Tracer Study 2013
Vocational Education and Training in Lao PDR
Final Report

Lao-German Development Consulting
Teamwork for Sustainable Vocational Education and Training & Local Business Development

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Content

List of figures ........................................................................................................................................... 5
List of Tables ............................................................................................................................................ 6
List of Abbreviations ................................................................................................................................ 7

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 8

1.1 Preface ............................................................................................................................................ 8
1.2 Rationale ........................................................................................................................................ 8
1.3 Objectives and Challenges of TVET Development ........................................................................ 8
1.4 Objectives of the Tracer Study 2013 (ToR) .................................................................................. 12

2. Methodology and Implementation of TS 2013 ............................................................................... 12

2.1 Design and Methodology ............................................................................................................... 12
2.2 Expected results of the Tracer Study 2013 ................................................................................ 14
2.3 Timeframe of Tracer Study 2013 ................................................................................................ 15
2.4 Sample of Tracer Study 2013 ....................................................................................................... 15
2.4.1 The TVET institutions ........................................................................................................... 15
2.4.2 The TVET graduates ............................................................................................................ 15
2.4.3 The enterprises ................................................................................................................... 17
2.5 Fieldwork ....................................................................................................................................... 17

3. Findings of Tracer Study 2013 ........................................................................................................ 19

3.1 Patterns of the sample ................................................................................................................... 19
3.2 Status of students ........................................................................................................................... 19
3.3 Basic Findings with Regard to Employment ............................................................................... 21
3.4 Pattern of the Enterprise Sample ................................................................................................ 23
3.5 Basic Findings with Regard to Satisfaction of Employers ................................................................ 24
3.6 Wage Structure of Employed Graduates .................................................................................... 26
3.7 Assessment of Training by Graduates ........................................................................................... 27

4. Major Results ....................................................................................................................................... 29

4.1 Structure and Patterns of Enrolment ............................................................................................ 29
4.2 Aspects of Employment ................................................................................................................. 31
4.3 Characteristics of IVET schools .................................................................................................. 35
4.4 Employment patterns by field of occupation ............................................................................... 37
4.5 Pattern and Opportunities of Cooperation with Enterprises ..................................................... 41

5. Conclusions and Recommendations ................................................................................................. 43

5.1 Conclusions regarding Major Results .......................................................................................... 43
5.2 Recommendations and Orientations ............................................................................................. 43
5.2.1 For Further Development in the Field of TVET ...................................................................... 43
5.2.2 For future tracer studies and additional research .................................................................... 46

Annexes ................................................................................................................................................. 48
List of figures

Figure 1: Interviewed graduates in 12 selected schools 2011 vs. 2013 .................................................. 17
Figure 2: Graduates by year of graduation ............................................................................................ 19
Figure 3: Gender composition ............................................................................................................. 19
Figure 4: Status of students ................................................................................................................ 20
Figure 5: Share of paying students in schools in the TC-13 (2011/12) .................................................. 20
Figure 6: Share of paying students ..................................................................................................... 21
Figure 7: Share of employment .......................................................................................................... 21
Figure 8: Employment 2006, 2011 and 2013 .................................................................................... 22
Figure 9: Time until first employment ............................................................................................... 22
Figure 10: Enterprises by size ............................................................................................................. 23
Figure 11: Enterprises by type ............................................................................................................. 23
Figure 12: Enterprises by business sector ......................................................................................... 23
Figure 13: Training of employed admin staff .................................................................................... 24
Figure 14: Training of employed technical staff ................................................................................ 24
Figure 15: Comparison of level graduates with older staff ............................................................... 26
Figure 16: Structure of wages 2013 .................................................................................................. 26
Figure 17: Rating of usefulness of training ....................................................................................... 27
Figure 18: Rating of usefulness of theoretical and practical training ............................................... 27
Figure 19: Usefulness of certificate 2013 vs. 2011 ............................................................................. 28
Figure 20: Level of general education ............................................................................................... 29
Figure 21: Level of vocational training ............................................................................................. 29
Figure 22: Levels of vocational training 2006, 2011, and 2013 ....................................................... 29
Figure 23: All students at 12 selected schools by level of training (2012) ........................................ 30
Figure 24: Interviewed by field of training ....................................................................................... 30
Figure 25: Selection of occupation .................................................................................................. 31
Figure 26: Type of employment ....................................................................................................... 31
Figure 27: Employment by type of ownership .................................................................................. 31
Figure 28: Size of employing enterprise .......................................................................................... 32
Figure 29: Employment corresponding to received training .......................................................... 33
Figure 30: Level of responsibility ................................................................................................... 33
Figure 31: Employed graduates by level of responsibility 2011 and 2013 ....................................... 34
Figure 32: Reasons for unemployment ............................................................................................ 34
Figure 33: Level of qualification by school type and gender ............................................................ 35
Figure 34: Employment by school type ........................................................................................... 36
Figure 35: Wage by school type ....................................................................................................... 36
Figure 36: Employment pattern by school type and year ............................................................... 37
Figure 37: Employment by field of occupation and type of school ................................................ 38
Figure 38: Employment by field of occupation, school type and sector of employment ................... 39
Figure 39: Employment of graduates of TVET schools in accounting and business administration .. 40
Figure 40: Share of employment by occupation in accounting and business administration .......... 40
Figure 41: Share of self-employed graduates by field of occupation and school type ....................... 41
Figure 42: Companies accepting trainees by duration ..................................................................... 42
Figure 43: Form of supervision of trainees ....................................................................................... 42
List of Tables

Table 1: Schools by type and region............................................................................................................. 15
Table 2: Number of graduates in TS13, number of graduates 2012 in TS13 and total number of final year
students in respective TVET schools ........................................................................................................ 16
Table 3: Entrepreneurs by province............................................................................................................ 17
Table 4: Ability to work by level of training (admin staff)........................................................................ 25
Table 5: Ability to work by level of training (technical staff) ..................................................................... 25
Table 6: Satisfaction of employers by level of training (admin. staff)....................................................... 25
Table 7: Satisfaction of employers by level of training (technical staff).................................................... 26
List of Abbreviations

AEC  ASEAN Economic Community
AFA  Education for all
DTVE  Department of Technical and Vocational Training
EA&P  East Asia and Pacific
EMIS  Employment Management Information System
ES  Enterprise Survey
ESDF  Education Sector Development Framework
GoL  Government of Laos
HRD  Human Resources Development
HRDME  Human Resources Development for a Market Economy (programme)
IVET  Integrated Vocational Education and Training
Lao PDR  Lao People’s Democratic Republic
LGDC  Lao-German Development Consulting Co.
LGTS  Lao-German Technical School
LMIS  Labour Market Information System
LNCCI  Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
MoE  Ministry of Education
MoES  Ministry of Education and Sports
MoLSW  Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MPI  Ministry of Planning and Investment
NBTS  National Baseline Tracer Study
NQF  National Qualification Framework
NSEDP  National Socio-Economic Development Plan
NTC  National Training Council
NTS  National Tracer Study
PESS  Provincila Education and Sports Service
QAM  Quality Assurance Mechanism
SD  Skills Development
ToR  Terms of Reference
TS-13  Tracer Study 2013
TVET  Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO  United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VEDI  Vocational Education Development Institute
VELA  Vocational Education in Laos
VET  Vocational Education and Training

...
1. Introduction

1.1 Preface
This report is the result of joint efforts involving the *Department of Technical and Vocational Education* (DTVE) of the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Lao-German Program ‘Human Resource Development for Market Economy’ (HRDME III) and contracted consultants.

This report follows similar undertakings, namely the *National Baseline Tracer Study 2006* and the *National Tracer Study 2011* and tries to provide comparable information. However, due to changing circumstances the focus of this year’s tracers study shifted towards Integrated Vocational Education and Training (IVET) Schools keeping a number of TVET institutions as control group in the sample. On the other hand more detailed information has been collected from employers of graduates of vocational training institutions thereby allowing a better analysis to be conducted directly relating to the relationship between vocational training and labour markets. The Tracer Study 2013 (TS-13) was conducted from April to October 2013 by Lao-German Development Consulting in cooperation with DTVE and the respective schools.

1.2 Rationale
The rationale of the TS-13 is “to provide empirical data about placement on the labour market of graduates of selected vocational schools in Lao PDR”. In doing so the study of 2013 follows two main objectives. Firstly it follows the tracer studies 2006 and 2011 with the aim to provide information about the achievement of the objectives of HRDME phase III (2011-2014) against defined indicators. On the other hand the study is used also to provide essential information for the upcoming new projects in the field of vocational training as a baseline.

In practical term the Tracer Study has to provide data for indicator 3 of HRDME which reads: “The share of female graduates of six IVET and one supported TVET institutions getting employed or self-employed in their respective professions within 6 months after graduation increases from 36.5% (2010) to at least 40% (2014)”.

The study provides also major information concerning labour-market orientation of vocational training. In this connection the study provides some reflections and recommendations about the readiness of the current TVET system under MoES to respond to the needs of the growing national economy of Lao PDR.

