JAMAICA NATIONAL REPORT ON
TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET)

A contribution to the regional discussion on reforming TVET institutions and accreditation systems for improved skills and enhanced employability in Caribbean labour markets
Introduction

1.1. Socioeconomic history of the country up to the present day

Jamaica is a small island nation, with a land area of 11,000 sq. km. It is classified by the World Bank as lower middle income, with a Gross National Income of US$2,820. While experiencing low economic growth in recent years, it has achieved high and rising social indicators. Jamaica ranks 78th on the UNDP Human Development Index.

The population of Jamaica at 2004 was estimated at some 2,650,900. The annual growth rate has been falling steadily since 1997 and presently stands at 0.6 per cent. This reflects continued out-migration. External migration is particularly prevalent amongst higher education graduates,

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including health professionals and teachers, and has an impact on the overall socioeconomic profile of Jamaica. Jamaica is also currently experiencing the effects of an ageing population: a declining 0–14 age group; an increasing working age group (15–64) and dependent elderly (65+). This is due to the effects of declining fertility and mortality rates. As a result, age dependency ratios are projected to continue declining. This opens favourable opportunities for economic growth through job creation, leading to more savings and investment.

The low growth that has characterized the economy for the past 15 years, with generally high inflation, has only recently begun to change with modest growth over the past four years. However, inflation has been over ten per cent in the past two years and Hurricane Ivan in 2004 dampened growth significantly. A strategy of maintaining the value of the Jamaican dollar has required high interest rates from the early 1990s, with the 2004 averaged rate of commercial bank loans at 17.7 per cent (PIOJ, 2005).

The 1990s saw a significant liberalization of the economy including a reduction in protection of local industries, liberalization of foreign exchange, and divestment of public sector assets, including the electricity and telecommunications companies. Significant economic restructuring including a noticeable shift in the emergence of a services economy, downsizing of firms and a financial sector crisis in 1998 also occurred during the 1990s. Employment in large enterprises declined from 145.5 thousand in 1998 to 132 thousand in 2002 (STATIN, 2003). Own account employment is reported by 34 per cent of the workforce. A large informal sector, estimated at about 45 per cent of the economy (World Bank, 2005), includes informal importers, vendors, household workers and subsistence farmers, among others.

The social picture
On the social side, Jamaica has always been characterized by high inequality. The most recent Survey of Living Conditions (2001) indicates that the wealthiest 20 per cent of the population accounted for 45.9 per cent of national consumption while the poorest 20 per cent accounted for only 6.1 per cent of national consumption. On average, the wealthiest 10 per cent of the population consumed approximately 12.5 times that of the poorest ten per cent (STATIN, 2002).

Enrolment in upper secondary education is linked to socioeconomic status with 67.6 per cent of the poorest quintile as compared to 94.6 per cent of the wealthiest quintile enrolled.
Over half of all students in the traditional high schools are from the top two quintiles while
students in the poorest quintile are disproportionately represented in poorer quality types of
schools (Blank and McArdle, 2003).

Analysis of the data by consumption groups indicates that almost 17 per cent of the wealthiest
quintile was enrolled in a post-secondary institution as compared with less than 2 per cent of the
poorest quintile.

The formal education system is an important input into the training system. Jamaica’s education
system has been characterised by under-performance for years as indicated by the following
quote from the World Bank (2005):

Jamaica’s Government spends six percent of its GDP on education, and
real expenditure on education has doubled in the last ten years.
Enrolment has expanded remarkably, and was near universal for 6–14
year olds as early as 1989, and 95 percent for 12–14 year olds from the
poorest quintile. Yet, education outcomes leave much to be desired—
about 30–40 percent of grade 6 leavers are functionally illiterate. Only
30 percent of those who appear pass the Caribbean CXC mathematics
examination in grade 11, lower than most Caribbean countries.
Jamaican-educated workers receive amongst the lowest returns in the
US labor market. Poor education outcomes may be one factor limiting
productivity gains in Jamaica, both in absolute terms and also as
compared to other Latin American countries. Cross-country evidence
shows that higher quality education makes workers more productive,
increases returns to education and creates incentives for more private
investment in education (World Bank, 2003).

