



# The Establishment of Sector Skills Councils

A Handbook and Guide + online animation!



Implementing Agencies

This document has been developed as part of the VET Toolbox project.

The VET Toolbox was created in 2017 and provides partner countries with know-how, tools and advice to improve the effectiveness and inclusiveness of VET reforms supported by the European Union.

It focuses on supporting VET systems to:

- become more demand-driven, with more effective private sector engagement.
- become more responsive to labour market needs.
- provide increased access to (self-) employment, including for disadvantaged groups.

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The intended beneficiaries of the VET Toolbox are:

- National vocational authorities and regulatory bodies, including training funds;
- National and international enterprises involved in VET partnerships;
- Quality assurance organisations responsible for learner assessments and examinations;
- Public, private or mixed VET training institutes and VET pre-service and in-service instructor training institutes;
- National, regional and sectorial business and professional associations and civil society organisations.

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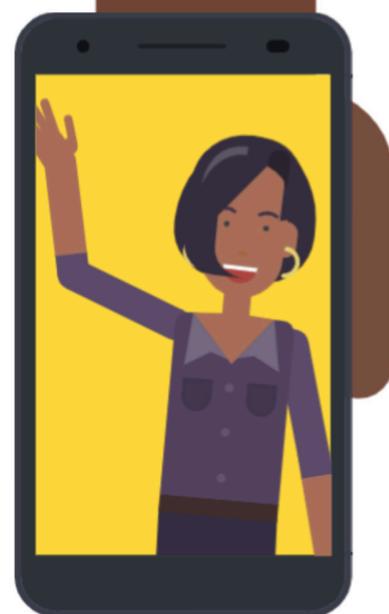
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Would you like to get a quick and easy overview of this tool before starting reading it?



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A vertical smartphone is shown, held by a brown hand. The screen displays the text "How to establish a Sector Skills Council?" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The background on the screen is light gray.

**How to establish  
a Sector Skills  
Council?**

## TABLE OF CONTENT

1	Background and Rationale	5
2	Purpose and Role of a Sector Skills Council	11
3	Employer Engagement and Commitment	16
4	Stakeholder Commitment	20
5	Principal Operations of a Sector Skills Council	23
6	The Organisation to Deliver the Functions	37
7	Governance and Legal Structure	46
8	Funding and Sustainability Model	50
9	Implementation and Getting Started	53



## 1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

i

This introductory section considers the arguments in favour of a sector approach to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and their purpose.

Although sector approaches to skills development have a long history in many countries, it is only more recently that sector-specific organizations, with a skills development mandate, have emerged. There are many reasons for this. First, a major goal of TVET modernisation is to move from an emphasis on supply to demand, requiring education and training provision to meet the needs of the labour market. TVET provided on the basis of central planning has not proved responsive to the needs of employers. Sector bodies present industrial, commercial and service skill needs and in varying degrees use this information to plan curricula and training programmes. Second, technologies, work organisation change, and the publicly organized TVET sectors find it difficult to keep pace with change. Increasingly governments look to employers to develop partnerships to maintain the relevance of training provision. A sector approach is one that is familiar to employers and is the basis for their associations and collective working.

A common theme in education and skills policy is to shift from a supply-led to a demand-led system. This means allowing employer and learner demand to drive the main aspects of education and training provision, the types and levels of skills to be developed, and the quantity.

An International Labour Organisation Global Dialogue Forum in March 2010 reached agreement on the desirability of a strengthened sector approach to TVET, based on close cooperation between governments and social partners at national and local levels. It was agreed that sector strategies should include the following elements:

- Partnerships for training design: to ensure a better match between labour market requirements and training provision, to anticipate future skill needs, assess the quality and relevance of training programmes and improve delivery, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises;
- Skills, employment and growth linkages: to link sector, and cross-sector, approaches to skills development within national growth strategies to build coherence between TVET and labour market policies, technological innovation, the delivery of public services and trade and investment policies;
- Theoretical and practical training: to ease the transition into the labour market through combining classroom activities with work experience, apprenticeships and other forms of traineeship;
- Skills and labour markets: to place greater reliance on labour market information and analysis;
- Targeted skills strategies: to address particular skill shortages or the needs of defined groups.

## The Emergence of Sector Skills Councils

In many countries, at various stages of economic and social development, a sector approach to skills development has been established through the creation of sector skills bodies. Such organisations have different names and legal frameworks – to reflect the particular circumstances of different nation states – but they share a number of common characteristics:

- They are the voice for people development of the industry/sector they represent, sharing best practice and encouraging excellence in training;
- They bring together employers, and other social partners, to present opinions and ideas about skills development policy and practice to Governments and to training providers;
- They work together with employers to create and develop training and skills development solutions that work.

Thus, sector skills organisations function as bridges or channels between employers on the one hand and Governments and training providers on the other, to explain and articulate people development issues. They assist employers to work together to better understand

people development policies and their implications for individual employers. They collaborate with employers and training providers to develop training solutions and products they are relevant to sector needs and developments. They encourage debate and discussion within the sector about skills needs, people development, and help sectors to think long-term.

Demand-led training must, by definition, be responsive. This means it must be based on a clear understanding of current and future skills needs in the sector and that programmes must be designed and delivered to meet them.

A demand-led, responsive TVET system requires:

- A culture of partnership between employers and education and training, with employers recognised by Government and training providers as co-investors and co-designers of curricula and programmes;
- TVET programmes that are relevant directly to getting a job and to improving productivity and efficiency in the sector and the economy;
- High quality TVET programmes, notable for their content and delivery;
- Robust assessment criteria and arrangements for the assessment of individual trainees;
- A rigorous approach to quality assurance to ensure the integrity of the TVET system;
- Teachers and instructors of quality, with knowledge and experience that is relevant and up-to-date;

Typically, therefore, sector skills councils offer the following services and activities:

- Labour Market Intelligence: to understand the skills needs of the sector;
- Policy developments: to provide practical guidance and help to employers on training policy and practice and to develop a coherent sector view on policy developments;
- Training and skills solutions, including the development of standards based qualifications, competence-based training programmes and tailored training provision to meet sector needs;
- Building capacity: to develop the capacity to respond to sector demands, including training of trainers and strengthening the ability of individual employers to develop their people.



These functions are considered in more detail in Section 5.

## The key role of a Sector Skills Council

Sector Skills Councils work to identify and bridge skills gaps, improve training standards and drive employer investment in skills.



Everything we do is about Industry

### Sector Skills Councils are created to:

1. Understand industry needs
2. Develop industry role benchmarks
3. Design & deliver relevant industry training
4. Implement industry TVET programmes
5. Measure industry impact/outcomes

They do this through the following activities:

### Labour Market Intelligence

SSCs gain a detailed insight and understanding of the business and skills priorities affecting industry, at a local, regional and national level, and to analyse this labour market information intelligently. Identify sector skill priorities, through research and dialogue, and determine relevant solutions to deliver the skills that are required and support employers to expand work-based training.

### TVET Strategy and Policy

Working with a range of government departments and agencies, stakeholders and industry to understand the political, economic and social challenges and their ambitions, SSCs work with their partners to shape a technical and vocational education and training strategy. They should present sector perspectives on skills development issues and promote skills development and training solutions, both within the sector and more broadly.

## **Employer Engagement**

At the heart of any TVET system must be industry and employers. Long-term achievement of systemic change in skills delivery must be driven by the demands of industry. The SSC should demonstrate unparalleled experience of employer engagement and how best to utilise employers to achieve skills ambitions in a sustainable manner.

SSCs should work in partnership with employers, workers and their representatives, Government, training providers to facilitate the forging of partnerships throughout the sector.

## **National Occupational Standards**

The experts in the development of National Occupational Standards (NOS) will help the industry to utilise existing standards and to develop new standards that meet the needs of the industry. They also ensure that NOS is directly link to and match (where appropriate) equivalent international skills standards – enabling recognition and mobility of labour.