Furthermore the tracer study delivers baseline data for indicators of the new VELA project scheduled to start in 2014 in relation to employment and income of graduates as well as satisfaction of employers with the quality of graduates.

1.3 Objectives and Challenges of TVET Development
Since 2006, the year of the first TVET tracer study which was delivered by the Lao-German HRDME project, several policy efforts, strategies and plans have been initiated, among them the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy in 2006, the National Socio-Economic Development Plans (6th NSEDP 2006-2010 and 7th
NSED 2011-2015), the National Education System Reform Strategy 2006-2015, the Education for All (EFA), National Plan for Action 2003-2015 and last but not least the Education Sector Development Framework (ESDF) 2009-2015. Regarding Vocational Education and Training the TVET Strategy and Action Plan 2008-2015 has been developed by MoE in 2007/2008. With support from the German Technical Cooperation this document has later been approved by the Prime Minister’s Office. All these strategies and plans clearly emphasise the importance of education within the development policy of Government of Lao PDR (GoL) until 2020, especially the increased attention to HRD and in particular to TVET and Skills Development. The policies state to uplift training capacities and their quality, widen TVET access (also on district level) and develop HRD in general to be one breakthrough pillar of the society. The main objectives and targets of TVET development stated in the above mentioned papers related to education are among others to satisfy the labour market demand and social needs based on 7th NSED in Laos. With respect to TVET the goals are among others:

- Improve access through extension of TVET -capacities nation-wide (offering more training places “to at least 50,000 students of which 50 per cent are women and 20 per cent are from remote areas and/or poor families”)\(^1\),
- Increase enrolment rate and build at least three technical schools on district level in districts with rapid economic growth,
- Increase literacy rate in the age group 15-24 years to 99 per cent and in populations of age above 15 to 87 per cent by 2015\(^2\),
- Improve quality of TVET (QAM of MoE), and
- Promote TVET teacher training development.

So far the policies and strategies in place have been delivered in the right directions – mostly determined in quantitative terms and trying to solve the problems by extending TVET capacities nation-wide and promoting vocational training as the basis for a livelihood option for school leavers. In respect to the qualitative targets and challenges, some objectives (key features of TVET development) like financing, TVET delivery and assessment as well as industry engagement and cooperation are not clearly defined and sometimes inconsistently implemented. The following details shall explain the situation and the related consequences:

**Governing and Financing Vocational Training**

TVET Institutions are widely responsible for their own financial situation as the government does not provide a relevant budget to finance training. Therefore TVET institutions have to be managed in a way that they can ensure their survival and secure the living conditions of their teaching staff. As a consequence state of the art training is not delivered (quality of training and quality assessment), practical and theoretical competencies as well as productivity of graduates leave much to be desired, high level

\(^{1}\) Policy Review of TVET in Lao PDR, UNESCO 2013, page 19
\(^{2}\) Please also compare ESDF: Increase lower secondary education enrolment rate to 75 per cent by 2015 and increase upper secondary education enrolment rate to 43 per cent by 2015
certificates of uncertain base are handed out, training offered by public schools does quite often not comply with labour market demand, engagement of the business sector remains very limited (quality assessment). A recently published Policy Review of TVET in Lao PDR (2013) carried out by UNESCO pointed out “…there is no appropriate system to manage coordination of central-level and provincial-level TVET activities. Oversight of TVET institutions remains weak. For example, the central government does not have accurate information about the financial situation of TVET institutions under the Provincial Education and Sports Service (PESS).”

According to an enterprise survey delivered in 2010 and carried out by the World Bank the conclusions related to the current performance the TVET system are alarming. The survey clearly pointed out an insufficient skilled labour force and low productivity as major constraints for firms and the competitiveness of the Lao economy. “Interviews with companies in the garment sector have shown that though investment in training is high, labour retention is poor. The migration of skilled labour to Thailand was one reason cited by respondents. Skills deficits are also a problem in the services sector, where the lack of English language skills and the absence of tourism-related education are often cited as important constraints to the expansion of domestic ownership of firms. Perception of unskilled labour as a major constraint varies with firm size. Medium- and large-sized firms perceive more constraint than smaller enterprises. Unskilled labour is a greater constraint for Lao enterprises compared to other countries in the EA&P region.”

Delivery and Assessment of Vocational Training

If schools are not in a financially secured position enabling them to use their full potentials to train for the labour market they will teach mostly what helps to overcome the financial shortages, which is not an appropriate way to serve to the labour market demands. Figures for the last eight years show that the public VET institutions “produce” per year of training not enough skilled workers (9+3) to overcome companies skills shortage in growing industrial areas like mining, hydropower and services. If technical occupations were trained in public TVET institutions the preferred qualification levels by ‘customers’ (students) are mostly diploma, higher diploma and “bachelors”. Student’s statistics provided by MoES show a gap of 2,126 trainees on certificate level (9+3) in school year 2010-2011 batch 1+2 compared to the planned

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3 Policy Review of TVET in Lao PDR, UNESCO 2013: Authors: Borhene Chakroun UNESCO Headquarters; Youngsup Choi, Programme Specialist from UNESCO Bangkok; Anuje Sirikit, Project Officer from the UNESCO Antenna Office in Vientiane, and external experts Luis Guillermo Hakim, Siripan Choomnoom and Jean-Raymond Masson
4 Including the so called soft or transferable skills are key competencies
5 According to the 2005 Lao Economic Census, there were about 210,000 economic units operating in the country, of which about 127,000 had a permanent location, and 90,000 were paying some form of taxes. Only 10,000 firms operated with a tax identification number. The Social Security Office (SSO) had targeted 1,328 firms from the latter group, of which it had only reached 388 firms.
6 Source: Enterprise Survey Lao PDR, World Bank, 2010
7 TVET-Bachelor is a special kind of qualification and not comparable to academic education at Universities in Lao PDR
total of 2,890 trainees in quota courses\textsuperscript{8}.

Another problem concerns the determination of occupations and qualifications delivered by VET schools. The data collected by the study show that nearly all schools are offering training in occupational fields like construction, mechanic, tourism, automotive etc. but they didn’t clearly define professions or occupations stated on the issued VET certificates like bricklayer, carpenter, construction machinist, welder, fitter, motorcar mechanic etc.!

\textit{Industry engagement}

Without some very good single initiatives of industry cooperation by e.g. Lao-German Technical School with Toyota, Phu Bia Mining, Hongsa Lignite and others, dual cooperative training with enterprises are rare to find. The National Training Council (NTC) which has been founded to build the basis for private public cooperation in TVET is no longer engaged in this very important issue. Therefore investors try to solve the permanent problem of lack of qualified personnel by importing experts and train their own skilled workers. Under these circumstances the appearance of qualified workforces in Lao PDR deteriorates year by year and this creates major constraints for the evolving Lao economy and foreign investment firms in respect of such discrepancy.

With regard to the above mentioned situation some immediate measures of GoL have been introduced mid of 2013 which raise hope for improvements. This includes:

- Restricted admission to Universities for graduates from upper secondary education,
- Reduction of bachelor courses at TVET Colleges,
- Promotion of professions demanded by industry on the local labour market (e.g. key professions like metal worker, electrician, carpenter, bricklayer, construction machine mechanic etc.) through financial incentives for schools and students,
- Improvement of TVET image (TVET campaign),
- Rehabilitation of certificate level training (9+3).

It seems that those decisions draw big attention from users and providers of TVET. But it shows also that more effort has to be done. The challenges for TVET development to correct the existing mismatch between the demand and supply in a short run remain high. Only some exclusive and immediate measures can help to shift the TVET into a functional labour market oriented system, as for example, to stop the trend of ‘academisation’ of vocational training by providing incentives to schools and trainees to enter certification level courses, clarifying and introducing the NQF for all kind of HRD, enhancing the role of NTC for reorientation of school based training into workplace based training and increasing industrial engagement and cooperation between schools and business sectors.

\textsuperscript{8} UNESCO Policy Review in Lao PDR 2013, Annex 7
It hopes that those and other important requirements can stop the currently false TVET developments and re-shift vocational training into a well-balanced and efficiently manageable market oriented training system which serves in all stages of the development by responding better to the real needs of the changing labour market and the common ASEAN integration economic free trade market by 2015 (AEC).

1.4 Objectives of the Tracer Study 2013 (ToR)
Following the two major objectives as mentioned under 1.2 (achievements of HRDME III and baseline data for VELA) the Tracer Study 2013 “provide(s) empirical data about placement on the labour market of graduates of selected vocational schools in Lao PDR” (objective stated in the Terms of Reference). For this purpose the following activities had to be implemented:

1. Brief TVET Directors (and other TVET staff as necessary) on the purpose and value of the Tracer Study. Obtain their buy-in and clarify roles and responsibilities.
2. Collect contact data from sample TVET’s on graduates from 2007-2012 periods.
3. Set target number for each institution which will be lead to a total number of up to 1,000 graduates
4. Organize a series of workshops (1-2 days) at TVET/IVET institutions or selected venue in province inviting graduates from public TVET/IVET to complete the Tracer Study Questionnaire
5. Interview TVET institution directors and employers for obtain additional information,
6. Interpretation of processed data in view of policy measures to improve the quality of vocational education for labour market needs

Special attention has been given to point 5 by interviewing directors of TVET institutions and employers in order to collect additional information. For this purpose a special questionnaire for employers has been developed.

