

SIFA
Skills Initiative
for Africa

TC
Technical Cooperation

THE TVET ECOSYSTEM REFLECTION TOOL

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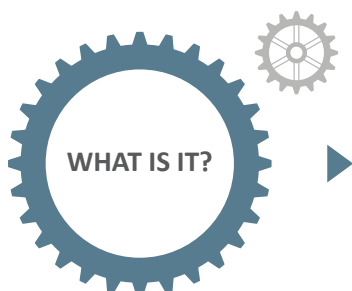
1. The TVET Ecosystem Reflection Tool



Ministerial officials from 14 African countries joined the Permanent Secretariat Leadership Summit convened by AUDA-NEPAD in 2019 in order to discuss and promote Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills development in their countries and across the region. Valuable lessons and insights as well as common concerns were shared, resulting in the identification of a number of possible action areas. The TVET Ecosystem Reflection Tool draws on this content.



The Tool is a resource for public service decision makers/influencers and those with oversight responsibilities for TVET at a systemic level who work to strengthen and improve TVET, skills development and youth employment systems in their countries – that is, those comprising TVET Leadership in their nations.



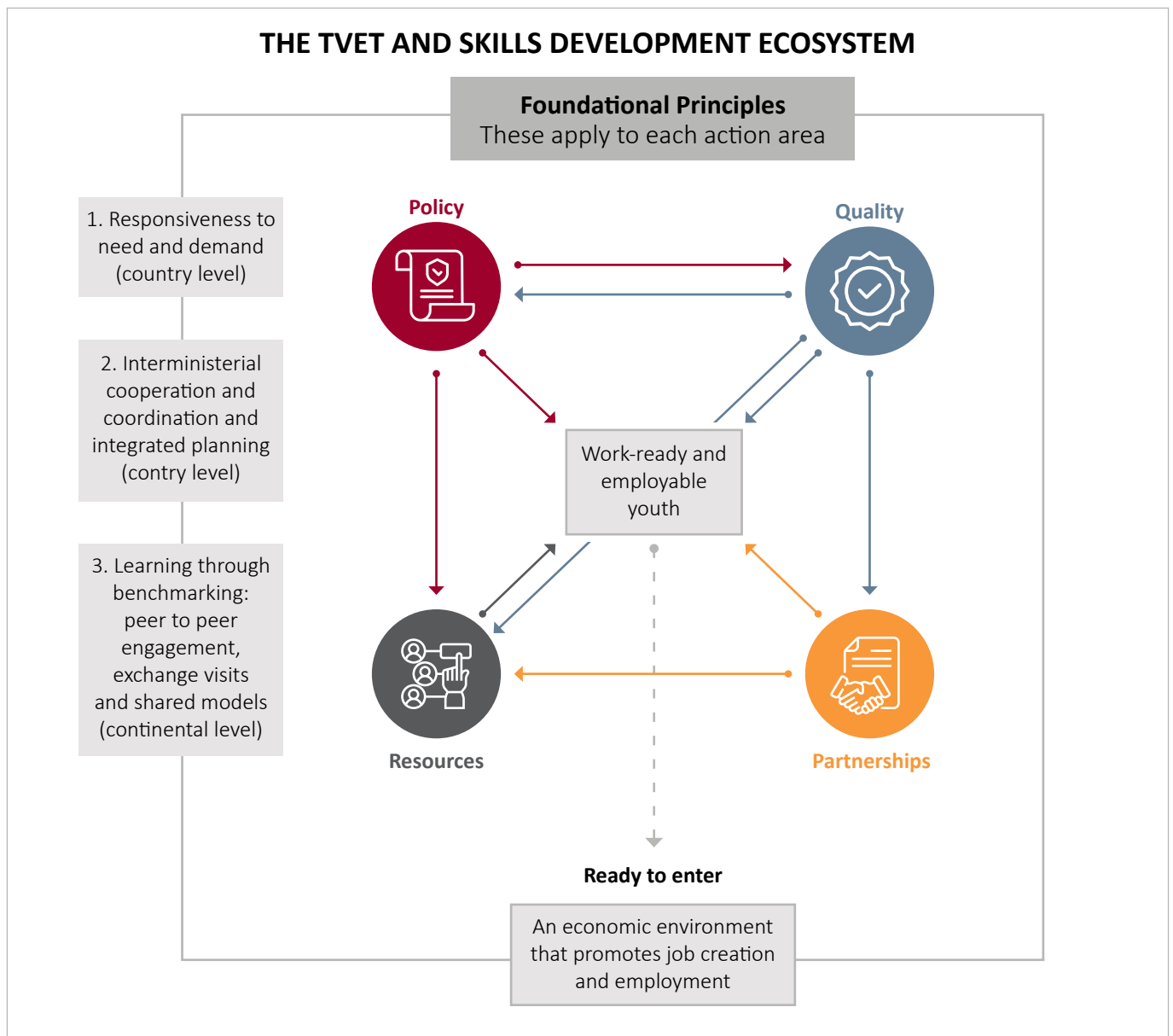
The Tool is (i) a systems map that gives a helicopter view of the various dimensions that make up and affect TVET systems and their implementation; and (ii) a set of prompt questions to guide reflection on how these factors play out in specific country contexts.

