

EFFECTIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN TVET SKILL REFORM: LESSONS FROM SAUDI ARABIA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Global recognition of the vital role skill development systems can play in advancing and diversifying economies has renewed the focus on technical and vocational education and training (TVET). In addition, global trends show that rising educational attainment does not always translate into improved employment outcomes. Despite high rates of school and university enrollment, many graduates struggle to find jobs that match their qualifications. One key reason is the persistent misalignment between education systems and labor market needs. This is especially true in the Middle East and North Africa.

This report proposes that vocational education has a key role to play in advancing skills development and correcting skill misalignment. In particular, the report focuses on the value of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in TVET in designing targeted skill interventions. Accordingly, it shows how diverse PPP approaches can align skill supply with labor market demand, drive the development of key industries, and support comprehensive skill system reform.

To illustrate effective PPP approaches, the report focuses on the model developed under the Saudi Arabian Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC), the national authority responsible for all TVET. TVTC has become a driving force behind the Kingdom's human capital transformation efforts. Established to equip Saudis with the skills demanded by a rapidly diversifying economy, TVTC oversees hundreds of training providers, setting national standards for quality and employability. Through its National Center for Strategic Partnerships (NCSP), TVTC has built more than 50 specialized academies with major industry players, linking training directly to jobs and key economic sectors. By combining public oversight with private investment and expertise, TVTC and NCSP have created a responsive, world-class skills ecosystem that exemplifies how well-designed PPPs can align education with economic growth and serve as a global model for workforce development reform.

Of particular relevance to this report is NCSP's strategic partnership model. Strategic partnership colleges are nonprofit institutions established and operated jointly with industry employers. Each college delivers sector-specific, employment-linked training programs that are tailored to Saudi youth and respond to labor market needs. The NCSP model foregrounds forming partnerships with the private sector and establishing specialty academies or institutes to advance skills in key strategic areas. This model is fast becoming an international model of how such partnerships can be nurtured. In addition, the partnership model illustrates good practices of how partners - in this case, TVTC, NCSP, and private enterprises - can work collaboratively yet have distinct responsibilities.

To understand how these partnerships operate in practice, the research team conducted a series of field visits to TVET colleges in the Kingdom. The objective was to engage with key stakeholders to gain insights into how these partnerships operate and what factors contribute to their effectiveness. The research focused on four colleges in Riyadh: the Saudi Electric Services Polytechnic (SESP), Al-Tamayyuz Finance and Accounting Academy, the Higher Institute for Tourism and Hospitality (HTMi Saudi Arabia), and the International Aviation Technical College (IATC).

Engagements with the colleges sought to capture the design, implementation, and outcomes of this model from a holistic perspective. Discussions were held with four key stakeholder groups:

- **College leadership teams**, to explore how partnerships are formed and sustained, the division of roles between public and private actors, and institutional governance practices;
- **Instructors and implementers**, to examine how training is delivered, the involvement of employers in curriculum design and assessment, and how program quality is monitored;
- **Current students and alumni**, to capture personal experiences, skill development, employment outcomes, and perceived benefits of the program;
- **Private sector partners**, to assess their role in shaping and evaluating training, the business case for partnership, and the sustainability and scalability of the model.

These interviews provided valuable qualitative insight into how strategic partnerships are operationalized on the ground and what impact they are having on skills development and employment outcomes. The report delves into the governance structure of these colleges and the triangular relationship between the college, the employer, and the overseeing government body. It shows how these colleges were established, how these partnerships were built, and how the partnerships sustain themselves. Throughout the report, testimonials from the visit are included to illustrate lived experiences alongside technical analysis. The aim is to showcase these lessons for replication both within and beyond the Kingdom.

From engagements with the colleges, eight key lessons can be learned to support countries or sectors in establishing effective PPPs in TVET:

- **Facilitating strong partnerships between public and private entities is essential.** Leveraging partnerships through clearly defined roles and responsibilities allows each party to contribute in meaningful ways—whether using training funds, government-owned infrastructure, or private sector expertise and machinery. Embedding the employer partners directly within the institution, such as through a multistakeholder board of trustees, fosters a deeper level of engagement and creates a stronger sense of ownership and commitment to outcomes.
- **Being responsive to stakeholder needs.** A strong partnership recognizes that all parties have distinct interests, which should be negotiated and pursued through the partnership.

- **Considering successful PPPs in TVET as centers of excellence**, with a distinct focus and with rigorous quality-assurance practices in place.
- **Extending partnerships internationally to increase the attractiveness of the program** for potential students/trainees and elevate the quality and recognition of the program.
- **Engaging in rigorous partnership and student/trainee selection.** Attracting and approving students/trainees must be a structured but adaptable process, and the same goes for selecting the right trainers and private sector partners. Having reliable and trusted partners, along with experienced and recognized trainers, enables colleges to flourish and support the reputation and employment outcomes of the colleges.
- **Providing clear employment outcomes** through prearranged job placements or career support enhances the value proposition of these institutions and attracts motivated students/trainees.
- **Establishing institutional flexibility.** Successful institutes adapt to changing market demands, whether by adding new programs, shifting focus areas, or engaging with different sectors. Part of this flexibility includes establishing demand-driven institutes built on partnerships across entire sectors, rather than single employers.
- **Being globally oriented**, such as focusing on offering courses in English or seeking international accreditation or recognition.

The lessons highlighted in this report lead to a suggested theory of change that can offer a practical, scalable framework for countries seeking to modernize their TVET systems. Saudi Arabia's strategic partnership model provides a compelling example of how PPPs can transform vocational training into a high-impact, demand-driven system. Colleges built directly in response to labor market needs, backed by the government and industry, and offering clear employment outcomes can help countries move toward a more inclusive, responsive, and demand-driven workforce development system.

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01 INTRODUCTION

CH.

Skills reform is a critical component in aligning labor market supply with industry demand, advancing priority sectors, and keeping pace with the rapid evolution of work. As economies across the globe navigate complex labor market transformations, reforming technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems has emerged as a strategic priority. TVET also plays a key role in Saudi Arabia's drive to diversify skills and establish a coordinated skills development system. Legislative and policy reforms in recent years have brought about a more coordinated system. In support of the Vision 2030 goals to diversify and strengthen skills, the World Bank has been working closely with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (MHRSD) to develop a National Skills Strategy, in which TVET and partnerships with private entities play a vital role in strengthening skills development.¹ In addition, legislative support, such as the Private Sector Participation Law of 2021, provides an enabling legal framework for forming PPPs.²

Reform in skills development requires coordinated investment and effort from both the public and private sectors. PPPs, in particular, offer a powerful mechanism for demand-driven skills development and ensuring that education and training systems remain responsive and relevant, and many countries have begun to move toward more demand-driven models for TVET. Increasingly, they use PPPs to align curricula with industry needs, modernize infrastructure, and expand access to training opportunities. International examples highlight the potential of such approaches to foster more dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable labor markets. However, despite the growing adoption of PPPs in TVET reform, there remains a lack of in-depth evaluation of these interventions. Understanding the conditions under which PPPs succeed, and the mechanisms that drive their impact, is essential for scaling and replicating effective models.

The Saudi experience is emerging as an example of how PPPs can be leveraged to enhance skills alignment, drive sectoral development, and support broader labor market reforms. In recent years, the Kingdom, through the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC), has made notable progress in diversifying its skills base and modernizing its TVET sector, particularly through its strategic partnership model. This model represents a unique PPP approach

¹ Alzahrani et al., 2025

² See [Laws & Regulations](#)

within Saudi Arabia's TVET system, centered on establishing nonprofit institutes jointly developed by TVTC and industry partners.

TVTC has 260 public training facilities, reaching more than 240,000 trainees and students. It works closely with industry partners to deliver sector-specific programs that guarantee employment pathways and strengthen national capacity. Its achievements include establishing world-class academies, training thousands of Saudi instructors, and positioning the Kingdom as first in the world in enrollment in technical and vocational programs. These achievements have earned TVTC global recognition for its success in advancing technical education.



PHOTO CREDIT © International Aviation Technical College at Riyadh

PHOTO CREDIT © Saudi Electric Services Polytechnic



A cornerstone of this transformation is the National Center for Strategic Partnerships (NCSP), established by TVTC to manage and expand collaborations with the private sector. NCSP coordinates more than 50 specialized non-profit academies and institutes, jointly operated with industry leaders. These academies and institutes link training directly to job creation in key economic sectors such as energy, manufacturing, mining, and hospitality. This model exemplifies the growing power of PPPs in Saudi Arabia's education ecosystem in that TVTC provides policy direction and oversight, NCSP facilitates partner relationships, and private companies contribute investment, expertise, and employment opportunities. Together, TVTC, NCSP, and their private partners are building a responsive, sustainable, and market-driven skills development system that supports Vision 2030's broader goals of skill diversification and human capital advancement. By showcasing effective public-private collaboration in the Saudi context, this report not only highlights TVTC's achievements but offers insights into practices that may inform similar initiatives elsewhere. Furthermore, it draws attention to TVTC's recent efforts to expand women's participation in TVET, thereby contributing to more inclusive and equitable labor market outcomes.³

3 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/0d88e77a-e41f-4034-b540-8b3a3ec33116>



02 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

CH.

TVET continues to face lingering perceptions that it is an alternative rather than first-choice pathway compared to academic education. This stigma has historically undermined the attractiveness and uptake of TVET, despite its critical role in addressing skills shortages and improving employability. In response, many countries have implemented targeted strategies to enhance the image of TVET, including national awareness campaigns, the introduction of high-quality, industry-relevant qualifications, skills competitions such as WorldSkills, and the integration of career guidance.⁴

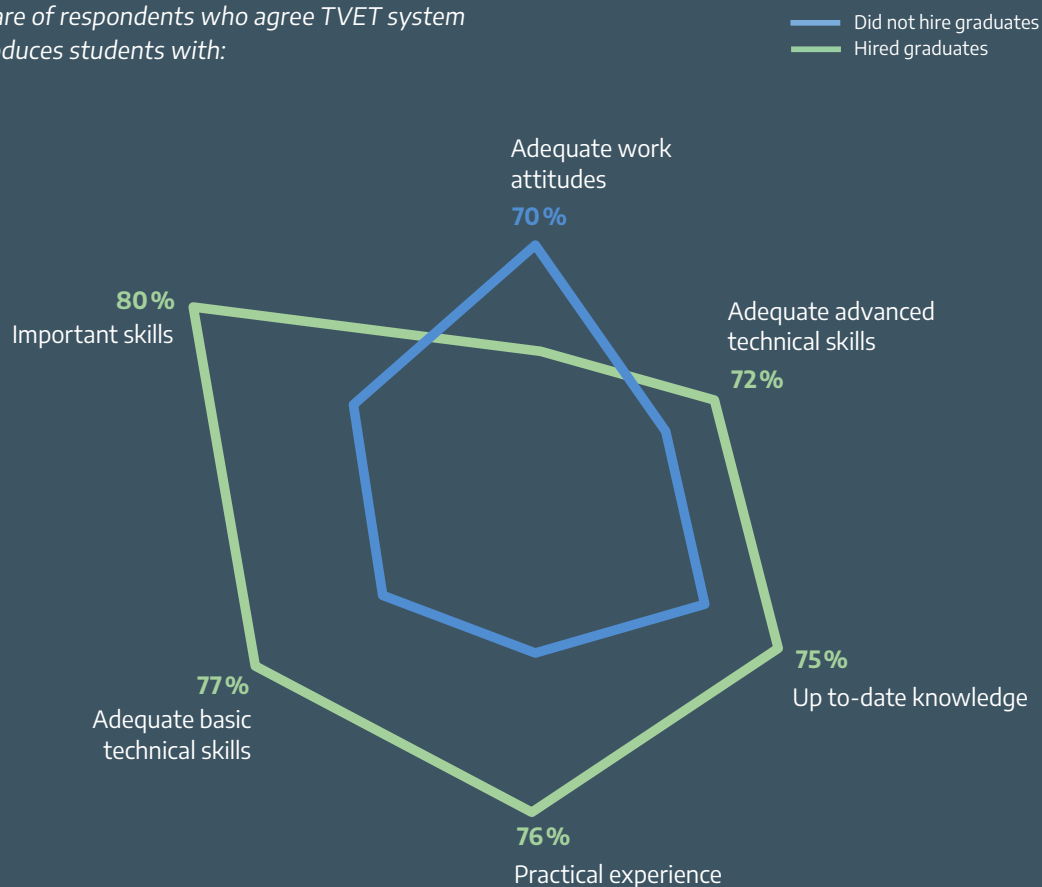
Perceptions about the TVET system vary widely across countries. In countries with a highly institutionalized and prestigious TVET system, TVET tends to be widely perceived as a viable pathway to productive employment. In other countries, especially where the TVET system is less developed and integrated in the education system, perceptions can be less positive. Box 1 shares some recent findings from the Skills Development Survey, conducted in Saudi Arabia, to illustrate employers' perspectives on TVET graduates.

⁴ World Bank, ILO & UNESCO. 2023.

BOX 1

EMPLOYERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF THE TVET SYSTEM

Share of respondents who agree TVET system produces students with:



Source: World Bank, Skills Demand Survey in Saudi Arabia, Executive Summary Skills Development Survey⁵

ANALYSIS / GRAPH CREDIT: Nayib Rivera, World Bank

- 5 The Skills Demand Survey in Saudi Arabia was conducted between 2024 and 2025 through a collaboration between MHRSD, the World Bank, and NielsenIQ. The survey included 3,150 face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative sample of private sector employers, ensuring broad geographic and sectoral coverage. It was implemented by MHRSD and NielsenIQ, with technical guidance from the World Bank, to assess the skills most in demand in the private sector in light of recent transformational labor market reforms in the Kingdom.

In Saudi Arabia, employers generally have very positive perceptions of TVET graduates. At least 70 percent agree that TVET programs supply graduates with adequate skills, knowledge, experience, and work ethics and that TVET overall meets their business needs. Employers with recent hiring experience are even more positive in every dimension except work attitudes. The difference between direct experience and general perception suggests that TVET's outcomes often surpass its reputation. This perception gap gives TVET providers an opportunity to showcase their strengths more convincingly to employers and prospective students alike.

Previous studies in Saudi Arabia suggest that Vision 2030's promotion of vocational education and training as a viable educational track may have improved perceptions of TVET but students' attitudes toward the TVET system are still influenced by factors such as gender, family income, and parental education levels.⁶ Perceptions of own employability differ between TVET students and university graduates, with some studies showing TVET students are more confident about their job readiness.⁷ This perception is confirmed with TVET students being more likely to find jobs within six months of graduation.⁸

A global movement toward skill development in recent years has increased the urgency of strengthening vocational education and training (VET). This is evident in the G20 Skills Strategy, which was formulated by the world's major economies to guide the development of inclusive, adaptable, and demand-driven skills systems. In addition to this work, the European Skills Agenda outlines a five-year plan to support individuals and businesses by promoting lifelong learning, closing skills gaps, boosting digital and green skills, and improving the alignment between skills supply and labor market needs. The agenda includes flagship actions such as the Pact for Skills, the Skills for Jobs initiative, and support for VET modernization. International organizations, such as the World Bank and UNESCO, also explicitly focus on improving skills, particularly through strengthening TVET systems. Evidence of the impact of VET, particularly secondary VET, includes increased employment in all OECD countries; however, only 45 percent of these students are enrolled in programs with significant work-based learning elements, which require partnerships between public and private sectors.⁹

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- 6 Aldossari, Abdulaziz Salem. "Vision 2030 and reducing the stigma of vocational and technical training among Saudi Arabian students." *Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training* 12.1 (2020): 3.
 - 7 Sánchez-Queija, María Inmaculada, et al. "Differences in self-perceived employability between university and VET students: an analysis of emerging adults in Spain." *Education+ Training* 65.10 (2023): 14–28.
 - 8 World Bank. 2022.
 - 9 OECD. 2015; OECD. 2023; <https://www.unesco.org/en/skills-work-life>; <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/skillsdevelopment>; https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/skills-and-qualifications/european-skills-agenda_en



CH. 03 PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN TVET

In the Middle East and North Africa, while educational attainment is high, this has not always translated into meaningful cross-generational gains in income.

In fact, the private returns to education in the labor market are among the lowest in the world, especially for young people and women.¹⁰ A key reason for this disconnect is a misalignment between the education system and labor market needs, resulting in widespread skills and education mismatch, unemployment, and underemployment. Despite holding degrees, many graduates struggle to find jobs that match their qualifications, and the Middle East and North Africa continues to face the challenge of youth unemployment.¹¹ If leveraged intentionally, TVET systems across the region could play an important role in aligning skill supply and demand needs, as well as stimulating economic growth.¹²

In Saudi Arabia, Vision 2030 sets out a bold agenda for economic diversification, with a strong focus on empowering the private sector and investing in human capital. Central to this agenda is addressing the mismatch between labor market needs and workforce skills, particularly through expanding and improving the TVET system. While progress has been made in upgrading skills and reforming TVET, challenges remain, including low national participation in the private sector, high unemployment, large skills gaps, and an education system that often lacks labor market relevance, especially for vulnerable groups such as youth and women.¹³

¹⁰ World Bank. 2019. “Expectations and Aspirations: A New Framework for Education in the Middle East and North Africa.” Overview booklet. World Bank, Washington, DC. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.

¹¹ International Labour Organization. n.d. “ILO Modelled Estimates and Projections Database (ILOEST).” ILOSTAT. Accessed January 7, 2025. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data>

¹² ILO Regional Office for Arab States, UNICEF Regional Office for MENA, and European Training Foundation. 2023. “Enabling Success: Supporting Youth in MENA in Their Transition from Learning to Decent Work.” ILO Regional Office for Arab States, Beirut.

¹³ World Bank. 2022.



PHOTO CREDIT © International Aviation Technical College at Riyadh

Globally, PPPs have emerged as a powerful mechanism to strengthen the relevance, quality, and status of TVET systems. PPPs in TVET can solve problems in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as similar problems in other regions. Well-structured PPPs enable closer alignment between training provision and labor market needs. PPPs in education are expanding, as governments recognize the value such partnerships bring to the quality and quantity of education provision. In most countries, at all levels of education, challenges such as keeping up with infrastructure and maintenance demands of schools, enticing students to enroll in certain courses or programs, lack of capacity to manage or teach at educational institutions, or general lack of funding to support growing educational systems are commonplace. To address them, and to be proactive in avoiding them, many governments are instituting PPPs.¹⁴ By embedding employers directly into the design and delivery of training, these models present a demand-driven approach—a viable, shorter, more targeted educational track, teaching skills aligned directly with labor market needs. Furthermore, the association with reputable employers, as demonstrated from student experiences captured in this report, can help reframe the social narrative associated with TVET and replace it with one of pride in being associated with these employers. The guarantee of employment or early job placement through these partnerships also instills greater confidence in the system and indicates that TVET is a serious pathway for upward mobility for youth and underrepresented groups.

¹⁴ Aslam et al., 2017.

There are several types of PPPs in education, all with varying degrees of private sector involvement. In Denmark and Germany, dual education models rely on private sector partnerships to facilitate apprenticeships. Attempts to replicate the German apprenticeship model have been made in several countries. In Finland, the government provides financial support to businesses to acquire training services to further upskilling and reskilling efforts, and in Ireland, the public sector supports the creation of training networks that allow sharing of resources and information to rapidly upskill employees—particularly those in micro, small, or medium enterprises.¹⁵ Figure 1 illustrates eight common types of PPPs in education. These range from minimal private sector involvement, in the form of funding provision, to complete involvement of the private sector, in the form of managing institutions on behalf of the public sector.

