



THE GAMBIA TVET POLICY 2021 - 2030

Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST)
Government of The Gambia, 1 February 2021



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ESP	Education Sector Policy
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
EU	European Union
GCCI	Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GLFS	The Gambia Labour Force Survey
GNQF	Gambia National Qualifications Framework
GSQF	Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework
GTTI	Gambia Technical Training Institute
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
LGA	Local Government Area
MoBSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MoHERST	Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology
MoTIE	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NAQAA	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
SSC	Sector Skills Council
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

FOREWORD



Honourable Minister Badara A. Joof

It is my great pleasure to introduce the Gambia's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy for the period 2021-2030. The Government of the Republic of The Gambia recognizes that effective TVET and skills development systems are critical for the individual, society and the economy as they help people to be more resilient, increase labour productivity and income growth, and turn innovation into business opportunities. This new TVET policy sets out the Government's commitment to invest in developing skills that are necessary in our fast-changing world economy and responds to contemporary challenges through the opportunities of the Gambian people. The country is blessed with a dynamic and youthful population: 1.2 million Gambians, which is more than half the country's population are between 15 and 64 years of age. However, 41.5 % of them are

currently unemployed and with limited access to markets and microfinance services, work in the agricultural and informal sectors which are dominated by women.

The growing recognition of the inextricable link between national socio-economic development and skills-building has generated renewed interest in improving TVET systems. The importance of TVET and skills development is highlighted in various global, continental and regional agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals (namely SDGs 4 and 8), the African Union vision for 2063, and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025. Through such momentum, the local Gambian context of TVET provisions enshrined in the Gambia Tertiary and Higher Education Policy 2014-2023, the Education Sector Policy 2016-2030, and the National

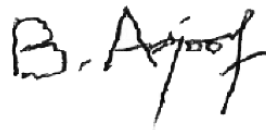
Development Plan (NDP) provides a strong basis for embracing a new TVET paradigm shift to sustain various skills development initiatives, respond flexibly to a rapidly changing labor market and ensure greater synergy in regional and global contexts. The Ministry acknowledges that this ambition can only be achieved through a more inclusive, equitable and relevant TVET policy as it creates an enabling environment that will give young people, especially girls, a better chance of finding decent employment or entrepreneurial opportunities as part of a lifelong learning trajectory.

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST)'s mission to address the necessity for a comprehensive TVET policy in order to meet the Gambia's skills needs began in August 2020. As part of the first steps to the TVET policy development process, the state of the Gambian TVET system and labour market needs were assessed. Based on the findings from these assessments, the effectiveness and relevance of the existing policies were reviewed, and over 200 national stakeholders' engagement was ensured through consultation. The Gambia TVET Policy 2021–2030, was successfully validated and disseminated at a high-level political and technical forum on 11 and 12 August, 2021 at the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Centre, Bijilo and at the MoHERST Conference Hall, Bijilo respectively.

It will not have been possible to realize the development of this new policy's vision, mission and strategic objectives without the support of all players from both the public and private sectors as well as development partners. It is my fervent belief that, this commitment to open new opportunities for strategic, tangible and sustainable socio-economic gains for the common good will continue in a sustainable manner.

I therefore wish to take this opportunity to thank all those institutions, individuals and organizations for their contribution to the process. I am confident that, with our collective commitment, the Gambia's TVET policy will signal an innovative approach to TVET and to transform the current national education and training system to fulfill the potential of the country's present and future generations.

Badara A. Joof



Honourable Minister

**Ministry of Higher Education, Research,
Science and Technology (MoHERST)**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Gambia TVET Policy (2021-2030) finds its relevance in the National Development Plan (2018-2021) and Education Sector Policy (2016-2030). Both strategic documents state the need for having an overarching policy framework to sustain the various skills development initiatives in the system.

The reference frameworks used to develop the present policy are, on the one hand, the two important national development strategic plans mentioned above: The National Development Plan (2018-2021) and the Education Sector Plan (2016-2030), and on the other hand, the Sustainable Development Goals (especially Goal 4), the UNESCO Recommendation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the recommendations on Technical and Vocational Skills Development of the African Union (AU).

The last TVET policy was designed in 2004. Since then, many efforts have been made to revitalise the skills development sector and structure interventions at the levels of the ministries in charge of TVET: The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (MoHERST) and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE). Other institutions involved in the TVET landscape are also implementing different initiatives to make skills development more relevant to the country's development orientations. It is important to note that the present national

TVET Policy takes up the current strategies and action plans while integrating them into a broader vision of the missions assigned to the TVET system in The Gambia.

The TVET Policy impulses a renewed vision of TVET and opens up new institutional, organizational, and multi-stakeholders' managerial perspectives to guarantee effective TVET governance subjected to accountability. It sets policy actions enabling every Gambian to have access to quality skills development and acquire the needed skills for upward mobility.

Most importantly, it emphasizes the need to put TVET firmly back at the service of employment of every Gambian, and most importantly, the youth. In concrete terms, TVET will have to move from a supply-side logic to an effective integration of individuals, communities, and enterprises' skills demand.

The new Gambia Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy will enable the country, if implemented, to have a skilled workforce capable of helping The Gambia to meet its socio-economic targets, thus, contributing not only to the country's sustainable economic growth, but also to the economic growth of West Africa and the whole Continent.

2. METHODOLOGY

The TVET Policy was designed under the aegis of the “Youth Empowerment through Technical and Vocational Education and Training in The Gambia Project” coordinated by UNESCO and funded by the Korean Government through the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Senegal.

The methodology used for its development has employed a participatory and inclusive approach. The Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST) appointed a National Technical Team to work on the development of the policy, and from the same team, a smaller group was selected (Core Group) to closely work with the Consultant, under the guidance of the Director of Higher Education of the MoHERST.

Two requirements have guided the process of selecting the participants: the need to have a broad spectrum of stakeholders’ representation and the search for relevance to The Gambian context in defining the policy orientations and actions.

In the first phase of the policy development, a diagnostic review of the TVET system in The Gambia and labour market needs took place from May to December, 2020, with a field mission from 9 to 23 December, 2020. The second phase, the actual development of the TVET policy, started as an integral part of the first mission, which was conducted by the Consultant in December, 2020, and then continued with online working sessions.

Data collection to complete the findings of the diagnostic review of the TVET system and labour market needs in The Gambia involved documents review, interviews, and consultations with different stakeholders.

The technical part of the process involved two workshops that took place in December, 2020. The first was a two-day information workshop that set the conceptual background of the policy in terms of knowledge of TVET reference frameworks at continental and regional levels, and presentation of the education and training landscape in The Gambia in terms of successes, challenges, ongoing initiatives, and new policy options. In the second workshop, the participants defined the new vision, pillars and some priority actions of the policy.

The outcomes of the technical workshop were first presented to the National TVET Committee and then to a wider pool of TVET stakeholders’ representatives, compared to those who participated in the workshops. In addition, an online session to continue the refinement of the policy, and more precisely, the priority policy actions, took place on 11 June, 2021. It served to synthesize the various inputs obtained from other resource persons who did not attend the technical workshop.

A validation workshop took place on 11 August, 2021 with the participation of government authorities and representatives of all the stakeholders.

3. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

In the document, the below concepts are defined as follows:

TVET

TVET comprises education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods. TVET, as part of lifelong learning, can take place at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels and includes work-based learning and continuing training and professional development which may lead to qualifications. TVET also includes a wide range of skills development opportunities attuned to national and local contexts. Learning to learn, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills are integral components of TVET (UNESCO, Recommendation concerning TVET, 2015).

In The Gambia, TVET includes apprenticeship schemes and prevocational programs, starting from Basic and Secondary Education.

Formal TVET

Formal TVET refers to institution-based or in-school training that follows a standardized curriculum, resulting in a certification that is nationally recognized.

Informal System of Training

The informal system of training refers to on-the-job skills training or apprenticeship schemes, mostly developed in the informal sector of the economy.

4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT



4.1 Population

The population of The Gambia was estimated at 2.3 million in 2019. It is one of the most densely populated countries in West Africa. Urban areas have the highest proportion of the population, with 54.6%, compared to the rural areas 45.3% (The Gambia Labour Force Survey (GLFS), 2018).

The population is young. The dominant age segment in The Gambia is between 15-64 years old, and it counts for 1.2 million Gambians, with more females (52.4%) than males (47.6%). The average household size is roughly 10 persons. In the rural areas, it is 11.2 people per household compared to 8.0 people in urban areas.

According to the 2020 Human Development Index¹, The Gambia is ranked 172nd out of 188 countries, with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.496. The HDI is below the average of 0.523 for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

4.2 Economy and Labour Market

4.2.1 Economic Growth

The Gambia is classified as a low-income developing country. The GDP per capita is estimated at USD 483². Its economy relies heavily on agricultural products, tourism, and remittances. The sectors that significantly contribute to the economy are services (54.4% of The Gambia's GDP), followed by agriculture (29.8%), and industry (11.8%). Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was estimated at 6.6% in 2018 compared to 4.6% in 2017.

Remittances are a significant component of the economy. Statistics show that out of 280,659 households in the country, 35.9% receive a transfer from outside. The amount of remittances received by households in 2018 is estimated at 204 million USD³.

4.2.2 An Economy Characterized by High Debts Level Despite Efforts for Recovery

The state of the economy is characterized by both efforts to overcome recent crises and a high level of debts which strongly reduces the fiscal base for public investment. On the one hand, various national economic strategies state that the Gambia's economy has shown some resilience during the 2007-2010 financial crisis, registering an average annual GDP growth rate of 5.5%. On the other hand, public debt is estimated at around 87% of GDP in 2018, while interest payments constituted about 26% of domestic revenues in the same year.

