SADC TVET Symposium

Building effective national TVET policy framework in the SADC member states

<u>Note 1</u>: Policy framework

1.0 Background

The Southern African Development Community (SADC), in cooperation with ACQF-II project implemented by the European Training Foundation (ETF), and with the ILO and UNESCO is convening a technical vocational education and training (TVET) symposium with the SADC Member States on 8-9 May 2023 contributing to strengthen TVET policies and systems. The decision was approved at the annual Joint Meeting of ESTI Ministers of SADC (14-17/June 2022).

The symposium will deepen the findings and conclusions of the 'Situational analysis of TVET in SADC' study and propose pertinent measures towards strengthening TVET in the Member States.

2.0 Preamble

Education, training and skills development are important for socio-economic development. Technical and vocational skills development, through among others – quality TVET. The definition of TVET used is adapted from the "UNESCO Recommendation concerning TVET" (2015): 'TVET, as part of lifelong learning, can take place at secondary, post-secondary, tertiary levels and working life, and includes work-based learning and continuing training and professional development which may or may not lead to qualifications. It also encompasses the wide range of skills development opportunities that an individual benefits from during his/her working life, to acquiring learning to learn skills, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills'.

The following four themes have been identified as contributing to the discussion at the symposium;

- Policy framework;
- Labour market responsiveness;
- Articulation; and
- Innovation in TVET and responsiveness to green and digital transition.

This concept note focusses on 'policy framework' and is intended to stimulate discussions at the symposium.

3.0 Adopted methodology

This concept note on 'policy framework' is based on a rapid scoping and evidence literature review and is intended to stimulate discussions at the symposium. It borrows from the sub-themes that have been suggested by SADC to be considered under 'labour market responsiveness', at the TVET symposium. Section 4.0 summarises the main findings of the SADC TVET Situational Analysis, followed by a short description of

'articulation in section 5.0. Section 6.0 presents the various sub-themes, their respective case studies and associated questions for discussion.

4.0 SADC TVET situational analysis[1]

- **TVET monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems in SADC member states are at different stages of development**, with varying levels of capacity to manage the M&E functions. Participation of the industry in the M&E process should be more widespread with the publication of frequent performance monitoring reports are produced in some countries like South Africa, Mauritius, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana with the reports being shared with all the relevant stakeholders.

- **TVET research in Sub-Saharan Africa is not systematic** and not of high enough quality to provide systematic labour market feedback to ensure that policy-making is evidenced based and that the sector responds to market demand for skilled workers.

- Most SADC member states have a National Qualification Framework, but they are still **facing issues with the articulation pathways**, whereby it is challenging for a TVET graduate to effortlessly and systematically join a Higher Education Institution (HEI). There are working platforms that have been established in some member states whereby TVET and Higher Education Authorities (HEA) are addressing challenges related to articulation arrangements and pathways.

- Despite having national gender inclusive education policies and the implementation of specific affirmative strategies in certain member states, the **enrolment rates of girls and special needs individuals are generally low**.

- Member states have formulated policies to improve the performance of national TVET systems. Reforms have been taking place but have not been mainstreamed and sustained due mainly to a **lack of financial and capital investment.**

- The situational analysis found that most Member states' systems are supply-driven. Such **systems are inadequately responsive to labour demand**, resulting in persistent skills mismatches. Most countries have bifurcated labour markers wherein high employment, especially youth unemployment exists alongside high demand for semi- and high-skilled labour. The major problem is that TVET systems have not explored non-traditional learning modalities, alternative credentialing and new technologies that can expand access, increase relevance and speed upskilling and re-skilling.

- TVET systems have **timidly embraced the use of digital-pedagogical technologies**. Many reasons underpin this low uptake, including resistance of trainers and learners to change, limited digital skills of trainers, lack of financial resources to invest in digital learning technologies, challenges in accessing and using existing learning platforms, inadequate digital skills development capabilities as well as the realities of TVET requiring physical contact between trainers and learners.