## **Apprenticeships**

SSCs should commonly use a collaborative process in partnership with employers, supporting the process of building apprenticeship standards at all levels.

## **Qualifications and curriculum**

SSCs develop qualification and curriculum and provide support to employers, training providers and colleges in order to produce world-class qualifications and supporting curriculum that fulfills the requirements of the relevant NOS.

## **Capability and Capacity Building**

SSCs develop a range of education and TVET specialists, providing appropriate development training and materials to create, build and sustain high quality, knowledgeable and occupationally competent training and assessment teams.

## **Recognition and Certification**

SSCs often provide expertise in the development of systems and procedures for the

recognition of learner achievements through a robust certification system that is accepted by employers and government.

### Membership and Licensing

SSCs often provide expertise in the development of membership and accreditation for the recognition of excellent training provision. They also provide Licensing models for individuals trainers.



#### CASE OF UGANDA

The development of a Tourism sector approach to skills development is important to each country and for Uganda for a number of reasons:

- Sector and economic growth: sector development and economic growth will be achieved with higher productivity and efficiency to compete in world markets – producing what people want in tourism and hospitality, on time and at prices they are willing to pay. Growth will also depend on expanding the growing domestic tourism market and providing products and services to meet the needs of the growing international tourists;
- A more skilled and flexible workforce is needed to support more complex and sophisticated Tourism and Hospitality services and to continue to enable Ugandan workers to compete in the international labour market;
- The country faces a significant increase in its young working population. This young population could be a source of increased prosperity if people can find productive work in the Tourism industry and contribute to national wealth;
- Employers complain of the poor quality of TVET programmes that fail to provide the skills that the country needs. It is not sufficient to criticise only: action is required to remedy the poor state of skills in Uganda.

These are serious challenges for the country and for every sector of the economy. Individual employers, training providers and individuals find it difficult to appreciate and address such challenges. Structures are required to focus attention on skills issues and to encourage collective action.



## 2. PURPOSE AND ROLE OF A SECTOR SKILLS COUNCIL

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This section considers the core functions of a Sector Skills Council.

A Sector Skills Council has three major functions:

- To get employers more involved in all aspects of skills development;
- To research and publish reliable and accurate labour market information about its sector;
- To support the development of qualifications and programmes that meet the needs of employers.

How these core functions are fulfilled will depend on the challenges and opportunities presented in different economic sectors. As they develop Sector Skills Councils, they might decide to initiate additional services and functions, but each should be clear about its central purposes.

### To get employers more involved in all aspects of skills development

Central to the role and purpose of a Sector Skills Council is to be the voice of employers to determine a coherent understanding of skills needs in a sector and to influence the design and delivery of qualifications and training programmes to ensure that the skills required in each sector are provided. A Sector Skills Council must drive the development of a demand-led TVET system. They have a role to support and encourage employers to develop and use the skills of existing workers and to invest in the training of new workers. A Sector Skills Council must seek to work with employers throughout its sector, including large, medium and small enterprises and to include all geographical areas. It will take time to build such

coverage, but imaginative outreach strategies should be developed during the first three years of each Sector Skills Council's life, to determine a targeted approach to ensure that all sector concerns are addressed.

Whatever legal form is determined to establish a Sector Skills Council, each Council must be run by employers, supported as necessary by other sector stakeholders. The responsibility for ensuring the good management, efficiency and effectiveness of a Sector Skills Council should lie with a representative group of employers. Good private sector business practice should characterise the administration of a Sector Skills Council. Through their participation in the governance of each Sector Skills Council, employers will determine:

- The day-to-day leadership and management of the Council, through the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer and technical and administrative staff;
- That strategic and business plans have been prepared, approved and are being implemented;
- That there are sufficient resources and capacity to enable the Sector Skills Council to fulfil its functions;
- That financial management is robust, with appropriate systems and audit procedures;
- That employers and others that the Sector Skills Council seeks to serve are satisfied with its work and the services that it provides.

The majority of members of the governing body of a Sector Skills Council should be employers, representative of a range of sector activities and be individuals who command support and exercise authority within the sector. Each member of the governing body will act as a non-executive director, but their fiduciary duties to determine strategic plans and budgets; to monitor and review progress and to hold executive staff to account are considerable.

The role of employers is crucial to ensure that services and people development solutions that might be proposed by the Sector Skills Council executive staff are relevant to the needs of the sector and the development of fit-for-purpose qualifications.

A third major responsibility of employers involved in the governance of a Sector Skills Council is to test the relevancy of skills solutions to the challenges of the sector. Wider employer engagement will depend on the acknowledgement that sector specific approaches are being adopted, based on an understanding of skills needs and the dynamics of the sector, rather than centrally imposed or dictated training programmes.

Sector Skills Council will play a major role in briefing employers about skills development issues and interpreting for them the implications of relevant policy decisions or proposals.

They should develop as the ‘first port-of-call’ for employers on any matter relating to human resource development and be able to offer informed advice or assist employers to access relevant information or guidance.

## **To research and publish reliable and accurate labour market information about its sector**

The foundation for the work of Sector Skills Council is robust, high quality research and labour market intelligence. The developmental proposals and services designed by Sector Skills Council must be evidence-based.

Evidence-based policy-making requires a rational, rigorous and systematic approach. It is based on the premise that policy decisions are better informed by available evidence and should include rational analysis. This is because policy based on systematic evidence is seen to produce better outcomes.

The development of labour market information will include:

- The collection of data about employers, by number and size; employees by age gender, occupation and education levels;
- Gathering information about recruitment and retention; training and human resource development practices;
- Information about vacancies, hard-to-fill jobs and skill shortages;
- Data about training provision, programmes, TVET providers and their effectiveness.

Additionally, information will be required about sector developments – performance, prospects for growth and specific developments, perhaps based on government economic and social strategies.

It is vital for Sector Skills Council to compile baseline data, against which trends and comparisons with other sectors, can be assessed. Sector data may need to be disaggregated by sub-sector.

A variety of techniques will be required to collect data. These will include the exploration of existing primary and secondary sources of information; original primary research, where there are gaps in information – involving surveys and questionnaires – and focused studies.

Labour market information needs to up-dated regularly and made available in accessible formats to employers.

The responsibility of a Sector Skills Council is not simply to collect and analyse data, however. The information that is collected requires interpretation to identify:

- Skills needs – competences that may be lacking, are in short supply or that need to be anticipated to meet future demand;
- Skills priorities – those skills that the sector requires in the short, medium and long-term.

The determination of priorities must include the assessments and judgements of employers and encourage their greater investment in skills development.

Sector Skills Councils should also develop research strategies, linked to strategic and business plans and to ‘feed-back’ into the review of plans. This work will involve impact studies, to evaluate the effectiveness of Sector Skills Councils’ programmes and special research activities to examine particular issues (for example, the cost-benefits of investing in training; the effects of training on productivity).

The research findings and labour market intelligence assessments of Sector Skills Councils should be made available to a variety of potential users and audiences through regular publications. Publications should be accessible and attractive and distributed to employers, training providers, BTVET and government-funded TVET organisations. Research publications are invaluable tools to raise the level of debate about skills issues and to support dialogue between employers, governments, training providers and other stakeholders, such as trade unions and employer associations.

### **To support the development of qualifications and programmes that meet the needs of employers**

Sector Skills Councils should try to ensure that qualifications, national occupational standards and apprenticeships are:

- Informed by current and future skills needs as assessed and agreed by employers;
- Based on high quality labour market intelligence that is reviewed and interrogated regularly;
- Informed by relevant provincial education and training policies and federal standards.

Sector Skills Councils will take the lead role, within Federal Guidelines, for developing, maintaining and up-dating national occupational standards within the context of the country's National Vocational Qualifications Framework.

The Councils are responsible also for supporting the design and delivery of qualifications, based on national occupational standards and reflecting sector skills priorities. They will need to establish close working relationships with accreditation and assessment and certification bodies and agree Memoranda of Understanding with each to ensure the harmonisation of processes and collaborative working.