Moreover, with the current pandemic situation at the global level, the national economic outlook should be reviewed, taking into account the effects of the international sanitary crisis on the national economy. Thus, all the economic prospects indicating that The Gambia is expected to see steady economic growth in the coming years should be re-evaluated in the aftermath of the crisis, as would be the case in other countries.

4.2.3 An Important Informal Economy

The informal sector represents a large part of the Gambia's economy with 34% of employment, especially in urban and peri-urban areas of the country. Employment in the sector is dominated by trade (wholesale and retail), repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (14%), construction (10.2%), and forestry and fishing (11.2%) (GLFS, 2018). It is recognized that the sector has a high potential for employment.

4.2.4 A Labour Market Dominated by Employment in the Informal Economy and Males, with Concentration in Urban Areas

According to the Gambia Labour Force Survey Report (2018), out of the total working-age⁴ population of 1,256,589 persons, 431,168 persons are in employment, 234,724 persons are unemployed, and 590,977 persons are outside the labour force. The labour force participation rate⁵ is 53%, with a disparity between the rural areas (58%) and urban areas (49.2%). The male population accounts for 63.9%, whereas females count for 43.1%. Table 1 shows the labour force participation by the level of educational attainment. It is noteworthy that the labour force participation rate among persons with vocational certificates is 64.3% (GLFS, 2018).

Table 1: Labour Force Participation Rate by Level of Education, 2018

Level of Education	LFPR
No schooling	61.2
Early Childhood	50.6
Primary Education	46.7
Lower Secondary	37.9
Upper Secondary	45.8
Vocational Certificate	64.3
Diploma	76.9
Higher	76.5

(Source: Gambia Labour Force Survey (GLFS), 2018)

In The Gambia, the area of “other services” tends to have the highest rate of employment, followed by wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, and agriculture. A closer look at the age group (15-35 years), reveals that even if the same trade areas seem to hold the highest positions, they are followed very closely by education and construction (Diagnostic Review, 2021).

Unemployment

The unemployment rate is estimated at 35.2 % by the Gambia Labour Force Survey (2018)⁶. It affects females more than males and is considerably higher in rural areas (69%) than urban areas (31%). In urban areas, the population aged between 15 and 24 years is the most affected.

Among males, the highest proportion of unemployed persons are individuals with diplomas (70.9%) and upper Secondary Education (59.5%). As for females, the highest levels of unemployment are among those with Early Childhood Education (ECE) and no education.

Underemployment⁷

Around 17.4% of the employed population reports being underemployed. The phenomenon is predominant in the urban areas (Brikama and, to a lesser extent, Kanifing) and among females. According to the National Employment Policy (2019-2024), age does not seem to be a factor affecting underemployment. Furthermore, it can be found in both the public and private sectors. And in particular, it affects skilled workers, such as professionals, managers, technicians, craft, and related trade workers, and individuals involved in Armed Forces.

Youth Employment

The Gambia Labour Force Survey (2018) estimates that the youth population represents 58.5% of the total employed population. Not surprisingly, the youth employment rate-to-population rate is higher in the urban areas (54.7%) than in the rural ones (45.3%). It is important to point out that there is a large proportion of underemployment in the indicated youth employment rate, especially in the urban areas. The underemployment rate is estimated at 54.7% of the employed youth in the urban areas.

In terms of occupations, most of the youth are employed in the category “Other services activities⁸”, which covers various occupational activities: repair of computers and household goods, washing of textiles, hairdressing, and other beauty treatments, etc. Also, a large segment of the youth is employed in the wholesale and retail trade or repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (GLFS, 2018).

The youth unemployment rate is estimated at 41.5 %. The data shows that the wage-unemployment rate⁹ is higher in rural areas (69.4%) compared to urban ones (30.6%). Male youth unemployment counts for 44.7%, and female counts for 55.3%.

In regards to education, males have the highest proportions of unemployed youth population among those with diplomas (62.3%) and upper Secondary Education (57.5%). As for females, the highest proportions of unemployed youth are among those with ECE (73.7%) and Tertiary Education (66.6%).

At the national level, the percentage of the youth who are not employed and are not involved in education or any training activities (NEET) is 56.8%, with 44.7% representing males and 56.3% representing females.

4.2.5 New National Economic Orientations

The recent economic development strategies have focused on new interventions to reduce reliance on the fragile agricultural and tourism industries. At the macro-economic level, the new key priorities consist of:

- a. Making a shift from exports of primary commodities to processed agricultural products;
- b. Developing a tourism industry that can operate all year-round, thus, attracting higher value visitors; and

- c. Promoting the development of a knowledge-based economy, especially in the financial and services sectors (National Development Plan, 2018-2021).

4.2.6 Priority Sectors of the Economy

The National Development Plan (2018-2021), and other developed strategies, especially the Youth and Trade Roadmap (2020-2024), have identified strategic sectors with a high potential to contribute to the national economic growth. These sectors are tourism, ICT, trade, agriculture, and forestry and fisheries. Among these, three seem to constitute the pillars: agriculture, tourism, and ICT.

Agriculture

The goal stated for the agriculture sector under the National Development Plan (2018-2021) is: “a modern, sustainable and market-oriented agriculture and livestock for increased food and nutrition security, income and employment generation, poverty reduction and economic transformation”.

The sector employs nearly half (46.4%) of the working population and 80.7% of the rural working population. It employs 58% of the youth (15-24 years), 51% of women and 54% of the uneducated people, which is another indicator of the sector’s importance.

Tourism

The National Development Plan (2018-2021) targets: “an inclusive and culture-centred tourism for sustainable growth”. The goal is to make tourism highly competitive and sustainable, centred on people and culture.

The tourism industry contributed to 24% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 20% of total employment in 2018, generating more than 35,000 direct and 40,000 indirect jobs and bringing \$110 million in tourism receipts (Youth

and Trade Roadmap: Creative Industries Roadmap, 2020-2024). According to the same source, creative industries should be linked to tourism since they are closely related. Both sectors have significant potential in contributing to the economic development of the country.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The sector has seen growth in recent years, and both local and foreign investments have increased due to a high level of confidence. For example, the National Development Plan (2018-2021) indicates that a consortium of 16 international operators invested \$700 million to bring the high-speed Africa Coast to Europe submarine cable from Europe to 23 African countries, among which is The Gambia.

Another important development project is the liberalization of the sector through the Information and Communications Act, 2009 allowing the development of a dynamic and competitive market. The Plan calls for “Making The Gambia a digital nation, and creating a modern information society” (The National Development Plan, 2018-2021).

4.3 Challenges Facing the Macroeconomic Context in Terms of Employment and Skills

The challenges concluded from the above description of the economy, the existing labour force main characteristics, and the orientations set by recent national development strategies could be summarized as follows:

- An undiversified economy relying heavily on agriculture and tourism;
- A small internal market due to the size of the country and its population;
- A very important informal sector with more reliance on commercial activities rather than industrial ones, requiring a minimum level of skills; and

- An unskilled workforce that can transform the economy of the country as targeted by the National Development Plan goals.

4.4 Skills Gap

Employment policy documents and strategies state the need to transform the labour force into a more highly educated and skilled workforce. At present, most Gambians are subsistence farmers or unskilled workers in the informal sector with very little or no formal education.

Furthermore, the average educational attainment in The Gambia is only 3.7 years, slightly more than halfway through primary education. The education attainment and existing skills levels are, therefore, insufficient for the national ambition, aiming at processing agricultural goods for the local and external markets or for embarking on the digitalization of industry.

The skills gap in the country has been assessed in the TVET Roadmap (2020-2024)

to orient recommendations and curricula design. The Employers Skills Survey (2018) also highlights the skills gap issue. It indicates that the most sought-after occupations are automotive engineering specialists (23%), mainly in the wholesale and retail sectors, food science and technology specialists, especially within agriculture and hotel and restaurant sectors (11%), then civil engineers, computer technology experts and finance specialists.

The findings of the skills gap assessments are of vital importance and should guide interventions in providing the most needed skills to the workforce. However, it should be highlighted that the exercise of evaluating the skills needs should integrate two factors: the currently needed skills as expressed by the employers and anticipated skills for the development of priority sectors in the future. The challenge remains in providing solutions for the current situation while addressing the future at the same time.

5. THE TVET LANDSCAPE, ITS CHALLENGES, SUCCESSES AND STRENGTHS

5.1 The TVET System Policy Framework

The legislation governing TVET in the country stems from the National Training Authority Act 2002, which established, at the time, the National Training Authority (NTA). Until 2002, TVET was managed by the Directorate of Technical Education and Vocational Training (DTEVT) at the Department of State for Education. Currently, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST) have the mandate to regulate the TVET provision at the level of Basic and Secondary Education, and Tertiary and Higher Education, respectively. In addition, the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) manages some skills training centres, and the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MoTIE) is mainly in charge of facilitating employees' integration into the labour market. It also coordinates short-term on-the-job training programs at employers' demand.

5.2 The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority

The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) was established by an Act of Parliament in 2015 to ensure the TVET institutions' accreditation and supervise the quality of training delivery in the system.