In addition to these problems, about 10,000 youth leave secondary school after grade 9. This
annual cohort presents a special challenge to the training system. These 15 and 16 year-old youth
are still immature and they are seldom ready to benefit from training in terms of basic academic
preparation. The dual language issue in Jamaica is a further problem. As Blank (2003) wrote:
It should be noted that a critical constraint in formal education has been the failure of the education system to come to grips with the dual language situation. In Jamaica, English is the language of official discourse, while patois (Creole) is often the language of the home—especially in lower-income families. There is recognition of the need for bilingual teaching strategies; however, the role of patois in the classroom has not been resolved. It is not clear whether patois should be used as stimulus material, as a motivational tool, as a bridge to literacy or as the official language of instruction. The current situation is that both teachers and students use patois regularly. The transition from oral patois to written English is a very difficult one for children. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (MoEYC) has recognized the dual language situation; however, the training of teachers with respect to how they can best use the child’s first language to facilitate growth in literacy has been inadequate. This issue affects all stages of lifelong learning.

Additional important social issues include crime and violence and gender issues. The crime rate in Jamaica is among the highest in the hemisphere, especially murders. Crime and security costs are impediments to investment and economic growth. In terms of gender, the problem of the gender gap between males and females, sometimes referred to as male marginalization (Miller, 1991), is prominent. Males perform poorly in school compared to females and participation in tertiary education is highly skewed toward females. HEART’s enrolment ratio for 2004–05 was 58 per cent female. Male labour market participation declined from 82 per cent in 1975 to 73 per cent in 2004. These indicators show that males are experiencing particular problems in both the education system and the labour market.

1.2 The major areas of economic activity and employment

The economy is now about 70 per cent services, with the distributive trade being the largest contributor, followed by transport, storage and communication, manufacturing, government services and construction and installation; other sectors contribute the balance (see Figure 2).
Recent growth is related to construction, the export of bauxite and alumina, tourism, and the manufacturing of beverages and processed foods.

**Figure 2: Proportion of GDP by Sector, 2004**

Source: PIOJ *Economic and Social Survey*, 2004

Remittances from Jamaicans working overseas are now an important feature of the Jamaican economy, moving from US$184 million in 1990 to $800 million in the late 1990s and to $1.47 billion in 2004 (Jamaica Information Service, 2005). This income is similar to that derived from tourism at $1.44 billion.

According to the PIOJ, total GDP was US$7.3 billion in 2004 with inflation at 13.7 per cent (in 2003 inflation was 14.1 per cent), with a record fiscal deficit. Debt servicing reached 36.3 per cent of GDP in 2002 and declined to 32 per cent in 2003.

In 2004 the Government negotiated a two-year freeze on public sector wages to control spiralling fiscal deficits, and Hurricane Ivan struck in September of that year, dampening growth for the remainder of the year. The economic outlook is improving, however, with the Government’s medium-term socioeconomic policy framework of 2004 projecting growth of 2.5 per cent for 2004 and moving to 3.0 per cent in 2006 along with declining inflation. New, large investments in the bauxite/alumina sector and tourism are beginning to materialize. The ICT sector and food processing show favourable growth and the declining unemployment rate is quite significant. As
we shall see, the investments in alumina production and tourism are a particular challenge to the HEART Trust/NTA.

**The Labour Market**

The Jamaican labour force is 1,194,800, comprising 663,500 males and 531,300 females (data from PIOJ, 2004). Participation is at 64.3 per cent with a male rate of 73 per cent and a female rate of 56 per cent. Total employment is 1,055,200 with an unemployment rate of 11.7 per cent for 2004, down from rates of 15–16 per cent a few years ago. Females have more than twice the unemployment rate of males at 16.4 per cent versus 7.9 per cent for males. During the 15-year period from 1990–2004, jobs increased by only 17 per cent, at the low rate of 0.78 per cent increase per year.

Table 1 and Figure 3 show employment by sector, comparing 2004 figures with 1990 figures. Employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing declined by over 42,000 and manufacturing by over 38,000, but employment grew in other sectors as follows:

- Wholesale/retail/hotels/restaurants 84,325
- Construction and installation 47,850
- Community services 42,875
- Transport/storage/communication 40,500
- Finance/insurance/real estate/business services 23,650