2. Methodology and Implementation of TS 2013

2.1 Design and Methodology
The Tracer Study 2013 follows the general design of the previous studies, namely the National Baseline Tracer Study 2006 and the National Tracer Study 2011. However the 2013 study shifted the focus further on the graduates from selected TVET institutions with special emphasis on IVET schools supported by Lao-German development cooperation. In this context the total number of vocational training institutions was reduced to 12 with keeping 8 IVET schools in the sample and using 4 leading vocational training institutions in Lao PDR – Technical College Pakpasak, Lao-German Technical School, Technical College Vientiane Province and Luang Prabang Technical
School – as control group. Major focus of the tracer study were graduates of school years 2011 and 2012.

The 2011 skipped additional survey among enterprises employing graduated of vocational training institutes has been changed by using an additional questionnaire aiming at two objectives: First, the satisfaction of entrepreneurs with the graduates of vocational training institutions, and second their interest and willingness to participate in vocational training activities.

Implementation of the survey HRDME was assigned to Lao-German Development Consulting Co. which combines experts with long experience in vocational training and economic development in Lao PDR. For this purpose LGDC developed and submitted a detailed plan of activities together with the respective budget plan.

Based on discussion and in close cooperation with HRDME, Component 2, the LGDC team updated the questionnaire for graduates by keeping in mind the comparability of data collected by the 2013 Tracer Study with those of previous studies. The questionnaire for enterprises was newly developed and submitted to HRDME and DVTE for decision.

The questionnaires have been developed and the draft questionnaires were pre-tested in Vientiane and updated after the pre-test by the LGDC expert team. The finally adopted questionnaires included:

Questionnaire 1 (graduates)
- Personal Information
- Educational Background
- Status after TVET graduation
- General information of employer
- General evaluation and comments

Questionnaire 2 (entrepreneurs)
- Basic data
- Educational background of owner /manager and staff

The LGDC team, HRDME C2 and directors of DVTE ensured a coordinated implementation of the activities and the best inclusion of responsible personnel of the respective schools. For this purpose LGDC prepared and held a special presentation about objectives and steps of implementation of the 2013 Tracer Study during the vocational training conference in April 2013 in Vientiane. Unfortunately only about half of the introduced personnel have been later directly involved in fieldwork and cooperation with LGDC during data collection.

LGDC formed two implementation teams which than joined forces with directors and leading staff of the respective 12 vocational training institutes in order to organise the interviews with graduates. These interviews were held in alumni meetings convened at
each of the training institutions in cooperation with school staff and supported by HRDME. In some cases—mostly due to long distance to the school or meeting place—interviews with graduates had been made by telephone, in some other cases graduates have been interviewed at their working place. In these cases additional interviews with enterprises were organised in the form of individual meetings with owner/managers of the respective enterprises.

2.2 Expected results of the Tracer Study 2013
The Tracer Study 2013 aims to provide information about:

- The internal efficiency (Do the vocational training institutions work properly and economically?) and external effectiveness of the TVET system (Does the TVET system serve to reach the goals of the society?), and the relevance of the vocational training and employability of graduates.
- The actual employment situation of TVET graduates within the different provinces, sectors, and occupations,
- The situation of TVET graduates in employment,
- The satisfaction of employers with TVET graduates.

Based on this information the study draws conclusions and develops recommendations for further adaptation of the vocational training systems to labour market demand. The study also provides baseline data for future projects and activities in the TVET sector.

Major aspects to be addressed by the tracer study are:

1. Relation between region of education/training and region/location of work,
2. Receptiveness of the employment sector (private, public, sub-sectors),
3. Overall employment rate in terms of institution and occupation,
4. Waiting time for first employment,
5. Appropriateness of first job to educational background,
6. Placement in salary brackets and job positions,
7. Assessment of the training by graduates,
8. Gender parity in TVET,
9. Assessment of training by entrepreneurs,
10. Participation of enterprises in TVET.
2.3 Timeframe of Tracer Study 2013

<table>
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<th>Activity</th>
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<th>Jun 13</th>
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<th>Nov 13</th>
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2.4 Sample of Tracer Study 2013

2.4.1 The TVET institutions

Since the school year 2007/08 public vocational training institutions are active in all provinces of Lao PDR with different technical and personally preconditions. In a number of provinces also private providers offer vocational qualification in addition to public schools. In order to analyse the development of the public vocational training system and especially the impact of development cooperation in vocational training it was decided to focus this study on selected public school with emphasis to the IVET schools supported by HRDME. Therefore for the Tracer Study 2013 a total of 992 graduates from 12 vocational training institutes, including 8 IVET schools, have been interviewed. The sample covers all geographical regions of Laos with emphasis on the northern part which has also the highest number of IVET schools. Schools from the central area which is also the economically most vibrant part of the country are included mainly as control group. The sample is completed by three more IVET schools in the southern provinces.

Table 1: Schools by type and region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical College</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>North</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Center</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVET School</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2.4.2 The TVET graduates

The Tracer Study 2013 interviewed a total of 992 graduates, among them 407 from IVET schools. As the publicly available data of the MoES does not provide complete information about vocational training – especially figures about short-term courses and certificate level of training are not included into official statistics – it is complicated to compare the sample of the Tracer Study with the total number of vocational students at all levels. The only data available was for academic year 2011/12. The following table
sets the total number of graduates interviewed for this study into relation to the number of interviewed graduates of school year 2012 by school and the number of students in the last year of their vocational training in the school year 2011-12.

Table 2: Number of graduates in TS13, number of graduates 2012 in TS13 and total number of final year students in respective TVET schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Tracer Study 2013</th>
<th>Graduates 2012 in Tracer Study</th>
<th>Final year students 2011-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>IVET Houaphanh</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVET Oudomxay</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVET Xieng Khouang</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVET Saravanh</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVET Sekong</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVET Attopeu</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no answer</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total number of interviewed graduates of academic year 2011-12 was 465, representing the biggest single year of graduation in the sample and equalling 47% of all interviewees. This number covers 12% of all students of the final year of training in this specific academic year in the same 12 TVET institutions.

If comparing with the National Tracer Study 2011, the total number of interviewees decreased from 1,755 graduates in 2011 to 922 in 2013. This is mainly due to the decrease in number of schools covered by the survey from 18 in 2011 to 12 in 2013 and a higher concentration on graduates of those schools. After eliminating all questionnaires which could not be attributed to one on the 12 schools the sample covers 931 graduates in 2013 versus 807 in 2011. Thereby the relation between TVET and IVET institutes is much better levelled in 2013 when the ratio was 56,3% vs. 43,7% against 70,5% vs. 29,5% in 2011. This resulted mainly from a higher coverage of IVET schools especially in the southern provinces as the number of interviewees from TVET institutions dropped only modestly from 569 to 525. Here has to be mentioned that the graduates of IVET schools comprise – with 2 exemptions – only graduates of formal courses.
2.4.3 The enterprises

For the first time the Tracer Study also included a special questionnaire for enterprises employing graduates from TVET institutions. The team of the tracer study tried in get enterprises in all covered areas involved but did not find always the appropriate willingness to cooperate. Therefore the selection of enterprises depended on opportunities and was often combined with cases where also graduates have been interviewed in their work environment. A total of 37 enterprises has been interviewed with a provincial breakdown as shown in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luang Namtha</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oudomxay</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luang Prabang</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xayaboury</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houaphanh</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xieng Khouang</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vientiane</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTE Capital</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saravanh</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sekong</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5 Fieldwork

Field work has been carried out with some delay after getting the green light from the DTVET from end of June until end of July. Due to several problems the last data’s from TVET institutions have been delivered to LGDC end of September. Based on the contract with GIZ and in cooperation with the Department of TVE at MoES the contractor has selected 2 TVET colleges, 2 TVET schools and 8 IVET schools (please compare Table 4 below) for this year’s survey. The official letter from the DTVE regarding to the tracer study, sent to all selected training institutions has provided all relevant information’s to support with high attention and
responsibility to the survey. The letter included the objectives, timeframe and their responsibilities e.g. setting up taskforce (mostly by activating the MIS units), contact their former students, preparing the venue, carrying out the data collection (questionnaires) and interviews etc.