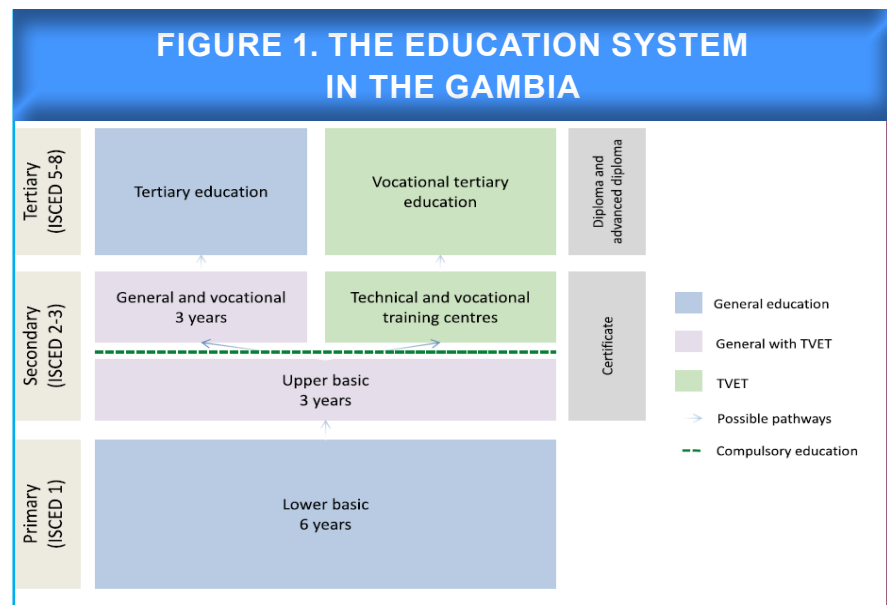
It should be noted that the NAQAA functions are limited to the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST), therefore, its mandate does not cover the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE).

5.3 Technical Education and Vocational Training Systems

5.3.1 The Formal TVET System

The formal TVET starts once compulsory Lower Basic Education (LBE) is completed. Thus, a few vocational education programs, which are called pre-vocational, are included in the upper Basic Education. However, specialized TVET programs in training centres start at the Secondary School level (Figure 1).

Most of the TVET institutions are privately owned. The majority has an enrolment of 200 students or even fewer. Only four institutions



(Source: UNESCO/UNEVOC database, 2015)

have a capacity of more than 1,000 students, which are: The Management Development Institute (MDI), The Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI), the National Coordinating Organisation of Farmer Associations Gambia (NACOFAG), and the QuantumNet Institute of Technology (QIT).

Training Provision

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST) reports 115 TVET institutions, 92 of which are accredited, whereas the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) lists 8 TVET training centres, with an ambition to extend training provision to 11 institutions, adding three more in the future.

A closer look at the geographical spread of the TVET training centres/institutions reveals that approximately 75% of accredited TVET providers are located in Banjul and Kanifing Local Government Area (LGA). As for the other LGAs: 16% of TVET institutions are located in the Brikama LGA, four institutions operate in Kerewan LGA, one in Mansakonko, three in Basse LGA, and no accredited TVET institutions operate in the Kuntaur and Janjangbureh LGAs.

Training provision in the rest of the country covers a very limited range of training programs. In addition, there is no registered TVET institution in the Upper River Region in manufacturing or processing, and in the field of agriculture only the Gambia Songhai Initiative (GSI) and Njawara Agricultural Training Centre in Kerewan operate.

Nonetheless, expansion of training provision is underway: the MoHERST plans to establish modern skills training centres in rural areas. The Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI) is also renovating two new rural annexes: Ndemban Skills Training Centre in the West Coast Region and Julangel Skills Training Centre in the Upper River Region (The TVET Roadmap, 2019).

Courses Provided

The training offered by the TVET institutions under the MoHERST shows a predominance of two sectors: Business Administration and Computing. The level of qualifications ranges from certificate level to bachelor's degree. The average duration of the course generally depends on whether it is a certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, or bachelor. Certificate and diploma courses mostly last for six months and one year, respectively. Advanced diplomas and bachelor's degrees last for four years and three years, respectively. Along with the classical training programs of six months to 4 years, there are short training courses in very skill-focused trades, such as bricklaying, tiling, garment making, small engines repair, animal husbandry, solar installation. These courses last for 1-18 months.

Certification

The Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework (GSQF) is a national skills standards and qualifications system created in 2002. It caters for formal and informal training systems and is administrated by the NAQAA. The Framework has become an integral part of the newly developed Gambia National Qualifications Framework (GNQF, 2020), which is composed of 10 levels, from basic to doctorate, with correspondences among Higher Education, TVET and informal apprenticeship. However, despite the rather long existence of the GSQF, the TVET Survey (2019) shows that it has yet to reach a national application in the country.

Infrastructure

As previously mentioned, the spread of training centres is concentrated in two regions, indicating that the availability of training infrastructures is limited and does not allow access to every Gambian. Furthermore, the existing infrastructures suffer from a lack of adequate facilities to support a sufficient intake of trainees and modern equipment.

5.3.2 TVET Quality and Relevance

TVET Quality Assurance

As previously indicated, the quality assurance is performed at the prerogative of the NAQAA in the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology. Despite its well-defined role and responsibilities and the existence of reference tools, in particular, the Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Framework, there are challenges to efficiently monitoring quality in the system due to the limited mandate of the NAQAA and need for all the stakeholders' advocacy to comply to existing regulations.

Teachers/Trainers and Management Staff

The Gambia Teacher Training Institute (GTTI) is the only institution for pre and in-service TVET teacher training along with the University of The Gambia, which provides pre-service training for general education teachers. Some private institutions offer in-service practice to their trainers. However, most of the instructors are not trained before being recruited.

Similarly, most of the management staff have not received any initial management training. The TVET Survey (2019) reports that 40% of the TVET institutions classified the governance management as “inert”, namely the management has not received training in TVET institutional management skills. Another 29% classified the management as “passive”, that is, it had received some management training from the government authority but had not initiated any other capacity building on its own to complement eventual gaps.

Curricula

Most of the TVET programs and curricula have been designed without clear information on the labour market needs. In addition, the integration of the labour market data into a program is acknowledged to be difficult due to the lack of expertise in curricula design.

Internal Efficiency of the System

Evaluating the internal efficiency of the system remains a challenge as relevant data is not captured systematically and holistically. There are three Education Management Systems (EMIS): the first is for the MoBSE, the second for the MoHERST, and the third for TVET data. However, the TVET/MIS does not cover the entire system as most of private schools' data in the country are not captured.

External Efficiency of the System

In general, the skills development system lacks a culture of assessing its external efficiency. The most recent evaluation of the external efficiency of the system is documented in the GTTI Tracer Study conducted in 2018. There is a need for more data covering a wider spectrum of TVET Institutions and training centres.

The most salient elements in the 2018 GTTI Tracer Study are: 57.9% of graduates are either in regular paid employment or self-employment/freelance work; 38% out of the 57.9% are engaged in paid employment, while 19.1% are in self-employment or freelance jobs, and 33% of graduates are unemployed. 20% of the TVET graduates work in jobs that are not related to their training.

Despite the high graduate employment rate among higher skills acquisition levels, the analysis shows that the total number of unemployed and underemployed individuals (53%) raises the question about the relevance of the training programs to the market needs.

Linkages with Industry in Developing Training Programs

It has been reported that TVET institutions, at both central and local levels, have limited interaction with the Private Sector. In the 2019 TVET Survey, only 34% of the respondent institutions indicated that they have developed training courses in response to the industry's

demand. Likewise, the Employers' Skills Needs Survey (2018) indicates that an average of 70% of the respondents has never been in contact with training providers in important fields to gauge the level of linkages between the market and training programs to improve employability.

It should be noted, though, that the newly developed courses under the framework of some skills development projects have attempted to change the situation, especially in the informal training programs. Nevertheless, there is a need to systematically build and develop the linkage between the training systems and relevant industries.

5.3.3 The Informal and Non-Formal Systems of Training: Apprenticeship and On-the-job Training

As is the case in the formal TVET training, 79% of the apprenticeship provision is concentrated in the Kanifing LGA, an urban area. The most widely spread type of apprenticeship in The Gambia is the traditional one: highly unstructured since content creation is left to the goodwill of the master-craftsman; highly focused on technical skills acquisition, with limited theory and no contract between the master-craftsman and the apprentice. It covers training in trade areas, such as motor mechanics, welding, masonry, jewellery, carving, sewing, and commercial vehicle driving.

Another characteristic of the traditional apprenticeship in The Gambia is that it is male-dominated with an under-representation of females at master-crafts positions (TVET Survey, 2019). The duration of training varies depending on the master-craftsman and the field: from 1 to 3 years.

Some initiatives to “formalize apprenticeship training” are currently being implemented under

the framework of some skills development projects, such as the EU-GIZ TekkiFii project, the Youth Empowerment Project, or the Job, Skills and Finance Project. The development of some training programs by the NAQAA in partnership with master-craftsmen and skills training centres is an essential feature of the formalization process.

Moreover, the current National Qualifications Framework recognises apprenticeship training as an integral part of the training system in The Gambia. Hence, there is an awareness of the importance of integrating the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPL) into the existing certification framework. Nonetheless, no formal action has been taken in this regard yet.

5.3.4 Continuing Education and Other Types of Training

At Tertiary and Higher Education levels, institutions offering technical skills development include: the University of The Gambia (UTG), the Management Development Institute (MDI), the Gambia Teacher Training Institute (GTTI), the Gambia College, the Gambia Telecommunication and Multimedia Institute (GTMI), the Gambia Tourism and Hospitality Institute (GTHI) and the Rural Development Institute (RDI). The offered courses are teacher education, nursing and midwifery, public and environmental health, agriculture, tourism and hospitality, ICT, management and rural development.