Sector Skills Councils have a major role to play in supporting the development and implementation of apprenticeships. This work might include:

- Designing new apprenticeships to up-date traditional occupational training and to extend the apprenticeship concept to non-traditional areas;
- Developing group apprenticeship arrangements to encourage more small and medium-sized enterprises to participate;
- Providing a brokerage role between employers and young people seeking apprenticeships.

## Other roles and functions

There are other functions that Sector Skills Councils might develop. These include:

- Technical advice and support to employers to introduce and develop work-based training and assessment solutions;
- Promotion of sectors to young people and job-seekers; to explain the occupations and opportunities within a sector to attract people to jobs and training opportunities;
- Membership and accreditation.

As Sector Skills Councils evolve, there will be opportunities to introduce new services: much will depend on the dynamics of individual sectors and the enthusiasm and support of employers. The early focus of work must be, however, to:

- Get employers in the 'driving seat' and win recognition for their role;
- Build confidence amongst employers, government, stakeholders and training providers that each Skills Council knows its business and understands the training issues within its sector;
- Reassure employers through the design and delivery of training programmes that meet their needs and bring satisfaction to learners/trainees because of the quality of what they learn and their ability to get jobs.



### 3. EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMITMENT

There are many ways in which employers can become involved in TVET:

- Delivery of enterprise-based training and apprenticeships;
- Collaborative working with government to determine skills development policy;
- Involvement in the design of training programmes;
- Management of publicly-funded TVET institutions;
- Development of private training institutions;
- Determination of current and future skill needs;
- Placements and internships for learners/trainees;
- Practical work experience for trainers and instructors;
- Developing information and supporting guidance about occupations and prospects in different sectors.

The argument for employers taking a more prominent role in skills development is clear:

- Employers run businesses and provide jobs;
- Employers understand the day-to-day needs of their enterprises and develop plans for survival and growth;
- Employers work with other employers and understand supply-chains and linkages;
- Employers have a vested interest to make their businesses more successful: their bottom-line, turnover and profits can be increased with a better-trained workforce.

Traditionally TVET has been the responsibility of Governments and decisions about investments in training and determining priorities for the development of new programmes have been made by civil servants and department officials. Whilst their judgements and

assessments may have been made in good faith, they lack the detailed knowledge and ‘feel’ of the business world to inform their decisions. The result is an ineffective training system that fails to produce ‘job-ready’ workers and which does not invest in the development of skills of existing workers.

Attempts to involve employers in TVET decision-making and implementation – through membership of governance bodies and TVET institutional management structures management structures – have not been entirely successful, in part because employers are usually in a minority, officials tend to be suspicious of their role and there can be a ‘culture clash’ between those with an entrepreneurial spirit and those who are more cautious in the interpretation of the law and the management of existing structures and systems.

However strong the argument for greater employer engagement in TVET may seem to be – ***it is an argument that is not yet won***. Governments at all levels – although public rhetoric may suggest something different – remain reluctant to enter into genuine partnerships and to share responsibility for decision-making and the distribution of resources. Employers – particularly those who have worked with government officials directly – speak of the difficulties of seeking to work in partnership and are frustrated by the experience.

There are, however, some significant innovations. The law that defines the Tourism act in Uganda for example mentions the need for a Sector Skills Council in Tourism.

In establishing a Sector Skills Council, it is necessary to present the argument for greater employer involvement and it should not be assumed that this is an agreed assumption in consideration the future development of TVET.

Training, and the development of a more skilled work force, is not just about building partnerships between employers and the government, however. There is much that employers can do themselves to raise levels of productivity, to improve the skills of their workers and to build a more prosperous and stable society. Such measures include:

- Developing in-house, work-based training;
- Collaborating with other employers, in local areas or supply chains, to build skills. \working together, enterprises have the purchasing power to achieve economies of scale, stimulate demand and encourage new or tailored training programmes. Enterprises, especially large companies, have the capability to improve skills in supply chains and can train more people than they require to meet their own needs to assist small businesses.

It may be that employers in a sector are already persuaded of the benefits of a skills council. Where this is not the case, and to stimulate interest, the following steps are recommended:

- Identify key employers in the sector and discuss with them training issues and their skills needs;
- Outline with them the scope and functions of a Sector Skills Council and its potential benefits;
- Meet with major providers of training to the sector and consider with them how greater employer engagement would assist their work and performance;
- Organise a workshop of employers and training providers to review the support for, and opportunities for establishing a skills council. As well as key sector employers, representatives of relevant Trade Associations or Chambers might be invited to build knowledge and support amongst the employer community more generally;
- Identify a champion or leading employer who is committed to the improvement of skills development around which a steering or planning group might be formed to create a Sector Skills Council.

Both during the establishment of a Sector Skills Council and once it is up and running it is important to keep employers informed of developments and the services that should be increasingly available. Communication with employers – using language and terms that will be familiar and accessible to them – is a priority task, to keep them ‘on board’ and to strengthen the message of the important role they can play through the Sector Skills Council.

The active commitment of employers is essential to the success of a Sector Skills Council.

**Active commitment means:**

- The willingness to argue for greater employer involvement in skills development – with government representatives and officials; other employers, the media. The case needs to be made that Governments should commit to supporting employer leadership on skills, individually and in partnerships, as central to long-term growth plans and to align public and private resources;
- The acceptance of an active role – through involvement in the structures and activities of a Sector Skills Council as an employer representative or to be willing to use and buy services from the Sector Skills Council;
- The enthusiasm to support the Sector Skills Council in all practical ways and to see this as a representation of the vibrancy and potential of the sector.

## CONCLUSION

**Employer support is fundamental to the working of a Sector Skills Council. Without it, and the willing acceptance that employer support is more than token and will require active commitment – at least from a solid core of employers in the sector – the case for a Sector Skills Council cannot be substantiated.**



## 4. STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT

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Employers are not the only sector TVET stakeholders and this section reviews other partners whose support for a Sector Skills Council is important.

There are other organisations and groups of people, in addition to employers, who are concerned about TVET issues. These should be encouraged to support the Sector Skills Council and see it as an ally and partner in the continuing reform of TVET. These include:

- Government;
- Statutory Agencies and Bodies with TVET functions and responsibilities;
- Training Providers;
- Higher Education Institutions;
- Funding Partners;
- Workers.

### Government

Government – at all levels of operation – have an interest in Sector Skills Councils for two principal reasons. First, economic and social development policies have human resource implications. For example, new environmental projects require a variety of skills to make implementation possible; lowering levels of infant mortality will require more midwives and health workers. A Sector Skills Council will develop the knowledge and expertise to analyse and anticipate the implications for skilled workers of emerging strategies and policies.

Second, Government continues to be a major TVET provider and funder. Training activities are not limited to formally designated TVET providers. Many line ministries manage large skills development programmes and the police and military invest in training.

A Sector Skills Council cannot operate in isolation and it needs to develop working relationships with Government. Its work will be assisted if it has the authority to present itself as the TVET Voice for the sector, and this will require that it has recognition from Government to exercise this role.

### **Statutory Agencies and Bodies with TVET functions and responsibilities**

It is normal for Government to be responsible for setting standards in TVET. National standards, qualifications and quality assurance will be linked to the Uganda Vocational Qualifications Framework. Responsibility for the development and maintenance of the Vocational Qualification Framework lies currently with the National Bureau of Standards (UNBS). It would be important to agree priority qualifications, sanction the arrangements for developing occupational standards and training programmes and approve them for inclusion in the Vocational Qualifications Framework.

Sector Skills Council will need to understand the work and functions of agencies and develop working relationships with them. Sector Skills Councils will need to demonstrate how they will add value and support the work of TVET agencies.