- TVET generally has a **poor public image** amongst youths and parents. The perception that TVET is a segment of education that is designed for drop-outs and the academically poor is engrained in the psyche of both prospective learner and parents. Innovative and marketing advocacy work needs to be generalized in the member states.

5.0 Policy framework: a working definition

A policy framework is a structured set of guidelines, principles, and rules that provides a broad framework for decision-making and action related to a set of TVET issues. It outlines the goals and objectives of the policy,

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[1] The main points summarized here originate from the 'SADC (2022) Situational Analysis of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in SADC Member States, April. SADC: Gaborone'.

the strategies for achieving them, the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, and the criteria for monitoring and evaluating progress and success. It can include a range of components, such as:

- A statement of the policy problem,
- Goals and objectives that the policy seeks to achieve,
- Strategies and actions to achieve intended goals and objectives,
- Roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the TVET ecosystem,
- Resource requirements, including financial, human capital, and material,
- Performance indicators for measuring progress and success, and
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and make adjustment to policy implementation.

Overall, a policy framework serves as a roadmap for policy development, implementation, and evaluation. It provides a systematic approach to addressing pressing and complex TVET challenges and can help to ensure that actions are aligned with goals and objectives.

6.0 Sub-themes & pointers for discussion

1. **Transfer of policy knowledge**
2. **Policy framework and strategy formulation**
3. **Policy implementation, M&E and review process**
4. **Research and TVET**

6.1 Transfer[2] of policy knowledge

Given the wide-ranging socio-economic benefit of TVET, international policy transfer is a theme that should be more fully explored across boundaries. Policy transfer refers to the process of exchanging and adopting policy measures, reforms, strategies, initiatives and ideas from one context/country to another[3] either with or without adaption and contextualisation.

International policy transfer[4] has a long and strong tradition in education, but lesser so with respect to TVET. The German apprenticeship programme is a model that has been extensively borrowed, adopted and adapted in many countries. International organizations (e.g. ILO, UNESCO, European Training Foundation, World Bank, African Development Bank, SADC and others) can assist in policy transfer, reception and learning to member states, bearing in mind local realities.

6.1.1 Case from UNESCO: National, regional and global policy learning from the UNESCO strategy for TVET 2022-2029: Transforming technical and vocational education and training for successful and just transition[5]

The UNESCO is developing its Strategy for TVET 2022-2026: 'Transforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training for successful and just transition'. The strategy is strongly anchored in the philosophy that TVET systems should be proactive and should adapt their training supply to benefit individuals, societies and

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[2] Many terms are used interchangeably, for e.g. policy learning, policy transfer, policy reception, policy diffusion, policy lending and policy borrowing amongst others.
[3] Dolowitz D., P. and Marsh, D. (2000) Learning from abroad: The role of policy transfer in contemporary policy-making. *Governance* 13(1): 5–23.
[4] Barabasch, A., Bohlinger, S. and Wolf, S. (2021) Policy transfer in vocational education and training and adult education. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 16(4): 335-338.
[5] See section under Cross-cutting interventions at https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/draft-unesco-strategy-for-tvet-2022-2029.pdf

countries. This notion is fully aligned with SDG 4[6] and intends to strengthen and support the efforts of member states to enhance the relevance of their TVET systems, this will be achieved through policy support for a transformative TVET agenda.

UNESCO will support situational analyses of TVET policy, including TVET policy review and development. This approach will be demand-driven by member states and could also muster the contribution and support of other UN organisations. As per the strategy, 80 countries (including 36 countries from Africa, and 8 countries from small island development states) will be assisted to develop and implement policies and strategies on skills development for work and lifelong learning while widening access to equitable, gender-responsive and quality-assured TVET.

