

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



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TVET POLICY

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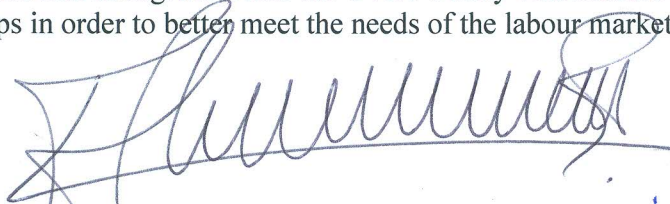
Foreword by the Minister of State in charge of TVET

Recently a general consensus has developed that Rwanda, as other developing countries, faces similar challenges including the liberalization of the market, rapid innovations in technology, and the importance of knowledge to a country's competitive advantage. Against these pressures many countries are turning to their education and training systems as a part of the solution for dealing with a whole range of social and economic issues. In light of this, and the previous second-class status of TVET, the Government of Rwanda has undertaken significant steps to strengthen TVET.

At the forefront of these efforts are the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and the Workforce Development Authority (WDA) who both have recently made great efforts in promoting TVET and the labour market responsiveness of the education system. TVET has emerged as one of the most effective human resource development strategies that Rwanda has embraced in order to train and modernize the technical workforce for national development.

The new direction for TVET is orientated towards the world of work and the emphasis of the curricula on the acquisition of competency based employable skills. This change is necessary to train the skilled and entrepreneurial workforce that Rwanda needs to create wealth. TVET will respond to the needs of different types of industries, and also to the different training needs of learners from different socio-economic and academic backgrounds including nine- and twelve year basic education, university graduates and others from the informal, non-formal and formal sectors. TVET will seek to ensure equitable access and outcomes for men and women, boys and girls, and vulnerable groups (i.e. orphans, people with disabilities, etc.). A skilled workforce is a basic requirement for driving the engine of industrial and economic growth, and TVET – in close collaboration with the private sector - holds the key to building this type of technical and entrepreneurial workforce.

It is from this background that the TVET Policy will address the identified TVET challenges and gaps in order to better meet the needs of the labour market.



Albert NSENGIYUMVA
Minister of State in charge of TVET



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List of Abbreviations

EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
HEC	Higher Education Council
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IPRC(s)	Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centre(s)
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
NEP	National Employment Programme
REB	Rwanda Education Board
RTQF	Rwanda TVET Qualifications Framework
SME	Small & Medium-sized Enterprises
TSS	Technical Secondary School
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
WDA	Workforce Development Authority

Introduction

This document contains the revised TVET Policy. It is the vision for the TVET sector for the next five years including what objectives need to be achieved and what challenges need to be addressed in order to achieve that vision. It follows on from the TVET Policy from 2008 and incorporates the current environment in which the Rwandan TVET system operates and the necessary policy objectives to further strengthen the TVET system in Rwanda.

This revised TVET Policy does not stand alone. It is linked to other national policies such as the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2013/14-2017/18, the National Gender Policy (2004), the Vision 2020, the National Employment Programme (NEP) and the Girls' Education Policy. These national documents underscore the need for developing skills for a knowledge-based society if Rwanda is to achieve the structural economic change implied in the targets of Vision 2020 and also stipulate that major emphasis will be placed on vocational and technical training fields.

It is important to note at the beginning that a TVET Policy is not a TVET Strategy. Based on this Policy, a TVET Strategy is developed which will identify the mechanisms and structures for achieving these policy objectives including corresponding outputs that are expected to be achieved during this planning period. Following after the Strategy an Action and Implementation Plan will outline the operational activities of the WDA, the Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centres (IPRCs), other TVET institutes, but also other stakeholders (e.g. Development Partners, Private Sector) over the same period of time.

Rationale for a revised TVET Policy

This TVET Policy was to enable the TVET sector to overcome the numerous challenges ahead. It provides a clear sense of purpose, direction and a supporting framework for all those who will be involved in TVET. This includes strategic alignment with its vision, policies, and strategies. It also justifies and explains why the WDA and its partners in development are concerned with TVET, what the government aims to achieve, and how it will be achieved.

The decision to update the TVET Policy was undertaken for the following reasons:

- There was a need to (re-)assess the (new) challenges facing the current TVET system and to identify how provisions could respond in a more coordinated, effective and responsive manner, resulting in a TVET system that is relevant, accessible and of high quality.
- Identify what are the important labour market issues facing Rwanda's TVET system.

