III will be discussed on Day 2.

DAY 2

Session 3: Moderated Plenary Session (Continued)

3 hours

Highlights from Country Policies, Issues and Practices related to each aspect of StW information bases

- Discussions on Part III (1.5 hours)
- Complementary discussions on issues which have not been covered enough (1.5 hours)

Session 4: Moderated Plenary Session

3 hours

Identification of Areas of Intervention for UNESCO

- a) To discuss which best practices, policy lessons and measures can be highlighted in the regional synthesis report
- b) To brainstorm on how these findings can be usefully disseminated
- c) To draw policy recommendations based on the analysis of good practices and lessons learned at regional and country level
- d) To identify the possible areas of intervention UNESCO and other related organizations can contribute to and/or facilitate

DAY 3

Session 5: Moderated Plenary Session and Group Sessions

6 hours

The UNEVOC Network: Roles and Responsibilities of the UNEVOC Centres

- a) To review and clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of the National UNEVOC Centres as part of the Global UNEVOC Network (3 hours)
- b) To have a shared vision of roles and responsibilities, and identify follow up actions to improve institutional capacities (3 hours)

Session 6: Moderated Plenary Discussion

3 hours

UNEVOC Centres and Their Implication in the StW Transition: Challenges and Resources Needed

- a) To discuss how UNEVOC Centres will respond to the country-specific challenges related to school-to-work information bases (1.5 hours)
- b) To deliberate how UNEVOC Centres will initiate policy dialogue at the national level to improve school-to-work information infrastructure (1.5 hours)

DAY 4

Session 6: Moderated Plenary Discussion (Continued)

3 hours

UNEVOC Centres and Their Implication in the StW Transition: Challenges and Resources Needed

- a) To discuss how UNEVOC Centres will respond to the country-specific challenges related to school-to-work information bases (1.5 hours)
- b) To deliberate how UNEVOC Centres will initiate policy dialogue at national level to improve school-to-work information infrastructure (1.5 hours)

Session 7: Moderated Plenary Discussion

3 hours

Development of a Sub-regional Mechanism for Better Co-ordination of Activities

- a) Throughout the session, there will be discussions on these issue areas:
 - Strengthening the performance and effectiveness of the UNEVOC Network in the South East Asia region
 - Creating a better network and disseminating good practices in the South East Asia region
 - Strengthening the Network – the way forward