FIG. 1 Common types of PPPs in education¹⁶

TYPE OF PPP	DESCRIPTION
School subsidies	School subsidies partially finance school costs. They might include per-student subsidies, block grants to support teacher salaries, or operational expenditures. School subsidies are distinct from other forms of funding partnerships because the funding partner has little or no operational oversight.
Adopt-an-institution programs	Private sector partners provide support for government funding of institutions. The main aim is to improve quality, access, infrastructure, and community participation. Contractual agreements determine the involvement of private partners beyond funding.
Private sector philanthropy	Private entities support school financing, particularly to help the poor gain access to quality education. A key aspect is co-financing, in which both the private entity and school system are responsible for covering certain costs.
Capacity-building programs	Private sector partners support capacity building in public institutions in a number of areas, including curricular and pedagogical development, managerial and administrative training, textbook provision, teacher training, and quality assurance.
Subcontracting of institutional management	Institutions are privately managed but publicly owned and funded. Often, there is a management contract that details the partnership, such as performance targets, accountability, timelines, and arbitration procedures. In this form of partnership, managerial decisions are decentralized and include a wider range of stakeholders.
Government purchasing programs	Such programs are also known as vouchers or coupon systems. The government contracts with private institutions to deliver education at public expense, often in the form of a subsidy per student enrolled in an accredited or eligible private institution. This allows for greater school choice.
Incentivizing VET	Student-facing government funding so that students can attend educational institutions. Incentives can take the form of coupons, bursaries, or loans, and can happen in conjunction with, or independent from other purchasing programs.
Institutional-infrastructure partnerships	The government leases a facility that has been financed, built, and operated by a private operator, and it retains responsibility for providing education.

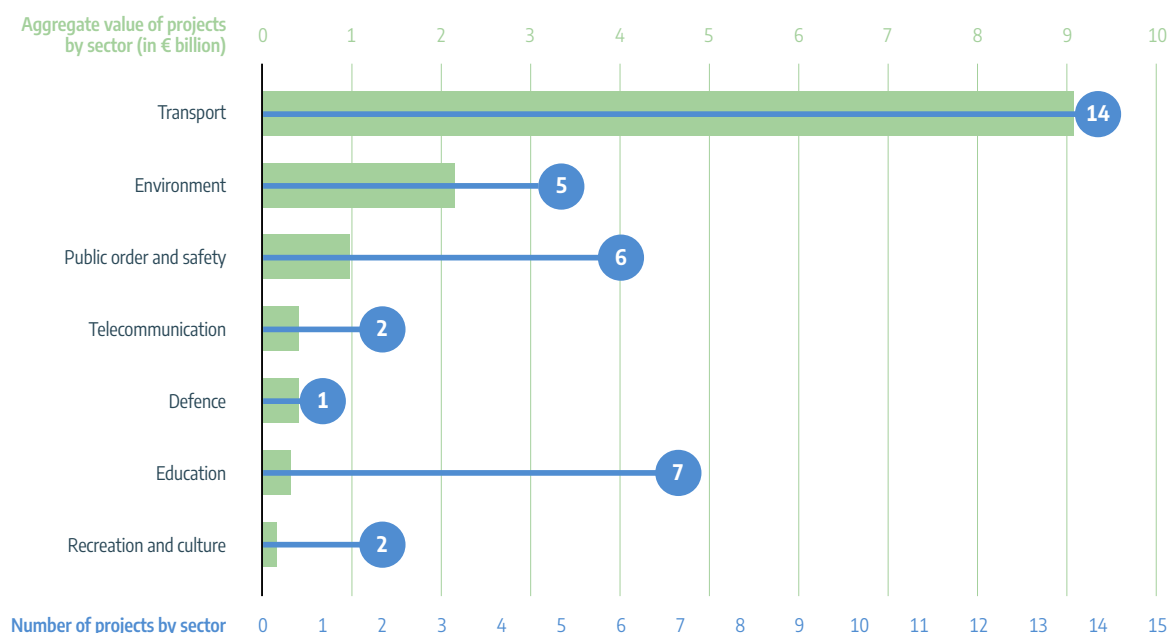
¹⁵ OECD, 2021.

¹⁶ Adapted from Alzahrani et al., 2025 and USAID

PPPs can also be strategically positioned to support development at different levels, such as the policy, system, program, and project levels. At the policy level, this includes partnering with the private sector to develop and implement key educational policies. For system- and program-level interventions, this might include partnerships to identify sectoral skills demands, developing skills- or competency-based standards, and taking advantage of innovative funding avenues, such as venture capital schemes. And at the project level, partnerships include delivering infrastructure-based services, supporting training and delivery through workplace learning, joint assessment and certification of skills, joint management of institutions, and leveraging social impact bonds.¹⁷

While the number of PPPs in education increasing, the value of such partnerships are much lower than in other sectors. Figure 2 shows that after the transport sector, the education sector had the most number of PPPs in the European context in 2023. However, the value of these partnerships were quite small in comparison to the other sectors.¹⁸

FIG. 2 European PPP market in 2023



¹⁷ Sakamoto, 2016; ETF, 2020a.

¹⁸ European PPP Expertise Centre and European Investment Bank, 2024.

In recent years, the purpose of PPPs, especially in TVET, has moved away from addressing challenges and improving efficiency towards an outcome-based approach. This means that PPPs are recognized as a key component to align the supply and demand aspects of labor market skills and competencies. Such partnerships, therefore, allow institutions and stakeholders with mutual goals to work together, which would not be possible without such a partnership agreement.¹⁹

BOX 2

APPRENTICESHIPS—THE MOST POPULAR PPPs IN TVET

Apprenticeships are periods during which individuals apprentices and firms engage in a working relationship. Firms benefit from lower-wage workers, and apprentices have the opportunity to receive firm-specific training while working toward a qualification. Governments usually support apprenticeships by subsidizing either the apprentices or the firm; the contract is a private agreement between each apprentice and the firm. The training content is often designed (or heavily influenced) by the firm, and governments ensure its quality and relevance. Apprenticeship programs can include both classroom and workplace training. Apprentices acquire a certification or qualification at the end of their training program and are equipped with both practical and theoretical knowledge, skills, and competencies.

Employers benefit from the lower cost of labor during the apprenticeship period and often absorb trainees as employees.

A good apprenticeship program should have

- Relevant and rigorous training;
- Appropriate regulations;
- Social partners in the design and maintenance of the program;
- Compulsory formal assessment and certification;
- Qualified staff or master trainers;
- Supporting institutions, such as sectoral bodies, industrial associations, and professional bodies;
- A targeted approach (one-stop shop, including basic skills);
- Mechanisms in place to ensure training practices are aligned with the agreement.

Source: Sakamoto, 2016; World Bank, 2016.

¹⁹ ETF, 2020a.



CH.

COORDINATING PPPs IN THE TVET SECTOR IN SAUDI ARABIA: THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

In Saudi Arabia, the NCSP manages the collaborative relationship between TVTC and strategic partners from both the public and private sectors. This relationship is aimed at establishing and activating nonprofit academies, or institutes, that offer employment-linked training programs for Saudi youth. Such institutes are designed to meet the specialized workforce needs of these partners in various fields. A cabinet resolution in 2008 started the process of establishing NCSP under TVTC. The initial resolution provided a vision to adopt training programs that are designed, presented, and approved by specialized international bodies. Further, it envisioned building strategic partnerships with training bodies to operate training units and institutes and provide joint programs with the private sector. A series of resolutions, decrees, and agreements followed, which led to the establishment of NCSP and the NCSP Board of Directors in 2018. Ultimately, NCSP was established to implement the cabinet's decision to approve the regulatory rules for creating nonprofit training units in the TVET sector. The center aims to build an integrated relationship between TVTC, the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF), and strategic partners from both the public and private sectors. This collaboration is meant to establish nonprofit training units offering employment-based training programs to meet partners' needs for qualified personnel in specialized fields. TVTC was granted authority to implement its own policies and procedures within this framework.

BOX 3

NCSP ESTABLISHMENT
AND GROWTH²⁰

Cabinet Resolution No. 158 >

2008

The general training plan for the institution, which includes adopting training programs designed, presented and approved by specialized international bodies, and building strategic partnerships with internal and external training bodies to operate training units and institutes and provide joint training programs with the private sector.

2009

< Cabinet Resolution No. 17

Approval of the regulatory rules for the establishment of non-profit training units in the field of technical and vocational training

Royal Decree No. (A/121) >

2011

By approving the detailed plan that includes urgent short-term solutions and future solutions to the problem of the increasing number of university graduates prepared for teaching, and what those solutions included in terms of supporting the National Center for Strategic Partnerships in the General Organization for Technical and Vocational Training, and entrusting it with the tasks of qualifying and training Saudi youth of both genders.

2013

< Shura Council Resolution No. (80/204)

Which stipulated that: Technical and Vocational Training Corporation converts its training programs into partnership programs that end in employment.

Operating Agreement >

2014

Signing an agreement to operate the National Center for Strategic Partnerships with Colleges of Excellence Company

2018

< NCSP Board of Directors Resolution No. 108

The Board of Directors of the Foundation approved the Executive Procedures Regulations for Non-Profit Training Units

> Expansion Project Agreement

2023

Launching new strategic partnership institutes with the support of the Foundation and expanding the strategic partnership model by developing the work of the National Center for Strategic Partnerships. The project aims to expand to launch (18) new non-profit training units in the field of technical and vocational training.

²⁰ <https://ncsp.org.sa/en/about/about-us/>

NCSP plays a pivotal role in shaping the country's TVET landscape by establishing sector-specific, rather than company-specific, demand-driven institutes. This approach is rooted in comprehensive labor market studies that identify broader sectoral needs rather than focusing narrowly on the requirements of individual companies. The shift from company-specific to sector- and skill-specific models began with the Saudi-Japanese Automobile High Institute in Jeddah (2001-2), which united multiple Japanese car vendors under a single training umbrella. This approach allows NCSP to ensure that the training programs are aligned with the real demands of the Saudi labor market, enabling graduates to acquire skills that are transferable across multiple employers within a given sector.

NCSP also plays a key role in contextualizing the Private Sector Participation Law for TVTC. As with all legislation, this law is generic and intended to serve multiple ministries, so some areas in the legislation need to be contextualized. For example, the law focuses heavily on contracts, financing, and risk sharing but says little about education-specific standards. This is where NCSP plays a vital role in representing the needs of the public sector and creating partnerships that benefit both.

Central to the NCSP model is its rigorous partnership process. Private sector partners are required to conduct detailed feasibility studies and submit comprehensive proposals outlining the programs, skills, and expected employment outcomes. This process goes beyond the immediate needs of the partner company, requiring a strategic view of the market's overall demands and how the proposed institute will serve broader sectoral growth. NCSP also actively engages with government bodies, such as the Sector Skills Councils, regulators, and ministries, including the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Environment, to ensure alignment between training programs and national workforce strategies. Even major mega-projects are involved to help shape a clear, long-term vision for sectoral skills development.

BOX 4

NCSP QUICK FACTS

Over

55

strategic partner
academies

In

25

cities and
provinces

Over

150

strategic
partners

Over

360

employers

Over

20,000

current trainees
at any time

Over

60,000

graduates
over time



Training includes diploma
and associate-diploma
programs, short courses,
and on-the-job training

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

NCSP coordinates a business partnership model with three key players - TVTC, HRDF, and private sector partners. Figure 3 breaks down the roles and responsibilities of the players. TVTC, through NCSP, plays a strategic and coordinative role by identifying labor market needs, aligning proposed partnerships with national strategic goals, such as Vision 2030, and engaging with external stakeholders to secure investments. HRDF, a government fund under MHRSD that was established to support the employment and development of Saudi nationals in the labor market through subsidies, training and upskilling, and public employment services, also provides funding to partners and trainees through tailored models. TVTC is responsible for accreditation and providing space, while the strategic partners provide equipment, co-supervise training, and formally contract with trainees. International training and educational partners are often also brought in. From the private-investment side, the strategic partnership model requires employing private sector companies to contribute no less than 25 percent of training costs and 50 percent of the trainee stipend, though this ratio changes slightly when the private sector partner is a small or medium-sized enterprise. In return, these companies receive national talent of the quality they expect and in the specialties they actually need.

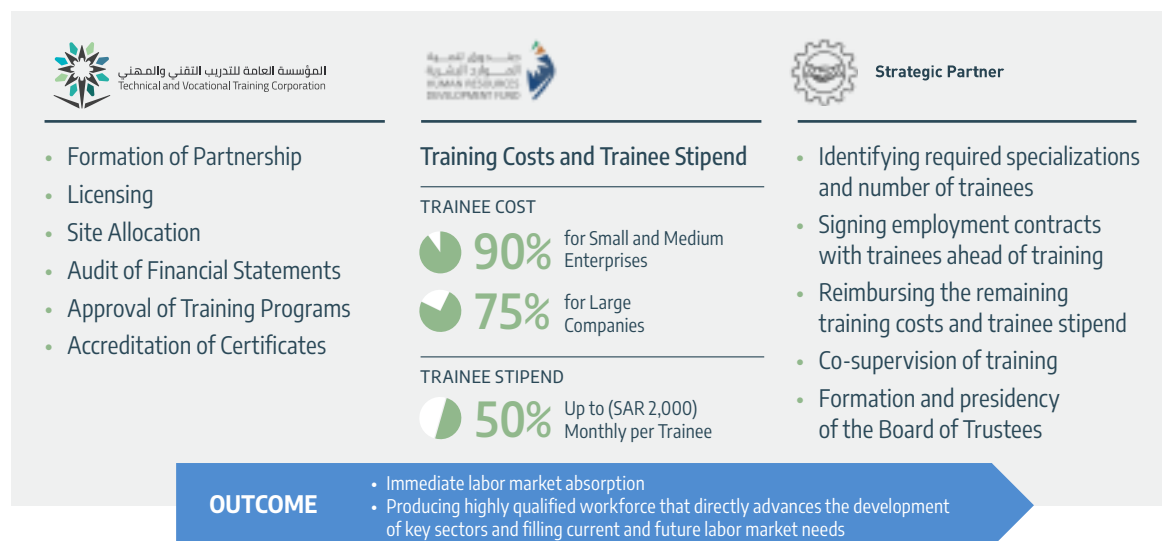


PHOTO CREDIT © Saudi Electric Services Polytechnic

As for HRDF, the model's financial-support pillar rests on the fund covering at least 75 percent of training costs and 50 percent of the trainee stipend, up to SAR 2,000 per trainee over the full training period. In doing so, the fund hits a number of national targets related to employment, reducing unemployment rates, and creating quality jobs in critical sectors. This ensures that all 22,000 trainees currently enrolled are employed immediately after graduation or are supported in finding employment within six months of graduation. More than 350 employers benefit from this system, making it one of the most successful employment-driven training models in the region. Additionally, while HRDF covers longer programs ranging from short courses (3–12 months) to associate-level qualifications (one year or less), the institutes are also allowed to generate sustainable income by offering shorter courses (less than 3 months) outside the scope of HRDF funding. For small and medium-sized enterprises, the support is even more generous, with HRDF covering up to 90 percent of the training expenses. Additionally, HRDF offers a stipend that covers 50 percent of the trainee's allowance, up to SAR 2,000 per month, for programs lasting anywhere between 3 months and two years.

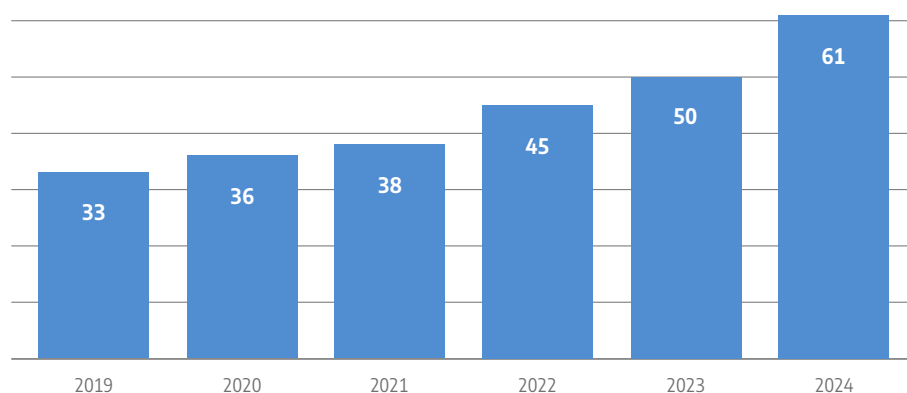
HRDF also plays a critical role in supporting and financing training initiatives by setting clear funding conditions. Employers seeking HRDF support must provide two key elements: a signed contract confirming student employment, and formal approval from NCSP for the training programs. HRDF manages its funding mechanisms through two main approaches—a reimbursement model and a direct-funding model. In the reimbursement model, the employer initially pays 100 percent of the training costs and later submits all necessary documentation to HRDF to receive a 75 percent reimbursement. In contrast, the direct funding model involves HRDF directly covering 75 percent of the costs from the start, reducing the financial strain on employers. NCSP and HRDF are actively working to transition away from the reimbursement system, recognizing the challenges it creates for many companies. This financial structure ensures that training institutes can deliver high-quality, employment-linked programs without overburdening employers, particularly smaller businesses.

FIG. 3 Business model of strategic partnership institutes



Within the strategic partnership model, a portion of the training focuses on short-term upskilling and reskilling programs designed to meet specific employer needs. These programs are often aimed at bachelor's-degree graduates or current employees, offering targeted short courses that equip them with specialized skills or prepare them for new roles within the company. While these short-term trainings account for less than 10 percent of all trainees within the partnership system, they play an important role in enhancing workforce adaptability and ensuring that both new hires and existing staff remain aligned with evolving industry demands. Since the launch of the first strategic partnerships in 2019 to 2024, the number of colleges has more than doubled, from 33 in 2019 to 61 in 2024.

FIG. 4 Number of strategic partnership institutes, 2019–24



Source: NCSP Annual Report (2024).

NCSP relies on several key sources of labor market information to determine where to focus its efforts in establishing or expanding institutes. One critical source is its own internal data, including surveys, key performance indicators (KPIs), and a comprehensive database of all current training programs. This allows NCSP to continuously monitor sector trends, program performance, and evolving workforce needs across the country. Another essential input comes from feasibility studies conducted by private sector partners. These studies, which are required as part of the application process, provide detailed projections of labor demand, skills needs, and employment opportunities, typically setting a minimum threshold of 300 job placements. This figure not only reflects the scale of anticipated workforce demand but signals the partner's level of commitment to supporting meaningful employment outcomes.

NCSP engages in consultations with governmental and sectoral bodies to gather workforce forecasts and market insights. While these government agencies provide valuable consultation, they do not act as final decision-makers. Importantly, NCSP prioritizes directing new partners to existing strategic partnerships and institutes wherever possible, aiming to avoid unnecessary duplication and to maximize the use of existing infrastructure. The decision to establish a new institute is carefully weighed, balancing projected job creation, the results of feasibility studies, and the overall alignment with national labor market strategies.