6.1.2 Pointers for discussion

- How would you rate the capabilities in the SADC to formulate TVET strategic plans and policies?
- How can such capabilities be built/strengthened at national and regional levels?
- How easy/relevant is the transposition of the regional plans into national contexts?
- How can countries from the SADC benefit from the UNESCO's TVET policy review and development programme?
- Is the soft infrastructure (e.g. human capital, support systems,..) adequate to absorb policy knowledge and to impact TVET policies and strategies?

6.2 Policy framework and strategy formulation

Skills development and TVET policies are crucial for the development of a skilled workforce, and its subsequent contribution to economic growth and social development. Effective policy-making thus requires a multi-dimensional policy framework that takes into account the needs of the economy, the labour market and society.

The policy framework for skills development provides guidance for institutional policy development, including governance, multi-stakeholder engagement, flexibility and adaptability, practices informed by research, competency standards, quality assurance, quality of TVET provision, funding, implementation, sensitisation, evaluation and review, and equity and inclusiveness. The framework aims to bracket the policy development process and provide the most appropriate ecosystem for policy development and implementation.

6.2.1 Case from Commonwealth Secretariat: A TVET framework model

The Commonwealth Secretariat developed a TVET Assessment Framework. The framework is a tool designed to assist countries to identify and assess the development of their technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system. It is acknowledged that it has been designed to assess and inform governments and policy-makers about where the main gaps are in their TVET policies and delivery mechanisms. The framework comprises six key features which are deemed important for an effective TVET system. The key features are further broken down into key elements. These are[7]:

- Governance
    - Defined roles and responsibilities
    - Policies and funding
    - Access and equity policies

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[6] Quality education

[7] The key elements of the six TVET framework features are taken from https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/migrated/inline/TVET%20participants%20manual_FINAL_.pdf

- Industry/ employer engagement,
  - Determination of prioritise skills needs
  - Curriculum development
  - Skills training
  - Support for the TVET sector
- Occupational standards,
  - Competency-based curriculum
  - Recognition of existing skills and knowledge
- Qualifications framework,
  - Qualification framework
  - Recognition and articulation
- Quality institutions, and
  - National institutional standards
  - Registration process
  - Monitoring the performance of TVET providers
- Delivery and assessment.
  - Trainers
  - Flexible delivery
  - Learners' support
  - Validation and moderation processes

Figure 1.0 below provides some additional themes that would characterize the six main features of the TVET framework.

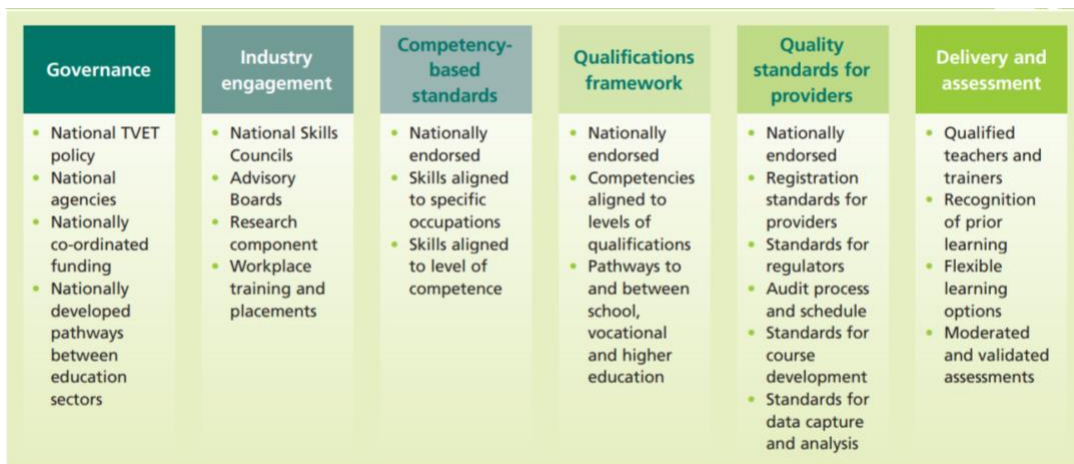| Governance	Industry engagement	Competency-based standards	Qualifications framework	Quality standards for providers	Delivery and assessment
• National TVET policy • National agencies • Nationally co-ordinated funding • Nationally developed pathways between education sectors	• National Skills Councils • Advisory Boards • Research component • Workplace training and placements	• Nationally endorsed • Skills aligned to specific occupations • Skills aligned to level of competence	• Nationally endorsed • Competencies aligned to levels of qualifications • Pathways to and between school, vocational and higher education	• Nationally endorsed • Registration standards for providers • Standards for regulators • Audit process and schedule • Standards for course development • Standards for data capture and analysis	• Qualified teachers and trainers • Recognition of prior learning • Flexible learning options • Moderated and validated assessments