These changes reflect the re-orientation of the economy towards services and service occupations.
Table 1: Employment by Sector 1990 and 2004 (000,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goods Producing Sectors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing</td>
<td>239,600</td>
<td>197,300</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>-19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>108,175</td>
<td>69,400</td>
<td>-36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction/Installation</td>
<td>56,950</td>
<td>104,800</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services Producing Sectors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity/Gas/Water</td>
<td>5,375</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale/Retail/Hotels/Restaurants Services</td>
<td>163,475</td>
<td>247,800</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport/Storage/Communication</td>
<td>34,200</td>
<td>74,700</td>
<td>118%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance/Insurance/Real Estate/Business Services</td>
<td>34,750</td>
<td>58,400</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/Social/Personal Services</td>
<td>246,325</td>
<td>289,200</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Not Specified</td>
<td>4,750</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>-70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Employed Labour Force</strong></td>
<td>900,800</td>
<td>1,055,100</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employment by occupational group is shown in Figure 4, which compares 2004 with 1993. The number of professionals, officials and technicians has increased the most, along with service workers and shop and market sales, followed by clerks. Only very modest growth occurred for plant and machine operators and craft and related trades workers, while skilled agricultural and fishery workers and elementary occupations declined during the period. These changes reflect the increase in services, the growth in distribution, decline in manufacturing, restructuring in agriculture, and a continued loss of low-skill elementary jobs.

Jamaica exports both farm workers and hospitality workers to North America for guest worker programmes of various durations; this group is organized with government cooperation and remittances to home are built into the programme. The Jamaican Diaspora includes enclaves in the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom, with the Jamaican population living abroad approximating the population living on the island. The high migration rate of Jamaicans results in a brain drain that is fairly well established (Adams, 2003; Lowell, 2001) and which poses a serious challenge to the education and training system.
Large numbers of professionals who have benefited from highly subsidized university education have migrated and in recent years the USA and the UK have been recruiting large numbers of teachers and nurses. Jamaica also benefits if these migrating individuals return, and the whole question of the value of the remittances versus the brain drain is viewed as a trade-off that suggests that Jamaica must continue to educate and train, regardless of migration pressures.

The Jamaican labour market has been characterised by segmentation in terms of social class, gender and age as summarized most recently by Downes (2003), who pointed to the sharp cleavages in terms of status between workers and management; the distrust between workers and management which demotivates workers; weaknesses in work norms and management styles; and social relationships based on class, colour, ethnicity, residential location and education, that spill over from the wider society into the workplace.

1.2. The country’s export base and competitiveness

The export base of Jamaica includes bauxite mining and tourism, both of which have been expanding, and sugar and bananas, both of which are on the decline due to low competitiveness. According to the Planning Institute of Jamaica’s (PIOJ) Mid-Term Socioeconomic Policy Framework (2005):
The recent performance of Jamaica in terms of competitiveness has been disappointing. In 2002, it was ranked 60th among a total of 80 countries in the Global Competitiveness Report, compared with a ranking of 52 in 2001. With respect to the microeconomic environment index, Jamaica was ranked 59 in 2002 compared to a rank of 39 in 2001 (BOJ, 2003). The competitiveness of Jamaica is also affected negatively by minimum wages higher than in competing countries and externalities such as crime, inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained manpower, limited domestic availability of credit and cumbersome administrative procedures.

The GOJ has been working with the PIOJ in resolving some of the competitiveness issues in the manufacturing sector. However, GOJ capacity to support is limited not only by the funds actually available for activities such as training and technical assistance but also by the trade-offs inherent in the prevailing macro economic situation. For instance a drop in the exchange rate, favourable for competitiveness, increases the foreign public debt. Similarly credit to the private sector is limited by the high interest rates existing on Treasury bills.

Private sector support for reform measures has gathered momentum with the establishment of the “Partnership for Progress” initiative, modelled on an approach adopted in Ireland that contributed to the successful economic recovery and subsequent economic expansion there.²

1.3. The stated objectives for social development, economic growth, diversification and export competitiveness

Objectives for social development

Recent developments in the social sector are marked by major reform initiatives as the country strives to address challenges in several areas. Chief amongst these are reforms in:

(a) Social protection to improve security provisions for the rapidly increasing elderly age cohort and to streamline and modernize the welfare system;
(b) Early childhood provisions to ensure that the developmental needs of this age cohort are adequately met; and
(c) Secondary education to standardize the curricula and facilities accessed by students at this level.