- The implication of the new policy environment for TVET, particularly in relation to the country's new Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) and the National Employment Programme as well as the new National Gender Policy, and the Girls' Education Policy (2008)
- The constraints facing the TVET system and what areas need to be reformed.
- The vision for the revised TVET system in the light of new demands and constraints facing TVET, particularly with regard to the need to create employability skills and the recent establishment of the Rwandan TVET qualification framework.
- The objectives for the revised TVET system and the corresponding strategies for achieving them.

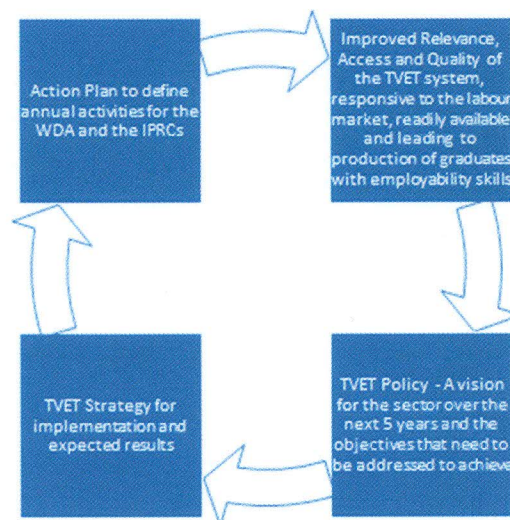


Figure 1: Relationship between TVET Policy, TVET Strategy and Action Plans

Rwanda faces a number of unique challenges. The losses of human capital and flight associated with the genocide have to be tackled, particularly in relation to the lack of technicians and middle level managers. This will be compounded by the large numbers of young people completing their nine years of basic education and entering the labour market.¹. A significant proportion of these young people will need to acquire employability skills to find employment, or to work for themselves, as entrepreneurs. Unless effective measures are introduced into the TVET systems to tackle these challenges, they could pose serious threats to Rwanda achieving its 2020 vision.

¹ The extent of the problem can be seen by the fact that around 160,000 young people are leaving their nine years of basic education. However, the number of places in the TVET system for these young people to obtain employability skills is limited.

Vision for TVET

“To develop a regional and international TVET system that produces men and women quality graduates, with employability skills that respond to the changing demands of employers and the country’s labour market, providing them with the opportunity to engage in decent work², work for them-selves, be competent entrepreneurs and engage in life-long learning”

TVET Policy Objectives

A number of systemic and institutional constraints face the current TVET system and account for the low skills base and the growing gap between what is produced by the institutions and what is needed by the labour market and companies. In this section the policy responses to these constraints are formulated.

1. Improved understanding of skill needs in priority sectors

Despite a consensus on the country’s priority sectors, there is a limited understanding or accord on the nature or extent of skill shortages facing Rwanda. The resultant is a mismatch between industry demand for skills and the supply of skilled graduates by the training sector. The importance of reaching a consensus on this cannot be under-estimated, as understanding which skills are in high demand and which skills are not is crucial for making the curriculum more responsive to the labour market, a timely provision of competent graduates to the industry and target resources at skill priorities.

When making decisions about priorities it will be important to take into account the country’s Vision 2020, the EDPRS 2, ESSP 2, the National Employment Programme, National Gender Policy, Girls’ Education Policy and other strategies that impact on TVET, including strategies for SME development, skills development and entrepreneurship.

Moreover, it is not just important to identify immediate skill needs, but to be more strategic and to think about future skill needs and how to identify them. This will help ensure that strategies for TVET anticipate and support change in the economy in general and the labour market in particular, as opposed to just being reactive and responding to change.

To address the aforementioned issues, a Workforce (Development) Planning mechanism is established to realize a match between current and future skills demand and supply.

² Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men (<http://ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work>).

Obviously, such mechanism can only be achieved through an orchestrated intervention by respective ministries and agencies.

2. Improved (horizontal and) vertical pathways

The current TVET system is characterised by a lack of horizontal and vertical integration, as a result of a disjointed TVET system and the corresponding lack of progression paths for students. This is compounded by the fact that until recently Rwanda did not have a qualification framework for TVET (RTQF) and stakeholders did not know the value of qualifications and the degree to which a certain qualification would provide access the next level of the education or TVET system.

In order to support life-long learning there must be a smooth transition from upper secondary schools, to vocational training centres and polytechnics, and between such institutions and those in the academic stream. A student or learner must be able to freely transfer between institutions and over time all TVET institutions should provide open access to TVET, providing an opportunity for all to engage in life-long learning.