Strategic partnerships can result in the creation or redirection of academies. The first option is a collaboration between all players to establish an academy. The second option is for strategic partners to make use of existing academies to offer programs and specialized courses. Currently, the majority of partnerships and academies are uniquely developed to meet the needs of both partners and stakeholders. NCSP plays a vital role in shaping programs by providing guidance on curriculum design, training content, and program structures. Its input extends to both long-term and short-term offerings, ensuring alignment with national priorities and labor market needs. NCSP also oversees the quality of the training delivered, especially in relation to partnerships with international providers, and is responsible for reviewing and approving new initiatives.

In parallel, TVTC provides overarching regulatory and operational support. Its role includes licensing the institute or academy, ensuring it meets the national requirements to operate under TVTC's strategic umbrella. TVTC facilitates access to resources (most importantly by providing the buildings for the college), promotes the institute within the region, and organizes workshops to communicate updates, policy changes, and strategic developments within the Kingdom. Recent policy shifts highlight the importance of TVTC's guidance. For example, a mandate requiring all strategic partnership institutes to obtain national accreditation through the Education and Training Evaluation Commission (ETEC) has become a cornerstone for institutional eligibility and funding. Further, a specialized team at NCSP approves all training programs offered by strategic partnership institutes and academies, in accordance with an internally designed framework that adopts best practices suited to the model's nature. An updated framework was designed and approved starting in 2025, in alignment with ETEC and informed by feedback from strategic partnership institutes and academies in line with global best practices. Going forward, funding mechanisms will be increasingly tied to both national and international accreditations. In addition to accreditation and compliance, TVTC supports the institutes in applying policies and procedures related to curriculum development and the recruitment of trainers, including defining qualifications, experience standards, and quality standards. It also acts as a conduit for aligning the institutes' operations with broader government frameworks. Without TVTC's endorsement and regulatory oversight, the institute would not be eligible for HRDF funding.

NCSP also plays an important role in program endorsement. All programs are submitted for review and validation, adding another layer of quality assurance and institutional credibility. NCSP has set a quality framework for all strategic partnership institutes and academies that includes site visits, performance indicators for monitoring, and advisory services to raise quality and improve performance. Internally, the center also develops integrated KPIs that include satisfaction of stakeholders (employers, institutes and academies, trainees, and enabling partners), as well as numbers of admitted trainees and graduates, institutional accreditations, and other operational indicators tracked quarterly, semiannually, and annually. On the operations side, NCSP has designed a specialized platform for live monitoring of admitted trainees, graduates, and other key indicators that are followed on a regular basis.

BOX 5

UNPACKING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ACADEMIES

Stakeholders in establishing strategic partnership academies:

TVTC and NCSP

Strategic partner

Employers

HRDF

Board of trustees

Training service provider

Stages in establishing academies:

- **Discussions:** formation of partnership
- **Feasibility study:** identifying alignment with strategic labor needs and obtaining preliminary approval from His Excellency, the Governor of TVTC
- **Signing memorandum of understanding:** agreeing on roles and responsibilities of TVTC and strategic partner
- **Appoint a board of trustees** and **get approval** for the board of trustees from His Excellency, the Governor of TVTC
- **Licensing:** issuance of license and approval of bylaws
- **Site allocation:** determining where the academy will be situated
- Approval of **training programs** and accreditation of **certificates**
- Contracting a **training service provider**

NCSP has developed seven quality domains with associated standards to ensure PPPs are effective and sustainable. These domains cover Strategy (encompassing strategy development, projection, and performance monitoring), Partnerships (including management of partnerships, growth in partner networks, and stakeholder satisfaction), Institutions Business Development (marketing strategies, market analysis, and sales management), Governance (strong governance systems, organizational policies, and procedures), Resources (covering financial planning, cash flow and cost management, HR operations, performance management, financial sustainability, and employee satisfaction),

Operations (training operations, accreditations, project management, innovation, and growth in enrolled trainees), and the Work Environment (ensuring a safe and well-equipped space to support learning). Each standard within these domains is further translated into measurable outputs or outcomes, which are assigned weighted percentages that ultimately contribute to a composite score assessing the overall quality of PPP initiatives.

Each NCSP institute in Saudi Arabia operates under the governance of its own board of trustees (BOT). The BOTs play a central role in ensuring the institute's strategic direction, oversight, and alignment with national goals. As part of the formal process, the BOT is appointed and officially submitted to NCSP for approval. This board includes a representative from TVTC, ensuring that the national regulatory and policy perspective is always incorporated into key decisions. The BOTs' composition depends on the nature of the strategic partnership behind the institute. NCSP actively supports and guides partners as they form the board, encouraging them to nominate members from both the private and public sectors. This includes providing access to a network of companies and government entities, ensuring the board reflects a balanced and informed mix of expertise. Through this structure, the BOT, led by its chair, provides crucial leadership, governance, and accountability, making sure that each institute fulfills its mission of delivering high-quality, market-relevant training under the nonprofit model. By including industry professionals, such as senior leaders from major sectoral companies, as part of the BOT, colleges benefit from direct, practical guidance rooted in current labor market realities. This approach ensures informed decision-making not only regarding the strategic direction of these colleges, but in the finer details, such as curriculum development, identification of essential skills, and the establishment of relevant academic programs aligned with industry demands.



PHOTO CREDIT © Saudi Electric Services Polytechnic

NCSP follows a structured and careful process to guide the revision, evaluation, and renewal of its partnerships. Central to this process is the emphasis on creating sustainable jobs. Partnerships are assessed based on their ability to deliver employment opportunities that offer long-term value, rather than short-term or temporary placements. NCSP also examines how satisfied employers and sponsoring companies are with the performance and quality of the employees trained through the partnership, as employer satisfaction is a key indicator of the program's effectiveness and relevance. Another critical factor in the review process is whether the partnership and its programs are aligned with national priority sectors. NCSP ensures that institutes are not only addressing immediate company needs but contributing to broader sectoral development, often introducing new and forward-looking programs, such as specialized training in emerging construction technologies.

TVTC holds the rarely exercised authority to terminate partnerships when necessary. Most partnerships continue, and when they do end, it is typically at the request of the partner rather than through TVTC intervention. Each partnership operates under a one-year license, and renewal is contingent on demonstrated progress and compliance. For new partnerships, this means showing tangible progress within a defined timeline or risking nonrenewal. For existing strategic partnerships, renewal requires submitting financial statements to confirm their nonprofit status, providing minutes from BOT meetings, and demonstrating that the institute remains a sustainable academy. This comprehensive review process ensures that all NCSP partnerships continue to deliver high-impact, employment-focused outcomes aligned with Saudi Arabia's strategic labor market goals.

Currently, there are 50 institutes operating under this model across Saudi Arabia, covering more than 18 key sectors. Vision 2030 focuses on diversifying the economy and enhancing quality of life through several strategic development sectors. These include expanding the energy and mining sector beyond oil, strengthening industrial and advanced manufacturing, and positioning the Kingdom as a global hub for tourism, culture, and entertainment. It also prioritizes transport and logistics, financial services, and the digital economy, while investing in education and training to align skills with market needs. Health and life sciences, sustainable agriculture and food security, and housing and urban development are also central pillars, supporting both economic growth and social well-being. Currently, the tourism and hospitality sector, the logistics sector, and industry (automotive and food) are the most significant sectors supported by the academies. The case studies showcased in this report represent the tourism, energy, transport, and financial sectors and illustrate how these and other strategic sectors are being advanced through PPPs. Importantly, NCSP does not focus on sheer numbers but on the quality and measurable impact of these institutes. Three additional institutes are under development: a nonprofit academy, an academy for transportation, and a specialized academy in partnership with the Ministry of Environment. Figure 5 illustrates an NCSP dashboard that has been developed to track participation and other indicators related to the PPPs. It differentiates between gender and location.

FIG. 5 NCSP enrollment tracking dashboard



Through NCSP, TVTC has developed a unique sector-wide collaborative model that supports both the youth and employers. For young people, it provides industry-relevant training directly linked to employment opportunities. For employers, it ensures access to a pipeline of talent trained with skills tailored to their specific needs. In essence, these strategic partnership institutes integrate recruitment, training, and employment services under one roof, far exceeding traditional company-sponsored training. Crucially, the partnership with HRDF makes this cost-free for the student and very low cost for the employer, lowering financial barriers on both ends. Overall, NCSP’s strategic partnership model ensures that Saudi Arabia’s vocational-training ecosystem is both demand driven and employment linked, helping to equip the national workforce with the skills needed for a dynamic and diversified economy.

KEY LESSONS

Several key lessons from the NCSP model in Saudi Arabia can be shared with others looking to replicate its success. One of the most critical factors is the careful selection of the BOT for each institute. The BOT plays a decisive role in the long-term success of the institute, as it not only provides governance but sets the strategic direction and ensures alignment with both public and private sector needs. Embedding employer partners directly within the BOT fosters deeper engagement, creating a stronger sense of ownership and commitment among companies. This deeper involvement can motivate employers to become more invested in the partnership’s success by driving recruitment efforts and proactively participating in

shaping training programs. Closely tied to this is the appointment of the academy's CEO, a process overseen by the BOT. Choosing the right CEO - someone with the expertise, leadership skills, and adaptability to manage the academy effectively - is essential for maintaining operational excellence and achieving desired outcomes.

Another valuable lesson is the importance of institutional flexibility. Successful institutes are designed to adapt to changing market demands, whether by adding new programs, shifting focus areas, or engaging with different sectors. Part of this flexibility includes establishing demand-driven institutes built on partnerships across entire sectors, rather than being sponsored by individual companies, which enables these institutes to continuously attract new employer partners. As institutes mature, they typically develop their own marketing teams to reach out to potential employer partners, which helps ensure their sustainability and continued relevance. Additionally, obtaining accreditations is crucial, as it strengthens employer trust in the quality of the training provided and enhances the reputation of the institute.

Attracting and approving students/trainees has to be a structured but adaptable process. Once an institute is approved and launched, its website opens for applications, typically targeting fresh graduates. Some employers choose to be highly involved in the selection process, setting specific criteria or personally interviewing applicants, making the admissions process function much like a job interview. This tight link between training and employment is particularly appealing to foreign investors, who often require highly qualified employees with a precise set of skills. Recognizing this, the Ministry of Investment has featured the NCSP model as one of the key offerings to attract foreign investment to Saudi Arabia. Visiting investors are often taken to NCSP institutes to see the model firsthand, thus demonstrating its effectiveness and encouraging investment. Furthermore, outcomes and insights from the Sector Skills Councils are used to inform the establishment of new colleges, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with national workforce priorities.

Attracting and approving the right partners must also be a structured but adaptable process. Strong partnerships depend on the ability to identify and attract committed and credible employers, who not only hire graduates, but believe in the vision of the college and actively contribute to its long-term success. This includes playing a part in the day-to-day operations, making sustained recruitment commitments, providing technical expertise, maintaining commitment to students' on-the-job-training, tracking and providing feedback on their students' education, and donating equipment or machinery. Colleges, and their students, need to feel assured that these partners are also quality employers—this means offering decent work conditions, providing opportunities for advancement, and understanding the skills and aspirations of the students. This reinforces the credibility of the training model and strengthens student motivation, retention, and outcomes.

Finally, a large part of the success and widespread appeal of NCSP's colleges is its guaranteed employment outcomes. Under the current model, HRDF funding is contingent on employment, meaning colleges have up to six months after graduation to secure jobs for their students. This creates a strong incentive

for colleges to maintain close ties with industry and ensure programs are tightly aligned with labor market demand. In practice, this can take on several forms. In some cases, the college builds a cohort in direct response to employer requests, for example, when a company approaches the college with specific workforce needs, and a group of students is selected and linked to jobs from the start of their training. In other cases, colleges actively work on career counseling, job-readiness support, and building a strong network of partners to support their students in finding opportunities upon completion. In any scenario, the college offers a unique opportunity for students that bridges their education directly to the labor market. Accordingly, excerpts from students attending these colleges show how this not only enhances student motivation and confidence, but elevates the perception of TVET as a viable, outcome-oriented educational pathway.

BOX 6

SINGAPORE'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD



An international example of a formal government entity tasked with facilitating PPPs, much like NCSP in Saudi Arabia, is the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB). EDB is a government agency under the Ministry of Trade and Industry, responsible for strategies that enhance Singapore's position as a global center for business, innovation, and talent. EDB acts as a mediator to provide the private sector with access to information, networks, and access to government incentives while working closely with government agencies to ensure that industries are supported by a globally competitive workforce through talent development.²¹

Singapore's pre-employment TVET system is widely known for its quality, owing much to the skills development schemes sponsored by EDB. EDB's decision to partner with leading

international firms with proven training systems in order to learn the training business from them set in motion a legacy of securing demand-driven training opportunities. EDB's first training partner was Tata Group, a large Indian conglomerate. It led to the creation of the Tata-Government Training Center to supply workers for Tata's engineering plant in Singapore. The Singapore government provided the land and buildings, contributed 70 percent of the center's operating costs, and paid the stipends of the trainees. Trainees were committed to work with EDB or any company directed by Tata Group for five years. Twice as many people as Tata required were trained so that the graduates not recruited by Tata would attract other engineering firms to Singapore, contributing to the growth of an industry cluster.²²

²¹ [Economic Development Board: Business, Innovation & Talent | Singapore EDB](#)

²² World Bank, 2015.



CH.

PPP APPROACHES IN SKILLS REFORM: GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FROM SAUDI ARABIA

This section conducts four case studies of good practice PPPs in the Saudi Arabian TVET sector. The first three form part of NCSP: the Saudi Electric Services Polytechnic (SESP), Al-Tamayyuz Academy, and the Hospitality and Tourism Management Institute Saudi Arabia. The fourth example is the International Aviation Technical College (IATC) at Riyadh, which is classified as a separate international technical college under TVTC's Colleges of Excellence; however, it still contributes to our understanding of successful PPPs.



SAUDI ELECTRIC SERVICES POLYTECHNIC

Introduction

SESP is a strategic partnership college established under TVTC. Founded in 2012 through a collaboration with the Saudi Electricity Company (SEC), the Kingdom's leading and majority-state-owned energy provider, SESP was envisioned as a national center of excellence for vocational education in the power sector. The Riyadh branch, SESP Riyadh, opened in 2014 and is one of several SESP campuses operating across Saudi Arabia. Prior to this initiative, SEC managed four internal training centers independently. However, internal evaluations revealed a persistent gap between training outcomes and the evolving needs of the energy industry. These shortcomings prompted SEC to pursue a more robust and forward-looking training model—one that would deliver instruction in English, adhere to international standards, and ensure graduates possessed industry-relevant skills applicable across the broader energy sector.

“Back in 1966, when a major SEC power plant went down, the only engineer who could fix it was abroad on vacation. That moment sparked a decision to invest in training a generation of local talent.”

— Faculty Member, SESP



PHOTO CREDIT © Saudi Electric Services Polytechnic

In place of continuing in-house training, SEC opted to partner with TVTC to establish a more standardized, impartial, and scalable approach to vocational education. Crucially, infrastructure and facilities provided by TVTC and support from HRDF played a key role in enabling this transition, unlocking the resources needed to secure qualified instructors and modern equipment. The result was the establishment of SESP as a strategic and sustainable solution to meet the long-term workforce development needs of the Kingdom's power industry.

Governance, funding, and strategic partnerships

SESP operates under the strategic partnership model as a nonprofit institution. The financing is shared between industry sponsors, HRDF, and other public sector entities. HRDF covers 75 percent of the training costs and 50 percent of the student stipends, while corporate sponsors contribute by funding housing, medical insurance, and additional stipends and by registering trainees under the General Organization for Social Insurance.

Governance of the college is overseen by a BOT. The BOT is composed of representatives from key stakeholders including TVTC, SEC, and other public and private sector partners. Among these are strategic collaborators, such as the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy (KACARE), and international technical and industrial training providers, including Gunt, Kemppi, and Rockwell Automation. TVTC supplies the college infrastructure and initial equipment, while industry partners provide additional specialized equipment and training

resources. In return, the value of this support is deducted from the training fees for sponsored trainees.

Over time, SESP has built a robust network of strategic partners through multiple channels. Many of these relationships originated through short-term training courses offered to industry stakeholders, with participants often recommending the college to others or returning as corporate representatives. Referrals from partner companies and consistent outreach activities, including company visits and distribution of promotional materials, have further expanded the college's network. Additionally, many partnerships have emerged through the on-the-job training (OJT) component of SESP programs, in which host companies often recruit trainees directly following their placements. This collaborative governance and funding model has enabled SESP to maintain a high standard of industry-relevant training while ensuring the long-term sustainability and responsiveness of its programs to labor market needs.



PHOTO CREDIT © Saudi Electric Services Polytechnic

Program structures

SESP offers a range of vocational training programs tailored to meet the evolving needs of the energy sector. The core programs include associate diploma courses lasting 12 months and full diploma programs that take up to 24 months, including an integrated period of OJT. Areas of specialization include Power Plant Operation, Electrical Network Operation, Solar Energy, Hydrogen Technology, and Smart Grid Systems. In addition to these, the college provides shorter-term training programs ranging from 1 to 6 months. SESP is recognized both locally and internationally, holding accreditations from the Scottish Qualifications Authority, the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training, and Saudi Arabia's National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation. Students earn stackable certifications throughout the course of their studies, often graduating with multiple industry-recognized credentials alongside their diploma.



“If other private partners within or beyond Saudi Arabia want to replicate this model, what would they need to do?”

“They should have a body like TVTC.”



Program recruitment is demand driven and flexible. New cohorts are launched in response to requests from employer partners and are advertised via HRDF, TVTC, and SESP's social media platforms. Recruitment also draws from the TVTC alumni network and a database of previous applicants. Candidates must be under 24 years of age to qualify for HRDF support and are typically graduates of technical colleges or vocational high schools. The duration of the program depends on the student's educational background: Those with vocational training may complete a 1-year program, while high school graduates typically follow a 2-year pathway. Each cohort accommodates up to 50 students, with a total institutional capacity of approximately 500 students at any given time.

A hallmark of SESP's model is its high degree of customization and employer alignment. Programs are designed in close consultation with industry sponsors, allowing up to 20 percent of the curriculum to be adapted to specific company requirements without the need for reaccreditation. Cohorts begin on a rolling basis and are assembled only when an employer submits a formal request for trainees in a particular specialization. Once identified, candidates undergo a multistep admissions process that includes entrance exams, interviews, and sponsor review. Final selection authority rests with the sponsoring company. Upon selection, students are formally employed by the company from day one, receiving both HRDF and employer benefits, and are registered with General Organization for Social Insurance (social insurance).

The relationship between student performance and employer expectations is closely managed. Weekly performance reports that cover academic results, attendance, and work ethic are sent to sponsoring companies. A strict attendance policy is enforced, with any student exceeding 30 hours of absence, excused or unexcused, being subject to dismissal. Despite these rigorous standards, SESP maintains a low dropout rate, as students are highly motivated by the financial and career benefits associated with their employment and training. This model ensures that students not only are academically prepared, but develop the professionalism and work discipline required for immediate integration into the energy workforce. In addition to the standard cohorts, the college offers short-term, fee-based training courses for company employees to generate income. As with other strategic partnership institutes operating under a nonprofit model, it is essential to create alternative sources of revenue. Among the college's catalog of paid short-term courses are training programs for the certification that is legally required for certain professions in the country.



