

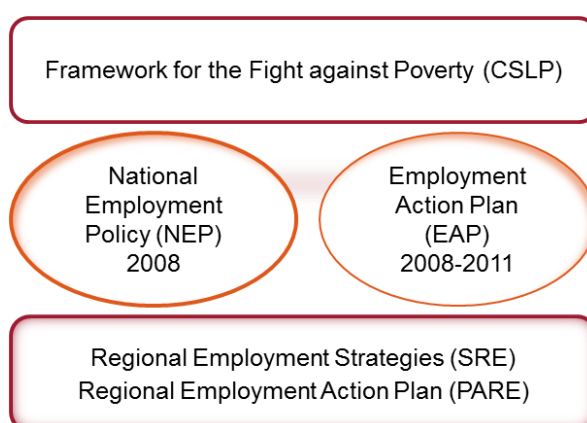
EMPLOYMENT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS IN BURKINA FASO¹

The ILO and its constituents have made significant progress in developing national employment policies (NEPs). However, unless appropriate institutional arrangements can be put in place to ensure their timely and effective implementation, even sound policies may not produce the desired results. To respond to the increasing requests from its constituents for assistance in NEP implementation, the ILO launched a research project on “a comparative analysis of employment policy implementation mechanisms in selected countries”. Case studies² and a synthesis report were published as working papers. This research brief presents the institutional framework for NEP implementation in Burkina Faso.

1. National Employment Policy in Burkina Faso

The NEP in Burkina Faso was officially adopted as part of poverty reduction efforts by the Government in May 2008. Before its adoption, there already existed a whole range of employment measures, particularly for youth employment and employability. The NEP unified these measures and served as a catalyst to initiate new employment schemes, while improving the visibility and the coherence of the existing measures. It was accompanied by an Employment Action Plan (EAP) which first covered the period 2008-2011. At the regional level, 10 of the 13 national regions have drafted regional employment strategies and action plans. Figure 1 presents the NEP framework.

Figure 1. The NEP framework in Burkina Faso



Source: the Author

Figure 2. The strategic objectives of the NEP in Burkina Faso



Source: the Author

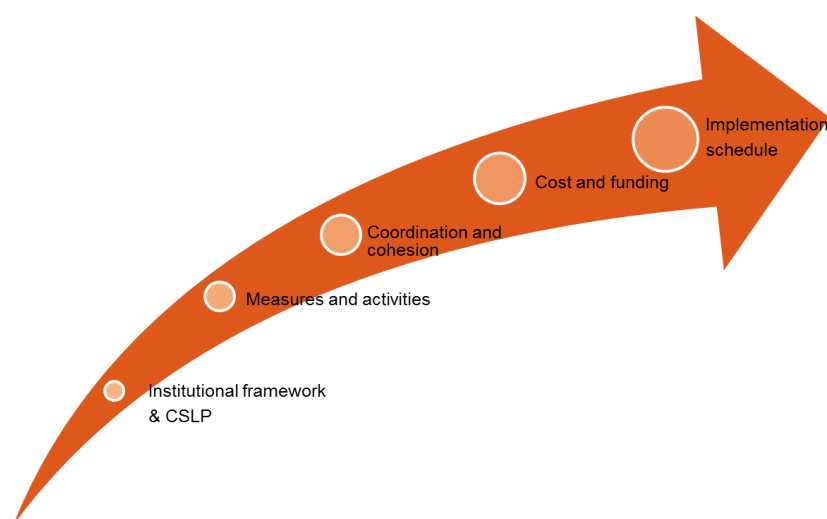
The NEP has four strategic objectives as shown in Figure 2, which are in line with the national poverty reduction strategy – the Framework for the Fight against Poverty (CSLP):

- *Strengthening the relationship between the NEP and other national policies.* This objective is to improve the coherence between employment policies on the one hand and macroeconomic and sectoral policies on the other, including agriculture, crafts, industrial and trade policies. With regard to macroeconomic policies, the objective is essentially to advocate for a pro-employment macroeconomic framework. By improving coordination between the various ministries, agencies and actors, the policy coherence and effectiveness of the overall strategy should be improved.
- *Strengthening job creation.* This objective is to remove the obstacles to micro- and small-enterprises development, especially those related to their financing and survival during their early years of existence through interventions by agencies and structures already in place. This also concerns vulnerable groups, promoting employment through programmes of self-employment and public works.
- *Improving employability.* This objective is to improve the skills of the workforce to increase the supply of skilled workers through developing the system of technical and vocational training. It also focuses on areas where the supply of technical and vocational training is inadequate. The national technical and vocational training policy was developed and adopted in July 2008, two months after the adoption of the NEP.
- *Improving the organization and functioning of the labour market.* This objective is to improve the provisions of the Labour Code with regard to hiring and firing rules and working time, as well as to strengthen the role of the National Employment Agency (ANPE), in particular in the regions, and encourage the establishment of private employment agencies. With regard to the information system on employment and vocational training, the NEP emphasizes the central role of the National Observatory of Employment and Vocational Training (ONEF). This objective also contains measures to promote decent work through a greater application of labour legislation and social dialogue.