To facilitate articulation within and between both academic and vocational streams, existing qualification frameworks, including a full-fledged RTQF that allows for a professional bachelor and master level, need to be harmonized into a *National Qualification Framework*. Such harmonization would incorporate *vertical pathways* (between different parts of the TVET system), *horizontal pathways* (between the TVET system and general education, at the same level) as well as *diagonal pathways* (progression routes between the TVET system and general education).

3. Develop the human capacity within the TVET system

The lack of capacity within the TVET system occurs at a number of levels and needs to be addressed in order to ensure that provision becomes more market responsive.

Although there is a high degree of commitment to TVET reform, a significant proportion of WDA staff is young and in need to upgrade their skills and to gain more senior management experience. Staffs need to be provided with the skills to perform their jobs in a more effective and efficient manner. Among other, they must develop improved competencies in planning, quality assurance and also an improved understanding of regulatory issues in order to help ensure that the WDA can develop the systems and procedures to warrant that provision responds to the needs of the labour market.

Capacity constraints also exist lower down the system, regarding those who manage TVET institutions and those involved in the actual delivery of programmes. Managers at this level will also need to have new skill-sets in the light of the decentralisation in which increasing responsibilities are being handed down to those at the IPRCs. These types of skills range from familiarity with managing funds and project management to understanding new legislation and its implications for managing education institutions at the decentralised level.

In vocational centres and polytechnics, comparable situations can be observed, where a significant majority of trainers is characterised by a lack of suitable technical qualifications, no pedagogical qualifications and minimal industrial experience. They need to have their skills upgraded in order to effectively deliver programs and ensure that students develop “employability skills”. This must cover not only improved technical knowledge of their subjects, but also pedagogic methods, ICT skills, command of English and industrial experience.

4. Improved Coordination of TVET Initiatives

The number of partnerships is expected to increase substantially as will the complexity of such linkages between actors in the TVET sector, between the TVET sectors and Development Partners as well as between the TVET sector and the private sector industry³. Such partnerships can make TVET relevant to the needs of industry and labour market as well as improve the provision of TVET at the same time. An industry-institution linkage system is increasingly becoming the most important feature of TVET in its orientation towards development of the Rwandan workforce on the world of work.

This calls for a coordinated response towards the initiation, management and administration of these partnerships. The development of a *Strategic Partnership Framework* is a valuable reference and guiding instrument for all actors involved, not in the least instance for WDA. The Strategic Partnership Framework is intended to be a guide to the process of forming and maintaining strategic partnerships in the TVET. The approach is comprehensive – beginning before a partnership is established with organizational self-assessment, and progressing through the process of building and maintaining a partnership, with evaluation and reassessment integrated throughout the entire process.

5. Improve TVET facilities and its sourcing

One of the common complaints from those working in the TVET system is the lack of suitable equipment or poor facilities, a legacy of under-funding from the past. Before 2006 there was no separately defined budget for TVET and even now, despite the substantial increase of the budget allocated to TVET, it is still not adequate to meet the demands. As a consequence many of the VTCs and TSSs are unable to purchase the necessary materials and equipment to deliver quality TVET programs.

Improved facilities are more than just increased levels of funding; attention should be given to tackling issues such as how resources are collected, managed and utilised and more needs to be done to identify cost recover strategies and what can be done to raise revenue levels in a sustainable manner.

³ TVET sector-Industry linkages, (could) include: curriculum development, teaching and learning process, mobility and exchange staff, information exchange, training of students, industrial apprenticeship and study visit, financial recourse generation, career guidance counselling, placement services as well as the initiation of Incubation centres, vocational accreditation and evaluation systems.

In order to make informed decisions on what kind of investments are needed, when and where, a long term, comprehensive, mapping of the local needs for TVET facilities and equipment needs to be conducted and frequently updated. Obviously, local stakeholders, notably the private sector industry, must be involved in this process.

6. Expand the availability of the responsive curriculum offer in TVET

To date, a relatively traditional view on curriculum exists in Rwanda in which much of the emphasis is on a teacher centred approach in which the curriculum list resources, equipment and teaching strategies to support student learning. As a consequence existing programs tend to be time-based and the method of assessment is to test student's recall of knowledge at one point in time, as opposed to continually testing their skills, knowledge and attitudes. Also introducing entrepreneurial skills as an important component of the TVET curricula would prepare students better for the challenges they face in both work and life.

The view of the curriculum needs to change from one being based on a set of objectives, strategies and resources developed solely by educators for trainers, to one that serves the needs of industry. The new, Competency Based, TVET curriculum needs to be:

- Developed by and in collaboration with industry
- Capable of reflecting changes in technology and the workplace
- Student rather than teacher-centred;
- Using resources drawn from practical applications of knowledge and skill
- Including flexible learning mechanisms of delivery to respond to those learners who cannot study full-time as well as for learners with special learning requirements or people with disabilities
- Using assessment methods that enable learners to demonstrate their competence in through demonstrations of the required knowledge and skills.