PHOTO CREDIT © Saudi Electric Services Polytechnic



Academic approach: Prioritizing practical and locally relevant experience

A key element in shaping the SESP program is continuous client feedback, from both students and their sponsoring employees. The Program Assessment and Evaluation Committee (PAEC), which was established to continuously assess and evaluate program objectives and outcomes, produces an annual report based on multiple evaluation tools, including assessments of trainee learning outcomes, as well as a series of surveys, including graduate surveys, industry feedback surveys, trainee exit surveys, trainer satisfaction surveys, and monthly evaluations from OJT companies. This robust data-collection framework, driven by measurable KPIs, allows the college to maintain an ongoing system of monitoring and evaluation (Figure 6). The gathered insights feed directly into targeted action plans, ensuring that improvements are evidence-based and responsive to real-time feedback.

FIG. 6 How client satisfaction feeds into SESP's PAEC report

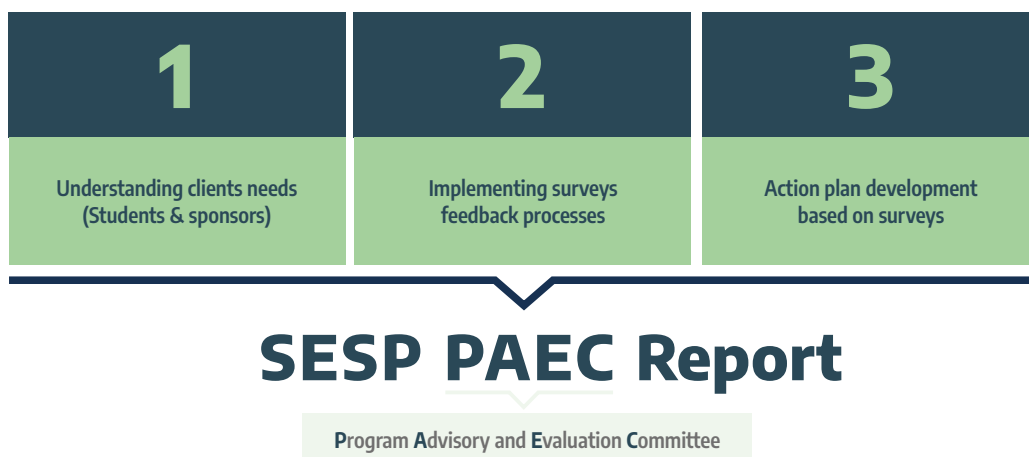
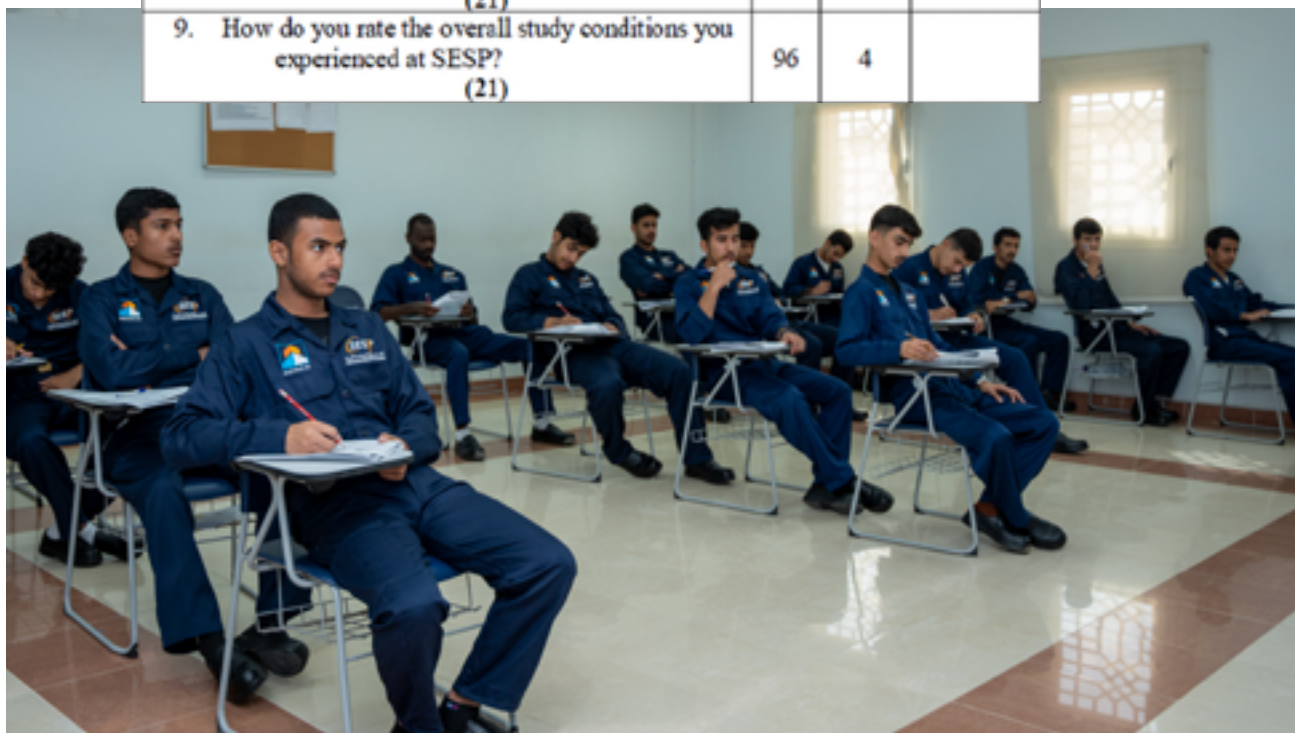


FIG. 7 Example of graduate survey results from SESP's PAEC report (July 2023)

Table 1: Graduate Survey Results on program objectives

Assessment of SESP's effect on employment	Response %		
	Yes	No	No Comment
1. Did the polytechnic program you studied help you in your job daily activities? (8)	87	13	
2. Do you think the major courses you have studied are adequate in the light of the requirements of the electricity industry? (9)	95	5	
3. Do you think the on-the- job training program has been useful? (17)	100	0	
4. Do you think that the counseling and advising given by the trainee counselors were helpful? (18)	92	8	
5. Do you think that the advising given by the polytechnic faculty is adequate? (19)	91	5	4
6. If you could do it all over again, would you take: (21)			
a. Same major	82		
b. Another major in different institute	7		
c. Another major	11		
7. Have you undertaken any training activities in the period since you graduated? (21)	76	24	
8. Have you change job after since your first employment? (21)	0	100	
9. How do you rate the overall study conditions you experienced at SESP? (21)	96	4	



Curricula at SESP Riyadh are developed through the Curriculum Development Unit. This unit receives and incorporates feedback from the industry, alumni, program faculty, OJT overseers, and PAEC. The unit is responsible for the analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation of all the curricula at SESP. Curricula and training modules are reviewed annually and regularly updated to reflect advancements in technology, especially in the rapidly evolving renewable energy sector. As new innovations emerge, the courses are continuously refined and expanded, with a strong emphasis on practical application. Faculty members are encouraged to propose changes, and a responsive committee is in place to review and support these updates.

Trainers are experienced experts in the various fields of the power utility and construction industries, and they must be certified English speakers, as the college courses are taught in English. Faculty recruitment emphasizes qualifications, teaching experience (minimum of five years), and, most importantly, industry-relevant experience. In addition, they must go through a performance appraisal, and a large part of it comes down to how well their class fulfills their sponsor's needs.

“Get the right people in the training institute. The selection process should be rigorous, especially for the selection of the faculty. It’s not the technology, nor the financial situation of the institute, it’s the people that will make the difference.”

FIG. 8 Curriculum development process at SESP

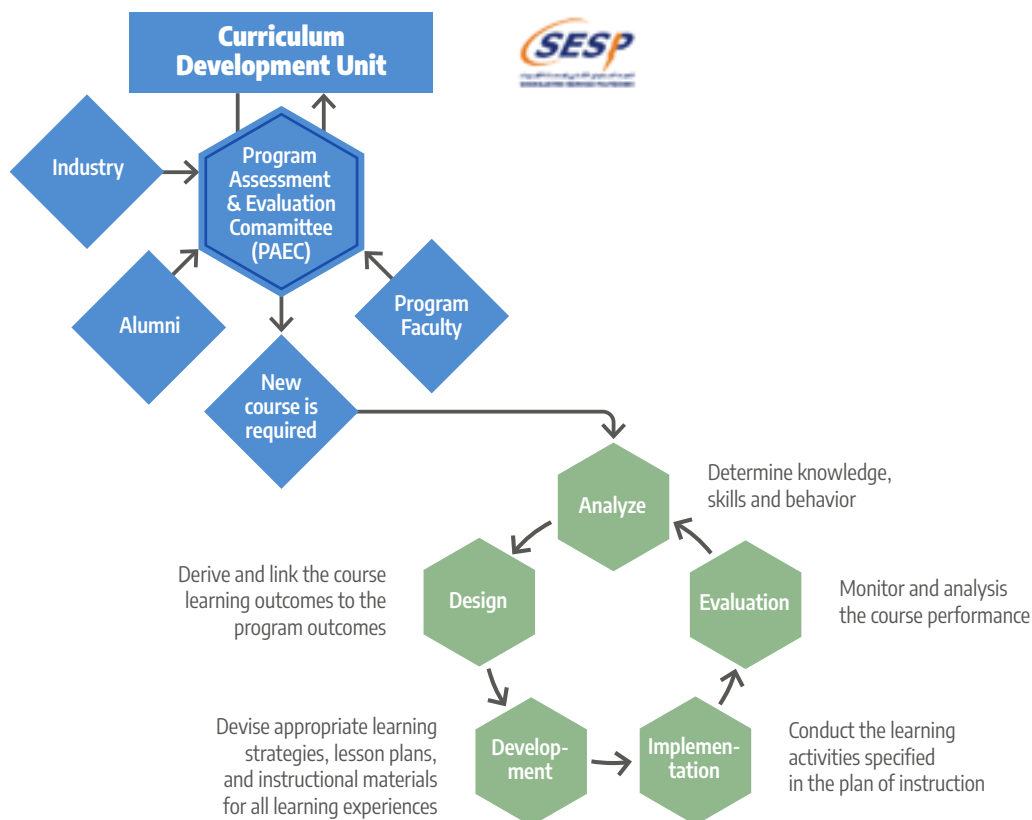
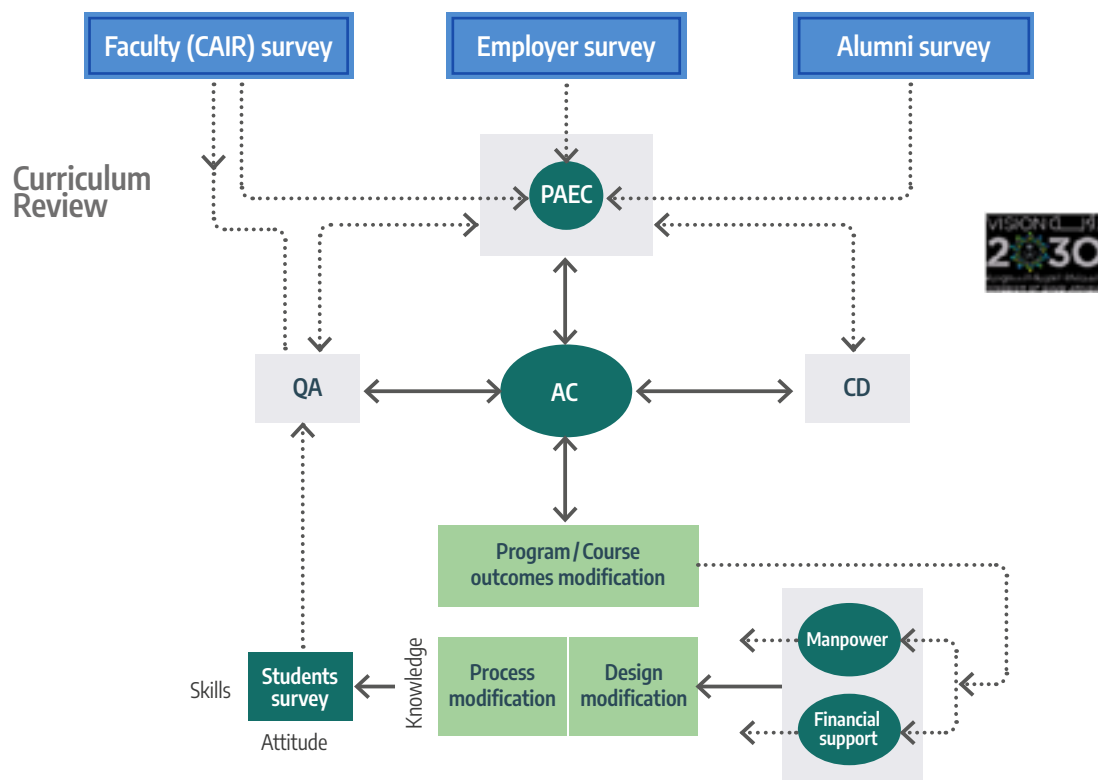


FIG. 9 Curriculum review process at SESP



Labor market integration

OJT is a critical component of the program and plays a key role in students' transition into the labor market. OJT is mandatory, lasts three months for the one-year diploma programs and six months for the two-year programs, and always takes place at the sponsor's facility. During this period, companies submit monthly performance evaluations of each trainee, while students are required to submit weekly reflections on their work experience. This two-way feedback loop ensures continuous monitoring and adjustment to enhance learning outcomes and readiness for full-time employment.

SESP has also introduced an alternative model to support female students entering nontraditional sectors, such as renewable energy. In this model, cohorts are sponsored by organizations such as the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy (KACARE), which funds training, stipends, and housing but does not directly employ the trainees. As a result, students are not eligible for HRDF support, but they benefit from KACARE's full sponsorship. The college facilitates labor market integration by organizing job interviews, coordinating career fairs, and actively supporting the job-search process. For trainees without employers, SESP arranges OJT placements through its network of strategic partners. This model has proven effective, with more than 50 percent of the previous KACARE-sponsored female cohort receiving employment offers from their OJT host companies.

For students who wish to pursue further education rather than immediately entering the workforce, pathways to higher education are also available. TVTC recognizes SESP course credits toward bachelor's degrees, enabling a smooth transition into academic programs. SESP is actively working with universities both within Saudi Arabia and across the region to formalize articulation agreements that streamline the continuation of students' educational journeys.

Lessons, takeaways, and challenges

SESP's success is rooted in its strong client-centered approach, driven by accountability measures and continuous feedback. The college prioritizes understanding the needs of both its sponsors and students, and it incorporates these insights into institutional planning. It applies a three-tiered approach: understanding client needs, collecting feedback through regular surveys, and developing action plans based on the findings. A core component of this is the annual PAEC report, published each July, which analyzes employer feedback and outlines specific responses to address concerns. Additionally, TVTC conducts separate surveys of employers and students and shares results with the college, enabling SESP to review not only curricula and student performance but the strength and value of its industry partnerships.

SESP's unique strength lies in its ability to design tailor-made programs that directly respond to labor market needs. Program features, such as cohort size, curriculum design, and OJT placement, are all structured around the specific requirements of employers. Labor market insights are sourced through



PHOTO CREDIT © Saudi Electric Services Polytechnic



direct engagement with industry partners, the BOT, and even national entities such as the Ministry of Economy and Planning. These connections allow the college to anticipate future workforce needs, such as those related to large-scale national events like the 2034 FIFA World Cup, and to respond accordingly through program development.

The strategic partnership model also transforms the student learning experience by embedding professional responsibility from day one. Trainers have noted that by being treated as employees from the start, students develop a strong sense of discipline, ownership, and motivation. This sustained engagement with their future employers creates a seamless bridge between education and employment, where students clearly understand the real-world relevance of their studies and are encouraged to perform at a high level throughout the training period.

SESP has also addressed a critical gap in the Saudi labor market by training middle-skill technicians in emerging and traditional sectors. This comes at a time when the Kingdom is working to diversify its economy beyond oil and gas. The college's programs meet the demand for technically skilled professionals in sectors in which workforce shortages persist. Additionally, SESP has effectively integrated green and renewable energy skills into its curriculum. Initiatives include offering specialized courses on renewable energy technologies, developing green practices such as going paperless, and forming partnerships with organizations such as KACARE. This balance of traditional and emerging skill sets ensures the college will remain relevant and responsive to national development goals.

Despite its success, SESP faces ongoing challenges that could affect its growth and competitiveness. Chief among these is the need to raise awareness in the private sector about the value of vocational training, particularly in the face of

“In the Middle East, you always either have engineers or laborer—the intermediate layer was always missing. These centers are changing that. When I first arrived, Saudi technicians were rare. Now, their numbers are growing. The model is shifting, students who once had limited options can enter vocational tracks and still find pathways to higher qualifications, even engineering degrees. It's not just bridging a skills gap; it's expanding opportunity.”

— Faculty Member, SESP

employer budget constraints and external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The college must also differentiate itself from other institutions offering similar services in the energy and technical sectors. Another challenge lies in identifying and retaining high-quality strategic partners. SESP is deliberate in selecting companies that demonstrate a genuine commitment to hiring and investing in Saudi youth, not simply fulfilling localization quotas. Preference is given to large-scale companies with strong reputations and long-term interests in workforce development. In contrast, smaller companies must work harder to gain trust, often undergoing site visits and providing additional assurances of their intentions before being accepted as partners.

BOX 7

CENTERS OF VOCATIONAL
EXCELLENCE (CoVEs)

CoVEs were formally introduced in 2020 as part of the European Commission's policy agenda. A CoVE can be described as a network of VET providers, employers, industry bodies, local authorities, universities, and innovation centers that co-design and co-deliver training programs that satisfy current and future labor market needs. CoVEs are region specific and closely tied to regional development strategies, ensuring that the skills being taught support local economic priorities.

Europe has over 50 CoVEs and is actively funding new partnerships, mainly through the Erasmus+ program. In addition to being responsive to developing regional skills needs, CoVEs work closely with companies, especially small to medium-sized enterprises, to create knowledge and innovation hubs, as well as supporting their learners' entrepreneurial initiatives.²³ The purpose, structure, and functions of CoVEs depend on the context. These centers normally offer high-quality programs for the development of highly specialized professions, which are often

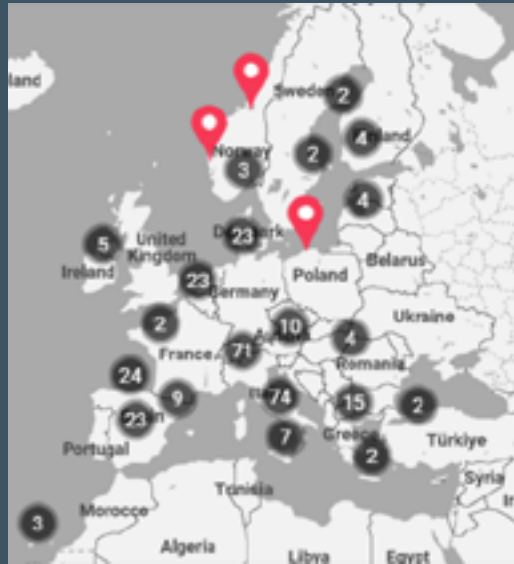
connected to routes to further education. The programs tend to have a strong focus on technological/innovative, sectoral, or multisectoral training to meet the skills needs of both companies and individuals.²⁴

Project leaders of all Erasmus+ CoVEs have joined forces to form communities of practice, thereby extending the reach of networks beyond regions. Each community provides a platform for partners to share experiences, inspire each other, and jointly seek solutions to common issues they encounter while implementing the CoVEs. There are over 300 communities of practice supporting CoVEs within their local and international regions. Through the community-of-practice network, future partners are supported with the knowledge, tools, and networks to successfully form and maintain PPPs. For example, the community-of-practice network provides step-by-step guidance to prospective partners on establishing PPPs that focus on applied research, education and recruitment, lifelong learning, and professional innovations, among other areas.