### **Training Providers**

Public and private training providers have much to gain through the establishment of Sector Skills Councils. These benefits include:

- Access to labour market information that can inform their invest decisions and the programmes that they provide;
- Organised and coherent dialogue with employers, through a 'single voice';
- The development of channels to employers and opportunities to develop bespoke and tailored training programmes;
- The promotion of training programmes to employers, workers and job-seekers;
- Access to informed information about national and international TVET developments.

## **Higher Education Institutions**

Some TVET programmes are designed for graduates. It is increasingly possible that graduates will need to add to their skills to get jobs and will seek to enter TVET programmes. People who complete successfully TVET programmes may wish to progress to higher education. Different sectors may need to promote themselves to students in higher education to inform their decisions about jobs and post-university opportunities. There are linkages to be developed between Technical Education and Higher Education and there is scope for partnership working between Sector Skills Councils and Higher Education.

## **Funding Partners**

Funding partners include Donor, EU, TVET, Government and other governments such as Enabel in Uganda. It is important to share with the potential funders the action plan to ensure funding is used effectively and reduce parallel work.



## 5. PRINCIPAL OPERATIONS OF A SECTOR SKILLS COUNCIL

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The main functions of a Sector Skills Council have been described. This section considers the practical implications; how might a Sector Skills Council operate?

The activities and priorities of the Sector Skills Council and the resources allocated to them must be set within an overall strategy and business plan.

### Strategic and Business Plans

The Strategy defines objective, principal activities and anticipated outcomes/results for a defined period, usually three to five years. This is updated annually and an annual, more detailed business plan developed.

These plans fulfil a number of purposes:

- The sector is informed of the ambitions and activities of the Skills Council;
- The Governing Body of the Sector Skills Council sets the direction of the organisation and has criteria and measures against which to assess progress and to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the executive staff;
- The staff have a clear set of goals and signposts to guide their work.

The Plans should consist of the following:



### **A Vision and Mission Statement:**

To state in a few words the overall objective of the Sector Skills Council and its values.

Construction Sector Council (Industry Training Organisation): New Zealand

Our vision is to build building professionals for the future, today. We are passionate about leading the construction industry to create the best skilled people for tomorrow. The essence of our operation includes:

- Leadership;
- adding value and innovation;
- integrity and fairness;
- excellence in customer service;
- teamwork;
- investing in people;
- professionalism;
- quality assurance;
- responsiveness.

What makes us get up in the morning? The key points that come out of this are the notions of professionalism, the future and skills. We endeavour to work on these aspects of the building industry as they have the ability to increase the productivity, quality and perception of the construction sector in New Zealand.



### **Objectives, Activities and Outcomes**

An objective sets out what the Sector Skills council plans to achieve. The achievement of each objective will require a range of activities and the outcomes of those activities needs to be set.

For example: an objective might be to increase the number of apprentice in the sector by 50 per cent over a three-year period.

The activities linked to this objective might be:

- Establishment of current base line data: numbers of apprentices, types of apprenticeships,

distribution etc.;

- Review of existing apprenticeship arrangements, with an emphasis on high-lighting good practice;
- Creation of apprenticeship support service: to manage contracts for employers, train supervisory staff, provide on-programme support for apprentices, mediation if problems arise, offer post-training counselling and placement for apprentice not employed at the end of their training;
- Advocacy campaign with employers to promote apprenticeships and support those offering them for the first time;
- Promotion campaign to encourage young people to apply for apprenticeships and assistance to employers in recruitment;
- Monitoring and evaluation.

The outcomes would be:

- X number of additional apprentices recruited;
- Y number of employers offer apprenticeships for the first time;
- Apprenticeship support service established;
- Published report to summarise activity, outcomes and lessons-learnt to inform national debate about apprenticeships.

Such a process is followed for each objective.

### [The Food Processing Human Resource Council in Canada](#)

FPHRC monitors the industry's HR developments and needs, and is a leader in delivering HR information and training tools to support a safe and secure food supply and a viable and competitive food-processing sector. The FPHRC focuses on four major pillars that support its action plan:

- **Communication** – This component is critical in advancing the industry, together with the ability to share and exchange ideas. The FPHRC will be instrumental in keeping stakeholders aware of developments in an ever-changing environment.
- **Market Knowledge** – The ability to forecast, understand our demographics and landscape, is critical for Canadian processors to compete on the global market. Gathering Labour Market Information is one of the council's specialties.
- **Skills Development and Training** – New and upgraded skills and training to meet the evolving demands of a complex and diverse industry are required, in terms

of technology, the composition of the labour market, the need for national skill standards, and the need for learning tools that embrace a variety of food commodity groups.

- **Attraction and Retention of Workers** – With critical labour shortages in several areas across Canada, there is an increased need to develop strategies and find solutions to the growing demand for labour.



### Resource Allocation

To set out the resources to be devoted to each activity, both personnel and financial and to present a budget for the plan period and a detailed annual forecast of income and expenditure.



### Risk Assessment

To assess the risks that might be encountered and to propose measures to mitigate their effects. For example, activities to increase the number of apprentices might be frustrated by lack of interest in training in the sector by young people. This risk might be addressed through more aggressive marketing, focused on parents and teachers or by offering incentives to young people, such as a job guarantee.



### Reporting Requirements

To specify the reports that the executive staff will make to the Governing Board and committees that might be created and documents that the Sector Skills Council might publish to keep the sector informed of its work.



### Delivery of core functions

As discussed in Section Two, the three core functions of a Sector Skills Council are:

- To encourage and stimulate employer involvement in skills development;
- To provide information and assessments about the labour market to inform decisions about skills priorities;
- To develop and support the design of qualifications and the design and delivery of training programmes.

The practical implications of delivering these core functions are now considered.

## Encouraging and stimulating employer engagement

There is no single activity that can be initiated to 'get employers more involved' in TVET. In reality some will not want to be engaged and it is important to identify employers and organisations that can be 'trail-blazers' and ambassadors for the Sector Skills Council.

Four broad issues are important.

The organisation of the Sector Skills Council and how it works.

Employers must be involved in all aspects of the work of the Sector Skills Council. This means that governance structures must be controlled by employer representatives – and they must be seen to be in control. Senior employers need to be attracted to the governing Council so that decisions of strategic importance to the sector can be made. Working groups and Task Forces that will be established to look at qualifications and the detail of defining national occupational standards should also involve people with direct work-place experience.

It is important that the communications and language used by the Sector Skills Council 'speaks' to its prime clients, avoiding bureaucratic jargon and focusing on key issues presented in a straightforward manner.

## Capacity-building

Whilst employer representatives may have long experience of business and commerce and the sector they may not have knowledge of TVET issues that they need to know to be able to fulfil their duties as Council or Board members; to contribute to discussions about occupational standards or to support the development of training programmes or assessment arrangements. Building the capacity of a Sector Skills Council – including its executive staff team – is a first order priority and continuous investment in personnel development should characterise the organisation, both to enhance its capabilities and to act as a good example to employers in the sector.

Different strategies will be required to build the capacities of people at varying levels of seniority and experience. These might include:

- Workshops;
- Formal training programmes;
- Study Visits;
- Topic Groups.

## Information

The dissemination of high quality information is important for two principal reasons:

- To keep the sector informed of the work of the Skills Council and to encourage and foster ownership of its work and activities;
- To contribute to building capacity.

A Sector Skills Council should develop a Communications Strategy. This should identify key target audiences and consider the different media and methods to communicate with them (e.g. websites, social media, printed documents, videos and DVDs), and the languages to be used. The Sector Skills Council should prepare a policy and manual designed to ensure that there is a corporate approach to publicity (logo and house style) and to define levels of authority for agreeing documents for publication/circulation and for making statements on behalf of the Sector Skills Council.

## Specific Services and Advice

Sector Skills Council should seek to be the first 'port-of-call' for employers on all issues relating to skills and training. An advisory function should be established to deal with enquiries from employers (and workers) that might be received in a number of ways (internet, post, telephone, personal call). This should include a system to monitor the receipt of queries and the response to them, to ensure the efficient management of the function and to highlight emerging issues of concern that might suggest a sector-wide publication or a more strategic response from the Sector Skills Council.