5.3.5 Equality and Equity in the TVET System

Female Participation in TVET

Female participation in TVET is a major challenge. Even though there are more females than males in non-tertiary courses in terms of the total number of enrolments and graduation, the situation changes at

higher-level certification. The same pattern is observed in general education, and this could be explained by cultural practices encouraging female marriage at an early age.

To counter the phenomenon, which exists in most African countries, a structured set of incentives is crafted, ranging from paying training fees to allocating scholarships or grants. However, the formal and informal TVET systems in The Gambia do not integrate systematic schemes to increase females' participation at all levels, specifically to enable them to enroll in Tertiary and Higher Education levels and acquire the necessary skills for horizontal mobility in the community.

Equity in the TVET System

As a result of concentrating training centres and apprenticeship opportunities in the urban areas, equal access to training opportunities for every Gambian is a challenge in both formal and informal systems. In addition, apart from some faith-based institutions, there are very few government-funded training centres targeting persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups.

5.3.6 Governance and Financing

Governance of the TVET System

The large number of entities in charge of TVET creates a coordination challenge. In addition, the governance nature itself is very centralised. Ministries are responsible for the recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff, staff deployment and promotion, formal TVET curricula development, and equipment procurement. To solve the lack of coordination and involve more actors from the system, especially the private sector, the newly developed strategies and policies advocate the need for a multi-stakeholder approach in the governance of the TVET system in The Gambia. As a first step in achieving the desired cohesion, the National TVET Committee was created.

The National TVET Committee

In 2019, the National TVET Committee was created to facilitate the development of the TVET Roadmap. Since then, it has become a formal governance organ with a full mandate coordinated by the MoHERST. The National TVET Committee functions are carried out with the support of the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). To date, the SSCs have been created in three sectors: agriculture, ICT, and construction.

A coordinating body is established now. However, at this stage, two weaknesses persist: 1) the body is harboured and led by only one of the two ministries in charge of TVET; and 2) Its composition does not include all TVET stakeholders, which would affect the effectiveness of the assigned coordination role.

Financing the TVET System

The Gambian Government directly finances the public TVET providers, whereas private TVET institutions are financially autonomous and tuition fees and donor funding are their main sources of financing. The National Education and Technical Training (NETT) Levy serving as an annual subvention finances the quality assurance mechanism. Government funding is supplemented by the several donor-funded projects, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and private institutions fees.

Efficiency of TVET Financing

Government expenditure on education and TVET does not cover the expenses of the educational system. In 2015, the government covered 32% of the total education spending (US\$29.3 million), while households financed 59% (US\$53.4 million), and international partners funded the remaining 9% (US\$7.8 million). The MoBSE received 88% of the public spending on education. The MoHERST, on the other hand received only 12%. The share of TVET expenditure in both ministries cannot

be easily captured since it is embedded in the total budget. However, it might be inferred that the government spending is limited.

In general, TVET is expensive, therefore, very often in most countries, the contribution of the government and different donor agencies must be supplemented by the training centres themselves. However, very few training centres embark on developing income-generating activities in The Gambia, such as service to their communities.

Cost of Training

The TVET Survey (2019) indicates that the average yearly tuition fee charged by training institutions is about 15,000 Gambian dalasis (around US \$ 300). 15% of the surveyed TVET institutions confirmed that their tuition fee is more than D15,000. The majority, however, indicated that the tuition fee is less than D5,000 (around US \$ 100). In view of the economic indicators of 2018, which confirms that 48.6% of the population is at the national poverty line, many families cannot afford the cost of the training.

5.4. Challenges of the TVET System

The situational analysis of the TVET and skills development systems in The Gambia points out the below challenges:

Access and Equity: an increase of the geographical spread of training institutions and provision of skills development to cover all the regions

There is an uneven distribution of formal and informal skills acquisition training institutions across the regions, with a large concentration of 75% in the Capital, Banjul, and its surroundings. Furthermore, most of the training centres offering comprehensive courses with certificates, diplomas and even higher certificates are also located in the urban

areas, neglecting the rural regions. There is a need to provide access to every Gambian in both urban and rural areas.

Quality (teachers/managers, infrastructures and equipment): an improvement in management and pedagogical competencies and providing quality and modern equipment

The lack of pedagogical and managerial skills among teachers and the management staff is reported, therefore, the teaching and management staff should receive regular training. In addition, pedagogical and technical skills should be updated to offer training relevant to the skills needed in the labour market and the country's economic orientations. Moreover, the capacity of the training centres to offer specialized courses is limited due to the inadequate infrastructures and equipment.

Quality Assurance: structures and mechanisms are in place, but not known and owned by all stakeholders

The Gambian National Qualifications Framework (GNQF) integrating the Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework (GSQF) should be adopted to involve all the relevant entities especially the MoBSE and the MoHERST. There is also a need to develop a sector-wide approach to involve all relevant stakeholders in search of an effective approach for quality in skills acquisition.

Relevance: an increase in employability and involvement of Employers/Private Sector

As reported by employers in the Employers Survey (2018), low employability is the main reason behind the poor recruitment. The reduced ability of the TVET sector to analyse the employer's skills needs and anticipate the country's training needs, especially in the emerging growth sectors, remains a serious impediment. To take it a step further, skills need anticipation should not only assess the skills gap, but also should be able to

quantify the number of jobs to be created per industry. Moreover, the capacity to reform the training curricula for better relevance and responsiveness is lacking, including the integration of entrepreneurship courses. Finally, as stated in the National Development Plan (2018-2021) the country's ambition is to transform its economy by preparing a skilled workforce, for this purpose, the development of a system that caters for lower as well as higher-skilled workers remains a challenge, since most of the current innovative courses target lower-skilled individuals.

Financing Skills Development: an increase in efficiency and search for sustainability

Reforming the finance of the TVET system by diversifying sources, promoting efficient use of available funding, involving the Private Sector and making it more sustainable is a must. It should be highlighted that government funds allocation does not match the sector's needs. Also, the donors' financial contributions are not sufficient. In addition, the recent economic crises call for a diversification of funding sources.

There are avenues to be explored in taxation, for example, imposing taxes on some imported second-hand goods and other innovative funding mechanisms. Furthermore, the share of the National Education and Technical Training (NETT) Levy, within all TVET structures, at central and decentralised levels, should be reviewed for efficiency and transparency.

Governance: the need to coordinate among the different entities involved in the TVET system and many initiatives being implemented

In addition to the multiplicity of entities involved in the TVET system in The Gambia, which already causes a coordination challenge, several initiatives are being implemented at different levels. Hence, there is a need for more coherence, supervision, and oversight.

Efficiency of the TVET System: the need to monitor and evaluate system's performances through the provision and use of up-to-date data

The scarcity of recent and accurate data that could contribute to the quality and relevance of the TVET system is a real and critical issue. Moreover, for monitoring and decision-making purposes, there is a need to measure the performance and overall efficiency of the system regularly and holistically, both internally and externally.

5.5 Strengths of the System and Promising Developments

In terms of existing strengths, the following could be highlighted:

- A political will to make technical and vocational skills development the driver of the economy, now and in the future, as stated in all national development strategies and policies;
- A youthful population eager to acquire technical and vocational skills for self-fulfilment and, thus, benefiting the country;
- A small sized country, with a youthful population, can be turned into an asset as return on investment can be quickly obtained;
- A private sector willing to contribute to the quality of skills development. The private sector, specifically the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI), is ready to contribute. The organisation is implementing many initiatives contributing to the development of a skilled manpower;
- The presence of private TVET institutions offering a large range of training courses, with sometimes, more advanced equipment than those used in the public institutions; and
- A pool of development partners (European Union, GIZ, UNDP, UNESCO, KOICA, etc.) involved in financing and running the TVET projects.

The promising developments in the country are structured around the following initiatives to modernize the TVET and apprenticeship systems:

- An advocated new model in Basic Education, introducing pre-vocational programs starting from Grade 4;
- The timid but reaffirmed shift to operationalize the continuum from Basic and Secondary Education to Tertiary and Higher Education, to widely align the GSQF and the GNQF, involving the two ministries in charge of the education sector;
- The strong will to establish pathways to allow TVET graduates from a lower level (Certificate level) to transit to Tertiary and Higher Education (diploma and post diploma levels);
- The reaffirmed will to establish pathways to allow TVET graduates from a lower level

(certificate level) to transit to Tertiary and Higher Education (diploma and post diploma levels);

- The development of all the strategic Roadmaps (ICT, TVET, tourism, etc.) to guide the revitalization of TVET in The Gambia; and
- The existence of TVET/skills development projects financed by development partners and NGOs, which endeavour to support TVET delivery where needs are rising (in the rural areas with returnees, or in the much-needed industries) to provide the youth with employable skills, thus, reducing international migration.

The TVET Policy stems from the development strategies designed in the country to impulse the needed transformation in the economy. As seen below several strategies and policies are already in place.

6. FOUNDATION DOCUMENTS OF THE POLICY

6.1 The National Development Plan (2018-2021)

The Gambia National Development Plan (2018-2021) states:

“The Government’s vision for ‘The new Gambia’ is a country that upholds the highest standard of governance, accountability and transparency; where social cohesion and harmony prevails among communities; its citizens enjoy a standard of living and access to basic services to enable them to lead decent and dignified lives; and the youth, women, children realize their full potential, and a nurturing and caring environment exists for the vulnerable.”