7. Improving the attractiveness of TVET

TVET has historically been positioned as "second chance" or "second rate" education. In many countries young persons who are seen as "academic underachievers" are shunted into TVET programs and institutions thus reinforcing negative perceptions and a low valuation of TVET.

The only way to change perceptions is to demonstrate the positive outcomes that can be achieved from TVET and to orientate students' attitudes towards the benefits of studying TVET qualifications, as opposed to academic ones.

Enhancing the status and attractiveness of TVET will involve changing perceptions and attitudes of the public about technical and vocational education. For this to happen, MINEDUC, REB, HEC and WDA will play a key role in student selection, admission and referrals.

The status of technical and vocational education can also be enhanced by upgrading polytechnics and vocational centres, to strengthen polytechnic institutions and their role in industrial and technological development (i.e. applied research) to generally raise their status and attractiveness of TVET as choice for senior secondary school leavers.

Central to this process will be the setting-up of a thorough system for *career information advice and guidance* to those leaving the formal education system (including marginalized groups) and to inform them about the possible benefits of studying TVET subjects, including the possible career options and salaries that are available to skilled crafts and technicians.

8. Increased employer engagement in TVET

Employer engagement or industry-education links are a win-win situation for all those involved. For the employer it can provide a means of identifying future employees with the appropriate skills and attitudes, and at the same time enables the learner to gain the so called employability skills and access to the workplace. More importantly, for the TVET system, increased involvement of employers can provide a valuable means of obtaining additional funds and technical advice to help ensure that provision becomes more efficient, and responsive to market needs. Unfortunately, within the present system there is a limited employer engagement at all levels of the system.

Employers are the clients of the TVET system and it is imperative that they take on active involvement in TVET at different levels of the system. At the top of the system employers must work with WDA to identify skill needs and to have an input into strategies for implementation. It will be equally important for institutions to forge closer partnerships with industries in order to facilitate the more wide spread internships or apprenticeship programs. Improved partnerships also provide a means to draw on employers' expectations and expertise for the running of an institution and in some case provide an alternative source of revenue.

9. Increased equitable and inclusive TVET

Traditionally, the enrolment of girls/women into TVET has been limited, due to social structures of institutions and the segmentation of the labour market, compounded by social values and beliefs about appropriate roles and expectations, not to mention a range of other barriers to their participation (e.g. lacking qualifications, situational factors, and institutional barriers). In addition, as a result of gender norms that determine socially acceptable activities for women and men, women tend to enrol in less lucrative trades.

Disability and poverty are closely interrelated, with disability accentuating poverty and poverty increasing the likelihood of disability. Currently more needs to be done to break this cycle by integrating persons with disabilities into mainstream education, including TVET, thereby opening up pathways to decent employment and quality of life. Education/TVET should respond effectively to the needs of people with disabilities, providing special measures for inclusiveness.

The current gender inequalities in TVET and barriers to access to TVET for all, clearly requires a policy response, with supportive strategies to make TVET available to all members of the community, to not only increase the participation but also to improve (participation) outcomes, particularly focusing on those groups that have been traditionally under-represented, especially girls/women, indigenous individuals, persons with disabilities, people from a non-English-speaking background, and people from rural and remote areas.

Sustainable Innovative financing mechanisms in TVET

TVET needs to react flexibly to ever changing demands in the labour market, through the development of new training programmes, applying new training technologies and provide opportunities for employees to engage in continuous professional development, life-long learning. This makes TVET an expensive form of education which triggers a discussion on whether the current (basically) unilateral financing through the Government is sustainable and other types of financing should be considered.

The benefits of an accessible, relevant and quality TVET are undisputed. The skills of trainees improve with training, which improves their position on the labour market. The benefits that enterprises reap from a better-trained workforce come in the form of higher productivity, better quality, and higher profits. A higher qualification of the workforce improves the relative position of a country in regional and international competition.

Currently, the possibility of cost sharing with those who benefit from TVET (employers, trainees and their families, or the society at large) is considered by the Government of Rwanda. Under this TVET Policy funding mechanisms are being examined that are either unilaterally oriented (financing by one stakeholder, i.e. state, trainee, employer) or are based on a co-financing/cost-sharing model (e.g. apprenticeship programmes, dual programmes, employer training incentives schemes). This would lead to a funding mechanism of TVET in Rwanda that is both innovative and sustainable.