There is scope for Sector Skills Council to offer tailored support to individual businesses to support them in addressing training issues. Such services might include:

- Training needs analyses: to help enterprises to review existing skills and age profiles of their work-forces and to develop practical solutions to ensure that their skills needs are met;
- Consultancy and advice on specific problems and challenges;
- Planning and development of customised training programmes.

Sector Skills Council must be relevant to the employers and other stakeholders whom they are established to serve. They must be responsive to employers' needs and demands: this does not mean undertaking every request for services, but it does mean explaining to clients why certain activities may not be possible, or the conditions that might attach to the development of a service or activity.

## Research and Labour Market Intelligence

As the ‘voice for the sector’ on skills development issues, well-researched intelligence is the basic foundation for the work of a Sector Skills Council. Research is the basis for determining skills needs and priorities and for stimulating debate on significant labour market and skills issues. Reports provide essential reading for policy-makers, employers, TVET institutions and providers, training managers and human resource development professionals.

The aims of research and labour market intelligence are to:

- Understand the current and future skills needs of the sector, to assess the extent to which these are being met and to formulate plans to address gaps and weaknesses;
- Stimulate informed debate and discussion within the sector about skills development;
- Provide the data to inform engagement about provincial and national education and training policies.

The core tasks are simply stated, though achieving them requires a great deal of detailed work. They are:

- To define the sector and map the occupations it covers;
- To assess skills needs;
- To review current training arrangements and the potential supply of labour to the sector;
- To undertake a gap analysis;
- To identify action and formulate a plan to address the gaps.

To define the sector and map the occupations it covers

The principal industries that fall within a defined sector need to be clarified and the range of occupations covered need to be stipulated. This is necessary for the sake of clarity and to identify overlaps with other sectors. Welders or computer operators, for example, may be common to a number of sectors, suggesting that collaboration between Sector Skills Councils may be necessary.

An Occupational map provides a useful starting point to understand the number of occupations in each industry. Drafting a map of the occupations in each sector and sub-sector helps to identify linkages between jobs and career profiling and to identify where training might be concentrated to have the greatest impact.



integrity of sample data and the extent to which all sub-sectors are covered.

***To review current training arrangements and the potential supply of labour to the sector;***

Key information to be collected and analysed includes:

- Training institutes/providers that offer relevant programmes; the numbers of places available by programme; rates of enrolment, completion and recruitment into jobs; accreditation status of providers; development plans and capacity and professional development of staff;
- Work-based training and the extent to which employers invest in training; training capacity and human resource development plans; numbers and progression of apprentices;
- Assessments and development plans of Uganda and line ministries and discussions with them and Assessment Bodies.

The examination of training provision will involve both quantitative and qualitative assessments and will involve both surveys/questionnaires and site visits.

***To undertake a gap analysis***

A gap analysis is a simple technique to determine how skills development moves from its current state to its desired future state: how do we get from where we are to where we want to be? This will involve a critical review of current training programmes and the skills they are designed to generate against the labour market demands in the sector and addressing a series of questions: what adaptations to existing training provision are required? What new programmes might be required? How are existing programmes adapted to be competence-based and to be recognised for inclusion in a National Vocational Qualifications Framework? Are there constraints to be dealt with to develop new programmes and enhance their delivery? What interventions can be made that will have the greatest impact?

This analysis has two key elements:

- A critical review of the skills needs confirmed by employers and current training provision, assessed in terms of scale, range, quality and relevance;
- An audit of new competence-based training programmes under development.

The consideration of issues is probably best handled through workshop discussions with a mix of employers and trainers.

### ***To identify action and formulate a plan to address the gap***

This is the principal result of the research and analysis and will:

- Summarise research outcomes and analysis;
- Define priority skills for the sector;
- Set out a programme for the revision of existing programmes and preparation of new ones – A Skills Action Plan;
- Describe arrangements for the design of qualifications/programmes (e.g. working groups and to meet requirements of the National Vocational Qualifications Framework);
- State the specific actions to be taken (e.g. X number of revised qualifications/programmes in Year 1, Year 2; Y number of trainers/instructors undergo capacity-building/training).

Sector Skills Councils will wish to consult about their proposals for skills priorities with sector employers and stakeholders. The ways in which this consultation might be undertaken will include:

- Circulation of draft skills plan for consultation;
- Sub-sector workshops;
- On-line consultation through website.

## **Developing Qualifications and TVET Programmes**

The creation of a National Vocational Qualifications Framework requires that all vocational qualifications will be based on national standards and that training programmes and assessment will be competence-based. The Sector Skills Council will have a major role in identifying priority occupations to meet demand and in ensuring employer participation in the definition of standards and design of training programmes and assessment. They will require the authorisation and endorsement of the National Vocational and Technical Training body to undertake this function.

## **National Occupational Standards**

A National Occupational Standard (NOS) is a statement that describes what an individual needs to do, know and understand in order to demonstrate competence in an occupational function.

- **National** because they are used in every part of the country;
- **Occupational** because they describe what an individual must do, know and understand

to be competent in her/his job

- **Standards** because they are statements of effective performance which have been agreed by employers and other key stakeholders and approved by a National Qualifications Curriculum Committee.

Responsibility for the establishment of National Vocational Qualifications Framework lies with the National Vocational and Technical Training body in Uganda. The development of Vocational Qualifications Framework and competence-based training and assessment are new initiatives in Uganda and policies are systems are evolving. Sector Skills Council must keep themselves informed of developments, adapt their approaches as necessary and consider – and communicate to the sector – the effects and implications of policy and administrative changes.

## Developing National Vocational Qualifications



Qualification	Assessment	Curriculum	Teaching & Learning Materials
<p><b>Define</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competency Standards</li> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Level</li> <li>• Credit</li> <li>• Progress requirements</li> <li>• Pathways &amp; equivalences</li> </ul>	<p><b>Define</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan &amp; requirements</li> <li>• Task validation</li> <li>• Evidence Guide</li> <li>• Post assessment moderation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Define</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modules</li> <li>• Learning units and elements</li> <li>• Delivery sequence</li> <li>• Guidance on timing</li> <li>• Learning setting &amp; equipment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TLM Package</li> <li>• Templates</li> <li>• Pilot examples</li> </ul>

The development of a qualification involves the preparation of a complete package. The Skills Demand Analysis will be a product of the Labour Market Intelligence work described above. The Sector Skills Council should seek to support the design, delivery and implementation of the qualifications defined in its Skills Action Plan.

The development of qualifications is best undertaken by dedicated task teams/groups, setting up sub-groups as required to work on specific issues.

## Sector Solutions

In addition to the development of national qualifications, there are other training and skills issues that employers and workers will require.

For example:

- Customer care and looking after clients will affect the performance of enterprises in many sectors. This aspect of service delivery may feature in different formal qualifications, but it is a topic that deserves to be highlighted and reinforced through dedicated special training programmes. Similarly, topics might include basic computing, communication and language skills, management skills and disciplines (e.g. human resource management). There is always a demand for short-training programmes to focus on particular skills and Sector Skills Councils should be alive to the needs of the sector and develop provision;
- Tailored-made training: particular processes, the introduction of new products and equipment, business growth and recruitment of additional workers may require employers to introduce training programmes. There are business opportunities for Sector Skills Councils to support employers to develop training programmes, by helping them to plan programmes, to act as a broker with training providers or to implement training activities themselves;
- Apprenticeships: current apprenticeships are not as effective as they might be and there are too few of them. Sector Skills Councils can develop a range of services to help both employers and young people to take advantage of this training. Such services include – group training programmes to bring together small and medium sized forms to provide apprenticeships; support to publicise opportunities and to recruit young people; management of apprenticeship contracts and placement services to find jobs when training is completed;
- Training of Trainers: to improve the skills of current trainers and instructors, to train additional trainers and to build the capacity of supervisors and managers to oversee trainee.