The goal of the Government under the Plan is to: “deliver good governance and accountability, social cohesion, and national reconciliation and a revitalized and transformed economy for the wellbeing of all Gambians”.

Eight strategic priorities are defined:

- Restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralization and local governance;
- Stabilizing our economy, stimulating growth, and transforming the economy;
- Modernizing our agriculture and fisheries for sustained economic growth, food and nutritional security and poverty reduction;
- Investing in our people through improved education and health services, and building a caring society;

- Building our infrastructure and restoring energy services to power our economy;
- Promoting an inclusive and culture-centred tourism for sustainable growth;
- Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth; and
- Making the private sector the engine of growth, transformation, and job creation (NDP, 2018-2021).

6.2 Skills Development Orientations in the National Development Plan (2018-2021)

Transforming the economy and empowering the youth through skills acquisition are central to the vision and strategies of the National Development Plan (2018-2021). Therefore, skills development has been identified as one of the main drivers for the socio-economic growth. After having outlined the situation of the education and training sector in The Gambia, the document states:

“To address the issues of access and equity in post-secondary institutions, Government plans to establish TVET centres across the country, with at least a major centre in each administrative region, and in village skills centres to serve as feeders into these major centres. This paradigm shift in TVET will give youth opportunities to pursue TVET at degree levels.”

Further, the document declares:

“Given the poor quality of TVET programs, and their relevance to the labour market, Government will continue to review curricula across all levels of education and

introduce pre-vocational/TVET programs even to the basic education level. For the effective management of the sector and to promote evidence-based policies, Information Management Systems will be promoted.”

Two outcomes directly target TVET and skills development especially apprenticeship:

Outcome 4.2: Improved Access and Quality Learning and Relevant Life and Livelihood Skills for all Graduates, with special emphasis on STEM, health, and agriculture.

Outcome 4.3: Improved Access to non-formal Education and Literacy Programs for out-of-school children, youth, and non-lettered adults.

To achieve these outcomes, the measures to be taken include:

- Training more specialists in STEM (including TVET), health and agriculture;
- Implementing and monitoring a framework on adult literacy and apprenticeship;
- Expanding adult literacy and apprenticeship educational infrastructure and providing institutions with learning and teaching equipment;
- Building the capacity of adult literacy service providers and craftsmen; and
- Promoting Certification of Adults Prior Learning Recognition.

BOX 1. AIMS OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR POLICY 2016-2030

The aims of the new Education Policy are to:

- *Promote broad-based education at the basic level for lifelong learning and training;*
- *Mainstream gender in the creation of opportunities for all to acquire literacy, livelihood skills and the utilisation of these skills in order to earn a living and become economically self-reliant members of the community;*
- *Develop the physical and mental skills which will contribute to nation building – economically, socially and culturally in a sustainable environment;*
- *Encourage creativity and the development of a critical and analytical mind;*
- *Further an understanding and appreciation of the contribution of science technology engineering and mathematics to national development;*
- *Cultivate sound moral and ethical values in the development of life skills;*
- *Develop a healthy body and an appreciation of the value of a healthy mind in response to life threatening diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria, cancer and tuberculosis;*
- *Create an awareness of the importance of peace, democracy and human rights, duties and responsibilities of the individual in fostering these qualities;*
- *Foster an appreciation of and respect for the cultural heritage of The Gambia;*
- *Promote a sense of patriotism: service, loyalty, integrity and dedication to the nation and humanity;*
- *Promote the singing of the National Anthem in class and assemblies.*

(Source: Education Sector Policy 2016 -2030)

6.3 The Education Sector Policy (2016-2030)

The Education Sector Policy (ESP) stems from two prior strategic documents: the Education Sector Strategic Plans of (2006 -2015) and (2014-2022). The stated development (impact) objective of the Education Sector Policy is: “By 2030 universal access to quality basic and secondary education and improved access to relevant and quality education and training will be achieved.”

A strategic plan has been adopted, integrating the following program areas:

- Access & Equity,
- Quality and Relevance,
- Research & Development,
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
- Sector Management

Each of these programs has policy priority areas that are linked to corresponding indicators and results.

6.3.1 TVET in the Education Sector Policy (2016-2030)

TVET is recognised in the Education Sector Policy (ESP):

“Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has the potential to better prepare students for wage and self-employment as part of the socio-economic diversification process. Despite this potential, TVET continues to suffer from inadequate infrastructure, small numbers of TVET graduates, non-responsive TVET training to meet the labour market needs and inadequate number of scholarships for TVET teachers, instructors and students. It also suffers from a perception that TVET is a second option for most students.”

Furthermore, the ESP emphasises the need for an “operational” TVET Policy:

“To address these issues a TVET operational policy will be formulated and implemented. It will provide a national TVET framework with clear directions on linkages between TVET and pre-vocational delivery, general education, tertiary and higher education, labour market needs, quality service delivery and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements.”

BOX 2 : PROVISION OF TVET IN THE EDUCATION POLICY

On Access

Result Area 5: Access to TVET programs, particularly in deprived areas increased:

- *Provide seed money for TVET graduates;*
- *Conduct labour market research to determine the TVET training needs of the country;*
- *Establish multi-purpose skill centres in the regions;*
- *Train out-of-school youth on self-employable skills.*

On Quality and Relevance Program Area

Result Area 3: Relevant and up-to-date TVET programs operational:

- *Review and develop TVET programs in conformity with training needs;*
- *Develop materials on revised TVET programs;*
- *Orientate practitioners on the use of revised TVET programs;*
- *Develop a system of accreditation and recognition of evidence of prior learning to facilitate credit transfer within and across TVET programs and institutions;*
- *Expand Gambia Skills and Qualification Framework (GSQF) from level 4 upwards, in incorporating identified local and global competencies and in conformity with international standards.*

Result Area 5: Highly qualified staff motivated and retained:

- *Train teachers in pre-vocational and technology subjects at the tertiary level;*
- *Train teachers on content knowledge in English and Mathematics through e-learning training mode;*
- *Continue to provide scholarships for the training of senior secondary school teachers at the UTG; and*
- *Develop professional standards for teachers.*

Result Area 9: An effective higher education quality assurance developed and implemented:

- *Review and revise the regulatory framework for the operations of non-state providers of tertiary and higher education;*
- *Develop a framework with criteria and standards for assessing academic quality in tertiary and higher education within the country;*
- *Conduct regular external reviews of tertiary and higher education programs including TVET;*
- *Develop a system of accreditation and recognition of evidence of prior learning to facilitate credit transfer within and across tertiary and higher education institutions.*

On Sector Management Program

Result Area 6: An effective and efficient regulatory mechanism for public and private TVET, tertiary and higher education institutions ensured:

- *Strengthen the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority Board;*
- *Sensitize tertiary and higher education institutions on the details of the framework;*
- *Recruit and train staff of the quality assurance authority;*
- *Conduct regular quality assurance visits;*
- *Develop a system of accreditation for tertiary and higher education institutions.*

(Education Sector Strategic Plan, 2016 - 2030)

6.4. The Employment Policy (2019-2024)

The new Employment Policy (2019-2024) highlights the following priority strategies:

- Pro-employment macroeconomic policies;
- Priority sectors to foster employment as tourism, public works;
- Actions targeting specifically the informal sector and the development of skills;
- Generating energy; and
- Focusing renewable energy.

As stated in the preamble of the document:

“The 2019 Employment Policy encourages vigorous private sector led growth, spearheaded by SMEs through the transformation of the informal economy. It outlines agriculture-based industrialization, systematic and targeted value addition, renewable energy generation and green jobs. It targets services, such as tourism to generate employment and leverage our natural resources. The policy also focuses on the public sector providing an enabling policy environment, with sound macro-economic policy, market responsive skills development policy, sound financial policy, all of which form an integral part of the productive job creation”.

It further stipulates that a special emphasis will be placed on the employment of women, youth and “differently abled” individuals, who are the most affected by the current levels of unemployment and informal employment.

6.5 The Youth and Trade Roadmap (2020-2024)

The Youth and Trade Roadmap developed under the aegis of the Gambian Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) aims at assessing: “business opportunities to foster youth employment and to identify potential skill gaps. The Youth and Trade Roadmap provides a strategic implementation framework for the duration of the YEP project”.

The document prescribes four levers to foster youth integration into the Gambian economy: self-employment and entrepreneurship, education, policies and institutions. It further outlines four pillars and strategic orientations in five areas: entrepreneurship, skills development, self-employment, market led value-development and sector coordination. The five sectors to implement the Roadmap’s strategies are: TVET, ICT, Creative Industries, Tourism and Nuts and Agro-processing.

7. VISION, MISSION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND POLICY ACTIONS OF TVET IN THE GAMBIA

7.1 The Vision for The TVET System in The Gambia

The policy is based on the following vision for TVET/skills development in The Gambia:

“A quality, relevant and well-resourced TVET System that is accessible, equitable and inclusive to deliver, through lifelong learning, a skilled, competitive and employable workforce for sustained socio economic development.”

This vision stems from the one stated in the National Development Plan (2018-2021) for “The new Gambia” in which: “its citizens enjoy a standard of living and access to basic services to enable them to lead decent and dignified lives; and the youth, women, children realize their full potential and a nurturing and caring environment exists for the vulnerable.” It is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 4 “to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” Also, it integrates the AU Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, in its Aspiration 1: A prosperous Africa, based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development, and its goals.