2. The TVET Ecosystem

The goals of economic growth, job creation and employment are interdependent. Achieving these goals is driven by a number of factors. One of these is the existence of a robust, relevant and effective TVET and Skills Development system, which aligns the supply of skilled individuals with the human resource demands of industry and business so that different economic sectors can thrive and in turn create more employment opportunities.

TVET Leadership as the key player on the supply side of the labour market has a responsibility/ mandate to deliver employable and job-ready youth who can respond to the demands of the economy. These include individuals who can contribute meaningfully to economic growth in the formal sector, or those who identify or create opportunities for income generation through entrepreneurial activity or in the informal sector.

The TVET Ecosystem is made up of interrelated areas in which actions taken can help strengthen TVET systems, and in which shifts in one area influence outcomes in other areas. Four major action areas – Policy, Quality, Resources and Partnerships – make up the ecosystem shown below, leading to the central goal of a successful TVET system: work-ready and employable youth. Three foundational principles (in line with AUDA-NEPAD's mandate in this field) are suggested as guidelines to impactful actions in these areas.



3. Action Areas

The terms used here- Policy, Quality, Resources and Partnerships- may mean different things to different people. Within the TVET Ecosystem they could cover inputs, processes, practices or even objects in the real world, all of which can be actioned. General descriptions of each of the terms are given below, with the understanding that not all the elements noted in each area are within the scope of influence or decision-making of TVET leadership. In Section 4 'Using the Reflection Tool' we zoom in at a more detailed level to think through how these areas apply to TVET leadership considerations.



PILOT

- National policies may be guided by continental and regional frameworks (e.g. AU Plan of Action for the African Decade for TVET 2019-2028)
- Public policy is a statement of intent based on a strategy, supported by legislation, regulatory frameworks and other guidelines.
- Public policies for TVET and skills development may arise in or be affected by different government departments or ministries, including those dealing with formal education and training, adult education, labour relations, trade and industry or social development.
- Policies should be linked to an appropriate budget, implementation plan and M&E system.
- Private sector body agreements or even human resource policies at individual enterprise levels are also relevant.



QUALITY

High quality in TVET means that all elements of the system are up to date, relevant to the labour market, and responsive to the needs of both beneficiaries and employers.

'Quality' is used here as an umbrella term covering a number of facets of the TVET system:

- Quality of defined industry or professional standards that guide training delivery, including qualifications and certification systems
- Quality of the training provided to educators and trainers, and the quality of their own delivery to their students
- Quality of the programmes, curricula and materials used in training
- Quality of the assessment and accreditation systems in terms of reliability, validity and currency
- Quality of the infrastructural and physical resources available



RESOURCES

Resources include financial, physical, human and information or data resources. Examples:

- Funding mechanisms and adequate budget allocations to all public TVET institutions
- Public and private financing mechanisms for other training providers, projects and programmes
- Appropriate infrastructure, training facilities, materials and equipment
- Incubation centres, centres of excellence and workplace training venues
- TVET managers, officials, educators and other specialists
- Information resources on relevant research, data, good practice models and case studies