## Publication and Dissemination

The results of each Sector Skills Council’s research and assessments of training should be communicated to the sector, to Government Departments concerned with economic development, such as the Planning Commission and relevant Provincial line ministries.

There will be reports that the Sector Skills Council will prepare at the start of their work, for example the Skills Action Plan, with its analysis of current and future skills need. There will be topical reports on specialist topics, for example, research might be undertaken on the economic benefits and ‘payback’ from the investment in training or training initiatives in sub-sectors.

Additionally and at regular intervals, say every two years, Sector Skills Council should produce a Sector Profile. This should aim to provide an overview of the sector and its prospects, present employers and workers with an authoritative assessment and provide the context for developing training plans and stimulate debate about skills development issues.

Such a Sector Profile might contain the following:

<b>Economic Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of workers and percentage of working population in sector</li> <li>• Numbers of enterprises by size</li> <li>• Business performance and trends</li> <li>• Employer expectations for growth</li> <li>• Particular events or issues of importance to the sector (e.g. significant investment plans, Government policy or strategy; natural disaster impact; external influences on performance)</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics of work force</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers and growth trends</li> <li>• Employer expectations about growth/decline of work force</li> <li>• Gender and age composition</li> <li>• Education profile of work force</li> <li>• Earnings and trends</li> <li>• Productivity</li> </ul>
<b>Recruitment and retention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard-to-fill vacancies</li> <li>• Quality of recruits</li> <li>• Skill shortages</li> <li>• Turnover rates</li> </ul>
<b>Skills Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard-to-fill vacancies</li> <li>• Quality of recruits</li> <li>• Skill shortages</li> <li>• Turnover rates</li> </ul>

<b>Future Trends</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of prospects for growth</li> <li>• Skills needs identified by employers which if not available will constrain growth</li> </ul>
<b>Skills Council Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumption about growth and employment prospects</li> <li>• Priority skills required</li> <li>• Plan of how these are to be met</li> </ul>



## 6. THE ORGANISATION TO DELIVER THE FUNCTIONS

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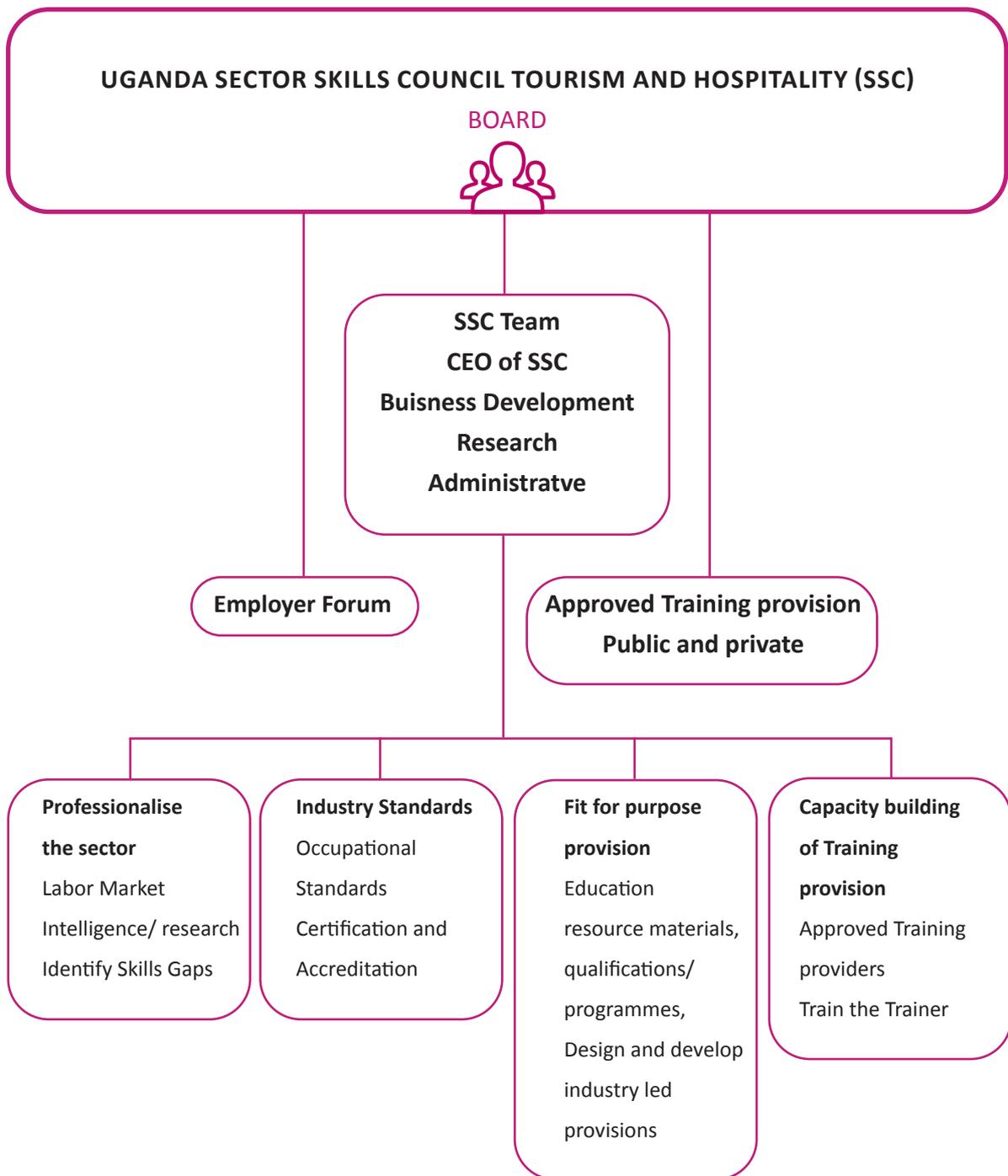
In this section the organisation and structure of a Sector Skills Council is discussed.

A Sector Skills Council needs a structure and staff to enable it to undertake its functions. The precise form of the organisation and the number of its staff will depend on the ambitions of the sector, rate of growth, and access to resources. However:

- The structure should be consistent with the objectives of the Sector Skills Council with clear statements of functional responsibilities and accountability;
- The roles and responsibilities of members of staff should be defined in job descriptions;
- The Sector Skills Council should have policies and procedures to govern its administration;
- Corporate governance arrangements and the roles of executive staff should be clear (see Section 7).

### Structure of the Organisation

Figure two (P.38) sets out a basic structure for a Sector Skills Council. This shows that the overall responsibility for the organisation lies with a Board or Council. Its role is considered in more detail in Section 7.



### Notes on the Model Structure

Chief Executive or Chief Operating Officer: responsible for the day-to-day running of the Sector Skills Council.

(1) The dissemination of information (through electronic and other media) is vital to build sector awareness and to maintain and expand employer and stakeholder engagement;

(2) Labour market intelligence and understanding the dynamics of the sector are essential in

developing evidence-based decision making;

(3) This will involve the development of standards based programmes – involving sector specialists;

(4) This function will include exploration of sector needs and developing solutions to meet them: it is about business development;

(5) Internal functions will require policies and procedures that are endorsed by the Board.

## Staff roles and Job Descriptions

Examples of outline job descriptions for key roles follow:

- Chief Executive;
- Head of Research;
- Head of Training;
- Head of Sector Development;
- Head of Administration and Finance.