In order to carry out the survey accordingly to the ToR and the fixed location and time frames LGDC has established 2 survey teams. While the survey team 1 has been responsibly cooperated with schools in the south and northwest of Laos, the team 2 worked closely together with schools in the northeast, Vientiane Capital and Vientiane Province as details below mentioned:

Table 4: List of evaluated vocational institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>IVET Xieng Khouang</td>
<td>24.-25. 06.2013</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>IVET Huaphanh</td>
<td>26.-28. 06.2013</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>IVET Luang Namtha</td>
<td>17.-19. 07.2013</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IVET Oudomxay</td>
<td>20.-23. 07.2013</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>IVET Xayabouly</td>
<td>23.-24. 07.2013</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Pakpasak Technical College</td>
<td>05. 09.2013</td>
<td>Vientiane C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Lao – German Technical School</td>
<td>26. 07.2013</td>
<td>Vientiane C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Technical College of Vientiane Province</td>
<td>18. 07.2013</td>
<td>Vientiane Pr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>IVET Attapeu</td>
<td>06.-08. 07.2013</td>
<td>IVET-south</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>IVET Xekong</td>
<td>09.-11. 07.2013</td>
<td>IVET-south</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>IVET Saravanh</td>
<td>12.-15. 07.2013</td>
<td>IVET-south</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to the requirements of DTVET the selection and invitation of graduates was done by the colleges/schools and the data collection and interviews were carried out also by colleges/schools taskforce under the supervision of LGDC teams. The evaluation teams of LGDC worked close together with the school management and the MIS-units of selected vocational school. They always arranged team meetings with directors from the school at the beginning and the end of the survey in order to summarize the findings (and problems so far as appropriate) and to agree about further measures. In every location the interview ends up with a working dinner, which included all involved interviewees, the responsible staff from the schools and the field interviewers. Several companies were invited to join the event but only some has participated. The LGDC teams used these opportunity to interview representatives of such companies.

Thanks to the directors of the involved vocational training institutions, the field work 2013 has been done properly and accordingly to the ToR and the requirements of the DTVET. Comparing to the habitual approach (sample 2006-2011) of the survey which includes mostly the reachable graduates within the surrounding area of the vocational institutions - LGDC would like to assess that the selection is not such effective as necessary to getting neutral results in terms of the employment rate and the type of employment. The reason for this critical view is that such contacted interviewees are roughly one fourth of the total cohort per school year. It is a worry that the other three quarters of graduates which has not been reached are in changing situations and/or mostly unemployed. Therefore please refer to point 5 conclusions.
3. Findings of Tracer Study 2013

3.1 Patterns of the sample

The Tracer Study 2013 aimed to provide a representative overview about graduates of vocational training institutes with special focus on IVET schools. Therefore 12 schools in 10 provinces and Vientiane Capital, among them 8 IVET schools, have been selected. 992 graduates were interviewed and the respective number of questionnaires filled in. The sample was 8 graduates short of the envisaged maximum number of 1,000 graduates. The study was focusing on graduates of academic years 2010/11 and 2011/12 representing together 86% of the sample (see Figure 2). The remaining interviewed persons were from earlier years of graduation, however during the interviews it was clarified that they did not participate in the Tracer Study 2011.

With regard to gender distribution in the sample 39% of interviewed graduates were female. This corresponds to the respective figures of the tracer study 2011 (40% females) and 2006 (41%) and is in line with the total number of female students in vocational training. Figures of MoES show also that the share of female students increases with the level of training being lowest at certificate level of training and highest at bachelor level.

3.2 Status of students

Graduates have been asked whether they had paid for their training or not. In this regard the questionnaire distinguishes three categories namely quota students, non-quota (but not paying) students and paying students. In the Tracer Study 2011 the composition of these three groups has been quite balanced with 38% paying, 34% quota and 28% non-quota students. This year’s survey revealed that almost half of all interviewed graduates belonged to the group of quota students (see Figure 4).
This may be explained by the different composition of selected schools in 2013 not containing any private schools (which do not have quota or non-quota students).

Figures for the vocational training in the academic year 2011/12 provided by MoES show that the higher the level of qualification the higher also the share of paying students, reaching 100% of all students at bachelor level. On the other end only 7.5% of students at certificate level at the 12 selected schools did pay for their qualification.

This may be one of the major incentives for decision makers at school level to reduce the offer of lower level qualification and increase the offer of highly income-relevant qualification courses at higher technician or bachelor levels.

Among IVET schools only Xayaboury IVET school reported paying students at certificate level, paid offers at technician level were found in Xayaboury and Xieng Khouang, at higher technician level in all IVET schools except Oudomxay (IVET schools in Attopeu, Sekong and Saravan do not offer 12+3 courses at all). However the lion’s share of paid vocational qualification offers is concentrated at Pakpasak Technical College, LGTS, and Vientiane Province Technical College. For the complete list of share of paying students at all 12 schools in the 2013 sample see Figure 6.
3.3 Basic Findings with Regard to Employment

A total of 77% of the interviewed stated being employed at the moment of the study. Only 4.2% stated that they are unemployed or job-seeking. New to the questionnaire was the option ‘self-employed’ which accounts for 1.9%. A quite significant share of 14% answered that they are in further study. At this point the study is not able to distinguish whether this further study means a higher qualification in the studied occupation or a professional re-orientation.

Compared with the NBTS 2006 and NTC 2011 the share of participants finding employment remains in a similar pattern (see Figure 8). On the other hand the share of graduates seeking employment dropped significantly. This may be related to the methodology of tracing graduates which in general makes it easier to trace employed than unemployed people. However as the same method was used for all three consecutive studies differences may rather being explained by different factors and the method could be made responsible for a general underrepresentation of unemployed graduates. Also answers like ‘other’, ‘no answer’ and ‘unemployed’ combined count significantly less than unemployment in previous studies.
Newly included was the question about self-employment. Interestingly the share of graduates stating to run their own business is higher among women (2.6%) than in average (1.9%).

Regarding the time lag between graduation and first employment a significant proportion of 35% of all interviewed stated having found their first employment within one month after graduation. The threshold of 6 months until the first employment contained in the success indicators of HRDME was met by 63.4% of all interviewed. This differs from the statement made in the Technical Report of NTS 2011 which stated:

“A majority of 59% of TVET-graduates finds employment within the first three month after graduation providing the basis for the result, that 89% of the graduates find employment within the first six months after graduation (18%+59%+12%). One year after graduation 94,3% of the graduates are finally employed.”

A factual check revealed that the figures given in the report do not – as stated – refer to the total number of graduates but only to those finding employment. The correct description therefore should read ‘A majority of 59% of TVET-graduates finding employment did this within the first three months after graduation’.

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9 National Tracer Study 2010/11, Technical Report, Vientiane 2011, p. 16
If set in relation to the total number of interviewed the share of those finding employment within the first three months was 52.2% and the share of those finding employment within 6 months was 60.1%. Both indicators were slightly surpassed in 2013 (54.7% and 63.4% respectively). It seems obvious that also those who were unemployed or went to further education did not find employment within a certain period in time. However the study is not able to determine whether those, going to further qualification, decided to do so because they could not find employment or by other considerations.

3.4 Pattern of the Enterprise Sample

The totally 37 interviewed enterprises were regionally not evenly distributed with a high representation of Houaphanh and Xieng Khouang provinces (10 entities each). The enterprises sample by size shows that the majority of interviewed enterprises belong to the small enterprise bracket, e.g. with 3-19 employees, followed by medium sized enterprises (20-99 employees). Compared to the sample of the Enterprises Survey 2011 the general pattern is repeated but micro enterprises are under-represented (22.5% in ES 2011 vs. 6% in TS-13) and medium-sized enterprises over-represented (14% in ES 2011 vs. 27% in TS 2013).

![Figure 10: Enterprises by size](image1)

![Figure 11: Enterprises by type](image2)

![Figure 12: Enterprises by business sector](image3)
With regard to type of business the majority of interviewed enterprises are Lao private entities, followed by the State Owned Enterprises and two types of foreign investment. Mixed state-private enterprises and collective enterprises were not represented in the sample.

Accommodation and Food represents the biggest sector in the sample (30%) followed by Trade/Repair of Motor Vehicles (19%). The third place is shared by Manufacturing and Electricity/Gas/Steam/AirCon (14% each).

The employers stated that the biggest share of trained management/administrative staff in their companies was training in short-term courses outside the company. Second largest in kind of training was in-company training. Public TVET institutions provided 10% of the trained office staff of the interviewed companies. With regard to workers/technical staff the share of graduates from public TVET institutions among trained employees increased to 17%. However, in-company or short term training remained the biggest sources of training adding up to 78% (compared to 76% for administrative staff).

3.5 Basic Findings with Regard to Satisfaction of Employers
A total of 13 (out of 37) enterprises stated that they employed graduates from TVET institutions for administrative jobs during the most recent two years (2011 and 2012). The total number of newly employed admin staff in those enterprises was 77 (30 female) persons. The number of enterprises newly employing technical staff/workers graduating from TVET institutions during the same period of time was 21, the total number of newly employed staff 188 with only 21 women.

In general employers certify a positive rating of graduates. Asked about possibilities for immediate assignment of newly employed graduates the respective question read “How able were they to start work?”. 