Figure 1.0: The main elements of a TVET framework model

The framework can be augmented and used to facilitate policy formulation, as it also allows the analysis and assessment of the existing status of the various features, level of development and effective operationalisation of their national system.

6.2.2 Case from Mauritius: The development of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) 2022-2026

The need for an overarching framework was felt that would create the right conditions to develop a skilled and capable workforce that contributes to and benefits from economic growth. The development of the BSDS was coordinated by the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), and was developed in close

collaboration with numerous stakeholders from both the public and private sector. The main aim of the NSDS is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the skills development system in Mauritius so that it is more responsive to the upcoming skills challenges, particularly with the manifold challenges brought about by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Against this backdrop, the following objectives of the NSDS have been mapped out:

- Chart the pathway for skills development in line with the vision of the Government;
- Assess the current status and set-up of the skills development system in the country;
- Identify areas in the skills development system that would require improvement; and
- Propose actionable recommendations that would improve the current skills development outcomes.

The technical support of Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and local collaborating partners (wide range of stakeholders) were instrumental in its development. A quadruple helix approach was adopted with various ministries and parastatals, industry representatives from various industrial sectors, academia comprising both higher education and TVET, and representatives of trade unions and non-governmental organisations. By bringing together multiple stakeholders, the quadruple helix model helped to ascertain the needs and also to capture inputs from various quarters. This allowed the development of an all-encompassing strategy, favouring engagement in subsequent implementation. The development of the strategy consisted of four main phases:

- diagnostic phase,
- thematic working groups (to brainstorm on the salient features surrounding each theme to collectively identify issues and come up with preliminary proposals),
- drafting the strategy and development of the action plan. The strategy was inspired largely by rigorous, evidence-based trend as well as by relevant international practices,
- national level validation, following which the NSDS was finalized. The NSDS is anchored around three main strategic clusters and 10 strategies.

Strategic cluster 1: Improving skills system effectiveness.

- Develop and maintain occupational and qualification standards
- Establish and maintain a centralised and up-to-date repository of occupational   qualifications standards to confer operational status to the NQF

Strategic cluster 2: Tackling skills imbalances

- Anticipate skills for the future of work
- Upskill workforce at middle management, technical and professional levels
- Develop a mechanism to promote skills development among Micro and Small and Medium Enterprises
- Review framework for curriculum development

Strategic cluster 3: Strengthening the education and training system to prepare and empower young people for the future

- Reskill and upskill educators, trainers and lecturers
- Improve articulation between Quality Assurance Frameworks for TVET and Higher Education
- Introduce a credit point system to improve articulation between the TVET and HE sectors within the NQF
- Improve financial support for relevant training

The Strategy transcends both TVET and HE, and aims amongst others at improving articulation. It is accompanied by a well-elaborated Action Plan of 65 actions, which have been broken down into their respective 'description', 'assumptions', 'requisites, tools and methods' for implementation, 'lead institution', 'collaborative institution', 'indicative budget', 'indicative source of funding', 'timeframe prioritised over a period of five years' and 'key performance indicators'.