7.2 Mission Statement

The actors in the TVET system in The Gambia will endeavour to:

- Make technical and vocational skills development equitable, inclusive and accessible to all;
- Develop quality technical and professional skills in line with the current and future market needs, serving sustainable socio-cultural, environmental, and economic growth;

- Promote the perception of the TVET system;
- Promote an education-training-employment continuum; and
- Develop partnerships for the implementation of effective and efficient public policy for the sector.

7.3 Principles to Guide the TVET Mission

The mission could be achieved if guided by the following principles:

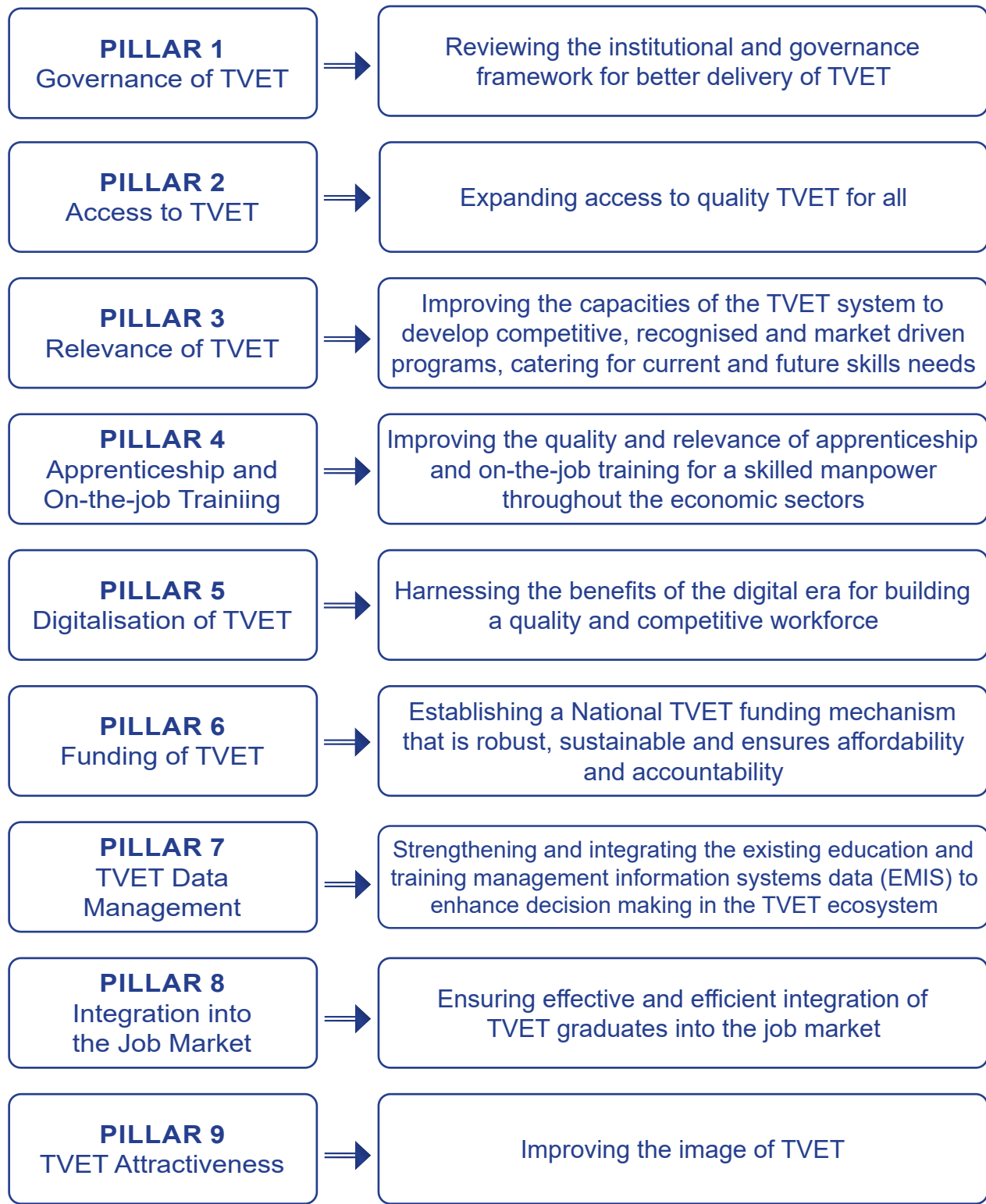
- A highly performant system that guarantees flexibility, responsiveness, continuity and competitiveness at all levels;
- A system that guarantees good governance (multisectoral approach driven, mutual accountability and transparency) with a focus on national and international development issues;
- A holistic, coherent and equitable system guaranteeing the education-training-work continuum;
- An inclusive system that maximizes the contributions of all stakeholders (private sector, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), local governance actors, etc.);
- A system that integrates modern dynamics of TVET operations to meet the growing socio-economic challenges, at both local and global levels; and
- A system that integrates sustainable development practices at all its levels of operations.

7.4 Pillars and Key Strategic Objectives

The following pillars have been defined in the areas of governance, access, quality and relevance, employability, integration of all models of training (formal, informal, and non-formal), financing skills development and transition from school and training to work, to tackle the challenges facing the TVET system and achieve the aforementioned vision.

- Pillar 1. Governance of TVET: Reviewing the institutional and governance framework for better delivery of TVET.
- Pillar 2. Access to TVET: Expanding access to quality TVET for all.
- Pillar 3. Relevance of TVET: Improving the capacities of the TVET system to develop competitive, recognised and market driven programs, catering for current and future skills needs.
- Pillar 4. Apprenticeship and On-the-job Training: Improving the quality and relevance of apprenticeship and on-the-job training for a skilled manpower throughout the economic sector.
- Pillar 5. Digitalisation of TVET: Harnessing the benefits of the digital era for building a quality and competitive workforce.
- Pillar 6. Funding of TVET: Establishing a National TVET funding mechanism that is robust, sustainable and ensures affordability and accountability.
- Pillar 7. TVET Data Management: Strengthening and integrating the existing Education and training Management Information Systems data (EMIS) to enhance decision making in the TVET ecosystem.
- Pillar 8. Integration into the Job Market: Ensuring effective and efficient integration of TVET graduates into the job market.
- Pillar 9. TVET Attractiveness: Improving the image of TVET.

FIGURE 2: THE PILLARS AND KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE TVET POLICY



7.4.1 PILLAR 1

Governance of TVET

Reviewing the institutional and governance framework for better TVET delivery and accountability in the system.

Key Strategic Objective

Establish a sound, coherent and effective multi-stakeholder organ (TVET Authority) to coordinate, advise, monitor the development of strategies and ensure efficient and transparent management and implementation of TVET/ skills development in the country.

The economic growth options and development imperatives set in the National Development Plan (2018-2021) require the country to have a holistic vision and shared planning of technical and professional skills development endeavours. Furthermore, the much-needed operationalisation of the education-training continuum sought by the country's education and training strategic documents and dictated by national development options requires greater oversight of all strategies and interventions at all levels of vocational and technical training, including the higher level.

However, currently, the responsibility of regulating, supervising, and coordinating skills development in The Gambia is fragmented. In addition, greater involvement of the private sector in the TVET system management is imperative. The full participation of the private sector entails an institutionalisation of the public-private partnership.

To overcome the lack of coordination issue and involve more actors from the system, there is a need to create a coordination organ, to be a powerful national TVET authority responsible for overseeing TVET and skills development in the country, minimising TVET provision fragmentation, introducing some measures of coherence, transparency and accountability within the TVET system, and helping to avoid

costly duplication of training programs, while assuring standardisation of provision and an effective framework for resource mobilization.

In light of the current situation, the 2019 National TVET Committee cannot fulfil the required mandate. Therefore, to achieve better coherence, there is a pressing need to address the following: integration of all TVET stakeholders, the legal mandate of the Committee and the expansion of the mandate of the NAQAA.

Priority Policy Actions

- Setting up an Inter-ministerial Committee with representation of all the TVET stakeholders: Government, Non Government Organisations, Private Sector (including representatives of the informal economy), Civil Society, and TVET Private Institutions. The new coordination organ will be given a legal mandate and its functions will be clearly defined. It will reflect the public-private partnership needed in developing a skilled manpower, with the sharing of its presidency and vice-presidency;
- Ensuring the creation of formal Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) to cover all trades;
- Strengthening the regulatory and quality assurance mechanisms for an effective and efficient TVET system across the ministries in charge of TVET, and integrating the formal, informal and non-formal training systems. This policy action also includes the revision and enforcement of the accreditation mechanism of all TVET service providers (formal, informal and private); and
- Reviewing and expanding the mandate of the NAQAA to cover the two ministries in charge of TVET: The Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science, and Technology (MoHERST) and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE). This will ensure a better articulation in the education and training continuum.

7.4.2 PILLAR 2

Access to TVET

Expand access to quality and relevant TVET for all.

Key Strategic Objective

Increase technical and vocational skills provision to all, with special attention to vulnerable females and persons with special needs, by expanding infrastructures, human and technical resources, range of the offered training programs, and using innovative approaches to training, in partnership with the private sector.

There is a need to increase the geographical spread of the training institutions and provision of skills development to cover all the regions. At present, 75% of the training institutions, and the highest offer of training courses, covering certificates to diplomas or even Higher Education certificates, are situated in the capital or its surroundings.

Expanding access to skills development is already targeted by all the strategic development and education documents (NDP, ESSP, The Gambia Tertiary and Higher Education Policy). Also, some new training centers and higher-level training institutions are being created or renovated by the ministries in charge of TVET. Nonetheless, providing more access encompasses ensuring that every Gambian who is willing to take the TVET route is not denied this right for any reason, even for not having an institution within reach. In addition, it involves adopting inclusive interventions to give training opportunities to vulnerable groups and those with special needs.

