



# DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION TIPS TOOLS INSIGHTS PRACTICES

## In practice

# KOREA'S GRANT SUPPORT FOR TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN UZBEKISTAN

### Key messages

In Uzbekistan, the [Korea International Cooperation Agency \(KOICA\)](#) has worked to build human capital and match skills to employment opportunities through its support for five vocational training centres. It has worked to develop curricula for technical training, nurture vocational trainers and introduce a state-certified test system.

### Keywords

Human resources | Learning and knowledge management

### Key partner

Korea

### Challenge

One of the three key pillars of [KOICA's Education Mid-Term Strategy 2021-2025](#) is cultivating talent via technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and post-secondary support. Uzbekistan is the most populous country in Central Asia with 35 million people, 64% of whom are under the age of 30, and with 500 000 youths entering the job market each year. KOICA supports inclusive development and youth empowerment through quality education in Uzbekistan.

### Approach

KOICA's country portfolio evaluation of 16 projects in Uzbekistan cites the high potential and impact of investments in human capital. This is in line with KOICA's objective to develop a high-quality industrial workforce through its grant support for five vocational training centres (VTCs) for the unemployed population in Tashkent, Samarkand, Shahrisabz and Fergana plus a centre that is currently being established in the city of Urgench.

KOICA worked with partners to establish and advance VTCs, develop curricula for technical training, nurture vocational trainers and introduce a state-certified test system. In doing so, Korea works to address vulnerable populations and inequality outside of the capital and main cities.

Some highlights of KOICA's TVET investments include:

- A legal foundation was established to enable VTCs to actively operate within Uzbekistan's vocational training system. Tashkent VTC plays an important role in training and improving the overall system in Uzbekistan and maintains strong links to responsible ministries, donors, and the sector working group on education and TVET.
- Starting from Shahrissabz VTC, tailored programmes have been implemented to facilitate women's employment and empower women in the workplace.
- Within the Fergana VTC, KOICA provided teacher training for instructors from other related organisations nationwide in the field of TVET, contributing to the government's efforts to reduce unemployment.

## Results

- **Developing skills to match employment opportunities across industries:** Over a period of 11 years, a total of 11 736 people (9 794 men and 1 942 women) completed training in information and communication technology, electronics, car maintenance, metal working, welding, the textile industry, and cosmetology.
- **High completion and employment rates:** The overall graduation rate was 86%, leading to a 94% employment rate and a 97% satisfaction rate among hiring enterprises.
- **High potential for growth:** An evaluation assessed the Uzbekistan vocational training cluster projects since 2012 and found TVET to be a cluster of excellence in the overall country portfolio and one with a high potential for future growth.
- **Strategies for expansion and market enlargement:** Korea is considering opportunities to expand work on VTCs, improve the institutional system through capacity building, and enlarge the market including through policy- and programme-based loans with a potential to further link KOICA and the Export-Import Bank of Korea (KEXIM) activities.

## Lessons learnt

- **Involve the partner government from the start to ensure sustainability and meet accreditation needs.** For example, setting salaries at a level that can assure quality teaching must be done by government resolution, such as presidential decree, for each centre in Uzbekistan, and this takes time. The Uzbek government also wanted to make sure that the certification from TVETs was recognised beyond Korea and Uzbekistan, including by the European Union, to open further job market opportunities.
- **Actively partner with local businesses to enhance employment.** The Samarkand VTC, for example, has strong links to 205 local enterprises, which has increased employment and entrepreneurship rates of VTC graduates, including through the implementation of on-the-job training programmes.
- **Link support to VTC to economic migration.** [Korea's Employment Permit Scheme](#) also benefits from the skills training of Uzbekistan workers that migrate to Korea for 3 years and send remittances back to Uzbekistan.

- **Foster greater ownership on the part of the partner government and local communities.**  
Korea and its partners could ensure regular opportunities for stakeholders to share progress and give feedback on projects.

### Further information

KMA Consultants Inc. (2021), *KOICA Country Portfolio Evaluation: Uzbekistan*, [http://www.koica.go.kr/sites/evaluation\\_en/article/view/890](http://www.koica.go.kr/sites/evaluation_en/article/view/890).

Korea International Cooperation Agency (2020), *Evaluation Lessons of Education Sector*, [http://www.koica.go.kr/sites/evaluation\\_en/article/view/909](http://www.koica.go.kr/sites/evaluation_en/article/view/909).

### OECD resources

OECD (2024), *OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Korea 2024*, OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, [forthcoming].

OECD (2023), "Determining how Iceland's scholarship and training programmes contribute to development", *Development Co-operation TIPS*, [www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning/practices/determining-how-iceland-s-scholarship-and-training-programmes-contribute-to-development-a695529b/](http://www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning/practices/determining-how-iceland-s-scholarship-and-training-programmes-contribute-to-development-a695529b/).

OECD (2023), "The Czech Republic uses evaluations to strengthen scholarships and deepen partnerships with universities", *Development Co-operation TIPS*, [www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning/practices/the-czech-republic-uses-evaluations-to-strengthen-scholarships-and-deepen-partnerships-with-universities-19ccc842/](http://www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning/practices/the-czech-republic-uses-evaluations-to-strengthen-scholarships-and-deepen-partnerships-with-universities-19ccc842/).

### To learn more about the Korea's development co-operation, see:

OECD, "Korea", in *Development Co-operation Profiles*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/d919ff1a-en>.

See more *In Practice* examples from Korea here: <https://www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning?tag-key+partner=korea#search>.

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