Legislative and institutional changes have also been made in several areas as part of the reform process. Decentralization of management and decision-making is another feature of the ongoing changes with these being introduced in the health and education sectors. Efforts to enhance participation in governance include the Jamaica Social Policy Evaluation Project, which seeks to establish a prototype for facilitating community involvement in policy development and monitoring.

The most intractable problems to be addressed include persistently high levels of violence, particularly murder; unsatisfactory output of the education system at the secondary level; and youth-related issues such as reproductive health and unemployment, especially among females; and underachievement and crime, especially among males.

A recently conducted assessment of the country’s progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) revealed a fairly good record of achievement.

The Government of Jamaica (GOJ) reaffirms its commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Noting the findings of the recent assessment of the progress towards achieving the goals, particular attention will be paid to improving infant and maternal mortality.
Prioritizing the budgetary allocations and release of funds to support the social sectors and poverty reducing measures;

- Focusing health reform measures on improving service delivery standards, with particular attention to those indicators cited above that are lagging in achieving MDG targets;

- Implementation of the HIV/AIDS strategy inclusive of a national public education programme targeting the youth and the tourism sector;

- Facilitating human capital development among the poor by the use of conditional transfer linked to behaviour modification in health and education; and

- Improving housing conditions of slum dwellers in the inner city of the Kingston Metropolitan Area (KMA) through housing and infrastructure development.

1.4. Objectives for economic growth, diversification and export competitiveness

The GOJ is aiming at a 3 per cent growth rate based on sound macroeconomic and fiscal policies including public sector wage restraint. Growth in tourism is projected to directly create 12,000 jobs in new hotels with further employment creation expected. Expansion of bauxite mining is occurring with a US$600m expansion project by Jamalco (formerly Alcoa). The telecommunications infrastructure has increased significantly and new highways are being built along the north and south coasts that will alter development patterns and enhance growth.

The banana and sugar industries remain problematic with consideration being given to conversion of the sugar industry toward bio-energy, but also discussion of the sale of government-owned sugar estates to workers. The banana industry was devastated by Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

Financial services made a good recovery after the sector’s crisis in the late 1990s to 2002. Construction activity has increased since 2004 and the outlook is favourable.

The merchandise trade deficit was US$2,515.8m in 2004, an increase of 1.3 per cent over 2003; however, total merchandise exports grew by 18.0 per cent in 2004. This growth is from mineral fuels, chemicals and food, especially beverages.
2. The Current state of the TVET system in Jamaica

2.1. National TVET objectives and priorities

2.1.1. Institutional reform

HEART, as an agency, is in the completion phase of reform toward achieving greater flexibility in the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) using newly developed unit standards, with the implementation at about two-thirds of training offerings now offered within this new framework.

The Ministry of Education has a stated policy of implementing NCTVET NVQs in schools, but uptake of either the older or newer system has been slow, actually decreasing in 2004, and rebounding somewhat in 2005.

Tertiary institutions have implemented some Level 1 and Level 2 courses with direct financial assistance from HEART but have not offered any diploma or associate degree developed within and sanctioned by the NCTVET framework.

Future institutional reform might focus on how to enlarge the training market beyond the current HEART-financed programmes which have what will increasingly appear to be an unfair advantage, with assured funding every year. Additional competitive measures that allow all accredited training entities to bid on providing training, along with a market-based projection of training and employment, needs to determine how many spaces are “purchased” for different skill areas, may be required.
Table 2.1: Total number of persons enrolled and total number of persons successfully completing TVET\(^{(2)}\) by type of institution in 1995, 2000 and 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status/year</th>
<th>Institution(^{(2)})</th>
<th>1995/96</th>
<th>2000/01</th>
<th>2004/05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gross costs</td>
<td>Enrolled</td>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>Gross costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEART Trust/NTA</td>
<td>J$845.2m</td>
<td>18,421</td>
<td>8,227</td>
<td>J$2,032b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>J$845.2m</td>
<td>10,290</td>
<td>5,622</td>
<td>J$2,032b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Enterprises</td>
<td>J$2,032b</td>
<td>3,928</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>J$2,032b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Progs</td>
<td>J$2,032b</td>
<td>4,203</td>
<td>1,967</td>
<td>J$2,032b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary TVET</td>
<td>J$2,032b</td>
<td>2,395</td>
<td>736</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Providers (2003)</td>
<td>J$2,032b</td>
<td>At least</td>
<td>At least</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary TVET (2003–04)</td>
<td>J$2,032b</td>
<td>43,300</td>
<td>14,643</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data are for fiscal years going from April 1 to March 31 each year.