²³ [Centres of Vocational Excellence—European Commission](#)

²⁴ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2/centres-vocational-excellence>; <https://www.copcov.es/>

Map of active community-of-practice CoVEs



Source: <https://www.copcovs.eu/>

The success of CoVEs can be attributed to several interrelated factors that position them as key drivers of regional skills development and

innovation. First, CoVEs are deeply integrated within broader frameworks for regional development, innovation, and smart specialization, allowing them to align with policy priorities and create synergies across multiple stakeholders and sectors. Second, they are built upon strong and enduring partnerships among VET providers, including those at the tertiary level, higher education institutions, and businesses. These relationships are not one directional; instead, they are reciprocal and mutually beneficial, ensuring that each partner contributes to and benefits from the collaboration. Finally, the integration of activities across partners allows CoVEs to deliver more than the sum of their parts. By drawing on the unique expertise and resources of each stakeholder, CoVEs are able to offer comprehensive learning pathways and development opportunities for both young learners and adults, enhancing their skills and employability while supporting broader economic and social goals.²⁵





AL-TAMAYYUZ FINANCE & ACCOUNTING EXCELLENCE ACADEMY

Introduction

Al-Tamayyuz Academy was established in 2019 following a strategic decision made during a board meeting of Saudi Aramco, the Kingdom's state-owned oil company. Having already founded several specialized academies in the industrial and drilling sectors, Aramco identified a significant gap in the labor market for specialized skills in finance and accounting. In response, the company initiated the formation of a new academy and invited key stakeholders from leading financial institutions and firms operating in Saudi Arabia to collaborate. Founding partners included Saudi National Bank, Citigroup, Goldman Sachs, J. P. Morgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, HSBC, and KPMG, alongside TVTC. Since its inception, Al-Tamayyuz Academy has grown to include a diverse network of partners from across the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, both locally and internationally.



PHOTO CREDIT © Al-Tamayyuz Finance & Accounting Excellence Academy

Al-Tamayyuz Academy offers a distinctive model compared to other strategic partnership institutes in the Kingdom. Unlike typical vocational training centers, the academy requires applicants to hold a bachelor's degree in finance or business as a prerequisite. It is designed to serve new entrants to the labor market or those recently employed who wish to enhance their education and work experience through a focused, accelerated program. The academy's teaching model is also unique: Instead of traditional academic faculty, instruction is delivered by industry professionals with real-world expertise. This ensures that the training is both practical and directly aligned with the demands of the Saudi financial sector. Through its strategic partnerships with top-tier financial institutions, the academy not only shapes relevant curriculum content but acts as bridge between education and employment.

Al-Tamayyuz Academy's vision is to become a leading source of financial talent for its stakeholders. Equipped with elite facilities and cutting-edge simulation labs, and supported by world-class partners, the academy is positioned as a premier institution for preparing high-caliber professionals for the financial services sector in Saudi Arabia.

BOX 8

BAHRAIN INSTITUTE OF BANKING AND FINANCE



Other PPP-based training models have emerged within the region. In neighboring Bahrain, the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance (BIBF), the semigovernmental educational institute associated with the Central Bank of Bahrain, serves as a notable example. Established in 1981, BIBF originated as a small training institute mainly for employees within the banking sector. Since then, the institute has grown significantly, training over 360,000 students in the last 40 years through a diverse array of programs, ranging from short courses and professional qualifications to full academic degrees. BIBF is widely regarded as a cornerstone of the financial sector

in Bahrain and has been credited with playing a large role in supporting the localization of the sector. A core part of its mission is offering career-linked programs, industry-relevant knowledge, and a faculty consisting of practitioners and experts in business and finance. Much of the success of BIBF can be attributed to the collaborative effort between the Central Bank of Bahrain and its private sector partners, representing Bahraini banks and business sectors. This collaboration is institutionalized through BIBF's board of directors, which consists of members of government and representatives from different business sectors.²⁶

²⁶ Bahrain Institute of Bankers and Financial Studies. "Annual Report 2021." Bahrain Institute of Bankers and Financial Studies (2022).

Governance and strategic partnerships

Aramco leveraged its industry influence to bring together leading partners to launch Al-Tamayyuz Academy as a nonprofit initiative. Founding members and partners were secured through Aramco's strong network and reputation, and they contribute not only in-kind resources but strategic direction, technical expertise, and support for implementation. Observations during site visits highlight the high level of trust and the long-term commitment shown by these founding partners, who are driven by a shared belief in the academy's potential to benefit both the Kingdom and their respective organizations.

The governance of Al-Tamayyuz Academy is overseen by a board composed of representatives of the founding members, including TVTC. The board operates through three dedicated committees: the Executive Committee, the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Board Audit Committee. The Technical Advisory Council, made up of private sector experts, is responsible for reviewing training programs and curricula to ensure alignment with labor market needs. Operational leadership is provided by a managing director supported by an internal executive team. In addition to branding benefits, such as having their names displayed in classrooms, partners receive discounted services, two complimentary corporate social responsibility programs targeting underrepresented groups (including working mothers and people with disabilities), and a complimentary spot in the academy's flagship program for young professionals. Founding members also provide subject matter experts to deliver guest lectures, offer mentorship, and ensure the curriculum stays relevant given emerging industry trends.



PHOTO CREDIT © Al-Tamayyuz Finance & Accounting Excellence Academy

The academy maintains an international academic partnership with IE University in Spain. IE University plays a key role in both academic credentialing, awarding the program degree, and talent acquisition by nominating qualified instructors for the flagship program. This relationship strengthens the credibility of the academy's offerings.

In 2024, Al-Tamayyuz Academy transitioned into the national strategic partnership system under TVTC. This shift made students eligible for HRDF financing, which covers 75 percent of training costs and includes stipends, provided students secure employment within six months of graduation. Joining NCSP also enhanced the academy's connections with government stakeholders and the newly established Sector Skills Council, further integrating it into Saudi Arabia's evolving human capital-development ecosystem.

"I don't think there's another institution that has this collection of founding members and partners."

— Managing Director of Al-Tamayyuz Academy

FIG. 10 Sponsorship benefits at Al-Tamayyuz Academy

Benefits	Platinum	Strategic
Sponsored Program	1	2
Sponsor Seats in Flagship Program	2	3
Naming Right on one of the classes	N/A	✓
Discount on all Services (offerings & facility) (1)(2)	10%	15%
Course Registration Priority	✓	✓
Advertisement via Internal & External Channels	✓	✓
Free utilization of the facility (Classes, Lab, Board Room) (1)(2)	20 Days	30 Days
Promote job opportunities in Alumni network	✓	✓
	\$ 450,000	\$ 650,000

*Annual Subscription
(1) Catering not included (2) Based on availability

Program structures

Al-Tamayyuz Academy offers flagship programs that serve as the cornerstone of its educational offerings. The flagship program is a six-month course that blends academic, technical, and professional development. The flagship program contains two cohorts:

- The first cohort is for fresh graduates in finance and accounting who are looking to supplement their degree. This part of the program provides specialized, hands-on, relevant industry knowledge to ease the students' transition into the

labor market. More than half of the students receive job offers from strategic partners before even starting their studies. This cohort receives a majority of the funding from HRDF.

- The second cohort is for recently employed young professionals whose companies seek to upskill them. This part of the program is fully funded by the employers.

The program structure begins with a module on core financial and accounting skills. Students then select a specialization track, either internal audit or investment banking, and complete a capstone project in the third module. By the end of the six-month program, students receive a “private master’s degree,” a type of executive degree, jointly awarded by Al-Tamayyuz Academy and IE University and accredited by TVTC. The graduation rate in the flagship program stands at 96.7 percent, as students undergo close monitoring and have access to additional support to help them complete the program.

FIG. 11 Examples of assignments in Al-Tamayyuz Academy’s flagship program



Admission to the program is highly competitive, with a capacity of only 50 students per cohort but thousands of applications. The recruitment process includes a targeted information campaign, technical and language examinations, and interviews conducted by both the academy and IE University. Beyond the flagship program, the academy has introduced midlevel, executive-level, and hybrid programs for working professionals. These range from a program on corporate governance to a program for board directors.

FIG. 12 Programs offered at Al-Tamayyuz Academy

Programs	Career Level	Training Provider	Duration	Sponsor
Flagship Program	Early	ie	6 months	
Internal Audit Program	Early	ie	6 months	
Corporate Governance Program	Mid	ie	3 days	
IE Mile Bootcamp	Mid	ie	1 day	
Financial Acumen Program	Mid	ie	5 days	
CPE Preparatory Course	Mid	ie	5 days	
Financial Data Management Program	Mid	alpha	Design the program only	
Board of Directors Program	Executive	ie	4 days	
Financial Leaders Program	Executive	ie	3 weeks	
Economic Leaders Program	Executive	ie	10 days	

Our Future Programs:

- 1. CEO Development Program
- 2. CFO Development Program
- 3. Industrial Leaders Program
- 4. New Business Dev. Program
- 5. Business Acumen Program

Participation:

Logos of participating organizations: KPMG, PwC, Deloitte, EY, etc.

As a nonprofit, the academy has to find innovative ways to generate money for the academy. With state-of-the-art facilities and well-equipped classrooms, the academy offers courses outside of the flagship program. These typically come in two forms. First, an outside client comes in and asks to use the space, for example, a company renting out the space for events or employee training. The second is similar, except the academy conducts the training itself: creating and designing a curriculum, supplying the trainers to meet the needs of the client, and carrying out assessments. Despite its space's income-generating value, the academy is selective about who it provides the space to. This model serves to incentivize partners and sponsors, who receive discounts and benefits and spots for their employees within the flagship program. The academy has found a way to finance itself to continue operating as a nonprofit and support its flagship program.

Academic approach: Prioritizing practical and locally relevant experience

The faculty members are not traditional career educators but seasoned professionals with several years of industry experience. For the flagship program, faculty are recruited and nominated by IE University. The academy places a strong emphasis on real-world case studies, particularly those relevant to the Saudi context. For example, students work on case studies and projects, such as credit-rating projects or the Saudi sovereign fund's structure, in which they analyze companies, recommend strategies to improve companies' credit ratings, and identify risk factors for potential employers. The fresh-graduate cohorts focus on developing foundational technical skills needed to advance their careers, while early-career professionals focus on applying those skills in

real-world scenarios or even undertaking real tasks for their employer. The program also includes forward-looking subjects, including fintech, green finance, and governance ethics.

Training is augmented by gamification and access to state-of-the-art facilities, including advanced simulation labs. Furthermore, students' education is enriched by the expertise of strategic partners. It is common for professionals from these partner companies to visit as guest lecturers within relevant modules, share their experience and providing current and relevant expertise, industry insights, practical knowledge, and opportunities for networking.

“There is a gap between what universities are producing and private sector needs. As someone from the private sector and academia, I make sure that students are bridging this gap. You need to do work with students to hit the ground running for employment.”

— Faculty Member,
Al-Tamayyuz Academy

Labor market integration

The flagship program for fresh graduates emphasizes both technical and interpersonal skill development. Given that many of these students are entering the workforce for the first time, the academy emphasizes enhancing soft skills such as critical thinking, presentation, negotiation, teamwork, time management, and communication. Since HRDF provides funding contingent on securing employment within six months of graduation, the academy proactively supports students throughout the program to help them do so. Efforts include securing sponsors before the program starts and engaging in ongoing outreach to strategic partners for employment opportunities. Students receive coaching on their careers, their CVs, and interview preparation alongside technical training.

The academy has achieved strong employment outcomes for its flagship-program graduates. Among the more than 400 students who have completed the program across eight cohorts, 94 percent found employment within one year of graduation. Notably, 35 percent of those employed were promoted to management roles, reflecting the strong alignment between the program's training and the labor market's demands. Students also benefit from a wide range of networking and practical learning opportunities embedded in the program. During the final two months, participants engage in internships and OJT that enhance employability. Additionally, each student must complete a capstone project in collaboration with a partner company, which is then presented to peers and strategic partners. These experiences not only deepen practical knowledge but increase visibility among potential employers.

Strategic partners play a critical role in inspiring students and expanding their professional horizons. Guest speakers from partner organizations regularly engage with students to share their career journeys, offering insights into the challenges and opportunities of the finance and accounting sectors. These interactions serve both as inspiration and as a means for students to explore diverse career pathways they might not have previously considered.



Postgraduation support is a core component of the academy's approach to labor market integration. For those who are not employed at graduation, a dedicated division follows up for up to six months to support job-placement efforts. This includes tracking employment status and collecting feedback on how well the training aligned with labor market needs. To further strengthen alumni engagement, the academy is also launching a learning management system to provide continued access to learning materials and networking resources.

Lessons, takeaways, and challenges

The primary challenge Al-Tamayyuz Academy faces is achieving financial sustainability while maintaining exceptional quality. Operating as a startup nonprofit, the academy uses its limited funding to maintain its commitment to high-caliber training. To address this, it targets partnerships with private sector leaders, including major international firms and mega-projects like NEOM, that recognize the value of its model. Despite resource constraints, Al-Tamayyuz remains firmly committed to quality over scale.

The strength of Al-Tamayyuz Academy lies in the commitment of its founding members. The academy depends on strong, trust-based relationships with individuals within partner companies who actively support and enrich its programs.



PHOTO CREDIT © Al-Tamayyuz Finance & Accounting Excellence Academy

This includes contributing time, expertise, and feedback. In return, the academy delivers a pool of exceptional, industry-ready candidates—graduates who are not only academically distinguished, but possess practical skills and a deep understanding of the Saudi financial landscape.

For students, Al-Tamayyuz represents a fast-track, high-impact alternative to traditional education routes. Rather than entering the workforce immediately after attaining their bachelor's degrees, students gain access to a specialized program that opens doors to higher-quality jobs and more prestigious employers. Many view the academy as a practical substitute for a master's degree, in which they gain industry-aligned skills, strategic networks, and accelerated entry to leadership pathways.

A core element of the academy's success is its responsiveness to labor market needs. By actively engaging with stakeholders such as the Ministry of Finance, Al-Tamayyuz is able to identify and address mismatches between university education and sector demands. The academy also tracks localization efforts within the finance sector, responding to evolving policies that increase demand for skilled Saudi professionals. These efforts directly contribute to achieving Vision 2030 goals regarding national workforce development and employability.

Al-Tamayyuz Academy offers a compelling model for workforce development through demand-driven, private sector-led training. Its success demonstrates the importance of deep, ongoing engagement with employers to shape relevant, high-quality programming. For countries aiming to reduce skill gaps, Al-Tamayyuz stands as an example of how strategic partnerships and targeted talent development can create lasting economic impact, which not only benefits graduates and the broader labor market but advances national development objectives.

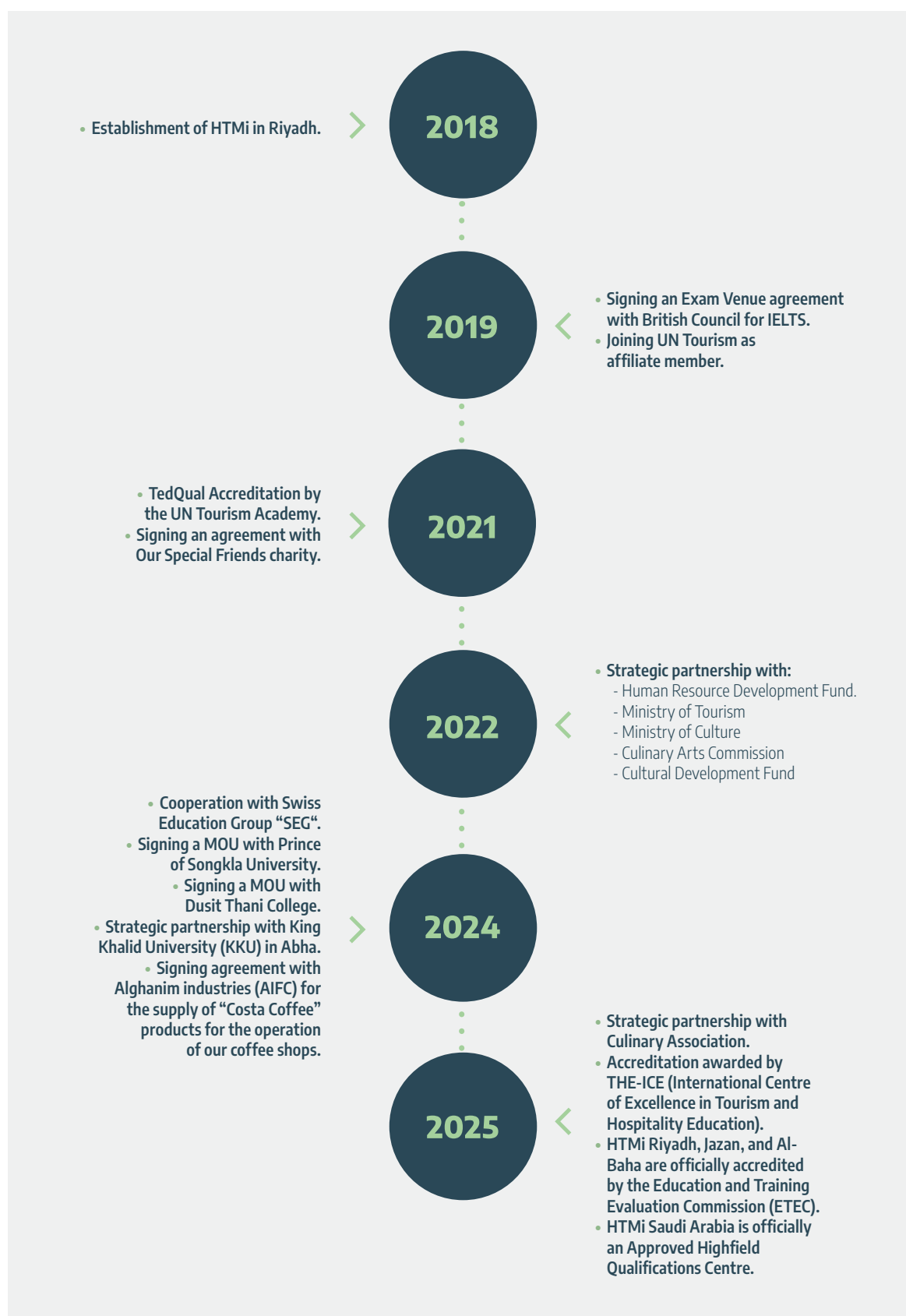


HOTEL AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE (HTMI SAUDI ARABIA)

Introduction

HTMi Saudi Arabia has three campuses, in Riyadh, Jazan, and Albaha, as well as running the first-ever female hospitality institute in Riyadh. It was established in 2007 in response to the growing need for skilled professionals in Saudi Arabia's hospitality sector. In partnership with TVTC, the institute has been supporting national workforce development. Over the years, it has strengthened its presence across the Kingdom by partnering with HTMi Switzerland, a globally recognized hospitality institute, and by obtaining accreditation from both national and international bodies, including the Education and Training Evaluation Commission, UN Tourism, Eurhodip, and THE-ICE. Today, HTMi Saudi Arabia is a strategic partner within TVTC's NCSP and Colleges of Excellence, continuing its contribution to the development of a globally competitive tourism workforce. It aims to pursue Saudi Arabia's vision (expressed in Vision 2030) of being a modern and forward-thinking nation led by the hospitality and tourism sector. HTMi Saudi Arabia is the Kingdom's largest and most innovative hospitality institute and is on its way to become a leading hotel-management institute in the Middle East and globally. Figure 13 illustrates the institute's milestones since 2018, with particular emphasis on the range of strategic partnerships that have been formed in recent years and have contributed to the institute's vision of becoming a leading management institute.