2. From National Employment Policy to Employment Action Plan

An Employment Action Plan (EAP) was formulated to implement the NEP, which include, as Figure 3 shows, specific measures, the responsible agencies and actors, the estimated costs and the sources of funding, and an implementation schedule. An important difference between the NEP and its EAP is the inclusion of the fifth strategic objective: *the establishment of the conditions necessary for NEP implementation*. This new strategic objective is divided into two immediate objectives: (i) establishing an appropriate institutional framework for implementing the NEP and EAP, and (ii) integrating employment in the CSLP.

Figure 3. From NEP to EAP in Burkina Faso



Source: the Author

The EAP includes three aspects summarized in Table 1:

- A. Activities to achieve the strategic and immediate objectives.** In the first column, more than 317 activities were planned in 2008. Objective 2 has the largest number of activities, followed by Objective 4. These are essentially activities that fall within the traditional definition of labour market policy. Employability improvement activities are less numerous, which reflects the delay in the development of the technical and vocational training policy and the fact that its formulation ran parallel to that of the NEP.
- B. Departments and other relevant agencies.** The second column gives the number of departments and implementing agencies involved in the implementation of the activities, which is important with regard to the immediate objective of job creation (Objective 2.2). This reflects the large number of activities under this objective. It is also due to the fact that employment programmes for young people and women are the responsibility of different ministries, agencies and organizations. Departments are highly specialized: a) the Ministry of Finance (MEF) is responsible for taking employment into account in cross-cutting policies (Objectives 1.1 and 5.2); b) the Ministry of Youth, Vocational Training and Employment (MJFPE) is responsible for employment programmes, the functioning of the labour market and overseeing the implementation of the NEP (Objectives 2.2, 4.1 and 5.1); c) the sectoral departments (agriculture, crafts, industry and trade) are responsible for employment-creating activities in their sector (Objective 1.2); d) the department in charge of the private sector is responsible for improving the business environment, e) the Ministry of Education (MESSRS), in collaboration with the MJFPE, is responsible for employability (Objectives 3.1 and 3.2); and f) the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Service (MFPTSS) is in charge of the promotion of decent work (Objective 4.2).

C. The costs and funding. In the EAP, under one third of the activities had a budget allocation, while 40 per cent had no budgetary implications. The mobilization of resources has been helped by the establishment of a technical inter-ministerial committee by the Ministry of Employment in 2009 in order to accelerate the integration of the EAP into the national budget.

Table 1. The Employment Action Plan (EAP) 2008-2013

Strategic objective Immediate objectives	(1) Activities	(2) Structures	(3) Budget	(4) Implementation
1. Strengthen the link of NEP to other policies				
1.1 Employment in cross-cutting policies	25(8)	6(3)	10(3)	Low
1.2 Employment in sectoral policies	31(10)	7(4)	14(19)	Low
2. Strengthen job creation				
2.1 Job-rich activities in private enterprises	36(11)	6(2)	15(12)	Underway
2.2 Targeted measures for job creation	88(28)	10(5)	30(34)	Advanced
3. Improve the employability of the labour force				
3.1 Expanding vocational training	15(5)	7(2)	3(8)	Initiated
3.2 Improving training quality through an integrated approach	9(3)	4(2)	1(3)	Initiated
4. Improve the organization and functioning of the labour market				
4.1 Improving labour market governance	32(10)	8(4)	7(17)	Underway
4.2 Progress towards the decent work	45(14)	6(3)	20(19)	Initiated
5. Institutional framework for NEP Implementation				
5.1 Establishing an implementation framework	20(6)	2(1)	7(10)	Low
5.2 Integrating employment in the poverty reduction strategy	16(5)	3(2)	2(10)	Low
Total	317(100)		109(128)	

Notes: (1) Number of planned activities (in % of the total number of activities):

(2) Number of leading structures (number of ministries involved).

(3) Number of activities with estimated budget (number of activities without incidence or current budget).

Source: Bourdet (2014)

3. Institutional framework

The Ministry of Youth and Employment (became the Ministry of Youth, Vocational Training and Employment, MJFPE in 2011) has been in charge of drafting the NEP and EAP. According to the official NEP document, its implementation includes four structures: 1) an orientation and consultation structure – the National Council for Employment and Vocational Training (CNEFP); (2) a technical committee; 3) a technical secretariat; and 4) a decentralized structure at the regional level. Structures (2) and (3) constitute the executive of the NEP and EAP (see Figure 4).