(1) Please specify if data include or exclude (all) private sector training centres/institutions

(2) If there are many training centres please aggregate by type of institution
2.1.2. VET demand analysis and planning of delivery

HEART Trust/NTA, the PIOJ and the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) all provide important information and analytical resources for planning TVET. The VET demand analysis and planning is mostly concentrated in HEART Trust/NTA.

Demand is analysed using a variety of inputs and approaches that allow for an understanding of both long-term trends and needs and short-term opportunities and demands; in short, a strategic vision with an ability to respond to immediate needs.

Demand analysis takes into account changes in employment patterns shown in STATIN labour market data, results of tracer studies, and findings of sectoral training needs studies. In addition, sectoral consultations are held and recently, major investment projects have deliberately sought to include workforce development in the planning.

Over time the portfolio of HEART offerings has changed in terms of greatly increasing spaces in tourism and hospitality, ICTs, construction and early childhood care. Implementing additional higher-level training is also a labour market imperative.

2.1.3. TVET decentralization strategy

Schools are run by government and by private entities which receive government funds to pay teachers. There is no strategy of decentralization
per se, however, a decentralization into some regional services has been effected within the MOEYC.

TVET at HEART is only partially decentralized. Community-based training (CBT) programmes are run with a small head office complement monitoring and are essentially the most decentralized. For the institutions, as they are all owned by HEART, there is still a high degree of centralization in terms of budgeting, purchasing, revenue management, hiring and firing. Enterprise-based training is somewhat more decentralized because its business is different.

As noted at 2.1.1 the strategy for further decentralization would involve placing the HEART institutions on a competitive footing with other providers who become Accredited Training Organizations (ATOs) under the NCTVET framework. They would then diversify their revenues, supposedly, to include training financed by HEART and training financed by other means, for example, fees.

2.1.4. Targeting specific labour market groups

Specific labour market groups are targeted in several different ways.

Overall, the unemployed and untrained are the first priority, receiving free training with a stipend to assist with transport, and most receive lunch. Self-targeting of the poor is evident in recent research on return on investment.

Further, there is a historic gender bias in favour of female enrolment that HEART has tried to manage and reduce. For the year-to-date at 11/2005,
the female proportion of enrolment was 53.7 per cent and it was 59 per cent for all of 2004–05.

Since 2002, an emphasis on the need for certification in the childcare field led to a project that continues to provide training and certification. More recently, investments in bauxite mining and new hotels have prompted a focus on training, certification and upgrading of construction personnel.

2.1.5. Other objectives and priorities

The major objective is increasing access to certification services by certifying members of the Jamaican labour force through assessing and recognizing prior learning and filling in training gaps of existing workers, as well as providing comprehensive, relevant training to individuals entering the workforce.

2.2. Current funding arrangements

2.2.1. Advantages and disadvantages of the current funding mechanism

The training levy has functioned to provide a stable and predictable basis to assure financing for training and has enabled the development of a strong national training infrastructure. (See Investment in Training: A Cross-Country Comparative Study on Best Practices for more information).

2.2.2. Indicators—including cost indicators—used in designing and evaluating TVET funding strategies

- Employment rates from tracer studies;
- Job placement rates;
• Enrolment, completion and certification rates of various programmes;
• Unit costs for training programmes.

3. Quality assurance strategies

3.1. Assuring National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

3.1.1. Describe and review current national system of assuring VET quality

NVQs are quality assured by the NCTVET through its Quality Assurance Department, which conducts moderation of assessment and audits of the assessment process by providers in the NCTVET framework. Standards are maintained for assessor and the assessment process and these are assured by NCTVET using risk management techniques.

3.2. HEART Trust-National Training Agency

3.2.1. Short history

The Human Employment and Resource Training (HEART) Act was passed in 1982, setting up a training levy and tax credit for on-the-job training. The Trust is governed by a Board of Directors of seven to 20 persons chosen from the public and private sectors.

A traineeship programme was launched in 1983, and seven HEART Academies were launched between 1984 and 1988: in Kingston
(Garmex), Portmore, Ebony Park, Kenilworth, St. Andrew (School of Cosmetology), Runaway Bay, and at Stony Hill, also in St Andrew. A reform process which began in 1989 resulted in the launch of the National Training Agency in 1991. The NCTVET was launched in 1994. Between 1992 and 1997 a variety of institutions were transferred to HEART including 14 vocational training centres, the Vocational Training Development Institute (VTDI) and the National Tool and Engineering Institute. The Caribbean Institute of Technology (CIT) was launched in 1999.