FIG. 13 HTMi Saudi Arabia history

Governance and strategic partnership

The institute is governed by a board consisting of representatives from TVTC and industry partners. The board plays an active role in all areas of the institute's operations, from signing agreements with strategic partners to approving programs and overseeing their delivery. It is also responsible for budget oversight, financial approvals, and recruitment of senior executives. The board meets monthly with representatives from partner employers and contributes to the institute's long-term strategic planning. As part of its strategic partnership with HRDF, the institute plays a vital role in advancing workforce development. HRDF offers financial support for programs that build the skills of Saudi talent and align them with labor market demands. To ease the administrative burden on employers, the institute now handles the registration of cohorts with HRDF on the employers' behalf, simplifying the process and ensuring smooth, efficient access to funding. This collaboration underscores the institute's ongoing commitment to supporting employers and building the nation's stock of human capital.

Two recent agreements between the institute and HRDF mark a significant step forward. The first focuses on developing tailored training programs in collaboration with an international hotel group operating in Riyadh. The second aims to enhance the hospitality and tourism sector in the Jazan region. A key advancement began with the development of a new, international three-year program in partnership with TVTC, the Ministry of Tourism, and an international hotel chain. This initiative introduced a more effective funding structure, which later paved the way for the Jazan program. These programs are closely aligned with regional and sectoral job-creation priorities. The primary distinction between the former and current funding models lies in the flow of payments. Previously, employers received direct financial support from HRDF. Now, HRDF pays the full training fees directly to the institute and subsequently coordinates financial arrangements with the employers. This shift has simplified the process and enhanced transparency, ultimately facilitating stronger partnerships and more efficient program delivery.

The institute maintains strong partnerships with several private sector organizations. A long-standing collaboration with NESMA Catering in the Riyadh region, which began in 2016, is one such partnership. NESMA's engagement with HTMi Saudi Arabia was driven by the company's commitment to increasing the participation of Saudi nationals across its operations. To achieve this, NESMA sought reputable training providers capable of delivering high-quality education and practical experience. HTMi Saudi Arabia emerged as a leader in this space, recognized for establishing a strong training culture and delivering relevant, industry-aligned programs. NESMA currently sponsors trainees enrolled in the two-year Culinary Arts Management and Restaurant Management diploma programs. Within the company's catering division, which employs approximately 3,400 people across more than 52 projects nationwide, there are currently 156 trainees enrolled at the institute, 148 of whom are currently undergoing OJT, and 248 have already graduated. The partnership is supported by structured communication and performance monitoring: HTMi Saudi Arabia provides weekly reports

detailing attendance, academic progress, lesson plans, and any updates concerning the trainees. NESMA representatives, including executive chefs and senior staff, are actively involved in academic activities such as serving on examination panels and participating in graduation ceremonies—an engagement that is both valued and encouraged.



PHOTO CREDIT © www.htmisa.com

From the outset, trainees are registered with the national insurance system (General Organization for Social Insurance) and receive a monthly stipend co-funded by HRDF and the employer. This formal employment status reinforces the professional orientation of the programs and signals the seriousness of the employer's investment in the trainee's development. Together, this collaborative structure spans rigorous selection, blended classroom and workplace learning, continuous evaluation, and close coordination with employers and funders, and it forms a robust foundation for sustainable program success.

To cultivate such partnerships, HTMi Saudi Arabia's marketing and strategic partnership teams actively engage with industry stakeholders. This is done through initiatives like career fairs, field visits to employer locations, and open invitations to explore the institute's training facilities. The institute positions itself as a reliable partner by offering job-ready employees tailored to employer needs. New program offerings, particularly those backed by government entities such as HRDF and TVTC, are promoted extensively through social media and direct outreach. These announcements are often shared not only by the institute but by its government partners, increasing visibility and attracting new industry collaborations. Strong and seamless stakeholder collaboration has contributed significantly to the institute's recognition as a flagship training institution and trusted partner for national workforce development on a national scale.

Program structures

HTMi Saudi Arabia offers a range of diploma and certificate programs. These programs range from occupational health and safety, to international hospitality and tourism management, to culinary-arts management. The duration of these programs ranges from three months to three years, depending on the qualification. Figure 14 summarizes the programs offered.

FIG. 14 HTMi Saudi Arabia programs

Higher Diploma Programs - 3 Years	Diploma Programs - 2 Years	Associate Diploma - 1 Year	6 Months - Course	Certificate Programs - 4 Months	Qualification Programs
› International Hospitality & Tourism Management › International Culinary Arts Management	› Hotel Management › Tourism Management › Restaurant Management › Events Management › Marketing Management › Culinary Arts Management	› F&B Service And Food Production	› Hotel Management	› Cashier & Retail › Front Office › Housekeeping › Food Production › Food & Beverage Service › Travel & Tourism › Food And Beverage Services Pathway Specialized Coffee Certificate	› Occupational Health And Safety - Professional Level - 4 Months › Occupational Health And Safety - Practitioner Level - 3 Months

The number of applicants per program is determined by the scope and objectives of projects initiated by the main government training sponsors in the hospitality sector. These include HRDF, MHRSD, the Ministry of Tourism, the Cultural Development Fund, and the Culinary Arts Commission, as well as companies within the hospitality industry.

The curriculum for the diploma programs is structured along three distinct tracks: one-year, two-year, and three-year programs. Subject content is developed using multiple approaches. For long-term diploma programs, feedback from former trainees is collected through surveys to identify potential additions or improvements to the curriculum. Similarly, input from partner organizations is regularly gathered to assess the technical competencies of graduates and trainees and to identify the specific skills needed within their industry. Additionally, the institute consults with its international partners to ensure the curriculum reflects global trends and aligns with international education standards, maintaining both relevance and quality on a global scale. These insights are incorporated during internal and external curriculum reviews. National strategic priorities are also taken into account, particularly those outlined by relevant government entities such as HRDF, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Ministry of Culture. For example, the culinary-arts program was introduced to align with a strategic directive from the Ministry of Culture to support national efforts to preserve cultural heritage, nurture local talent in culinary arts, and embed cultural elements within vocational education. After considering stakeholder feedback, the curriculum

design and development process is carried out collaboratively by the academic team, comprising the academic head, training managers, and trainers, and the quality-assurance team, which plays a key role: reviewing the content to ensure it meets institutional standards, aligns with stakeholder expectations, and maintains academic rigor and relevance.

A key consideration in curriculum development is achieving a balance between academic theory and hands-on practical training, ensuring trainees acquire both solid theoretical knowledge and practical skills aligned with industry needs. Subject matter experts within the institute work collaboratively to ensure that programs align with labor market demands and integrate both components. Approximately half of the curriculum is focused on developing core competencies and soft skills, such as taking initiative, making decisions, and solving problems, which are essential for success in the hospitality and tourism sector. These priorities are informed by regular feedback from industry stakeholders and employers.



PHOTO CREDIT © Hotel and Tourism Management Institute (HTMI Saudi Arabia)

The institute's short- and long-term programs can be tailored to its partners' needs. These programs are based on client or industry needs, with short courses structured into two main categories: general skills applicable across all sectors, and occupational skills specifically designed for the tourism and hospitality industry. While long-term and short-term programs follow accredited structures, module enhancements can be introduced in response to specific requests. As part of the standard partnership procedure, prospective partners are required to visit the institute's training facilities and engage in detailed discussions with both the training and management teams to explore the partnership framework before any agreement is finalized. Program design is also guided by labor market intelligence, including a regularly updated list of in-demand jobs. In addition, the institute collaborates with international partners such as HTMi Switzerland, whose program structures and curriculum-development expertise inform the local offerings.

All programs can be tailored to reflect an employer's area of specialization. For example, if a restaurant specializing in Arabic cuisine requests customized training focused on its menu, the module content can be adapted accordingly. Some industry partners actively contribute to course development by defining the desired learning outcomes for their trainees. HRDF provides sponsorship for short courses, provided the employer meets the eligibility criteria.

Trainers are recruited directly from the hospitality industry, bringing in-depth expertise across key areas such as culinary techniques, hotel operations, and food and beverage services. Industry experience is the main qualification, with academic background considered an advantage. All new trainers are inducted and oriented to the curriculum. Given their practical background, adapting to the curriculum is typically straightforward. One of the institute's key strengths lies in the expertise of its trainers, all of whom possess academic qualifications in hospitality alongside 5 to 15 years of industry experience. Approximately 70 percent of the course content is practical, ensuring that trainees gain hands-on experience. Course design is informed by Bloom's taxonomy to support structured progression toward advanced competencies, particularly in the application and creation of knowledge, which enhances instructional quality.

All training programs are aligned with current labor market demands, with course materials regularly updated to reflect emerging trends in the hospitality and tourism sector. The institute serves a diverse client base, which requires continuous adaptation to evolving workforce needs. Collaboration with trainees and industry partners is integral to this process, with partners also playing a valuable role in promoting the institute's offerings. While many institutions may provide standard training based on general industry expectations, the institute focuses on delivering what employers truly need, not just what trainees express interest in. This distinction is embedded in the contract development process, in which training objectives are carefully defined in collaboration with employers to ensure graduates are equipped with the skills most relevant to their operational realities.

"I believe trainees choose to join the institute due to both its strong reputation and the prominent companies it collaborates with."

— Private sector strategic partner at HTMi Saudi Arabia

Trainee retention is a priority for the institute, particularly given the broader challenge of employee retention in Saudi Arabia. A supportive training environment is cultivated to encourage commitment not only to the institute but to future employers. This includes promoting awareness of the benefits trainees receive, such as financial incentives, while fostering a culture of responsibility and professionalism. Retention efforts begin with careful selection of employer partners. The institute prioritizes partnerships with reputable companies known for maintaining a positive and supportive work environment. These employers are expected to uphold high standards and demonstrate a long-term presence in the market. By collaborating with such organizations, the institute increases the likelihood that trainees will remain engaged and employed after graduation.

In parallel, the trainee recruitment process has become increasingly rigorous over the past four years. Initially, enrollment was open to all interested trainees; however, the process is now more selective. Applicants undergo multiple screening rounds, including a review of academic records, interviews, and assessments of relevant skills and demonstrated interest in the industry. Shortlisted candidates are then presented to employer partners, who conduct their own interviews and select from this filtered pool.

Labor market integration

HTMi Saudi Arabia's partners consider trainees as employees during the training period. While there is no obligation for trainees to remain with the partner after graduation for more than a year, most do, given the opportunities available there. These opportunities often include placements across the country. After completing the training program, graduates are offered formal employment contracts based on their performance and the organization's needs. Even for trainees who do not begin their program with an employment contract, the institute secures a job placement before the end of their training. For example, in the four-month programs, a contract is arranged during the third month to ensure that the final month, dedicated to OJT, takes place at the employer's location. Importantly, if graduates remain with the same employer after completing their training, HRDF subsidizes 50 percent of their salary during the first year. This serves as a further incentive for both job placement and retention. There is a risk that some employees will leave during probation or fail to meet expectations. This is an inherent challenge in workforce development. However, the institute works closely with companies to minimize this risk through collaborative trainee selection, strong communication, and continuous engagement throughout the training period.

A key element of the institute's approach is building and maintaining strong relationships with trainees. From the first day of training until graduation, trainees receive ongoing support and are held accountable through clearly defined program commitments. Upon placement with employers, additional factors such as fair compensation, job-role clarity, workplace culture, and the availability of accommodation and transportation play a role in ensuring a smooth transition and continued retention. Ultimately, the institute strives to ensure that each graduate is viewed as a valuable asset from day one, and it works with employers



PHOTO CREDIT © www.htmisa.com

“The instructors don’t talk to you here like a student, they talk to you like an employee.”

— Trainee at HTMi Saudi Arabia

to create the conditions that allow trainees to succeed and grow within the hospitality and tourism industry.

The effectiveness of the training model rests on the structured integration of OJT into trainees’ journey. Before graduation, all trainees participate in workplace placements lasting one to six months, in which they are immersed in professional environments and work on real-world projects. This period provides critical practical experience and serves as a key phase for assessing readiness for employment. Trainee performance is evaluated through two lenses: first, by the institute during the classroom- and lab-based training phase; second, by the host company during the OJT phase. These dual assessments ensure that trainees meet both academic standards and workplace expectations.

The program’s long-term success is evidenced by the diverse trajectories that graduates follow. Many advance within their companies to higher-level positions, moving from entry-level roles such as waiter to supervisory and management roles. Others pivot to administrative functions within the same organizations or secure roles at competing firms offering better opportunities. This level of progression indicates that graduates are not only job ready upon completion but equipped with foundational skills that enable them to advance and develop their career in the hospitality sector.

A key component of maintaining quality is the collaborative trainee-selection process. Employers participate directly in recruitment by reviewing short-listed candidates and conducting interviews to assess both aptitude and motivation. This front-end involvement helps ensure that selected trainees align with both the institute's academic standards and the employer's expectations. Throughout the training period, the institute provides regular reporting to employers and funding bodies, including semester and quarterly updates on trainee attendance, performance, and participation in extracurricular activities. For select projects, tailored trainee profiles or individual progress cards are also shared with partners. These feedback mechanisms help maintain transparency and accountability across all stakeholders and allow for continuous improvement.

Lessons, takeaways, and challenges

While the public sector's support has been strong, further commitment and engagement from private sector employers remain essential. Training providers invest significantly in developing their trainees' technical and soft skills, but if industry partners do not actively participate through feedback, curriculum alignment, student mentoring, and workplace integration, the outcome risks becoming one-sided. Interactions with stakeholders revealed that initial private sector involvement was limited; however, the relationship has improved considerably. Employers are increasingly appointing dedicated supervisors who actively participate in mentoring sessions, engage in a wide range of trainee activities, support professional development, and collaborate on curriculum development. Over the past few years, the dynamic has shifted meaningfully. Employers who once had to be approached are now proactively seeking partnerships with the institute. This evolution underscores the importance of building credibility and trust in the training ecosystem. To further strengthen these partnerships, the institute is expanding its strategic-engagement efforts, including more frequent career days and networking events, and establishing dedicated liaison teams to manage employer relationships more effectively.

From a policy perspective, government incentives that encourage private sector participation are proving critical. These include financial subsidies, recognition programs, and contractual arrangements that make it attractive for employers to engage meaningfully with training institutions. Moreover, the value of international-local partnerships cannot be understated. Close cooperation between institutions such as HTMi Switzerland and HTMi Saudi Arabia ensures quality assurance, alignment with global standards, and the adaptability required to meet evolving sector demands. Regular monitoring, shared governance, and mutual understanding contribute to the durability and effectiveness of such collaborations. There is also a pressing need to raise awareness about vocational

“One of the biggest advantages is the guaranteed job after graduation. From the moment you start studying here, you're already linked to a company. That's a major difference compared to traditional university pathways, where finding a job can be a real challenge.”

— Trainee at HTMi Saudi Arabia



pathways among secondary school students and the broader public. Many trainees entering the program are unaware of vocational education as a viable and respected career option. Greater collaboration with the Ministry of Education and targeted awareness campaigns could help address this gap and attract a more informed cohort of applicants.

To successfully replicate this program, institutions must begin by selecting the right candidates through a careful recruitment and interview process.

Placing the right individuals in the right roles from the outset is essential for long-term success. In the Saudi context, cultural perceptions of hospitality roles, particularly positions such as front office staff, service personnel, or waitstaff, remain a challenge. Addressing these perceptions is a critical part of the institute's role. Efforts should be made to instill pride and passion in trainees for their chosen career paths by helping them understand the value and purpose of their work.

The institute has implemented a scaffolded approach to establishing foundational aspects of learning.

Accordingly, extensive English language instruction has been integrated into the curriculum to support trainee readiness for the workplace. In addition, adapting to the foundational concepts and professional expectations of the hospitality industry requires time and patience. However, many trainees are eager to advance quickly. The institute therefore emphasizes the importance of beginning at the foundational level and gradually progressing toward higher-level responsibilities, reinforcing the value of learning through experience.

“Your identity becomes so closely tied to your employer that when someone asks my name, I say the name of the company.”

— Trainee at HTMi Saudi Arabia



PHOTO CREDIT © Hotel and Tourism Management Institute (HTMi Saudi Arabia)

Discussions with current and former HTMi Saudi Arabia trainees reveal a strong appreciation for the practical, high-quality education and career-oriented environment the institute offers. A standout feature frequently mentioned is the guaranteed job placement upon completion of studies. This direct pathway to employment addresses one of the most significant challenges faced by students following traditional academic routes. Trainees highlight the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills as a core strength of the programs. They describe gaining a clear picture of what to expect in the hospitality industry after graduation, thanks to hands-on experience and realistic instruction. Many note that HTMi Saudi Arabia has allowed them to move from passive learning, such as watching cooking shows, to actively developing their skills through direct practice. Another valuable aspect is access to real-world opportunities, including industry competitions, work-based learning, and collaborations with major hospitality brands. These experiences not only enhance their skills but allow trainees to build professional networks across the sector. For some, this has already translated into clear career pathways, with job offers secured even before completing their diplomas.

The professional approach of the instructors also plays a critical role in preparing trainees for the workplace. Trainers who possess substantial industry experience and specialized knowledge in hospitality operations engage with trainees as deeply experienced industry professionals who engage with trainees as future colleagues rather than traditional teachers. This professional treatment helps trainees develop a strong work ethic and a mindset aligned with employer expectations. Finally, the vibrant learning environment at HTMi Saudi Arabia contributes to trainee satisfaction. The abundance of extracurricular activities, opportunities for involvement, and supportive culture create a dynamic educational experience. Many trainees leave the institute not only with qualifications but with confidence, industry connections, and a readiness to succeed in the hospitality and tourism sector.

While this model has achieved success in Saudi Arabia, it is not universally transferable without adaptation. Cultural context, labor market structure, and education system design vary widely by country. The underlying principle of close collaboration between government, industry, and training providers remains sound, but the implementation must be customized to local realities.

BOX 9

NEW SOUTH WALES PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP FOR VISITOR-ECONOMY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



A similar example of how the tourism sector is implementing partnership initiatives to develop current and future skill needs comes from New South Wales (NSW) in Australia. The partnership is between Technical and Further Education (TAFE) NSW and Destination NSW, supported by the federal government's NSW Choose Tourism Program. With the state's visitor economy projected to require up to 150,000 additional workers over the next decade, this partnership aims to deliver subsidized, industry-aligned training programs. These efforts align with the Visitor Economy Strategy 2030, which emphasizes attracting school leavers and job seekers to tourism to grow the workforce to 450,000.

The initiative offers a suite of targeted training resources, including an "Introduction to the Visitor Economy" microskill, which provides

foundational knowledge and career insights through a short online course. The course is freely available to the public and fully subsidized for NSW high school students. Additionally, five industry-led video master classes and a modernized Certificate III in Tourism aim to deliver relevant, flexible, and high-quality training. All materials are developed in collaboration with industry partners such as Sydney Opera House, Merlin Entertainments, and Scenic World, ensuring alignment with current sector needs.