A centrally-coordinated Strategy Implementation Committee (SIC), chaired by the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, oversees the implementation of the strategies under the NSDS. Its membership comprise stakeholders from the public and private sectors who are either silgy/jointly involved in the implementation of the various actions under the NSDS. The membership includes the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Industrial Development, SMES and Cooperatives, Business Mauritius, Mauritius Institute of Education, Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, Mauritius Qualification Authority, SME Mauritius, Economic Development Board and the HRDC. The SIC, in collaboration with various stakeholders, is driving the implementation of the Strategy and meets every 3 months to review progress.

6.2.3 Pointers for discussion

- Is TVET policy developed, bearing in mind the implementation capabilities (financial, institutional and financial) of member states?
- Does TVET policy development in your country follow a multi-dimensional development framework (e.g a multi-stakeholder philosophy,…)?
- Does a framework improve systematism in policy development?
- Can the SADC build capabilities to adopt TVET policy development frameworks to suit national and regional realities?
- Is external technical assistance necessary? How should such technical assistance be seamlessly integrated?
- What infrastructure should be set-up in the SADC to better accommodate TVET policy transfer, reception and integration?
- Who exerts influence during policy implementation? Who benefits?

6.3 Policy implementation, M&E and review process

TVET is viewed as an instrument for socio-economic upliftment and productivity enhancement. Therefor TVET systems must be optimised and their performance improved in terms of access, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, quality and responsiveness. Optimizing performance of TVET policy-making and system implementation, is reliant on an updated system of monitoring and evaluation.

A central component of TVET policy implementation is to integrate feedback from the labour market and stakeholder, operating in the TVET ecosystem, to angle TVET provision to deliver on policy objectives. This input is essential especially for TVET institutions delivering on policy. A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework is a sine-qua-none. It is an overarching structure with processes, standards, strategies, plans, indicators, databases and reporting lines to manage performance.[8] The M&E framework should collect data,

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[8] DHET (2015) Monitoring and evaluation and reporting framework for TVET college performance. DHET: South Africa. het.gov.za/Public%20FET%20Colleges/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation/Templates%20and%20Guidlines/TVET%20College%20ME %20Framework.pdf

monitor, evaluate, analyse and report TVET performance to policy implementors for redress if necessary. In certain cases an integrated monitoring/management information system (MIS) can be used to assist in structuring data collection and the M&E process.

6.3.1 Case from UNESCO: Monitoring and evaluation in the UNESCO strategy for TVET 2022-2029: Transforming technical and vocational education and training for successful and just transition[9]

The strategy for TVET 2022-2026 is inspired by the ILO's 'Global Commission on the Future of Work' report and aims to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It anticipates concentrating on six dimensions, namely: economic recovery, technological change, informality, demographic transition, societal and political issues and green and sustainable transition.

UNESCO will set quantitative objectives for the range of strategic actions, which will be regularly monitored and re-aligned if needs be, to ensure the delivery of results. It will apply a results-based management approach consistent with its rules and procedures to support a periodic review of the strategy. An accountability and results matrix with respective indicators will be used within a logical framework, to aid in the tracking of progress.

A mid-term review will be conducted and the strategic course of action will be adapted with respect to intended objectives and the operating TVET context. In certain instances, changes in structural determinants in the TVET system can also warrant review of strategic objectives mid-way through the policy cycle. An external evaluation of the strategy will be effected in 2029 to assess overall impact.

An evaluation of the strategy will determine to which degree it has achieved its intended objectives and whether it has responded to the relevant needs of member states and the ever-changing demands of TVET.