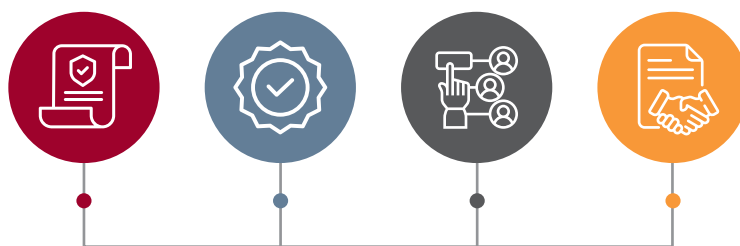
PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are of different types with various stakeholders, at all levels. Purposes range from (for example) advocacy or information sharing, to shared curriculum or training programme design or delivery, or to the management of workplace training and employment opportunities. Types include:

- Regional partnerships – continental collaboration between countries
- Between different government ministries or departments at national or local government levels within a country
- Public / private partnerships
- Funder / provider partnerships
- Networks or forums
- Between different industry sectors
- Local industry and local training provider partnerships

CONTEXT FOR THE 4 ACTION AREAS: DEMAND SIDE

Digitalisation | Macro-economic trends | Changing world of work | Shifting skills needs



The combined impact and influence of positive actions in these four areas in relation to the TVET ecosystem leads to:

Work-ready and employable youth with entrepreneurial know-how and labour market related skills to be absorbed into the economy:

The combined efforts of government, the private sector and other key stakeholders create **an enabling environment for TVET-based job-creation and employment**, including:

- Workplace learning, apprenticeships and internships
- Local industry and community employment hubs
- Entrepreneurship incubation and support
- Pathways for the informal sector
- Identification of opportunity areas for new skills and jobs

4. Using the Reflection Tool

The Tool aims to help TVET leadership make sense of the key areas that need to be addressed in order to strengthen TVET and Skills Development systems, taking your own country contexts, scope of influence and decision-making, priorities and challenges into account. Reflection questions are often used kick-start strategic planning for a course of action in relation to influencing a system.

In this Tool you will find:

- Leading questions in each of the Action Areas to provide a starting point for further discussion. Not all questions may be relevant to your country context.
- Examples of points to consider when reflecting on these questions. These are not exhaustive, and you may come up with others which relate directly to your context. Many of these points are relevant to more than one leading question, and to more than one Action Area.
- Examples of 'Lessons Learned' in each Action Area, drawn from discussions at the PSS Leadership Summit.

TVET POLICY

What do we know and what don't we know in our country context?

What are our priorities, and what are our major challenges?



LEADING QUESTIONS

- Do we have a clear map of all the policies which affect TVET?
- Are there policies from different ministries or departments which need to be considered?
- Are there any tensions or misalignments between different departmental policies?
- Are there shared oversight and accountability responsibilities?
- Are there outdated policies which no longer speak to TVET ecosystem realities?
- Are there any policy gaps?
- Do TVET policies include financial considerations and implementation budgets?
- Are TVET stakeholders and implementers aware of our policies? Is there an advocacy and communications strategy on policy?
- Do we have a consultation process for policy development?
- Are any particular industry or business sectors highlighted or neglected in our policies? Why?
- Are there policies that specifically address development of the informal sector?
- What data underpins our TVET policies?
- Do we have an M&E system in place for policy monitoring?

SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER

- The links between foundational competencies in general education (schooling) and TVET
- Institutional and other forms of delivery pipelines
- Qualifications, certification and trade test systems
- Articulation between different learning pathways
- Extended TVET / retraining
- Capacity building at all levels
- Inter-departmental cooperation processes
- Varied and reliable data sources
- M&E systems
- TVET stakeholder profiles and levels of involvement in policy
- The need for buy-in to policy through consultation and advocacy with business, labour and civil society

Examples of Lessons Learned

A good TVET policy framework is an essential precondition for effective TVET, but it is not enough on its own. Both political will and technical expertise is required to implement policies effectively.

TVET policy becomes more powerful when there are explicit and defined targets. Examples:

- **Niger:** The field of ‘youth development’ is a strategic priority in all the national and sectoral policy documents and plans.
- **Uganda:** There is a stated commitment to revitalise apprenticeships.
- **Togo and Nigeria:** TVET policies need to be linked to the pace of technological growth and recognise the importance of ICT in TVET.
- **Ghana:** Special initiatives by government are enablers for skills development (e.g. industrialisation drive: One District, One Factory; and food security and job creation drive: Planting for Food and Jobs).