A new modular certification framework was introduced in 2003.

3.2.2. Role and objectives

HEART Trust/NTA’s role is to finance and regulate training programmes with the objective of producing a skilled, certified workforce consistent with the needs of the economy and the labour market.

3.2.3. Functioning within the institutional framework

HEART reports to the Ministry of Education. The current Permanent Secretary is on the Board of Directors. The Ministry of Finance monitors financial and related performance under the Public Entities Accountability Act, and provides oversight and approval to the agency’s annual operating budget.

3.2.4. Availability of professional expertise and the institutional sustainability of HEART Trust/NTA
HEART has a staff that includes standards developers, assessment professionals, researchers, instructor trainers, instructors, career development professionals, project managers and HRD specialists, and it also has a strong HRD programme for staff.

The sustainability of HEART is assured in the fiscal sense by the three per cent levy, but continuing to increase value to employer and learner stakeholders is considered the major means of sustainability.

3.2.5. The need for reform of HEART Trust/NTA

HEART Trust has been involved in several waves of reform and is in the midst of a reform involving the implementation of the unit competency framework.

In the medium term, financial reforms may be necessary in terms of establishing a competitive framework for accredited training providers and in terms of the amount of the training levy.

3.2.6. Technical assistance and other support needed to implement current strategies including the harmonization of NVQs and CVQs

The agency continues to use consultant technical assistance in implementing its new NVQs.

Harmonization with CVQs has yet to become an activity.
4. The Caribbean single market and CARICOM Vocational Qualifications

(CVQS)

4.1. Differences between NVQs and CVQs

The Jamaican NVQ (or NQ) is based on five levels of employment and relates these levels to qualifications (certificates at levels 1–4, with diplomas and associate degrees at 3 and 4, and bachelor’s degrees at level 5. The CVQ appears to start with qualifications and then relate them to levels of employment and this includes postgraduate study. It misses a level of skilled employment, collapsing the NVQ’s levels 2, 3 and 4 into two levels rather than three. Nonetheless, these differences are not major impediments to harmonization. The real issue is the acceptance of the framework by stakeholders.

4.2. Reform of the quality assurance system, adopted reforms and implementation

The NCTVET quality assurance system is just beginning to function effectively after significant reform over the past three years. Efforts continue in the areas of ISO, moderation of assessment, auditing of training providers and quality assurance within the ATOs.

4.3. Harmonizing national quality assurance practices at the CARICOM level

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4. CARICOM has established and institutionalised a framework for work/labour force competency certification (NVQs and soon CVQs). This framework is based on approved occupational standards of competence for over 120 occupations from entry level 1 to professional level 5 (website to access this system is http://www.ilocarib.org.tt/cef/index.html). The CVQ certification is intended to facilitate the movement of skilled certified workers within the CSME as well as enhance the quality profile and investment attractiveness of the work/labour force of the CARICOM member states.
The Jamaican system has a well-defined QA system that can serve as the model for CARICOM states.

5. Reforming the TVET system in Jamaica

5.1. Main factors driving the need for change of the TVET system

- The need to increase competitiveness of firms and to improve productivity;
- The need to increase the skills and qualification level of the workforce;
- The need to expand access of all working age Jamaicans to training and certification;
- The need for a flexible system that enables both full-time and part-time participation, with recognition of prior learning, and with a modular system in which acquired skills accumulate into a qualification over time;
- The need to upgrade the existing workforce.

5.2. Reforms needed to better address the need for skills training and enhanced employability

Continued emphasis on “soft skills” in training programmes through a strategy of integration of employability concepts into the teaching and learning process.

5.3. Adopted (actual) education and training reform policies and implementation

5.3.1. New legislation and reforms of the regulatory system

Changes to legislation are contemplated to move away from an automatic tax credit for enterprise-based training and toward a training grant approach.
The threshold for paying the HEART levy also needs to be increased.

5.3.2. **New ways to provide access to job training and certification**

5.3.2.1. **Educationally disadvantaged, uncertified dropouts and marginalized youth.**

The disadvantaged are well represented in HEART Trust/NTA programmes. The new framework enables recognition of remedial work to make it possible to qualify to enter training programmes.