6.3.2 Pointers for discussion

- Is M&E of the TVET strategy in your country systematically effected following the various steps?
- How do you rate the relevance/responsiveness of labour market observatories as a M&E instrument? Do they provide sufficiently-updated and sufficiently-local data and information on TVET systems?
- Should cost-effectiveness[10] be used as a M&E method across the board?
- What are the main indicators of TVET performance in your country? Are they related to the cardinal objectives of the national TVET policy?
- How are the M&E indicators measured?
- How are quantitative and qualitative indicators collated, analysed and reported? How do they feed into the M&E system?
- Can an integrated MIS be useful in the M&E process? How can this be institutionalized at the regional level?
- How do such M&E reports reach policy implementors, and what is the coordination mechanisms/processes to re-adjust policy implementation?
- How can M&E results be used to improved equity and inclusiveness?
- Should the M&E exercise be pegged with subsequent programme disbursement/funding?
- Should TVET policy M&E be externally led to minimize conflict?
- How can M&E of TVET systems (data collection, analysis, reporting and integration into policy implementation) be improved at the SADC level?

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[9] https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-launches-new-strategy-tvet-2022-2029-international-conference
[10] Systematically looking at costs, output and outcomes of policy interventions.

6.4 Research and TVET

Research is defined as a systematic process that seeks for information on a particular/around a particular subject in a planned manner that use methods and techniques to minimize errors. There can also be a strong/stronger empirical facet to research whereby there is a more profound quest for data and information, and their analysis and confrontation. In TVET policy research, it is important to acknowledge that research cannot replace judgement and context awareness, but it can definitely reduce uncertainty and provide support for certain policy options and deter others.

Research uptake can play an important role at three stages during policy development. Firstly, it can assist in systematically appraise and diagnose problems. Secondly, there is a need for real-world and context-sensitive initiatives and evidence to respond to and address complex TVET issues. These can include identification of emerging trends in technology, assessing dynamic needs of industry, appraisal of good TVET practices amongst others. A research-based outlook is also important during monitoring and evaluation on the policy, in terms of systematic evaluation methodologies. Research can thus inform policy as well as assisting in informing readjustments and corrections in implementation of policy. There is thus growing demand for the translation of research into policy practice and implementation.

6.4.1 Case from InWent and UNEVOC: Research for TVET policy development[11]

Policy studies is a field that focuses in the sources of policy and the process of policy making, and also comprise the role that research can play in the policy formulation process. Research[12] could address several themes and provide input in the early stages of TVET policy formulation. Research can provide relevant knowledge on relevant TVET issues that could be considered in developing policy for a specific country. Topical researchable themes would include: digitalization and skills, implication of just transition on TVET, tackling youth unemployment, national training funds, labour market monitoring and forecasting, advent of big data, operationalising qualification frameworks, microcredentials, modularisation of curriculum, capacities for implementation, TVET articulation, quality assurance systems, apprenticeship programmes, impact of TVET in economic development amongst others.

Research can also focus on monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of TVET policies and, to subsequently feedback into the policy implementation continuum. Such evaluation could take the forms of tracer studies, participatory mapping, tracking and measuring development, cost-effectiveness analyses, SWOT analyses, impact assessment, experimental methods, logical framework approach, performance indicators and formal surveys amongst others.

6.4.2 Pointers for discussion

- Is TVET research prioritized in your national TVET policy?
- What type of research should be conducted to suit the purpose of TVET systems?
- It there enough research capacity in TVET institutions to conduct research at various stages of policy development?
- If no, how can this deficiency be addressed? Should TVET institutions collaborate with higher education institutions on joint research programmes?

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[11] Lauglo, J. (2005) Research for TVET policy development. Paper presented at an International Conference at Tanjin, China on 9th -10th December, Tanjin University, Inwent and Unevoc. Paper can be accessed at:
https://unevoc.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/pubs/IntLib_DiscP_PolicyDev.pdf
[12] Research would relate here more to systematic and empirical enquiry rather than purely academic.

- Should research methods increasingly hinge scenario analysis and foresight to make TVET systems more responsive?
- What knowledge might be useful for decisions when policy makers are considering various options and decide on which one would be more appropriate for a particular reason?
- What research infrastructure/capacity is required to integrate a strong research component in TVET policy development and M&E?
- How can SADC assist in building research capacity for TVET policy development?