QUALITY IN TVET

What do we understand by ‘quality’ in TVET?

What are the components that make up a high quality TVET system?

Where are we succeeding, and where are we failing, in delivering quality TVET?

What are our priorities, and what are our major challenges?

What do we know and what don’t we know about quality in our country context?



LEADING QUESTIONS

Do we have a clear profile map of all the public TVET colleges in the country, including their programme and qualifications mix and the sectors they serve?

How many of these colleges are considered to be of good standing? Is there a rating system for public TVET colleges?

Do we have reliable data on student registration numbers, dropout rates, throughput rates and graduation numbers for the public TVET sector?

Is this data segmented according to industry/ business sectors?

Do we have tracking data regarding employment of TVET alumni?

What does the overall qualifications system look like, and where do TVET qualifications fit in? Is there a national qualifications framework in place? Are short skills-based courses recognised?

Is there easy articulation/ transition between academic learning routes, vocational learning routes, and informal skills acquisition?

Does any vocational training take place in the formal school system? At what point is this an option?

Is there a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system in place for technical, trade and vocational qualifications? What models exist?

What does the TVET Quality Assurance system look like? Does it focus on TVET inputs (e.g. curricula, resources) or TVET outputs (e.g. assessment systems) or both?

What are the regulations governing private TVET colleges, training centres or skills development providers? Are they similar to those that apply to the public sector?

Are there many industries or large employers that conduct their own TVET training in-house, without reference to the formal TVET system? Is this training recognised outside the company?

Is there alignment between industry standards and TVET curricula? Does this vary between different industry sectors or professions?

How are TVET curricula developed? Are there processes in place for the private sector (industry bodies, professional bodies, employers) to participate and give input?

Does the system allow for and facilitate workplace learning to take place before certification, so that theory and applied practice are combined during training?

Are there mechanisms in place to help TVET institutions or training centres/ providers and their students to easily find workplace learning placements?

Are there standards and qualifications in place for TVET educators or trainers?

What kinds of support systems are in place for TVET applicants? Can they easily find the information they need to enter the system? What are the financial aid options?

How is development of the informal sector (including entrepreneurship in this context) supported?

What does national funding for TVET look like? Are there gaps and areas of neglect in the national budget for TVET?

SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER

- The link between general education and TVET and the foundation laid in the school system for 'learning for work'
- The types entities delivering TVET, both public and private
- Varied and reliable data sources
- Different work place learning models, such as dual TVET, and other forms of apprenticeships and internships
- Different vocational training models, such as the integration of vocational education into technical high schools
- Ease of movement between different learning pathways
- The type and amount of evidence needed for effective quality assurance of TVET – balancing reliability and efficiency
- Forging links between TVET and the private sector for quality, alignment, curricula and workplace learning
- Consistency in training of trainers and TVET educators
- Recognition and role of industry-based training, and company-specific training
- Needs-based and just-in-time short course training
- Ensuring that TVET curricula, pedagogies and training resources are relevant and up to date
- Career guidance
- The role of ICT and digitilisation
- Access and inclusivity, specific target groups
- Access and inclusivity, geographical spread
- Uplifting the status of TVET to increase reach and engagement

Examples of Lessons Learned

Ethiopia has prioritised two major quality improvement interventions:

- The training of trainers:
 - » Curricula need to take into account both the pedagogical and technical skills of educators
 - » TVET educators need industry exposure to keep up to date, and the system should include short term skills gap training in new developments in a sector
 - » Continuous professional development is required to that TVET educators stay up to date
- The integration of vocational education into the schooling system, so that transition is easier, and the status of TVET is increased.





RESOURCES FOR TVET

Resources include financial, physical, human and information resources.

What are our priorities and challenges in each of these resource areas?