Indeed, the new training offering should respond to the local economic development needs. The system will propose innovative training techniques, in terms of types and modes of training, of high quality and accessible for everyone. Under this pillar, interventions will

seek to introduce new targeted and innovative training pathways in the TVET system, which currently favours the face-to-face mode. Hence, online, open and distance learning and modular training will be considered. Also, the option of creating short, but promising channels of course delivery will be integrated into the process of improving access and equity.

Furthermore, the learning pathways and mechanisms to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) should be operationalised to better integrate all Gambians and enable vertical mobility in society.

Priority Policy Actions

- Expanding training opportunities to the rural areas by establishing, renovating, and modernising skills training centres;
- Implementing interventions and measures for the promotion of female integration into TVET, especially at Tertiary and Higher levels;
- Expanding training opportunities to people with special needs by facilitating access to relevant infrastructures and equipment to fit their needs;
- Expanding training opportunities to cover the acquisition of low to high level skills needed to transform the economy, in conformity with the National Development Plan (2018-2021) goal. This could be achieved by creating, in addition to skills training centres, institutions of Higher Education and Training (polytechnics, university, or other institutions specialised in agriculture, teacher training, ICT, etc.);
- Providing alternative modes of training to respond to the targeted populations needs, such as those with special needs, out-of-school children, and returnees. This will include the e-Learning platform setting and use of electronic devices for the provision of blended learning training, among other innovative approaches; and

- Promoting lifelong learning by implementing a mechanism for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and institutions learning pathways.

7.4.3 PILLAR 3

Relevance TVET

Improving the capacities of the TVET system to develop competitive, recognised and market-driven programs, catering for current and future skills needs.

Key Strategic Objective

Enhance the relevance of TVET and employability of graduates by improving the profile of trainees at the entry-level, provision of qualified teachers/trainers and managers, delivery and certification of programs, and using a close and effective public-private partnership to develop a skilled labour force in the growth sectors of the economy.

Improving the relevance and quality of training and employability of learners and trainees requires a combination of strategies. It involves, on the one hand, investment in teacher/trainer education and in training infrastructures, and on the other, knowledge of skills supply and demand (the dynamics of the labour market) and competencies needed to develop relevant training programs.

Currently, the quality of TVET delivery in The Gambia is compromised by poor trainees' profiles at the entry-level. The educational attainment rate is very low; it is estimated that about 58% of the population has never been to school. Furthermore, educational attainment in rural areas is lower than in urban areas. In light of this, the country's ambition of transforming its economy through a highly qualified workforce cannot be fulfilled.

It is noteworthy that the Education Sector Policy (2016-2030) has integrated targeted measures to improve the learners' poor background in

science and mathematics. However, computer, reading comprehension and writing skills are also needed for the development of a competitive workforce.

To achieve the targeted goal of transforming the economy, the National Development Plan (2018-2021) has identified agriculture and fisheries, tourism, and ICT as the growth sectors. Furthermore, creative industries have been integrated into the tourism sector, and specific strategies to develop the sector have already been identified (Youth and Trade Roadmap: Creative Industries, 2020-2024).

At present, however, there is a significant mismatch between the training programs and the employment sector demands. There is a need: 1) to foster the linkage between training institutions and employers in general, and 2) to train according to the needs of the labour market and translate the results of the labour market data into relevant training programs.

Priority Policy Actions

- Providing efficient career guidance and counselling service, starting from the Basic Education level and throughout the education-training continuum. The service will also include a digital platform to inform about learning pathways, careers, and employment opportunities;
- Expanding the provision of pre-vocational programs at Basic Education level (Grade 4);
- Ensuring that all learners acquire basic literacy, numeracy skills and incorporate the study of science, technology, and mathematics into all the skills development programs;
- Strengthening the capacities of both public and private TVET institutions to offer market-driven programs by ensuring pre and in-service training of teachers/trainers and managers in the training institutions, with an emphasis on industrial training for all teachers/trainers;

- Reviewing and enforcing the standards of the TVET training qualifications framework for teachers/trainers and managers;
- Encouraging professional development by designing career pathways for teachers / trainers;
- Harmonizing the existing labour market information systems (LMIS) to identify the current skills gap and future skills needs in the emerging growth sectors in the national economy (agriculture, tourism and ICT) and other trades according to specific and local labour market needs;
- Establishing advisory committees at the training institution level and each local government administration (LGA) level, consisting of community artisans, industry and business representatives, instructors, students, and alumni to advise on relevant curricula;
- Developing innovative and flexible strategies to train specialists in the development of training programs to cover present skills gap and future skills needs;
- Developing internships and industrial attachment opportunities for trainees during their training;
- Developing partnerships with the industry for the promotion of workers continuous training and support of employees upskilling or reskilling; and
- Advocating wide adoption of the National Qualifications Framework, which integrates the Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework, by involving the ministries in charge of TVET and service providers.

This policy action also calls for better advocacy for quality assurance in skills development.

7.4.4 PILLAR 4

Apprenticeship and On-the-job Training

Improving the quality and relevance of apprenticeship and on-the-job training for skilled manpower throughout the economic sectors.

Key Strategic Objective

Modernise the apprenticeship system by ensuring access to a regulated system, reviewing the existing certification and qualification frameworks, developing the training skills of master-craftsmen, and ensuring a sustainable integration into the labour market.

The informal sector of the economy remains a major contributor to the development of skills and employment in the country, and apprenticeship is the most common training model in the sector. The apprenticeship system is a traditional one in the whole Continent: highly unstructured since content creation is left to the goodwill of the master-craftsman, highly focused on the technical skills acquisition, with limited theory and no contract between the master-craftsman and the apprentice.

Improving the quality of apprenticeship does not only include improving the legal framework of the training model, but also building the master-craftsmen training capacities and raising the educational attainment rate of apprentices through the provision of adult literacy opportunities and relevant certification mechanisms. A certification mechanism that takes into account the trainees' profiles and individuals' need to move up the social and professional ladder comprises designing and implementing a mechanism for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and establishing learning pathways throughout the education and training system.

Self-employment and entrepreneurship should be encouraged in this training system by providing the necessary support for sustainable and decent earnings.

Priority Policy Actions

- Reforming and modernising the traditional apprenticeship system by developing and implementing a regulatory framework that institutes training standards and requirements for master craftsmen and their accreditation;
- Implementing an effective mechanism for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for all trades;
- Providing quality adult education opportunities;
- Reviewing the National Qualification Framework to ensure effective vertical and horizontal pathways between informal and formal training systems; and
- Designing and implementing training support, post-training mentoring, financial services structures, and mechanisms to facilitate the transition from apprenticeship training to the world of work and include business development and entrepreneurship training for self-employment.

7.4.5 PILLAR 5

Digitalisation and TVET

Harnessing the benefits of the digital era for building a quality and competitive workforce.

Key Objective Strategy

Equip TVET graduates with digital skills to keep up with the constantly evolving world of work.

The National Development Plan (2018-2021) calls for “Making The Gambia a digital nation, and creating a modern information society”.

There is a need to build a qualified workforce able to embrace the digital era to fulfil this goal.

At present, ICT courses are developed and rank second in the most offered programs. However, the offered training programs do not allow the acquisition of the necessary digital and transferable skills to build a competitive workforce. Furthermore, the challenge of building a skilled workforce, for the future, capable of using the promises of the 4th industrial revolution, which is the digital one, calls for the acquisition of digital skills for all the TVET system graduates.

There is, therefore, a need to strengthen the training programs’ content and delivery to reinforce the acquisition of digital skills. This could be done by developing the training institutions’ capacity and programs’ content. In addition, trainers should acquire competencies in the use of digital pedagogical tools and development of innovative methods outside the classroom.

Priority Policy Actions

- Building the trainers’ capacity to teach using the digital equipment;
- Enhancing the training institutions’ capacity to train in ICT by establishing a partnership with the private sector;
- Developing innovative programs for the acquisition of digital skills from basic to higher levels to include coding and programming skills; and
- Promote the creation of ICT hubs to expand access to digital equipment.

7.4.6 PILLAR 6

TVET Funding

Establishing a National TVET funding mechanism that is robust, sustainable and ensures affordability and accountability.

Key Strategic Objective

Provide a sustainable and innovative TVET financing mechanism through a multi-stakeholder partnership (Government, Private Sector, Local Communities and Development Partners) to support the management and development of the TVET system.

Improving the quality and relevance of TVET requires a planned and sustainable financial investment in the system. However, the financial resources allocated to TVET are insufficient. In addition, the country's economic outlook, given the present crisis, is not reassuring in terms of the government's capacity to increase its investment in the education and training sector.

Currently, the TVET system receives significant funds from technical and financial partners. The support is provided through projects funding human capacity building and infrastructures. However, the funding is not enough to achieve the current development goals set by the NDP and meet the demands for qualified human resources.

The strategic objective involves advocacy and promotion of measures for greater participation of the private sector in the provision of adequate and sustainable financial resources. The actions aim at increasing resources, ensuring an increased and effective distribution of the training levy (NETT) raised from the private sector, and identifying other sources of funding relevant to the Gambian context by involving local communities and TVET institutions. All these measures provide support to the technical and financial partners.