- A. The National Council for Employment and Vocational Training (CNEFP)** is the consultation and steering structure of the NEP created by Decree in 2009. It is an inter-ministerial and tripartite body headed by the Prime Minister, and composed of 58 members from key ministries with regard to employment, social partners and civil society at the national and local level that meets annually. The main functions of the CNEFP are: (i) to guide the initiatives of the mechanism and the actors with emphasis on the convergence and complementarities of the interventions and actions; (ii) to monitor and evaluate implementation; (iii) to approve the annual report of the executive coordinator; (iv) to suggest improvements to the NEP and EAP; and (iv) to contribute to social dialogue and consultation on the NEP/EAP (see Table 2).
- B. The Technical Committee** is a permanent structure created in 2012 and chaired by the Secretary General of the MJFPE, who is the Executive Coordinator and a central player in the executive structure. The Technical Committee meets twice annually and includes 17 members from the departments relevant to employment issues (e.g. MJFPE, MFPTSS), social partners and the monitoring and enforcement agencies (ONEF, INSD and ANPE) (see Table 2). Its main function is to support the CNEFP in the NEP and EAP implementation, which include: (i) facilitating activities of various actors of the NEP and EAP; (ii) being responsible for the organizational process underpinning the NEP and EAP activities; (iii) centralizing all the NEP and EAP implementation information; (iv) assuring relations at regional level for implementation of the NEP/EAP; (v) preparing the meetings of the CNEFP and the supporting documentation; (vi) building a strategic partnership with the responsible departments of the CSLP and assisting with budgetary issues; (vii) organizing the evaluation and impact assessment required by the NEP and EAP; and (viii) preparing the annual implementation report of the NEP and EAP for submission to the CNEFP.

C. The Technical Secretariat assists the Executive Coordinator of the Technical Committee in performing its tasks, the main functions include: (i) taking all necessary organizational measures to support the activities of the EAP; (ii) ensuring that the programming of tasks and work schedules are respected; (iii) collecting and analyzing the information on the implementation of the EAP; (iv) preparing, at the request of the Executive Coordinator, studies or analysis relevant to the action plan and reports on EAP implementation, and making administrative arrangements; and (v) establishing good working relations with the actors in charge of the implementation of the EAP at the national and regional levels.

D. The decentralized structure at the regional level is represented by the Regional Director of the Department of Employment and Vocational Training under the authority of the regional governor. Awareness and guidance structures – such as the framework for regional consultation, and coordination and promotion units – establish ownership of the NEP at the regional level. The decentralized structure's main functions are: (i) ensuring ownership of the objectives, approaches and actions included in the NEP and EAP by local actors and social partners; (ii) mobilizing local actors and social partners on the issue of employment; (iii) analyzing the regional employment situation and actions needed; (iv) preparing the annual report on the employment situation and subsequent regional response; (v) contributing to the activities to implement the NEP and actions to promote regional employment interests, in particular the convergence of efforts, support to local institutions, and information and orientation of the local recipients of employment measures; and (vi) establishing relations with the regional councils and the advisory regional development councils.

Table 2. Composition of the CNEFP and the Technical Committee

	CNEFP	Technical Committee
Presidency	Prime minister	Secretary General (MJFPE)
Number of vice-presidents	4 ^{a)}	2 ²⁾
Number of representatives of departments	26 ^{c)}	6
Number of representatives of executive agencies	0	3 ^{d)}
Number of employers' representatives	12	3
Number of workers' representatives	9	3
Number of representative of civil society	7 ^{e)}	0
Total	58	17

Notes: a) Two ministers (of employment and of vocational and technical training) and two representatives of employers and workers.

b) An employers' representative and a workers' representative.

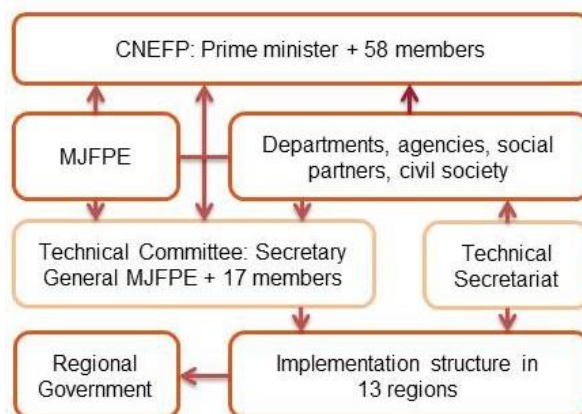
c) Of which six representatives of the MJE, two representatives of the MTSS, two representatives of the MESSRS and two representatives of the MEF.

d) A representative of the ONEF, a representative of the ANPE and a representative of the National Institute of Statistics and Demography INSD).

e) Two representatives of the National Youth Council, two representatives of women's associations, two representatives of associations for the unemployed and one representative of the association of parents of students.