LEADING QUESTIONS

- Do we have a clear map of all the sources of finance for the public TVET system from government (e.g. central or national treasury, ministerial/ departmental budgets, regional or municipal budgets ...)
- Can we identify any untapped potential sources of public finance with an interest in TVET?
- Where are the major gaps in TVET financing? Which aspects of TVET are under-financed, and which are sufficiently financed?
- Are there systems in place to monitor the management of public finance for TVET?
- What other sources of finance are there for TVET outside of public funding? Do we have enough processes in place to take advantage of these?
- Does TVET leadership have any oversight or regulation of private TVET provision?
- Is there sufficient physical infrastructure for the delivery of TVET in different economic sectors?
- Are the physical resources (e.g. workshops, machinery, laboratories etc.) fit-for-purpose? Are some industry sectors better off than others? Which and why?
- Are some geographical areas better served than others in terms of physical access to TVET? Which and why?
- Do we have sufficient human resources at all levels in the TVET system (public officials, TVET colleges, educators/ trainers, assessors etc.)? Where are the gaps?
- Where are there competence or efficiency gaps in our TVET human resources?
- Is there a human resource strategy for TVET?
- Is there a centralised Management Information System for TVET? Does it include labour information, baseline studies, student and educator data? What other kinds of information might be useful to TVET leadership?
- Is there a public and easily accessed database for TVET candidates (e.g. on TVET institutions, TVET qualifications and skills development opportunities)?
- Have information resources on TVET been developed by the TVET leadership for different audiences and different purposes?

SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER

- The development of financial guidelines, tools and templates
- The development of guidelines for setting up and managing joint funding with the private sector, funders and development agencies
- Cooperation and collaboration with the private sector and industry experts on the nature of technical resources needed
- TVET human resources job profiling and career pathing
- Areas of TVET research needed for decision making
- Varied and reliable data sources
- Communications strategy to reach all relevant target audiences, including the use of different media (online, print, radio etc.)

Examples of Lessons Learned

- The need for more research and information resources was noted in many countries. Topic Examples:
 - » **Niger:** The value chains upstream and downstream between related sectors, and implications for TVET supply.
 - » **Tunisia:** The openness of TVET systems to technological innovation, taking into account the impact of global influences in order to bring skills development in line with international standards.
- **South Africa** among other countries recognized the need to register more companies as work place training sites. This requires cooperation from the private sector.



PARTNERSHIPS IN TVET

Who do we partner with at the moment, and who could we partner with in the future?

What do we know and what don't we know about the range and possible types of partnerships for TVET in our country context?

What are our priorities, and what are our major challenges?



LEADING QUESTIONS

Have we done a stakeholder analysis of the possible partners that could work with government? Does this include African and other international partnerships as well as in-country partners?

Do we have an up to date map of our current stakeholder partnerships? What is the nature, scope and purpose of these partnerships? Does this include African and other international partnerships as well as in-country partners?

Do we have a strategy for identifying potential partnerships with stakeholders?

Do we have guidelines for public / private partnerships? Are these helpful and flexible?

What about stakeholders inside government? How do we cooperate between different government ministries or departments at national or local government levels within a country? How do we ensure that plans which affect the TVET system are aligned?

How do we as TVET leadership promote the concept of partnerships in the TVET ecosystem?

Do we enable and support partnerships between (for example) different industry sectors, or between industry and TVET colleges, or between civil society organisations and communities? How do we do this? What incentives can we use?

SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Partnerships can work on different levels, for example:
 - » Loose networks or forums for information sharing
 - » Cooperating on or coordinating set of activities or events
 - » Collaboration in the context of formal contractual agreements on longer term funded projects
- In order to work, formal partnerships need to take a number of things into consideration, for example:
 - » Agreement on principles, aims and outcomes of the partnership
 - » Costs
 - » Governance agreements
 - » Clear communication
 - » Expectations
 - » Defined roles and responsibilities
 - » Knowledge management and reporting
 - » Monitoring and evaluation

Examples of Lessons Learned

- **Uganda and Rwanda:** The need for benchmarking against the experiences of other African countries, including collaboration and country exchanges.
- **Niger:** Neglected sectors such as the informal sector and rural youth can be helped through community partnerships.
- **Burkina Faso:** use exchanges and partner forums to profit from the experience of other countries, supported by partnerships with international aid agencies and donors.
- **South Africa:** Industry and business associations and professional bodies are critical partners in strengthening TVET.