The partnership is expected to build a pipeline of skilled workers for the state's growing visitor economy, valued at \$52.9 billion annually, as well as supporting regional businesses and promoting tourism careers as viable, rewarding paths. The initiative further anticipates skill needs by preparing a workforce to support the newly developed Western Sydney Airport.

Source: SNSW Government, 2024. https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/dcihs/ministerial-media-releases/training-programs-to-plug-jobs-gap-visitor-economy?utm_source=chatgpt.com



INTERNATIONAL AVIATION TECHNICAL COLLEGE AT RIYADH

Introduction

The aviation industry in Saudi Arabia is experiencing rapid growth, driven by expanding fleets and increased demand for air travel. According to the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), the Kingdom requires approximately 1,800 aviation technicians to enter the labor market each year to meet industry needs and avoid a shortage. This demand is amplified by the acquisition of new civil aircraft, underscoring the urgency of developing a skilled local workforce. The shortage of qualified aircraft maintenance personnel is not unique to Saudi Arabia. During consultations with Emirates Airline, it was revealed that the global aviation sector is struggling to keep pace with the need for maintenance technicians. Emirates alone requires nearly 150 technicians per month over a 24-month period but is able to recruit only 20 to 25 monthly, despite offering highly competitive salaries. This global context reinforces the importance of national initiatives to build domestic capacity.



PHOTO CREDIT © International Aviation Technical College at Riyadh



In 2013, TVTC launched a strategic initiative to establish a new model of technical education. This initiative led to the formation of Colleges of Excellence, a government-owned company created to contract international training providers to operate the newly formed International Technical Colleges (ITCs). This approach provided greater flexibility in contracting and ensured that the quality and relevance of training programs could be closely monitored and adapted over time. Initially, 30 ITCs were established across the Kingdom. However, after five years, the model was reassessed, and underenrolled colleges in smaller towns were phased out to focus on strengthening the remaining institutions and the broader technical-college network. In a significant step, a royal decree transferred full ownership of Colleges of Excellence to the government, designating it as a strategic entity to elevate the TVET sector and align it with national development goals.

One of the ITCs, International Aviation Technical College (IATC), is a paragon of this strategic transformation. Operating under this new model, IATC plays a critical role in equipping young Saudis with the skills required in aviation engineering and maintenance. Offering both civilian and military training tracks, the college directly supports Vision 2030 objectives by fostering local expertise and reducing dependence on foreign technical labor.



PHOTO CREDIT © International Aviation Technical College at Riyadh

Governance and strategic partnerships

IATC was established as a strategic partnership between Shamal Investment Group and Aviation Australia, an Australian aviation training organization. Its purpose was to meet the growing national demand for aviation maintenance professionals. As a government-owned institution operated by an international training provider, IATC combines global expertise with local strategic direction.

All tuition fees are fully covered by the government through TVTC. In addition, students receive a monthly stipend of SAR 1,000, with sponsoring entities often providing supplementary financial support to attract and motivate high-performing candidates. This sponsorship-based model incentivizes both student performance and industry engagement.

IATC operates under a multistakeholder governance structure designed to ensure relevance, accountability, and excellence. A notable example of this collaboration is the strategic agreement with the Royal Saudi Air Force, which requires the college to deliver approximately 1,100 graduates annually to support military aviation operations. This 10-year agreement reflects the level of trust and reliance placed on the college to supply skilled personnel for critical national functions.

The college's performance is closely monitored through government-mandated KPIs, including graduate employment rates. The IATC celebrated 1,291 graduates for the 2024–2025 academic year, of which 85% of this cohort has already secured employment across Saudi Arabia's civil and military aviation sectors.

This demonstrates strong alignment between training outcomes and labor market needs. As part of its growth strategy, IATC has begun opening its programs to international students, positioning itself as a regional hub for aviation education. The college also participates in student-exchange initiatives supported by TVTC, leveraging its global training-provider network to expand learning opportunities and cultural exchange.

While IATC does not fall under NCSP, and thus is not classified as a strategic partnership institute, strategic industry collaboration is a cornerstone of its success. Unlike colleges under the strategic partnership model, IATC is not exclusively employment linked. However, over the years, it has cultivated strong industry ties that have resulted in sponsorship of several employer-linked cohorts, most notably the multiyear agreement with the Royal Saudi Air Force, which continues to be one of the largest employers of IATC students.

Regular engagement with sponsoring companies ensures that training remains aligned with evolving industry standards and expectations. The college maintains a dedicated Employer Engagement Department responsible for building and sustaining relationships with government, military, and private sector entities. These partnerships have been integral to the college's development and reputation as a flagship institution within the Saudi TVET system.

The governance model supporting IATC is robust and collaborative. For example,

- The land is provided by GACA;
- The physical infrastructure was constructed by TVTC;
- Tuition and stipends are financed by TVTC;
- Aircraft used for training were donated by the Royal Saudi Air Force;
- Additional equipment contributions come from private sector partners; and
- The training provider is an internationally recognized institution from Australia.

An advisory board, composed of key industry stakeholders such as GACA, Riyadh Air, and Flynas, plays a critical role in shaping the strategic direction of the college. Advisory-board members actively guide program development and ensure industry alignment, underscoring their commitment to the institution and its contribution to the national aviation sector. Each sponsoring entity is further supported by dedicated liaison offices within the college, enabling daily interaction, oversight, and coordination regarding student development and training quality. This embedded approach ensures that partners remain closely involved in shaping student success.

The sponsorship process itself is formalized through memoranda of understanding, which outline student benefits and partnership obligations. Sponsorship models vary:

- Some entities engage at the recruitment stage, selecting students directly from the applicant pool.
- Others choose from among current students based on performance metrics and institutional evaluations.

- Many sponsors provide full employment contracts during training, allowing students to access social insurance, health care, additional stipends, and other employee benefits, thereby supporting Saudization and improving post-training outcomes.

The college has witnessed exponential growth in applications. It receives between 60,000 and 70,000 each semester for approximately 900–1,000 available seats. Admission is competitive, with applicants undergoing aptitude and English language testing. Students are selected based on merit and suitability, and final approval is often subject to sponsor-specific criteria, including physical and medical assessments. Currently, around 80 percent of students are sponsored. As Saudi Arabia pursues its strategy to privatize parts of the training sector, IATC is preparing for a new phase of development. While privatization aims to enhance cost efficiency and quality, government funding for students will remain.



PHOTO CREDIT © International Aviation Technical College at Riyadh

Program structure

IATC offers a dual training model, structured to meet both civilian and military aviation needs. Programs are fully accredited, and graduates have the opportunity to pursue higher education through recognition of prior learning and credit-transfer arrangements, both locally and internationally. All students begin with a foundation year focused on building core competencies. This preparatory phase includes English language instruction, targeting a minimum level of proficiency, alongside modules in technical English, Islamic studies, information technology skills, and aviation terminology. A fast-track option is available for students who perform well in placement tests. Successful completion of the foundation year, including the required English proficiency and Islamic studies assessment, is mandatory before students advance into specialized vocational programs. Because of rising demand, the studies in the foundation year have been relocated to a separate campus to accommodate growing enrollment, which currently stands at approximately 4,500 students.

IATC offers seven specialized programs, including one accredited directly by GACA. Graduates of this program are eligible to sit for the official GACA technician licensing examination immediately upon completion. This stands in contrast to other graduates, who typically must complete five years of work experience before qualifying for the exam. The GACA-aligned program is highly competitive and maintains rigorous academic standards, requiring students to achieve a minimum of 70 percent in each module, compared to 60 percent in other programs. Other diploma-level offerings include avionics, aircraft mechanics, drone maintenance (introduced in 2017), and communication datalink systems. Approximately 75 percent of enrolled students are sponsored by military entities, which often direct trainees into tracks that do not require GACA licensing, as their employment contexts do not demand it.



PHOTO CREDIT © International Aviation Technical College at Riyadh

The academic framework at IATC is based on an Australian vocational curriculum, with future revisions under consideration to incorporate updates informed by industry collaboration. For example, cooperation with Saudia Airlines has led to plans for joint training initiatives at the college, including programs for airline employees. These partnerships are expected to contribute to ongoing curriculum development and program alignment.

In parallel, the college places heavy emphasis on career preparation. Students receive comprehensive training in job-search skills, including CV writing, interview preparation, and employer expectations. This support is crucial, as graduates must compete in the job market. The college provides ongoing guidance to help students navigate these transitions successfully. Instruction is delivered in two shifts to maximize access: a morning-to-afternoon session and an afternoon-to-evening session. All instructors work full time, and many have over two decades of industry experience. This deep practical knowledge enriches the training environment, especially in areas such as advanced troubleshooting—where real-world insights often extend beyond textbook content. Students are encouraged to explore beyond the curriculum, and experienced instructors play a vital role in supporting deeper learning.



PHOTO CREDIT © International Aviation Technical College at Riyadh



The college is organized into two divisions, aligning with the nature of students' future employment. One division is designated for military students, while the other operates under the standards of GACA, preparing students for roles in the civilian and private aviation sectors. GACA-designated programs require instruction by licensed professionals, ensuring industry compliance and increasing employability. The college's reputation has attracted leading employers such as Boeing, who actively recruit from the student body. Strong recruitment partnerships are in place with major national airlines, including Saudia and Flynas. These organizations frequently identify candidates prior to graduation and may initiate hiring processes while students are still completing their studies. Many students are motivated to enter the private aviation sector, where they can demonstrate and further develop their hands-on skills in dynamic operational environments.

While IATC primarily focuses on diploma-level training, graduates have successfully transferred to international institutions, including those offering bachelor's degrees in aeronautical sciences. However, the college maintains a strong emphasis on technical skills, responding to industry feedback that highlights a pressing need for practitioners rather than management-focused graduates. Employers prioritize hands-on experience and operational competence over academic credentials alone, a philosophy that underpins the college's approach to training and development.

Lessons, takeaways, and challenges

IATC offers an example of how cohesive partnerships, specialized training, and real-world alignment can create a high-impact skills development model. Several key lessons and success factors emerge from the IATC experience, along with some important challenges that warrant consideration.

At the heart of IATC's success is seamless cooperation among diverse stakeholders. This includes military institutions, civil aviation authorities, regulatory bodies, and private sector employers. This collaboration ensures that training remains relevant, responsive, and rigorous. It further ensures regulatory compliance and creates direct pathways to licensure for qualifying students. Employers also actively contribute equipment, feedback, and employment opportunities. The on-campus liaison office has been instrumental in sustaining this relationship and maintaining training quality.

The specialized focus of IATC differentiates it from more general technical colleges. Its unmatched training resources, including access to 19 types of aircraft, underscore the depth of practical exposure students receive, which is rarely seen even in internationally renowned institutions.

Another lesson is the importance of instructor quality and real-world preparedness. Student feedback consistently emphasizes the pivotal role of instructors, many of whom have over 40 years of industry experience. Their mentorship extends beyond the curriculum, preparing students mentally, physically, and professionally for high-performance work in aviation. Students are trained not only in technical competencies but in job-readiness skills such as CV writing, interview techniques, and employer expectations. In addition, while the formal curriculum provides a solid foundation, instructors frequently supplement it with real-world insights, especially in areas like troubleshooting.

A standout feature of the IATC model is the clear and supported transition from training to employment. Students are supported beyond graduation, particularly in preparing for post-diploma certifications essential for career advancement. External OJT placements also connect students directly with potential employers. Industry representatives observe student performance firsthand, often initiating hiring before graduation. Students express strong confidence in their job readiness. Many report receiving employment offers immediately after graduation, with others assured of opportunities shortly thereafter.



PHOTO CREDIT © International Aviation Technical College at Riyadh

BOX 10

ADVANCING WOMEN IN SAUDI ARABIA'S TVET SYSTEM

The Saudi TVET system, rooted in Vision 2030, is playing a crucial role in adapting its programs and offerings to include female students, especially offerings for workforce development in the sectors in which future economic growth is expected as the economy shifts from the oil and gas sectors. The TVET system has made significant advancements in bringing female students workforce and skills development in their TVTC institutions and colleges. Recent enrollment data show that female participation in TVET studies has more than doubled in the past few years. TVTC's overall strategy incorporated gender diversity and advancement of opportunities for men and women as key strategic goals. Several institutions dedicated to female TVET education have been established.

TVTC also expanded its offerings for women in colleges that were previously only open to men in the strategic areas of future economic

growth, such as tourism, hospitality, aviation, green jobs (for example, renewable energy), information and communication technologies, and cybersecurity. IATC is one previously male-only college that opened its doors to its first female cohort.

In late 2023, IATC announced the launch of a women's training cohort, in partnership with Riyadh Air, marking a groundbreaking step in advancing gender inclusion in technical aviation roles. Female students receive comprehensive support, including housing, transportation, a living stipend, and guaranteed placement with Riyadh Air after graduation. During the development of this report, the research team met with members of this cohort. Many female students recounted transformative personal journeys, including transitioning from unrelated fields, experiencing familial pride and support, and feeling fully integrated into the aviation community.



“Riyadh Air feels like a family. They visit us regularly, host us during their corporate events, and invite us regularly to their headquarter. Some of their employees even connect with us on LinkedIn, where we’re listed as part of the company. It’s not like they just placed us here; we genuinely feel like part of the company.”

—Female Student, IATC, Riyadh Air Cohort

“From the moment I applied, I felt proud, even if I were to have been rejected, just going through the experience was exciting. The hands-on training was actually fun. I’m grateful I got to be part of it and see the airplanes and the hangar up close.”

—Female Student, IATC, Riyadh Air Cohort

The visibility of female students has drawn attention from other aviation employers, many of whom are actively seeking to recruit female graduates. This reflects both market demand and alignment with the broader national aviation strategy to diversify the workforce. While the program model is robust, certain challenges remain. For example, some students enter the program with limited knowledge of aviation, leading to initial anxiety, particularly around practical assessments. However, additional mock tests, guided practice, and instructor support help build student confidence and capability. The IATC model illustrates the transformative impact of coordinated, demand-led skills development rooted in deep industry engagement and specialized training. Its success stems not only from its facilities and curriculum, but its alignment with employer needs, emphasis on instructor expertise, and commitment to inclusive talent development. The IATC model offers valuable lessons for other countries or sectors seeking to replicate high-quality technical training pathways that bridge education and employment.

BOX 11

CENTERS FOR INNOVATIVE CRAFTMANSHIP AND CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE IN THE NETHERLANDS



An example of innovative partnerships in the Netherlands is centers for innovative craftsmanship and centers of excellence. A change in industrial policy led to the emergence of more than 160 PPPs, involving over 9,800 companies, 5,000 teachers, and 84,000 students. These partnerships include centers for innovative craftsmanship in schools, which provide upper-secondary VET, as well as colleges of excellence in higher professional education. Through partnerships, the centers aim to enhance both educational and labor market innovations. The centers are supported by state grants and co-financed with private capital. Requirements to establish a center include drafting a business plan that meets a series of conditions, including

- Indicating a joint ambition between partners to establish a new learning environment;
- At least a 50/50 percent split in budget between public and private partners;
- Operational and financial aspects are the joint responsibility of public and private partners, but the secretariat of the partnership must remain with the public partners;
- The PPP centers must continue to follow the formal state-supported requirements for their respective levels of education;
- The business plan must include a long-term financial sustainability plan, and each center must become financially independent within five years.²⁷

²⁷ ETA, 2020b.

An example is the Centre for Innovative Craftsmanship Water (CIV Water), which takes a life-long-learning approach to educating individuals in the field of water. CIV collaborates with several educational institutes like MBO Life Sciences and semigovernmental organizations such as Waterskip Fryslân and Vitens to develop awareness

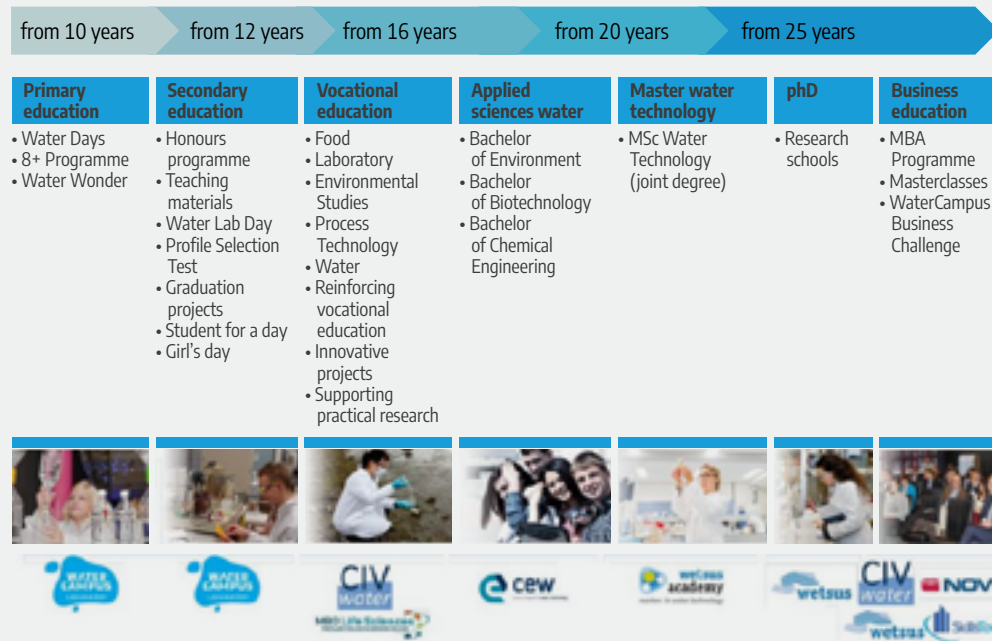
campaigns at the school level, tailored educational programs for VET students, and higher education programs.

Knowledge from partnerships is directly transferred to intermediate vocational education curricula, which, in turn, produce skilled individuals to take the sector forward.

Study track water Leeuwarden

LIFELONG LEARNING

AGE



Source: COVE Water, The Netherlands—PoVE Water



LESSONS LEARNED

CH.

This report set out to explore good practice examples of PPPs in Saudi Arabia and beyond in order to document what makes them successful. Effective PPPs can be a central driver in promoting the attractiveness and impact of TVET systems. TVET systems have long been plagued by negative perceptions about their quality, lack of graduate employability, and reinforcement of gender stereotypes in career options. The PPP cases highlighted in this report illustrate the potential to change the perception of TVET systems. This is particularly important because of how TVET systems have been positioned as key players in the advancement of skill systems in general. As noted earlier, by foregrounding examples of effective PPPs in Saudi Arabia, this report aims not only to highlight the achievements of TVTC but to provide transferable lessons about practices that can inform similar efforts in other contexts, sectors, and countries. The examples from Saudi Arabia and other contexts clearly illustrate the value of PPPs in advancing TVET. While the partnerships differ in design, scope, and implementation, they collectively demonstrate how PPPs can be leveraged to align skills development with economic needs, enhance quality, and increase employability.