Figure 13: Training of employed admin staff
Figure 14: Training of employed technical staff
Disaggregated by level of training the answers for administrative staff were (the table shows number of employing companies):

Table 4: Ability to work by level of training (admin staff)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Training</th>
<th>No problem</th>
<th>Need advice</th>
<th>Need short training</th>
<th>Need &gt; 2 weeks</th>
<th>Need retraining</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short term VT</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Diploma</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other works most companies state that graduates are able to immediately start work without any additional preparation or with some advice - 15 and 16 answers respectively. On the other end three answers show big dissatisfaction by stating that the graduates needed complete re-training. For workers/technical staff the respective assessment looks as follows:

Table 5: Ability to work by level of training (technical staff)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Training</th>
<th>No problem</th>
<th>Need advice</th>
<th>Need short training</th>
<th>Need &gt; 2 weeks</th>
<th>Need retraining</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short term VT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again the positive rating of working abilities of graduates persists at a similar level whereas the number of statements that training of more than two weeks duration or complete re-training is needed increased significantly. Asked directly about their satisfaction with graduates the assessment remains positive for administrative staff as well as for technical staff. For administrative staff the highest level of satisfaction was expressed for graduates of technical certificate level. In this category graduates of short-term training at TVET institutions ranked lowest.

Table 6: Satisfaction of employers by level of training (admin. staff)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Training</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>More or less</th>
<th>unsatisfied</th>
<th>very unsatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-company VT</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term VT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The same table for technical staff shows a slightly lower level of satisfaction by more answers shifting from very satisfied to satisfied, a significantly higher share of more or less satisfied employers and even one statement of dissatisfaction. Again graduates at Technical Certificate level were rated highest.

Table 7: Satisfaction of employers by level of training (technical staff)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Training</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>More or less</th>
<th>Unsatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short term VT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Diploma</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to capture possible developments in vocational training the study also asked the entrepreneurs to compare the level of newly employed graduates to their older staff. The answers suggest that no substantial improvements took place as a majority of 70% stated that the level is about the same. 13% found the level of newly graduates better, but one company stated that it was worse.

3.6 Wage Structure of Employed Graduates

Graduates were asked to provide information about their salary level which was done by 76% of the interviewees. The remaining 24% fall mostly in the categories of job seeking, persons in further education, unpaid family members and contract workers not receiving regular wages or salaries. Compared to NTS 2011 the salary brackets have been adjusted in order to reflect on the new official minimum wage of 626.000 Kip introduced in January 2012. The wage structure in 2013 is shown in Figure 16. In general a significant increase in salary was found. In 2013 91% of wage earners got the minimum wage or more compared to 87,6% in 2011. The biggest change occurred for graduates earning more than 1 million Kip per month increasing dramatically from 24% in 2011 to 71%. In 2011 when the official minimum wage stood at 348.000 Kip 12% of
wage earners stated a wage up to 300,000 Kip. In 2013 the share of persons declaring a salary lower than 650,000 Kip (means practically below minimum wage) was 9%, out of this 6% earning less than 300,000 Kip, means below half of the minimum wage. In the bracket at and slightly above minimum wage (2011: 300,000-500,000 Kip; 2013: 650,000-1 million Kip) a respective share of 14% and 20% was reported.

When looking specifically at wages of female graduates the shares differ only marginally with the share of those earning more than 1 mil. Kip decreasing by 2% to 69% and increases in the lowest sector (below 300,000 Kip) and the bracket 650,000-1 million Kip by 1% each.

3.7 Assessment of Training by Graduates

Figure 17: Rating of usefulness of training

In general the study does not emphasise on the assessment of quality of training. However certain general information about perceived usefulness of the vocational training has been captured as well. Asked about the general usefulness of the training for the current job 77.8% of all graduates stated that the training has been useful, 10.6% said ‘not useful’ and 11.6% did not answer the question. More specifically the graduates were asked to rate the usefulness of theoretical and practical training. Results differ with rating theoretical training (provision of theoretical principles and knowledge) higher than practical skills.

Figure 18: Rating of usefulness of theoretical and practical training
One question aimed especially on the perceived usefulness of the level of certificate obtained at the end of vocational training. Most graduates (68.8%) interviewed in 2013 found their certificates ‘extremely useful’, a dramatic increase over 2011 when the majority of 78.1% opted for ‘very useful’ instead. In general graduates in 2013 seem to put higher importance to certificates.

Figure 19: Usefulness of certificate 2013 vs. 2011
4. Major Results

4.1 Structure and Patterns of Enrolment

Asked about the level of general education prior to start vocational training the majority – 95.9% - of the interviewed stated to have finished upper secondary education. Only one participant out of 992 stated having finished just primary education. 2.8% of interviewed graduates finished lower secondary school before entering vocational training. This composition roughly corresponds to the actual level of vocational training where 92.5% of all graduates finished technical or higher technical courses requiring upper secondary education as precondition for entry. In general findings of the Tracer Study 2013 compared with NBTS 2006 and NTS 2011 maintain the trend of decrease of the share of certificate level vocational training. These facts can be set in relation to general education statistics showing a drop in the Gross Enrolment Rate of about 30% from lower to upper secondary education.¹⁰

Figure 21: Level of general education

Figure 22: Level of vocational training

where 92.5% of all graduates finished technical or higher technical courses requiring upper secondary education as precondition for entry. In general findings of the Tracer Study 2013 compared with NBTS 2006 and NTS 2011 maintain the trend of decrease of the share of certificate level vocational training. These facts can be set in relation to general education statistics showing a drop in the Gross Enrolment Rate of about 30% from lower to upper secondary education.¹⁰

Figure 20: Levels of vocational training 2006, 2011, and 2013
Most remarkable is the fast and steady growth of technical education since 2006. The share of different levels of training among the interviewed corresponds as follows to the general ratio of all students at the selected 12 schools in 2012.

**Figure 23: All students at 12 selected schools by level of training (2012)**

Here it has to be noted that graduates from bachelor courses could practically only be expected at Technical College Pakpasak as the Technical School Vientiane Province got promoted to college only in 2012/13.

The distribution of interviewed graduates into different occupations is shown in Figure 24.

**Figure 24: Interviewed by field of training**
Compared to 2011 an almost doubling of graduates from agricultural occupations was observed (agriculture and animal husbandry together in 2013 23,7% compared to 12,7% in 2011. This may be related to the focus of the 2013 study on IVET schools offering more such courses. The biggest drop was recorded in ‘other professions’ standing in 2011 for 9,4%. This can be explained by a different approach on sampling focussing on graduates of the selected schools from the most recent years whereas in 2011 a broad number of occupational fields has been reported actually not offered by Lao vocational training institutes. Not included this time was the field ‘mine exploration and survey’ accounting in 2011 for 6,3%. In 2013 the field of ‘construction and carpentry’ accounted for 4,9% (2011: 4,2%) whereas the construction sector is one of the most active business sectors in the country.

In order to find out more about pattern for choice of respective vocational qualification the graduates were also asked who influenced their decision (Figure 25). More than one third of the interviewed stated that their decision was following outside influence, mainly from parents. 58,7% of interviewed stated that it was their own decision to study a certain occupation. On the other hand the availability of study places did only in 3 cases (0,3%) influence the final choice. Similarly little important was peer pressure as only 2 interviewed said that they followed the choice of friends.

4.2 Aspects of Employment
Looking at the places of employment of graduates (see Figure 26) the study found that almost half of all interviewed were at the time of the study employed in civil service followed by paid employment in enterprises. Self-employment with or without further

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**Figure 25: Selection of occupation**

![Selection of occupation chart](image)

**Figure 26: Type of employment**

![Type of employment chart](image)

**Figure 27: Employment by type of ownership**

![Employment by type of ownership chart](image)
employees is a rather rare option for graduates of vocational training schools representing just 1% each. The 22% of ‘no answer’ include all not employed interviewees, e.g. unemployed or people in further qualification.

If taking into consideration only those 60% of interviewed answering the question about the type of enterprise they are working with (i.e. obviously excluding offices and other establishments) the majority stated to work with State Owned Enterprises. Only 8% of the answering graduates found work with enterprises related to foreign investment (4.6% of all interviewed graduates). One third of the graduates working in enterprises have employment with Lao private enterprises (19.7% of all interviewees).

Regarding the size of employing enterprises the biggest share (46%) of those 50% answering this question is working at large enterprises (100 and more employees) followed by medium (20-99 employees – 31%) and small enterprises (3-19 employees – 19%). Only a very small portion of graduates employed at enterprises is employed by micro enterprises (4%). According to other sources small and medium sized enterprises (including micro) constitute up to 98% of all registered enterprises in Lao PDR. According to the Enterprise Survey 2011 conducted by HRDME large enterprises provide 45.9%, medium sized enterprises 29.1%, small enterprises 23.0% and micro enterprises 1.9% of employment. These figures correspond largely to the answers received during the tracer study.

With regard to employment in the learned occupation 82.8% of those who found employment stated being employed ‘corresponding to the received training’ (2011: 84.9%). If put into relation to the total number of interviewed graduates the share of those employed in correspondence with the received training increased from 57.5% to 60.3% (see Figure 29).

