Terms of Reference
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
Mapping Sector Skills Councils engagement in the Commonwealth

Background

There have been extensive consultations and debates by international development organisations on Post-2015 development framework, which will replace the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) targets in 2015. These consultations and debates have witnessed increased recognition for prioritising ‘skills development’ in the Post-2015 development agenda, this was also evident in the UN High Level Panel report on the Post-2015 development framework. The skills for young people have been discussed in the context of what employers need in a globalised economy. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and specialised skills have been discussed together with foundation and transferable skills needed by the young people. Within the Commonwealth, due to skills mismatches, the youth labour force (those aged 15-24 years) without work but available for and seeking employment is high in many countries. Youth unemployment rate is 27.1 per cent in Jamaica, 41.7 per cent in Namibia, 48.2 per cent in South Africa and 19.8 per cent in the UK. This, in turn, has resulted in a shift in the global debate towards ‘skills development’ and young peoples’ transition from education to the labour market and the need for having extensive bridging mechanisms between employers and providers of technical education.

Secretariat’s work in TVET/Skills

The Commonwealth Secretariat commissioned a research study in 2011/12 to review the TVET policies and initiatives in five Commonwealth countries, selecting countries from four Commonwealth regions based on the following demographic criteria: large young populations, low skills levels among the young people and low economic growth rate. Key outcomes of the research included the need for TVET standards both in the delivery and assessment; and secondly lack of appropriate allocation of resources and a lack of engagement between TVET institutions and industries.

The Secretariat is in the process of finalising a TVET assessment framework that can be used to assess national TVET systems. This mechanism would allow member countries to review and compare the TVET systems to ensure quality and relevance. The framework consists of six elements: governance; industry engagement; occupational standards; qualifications framework; quality institutions; and delivery and assessment. A supporting taxonomy containing five levels against each of the element has also been developed and is being expanded.
In 2013, the Secretariat also convened a TVET roundtable with key stakeholders and technical experts from member countries to discuss and share the emerging issues within the sector. One of the outcomes identified was to conduct mapping of the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) or relevant bodies’ engagement with training institutes and employers to identify similarities and differences. It was evident through the roundtable deliberations that the role of SSCs or relevant bodies needs further strengthening for having effective bridging mechanisms.

The SSCs or similar relevant bodies can play a pivotal role in facilitating the industrial needs through raising awareness about employer skills needs. The SSCs can help to: reduce the skills gaps and shortages; impart relevant skills training and qualifications; define and understand occupational standards and job competencies; and work towards achieving the employer-driven skills agenda.

Another need discussed at the TVET roundtable, but which has received increasing attention since then, is the growing use of public private partnerships (PPPs) to increase the provision of quality technical education for young women and men. Within the Commonwealth, India in particular, has embraced PPPs as a way of rapidly modernising the national TVET system and responding directly to private sector demand.

The adaption of PPPs within the TVET sector has received varying levels of attention and prioritisation in Commonwealth countries. In some cases, PPPs are embraced nationally, and in other cases, they are ad hoc, scatter-gun and dealt with at the municipal level. It is however increasingly clear, the private sector (PS) has demonstrated a keen interest in this modality and that some countries are having more success at harnessing PS dynamism, commercial know-how, and resources to their advantage than others. There is a need to understand i) how PPPs in TVET can better serve the national interests of Commonwealth countries and ii) which models best result in quality, affordable, inclusive and sustainable training for young people.

Purpose

To conduct a i) mapping of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) or relevant bodies’ engagement in Commonwealth countries to identify similarities, differences and effectiveness; and ii) a survey of PPP models currently being used in Commonwealth countries to understand good practices and opportunities to employ this modality for stronger national TVET outcomes. Identify the current baselines and propose futuristic timelines for TVET and skills leading to employability at national and sub-national level through the strengthened role of SSCs/relevant bodies’. Produce a report identifying strengths and weaknesses of SSCs/relevant bodies and PPPs within the Commonwealth and make recommendations for improvement.

Specific tasks

Under the supervision of the Health and Education Unit (HEU) of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the consultant will be responsible to:

- Analyse the context of the labour market and the TVET sector: facts, figures, trends and performances (TVET sector) on both the supply and the demand side.
- Analyse the prospects on the labour market and employment rates for both the formal and informal economy.
- Assess lessons learned from past experiences, concrete results achieved in terms quality of TVET, numbers of skilled workforce available for the labour market, the transition from education to the labour market.
- Identify good practices and standards for effective i) SSCs or relevant bodies’ and ii) PPPs, taking from any relevant models which may include from: European Training Foundation, The World Bank, UK Commission for Employment and Skills, International NGOs, and private sector TVET providers
- Identify variations in SSCs and PPPs against identified good practices
- Identify/similarities and differences in SSCs within the Commonwealth
- Assess the roles and effectiveness of Chambers of Commerce or other relevant bodies, where they are substituting for SSCs, against identified good practices
- Evaluation/assessment of effectiveness of SSCs and recommendations of strategies for strengthening and effectiveness of SSCs
- Identify gaps at national level, examine and evaluate the current status of TVET at national and sub-national level
- Recommend market-based and demand based skills leading to skills for employability for both young men and women

**Deliverables/Outputs**

- Report on SSCs or relevant bodies’ engagement in 12 Commonwealth member states, highlighting their effectiveness and good practices, and recommendations for their improvement and strengthening of bridging mechanisms between employers and providers of technical education.

**Methodology**

The research will be conducted in 12 Commonwealth countries, these countries are identified from Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Pacific regions. In order to save time the research will be required to be carried out by a team of consultants (company or independent consultants), who would be covering the identified countries from the respective four regions.

- Desk research
- Questionnaire
- Consultations and interviews with selected stakeholders
- Stakeholder Analysis using SWOT analysis
- Skills needs and demand analysis
- Trend Analysis
- Access national database to identify existing gaps

**Duration**

- Up to 60 working days

**Qualifications and experience required**

- PhD in Economics, Social Sciences, Business Administration with 10 years’ experience in education and TVET or Master’s degree in the same disciplines with 15 years’ experience in the relevant field.
- Experience of working with major stakeholders at national and international level in education and skills development
- Expertise in Optimal Resource Utilization, Quality Service Delivery Mechanism, Educational Management preferably in Secondary and Higher Education, Technical and Vocational Education
- Ability to conduct research and produce analysis
- Excellent writing skills