### *Chief Executive*



#### Job Description

Job Title	Chief Executive/Chief Operating Officer/Executive Director Reports to Board
Core Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support to Board and engaging with key employers and stakeholders</li><li>• Contribute to the strategic direction and development of the Sector Skills Council</li><li>• Promote the Sector Skills Council within the sector, to Government, training providers, the media etc.</li><li>• Quality assurance of the work of the Sector Skills Council</li><li>• Recruitment and management of its staff</li><li>• Ensuring financial sustainability of Sector Skills Council</li><li>• Efficient use of resources</li></ul>

## **Chief Executive**



### Job Description

#### Specific Contributions to Key Areas of Sector Skills Council

Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support to preparation of Five-Year Plan</li><li>• Oversight of preparation of Skills Action Plan</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul>
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitoring revision and development of competence-based programmes</li><li>• Developing links with employers, training providers, higher education institutions to extend skills development practices and to raise quality</li><li>• Contributing to the development of sector solutions</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul>
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Devising plans to secure the financial sustainability of the Sector Skills Council</li><li>• Reviewing continuously income and expenditure</li><li>• Seeking funding through developing links with Government and international donors</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul>

## **Head of Research**



### Job Description

Job Title	Head of Research and Labour Market Intelligence Reports to Chief Executive
Core functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsible for research activities and management of any relevant staff, specifically<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o Preparation of Skills Action Plan</li><li>o Sector Skills Profile</li></ul></li></ul>

## *Head of Research*



### Job Description

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Core functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preparation of other topical reports as commissioned by the Board</li><li>• Liaison with research contractors</li><li>• Quality assurance of research reports and studies</li><li>• Development of contacts with research institutes, institutes of higher education and other appropriate organisations</li></ul> |
|----------------|--|

### Specific Contributions to Key Areas of Sector Skills Council

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contributing to preparation of Five-Year Plan</li><li>• Directing drafting of plans to determine skills priorities</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul> |
|----------|---|

## *Head of Training*



### Job Description

Job Title	Head of Training Reports to Chief Executive
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- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Core functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support to preparation of Skills Action Plan</li><li>• Oversight of amendments to existing qualifications and associated training programmes</li><li>• Management of development of new qualifications, programmes, assessment arrangements and preparation of learning and teaching materials</li><li>• Support to the development of sector solutions to promote skills development</li><li>• Support to the promotion of apprenticeships.</li></ul> |
|----------------|--|

### Specific Contributions to Key Areas of Sector Skills Council

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contributing to preparation of Five-Year Plan</li><li>• Directing drafting of plans to determine skills priorities</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul> |
|----------|---|

## *Head of Sector Development*



### Job Description

Job Title	Head of Sector Development Reports to Chief Executive
Core functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identification of sector-specific training needs and development of solutions</li><li>• Implementation and Promotion of sector solutions</li><li>• Promotion and management of apprenticeship support service</li></ul>
Specific Contributions to Key Areas of Sector Skills Council	
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contributing to preparation of Five-Year Plan</li><li>• Directing drafting of plans to determine skills priorities</li><li>• Etc.</li></ul>
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing and implementing income generating services to secure the financial sustainability of the Sector Skills Council</li></ul>

## *Head of Administration and Finance*



### Job Description

Job Title	Head of Administration and Finance Reports to Chief Executive
Core functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development and implementation of human resource management, finance and procurement and other procedural policies and practices to ensure the efficient running of the Sector Skills Council office</li><li>• Management and oversight of human resource, finance and internal management (security, housekeeping, property etc.)</li><li>• Preparation of Annual Budgets</li><li>• Oversight of preparation of annual accounts</li><li>• Liaison with suppliers and service contractors</li><li>• Liaison with auditors</li></ul>
Specific Contributions to Key Areas of Sector Skills Council	
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Managing resources efficiently</li></ul>

Person Specifications will be required that set out for each post:

- **Qualifications:** List of required qualifications needed to undertake the role;
- **Knowledge and Understanding:** Statements to describe the knowledge and understanding needs of the role (e.g. knowledge of developments in TVET, including competence-based training and assessment);
- **Experience and Skills:** To set out the skills and experience so that the person appointed can work confidently in the sector on skills development.

## Internal Policies and Procedures

The following checklists are designed to aid the preparation of internal policies and procedures.

### Management Systems and Practice

Is there a business plan?	Has this been communicated to all staff?
Are all systems documented?	Are there arrangements for their review and updating?
Are there arrangements to monitor and evaluate performance?	Is there a management information system related to the business plans goals? If not how is performance assessed?
How are activities within the Sector Skills Council coordinated?	How are internal coordination and information sharing handled?
Is there an organogram that makes clear reporting lines?	
How does the Board monitor progress?	Are there performance measures and regular reports related to them?

### Human Resource Management

Are there job descriptions for all staff?	
Are there records for each member of staff?	
Is there a staff appraisal system?	Does this identify the training needs of individual staff members?
Is there a recruitment policy?	Is this based on open competition? Is it clear who is responsible for offering jobs at different levels of seniority?

## Human Resource Management

Are expected rules of behaviour clear?

Is there a staff handbook or induction programme?

Are procedures for salary determination clear?

Does the Council operate its own payroll?

Are there policies and procedures to deal with non-financial rewards, such as leave, study, travel, pension, flexible hours, childcare?

## Finance

Is there a budgeting system to identify main sources of income and expenditure?

Is this documented and followed?

Who has responsibility for authorising expenditure?

Do all staff know this?

Is there a system for monitoring expenditure?

Who is responsible for this and how are over/underspends reported to the Board?

Is there a system for managing cash?

Does the Sector Skills Council have a bank account?

Is there a procurement system?

Who monitors that the system is followed?

Are annual income and expenditure accounts prepared, presented to the Board for agreement and published?

Is there an external auditor to support the verification of accounts?



## 7. GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL STRUCTURE

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This section considers how the Sector Skills Council should be governed.

The first issue to be determined is the legal structure of the Sector Skills Council. The Sector Skills Council will be more than an advisory body: It will have functions, control resources and should be independent and autonomous.

In many countries Sector Skills Councils have been established by Governments – either through legislation (as in South Africa), or through a licensing arrangement (Egypt and the UK have followed this route. Where Governments have been involved directly, financial grants and other assistance has been made available to establish the Sector Skills Councils, at least for an initial period.

It would be open for either the Federal Government or Provincial Governments to legislate for the establishment of Sector Skills Councils.

Other options are available, however. Employers might agree to create a Sector Skills Council as a Section 42 Company (Companies Act, 1984) UK example.

The creation of a sector skills council might be a joint initiative with the Government, or the lead might be taken by employers.

If the second route is taken, and a Sector Skills council is created by employers it should seek an agreement with Government that it will be recognised as the voice for the sector on skills development issues. This could be achieved through a Memorandum of Agreement.

Similar recognition should be sought with the body responsible for the National Vocational Qualifications Framework, BTVET and private training providers. Without such formal agreements the Sector Skills Council would lack authority to represent the sector.

The Sector Skills Council will require a Board of Directors. This should be made up of senior employers from the sector, who should be in the majority. The membership of the Board should seek to deliver a balance of entrepreneurial, operational, marketing, financial, legal and people management skills.

The functions of the Board are to:

- Ensure that the Sector Skills Council complies with its statutory obligations (under the Companies Act) and other legal obligations;
- Determine the Sector Skills Council's policy, strategy and direction;
- Support and advise the executive staff and monitor their work;
- Determine the limits of authority of the Chief Executive and her/his staff;
- Decide its working methods and determine delegation of powers to sub-committees.

The Board might consider the establishment of two sub-committees to assist its work:

- Finance and Audit Committee: the Sector Skills Council must be financially self-sustaining as quickly as possible. There are various ways in which it might generate income that need to be considered in detail. In its early days, particularly, the Sector Skills Council will need careful financial management – to ensure efficient use of resources, to maintain activity and to convince employers, and other sector stakeholders, that the Sector Skills Council is well-managed and 'adds value';
- Training Committee: the Sector Skills Council is likely to be assessed by the speed at which it develops qualifications and initiates sector solutions to skills needs. The Council itself is unlikely to have the time to deal with the detail of training programmes and initiatives and a sub-committee is better placed to oversee this work. It provides also the opportunity to involve TVET specialists in the work of the Sector Skills Council.

Members might be appointed to the Board at a General Meeting convened to promote the Sector Skills Council. As suggested in Section 10 a shadow Board should be appointed to oversee the establishment of the Sector Skills Council and this should determine such issues as the appointment of members to the Board.