Figure 29). So the statement made in the report of NTS 2011 “By rising from 76% in the NBTS 2006/07 to 86% in NTS 2010/11 the share of TVET-graduates employed in the occupation trained has reached a very good level” can't be maintained as it actually reached only 57.5%.

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As asked about responsibilities at their place of employment the majority of respondents stated to work as junior employee. According to additional explanation during the interviews the 16% of contract employees contains mostly persons working for the government on a daily payment basis in waiting for acceptance as civil servant. If comparing the number of graduates actually finding employment the share of those working as contract employees decreased slightly whereas the biggest change was found in an increase of junior employees from 58.3% to 64.4%.

**Figure 30: Level of responsibility**
One specific question was asking about probable reasons for unemployment. Here the choice was between objective factors like oversupply of graduates in certain occupations, subjective factors like personal underperformance during studies and attractiveness of jobs in the learned occupation expressed by the level of income.

All 42 graduates stating to be unemployed answered this question. The biggest share (53%) stated an oversupply of graduates in their particular occupational field as the reason for unemployment. 21% made too low payment in the learned occupation responsible for unemployment. 5% stated that their training did actually not match the requirements of the respective job. However in personal discussion during the interviews it was also revealed that unemployment resulted from unfulfilled hope to get into civil service and unwillingness of graduates to work in the business sector. This concerns especially graduates in agricultural professions.
4.3 Characteristics of IVET schools

Comparing the level of qualification received at IVET schools and TVET institutions the study shows that IVET schools which are supposed to offer a higher number of non-formal training courses did not perform significantly better than TVET institutions in this field. The majority of trainees in IVET schools are clearly to identify on technician (12+2) level accounting for 68.1% of all interviewed graduates from IVET schools. The respective share at TVET institutions stands at 40.6%. Second largest share at IVET schools is higher technician (12+3) level with 26.6%. In TVET institutions this segments is bigger than that of technician level and counts for 57%. Interestingly the majority of female graduates on both school types graduated from higher technician level reaching in TVET institutions almost 80% of all female graduates. The relatively low share of female graduates of TVET institutions at technician level may be explained with the influence of Lao-German Technical School which by composition of the offered occupations is a male-dominated training provider (gender ratio at technician level among interviewees 74:1).

Figure 33: Level of qualification by school type and gender

Graduates from TVET institutions show a significantly higher level of employment (83.9%) than their colleagues from IVET schools (68.1%). A special characteristic of IVET schools is the high share of graduates moving on to further education. This ratio is highest in Oudomxay and Houaphanh provinces where it reaches 39.2% (Oudomxay) or 44% (Houaphanh) of all interviewed graduates. The share of unemployed people is more than double as high among IVET graduates as among graduates of TVET institutions.
The data was also checked for differences in income between graduates of IVET and TVET-institutions with the result that graduates of TVET-institutions are in general better paid than IVET-graduates. This may of course also being related to the general level of economic development of the respective areas as TVET-institutions are located in bigger cities and economically more active areas. This may as well be related to the reputation of schools as for the share of graduates earning more than 1 million Kip per month the IVET schools Xieng Khouang and Saravanh rank at the same level as TVET-institutions, i.e. more than 50%, whereas in some other places like Houaphanh and Oudomxay this indicator stands much lower (at 24% and 31.4% respectively).

Comparing employment patterns among the schools covered by the Tracer Study 2013 with the same school in the 2011 sample a general significant increase of employment from 54.5% to 77% is seen. This increase is higher among TVET institutions than
among IVET schools. However, the share of unemployed graduates which dropped in general from 17.8% to just 4.2% fell dramatically among IVET graduates – from 39.9% to 8.6%. This was compensated by a steep increase of graduates moving to further qualification.

Figure 36: Employment pattern by school type and year

4.4 Employment patterns by field of occupation

By looking into more details of employment opportunities the general positive picture is overshadowed by a number of worrying trends. If just looking on the rate of employment by fields of occupation the general situation seems still to be encouraging with employment rates for most fields of occupation well above 60% with generally lower rates for IVET schools. In some cases the general low number of interviewees may be responsible for a bias in the results. For example the tailoring/garment section is based very few graduates. But this fact alone shows a different problem. The Lao Garment Industry Association reports a yearly demand of several thousand industrial sewers but the public TVET sector offers only tailoring were of a total of 5 graduates (2 from IVET, 3 from TVET) only 2 found employment.
In a next step it was analysed where the graduates from different fields of occupation found employment. Across all fields of occupation for one graduate working with the business sector two became civil servants. When looking at school types the ratio becomes even more unbalanced as 90,2% of graduates of IVET schools finding employment entered civil service. For TVET-institutions this ratio stands at 56,4%. Completely surprising is the fact that more than 90% of all employed graduates in agricultural professions from both school types (93,8% for crop production and 94,4% for animal husbandry) found work as civil servants. The majority of them states to work in their trained field of occupation. The figures of graduates from in technical occupations like metal work/plumbing, automotive or construction from IVET schools is astonishingly high, in some cases including all employed graduates.

The topic needs further elaboration in a detailed study as it becomes not clear what those trained people are actually doing as civil servants even after stating that they work according to their trained occupation. It is clear that government especially armed forces also need electricians, car mechanics and other technically trained staff. But the current study is not able to provide evidence for such use of graduates.
On the other hand the automotive sector (especially graduates from LGTS) shows the highest share of graduates employed by businesses (74.5% of all employed graduates of TVET in automotive sector) which can be attributed to the policy of LGTS to sign contracts with large companies to provide qualified staff (e.g. Toyota).

When comparing salary levels it stands out that lower salary especially those below 300,000 Kip concentrate in civil service, especially among graduates from IVET schools in agricultural occupations (19 out of a total of 31 persons earning less than 300,000 a month). 5 graduates from the automotive sector (TVET institutions) entering civil service constitute a second larger group of persons receiving wages up to 300,000 Kip. On the other end just one persons employed in the business sector stated a wage below 300,000 Kip. Among graduates from IVET schools those finishing training in the field of hospitality were best off with a 100% share of salaries of more than 1 million Kip.

One of the hypotheses for this study was that the TVET systems provides an oversupply in graduates in business occupation (business administration and accounting). Facts show that this group of graduates find employment opportunities quite comfortably. However, none of the respective graduates from IVET schools was
employed in the business sectors, but 9 of them (7 accounting, 2 business administration) in civil service. None of them stated to work in the trained field of occupation.

For graduates from TVET schools the respective results differ enormously. As Figure 39 shows 87% of all graduates from TVET institutions in business administration and 78.1% of those in accounting found employment, for the bigger part (65.2% and 48.6% respectively) in civil service.

**Figure 39: Employment of graduates of TVET schools in accounting and business administration**

Put in relation to the total number of employed graduates in each sector and field of occupation the picture differs and shows that less than 60% of employed graduates in both occupational fields are working in accordance with their field of training, slightly higher for accounting than for BA. For graduates in business administration working in civil service the share of those working in their field of training drops to 43.3%. It is highest for trained business administrators working in the business sector (60%).

The answers also show a relatively high level of salary compared to other fields of occupation with the highest level for graduates employed in the business sector. About 70% of employed graduates of TVET institutions in both fields of occupation earn more than 1 million Kip per month.
Searching for preferred fields of occupation to start self-employment the data show a certain concentration in the hospitality sector. In general very low trend to seek self-employment it is more common among graduates from TVET institutions than for IVET schools, probably due to better business perspectives in and around Vientiane. The very promising 100% self-employment for IVET trainees in tailoring is based on a sample of just two graduates. Relatively high concentration of self-employment was also found in metal works/plumbing, construction and automotive fields of occupations.

Figure 41: Share of self-employed graduates by field of occupation and school type

4.5 Pattern and Opportunities of Cooperation with Enterprises
The study also collected information about the current state of cooperation of businesses with vocational training. As the companies were selected through graduates of TVET it was likely to find a general positive pattern of cooperation in the field of vocational training if compared with the business sector at large.

Regarding the current status the entrepreneurs were asked whether they already accept trainees in the companies and for how long they are working as trainees in the companies. A surprising share of 43% of enterprises stated that the apprentices stay permanently in their companies, followed by internships of up to 3 months lengths (27%). Only 8% of the companies stated that they do not receive trainees.

Concerning the form of supervision and coaching during training within the companies the majority of interviewed entrepreneurs stated to assign foremen to supervise the trainees (54%). Another 8% of enterprises declared that they hire teachers especially for the task of supervising and coaching trainees. On the other hand none of the interviewed entrepreneurs said that teachers from TVET institutions would follow up and supervise their students during internship of training at the enterprises.

Another point of interest is the willingness of enterprises to cooperate with the TVET institutions in the future. Here of course one has to take into account that the interviewed firms in this study already gathered experiences in cooperation in the field of vocational training. Therefore this question was included into the Enterprise Survey 2013 interviewing more than 700 enterprises. Unfortunately the data was not yet available at the time of finishing this report as fieldwork for the ES2013 started only in mid-November.