5.3.2.2. **Students about to graduate from the secondary school system**

Secondary schools can partner with the agency to enable students in grades 10 and 11 to acquire unit competencies and NVQs. School leavers can access agency training programmes in institutional, community and enterprise-based settings.

5.3.2.3. **Existing members of the labour force (employed and unemployed)**

Existing workers can access the new framework and seek assessment and certification of existing skills. HEART partners with firms to assist existing workers to acquire unit competencies and NVQs.

5.3.3. **Reform of secondary education**

Jamaica continues a reform of secondary education that has only been partially successful at the level of grades 7–9. The upper secondary system remains somewhat wedded to the CXC/CSEC examinations, although this system appears to leave behind a majority of participants. Increasing the relevance of secondary education in terms of employability skills (soft skills) is a major priority and this appears somewhat in conflict with the CXC approach, which may be overly academic, too individualistic and too test-centred.
Improvement of education quality remains the greatest need in the education system.

5.3.4. **Tertiary education and skills training**

Tertiary education participation rates have increased significantly but still lag behind the Latin American and North American rates. Tertiary education programmes are also in need of increased relevance to the labour market with a greater emphasis on competencies and performance.

5.3.5. **Current policies and programmes that address the need for skills training in the informal economy**

This area comprises a significant challenge for the agency. Programmes aimed at entrepreneurship are offered to all institution-based learners at a low level with an insufficient supply of more (1) advanced programmes and (2) properly targeted programmes.

6. **Impact, evaluation and sustainability of the TVET system**

6.1. **Jamaica and impact evaluation**

HEART implemented an impact monitoring system in 1999 and developed an annual impact assessment that brings together a variety of indicators and measures of the impact of the investments in training including tracer studies, job placement data, return on investment data and other evaluative information.

HEART conducts programme evaluations that focus on the delivery of training in a training programme or programmes and conducts reviews of performance on a regular basis.
6.2. Assessing training needs; institutions, sources and methods

Training needs assessments are conducted both at the micro level (in firms) and at the macro level (industries, sectors). Surveys are common along with a review of secondary data, focus groups and stakeholder consultations. These are summarized in reports and in the corporate strategic plan of the agency.

6.3. TVET annual output specifications

Annual targets are set for enrolment, completion and certification. Certification rate is benchmarked at 90 per cent.

7. TVET institutions and sectoral (employment) policies

7.1. Restructuring of agriculture and the response of the TVET systems

The main agricultural training institution has moved toward partnerships with stakeholders to develop new lines of agricultural and agro-processing activity and has moved toward a linkage into food processing. An articulation agreement with the College of Agriculture, Science and Education (CASE) has enabled Level 2 learners to go on to tertiary studies with reasonable success.

The institution once devoted entirely to agriculture has diversified into food processing, tourism and childcare.

7.2. TVET and the response to growing/changing demand for skills in tourism, international business and financial services

HEART has increased offerings related to tourism, especially hospitality, quite significantly over the past ten years and this is its largest area of training by far. There is still need, however, for more higher-level training programmes and to anchor some of the tertiary offerings to industry standards. Diversification in tourism offerings is currently under way, however the pace of new programme development is too slow. Programme development and implementation is aimed at golf (standards in development), marinas and boating including boat engine and body repair, landscaping and horticulture, property management of villas and
apartments, cultural knowledge and sensitivity, tour guiding and hotel plant maintenance.

A partnership with the Tourism Product Development Company involves HEART financing training in Team Jamaica, a brand-knowledge and attitudinal development programme for all tourism workers.

In the area of international business, training for several levels of call centre workers and advanced training for construction personnel for developments in bauxite and tourism are now in place.

In financial services, a sector study was conducted showing how the training agency could make inroads into the sector. Subsequent to this, standards have been developed for five qualifications but only two of these have been implemented as training programmes. See Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Standards for the Financial Services

| Standards Developed in Financial Services |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Accounting                     | 1. General Accounting Level 1 (Junior Clerks) |
|                                | 2. General Accounting Level 2 (Accounting Clerks) |
|                                | 3. Payroll Administration Level 2 |
| General Insurance              | 4. Loss Adjusting Level 3 (Automotive Assessing) |
|                                | 5. Investigating Level 3 (Insurance Investigators) |

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