In order to build support for the Skills Council within the sector, consideration should be given to other mechanisms to engage employers and stakeholders, in addition to the Board.

Such mechanisms might include:

- An Employer Forum: this might involve a general meeting, say every quarter, open to employers and in the sector. The purpose of the forum would be to report on the Sector Skills Council work and for general discussion about skills development to inform the decision of the Board.
- Approved Training provider forum: a formal body with representatives from each sub-sector, and to include training providers and learners/trainees. It would debate skills development issues as they affect the sector and frame advice to the Board.

The aim should be to build a sense of ownership of the Skills Council within the sector and to encourage those involved to be ‘ambassadors’ to promote its work.

A major function of governance is to ensure that an organisation is doing what it is supposed to do. How should the Board assess if the Sector Skills Council is doing a good job?

The following Table sets out five assessment tools to inform judgements about performance and impact.

Assessment Focus	Key issues to be examined
1. Employer Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is strategic direction provided by a broad range and representative cross-section of employers? Are other stakeholders involved actively?</li><li>• Is accountability to the sector assured through employer involvement in governing and other structures?</li><li>• Is the Sector Skills Council’s work supported by a broad and representative cross-section of employers in the sector?</li></ul>
2. Knowledge of Learning and Skill Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are sector skills needs addressed in the Sector Skills Council’s strategy and business plans?</li><li>• Is relevant information about the sector determined and updated regularly?</li><li>• Are sector and work force trends identified and forecast?</li></ul>

Assessment Focus	Key issues to be examined
<p>3. Representation and Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the Sector Skills Council the preferred reference point for skills development issues?</li> <li>• Are relevant policy issues and their potential impact on the sector’s competitiveness evaluated and communicated?</li> <li>• Is effective representation of the sector achieved with provincial and national governments, their agencies and other partners?</li> <li>• Are communication strategies in place to reinforce employer understanding of the importance of investing in skills development to improve business performance?</li> </ul>
<p>4. Ensuring Effective Delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are national occupation standards developed and competency-based training programmes implemented?</li> <li>• Is the training system, including the competences of trainers and instructors developed and maintained for the sector?</li> <li>• Are innovation, partnerships and co-operative training encouraged and supported?</li> <li>• Are financial, staffing and other resources adequate to ensure that all functions can be delivered effectively?</li> <li>• Are there effective internal management systems to assure financial and quality control?</li> </ul>
<p>5. Viability and Capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are conflicts of interest dealt with openly and efficiently?</li> <li>• Is performance systematically measured and reviewed?</li> <li>• Are the skills and knowledge base of the Sector Skills Council sustained in line with business needs?</li> </ul>



## 8. FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY MODEL

Even in those countries in which Governments have set-up Sector Skills Councils and have given them initial funding, a major challenge has been to make the Councils financially viable and sustainable. The major benefit of the ending of subsidies and grants to Sector Skills Councils is that they have had to develop services and activities that employers – and workers – are willing to support. Sector Skills Councils have to be demand-driven.

It is desirable if initial financial support can be found to support the shadow Sector Skills Council and enable it to develop a range of services and fee-paying activities. Realistically it is likely to take between two and three-years for a Sector Skills Council to be sustainable.

Worldwide experience of Sector Skills Councils suggests that a sustainable model can be built on three pillars:



- To encourage informed debate
- To build links between the Skills Council and the sector



- Policy and partnership work to develop as the voice of the sector on skills issues
- Collaborative working with industry to support employers in the development of the work force



- Provision of services to raise the delivery of qualifications / certification
- Support to employers to high quality skills development programmes and products to enable them to improve productiivyt and performance
- Membership, certification, accreditation and licensing.
- Capacity buiiding and TOT OF trainers

Research and the generation of debate about skills issues lays the foundation for raising the profile of the Sector Skills Council and encouraging a more serious consideration of the benefits of investment in skills. The argument must be promoted that investment in skills yields results – in terms of productivity, customer satisfaction and improved products and levels of service. Research from around the world increasingly confirms that investment in training yields financial and non-financial benefits. Employers may need to be encouraged to take a longer term view of human resource issues and the insights and information that the Sector Skills Council can generate will help to encourage this.

Policy alignment involves the development of a sector voice on skills development and presenting a sector perspective and view to Government and TVET stakeholders. It means also that the Sector Skills Council must work to see that employer views are reflected in TVET programmes in the sector.

Development of Practical Solutions involves developing services that employers, workers, training providers and other TVET stakeholders value so highly that they are prepared to pay for them. The type and range of services will depend on what customers want and how the Sector Skills Council develops products and establishes a market position. Services might include, for example:

- Management of apprenticeships and creation of new apprenticeship programmes;
- Training of trainers and supervisors to increase work-based training;
- Recruitment campaigns;
- Design and delivery of customised training;
- Development and implementation of training programmes that deal with broad-based, rather than occupational specific skills, such as customer relations.

Other revenue generating approaches that should be explored include:

- Providing advice to enterprises on human resource development issues;
- Contracting for research projects on relevant skills development issues;
- Developing membership schemes with training provider / employers, to encourage their active support.

In Uganda, the following additional funding streams have been identified:

1. Certification of programmes
2. Membership and accreditation
3. Standardisation and licensing
4. Licensing of trainers
5. Certification of Tour Guides



## 9. IMPLEMENTATION AND GETTING STARTED

Once there is agreement in principle to set up a Sector Skills Council, a Board should be established. Its primary task is to oversee the procedures to create the Sector Skills Council.

The Board should be composed of experienced senior managers; ideally, those with a high profile in the sector who are able provide leadership. The members of the Board should be nominated by sector stakeholders, perhaps at an inaugural general meeting or through existing trade and employer structures. Representatives of Government, and its agencies concerned with TVET should be invited to be members of the Board to generate partnership working and to demonstrate the transparent nature of its work.

### Membership of the Board



The aim should be to establish a Board that is representative of the sector – and its range of activities – and whose members command respect within the sector. In addition to a majority of sector employer representatives, who should be sufficiently senior to commit their organisations to decisions made by the Shadow Board, stakeholder representatives should also be members. These should include relevant Trade Associations, the Chamber of Commerce, the BTVET and of TVET Institutions, one from the public and one from the private sector.

The responsibilities of the Shadow Board are to:

- Determine the vision, values, aims and objectives of the Sector Skills Council
- Review options and decide the most appropriate corporate governance arrangements
- Prepare a strategy and Business Plan for the Sector Skills Council
- Manage and account for funds that may be supplied to establish the Sector Skills Council
- Ensure that risk management, control and audit and governance systems are in place
- Develop operational policies for the Sector Skills Council (e.g. employment, human resource development, financial and administration policies).

### **Conduct of Business**

The manner in which the Board conducts its business will influence perceptions in the sector about the value of a sector approach and the support, which might be given to a Skills Council. It will require rules of business to cover the following:

- Election of chair and deputy;
- Minimum number of attendees to constitute a quorum;
- Decision making and voting rights;
- Recording decisions, minutes and the circulation of information about the work of the Shadow Board;
- Frequency of meetings.

### **Consultation**

A key aspect of the authority of a Sector Skills Council is that it represents and serves the interests of its sector. The work and decisions of the Board need to be communicated to employers and stakeholders. There are likely to be major issues on which the Board will seek the views of employers and stakeholders through formal consultation exercises. The Board should develop a communications plan to ensure that its work is known about in the sector. Elements of a communications strategy might include:

- Creation of web-site and use of social media;
- Regular publication/newsletter
- Focus groups;
- Consultation papers;
- Annual Report and associated public meetings.

## **Support Staff**

The Board will require a core team of staff to enable it to function; some of these individuals may be seconded from the Board members or key stakeholders. Typical requirements would be:

- CEO
- Research
- Administrative function
- Business Development
- Standards and Qualifications



*Would you like to know more about this topic?*

**Please contact us!**

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