Figure 42: Companies accepting trainees by duration

Figure 43: Form of supervision of trainees
5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions regarding Major Results
Training at certificate level (9+3) was actually meant to open training and employment opportunities for graduates from lower secondary education. Due to pressure from graduates of higher secondary education and income orientation of TVET institutions aiming at the same target group certificate level training became absolutely rare. In the school year 2011/12 7% of all trainees in TVET institutions (10% in the 12 institutions included into the TS-13) were enrolled in certificate level training, among the interviewed graduates just 3% finished this level.

The situation seems to be worse in short-term courses as only two graduates of such course were included in the sample. In preparation and training for representatives of the selected schools explicit focus on those graduates had been made as especially IVET schools should train 50% of their trainees in non-formal (short term courses). However, during fieldwork school representatives provided different explanations why those groups were not represented during the meetings. In official statistics only two schools (Xiengkuang and Xayabouri) reported any short-term training.

Graduates from TVET institutions and IVET schools are finding work relatively fast (63.4% of interviewed in less than 6 months), more than three quarters state having found employment in their trained field of occupation. These figures differ between IVET schools and TVET institutions to the advantage of IVET schools.

Most graduates are searching their employment perspectives in civil service, accepting military service, contract or even unpaid work as ‘volunteer’ in order to reach that goal. This trend is even more common among graduates from IVET schools. The study is not able to provide information to which extent graduates in civil service are actively applying their knowledge and skills in the respective jobs. In general the study shows that labour market orientation (especially in increasing business sectors) of vocational training should be improved. Best results in employment in the business sector were reached in cases where enterprises were already involved in training by contract or in DCT schemes.

Self-employment and creation of a business is a very uncommon option for graduates from vocational training. Respective inputs (e.g. the ILO tool Know About Business included secondary education and other basic entrepreneurial training) could help to create more interest for this livelihood option.

5.2 Recommendations and Orientations

5.2.1 For Further Development in the Field of TVET
In conclusion of the above mentioned facts and figures and especially in the broadest sense of TVET development processes in Lao PDR some emerging issues need attention in order to further improve vocational training and employment in general and
to ensure adequate provision of competent labour forces for the next decades in particular. Responsible partners and stakeholders therefore should keep three major components in mind in order to shift TVET and SD in an appropriate direction.

First: Governing and financing of vocational training should be managed with the intention to,

- ameliorate the financial situation of TVET institutions significantly and especially for those schools or programs which offer labour market oriented training and good opportunities for employment and self-employment;
- introducing and carrying out a “National TVET & SD images and promotion program” which includes all parties (users, providers, employers) and which offers incentives for training programs in unpopular but economically demanded professions through, for example, limited voucher programs for trainees and training providers, inclusive industry engagement campaign, tax incentives for public and private companies offering or joining vocational training, etc.;
- identify national labour market needs in all industrial sectors (using TWG’s and create new TWG’s if necessary) and deeply define projection of manpower requirements and supply (MoES and NTC plus MoLSW and LNCCI).

Second: Modes of delivery of vocational training should be managed and assessed in order to,

- reduce significantly “uncontrolled training provisions” at TVET institutions and introduce a strict labour market oriented planning, execution and assessment of TVET through DVTE and VEDI and LNCCI;)
- ameliorate the image of vocational training for users and employers by introducing a TVET information system, professional career guidance systems and appropriate media campaigns;
- use better training facilities at IVET-schools and enhance inclusion of disadvantaged target groups by offering significant number of non-formal (short term) courses;
- apply quality assurance of training and school management at all public and private training providers.

Third: Industry engagement and cooperation with stakeholders must be strengthen with regard to,

- support efficiently NTC in order to ensure the reform process of demand oriented TVET development based on needs and requirements of the Lao economy (introduce special task forces, reactivate TWG"s, organize public-private dialog by organizing expert meetings and annual National Conferences of NTC etc.)
- define or re-define professions by business sectors (comprehensive or key occupations mostly addressed in formal training as well as limited professional activities addressed by non-formal or short-term training) and elaborate curricula
for those occupational programs by TWG’s clearly streamlined with labour market demand and recognised by NTC and all relevant stakeholders especially MoES, MoLSW, MPI, LNCCI and other business operators.

- Introduce DCT as guarantee for labour market relevant training within all possible business sectors and providers (analysing success factors of DCT at LGTS and transfer lessons learned and best practices to all TVET and IVET schools);
- With intension to provide capacity development building measures for TVET/IVET administrators and managers as well as business personnel.

The suggested recommendations can be seen as minimum requirements regarding the immediate improvement of TVET and SD. They are fully in line with the socio-economic targets of GOL (and the development targets for Lao PDR determined by the German Government). Further appropriate measures are necessary for sustainable TVET and SD development which are not further elaborated here as they are not related to the conclusions of the results of the TS 2013. This refers to topics like TVET staff development and research, standard development with regard to regional integration processes and application etc.
5.2.2 For future tracer studies and additional research

1. Focussing on random sampling based on list of graduates of selected schools should be agreed upon. This would increase the value of answers significantly as it could lead to a better representation of graduates originating from locations further away from the direct school surrounding (students from other districts and provinces returning after graduation to their place of origin) and probably also more graduates not finding employment. On the other hand such approach also increases expenses as graduates have to be traced back and interviewed at their current place of living.

2. Better representation of graduates from non-formal courses within the sample. For these targets IVET schools should keep track of trainees from non-formal courses and provide this information for the team of the tracer study. This could be encouraged by including data about non-formal courses in the official records of provincial and central level.

3. More specific questions or options for answers from employers of civil services in the questionnaire as important part of employment is currently not adequately reflected. This concerns especially questions about kind of work (office job, military service) as the current questionnaire does not allow to distinguish between graduates entering civil service but actually working in the learned occupation (like graduates from automotive section responsible for maintenance of office or military vehicles) and those shifting to office jobs.

4. Future studies should pay special attention to data showing impact of the measures for rehabilitation of certificate level training, especially whether those measures will result in reversing the trend of ‘academisation’ of VET.

5. It seems to be advised to trace self-employment attitudes of trainees (included in the Tracer Study or in form of a separate study) and to compare the results with existing training offers of the TVET institutions and IVET schools country wide.

6. Having in mind the high importance of civil service for graduates the extension of Q2 from an enterprise to an employer’s questionnaire then including civil service and SOEs should be envisaged.

7. With reference to the still not very reliable and often contradicting statistical basis in the VET sector and having in mind ADB efforts to overcome this situation especially in TVET for upcoming studies a close cooperation with TVET employment management information system (EMIS) and labor market information system (LMIS,) development is highly recommended.

8. With regard to the specific data on vocational training and expressed training needs collected by the Enterprise Survey 2013 a special desk top study for best use of those data is suggested.

9. Due to the general lack of reliable information of labour forces demand on a strategic and occupational (standard) level the commissioning of a new training
needs analysis based on information from relevant government and business sector representatives is highly recommended.

In conclusion to that it should be recommendable to focussing the next tracer study more impact than output oriented and to better involve public and private training providers (DTVET and PES’s as well as NTC, LNCCI and PCCI). This new shape of a labour market oriented Tracers Study should be discussed and agreed upon in the frame of NTC’s responsibility to closely cooperate together with Lao Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) and the Provincial Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PCCI).
Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANT

**Tracer Study Vocational Education and Training Schools**

**Specification**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Principle Consultant</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tracer Study TVET Schools</td>
<td>Lao-German Development Consulting</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Eberhard Frey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of TTEP, GIZ Lao</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<th>Quotation as of 20.02.2013</th>
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**Purpose and Objectives:**
The National Tracer Study is to provide empirical data about placement on the labour market of graduates of selected vocational schools in Lao PDR. The study is to follow up the 2nd National Tracer Study 2010-2011.

