

## Thematic factsheet



### Building public-private dialogues & partnerships

The overarching goal of VET Toolbox is to demonstrate that **local skills development systems** can be **flexible** and more **responsive to the labour market's needs**. When skills systems deliver the competent local workforce needed to support investments in Sub-Saharan Africa, foreign capital can create **local benefits**, including **decent jobs** and **income generation**.

As a predecessor of the Team Europe Initiative "Opportunity-driven skills and Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Africa" (TEI OP-VET), VET Toolbox is **piloting an opportunity-driven approach to VET**, linking skills development with investment opportunities for local value creation through employment.

This approach depends heavily on a strong collaboration between public and private actors. VET Toolbox therefore supports the set-up and strengthening of **public-private dialogues (PPD)**. PPDs bring together public stakeholders (such as VET and employment authorities and sectoral ministries), VET providers (public or private) and the private sector. When trust is built and expectations are managed, these platforms can lead to different types of **private-public partnerships (PPPs)**.

### Starting point

Depending on the context, VET Toolbox introduced new PPDs or strengthened existing PPD structures in partner countries, using different approaches:

**Strengthening existing PPD structures** for efficient opportunity exploration and project implementation.



- **Kenya:** *The e-waste project could build on an existing PPD on E-waste, which already included representatives from the private sector and the government. The project integrated the VET sector, allowing for better coordination around skills development in e-waste.*

**Establishing new PPD structures** that were supported through capacity development measures by the VET Toolbox implementing agencies.



- **Nigeria:** *VET Toolbox supported the set-up of the PPD "Cashew Processors and Packagers Association of Nigeria" with several cashew processing companies such as Julius Berger.*

## Different forms of PPD

1. **Operational PPDs** support **project implementation** and **follow-up**; **address context-specific needs** at the sectorial and value-chain level; ensure that skills development responds to **labour market needs**; and make **operational decisions**.

- They include representatives from specific companies and VET providers, often also relevant ministries, training and qualification authorities or international NGOs.
- They are often organised in the form of technical working group meetings (frequent and informal meetings, approx. every two months).

2. **Steering PPDs** ensure **strategic decision-making** and **steering** of the project.

- They include the VET Toolbox implementing agency, VET representatives, private sector actors, governmental bodies, and often training funds, the EU Delegation (EUD) and Chambers of Commerce.
- They usually take place in the form of Steering Committees or Advisory Boards, on an ad hoc basis and sometimes in the form of flexible mechanisms for opportunity identification.

3. **Advocacy PPDs** promote the **opportunity-driven approach**, strengthen the projects' **visibility** at the **policy level** and stimulate **VET reform processes**.

- They include high-level representatives from the private sector and VET providers, the EUD and policymakers at the national level, sometimes research and academia.
- They are usually organised in the form of launch or closing events, sometimes integrated into larger business-related events such as business fora.

## Key features of PPDs

**Sector-specific and cross-sectoral PPDs:** All PPDs address specific sectors and allow that skills needs and job opportunities are systematically addressed by the private sector and VET stakeholders. This allows to **meet sector-specific demands**. In some cases, an additional cross-sectoral PPD platform allows for a broader value chain approach and the exploration of new investment/employment opportunities in other sectors.



- ***DRC:** Opportunities were defined in key economic sectors along the mining sector value chain. A cross-sectoral, high-level PPD is complemented by sector-specific PPD structures in construction & public work; transport & logistics; hotel, restaurant & catering; and digital.*

**Private and public sector-led PPDs:** Private sector-led PPDs ensure **strong private sector commitment**, effectively representing their needs and addressing **employment opportunities** while public sector-led PPDs show more promise for sustainability and policy uptake. Local partner-led PPDs generally have better sustainability prospects, but facilitation by the VET Toolbox implementing agencies remains crucial in the early stages to build partnerships, capacity, and trust.



- ***Mozambique:** VET Toolbox supported linking the private sector with VET providers and governmental representatives. A business association with several hundreds of registered members takes the lead in the PPD in the logistics and transport sector.*

**Sustainability:** Business membership organisations that can rely on firmly established financial contributions are ideal PPD hosting structures in terms of sustainability. Funding for PPD is also easy where sectoral and/or national training funds are available, but unfortunately, these funds are not present or functioning in all countries.



- **Congo:** A newly created cross-sectoral PPD, led by an executive committee comprising high-level public and private partners, is financed by small membership fees.

**PPPs:** All projects established PPPs, mostly between companies and VET providers, but also with business associations and VET or employment authorities:



- **Ghana:** MoUs were signed with 11 key partners including the Commission for TVET, Ghana TVET Service, commercial farms and Vocational Training Institutions (VTIs).

## Key recommendations on PPDs

- **Offer a platform for systematic exchange** on skills development, employment and investment needs/plans by key public and private actors.
- **Integrate opportunity-identifying mechanisms** for continuous identification and validation of new investment or employment opportunities that benefit from responsive and flexible skills development through dialogue.
- **Stimulate VET reform** through strategic PPDs, ideally at the regional or national level, that fulfil an advocacy function towards policy level.
- **Organise interactive multi-level structures** where strategic PPDs build a good base for operational training delivery that fits the private sector needs in the specific context.
- **Ensure a local private and/or public lead** to improve the sustainability of PPDs and guarantee real ownership at the local level.
- **Address the topic of sustainability** along with financing opportunities (joint financing or cost-sharing mechanism) early in the process and define an exit strategy before the project ends.



VET Toolbox is a programme developing opportunity-driven skills development initiatives aligned with investments' needs, supporting the private sector with local job creation. For additional information, please visit [www.vettoolbox.eu](http://www.vettoolbox.eu).



A partnership project

