“Engaging employers and other stakeholders to strengthen links between vocational programs and labor mark needs is a key input to reform vocational training in Jordan,” highlighted Ms. Nadera Al Bakheet, USAID-funded Jordan Workforce Development (WFD) Project Team Leader for Improved Quality of and Enrollment in Vocational and Workforce-Readiness Training. “Employers as a whole have very strong interest in ensuring that graduates of the vocational training have quality and coherent qualifications.”

Delivering a quality vocational education through first-rate instructors and a strengthened curriculum in line with international best practice that is adaptive to local industrial sector and market needs is one of the main objectives for WFD. One of the challenges faced by TVET graduates entering technical/vocational training is the current mismatch between the training programs provided and the current needs of businesses. WFD recognizes the need to encourage the private sector in Jordan to collaborate with TVET training providers and policy makers to update and test vocational training programs to match trainee skills with business needs. The project is designing efforts to support the private sector engagement through public-private partnership (PPPs) to enhance practical and applied training, provide work-based learning opportunities, pilot VTCs as innovation hubs, and develop curricula in target sectors.

“One of the examples of the lack of public private partnerships in TVET is related to the skills of the OSH Supervisor graduates. The private sector is not being approached to participate in enhancing the quality of the vocational education related to OSH, while there is significant need to improve the quality of safety and health environment in local industries to attract more women and youth to enter the labor market. There is a need to engage the private sector in the development of OSH supervisors related programs to ensure that the local industries will have qualified OSH supervisors who can maintain the proper implementation of safety conditions, as well as increase the knowledge of employers about the importance of applying the OSH standards in their workplaces” said Eng. Raed Halaseh, an internationally certified safety and health trainer and consultant.

To address the gap and skills provided by the current OSH training providers and the requirements of the employers, WFD partnered with the Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA), as the national quality assurance entity to provide certification and in the vocational and technical field, to upgrade an OSH Supervisor National Occupational Standards (NOS) by collaborating intensively with employers to ensure that the OSH Supervisor competencies match their needs. “Jordan never had an occupational standard for an OSH supervisor prior to this project. The OSH occupational standard is aligned with international best practices. Since many companies in Jordan follow international standards, training on this updated curricula shall reduce the gap between the training providers and the employers,” Eng. Halaseh acknowledged.

Using the same participatory approach, the project developed a curriculum framework for OSH supervisors for Occupational Safety and Health Institute (OSHI), the only institute responsible for training on OSH standards in the VTC. The framework will be the central reference document used for editing training material that will be applied in OSHI training programs.

“The methodology adopted successfully utilizes employers’ needs, is customized to the local context, and will produce qualified OHS supervisors which will support in saving lives in the workplace. Creating a demand driven training system to match market needs requires a strong relationship between employers and training providers,” noted Eng. Walid Atwan, a participant at the WFD Curriculum Training Workshop. “Like many freelancers, I will be using the OSH curriculum framework as a reference for developing training in the region,” continued Eng. Atwan.

The curriculum gained recognition by several parties including the National Center for Human Resources Development (NCHRD). Eng. Mohammad Kheir Irshid, Director of CAQA, confirmed to the Project that NCHRD will be using the WFD/CAQA approved OSH Supervisor to train 500 community college graduates.

“Education and training should be designed to prepare citizens for a range of roles in the workplace and for lifelong learning. Our project will continue applying the same methodology of bringing the private sector from local industries and the public training providers to create other practical, localized occupational standards with extensive private sector engagement in every step of the design, development, delivery, and review of programs to ensure the content is market responsive. Utilizing a highly participatory process which engages the private sector effectively, is a model that can be replicated by the VTC and VTIs in the future. This supports long-term sustainability through reinforcing a market-driven curriculum development approach to TVET,” commented William Thompson, WFD Chief of Party.