**Activities:**

- Brief TVET Directors (and other TVET staff as necessary) on the purpose and value of the Tracer Study. Obtain their buy-in and clarity roles and responsibilities.
- Collect contact data from sample TVETs on graduates from 2007-2012 periods.
- Set target number for each institution which will be lead to a total number of up to 1000 graduates
- Organize a series of workshops (1-2 days) at TVET/IVET institutions or selected venue in province inviting graduates from public TVET/IVET to complete the Tracer Study Questionnaire
- Interview TVET institution directors and employers for obtain additional information
- Interpretation of processed data in view of policy measures to improve the quality of vocational education for labour market needs

**Output**

1. Tracer Study in hard copy (five originals) as well as data files
2. Report on conducting the study

**Deadlines**

**Remarks**

Vientiane, 2013-02-26
Delele Prehn

TOR: Tracer Study TVET
Annex 2: Letter of GD of DTVE
## Annex 3: Questionnaire 1

### Questionnaire for TVET Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Nr</th>
<th>Enumerator</th>
<th>Supervisor:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Basic Personal Data

1. **Name:** ....................................................
2. **Date of birth:** ______/_____/_______
3. **Place of birth:**........................................; **District:** [ ] **Province:** [ ]
4. **Gender:**
   - 1 = Male;
   - 2 = Female
5. **Present place of residence:** ................................................... **District:** [ ] **Province:** [ ]

### Educational Background:

6. **General Education:**
   - 1 = Completed Primary education (grade 5/6);
   - 2 = Completed Lower Secondary (grade 8/9);
   - 3 = Completed Upper Secondary (grade11/12);
7. **TVET Institution attended:**
8. **Occupation/ Course attended:** .................................................. ....................................................................................
9. **Type of training:**
   - 1 = Non-formal training
   - 2 = Vocational training(8+3);
   - 3 = Technical Education (11+2);
   - 4 = Higher Technical Edu. (11+3)
   - 5 = others, specify: ..........................................................................
10. **Kind of student:**
    - 1 = Quota;
    - 2 = non Quota;
    - 3 = paying
11. **How did you select the trade / occupation you studied:**
    - 1 = Parents/family;
    - 2 = Relatives;
    - 3 = Own choice;
    - 4 = Availability of study place;
    - 5 = Others ; specify: ..........................................................................
12. **Year of final examination:** 2011
14. Did you participate any course after graduation? ① Yes; ② No; 

15. Status after TVET graduation: 

① Employment; ② Unemployment; ③ Others

16. Kind of present employment

① Unpaid family business; ② Paid family business; ③ Paid employee in economic sector; ④ Civil servant; ⑤ Self-employment without employees; ⑥ Self-employment with employees; ⑦ Other, please specify:

17. 1st employment after graduation (Firm, starting date and duration):

18. 2nd employment:

19. Present employment:

Name of organisation/company: 

Name of employer: 

Address: 

Tel: 

20. Please state the exact name of your job:

21. When did you find your first employment?

① under 1 month; ② 1-3 months; ③ 4-6 months; ④ 7-9 months; ⑤ 10-12 months; ⑥ more than 12 months.
22. How did you find your job?

①= Self applying
②= Helping by relative/friend
③= Other, please specify:

23. What is your present position/responsibilities?

①= Contract employee
②= Junior employee
③= Senior employee
④= Foreman
⑤= Others

24. What is your present position/responsibilities?

①= Yes
②= No
③= Don’t know

25. What is your average monthly wage/income?

①= Below 300,000 Kip
②= 300,000 – 650,000 Kip
③= 650,000 – 1,000,000 Kip
④= More than 1,000,000 Kip

26. In case of unemployment, what are reasons for?

①= Too many graduates in this field
②= Training contents do not meet job profile
③= Personal training result is too low
④= Payment is too low
33. In your present job, has your training at the technical school/college been useful:
① = Useful/Yes;  ② = Not useful/No:

34. Theoretical principles and knowledge/ Practical skills trained:

35. The certificate/diploma you obtained:

36. Concerning your present work, what kind of theoretical subjects are missing at technical schools?

37. Concerning your present work, what kind of skill training is missing at technical schools?

38. Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding the training at the TVET institutions or in finding employment?
Thank You for your contribution
Annex 4: Questionnaire 2

Questionnaire for Entrepreneurs

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Nr</th>
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<th>Code Nr</th>
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 Supervisor: ______________________

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<th>Section</th>
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<td>Financial and insurance activities</td>
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<td>Mining and quarrying</td>
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<td>D:</td>
<td>Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply</td>
<td>N:</td>
<td>Administrative and support activities</td>
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<td>E:</td>
<td>Water supply, sewerage, and waste management</td>
<td>O:</td>
<td>Public administration and defence, social security</td>
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<td>F:</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>P:</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>G:</td>
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<td>H:</td>
<td>Transportation and storage</td>
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<td>I:</td>
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<td>S:</td>
<td>Other service activities</td>
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29. Location: Village..........................; District: ......................
30. Province:.................................
31. Gender: ① Male; ② Female
32. Size of the company/business:
   ① Micro (1 to 2 Staff) ② Small (3 to 19 Staff)
   ③ Medium (20 to 99 Staff) ④ Large (> 99 Staff)
33. Kind of company/business:
   ① State owned ② Private
   ③ State private ④ Foreign Lao Joint venture
   ⑤ Foreign investment ⑥ Cooperatives & Groups
34. Sector of business (ISIC rev. 4):
35. คำถามที่สุ่มจำกัดข้อมูล อยู่ที่บ้านหรือบ้าน อบรมที่ไร่?/ How do you determine salaries for your staff?  

- 1. ตามประกาศระเบียบ by certificate 
- 2. ตามผลผลิตการทำงาน by work output 
- 3. ตามประสบการณ์การทำงาน by experience at company 
- 4. ตามข้อบังคับโดยรวม by a mix of 1-3 
- 5. ตามตำแหน่งในบริษัท by position in company 
- 6. ทั้งหมดได้รับเงินเดือนที่เท่ากัน/all are getting the same pay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>จำนวน/Total</th>
<th>เพศชาย/Female</th>
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permanent paid workers

36. จำนวน ตะนวนธุรกิจ ทุ่มเท/ Number of permanent staff

ชั้น 2. ประวัติการศึกษา/ Educational background:

37. ระดับการศึกษา General Education:
   ① = จบประถม/Completed primary education (grade 5/6);
   ② = จบมัธยม/Completed Lower Secondary (grade 8/9);
   ③ = จบมัธยมปลาย/Completed Upper Secondary (grade11/12);
   ④ = จบช่างเทคนิค/Completed Vocational Education;
   ⑤ = จบ โรงเรียนฝึกงาน /Completed Technical Education;
   ⑥ = จบการศึกษาขั้นสูง/Completed Higher Education;
   ⑦ = จบอุตสาหการ/Academic Grade

38. ท่านมีการฝึกอบรมแบบใดบ้าง ประเภทใด ในงานบริหารงาน โครงการ และ ตะนวนธุรกิจ ที่อยู่มาก/What type of professional training does your management and office staffs have? (สามารถตอบได้หลายข้อ ตามความจริง/ MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (สามารถตอบได้หลายข้อ ตามความจริง/ MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (สามารถตอบได้หลายข้อ ตามความจริง/ MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (สามารถตอบได้หลายข้อ ตามความจริง/ MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (สามารถตอบได้หลายข้อ ตามความจริง/ MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

   □ 1- ไม่มี/none
   □ 2- ได้ฝึกใน ประถมศึกษา/ trained in the company, ________ติม/persons
   □ 3- ฝึกอบรม/ หลักสูตรสั้น/short course training outside the company, ________ติม/persons
   □ 4- จบการศึกษาระดับอาชีวศึกษา/ ตีโรงเรียน ได้รับการศึกษา/ graduated from public vocational or technical school, ________ติม/persons
   □ 5- จบการศึกษาระดับอาชีวศึกษา/ ตีโรงเรียน ได้รับการศึกษา/ graduated from private school/college, ________persons
   □ 6- จบการศึกษาระดับอาชีวศึกษา/ ตีโรงเรียน ได้รับการศึกษา/ graduated from university, ________ติม/persons
   □ 7- ฝึกอบรมอื่นๆ/ Other, specify ________________, ________ติม/persons

39. ท่านมีการฝึกอบรมแบบใดบ้าง ประเภทใด ในงานด้านงาน โครงการ และ ตะนวนธุรกิจ ที่อยู่มาก/What type of professional training do your workers and technical staff have? (สามารถตอบได้หลายข้อ ตามความจริง/ MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)
-  None
-  Trained in the company, ___________ persons
-  Short course training outside the company, ___________ persons
-  Graduated from public vocational or technical school, ___________ persons
-  Graduated from private school/college, ___________ persons
-  Graduated from university, ___________ persons
-  Other, specify ______________, ___________ persons

40. How many administrative new staff graduating from vocational school did you employ during the last two years (2011-12)?

41. How many technical new staff graduating from vocational school did you employ during the last two years? (2011-12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Staff</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male/Female</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.1</td>
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<td>12.2</td>
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<td>12.3</td>
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<td>12.10</td>
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<td>13.10</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42. Out of the newly recruited staff, how able were they to start working?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Staff</th>
<th>No problem</th>
<th>Advise</th>
<th>Short training</th>
<th>Training &gt; 2 weeks</th>
<th>Retraining needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>
43. How satisfied are you with newly recruited graduates in vocational training?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trained in company</th>
<th>Short-term course (3-6 ᵃ)</th>
<th>Vocational certificate</th>
<th>Technical certificate</th>
<th>Higher Diploma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admin Staff</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Staff</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

44. Does your company receive vocational trainees?

1. No
2. For practice (< 3 months)
3. For practice (> 3 months)
4. Permanently

45. How do you organize in-company training?

1. Just put trainees to work
2. Foremen assigned to supervise
3. Special trainers employed
4. Teachers from IVET school check
5. Sending trainees abroad
6. Other (please specify …………..)
15.a) How are newly employed graduates from TVET institutions prepared for their job compared to older staff?

① = better  ② = about the same  ③ = worse  ④ = don’t know

15.b) Did you older staff members also graduate from TVET institutions?

① = yes  ② = no