MOVING SAUDI ARABIAN PPPs FROM GOOD PRACTICE TO BEST PRACTICE

A central lesson of the case studies is that there is no one-size-fits-all model. Each PPP must be designed to fit its unique national, regional, and institutional context. The Saudi Arabian examples show that a coordinating body, such as NCSP, provides a structured approach that facilitates the development of institutes and academies of excellence and their alignment with national skills objectives. Even among NCSP-affiliated institutions, there are varied focus areas and approaches to skills development. This diversity within a coordinated framework is one of the model's key strengths. A comparable coordinating role is played by Singapore's EDB, which also helps to catalyze effective, scalable partnerships. In Europe, extensive funding and policy-level support have enabled the creation of CoVEs, often integrated within larger skill networks and communities of practice. These structures provide motivation and infrastructure for sustained collaboration between public and private actors. Bangladesh offers another instructive example, where the emphasis is on implementing, learning, and iterating, adapting successful practices and discarding those that do not deliver. The Netherlands highlights the potential of PPPs to extend beyond traditional TVET and into lifelong learning, specialization, and continuous professional development.



PHOTO CREDIT © Saudi Electric Services Polytechnic

While the Saudi Arabian cases are considered good practice in facilitating the establishment of PPPs to diversify skill development, there is room for improvement toward positioning these cases as international best practices. A key need is to formalize and track KPIs that would provide concrete evidence of the outcomes of PPPs. Another is to continue raising awareness within the private sector about the value of vocational training to increase partnership and investment opportunities. TVET colleges also need to clearly differentiate themselves in a competitive education landscape, thereby increasing the perceived value of a vocational qualification. Last, many institutions are striving to maintain a strong commitment to quality while heeding the financial imperatives of scale and sustainability.

As part of its plans to expand the strategic partnership model, NCSP is working on developing a comprehensive set of indicators to measure the performance of partner institutes. This includes updating current indicators, designing new KPIs, and creating tools for collecting data accurately, which will be applied across all institutes. The proposed indicators were selected based on an analysis of international, national, and institutional strategies and indices, as well as input from surveys of current strategic partnership institutes. Key references for developing the indicators include the National Transformation Program, the Human Capability Development Program, the Education and Training Evaluation Commission strategy, the Institutional Accreditation Standards of the National Center for Training Assessment and Accreditation, UNDP's Global Knowledge Index, and the IMD World Competitiveness Index 2024, among a total of 14 sources.

The proposed indicators aim to support strategic partnerships in assessing their performance in terms of labor market alignment, quality, Vision 2030 objectives, educational outcomes, and stakeholder engagement. These indicators cover the availability and effectiveness of institutional policies, procedures, and strategic and operational plans, as well as the quality of training processes, including instructor recruitment, professional development, and trainee outcomes. The framework also incorporates mechanisms for accurate data collection and reporting, such as the systematic documentation of reports, minutes, and records that track institutional activities and progress. Stakeholder satisfaction

is measured across all key groups, trainees, trainers, faculty and administrative staff, sponsoring companies, graduates, and the board of directors, ensuring that diverse perspectives inform ongoing evaluation and improvement. Furthermore, the indicators draw on national and international benchmarks, including drop-out rates, accreditation status, equity of access, entrepreneurship, private sector participation, and graduate employment, ensuring alignment of institutional performance with strategic priorities and labor market needs. This holistic approach reflects NCSP's commitment to continuous improvement and accountability.

As with advancements in identifying indicators to measure the success of these initiatives, TVTC, through NCSP, will keep strengthening the nature and impact of PPPs. Looking at the case studies shared in this report, it is clear that the NCSP model has achieved success within the Kingdom and that it has the potential to transform perceptions of the value and relevance of vocational education and training. This is particularly significant in a place that is prioritizing the development of a coordinated skills development system, the diversification of skills among Saudi nationals, the advancement of women in the labor market, and the advancement of key sectors by strengthening skill supply and demand. Therefore, while there is room for improvement in positioning the NCSP PPPs as international best practices, the case studies reveal common features that contribute to the quality, industry alignment, and strategic focus of effective PPPs, which should inform replication efforts in other contexts.



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BOX 12

2025 NCSP STRATEGY FOR EXPANSION THROUGH IDENTIFYING LABOR MARKET NEEDS

Following the success of the strategic partnership model in Saudi Arabia, NCSP is working toward an expansion strategy, for which NCSP conducted an integrated analysis to review its current operating model to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities, and to pinpoint gaps, with the aim of developing a plan to support the growth of the model across the country. Working closely with Colleges of Excellence, key components of the plan include

- Creating a new business model;
- Developing plans for quality monitoring;
- Establishing a portal for strategic national partners;
- Automating company services;

- Developing marketing and communication plans;
- Identifying key performance indicators.

An integral part of the expansion strategy is to ensure alignment of the training units with labor market needs. The study aimed to identify and define high-priority strategic sectors and listed professions, specializations, strategic partners, supporting entities, and recruitment companies. These findings will guide NCSP toward key sectors that might benefit from PPPs. Building on those findings, NCSP aims to develop a communication plan and training unit for each sector, as well as focusing on nonpriority sectors to design criteria to evaluate opportunities and requests from these sectors.

The labor market study was structured into four distinct phases:

Phase 1: Identify priority sectors

This included mapping and prioritizing economic activities and sectors, which was done through looking at the estimated contribution of economic activities to gross domestic product (GDP) from the past five years and the projected next five. Next, it conducted an assessment of the contribution of the subeconomic activities to the labor market through the number of newly created jobs. Thus, they were able to determine priority sectors and strategic subsectors as follows:

target groups of graduates from strategic partnership institutes by sector. This phase included a large-scale survey of target employers from the identified sector, which identified priority occupations and previous and planned hiring trends, and from there identifying the educational specializations required for these occupations.

Phase 3: Identify required occupations within mega-projects

This phase included studying ongoing and upcoming mega-projects in Saudi Arabia, such as NEOM, special economic zones, the Red Sea, and King Salman Energy Park, among 16 projects. The study examined each project's strategy, identified required occupations, and compiled a consolidated list of aligned occupations required across these projects.

Phase 4: Supply-demand gap analysis in priority sectors

The final phase of the project evaluated the balance the current demand and supply from the mapped

occupations in each priority sector and region to identify occupational gaps in workforce availability.

The results of this study aim to inform the development of new strategic partnership training units with relevant offerings that are responsive and linked to real sectoral needs, and the following outputs are produced:

- Sectoral mapping and prioritization reports;
- Occupational-needs assessments;
- Mega-project workforce-requirement lists;
- Regional demand-supply gap analyses;
- Strategic partnership proposals;
- Recommendations for sectoral development.

Throughout the implementation of the expansion strategy, NCSP aims to monitor progress against defined KPIs and adjust strategies as needed. The strategy also aims to design a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track and assess progress of new units.

Contribution to GDP	High	First Priority	First Priority	First Priority
	Medium	First Priority	Second Priority	Second Priority
	Low	First Priority	Second Priority	Third Priority
		High	Medium	Low
		Contribution to the Labor Market		

Phase 2: Analyze sectoral occupational and specialization needs

This phase includes identifying the

REPLICATING PPPs IN OTHER CONTEXTS

Some key lessons and enabling conditions for replicating effective PPPs in TVET can be gleaned from the case studies in this report. An example of a proposal to establish a PPP is provided in Appendix A. The lessons include the following:

1. Cultivating good governance and strong partnerships

A foundational element of success among PPPs in TVET systems is strong and sustained government support. This includes providing a legislative framework to support PPP agreements and providing incentives, such as funding, recognition programs, and formal agreements that encourage meaningful private sector engagement. Having PPP legislation in place is important to regulate and support such agreements; however, it is often generic and does not cater to all sector-specific needs. Having an entity such as NCSP that negotiates on behalf of the public sector, and ensures that PPP agreements meet the strategic national needs of skill development, is an important caveat of introducing supportive legislation.

PPP institutions also typically enjoy more autonomy than standard TVET colleges, enabling them to adopt professional governance structures that emphasize efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness to labor market demands. National policies should acknowledge and actively support this autonomy, as it allows institutions to remain agile and industry relevant. From the Saudi Arabian case studies, it is clear that without the backing and strategic involvement of entities such as HRDF, TVTC, and relevant ministries, initiatives of this kind would not be possible. The government's commitment to Saudization and long-term workforce development is a cornerstone of the model's success, ensuring that local talent is equipped to gradually replace expatriate labor and assume key roles across the hospitality and tourism sector.

Within this enabling environment, effective PPPs are built on strong, trust-based relationships with private sector partners. These relationships are characterized by deep engagement, in which companies contribute time, share expertise, co-design curricula, and provide ongoing feedback. Such collaboration ensures that training programs remain current, targeted, and aligned with real-world needs. Establishing a coordinating entity, such as NCSP, could help facilitate relationships with sector councils and the private sector in general to find and sustain strong partnerships.

Also critical to sustaining this ecosystem is the strategic leadership provided by the institution's BOT. Carefully selected boards serve not only as governance bodies but as key architects of institutional strategy, ensuring alignment with both public policy goals and market expectations. Their role in appointing and supporting a capable, adaptable CEO further strengthens the institution's leadership, operational excellence, and long-term success.

2. Excellence and institutional distinctiveness

PPPs are most effective when focused on advanced and emerging sectors. This specialization allows institutions to address both traditional and future-oriented skills gaps, ensuring that graduates are prepared for evolving labor markets. The ability to design tailor-made programs in collaboration with industry ensures PPPs' relevance and impact. This distinguishes PPP-based academies or institutes from general colleges. In addition, offering lifelong learning opportunities, such as upskilling and reskilling programs, master classes, and specialized short courses, can help PPPs meet the evolving needs of industry and enhances workforce adaptability.

3. Quality assurance and international collaboration

Accreditation processes are essential for building trust with employers and validating the quality of training programs. In addition, international-local partnerships add value by fostering shared governance, enabling knowledge exchange, and promoting best practices. Their success is built on regular monitoring, transparency, and mutual understanding.

4. Finding the right people

Success begins with selecting the right candidates—both students and staff. Structured recruitment and interview processes help ensure the right fit for each program. Several case studies in this report also stress that having instructors with industry experience who treat students as future colleagues rather than passive learners enhances the professional nature of training.

5. Responsiveness to stakeholder needs

A client-centered approach is fundamental. Institutions that prioritize understanding the needs of both their sponsors and their students are better able to remain relevant. Mechanisms such as regular feedback surveys and institutional action plans help ensure continuous improvement and alignment with expectations.

6. Strengthening the link between education and employment

A key value proposition of PPPs is improved employability of trainees. Employer involvement in curriculum development and recruitment creates direct pathways from training to work, often including guaranteed job placement. Real-world preparedness is emphasized, not only through technical training but through the development of soft skills and professional behaviors. Many institutions incorporate work-based learning or structured OJT, developed in close coordination with employers and supported by individual learning plans, supervision, and performance assessment. Further, exposure to professional environments, such as innovation hubs, simulated workspaces, and industry events, helps build students' networks and readiness.



7. Institutional flexibility and inclusiveness

Flexibility is a defining feature of successful PPP-based TVET institutions.

The ability to shift focus, launch new programs, or engage with new sectors enables ongoing relevance and innovation. This adaptability often includes developing internal marketing and outreach teams to engage new employer partners and secure the long-term sustainability of the institution. Inclusion is also a critical goal. Programs that support underrepresented groups, such as women in aviation, demonstrate how PPPs can contribute to equity as well as economic goals.

8. Global orientation and language skills

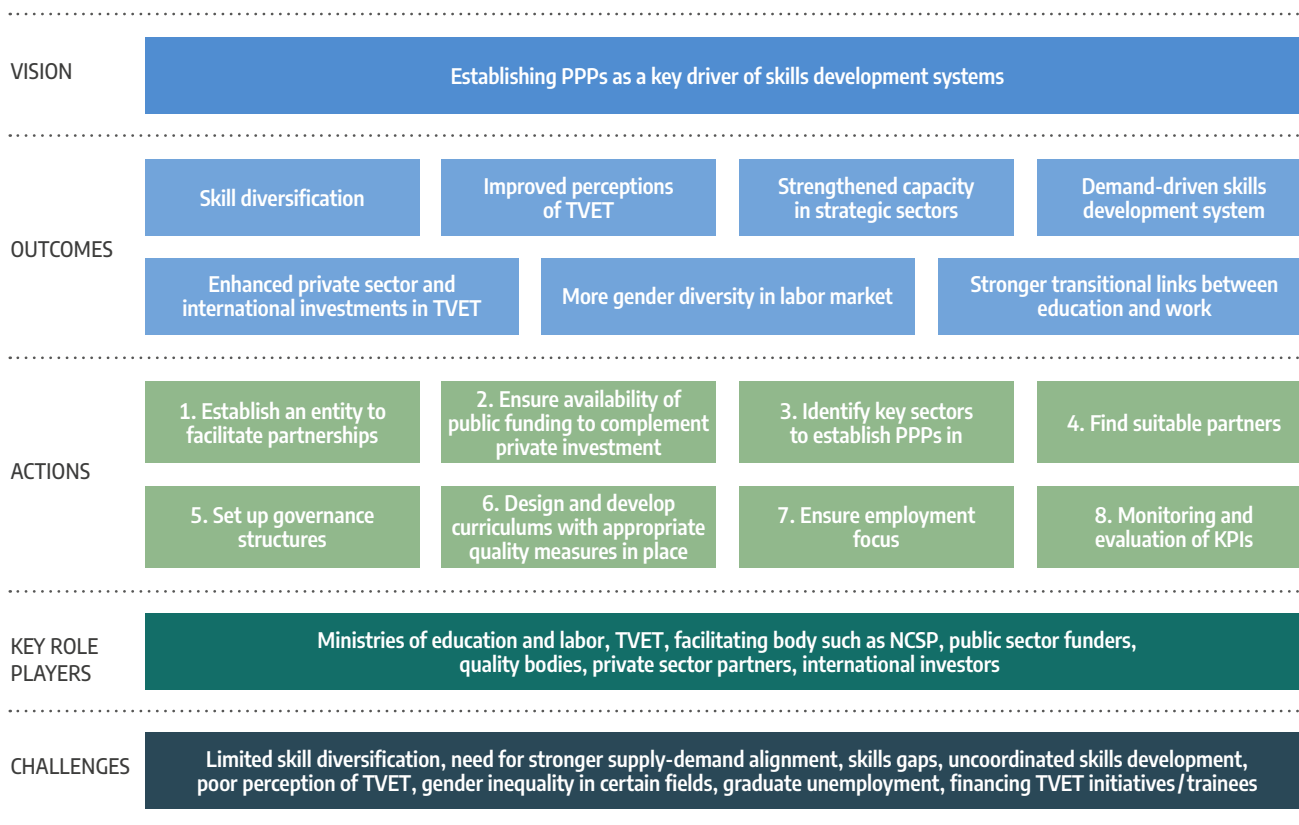
English language proficiency and international competencies are increasingly important. This is especially true for institutions aiming to partner globally and prepare graduates for a competitive global labor market.

Taken together, these lessons emphasize that effective PPPs in TVET require thoughtful design, committed leadership, and flexible, responsive structures. While each context will shape how such partnerships are developed and implemented, the principles shared here offer a practical guide for replication. As countries continue to navigate complex economic and employment challenges, PPPs offer a powerful means of bridging the gap between education and the world of work, driving innovation, supporting economic diversification, and preparing learners for the future.

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO ESTABLISHING PPPs

From the lessons outlined above, a clear picture emerges to guide sectors, industries, or countries toward establishing effective PPPs to drive skills development systems. This is captured as a proposed theory of change in Figure 15.

FIG. 15 Suggested theory of change for establishing PPPs



In pursuit of a vision of establishing PPPs as a key driver of skills development systems, and responding to typical challenges experienced with TVET systems, such as skills gaps, poor perceptions of TVET qualifications, and the need for stronger supply-demand alignment in certain sectors, the theory of change suggests taking eight key actions:

1. **Establish an entity to facilitate partnerships.** The role of NCSP is vital in identifying strategic sectors to target, finding appropriate private sector partners, facilitating agreements with such partners, negotiating public funding support, overseeing the quality and relevance of training, and ensuring that all parties' needs (those of the public and private sectors, as well as trainees) are adequately met through the partnership.

2. **Ensure availability of public funding to complement private investment.** In the Saudi Arabian context, HRDF plays an important role in supporting trainees and contributing to the overall cost of training. Making use of dedicated skills funds, levies, or other means of supporting skills development is an important contribution the public sector can make to support the partnership.
3. **Identify key sectors in which to establish PPPs.** Ensuring alignment between PPPs and national priorities is important. Policy documents, such as Vision 2030 or the Labor Market Strategy in Saudi Arabia, provide guidance as to which sectors are important to focus on. Using this guidance, together with relevant labor market information, is an integral part of strategic alignment of efforts.
4. **Find suitable partners.** As seen throughout the report, identifying partners that are equally invested and motivated is vital for the success of PPPs. A thorough process of analyzing needs and expectations is important to make sure all stakeholders are satisfied with the terms of the agreement. In addition, finding suitable trainees is equally important, particularly to provide opportunities to those who meet relevant requirements or to provide opportunities for underserved groups.
5. **Set up governance structures.** A key lesson from the case studies is the importance of strong governance structures to oversee PPP implementation. This includes continued government support, having a reliable board or committee overseeing day-to-day governance, and nurturing public-private partner relationships within such agreements.
6. **Design and develop curricula with appropriate quality measures in place.** It is important for curricula to be led by employers and the demand side. The design and development of curricula should take quality standards into account, and, where possible, seek accreditation from national or international bodies.
7. **Monitor and evaluate KPIs.** A monitoring and evaluation framework should be developed as part of the PPP agreement. This includes identifying specific outcomes the partnership wishes to achieve, along with measurable and time-bound KPIs that are used to measure impact, and track longitudinal progress of initiatives.

These actions, if implemented well, are likely to lead to a set of desired outcomes that include skill diversification, improved perceptions of TVET, strengthened capacity in key strategic sectors, enhanced private sector and international investment in TVET, more gender diversity in the labor market, and stronger transitional links between education and work.



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APPENDIX 1: PPP PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

The establishment of the [Academy Name] , will be a joint effort between the [public partner] and [Company Name] . The agreement aims to produce a specialized [academy/institute/other] dedicated to developing and empowering national talent to lead transformative progress in the [sector name] sector. This effort aligns with broader national aspirations and adheres to international standards. As a strategic initiative, it marks a key step toward offering high-quality academic and training programs that prepare qualified national cadres to play an active role in driving positive change within the sector.

[Use this introductory space to further expand on the company, its vision, mission, and values, and the proposed value such a partnership will bring to the sector.]

Sector needs:

[Add evidence of sectoral skill needs, employment demand projections within relevant sectors, or other evidence/labor market information that support skill development efforts in relevant sectors]

Proposed name of academy/institute:

Overview of the academy/institute and the purpose of its establishment:

[Explain the intended focus of the academy/institute and how it responds to international/national/sectoral needs. Include specific reference to specialization areas, and strategic/developmental opportunities that can be leveraged through the academy/institute, or specific challenges that it will address]

Governance and partner roles:

[Explain how the partnership will work and how the PPP will be governed]

Objectives:

[list at least three objectives the academy/institute will pursue. Also add how these objectives align strategically with national priorities]

Target sector:

Target location(s):

Target numbers:

[Explain who the target market is for enrollments, whether there are equity targets the partnership will pursue, and how many enrollments and graduates are estimated —also include strategic efforts that will be put in place to reach targets]

Expected starting date:

Financial arrangements:

[Explain the financial arrangements of the partnership, including expected cost per student, and expected return on investment for partners]

Indicators:

[Include key indicators that will be tracked to ensure quality and establish the success of the partnership and academy/institute]