Priority Policy Actions

- Establishing a National TVET/Skills Development Fund (SDF). The fund will serve for the mobilization of resources to finance the policy reforms and initiatives;
- Establishing a "Governance Committee" for the fund to coordinate and ensure accountability and transparency in the management of the TVET funding. The Committee will be composed of representatives from the Government, Private Sector, International Community, and NGOs. It will decide on the distribution of funds, including the share of the training levy to cover expenses across the TVET system at central and local levels;
- Developing strategies to ensure a holistic approach to financing TVET throughout the education and training continuum to include all the ministries in charge of skills development;
- Developing strategies to ensure funding from the private sector through the SSCs, by instituting financial incentives to motivate the industry and micro and small enterprises to contribute to the development of employable skills;
- Developing strategies to ensure sustainable funding of the TVET system at a local level by involving the local communities and TVET institutions. This action promotes the idea that participation in education and training expenses at a local level is a must in the search for relevance and quality. TVET institutions will be given autonomy to develop and manage income-generating activities such as: hiring TVET institution facilities, sale of products and services, etc.; and
- Developing strategies for the provision of grants, scholarships, equipment and resources, infrastructure, and start-up capital to public and private TVET institutions, students, and apprentices to alleviate the financial burden on the households employment.

7.4.7 PILLAR 7

TVET Data Management

Strengthening and integrating the existing Education and Training Management Information Systems data to enhance decision making in the TVET ecosystem.

Key Strategic Objective

Build a systematic, comprehensive, and up-to-date data management system to enhance the use of relevant and reliable data throughout the TVET system.

The availability of quality quantitative and qualitative data is an essential condition for the efficient management of the TVET system. At the national level, TVET stakeholders should be able to: produce, manage up-to-date information on training provision, monitor and evaluate the system. Data should also capture the internal and external efficiencies of the system for an informed and responsive implementation of the policy.

Priority Policy Actions

- Establishing a comprehensive technical and vocational education and training (TVET) management information system (TVET/MIS). The system will integrate data from the three existing EMIS. It will also identify relevant indicators from both public and private training institutions to ensure evidence-based decision-making in skills development. The MoHERST will host the TVET/MIS. Nonetheless, the system should be accessible to all the stakeholders.
- Ensuring the collection and storage of up-to-date relevant TVET data, including results of tracer studies and labour market information;
- Ensuring the dissemination of data across the education and training continuum; and

- Facilitating studies conduct and dissemination (needs assessments and impact evaluation) focusing on the TVET system.

7.4.8 PILLAR 8

Integration into the Job Market

Ensuring effective and efficient integration of TVET graduates into the job market.

Key Strategic Objective

Foster the transition from training to work through advocacy and the promotion of incentives measures facilitating entry into the labour market by involving all TVET stakeholders (ministries in charge of TVET and Employment, Private Sector and Training Institutions)

In addition to facilitating internships and industrial attachment, there is a need to ease the transition from training programs to the world of work by setting up enabling conditions for TVET graduates to enter self-employment or find a relevant and sustainable job.

The private sector (artisans, SMEs, industry) is the creator of jobs. However, the sector needs policies to protect and promote local enterprises. These policies have already been identified in national strategic documents, such as the Employment Policy (2019-2024).

The integration mechanisms into the labour market, sought under this pillar, must be implemented in collaboration with other institutions responsible for employment, work, and grassroots development, especially the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MoTIE), the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI), the Associations of Employers, etc.

Priority Policy Actions

- Conducting and analysing tracer studies on a regular basis to assess the efficiency of TVET programs;
- Providing start-up facilities (legislation, start-up kits, loans and incentives) for the promotion of self-employment;
- Designing and implementing training support, post-training mentoring, and financial services structures and mechanisms to facilitate the transition from training to the world of work to include business development and entrepreneurship training for self-employment;
- Promoting integration into the job market through job fairs and the creation of incubators;
- Implementing incentives for hiring TVET graduates, and targeting the private sector; and
- Advocating pro-employment measures to protect local employers and boost job creation.

7.4.9 PILLAR 9

TVET Attractiveness

Improving the image of TVET.

Key Strategic Objective

Promoting advocacy campaigns and outcome-based incentives that will make TVET a preferred option in The Gambia.

It should be highlighted that all the policy actions identified above serve to improve the image of TVET in the country. However, in addition to these measures, there is a need to work on the

persisting negative TVET image. This implies a communication strategy dedicated to the system itself, its prospects, and opportunities for the socio-economic empowerment of the individual.

Priority Policy Actions

- Conducting well-designed awareness campaigns through various media outlets: radio, TV, drama, websites, local vernacular, etc. to increase public awareness, support, and involvement in TVET;
- Developing partnerships at the local community level to inform and educate the public on possible TVET opportunities in specific fields and geographic areas;
- Developing and implementing communication strategies targeting underrepresented groups, including females and geographically disadvantaged populations and develop special programs to increase access to TVET institutions and programs;
- Developing and implementing a communication strategy to enhance the TVET image and mainstream technical and vocational education into the general education and training system, to motivate students with good performance to choose the TVET track;
- Providing financial assistance (scholarships and grants) to prospective TVET students to motivate them to enroll and continue in the TVET programs; and
- Contributing to changing the perception and attractiveness of TVET through high visibility events and contests, such as the organisation of a National Skills Competition, and the promotion of participation in international competitions (WorldSkills).

8. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Prerequisites

The first condition for the implementation of the policy is to ensure that the existing political will is maintained and even increased to garner support for implementation. This condition could be met with the constant mobilisation of all the actors in the TVET system through advocacy and regular communication.

The second condition requires a greater awareness of the need to have a holistic vision of the issues at stake in the technical and vocational skills development, in order to equip youth and adults with employable skills. It also implies new ways of collaboration between the different ministries in charge of TVET and all other ministries and stakeholders involved in skills development to share information and mutualize interventions.

The third condition includes the following steps to facilitate the implementation of the policy:

- Review the legislation governing education and training, specifically the institutional framework and operating TVET bodies, TVET Policy Act, and create a coordinating body; and
- Implement measures to ensure ownership of all the stakeholders through a wide communication and advocacy campaign on the policy and implementation of its various actions.

8.2 TVET Policy Master Plan and Action Plan

The priority policy actions outlined in the Technical and Vocational Education and

Training (TVET) Policy will be integrated into a Master Plan defining a set of strategies to operationalise the policy, along with the definition of measurable actions and realistic targets to be implemented within the timeframe of the policy (2021-2030). This timeframe coincides with the duration of the Education Sector Policy.

The Master Plan will include short-term, mid-term, and long-term objectives and targets. It will assign detailed implementation roles to the various actors and stakeholders. Moreover, it will seek to integrate all the existing strategic interventions, ongoing programs, projects, and initiatives including the different roadmaps (TVET, ICT, tourism, agriculture, etc.) and other relevant skills development strategic documents.

An ensuing Action Plan will then be designed to cover a timeframe of four years and will be reviewed and evaluated regularly. Furthermore, there is a need to design and conduct baseline studies to set realistic indicators for the Action Plan.

8.3 Costing of the Policy

Along with the Master Plan and Action Plan, there is a need for the costing of the policy. The costing exercise will take into account the relevant budget lines set in the ESP, the Higher Education Policy and other strategies. It will also identify resource mobilization strategies to cover the estimated budget of the policy.

9. POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A robust yet flexible monitoring and evaluation strategy (M&E) will be developed to periodically assess the implementation of the Policy. Periodical monitoring and evaluation will identify the challenges encountered and progress made not only in achieving key strategic objectives set by the policy itself, but also towards the achievement of the National Development Plan goals in providing the country with the needed human resources for the transformation of its economy.

For monitoring and evaluation purposes, a mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan will be envisaged.

10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIFFERENT ACTORS IN THE SYSTEM

TVET STAKEHOLDERS	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that strategic options are consistent with the development plans (NDP, ESP, etc.); and • Finance the Policy.
Ministries in charge of TVET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the implementation of the Policy in partnership with the Private Sector; • Ensure the governance of the system; • Develop synergies with other ministries/institutions involved in skills development; • Supervise quality assurance training interventions; and • Ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the Policy.
Other ministries involved in skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the coordination of the Policy actions; • Coordinate the implementation of the Policy in their department; and • Ensure the follow-up of the Policy actions; • Participate in the coordination of the Policy actions.
Private Sector (artisans and industries) and civil society organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the identification of skills development needs; and • Finance training activities.
Local and regional authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the coordination, at the local level, of TVET interventions and Policy monitoring; • Identify local training needs; • Participate in the development of the training programs; and • Finance training activities at the local level.
Training institutions and centres (public and private)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out training activities related to the labour market skills needs; • Contribute to the evaluation of the Policy actions; and • Carry out self-financing activities.
Technical and Financial partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical support in the implementation of the TVET programs; • Provide exposure to international issues and skills development in TVET; and • Provide financial support for the implementation of the Policy.

Endnotes

- 1 Human Development Index Site: Accessed 24 March, 2021.
- 2 The Gambia Labour Force Survey (GLFS) 2018.
- 3 The World Development Indicators Database.
- 4 Aged 15-64.
- 5 The Labour Force Participation Rate is defined as the number of persons in the labour force, expressed as a percentage of the working-age population.
- 6 The Survey defined unemployment as “economically active persons who were without work or available for work for seven days prior to the survey.”
- 7 Underemployment is a situation when: “an employed person work less than normal working hours per week but is willing and available for more work”.
- 8 As defined by the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, (ISIC).
- 9 Wage employment includes any salaried or paid job, under a contract, to another person, organization or enterprise in both formal and informal economy.