Source: Bourdet (2014)

Figure 4. The coordination structure of the NEP in Burkina Faso



Source: the Author

4. The monitoring and evaluation system

Monitoring and evaluation of the NEP is in its infancy. According to the EAP, the ONEF and the Technical Committee are in charge of the monitoring and evaluation process. As the Technical Committee was only put in place in 2012, the ONEF has been the main instrument for monitoring. The status of the ONEF was changed in December 2012 to make it more operational in its mission of collecting, processing, analyzing and disseminating information on employment and vocational training.

The EAP initially proposed 48 indicators to assess progress on the measures and actions. Most of them are impact indicators without any direct relation with the implementation of employment measures. Moreover, roughly two-thirds of the indicators are based on data from household surveys. There has been no recent and regular labour force survey in Burkina Faso: the most recent household survey is from 2009 and the data are not available. In 2010, the number of indicators was reduced from 48 to 12, as shown in Table 3. But the indicators in the new list (except for the last one) have the same shortcomings mentioned above, and the matrix of indicators was still short of data in 2013. In its report for the year 2012, three major problems of the NEP were pointed out: (i) the late establishment of the implementation structure, (ii) the low ownership of the cross-cutting employment policies and actions, and (iii) the lack of a financial structure.

Table 3. Key indicators of monitoring the NEP

1	Employment rate
2	Sectoral distribution of employment
3	Distribution of the employed by employment status
4	Urban unemployment rate
5	Rate of underemployment
6	Rate of youth (neither in employment nor in education nor training - NEET)
7	Rate of labour productivity growth
8	Rate of working poor
9	Rate of workers lack of social protection
10	Rate of vulnerable employment
11	Rate of bad jobs
12	Share of public expenditure on employment promotion

Source: Bourdet (2014)

5. Summary

Burkina Faso has made institutional arrangements to support the implementation of the NEP and EAP, which include political commitment, a clear employment strategy with priorities and coherent measures, a decision-making process that reconciles the objectives of the NEP with budgetary constraints, and an institutional framework. However, some deficiencies and weaknesses in the institutional set-up itself created obstacles which should be overcome to implement the NEP and EAP more effectively:

- Ownership of the employment policy by the departments in charge of the overall economic policies, such as MEF, is insufficient. The four structures of implementation are the main responsibility of the MJFPE. This is one reason behind the lack of visibility and the deficit in implementation of the NEP. It is important for the success of the NEP that its priorities and strategic objectives be endorsed by those public policymakers with the greatest weight in terms of economic policymaking and poverty reduction strategy formulation. Inter-departmental coordination needs to be strengthened.
- The scattering of measures, departments and structures in charge of the implementation is an obstacle to the horizontal and vertical coherence as well as the good governance of employment policy. The fact that the MJFPE is a relatively young department, whose area of intervention has been redefined several times since its creation, might also contribute to this deficit. A simplification of the administrative “layer cake” of the NEP is needed to improve its visibility and effectiveness. The technical, human, organizational and financial capabilities of the MJFPE, need to be strengthened at both national and regional levels.
- Monitoring of the NEP is deficient: certain measures are monitored, but this monitoring does not cover all the measures implemented and is not done on a regular basis. The absence of recent and reliable employment statistics at regular intervals, along with the blurred relationship between different departments and structures partly explain the difficulty in monitoring. The cross-cutting nature of the NEP requires strengthening the role and coordination capacity of the agency in charge of monitoring.
- Participation of the social partners in the design and implementation of the NEP was limited. Beyond consultation, it would be desirable to involve them in the analysis of the employment situation and design of the measures in response. Participation of the social partners is necessary for ownership of the policy by businesses and workers and to increase its likelihood of success.
- “Politicization” of implementation, i.e. dependence on changes of governments or ministerial reshuffles, may jeopardize the continuity and coherence of the NEP. The Executive Coordinator is the Secretary General of the MJFPE, while the Regional Director of the MJFPE is under the authority of the Governor of the Region. Their frequent changes may affect the implementation of the policy by delaying the execution of interventions due to the time it takes for a newcomer to appropriate the new role and new responsibilities.

Endnotes

¹ This research brief is prepared by Yadong Wang, based on Bourdet (2014), *Employment policy implementation mechanism in Burkina Faso* (Employment Working Paper No.155, Geneva: ILO). Eléonore D'Achon provided comments. Aurelio Parisotto reviewed the policy brief.

² The following countries are covered: Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Brazil, China, Republic of Korea, South Africa, and the European Union (EU) including the United Kingdom and Germany. Apart from Argentina and South Africa, the other countries mentioned here have ratified ILO's Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (C122).

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